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TOTAL DEFENSE: THE STRATEGY ON HOW TO DEFEAT STRONG

PMC Research Center Policy Paper

2023
Tbilisi

TOTAL DEFENSE: THE STRATEGY ON HOW TO DEFEAT STRONG

Author: **Giorgi Shaishmelashvili**

Peer Reviewer: **Shalva Khutsishvili**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Russia's full-scale military aggression and the ongoing war in Ukraine have led to a fundamental overhaul of the West's defense and security policy and practice. In addition, a large-scale conventional war on European soil and the successful defensive operation of Ukraine has prompted defense and security professionals to reconsider the importance of total (comprehensive) defense.

The total defense system was established during the Cold War in non-NATO member states that faced threats from a superior adversary. The concept has adapted to new security challenges and evolved from a comprehensive defense system to a comprehensive security model.

Since 2017 Georgia has been trying to build its defense and security system on the principle of total defense. However, it has not yet approved the necessary political and strategic guidelines, conceptual framework, implementation plan, and assigned resources.

Based on the Baltic and Nordic States case study, the paper identifies the critical conditions for implementing an effective and efficient total defense system and assesses the state of play in Georgia consistent with the case study's findings.

INTRODUCTION

Russia's full-scale military invasion of Ukraine on February 24, 2022, has profoundly changed the security environment in Europe. The scale, character of warfare, and humanitarian and material damage of the continuing war shocked security professionals and the broader public since there had not been a conventional war on European soil since World War II. There are many lessons to be learned from the Russia-Ukraine war - at strategic, operational, and tactical levels. Though the puzzle of how the Ukrainian Government, military, and society as a whole managed to withstand the attack on such a scale at the initial phase of the war and conduct successful counterattacks later has yet to be explored - intelligence services, think tankers and independent analysts have already started to draw preliminary findings of the conflict. There is a broad consensus among observers that the success of Ukraine lies in the measures taken before the war by the country. As Hanna Shelest puts it, after the Russian invasion, Ukraine created a "de-facto **total defense system**" based on the pre-war planning and transformation of the defense organization.¹ How Ukrainians defend their homeland deserves further exploration and could be a role model for other nations neighboring Russia.

After the annexation of Crimea, alongside Baltic and Nordic countries, Ukraine has taken measures to establish a total defense, including outlining the system's appropriate conceptual and legal basis. Ukraine's Military Security Strategy, adopted in March 2021, is based on a comprehensive security approach. According to the Minister of Defense of Ukraine, Oleksii Reznikov, "The Military Security Strategy of Ukraine was developed for the first time introducing a comprehensive approach to the state defence based on deterrence, resilience and interaction."² Later, in September 2021, Ukraine adopted the National Resilience Concept, which is mainly in line with NATO's baseline requirements for resilience and adds two additional requirements: resilience to information influence operations and financial and economic resilience.³ Finally, Ukraine adopted the law on the Fundamentals of National Resistance⁴ in 2021. The law created a legal framework for establishing the territorial defense forces as a force multiplier for an army and a bridge between the military, volunteers, and the broader public. Although before the breakout of the war, Ukraine did not have all instruments of total defense fully operational, those established mechanisms played a crucial role in the war with Russia.

¹ Hanna Shelest, "Defend. Resist. Repeat: Ukraine's Lessons for European Defence," ECFR, November 9, 2022, <https://ecfr.eu/publication/defend-resist-repeat-ukraines-lessons-for-european-defence/>.

² Ministry of Defence of Ukraine, *White Book 2021: Defense policy of Ukraine* (Kyiv, 2022). accessed June 13, 2023, https://www.mil.gov.ua/content/files/whitebook/WhiteBook_2021_Defens_policy_of_Ukraine.

³ Hanna Shelest, "Defend. Resist. Repeat: Ukraine's Lessons for European Defence," ECFR, November 9, 2022, <https://ecfr.eu/publication/defend-resist-repeat-ukraines-lessons-for-european-defence>

⁴ Daryna Kolomiets, "Understanding Ukraine's 'National Resistance' Movement," *Get the Latest Ukraine News Today* - Kyiv Post, accessed June 13, 2023, <https://www.kyivpost.com/post/7528>.

The total defense system was formed primarily in the non-NATO states bordering the Soviet Union during the Cold War. In a broader sense, total defense means a comprehensive and integrated use of all national resources to compensate for the existing asymmetry with an adversary that holds unmatched military capabilities. After the end of the Cold War and in the context of liberal enthusiasm, along with the reduction of national defense expenditures, almost all states have reduced the size of their armed forces, and previously existing civil defense systems that were considered obsolete changed their profile. However, the annexation of Crimea in 2014 and the war in Eastern Ukraine gave new significance to total defense. Blend with hybrid threats, the risk of conventional military confrontation on their territories encouraged Eastern European states to review the principles of organizing state defense. Considering limited military, human, and economic resources, Russia's neighboring NATO member and non-member states started reestablishing and gradually implementing total defense.

Against this backdrop, Georgia has taken important steps to establish the country's defense and security system on the principle of total defense as well. Based on the lessons learned from the August War 2008, the National Security Review (NSR) in 2009-2011 identified the significance of a whole-of-government approach to dealing with national security issues and defense planning.⁵ The outcome of the review, the National Security Concept of Georgia adopted in 2011, states that the Georgian defense system should be organized based on a "total defense approach." However, the concept has never been further elaborated in national-level strategic planning documents. Revitalization of the discussions on Georgia's total defense system, as in many European states, started after the annexation of Crimea in the Strategic Defense Review (SDR) 2017-2020. The document adopted in 2017 outscored the importance of the "total defense approach" without outlining the details of the concept. After publishing SDR 2017-2020, the Georgian Ministry of Defense (MoD) started to adopt the term Total Defense in its agency-level planning documents, such as Minister's Directives.⁶ The guiding document for the foundation and implementation of Georgian total defense is supposed to be National Defense Strategy (NDS) 2020-2030. However, the document is not yet formally approved by the Government of Georgia.

In the absence of conceptual guidance at the strategic level, establishing a total defense system in Georgia remains challenging. The Ministry of Defense of Georgia has taken significant steps to implement total defense without clear and precise guidance from the national level. However, since total defense is an inherently inter-agency, whole-of-national endeavor, the steps undertaken by the MoD in this direction cannot adequately respond to the requirements of Georgia. Russia's military aggression in Ukraine again illustrates the significance of robust national defense for Georgia, while the tempo and scope of the establishment of Georgia's total defense system lag behind the country's national security needs.

⁵ Author's interview with former ONSC bureaucrat.

⁶ "Minister's Directives - MOD.GOV.GE," accessed April 6, 2020, <https://mod.gov.ge/en/page/48/minister%E2%80%99s-directives>.

The war in Ukraine further deteriorated Georgia's security environment but set the stage for a fruitful discussion and created conditions for finding a broader consensus on national defense issues. As the war in Ukraine illustrated, the national defense must not be only the state's responsibility and should include the whole society. The paper aims to bolster the academic discussion on Georgia's national defense. It could serve as a baseline document for various stakeholders engaged in the defense and resilience of the nation. To this end, it poses two research questions: 1. What are the critical conditions for establishing an effective and efficient total defense system? 2. What has been done at the strategic level by Georgia to establish a total defense system?

Methodologically, the paper belongs to the category of qualitative studies and uses the case-study method as a methodological approach. Structurally, the research consists of three parts. In the first part, desk research of selected cases was carried out, identifying the critical conditions for implementing effective and efficient total defense systems. The second part of the research assesses the current dynamic of the establishment of total defense in Georgia, consistent with critical conditions identified during desk research. More specifically, the document reflects the analysis of the primary measures implemented in the Baltic and Nordic countries to increase the effectiveness of total defense and identifies the institutional, organizational, and cultural obstacles accompanying the establishment of a total defense system. Assessment and identification of current gaps in Georgia's total defense system rely on analyzing primary sources such as national and agency-level strategic policy planning documents and semi-structural interviews with representatives of the relevant state agencies. The last part of the paper provides recommendations for Georgia based on the research findings.

CHAPTER 1. KEY INSIGHTS FROM CASE STUDIES

1.1. CONCEPTUAL OVERVIEW – EVOLUTION OF THE TERM

Total defense is the use of all available resources for the purposes of national security, aiming to prevent a potential adversary from aggression by sending a signal that everyone in society would resist attack, thus imposing uncertainty on its strategic calculations.⁷ Total defense is essentially a Cold War concept, which was materialized in Europe in non-NATO member states, Switzerland, Finland, Sweden, and Yugoslavia.⁸ Similar defense organization systems exist outside the European continent in Israel and Singapore. The term total defense has been established in Sweden since the 1940s and is associated with the experience of World War II as a total war. In 1943, in one of the reports of the commission established to draft the civil defense law of Sweden, we read: “Boundaries between the military and the civil, as well as between theatres of war and the previously preserved homeland, have to a large extent been erased. War has become total”... The document further contends that it “needs to be countered with total defense, including both a military and civil side.”⁹

However, since the 1960s, the term total defense has been replaced by the terms “comprehensive defense” or “comprehensive approach to the defense” due to its negative associations with totalitarianism and World War II. During the Cold War period, the central tenets of total defense were the preparation for the major war of non-allied small countries. Hence, it primarily implied civilian support to the military during a war.

Later, after the end of the Cold War, the concept expanded to include crisis response to non-military threats, terrorism, natural and man-made disasters, and any threat to the population in peacetime. Thus, a new concept, comprehensive or integrated security, has emerged. Responding to such a wide range of threats implies coordinated actions and the functioning of state institutions, non-state actors, and the whole society during war and peacetime. Therefore, unlike total defense, comprehensive security is a continuous effort that must be pursued throughout the spectrum of conflict (peace-crisis-war). The changing character of modern warfare and the new generation of wars,¹⁰ in which the adversaries’ target is the population’s attitudes, have given critical importance to comprehensive security, especially its civilian dimensions. Fight for “hearts” and “minds” usually goes under the threshold

⁷ Ieva Bērziņa, “Total Defence as a Comprehensive Approach to National Security,” in *Deterring Russia in Europe* (Routledge, 2018), p.71. \u00a0 in \{\i\}Deterring Russia in Europe\} (Routledge, 2018)

⁸ James Kenneth Wither, “Back to the Future? Nordic Total Defence Concepts,” *Defence Studies* 20, no. 1 (January 2, 2020): 61–81, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14702436.2020.1718498>.

⁹ Cited in: Sebastian Larsson and Mark Rhinard, *Nordic Societal Security: Convergence and Divergence* (Taylor & Francis, 2021), page 46.

¹⁰ See for example: Jānis Bērziņš, “The Theory and Practice of New Generation Warfare: The Case of Ukraine and Syria,” *The Journal of Slavic Military Studies* 33, no. 3 (July 2, 2020): 355–80, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13518046.2020.1824109>.

by the non-kinetic instruments of national power. This type of warfare has become the framework for Russia's foreign policy and military conduct, especially after the 2000s. Accordingly, psychological defense and societal resilience have acquired critical parts of national security.

1.2. COMPREHENSIVE DEFENSE IN THE CONTEXT OF RUSSIA'S HYBRID WARFARE

Russia's assertive foreign policy behavior that led to the full-scale intervention in Ukraine has been a significant security concern for its neighboring countries, especially after the annexation of Crimea. Since 2014, hybrid warfare, gray zone operations, new generation warfare, and other concepts and terms, have become the intellectual tools for exploring modern Russian grand strategy. Against the background of Russia's enduring (civilizational) quest for being and treated as a Great Power, coupled with restricted recourses at its disposal, Russia has acquired a peculiar approach to strategy. Hybrid warfare is largely a continuation of Moscow's traditional military thinking, with some innovations related to current social-political changes and modern technologies.¹¹ The conceptualization of Russian (indirect) strategic thought is the product of the Soviet era. Since Marxism explains all human history through the lens of enduring class struggle and spreading communism (at least in the initial stage) was the explicit political aim of the Soviet Union, the elimination of the boundaries between war and peace was a significant trait of Soviet strategic thinking. As Condoleezza Rice points out, "[the understanding of the] strategy that neatly separate war and peace, or the army and society were foreign to the Bolsheviks."¹² Thus, for the Soviet military thinkers, war was not a "continuation of politics by other means"; instead, politics and war were the two sides of one single concept.¹³ Besides the "routinization" of war, the strategy of attrition and indirect approach remained the main stratagem for the Soviet strategists to avoid a decisive battle with a superior enemy. Hence, gaining a relative advantage before engaging the enemy by force has been and remains the main feature of Russian strategic thought.

In terms of strategic theory, Russian hybrid warfare is a modern manifestation and continuation of traditional indirect strategy,¹⁴ implying the use of multiple, ambiguous means to target and exploit the vulnerabilities across society to achieve political aims without triggering a response. Russia's astute use of its instruments of national power is based on the needs of different theaters. In the post-Soviet space, Russian hybrid warfare is more of an operational-tactical concept, while in the Western theater, Russia uses the gray zone, political activities, in which the role of the military instru-

¹¹ Giorgi Shaishmelashvili, "Russia's Permanent War against Georgia," March 2021, <https://www.fpri.org/article/2021/03/russia-permanent-war-georgia/>.

¹² Condoleezza Rice, "The Making of Soviet Strategy" in Paret, Craig, and Gilbert, *Makers of Modern Strategy*, 648.

¹³ John J. Dziak, *Soviet Perceptions of Military Power: The Interaction of Theory and Practice* (Crane, Russak, 1981).

¹⁴ Sibylle Scheipers, "Winning Wars without Battles: Hybrid Warfare and Other 'indirect' Approaches in the History of Strategic Thought," 2016, <https://research-repository.st-andrews.ac.uk/handle/10023/10549>.

ment of power is essentially lower. Thus, the twofold definition provided by Dr. Hoffman is a valuable framework for understanding the Russian way of warfare. According to Hoffman, a Gray Zone is: "Those covert or illegal activities of non-traditional statecraft that are below the threshold of armed organized violence; including disruption of order, political subversion of government or non-governmental organizations, psychological operations, abuse of legal processes, and financial corruption as part of an integrated design to achieve strategic advantage."¹⁵ It might be said that a gray zone is essentially political warfare, as proposed by George Kennan,¹⁶ while hybrid warfare, according to Hoffman, implies "any adversary that simultaneously employs a tailored mix of conventional weapons, irregular tactics, terrorism, and criminal behavior at the same time and battlespace to obtain their political objectives."¹⁷

(Figure 1 – illustration of Russia’s hybrid warfare and gray zone campaign model against Georgia from the 1990s to the present. Designed by the author, used in the article - "Russia’s permanent warfare against Georgia")

Conflict Spectrum	Irregular warfare Separatist conflicts	Hybrid Warfare	August War Conventional	Gray Zone
Ends	Creating and maintaining leverages on Georgia	Discrediting Rose Revolution/ Regime survival	Stopping NATO enlargement Military presence in South Caucasus	Weakening state institutions Slowing Western integration
Ways	Mercenaries Separatist forces Fueling Nationalism Terrorism	Economic sanctions Energy coercion Information Terrorism Supporting Separatism	Limited war Cyber attacks Information	Carrots and Sticks Fueling anti-Western narrative Creeping occupation Information operations
Means	Population Useful idiots Scientists North Caucasus Local leaders	FSB Peacekeepers Covert actions	58 th army Aviation Special forces	Useful idiots Ultra-right political groups Media and NGOs Political parties Orthodox Church
Year	1990s	2003-2008	2008	2008-Present

¹⁵ Frank G Hoffman, "Examining Complex Forms of Conflict: Gray Zone and Hybrid Challenges," PRISM | National Defense University, 2018, <http://cco.ndu.edu/News/Article/1680696/examining-complex-forms-of-conflict-gray-zone-and-hybrid-challenges/>.

¹⁶ Linda Robinson et al., "Modern Political Warfare: Current Practices and Possible Responses," Product Page, 2018, https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR1772.html.

¹⁷ Ibid.

The case of Georgia and Ukraine and Russia's malign activities in Eastern Europe illustrate how Russia approaches its ways and means to uphold national ends. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russia continued to exert pressure on Georgia and Ukraine by employing a combination of instruments of power. Along with traditional sources of power - such as military force or the threat thereof, supporting proxies - Russia has been employing economic measures, information operations, and cyber-attacks against them.

Blurring the lines between war and peace and Russia's use of a tailored mixture of military and non-military instruments of power, weaponization of cyberspace, information, and economic spheres required a comprehensive response from targeted states. NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg noted that hybrid war is "the dark reflection" of NATO's comprehensive approach.¹⁸ This could be understood as, while hybrid warfare is an offensive strategy combining different instruments of national power, comprehensive defense combines the same powers to ensure the resistance and security of the allied and partner nations.

Given the growing importance of Russia's hybrid warfare, some NATO member countries adopted the total defense system. Hence, after the annexation of Crimea, collective defense is complemented by total defense, unlike in the Cold War period. According to the concept of a Comprehensive approach to counter hybrid threats, developed by the European Centre of Excellence for Countering Hybrid Threats, comprehensive defense reinforces collective defense as a concept of resilience with an emphasis on the civilian aspects of security at a national level. At the 2016 NATO Warsaw Summit, civil preparedness was identified as a central pillar of resilience and a critical enabler for the collective defense of NATO.¹⁹ In parallel to NATO, the importance of similar needs has been realised in the EU, accumulated under the general term of Civil Protection.²⁰ Essentially, under these two terms, it is meant to ensure the maintenance of the functioning of the state in the conditions of crisis and war, which in the NATO concept implies the maintenance of seven functions of vital importance for the state and society. Resilience, therefore, results from a well-functioning civil preparedness/civil protection system, (coupled with military capacity) which refers to a society's ability to withstand and rapidly recover from shocks caused by natural or man-made disasters, critical infrastructure failures, hybrid threats, or military attacks.²¹

¹⁸ Eugenio Cusumano and Marian Corbe, eds., *A Civil-Military Response to Hybrid Threats* (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2018), <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-60798-6>, p3.

¹⁹ NATO, "Civil Preparedness," NATO, accessed June 12, 2022, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_49158.htm.

²⁰ "Civil Protection: EU Outlines Disaster Resilience Goals," European Commission - European Commission, accessed June 13, 2023, https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_23_599.

²¹ NATO, "Resilience, Civil Preparedness and Article 3," NATO, accessed June 13, 2023, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_132722.htm.

1.3. IDENTIFIED CRITICAL CONDITIONS FOR SUCCESSFUL TOTAL DEFENSE

Planning and executing a sound total defense system mainly depends on a whole-of-government approach and mature inter-agency cooperation processes. That, in turn, requires appropriate structural and procedural arrangements at the governmental level, such as creating a proper cabinet-level planning and oversight mechanism for the entire security sector, establishing permanent inter-agency teams, synchronizing the planning process and methodology across different state agencies, harmonizing doctrines and education of staff. All that mentioned will be impossible without high-level political consensus on long-term defense and security policy objectives among the main political stakeholders and the broader public. Usually, **a parliament** represents an arena for forging this type of consensus. Furthermore, drafting laws, approving national-level conceptual planning documents, and allocating financial resources are the parliament's responsibilities.

Besides parliaments, the crucial role of the **central coordinating authority** in all explored case studies grabs particular interest. Inter-agency collaboration is a complicated exercise even in countries with advanced public administration systems. Major obstacles are rigid and outdated mindsets, lack of strategic and long-term planning traditions, insufficient resources for cross-cutting activities, etc. Cooperation between military and civilian agencies is particularly challenging due to the different institutional cultures. In this context, the role of solid coordination authority is of key importance. After the end of the Cold War, these authorities were relatively weakened in the Baltic and Nordic states. Russia's hybrid warfare against its neighbors increased the importance of integrated response of different security agencies and inter-agency cooperation. In Estonia, for example, the role of the Government Office in coordination and oversight of the comprehensive security system was strengthened after 2015.²² In addition to advising and providing organizational support for the Government Security Committee and coordinating the security and intelligence agencies, the National Security and Defense Coordination Unit was given the extra tasks of coordinating defense planning, ensuring government situational awareness, and advising the prime minister on national security issues.

Though coordinating authority ought to be under the Prime Minister's office, since all countries explored in the cases are parliamentary republics like Georgia, it is worth noting that **there is not a single right rule on how to arrange coordinating authority**. The countries are different in structural arrangements due to their historical experience. For example, the Security Committee in Finland, still located in the Ministry of Defense, assists the Government and various ministries in matters pertaining to comprehensive security.²³ It also coordinates preparedness issues related to comprehensive security. The Committee is chaired by the Permanent Secretary for Defense,

²² Piotr Szymański, "New Ideas for Total Defence: Comprehensive Security in Finland and Estonia. OSW Report 2020-03-31.," Other, March 2020, <http://aei.pitt.edu/103309/>, p. 38.

²³ *Ibid*, p.20

the highest non-political official at the Ministry of Defense. The Deputy Chairman is the State Secretary from the Prime Minister's Office. By and large, despite slight variations, a key insight from case studies is that it is necessary to establish an effective overarching structure vested with proper authority and supported with the necessary resources to guide, integrate, and oversee comprehensive security. Another essential feature for coordinating bodies is **permanent inter-agency groups** for planning, coordination, and monitoring the comprehensive defense. This enables the spread of a shared vision and understanding of cross-cutting security issues, that is, in situations when it is not clear whose responsibility is a particular issue. The staff socialized and sensitized to common national objectives in this type of working group deals with issues not through the lens of the agency they represent but rather from the national Government's perspective.

National-level strategic planning documents, crafted in an interagency working process and approved by parliaments, represent the leading political and practical guide for implementing comprehensive defense in all Baltic and Nordic States. Estonian National Defense Concepts of 2010 and 2017,²⁴ the Latvian National Defense Concept 2016,²⁵ the Lithuanian National Security Strategy,²⁶ the Swedish National Defense Bill 2015,²⁷ and the Finnish Security Strategy for Society 2017 are foundational documents for developing and implementing comprehensive defense systems in those respective states. Besides updating conceptual policy planning documents, some countries, particularly in the Baltics, have changed **national laws** to streamline the implementation process of the comprehensive defense. For example, Estonia adopted a new National Defense Act (2015), which replaced the previous separate peacetime and wartime regulations, and amended the Emergency Act (2017).²⁸ The new National Defense Act simplified and unified the decision making process, eliminating the division into the peacetime and wartime chain of command and regulating the mobilization issue. Besides, the ministries' competencies in the event of a crisis and armed conflict were laid down and clarified.

Although there are slight variations in different contexts, the model of total defense has some important standard features in all countries, including military defense, psychological defense, internal security, ensuring the resilience of critical services, civil defense, and international activity.

²⁴ On the measures taken by Estonia to increase its defense capabilities, see, for example: Tony Lawrence, "Estonia: Size Matters," PRISM 10, no. 2 (2023): 18–37.

²⁵ On the measures taken by Latvia to increase its defense capabilities, see, for example: Janis Bērziņš, "Latvia: From Total Defense to Comprehensive Defense," PRISM 10, no. 2 (2023): 38–53.

²⁶ On the measures taken by Lithuania to increase its defense capabilities, see, for example: Dalia Bankauskaitė and Deividas Šlekys, "Lithuania's Total Defense Review," PRISM 10, no. 2 (2023): 54–77.

²⁷ On the measures taken by Sweden to increase its defense capabilities, see, for example: Anna Wieslander, "The Hultqvist Doctrine' – Swedish Security and Defence Policy after the Russian Annexation of Crimea," Defence Studies 22, no. 1 (January 2, 2022): 35–59, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14702436.2021.1955619>.

²⁸ Piotr Szymański, "New Ideas for Total Defence: Comprehensive Security in Finland and Estonia. OSW Report 2020-03-31.," Other, March 2020, <http://aei.pitt.edu/103309/>, p. 38

1.3.1. MILITARY DIMENSION

The mixed force structure, composed of professional, compulsory service, reserve forces, and volunteer organizations, is one of the main features of the total defense system in any country. From this point of view, the example of Finland is particularly interesting, which maintained the conscription system even after the end of the Cold War. However, the situation is different in other countries. For example, Sweden revoked conscription in 2010 but reinstated it in 2017, considering Russia's increased security threats.²⁹ A similar experience had the case with Lithuania, which eliminated conscription in 2008 but reinstated nine months of mandatory military service in September 2015 for five years.³⁰ The conscription system for those states is not just a part of conventional military capabilities; it is, first and foremost, a philosophy that contributes to a unique strategic culture and civil-military relations. A vivid example is Finland, where almost 90 percent of parliament members had military ranks.³¹

1.3.2. CIVIL DIMENSION

Civil defense is an integral part of the total defense system of any country. The traditional understanding of civil defense was ensuring the population's physical safety.³² In response to modern character warfare, the civil dimension of comprehensive defense has become more complicated and includes activities such as: ensuring the continuity of Government during crisis and war, continuous operation of critical infrastructure and vital societal functions, the civilian support for military defense, etc. What is called "civil defense" during the Cold War referred to the physical safety of the civilian population by providing shelters, early warning mechanisms, sirens, etc., now primarily called civil protection/safety, which is now just a critical component of the civilian dimension of total defense together with other sets of activities. Without an effective civil defense system, the military component of total defense would fail since those countries expect war in their own territory, and the military's morale will be degraded in case of disproportionate civilian casualties. Hence, during wartime, contributions from civilian agencies and society, in general, are instrumental in supporting the military to sustain their long-term combat effectiveness and maintain their concentration on combat operations, while during crises and emergencies, military organizations as the largest organized force in any country are crucial for civilian authorities.

It should be noted that despite a long tradition of total defense, the financial provision of the complex civil defense system and maintaining its readiness is a significant challenge, even for The Baltic and the Nordic states except Finland. After the fall of

²⁹ "Sweden Brings Back Military Conscription amid Baltic Tensions," BBC News, March 2, 2017, sec. Europe, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-39140100>.

³⁰ Dalia Bankauskaitė and Deividas Šlekys, "Lithuania's Total Defense Review," PRISM 10, no. 2 (2023): 54–77

³¹ Piotr Szymański, "New Ideas for Total Defence: Comprehensive Security in Finland and Estonia. OSW Report 2020-03-31.

³² Bērziņa, Ieva. "Total Defence as a Comprehensive Approach to National Security." In *Detering Russia in Europe*. Routledge, 2018.

the Soviet Union, civil protection infrastructure inherited from the Soviet time has deteriorated in the Baltic States. For example, Estonia abolished the Soviet-style civil defense system after a long debate in 1993.³³ Wargaming and Cold War shelter capacity analysis revealed that they would have been sufficient for only 5% of the population.³⁴ It was decided that Estonia would not start developing its shelter system for financial and operational reasons. Instead, the decision was made to use the existing infrastructure as shelters – public administration and private buildings, such as underground car parks. To deal with the issue, the Government of Estonia approved a comprehensive approach to developing civil protection. The document recommends that the population maintain a week's supply of vital products in an emergency and envisages the development of an early warning notification system that uses mobile telephones and evacuation plans. In Finland, there are currently approximately 45,000 shelters (85% are private) with a capacity for about 3.6 million people, which is 65% of the population.³⁵ Daily, some shelters are used as public facilities, and each shelter must have the capacity to take in people within 72 hours.

1.3.3. INFORMATIONAL-PSYCHOLOGICAL DIMENSION

Failure of psychological defense and societal resilience risks the effective implementation of total defense. All citizens must have a sense of personal responsibility and understand and recognize their individual roles in the entire national defense system. Psychological readiness is a manifestation of the public will to resist. Maintaining and strengthening the fighting spirit of citizens, avoiding panic and coordinated action are one of the main tasks of the informational-psychological dimension of total defense. The issue has gained particular importance in the information age, along with the growth of hybrid threats.

Unlike the military and civil areas, the picture of the main state agencies and civil society interest groups involved in information-psychological defense is even more complex, complicating identifying the leading and supporting responsible agencies and distributing functions among them. Additionally, assessing the readiness level when it comes to intangibles, such as the will to fight, is challenging.

³³ Piotr Szymański, "New Ideas for Total Defence: Comprehensive Security in Finland and Estonia. OSW Report 2020-03-31.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Ibid.

CHAPTER 2. THE 'STATE OF PLAY' IN GEORGIA MOVE TO THE RIGHT, YET WITH SLOW

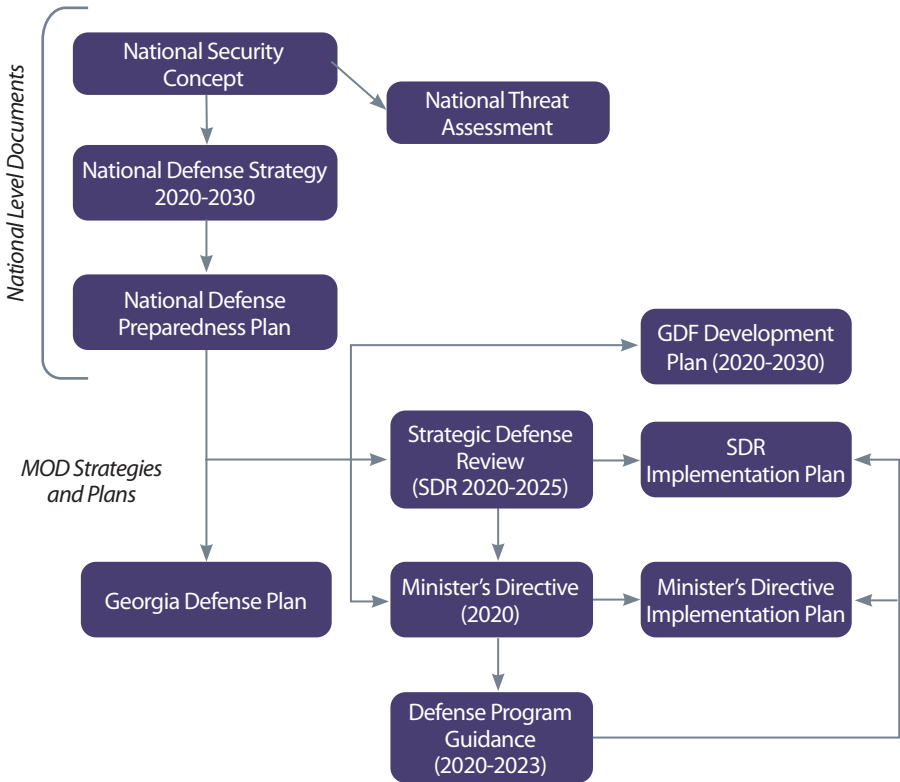
Since gaining independence, Georgia's defense and security system underwent a significant transformation. However, institutionalization, consistency, and continuation of the reforms remain challenging. At least after the August War 2008, Georgia's security environment as a major factor in its defense planning is fairly straightforward. The country faces an adversary with unmatched military capabilities. Furthermore, Russia aims to exploit the vulnerabilities of Georgia in all political, military, economic, social, informational, and cyber domains and uses a tailored mixture of its different national instruments of power to exact its political will on Georgia. In this context, establishing a total defense system is the only correct solution for Georgia.

As noted above, Georgia has been trying to establish the total defense system alongside the Baltic and Nordic States since 2017. However, consistency, political commitment, and allocating enough financial resources to the country's national defense remain challenging. Strategy formulation is an inherently political exercise in its nature. Every written strategy is a product of a long-lasting process confined by the political environment, tradeoffs, strategic and organizational culture, dynamics of civil-military relations, existing recourses, etc. Therefore, these factors largely define the success and failure of strategies. Furthermore, every strategy is a product of processes that shape it. Security policy and strategy planning in most democracies is a product of formal processes regulated by laws and practices. With the help of international partners, Georgia gradually established its security policy and coordination architecture and hierarchy of the national and agency-level conceptual documents. According to the Law on National Security Policy Planning and Coordination, Georgia has the following documents at the national level, with the hierarchy shown in the figure below.

Without the content analysis of documents, their current legal status reveals much about the problems of Georgia's strategic planning process. The National Security Concept of Georgia, which is the essential document that explains fundamental national values and national interests, threats, risks, and challenges and establishes the main directions for national security policy, has not been updated since 2011. Threat Assessment Document, supposed to be updated in 2018, is not updated yet; National Defense Strategy, considered a foundational document for total defense and supposed to be adopted in 2019, is still not adopted. It should be noted that the solid draft versions of all those documents are already being crafted, unlike the National Defense Preparedness Plan (NDPP) that had not been started yet. National Defense Preparedness Plan is a national-level organizational document for national defense planning, uniting the respective preparedness plans of the MoD and General Staff and all other relevant entities responsible for the state's defense during the war.

Figure 2. Planning Architecture of Georgia

Strategy and Planning Architecture



Without guidance from the national level, the MoD reflected the ideas related to implementing total defense in its agency-level documents. However, as shown in the previous chapter, total defense is an inter-agency effort in nature, and without coordinating solid authority, the MoD cannot push other agencies to allocate resources and relevant efforts for total defense.

As case studies illustrate, all Nordic and Baltic states increased the capacity of their comprehensive security by reinforcement of the coordinating authority, while Georgia stepped up to establish a total defense system when the coordinating body - the National Security Council of Georgia, was abolished. National Security Council, as the principal body responsible for national-level planning and coordination, was restructured three times (once abolished and reestablished) in five years. Between 2014 and 2017, Georgia had two national security policy planning and coordination bodies, one subor-

minated to the President and the other to the Prime Minister (PM). Shortly after having established two parallel bodies, they were abolished almost simultaneously. After abolishing two parallel councils, the Government realized the need for a coordinating body and created a permanent Defense Policy Planning and Coordination Commission under the Minister of Defense. The commission's primary objective was to craft, review and endorse the two major documents for the total defense system of Georgia - National Defense Strategy and National Defense Preparedness Plan. The commission stopped functioning when the new National Security Council (NSC) was created under the PM. Unfortunately, neither commission nor the new Security Council has been managing to adopt the documents so far.

Since 2017, the MoD has taken significant steps toward the establishment of the total defense system in Georgia. Regarding conceptual basis, as is already noted above, MoD and General staff were the primary intellectual drivers of the designing NDS draft. Besides, the MoD regularly updates its agency-level planning documents, including Strategic Defense Review and its implementation plan. The fact that MoD keeps a total defense as a guiding principle for its development plans should be considered a good sign of maturity and continuation in defense planning and reveals the advancement of organizational capacity. From a conceptual and practical perspective, the total defense system reflected in the MoD-issued documents is very similar to those of Estonia and Sweden. Furthermore, steps taken by the MoD indicate mature thinking on the modern trends related to comprehensive defense.

However, in the absence of overarching guidance to establish a total defense system, there is a lack of an all-encompassing conceptual understanding of all components of a total defense system and integrated practical steps to its implementation in Georgia. This is particularly true with civil and informational dimensions of total defense.

Against this backdrop, MoD Georgia is renewing the conscription using Baltic and Nordic countries' best practices. According to the vision reflected in the new Defense Code, the time for compulsory military service will be reduced, enabling more people to train in the military profession quickly. The vision also includes another vital novelty, according to which citizens will only undergo mandatory military service within the system of the Ministry of Defense of Georgia. MoD Georgia implemented the reform of the Reserve and Mobilization System. The new system introduced the Active Reserve Service, consisting of several types of reserve, including territorial reserves, similar to that of the Ukrainian model.

However, as the war in Ukraine once again illustrated, the Military and its force multipliers are not enough for a successful defense. Civilian support of the Military, civil defense, societal resilience, information, and psychological defense, and critical infrastructure protection are the crucial parts of the modern total defense system. In parallel with drafting the National Defense Strategy, the Government of Georgia started working on crafting the Critical Infrastructure Strategy (The leading agency at that time, the Ministry of Internal Affairs). Both documents were supposed to serve as conceptual foundations of Georgia's civil defense system. The Critical Infrastructure Strategy should reflect the vital societal functions (objects, systems, and services) defined

per defense operational requirements and NATO's seven baseline requirements for resilience. Unfortunately, both documents are not yet formally adopted.

Case studies show that the will to fight, combat spirit, and society's resilience determine whether the state achieves its defense missions. Thus, moral and psychological readiness is the basis for each dimension of total defense. At the same time, its failure compromises the effectiveness of the entire defense system. Mechanisms that allow constant information provision of the population during crisis and war in the light of critical restrictions and conduct active state policy regarding propaganda, psychological, and information operations remain challenging for Georgia. Importantly, the state has no clear vision of dealing with the information environment as a national security domain. It should be noted that it is usually a challenge in all liberal democracies. However, after the annexation of Crimea in the fight against Russian hybrid threats, Eastern European states have gained some knowledge that is worth studying and emulating for Georgia.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A total defense system based on the comprehensive and integrated use of all national resources is the only compensator for tackling asymmetry with a superior adversary for small states. The importance of total defense, established in the non-NATO member states during the Cold War, increased in the wake of Russia's revanchist foreign policy. Although the concept has undergone some evolution consistent with emerging threats, its essential features remain the same. Despite slight variations from country to country, a total defense has its defining features. A closer exploration of the Nordic and Baltic Cases shows that building a robust total defense system is impossible without broader societal consensus. That, in turn, requires the intense engagement of the parliament as an arena for achieving consensus around national defense issues. Approved by the parliaments, the policy of establishing the system is coordinated by a governmental body, usually national security council-type organizations.

Russia's hybrid warfare makes civilian and informational-psychological dimensions of total defense especially important. Conventional war in Ukraine illustrates that robust systems of civil protection, strategic communications, and cyber and societal resistance are the key factors to withstand the enemy coupled with military capabilities. Ukraine's pre-war planning and execution of the total defense system was the decisive factor in its success in the war with Russia. Georgia, especially since 2017, has taken significant steps to base the country's defense system on the principles of total defense. However, establishing the system is challenging in the absence of an overarching national policy. In this regard, all national-level strategic security conceptual documents are outdated and require updates.

MoD of Georgia thrives on compensating for this gap by adopting the concept in its agency-level documents and continuously introducing reforms necessary for total defense. But the single governmental agency's endeavors are not enough to establish the system. Case studies revealed that Georgia is moving in the right direction. However, the tempo and scope of developing necessary capabilities compared to the country's threats are significantly less than is needed. It should be noted that discussions on national defense arrangements have always been confined to small professional groups, while the war in Ukraine and its impact increased the interest in the issue and created a fruitful ground for the engagement of broader society. In an ideal situation, the MoD should take advantage and start communicating with society on pressing issues of national defense in order to get the necessary resources from the parliament. More importantly, civil society organizations and foreign donors should also include the topics such as civil defense and critical infrastructure protection in their working agenda.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Adoption and practical implementation of the total defense concept implies wide **public consensus**. Unfortunately, the government of Georgia and its institutions working on the introduction of the concept did not undertake significant efforts for awareness raising and popularization of this topic. It would be useful to open discussion on this topic within the expert community and beyond, especially in the light of the war in Ukraine. That will give added value to the MoD for more active and compelling solicitation to policymakers for the necessity and relevance of the total defense concept for Georgia.
- **The importance of Parliament:** In the majority of Nordic and Baltic states, which, like Georgia, are parliamentary republics, the parliament has a central role in the formation and implementation of total defense. Since defense and security are less ideologized spheres, strong consensus should be achieved on the long-lasting plans for defense among major political parties in the Georgian parliament. The parliamentary Committee on Defense and Security should take more active standing in the process of elaboration of the policy framework on total defense and, accordingly, the development of Georgia's defense model. Conducting a special committee hearing for detailed consideration of the total defense concept with the participation of the government institutions and the expert community would be beneficial for raising awareness and supporting the process of the development of a policy framework.
- **Coordinating authority:** Organizations such as the National Security Council play a central role in policy planning, coordination, execution, and readiness monitoring in explored jurisdictions. The Office of the National Security Council (ONSC), which handles daily coordination of national security policy planning and implementation on behalf of the Council, can serve as a mechanism for developing tailored cross-sectoral total defense policy document for Georgia. For this purpose, a permanent interagency working group should be established under the ONSC to explore international experience and adapt global expertise to Georgian reality.
- **Conceptual Framework:** It is important to develop and approve the National Defense Strategy (NDS) and National Defense Preparedness Plan (NDPP) in an interagency format and approved by the Prime Minister.
- **Financial issues:** Dedicated budgetary trust funds for cross-cutting issues that do not fall under the full purview of a particular ministry provide the necessary financial basis for the implementation of total defense activities. This experience of allocation of the funds should be taken into account during the elaboration of the policy framework.

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