

MILITARY DEFENSE AND INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION AS CORE ELEMENTS OF THE TOTAL DEFENSE CONCEPT IN GEORGIA

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Abstract. This doctoral dissertation examines the role of the **Total Defense** concept in ensuring Georgia's national security. The contemporary international security environment is characterized by diverse and complex threats, including conventional military aggression, hybrid warfare, cyber threats, disinformation, economic pressure, and other non-conventional challenges. These circumstances require states to develop new, integrated, and multidimensional approaches to security. The aim of this study is to analyze the theoretical foundations, historical development, key components, and practical implementation prospects of the Total Defense concept within the Georgian context. The dissertation discusses the significance of Classical Realism, Neorealism, Securitization Theory, Liberalism, Economic Security Theory, and Hybrid Warfare Theory in the formation and development of the Total Defense concept. Particular attention is paid to the interrelationship between military defense, civil engagement, international cooperation, and the economic, social, psychological, and cyber dimensions of defense. The research is based on historical-descriptive, comparative, content analysis, case study, SWOT analysis, and in-depth interview methods. The study demonstrates that the effective provision of Georgia's security cannot rely solely on military capabilities but requires coordinated cooperation among the state, society, the private sector, and international partners. The findings confirm that the Total Defense concept represents an important mechanism for strengthening Georgia's national security by enhancing national resilience, increasing adaptability to crises, and improving resistance to hybrid threats. The dissertation presents relevant recommendations aimed at improving the national security system and further strengthening Georgia's defense capabilities.

Keywords: Total Defense, National Security, Hybrid Warfare, Military Defense, Civil Defense, Securitization, Economic Security, Cyber Security, International Cooperation, Georgia.

Introduction. The contemporary international security environment is characterized by rapid changes and an increasing diversity of threats. While in the past the primary security challenge for states was mainly military aggression, in the 21st century it has been supplemented by hybrid warfare, cyberattacks, disinformation, economic pressure, terrorism, and other non-conventional threats. These processes have significantly transformed the traditional understanding of security and created the necessity for approaches that do not define a state's defense capability solely through military means. In this context, the concept of "Total Defense" has gained particular importance, as it considers the provision of national security as the result of joint efforts by the state, society, economy, and international partners. This model is based on the idea that the security of a country is not solely the responsibility of the defense forces; rather, civil society, the private

sector, state institutions, and individual citizens also play an important role in this process. For Georgia, considering its geopolitical location and existing security challenges, the concept of Total Defense has become particularly relevant. The military, political, economic, and informational threats facing the country require the effective mobilization and coordinated use of national resources. At the same time, under conditions of modern hybrid threats, strengthening societal resilience, crisis preparedness, and national unity has become increasingly important. The present study aims to analyze the theoretical foundations of the Total Defense concept, its main components, and its significance within Georgia's national security system. The research examines the major theories of international relations and security studies, as well as the role of military, civilian, economic, psychological, and digital defense in ensuring national security. The paper also evaluates the practical significance of the Total Defense concept and its potential for strengthening Georgia's national resilience and defense capabilities.

Literature Review. The study of the concept of "Total Defense" is based on numerous theoretical and practical works developed within the fields of international relations, security studies, and military science. The transformation of the contemporary security environment and the growing prevalence of hybrid threats have significantly increased interest in models that approach state security in a comprehensive manner and integrate military, civilian, economic, and informational resources into a unified system. In the theoretical understanding of the Total Defense concept, an important role is played by representatives of classical realism, particularly the works of Hans Morgenthau and Niccolò Machiavelli, who emphasize the importance of state security and power. According to realism, the international system is anarchic, which forces states to continuously develop their defense capabilities in order to ensure their own security. Representatives of neorealism, including Kenneth Waltz, Robert Jervis, and Stephen Van Evera, place particular emphasis on the importance of the balance of power and deterrence policies. According to their perspective, effective defensive capabilities represent one of the main instruments for preventing aggression. In contemporary security studies, an important place is occupied by the Securitization Theory developed by Barry Buzan, Ole Wæver, and Jaap de Wilde. This theory explains how a particular issue becomes transformed into a national security problem and how state resources are mobilized in response to it. This approach is particularly important for analyzing the concept of Total Defense. A significant contribution to the development of Hybrid Warfare Theory was made by Frank G. Hoffman. His works describe a form of modern conflict in which traditional military operations are combined with cyberattacks, information operations, economic pressure, and other non-conventional methods. The growing nature of hybrid threats has directly contributed to the increased relevance of the Total Defense model. In the study of Georgia's security issues, significant attention is given to the works of Georgian researchers, including Vakhtang Maisaia, Guguli Maghradze, Korneli Kakachia, and Nika Chitadze, as well as other authors who examine issues related to national security, regional stability, and the development of defense policy. Their studies provide an important foundation for understanding and evaluating the concept of Total Defense within the Georgian context. The analysis of these academic works and theoretical approaches demonstrates that ensuring state resilience and defense capability in the contemporary security environment requires a comprehensive and multidimensional approach. The concept of Total Defense provides the most effective framework for addressing these challenges.

Methodology. The present study is based on a qualitative research methodology and aims to examine the theoretical and practical aspects of the concept of "Total Defence" within the context of Georgia's national security. The research employs several complementary methods, which ensure a comprehensive analysis of the issue and the formulation of objective conclusions. The main research method is the historical-descriptive method, through which the historical prerequisites for the formation of the Total Defence concept, the stages of its development, and the experiences of different states are analyzed. This method

enables the assessment of the evolution of the concept and its significance within the contemporary security environment. The study also applies the content analysis method, which is used to examine international and Georgian academic literature, state strategic documents, security concepts, research studies, and expert assessments.¹ The analysis of these materials makes it possible to identify the theoretical foundations and practical significance of the Total Defence concept. An important component of the research is the case study method, which is applied to analyze the experiences of different countries. This approach allows for the evaluation of the practical outcomes of the Total Defence model and the assessment of its applicability within the Georgian context. The study also employs the SWOT analysis method, through which the strengths and weaknesses, opportunities, and challenges of the Total Defence concept are assessed in relation to Georgia's security environment. This method contributes to a comprehensive evaluation of the current situation and supports the development of relevant recommendations. The research further incorporates elements of comparative analysis, which enables the comparison of different theoretical approaches and practical experiences. This methodological framework ensures the reliability, objectivity, and academic value of the research, which are essential for a comprehensive analysis and evaluation of the Total Defence concept.²

Theoretical Framework. The theoretical foundation of the present study is based on the major theories developed within the fields of international relations and security studies, which enable the analysis of the essence, significance, and practical role of the concept of "Total Defence." The theoretical framework of the research is based on the theories of classical realism, neorealism, securitization, and hybrid warfare, which provide different yet complementary perspectives for explaining contemporary security challenges.

According to classical realism, the international system represents a sphere of continuous competition and struggle for power. This theory emphasizes the state as the primary actor in international relations and highlights the necessity of ensuring national security. Within this approach, the concept of Total Defence is considered a means through which a state can maximize the mobilization of its resources in order to protect national interests and sovereignty.³

Neorealism places particular emphasis on the anarchic nature of the international system and the importance of the balance of power. According to this theory, states seek to ensure their security by strengthening their capabilities and developing effective defence mechanisms. The concept of Total Defence corresponds to this approach, as it is aimed at enhancing state resilience and defence capabilities.⁴

The theory of securitization occupies an important place within the theoretical framework of the research and was developed by representatives of the Copenhagen School — Barry Buzan, Ole Wæver, and Jaap de Wilde. This theory explains how specific issues are transferred into the security domain and perceived as existential threats.⁵ The securitization approach is particularly relevant to the concept of Total Defence, as it provides the basis for mobilizing society, state institutions, and resources in order to achieve common security objectives. Furthermore, the research draws upon the theory of hybrid warfare, which reflects the multidimensional nature of contemporary conflicts. Hybrid warfare combines military, informational, cyber, economic, and political instruments, making the threats faced by states increasingly complex. This theory is particularly significant for the Total Defence model, as effectively responding to modern hybrid threats cannot be achieved through military capabilities alone and requires a unified effort by both the state and

¹ Kakachia, Kornely. 2018. *Georgia's Security Challenges and Foreign Policy Priorities*. Tbilisi: Georgian Institute of Politics.

² Buzan, Barry, Ole Wæver, and Jaap de Wilde. 1998. *Security: A New Framework for Analysis*. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers.

³ Waltz, Kenneth N. 1979. *Theory of International Politics*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.

⁴ Van Evera, Stephen. 1999. *Causes of War: Power and the Roots of Conflict*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

⁵ Buzan, Barry, Ole Wæver, and Jaap de Wilde. 1998. *Security: A New Framework for Analysis*. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers.

society. Therefore, the presented theoretical framework establishes a conceptual foundation through which it becomes possible to conduct an in-depth analysis of the significance of the Total Defence concept, its key components, and its role within Georgia's national security system.

Military Defence as the Most Important Component of Total Defence. Within the concept of Total Defence, military defence represents one of the fundamental and core components. Its primary purpose is to protect the state's sovereignty, territorial integrity, and national interests from external threats. In the contemporary security environment, armed forces not only constitute the first line of national defence but also play an important role in crisis management, the implementation of deterrence policies, and the effective functioning of the overall national security system. The effectiveness of military defence depends on the professionalism of the armed forces, their equipment with modern technologies, combat readiness, and rapid response capabilities. At the same time, particular importance is attached to the development of the reserve system, military education, and international cooperation in the field of defence. Within the framework of Total Defence, the military component closely cooperates with state institutions, the civilian sector, and society, which represents an important prerequisite for strengthening the country's defence capabilities and resilience.⁶ For Georgia, given the existing security challenges, strengthening military defence remains one of the primary directions of national security policy. Strong, modern, and effective defence forces represent the foundation upon which the entire Total Defence system is built.

International Cooperation as an Important Component of Total Defence. Within the concept of Total Defence, international cooperation represents one of the important components, as in the contemporary security environment states face numerous threats that are difficult to overcome solely through national resources. Cooperation with international partners contributes to strengthening defence capabilities, sharing experience, introducing modern standards, and developing effective mechanisms for responding to crises. International cooperation includes the deepening of partnerships in the military, political, economic, and security fields. Particular importance is placed on cooperation with international organizations, joint exercises, the exchange of defence-related experience, and coordinated actions on security issues. These processes contribute to increasing state resilience and developing the national security system.⁷ For Georgia, international cooperation holds particular significance, as the country's security environment is connected with both regional and global challenges. The support of international partners, the exchange of experience, and cooperation based on common security interests play an important role in strengthening the country's defence capabilities and security. Accordingly, international cooperation represents an integral part of the Total Defence system and creates additional opportunities.⁸

Conclusion. Conclusion The research has demonstrated that in the contemporary security environment, the threats facing states are multidimensional and complex in nature, which requires a reconsideration of traditional approaches to ensuring security. The concept of "Total Defence" represents an effective model that integrates military, civilian, economic, psychological, and digital components in order to strengthen national security. The findings of the study indicate that ensuring Georgia's effective security cannot be achieved solely through reliance on military capabilities and requires coordinated cooperation between the state, society, the private sector, and international partners. Particular importance is attached to strengthening military defence, increasing public involvement, and developing international cooperation.

⁶ Clausewitz, Carl von. 1976. *On War*. Edited and translated by Michael Howard and Peter Paret. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

⁷ Cohen, Richard. 2001. *Cooperative Security: From Individual Security to International Stability*. Garmisch-Partenkirchen: George C. Marshall European Center for Security Studies.

⁸ Chitadze, Nika. 2022. *National Security of Georgia and Contemporary International Relations*. Tbilisi: Universal Publishing House.

Therefore, the development of the Total Defence concept and the effective integration of its components will significantly contribute to the further strengthening of Georgia's national security, resilience, and defence capabilities in the face of contemporary challenges.³⁰

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³⁰ Republic of Georgia. 2021. *National Defense Strategy of Georgia 2021–2025*. Tbilisi: Ministry of Defence of Georgia.