

August 2008 and Everything After

A Ten-Year Retrospective on the Russia-Georgia War

The 2008 war between Russia and Georgia shocked most of the world but was quickly overshadowed by other events. The 2008 financial crisis, which began around the same time, seized the attention of governments as they tried to prevent a global economic meltdown. Barack Obama's election to the U.S. presidency in November of that year ushered in a "reset" in U.S.-Russian relations, and the U.S. began looking for pragmatic ways to cooperate with Russia. Even Georgia seemed to move on from the war quickly: its political and economic reform processes continued and even accelerated in the years after the war.

But the **ten years since the war have brought more ominous consequences into view.** The continued presence of thousands of Russian troops inside Georgia's borders have degraded its always-tenuous security situation and taken a psychological toll on its people. And Russia's 2014 seizure of Crimea and military intervention in eastern Ukraine have made clear that—far from being an isolated event—Russia's 2008 intervention in Georgia marked the beginning of a sustained and serious Russian challenge to the U.S.-led global order.

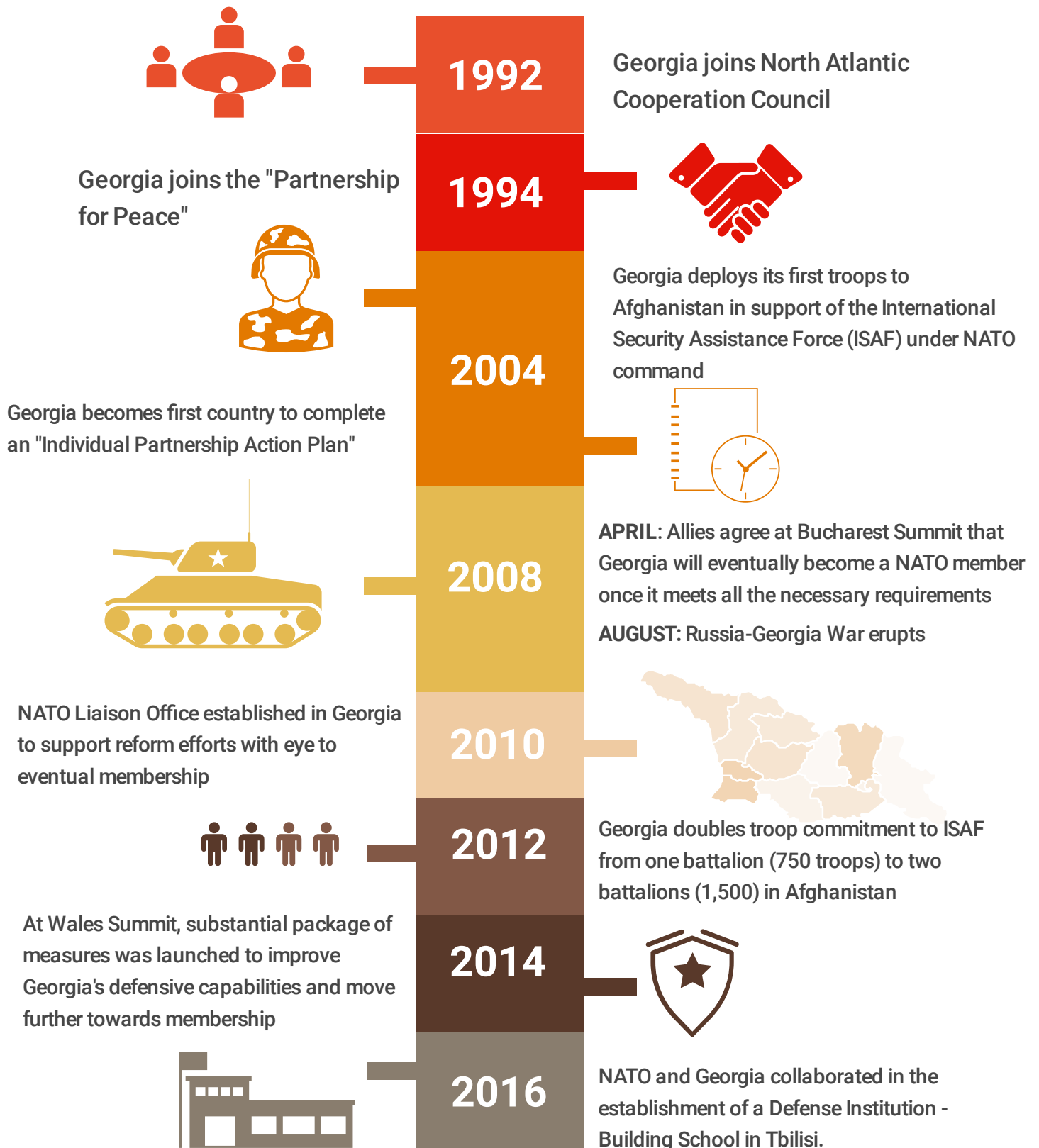
KEY INSIGHTS

- Only with the perspective offered by the ten years since the war is it possible to see it as the first step in Russia's campaign to disrupt and overturn the rules-based global order and replace it with an order led not by rules and principles, but by a concert of great military and economic powers.
- Although Georgia recovered from the 2008 conflict quickly in most areas, and Western states and institutions hastened to return to business as usual with Russia, the latter continued to nurse grudges and seek opportunities to express them.
- With assistance from Western partners, Georgia has made meaningful strides in its capability to defend itself. Unfortunately, Russia's offensive military capabilities have also advanced in the past decade, and Russia's stronger military position in the South Caucasus gives it advantages that it lacked in 2008.



NATO - Georgia Cooperation

The Georgian government understands that NATO membership is not in the cards in the near future, but it - at least officially - is optimistic about its future prospects.



1992

Georgia joins North Atlantic Cooperation Council

Georgia joins the "Partnership for Peace"

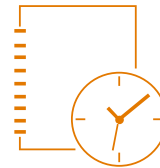
1994



2004

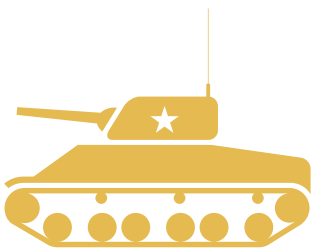
Georgia deploys its first troops to Afghanistan in support of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) under NATO command

Georgia becomes first country to complete an "Individual Partnership Action Plan"



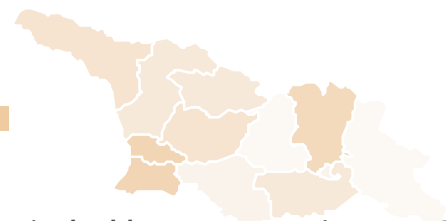
2008

APRIL: Allies agree at Bucharest Summit that Georgia will eventually become a NATO member once it meets all the necessary requirements
AUGUST: Russia-Georgia War erupts



NATO Liaison Office established in Georgia to support reform efforts with eye to eventual membership

2010



2012

Georgia doubles troop commitment to ISAF from one battalion (750 troops) to two battalions (1,500) in Afghanistan

At Wales Summit, substantial package of measures was launched to improve Georgia's defensive capabilities and move further towards membership

2014



2016

NATO and Georgia collaborated in the establishment of a Defense Institution - Building School in Tbilisi.