

Navigating the Complexities of Civil-Military Relations: A Preface to Cohen's 'Supreme Command' in Georgian Context

The preface for the translation of Cohen's "Supreme Command" into Georgian aims to shed light on the intricate dynamics of civil-military relations within the context of Georgia. Our intention is to foster a deeper understanding of military strategy and encourage constructive dialogue between civilian and military stakeholders.

In examining the historical backdrop of Georgian military thinking, it becomes evident that a fundamental lack of strategic vision and a deficit in the culture of civil-military relations persist. These challenges, rooted in Georgia's Soviet past, continue to shape the nation's approach to defense and security. Regrettably, three decades of independence have not yielded satisfactory progress in this regard. Instead, Georgian civil-military relations remain ensnared in a problematic cycle of uncertainty and ambiguity.

Within professional circles, there exists a prevailing notion regarding the necessity of civilian oversight of military structures. However, both the political spectrum and the military elite often struggle to delineate the boundaries between political and military domains. This institutional uncertainty is particularly pronounced in a nation confronted with the realities of active conflict.

The essence of the problem lies in the perception—or lack thereof—of civil-military relations within Georgian society. Rather than grounded in an analysis of our unique reality, culture, and historical practices, these relations are often dictated by superficial, fashionable phrases and slogans. As a result, fundamental questions regarding the roles and responsibilities of key figures in times of war remain unanswered.

Furthermore, there exists a pervasive belief that the chief criterion for military leadership is solely professional competence, divorced from considerations of loyalty to governmental policies. However, in the tumult of warfare, such assumptions can prove perilous, especially if they engender distrust between political and military spheres.

The path forward necessitates a candid examination of our existing realities and a concerted effort to transcend superficial rhetoric. We must confront the legacy of military uprisings and political apprehension that has plagued Georgian history. Only through robust education, historical analysis, and a commitment to transparency can we forge healthy and effective civil-military relations.

Cohen's "Supreme Command" offers invaluable insights into the complexities of military-civilian relations, drawing upon the experiences of influential leaders throughout history. While the book may not directly address the Georgian experience, its principles and analyses remain pertinent to our context.

As we embark on this journey of exploration and reflection, let us not shy away from the difficult questions that lie ahead. By confronting our realities with courage and clarity, we pave the way for a more resilient and secure future.