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## The Guns of August 2008

*Russia's War in Georgia*

Edited by Svante E. Cornell & S. Frederick Starr

Central Asia-Caucasus Institute & Silk Road Studies Program Joint Center, Washington, DC/Stockholm

In the summer of 2008, a conflict that appeared to have begun in the breakaway Georgian territory of South Ossetia rapidly escalated to become the most significant crisis in European security in a decade. The implications of the Russian-Georgian war will be understood differently depending on one's narrative of what transpired and perspective on the broader context.

This book is designed to present the facts about the events of August 2008 along with comprehensive coverage of the background to those events. It brings together a wealth of expertise on the South Caucasus and Russian foreign policy, with contributions by Russian, Georgian, European, and American experts on the region.

### *Selected Contents:*

1. Introduction, *Svante E. Cornell and S. Frederick Starr*
2. The Paradox of Living in Paradise: Georgia's Descent into Chaos, *Thomas Goltz*
3. Georgian-Russian Relations in the 1990s, *Thornike Gordadze*
4. The Russian Leadership's Preparation for War, 1999-2008, *Andrei Illarionov*
5. Georgia's Rose Revolution: The Break with the Past, *Niklas Nilsson*
6. From Neglect to Duress: The West and the Georgian Crisis Before the 2008 War, *Stephen Blank*
7. The Saakashvili Administration's Reaction to Russian Policies Before the 2008 War, *David Smith*
8. From Sukhumi to Tskhinvali: The Path to War in Georgia, *Johanna Popjanevski*
9. After August 7: The Escalation of the Russia-Georgia War, *Pavel Felgenhauer*
10. Defining Victory and Defeat: The Information War Between Russia and Georgia, *Paul Goble*
11. The External Implications of the Russia-Georgia War, *James Sherr*

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“This is an important work that places the Russian invasion of Georgia into the larger context of Russian policy since the demise of the Soviet Union. It deserves wide readership among policymakers, specialists, and all those who seek to understand the background, conduct and consequences of the war Russia chose to wage against its small, democratic neighbor in August 2008.”  
— **John McCain, U.S. Senator**

“This commendable volume brings together a group of leading specialists on the Southern Caucasus and Russia's role therein. The results are superb. The book is essential reading for those who want an easy way to get a clear and balanced understanding of the Georgian crisis of 2008 and its legacies.”

— **S. Neil MacFarlane, Oxford University**

“This volume is an important contribution to the understanding of one of the most dangerous episodes of the protracted ending of the Cold War. The analyses by some of the foremost Western and Russian experts hold lessons for policymakers everywhere. The contributions will be useful for the European Union in meeting the multiple challenges of overcoming the consequences of the war, preventing confrontation in the future, and building closer ties with the region.” —**Peter Semneby, EU Special Representative for the South Caucasus**

“The co-editors have assembled a first-rate collection of essays shedding light on the factors underlying the Russo-Georgian war of August 2008. The war itself and its political aftermath are also discussed in illuminating fashion.”  
— **John B. Dunlop, Senior Fellow, The Hoover Institution**

“*The Guns of August 2008* offers a deep analysis of the Russian-Georgian war of August 2008 and the developments which preceded and underlay it. The book helpfully corrects an erroneous urban legend that Georgia started the war. In July 2008, Russia’s military conducted a full field exercise of an invasion and then launched the real thing. It leads to the disturbing conclusions that Russia may go beyond Georgia to subdue other neighbors, and that it may again use force against Georgia.”

—**William H. Courtney, Former U.S. Ambassador to Georgia**

**HARDCOVER INFORMATION**

ISBN: 978-0-7656-2507-6  
Price: \$68.95  
Series: Studies of Central Asia and the Caucasus  
Pages: 304  
Includes: Maps, photographs, index  
Pub. Date: June 2009

**PAPERBACK INFORMATION**

ISBN: 978-0-7656-2508-3  
Price: \$24.95

M.E. Sharpe INC., 80 Business Park Drive, Armonk, NY 10504, USA  
Tel: (800) 541-6563 or (914) 273-1800; Fax: (914) 273-2106  
Website: [www.mesharpe.com](http://www.mesharpe.com) • Contact our Sales Manager at ext. 148