On My Mind: The Case For Free Trade Agreement with Georgia

By “Coach Vance” Trefethen

***Resolved: The United States Federal Government should significantly reform its import and/or export policy within the bounds of international trade***

This case has the U.S. offer a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) to the east European nation of Georgia. In Status Quo, we do not yet have such an agreement with Georgia, but a number of experts believe we should offer them an FTA and that they would accept if we did. The Plan does not fiat that Georgia accepts it, since AFF has no power to make that happen, but instead AFF evidence says they would accept it if we offered it, which accomplishes the solvency of the plan.

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On My Mind: Georgia FTA

The former Soviet republic of Georgia is on the front lines of confrontation with Putin’s Russia. Today’s turbulent era is a perfect time for the U.S. to establish a closer relationship with Georgia, and that’s why my partner and I are affirming that The United States Federal Government should significantly reform its import and/or export policy within the bounds of international trade

OBSERVATION 1. DEFINITIONS

Significant

Merriam Webster Online Dictionary copyright 2022. <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/significant> (accessed 10 May 2022)

2a**:**having or likely to have [influence](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/influence#h1) or effect **:**[IMPORTANT](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/important)

Policy

Merriam Webster Online Dictionary copyright 2022. <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/policy> (accessed 10 May 2022)

a high-level overall plan embracing the general goals and acceptable procedures especially of a governmental body

FTA – Free Trade Agreement

Adam Barone 2020 (journalist) 29 Jan 2020 INVESTOPEDIA “Free Trade Agreement (FTA)” <https://www.investopedia.com/terms/f/free-trade.asp> (accessed 31 May 2022)

A free trade agreement is a pact between two or more nations to reduce barriers to imports and exports among them. Under a free trade policy, goods and services can be bought and sold across international borders with little or no government tariffs, quotas, subsidies, or prohibitions to inhibit their exchange.

OBSERVATION 2. INHERENCY, or the conditions of the Status Quo. One simple fact:

More free trade needed

Tori Smith 2020 (Jay Van Andel Trade Economist in the Thomas A. Roe Institute for Economic Policy Studies, of the Institute for Economic Freedom, at The Heritage Foundation ) “A Free Trade Guide for the Next Administration and the 117th Congress” 2 Nov 2020 <https://www.heritage.org/sites/default/files/2020-11/IB6024.pdf> (accessed 31 May 2022)

The U.S. has been slow in recent years to sign new free trade agreements, meanwhile the European Union, Japan, and other major countries have been rapidly implementing new agreements. [**END QUOTE**] For example, since 2017, Japan has entered into two major trade agreements: the Comprehensive and Progressive Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) and the Japan–EU Economic Partnership Agreement. This means that Americans have more restricted trade with Japan than do the EU and countries in the CPTPP. The U.S. did sign a small agreement with Japan in 2019, but the benefits of that agreement for the country are limited. A comprehensive trade agreement would result in even freer trade between the American and Japanese people. Mexico has broader trade relations than the U.S. through 13 trade agreements with 50 countries . [**THEY CONTINUE LATER IN THE CONTEXT QUOTE:]** The U.S. should be aggressively seeking out new trade agreement partners, especially countries that share the values of rule of law and free markets. The U.S. should pursue full-scale trade agreements with Switzerland, Georgia, Taiwan, and India.

OBSERVATION 3. The Plan, implemented by Congress, the President and any necessary federal agencies

1. The US Secretary of State offers the nation of Georgia a Free Trade Agreement, and upon completion the President and Congress will approve it.

2. Enforcement through existing trade enforcement agencies as currently used for all other Free Trade Agreements.

3. Funding from existing budgets of existing agencies and general federal revenues as currently done for all other US Free Trade Agreements.

4. Plan takes effect 30 days after an Affirmative ballot.

5. All Affirmative speeches may clarify.

OBSERVATION 4. SOLVENCY

Georgia would welcome FTA and we should offer it

[Brock Bierman](https://www.gmfus.org/find-experts/brock-bierman)*2022 (visiting fellow for Democracy Initiatives at the German Marshall Fund of the United States. Prior to that, he served as the assistant administrator for USAID’s Bureau for Europe and Eurasia) 9 Mar 2022 “*Give Georgia a free trade agreement” <https://thehill.com/opinion/international/597468-give-georgia-a-free-trade-agreement/> *(accessed 31 May 2022)*

The U.S. needs to think about countering Putin as a matter of economic policy, not just as much as a matter of security policy. Of the countries currently under Russian pressure, Georgia is low-hanging fruit for the U.S. to make an immediate positive impact. In short, Georgians want an FTA, it’s a win-win for us all, and we should give it to them. After all, it’s in our best interest.

OBSERVATION 5. ADVANTAGES

ADVANTAGE 1. Economic growth

A. The Link: Easier access to 2 billion consumers, and 20% increase in US exports

Kenneth Rapoza 2020 (business journalist) 5 Mar 2020 FORBES “Why Does Everyone Suddenly Want A Free Trade Deal With Georgia?” <https://www.forbes.com/sites/kenrapoza/2020/03/05/why-does-everyone-suddenly-want-a-free-trade-deal-with-georgia/?sh=c9396a350e64> (accessed 31 May 2022)

A Georgia FTA was viewed as both a shrewd political and commercial move to bolster security and American business opportunities. “Under President Trump, we saw an opportunity to further align Georgia’s economy with that of our main strategic partner through a trade deal,” says Giorgi Tsikolia, the Deputy Chief of Mission at the Embassy of Georgia and the country’s No. 2 man in Washington. He says the trade deal benefits businesses in both countries and give American companies easier access to 8 landlocked countries in Eurasia with a consumer market of roughly 2 billion people. A study by PwC published in May 2018 says U.S. exports to Georgia would grow by around 20% over three years if there was such a deal. Total goods traded between the two countries is $515 million higher in 2023 with a free trade deal, with the largest impact being in favor of U.S. exports, according to PwC.

B. The Impact: More high paying jobs

Bruce Katz and Emilia Istrate 2011. (Katz – VP and Director, Brookings Institution. Istrate – Senior Research Analyst, Brookings Institution) Jan 2011 “Boosting Exports, Delivering Jobs and Economic Growth” <https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/0126_exports_katz_istrate.pdf> (accessed 31 May 2022)

More exports mean more and better paid jobs across the United States. In 2008, between 10.3 million and 11.8 million jobs were supported by exports in the United States. Wages were roughly 11 percent higher for exporting manufacturing companies in the early 1990s, for both production and non-production workers. Leading export industries, such as freight services in Memphis or transportation equipment manufacturing in Detroit, paid better than the national average salary in 2008.

ADVANTAGE 2. Improved US supply chain

A. The Link: Improved Supply Chain. Georgia FTA would improve the US supply chain

[Brock Bierman](https://www.gmfus.org/find-experts/brock-bierman)*2022 (visiting fellow for Democracy Initiatives at the German Marshall Fund of the United States. Prior to that, he served as the assistant administrator for USAID’s Bureau for Europe and Eurasia) 9 Mar 2022 “*Give Georgia a free trade agreement” <https://thehill.com/opinion/international/597468-give-georgia-a-free-trade-agreement/> *(accessed 31 May 2022)*

In addition to helping Georgia, U.S. companies would benefit from an FTA with Georgia as well. One global lesson learned from the COVID-19 pandemic is the vulnerability of global supply chains to significant disruption. Companies have an interest in shortening the supply chain they need to bring products to European markets. Georgia, with a flexible labor code, competitive operational costs, and a permissive environment for foreign investment is an attractive option for foreign investment in supply chains.

B. The Impact: Economic Security. Now is the critical time to protect the economy by diversifying the foreign supply chain

Daniel Runde and Sundar Ramanujam 2020 (Runde - Senior Vice President; William A. Schreyer Chair; Director, Project on Prosperity and Development; and Director, Americas Program. Ramanujam - Research Associate, Project on Prosperity and Development) 10 Sept 2020 Recovery with Resilience: Diversifying Supply Chains to Reduce Risk in the Global Economy <https://www.csis.org/analysis/recovery-resilience-diversifying-supply-chains-reduce-risk-global-economy> (accessed 1 June 2022)

The United States, as with most countries around the world, painfully acknowledged its vulnerabilities caused by an overreliance on China in the early days of the Covid-19 pandemic. It is woefully dependent on a foreign political power to access data and perform oversight functions on a significant portion of the supply chain management systems. Similar to the PPE sector, the U.S. economy has supply chain-related vulnerabilities in other strategic sectors, including the semiconductors, communications, and technology sectors. Timely policy action is therefore necessary to preserve these sensitive sectors from exogenous supply shocks.

ADVANTAGE 3. Freedom & Democracy. Geopolitical influence for freedom & democracy

A. The Link: Now is the time to strengthen Georgia against the Russian threat

Thomas DeWaal 2022 (senior fellow with Carnegie Europe, specializing in Eastern Europe and the Caucasus region) “WHY GEORGIA AND MOLDOVA NEED TO BE WORRIED” 25 Feb 2022 <https://carnegieeurope.eu/strategiceurope/86525> (accessed 1 June 2022)

The worst nightmare scenario has now come to pass, so it would be foolish to forecast his intentions toward other neighbors. For that reason, pro-Western Georgia and Moldova should definitely be worried. Objectively, there are reasons to say that they are less threatened. Moldova is much smaller than Ukraine and far less significant to Moscow. It does not share a land border with Russia, and even the pro-Russian territory of Transdniestria wants normal peaceful relations with Chișinău and the EU. Georgia is the most post-Soviet of these countries, even more united in its rejection of Russia than is Ukraine. Moscow has literally no political or ethnic group to claim to be fighting for outside the territories of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, which it already controls. Besides, Russia now has its hands full with Ukraine for a very long time. But all bets are off now. Even if the unchained militaristic Putin of today does not necessarily seek war in these two countries (or not yet), he may have some scary ideas about regime change—ideas that their European friends should be seeking to prevent right now.

B. The Answer: Agreeing to Georgia’s request for an FTA would help resist authoritarianism in eastern Europe

Prof. James Bacchus 2019 (Professor of Global Affairs at Univ. of Central Florida and an Adjunct Scholar at the Cato Institute; former member of the Congress, former chairman of the Appellate Body of the World Trade Organization) 8 Nov 2019 “Time for a US-Georgia free trade pact” FINANCIAL TIMES <https://www.ft.com/content/f1e18bf2-8cab-4240-8ef3-9a3760d4c34d> (accessed 31 May 2022)

Strategically, commercially and, not least, morally, responding now to Georgia’s oft-stated desire for the launch of negotiations on an FTA makes sound sense for the US. Not only would it cement our ties with Georgia. It would also reassure other countries in the region that, despite recent events, the US continues to offer an alternative to acquiescence to the authoritarian regimes that surround and threaten them.

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2A Evidence: Georgia FTA

Georgia is part of Europe: Pres. Saakashvili and consensus of its population agree

Joshua Kucera 2017 (journalist) 30 Jan 2017 “Where Europe Begins, or Where It Ends?” SLATE <https://slate.com/news-and-politics/2017/01/georgia-insists-that-its-a-european-country-what-does-that-really-mean.html> (accessed 12 June 2022)

Since the rise to power of pro-Western strongman Mikheil Saakashvili in 2004 this has become the only politically correct answer: Georgia is Europe. “We are not only old Europeans, we are the very first Europeans, and therefore Georgia holds [a] special place in European civilization,” Saakashvili said in his inauguration speech. Saakashvili is now gone, defeated in 2012 and exiled to Ukraine, but this legacy of his has endured, and now it is a consensus across partisan divides that Georgia is European.

NATO agrees: NATO charter says they can only invite European countries, and they are in process of inviting Georgia

Joshua Kucera 2017 (journalist) 30 Jan 2017 “Where Europe Begins, or Where It Ends?” SLATE <https://slate.com/news-and-politics/2017/01/georgia-insists-that-its-a-european-country-what-does-that-really-mean.html> (accessed 12 June 2022) (brackets added)

 “During discussions some were saying, we should stop expansion, maybe for 10 years or so,” he [Archil Gverdtsiteli, a retired military officer] says. But Article 10 of NATO’s founding treaty, reaffirmed repeatedly since then, stipulated that “any other European State” is eligible to join, provided that they are able “to contribute to the security of the North Atlantic area.” And since the year before, alliance members had pledged that Georgia would someday be a NATO member, “that means they are counting Georgia as a European country.”

INHERENCY

Countries Georgia currently has FTA with:

US Dept of Commerce, International Trade Administration 2021. “Georgia - Country Commercial Guide” 3 Oct 2021 <https://www.trade.gov/country-commercial-guides/georgia-trade-agreements> (accessed 31 May 2022)

 Georgia has free trade regimes with countries of Commonwealth of Independent States and Turkey.  In June 2014, Georgia signed an Association Agreement and a Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area with the EU.  Georgia signed a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) with China in 2017, and in 2018, it signed an FTA with Hong Kong.

A/T “SQ already increasing trade” –FTA is essential pre-requisite to significant trade improvements

Wilder Alejandro Sanchez 2022 (journalist; researcher;  regular contributor for Jane's Defence Weekly, Providence Magazine, and the Center for International Maritime Security, among other publications. His analyses have appeared in numerous refereed journals including Small Wars and Insurgencies, Defence Studies, the Journal of Slavic Military Studies) 20 Jan 2022 “US-Georgia Economic Relations: Time for an FTA?” <https://www.geopoliticalmonitor.com/us-georgia-economic-relations-time-for-an-fta/> (accessed 31 May 2022)

A late 2021 letter by several members of the [United States Congress](https://georgiaembassyusa.org/2021/12/15/members-of-congress-call-for-free-trade-agreement-with-georgia-in-letter-to-us-trade-representative/) requests the U.S. Trade Representative, Ambassador Katherine Tie, to increase commerce and investment with Georgia. While more significant trade will not alter the complicated dynamics of the Caucasus, at a bilateral level, strengthening this sector is essential for Washington-Tbilisi relations and will have obvious positive repercussions on the Georgian economy. Signing a Free Trade Agreement between the two countries is a necessary first step for this process to occur.

A/T “SQ has lots of US/Georgia trade” – Not really. Lots of room for growth in US/Georgia trade

Wilder Alejandro Sanchez 2022 (journalist; researcher;  regular contributor for Jane's Defence Weekly, Providence Magazine, and the Center for International Maritime Security, among other publications. His analyses have appeared in numerous refereed journals including Small Wars and Insurgencies, Defence Studies, the Journal of Slavic Military Studies) 20 Jan 2022 “US-Georgia Economic Relations: Time for an FTA?” <https://www.geopoliticalmonitor.com/us-georgia-economic-relations-time-for-an-fta/> (accessed 31 May 2022)

Without a doubt, there is plenty of space to grow as nowadays [trade](https://www.census.gov/foreign-trade/balance/c4633.html) between Washington and Tbilisi is not particularly strong. According to U.S. government figures, trade reached USD587.7 million in U.S. exports and USD158.7 million in imports in 2021. The amount is slightly more than in 2020 when exports reached USD436 million, and imports were USD148.8 million.

Status Quo won’t get FTA with Georgia even though there’s lots of advocacy

Wilder Alejandro Sanchez 2022 (journalist; researcher;  regular contributor for Jane's Defence Weekly, Providence Magazine, and the Center for International Maritime Security, among other publications. His analyses have appeared in numerous refereed journals including Small Wars and Insurgencies, Defence Studies, the Journal of Slavic Military Studies) 20 Jan 2022 “US-Georgia Economic Relations: Time for an FTA?” <https://www.geopoliticalmonitor.com/us-georgia-economic-relations-time-for-an-fta/> (accessed 31 May 2022)

A legal framework between the two nations to improve trade and investments includes the US-Georgia Trade and Investment Framework Agreement and a Bilateral Investment Treaty (BIT). Nevertheless, as the letter states, Washington does not have a free trade agreement (FTA) with Tbilisi. On the issue of the FTA, a June 2021 report by the U.S. [Congressional Research Service](https://sgp.fas.org/crs/row/R45307.pdf) explains, “since 2012, the United States and Georgia periodically have discussed the possibility of a free-trade agreement. The Georgia Support Act (H.R. 923), if enacted, would express the sense of Congress that ‘the United States Trade Representative should make progress toward negotiations with Georgia’ on a free trade agreement.” However, at the time of this writing, there is no indication that an FTA will be signed during U.S. President Joe Biden’s term in office.

SOLVENCY / ADVOCACY

The US should offer an FTA to Georgia because it would be welcomed, easy to accomplish, and beneficial

[Brock Bierman](https://www.gmfus.org/find-experts/brock-bierman)*2022 (visiting fellow for Democracy Initiatives at the German Marshall Fund of the United States. Prior to that, he served as the assistant administrator for USAID’s Bureau for Europe and Eurasia) 9 Mar 2022 “*Give Georgia a free trade agreement” <https://thehill.com/opinion/international/597468-give-georgia-a-free-trade-agreement/> *(accessed 31 May 2022)*

The majority of Georgians support deeper integration with the West. This was clear from every Georgian I’ve spoken with. But given the current crisis in Ukraine, now is the exact time for the U.S. to take a specific concrete action that will help Georgia build a stronger economy: establish a bilateral free trade agreement (FTA). **[END QUOTE]** An FTA is a legal agreement aimed at expanding business opportunities between two or more states. FTAs typically focus on reducing tariffs and duties that the cooperating countries place in imports and exports, as well as establishing mutually agreed upon rules for things like investment, intellectual property, and government procurement. [**HE CONTINUES LATER IN THE CONTEXT QUOTE**:] Bilateral FTAs (agreements between two states) are always easier and can be decided upon quickly. In the case of Georgia, an FTA is an easy solution the Biden administration could take action on now — and one that would have immediate and long-lasting impact for Georgia.

Georgia FTA would not be hard to do and would strengthen US-Georgia trade relationship

Alexis Mrachek 2020 (policy analyst for Russia & Eurasia at Heritage Foundation) 31 Jan 2020 “Top Five Priorities for the U.S.–Georgian Relationship in 2020” <https://www.heritage.org/global-politics/report/top-five-priorities-the-us-georgian-relationship-2020> (accessed 31 May 2022)

Creating an FTA between Georgia and the U.S. would not be starting from scratch. A high-level trade dialogue already exists, in addition to a bilateral investment treaty and a bilateral trade and investment framework agreement.  An FTA would only strengthen the already strong U.S.–Georgia trade relationship.

Georgian government and business community want FTA with U.S.

Wilder Alejandro Sanchez 2022 (journalist; researcher;  regular contributor for Jane's Defence Weekly, Providence Magazine, and the Center for International Maritime Security, among other publications. His analyses have appeared in numerous refereed journals including Small Wars and Insurgencies, Defence Studies, the Journal of Slavic Military Studies) 20 Jan 2022 “US-Georgia Economic Relations: Time for an FTA?” <https://www.geopoliticalmonitor.com/us-georgia-economic-relations-time-for-an-fta/> (accessed 31 May 2022)

The first obvious step should be for Washington and Tbilisi to sign an FTA. This commercial agreement would create a legal framework that would facilitate future trade and investment initiatives that U.S. members of Congress are requesting and which the Georgian government and business community would certainly like to see.

Georgia is fully supportive of FTA with U.S.

Prof. James Bacchus 2019 (Professor of Global Affairs at Univ. of Central Florida and an Adjunct Scholar at the Cato Institute; former member of the Congress, former chairman of the Appellate Body of the World Trade Organization) 8 Nov 2019 “Time for a US-Georgia free trade pact” FINANCIAL TIMES <https://www.ft.com/content/f1e18bf2-8cab-4240-8ef3-9a3760d4c34d> (accessed 31 May 2022)

Giorgi Gakharia, the new Georgian prime minister, is fully supportive of the prospective agreement. He said last month: “A trade agreement is a logical continuation of our partnership with the US. We’ve nurtured our relationship to the point where we are ready to welcome more US companies to Georgia, which serves as a natural hub for American companies to access larger markets in Eurasia. A trade agreement will advance both America and Georgia’s security interests, while bringing tangible economic benefits.”

Advocacy: House Foreign Affairs Committee recommends FTA with Georgia

Embassy of Georgia 2022. “U.S. House Foreign Affairs Committee Passes Georgia Support Act” 7 Apr 2022 <https://georgiaembassyusa.org/2022/04/07/u-s-house-foreign-affairs-committee-passes-georgia-support-act/> (accessed 31 May 2022) (GSA was a bill pending in Congress, which the author here is commenting on)

In further bolstering U.S.-Georgia economic ties, the GSA [Georgia Support Act] states that a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) with Georgia would be a “clear signal of the strategic interests of the United States in the region, providing further support to Georgia’s Euro-Atlantic integration aspirations, post Covid 19 economic recovery and development including trade diversification needs,” adding that it is the sense of Congress that the U.S. Trade Representative should make progress toward negotiations with Georgia on the matter.

ADVANTAGES

Reasons why it’s good for the economy to diversify the supply chain

Daniel Runde and Sundar Ramanujam 2020 (Runde - Senior Vice President; William A. Schreyer Chair; Director, Project on Prosperity and Development; and Director, Americas Program. Ramanujam - Research Associate, Project on Prosperity and Development) 10 Sept 2020 Recovery with Resilience: Diversifying Supply Chains to Reduce Risk in the Global Economy <https://www.csis.org/analysis/recovery-resilience-diversifying-supply-chains-reduce-risk-global-economy> (accessed 1 June 2022)

Consequently, de-risking happens fundamentally when the sourcing, production, and shipping of goods and services are diversified across a range of economies. By doing so, firms will be able to limit the chances of a single manufacturing hub or shipping route creating a supply shock due to a pandemic, natural disaster, civil unrest, or other unexpected events. Furthermore, it also deters a handful of countries from functioning as a cartelized oligopoly—particularly in the context of specific industries of strategic importance such as medical gear production, pharmaceuticals, and semiconductors.

FTA would benefit US and Georgia economically and move Georgia closer to Western democracies

Kenneth Rapoza 2020 (business journalist) 5 Mar 2020 FORBES “Why Does Everyone Suddenly Want A Free Trade Deal With Georgia?” <https://www.forbes.com/sites/kenrapoza/2020/03/05/why-does-everyone-suddenly-want-a-free-trade-deal-with-georgia/?sh=c9396a350e64> (accessed 31 May 2022) (brackets added)

[Deputy Chief of Mission at the US Embassy of Georgia, Georgi] Tsikolia says that over 270 American companies are already in Georgia, across industries, but especially in hospitality, energy and port logistics. “An FTA might encourage more foreign investors to go there,” says Luke Coffey, a director of foreign policy studies at Heritage Foundation. He thinks a U.S.-Georgia trade deal is a win-win. It strengthens the U.S. position in the region, and helps Georgia develop its economy even more closely aligned to Western capitalist democracies.

Comprehensive study of all past US FTA’s shows they add jobs and economic growth

Prof. Katheryn Russ 2021 (prof. of economics, Univ of Calif.-Davis; nonresident senior fellow at the Peterson Institute for International Economics) Yes, US trade agreements led to economic gains, especially in services, new report says 20 July 2021 <https://www.piie.com/blogs/trade-and-investment-policy-watch/yes-us-trade-agreements-led-economic-gains-especially#:~:text=The%20agreements%20reduced%20uncertainty%20by,and%20addressed%20strategic%20geopolitical%20considerations>. (accessed 3 June 2022) (first brackets added, all others in original)

The USITC [United States International Trade Commission] is an independent agency that provides data and analyses related to trade for both the executive and legislative branches and houses some judicial processes related to trade and multinational firms. Its internal processes are generally unbiased and its staff holds some of the top US experts in trade agreements and policy. The results were eagerly anticipated. The USITC reported that 12 bilateral free trade agreements (FTAs), plus two regional FTAs (the North American Free Trade Agreement [NAFTA] and the Dominican Republic-Central America-United States Free Trade Agreement [CAFTA-DR]), all negotiated and implemented under TPA, resulted in the US economy being [one half of a percent bigger](https://www.usitc.gov/publications/332/pub5199.pdf#page=102) than what it would have been without the agreements in place. The growth was accompanied by almost [half a million](https://www.usitc.gov/publications/332/pub5199.pdf#page=102) additional jobs and [$133 billion](https://www.usitc.gov/publications/332/pub5199.pdf#page=103) in additional two-way US trade with the world.

Georgia FTA increases US influence and confidence in a key region

Prof. James Bacchus 2019 (Professor of Global Affairs at Univ. of Central Florida and an Adjunct Scholar at the Cato Institute; former member of the Congress, former chairman of the Appellate Body of the World Trade Organization) 8 Nov 2019 “Time for a US-Georgia free trade pact” FINANCIAL TIMES <https://www.ft.com/content/f1e18bf2-8cab-4240-8ef3-9a3760d4c34d> (accessed 31 May 2022)

A Russian military invasion in 2008 cost Georgia Abkhazia and South Ossetia — northern regions that border Russia and comprise about 20 per cent of Georgia’s national territory. Russian encroachment continues. Likewise, the Turks and the Iranians are restive, assertive and not far away. Amid all these threats, the signing of an FTA between Georgia and the US would send a strong signal that America is committed to expanding its footprint in this key region.

Georgia FTA would defeat Russian anti-Western propaganda

Dr. James J. Carafano and Alexis Mrachek 2019 (Carafano - master's degree and a doctorate from Georgetown Univ., master's degree in strategy from the U.S. Army War College. Mrachek - Master’s degree in Eurasian, Russian, and East European Studies from Georgetown Univ. School of Foreign Service ) “Georgia Deserves a Free Trade Agreement With America” 15 Oct 2019 <https://www.heritage.org/europe/commentary/georgia-deserves-free-trade-agreement-america> (accessed 2 June 2022)

For one thing, it would be a tangible demonstration of U.S. support for Georgia—something especially desirable ahead of next year’s parliamentary elections. It is a given that, throughout the campaign season, pro-Russian propaganda will assert that there is no point in voting for a pro-Western party since the West (supposedly) never reciprocates Georgia’s overtures. Entering a U.S.-Georgia free trade agreement would destroy that argument.

Europe’s security matters to the US as we resist Putin’s opposition to democracy and the West

Prof. Bryan Bender and Paul McLeary 2022 (Bender -  adjunct professor at the Walter Cronkite School of Journalism at Arizona State University. McLeary - journalist) 21 Feb 2022 “‘Cold War, Part 2’: How Putin is dragging America back to the bad old days” <https://www.politico.com/news/2022/02/21/vladimir-putin-america-cold-war-00010454> (accessed 1 June 2022)

“Europe’s security matters to the United States, both due to our trusted partnerships as well the implications for how Putin may continue to lash out at democracies and the West,” Sen. Jeanne Shaheen, a Democrat from New Hampshire and chair of the Senate Foreign Relations Subcommittee on Europe and Regional Security Cooperation, said during a visit to Poland on Monday.

Strengthening Georgia's international standing gives it one of its most powerful weapons against Russian aggression

Prof. Stephen Jones 2022 (Director, Program on Georgian Studies; Professor of Russian and Eurasian Studies, Mount Holyoke College) 12 Apr 2022 "How Georgia Could Gain from the Russo-Ukrainian War" <https://daviscenter.fas.harvard.edu/insights/how-georgia-could-gain-russo-ukrainian-war> (accessed 1 June 2022)

Non-coercive environments give small states bargaining powers they would otherwise not possess. Georgia has demonstrated on the international stage—at the UN and in negotiations with the EU and NATO—that it is able to create coalitions and resist Russia’s hegemonic claims. In particular, Georgia has the resources—more so than neighboring Azerbaijan and Armenia—of what Joseph Nye refers to as “soft power.”  It demonstrated its usefulness for NATO in Iraq and Afghanistan, and it became a new cultural phenomenon through its opera stars, cuisine, and natural beauty, attracting millions of European tourists to partake in eco-tours in its mountains and food tours in its towns. Soft power, like hard power, will not guarantee Georgia’s security, but it is one of the country’s most useful weapons.

FTA boosts US soft power in the region and puts more pressure on Putin for democratic reform

[Brock Bierman](https://www.gmfus.org/find-experts/brock-bierman)*2022 (visiting fellow for Democracy Initiatives at the German Marshall Fund of the United States. Prior to that, he served as the assistant administrator for USAID’s Bureau for Europe and Eurasia) 9 Mar 2022 “*Give Georgia a free trade agreement” <https://thehill.com/opinion/international/597468-give-georgia-a-free-trade-agreement/> *(accessed 31 May 2022) (brackets in original)*

Russia’s ongoing invasion of Ukraine has the United States focused on Europe’s immediate security needs, as it should — whether that’s bolstering troop presence at NATO’s borders or providing direct support to the Ukrainian military. But the U.S. must recognize that Putin’s ultimate objectives are to prevent countries on Russia’s periphery from developing into prosperous democracies and partners. The fact is if countries like Ukraine, Moldova, or Georgia are thriving democratic states, more and more Russians will demand the same at home, pressuring Putin’s authoritarian regime and stranglehold of the Russian people. As such, military support is not the only tool that can help nations at risk from Russian aggression. We must consider what economic tools we have available to build resilience in countries under threat and strengthen American ties in the region — particularly in Georgia where Russian troops currently occupy 20 percent of its territory.
**END QUOTE. HE GOES ON LATER IN THE CONTEXT WRITING QUOTE:**
Georgia’s Minister of Foreign Affairs David Zalkaliani recently communicated to me that the potential was considerable. He said, “An FTA with Georgia would instantly increase U.S. soft power beyond Georgian borders, avoiding increased tensions [in the South Caucasus], building economic resilience, well-being and bilateral trade.

Putin fears if democracy succeeds in Georgia, the Russian people will demand it themselves and he loses power

Damon Wilson 2022 (President and CEO, National Endowment for Democracy) Global Strategy 2022: Thwarting Kremlin aggression today for constructive relations tomorrow 8 Feb 2022 <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/content-series/atlantic-council-strategy-paper-series/thwarting-kremlin-aggression-today-for-constructive-relations-tomorrow/> (accessed 1 June 2022)

Putin recognizes that if freedom and democracy succeed in Ukraine—or Georgia or Belarus—that if they follow the wildly successful path of the Baltic states, it is only a matter of time until the Russian people demand more for themselves. Today’s conflict is therefore also about power inside of Russia. Confrontation with the West helps Putin consolidate control at home.

Russian influence is a bad thing: They prioritize state power instead of democracy and freedom

Patty-Jane Geller 2022 (senior policy analyst, Heritage Foundation) 16 May 2022 “Traditional Victory Over Russia Is Unlikely. Instead, Expect To Manage Competition for the Long Haul” <https://www.heritage.org/defense/commentary/traditional-victory-over-russia-unlikely-instead-expect-manage-competition-the> (accessed 1 June 2022)

Finally, Russia takes pride in its culture and civilization that dates back over 1,000 years. This pride often manifests itself in national and foreign policy. Nicholas I used the “Uvarov doctrine” based on Russian orthodoxy, autocracy, and nationality to unify Russian society in the 1830’s when autocratic rule was becoming more unpopular. The Uvarov doctrine was again used in the early-1900’s to mobilize support for Nicholas II prior to World War I, and even referenced in the late-1990’s as Russian President Vladimir Putin began to consolidate power. Contrary to U.S. values of democracy and individual freedom, Russia prioritizes power vested in the state—autocracy in some form—to provide for the people, from the rule of Peter the Great, the succession of czars, the totalitarian Soviet Union, to Putin’s current rule.

Don't need to quantify: FTAs often bring benefits that cannot be quantified by economic models

Dr. Michael G. Plummer, Dr. David Cheong and Dr. Shintaro Hamanaka 2010. (Plummer - PhD economics; is currently head of the Development Division of the Trade and Agriculture Directorate of the Organisation of Economic Co-operation and Development. Cheong - PhD international economics; chief technical advisor in the Trade & Employment Program at the International Labour Organization. Hamanaka - PhD; economist at Office of Regional Economic Integration of the Asian Development Bank) Methodology for Impact Assessment of Free Trade Agreements <https://aric.adb.org/pdf/FTA_Impact_Assessment.pdf> (accessed 2 June 2022)

Moreover, developing countries in Asia stand to gain relatively more from these “deep” policies than developed countries, provided that the region’s FTAs are open, trade creating rather than trade diverting (i.e., the regional division of labor that emerges from the accord is consistent with comparative advantage), and other regulatory and non-border conditions are met. Maximizing benefits that cannot easily be quantified by economic models is critical for developing countries to have a fruitful conclusion of FTAs. But this requires careful construction of the agreement.

DISADVANTAGE RESPONSES

A/T "U.S. job losses" - Existing Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) programs solve for impacts to displaced workers

Dr. Michael G. Plummer, Dr. David Cheong and Dr. Shintaro Hamanaka 2010. (Plummer - PhD economics; is currently head of the Development Division of the Trade and Agriculture Directorate of the Organisation of Economic Co-operation and Development. Cheong - PhD international economics; chief technical advisor in the Trade & Employment Program at the International Labour Organization. Hamanaka - PhD; economist at Office of Regional Economic Integration of the Asian Development Bank) Methodology for Impact Assessment of Free Trade Agreements <https://aric.adb.org/pdf/FTA_Impact_Assessment.pdf> (accessed 2 June 2022)

The United States (US) Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) Program was created under the Trade Act of 1974 as a federal program under each state to mitigate the adverse effects of international trade both on workers, through the TAA program of the US Department of Labor, and on firms, through the TAA program of the US Department of Commerce. Changes were then made to the Trade Act via the Recovery Act, effective 18 May 2009, which expanded the benefits and services available to workers and firms affected by foreign trade, including extending program coverage to include more workers and opening the application process for TAA certification to firms in the services sector. Eligibility for TAA at both the worker level and firm level requires the occurrence of at least one of four conditions that lead to either actual decline in sales or production at the workers’ firm, or layoff or separation of or threat thereof to a minimum number of workers within 12 months preceding the date of petitioning for TAA certification. These conditions are (i) increased imports of like or directly competitive goods and services (including component parts or services), (ii) shifts in the production of goods or supply of services to a country outside the US, (iii) workers’ firm’s loss of business as a supplier or downstream producer to a TAA-certified firm, or (iv) acquisition of services by a public agency from a foreign country. The certification process is bypassed if workers are employed by a company identified by the International Trade Commission as a company in an affirmative finding of injury (Government of the United States, Department of Labor 2010). Eligible workers are entitled to TAA program benefits and services, which include training and income support payments, job search and relocation allowances, as well as other reemployment services. The trade readjustment allowance is provided as income support to augment unemployment compensation, and is based on the amount of unemployment insurance received by an individual. Under the trade readjustment allowance, workers may also avail of a health coverage tax credit for 80% of monthly health premium payments. Training, as well as apprenticeships, post-secondary education, and prerequisite and remedial education, is available to laid-off workers and even to those threatened with separation, and is paid for with TAA program funds. Workers 50 years or older with less than $55,000 annual income under their prospective employment are eligible for the reemployment trade adjustment assistance, which is a wage supplement when accepting new employment at a lower wage, including employment and case management services to help evaluate relevant training and career options.