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Georgian Politics Is Still in Turbulence How Long Will it Last?

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Georgian Politics Is Still in Turbulence – How Long Will it Last?

By DR. VAKHTANG MAISAIA

Georgian political life has been steadily falling into deep crisis. There are some clear indications that this situation, which is also being fanned by the local economic crisis, may lead to the collapse of local politics.

Campaigning in the two by-elections in Gurjaani and Martvili is becoming inflamed, and their results will demonstrate who has won the internal arguments a year after they broke out. These elections, which will be held on 31 October, have already revealed how much Georgian domestic politics is “diseased”, and its prognosis is not an optimistic one.

Only two parties are taking part in these by-elections – the Republican Party, representing the ruling Georgian Dream coalition, and the opposition Georgian Patriotic Alliance, whose leader Irma Inashvili is its candidate in Gurjaani. All other parties, such as the United National Movement, the main parliamentary opposition party, the Free Democrats and the Democratic Movement, are boycotting them. Hence, the political environment is not a positive one a head of the 2016



elections, which are unlikely to be genuinely pluralistic, or have unquestioned legitimacy, in these circumstances.

In recent times relations between the two key political figures, the President and Prime Minister, have been strained, and this has affected the stability of the country. The Prime Minister and some other government members refused to

attend the National Security Council meeting of 24 September because it was chaired by President Giorgi Margvelashvili, despite the fact it discussed national security and defense reform issues at a time when Georgia is facing a multitude of military threats. Furthermore, two high-level government delegations flew to New York to attend the UN General Assem-

bly whilst ignoring the appointment of two members of the Georgian National Energy and Water Supply Regulatory Commission, a key anti-monopoly agency, selected by the President. The government has remarked that this latent political conflict and instability are against the national interest, but is still playing a part in fomenting it.

The sudden resignation of the leader of the coalition's parliamentary group, long-serving politician David Saganelidze, and his appointment as Director of the Partnership Fund by Prime Minister Gharibashvili also indicates crisis within the coalition. It is strange that such a professional politician with rich experience of Georgian politics should be “put out to pasture” during an election period. There are rumors that several other members of the majority group are ready to leave the coalition, including Soso Jajvliani, one of its leading figures, and there have been disputes between coalition parties, with Tamaz Mechiauri of the Democratic Party sharply criticising the Republican Party and the Republicans replying in kind.

There are also problems with public policy. Earlier this month the Georgian Constitutional Court declared ex-Mayor of Tbilisi Gigi Ugulava's pre-trial detention illegal, meaning he was released for a day, but he was immediately detained again as he has already been sentenced to 4 1/2 years in jail for mispending public funds. Ugulava's release and rearrest-

ed were fodder for the formerly ruling United National Movement, and made waves for a short period. Though most international for a ignored the UNM's protests the European People's Party (EPP), of which it is a part, objected to Ugulava's treatment. Furthermore there are more problems with the Georgian media, which has already seen some stations closed down: Maestro TV has been declared bankrupt, but no one seems to know who actually owns it and is therefore liable or not liable for any future payments.

It is against this backdrop that the farmers of the Kakheti region have protested against the lack of a promised financial subsidy for their grape crop, and clashed violently with the police. The general public are also protesting about the electricity tariffs being increased by five tetri when the currency has greatly deflated. Hence, the political situation in Georgia is very fragile and real conflict could break out over any number of issues.

The Georgian Institute for Geostrategic and Euro-Atlantic Studies Institute, Chairman

NEWS

FRENCH, GEORGIAN FOREIGN MINISTERS MEET IN PARIS

Georgian Foreign Minister Giorgi Kvirikashvili met his French counterpart Laurent Fabius in Paris on September 23.

The Georgian Foreign Ministry said “importance of further French support towards Georgia's European and Euro-Atlantic integration process, effective implementation of Georgia's Association Agreement with the EU and visa liberalisation process was stressed” during the meeting.

“On visa liberalisation we conveyed our main message that Georgia has done its homework fully and that migration problem in Europe, stemming from crisis in the Middle East, should not affect Georgia's visa liberalisation process,” Foreign Minister Kvirikashvili said.

“The French Foreign Minister has accepted this message positively and also assessed positively reforms carried out by

Georgia in frames of visa liberalisation [action plan],” Kvirikashvili said.

The next, fourth report on how Georgia is implementing its Visa Liberalisation Action Plan, a detailed set of reforms required for a country to implement in order to be granted short-term visa free travel rules in the Schengen area, is expected from the European Commission by the end of this year. Officials in Tbilisi hope that it will be the final report in which the Commission will recommend granting visa free regime for Georgian citizens.

The Georgian Foreign Ministry said that bilateral cooperation in defense sector, as well as regional security, relations between Georgia and Russia and situation in Georgia's occupied regions were also discussed during the meeting between the French and Georgian foreign ministers.



The French Foreign Ministry said that strengthening bilateral relations, as well as Georgia's “cooperation with the EU and NATO” and issues related to December's climate change conference in Paris were discussed.

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PM HEADS TO NEW YORK FOR UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Georgian PM Irakli Garibashvili left for New York on Friday for a visit to UN headquarters, where he will address the annual high-level general debate later next week and will participate in other events planned on the sideline of the UN General Assembly.

On September 28, PM Garibashvili will attend a summit on UN peacekeeping missions, which will be chaired by U.S. President Barack Obama. The PM will also participate in the UN sustainable development summit and meet UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, the Georgian PM's office said.

A separate delegation from Georgia, led by President Giorgi Margvelashvili will also be visiting New York next week, where the President will participate in a high-level discussion on women's rights. The discussion will be organized by the Council of Women World Leaders, which is chaired by Lithuanian President Dalia Grybauskaitė. President Margvelashvili will then head to Washington DC.

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Customers' idea about ideal lottery

-  There must be a wide variety of prizes;
-  It would be good to win several times;
-  Receive the prize the moment you win;
-  The rules must be easy;
-  In case of cash prizes, decide myself what to buy.

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The prizes are



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after “Kurier” 18:00.

Foreign Policy of Azerbaijan: Shifting from West to North?

By DR. VAKHTANG MAISAIA

The New Cold War has plunged the South Caucasus into a geopolitical cleavage. It has become a new "Rimland", a geopolitical frontline where the two global power centres – Russia and USA – try to increase their zones of influences and recruit as many nations as possible to their side.

At present, this game of "ideological foreign policy warfare" in the region is being won by the Russian side. After the most recent official clashes between Azerbaijan and the Western community, including the EU and USA, the score is 2-1 in favour of The Kremlin (Armenia and Azerbaijan have moved towards Russia's position, while Georgia is still resisting but perhaps temporarily).

The breakdown in relations between Azerbaijan and the USA and EU can be demonstrated by the following developments:

- Government officials in Europe and the United States have previously offered only muted criticism of Azerbaijan throughout a year of rampant human rights violations, including the arrests of journalists and activists and the closure of numerous NGOs. Now however stronger criticism is emerging. In the first days of September Azerbaijan sentenced award-winning investigative journalist and anti-graft campaigner Khadija Ismayilova to seven and a half years in jail on corruption charges she denounced as trumped-up, after she fearlessly probed the alleged vast riches amassed by the Aliyev family, who have ruled Azerbaijan with an iron fist since it gained independence from the Soviet Union in 1993. As soon as the verdict was announced the European Parliament passed a non-binding resolution strongly condemning the "unprecedented repression against civil society in Azerbaijan". Reference was also made to the lengthy jail term given to a prominent Azeri couple who campaign against human rights abuses;

- The European Parliament has now adopted a further resolution calling for sanctions against the Azeri authorities. MEPs urged the EU to "conduct a thorough investigation into the corruption allegations against President (Ilham) Aliyev and members of his family." They called on the EU's executive body to "consider targeted sanctions and visa bans



on all politicians, officials and judges involved in the political persecutions". This is a very serious indication of worsening relations between Azerbaijan and the EU, never before seen. Prior to these resolutions Azerbaijan had been closely cooperating with EU officials on the anti-Russian NABUCCO energy project and Baku had declared itself ready to take a very active role in the Eastern

verbal attacks from a top Azeri official. According to the US-based rights group Freedom House there are now more than 80 political prisoners in Azerbaijan, while independent activists give a figure of over 90.

What will happen next? American political scientist and analyst Mr. Armen V. Sahakyan has laid out four possible scenarios of future relations between the West and Azer-



baijan:

1. The Azerbaijani elite will continue its consolidation of power around President Aliyev and his closest allies;

2. Western-sponsored organisations and employees will continue to be prevented from operating within the country, as exemplified by the recent case of a Human Rights Watch employee being denied entry;

3. The leadership will at-

tempt to remain non-aligned for as long as it can;

4. Anti-Western sentiments and jingoism will continue to be propagated.

On 11 September Azerbaijan fiercely denounced European criticism of its human rights record. Its Minister of Foreign Affairs stated: "Azerbaijan's relations with the European Union should be revised due to its anti-Azeri and anti-

Islamic tendencies". Similarly, there are signs that Azerbaijan is willfully moving closer to Russia and trying to balance Western "pressure" on Baku. There include:

1. Azerbaijan has been granted "Partner Observer" status within the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), which is effectively led by Russia;

2. Azerbaijan has agreed to lease one of its military bases to Russia from 2017, and this will be occupied by the Dnestr-M special Anti-Air Defense unit which enables Russia to control air space in the Middle East, Central Asia and Southern Europe;

3. Azerbaijan's leaders are making more formal visits to Russia and expressing more interest in the Eurasian direction.

These are only some of the reasons for thinking that Baku wants to distance itself from the West and get closer to Russia. Maybe these are only assumptions, but who knows?

The Georgian Institute for Geostrategic and Euro-Atlantic Studies Institute, Chairman



Partnership and accept Associate Membership of the EU, a status Georgia gained on 28 November 2013;

- Azerbaijani officials have taken some aggressive steps towards American and international organisations working in Baku. The pro-government media has accused IREX, a highly regarded organisation that supports media development and people-to-people exchanges, of "pursuing the interests of Azerbaijan's enemies." Ultimately, the group has been pressured to leave the country. Official interference has also led the Peace Corps to discontinue its programmes in the country. Former U.S. Ambassador to Azerbaijan Richard Morningstar has also received targeted

NEWS

GD PARLIAMENTARY MAJORITY LEADER BECOMES CEO OF PARTNERSHIP FUND

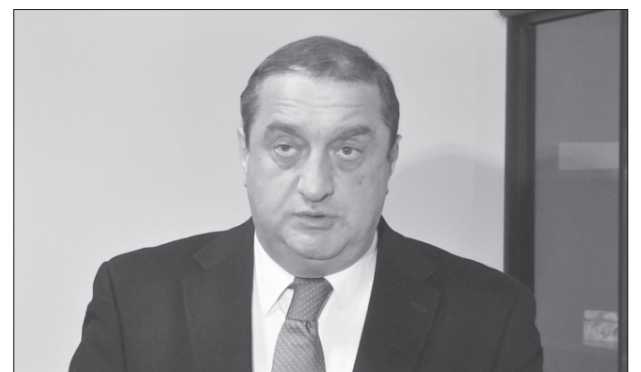
Leader of the Georgian Dream majority group in the Parliament, MP Davit Saganelidze, is quitting the legislative body to take the post of head of the state-owned investment fund.

MP Saganelidze, who has been a lawmaker for 14 years, was named as CEO of the Partnership Fund by PM Irakli Garibashvili on September 23.

It is not yet clear who will replace Saganelidze as new leader of the GD parliamentary majority group.

Position of the Partnership Fund's CEO was vacant after Irakli Kovzanadze was confirmed by the Parliament as a board member of the Financial Supervisory Agency, a body which has been established after banking oversight functions have been removed from the National Bank of Georgia

"I hope together we will be able to carry out serious restructuring based on this fund; I hope we will be able to create an institution, which will attract much more investments in the country and implement the plan, which we have launched in the economic sector under the leadership of [ex-PM] Bidzina Ivanishvili in 2012,"



Saganelidze said.

Along with investment activities, the Partnership Fund also manages assets of some major state-owned enterprises, among them the Georgian Railway; Georgian Oil and Gas Corporation (GOGC); Georgian State Electrosystem; Electricity System Commercial Operator, as well as 24.5% shares in Telasi, an electricity distributor company in Tbilisi.

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HUMAN RIGHTS COMMITTEE GIVES TENTATIVE SUPPORT TO PARLIAMENT QUOTAS FOR WOMEN

Parliamentary committee for human rights gave a go-ahead to formal initiation of a bill, which, if approved, would set mandatory quotas for women to help increase the number of female members in the legislative body.

The bill, which was submitted to the parliament by a group of civil society organizations, offers introduction of "zipper" system, where male and female candidates would appear alternately on party lists of MP candidates for the next year's parliamentary elections.

The bill, which was drafted by the Task Force on Women's Political Participation, a coalition of organizations that advocate for gender equality, aims at increasing share of female legislators in the next parliament to at least 25%.

Currently there are 17 female lawmakers, accounting for 11.3% of 150-seat Parliament. The number of female MPs in the sitting parliament may increase to 18 after by-election in October.

77 seats in the Parliament are allocated based on proportional, party-list system and remaining 73 seats are distributed to majoritarian MPs from single-mandate constituencies.

If the "zipper" quota system is introduced, it will apply to the party-list component and will result into at least 38 female lawmakers in the next parliament.

The decision of the parliamentary committee of human rights does not mean that the bill will be introduced to the parliamentary session for further consideration in its current form.

There is also another bill in the Parliament, which was sponsored by GD ruling coalition lawmaker Nana Keinishvili, according to which political parties must place a woman in every third position on their list of top 50 MP candidates.

At the committee hearing on September 24, MP Keinishvili said that she supports the bill offered by the civil society groups, envisaging "zipper" system, but if it is not approved by the Parliament, at least her bill should be passed.

At the committee session, female lawmakers, including chairperson of the human rights committee GD MP Eka Beselia, were speaking strongly in favor of the quota system.

Although deputy chairman of the committee GD MP Gedevan

Popkhadze said he was against of the quota system in general, he voted in favor of initiation of the bill along with five other members of the committee with one abstaining.

Opposition lawmakers were not present at the committee session.

Justice Minister, Tea Tsulukiani, who was present at the committee hearing, said that previously she was also against of quota system, but changed her mind after studying the issue thoroughly.

"Support opening of parliament's door for women," she told lawmakers. "This door is currently closed."

The quota system, Tsulukiani said, "will make political parties to think about women while compiling their list of [MP] candidates."

"It will give the country the kind of parliament, which will reflect the Georgian society. Now the parliament does not reflect it, because women are underrepresented," the Justice Minister said.

Baia Patariaia of Union "Sapari", an NGO working on helping victims of domestic violence, told lawmakers while presenting the bill at the committee hearing that although the Georgian legislation is gender-neutral, it is not enough to provide for actual equality.

"We do not ask for much," she said. "We ask for having at least 38 female lawmakers in the Parliament."

In his annual state of the nation address to the Parliament in March, 2015 President Giorgi Margvelashvili reiterated his support towards introduction of mandatory quotas for women in the legislative body.

Speaking at a conference in Tbilisi on women's political participation in March, 2015 parliament speaker Davit Usupashvili said that although in general he's against of any kind mandatory quotas, he's "a supporter of equality and if I see that it is impossible to achieve equality without setting quotas, then I become a supporter of quotas."

Usupashvili, however, also suggested that gaining enough support in the Parliament for the initiative to be passed would not be easy and added that even within his Republican Party, which is part of the ruling Georgian Dream coalition, there was no unanimous position over introduction of the quota system.

The Georgian legislation currently envisages financial incentive for parties to include more women in their list of candidates. Task Force on Women's Political Participation, however, said that this incentive has failed to address the under-representation of women in the Parliament.

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GOVT TARGETS 3% ECONOMIC GROWTH IN 2016

The Georgian government proposed state budget for 2016 will set next year's economic growth forecast at 3%, PM Irakli Garibashvili said at a government session on September 23.

The government was initially expecting 5% growth this year, but it had to cut it to 2%.

Real GDP growth stood at 3.2% y/y in the first quarter of 2015 and at 2.5% y/y in the second quarter. Georgia's economy grew 4.8% in 2014.

Next year's budget deficit will be 3%, Finance Minister Nodar Khaduri said.

PM Garibashvili also said that inflation forecast will be set at 4.5% in the draft of 2016 state budget, which has yet to be submitted to the Parliament for consideration.

Georgia's annual inflation accelerated to its highest rate in four years at 5.4% in August from 4.9% in July, according to the state statistics office.

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CENTRAL BANK INCREASES KEY RATE TO 7%

The National Bank of Georgia (NBG) raised its key refinancing rate by one percentage point to 7% on September 23, citing "significant increase in the inflation expectations" amid depreciation of the national currency lari.

Georgia's annual inflation accelerated to its highest rate in four years at 5.4% in August, exceeding central bank's target level of 5%.

NBG's monetary policy committee said after its meeting on September 23, that it expects annual inflation to go down at the targeted level by the end of 2016.

The government said earlier on September 23 that the 2016 state budget will set inflation forecast at 4.5% next year, which, it said, would be within central bank's target level.

The central bank started tightening monetary policy earlier this year, increasing refinancing rate from 4% to 4.5% in February and further raising it to 5% in May, to 5.5% in July, and to 6% in August. Last time when key refinancing rate was at 7% was in November, 2011.

Central bank's monetary policy committee will hold its next meeting on November 4.

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Russian Reinforcement Towards the Arctic: the North Strategic-Operational Command and Possible Nuclear Confrontation

By DR. VAKHTANG MAISAIA

Last year The Kremlin established the new North Strategic-Operational Command, part of the Northern Fleet HQ, a new means of achieving Russia's military goals and missions. It brought to five the number of Russian military-operational Command centres, the others being the South, Central, East and West HQs.

The Russian Federation is trying to define a number of new Geostrategic Areas – for example, it says there is a Caucasus Geostrategic Area (consisting of the North Caucasus Military District and South Caucasus Russian Army Group HQ and the 4th and 7th military bases) – in order to create a so-called “Strategic-Operational Triangle”. It is drawing up a common defense front between the 4th and 7th military bases in the South Caucasus, which will also link them with the 102nd military base through the creation of an autonomous Army-Operational HQ to counterspecific enemy units (for example, the 9th Army Corp HQ of the 2nd Field Army of the Turkish Armed Forces, NATO's South-Eastern Army Command, the USA's European Strategic Command, etc.). This is designed to serve the “forward defense” strategy The Kremlin has promulgated to address the threats and challenges The Kremlin perceives to derive from current NATO and US strategies.

The new North Command HQ contains special Air Defense and Air Force units equipped with the most modern weaponry systems –MIG-31 jets and C-400 anti-aircraft missile systems. The territory covered by the North HQ stretches from Murmansk to

Petropavlovsk-Kamchatsky and the Chukotka region, an area of more than 8 thousand kilometers which crosses four different time zones. At present, 70% of the new command centre is in place, with the remainder to be completed by 2017.

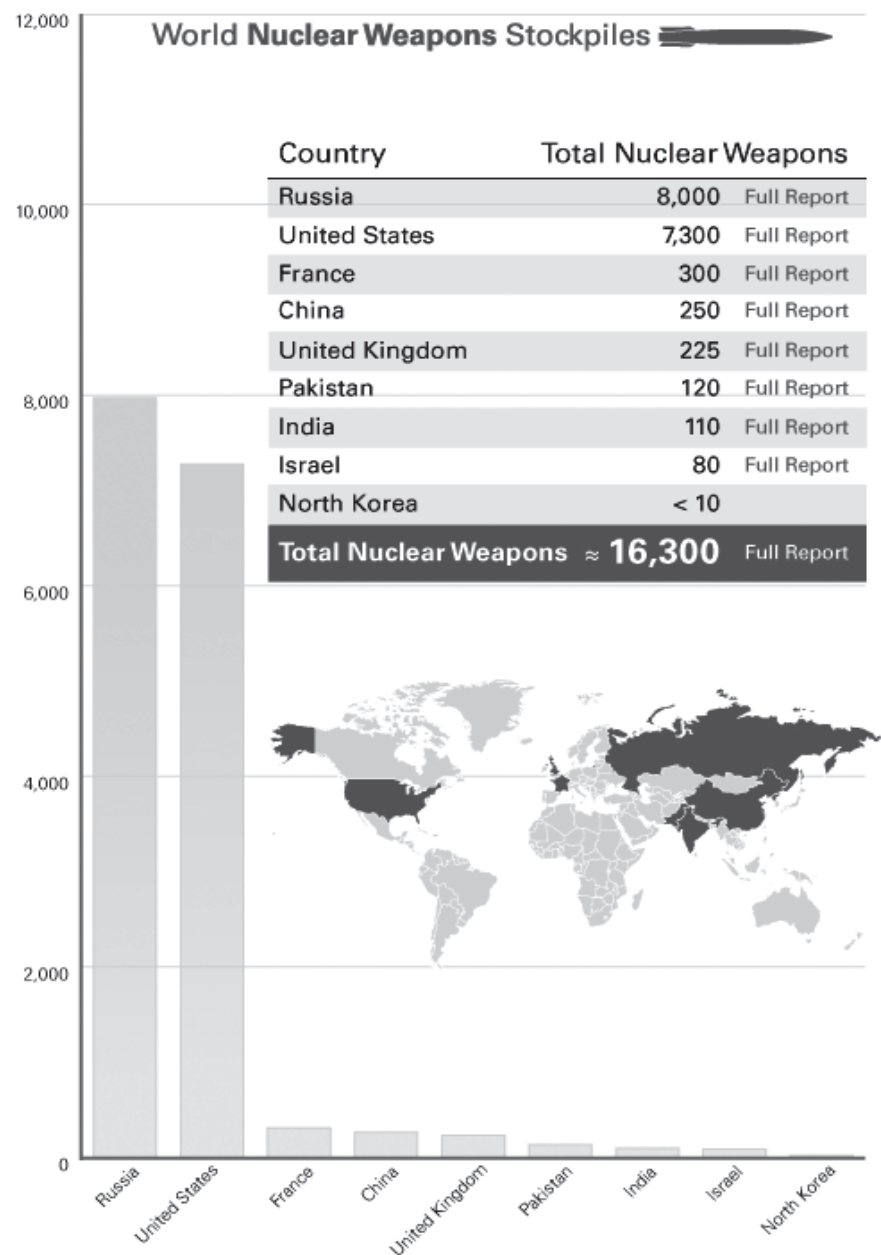
The Arctic is a zone in which the USA and Russia could engage in an arms race and nuclear weapons competition. According to some sources, notably Germany's ZDF public television network, the U.S. is due to bring 20 new nuclear bombs into Germany, each having four times the destructive power of the one dropped on Hiroshima. Hans Kristensen, Director of the Nuclear Information Project at the Federation of American Scientists, says, “With these new bombs the boundaries blur between tactical and strategic nuclear weapons.” Based on other sources, the base in Rhineland-Palatinate in western Germany hosts German Panavia Tornado multipurpose aircraft that are capable of deploying the USAF nuclear bombs stored there under a nuclear sharing deal. The base is the only location in Germany that has had nuclear weapons since 2007, and it has 20 of them, according to the Royal United Services Institute.

The US is currently working on a new variant of the B61, the Mod 12, which would be more accurate and have a smaller yield than the modifications 3 and 4 which are currently deployed in Europe. The ZDF report cited budget documents which indicated that in third quarter of this year the base would receive funding for the future storage and deployment of the new B61-12s. This will also include the upgrading of the Tornado aircraft. Russia is furious that this plan is being implemented and has made this

threat via its Ministry of Foreign Affairs: “The so-called practice of ‘joint use of nuclear weapons’ within NATO also gives as concerns. Training (exercises) associated with the preparation and use of nuclear weapons of the armed forces of states that do not possess such weapons are a direct violation of Articles 1 and 2 of the NPT. This abnormal situation has persisted for more than forty years, but that does not make it any more acceptable. Moreover, the action harms regional stability and threatens Russia's national security”.

Russia has also threatened retaliation. This will transform the “New Cold War” into a “nuclear arms muscle” game in which Russia and the USA try and demonstrate how strong they are. According to the analytical magazine “Value Walk”, even though there has been a mutual nuclear disarmament since the end of the Cold War, both Moscow and Washington still own about a thousand ready-to-go nuclear warheads. It was reported in 2014 that the entire stockpile of U.S. intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs) – about 448 active warheads – is aimed mainly at Russia.

The U.S. possesses 1,597 strategic nuclear warheads, which are deployed on 785 ICBMs, SLBMs and strategic bombers, according to the March 2015 edition of New START, while Russia has 1,582 strategic warheads deployed on 515 ICBMs, SLBMs and strategic bombers. The U.S. possessed as many as 4,717 active nuclear warheads as of September 30, 2014, according to the U.S. State Department. Both sides also have other warheads which have been retired, Russia an additional 3,200 of them, and although these are due to be dismantled they could theoretically be reactivated and used.



PLOUGHSHARES FUND

The Russians are planning to restore the former Soviet nuclear polygon and base code-named Object-700 and the Rogachovo strategic airfield in Novaya Zemlya, where it would be possible to deploy strategic combat jets armed

with rockets and nuclear warheads, like the modernised-MIG-31BM with its ԃ-33Y “air to air” long range missiles. The North HQ could be put in command of the TOPOL-M strategic ballistic missile system, which is openly designed

to strike at NATO conventional and nuclear capabilities in the European theatre of war.

The Georgian Institute for Geostrategic and Euro-Atlantic Studies Institute, Chairman

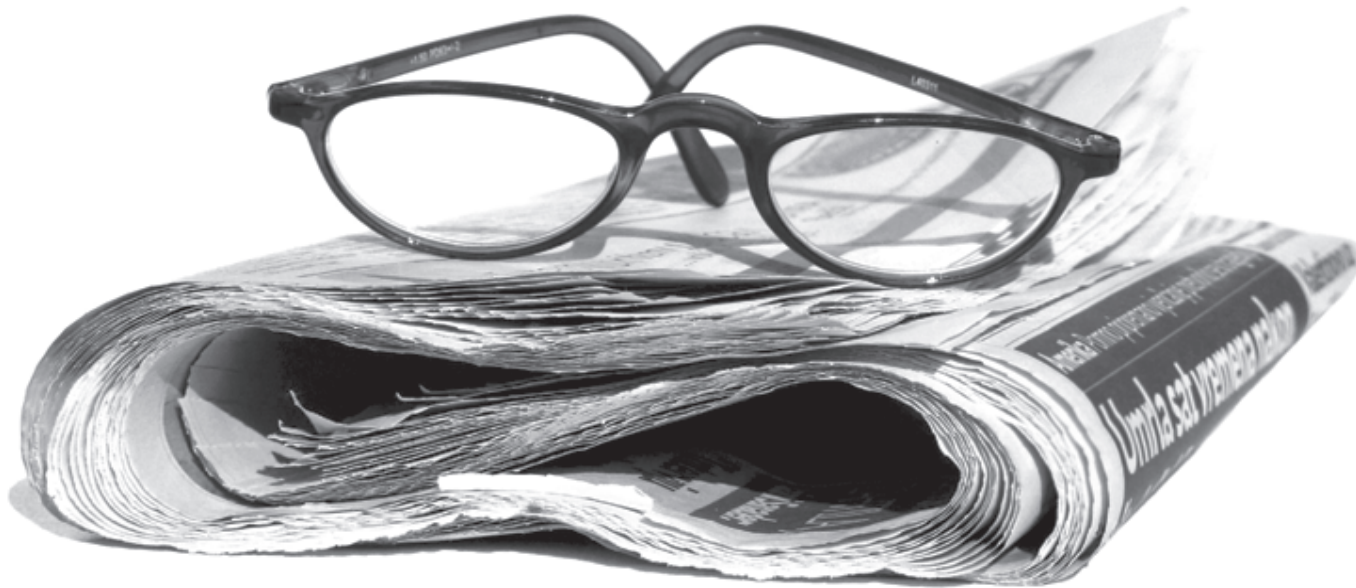


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The author of peace ideas addresses a message to the Georgian Prime Minister, the Secretaries-General of the UN and NATO and the President of France

On September 21, World Peace Day, Kutaisi native Besiki Adamia addressed a message to the Georgian Prime Minister, the Secretaries-General of the United Nations and NATO and the President of France concerning his previously reported initiative (Georgian Times, 1 July 2013) of writing the word "peace" in the Georgian and Azeri languages "შვიდობა", "Sülh", on the Wall for Peace in Paris (Armenian is already included). To support this initiative, here minded France of the service the Georgian Dimitri Amilakhvari, who was called the "Pride of France" after his death by Charles de Gaulle, once gave to the country.

"It is known that the UN has declared September 21 'World Peace Day', Adamia said. "The UN is celebrating its 70th anniversary this year, and is asking for more help from the international public in achieving its goals.

"In response, the history of my country, Georgia, its fight for independence and peace and its current situation has provoked me to write the word "peace" on my car in 22 languages, including Abkhazian and Ossetian. This may have made my car unique.

"My wish is the same as the UN's - to achieve world peace and find new ways of doing so. I am therefore asking Georgian Prime Minister Irakli Gharibashvili, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and the US government, through its embassy in Georgia, to hold a particular event.

"Next year the USA celebrates the 130th anniversary of the unveiling of the Statue of Liberty and 240th anniversary of its Declaration of Independence. I suggest it is possible to take Abkhazians, Ossetians, Azerbaijanis, Armenians and other representatives of Caucasus Nations to the Statue of Liberty and show the world how Georgia and USA support Caucasians who are fighting for freedom. In addition, I would like to see "The Board of Freedom", which contains the word "Freedom", written in Caucasian and other languages, placed at the Statue of Liberty.

"I suggest that when the Georgian Prime Minister makes a speech at the UN he addresses our Abkhazian and Ossetian friends by using the word "peace" in their mother tongue, as this will have resonance in these nations and around the world. In addition, I



want Georgia to take a peace initiative by inviting the leaders of Russia, the USA and Europe to a friendly meeting in Tbilisi. Such a meeting would be a prerequisite for bringing peace to the Caucasus, as tensions between these countries are negatively affecting Georgia.

"When I met the US Ambassador on May 19 he liked my idea of a "Peace jump" (Geo Patent #6258, 22/05/2015). This would be undertaken by parachutists from the armed forces, with the word "peace" written on their parachutes, who would land in circles displaying the same word in different languages. I will now suggest this idea to the armed forces of **Russia and NATO**, as it is clear that new war theatres are developing which make another world war possible. I would particularly ask the Secretary-General of NATO, Mr. Stoltenberg, for help in making this idea a reality, as it is expected to act as an example of a peaceful armed forces demonstration.

"I would also like to tell the President of France, M. François Hollande: As you know, on April 30, 2000, The **Wall for Peace** was inaugurated in Paris between The Eiffel Tower and the Military Academy on the Fields of Mars (the God of War in Roman mythology). However, the word

"peace", which was written all over the wall in many languages, did not appear in the Georgian, Azeri or any Caucasian language apart from Armenian. Over the past 10 years I have visited the Wall for Peace four times to attend peace promotion meetings. A judgment was made in court which should have resulted in it being destroyed, but the Wall was repaired because it had great public support. As you know, the Georgian written language is one of the world's 14 most ancient written languages! Inscribe the word 'peace' on the Wall in the Georgian and Azerbaijani languages will demonstrate your great support for our small countries and their

two great faiths - Christianity and Islam! The members of these two faiths will support you in this.

"M. President, it is possible to erect a 33rd column beside the existing thirty-two containing the word 'peace' written in the Caucasian languages! **After all, not only Dimitri Amilakhvari but many other Georgians have fought for France over the years, among them my neighbor Gogi Turabelidze, who fought with the Resistance during the German occupation. A price of 100,000 Francs was put on his head by German Fascists, and his work filled me with sympathy for France!**

"M. President, I also offer an interesting idea designed to make Paris the World City of Peace. From 2016, the Wall for Peace is due to have a permanent (24 hour) security complement consisting of two people. The Military Academy is only 200 metres from the Wall for peace, and I believe its management will support the idea of its students forming the security service for the Wall.

"M. President, keeping the Wall for Peace at its present location and protecting it are the duty not only of France but the whole world. It would thus be a good idea if every world leader sent two of their citizens to act as a guard of honor for the Wall for a week each year and

covered their expenses. I am personally ready to visit the city annually and stand in honour guard at the Wall for a week with Gogi Turabelidze Jr.

"I have gained written support for this initiative from Mr. Manuel Barroso, the President of the European Commission (02/09/2014, Brussels, EEAS/IB2(2014)DS/KL/CM-3122225) and the Paris Mayor's Office (on 16 October 2014). We need your help to locate **Clara Halter**, the architect of the Wall for Peace memorial, and obtain her authorization to add the word 'peace' in our languages. The Mayor of Paris also supports my complementary initiative to place an illuminated version of the word 'Paris' on the Mars Field as my gift to the French (Geo Patent #5391, 19/11/2012). This will be seen from the Eiffel Tower, and be an object of admiration for both Parisians and tourists.

"On my Facebook page you will see a photo of myself standing at the Wall for Peace holding a poster bearing the word 'peace' in 21 languages, as a message of peace for the whole world and also **Abkhazia and Ossetia**. This is something I am proud of doing.

"How powerfully the parts act together in a machine, how pitiful is the disagreement among people in reality! Our duty is to abolish disagreement!" (quotation)

"On September 21, the International Day of Peace, I say on behalf of the Georgian people: Peace to the World!

*Besiki Adamia
President of the LLL
Intellectual club of peace and
friendship
Former candidate for
President of Georgia,
publicist*

NEWS

BURJANADZE MEETS RUSSIAN UPPER HOUSE SPEAKER

Nino Burjanadze, leader of opposition Democratic Movement-United Georgia party and former parliament speaker met in St. Petersburg speaker of Russia's upper house of parliament, Federation Council, Valentina Matviyenko, on September 24.

Burjanadze is in St. Petersburg to participate in the inaugural Eurasian Women's Forum held on September 24-25.

This is Burjanadze's second visit to Russia in the past two months. "You are well-known not only in Georgia, but in Russia too as a prominent political and public figure," Matviyenko told Burjanadze. "We appreciate highly your consistent commitment towards the idea of good neighborly relations with Russia, which correspond national interests of both Russia and Georgia."

"I am saying it sincerely that not because of our fault tensions have arisen in relations between Russia and Georgia and we were worried very much when it was happening. Saakashvili's regime, full of Russophobia, was doing everything to destroy Russian-Georgian relations. We all know how it all ended," she said.

"Russia has always been in favor of normalization of Russian-Georgian relations. We have accepted positively those positive signals, which came after change of government [in Georgia] in 2012," Matviyenko said, noting bilateral direct dialogue between Georgian PM's special envoy for relations with Russia Zurab Abashidze and Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Grigory Karasin.

Matviyenko said that these direct talks helped to improve ties in the areas where it is possible to achieve progress in the condition of absence of diplomatic relations between the two countries, specifically in trade and people-to-people contacts.

"But we are still concerned about some impenetrable position the Georgian leadership has, which does not allow us to restore full-fledged diplomatic relations. Obviously we are concerned that Georgia is getting closer to NATO, which creates instability in the Transcaucasus and which does not contribute to peace and stability in the Transcaucasus," Matviyenko said.

Burjanadze said: "Restoration of normal relations is important for both Russia and Georgia. From my recent contacts and visits to Moscow I have seen that there is a real vision among Russian leaders that these relations are important for the both countries and that there is a willingness of restoring normal relations."

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