Shared Interests in the War and Terror from Beslan to Boston

Rare Diseases and Genetic Conditions require Attention, Treatment and Financial Support

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW

Davit Narmania: “We are focusing on improving the quality of infrastructure projects”

SOCAR becomes Partner to Georgia’s National Olympic Committee

Georgia and China seek to enhance Trade Relations

Armenians Commemorate Genocide Victims
Shared Interests in the War and Propaganda of Tbilisi and Moscow

By: HYMAN KAMENOWSKY

March 29, 2013

The Georgian Times

Although Washington and Tbilisi have been hand in glove in the fight against Al-Qaeda and other Islamic extremist groups in Chechnya, Dagestan, Karachay-Cherkessia, and elsewhere in the South Caucasus, there is a growing acknowledgment from both sides that the efforts to counter terrorism in the region have not always been in harmony.

The US has been a major player in the fight against terrorism in the South Caucasus, providing financial and technical support to the governments of Georgia, Azerbaijan, and Armenia. This support has been crucial in helping these countries build their counter-terrorism capabilities and develop an effective strategy to combat terrorism.

However, there have been reports of disagreements between the US and its partners in the region over the best way to approach the threat. For example, while the US has supported the use of force in the fight against terrorism, some countries in the region have taken a more nuanced approach, emphasizing the need for dialogue and engagement with moderate Islamist organizations.

There have also been concerns about the impact of US policy on the populations in these countries. Some argue that the US focus on military action has led to a backlash against the US and its partners, while others argue that the US has not done enough to address the root causes of terrorism in the region.

Despite these challenges, there is a growing sense of shared purpose between the US and its partners in the region. As the threat from terrorism continues to evolve, it is crucial that the US and its partners in the South Caucasus work together to develop a comprehensive strategy to counter terrorism.

LISA TANAKANAVI, GT

A public opinion poll conducted by the National Democratic Institute (NDI) has confirmed that President Mikheil Saakashvili has lost the trust of the population and the ruling Georgian Dream is gaining in strength, although the personal approval ratings of almost all the leaders of the coalition, including the Prime Minister, have actually fallen.

The poll results make good reading for the present government. The Georgian Dream has not yet named its presidential candidate, but according to the NDI survey 58 percent of poll respondents vote for the candidate with whom it may be. A United National Movement candidate would be supported by only 8 percent of poll respondents while 4 percent like no possible candidate. Leader of the United National Movement Gigi Tsereteli would be supported by 3 percent of respondents and Labour’s Shalva Natava would drop to 3 percent.

The majority of those surveyed (62 percent) would vote for the Georgian Dream if the 2014 local elections were held tomorrow; the UNM would get 9 percent of the vote. The Georgian Dream was the only party that was assisted in carrying out operations. More than half of those surveyed (56 percent) identified the UNM as the strongest opposition party; all other parties were named by 1 percent or less.

The poll determined that Patriarch Ilia II is still the most popular religious figure in Georgia. He had a personal approval rating of 47 percent, compared to 8 percent for the Georgian Dream’s candidate. An NDI poll of November 2012. Parliament Speaker Davit Usupashvili had a personal approval rating of 58 percent and 52 percent respectively. The UNM’s most popular figure was Davit Bakhturidze, liked by 48 percent, while President Mikheil Saakashvili was liked by 27 percent.

Projected to the previous poll, the approval ratings of both parties had dropped slightly. The opposition party; all other parties were named by 1 percent or less. The poll results make good reading for the present government. The Georgian Dream has not yet named its presidential candidate, but according to the NDI survey 58 percent of poll respondents vote for the candidate with whom it may be. A United National Movement candidate would be supported by only 8 percent of poll respondents while 4 percent like no possible candidate. Leader of the United National Movement Gigi Tsereteli would be supported by 3 percent of respondents and Labour’s Shalva Natava would drop to 3 percent.

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Davit Narmania: “We are focusing on improving the quality of infrastructure projects”

Davit Narmania, Georgia’s Minister of Regional Development and Infrastructure discusses problems and priorities in Georgia’s infrastructure. As one of the measures to improve the quality of roads, the Ministry has recently introduced control measures to ensure the quality of imported bitumen, an essential component in the construction of asphalt.

Mr. Narmania, how do you assess the former government’s infrastructure projects? What are the problems in this area?

Soon after political power was transferred, we began studying the projects that were already underway. We found more than 200 projects being implemented concurrently, most of which were related to the repair of roads, water supply systems, and other municipal infrastructure projects. Large sums of money from the budget were allocated for these projects. Some projects did not receive permission from the local municipality, and restoration projects for various cultural and historical sites were not coordinated with the Ministry of Culture. There were also logistical problems, and these were referred to in the drafts of the Municipal Development Fund. Projects related to the rehabilitation of roads were justified legally because they were carried out according to the guidelines of international donors. We have decided to strengthen internal auditing as a way of dealing with these problems; we have replaced the audit service and hired new employees, who have begun to undergo training and are making new recommendations on how to implement them in a more effective and timely manner.

Are there any big projects that you have put on hold?

There are no projects that we have stopped indefinitely but we have seriously reconsidered several. Among them was the Tbilisi-Rustavi road project, where we noticed several inaccuracies and shortcomings. We had to go through a very extensive process based on the rules of the Asian Development Bank, which is financially supporting the project. Guidelines have been included whereby local workers were preferred over imported labor. We will be releasing a tender for this project in the near future.

What about the East-West highway project? How is it progressing?

Construction work is continuing simultaneously on three segments of the highway project: the Agara-Russi area in eastern Georgia, the Kutaisi bypass in western Georgia, and the Kobuleti bypass. We have also added a fourth section, the stretch between Samtskhe and Gogiofeli, and work will commence this year.

How much does it cost?

This project was too expensive because of its quality; as it is a new road, the surfacing costs will be quite high. This work includes the purchase of the land and soil, then asphalt contractors to asphalt the road to a depth of 28 cm. Construction of the Agara-Russi stretch will cost us GEL 60 million. This is in the price submitted to us by the company that won the tender. Other areas also have their price, which has been determined by the rules and conditions of the tender. These projects are funded by various development banks under preferred terms.

Almost two-thirds of our infrastructure projects are funded by international donors and only a third is funded by the State budget. We do not tell the press and am exclusively telling you. It will be announced this week. Thus, it should be clear that we do focus on improving the quality of roads, the Ministry has has replaced the audit service and hired new employees, who have begun to undergo training and are making new recommendations on how to implement them in a more effective and timely manner.

Are there any projects, either locally initiated or foreign funded, that you would like to see implemented?

The Ministry is working to improve the quality of both international and domestic roads. This week’s government session will confirm new instructions for the classification of responsibilities for the rehabilitation of roads. Very strict rules and measures connected to the improvement of the quality of roads will be laid down. Today, I had a two-hour meeting where we discussed the quality of bitumen and we prepared special instructions to control its import. This is something that I have not told the press and am exclusively telling you. It will be announced this week. Thus, it should be clear that we do focus on improving the quality of infrastructure projects throughout Georgia.

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On April 23, for the first time, Georgia's PM, Bidzina Ivanishvili, addressed the plenary meeting of the Council of the European Parliament (PACE) in Strasbourg. Georgia’s aspiration for Euro-Atlantic integration, Georgia’s territorial integrity, the Russian military buildup and future international relations, the restoration of justice and criticizing the previous government and President Mikheil Saakashvili for “practically excluding all the opposition group” were the main topics of the PM’s speech at the PACE summit.

“I would like to emphasize that Georgia’s western foreign policy course and integration into EU and NATO represent our strategic choice and will not change,” the PM stated at the beginning of his public speech. “Georgians, decision to apply for membership in NATO represents about a deep respect for people, among our people to live with the values of the West. This commitment was adopted in the Resolution on Basic Directions of Georgia’s Foreign Policy, unanimously adopted by the Georgian Parliament,” he added.

Tackling about Russian-Georgian relations, the PM commented that there is still a danger of war, because there is still aggression directed against our country, 20 percent of our territory has been occupied by Russia since 2008. Nevertheless, during his speech Bidzina Ivanishvili said that more than 30 years it is a “big dream” and stated that “dialogue is an unavoidable and necessary challenge.”

The PM mentioned that his government’s approach towards Russia’s aggression was “pragmatic” and the policies in this respect would be “correct, but principled.”

“We are realistic about Georgians’ possibilities. We also recognize that Georgia is a small regional power with little economic neighborhood. No sustainable future can be built by projecting military power” explained Ivanishvili. “But there can be no progress without recognition of the rights of its citizens to return to their homes.”

Ivanishvili’s public speech was followed by a question and answer session with MPs from EU and NATO countries. Many questions concerned relations with Russia and the process about the cooperation process with the United National Movement (UNM) as President Saakashvili’s minority issues, women’s emancipation in politics and opinion related to the Maghreb List. Alksey Pushkov from the Russian delegation asked the PM what he would think if his countrymen and people in South Ossetia were given an opportunity for their voice to be heard, for example during the inter-parliamentary PACE, discussed on the example of Kosovo. “Abkhazia and South Ossetia are not Kosovo. It is obvious because Abkhazians and Abkhazians will of course be able to participate in the work of PACE as members of our delegations,” Ivanishvili commented, but added that unification in the region as a result of the process of the Unification of two of these countries in this regard is lack of Georgian-language skills among Abkhazians. Ivanishvili was also asked about his opinion of the Maghreb list, as well as the imprisonment of former Ukrainian Prime Minister, Yulia Tymoshenko, in Kiev. "I am aware of the Maghreb problem and I also know about the developments in Ukraine, but I know much better what is going on in my own country and what is the situation now," he commented, adding that

“...that implies putting before justice respectable societies of the previous government for committing massive human rights violations, and the entire system of the former regime will change for the good direction,” the President said.

Responding to several questions on ethnic minority rights in Georgia, Ivanishvili said that “Abkhazians and South Ossetians will of course be able to participate in the work of PACE as members of our delegations,” Ivanishvili commented, but added that unification in the region as a result of the process of the Unification of two of these countries in this regard is lack of Georgian-language skills among Abkhazians. Usupashvili was also asked about his opinion of the Maghreb list, as well as the imprisonment of former Ukrainian Prime Minister, Yulia Tymoshenko, in Kiev. "I am aware of the Maghreb problem and I also know about the developments in Ukraine, but I know much better what is going on in my own country and what is the situation now," he commented, adding that.

“I am very glad that the PM’s PACE visit was so successful. I am sure Georgia’s aspiration for integration into the European Union and NATO and our desire of being like Europe. The main thing is that this will help us in implementing our Euro-Atlantic aspirations,” stated Irakli Alasania, Defense Minister of Georgia, adding that “it was one of the most important speeches in the European Parliament.”

Georgia’s Dream MP Tina Khidashelvi, who was among the delegation that was asked to speak out, commented that the EUPs are very content as they saw Ivanishvili’s “open manner and character.” “The goal has been achieved—probably all the questions were asked. We are very satisfied,” Khidashelvi explained. According to Irakli Menagurishvili, co-chairman of the Center for Strategic Research, the ex-Minister of Foreign Affairs of Georgia “Ivanishvili took to Strasbourg almost all the messagess, which Europe expected from us.”

“The PM should play with the issues on territorial integrity as it is an issue of the future. We can damage things so that we never will be able to fix them in the future,” Saakashvili stated. Other members of UNM also assessed Ivanishvili’s performancer negatively. Georgia Kandelaki, one of the leaders of the Parliament of Georgia as a Member of Parliament, is assumed that the PM delivered “such a poor speech,” claiming it was “too confrontational” and “fought against the Georgian Parliament.”

In the first case, regarding the law about staffing the High Court of Justice, the PM thinks that “parliament refused to take into account the most principled positions of the Venice Commission,” and not about a theoretical model, but the real context in which this process was held, stressed Gueorguri, the new head of the parliament’s administration.

Moreover, during the meeting the president of the Venice Commission Gianni Buquicchio said after the presentation of the opposition United National Movement (UNM) that “the Venice Commission welcomed this initiative in order to improve the independence of the judiciary, the efficiency of the judiciary; it seems that everything is going in a good direction,” the President stated.

As it appears the president of the Venice Commission had no remarks regarding the bill. In his notes, President Mikheil Saakashvili offers that the ruling team is studying some of 13 out of 15 submitted fundamental issues of the working of the legislative package of the law on the High Court of Justice (HCJ) since their consideration would no longer comply with the criteria of the new bill. “I doubt the president will offer something that we will share, so the Parliament is expected to vote and I am sure the Parliament will successfully override this veto,” commented Davit Usupashvili, Chairman of the Parliament. “Bill is adopted by us as useful for the country and everyone acknowledges it, including the Venice Commission,” Usupashvili explained.

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Rare Diseases and Genetic Conditions require Attention, Treatment and Financial Support

On Apr. 17 in Tbilisi, Sheraton Metechi Palace hosted a conference on Development of Rare Diseases Policy/Strategy in Georgia for 2013-2017. The conference was organized by the Georgian Foundation for Genetic and Rare Diseases, which unites the majority of organizations and doctors working in the field of rare diseases as well as self-help groups of patients and their parents. The conference was held in the frame of EUROMAN 2 project which is initiated by EC and supported by EUERCOM, Committee of Rare Diseases experts of European Union.

www.europplanproject.eu

This project aims to help European countries in development of adequate rare diseases policy. Initator of the conference was EURORDIS, European Rare Diseases Organization, which is actively supporting EU countries as well as non-EU countries, such as Georgia, in the field of rare diseases.

With institutions as Ministry of Labour, Health and Social Affairs, National Center for Disease Control and Public Health, Tbilisi State Medical University, Tbilisi State University, Georgian Pediatric Academy, as well as the majority of medical professional and scientists working in the field of rare diseases in Georgia, and patient organizations took part in the organization and work of the conference.

The main goal of the conference was formation of effective working group which would consist of Health Care decision makers and people most competent and motivated in rare diseases, including patients and their parents, and whose function would be to draft a National Rare Diseases Policy/Strategy.

Rare diseases are often overlooked, not only do they not affect many people but they are not profitable for drug companies and do not gain much attention by the mainstream press. The Conference sought to raise awareness within the medical community about rare diseases and to draw the attention of health decision-makers to the problems in this field and pose social awareness and societal marketing projects.

The European Commission on Public Health defines rare diseases as life-threatening or chronically debilitating diseases (in most cases genetically determined) which are of such low prevalence that special combined efforts are needed to address them (first of all treatment). Statistically, low prevalence corresponds to less than 1 case per 2000 population. According to the EURORDIS estimations, there are between 5,000 and 7,000 different rare diseases. In spite of the fact that each of the diseases affects small numbers within a population, overall, rare diseases may affect 6-8% of European Union citizens (as well as in Georgia).

The majority of diseases are life-threatening and the majority of those who fall ill are children. Most find themselves in a critical condition due to the lack of proper diagnostic, experienced medical statement and evidence-based treatment. Lack of access to public health services is not only caused by prohibitive costs but also the lack of proper health services. In many instances there is a lack of diagnostic equipment, testing systems, protocols and appropriate and affordable medicines. Not only are such needs not accessible but those in medical and management positions are unqualified and are not keeping up with current research in the field due to the lack of continued professional development and released demand to achieve higher professional qualifications.

Early detection and timely treatment can save the children from a disability and even from death, not to mention the reduction of suffering for their parents and relatives, and also in terms of peer support and groups that help them deal with the impact of diseases on many interested stakeholders.

The importance of the Conference was directly in regard to the severity of rare diseases on an international level, across the South Caucasus region, and with particular focus on Georgia. Rare and little understood diseases are likely one of the most important aspects for appropriate and affordable treatments. Medical specializations such as pediatrics, endocrinology, hematology, rheumatology, neurology, orthopedics, genetics, etc. However, in some cases, they are forced to combine, not only because of the rare manifestations in the overall population, but also because of the dire prognosis and lack of prospects for appropriate and affordable treatments. Medical products intended for the rare diseases are called “orphan” because it is not cost-effective for the pharmaceutical industry to develop and market the products. It should be noted that the orphan drugs policy is the main component is for companies to be positioned to assist Georgian MDs in obtaining correct diagnosis in difficult cases.

Unfortunately the vast majority of physicians know practically nothing about rare diseases. The term “medical field” with respect to rare diseases is incorrect, as all of these diseases are attributable to the specific fields, such as: pediatrics, genomics, evidence-based treatment. Lack of experienced medical statement and evidence-based treatment. The Medical society and patients in providing medical attention, treatment and care due to absence of adequate rare diseases policy/strategy in Georgia. The Conference sought to address everybody who may read this article in conclusion, most of our patients, including many children with rare diseases, are deprived of access to adequate treatment and care due to absence of sufficient financing. We call on you to help our children. The Georgian Foundation for Genetic and Rare Diseases, which brings together patients with rare diseases and doctors and scientists working in the field, guarantees that your financial support will be effectively used to solve the problem of rare diseases in Georgia.

Please contact us by email: grd.georgia@gmail.com
The rapid economic development and ease of doing business in Georgia has attracted tens of thousands of foreign investors in recent years. The Economist Intelligence Unit’s Doing Business 2013 ranked Georgia 41st out of 183 countries and territories. In 2005 Georgia was 112th. In the Heritage Foundation’s Index of Economic Freedom Georgia has moved from 99th place in 2005 to 21st in 2013, whilst its neighbours Armenia, Turkey, Azerbaijan and Russia are 38th, 69th, 88th and 139th respectively. Transparency International states that only 3 percent of Georgian public servants are paid bribes in 2011. The Georgian government is trying to create better conditions for investors in order to attract more foreigners here. The country has seen impressive development in various economic areas, and this progress has been highlighted by several international organisations, explained.

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By LISA TONAKANYAN, GT

Georgia and China seek to enhance Trade Relations

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By EMMA BARALMOVA, GT

The Turkish Embassy in Georgia celebrates a unique annual festival dedicated to children. Each year it invites students from a different Georgian school to the celebration, and this year the Embassy’s guests were the pupils of Quality School International.

“Children are the flowers of life!” – For every citizen of Tur- key this expression has a special meaning. One of the national characteristics of Turks is their selflessness for the younger gen- eration. Turkish families tend to have many children, three or more per family being the norm. The state does not offer any special incentives to increase the birth rate and does not limit it.

There is a special festival of children in Turkey – “Cocuk Bayramı”, which is held every year on April 23rd. This is the day of the first convolution in 1920 of the Great National Assembly in Ankara, now seen as the first act of the national war of libera- tion from Ottoman rule, which established the modern Republic of Turkey. Mustafa Kemal Atat- urk, the first President of Tur- key, believed that the future of the nation lay in its children and therefore decreed that on this day adults should “give up” their au- thority for children for a while. Turkey’s main streets and schools are decorated with flowers, balloons, traditional portraits of Atatürk and Turkish flags. In secondary schools, the tradition- al home of this festival, pupils are elected as deputies, ministers and mayors of the school and some are allowed to work in its personnel department for the day. Columns of pupils in school uniform parade through the streets and children from all over the world come to Turkey to celebrate with them.

Children’s Days is considered one of the most important hol- idays in Turkey, which is why the Turkish Embassy in Georgia invites children from Georgian schools to celebrate with them. Quality School International teaches the Turkish language, amongst others, as part of its curriculum so attending the cele- bration had extra significance for its students.

The school children began their day by watching an animat- ed cartoon about Turkey and then took turns in sitting in the Turkish Ambassador’s chair.

“Today is Children’s Day. I love this holiday. It was estab- lished by Atatürk, who loved children very much. I partici- pated in the celebrations of this holiday in Turkey. It is especial- ly interesting when children from all over the world come to Tur- key to celebrate with us, I’ve lived here for two years, but I celebrate this holiday here,” told Leyla Ioquch, one of the celebrat- ing children.

Turkish Ambassador to Geor- gia, Levent Mustafı̇ Burhan, ex- plained that April 23 is the holi- day Atatürk gave to children and at the same time the date of the inauguration of the parliament of Turkey in 1920, Turkish chil- dren celebrate this holiday with children from all over the world. This festival is unique. Our Em- bassy marks this holiday by in- viting pupils from different Geor- gian schools, and there are no special criteria for who should be invited. We will invite any child. After lunch I have to vis- it the 5th school, where we have also organised a Children’s Day celebration, and also an orphan- age in the countryside. We try our best to celebrate this holi- day with a range of different chil- dren. We want to inspire chil- dren to become self-reliant and develop a sense of patriotism and love for their country,” the Turkish Ambassador in Georgia, with the support of the Turkish International Coopera- tion and Coordination Agency, also sends hundreds of Georgian schoolchildren to Turkey each year to participate in this festi- vals in various cities. Under a special programme developed by the Ministry of Education of Turkey, Georgian children between the ages of 10 to 13 live with Turkish families for a week, exchange views on international conditions with Turkish children and visiting Turkey’s historical and cultural sites.
Armenians Commemorate Genocide Victims

By LISA TONAKANYAN, GT

Ninety-eight years have passed since the Ottoman authorities arrested and murdered some 250 Armenian intellectuals in Constantinople. Every April 24 Armenians all over the world pay tribute to the victims of this massacre and the murder and forced deportations of Armenians between 1915 and 1923. The Armenian community of Georgia always holds a number of events to commemorate these tragic events.

Late in the evening of April 23 around a hundred young Armenians held a traditional candle-lit demonstration, marching from Vake Park to the Turkish Embassy in Tbilisi. This parade is an annual protest against Ankara’s denial that the Armenian genocide had place.

The next day Georgian-Armenians laid a wreath at the place.

The events started with the service at the Surb Echmiadzin Armenian Diocese in Tbilisi, attended by the Georgian-Armenian community. Zacariah Anahit, Head of the Legal Department of the Armenian Diocese, and Levon Isakhanyan, the Georgian-Armenian community leader, joined the service to achieve recognition by informing the world about the Armenian genocide.

Gedevan Popkhadze, the Georgian-Armenian community leader, said that April 24 is a painful day for him as it is for any Armenian but Georgia will not recognize the events it commemorates as genocide, as Armenia demands. However, Archchishvili, the Georgian-Armenian community leader, said that the world would not have seen the Holocaust if the Armenian genocide had been recognized.

After the service, the Georgian-Armenians moved to the Turkish Embassy and held a peaceful demonstration. “We aim to inform the world about the Armenian genocide, as it is very important to encourage its recognition,” Levon Isakhanyan, the Head of the Legal Department of the Armenian Diocese, said. The Georgian-Armenian community leader said that it’s her duty to contribute to achieving recognition by informing the world about the events which took place in 1915 and 1916-1923 in what is now Turkey. "I am a descendant of Armenians who were deprived of everything, who escaped with their lives. They survived to tell the world their story, and how human beings should not behave," she told GT. She believes Turkey needs this recognition more than Armenia does, as this would “prove its right to belong to the civilized world”.

Most of Armenia came under Ottoman rule during the 15th-16th centuries. The vast majority of Armenians were grouped together under the name “Armenian Millet”. The first mass killings of Armenians took place under Sultan Abdul Hamid, who was called the “great assassin” and “bloody Sultan” in the European and American press for murdering between 100,000 and 300,000 Armenians. The Young Turk Revolution of 1908 ushered in the resolution of the “Armenian Issue” through the planned massacre and deportation of local Armenians, on the pretext that Armenians were supporting Russian troops against the Turks. On April 24, 1915 Armenian notables were arrested and later executed by the Ottoman authorities, and from then until 1923 up to 1.5 million Armenians were killed and hundreds of thousands forced to embrace Islam.

The overwhelming majority of historians, and academic institutions which conduct Holocaust and Genocide Studies recognize the Armenian Genocide. Uruguay was the first nation to do so, in 1965, followed since by Russia, France, Italy, Germany, the Netherlands, Belgium, Poland, Lithuania, Slovakia, Sweden, Switzerland, Greece, The Vatican City, Cyprus, Lebanon, Canada, Venezuela, Argentina, Chile and 42 U.S. states. The genocide has also been recognized by the European Parliament, Council of Europe, World Council of Churches, Human Rights Association (Turkey), and the Permanent Peoples’ Tribunal. However, Turkey itself denies that the word genocide is an accurate description of the events of that period. Azerbaijan, in solidarity with Armenia, takes the same position.
The Best Businessman &
The Best Company
in Georgia of 2012

TOP 50 Companies in Georgia
Named by The Georgian Times and GORBI

The order of the following is a list of participants has no significance

- LTD Heidelberg Cement Georgia
- LTD Zedazeni 2012
- “Goodwill” Chain of supermarkets
- JSC Georgian Bank
- LTD Soker Energy Georgia
- JSC TBC Bank
- “PSP Pharma”
- LTD “Raddison Blue Iveria”
- LTD “Aversi Pharma”
- LTD “Rustavi’s Azot”
- JSC Wissol Petroleum Georgia
- LTD Barambo
- GIG-Georgian Industrial group
- JSC Nikara
- “T and K” restaurants MacDonalds
- San Pertroleum Georgia Gulf
- LTD Coca-Cola Bottlers Georgia
- Carrefour Chain of Markets
- LTD Geoplan
- Zestaphoni Manufacture “Fero”
- JSC Telavi
- JSC ProCredit Bank
- JSC Telavi Winery
- Rustavi Metallurgical Company
- LTD YTB Bank
- Silknet
- JSC “Davit Sarajishvili and Eniseli”
- Company Caucasus Online
- LTD Marshe
- Dairy products manufacturing company
  “Ecofood”
- GWP “Georgian Water and Power”
- LTD Georgian Sugar
- “Sante GMT Products”
- “Natural Mineral Water - Nabeghlavi”
- Georgian Bear company Natakhtari
- LTD “Lukoil Georgia”
- “Aldagi BCI” Insurance company
- GPS Pharm Company
- JSC Smart Retail
- LTD Rompertol Georgia
- LTD Ellt Electronics
- Bank Republic
- JSC Bagrationi 1882
- GPH Holding
- Company Besline
- LLC “Barvil Georgia”
- JSC Madame Mining
- Georgian Carriage Builders Holding
Appliance Detained in Strange Twist

By LG CHOPAN, GT

The ongoing investigation into the mysterious death of former Georgian Prime Minister Zurab Zhvania took an unusual turn this week. The former United Nations representative, who was appointed in 2004, has become a suspect in this case and has therefore been brought in for questioning, as every other suspect will be. We cannot say at this stage how long it will be detained. Its rights will be protected and the questions will be conducted under the terms laid down by the law.

Many commentators have welcomed this move. Ushangi Matiashvili of the Friends of the UNM praised this apparent volte face. “Ever since they took power the Dreamers have only arrested UNM-supporting embezzlers and abusers of power and ignored the real criminals, the people who voted the wrong way. Now they are acting on real, independently verified intelligence, although we do not hold out much hope of an impartial investigation.”

Thomas Jefferson Birch of the Southern Poverty Law Center, a former Democratic member of the US House of Representatives, says, “Of course it’s guilty, all Iranians are guilty. They are all in that part of the world. America is the land of the free. If they don’t do what America wants, they can’t eat their food you can’t trust them.”

However others have raised concerns over the detention of the appliance. Asmati Metreveli of the Global Forum for World Domination states, according to our information this heater was detained by three Justice Ministry personnel, one of which had attached the buttons to his uniform with black cotton rather than the regulation navy blue. This is a clear violation of the Criminal Code and the heater must therefore be released immediately as it is a political prisoner.”

GT has conducted its own investigation into the detention of the heater and this has raised a number of questions. For example, when the heater was observed in the Justice Ministry no lawyer was present. We are unaware of whether a lawyer was present during its questioning, but the law clearly states that whilst in detention a suspect should have access to their lawyer at all times. Furthermore, we have found no evidence concerning the heater was informed of its rights in Farsi, or any other Iranian language, nor any language spoken to the heater was understood by domestic appliance. This would also be a violation of the Criminal Code and accepted international practice. We have also found no evidence that a translator was present during its questioning or that the heater ever confirmed that it understood the translator or understood the questions being asked. Further, the Iranian Emomai was not informed of the heater’s detention and nor was it asked whether the heard enjoyed diplomatic immunity, as both were installed in Zabani’s flat in an official capacity, by the state. There is also the question of heandreous corpus – Georgian law clearly states that a suspect can only be detained for questioning for 24 hours before being either charged or released, and our sources have confirmed that the heater has been sitting in the Ministry of Justice for at least a week, and perhaps longer, without any charges having been brought.

GT has asked the Ministry of Justice for a reason, but it is refrainning from doing so while the investigation is ongoing. However Ushangi Matiashvili stated, “The heater was declared guilty by an investigation conducted under the authority of President Sakaevlalvi. Sakaevlalvi is already abroad in Russia which is why he became President, and none of these so-called concerns of yours change that. Justice begins and ends with the President”. Thomas Jefferson Birch commented, “Why do the guilty need lawyers? How is that justice? It was made in Iran by people who don’t follow American codes. You have to look at probable cause here. What the hell was this heater doing in a terrorist country in the first place if it wasn’t under orders to kill a friend of America? Is your newspaper full of pinko subversives like the rest of your damn country?”

“The questions of yours concern legal matters, and as such should be raised, addressed and argued over by members of our organisation. It is what we do best and what our training is for. Asmati Metreveli noted, “These official version of Prime Minister Zabani’s death has long been a source of controversy. However the detention of this heater raises the possibility that, however outlandish this version appears, it may have a grain of truth in it. The new government is keen to present itself as balanced and impartial rather than vengeful, and as such has a vested interest in claiming that its predecessor got something right, some of the time. We await further developments with interest.”

THE CAUCASUS: the knowledgeable Need to supply

By KENDRA PARADIS, GT

Thomas de Waal’s ‘The Caucasus: An Introduction’ is a slight misnomer; only a dozen pages are devoted to independent states of the South Caucasus. The book contains a historical overview from Tsarist Russia to present day arguing, “Geography is destiny” which de Waal lays out in his opening chapters.

In somewhat of a disclaimer de Waal points out, “The whole picture is deeply complex and makes the Balkans seem simple by comparison.”

AsAcclaimed as the foremost historian of the Caucasus: ‘The Caucasus: An Introduction’ - despite all its drawbacks - is one of the best independent references for anybody who is generally interested in the region. Indeed, even on some international forums from the OIC through the EU and up to the UN, we are witness for too often overly simplistic and plainly incorrect views on the Caucasus and its people.

The book does a satisfactorily job introducing the context of the South Caucasus however; given the naïve utopian recommendation in his closing section it is clear we can’t expect to gain anything more from his work. De Waal posits the only chance for the Caucasus to truly unlock its potential both in talent and natural resources lies in the union of republics with transparent borders and its nations working and living together in peace resting both outside influence and inside nationalist forces.

In terms of clarity the book acts as a readable and often concise in its informative and detailed structure although sometimes oversimplified in its conclusions or heavy-handed in focus. Undoubtedly, while still readable and interesting it is littered with numerous spelling and grammatical errors. The book has several highlighted epaulets which are helpful in giving readers a more detailed look at some of the important places, figures, or questions being considered in each chapter, however, of fourteen only five concern topics outside of particular Georgian or Armenian focus. This is an overall theme in the book.

Other than an honorable mention in the timeline of political events, de Waal does not deal with the complexities of the Azeri enclave of Nakhichevan or even mention such conflicts as those of Armenian minorities in the Samtske-Javakheti region of Georgia. To the book’s defense de Waal gives a brief description of many ethnic minorities including for example Kurds, Pontic Greeks and Jews. Confronting the worrisome inconsistencies the casual reader about Akhalkatsi’s 2004 Presidential election in which he claims, “...did not involve the Azeri minority” although the Aclli region’s Georgians did participate; but de Waal clearly lays out the knowledge of the region as a whole far outweighs any nit-picky claims critics would be quick to produce.

While for newcomers, information on modern developments in the Caucasus is arguably more interesting and relevant; his coverage of the clear and direct coverage of the Georgian conflicts in Abkhazia and South Ossetia; starting in his description of the assimilation policy against the Abkhaz during Soviet years continuing on to rep- rimend present-day Georgian nationalism.

When speaking of the Soviet legacy de Waal states, “...all three countries still live with the authoritarian political culture...” as well as citing that, “...Middle Eastern governments’ one point stating that Prince Mikhail Vorontsov, the first owner of the Caucasus was present during its question- ing…2004 might have been a promising moment... to end the conflict peacefully.”

Though ‘The Caucasus: An Introduction’ gives a readable and reasonably detailed analysis of Georgia’s conflicts and contemporary political dynamics, de Waal does not discuss many of the other tragedies that have taken place in the Caucasus across the last two decades in any real detail. This is a definite important book for newcomers who are looking to place their new home in context and others may find this an interesting starting point. However, readers who are already at least moderately knowledgeable or keen on learning about the Chechens, Dagestanis and other ethnicities living in the North Caucasus should look elsewhere; for an ample Frederik Eerens’ equally but more aptly titled ‘The Caucasus: An Introduction’. 
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Future Shorts

Georgia ‘eager to show a better’ form of art to Georgians

By TAKO AGARASHIVILL GT

In 1873 when Edward James Mogridge photographed a horse in fast motion he had no idea he had just taken the first step into what would become the biggest entertainment industry in the world. He had no idea that people around the world would be grateful to his bold attempt to capture a moving object on film.

Cinematography is a life-style. Either you have it under your skin, or it bypasses you. It’s one of the greatest forms of art at all times. Don’t say you love movies if you are following the Hollywood box office. Go deeper than the profit, go beyond the celebrities, go aside the special effects and follow the art of true cinematography. It knows exactly what to feed you. It’s a long and hardworking path to success. As much as Hollywood is proud of its dazzling movies, there is much more to it. There are short films that are not glamorous and are therefore in less demand. The most prominent names in the business started with doing shorts.

The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences defines a short film as “an original motion picture that has a running time of 40 minutes or less, including all credits”. You would be amazed if you knew how many genius directors have spent a lot of time producing shorts. Sadly, full length films are more advertised. Short films have their own certain and very loyal audience, but is generally much underrated. Directors like Jim Jarmusch, Alejandro González Iñárritu, Spike Lee, Bernardo Bertolucci, István Szabó and other outstanding names have done their fair share of shorts. I’m pretty sure and hope they are willing to create more of this truly amazing form of cinematography – short films – in the future.

Future Shorts is the world’s largest pop up film festival and is a short film label based in London in 2003. It started as Future Shorts One and was a monthly screening of short films by filmmakers from all over the world. Working across exhibition, distribution and experiential events, Future Shorts is the product of 9 years of audience development, experimentation and of reacting to the demand for another way of experiencing film. At first it covered 12 countries; now it does over a hundred. Georgia is a country well known for its art and the dedication and boldness in the industry. Yet, no one except Nino Togonidze acted on the dedication to shorts. She attended Future Shorts events while living in London. The Georgian girl was captivated enough to know she wanted to be a part of it. All she had at the moment was a desire, enthusiasm and the ticket to Georgia.

Since she couldn’t join them in London, she brought Future Shorts with her to Georgia. Thanks to her every season we can go to a place, get comfortable and dive into the utopia of short films.

When did Georgia become a part of Future Shorts and how did you come across it?

It was in 2011 that I was living in London. I studied digital cinematography at SAE Institute in London. I was also interning at Outedozer. The company works with prominent pockets for the events. Who are you – the team? It’s 5-6 people. It’s a group of people who have the same interest for art. It’s a friendly yet professional team. We

The last event DJ Phono cost us $15,000. This is not yet seen a DJ from such a pop- ular and quality label as him. He works with Modelessekt’s label Monokinet. It’s the same label Thom York works under. We didn’t really make any money out of it. The commercial interest is not what motivates us. We want to inculcate Future Shorts in the country. So far, events are costing us – the team. We have paid quite some money out of our

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