

Carrefour's Rapid Expansion Continues: A Huge New Supermarket Opens in Zugdidi



1,800 square metres offers a wide selection of high-quality food products and household items. This includes fresh and frozen food, organic produce, baby care, health and personal hygiene items, the brand's own Private Label range, and much more. Carrefour maintains its leadership position in terms of value, offering the best in range while maintaining competitive pricing.

This is the 75th store in Georgia for the French brand, which highlights Carrefour's position as a trusted community partner and its significant contribution to the economy. By opening new hypermarkets and supermarkets, Carrefour is creating more employment opportunities for local talent and promoting the development of the country's pro-



Carrefour, which is owned and operated by Majid Al Futtaim in Georgia, continues to actively expand throughout the country – this time launching a new, large-scale supermarket in the city of Zugdidi.

The new store opened on November 22 in Zugdidi Mall, Merab Kostava Street 28, in response to growing consumer demand. Open daily from 9.00am – 10.00pm, it provides customers with the latest services in modern retail as well as the chance to purchase everything one needs under one roof.

Carrefour's new supermarket spanning



duction, in cooperation with local farmers.

Supporting local agriculture, the retail industry and the Georgian economy remains the key priority for Carrefour, which is further demonstrated by the fact that it currently employs more than 2,500 local colleagues and plans to hire another 1000 by 2025.

The first Carrefour hypermarket was opened in Tbilisi Mall in 2012. Since then, it has continued to expand and elevate shopping through ongoing expansion. The brand's goal is to provide a wide selection of high-quality products at the most affordable prices, creating unforgettable moments for everyone, every day.



EU Ambassador to Georgia: It is Very Important that Draft Law on Deoligarchization be Sent to Venice Commission

We know that the draft law on deoligarchization passed the second reading in the parliament. In our opinion, it is very important that this bill be sent to the Venice Commission, – said the Ambassador of the European Union

to Georgia, Pawel Herczynski.

He noted that the Venice Commission can publish its own recommendations and these recommendations will be taken into account.

“It is up to Georgia to decide what the process of deoligarchization will be. It is about the creation of a systemic frame-

work that excludes the unwanted interest and influence of individuals on politics. Georgians must decide to implement this by adopting a law. We hope that this draft will be sent to the Venice Commission and the recommendations of the Venice Commission will be taken into account,” the ambassador said.

More Than Another Victory

Continued from page 1

Let me quote here one cute little excerpt from the conversation between Gerald Davies, the President of the Wales Rugby Union, and Sophie Katsarava, Georgia's Ambassador in London:

Before the match:
Gerald - Keep smiling!
Sophie - Of course!
After the match:
Gerald - Keep celebrating!
Sophie - Keep smiling!

This humorous exchange of words between a Welshman and a Georgian lady were so well-meant and full of love and friendly overtones that they could have had the power to save our planet from any possible man-made disaster.

The game was full of interesting play and surprises, the last saving the day for all Georgia. The supportive enthusiasm was as outstanding at the Cardiff stadium as it was in front of TV sets back in Georgia. The echo of Georgia's victory reverberated in stentorian tones over the continent all the way from one capital to another. The émigré Georgian men and women from all over Great Britain were at the Principality Stadium, wrapped in Georgia's national flags, very enthusiastically but also very elegantly rooting for the country of their origin.

The entire nation was poised in proud ethnic synergy and genuine national dedication to one great goal – ‘Georgia

on my mind’. This was the moment when the feelings and doings of our notoriously opposed political rivals made zero sense, having been overwhelmed so completely that there was no room left in between them for their habitual vitriolic invectives and baleful verbal skirmishes. They only knew that Georgia had done it, and that was the only meaningful thing at the time of the glorious all-national celebration. What an amazing breakthrough!

Just as amazing was the benevolence of the other side in Cardiff at the concluding get-together, where the WRU President Gerald Davies and GRU President Soso Tkemaladze reciprocated speeches to greet the teams and the public, both sides celebrating with noticeable equanimity and gentlemanly congeniality. And still, Tkemaladze could not but commendably reveal his obvious delight and shining happiness, which was totally contagious and consummate. The entire picture was historically appreciable, as if something huge had changed in Georgia's international image and behavior. The impression was that we will never ever be the same again, and that thanks to this one rugby match which was more, much more, than any other victory of Georgia in big sports.

Georgian Rugby, the truly distinguished and dignified great grandchild of our weathered Lelo, is strongly and determinedly making its thorny but glorious



Georgia celebrate their first victory over Wales. Photo by Joe Giddens/PA

way to where the rugby biggies reside – the famous Tier-1. Who would have believed a success of that magnitude, say, 30 years ago? But it has happened, the success is here, present and fulltime in all its astounding size, as astonishing

and unpredictable as it has turned out to be, and all that thanks to our unbelievably powerful athletes, full of stamina and zeal to get the job done. Nobody can make this country look more attractive and deserving of the world's attention

than those strong and handsome boys who have done more than they did at the Principality Stadium in Cardiff, Wales, on November 19, 2022 – one of the brightest and hottest days in the history of Georgian sports.



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Ukrainian President Zelensky Urges UNSC to Support 'Peace Formula' Following Missile Strikes

BY ANA DUMBADZE

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky spoke to the United Nations Security Council on Wednesday, urging the group to support the Ukrainian peace formula following a wave of Russian missile strikes that the President dubbed "the Russian formula of terror."

"I emphasize yet again: it is high time to support the Ukrainian formula of peace. There should be no room for terror in the world," Zelensky said.

He emphasized the need for "modern and effective air and missile defense systems" after detailing the series of Russian air strikes that destroyed critical facilities, including energy infrastructure, residential housing, and a hospital, where a newborn baby in the hospital's maternity ward was killed.

At least three people have been killed and six injured after a Russian missile strike in the Ukrainian capital of Kyiv, the city administration reported. A 17-year-old girl was among them.

This large-scale assault on energy infrastructure also led to widespread energy blackouts in Ukraine and neighboring Moldova, an act Zelensky said was "analogous to using weapons of mass destruction."

US Ambassador Linda Thomas-Greenfield was one of several representatives to reiterate their support for Ukraine, with emphasis on condemning Russian attacks on Ukrainian energy infrastructure.

"Putin's motive could not be more clear and more cold-blooded. He is clearly — clearly — weaponizing winter to inflict immense suffering on the Ukrainian people. He has decided that if he can't



Ukrainian President Zelensky urges UNSC to support 'Peace Formula' following missile strikes

seize Ukraine by force, he will try to freeze the country into submission," Greenfield noted.

ALMOST ALL POWER RESTORED TO UKRAINIAN CITY OF LVIV AND OTHER REGIONS HIT BY RUSSIAN STRIKES

Power has been restored to almost 90% of the Ukrainian city of Lviv, officials said Wednesday, following another barrage of Russian strikes which knocked out electricity throughout much of the country.

In a telegram statement, Lviv Mayor Andriy Sadovyi said that scheduled blackouts, which have become regular during the invasion, will continue due to country's war-damaged energy infrastructure, "so some houses may be without electricity." Water and heating have also been restored and all city services are working, he added.

The situation in Odesa is similar, with water and heat restored, according to Kyrylo Tymoshenko, deputy head of the Office of the President of Ukraine.

"Power supply — the region is supplied, consumers are being connected," he said. Electricity in the Zaporizhzhia region has also been restored.

According to the Ternopil region military administration, the power system there is "being stabilized" with customers "gradually being connected to the grid."

About one third of the region has electricity, with critical infrastructure facilities being connected to the power supply first.

BIDEN ADMINISTRATION CONDEMNS RUSSIAN STRIKES ON UKRAINE'S POWER INFRASTRUCTURE

The Biden administration on Wednesday

condemned Russia's strikes on power generating infrastructure across Ukraine.

National Security Council spokesperson Adrienne Watson said in a statement that Russia "is increasingly turning to horrific attacks against the Ukrainian people, with punishing strikes damaging energy grid infrastructure, and deliberately doing so as winter approaches."

Watson said that the strikes "do not appear aimed at any military purpose," but "instead further the goal of the Putin regime to increase the suffering and death" of Ukrainians.

The US also warned that the actions show "Russia is willing to increase the risk of a nuclear safety incident that could not only further harm Ukraine, but affect the entire region as well."

IAEA DIRECTOR WARNS ABOUT 'POTENTIAL CONSEQUENCES' AT ZAPORIZHZHIA

Negotiations between Kyiv and Moscow on the establishment of a safety zone around the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant continue — but in the meantime the director of the UN nuclear watchdog is warning about potential consequences.

"We cannot continue counting on good luck to avoid a nuclear accident," International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Director General Rafael Grossi told CNN on Wednesday.

Grossi said negotiations are "moving forward" but "this is an active combat zone, therefore getting to agreed parameters for this is not such an easy thing to do."

The IAEA director said he met with a Russian delegation in Turkey earlier Wednesday and spoke with Ukraine's Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba on Tuesday.

"I am having consultations with both. I would not agree with the assessment that we are not making any progress, I

think we are," Grossi said. "Of course, we are talking about something which is very difficult. This is war. This is real war and the protection zone that I am proposing is precisely on the front line, on the line where both adversaries are in contact."

Later on Wednesday, the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant "once again lost access to external electricity" and was instead relying on its emergency diesel generators for the power it needs for reactor cooling and other essential functions, IAEA said in a statement.

US TO PROVIDE \$400 MILLION IN ADDITIONAL SECURITY ASSISTANCE TO UKRAINE

The US will provide \$400 million in additional security assistance to Ukraine, the White House announced Wednesday in a memo.

According to a statement from US Secretary of State Antony Blinken, the drawdown "includes additional arms, munitions, and air defense equipment from US Department of Defense inventories."

A White House official said that the package has "additional munitions for National Advanced Surface-to-Air Missile Systems (NASAMS), 150 heavy machine guns with thermal imagery sights to counter Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS); additional ammunition for High Mobility Artillery Rocket Systems (HIMARS), 200 precision-guided 155mm artillery rounds," and more.

Total US military assistance for Ukraine has amounted to approximately \$19.7 billion since the beginning of the Biden administration, Blinken's statement added.

"We will continue to support Ukraine for as long as it takes, so it can continue to defend itself and be in the strongest possible position at the negotiating table when the time comes," Blinken said.

From Balancing to Extraction

ANALYSIS BY EMIL AVDALIANI

To divide Russia and China, the West first needs to push Moscow toward Beijing. The West needs to think long-term when it comes to the China-Russia partnership. The methods used thus far to divide their growing cooperation have failed. Instead, what the West first needs to do is to drive Moscow closer to Beijing only to see the Kremlin bouncing back to balance the increasingly lopsided ties with China by compromising with the West. It will take years, if not decades, but without this long-term vision, the West's strategy toward Russia will result in another grave failure.

Russia does not like to be dependent on a single power. In fact, its campaign against the West is an attempt to extract itself from its fixation on Europe. Moscow might presently feel comfortable with China, as Beijing seems to be less demanding when it comes to human rights and other elements of liberal internationalism, but in the longer run, the urge to free itself from geopolitical fixation will push Russia back to the West to seek accommodation.

The latter might not be a total abandonment of its imperial ambitions, simply because Russia cannot do so. Historically, it missed out on the Renaissance and Enlightenment, and only played briefly with liberal experimentation throughout the 20th century. The optimal expectation would be Moscow renouncing its military ambitions in its immediate neighborhood, while the West will leave Russia and its internal development as-is. Truly a shaky peace,

but it could be developed into something more fundamental if it produces at least a brief calm in the wider Black Sea region and Eastern Europe.

But first, the West needs to push Russia tighter into China's embrace. The process started in 2014 after the annexation of Crimea, but at the time, Moscow managed to keep a balance between the West and China. Moscow also played well on fears in Germany, France and other European states that too much pressure put on the Kremlin would push Russia toward China. The second invasion of Ukraine was a watershed moment not only for Ukraine and the resilience of the trans-Atlantic community, but also for Russia's future. Where, before 2022, Moscow could choose when to rely on China, now it has to do so and in almost all areas. Reliance comes with all sorts of silent concessions as well as the fear of becoming an appendage to the Asian giant.

The process has already started in Central Asia. True that both cooperate, and there is no need for these powers to sign official, binding alliances, as the two are actually freer without them. Beijing and Moscow have bigger space to maneuver and they deeply appreciate this level of freedom. Therefore, the alliance thinking needs to be cast away: We are entering an era of loose Eurasian partnerships. What will unite Eurasian powers is their shared opposition to the West and their growing ability to gradually shape the norms of international relations.

Yet the boundary between healthy balance and toxic dependence is often difficult to trace, and Russia might not be able to stop the process. The recent Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) summit held in Samarkand,



Russian President Vladimir Putin shakes hands with Chinese President Xi Jinping during the Eastern Economic Forum in Russia in 2018. Photo by Sergei Chirikov/AFP via Getty Images

Uzbekistan, on 15-16 September, exemplified the troubles Moscow is facing in the region and in its relations with China.

As Russia's fortunes seemed increasingly volatile in Ukraine, Russian president Vladimir Putin dearly needed a public appearance with Xi, and preferably open Chinese support too. Xi did not voice his public support for Russian actions, a stark discrepancy with the rhetoric from January when the two proclaimed a partnership with "no limits." Though for Russia the trip was mostly about China, for the latter, the SCO summit was about advancing its

more ambitious agenda which involved cementing its influence in Central Asia with the opportunities which emerged amid flagging Russian influence in the region. Xi's itinerary underlined this thinking and heightened Chinese expectations. Multi-billion trade agreements signed with Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan, as well as the progress on the China-Kyrgyzstan-Uzbekistan railway, are other results of winning Chinese diplomacy. The Central Asian states seem to no longer feel comfortable with Russia, and are increasingly supportive of geopolitical multiplicity in the region.

The dilution of Russia power is now

increasingly an established fact. Geopolitical plurality trumps the concept of Russia's concept "privileged sphere of influence". Moreover, dependence on China also kills Putin's much venerated multipolar world concept. These two fears will eventually push Russia to seek accommodation with the West. The West just needs to be patient and supportive of Ukraine and other threatened states near Russia.

Emil Avdaliani is a professor at European University and the Director of Middle East Studies at the Georgian think-tank, Geocase.

"Captured Emotions" - Russian Propaganda

BLOG BY NINO IMEDASHVILI
FOR GFSIS

Propaganda is a powerful weapon of the Russian hybrid war. By influencing people's emotions, it achieves on the one hand the neutralization of an active minority, and on the other mobilizes unconditional support around the ruling regime/leader.

Propaganda manages to "capture" the "emotions" of the people by using a plethora of factors, including ongoing economic and security problems. However, in our blog, we will review merely the emotional pillars of the propaganda structure, and its main patterns and results.

THE DIMENSIONS OF PROPAGANDA

Russian propaganda has two dimensions - internal and external. The internal dimension of propaganda serves to maintain public support for Russia's ruling regime, while the external dimension serves to restore and strengthen Russia's lost influence on the neighboring post-Soviet countries, especially aimed at those with a pro-Western foreign orientation: Georgia, Ukraine, and Moldova.

Both dimensions of propaganda are managed by the Kremlin. Management includes formulating a propaganda message and then controlling the mercenary actors involved in the spread of that propaganda, both inside and outside the country. The number of actors involved in propaganda is large - politicians, media representatives, experts, actors, directors, university professors, and clergymen, while the propaganda messages themselves are systematically distributed on social media through "trolls". Therefore, propaganda requires quite a lot of financial resources, because the state and private actors involved in it need funding and supervision.

PROPAGANDA STRUCTURE

The provocativeness and focus on emotions largely determine the effectiveness of the Russian propaganda. Modern Kremlin propaganda, in contrast to Soviet, is devoid of ideology or logical coherence. Often, messages are contradictory, even if they relate to the same story. For example, government propaganda spread 138 contradictory false narratives about the poisoning of the Skripals.

It is worth noting that the seemingly incoherent process, devoid of ideology, is in fact fully structured, and its purpose is to create an impulsive emotional momentum, where the truth is neglected, i.e., the Kremlin creates one or more false realities, and the audience connects to this falsehood via a simple and provocative message. The content of the message is so emotional that it easily penetrates the human consciousness, triggers subconscious impulses, and takes them into an emotional-illusory world where propaganda has a ready-prepared recipe for a "logical" defensive solution: distancing from the active political process or consolidating around the ruling regime.

It is a difficult and almost futile process to counter the kind of propaganda that exploits emotions with dry argumentation. Any exposure/criticism or public protest against the Kremlin's propaganda is linked to a plan for war, revolution, and chaos. Their main pillar of propaganda is now the inducing of fear and hatred in their audience, which thus puts on hold any public demand for human dignity and freedom.

Before discussing this fear and hatred as pillars of propaganda, let's review what that propaganda has been up against.

THE MAIN TARGET OF PROPAGANDA - "THE WESTERN THREATS"

Following the collapse of the Soviet Union, efforts the weakened Kremlin made to cooperate with the West revealed to it that the West is accompanied by "dangers".

The first "danger" is the contagious



charm of a democratic political culture. Part of this culture is the individual's belief that his will can change the country's leader or political process. In Russia, where large-scale de-Sovietization did not take place, the ruling elite would not feel safe in a democratic political system where the individual feels they can instigate change.

The second "threat" is criticism, which is a natural extension of democratic political culture. The West criticizes non-democratic regimes and demands justice in governance and protection of human rights. Western criticism of Russia's authoritarian political system could potentially increase domestic distrust of the regime, giving voters legitimacy for public protest. This would not only make the regime unpopular over time, but would put its inevitable removal on the agenda.

The third "threat" is the West as an alternative to Russia in the region. Russia is no longer the only player and center of gravity in the region. The West has offered substantial material benefits and all other types of development assistance to post-Soviet countries that choose the path of democracy.

The Russian government, whose main concern is to maintain power and its control over neighboring countries, began to fight these Western "threats" with propaganda of fear and hatred, silencing the voices calling for human dignity and freedom.

FEAR - THE EMOTIONAL BASIS OF PROPAGANDA

Propaganda of fear is based on the memory of the "enemy" (external threat), and aims to scare Russian citizens. Besides the fear, everything negative is to be associated with this "enemy". The "enemy" was the collective West (US and EU).

The propaganda of fear had two stages. First - outline the goals of the "enemy", which the propaganda presents as follows: The West desires war, chaos, and instability. The relevant propaganda seeks to convince its audience that the West is meddling in Russia's internal affairs, as if to "promote democracy", criticizing the policies of the existing regime and forcing upon it a supposedly "just" standard. Propaganda dictated to the audience a "logical" solution to free the country from any influence of the West in order to protect the country's sovereignty.

In order to convince Russian citizens that the West wanted a war, and to associate war with the West, the Kremlin used the bloody conflicts that arose as a result of the breakup of communist Yugoslavia. The aim was for the viewers to associate the videos and photos of bombed infrastructure, murdered children, burned houses, and tortured, displaced people spread in the media with NATO's military force. The Russian

propaganda, with the involvement of state and private actors, claimed that the West had attacked Russia's ally, Orthodox Serbia, and that this terrible war was the result of Western policies. The reality was very different - NATO in fact stopped the ethnic cleansing of Bosniaks and Albanians by Serbia and brought peace to the region.

Part of this propaganda stage was to later equate the causes of terrorism and various conflicts with collective Western politics. According to the propaganda, this was the result of and forced counter-aggression to the West's "willingness" to impose the same, supposedly just, style of governance on the rest of the world.

The second stage in the structure of the propaganda of fear is to connect the "external threat" (foreign enemy) with the "internal threat" (domestic enemy), which was formulated as follows: The West uses internal opponents of the regime to create chaos and revolutions. The West finances criticism of the government (media, non-governmental organizations, activists, opposition). The West organizes coups d'états and brings to power marionette politicians. The "logical" solution for propaganda purposes was to keep a distance from critics of the government because they were associated with the "foreign enemy" of the country.

The Kremlin has used this basic propaganda template to deal with domestic situational crises, for example, when there were internal protests against Putin's policies (the dissident march in 2006-2007, the actions organized by "Strategy 31" in 2009, the "Million March" demanding fair elections in 2011-2012, the demonstration demanding the release of opposition leader Alexei Navalny in 2013, and a Russian anti-war rally organized by Boris Nemtsov on March 1, 2015 in support of Ukraine. Before the rally, on February 27, Nemtsov was assassinated, but the rally still took place. The Kremlin propaganda linked these rallies and the anti-corruption protests of 2017-2019 to the West, as if they were Western-sponsored riots aimed at encouraging radicalism in Russia in the name of democracy. During the protests, the Russian special services demonstratively arrested the "radical" organizers of the rally on "connections with the West".

The equating of "external threat" (the West) with "internal threat" (protests) was preceded by peaceful revolutions in Georgia and Ukraine in 2003-2004, and the 2004 expansion of the European Union with 10 new members, most of which were former communist countries. Added to this was the explicit foreign priority of the USA and European Union to promote the spread of democracy in the region.

It was from this period that the Kremlin's propaganda saw the West's "plan" behind popular anti-government protests: Where the peaceful revolutions in Georgia and

Ukraine actually represented the victory of the will of the people over the rigged elections, according to Kremlin disinformation propaganda, it was a coup d'état organized by the West at the Russian border to bring into power its own proxies.

The government's propaganda of connecting the "external threat" with the "internal", and intimidating the audience with riots, resulted in the disruption and polarization of the protest unity, consequently marginalizing demonstrations, and finally mobilizing voters around the Putin regime.

Since the West was a "threat", the Kremlin's propaganda declared its bordering countries and allies of the West - Georgia and Ukraine - as a "threat" also. The small successes of the European integration of these countries enhanced the Kremlin's disinformation and aggressive campaign against them, which on the one hand was again supposed to mobilize the voters internally through the approach of the "external threat" and, on the other, was supposed to see the West abandon its attempts to spread democracy, as Russia threatened war against the neighboring countries so as to legalize the Russian spheres of influence.

Putin openly demanded this. In 2007, one year before his invasion of Georgia, in a speech at the Munich Security Conference, Putin demanded that the West enable a multipolar world which allowed multiple spheres of influence. Putin declared that since the planet was under the dictatorship of one country (America), Russia would not allow a unipolar (only American-ruled) world, and would risk going against American hegemony.

Similarly, after the full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022, Putin reiterated that this "operation" (Russia's war in Ukraine) would shatter the US-led world order and shift the world from American liberal-global egocentrism to a multipolar system.

The Kremlin's wars in Georgia and Ukraine were unsuccessful in forcing the West to agree to redistribute the spheres of influence and abandon the promotion of democracy; however, the propaganda of fear, invigorated by the approach of the "external threat", gathered voters around Putin once again.

According to the data published by the Russian Statistical Research Department, in August-September 2008, Putin's approval rating (on the question "Do you agree with the activities of the Russian President (Prime Minister) Vladimir Putin?") increased. Right after the invasion of Georgia by the Russian regular army, Putin's approval rating increased from 80% to 83%, and after Russia declared two regions of Georgia, Abkhazia and South Ossetia, as independent states, Putin's approval rating reached a historical maximum: 88%.

Similarly, in February-March 2014, when Russia annexed the Ukrainian region of

Crimea, Putin's approval rating rose from 69% to 80%, and after the full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February-March 2022, Putin's approval rating rocketed from 69% to 83%.

HATRED - THE EMOTIONAL BASIS OF PROPAGANDA

To keep it at a constantly high level, the Kremlin feeds its propaganda of fear with propaganda of hatred. Along with fearing it, the inhabitants of Russia must also hate the West. Therefore, since 2008, identity-related messages have been added to the propaganda of fear: The West is fighting religiosity - Orthodoxy; The West is against the concept of family and traditions; The West imposes over us pedophilia, homosexuality, and a depraved lifestyle.

According to the Kremlin's hate-propaganda, the West is fundamentally unacceptable because of its values and way of life.

The propaganda of hatred - "spiritual Russia vs the depraved West" - worked. A 2018 Levada-Center survey found that 53% of Russians did not consider themselves "people of Western culture", and 45% had a negative attitude towards the Western way of life in general. In addition, 75% of respondents considered Western countries to be the "enemies of Russia". By comparison, indicators of 19 years ago saw 70% of the respondents considering the Western countries as a model for the development of Russia.

The results indicate that in the early 2000s, before the propaganda took hold, Western values and the development model were acceptable and shared by Russian citizens. As a result of the Kremlin's 22-year propaganda, however, the West has become fundamentally unacceptable.

CONCLUSION

The answer to the question of whether the Kremlin will continue to "capture emotions" depends on the political system in Russia. If the Putinist authoritarian style persists, then the "emotional capture" will become increasingly intense, as it is precisely the combination of fear and hatred that helps the ruling regime maintain credibility and fight Western "threats". However, at the same time, it backs the regime into a corner. If the Kremlin reduces any of those mechanisms, then the population will react to the deteriorating economic situation inside the country and the impotent state institutions, which may lead to anti-government protests. As such, the Kremlin's propaganda needs to constantly maintain those impressions of threat (generating fear) and hatred in order to maintain the unconditional support of the audience. An integral part of maintaining this unconditional support is the constant struggle with the "foreign enemy", even against neighboring countries who crave Euro-Atlantic integration.

Modern Security Dilemma: Georgian Polyhedron. Part 3

BY VICTOR KIPIANI,
CHAIRPERSON OF GEOCASE

The first two parts of this article were dedicated to the specifics of the Georgian case in the context of the modern security dilemma, and we discussed current trends and possible solutions. However, as with any nonlinear topics, discussing general issues is one thing while highlighting special “implementing” nuances, describing them in detail and evaluating them is a different (and specifically difficult) task.

It is apparent that in the conditions of this (dis)orderly world, the problem of the Georgian polyhedron is a good example of a puzzle of the abovementioned category. In this case too, agreeing on “what we want” is a separate challenge while realizing how and by what means to achieve what we set as the aim is an additional objective.

Since we already talked extensively - by making assumptions as well as affirmative statements - about so-called framework theme of the Georgian security dilemma, in this part we will discuss operational methods and practical approaches of facilitating-strengthening Georgian security (in the broad sense of this word) for the interested audience.

HIGHER SECURITY WITH ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL LEVERS

We have repeatedly stated that “security,” in the modern sense of this word, means significantly more than a defense system and armed forces. In the system of global relations, a broad overall notion of security is, in addition to various formal or situational relationships and configura-

tions of military security, linked with the wholeness and health of the system of social relations primarily inside the country.

We think that one of key components of that wholeness and health is the national socioeconomic policy that is easily comprehensible, competitive for equal opportunities, and is based on co-participation by deeds, not words and inclusiveness. As regards smaller countries with their external and internal challenges, we think that an additional means of socioeconomic nature for national-social resilience is a greater implementation of welfare state model in practice.

The welfare state model is periodically discussed in Georgian media too. We have also published several articles on this topic. This model, if put concisely as we understand, is based on a larger participation of the state to ensure social justice, equal economic opportunities and to tackle challenges faced by citizens.

At the same time, apart from a reasonable and well-thought-out management of state budget expenditures for citizens' social needs, the responsibility for social participation also lies with the corporate segment of the country. A return from a business model that is oriented on excess gains, the so-called wild capitalism, to a relatively more responsible model, will not only help Georgian companies improve their moral image, but will also open up possibilities for the country's global competitiveness and adaptability.

Such transformation will produce many positive effects: citizens will get a better understanding of the country as their own, the state machinery and business circles will notably reduce a possible estrangement of society from them. Furthermore, the recovery of genuine mer-



Illustration by Angus Greig for Barrons.com

itocracy in economic activity and public sphere will reduce the main threat to social stability - excess inequality in revenues as well as in the access to possibilities of development. This process will also entail the decrease of hotly debated polarization to a permissible level and turn the struggle for power in the political life into a battle of ideas for the development.

All this will serve the aim of filling dangerous cracks in the social and political process in the country, minimizing vulnerabilities, balancing risks with economic and social levers, and, hence, strengthening Georgian security.

HIGHER SECURITY THROUGH STRONGER REGIONAL TIES

The course of Euro-Atlantic integration and the related security “shield” remains the main vector of Georgia. At the same time, no force can change our complex geographic location and unpredictable

neighborhood. Such a reality (seeing Georgia described as a “geographic prisoner” at a meeting held in Oxford some time ago) must be accepted and not only accepted but set as the priority of state security, needing to be adapted, adjusted to our favor, in short, requiring constant work.

When talking about the region we cannot expect the approximation of political systems or harmonization of external goals; it is also unrealistic to strive for a regional harmony that will ensure an eternal peace and stability in the region. Such a gift “from heaven” is unimaginable in the modern world and it is especially hard to achieve in the greater Black and Caspian Sea region.

In any case, the management of the Georgian security dilemma particularly requires a closer contact with the reality of practical needs, not useless ideological clichés; as well as thematic communication of Official Tbilisi with that

geopolitical neighborhood or regional actors that have a similar understanding of “risk” and “threat.” Why primarily risks and threats? Because if we stop seeing the world through rose-colored glasses, we’ll see that a situational and structural unity of countries primarily depends on a shared threat, not loudly declared pathetic statements. Neighboring-regional dimension of Georgian security must be expressed in, maximum, sharing by others of the threat in the Georgian understanding, and, minimum, in correctly identifying points of convergence of others’ threats.

When talking about the Georgian dilemma in the context of regional security, one must necessarily underline a constant care about a functional need and “usefulness” of our country. This may happen only through implementation of large-scale projects that are based on systemic vision. Georgia already obtained a relevant historic memory and experience at the turn of previous and current centuries. Now this historic memory needs to be refreshed by implementing new transborder and regional projects. It is unarguable that along with a common understanding of abovementioned “threat,” a closer integration of Georgia into the interconnectedness and interdependency system will become an additional practical means of managing Georgian security system. An attempt to make someone “like” or “befriend” you in the modern world is a generous and exciting but insufficient and illusory endeavor. When it comes to a country, it is necessary to make others to need you and in light of that need, to act pragmatically for a better management of your national security in this stripped-of-romanticism modern world.

Continued in next week's GT.

“Gradually, Then Suddenly”: Georgia in a Post-Putin World



Pro-Ukrainian volunteers pose with the Georgian national flag and the Caucasus Legion battle flag. Source: Telegram

BY MICHAEL GODWIN

In the world before February 24, 2022, the military juggernaut of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation was widely seen as truly indomitable. Following years of reforms, technological advancements, and recent experience in Syria, Moscow's forces were largely viewed as second only to that of the United States. Even with the recent Ratnik and planned Sotnik reforms, aimed at the modernization of combat equipment, there is now a different view.

Recently, Russian troops have fled the battlefield around Kherson in Ukraine. Seen as possibly one of the nation's largest ordered retreats since the First Chechen War, or maybe even WWII, it has further put into question Moscow's position as a military leader. For Georgia, this may have monumental consequences if the losses continue to mount up for Russian President Vladimir Putin in Ukraine and the “special military operation” collapses.

While nothing is definitive, certainly, as the hellish combat continues on all fronts, it is becoming less likely that Russia will remain unscathed and be able to pull a victory from the war in Ukraine. Socially, economically, and geopolitically, the Russian Federation is losing its position as the dominant power in several regions. This shows a decline from a position of strength, a regional ‘policeman’ of sorts, in the post-Soviet space.

The South Caucasus is an example of this. Much of the conflict in the region was kept to a minimum by force of arms from the Russian bear, with the only exceptions being the 2008 invasion of Georgia and the 2020 Karabakh War. The invasion of Georgia, aimed at pinning the country under the control of Russia, and the 2020 Nagorno Karabakh war, ended by Russian military deployment, only furthering their presence in the region.

Russian failures in Ukraine have compounded, with the once-feared military being turned back from Kyiv, Kharkiv, and recently Kherson in massive routes. This collapse of martial might has made other actors in the post-Soviet space question the influence of the Kremlin in their own affairs. Leaders in Azerbaijan, Armenia, Georgia, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, and others have now been left with a burning question on their minds: What happens if Russia is defeated?

This defeat may not be solely military in nature, but also geopolitical, economic, and connected to global stability as a whole. While routing Russia from Ukraine may seem too sweet to imagine for some, it could spell disaster for those banking on the Kremlin might for survival. This situation would likely

mirror the collapse of the Soviet Union, where the absence of an overarching power figure led to rampant war and instability throughout the former oblasts. In the wake of a new Georgian independent republic, almost immediately conflicts with Abkhazia and South Ossetia began, the two being former independent oblasts but seen as a part of the Georgian nation, they forcefully sought to separate entirely. With refugees, casualties, and violent crime, the new age of post-Soviet freedom came not with flowers and parades, but with artillery fire and destruction.

This has also been seen more recently. On September 12, Azerbaijan launched another campaign against its historical rival Armenia. Despite a comprehensive ceasefire following the 2020 war, fighting in Nagorno-Karabakh erupted and left more than 280 people dead. However, this round of violence was different in that Azerbaijan targeted not only Armenian troops in the disputed regions, but in Armenia proper as well.

Of particular note is the response, or lack thereof, by the almost 2000 Russian peacekeeping troops deployed in the area. Video evidence showed the peacekeepers abandoning their positions and refraining from intervening. After another ceasefire was brokered by multiple international partners, it left an estimated 10 square miles (26 square kilometers) of Armenian land captured by Baku. Yerevan, infuriated at this result, made moves to invoke the security agreement of the Russian-led Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO).

Despite its long-term membership and evidence of the territorial gains of Azerbaijan in Armenia proper, the CSTO refused to send military assistance.

Instead, what Yerevan received was a small delegation aimed at fact-finding and monitoring the situation. This event in its entirety is what some have speculated as Baku's way of probing the region to measure the response of not only the CSTO, but mainly Russia's appetite for conflict in the matter.

As soon as the ceasefire went into effect between the two, another conflict erupted in Russia's backyard, in the poorly demarcated border region in the mountainous area between Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan. While the area has long been a type of Central Asian “wild west,” with drug smuggling, occasional cross-border spats, and low simmering tension, this conflict took a new form. Unlike firefights in the past, this brought in the might of each side's armed forces. Armored vehicles, attack helicopters, and artillery exchanged fire that saw hundreds of civilians and soldiers killed, and at least 140,000 refugees flee from the area.

Of particular note in this scenario is that both Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan are members of the CSTO, along with other Central Asian organizations. As with Armenia, the CSTO failed to act effectively, with both coming to the table at the behest of Putin, enraged that a simultaneous meeting with Chinese President Xi Jinping had been marred and face lost. Something like this would be highly unlikely at the height of the Kremlin's force projection days.

The potential for the disappearance of the “neighborhood policeman” that was Russia could allow the floodgates to open. For regional players like Azerbaijan, this opens the way for its forces to settle old scores with Armenia with very few players outside Turkey to reel

them back in. For Georgia, this could complicate matters with the currently occupied regions.

The de-facto government in Tskhinvali, as well as much of their citizenry online, have been vocal about the need for defense against Tbilisi. Many perceive the absence of Russian and South Ossetian troops, deployed in Ukraine, as leaving them exposed to Georgia's newly modernized military. Even Georgian members of the volunteer units fighting in Ukraine have posted videos, some going viral, calling for Tbilisi to retake the occupied territories in a “come on in, the water's fine” move.

While the government in Tbilisi has repeatedly denied any motive to solve the issue militarily, things may not always be in their hands. The volatility of Tskhinvali needs to be factored into the equation. With Russian force projection removed from that equation, the variables become much more unpredictable for both sides.

The collapse of Afghanistan in 2021 left a geopolitical “black hole” in the region. Unlike Afghanistan, Russia is a much larger super-regional player, seeing its removal from power potentially leaving a black hole that is ten times larger, and subsequently ten times worse, for European, Caucasian, and Central Asian geopolitics and security. But this will not happen overnight.

“Gradually, then suddenly” - these lines from Ernest Hemingway's novel *The Sun Also Rises* have been used to describe the pace at which things in the world tend to flow. Just as Rome was not built in a day, neither did it collapse in such a time. Empires of Russia's size do not collapse in one fiery day, but rather “gradually, then suddenly.”

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Prof. Andrey Makarychev: Russia Has Become a Country without Borders



Dr. Prof. Andrey Makarychev

INTERVIEW BY VAZHA TAVBERIDZE

Dr. Andrey Makarychev is Professor of Government and Politics at the University of Tartu, Estonia, and Associate Senior Researcher at CIDOB (Barcelona Center for International Affairs). His areas of expertise are Russia-EU relations, post-Soviet countries, mega-events in Eastern Europe and Eurasia, and issues of biopolitics, with his most recent book 'Popular Biopolitics and Populism at Europe's Eastern Margins' published by Brill in 2022. Radio free Europe's Georgian Service sat down with him to discuss the Polish rocket crisis, the war, and Putin's future.

"The Polish missile strike has to be used by Ukraine and Poland together to make an even stronger claim for enhanced air defense, not only on NATO's eastern flank, but also when it comes to the

Ukrainian sky. One of the outcomes of this incident would be a proposal from Ukraine to Poland to help Ukraine eliminate Russian missiles as soon as they enter Ukrainian territory, as no-one knows what the destination point is. I think it a reasonable and logical idea for Poland to be kindly invited to at least partly close the sky, so Ukraine can prevent missiles being used against civilians and urban infrastructure.

SUPPOSE, IN AN IDEAL WORLD, POLAND ACCEPTS THAT OFFER. WHAT WOULD RUSSIA'S RESPONSE BE?

Well, it's hard to say because what happens with the Russian foreign policy generally is a jump from one unpredictability to another. I don't think Russia is interested in direct confrontation with any of the NATO members. The Russian military commanders understand the depth of Russian problems in Ukraine. And under these circumstances, to open a second front would be even more sui-

cidal than the decision taken on February 24. But maybe I'm trying to rationalize Russian foreign policy. Maybe this is all in vain.

WHAT DO YOU THINK OF THE WESTERN RESPONSE TO THE POLAND MISSILE STRIKE?

The best Western response would be to strengthen NATO's military infrastructure in all countries bordering Russia, including the Baltic States. It would be quite useful if NATO or specific NATO members would help Ukraine to target Russian missiles. That would be the best solution, the best outcome.

WE'VE SEEN THE PSYCHOLOGICAL EFFECT OF THE FREEING OF KHERSON IN UKRAINE, BUT WHAT WAS THE PSYCHOLOGICAL EFFECT OF IT IN RUSSIA?

I would say the spectrum of attitudes in which it was perceived ranged from deep regret to the understanding of the deep defeat that Russia is facing. Of course, there are people, especially those who go public, who would say that this is just a tactical maneuver, not something that is really a game-changer. I think they're just trying to save Putin's face. I would definitely say that this is a major defeat, and I don't see how Russian propaganda can hide it. I know it's already being discussed why it happened and who has to be blamed. Some reasonably independent Russian media sources are saying Putin is not really in control of the situation, and that his weakness is becoming more and more visible.

Let's take the fact that Putin did not attend the G20 summit in Indonesia. It's a very clear signal of a sense of depression in the Kremlin. I do think he was considering going, but I think even he understands that he has nothing to put on the table. The Kherson retreat is a major contributor to the fact of Putin's non-attendance, as well as to the strange performance of Lavrov and his premature departure. This behavior betrays a sense of deep disorientation, and, I would say, even fragmentation and a lack of options. One defeat leads to another. What happened in Bali was another defeat. The fact that when the summit was still in progress, Russia launched a

100-missiles strike against Ukraine is outrageous. Even Russia's best friends like China and India are growing ever more skeptical. At least wait until the summit ends! Don't do such a thing intentionally! It's a gesture of disrespect to the G20, especially considering that half of them are still on the phone, not averse to communicating with Russia. Maybe they're not friends, but they still believe that Russia is fighting for multipolarity, that Russia is fine fighting against US hegemony. Now, I think this message has become even less convincing.

WHAT IS THE IMPACT OF THE KHERSON RETREAT ON PEOPLE YOU'VE DUBBED AS "HOMINES PUTINUS" - "IMMATURE AND ILL-DEVELOPED WITH A PARADOXICAL COMBINATION OF AGGRESSION (TOWARDS UKRAINE) AND SUBMISSION (TO PUTIN'S RULE)"?

This is an empirical question. For that, we need sociologists to do fieldwork. What I can see in the media is that the sense of frustration and resentment is growing in Russia; disillusionment and disappointment in everything, including in their own government. It's not good, because it's exactly this sense of resentment that might give rise to an even harsher Neo Fascist regime, because Putin promised that Russia is going to be great again, and a certain part of the population was buying this argument. Now, with a "special operation," which transformed into full-fledged war, and not a victorious war, I'm afraid that the sense of frustration is going to grow in Russia. And I do think that this is exactly something that was fundamental for understanding the phenomenon of German fascism in the late 20s and 30s. I'm afraid that Russia is moving in this direction.

KEEPING THAT IN MIND, HOW MANY KHERSONS CAN PUTIN SURVIVE?

The answer to this question depends on two factors: First, the determination of the Ukrainian armed forces and Ukrainian president to go ahead and fight the occupation, including of sacred places like Crimea. That's number one. And number two is the determination of the

West to keep helping Ukraine, to increase their assistance, regardless of how long it takes. I do think that on both accounts, we might expect reasonably positive news.

A second defeat comparable in scope and scale with Kherson might well be the last for Putin. His power is already cracked, that's clear. He tries to maneuver, he tries to outsource some powers to people like Kadyrov, Prygozhin, etc., but these are all symptoms of the lack of a grand strategy. I think he's relying on buying time. Maybe he thinks he needs time to redress his armed forces, to buy another bunch of drones from Iran or whoever, but it's clear that his so-called mobilization did not really change anything except to add new problems for him domestically. It's a vicious circle: Whatever he does is not good, and whatever he does amplifies his problems, both internationally and domestically. Look at what's happening in Belgorod. It's really amazing. A territory of the Russian Federation is a battlefield, and what do they do? Nothing. Can you imagine? A part of the Russian Federation is already in flames. It's already well part of the war. Putin is cornered, even conceptually, by expanding or extending the borders of Russia. Now, Russia has become a country without borders. The latest Russian anecdote is a guy goes into a bookstore and asks for a map of Russia, and the shop assistant asks "A map for what date?" If Kherson is Russian, that basically means that Ukraine took Russian territory, so this it is a defeat for Russia. So for him, no explanation is good.

WITH PUTIN CORNERED, HOW BIG IS HIS TEMPTATION TO REACH TOWARDS THE "RED BUTTON"?

This option is going to be a disaster for him personally. I think he was playing with this option for quite a while, and he was expecting people to be so frightened that they would give up, including Ukraine, for this blackmail. But it didn't work. And my expectation is that at a certain point, Putin got the message that nuclear weapons are off the table. Of course, it might be a measure of the last resort. But so far as I understand, it's not on the agenda.

Challenges to the Liberal Order. Part 1

ANALYSIS BY EMIL AVDALIANI

The liberal international order is experiencing fundamental challenges. It has witnessed numerous crises since the end of the World War II. The Nazi and Communist movements were both mortal enemies; liberalism triumphed, leading it to its expansion across the globe after the end of the Cold War and the dissolution of the Soviet Union.

Yet, perhaps the modern challenges the liberal system is facing are the more expansive, as they go much beyond the troubles in bilateral ties between any two Western democracies, and puncture the very foundation of the order. Challenges are both internal and external, which makes their scope staggering. Internally, faith in the liberal system has been shattered in the US and other democracies. Coupled with financial problems following the 2008 crisis, the belief that the liberal system benefits the champions of the system, and most of all wider sections of society, has undergone changes. The social contract has thus been diluted, which also made many in the West re-think the very essence of the liberal idea, its expansion drive, and

ultimate goals. Without internal strength in the collective West, liberalism's fate will be much dependent on how powerful the external threats are.

The challenges are multi-layered, and are much larger in essence than the China-USSR strategic cooperation of the 1950s, and generally of the communist threat seen during the Cold War. Moscow and Beijing threatened the very geopolitical vision of the United States - to have Eurasia as much divided as possible. The communist idea also seemed threatening, especially in 1940s-1950s, when Mao Tse-Tung's victory in China's civil war in 1949 further expanded the socialist agenda to much of the supercontinent. But the intensity of the challenge soon abated and remained solely military in nature. The soviet economic and soft power allure proved ineffective, and it quickly became apparent that the liberal order and the advantages it offered (technological and economic superiority) stood unchallenged. The current liberal crisis is also bigger than what France did when it withdrew from NATO's structures in 1966, or other subsequent disagreements among liberal allies.

The America-led order is a loosely organized hierarchical formation where US domination is felt but not overwhelmingly enough to cause outright opposition, the creation of coalitions etc. The



Image source: diplomatist.com

US pushed for hierarchical relations but also agreed upon rules and institutions. This dualism has made the US-led order resilient, appealing, and in many ways based on consent. It is an open system, where all revolves around the US and other major democratic states, but where smaller, less influential or even subordinate states too have a share in the decision-making process through full participation in the inclusive institutions. This is a mixture of both hierarchies, even some sort of imperial influence, and consent on a part of weaker, dependent states.

This loosely organized hierarchy is indeed unique. Yet another distinctive

feature of the liberal order is that, unlike any other world system, the benefits of participating in it are not accrued to one or several powers, but are evenly spread amongst participants. Even China, which has only partly been a member of the liberal order, has witnessed the system's benefits firsthand as the participation in America-led multilateral institutions helped develop the Chinese economy and elevate its geopolitical weight.

And this tells a story of how special the liberal world order proved to be. Some argue that it could be seen as a product of exceptional historical processes and not the culmination of a long-drawn-out and logical development. All, however,

indicates that without liberalism, the US and most of Europe could have remained inconspicuous places. Indeed, the reason liberalism defeated authoritarianism cannot simply be attributed to exceptional circumstances or luck on battlefield. The advancement of the liberal states has come as a result of the superiority of liberal thinking over the rival ideologies of the 20th century and simply illiberal methods of governing we see today in some parts of the world.

A cornerstone of liberal internationalism is the normative frame within which it operates. It is contingent upon various rules, institutions, partnerships and alliances which fuse into multilateralism. Liberal internationalism is expansive, which means that it seeks to include newer lands and peoples under its fold. But this has always been bound to create tensions with non-liberal powers. In previous centuries, Asia's weak empires hardly managed to withstand on their own the technologically advanced West. They even failed to cooperate in creating a unified front. As a result, an extraordinary liberal awakening, and its ultimate expansion in the 19th and 20th centuries, followed.

Emil Avdaliani is a professor at European University and the Director of Middle East Studies at the Georgian thinktank, Geocase.

Fall Chasing



BLOG BY TONY HANMER

It has been my great privilege, this autumn, to see the season from several different locations in Georgia over more than a month. This has been possible because, given the country's wide range of altitudes and climates, autumn sweeps through and arrives at different times. First, of course, in the higher, colder places, then descending to the lower and warmer ones.

In early October, Racha was mostly

yellows and browns against the backdrops of evergreens and lightly snow-dusted mountain peaks. Svaneti came next, all the way through from Ushguli down to Jvari, with more reds mixed into the same tones as Racha, and snow creeping ever lower. It even reached down to whiten our village of Etseri before disappearing the same day, the ground still too warm to freeze under it and stop it from melting. Rinse, repeat; snow to stay could come as late as some time in December. Both provincial locations gave me ample time for photographs, without which I would have been hugely

frustrated merely to see all the warm-hued beauty without getting to record it. (Earlier articles show the best of these locations).

Tbilisi has taken me back mostly to the yellows of plane trees, its higher temperatures keeping the leaves up for now, waiting for windy weather which has held back so far. But here came to me an idea for a photographic series which will need some equipment and just the right combination of lucky weather to pull it off.

If I put my camera on a tripod and frame a scene of one or more trees los-

ing their leaves in the wind, I can then take many shots of the same thing in quick succession, a few a second. Stacking these successive frames in layers and showing the line of motion of each leaf as they move through the scene, they will become like the similarly stacked trails of birds in flight which have dazzled me and millions of other viewers. You could even animate the thing, and turn it into sheer magic. I hope to try this, and if I succeed, the results will be on display here.

But for now I am in Lagodekhi region, in Kakheti, having driven my wife here to meet her mother and other relatives for a few days. While they do most of the catching up, I will tear myself away after the necessary pleasantries (to which I don't mind contributing at all) and roam around catching fall here also.

This is also a warmer place, and here I can concentrate on some details. Peach tree orchards with mostly yellow leaves, half still up and the rest fallen in a yellow reverse-shadow, their dark gray branches held to each other with string. Late fruits like barberries, pecans, persimmons and quinces still unpicked. Details of downed leaves, nectarine, walnut, grape, or still just-hanging ones. Forlorn grapevines, bereft, their bunches picked earlier in November at rtveli, the

joyful harvest festival. Colors everywhere fully saturated from overcast skies; contrasts not too high in the absence of direct sunlight.

So... autumn's colors are dominated by the whole warm spectrum. Winter is more about the whites of snow through grays to leafless black, so, monochrome. Spring is the whole green palette, and summer is every color together as flowers compete to show off.

When I drive back to Tbilisi in a couple of days, leaving my wife for further meet and greets, it will be the first time I have ever driven back there from Kakheti alone. I will luxuriate fully in the opportunity to make as many stops and detours as I feel like, with no-one to get impatient with me in my solitary pursuit of photographic magnificence. And be thankful all over again for the gift of autumn pursued at leisure.

Tony Hanmer has lived in Georgia since 1999, in Svaneti since 2007, and been a weekly writer and photographer for GT since early 2011. He runs the "Svaneti Renaissance" Facebook group, now with nearly 2000 members, at www.facebook.com/groups/SvanetiRenaissance/. He and his wife also run their own guest house in Etseri: www.facebook.com/hanmer.house.svaneti

USAID-Georgia Beneficiary Entrepreneur Product Exhibition to be Held at Dedaena Park in Tbilisi

On December 4, in Tbilisi, at Deda Ena Park, a Holiday Fair will be organized by USAID/Georgia's program beneficiaries. Around 100 very talented and successful young and women entrepreneurs will be able to sell their wonderful handmade and homemade products to a wider audience. The Fair is open from 13:00 to 19:00.

Holiday Fair 2022

საანბნებლო ბაზრობენა-ბაზირვა
December 4th 4 დეკემბერი

Luca Polare Starts Production of Bio Ice Cream

BY MARIAM MTIVLISHVILI

After a year of active preparation, Luca Polare has started producing bio ice cream, all the ingredients of which are certified by international bio certification.

"In Georgia, there was no precedent for bio ice cream. Since we at Luca Polare continuously aim to develop our products, we decided to focus on the bio niche next," Ani Tsitskishvili, head of public relations and marketing, tells GEORGIA TODAY. "We started by looking for partners who could obtain an international organic certificate, and then we started the testing process. We ended up with truly the most delicious ice cream, and named it Shtoshi bio ice cream."

50,000 GEL was invested for the production of bio ice cream.

Luca Polare is a cafe-ice cream chain that offers customers up to 80 types of ice cream and exclusive coffee. The brand has been operating in the Georgian market for 14 years and is currently represented in five cities across Georgia, with 16 branches in Tbilisi, 4 in Batumi, 1 in Kobuleti, 1 in Rustavi and 1 in Kutaisi.



First Report on Implementation of Istanbul Convention by Georgia Welcomes Steps on Legislation, Calls for More Services for Victims and Dissuasive Sanctions for Perpetrators

The Council of Europe's monitoring body GREVIO in its first report on Georgia released Tuesday welcomed the many steps taken by the Georgian authorities to align its laws, policies and institutional framework with the standards of the Istanbul Convention. However, further legal amendments are needed, more domestic violence shelters and sexual violence crisis referral centers should be established across the country, bureaucratic obstacles related to obtaining victim status should be addressed, and steps must be urgently taken to increase women's equal status in the Georgian society where patriarchal attitudes still prevail. The comments of the Georgian government were also published.

The adoption of the National Action Plan on Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence and Protection of Victims 2018-2020, accompanied by policies, constituted a very important step in aligning Georgia's obligations with its commitments under the convention. Besides, the Law on Domestic Violence has been amended to address all forms of violence and contains such welcome elements as the provision of special leave for victims of violence for the duration of their stay at a shelter/crisis center, as well as the formal assignment of victim status to those witnessing domestic violence, notably children. The offence of domestic violence as well as new crimes such as forced marriage, female genital mutilation, stalking and forced sterilization have been introduced into the Criminal Code. Significant changes were made to legislation in 2019 in terms of prohibiting sexual harassment, and much effort has been made to raise awareness of the different forms of violence against women. However, the definition of rape and the other offences of sexual violence in the Georgian Criminal Code still needs to be amended, in order to fully



Victims have no access to sexual violence referral centers that would be adequately geographically distributed all over Georgia

incorporate the notion of the lack of freely given consent, as required by the Istanbul Convention.

Victims have no access to fully established rape crisis and/or sexual violence referral centers that would be adequately geographically distributed all over Georgia. Further, there are still very few services for women and girls at risk of or subjected to forced marriage, and administrative requirements such as obtaining formal victim status place barriers on women's access to domestic violence shelters. GREVIO also urges the authorities to improve the access to support services and protection mechanisms to women exposed to the risk of intersectional discrimination, such as those from national and/or ethnic minorities, living in rural areas, women with disabilities and refugees, lesbian, bisexual or transgender women, and older women. Children who witness violence often remain invisible to the system. Additionally, financial resources allocated to state and NGO actors should be augmented, and the involvement of the latter in anti-violence



law and policy development increased.

The criminal justice mechanisms for combating sexual violence face serious shortcomings: investigations and prosecutions lack in promptness, effectiveness, and sensitivity. The report calls for immediate measures to guarantee a quick and adequate response, in particular in cases of rape and sexual violence. The factors that contribute to the very high threshold for proving rape in court should be identified and addressed, and re-traumatization of victims avoided all along the way. Urgent action should also be taken to ensure that criminal penalties imposed are dissuasive and commensurate with the gravity of the offence, and that courts take into account all incidents of domestic violence when deciding on custody or visitation rights.

GREVIO urges the authorities to review the process of issuance of emergency barring orders by the police, to identify and address reasons for the high proportion of orders annulled by the courts

(around 60% in 2018-2021), as well as to monitor compliance with such orders. Similarly, the causes of the high number of violations of restraining and protection orders should be identified, and adequate sanctions applied in cases of breaches of such orders. GREVIO notes with great concern that while in 2018 the number of investigations initiated for violations of restraining orders was 60 and in 2019 the number went up to 516, no information has been provided concerning the sanctions imposed.

In its report, GREVIO also urges the Georgian authorities to ensure that women victims of violence who are in need of protection, regardless of their status or residence, shall not be returned under any circumstances to any country where their life would be at risk or where they might be subjected to torture or inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

Finally, GREVIO points out that patriarchal attitudes, and stereotypes about

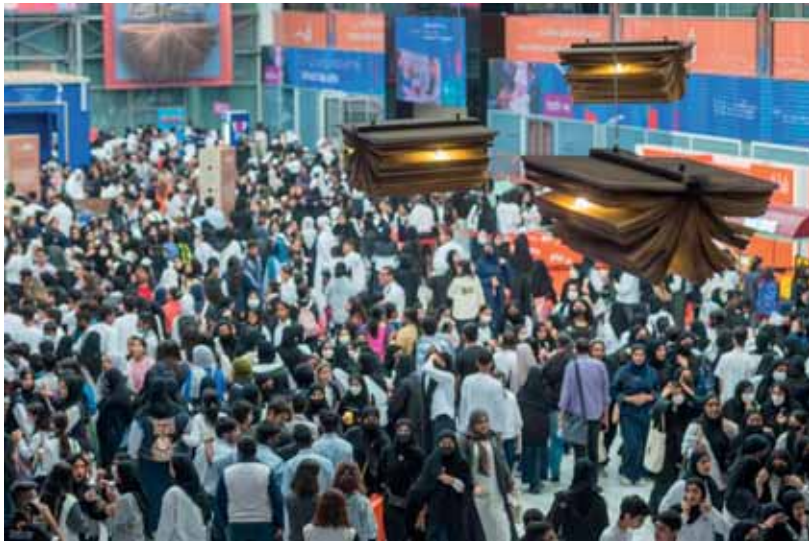
gender roles and acceptable behavior are still prevalent in Georgian society. Persistent gender stereotypes and their peddling by the media should be addressed, and efforts to increase women's equal status in society, public discourse and the media must be urgently undertaken.



Investigations and prosecutions lack in promptness, effectiveness, and sensitivity

GREVIO
Baseline
Evaluation Report
Georgia

SIBF 2022 Ends with an Inspiring Message to “Spread the Word”, Taking Book Culture to a Whole New Level



BY SOFIA BOCHOIDZE

This year, the world's largest book fair for buying and selling copyrights received 2.17 million visitors from 112 countries. As the Chairman of Sharjah Book Authority (SBA) stated in his interview with us, the fair continues to grow each year, and 2022 was truly proof of it. The Sharjah International Book Fair is an annual 12-day cultural extravaganza that ran this year under the theme “Spread the Word!” As the SBA stated at this year's closing event, “Words have their own power, a power that remains no matter how different the time is. Now, our time together at the book fair may have ended, but the words we took with us will last forever”.

GEORGIA TODAY, together with other leading media representatives from around the world, had the privilege to attend and cover SIBF 2022. It is noteworthy, that the fair is a cultural destination for many people, but especially for young students. SIBF, with its vision of building new generations of readers, gives a unique opportunity for youngsters to meet their favorite writers, artists, and influencers, providing their libraries with new Arabic and foreign publications.

Every single activity during the fair sought to connect people, bring like-minded communities together, discover something and someone new, and spread the word, spread positive vibes, and spread different aspects of different cultures in one place – in Sharjah. Poetry

evenings, masterclasses for adults and kids, and diverse activities in arts, music, and cultural programs were designed to bring Sharjah's cultural campaign “if you're into something, you're into a book” to the world.

GEORGIA TODAY visited several participants' stands and interviewed them, together with the visitors. Here are some of the highlights from SIBF 2022:

JASHANMAL BOOKS (IRAQ)

Jashanmal's story starts in 1919, when Rao Saheb Jashanmal opened the first Jashanmal store in Iraq, expanding soon throughout the GCC. They have books from all categories, nearly 14k+ titles from 350+ publishers, assorted stationery, academic books, notebooks, and diaries as per the requirements. Jashanmal Books has a wide spectrum of collections and boasts a well experienced and diverse team. Jashanmal collaborates with top publishers, such as Lonely Planet, Cambridge University Press, Penguin, Random House, Harper Collins, Bloomsbury, Macmillan, and many more.

WHITE STAR (ITALY)

As SIBF 2022 celebrated Italy as its Guest of Honor, we visited the Italian pavilion and spoke with Nicolo Minetti Corner, foreign rights of White Star. White Star was founded in 1984. In just a few years, it became one of the most renowned publishing houses in illustrated books on both national and global scales. Today, it boasts a catalogue of over 900 titles for both children and adults. White Star is directly distributed in six countries (Italy, France, Germany,

the United Kingdom, the United States and Canada) under different brands, and the books are translated into more than 30 languages. They work with the most important publishers abroad, building up co-editions every year and selling rights worldwide. We asked Nicolo why his company participated in this fair, and he answered: “For us, it is most important to meet different cultures, to find solutions for how to grow up together. We are, of course, happy to find lots of publishers interested in our products, we have lots of educational books that suit this country very well.”

PETER HARRINGTON (UK)

It was a great pleasure to meet with the team of Peter Harrington – Mr. John Casey and Ms. Cecilie Gasseholm. Peter Harrington issued their first catalogue from a stall at Chelsea Antiques Market on King's Road in 1969, and that's when their business kicked off. In 1971, Peter joined forces with his brother Adrian and formed Harrington Bros. They proved a successful team, selling old and rare books from what claimed to be the world's first antique market. Over the 1970s, they expanded, and by the early 1990s, the brothers owned the whole market, which at its peak housed more than a hundred stallholders.

Pom joined Harrington Bros. in 1994, immediately after leaving school, and was one of only three employees when the antique market was sold in 1997. Pom and his father went on to form Peter Harrington Rare Books, operating from new premises at 100 Fulham Road. Sadly, Peter passed away in 2003, but the business that still bears his name was taken on by Pom and, under his ownership, has grown to employ more than 60 team members. With a passion for the rare books trade, Pom has taken an active role in the Antiquarian Books Association – the senior trade body for book dealers in the UK – and was elected President in 2021, bringing his experience of over 30 years in the trade to the role. He is also the Chairman of Firsts, London's Rare Book Fair, a keystone event in the annual calendar of UK book fairs.

A collector himself, Pom Harrington firmly believes that rare book collecting should be fun and personal. He credits the “instinctual approach to rare book buying” he believes he inherited from his father for driving much of his book-buying habits. “My advice to any aspiring collector would be to buy the best copy you can afford of a book you love. Chances are, someone else will love it too”.

GT spoke with Peter Harrington's team. “It's a great place to meet people who are interested in books, a great opportunity to let them learn about us,” they said. “We have two shops in the UK, and we buy and sell books from all around the world. We deal with rare books. The first edition of Harry Potter is here, as are very rare Arabic manuscripts. We have an online shop too, so you can buy our books anywhere in the world.”

We asked them about the value of physical books these days, when everything is digitalized in the modern world, to which they answered, “Not everything is digitalized, it is much more expensive and is difficult to do properly. Libraries require a lot of money to digitalize everything.”



KALIMAT FOUNDATION

Another great initiative was represented at the fair, Kalimat Foundation is a non-profit organization founded under the patronage of Sheikha Bodour Bint Sultan Al Qasimi, to uphold children's rights to read and access books. It serves vulnerable and visually disabled children by equipping and empowering them with knowledge and ideas in books, through a variety of accessible formats, so as to ease social integration and build better prospects in learning and better opportunities in adulthood.

THE BOOK HUT

A participant in all the book fairs, especially in GCC, this was the 5th time The Book Hut joined in at SIBF. They are specialized in kids' books, importing most of their books from the UK and the US. Overall, every year they do very well. “Sharjah book fair is a great supporter, they do lots of good advertising and are flexible for cooperation, very friendly, and always supportive.”

ZOOM BOOKS UAE

Zoom Books are distributors, selling books for school libraries. “As this fair is the biggest book fair in UAE, all the companies should participate,” their representative told us.

MORE IDEAS GENERAL TRADING (BYJUS LEARNING APP)

“We are a learning app and we encourage the children to learn in a different

manner, with cartoon characters teaching them in a different manner. Now we are focusing on the UAE, with headquarters in India. The company was founded in 2016. Our mission is to create value – each day, every day – as we build an equal and accessible learning environment for all.”

The BYJU'S mission is to redefine how the world learns through relentless effort and innovation, breaking the barriers to quality education and helping to build a learning ecosystem that will create leaders of tomorrow.

GT also had the pleasure to meet the representatives of the French institute, Sharjah University, the Regional Center for EDI planning, and many others, who contribute greatly to the development of the modern education system and who work tirelessly to introduce modern trends and innovations to the industry.

This year, SIBF was attractive in its numerous activities, masterclasses, and meetings with amazing authors. “A book is not a work of solitude or a singular effort, it is a process of collaboration” – that's what Lisa Gardner, American writer, and novelist, told us during her session at the Sharjah International Book Fair.

And in the end, here is a very short, yet very emotional goodbye from the amazing team of SIBF: “Words conquer time. Our time at the book fair may have come to an end, but the words we take with us will stay forever! See you next year!”



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Reg. # 06/4-309



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