

'West has never tried to draw Georgia into war', US Ambassador to Georgia Kelly Degnan says

By LIZA MCHEDLIDZE

In a recent interview with a media Agency Interpressnews, the US Ambassador to Georgia Kelly Degnan responded to Bidzina Ivanishvili's recent open letter where he wrote that Georgia has successfully avoided being dragged into a war in Ukraine. Kelly Degnan's response is that at the meeting between Ivanishvili and Degnan there were no talks about Georgia's involvement in the war, adding that the West has never tried to drag Georgia into war.

"Usually, we do not talk to the press about personal meetings, but as Mr. Bidzina Ivanishvili confirmed, I last met him on March 21, after which a lot of time has passed. Our meetings have always been about the US-Georgia strategic partnership and US efforts to support Georgia's economy, security and democracy, to support development. Let me say very clearly so that no one has any more questions - there was never any talk about Georgia's involvement in Russia's war against Ukraine, or about "blackmail" or actions related to delaying the transfer of money to Ivanishvili. You should address these issues to him or to those specific banks," said the US Ambassador to Georgia.

Kelly Degnan has also assessed Bidzina Ivanishvili's mention of his legal dispute with Swiss bank in the letter, where he stated that it is directly related to ongoing political process in Georgia. The US Ambassador said that the ongoing discussion of this topic is a 'distraction from important work' and that this is Ivanishvili's private matter:

"When the United States imposes financial sanctions, we announce them publicly. There is a searchable list on the Treasury Department's website where



banks, the media and the general public can check who is and is not subject to financial sanctions. Any discussion of Swiss bank accounts is, frankly, a distraction from important work. As Mr. Ivanishvili stated in his July 27 announcement, this is a private matter between him and the financial institution," said Kelly Degnan.

"Frankly, it's a little confusing how much time and energy some spend on sanctions, or other people's money issues, instead of focusing on a clear path to EU membership," the US Ambassador added. Degnan also discussed the motive behind

the 'false' narrative that 'the west wanted to drag Georgia in war' and said that people who say this are doing Russia's work and it serves as a misinterpretation of US efforts to help stop the war:

"Again, we must ask what is the motive of anyone who persistently repeats false information that appears to be aimed at misrepresenting US efforts. US efforts have focused on restoring peace during the Kremlin's brutal and unprovoked war against Ukraine. We are working to end the war in Ukraine as quickly as possible and we are doing everything to

prevent this tragic conflict from spreading to Georgia or any other country. In the months leading up to the re-invasion in February, US diplomatic efforts were well-mobilized, with constant warnings against the unprovoked use of force, and constant communication to both Putin and the Russian people that a diplomatic solution was the best solution.

The West has never tried to 'draw Georgia into the war'. We have no interest in involving Georgia in the war. As we told the leaders of Georgia from the beginning, we understand Georgia's sensitive position, taking into account Georgia's own experience with Russia's occupation of Georgian territory and Russian aggression. Those who repeat this narrative are doing Russia's work and thereby trying to divide Georgia at a critical moment in its democratic development. Those who suggest that Georgia would receive candidate status if Georgia were at war, or who promote the narrative of a 'second front' are spreading disinformation aimed at creating fear and confusion. It is even more disturbing when these statements are echoed by members of the ruling party.

The West is cooperating with Georgia to end Russia's occupation of Georgia peacefully and to support the many people displaced as a result of Russian aggression. Our position is clear - this was stated by President Biden, Secretary Blinken, the representative of the State Department, our numerous guests and myself. There is no doubt that as a partner of Georgia, we want peace - here in Ukraine and throughout Europe. We continue to work for a whole, free and peaceful Europe, of which Georgia is a part," said US Ambassador to Georgia Kelly Degnan.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Mikheil Saakashvili to be transferred to Germany for medical treatment purposes

PREPARED BY MESSENGER STAFF

According to the lawyer of the third president of Georgia, Mikheil Saakashvili, Valeri Gelbakhiani, after the postponement of the sentence, the former president of Georgia may be transferred to Germany for medical treatment. The lawyer can not yet name exactly which country's clinic they will choose, however, based on qualification, they are considering Germany.

"Procedurally, work is being carried out every day, it is not an easy job, the main work was done by doctors and experts, now everything has to be brought to the final stage, it is in the final stage, the final conclusion of the examination must be issued by the expert bureau. We also assume that the foreign experts will also give their conclusions and then we will enter the court with a motion to postpone the sentence, because there is no improvement and progress in the vital parameters. He was in Gori Hospital, Gldani Prison Hospital, now he is in "Vivamed", these are all medical institutions, they were treated in different ways everywhere, 14 diseases were found, we don't even know if the diagnosis is correct or not, if they are treating correctly, because not a single parameter is improving. This is a very bad prognosis.

We are waiting for the last option from Mrs. Mariam Jishkariani everyday now, after that the examination will be conducted in a very short period of time, we assume that these procedures should be completed in the month of August.

We don't know the family's opinion yet, but speaking with Saakashvili, German clinics are more highly qualified, and probably the focus will be on German, I say



probably, it has not been decided yet. There is written and telephone communication with almost all leading clinics, information exchange procedures are underway. Reputationally, Germany is more highly qualified, Saakashvili suffers from such diseases that are very rare in medical practice, the Germans have more practical experience, and they will not start treatment by assumption, but with the introduced method," Gelbakhiani said.

EXCHANGE RATES: US DOLLAR - 2.7791 | EURO - 2.8208 | GBP - 3.3522 | 100 RUSSIAN RUBLE - 4.5683 | SWISS FRANC - 2.8910 |

‘Gov’t was planning on murdering me via a contract killer’ Soso Gogashvili Says

BY LIZA MCHEDLIDZE

The former deputy head of State Security Service of Georgia Soso Gogashvili states that he was warned by Archbishop Iakob a year and a half ago that the Georgian government was allegedly planning on murdering him via a contract killer in Pankisi Gorge and blaming it on Malkhaz Machalikashvili:

“I would also like to touch upon Archbishop Iakob’s warning... a year and a half ago, he warned me that the government was planning to liquidate me. Kist “Killer” was tasked with this, and during our discussion, as a result of analyzing this information, I came to the conclusion that if they did it, then they would blame Machalikashvili for it, because as he told me, this “killer” was in Pankisi Gorge. Archbishop, you are my grandson’s godfather, and denying and not telling this fact would be a shame,” Gogashvili wrote.

Soso Gogashvili also released another alleged information regarding Russia’s involvement in replacing the Patriarch



of Georgia Ilia II with Russia’s desired candidate. According to the former deputy head of State Security Service of Georgia, FSB Agents Konstantine Romanovsky and Davit Adamia have been ordered to do so. “Romanovsky and Adamia are

Putin’s close entourage - Matvienko , Poltavchenko , as well as FSB’s agents of influence, who have the task of replacing the patriarch in Georgia with their desired candidate. The fact that they are in contact with the Georgian special ser-

vices, this is confirmed by the above-mentioned (ongoing) case, which I personally have no doubts about anymore and I want the public to make conclusions” said Soso Gogashvili.

Officially, Soso Gogashvili was arrested based on Konstantin Romanovsky and Davit Adamia’s lawsuit, and is being charged with tampering with personal life information or personal data. Konstantine Romanovski is also suing Soso Gogashvili for causing moral damage.

Soso Gogashvili called them ‘alleged victims who are Russian citizens connected to the Russian special services’. In addition, the former deputy head of the State Security Service claims that during and after his stay in the SSS, he ‘always tried to prevent all this’. According to him, Shio Mujiri’s was considered as a candidate for the patriarchate, adding that Mujiri ‘worked with both sides’. He also said Patriarch Ilia II himself was planning to resign, however, the government representatives were able to convince him not to.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Irakli Kobakhidze comments on Kelly Degnan and Bidzina Ivanishvili meeting



PREPARED BY MESSENGER STAFF

The chairman of Georgian Dream Irakli Kobakhidze made a statement regarding the recently revealed meeting between US Ambassador to Georgia and former chairman of Georgian Dream party Bidzina Ivanishvili, saying that the meeting could not have been private

because ‘private meetings are held between friends’ and they do not have the information if this meeting was ‘friendly’, adding that if Kelly Degnan ‘is a friend of Bidzina Ivanishvili, she would separate herself from the unjust attack on her friend Ivanishvili’.

“We have no such information that it could be a friendly meeting. Therefore,

there was a full right to speak publicly about this meeting, asking questions and to giving answers to these questions. If we are talking about friendship here, at least in such a case, she would separate herself from the unjust attack that was carried out on his friend Bidzina Ivanishvili . If she considers herself a friend of Bidzina Ivanishvili , then she would have a proper reaction, among other things, regarding the resolution of the European Parliament, as well as to the “message box” of the radical opposition, as well as to NGOs.

Irakli Kobakhidze says that this is an ‘orchestrated attack on Bidzina Ivanishvili which involves the ‘radical’ opposition, NGOs and more than 300MPs:

“This is an orchestrated attack on Bidzina Ivanishvili, which involves the radical opposition, NGOs, more than 300 MEPs, and if we are talking about friendship here, of course, the ambassador would very easily leave the process. However, unfortunately, she did not do this and it creates additional question marks. Therefore, it is important to be clear in all this, for example, when someone says that sanctions should be imposed on Ivanishvili, it is important that

the US ambassador has a clear position in this regard, when someone demands the resignation of the government, the ambassador has a clear position in this regard, etc. At such a time, naturally, questions would be raised in society”, said Irakli Kobakhidze .

According to him, it is a pity that the US ambassador to Georgia Kelly Degnan did not confirm the meeting with Ivanishvili from the beginning and it is the reason society has raised questions about the meeting.

“It is unfortunate that this information was not confirmed from the beginning. The ambassador could easily answer this question, she could say that this meeting took place after the start of the war. Naturally, at such a time, the society would not have any additional question marks. Then Bidzina Ivanishvili’s letter was released, as a result of which the ambassador finally confirmed this meeting. At such a time, when you can easily give an answer to a question and you don’t, naturally, certain doubts appear in the society, which is very bad,” said Irakli Kobakhidze.

FRIDAY JULY 29

Day Partly cloudy
High: **32°C**

Night Clear skies
Low: **24°C**

SATURDAY JULY 30

Day Mostly cloudy
High: **34°C**

Night Mostly cloudy
Low: **23°C**

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