

Prof. William C. Wohlforth

FOCUS

ON TWO DIFFERENT AMERICAS

Prof. William C. Wohlforth on what's to come for America and Ukraine

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EU Condemns Russia's Military Presence in Occupied Regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia on 16th Anniversary of August War

BY TEAM GT

On 6 August, the European Union reiterated its condemnation of Russia's continued military presence in the occupied breakaway regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia in violation of both international law and of Russia's commitments under the 12 August 2008 six-point agreement.

In a statement on the occasion of the 16th anniversary of the start of the war between Russia and Georgia, which began on the night of 7 to 8 August 2008, EU High Representative Josep Borrell expressed the European Union's firm commitment to a peaceful settlement of the conflicts in Georgia.

"The human rights of conflict-affected communities in Georgia continue to be violated, including through 'borderization' policies, closures of crossing points and illegal detentions by the Russian military and de facto authorities," the statement said. "Restrictions on freedom of movement must end, violations of human rights must be investigated, and justice must be ensured for all victims."

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Photo from the August War. Source: Embassy Tbilisi, Georgia

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GALT & TAGGART CREATING OPPORTUNITIES									
Prepared for Georgia Today Business by									
As of 06-Aug-2024									
Markets					Markets				
BONDS	Price	w/w	m/m	STOCKS	Price	w/w	m/m		
GEORG 04/26	93.36 (YTM 6.94%)	+0.1%	+1.7%	Bank of Georgia (BGEO LN)	GBP 39.30	-12.2%	-4.6%		
GBAIL 04/28	88.59 (YTM 7.46%)	+0.0%	+0.2%	Georgia Capital (GCEO LN)	GBP 9.76	-8.3%	-7.0%		
GBGG 9/12 PERP	97.77 (YTM 9.34%)	+0.1%	+0.1%	TBC Bank Group (TBGG LN)	GBP 27.65	-9.8%	+0.4%		
SILNET 01/27	99.79 (YTM 8.47%)	+0.1%	-0.1%						
TBC 10/75 PERP	100.36 (YTM 13.30%)	+0.2%	+0.2%						
TBC 8/84 PERP	95.68 (YTM 11.31%)	-0.0%	-0.1%						
TBC 10 1/4 PERP	98.39 (YTM 10.65%)	+0.0%	+0.1%						
					COMMODITIES	Price	w/w	m/m	
					Crude Oil, Brent (US\$/bbl)	76.48	-2.7%	-11.6%	
					Gold Spot (US\$/OZ)	2,390.82	-0.8%	-0.1%	
INDICES					CURRENCIES				
SP 500	5,240.03	-3.6%	-5.9%	USD / GEL	2,7049	-0.7%	-1.3%		
FTSE 250	20,367.70	-5.0%	-2.0%	EUR / GEL	2,9570	+0.4%	-0.4%		
DOW JONES 30	38,997.66	-4.3%	-1.0%	GBP / GEL	3,4313	-1.8%	-2.3%		
Russell 2000	2,064.30	-8.0%	+1.9%	EUR / USD	1,0931	+1.1%	+0.8%		
FTSE 100	8,026.69	-3.0%	-2.2%	GBP / USD	1,2691	-1.1%	-1.0%		

Passenger Flow at Georgia's International Airports is Up



Deputy Minister of Economy and Sustainable Development, Mariam Kvrivishvili

BY MARIAM MTIVLISHVILI

In July 2024, Tbilisi Airport served 519,275 passengers, marking a 29% rise on the previous year. Batumi Airport experienced a 48% increase in passenger numbers.

Additionally, Kutaisi International Airport achieved a historical high, serving up to one million passengers in the period of January-July of 2024.

"Kutaisi Airport now operates flights to 30 European destinations, enhancing the country's tourism industry," the Deputy Minister of Economy and Sustainable Development, Mariam Kvrivishvili noted.

Rehabilitation of Road Connecting Lentekhi and Mestia to be Completed in 2024

BY MARIAM MTIVLISHVILI

The rehabilitation of the road connecting Lentekhi and Mestia is set to be completed this year.

"The Zugdidi-Jvari-Mestia-Lasdili national highways and Kutaisi (Tskaltubo bypass)-Tskaltubo-Tsageri-Lentekhi-Lasdili highways are existing roads that connect the Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti and Racha-Lechkhumi-Kvemo Svaneti regions.

"At this stage, the rehabilitation works of the mentioned roads are underway, and completion is planned at the end of 2024," the Ministry of Regional Development and Infrastructure of Georgia stated this week.



The Lentekhi and Mestia highway



President Salome Zurbishvili

President: The Dream Will Not Be Able to Falsify the October Elections

BY ANA DUMBADZE

Georgian Dream will not be able to falsify the October 2024 elections - President Salome Zurbishvili said in answer to GEORGIA TODAY's question regarding the international observation missions expected to attend the October 26 elections in Georgia.

The President held a press conference on August 5 at Orbeliani Presidential Palace to answer the questions of the Georgian media. Representatives of almost all the local media outlets attended.

When asked "Madam President, the 2024 elections will be observed by many representatives of the international mission in Georgia. How effective do you think their work will be and what obstacles will they face in this process, when evaluating the elections objectively?" Salome Zurbishvili answered:

"I think, as always... Observation in the recent period, as time goes by, is less and less effective, because the methods of forgery have become more 'refined,' not only in Georgia, but around the world. There are often cases of bribery, through the announcement of

various programs, etc. But let's not believe in the 'omnipotence' claimed by the authorities, suggesting that they will falsify and we will not be able to do so if there is full mobilization and maximum involvement of the population, not only in Georgia, but also abroad. The role of the diaspora in this process is very important. Even if you don't like any of the parties much, you should still vote for them," she said.

"I also believe that young people will actively participate in the elections, because they know very well that this is their 'last chance.' We know that many young people have been leaving the country because of difficult living and working conditions. There are no prospects for them in this country today, which I am very sorry for, but this is the reality. Maybe this is the calculation of the government. They are not defenders of national interests. The government encourages young people and the active part of society to leave the country and become immigrants. Therefore, it is very important that the diaspora also actively participates in the elections."

She went on to claim that the diaspora is prevented in every way from participating in the elections, through not opening polling stations abroad, etc.

"To prevent this, such an opinion was also voiced that they should be given the opportunity to come to Georgia and vote here. There will be a mobilization, and the more they anger the diaspora, the more the diaspora will be involved in the elections," the President noted.

"Let's remember that today there are more than a million Georgians abroad, in Europe and America, and more than 17,000 participated in the last elections. It is very easy to increase this number, and the government should not think that they will be able to stop the diaspora from voting and making their independent choice, because they are an integral part of our country and do a lot for our country.

"It will be a completely new election, it will be a referendum, not between war and peace, but between the dark Soviet past and the bright future!"

Parliamentary elections are scheduled to be held in Georgia on 26 October 2024.

The last parliamentary elections in the country were held on October 31, 2020, and Georgian Dream managed to win with 48.22% of the votes.

Presidential elections are also planned in 2024 in Georgia, in which the president will be elected for the first time under a new system, elected by a 300-member electoral group.

EU Condemns Russia's Military Presence in Occupied Regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia on 16th Anniversary of August War

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Borrell added that the EU remained fully committed to peaceful conflict resolution, including through the EU's engagement as co-chair in the Geneva International Discussions (GID), through the work of the EU Special Representative for the South Caucasus and the crisis in Georgia, and through the continued presence on the ground of the EU Monitoring Mission (EUMM Georgia).

The European Union also reiterated its unwavering support to the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Georgia within its internationally recognized borders.

"The occupation is not forgotten! We will never get used to it and we will never accept it," the President of Georgia, Salome Zurbishvili, wrote on social media Wednesday. "August contains a tragic memory for the history of Georgia. 16 years since the last invasion of Russia, the occupation is not forgotten! We will never get used to it and we will never accept it!"

"Georgia will firmly remain on its European path and will resolutely resist any destabilization attempts," she added.

Former President Mikheil Saakashvili also took to social media on the anniversary of the Russia-Georgia war. "In 2008, our army stood strong, people took



The EUMM overseeing a connecting road between Georgia proper and an occupied region. Source: euneighbourseast

to the streets, I stayed in Tbilisi and brought the world to our feet; our partners came to Tbilisi and the Americans sent a fleet to save Georgia's statehood," he said, going on to note that he is being

held captive only "because Georgia did not surrender to the enemy."

"We remember the events of August 2008 and their painful impact on the Georgian people to this day - Russia's

continuous violation of the 2008 ceasefire agreement emphasizes the ongoing struggle for peace and stability in the region," the statement of the US Embassy in Georgia noted.

"The United States continues to advocate for Georgia's sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders," the statement concludes.

The President of the European Parliament, Roberta Metsola, also issued a statement on Wednesday regarding the 16th anniversary of Russia's aggression against Georgia.

"16 years after Russia's aggression against Georgia, the European Parliament's support for Georgia's sovereignty, territorial integrity and European aspirations of its people remains unwavering," she wrote.

Meanwhile, NATO once again called for Russia to withdraw its troops.

"We call on Russia to withdraw the forces stationed in Georgia, which were deployed there without Georgia's consent. Despite 16 years of Russian occupation, South Ossetia and Abkhazia are part of Georgia. NATO fully supports the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Georgia," said the NATO spokesperson.

In the August 2008 Russia-Georgia war, 170 employees of the Ministry of Defense of Georgia, 14 employees of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and 224 civilians were killed. The total number of wounded and injured civilian and military persons is 2,232, among them, 1,045 persons are military personnel.

Ukraine Latest: Ukraine Launches Major Attack inside Russia

COMPILED BY ANA DUMBADZE

Ukraïne has launched a major attack on Russia, with its troops entering Russia in what appears to be its biggest and most serious incursion into the country since Moscow's full-scale invasion began in February 2022.

A Ukrainian force numbering in the hundreds, backed with armored vehicles, advanced on Tuesday across the border into Russia's Kursk region.

The Ukrainian troops appeared to have captured a number of settlements in the border area around the village of Sudzha, advancing perhaps as much as 15 km inside Russia, and heavy fighting is reported to be continuing.

The Ukrainian incursion prompted Russian President Vladimir Putin to hold urgent meetings on Wednesday with his government and defense leadership, while local authorities said thousands of Russian civilians were being evacuated away from the fighting.

The Russian Telegram account VChK-OGPU, that is linked to the Wagner mercenary group, on Wednesday claimed a column of Ukrainian troops had passed through the village of Lyubimovka, about 6 miles inside the border, saying that they appeared to be moving towards another village, Korenovo.

Ukrainian troops also reportedly entered the border town of Sudzha. Sudzha is home to a key pipeline hub for supplying gas to Europe. The situation for Russian forces continued to deteriorate Wednesday, with Ukrainian troops said to have



Damaged house following what Russian authorities called a Ukrainian military strike on the town of Sudzha. REUTERS

entered at least 11 settlements since Tuesday.

Russia's defense ministry initially claimed to have rebuffed the Ukrainian attack and forced them to retreat. The head of Russia's General Staff, Gen. Valeriy Gerasimov, on Wednesday briefed Putin that more than 1,000 Ukrainian troops had crossed the border. He claimed that hundreds had been killed and wounded. But it was clear on Wednesday that intense fighting was continuing, as Russian offi-

cial announced further evacuations of civilians from the region. At least 31 civilians were injured by shelling, according to local officials in Kursk.

The Ukrainian attack is the largest it has mounted into Russia. Ukraine previously launched smaller raids using Russian groups opposed to the Kremlin and controlled by Ukrainian intelligence, entering border villages and then retreating. This is the first time Ukrainian military units have entered Russia in

such numbers.

Multiple theories have emerged on Ukraine's goal with the offensive, with most analysts suggesting it could be an attempt to force Russia to divert forces away from elsewhere in Ukraine at a time when Ukrainian forces are under intense pressure in parts of the Donbas region. Some Ukrainian analysts have also indicated it could be an attempt to pre-empt a planned Russian offensive into the neighboring Ukrainian region of Sumy.

Some have also suggested Ukraine could be seeking to seize territory to give it leverage in potential peace negotiations to trade for Ukrainian occupied territory. Russian military bloggers have expressed alarm that Ukraine could even be seeking to seize the Kursk Nuclear Power Station that lies about 35 miles from the border. That appears unrealistic for such a small force to capture, although Russia's National Guard on Wednesday announced it was reinforcing security at the plant.

"It wasn't accidental," said war expert Kostyantyn Mashovets in a Facebook post. "It's clearly part of one clear plan."

Mykhaylo Zhyrokhov, a military analyst, told the BBC that Russia had been forced to redeploy some troops there from the front line in eastern Ukraine.

"If you look at official reports, there were significantly fewer Russian glide bombs dropped in the Donetsk area," he said.


"That means the aircraft which carry them are now elsewhere in Russia."

This incursion is extremely unlikely to be Ukraine looking to occupy Russian territory, but if pulling in Russian forces was a goal, it is quickly being realized.

Some Ukrainian and independent military analysts have questioned the wisdom of such a risky operation at a time when Ukraine is suffering from intense troop shortages and Russian forces have been advancing towards the key strategic city of Pokrovsk in Donbas.


Ukraine has not officially commented on the attack. In general, very few senior Ukrainian figures are saying much about this attack.




Sources: ABC News, The BBC




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Two Different Americas - Prof. William C. Wohlforth on What's to Come for America and Ukraine

INTERVIEW BY VAZHA TAVBERIDZE

William Wohlforth, Daniel Webster Professor of Government in the Dartmouth College Department of Government, was Editor-in-chief of Security Studies from 2008 to 2011. He is linked to the Neoclassical realism school and known for his work on American unipolarity. Radio Free Liberty/RL's Georgian Service sat down with him to discuss the US' approach to the world.

"We might be in for a more substantial change in America's fundamental approach to pursuing its interests, namely its grand strategy, than we've seen in many, many decades, and I've not seen anything like that in my lifetime. I want to stress it's potential. We really have a very hard time estimating what is likely to happen given US domestic politics. But I see more realistic potential for a shift than I've seen in a very long time," he tells us.

LET'S START WITH PRESIDENT BIDEN'S LEGACY.

In foreign policy, we have some unresolved questions, the resolution of which will determine Biden's historical place. But we can begin making a scorecard about President Biden's foreign policy successes and failures, and his overall legacy. He assembled a highly competent national security team and pursued a fairly coherent strategy of sustaining the commitments to alliances and institutions that this administration thinks are necessary for US security, but began the careful trimming of what they understood to be some over-commitment by the United States. And you saw that in their completion of the disengagement from Afghanistan. They really did want to see a diminution of US engagement in the Middle East, but they failed to do that for reasons outside of their control. When Hamas attacked Israel in October 2023, this was the kind of event that administrations can't control, and they had to react to it.

Regarding Europe, we saw a massive increase in America's commitment to NATO, a serious effort to aid Ukraine in its defense from Russia's assault, and managing that process competently with a theory. Now, you might disagree about their theory of the case. You might think that they were too concerned about escalation. You might think that they were too careful in the speed with which they enabled Ukraine to take advantage of different US weapon systems. We can have that debate, but they had a coherent approach to Ukraine, Russia's war against Ukraine, and they put it in place with a high degree of competence.

If you look at Asia, we've seen a further strengthening of the US alliance with Asia, with Asian partners, South Korea in particular, and Japan. We've seen them manage the cross-strait issue with Taiwan with significant confidence. And we've seen them engineer a change to our approach to our economic relations with China, where we witnessed a fairly substantial effort to try to maintain general economic engagement with China, while at the same time constricting access to the very things that will hasten the pace of their challenge to the United States' position. If we put all those things together, we see a coherent professional implementation of a slight course correction in fundamental US grand strategy.

WE ARE LOOKING AT TWO POSSIBLE, MUTUALLY EXCLUSIVE AMERICAS, DEPENDING ON THE ELECTION OUTCOME. HOW DIFFERENT ARE THE TWO AMERICAS WE MIGHT END UP WITH?

I would have to place a question mark over whether everything hinges on the election. The reason being that the Republican Party is not unified on foreign policy. In some sense, this is obscured



Prof. William C. Wohlforth

by the fact that the party is now in a campaign and is seeking to present a unified position against Biden and now Kamala Harris. But underneath that are different strains in Republican foreign policy, and it's very difficult to predict which of these strains would emerge dominant if Donald Trump were to win in November.

There are three basic strains: There's a continued, robust, Republican, Reagan-style foreign policy, which we're all familiar with; there's a strong rebalancing, which is to dramatically de-emphasize European security, force the Europeans to take more of the responsibility, and pivot the United States much more towards Asia and to a lesser degree the Middle East; and the third strain is a much firmer "America First" element, which demands an overall decrease in American engagement globally. If the third approach becomes dominant in the Trump Administration, then you will see that dramatic shift in American foreign policy.

Most people are treating the appointment of J.D. Vance as potential vice president as a move towards the direction of the second and third approach, away from the first.

WHAT COULD IT SPELL FOR THE US' STANDING IN THE WORLD?

The US' standing in the world is already, obviously, not what it was five, ten years ago. We have a clear situation in which many actors in the world, elites, governments, intelligence agencies, have assessed that the United States' power position is declining.

It's weaker than it has been since 2000. I would say both objectively but also subjectively. But many actors exaggerate the degree of the American decline. That includes Vladimir Putin and Xi Jinping, but also includes some Republicans who see the US' position as far more stressed than it is.

TALK TO US ABOUT THIS 'AGE OF SCARCITY' THAT POTENTIAL VP VANCE IS PREACHING, KEEPING IN MIND YOUR RECENT ESSAY, WHERE YOU ARGUED THAT THE US DOES NOT HAVE TO CHOOSE BETWEEN TAIWAN AND UKRAINE.

I don't think it does. Yes, you have to acknowledge that in certain areas, this war and this global crisis we're now in have revealed weaknesses in the US and allied industrial base. We've been preparing for the last 25, 30 years for a very different kind of war than a long-drawn war of attrition between highly substantial modern militaries. And the degree to which Russia's war against Ukraine is destroying gear is quite extraordinary, and people really hadn't planned for it. So J.D. Vance is correct in the narrow

sense that we do face a resource shortage in certain munitions that are needed by Ukraine. However, some experts will tell you that most of them, except in a few instances, are not the same as what is needed in East Asia and Taiwan.

The other thing to bear in mind is that we are already seeing the defense industrial base respond to this new demand and increased production in both European and US defense industrial facilities, such that this shortage he's referring to can be overcome in time.

IF THE CHINA PIVOT IS INEVITABLE, HOW WISE IS IT TO LEAVE RUSSIA NOT DEALT WITH AND AS A MENACE TO AT LEAST EASTERN EUROPE?

It's unwise. Even though the best military analysts estimate that, say you ended the war today, the Russian military is going to take 7 to 10 years to reconstitute itself after all the damage it received, that doesn't necessarily mean that Russia is now reconciled to a European security order that we have created. Strong evidence suggests the Russian political establishment remains deeply dissatisfied with the European security architecture as it exists. And this is the architecture that we support; therefore, Russia will seek various means to try to undermine that order until it achieves a different kind of European security order, which would not be good for the US. Rapidly shifting away from Europe, leaving the Europeans the entire burden of the task of trying to help Ukraine defend itself, would be a mistake for US interests.

WOULD THE MUCH-TALKED ABOUT STATEMENT FROM FORMER PRESIDENT TRUMP ABOUT ENDING THE WAR IN 24 HOURS BE AN EXAMPLE OF THE ALTERNATIVE VERSION OF STATECRAFT?

There are other foreign policy voices associated with the Trump campaign that speak of a much more careful and responsible pivot or renewed pivot to Asia, a pivot away from Europe. However, J.D. Vance says he doesn't care what happens to Ukraine, says he doesn't believe it has any meaning for American interests. I disagree with that. And we have Trump arguing we'll settle the war in 24 hours and we'll do a deal with Putin. Both of those things are quite delusional, ill-founded. They are unlikely to lead to a good outcome for the US, let alone Ukraine.

Vance says, "if they care so much about Ukraine, why can't they simply transfer some money out of their welfare states into their military and deal with it?" Russia, they think, is a completely manageable problem for Europe without the US. And what they say is the only way Europe will ever do this is if we seriously and

credibly start pulling back.

I think it has to be a much more gradual process. The US should be playing some sort of benevolent paternalistic role in helping to foster a strategic autonomy. If it doesn't do that, if it pulls out quickly, we will see contradictions among European states, coordination problems. In security matters, Europe is sovereign countries - Getting sovereign countries to cooperate on things like nuclear weapons, defense procurement, is really, really hard without a leading state. If the Americans are out of it, who's the leading state? Is it going to be Germany? Is it going to be France? Is it going to be both? How does the UK fit in now that it's out of the EU? Very difficult. So I think the US has to be incredibly committed to Europe.

WOULD THAT INVOLVE ANOTHER RESET WITH RUSSIA? AND IF IT DOES, WHY WOULD THIS ONE WORK WHEN ALL THE PREVIOUS ONES FAILED?

I don't see it. I mean, I think it's possible that Trump himself or maybe people in the Trump foreign policy orbit think that a grand bargain with Putin is possible. Maybe that's what they have in mind with this notion that somehow they will back away from Ukraine and create some sort of modus vivendi and rapprochement with Putin. I see very little chance that that would be successful. Very little chance. I think one of the things that I would forecast here is that we have heard from Moscow recently what their terms are to have a conversation about a ceasefire, not to mention a peace settlement. And to talk about a ceasefire requires Ukraine accepting, as legitimate, Russia's annexation of the four oblasts in eastern Ukraine. I think once this becomes evident that this is their minimum position to even start talks, I have a hard time imagining even Trump would accept those terms for the conversation.

THEN WHAT IS AN ACCEPTABLE OFF-RAMP FOR PUTIN THAT THE WEST AND THE US CAN GIVE?

I really wish I knew. Most people who analyze this war don't see the conditions for any kind of settlement being in place right now. As I read the Kremlin's most recent statements about talks and terms, they sound like they're saying, "We're going to get stronger in the future. If you feel like these conditions are unacceptable, the ones in the future are going to be even worse, so you'd better take these." And yet, we in the West still think that giving sufficient arms and sufficient support to Ukraine could put us in a position to get better terms, that Russia is actually under considerable stress. I'm not sure which of those is true.

WHAT SHOULD THE US RED LINES BE WHEN IT COMES TO THIS WAR? AND WHAT HAPPENS IF RUSSIA DOESN'T RESPECT THEM?

The obvious red line is an unambiguous attack on a NATO country, which the US has committed to respond to. This has been made clear by the highest level of the Biden Administration.

WHAT ABOUT HITTING RUSSIAN TARGETS INSIDE RUSSIA?

My understanding of American thinking on this is that we're worried about a process of escalation that gets out of control. Let's say Ukraine starts hitting targets wider throughout Russia using American weapons. And then the Russians respond in some way, like the sabotage campaign we've been observing in Europe. They're going to start to escalate in some other subtle way to try to hit. And then suddenly we feel compelled to respond.

The US is trying to aid Ukraine as much as possible while avoiding any pathway that might heighten the possibility of a war with Russia or with direct confrontation with Russia.

I personally am sympathetic to Biden's slow approach, slowly increasing what

Ukraine can do and being worried about the spiral. But I completely respect the view that says this is crazy, this is too conservative. The Biden administration has made perfectly clear the American interest does not involve a direct fight with Russia for Ukraine. So if you accept those premises, I view the way the Biden administration has managed escalation to be understandable, reasonable, and defensible.

IF NOT NATO, IS THERE AN ALTERNATIVE SOLUTION THAT WOULD SEE UKRAINE EQUALLY SECURE FROM RUSSIAN AGGRESSION. WHAT WOULD YOU OFFER IF UKRAINE WERE TO ABANDON ITS HOPES OF JOINING NATO?

I just said the American official position, which is unlikely to change, is that it is not prepared to fight Russia over Ukraine. That's what NATO membership means. So talking about Ukraine's NATO membership is a diversion from the real policy. And the real policy that could help to answer your question is the one Jens Stoltenberg suggested, which is what we needed to deliver in Washington - a long-term, credible commitment to continue aiding Ukraine so that Putin knows, "hey, the West is in this for the long haul." Sadly, we don't have a political consensus for that long-term commitment, and we have to keep fighting the battle to get Ukraine aid every single six months or every single year. That is the worst possible outcome. What Ukraine really needs is a consistent, credible, long-term program of assistance. I don't agree with J.D. Vance that we can't afford it. I think we can, and it's in our interest. If Putin knew that for the next 10 years, if they're still fighting, that we're in there, he would change his assessment about negotiating terms in this war.

THE REASON UKRAINE WANTED TO BECOME A NATO MEMBER IS TO BE SECURE AND PROTECTED IN THE FUTURE. SO WHAT FUTURE DO YOU SEE WHEN IT COMES TO NATO AND UKRAINE?

You don't make a country secure by simply declaring that it's a member of NATO. To be honest, the US States and NATO accepted the Baltic States before it had any credible way of defending them. It still doesn't, in a way, but it has other things it can do to Russia in response to a potential Russian incursion into those countries. So adding a country the size of France with a massive border with Russia to an alliance when you don't have the political will, when you don't have the capacity to defend it, is crazy. But there might be other guarantees that could be offered to Ukraine as part of a settlement of the war, and may they look a lot like NATO membership. We could create a situation where Ukraine could be defended by the US and its allies in Europe, but not right now. I don't want to rule out the possibility that someday in the future it could be possible, but there are lots of different ways of providing security to countries that don't necessarily involve Article V commitments.

WHAT DO YOU THINK IS AT STAKE IN THE UKRAINE WAR FOR THE WEST?

Unless the world sees that Russia has paid a very large price, or pays a very large price for territorial aggrandizement, the norm against territorial conquest will weaken and we leave the US States and its allies less secure and less prosperous. If it was so costly to Russia, that other countries, other leaders, other potential revisionists look at it and say, that is not a path I want to go down, see that it was a disaster for Putin, they would think twice. I really do believe we can do it without sparking a major war. Having the nation of Ukraine go down in history for Russians as a failure would be a good thing for global and US security.

'Gray Operations' as a Contemporary Security Challenge for Georgia: Specific Considerations and Observations. Part 2



Garibashvili, Ivanishvili and Kobakhidze following their foreign policy speeches in May. Source: cepa

BY VICTOR KIPIANI

It is within the Black Sea basin that it seems appropriate to develop cooperation in two directions – security and political. Moreover, the creation of mini-alliances or blocs through the convergence of interests due to geographical proximity is one of the notable trends of the modern world. Their practical benefits include, among other things, better perception and assessment of shared risks, as well as mobility of joint responses to address them and more efficient use of resources.

The formation of the Black Sea mini-alliance is all the more relevant if we take into account that in recent years the representation of the North Atlantic Alliance in the Black Sea has been characterized by a significant lack of potential and resources. Moreover, on the eastern flank of the alliance perimeter – from the Baltic Sea to the Black Sea – this sense of scarcity was compounded by apparent asymmetry or inequality. The result was and remains corresponding. Namely, against the backdrop of the disparity between the components of the Alliance's so-called tailored forward presence on the Black Sea and so-called enhanced forward presence of Baltic countries, NATO's approach is inexplicable, because the security of the Black Sea today requires at least the same standards of attitude as the northern part of the Alliance's eastern flank.

Thus, if we focus on the political component, we still want to put forward the initiative of a framework document of the Black Sea Declaration, which would serve the political and economic integration of the countries of the region, including a modern format of consultations, adapted to the time and the need for new channels of communication.

Such a declaration will emphasize the importance of the Black Sea region for world and regional peace and stability. With regard to a number of important topics, this document will:

- (1) Highlight the importance of partnership of the parties for regional security;
- (2) Consider the region as an area free from harmful influences and "areas of special interest";
- (3) Indicate the need to mobilize investment funds for the diversification of regional infrastructure, as well as the need to implement socially and environmentally sustainable projects in the region;
- (4) Note the frozen so-called ethnic, and in fact geopolitical conflicts, and

express support for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the countries of the Black Sea region;

(5) Create a platform to discuss current regional security issues, such as those related to terrorism and illegal migration challenges;

(6) Outline the directions of regional free trade agreements and blocs.

At the same time, in order to ensure the necessary coordination, consideration should be given to holding regular summits at the level of high-level representatives of the heads of state parties of the declaration, the United States, the United Kingdom, the European Union and other strategic partners. The main purpose of the regular summits is to support the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of the countries of the region; Summit participants should also discuss actual geopolitical (rather than so-called "ethnic") conflicts in the region, regional security in general, international terrorism, cyber security, illegal migration and other pressing issues and challenges.

As for the security dimension using the regional factor of the Black Sea, we envision the relevant cooperation (similar to NORDEFECO or another model) by joint efforts of the North Atlantic Alliance member countries (Romania, Turkey, Bulgaria) and non-member countries (Georgia, Ukraine).

And the area of cooperation issues presumably appears to us as follows:

- (1) Discussing security and defense policy and identifying common risks and challenges;
- (2) Concern for the interaction and interoperability of armed forces, including through the planning of specific programs and measures;
- (3) Exchange of experience and knowledge in the field of defense industry and related technologies;
- (4) Joint actions to ensure peace and stability in the Black Sea region.

It is clear that certain aspects of such cooperation require detailed discussion at the expert level, but with the necessary condition that such discussion is encouraged and facilitated by decision-makers.

ENHANCING THE GEO-ECONOMIC FUNCTION

We deliberately emphasized this component in the context of the article. We believe that, on the one hand, increasing a country's usefulness in a network of regional trade, transportation or other types of economic linkages and, on the other hand, the joint interest and co-ownership of actors with a voice in realizing these benefits will help to better

manage and mitigate future risks.

Realistically speaking, in today's opportunistic world, we consider ties based on mutual benefit to be one of the main prerequisites for stability and predictability. The rest – declarations, statements and supporting resolutions – will only be lifeless noise if there is no concrete content of economic co-beneficiary and co-ownership behind them.

The above-mentioned approach was the basis for the cross-border projects launched by Georgia in the 1990s (Baku-Supsa, Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan, Baku-Tbilisi-Erzurum, and later Baku-Tbilisi-Kars), which gave our country "its own self" in the eyes of the outside world. However, it is necessary to remember that strengthening the "own self" and filling it with new content is a constant, continuous process in which fatigue and boredom are excluded. A number of major projects, including the Middle Corridor and the Black Sea Electric Cable, which should give Georgia a unique role in the larger regional geo-economic structure, at least for several decades to come, serve this very purpose.

Here we will add what we have said many times. In particular, the country's concern is the existence of a competitive ecosystem in its own space. Now, if we imagine for a moment the growing trend of economic autarky and nationalism on a global scale, needless to say, such a Georgian ecosystem should at least not lag behind competitors of similar caliber. For this purpose, among other measures, it is necessary to: (a) increase tenfold the integration of the Georgian economy with developed economies; (b) increase technological and intellectual self-sufficiency; (c) promote science and education adapted to the needs of a practical economy; (d) maximize Georgia's use of the "friendshoring" potential within regional and subregional industrial and transport and logistics networks.

The fact is, if we somehow turn this country into a geography of economic gravity for powerful actors, the likelihood of overt military or other threats (including those related to "gray operations") will be proportionately reduced.

A FEW THESES TO CONCLUDE

Judging by the regional processes around Georgia, yes, direct aggression is still a possible scenario. However, I would add that the probability of such aggression, based on the current circumstances, is low.

Instead, the pursuit of "low-intensity" conflict through "gray operations" directed against a country is a permanent phenomenon and will remain so for the foreseeable future.

Moreover, in case the support of the West for Georgia becomes unconvincing for the same Russian Federation and if external forces manage and create a crack in the will and strength of our government to adequately respond to anti-Georgian and anti-state actions, the relevance of open aggression from outside will decrease even more.

It should be noted here that Russia's so-called "Salami Tactics" can be no less effective for a country of Georgia's size and scale than a conventional military campaign. It may be as a result of such "gradual", "step-by-step" pressure – whether in the economic or informational sphere – that Russia can exert the desired influence on our country's domestic political structure and its foreign policy course.

Considering the above, the strengthening of Georgia's ties with Western partners is given critical weight. In our opinion, one of the real manifestations of this

cooperation is the establishment in Tbilisi of a special joint center of excellence for combating hybrid warfare and disinformation, for example, in the form of an analog of the center for combating hybrid threats operating in Helsinki. In parallel with the neutralization of hybrid-disinformation manifestations in our country (the so-called "Global War Party", "Second Front", "Standing Firmly on Two Feet", etc.), such a center can also respond to the needs of the regional scale.

It is a fact that as the world and the South Caucasus region enter an era of instability and unpredictability, there is a growing demand for the so-called "opportunistic" approach in the external arena. And if the use of the word "opportunism" in the above-mentioned context offends someone's ears, we can call this much-needed approach much more correctly – "Georgian policy of realistic opportunities".

Survey on Georgia's Startup Ecosystem Provided by: JICA Georgia office Deadline: August 11th, 2024

JICA Georgia office is pleased to announce an opening for the position of Consultant for the Survey on Georgia's Startup Ecosystem

Job description:

- Create a list of key entrepreneurs, investors, incubators, accelerators, venture capitals, startup support organizations, and major projects of foreign aid agencies in Georgia's startup community. Also, organize the strengths and weaknesses of the startup ecosystem and compile recommendations for future support directions.
- Organize information on Japanese and Asian companies, investors, and support organizations related to startups in Georgia.
- Regularly participate in seminars and workshops related to startups, contributing to the enhancement of the presence of Japan and JICA.
- Conduct a meeting with JICA Georgia office once a month
- Compile the above surveys and activities into a monthly report and submit it to JICA Georgia office by the 15th of each month.

Skills and requirements:

- ** University degree;
- ** Highly proficient in spoken and written English and Japanese Language
- ** Computer literacy (word, excel, power point etc) and troubleshooting;
- ** At least three years work experience in the similar field;
- ** Analytical, open-minded, honest character;
- ** Excellent communication and interpersonal skills;
- ** Well-organized; strong sense of responsibility; hard working;
- ** Familiarity with Georgian and Japanese startup industry

Preferable but not mandatory skills:

- ** Familiarity with terms related to engineering and finance
- ** Experience of the launch of the startup business

Reporting Requirements and Time Schedule for Deliverables

- (a) Electronic submission
- (b) Submission due date: 15th of each month

JICA's Input, Counterpart Personnel, etc.

- (a) Concrete services and specific work schedule will be decided through day-to-day communication and consultation with JICA Georgia Office.
- (b) Staff of JICA Georgia Office to be assigned to the Consultant: Project Formulation Advisor and National Staff

Others

Travel expenses including daily allowance will be provided in accordance with the internal regulation of JICA Georgia Office.

Term:

From August 15, 2024 to March 14, 2024 (7 months)
(Probation period is 1 month. The employer will be able to terminate the contract depending on the performance during the probation period).

Salary:

US\$ 200/month without taxes (actual amount will be adjusted based on the past work experience and will be paid in GEL) JICA Georgia Office will assume no responsibilities with respect to the payment of taxes and other levies on the Consultant's income.

Next step:

Only shortlisted persons will be notified by email and invited to the interview. Interested candidates are required to send the CV (only in English) with two contact information from previous workplaces/schools and copies of certificates to: sakurada.kobun@jica.go.jp and no later than August 11th, 2024



UN Resident Coordinator Visits Plastic Packaging Producer in Kakheti

New EU-funded QUIS Project to Improve Product and Service Quality in Georgia

A new EU-funded project to improve goods and services has been launched in Georgia, implemented by the German Cooperation (GIZ) and the Czech Development Agency (CzDA), the EU Delegation to Georgia announced on 2 August.

'QUIS—Better Goods and Services' will promote the implementation of European standards in accredited laboratories and certified bodies, and assist the private sector in using these actors' services in the production process. This will help Georgian businesses to increase exports and access to the European market, encompassing 27 countries and over 500 million consumers.

The project will work with industrial sectors, as well as local manufacturers

in the furniture, toy industries, etc.

The main objectives of the initiative are improvement of product quality, improvement of service quality, raising consumer awareness, and support for innovation and technology.

"The QUIS project is one of the latest initiatives funded by the EU, which will strengthen quality infrastructure in order to support the development, innovation, and competitiveness of local businesses in Georgia. This will help Georgian consumers access the same high-quality goods and services as their EU counterparts," said Nicholas Cendrowicz, the Head of Cooperation at the Delegation of the European Union to Georgia.

The total budget of the project is around €12 million. The project is scheduled to continue until January 2027.



UN Resident Coordinator Didier Trebucq in Kakheti

UN Resident Coordinator Didier Trebucq recently visited a plastic packaging producer in Kakheti, supported by the European Union in Georgia and UNDP

Georgia. The enterprise collects, recycles, and reprocesses plastic waste from the streets of Telavi and nearby villages.

Now recycling around 30 tons of plastic per month, the enterprise has

achieved impressive economic results, having created 8 permanent jobs for Kakheti residents; reduced dependence on imports by 50%; cut production costs by 20%; and increased productivity by 30%.

Finance for the Net-Zero Transition Must Maximize and Share Benefits Equitably

BLOG BY MASATSUGU ASAKAWA*, PRESIDENT, ASIAN DEVELOPMENT BANK

The Asia and Pacific region stands at a critical juncture, positioned both as a significant contributor to global greenhouse gas emissions and a potential leader in transformative climate action. The Asian Development Bank (ADB), alongside our member countries, is steering the region towards a sustainable future through support for a just transition. Our vision aims to reorient economic and social frameworks to foster low-carbon, climate-resilient growth that enhances prosperity and inclusion.

The need for a just transition, one that puts people at the center of the shift to net zero, cannot be overstated. Asia and the Pacific account for over half of the world's annual greenhouse gas emissions, driven by its dependence on fossil fuels. At the same time, more than 200 million people in the region are impoverished, with many lacking access to basic electricity and relying on traditional biomass for cooking and heating. Women are particularly affected, and often face disproportionate impacts.

As Asia and the Pacific's climate bank, ADB prioritizes an inclusive approach to ensure that the costs and benefits of the transition to net zero are fairly distributed. Achieving net zero requires us to restructure our economies and change the way we live and work. It is paramount that in this process, the burdens of change are not imposed on the most vulnerable



Masatsugu Asakawa, President, Asian Development Bank

and that the benefits of a low-carbon economy are both maximized and shared equitably. Ensuring that all segments of society, including women, share in these benefits is critical to the success of our just transition efforts.

To create opportunities for inclusive and sustainable growth, ADB works with partners to implement robust policy frameworks, enhance institutional capacities and engage stakeholders through participatory processes. These just transition

efforts align with global commitments such as the Paris Agreement, and at the country level we support our developing members in crafting policies and programs that respond to their unique climate challenges and development needs.

At COP27, ADB launched a Just Transition Support Platform to help drive a just transition within our developing member countries. This platform focuses on supporting countries to incorporate just transition into their institutional and

policy frameworks and identify innovative financing approaches that attract public and private capital for a just transition. The platform also supports the mainstreaming of just transition in ADB's operations.

Moreover, at COP28, ADB launched an inclusive process to design a Just Transition Finance Facility that will provide targeted finance to address the socio-economic challenges of the transition to net zero. It will help countries realize the economic and social benefits of the transition and ensure these benefits are inclusive and widespread, ultimately supporting a robust and equitable shift to low-carbon and resilient economies.

Just transition is also a core part of ADB's Energy Transition Mechanism (ETM). Developed in partnership with ADB member countries, ETM is a scalable initiative that has the potential to be one of the largest carbon-reduction programs in the world. Under it, public and private investments – from governments, multilateral banks, private sector investors, philanthropies and other long-term investors – finance country-specific ETM funds. These funds are designed to retire or repurpose coal power assets on an earlier schedule compared with a business-as-usual timeline.

Just transition principles are a cornerstone of ETM's implementation, helping us to ensure that potential negative socio-economic impacts are minimized through policies and programs. For example, retraining and reskilling programs provide new opportunities in emerging industries for women and vulnerable workers.

The importance of managing the social

impacts associated with the transition to net zero can be seen through ADB's work on the Cirebon 1 coal-fired power station in Indonesia. This plant serves as an ETM pilot, for which ADB completed a preliminary just transition assessment earlier this year – the first of its kind for ADB and for the region. The assessment utilized a comprehensive methodology to identify impacts along the coal value chain and within the community and surrounding areas. It also established a process to further assess and develop a plan to manage impacts at the appropriate project stages.

Just transition offers a compelling vision for green and inclusive development across Asia and the Pacific. Its promise lies not only in avoiding the worst impacts of climate change, but in creating a more equitable social order that values well-being and gender equality, provides decent work, and ensures sustainable economic growth.

We must encourage optimism and concerted effort from all sectors of society to embrace the principles of justice and inclusivity that will be needed for a low-carbon, climate-resilient future. This journey faces challenges but is also filled with opportunities for transformative change that can forge a healthier, more equitable and prosperous world. The path we chart now will determine the climate legacy we leave for future generations.

*Masatsugu Asakawa is President of the Asian Development Bank. This article was first published in the OECD Development Cooperation Report 2024: Tackling Poverty and Inequalities through the Green Transition [https://doi.org/10.1787/357b63f7-en].

India's Dynamic Rise: Georgia Today Explores India's Expanding Cultural, Innovative and Global Influence

BY KATIE RUTH DAVIES

India's ties with Georgia are steeped in a rich historical tapestry that spans from antiquity to modern diplomacy and education and business relations. Although India formally established diplomatic relations in 1992, Georgia hosted no Indian Resident Mission until plans were laid out to set one up this year. Until then, the Indian Ambassador to Armenia doubles as the accredited representative to Georgia.

With the spirit of welcoming this new phase of relations between Georgia and India, GEORGIA TODAY was lucky enough to be invited by the Indian government on a media tour of part of the country at the end of June. The whirlwind visit saw us exploring India's cultural and political history, and key examples of the country's private sector as it strives to grow women's empowerment, green tech, and space exploration. We were also hosted by the Secretary of the Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways who discussed with us India's ambitious shipping plans, among them the impressive North-South Corridor.

"We are at a very exciting juncture in our bilateral relations," Ambassador to Armenia, also accredited to Georgia, Nilakshi Saha Sinha, tells GEORGIA TODAY. "Relations have always been very good, very warm; people-to-people ties are very strong, and now, with the opening of the embassy in Tbilisi, relations are being taken to the next level. We already have Indian investments of up to \$500 million in Georgia, a hydro-power plant in Batumi, more than 16,000 medical students studying here. In exchange, among other things, we offer tech scholarships, and Georgian diplomats are trained at India's Diplomatic Academy. Meanwhile, the Georgians in India are working to promote their country in a big way, and a lot of Indian tourists, businessmen and students are visiting Georgia, now helped by the new direct flight Tbilisi-Delhi."

India and Georgia have shared cultural ties for centuries. Georgian folklore often echoes Indian tales, like those from the Panchatantra, and during medieval times, their interactions grew through missionaries, travelers, and traders. An Indian prince even plays a significant role in Georgia's epic poem "The Knight in the Panther's Skin" by Shota Rustaveli. Further, in 2021, India returned relics of the much-revered Queen Saint Ketevan to Tbilisi, a gesture that highlighted the deep respect and long-standing connections between the two countries.

Today, the cultural exchange is vibrant, with Georgian artists performing in India and Bollywood gaining popularity in Georgia. The Gandhi Foundation in Tbilisi also promotes cultural understanding through various events and seminars.

On the economic side, while growth is strong, there are some hurdles like limited direct trade routes. However, efforts, including the ongoing discussions on a Free Trade Agreement since 2017, show progress. Indian investments in Georgia, especially in steel and infrastructure, are boosting economic ties, and, as we discovered on our tour, India has much more to offer Georgia in terms of experience and innovation.

SABKA SAATH SABKA VIKAS – A LESSON WORTH SHARING

India says it is committed to lifting millions out of poverty and improving quality of life for its people. Despite housing 17% of the world's population, the country contributes to less than 4% of global emissions, reflecting its role as a responsible global player. Adopting a "whole-of-society" approach, India seeks to engage everyone, from local communities to businesses and vulnerable groups, in its quest for sustainability. The motto "Sabka Saath Sabka Vikas" (literally "everyone's support, everyone's devel-

opment") defines India's belief in "Inclusive Growth for All."

INDIA'S HEALTHCARE REVOLUTION

India's healthcare industry is booming, covering everything from hospitals and medical devices to clinical trials, telemedicine, medical tourism, and health insurance. This impressive growth is driven by substantial investments from both public and private sectors. The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare is spearheading efforts to enhance immunization through the Universal Immunization Program (UIP), aiming to reduce under-5 mortality rates from vaccine-preventable diseases. Further, India's universal health insurance scheme gives 500,000 INR of coverage to each family each year.

The hospital sector alone, valued at INR 7940.87 billion in FY21, is expected to nearly double to INR 18,348.78 billion by FY 2027. Telemedicine is also on a rapid rise, projected to reach \$5.4 billion by 2025. Moreover, India's substantial investment in medical education, INR 17,691.08 crore for 157 new medical colleges since 2014, demonstrates its commitment to expanding healthcare infrastructure and capacity.

One of our media trips involved an extensive tour of the renowned FTO Unit III of Dr Reddy's in Delhi, where we got to witness up-close the international-standard process of pill manufacturing, from material delivery to finished, packaged product.

India leads the world in vaccine production, accounting for 60% of global output and being the top supplier of affordable vaccines. It is also the largest global provider of generic medicines, holding a 20% share of the market by volume. One standout example of this success is Dr. Reddy's Laboratories, founded by Kallam Anji Reddy. The company started out supplying drugs to Indian manufacturers, but quickly expanded into international markets with more relaxed regulatory requirements. This strategic move allowed Dr. Reddy's to export pharmaceuticals more easily, boosting its growth and profitability.

By the early 1990s, Dr. Reddy's was using its experience in these less-regulated markets to break into more developed economies like the US and Europe. This expansion was made possible by securing approvals from major regulatory bodies, including the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA), for their products and manufacturing facilities.

INDIA'S GREEN REVOLUTION: LEADING THE CHARGE IN RENEWABLE ENERGY

India has emerged as the world's third-largest energy consumer and ranks fourth globally in installed renewable energy capacity, with impressive wind and solar power resources. At COP26, India launched its ambitious Panchamrit Plan, aiming for 500 GW of non-fossil fuel-based energy by 2030, the most extensive renewable energy expansion plan globally.

In May, India reported its non-fossil fuel capacity had surged by 396% over the past 8.5 years, reaching over 201.75 GW. This includes hydro and nuclear power, which together account for 45.3% of the total capacity. Solar power has seen extraordinary growth, expanding thirtyfold in nine years to 84.27 GW, with the National Institute of Solar Energy estimating a potential of 748 GWp.

In 2022, India achieved the highest annual growth rate in renewable energy additions at 9.83%. Since 2014, the country's total renewable energy capacity, including large hydro, has risen by approximately 128%. India also encourages foreign investment in renewable projects, permitting up to 100% FDI under the automatic route as per The Electricity Act 2003.

During our media tour, we visited the ReNew headquarters in Delhi. ReNew



is a leading Indian firm dedicated to advancing decarbonization solutions, with a mission to drive innovation and sustainability toward a future without fossil fuels.

ReNew, having earned recognition as one of the country's top renewables-only firms, was among the first Indian firms to list on Nasdaq, highlighting the growing global importance of India's renewable energy industry.

ReNew is known for its innovative approach, seeing it incorporating hybrid technologies, energy storage solutions, and Real-Time Control (RTC) into its operations. One of ReNew's key innovations is its data-driven approach to enhancing operational efficiency at its solar PV plants. By developing a model that uses detailed data to automate soiling loss calculations and optimize cleaning schedules, ReNew has increased plant yield by up to 0.8% and significantly reduced water use. The implementation of robotic cleaning at its Rajasthan sites, for example, has conserved over 66,000 kiloliters of water, demonstrating how advanced analytics can sustainably enhance renewable energy performance.

WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT UNLEASHED: FICCI AND FICCI FLO DRIVING CHANGE AND INNOVATION

The Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FICCI), established in 1927 with the support of Mahatma Gandhi, stands as India's largest and oldest business organization. As a non-governmental, not-for-profit trade association, FICCI champions the interests of both private and public sector companies, from SMEs to MNCs.

During our visit, we learned about FICCI FLO, a dynamic organization dedicated to women's empowerment. Founded in 1983 as a part of FICCI, FLO is headquartered in New Delhi and boasts 19 chapters nationwide - representing over 9,500 women entrepreneurs and professionals. For 40 years, FLO has been promoting entrepreneurship and professional excellence among women through a range of initiatives, including workshops, seminars, training programs and capacity-building efforts, empowering women across all sectors and driving inclusive economic growth. Its efforts span three key levels: enhancing employability at the grassroots, supporting entrepreneurship in the middle tiers, and advancing women into leadership and board roles at the senior level.

"We're not just talking about contributing to such progress," the Ambassador tells us when we speak to her about India's achievements in women's empowerment, "we're participating and delivering!"

INDIA'S MARITIME VISION 2030

India's strategic position along major shipping routes and impressive 7,517 km

coastline are natural advantages. By 2021, India had emerged as a leader in the global ship-breaking industry, holding over 30% of the market share and boasting the world's largest ship-breaking facility at Alang. To enhance its maritime capabilities, the Indian government has introduced various incentives for enterprises in ports, inland waterways, and shipbuilding.

As part of the media tour, we met with Mr. T. K. Ramachandran, Secretary of the Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways. There, we learned about the Maritime India Vision 2030, launched by the Prime Minister in March 2021, which outlines over 150 initiatives designed to promote coordinated development across all maritime sectors. Alongside this is the Sagar Mala Program, started in 2017, which emphasizes port development and the enhancement of logistics-intensive industries. With a \$123 billion investment across 415 projects, it focuses on modernizing ports, improving connectivity, boosting industrialization linked to ports, and advancing community development on the coast. These initiatives are expected to generate \$2.7 billion in annual revenue from existing assets and create two million direct and indirect jobs by 2030.

EDUCATION MEETS INNOVATION: T-HUB DRIVING STARTUP SUCCESS

In Hyderabad, Telangana, we had the chance to discover T-Hub, an innovation hub that operates as both an innovation intermediary and a business incubator. What we found so inspiring is that it employs a unique model that brings together the Government of Telangana, leading academic institutions in Hyderabad - such as the International Institute of Information Technology, Indian School of Business, and National Academy of Legal Studies and Research, and the private sector.

The hub is dedicated to supporting both Indian and international startups by offering a range of resources, as well as fostering innovation ecosystems for various government organizations. T-Hub has earned impressive accolades, including the 'Best Incubator in India' award at the National Startup Awards 2022, and recognition as the top National Technology Business Incubator by the Government of India's Department of Science and Technology in 2023.

INDIA'S SPACE ODYSSEY

India's space sector is renowned for its cost-efficient satellite manufacturing, groundbreaking Mars missions, and successful foreign satellite launches. Currently representing 2-3% of the global space economy, India has set an ambitious goal to boost this share to over 10% by 2030. With over 400 private space companies, India ranks fifth globally in space activity.

The country's space strategy seeks not only to grow the Indian Space Research Organization's capabilities, but to expand commercial space technology use and increase industry participation. As global interest in space tourism and asteroid mining rises, India sees privatization as crucial for advancing its space sector.

During our visit, the company 'Skyroot' provided us a glimpse into the future of space exploration. Co-Founder Pawan Chandana, a Rocket Engineer turned Space Entrepreneur with a decade of experience and a Forbes '30 Under 30 Asia' accolade, shared with us his company's mission to revolutionize space access: "We are working towards a future where Space becomes part of our lives, and such a transition will transform humankind like never before," he noted.

INDIA'S TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY: A KEY DRIVER OF ECONOMIC GROWTH AND GLOBAL ATTRACTION

Like Georgia, India's tourism and hospitality sector is a major driver of economic growth and prosperity. As one of the largest service industries, it plays a crucial role in creating jobs and improving infrastructure - from hotels, resorts, and dining options, to more efficient transport networks, including aviation, roads, shipping, and railways.

India's rich array of tourist destinations includes UNESCO World Heritage sites like the Taj Mahal in Agra, a 17th-century marvel that attracts over five million visitors each year and was honored as one of the New 7 Wonders of the World in 2007. India's tourism portfolio also features specialized offerings, such as cruise, adventure, medical, and ecotourism, naturally leading to a rise in tourist arrivals and a boost for job opportunities nationwide.

And touching back on that women's empowerment progress India is so rightly proud of, the country's tourism sector is a leader in promoting diversity and gender empowerment, serving as a major employer of women and advancing equal opportunities through various supportive initiatives.

CONCLUSION: A BRIGHT FUTURE TOGETHER

India and Georgia are strengthening their partnership through bilateral mechanisms like Foreign Office Consultations and the Inter-Governmental Commission, while people-to-people ties continue to expand. Rooted in centuries-old shared values and cultural ties, such collaboration sets the stage for deeper cooperation across multiple sectors.

India's rise as a global leader reflects its legacy of innovation and resilience. As they move forward, India and Georgia can be united in their goal of creating a prosperous future for their people, fueled by sustainable innovation and inclusive growth.

From German Innovations to Georgian Traditions: A Dive into Cultural Intersection



Asureti. Photo by the author

BY IVAN NECHAEV

German-Georgian relations have a rich and layered history that extends beyond diplomatic ties to encompass deep cultural exchanges. These interactions have left a lasting imprint on Georgian society, influencing everything from architecture and education to music, literature, and even cuisine. The legacies of German settlers in Bolnisi, Asureti, and Tbilisi continue to shape the cultural landscape of Georgia. The contributions to beer brewing and the symbolic presence of a part of the Berlin Wall further illustrate the depth of German-Georgian relations. This enduring cultural exchange enriches Georgia's national identity, blending local traditions with European influences, and highlights the lasting power of intercultural dialogue and cooperation.

ARCHITECTURAL AND AGRICULTURAL CONTRIBUTIONS

German settlers in Georgia established several colonies, most notably in the regions of Kvemo Kartli and Kakheti. Katharinenfeld (now Bolnisi), Mariensfeld (now Sartichala), and Alexandersdorf were among the most prominent. These settlers brought with them distinct architectural styles, agricultural practices, and religious traditions, significantly impacting local culture.

German settlers also brought advanced agricultural techniques, particularly in viticulture and dairy farming. They introduced new grape varieties and wine-making practices, which contributed to the diversification of Georgian viticulture. Bolnisi remains known for its wine production, with some techniques traceable to these early German influences. Additionally, the settlers introduced dairy farming practices, including cheese-making techniques, which have since



Asureti. Photo by the author

been integrated into Georgian culinary traditions.

EDUCATION AND INTELLECTUAL LIFE

German influence in the educational sphere began with the establishment of German schools and later the Tbilisi German Gymnasium in the late 19th century. This gymnasium became a prestigious institution, attracting students from the Georgian elite. It offered a curriculum that included German language, literature, and sciences, introducing students to German intellectual traditions.

The exposure to German literature and philosophy had a profound impact on Georgian intellectual life. Georgian writers and poets, such as Ilia Chavchavadze and Akaki Tsereteli, were influenced by German Romanticism and the works of philosophers like Goethe and Schiller. This influence is evident in their writings, which often reflect themes of individualism, nature, and national identity, resonating with the Romantic ideals popular in German literature at the time.

The establishment of the Tbilisi State University in 1918, with support from German academics, further solidified German influence in Georgian education. Notably, the university's first rector, Ivane Javakhishvili, had studied in Germany and was influenced by the German educational model. The emphasis on rigorous academic standards and research methodologies at the university can be partly attributed to these German influences.

MUSICAL AND ARTISTIC INFLUENCE

The impact of German culture on Georgian music is most evident in the establishment of the Tbilisi State Conservatoire in 1917, which became a hub for Western classical music in the Caucasus. German musicians and educators played a critical role in its early development.

Alexander Nitsche, a German conductor, was instrumental in shaping the Conservatoire's curriculum and introducing Georgian students to European classical music traditions. He emphasized the study of composers like Bach, Beethoven, and Brahms, integrating these influences into the training of Georgian musicians. This Western classical foundation is evident in the works of Georgian composers such as Zakaria Paliashvili, whose operas combine Georgian folk music with Western operatic styles. Paliashvili's opera 'Abesalom da Eteri' (Abesalom and Eteri) is a notable example, blending Georgian melodies with complex harmonic structures influenced by German Romantic music.

The German influence extended to the visual arts, with many Georgian artists studying in Germany or being influenced by German artistic movements. The expressionist and modernist art movements had a particular impact on Georgian artists in the early 20th century. For example, David Kakabadze, a pioneering figure in Georgian modernism, was influenced by German expressionism and the Bauhaus movement, which is evident in his use of abstraction and experimentation with form and color.

CULINARY INFLUENCES

While German influence on Georgian cuisine is less well-documented, it nonetheless exists, particularly in regions where German settlers lived. The introduction of new culinary techniques and ingredients by German settlers added to the rich tapestry of Georgian gastronomy.

German settlers introduced methods of food preservation, such as pickling and smoking, which became integrated into local food practices. Additionally, they brought new crops, such as certain varieties of potatoes and cabbage, which were not previously common in Georgia. These ingredients have since been incorporated into traditional Georgian dishes. The region of Bolnisi, for instance, is known for its sausages and dairy products, which bear similarities to German culinary traditions.

German settlers in Georgia brought with them a tradition of beer brewing, which has had a lasting impact on the country's beverage industry. German settlers established breweries that produced beer using traditional German techniques. This included the use of specific strains of barley and hops, which were previously uncommon in Georgia. These early brewing practices introduced a new dimension to Georgia's rich tradition of wine and spirits. Today, the legacy of German beer making is evident in Georgia's growing craft beer industry. Several breweries produce German-style beers, such as lagers and wheat beers, which have become popular among Georgians. Beer festivals, celebrating both local and German brewing traditions, have also become a feature of Georgia's cultural calendar.

GERMAN HERITAGE: BOLNISI, ASURETI, TBILISI

Bolnisi, originally named Katharinenfeld, was established by German settlers in the early 19th century and remains a significant repository of German heritage in Georgia. The town's German architectural heritage is characterized by distinctive houses featuring steep roofs, timber framing, and large windows. This architectural style contrasts sharply with traditional Georgian stone and brick constructions. Notably, many houses in Bolnisi have been well-preserved, providing a tangible link to the town's past. The German settlers in Bolnisi also brought advanced agricultural techniques, particularly in wine-making. They introduced new grape varieties and cultivation methods, significantly impacting the region's wine industry. Today, Bolnisi remains a prominent center for wine production in Georgia, with some practices traceable to the early German influence.



A German sign in Tbilisi. Photo by the author

Asureti, formerly Elisabethtal, is another notable site of German settlement in Georgia, founded by Swabian Germans in the early 19th century. The town's layout, with its central church square and orderly street grid, reflects typical German village planning. The houses, many of which are preserved, showcase German architectural styles, with half-timbered structures and spacious courtyards. These elements distinguish Asureti from traditional Georgian villages. The Evangelical Church in Asureti is a central landmark, embodying the German Gothic style, with pointed arches and vaulted ceilings. This church serves not only as a place of worship, but also as a community center for cultural and social events, highlighting the role of the German settlers in shaping the town's cultural landscape.

Tbilisi, the capital of Georgia, has a rich German heritage, particularly in the Chugureti district, which was a hub for German immigrants in the 19th and early 20th centuries. Often referred to as the "German Quarter," Chugureti is notable for its historic buildings and cultural landmarks. The district's architecture includes several structures designed by German architects, featuring styles such as Art Nouveau and Gothic Revival. These buildings are an integral part of Tbilisi's urban fabric and offer a glimpse into the city's diverse cultural history. The Lutheran Church of St. Peter and Paul, located in Chugureti, is a significant symbol of the German presence in Tbilisi. Built in 1897, the church is a striking example of Gothic Revival architecture, with its tall spire and intricate façade. This church is a cultural and religious center for the German community in Tbilisi, hosting numerous events and gatherings.

A poignant symbol of Germany's divided past, a segment of the Berlin Wall is displayed in Tbilisi, signifying the strong historical and cultural ties between Germany and Georgia. The piece of the Berlin Wall, located near the Metekhi

church, serves as a powerful reminder of the struggles for freedom and unity faced by both Germany and Georgia. For Georgians, who have experienced their own challenges with territorial integrity and political sovereignty, the wall is a symbol of hope and resilience. The presence of the Berlin Wall in Tbilisi has educational significance, offering a tangible connection to a pivotal moment in world history. It underscores the importance of historical memory and the shared values of democracy and human rights. The wall has become a focal point for discussions on the lessons of history and the importance of international solidarity.

POLITICAL AND CULTURAL EXCHANGE IN THE 20TH AND 21ST CENTURIES

The relationship between Georgia and Germany has continued to evolve, particularly after Georgia's independence from the Soviet Union. Germany was one of the first countries to recognize Georgia's independence in 1992, and, since then, the two nations have maintained strong diplomatic and cultural ties.

The establishment of the Goethe Institute in Tbilisi, which celebrates its thirtieth anniversary this year, has been a significant factor in promoting German culture and language in Georgia. The institute offers language courses, cultural programs, and supports academic exchange between the two countries. This ongoing cultural exchange has helped maintain and renew the German influence on Georgian intellectual and cultural life.

Today, Germany remains one of Georgia's most important partners in the European Union, supporting various development projects in education, governance, and infrastructure. Cultural exchanges continue to flourish, with numerous joint art exhibitions, concerts, and academic conferences highlighting the deep and enduring ties between the two nations.



Berlin Wall, Tbilisi. Photo by the author

A Brief Stroll in Moscow



Moscow. Photo by Alexander Zemlianichenko Jr/Xinhua via ZUMA

BLOG BY NUGZAR B. RUHADZE

War or no war, life is ongoing in Moscow. I have not visited for the last quarter of a century, having no reason to want to come, being, as I was, chronically annoyed with the place and the dwellers thereof. But this summer, I thought it wouldn't hurt to have a look around the main city of the country which has snatched away almost one-third of my unfortunate Sakartvelo, and which is adamantly keeping a firm grip on it. Call it an ill-fated geopolitical reality, if you wish, or a temporary territorial

debacle, but those gamely-coined names and titles, no matter how up-to-date they might sound, are not at all helpful in getting back the lands we have lost to our angry and stronger neighbor. In my youth, I attended a high-level diplomatic school in Moscow, which, to be sincere, gave me considerable theoretical knowledge that I have since easily translated into my wellbeing. And that's not all that went into the now-remote coffer of my long-time memory. Has much changed here since those times of my boyhood? Yes, and no! It goes without saying that socialism is out and capitalism is in, but both sociopolitical structures appear odd here: the former not completely defunct and the latter not totally in action.

Yet, life is in full swing in Moscow. The men and women in the streets remain as fussy as they have always been, rushing in every possible direction with an icy inert look in their eyes. The city is clean and well kept, full of all kinds of handy merchandise, easy to buy and consume (but who knows how felicitous the overall consumption is). The public services of various content and character, including the available mobile phones and taxis, have drastically improved. Some shop attendants have learned how to smile (though many are still stuck with that menacing soviet-time sneer and snarl). And while the people in the streets are dressed like they are in the rest of the world, the collective Russian facial expression remains as overwrought

with mysterious anguish as it was, sitting in my memory since my salad years. The part of the city I met turned out to be the same gorgeous but gloom-ridden Moscow, and the other part that I bumped into was just as striking, with modern glass-and-concrete modern architecture, like any American big-city downtown. The perpetual Red Square cluster, adorned with the Kremlin contours, as well as the cubism-flavored Lenin Mausoleum and Saint Basil's Church, well-known symbols of the Russian glory and tradition, are all in place as unchanged, stoic and stringent Russian images. Lazily but ponderously striding back and forth in those familiar streets of Moscow, myriad thoughts roamed through my imagination, connected with

the childhood and youth of my generation. The difference is striking between then and now. Then, Moscow was one of the best places for fun and merry-making, education, shopping and leisure. Now, it is the center of scary political decision-making, on which lives depend and futures stand. Nobody knows how things might develop in that unforeseen future, but the way the present looks leaves a lot to be desired. Indeed, it seems the local rank-and-file don't even know that there is war ongoing somewhere in the vicinity unless they see an episode of the battle on TV, and, of course, the Russian-Georgian strife is far beyond their thought and care.

Although, in Moscow, I found myself in a familiar milieu, surrounded by unassuming people like myself, good food, beautiful parks, immaculately trimmed lawns, ubiquitous theaters and hundreds of fashionable gourmet restaurants, my meditations are not the simplest in the world. As I walked among them, I pondered that while most of our electorate in Georgia, getting ready for the October 26 parliamentary elections, believe that our newly-acquired and constitutionally fortified western orientation is the optimal track for our development, the current blurry and lukewarm détente with Russia may not be single-handedly written off either. And there was always the question hanging over my poor head: what is the best way to continue relations with the Russian people if... (here, add one of the possible endings to our unfortunate modern-day tale)? And the answer to this uneasy question always seemed to be the paradigm of current behavior in Moscow: to stay calm and cool, gingerly exuding a feeling of national independence; remain as quiet as a mouse, making no harmful waves in this not yet consummate world order, so as to avoid upsetting the heavy-loaded applecart; and wait for the best chance of survival to arrive. As the slightly altered saying has it, North or West, home is best!

Mutant Peppers

BLOG BY TONY HANMER

Got your attention? Not just your average everyday sweet peppers, but twisted, warped into new forms which make them superbly photogenic. These are the ones I notice. You can eat any pepper, but these ones are special. I picked up a couple of the mutants recently at Mestia's main fruit and vegetable bazaar, the best place for such produce in the whole town. The seller

knows me well and, as I was buying a lot of things from her, she threw in these two red ones I had noticed for free. I carefully stashed them in a protected place in the car, and drove home to Etseri. Now, I'll admit to having been drawn to the possibilities of odd peppers decades ago, seeing a gorgeous, mysterious, fascinating monochrome art print of some good specimens somewhere in a book when still in my youth as a photographer. It obviously impressed me enough that I never forgot it, and filed away the subject to attend to one day. Which has just come.

I didn't want, or have, a proper studio setup. Just a simple background and available light would suffice: the former some wood floor planks and then the black faux leather cover of an office chair. No flash or light reflector; no oil or water spray, just the natural shine of the peppers' skins. A 4/3-stop darkening of exposure, and a stepping down of aperture to around F8-10 for more depth of field (more of the subjects in focus).

I took 41 photos in less than half an hour: the two together and separate, from both sides and different angles. Towards the end, I took a breath and cut one of them in half along its length, splaying out the result to show its insides. Can't undo that! There was lots of imagery suggesting human embryos, even twins. I wanted sculpture, that weirdness on a dark ground, which had startled me as a teenager.

Post-processing from the color originals, in Photoshop. I darkened the reds, lightened the greens and yellows, so that the reds and greens would not turn into the same shade of gray in monochrome. That was all; I copied the Black & White adjustment layer from the first image to each of the others, with tiny adjustments to the reds to not lose them either to solid blacks or to washed-out grays. Cropping the edges to have the peppers nearly fill each frame. Done, with a couple of favorites and a smooth progression from frame to frame showing how it started and ended and the steps in between.

I probably could have shot and edited the whole thing on my iPhone, but opted for the big Canon digital as I'm more used to its manual controls.



Peppers. Photo by the author



Peppers. Photo by the author

My wife, walking past the computer screen with one of the frames filling it, thought she saw snakes (which she cannot abide) from the corner of her eye. I smirked, not glad to have scared her, but pleased that something of the strangeness I was after had jolted her. Just a pictorial experiment which had been brewing away in my mind's eye for all these long years across several continents, until finally it all came together. How to take an unusual sample of a commonplace subject and shoot it simply to make a satisfying result? Start with inspi-

ration from someone else; then imitate in your own style and make it wholly yours, as well as a tribute, I suppose.

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 over 2000 members, at www.facebook.com/groups/SvanetiRenaissance/. He and his wife also run their own guest house in Etseri: www.facebook.com/hammer.house.svaneti

Architects of Tomorrow: Sculpting Futures at the Goethe-Institut Georgien's 30th Anniversary Exhibition



Photo by the author

BY IVAN NECHAEV

As the Goethe-Institut Georgien marks its 30th anniversary, the exhibition 'Unbound Trajectories of the Future' offers an audacious exploration of what lies ahead, framed against the backdrop of today's complex socio-political landscape. This extensive showcase, running for three months, assembles a diverse group of 19 artists whose works challenge conventional perspectives and propose innovative visions of the future. With themes spanning technology, environment, migration, and more, the exhibition invites viewers to confront and reflect on the future's multifaceted potential. The exhibition runs until October 1st, and admission is free.

RECONSTRUCTING THOUGHT THROUGH 3D DESIGN

Mishiko Sulakauri's 'Phone Call to the Architect' presents an intriguing metaphor for the interplay between materiality and thought. The 3D-printed object, designed by Giorgi Patarkatsashvili, serves as a modern plastic constructor that reimagines architectural creation. By combining tangible and intangible elements, Sulakauri's work reflects on how past and present choices inform our future. This piece invites viewers to consider

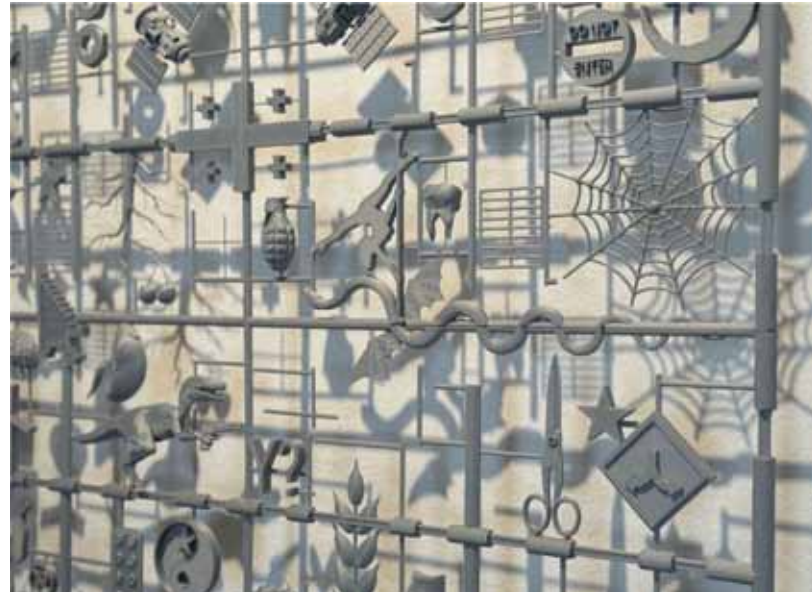
how our current frameworks shape future ideologies, emphasizing that our construction of the future is as much about intellectual and conceptual development as it is about physical structures.

THE ART OF DESTRUCTION AND REBIRTH

Gvantsa Jishkariani's tapestry series, 'Generational Trauma,' is a poignant commentary on cultural and aesthetic evolution. By transforming Soviet-era jacquard tapestries through a process of deconstruction and embellishment, Jishkariani critiques the remnants of past ideologies while celebrating the resilience of the present. The artist's method—ripping, burning, and redecorating—serves as a metaphor for the personal and collective struggle against outdated cultural narratives. The resulting works, rich with hand-embroidered detail and decorative elements, embody a narrative of destruction as a form of liberation and renewal.

ENVISIONING A UTOPIAN PUBLIC SPACE

In 'Dare to Think Differently,' Gigi Guledani offers a transformative vision of Tbilisi's urban landscape. The photomontage reimagines a section of the Rustaveli/Zemeli road area as a vibrant, green pedestrian zone. Integrating the Academy of Sciences and the Mtatsminda Park cable car station into this vision, Guledani presents a utopian scenario where urban planning harmonizes with



Mishiko Sulakauri's 'Phone Call to the Architect.' Photo by the author

ecological and social needs. This work challenges viewers to consider how reimagined public spaces can foster community and sustainability in an ever-evolving cityscape.

THE SCALE OF MIGRATION AND DYSTOPIA

Sandro Pachuashvili's monumental painting, 'Where is Vardo?' addresses the vast and often abstract concept of migration. By depicting individuals traversing a desolate, dystopian landscape, Pachuashvili uses scale to emphasize the insignificance of personal struggles against the backdrop of mass migration. The painting's expansive format underscores the collective nature of human displacement, urging viewers to reflect on the broader implications of migration and the fragmented connections between people and their environments.

THE DIGITAL FUTURE OF COMMUNICATION

The collaborative project 'Beyond the Walls,' led by students from the Tbilisi State Art Academy under the supervision of Sandro Asatiani, presents a forward-looking vision of communication. The publication and video installation explore how digital technologies are reshaping dialogue and interaction. This work envisions a future where traditional physical spaces give way to virtual realms, emphasizing the role of digital platforms in facilitating new forms of discourse

and connection.

VIRTUAL NARRATIVES OF UNITY

Mananiko Kobakhidze's 'The Tower of Unity' employs augmented reality to revisit the myth of the Tower of Babel, reflecting on contemporary multiculturalism in Tbilisi. Through 3D modeling and AR, Kobakhidze creates a virtual space that overlays urban memories with a narrative of unity amidst diversity. This work highlights the challenges and possibilities of fostering communication and understanding across cultural and linguistic divides in an increasingly digital world.

A DYSTOPIAN FUTURE REIMAGINED

Salome Vepkhvadze's short film, 'From 2084 to 2024,' presents a stark vision of a future ravaged by ecological collapse. The experimental cyberpunk narrative depicts a world where environmental degradation has become the norm, and technological advancements offer a temporary escape from this bleak reality. Vepkhvadze's film critiques the intersection of ecological collapse and technological escapism, urging viewers to consider the long-term impacts of current environmental policies and technological innovations.

SURVEILLANCE AND SECURITY IN THE DIGITAL AGE

Ana Kezeli and Sandro Sulaberidze's

installation, 'The Security Alphabet,' addresses the pervasive issue of surveillance in the digital era. By creating an environment where viewers are both observed and observing, the installation raises critical questions about privacy, security, and the ethics of information technology. The work's interactive nature invites viewers to explore the fine line between security and intrusion, highlighting the complex dynamics of personal data in a rapidly evolving technological landscape.

LANGUAGE AND INTERPRETATION

The site-specific text-based piece 'Glossary: The Future,' by Mariam Natroshvili and Detu Jintcharadze, challenges viewers to engage with language in a novel way. By presenting definitions without accompanying words, the work prompts audiences to infer meanings and reflect on the evolving nature of language. This interactive approach underscores the fluidity of communication and the need for adaptive interpretive strategies in an ever-changing world.

NETWORKS OF COMMUNICATION

Tinatin Tsurkava and Ilia Makharadze's installation, 'Network,' explores the concept of communication networks through a suspended metal mesh structure. The work symbolizes the future of informational exchanges, emphasizing the increased complexity and adaptability of communication systems. The interplay between the physical and symbolic representations of language highlights the ongoing evolution of dialogue and interaction in a dynamically shifting geopolitical landscape.

UNITING VOICES IN A FRAGMENTED WORLD

'Unbound Trajectories of the Future' offers a rich and diverse exploration of how art can engage with and shape our understanding of the future. Each work in the exhibition presents a unique perspective on contemporary challenges and possibilities, reflecting the Goethe-Institut Georgien's commitment to fostering intercultural dialogue and innovative thinking. Through this thought-provoking showcase, viewers are invited to consider the trajectories of our shared future and the role of art in envisioning and navigating the path ahead.

CULTURE

Int'l Festival "Night Serenades" Named After its Founder, the Greatest Violinist and Conductor Liana Isakadze

This year marks the 16th edition of the festival since its revival, and will be held in three cities: Borjomi, Batumi, and Tbilisi.

The festival will open on August 21 with an open air gala concert in Borjomi at Borjomi Likani Hotel.

On August 23 at 8 pm at the Batumi Professional State Drama Theater Mario Stefano Pietrodarchi (Bandoneon, Italy) and the festival Base Orchestra (concertmaster Lela Mtchedlidze) will perform the masterpieces of world-renowned composers: Ennio Morricone - Three themes, Nino Rota - Ommagio a Federico Fellini, Khaled Mouzanar - Medley, Carlos Gardel - Volver; Por una Cabeza

Astor Piazzolla - Melodia in La minore; Adios Nonino; Vuelvo al Sur; Milonga del Angel; Le, Grand Tango.

On the second day of the festival, August 25 at 8:00 PM, the Batumi Ilia Chavchavadze theater will host Elvin Hoxha Ganiyev - Violin, Azerbaijan / Turkey and the Festival Base Orchestra GEORGIAN VIRTUOSI (concertmaster Lela Mtchedlidze). The concert program includes Antonio Vivaldi's "The Four Seasons," Astor Piazzolla's "The Four

Seasons of Buenos Aires," and Niccolò Paganini's "Caprice No. 24."

Starting September 15, "Night Serenades" will move to Tbilisi. Beatrice Venezi (conductor, Italy), Sandro Nebieridze (piano, Georgia), and Georgian Philharmonic Orchestra will perform Ottorino Respighi's "Pines of Rome" and Sergei Rachmaninoff's Piano Concerto No. 3 in D minor, Op. 30.

On September 17 at 8:00 PM, an evening of Brazilian music will take place in the Tbilisi State Conservatoire Grand Hall. The concert will feature young, renowned Georgian soloists Lizi Ramishvili (cello), Mariam Roinishvili (soprano) and Giorgi Oikashvili (clarinet), with the Festival Base Orchestra GEORGIAN VIRTUOSI led by first violinist Lela Mtchedlidze. The program will include works by Brazilian composers such as Alberto Nepomuceno's String Quartet No. 3 "Brasileiro," Heitor Villa-Lobos' Five Songs, Chiquinha Gonzaga's "Corta Jaca," Zequinha de Abreu's "Tico-Tico no Fubá," and many others.

"Night Serenades" will continue with a Czech music concert on September 18 at 6:00 PM in the Recital Hall of Tbilisi State Conservatoire. In celebration of the 200th anniversary of Bedrich

Smetana, Giorgi Shaverzashvili (piano, Georgia) and Giorgi Khaindrava (violin, Georgia) will perform works by Bedrich Smetana and Antonín Dvořák. Attendees can look forward to many musical surprises throughout the concert.

This year's festival will be solemnly closed on September 20 at 8:00 PM at the Tbilisi State Conservatoire Grand Hall. Andres Gabetta - Violin / Conductor, France and Maurice Steger - Recorder, Switzerland with Festival Base Orchestra GEORGIAN VIRTUOSI (concertmaster Lela Mtchedlidze) will perform special program VIVALDI and Friends. The concert program includes:

Evaristo Felice Dall'Abaco's - Concerto a più istrumenti in D major, Op.5 No.6 - Ciaconna.
Pietro Locatelli - Concerto Grosso in C minor, Op.1 No.11, and concertos of Greatest Master Antonio Vivaldi.

Along with the concert program, within the framework of the festival, special attention will be paid to the cognitive-educational program for students and young people, including the disabled people, which includes master classes, workshops, open lectures and traditionally exhibitions by Georgian artists

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Georgian violinist and conductor Liana Isakadze passed away on July 5, 2024 at the age of 77. As well as a prominent soloist in Georgia, she conducted the Georgian State Chamber Orchestra and in 1988 was recognized as a People's Artist of the USSR, at the time the youngest artist to be so named.

The Sonic Alchemy of Aine Merme: Redefining the Guitar at Klara Bar

BY IVAN NECHAEV

In the intimate and evocative setting of Klara Bar in Tbilisi, a select audience gathered for an evening of musical exploration presented by Aine Merme, the enigmatic alias of Natuka Natsvlishvili. Known for her daring compositional style and intricate melodic structures, Aine Merme stands at the intersection of tradition and innovation within the Georgian music scene. This performance, featuring the collaboration of fellow guitarist Nika Gabadze, was a testament to her unique artistic vision and the depth of her musical prowess.

BRIDGING INTRICATE MELODY AND SOARED VOICE

Aine Merme's approach to music reverses classical song structures while simultaneously challenging their boundaries. Her compositions are a complex tapestry of harmonies, where multi-layered melodies intertwine to create an intense yet coherent sonic experience. This duality was evident from the first note, as she embarked on a journey that was as intellectually stimulating as it was emotionally resonant.

The set opened with a piece that immediately showcased her command of harmony and melody. Aine's guitar work, characterized by its precision and fluidity, laid a foundation over which her voice soared. Her vocals, imbued with a delicate yet powerful timbre, navigated the intricate melodic lines with ease, bringing a subtle nuance to each phrase. The interaction between her guitar and voice created a dialogue that was both



Aine Merme and Nika Gabadze. Photo by the author

compelling and deeply moving.

THE GUITAR'S NEW ROLE: CENTRAL CHARACTER IN A MUSICAL NARRATIVE

Central to Aine Merme's musical philosophy is her redefinition of the guitar's role. In her hands, the guitar is not merely

an accompanying instrument but a central character in the narrative of each composition. Throughout the performance, this was evident in the way she employed a variety of techniques to extract a wide range of tones and textures from the instrument.

From delicate fingerpicking patterns to

vigorous strumming, Aine's guitar playing was a masterclass in versatility. This approach was particularly effective in pieces where the guitar seemed to mimic the human voice, creating a seamless blend of instrumental and vocal lines. Her use of harmonics and unconventional tunings added an extra layer of complexity, invit-

ing the audience to engage with the music on a deeper, more analytical level.

SYMBIOTIC COLLABORATION: AINE MERME AND NIKA GABADZE

The addition of Nika Gabadze on guitar added a new dimension to the performance. Gabadze, a skilled guitarist in his own right, complemented Aine's style with his own brand of melodic and rhythmic innovation. The interplay between the two musicians was marked by a palpable synergy, each guitarist intuitively responding to the other's cues.

Their duets showcased a range of dynamics from gentle, introspective passages to powerful, climactic moments. The contrast between their styles—Aine's meticulous, almost cerebral approach and Nika's more spontaneous, emotive playing—created a rich and varied soundscape. This collaboration underscored the potential of the guitar as a multifaceted instrument capable of both leading and supporting the musical narrative.

BEYOND THE BOUNDARIES

The concert at Klara Bar was not just a display of technical skill and compositional ingenuity but a reflection of Aine Merme's evolving artistry. Through her music, she invites listeners into a world where boundaries are fluid, and conventional roles are constantly redefined. Her ability to balance complexity with accessibility, and innovation with tradition, makes her a distinctive voice in the contemporary music landscape. Aine Merme's performance was a compelling reminder of the transformative power of music and the endless possibilities that arise when an artist dares to push the boundaries of their craft.

SPORTS

Georgia's Olympic Successes

BY TEAM GT

Georgian judoka Lasha Bekauri (-90 kg) secured gold at the Paris 2024 Olympics, marking his second consecutive Olympic victory. In the final, Bekauri triumphed over Japanese competitor Murao Sanshiro, earning the first gold medal for Georgia at these Games. Bekauri, who also won gold at the Tokyo Olympics, overcame Spain's Tristan Moshlashvili in the semi-finals.

Georgia's medal haul continued with Tato Grigalashvili (-81 kg) earning a silver on July 30. Grigalashvili, a three-time world champion, added to the country's success. Another silver medal was claimed by judoka Ilia Sulamanidze (100 kg).

Boxer Lasha Guruli (63.5 kg) finished with a bronze medal on August 4, despite a unanimous decision loss in the semi-final match.

The Georgian team, consisting of 28 athletes, is competing in various sports at the Summer Olympics in Paris from

July 26 to August 11. Notably, sport shooter Nino Salukvadze makes history as the first female athlete to participate in 10 Olympic Games.

The Georgian delegation also features freestyle wrestlers Goderdzi Dzebisashvili, Vladimir Gamkrelidze, Givi Matcharashvili, and Geno Petriashvili, as well as Greco-Roman wrestlers Ramaz Zoidze, Lasha Gobadze, and Robert Koblishvili. In fencing, Sandro Bazadze will compete, and trampoline jumper Luba Golovina will represent Georgia as well.

The roster includes weightlifters Shota Mishveladze, Irakli Chkheidze, and Lasha Talakhadze; boxers Lasha Guruli and Giorgi Khimshiashvili; and judokas Giorgi Sardalashvili, Vazha Margvelashvili, Lasha Shavdatuashvili, Tato Grigalashvili, Lasha Bekauri, Ilia Sulamanidze, Guram Tushishvili, Eter Liparteliani, Eter Askilashvili, and Sophio Somkhishvili. Runners Lika Kharchilava and swimmers Ana Nizharadze and Noe Pantskhava will also compete.

An additional historic first for Georgia is a team of male and female judo wrestlers competing in the mixed team event.



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