

**THE GEORGIAN
DREAM
OR
A RUSSIAN ONE?**



ONLY THE FACTS

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TBILISI 2018

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“Some in Georgian Dream (GD) are genuinely pro-Western,” one high-ranking US diplomat said when describing the political conglomerate that governs Georgia. This comment, made in the summer of 2017, was probably the most accurate description by a foreigner of the eclectic group that converged around the oligarchic wealth of Bidzina Ivanishvili, the founder of GD, who has ruled the country since 2012.

Earlier, in 2016, practically the same admission came from Archil Gegeshidze, Georgia’s GD-appointed ambassador to the US. Gegeshidze however placed the emphasis differently, proclaiming that “there are [pro-Russian forces in the government], but fortunately they do not influence the decision-making process.”

Most recently, in the summer of 2018, a European politician, who had been rather loyal to GD from the outset, asked during a closed meeting with the opposition: “Have we in the EU been too naïve to place blind trust in GD’s unwaveringly pro-Western nature and ignore the opposition’s doubts?”

Judging from these statements, much is already clear for the West, and, therefore, there may no longer be a need for this brochure. On the other hand, in Georgia there is still some uncertainty on this issue: Georgian society’s explicitly pro-Western aspirations and anti-Russian sentiments do not always translate into a logical understanding and evaluation of the government’s actions – actions that do not always conform to the declared course of the Georgian state. Many struggle to admit that anti-Western forces are in fact rooted within

the Government. On the surface, this is understandable: the negotiations on the Association Agreement with the EU were concluded and visa-free travel with the EU became possible during the GD government. Therefore, assertions that GD is an outright pro-Russian force are not credible.

At the same time, when faced with a series of uniform facts, it is impossible to not question the real motivation of key figures in the governing political force. Many GD supporters explain such facts as errors caused by incompetence or simple accidents. More importantly, they believe that these facts do not affect the security of our country.

How credible is this position? You be the judge:

Can an exposed Russian agent accidentally end up in a secret military facility? – Of course he can.

Can an occupied country accidentally have a defense minister, who, in response to the above incident, argues that the entry of a Russian agent to military defense facilities is not a problem, because there is nothing secret about them? – This too is possible.

Can a person who believes that “Putin is not an enemy” accidentally be appointed as the Minister of Reintegration of a country occupied by Russia? – In many countries that would be unthinkable, but unfortunately in Georgia under GD, this is not impossible, either. Perhaps Ivanishvili did not know about the minister’s opinion prior to his appointment? (Strangely, however, he was not surprised after learning about it.)

Can almost all key political positions in a country accidentally be held by people who believe that Georgia started the war and/or that we could have “avoided” the Russian aggression (meaning that it was up to Georgia to start or not to start the 2008 war)? Such accidents are probably quite rare, but still possible.

Can it be a coincidence that in a single year (2014) five special force soldiers who had participated in special operation “Kodori 2007” (which resulted in the killing of two Russian colonels training saboteurs to be sent into the non-occupied part of Georgia) die in various freak accidents under dubious circumstances? Theoretically, this cannot be excluded either.

What is the probability that the government would not only fail to properly investigate the deaths of special force soldiers, but would classify them as accidents? For example, instead of conducting a forensic expertise, on the day following the accident the authorities demolished the entire building where a water heater explosion in one of the rooms resulted in the death of a security officer. In principle, a way out can be found here as well. One can justify this by saying that “there are not many competent investigators around.”

Is it possible for Akhmed Chataev – a person listed by the US Government as an international terrorist; a person suspected of ties with Russian special services; a person with one arm and one leg, who was released from prison by GD under the cover of political repression soon after the party won the elections – to have crossed the Georgian border together with the members of his group without the help of the government, found an apartment in Tbilisi and filled it with weapons? The likelihood is quite small, but it cannot be excluded altogether – by some miracle this, too, could have happened.

Could it be due to a mistake or perhaps lack of information that the favorite newspaper of Georgia’s informal ruler, Bidzina Ivanishvili, who is supposedly a fighter for Euro-Atlantic values, is “Asaval-Dasavali,” the flagship of Russian propaganda in Georgia? This is indeed hard to believe.

Moreover, is it possible that the pro-Russian “Asaval-Dasavali” has mistakenly supported “pro-Western” Ivanishvili for years?!

In theory, all of the above may indeed be a long line of strange coincidences. But what do we do about the mass amnesty of “political prisoners” by GD in 2012, which was definitely not an accident? Under this amnesty, GD released, as political prisoners, Russian spies and active officers of Russian intelligence, citizens of Russia, the country that is illegally occupying Georgian territory. The Law on Amnesty was vetoed by President Saakashvili, who explained his reasons in his response to the Parliament. However, GD’s fully informed Parliamentary majority unanimously (!) overrode the veto. Naturally, every government is entitled to express its political will and start relations with an enemy with a clean slate (for example, release its spies, even unilaterally and without any reciprocal benefits). This is a matter of political taste / feasibility. However, stating that your predecessor persecuted enemy spies on political (!) grounds carries a completely different message. This is an act that does not fade away as long as the political force responsible remains in power, the one which requires an objective assessment and proper response from a self-respecting society.

This force – both parts of its name (“Georgian” and “Dream”) are either a joke or an Orwellian cynicism – is presenting Salome Zurabishvili as an “independent” candidate for the 2018 presidential elections. It is backing her candidacy and is promising, as Chairman of the Parliamentary Committee of Defense and Security Irakli Sesiashvili stated, that it will “use all its available resources to ensure the victory of this candidate in the elections.”

This is the same Zurabishvili, who said Russia's 2007 anti-radar bomb attack in Tselubani was staged by the Saakashvili government in order to embarrass Russia – a statement she never retracted.

This is the same Zurabishvili who, echoing Russia's own position, has repeatedly blamed Georgia for initiating the 2008 war and only once, but still very incredibly, "explained" her position, thus giving GD the possibility to state ambiguously that "Salome Zurabishvili's position regarding the 2008 war is in line with the position of the Georgian Dream" (Statement by Irakli Kobakhidze, Chairman of the Parliament).

This is the same Zurabishvili, who ran unopposed by any candidate from GD in the 2016 parliamentary elections (hers was the only district in Georgia where GD did not field a candidate). Currently, she does not have a rival from any of the active, openly pro-Russian politicians for the upcoming 2018 presidential elections. Apparently, Burjanadze, Inashvili & Co. have decided not to participate in these elections in order not to confuse the pro-Russian segment and to avoid splitting the votes. Is this a genuine miracle or yet another miraculous coincidence?!

Unlike Ivanishvili and GD, there seems to be a full consensus among the rest of Georgian public about Zurabishvili's candidacy. We will therefore not burden this brochure by recounting every treasonous statement she has made over the course of the presidential campaign. Instead, we will try to demonstrate that there is no difference between Zurabishvili and the government that supports her. What Zurabishvili says today is merely a repetition of Ivanishvili's original creed and the building stone of GD's political identity.

There will be many who will not doubt the authenticity of these facts, but will not believe that these facts have any

material influence on the security and future of our country. “What are the specific results of these facts? Why should they be of any concern for an ordinary Georgian citizen?” – That will be the question posed naively by supporters of GD or those pretending to be “apolitical” and, therefore, neutral.

The answer is simple: sometimes a deadly cancer is not revealed until its last, terminal stage. For a long time it causes only mild discomfort. If all symptoms are present, why should we wait for the total destruction of the Georgian state or international recognition of Abkhazia’s “independence” before we acknowledge what we are dealing with? In addition, everything that has been happening since 2012 – the slowdown of economic growth, the suspension or termination of infrastructural projects, the stable devaluation of the Georgian Lari, effective stagnation of pensions and salaries, the return of corruption and crime, the drop in the efficiency and authority of armed forces and police – is it just “mild discomfort”? Does it not affect our everyday lives? Does it not make us weaker? Are these not the direct results of GD’s values, rhetoric and actions?

This brochure contains only well-documented, easily verifiable factual materials. Neither exhaustive nor complete, this publication does however include enough information to help raise legitimate questions and encourage the search for logical answers. We believe that digesting and passing our own judgment on the information compiled hereunder shall be tantamount to taking a small step on the road called civic virtue and individual responsibility.

Zaza Bibilashvili

14 October 2018

HOW I'D BUILD PEACE IN THE CAUCASUS

by BIDZINA IVANISHVILI

August 2, 2012

Wall Street Journal Europe

Aug. 8 marks the fourth anniversary of a short but brutal war between Russia and Georgia that ultimately led to Russian occupation of 20% of the latter, my country. Unfortunately, the passing years have not made peace any more likely. Tensions are growing in a region that is confronting 21st-century challenges with 19th-century institutions, all grounded in 16th-century hatreds.

Why should anyone outside the region care? The conflict threatens the growing interests of Europe and the United States in the Caucasus and Central Asia. We are no longer an isolated mountain outpost. Our strategic location makes us the hub for reshuffled relations among Russia and Central Asia with Iran, Turkey and the West. There is enormous potential for fallout here to affect energy supplies and more.

Russia continues to stir up historic enmity to keep countries like Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan off-balance. Sadly, the current Georgian government is playing into Vladimir Putin's hands. Georgian President Mikheil Saakashvili has raised the stakes by grounding our security agenda in the language of the past—for example, in promising to tear down the “new Berlin Wall” between Georgia and Russia.

Fortunately Georgia can install a new government after parliamentary elections on Oct. 1. If elected, my Georgian Dream coalition will drop Cold War rhetoric and do a better job of defusing the real causes of the explosive situation in our region.

Above all, we will focus on democracy. U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton said it best when she visited my country in June: “Georgia’s long-term security and prosperity will depend in large part on the quality of your democracy.”

Georgia does not currently have a functioning civil society. We are burdened by the same one-party authoritarian model that has been so destructive to other post-Soviet societies. In the past, weak and divided Georgian opposition movements were brutally suppressed. That is why I as a private citizen helped six parties find strength through the unity of Georgian Dream. Recent polls show our coalition in a dead heat with the government for the October elections. If we are given a fair chance, I believe we will win. Democracy will be the victor.

Georgian Dream is dedicated to building close partnerships with the West, recognizing the worth of Western values. We are committed to becoming an integral part of European and Atlantic institutions. Just as the current government claims to be, we are determined to liberate territories now occupied by Russia. And we are dedicated to working with our friends to build a strong Georgian defense force.

But there the similarities end. We will be realistic about Georgia’s possibilities. We will abandon saber-rattling and recognize that Georgia is a small regional power in a very dangerous neighborhood. No sustainable future can be built by projecting our own military power against Russia or anywhere else. If we were to become a Caucasian Cuba, our hopes of joining the West would be dashed forever.

Above all, we will be steady and determined. We will build a new foundation for peace with the same determination that

America applied to ending the war in the Balkans. For long-term models of resolving historic enmities, we will draw on experiences in South Africa, on the dialogue between Poland and Russia, and above all on the European Union itself. We will also explore the German experience with democracy-building through development aid.

Our dialogue with Russia will be firm and principled. There is still a deep rift over which nation was responsible for starting the 2008 war. The conflict emerged from the xenophobic and confrontational style that is endemic to both governments. If we can agree that we both made mistakes, we will already have made some progress.

Some observers outside Georgia seem to prefer the military stand-off they know to the uncertainty of democratic dialogue between Moscow and Tbilisi. So let me assure our friends: We are not planning to dismantle our defenses, but instead to use them more intelligently. My 20 years in the Soviet Union and Russia have taught me to deal with tough politics through trial and error, without illusions.

To those who claim that our new style is part of a Russian plot to weaken Georgia's resolve, I direct their attention to conflicts raging in other parts of the world. Without hope for freedom and liberty, our society will eventually explode with internal strife. The pot is already boiling. The Caucasus could experience sectarian conflicts similar to the one in Syria. And with both Russia and Iran on our doorstep, this is not a risk any of us should wish to take.

READING BETWEEN THE LINES

by ZAZA BIBILASHVILI

August 8, 2012

Tabula Magazine

The August 2 edition of Wall Street Journal Europe featured a doctrinal article by Bidzina Ivanishvili with a slightly confusing title – How I'd Build Peace in the Caucasus. It was confusing, because the letter says almost nothing about the Caucasus, except for couple of ambiguous hints on the possibility of violence in the region and unclear, though not the first, analogy with Syria.

Such letters are not written exclusively by one person and we may assume that not only Mr. Ivanishvili, but the entire "Georgian Dream" took part in drafting of the letter, with its local as well as foreign intellectual resources. Therefore, this letter may be considered as a cornerstone of this political force, a document containing its views on main foreign policy issues.

On its face, this article constitutes an attempt to eliminate suspicions that "Georgian Dream" is in fact a Russian project. Yet, the real effect of the article is the opposite. The only practical result of this article may be granting legitimacy to a number of Russian clichés by articulating them from a Georgian source.

While it is impossible to assert that Mr. Ivanishvili is acting on someone's orders (no evidence has been provided to this end so far), it is likewise impossible not to notice that the rhetoric and views of Mr. Ivanishvili are identical to Kremlin's, except for the mandatory part where he is constrained by the

name of a “Georgian Politician” and the already recognized international legal status quo. The author practically reiterates all Russian clichés intended for uninformed public. Upon reading the article, a Russian politician could easily say to his European colleagues – “Is this also me?!”. In response, French or German officials, to whom the article may read as a promise that Europe would be relieved of the discomfort of being constantly reminded of the Georgian issue, could now in good conscience justify their apathy towards the Caucasus.

Here are several examples, out of many:

Russian Cliché No.1

Mr. Ivanishvili notes that **“tensions are growing in a region that is confronting 21st-century challenges with 19th-century institutions, all grounded in 16th-century hatreds.”** That Georgia faces historically-rooted ethnic conflicts, as opposed to interstate political conflicts is an official Russian version, which the Russian Foreign Ministry has unsuccessfully been trying to spread. This is the version that not only contradicts common sense, but at the same time destroys any theoretical chance of restoration of Georgian territorial integrity. According to this version, the Caucasus is a region which is stuck in medieval mentality and Russia is the only force able to control it without “bothering” the civilized world. Until now, this idea was promoted by Russia only. Isn’t it more effective if this view is now heard from a Georgian source?

Russian Cliché No.2

“If elected, my Georgian Dream coalition will drop Cold War rhetoric and do a better job of defusing the real causes

of the explosive situation in our region.” Unfortunately, Mr. Ivanishvili avoids this critical issue and fails to clarify what exactly “real causes” of the “explosive situation in the region” are. Could it be only the rhetoric and “style” (especially bilateral?!) that he goes on to discuss further? Since the article is written by a Georgian politician, one should assume that “defusing the real causes of the explosive situation” is something Georgia is able to, but does not do. That is a Russian Cliché No. 2: There would be no conflict, if only Georgia “behaved.”

Russian Cliché No.3

“We will abandon saber-rattling and recognize that Georgia is a small regional power in a very dangerous neighborhood. No sustainable future can be built by projecting our own military power against Russia or anywhere else.” The reader will definitely think that until now this is what has been happening – Georgia has been using its “military power” against Russia or has been threatening to use it. Sounds familiar?

It is strange that in light of such seemingly pacifist rhetoric, the author keeps raising the threat of internal violence as one of the possible developments. **“Without hope for freedom and liberty, our society will eventually explode with internal strife.”** This means that according to the author, not only is Georgia currently devoid of freedom, but there is no hope of freedom either. It seems like the author is preparing the readers that instability (which, according to many, is Mr. Ivanishvili’s real goal), shall be triggered by citizens’ deprivation of freedom and may start spontaneously.

Russian Cliché No.4

“If we were to become a Caucasian Cuba, our hopes of joining the West would be dashed forever.” Cuba’s role in the Cold War is universally known. Is such analogy adequate in the reality of the 21st century? Who would perceive Georgia’s pro-NATO aspirations as an attempt to turn Georgia into Cuba, if not a Russian politician stuck in the mentality of the 19th century? How credible is it that such comparisons are coming from a Georgian politician of modern mentality, planning to build a democracy the quality of which, according to the author, will surprise Europe?

Another quote from the same opera: **“Some observers outside Georgia seem to prefer the military stand-off they know to the uncertainty of democratic dialogue between Moscow and Tbilisi.”** According to Mr. Ivanishvili, it follows that democratic dialogue between Moscow and Tbilisi is a possibility, but this is prevented by some observers outside Georgia. The message is clear – “leave Georgia and Russia alone and they will take care of their own business.” It is one thing to hear such statements from an eccentric Russian politician. But it is another thing to hear this from an influential Georgian politician. Could Mr. Ivanishvili give us at least one example of a successful one-on-one dialogue between Russia and any of its smaller neighbors? ...It’s a pity indeed, that there is no introductory course in world history for those planning to go into politics.

Russian Cliché No.5

“The conflict emerged from the xenophobic and confrontational style that is endemic to both governments.

If we can agree that we both made mistakes, we will already have made some progress.“ We could ignore this naïve, almost comic conclusion based on the author’s ignorance of facts and history, but the temptation to ask the question is too strong – could Mr. Ivanishvili clarify why the Russian course and relations with Georgia remain unchanged irrespective of the rhetoric and style of various Georgian governments? How could he explain the identical Tzarist, Bolshevic and post-soviet approach of Russia to the completely different governments of Georgia? Russia was similarly ruthless during the times of loyal “Menshevics” and rule of Shevardnadze, as well as more hawkish Gamsakhurdia and Saakashvili. If the existence of a conflict is caused by “style” only, what is the style what will be acceptable to Russia and not detrimental to Georgia?

It is hard to believe that a serious politician would propose to settle relations with Russia on the basis of change in rhetoric and style, even to the averagely informed observers. However, let us follow this logic and suppose that the Georgian government does change the rhetoric. What interest will Russia have in taking reciprocal steps? What happens when Russia does not change anything (which is highly likely, because Russia has never behaved in any other way and we have no grounds to suppose otherwise)? What shall be the next step of Ivanishvili? What shall he offer to Russia in return for change in rhetoric and in reality at what expense is “Georgian Dream” planning to settle controversies with Russia?

“To those who claim that our new style [again the “style!”] is part of a Russian plot to weaken Georgia’s resolve, I direct their attention to conflicts raging in other

parts of the world.” When reading this sentence, we get the impression that there is an editorial mistake in the text, because it is difficult to understand the meaning of the text and determine in what way shifting attention to conflicts around the world may answer a question posed by Mr. Ivanishvili himself. However, in this sense, this sentence is no different from any other:

Let’s take another – **“For long-term models of resolving historic enmities, we will draw on experiences in South Africa, on the dialogue between Poland and Russia, and above all on the European Union itself. We will also explore the German experience with democracy-building through development aid.”** What does South African experience have to do with Georgian-Russian conflict? Which Russian-Polish dialogue is he talking about? Let us for a second forget the first or the second Katyn tragedies, but how can one forget that Poland was able to engage in a successful dialogue with Russia only after it became a member of the NATO and the EU? It is likewise unclear where the German example fits into picture, or exactly which example Mr. Ivanishvili means.

Conclusion

According to the article, the problem for the author an ethnic strife rooted in the Middle Ages, and he plans to solve the conflict with Russia by softening the rhetoric and changing the “style”. Taking all of this into consideration, we may pose the final question, as follows: Mr. Ivanishvili is: (a) Honest, but naïve; (b) Politically inexperienced; (c) (a) and (b) together; (d) One who promotes Russian policy goals, whether intentionally or unintentionally.

As a Georgian citizen, I can only hope that the answer is (c), which leaves the possibility that after having gained a better understanding of the relevant issues, Mr. Ivanishvili will revisit his position in relation to this very important topic for the country. And if this happens, let the MPs of UNM and GD argue on current social-economic and philosophical-esthetic issues all they want, within the framework of a routine democratic process.

ONLY THE FACTS

1. GD'S PRO-RUSSIAN RHETORIC¹

“I am keeping an eye and carefully studying this issue [the Eurasian Union]. Currently, we don't have any position on that, but we will see in the long run. If it is good for our country's strategy, why not?”

***Bidzina Ivanishvili**, the Prime Minister of Georgia.
4 September 2013.*

“When you are studying it and looking at it [the Eurasian Union], you can join it if you want. When you see that it is no longer suspicious and it is, in fact, interesting and useful for our country...”

***Bidzina Ivanishvili**, the Prime Minister of Georgia.
7 September 2013.*

“The president of Russia openly declared, that he has no intention to interfere in the process of self-determination of the states. I think this statement is encouraging.”

***Bidzina Ivanishvili**, the Prime Minister of Georgia.
24 December 2013.*

“The existing railway is much longer, but we are additionally building 180 km long railway, which we call Kars-Akhalkalaki railway. The existing railway till Sochi is up to 600 km, perhaps longer. Its capacity is 25 million tons, but it can be increased up to 40 million tons with little remodelling works.”

***Bidzina Ivanishvili**, the Prime Minister of Georgia.
24 December 2012.*

¹ The texts itemized below are not listed in any particular order.

NB: the “existing” railway is closed due to the Russian occupation of Abkhazia. Russia has sought for years to get Georgia to agree to reopen it. Also, Ivanishvili repeatedly uses the Russian version of the Georgian toponym for the city of Sochi.

“I think that Armenia is a good example of this. Armenia gives a good example to Georgia and causes envy in me. Armenia has an excellent relationship with Russia, but also with the US and NATO. Therefore, all this is possible.”

Bidzina Ivanishvili, the Prime Minister of Georgia.
17 January 2013.

“We should not keep bugging the Russians on the international level by saying that they are occupants.”

Bidzina Ivanishvili, the leader of GD. 2012.

“We can see many facts of extreme incompetence, starting from the purchase of the tanks, and then how they got engaged in that irresponsible adventure and how they started the war.”

Bidzina Ivanishvili, the leader of opposition party
“Georgian Dream”, 19 May 2012, speaking about
the UNM Government which preceded him.

“It was because of Saakashvili and his emotional nature that our relationship with Russia was totally ruined.”

Bidzina Ivanishvili, the leader of the opposition party
“Georgian Dream”, 19 May 2012.

“I don’t think and cannot believe that Russia’s strategy is to invade and occupy territories of its neighboring countries. I don’t believe this.”

Bidzina Ivanishvili. 16 October 2014.

“It cannot be justified that the armed forces were mobilized and military actions were started before Russia crossed our borders.”

Bidzina Ivanishvili, the Prime Minister of Georgia.
10 April 2013.

NB: The fact that the Russian forces entered Georgia few days before commencement of the war has been confirmed by numerous sources, including the “Tagliavini Report”.

“How it began? Unknown militia groups were shooting towards Georgian villages for three days. Nobody had yet been killed, only some fragments of explosives hit one house. It was shown on TV for three days. It was necessary to evacuate civilians from these villages and invite observers from Europe. Perhaps everything would have stopped at that point. But what did he [Saakashvili] do instead? He deployed tanks and the air force, after which Russia’s regular forces entered Georgia. Saakashvili must not have responded”.

Bidzina Ivanishvili. The Prime Minister of Georgia.
16 September 2013.

“I was totally against the shares-for-loans auction where Khodorkovsky absolutely illegally purchased Yukos. We cannot ask someone else to be a law-abiding citizen if we are breaking the law. You can only demand from others when you yourself have everything in order. I was one of the competing bidders at the auction. I

had no intention to buy Yukos, but I was trying to undermine an illegal deal. But I failed. Afterwards, injustice began and, in that particular case, Khodorkovsky was persecuted selectively. I agree with that. But I strongly disagree that the global media covers only the case of his arrest. My opponents might say I shouldn't have said this about a man in trouble, but I cannot erase the past and start somewhere from the middle. We need to take into account the whole context, but I agree when the civilized world says, that Khodorkovsky was persecuted selectively.”

Bidzina Ivanishvili, the leader GD.
8 November 2011.

“I think that ignoring Tagliavini’s report and non-recognition of Abkhazians and Ossetians as parties to the conflict is a crucial strategic mistake. Consequently, our administration cannot negotiate with them on the security guarantee issues. I mean, negotiate as the parties and not as subjects of international law.”

Bidzina Ivanishvili.
2 November 2013.

“I think that our government must try and settle the relationship with our biggest neighbor, taking into account that we have a very long common history, we were living together before the Soviet Union, during the Soviet Union and then after the breakup of the Soviet Union. Today we must manage to first regulate our bilateral relation and then improve them and take them to a different level.”

Bidzina Ivanishvili, Prime Minister of Georgia.
1 November 2012.

“We definitely need to resolve our problems and deepen our relationships with Russia. It is our biggest neighbor. The whole world seeks to get an access to the Russian market. Before the war, there was a ‘cold war’ when Russia closed its market for Georgian products if you remember. They [UNM government] managed to do it, creating a hysteria when they [Russians] were loading Georgians in the wagons and deporting them back. And this background was created by them [UNM Government], these silly people, and before they initiated the war, they had cut down trade relations. Not at the expense of our territories, not that of course, what happened... We have to restore it [territorial integrity], not at its expense, but at the same time we need to restore relations with our biggest neighbor, and first of all economic and cultural relations”.

Bidzina Ivanishvili.

15 September 2016.

“NATO is an aggressive military block. I don’t want my country to be a part of any military blocks, because the shapes of the third nuclear war are more and more obvious. Neither the EU nor Eurasian Union are military blocks. Eurasian Union is one of the opportunities where we can live better. We know that Russia is an aggressor and occupied our territories. Russia is ill, but Russophobia can’t give us anything”.

Gogi Topadze, MP from “Georgian Dream”.

19 March 2015.

“I don’t support an integration to NATO in this configuration. Nobody will accept us with our problems unless we waive our right to reintegrate Abkhazia and South Ossetia”.

***Tamaz Mechiauri**, MP from GD Parliamentary Majority.
19 May 2016.*

“Even if Ivanishvili asks me, I would never support NATO”.

***Tamaz Mechiauri**, MP from GD Parliamentary Majority.
26 May 2016.*

“Regarding the possible interrogation of the president, if the case circumstances require, he too will be interrogated, but it also can happen when he is no longer the president. And many high officials, regardless of their nationality and ethnic origin, whose name may be unpleasantly associated with the August war, may also be interrogated.”

*Demand of **Thea Tsulukiani**, the Minister of Justice of Georgia on the interrogation of Mikheil Saakashvili regarding Russo-Georgian War.
15 April 2013.*

“I think by Georgia sending its soldiers to Afghanistan, a big sacrifice has been made. The number of casualties is high. It’s a complex issue. Naturally, the Ministry of Defense, the Government and the Parliament should rethink whether the presence of our contingent [in Afghanistan] is justified.”

***Eka Beselia**, a senior MP from GD Parliamentary Majority.
16 May 2013.*

“Is Putin an “enemy”? What does it mean? Putin is a human being; how can he be an enemy of a state? An individual cannot be

an enemy of a state, no matter if it's Putin or somebody else. An enemy of a state can be only another state.”

Paata Zakareishvili, State Minister of Reconciliation and Civic Equality,
26 December 2014.

NB: The issue of renaming the Ministry of Reintegration had been an important one for the Russian Federation. “Reintegration” placed emphasis on the external sources of the conflict, while “reconciliation” accentuates the internal, ethnic side of the matter. The issue got on the political agenda immediately after GD swept to power, and was implemented soon thereafter.

“One fact is surprising. Several days ago I visited Kiev for personal business, unofficially, and I have an impression, that everything is running normally in the country. In Kiev itself – everything is stable, restaurants, bars are working routinely, people are going about their normal lives. There is only the central Grushevski street with the clashes and the second, central street where tents are set up. So the crisis does not go beyond Grushevski street.”

Kakha Kaladze, Vice Prime Minister and the Minister of Energy about
the Euromaidan protests in Kiev, which resulted in the ousting of
Pro-Russian Yanukovich Regime. 29 January 2014.

“Also, we are ready for a direct dialogue with Ossetians and Abkhazians. We would welcome Russia’s constructive role in this process. In case there is a political will, we believe that further sensible steps could be taken.”

Giorgi Kvirikashvili, the Prime Minister of Georgia. 9 March 2018.
The written statement was made as a response to the torture and
murder of a Georgian citizen Archil Tatunashvili by the Russian
occupation regime.

“We should begin the reintegration of Abkhazia by [reopening] the railway.”

Gia Khukhashvili, political analyst, an influential confidant of Bidzina Ivanishvili. Spring 2013.

“We must recognize independence of Abkhazia.”

Mamuka Areshidze. GD's Majoritarian candidate for Parliamentary seat in Gardabani Municipality during 2012 general elections. 22 June 2011.

“Despite the principal disagreement between Georgia and Russia, including the causes and outcomes of the 2008 war, during the past three years, we have managed to take steps towards improving trade, transport communication and humanitarian ties. We are ready to continue the pragmatic policy with Russia and we are waiting for the same from them.”

Irakli Garibashvili, the Prime Minister of Georgia. 17 December 2015.

“My personal position as the head of the government is that we are against Georgia's joining the sanctions against Russia. We had the same position last year and it remains unchanged.”

Irakli Garibashvili, the Prime Minister of Georgia. 6 August 2015.

“This formula is correct, but it can work out in case of Moscow's interest and its honest participation in the reconciliation process. Georgia is ready for the establishment of direct dialogue with Abkhazians and Ossetians on the practical and humanitarian issues.

Determining the status could be postponed until the reconciliation and restoring the trust between us.”

***Irakli Garibashvili**, the Prime Minister of Georgia.
29 January 2014.*

“It [crossing borders in the occupied territories from the Russian side] should not be a criminal offence, but an administrative offence. The fine should be paid. When somebody pays the fine, he automatically recognizes Georgia’s territorial integrity. We do not need to put people in jail for a couple of years. It gives us nothing, except prisoners to feed.”

***Paata Zakareishvili**, Minister of Reconciliation and Civic Equality.
17 March 2016.*

“In my view, the National Movement established a wrong approach, according to which, inaction and opportunism wrapped in aggressive rhetoric was considered the only justified course of action. The current difficult situation [with Russia] was largely caused by this “policy.”

***Gia Zhorzholiani**, one of the leaders of GD’s Parliamentary Majority.
13 March 2018.*

“Mikheil Saakashvili and the United National Movement are responsible for this blood [killing of Archil Tatumashvili]. They have created the South Ossetian Autonomous Republic without any consultation with the local population or giving them any information. He included Akhagori in this Republic, which previously belonged to Mtskheta-Mtianeti region.”

***Archil Tinikashvili**, the Governor of Akhagori Municipality.
24 February 2018.*

“I would like to express my gratitude to your editorial team and journalists for your principled position, which you have had during these years and this has been reflected on the pages of “Asaval-Dasavali”. I cannot list other newspapers with such a patriotic and principled position.”

*Bidzina Ivanishvili, the leader of GD.
6 February 2012.*

“Asaval-Dasavali” is a leading Pro-Russian print media in Georgia, inciting anti-Western sentiments and values.

They [pro-Russian forces] exist in the ruling team, but fortunately they do not influence the decision-making processes. One thing is when the propaganda is inspired from abroad, but another thing is that they are trying to endorse an opinion that Georgia’s pro-Western orientation is useless.”

*Archil Gegeshidze, Georgian Ambassador to the US,
in an interview. 6 July 2016.*

“We are a responsible government. Responsible to our people. We will not act irresponsibly. 20% of our territory is occupied, Russian army remains on our territories, the situation in the region is complicated, Ukraine is engulfed in fire and your favorite Saakashvili has one goal - to provoke conflict and instability in Georgia and cause a new Russian-Georgian armed conflict. This is exactly what being an enemy of our country and our nation means, and we will not allow it to happen. I am the head of the Government and I must make a statement which will be good for our country, our people and not harm our national interests. By this statement, you want me to please you and a 20-member political sect call the

United National Movement. I will never allow it. I have a responsibility before my people and country.”

*Irakli Garibashvili, the Prime Minister of Georgia, answering a journalist's question on whether Putin is an enemy of Georgia.
24 December 2014.*

“We want to emphasize that the responsibility for Aleksandre Grigolashvili’s death lays on the members of the former [UNM] government, who recruit our citizens to fight in the armed conflict abroad. The Ministry of Defense has stated numerous times that such appeals are irresponsible and their aim is to mislead our current or former military personnel. The Ministry of Defense kindly asks our citizens not to follow this provocation and not to put their lives in danger in exchange for various offers”.

*Official statement of the **Ministry of Defense of Georgia** regarding the combat death of a Georgian soldier Aleksandre Grigolashvili in the East of Ukraine. 20 February 2014.*

“I believe, by this statement Nino Burjanadze proved her statesmanship. She is the statesman, not just a politician. Many questions that we had about Nino Burjanadze, have been answered today by her position.”

***Bidzina Ivanishvili**, the leader of GD, speaking about an openly pro-Russian, anti-Western politician Nino Burjanadze,
on 12 August 2012.*

“I wish to see a third political force, and I’m not hiding it. I will not hide that I had a meeting with Mrs. Salome [Zurabishvili] as well as Mrs. Irma Inashvili. I told both of them that they have parties and it would be good if they develop them. And, I think they have become more active. I also conveyed a message to Mrs. Nino Bur-

janadze, that it would be good if she became more active as well, if she strengthened and activated her party. This is nothing special. It's a result of relationship and this is my position... I understand, that it's not easy, but should become easier. I think, I may be accused again in the statements urging destruction of the National Movement. By the way, I asked Saakashvili when I met him: "Aren't you ashamed for these statements? Where have you seen me making such statements?" Of course, he avoided the topic. The fact that I have made statements about the National Movement... You must remember the Prime Minister's [Garibashvili] statement, that he changed the rhetoric and no longer has an intention to destroy the National Movement. God forbid, I am against the destruction. I'm not that type of person and I've never made such statements and even haven't thought about that. But I think they manage to do it by themselves. First of all, Saakashvili himself. And other members of the National Movement as well have caused, that the National Movement has very bad prospects and I cannot exclude the possibility that in the future they will lose their positions due to their actions and rhetoric, but on the other hand, the new parties will come to life or revive easily. And I very much wish for it to happen. Of course, I don't want the destruction of the National Movement. I would like to see the third power, the new power to come into picture and I shared with you some inside information – that it would be good. And that I met Mrs. Salome, Irma Inashvili and also had similar conversation with Burjanadze."

*Bidzina Ivanishvili. The Prime Minister of Georgia.
4 April 2013.*

NB: Inashvili and Burjanadze are openly pro-Russian and anti-Western politicians. Burjanadze visited Putin in Moscow after the 2008 war and has held a clear Russian line on the war.

2. GRANTING THE STATUS OF “POLITICAL PRISONERS” TO THE ARRESTED RUSSIAN SPIES AND THEIR RELEASE FROM GEORGIAN PRISONS IN SUCH CAPACITY

Kintsvisi case

On 26 May 2011, the Special Forces of the Ministry of the Interior arrested an armed group consisting of 24 individuals close to Kintsvisi Monastery, located in Khashuri Municipality. The group possessed large amount of weapons and explosive materials. The aim of the group was a military coup and an establishment of the pro-Russian regime. Later, all members of this group were granted a status of “political prisoners” by the Parliament controlled by GD.

They are: **Oleg Keshelava, Nikoloz Gogvadze, Varlam Charkviani, Makhare Sisauri, Mikheil Tsilikashvili, Giorg Beroshvili, Mikheil Maisuradze, Zaza Gvimradze, Giorgi Agajanashvili, Boris Guruli, Kakhaber Todua, Teimuraz Tsambaia, Davit Chitrekashvili, Zurab Chitrekashvili, Jemal Gundiashvili, Davit Shukakidze, Mamuka Beselia, Zurab Gelashvili, Davit Tutarashvili, Badri Chigogidze, Bakar Chigogidze, Irakli Charbadze, Ramaz Gvaladze, Jemal Suramelashvili.**

Mukhrovani case

On 5 May 2009, there was an attempted mutiny in Mukhrovani military base (tank battalion). The attempt coincided with mass protests of the then opposition, which lasted for several months, blocking traffic in Tbilisi's main Rustaveli Avenue with cages. The main demand of the participants of the attempted coup in the tank battalion was resignation of the government. The authorities convinced the soldiers participating in the mutiny to lay down their arms. Investigation later revealed that the mutiny had been organized by Russian intelligence operatives. After GD's accession to power, the following participants of the mutiny were granted status of "political prisoners" by the GD-controlled Parliament:

Shota Gorgiashvili, Besiki Potskhverashvili, Zviadi Jachvadze, Irakli Topuria, Aleksandre Begoania, Beka Grigalashvili, Nikoloz Bibilashvili, Zurabi Mikadze, Zaza Murjikneli, Vano Sabashvili, Vazha Saginashvili, Imeda Saginashvili, Koba Otanadze, Paata Khokhiashvili, Zurab Bzishvili, Giorgi Samadalashvili, Kakha Jolbordi, Kakha Dvali, Levan Amiridze, Vazha Khutsurauli.

Enver case

During the covert operation called 'Enver' Georgian counter-intelligence neutralized an extensive Russian spy network. Later, all arrested Russian spies were released, after having been granted a status of "political prisoners" by the GD-controlled Parliament of Georgia. These persons included: **Armen Gevorkyan, Ruslan Galogre, Ruben Shikoyan, Yuri Skrilnikov, Eduard Abdulayev, Davit Meskhidze, Bakur Kighuradze, Taniel Abashidze, Gela Kakabadze, Vyacheslav Pluzhnikov, Gocha Diasamidze.** Notably, some of

those released (e.g., Skrilnikov) were citizens of the Russian Federation.

On 25 October 2011, Georgian authorities arrested **David Londaridze, Sergei Chaplugin and Giorgi Gorelashvili** on charges of espionage in favor of the Russian Federation. Following GD's accession to power, all arrested Russian spies were released after having been granted a status of "political prisoners" by the new Parliament.

On 11 March 2016 Georgian government released and handed to Russian side the four perpetrators of the 2005 terrorist attack in Gori, three of whom had been sentenced to life in prison. All four perpetrators were Russian citizens.

"Orthodox People's Movement"

A pro-Russian far-right group Orthodox People's Movement was established in 2010. Shortly after establishment, activists of the group assaulted the journalist of TV Kavkavsia during a live broadcast, because the journalists did not share their position towards the minority rights. At the time, the assailants were detained and convicted. Later, the following individuals involved in the attack were granted a status of "political prisoners":

Shota Apkhaidze, Zviadi Bliadze, Levani Chachua, Daviti Shalamberidze, Giorgi Gabedava, Rati Maisuradze, Jaba Gurchiani, Avtandili Zumbadze.

Vakhtang Maisaia. According to the investigation, during the active phase of the 2008 Russo-Georgian war, Vakhtang Maisaia

was providing certain foreign intelligence services with the coordinates of Georgian troops. He was arrested in 2009. In 2012 he was released and granted a status of a “political prisoner”.

Vahagan Chakhalian. In 2012 the GD government released a prominent Russian-backed separatist, who had for years fought for separation of Samtskhe-Javakheti, a province inhabited by an ethnic Armenian minority, from the Georgian state.

3. GD AND THE NORTH CAUCASUS

Ahmed Chataev. In November 2017, Chechen Ahmed Chataev was killed in a residential complex in Tbilisi, along with two other fighter, in a lengthy special operation carried out by Georgian special forces. Notably, Chataev was arrested and incarcerated by the UNM administration, but soon after taking power in 2012, GD government ensured Chataev's release. GD officials referred to him as a victim of politically-motivated prosecution by UNM. Once free, Chataev left for Syria and became a high-ranking ISIS field commander. He was later identified as one of the organizers of the terrorist attack on Ataturk Airport in Istanbul. As such, the US added Chataev to the international terrorist wanted list. It has yet to be established how Chataev, who had one arm and one leg as a result of his combat injuries ended up in Georgia, was able to rent an apartment in the center of Tbilisi and fill it with weapons and ammunition.

Magomed Magomedov. A Dagestani veteran of the Russo-Chechen war, who had been granted a refugee status in Georgia. On 19 April 2013, he was kidnapped from Tbilisi by unknown people. According to the police, his cell phone last time was active near Anaklia, close to the occupation line. Later, the Red Cross found him in one of the Russian prisons.

Michael Kadiev. A Dagestani human rights and opposition activist, who was funding anti-governmental rallies in Dagestan. Ivanishvili's Government arrested him and charge him of "terrorism", but later the charge was changed to "illegal possession of weapons". During his detention, he was subjected to psychological pressure and was forced to say that President Saakashvili had ordered to train and equip terrorist organizations in Georgia. Following the release from prison, he has remained under the risk of extradition to Russia. Georgian General Prosecutor's Office justifies the necessity of extradition by referring to the letter from Russian authorities, stipulating that "the Russian Federation guarantees that he [Kadiev] will have a defense attorney and will not be subjected to torture and inhuman treatment."

Saikhan Muzaev. A Chechen activist, who later become a Georgian citizen. The high-ranking officer of the counterintelligence services Valeri Zumbadze was threatening him in order to get the testimony against former UNM officials, lest he be deported to Russia. He attempted several times to leave Georgia and move to the UK for study purposes, but Georgian security services did not allow him to cross the border in the airport. Eventually, Muzaev managed to travel to Austria and seek asylum.

Zelimkhan Khangoshvili. A veteran of Russo-Chechen war. In 2015 was subject to an attempt of assassination in the center of Tbilisi, allegedly by FSB operatives. Khangoshvili was heavily wounded but survived. The law enforcement agencies did not investigate this case and, despite CCTV footage, did not manage to identify the attackers. Notably, criminal proceedings were instituted under the article the Criminal Code for "inflicting minor

bodily injury". Zelimkhan Khangoshvili was eventually forced to flee Georgia.

In 2012, shortly after winning elections and forming the government, GD closed down **PIK TV**, Georgian-government backed independent Russian language television station designated for the North Caucasus.

Once in power, the GD government terminated all scholarship programs established by the UNM government and designated for students from the North Caucasus.

The ethnic North Caucasians often face barriers while crossing the Georgian border, whereas residents of other Russian regions do not have such a problem.

4. GD'S PERSECUTION OF ANTI-RUSSIAN POLITICIANS, MILITARY PERSONNEL AND INTELLIGENCE OFFICERS

Mikheil Saakashvili – The third president of Georgia and the first leader of a sovereign state which faced full-scale military aggression of modern Russia. GD government initiated four criminal cases against Saakashvili: three for abuse of power and the fourth one for embezzlement. In the first three cases, evidence against Saakashvili is exclusively indirect (hearsay) and is given to the court by Saakashvili's political opponents (e.g., openly pro-Russian Nino Burjanadze). In one case Saakashvili was sentenced for exercising his constitutional right to pardon prisoners. The case of embezzlement is likewise unique insofar as the disputed expenditures are principally associated with the exercise of the official duties (e.g., receiving foreign dignitaries) and are being carried out by his successor to date. Saakashvili remains in political exile.

Bacho Akhalaia – former Minister of Defense and Minister of the Interior. He was centrally involved in the modernisation of Georgian Armed Forces and launching of the first-ever Georgian military industry. He was also pivotal in defeating organized crime syndicates and so-called "thieves-in-law" in Georgia. He was accused of abuse of power and has been arrested since 2012. Notably, GD prosecution relied on the testimony of Russian spies and thieves-in-law to obtain the sentence against Akhalaia.

In October 2018, Mirza Subeliani, an influential operative of GD admitted in a secret recording aired on Rustavi 2 TV that some of the witnesses in the Akhalaia case had been tortured to obtain the desired testimony.

Vano Merabishvili – former Minister of the Interior and Prime Minister of Georgia. During his tenure, numerous successful counter-intelligence and covert operations against the Russian intelligence networks were conducted. He is accused of breaching a government employment programme, organizing the beating of MP Valeri Gelashvili and using a summer house confiscated by the state from a former corrupt official to vacation his family. Has been under arrest since 2013. Remains under arrest despite a landmark ruling by ECHR establishing the breach of Article 18 of the Convention. Notably, every other state against which ECHR established breach of Article 18 released the respective prisoner.

Roman Shamatava – former high-ranking intelligence officer operating in an around the occupied territory of Abkhazia. He organized numerous successful special operations in Georgia's occupied territories. In early 2012 he organized the escape of a Georgian priest (father Jonah) from the Sukhumi prison and accompanied the priest to the non-occupied part of Georgia. GD government accused Shamatava of organizing the 2008 terrorist act in Khurcha. Notably, one of the pieces of evidence produced by the prosecution against Shamatava in court was a newspaper interview of the late de facto separatist leader of Abkhazia, Sergei Bagapsh, who accused Georgians in organization of Khurcha attack. Shamatava remains under arrest since 2013.

Zurab Shamatava – Lieutenant Colonel, chief of the 4th Brigade of the Georgian Army, hero of the 2008 Russo-Georgian war. Was arrested at the end of 2012 and charged with torturing soldiers (which was manifested in their harsh training) and abuse of power. Spent 2 years in prison. Currently released.

Aleksandre Gorgadze – Army sergeant, “Hero of Georgia”, fought in the 2008 Russo-Georgian war, where he captured a Russian invader. Was charged with abuse of power. Was arrested together with Zurab Shamatava and spent 2 years in prison. Currently released.

Kakhaber Nakani – soldier of Georgian special forces. Fought in the 2008 Russo-Georgian war. Participated in numerous operations against organized criminal groups. Was charged with committing a premeditated murder, however, in fact, it was a special operation against an organized crime group. He is currently under arrest.

Revaz Charbadze – former director of a military factory “Delta”, founded during UNM Government. He was centrally involved in launching the first military manufacturing facilities in modern Georgia. He is currently in exile due to a pending criminal proceedings against him, in which the prosecution relies on a testimony by a ‘thief-in-law’.

Erekle Kodua – former director of “SOD”, the state security service. During his term in office, Kodua organized numerous successful operations against Russian intelligence services and organized crime syndicates in Georgia. His most notable operation was covertly recording his conversation with Badri Patarkatsishvili

in London, in which the oligarch was plotting a coup d'état in Georgia. Kodua is currently in exile, due to pending criminal prosecution against him.

Koba Todua – former director of the Military Intelligence. During his service, numerous Russian intelligence networks were revealed. He is currently under arrest.

Levan Tabidze – The former director of the Counter Intelligence Department. Has participated in numerous operations against Russian intelligence. Currently he is under arrest.

Giorgi Mazmishvili – former director of one of departments of Constitutional Security. Has participated in numerous operations against Russian intelligence and organized crime. Currently he is under arrest.

Gia Lortkipanidze – former deputy Minister of the Interior. Was actively involved in re-establishing control over the Pankisi Gorge after the Rose Revolution. He is in exile, due to a pending criminal case against him.

Gigi Kalandadze – General, former Head of the Joint Chiefs of Staff of Georgian Armed Forces. He was arrested by GD government a day before the visit of the NATO military committee to Georgia in late 2012. Due to this arrest, the visit of a high-level NATO delegation to Georgia was cancelled. Currently Gigi Kalandadze is in exile.

5. SPECIAL OPERATION “KODORI 2007”

Background

In the summer of 2007, a Georgian special force unit conducted an operation in the part of occupied Abkhazia known as Kodori gorge, which at the time was under the sovereign control of the Georgian authorities. Two Russian officers were killed during the operation. The Georgian authorities stated that they had destroyed a camp where these Russian officers were training Abkhaz terrorists and saboteurs to be sent into other parts of Georgia. Soon after the operation, the Russian government demanded from the Georgian government to punish those responsible for planning and executing the operation. The matter was elevated to the highest level when President Saakashvili talked about the incident from the UN floor, inquiring what the Russian military officers were doing on sovereign Georgian territory in the first place.

Shalva Tatukhashvili – fought in the 2008 Russo-Georgian war and was involved in the special operation “Kodori 2007”. In March 2014 he was abducted and his whereabouts were unknown for 22 days. He was interrogated in the presence of unidentified Russian speaking persons. He died on 24 March 2014. Forensic expertise established that he had been tortured.

Zviad Lagvilava – was a participant of operation “Kodori 2007”. He died on 28 October 2014 in Zugdidi, in his own office, in the

building of the State Security Service, as a result of an explosion. An hour after the explosion, the investigator made a statement that the explosion had occurred due to the malfunctioning of a water heater. Instead of carrying out a thorough expertise of the site, the entire two-story building was hastily demolished the day after the explosion. The Lagvilava family and its attorneys are certain that this was a planned assassination.

Aleksandre Danelia – was involved in the special operation against the Russian saboteurs in Kodori valley. Died in unclear circumstances in 2014. Officially, it was ruled a suicide, despite there being two gunshot wounds on his body. It is noteworthy that the body was first found and examined by the investigator working on the Roman Shamatava case.

Sergo Ubilava – was involved in the special operation against the Russian saboteurs in Kodori valley. Died in 2014 in prison, in unclear circumstances. Cirrhosis was stated as an official cause of his death.

Ivane (Vano) Ivanidze – died in a bizarre car accident. He was a personal driver of Shalva Tatukhashvili. The brother of Vano Ivanidze, David Ivanidze, who currently resides in France, has come forward with details of his brother's death, including in an exclusive interview to Rustavi 2. David Ivanidze maintains that his brother had been interrogated several times in connection with special operation Kodori 2007. According to Vano Ivanidze, two Russian-speaking persons attended the interrogations. The vehicle in which he died had gunshot marks.

Archil Mamageishvili – was a veteran soldier of special forces of the Ministry of the Interior. He was shot and killed in Tbilisi in 2016. The attack took place during a broad daylight, in front of the National Enforcement Bureau. The authorities claim that the attack was motivated by a commercial dispute. However, the family does not share this position, whereas Archil had assets far exceeding the amount of the dispute and had in fact already reached a settlement with the counterpart. The family believes this was an assassination connected to Archil's participation in special operation Kodori 2007.

6. PRO-RUSSIAN ACTS OF THE GD GOVERNMENT

In 2016 the Ministry of Defense of Georgia granted access to secret military fortifications to Tristan Tsitelashvili, an openly pro-Russian activist, who is widely suspected to be an outright Russian spy. In response, the Minister of Defense, Mindia Janelidze stated that the military facilities which Tsitelashvili had visited were not secret.

Soon after GD's victory in the 2012 general elections, all Georgian intelligence groups operating in occupied Abkhazia were exposed and neutralized by Russian special services.

In January 2017 Georgian military officer, the veteran of 2008 Russo-Georgian war Gia Tsertsvadze, who possessed important military information, was arrested upon arrival in Ukraine at the request of Interpol. Tsertsvadze had been placed on a wanted list by Interpol upon request by Russia. Georgia had information about this and Tsertsvadze was stopped for 40 minutes in Tbilisi airport before departure. Nonetheless, the Georgian authorities did not warn him of his pending arrest and potential extradition to Russia and let him leave the country. Ultimately, Tsertsvadze was not deported to Russia due to involvement of Ukrainian authorities and Georgian private individuals associated with the previous (UNM) government.

In June 2013 Georgian law enforcement officers “discovered” multiple caches in the forests of Samegrelo region. In these caches, barrels allegedly with video footage of torture as well as military ammunition were discovered. According to GD Government, these weapons were to be used by UNM for potentially destabilizing the country. In reality, these hiding places had been arranged by the Georgian military as places necessary for conducting defensive war in case of yet another Russian invasion. The information about their existence and location had been readily available to the Georgian Dream officials who took over the respective offices in 2012. By first “discovering” these hiding places and then making them public for internal partisan consumption, many argued that the Government severely damaged Georgia’s defense capabilities.

Vladimir Bedukadze, a former employee of the Corrections Department who was not only personally involved in the abuse of prisoners, but acted as the director, main actor and producer of the so-called “prison videos”, was awarded in Moscow by the Putin-affiliated Russia-based “Russian-Georgian Unity Foundation”. The award was made for “bravery and advancement in the Media”, which “ensured the end of Saakashvili’s criminal regime”. Notably, the prison scandal had a decisive impact on October 1, 2012 elections in Georgia, won by Bidzina Ivanishvili and his GD Coalition. GD extended to Bedukadze protection by state security service, which he enjoys to date.

In December 2014, a member of an openly pro-Russian political party “Democratic Movement” (the party of Nino Burjanadze) –

Levan Ghirsiashvili- was appointed Deputy Minister of Defense of Georgia.

Giorgi Gvimradze, a person associated with the Kremlin’s ideologist, Aleksandr Dugin and his Eurasia Institute, was appointed as the director of the information department of the Georgian Public Broadcaster in 2015.

Budgetary contracts with media which are inciting hate speech, anti-Western aspirations and are engaged in spreading of Russian propaganda: Similarly to 2014-2016, budgetary organizations are continuing to enter into contracts for the spreading of advertisement and information with such Media which are inciting hate speech and anti-Western sentiments. Budgetary contracts were made in 2017 with openly pro-Russian publications. In addition, one of the winners in a consolidated tender of the government was TV Obiektivi – a television associated with Patriots’ Alliance. Central Elections Commission has entered into an agreement with Quality Channel - a channel with pro-Russian editorial policy. Similarly to the year 2016, the Ministry of Corrections and Probation has an existing contract on dissemination of information with an openly pro-Russian edition “Tbilisi 24”. The latter is an organization related to pro-Russian party “Centrists”, which has proposed before the elections to legitimize Russian bases in Georgia. Tbilisi 24 frequently publishes false materials, which contain disinformation regarding the West, as well as praises of Stalin.

Media Financial Transparency. Final Report. 2017. Media Development Fund.

In 2015 the Minister of Defense Mindia Janelidze did not attend the funeral ceremony of Georgian soldiers killed in the 2008 Russo-Georgian war, whose body fragments had been found years after the war. The official reason for absence was the Minister's "busy schedule". The Minister later commented that "It was not a funeral, it was a ceremony of burying fragments of the bodies, which were taken for conducting of DNA testing".

In 2013 deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Georgia David Jalaghania attended the presentation organized by pro-Russian groups of a propagandist book "Unknown Putin".

In 2017 General Prosecutor's Office reopened an investigation into a series of terrorist attacks carried out in 2009-2010. The declared aim of the new investigation was to question Russia's role in these attacks. Among the 2009-2010 terrorist attacks is an explosion which took place in Tbilisi, near the US embassy. The results of original investigation conducted by Georgian government had coincided with results of investigation undertaken in US, and concluded that Russia's military intelligence (GRU) officers were behind the terrorist attacks. The perpetrators had been arrested and imprisoned.

In 2017 one of the key Putin's propagandists, the journalist Vladimir Mamontov visited Tbilisi. Prior to his visit to Tbilisi, he had entered Sukhumi in April 2014 in violation of the Georgian Law on Occupied Territories. Despite the existence of an evidence of his presence in Abkhazia, Ivanishvili's government did not take legal actions against Mamontov.

Since GD's ascent to power in 2012, the Independence Day military parade has been effectively canceled. Notably, Viktor Yanukovich of Ukraine pursued an identical policy on this issue.

GD government decided to send athletes to the Sochi Winter Olympics. This despite many protests due to the continued occupation as well as the fact that Viktor Nechayev, a Russian air force pilot who had bombed Georgia in 2008 had been demonstratively selected to be one of the carriers of the Olympic torch at the opening ceremony. Moreover, the Georgian government delegation set beside the leaders of separatist regimes at the opening ceremony.

In July 2013 the deputy Minister of Culture Manana Berikashvili wrote to the Head of Gori City Hall, that it would be better to restore Stalin's monument, demolished by Saakashvili's administration, and erect it close to the museum.

In 2017 Georgian government signed an agreement with Gazprom. According to the agreement, instead of 10% of natural gas transported to Armenia, Georgia will receive financial compensation. Notably, Gazprom had sought for years to amend the existing agreement in such manner.

In October 2015 Georgian delegation did not support two resolutions in favor of Ukraine in the Parliamentary Assembly of the European Council. Georgian delegation consisted of leading MPs from the ruling GD coalition: Manana Kobakhidze, Eka Beselia, Zviad Kvachantiradze and Guguli Maghradze.

Since 2014 Georgian government has been actively discussing the possibility of building of Dagestan-Kakheti road, which will connect Georgia with Russia. According to analysis, this road would have primarily a military function. Regarding this issue, then Minister of Economy and since then the PM Giorgi Kvirikashvili stated that “the more roads are built, the better it is.”

In 2013 GD government attempted to change the Law on Occupied Territories on several occasions. The changes would have exempted from criminal liability those foreign citizens, who had illegally entered the occupied territories of Georgia. The changes would thus set a different (more liberal) legal regime for parts of the Georgian state border occupied by Russia.

In 2017, known by his unconditional support of the occupational regimes, the former mayor of Moscow, Yuri Luzhkov visited Georgia. Luzhkov had breached the Law on Occupied Territories on numerous occasions. GD authorities took no steps to enforce imperative provisions of Georgian law.

In 2014 one of Putin’s key ideologists, Maksim Shevchenko visited Georgia. Shevchenko had breached the Law on Occupied Territories on numerous occasions. GD authorities took no steps to enforce imperative provisions of Georgian law.

In general, since 2012, many members of Russia’s State Duma have visited Georgia in violation of Georgian Law on Occupied Territories, with GD Government routinely not enforcing requirements of the law.

Since 2013 numerous Stalin monuments have been re-erected in various provinces of Georgia.

Georgian budget has funded numerous pro-Russian media resources such as Obiektivi, Sakartvelos Respublika, Kviris Palitra, Kronika, Alia and Asaval-Dasavali. Furthermore, the Media Development Foundation (MDF) financed Lado Bedukadze's media agency, who is well known by his pro-Russian position and scenes of torture. Additionally, the newspaper "Tbilisi 24", which is associated with pro-Russian Centrist party also received the funding from the state budget.

A company called Margio, Ltd., owned by Petre Dervishadze, who had been convicted for espionage in favor of Russia under the UNM administration, systematically won public procurement tenders announced by the Ministry of Defense and the State Security Service since 2012 general elections. Margio thus won millions worth of orders and revenue from the government.

In April 2018, MP Emzar Kvitsiani stated, that during 2006 Kodori special operation he acted under orders from the Russian intelligence. As he said, Russian special services convinced him to make anti-Georgian statements on Russian television channels. Emzar Kvitsiani, who escaped and lived in Russia, was sentenced to 12 years in prison in absentia. He returned to Georgia following GD's taking over the government. He was released from jail in accordance with the motion of the prosecution and personal suretyships by leading GD MPs.

Notably, a leading MP from GD and the chairman of the Defense and Security Committee of the Parliament Irakli Sesiashvili, stated that Emzar Kvitsiani’s collaboration with Russian intelligence was a personal matter and, as such, he would not comment on this issue further.

During the 2016 general elections, GD, through Central Election Commission who in turn relied on manipulation of votes and bulletins, ensured that an openly pro-Russian, anti-Western party “Alliance of Patriots” got seats in the Parliament and could create a formal fraction, entitling the party to certain political and financial benefits.

Politicians well-known for their pro-Russian and anti-Western stance (such as Irma Inashvili, Nino Burjanadze and Sandro Bregadze) decided not to nominate their candidacies for the 2018 presidential elections, thus effectively helping consolidate pro-Russian votes around Salome Zurabishvili, the candidate supported by GD.

7. WHO STARTED THE 2008 WAR?

Voice of America: As of today, a big chunk of the budget goes towards defense expenditures. In your case, how will the funds be distributed?

Bidzina Ivanishvili: I cannot name specific proportions of the budget now, but whatever Saakashvili and his government have done in this respect – one can see a lot of extreme incompetence. Starting from the purchase of tanks, then engagement in that irresponsible adventure, how they started the war.

Interview with Voice of America.

19 May 2012.

“How it all started – some unidentified band formations were shooting for three days in the direction of Georgian villages. No one was killed yet, one fragment broke into one house. Thereafter, they were showing it for three days. It was necessary to evacuate the population from the villages, ask for the European observers - it is possible that everything would end with this. But what did he do? Brought in tanks, flew the airplanes, after which the Russian regular army entered Georgia. Saakashvili must not have responded.”

Ivanishvili's interview with Latvian newspaper "Telegraph", September 2013.

“I think it is unjustified that the military forces were put on standby and the military actions were commenced before Russia crossed the border. Unidentified band formations were shooting and it would be absolutely adequate from our President and government to invite international observers and monitors. This process could have ended at that stage. I was watching all TV reports and coverage; nothing special was happening. One of the bombs broke fell on one of the houses and damaged the wall, no one was killed. It would be sufficient to evacuate up to 100 residents from the village and station military forces there. The only correct step would be to invite international community. It is unclear to me why this was done, and it raises questions. The investigation of the August war will not damage Georgia, or the former government or the image of the President. Based on Tagliavini group recordings, Europe has different perception and the former government is spreading absolutely different information in Georgia.”

Bidzina Ivanishvili.

12 April 2013.

“National Movement is portraying as if the 2008 war was initiated by Russia and won by “National Movement”. If it were not for silly actions of the National Movement, what happened would not have happened.

Bidzina Ivanishvili.

14 June 2016.

“We will find strength together and will be able to forgive. We will be able to not only forgive, but we also have the strength to ac-

knowledge our fault and repent. We will ask for forgiveness once again from Georgian mothers.”

Bidzina Ivanishvili.

July 2012.

“My opponents have said that there was a war in 2008 and how could one expect the [economic] situation to be better after the war. Of course 2009 and 2010 would have been bad. They talk as if this was a natural calamity which we could not have avoided. The war was exactly the main crime of the former [UNM] government.”

“They did not know how to govern and took the country towards catastrophe. One of them was the war, the war could be easily avoided. The situation should have been better. What a terrible state the population is and what a terrible state they put the population in. Then, there were peacekeepers, now we have occupied territories. This was, of course, their lack of judgment and the harshest word we can use publicly – stupidity. They were acting stupidly and we got what we got. Therefore, how could the economy develop? Because there was the war and they started this turmoil, this is why we got such economy.”

Bidzina Ivanishvili.

September 2016.

“We want to exit this dead-end and this causes their irritation. We are doing everything for the well-being of the country, we will return the lost territories step by step. This is what

bothers those that have a lion's share in the loss of these territories.”

Bidzina Ivanishvili.

14 October 2013.

“Mr. Ivanishvili, you state that thoughtless actions of Georgia resulted in even more thoughtless actions of Russia. Does this mean that you blame the Georgian side in this situation and consider it as the initiator of the war?” – This question from the reporter Vasil Gaprindashvili from “Interpressnews” and “Palitra TV” was answered by Bidzina Ivanishvili as follows:

“First of all, I will rely on the Tagliavini report. Secondly, I took the Parliamentary Assembly Resolution on the results of the Russo-Georgian war, which was voted for by the Georgian delegation. The Tagliavini statement and the Resolution, both state that the Georgian side started military actions. For those Georgians, which consider this insulting, I can clarify this and remind you how the process developed. As you know, Liakhvi villages were bombed from the Ossetian side by unidentified militias. In my opinion, Saakashvili should have defended the village, each resident could have been evacuated and international organizations could have been invited and they could have established the situation. Saakashvili acted absolutely thoughtlessly and started bombing Tskhinvali. This is established everywhere, except for three channels which I listed [Rustavi 2, Imedi, Channel I]. Everyone in the world knows everything very well, they are trying to mislead the Georgian population.

Saakashvili wants to convince us that the war was initiated by Russia and was won by Georgia. Apart from the fact that people have not lost their memories, are Georgian people so stupid? I am

reminded of George Orwell's thought police from "1984". They want to turn Georgian people into zombies. Don't we remember how Lomaia was summoning us like Levitan, we took that village and he was naming the villages. Didn't the big aggression come from Russia after this? We must face the truth. They should not try to lie to Georgian people and keep them in dark. Everyone in the world knows everything very well. The said three channels have done nothing during these three days but criticize me for my statements. This was the situation. They will not be able to erase our memory and turn us into zombies, but they are trying."

Bidzina Ivanishvili.

1 November 2011.

"Saakashvili dispersed the peaceful demonstration on November 7, 2007, then he rigged the Presidential Elections, his government was on shaky ground and the war was the way out. "Saakashvili [...] thought that if he took the territory of Ossetia by war, he would strengthen his position."

Bidzina Ivanishvili.

9 August 2012.

"The Resolution signed also by the Georgian government, says that the war was initiated by Georgia. In my opinion, the only thing that Saakashvili should have done then was to protect the villages, invite world organizations and show them what was going on there. Georgian President did something outrageous, he started a war in Tskhinvali. This is reflected everywhere. Today every Georgian Media outlet is trying to convince us that the war was initiated by Russia and won by Georgia, this is what Saakash-

vili also says, but the Georgian people are clever and it is not so easy to brain-wash them. We know what the reality is, and they cannot alter our minds.”

Bidzina Ivanishvili,
1 November 2011.

“Saakashvili managed to fight two wars with Russia and practically led the Russian army into Georgia.”

Bidzina Ivanishvili.
1 September 2016.

“Salome Zurbishvili’s position on 2008 war conforms with that of the Georgian Dream”.

Irakli Kobakhidze, *Chairperson of the Georgian Parliament.*
August 2018, following Zurbishvili’s scandalous statements that Georgia was at fault for starting or not preventing the war.

“Saakashvili, exactly Saakashvili started the war... For me personally, it makes no difference whether it was Russia that started the war or whether it was Georgia.”

Kakha Kaladze, *former Minister of Energy, currently the Mayor of Tbilisi, during a pre-election rally in 2012.*

“Georgia started the military operations. Liakhvi Gorge was bombed by unknown armed groups.”

Bidzina Ivanishvili, *the Prime Minister of Georgia.*
2012

“Saakashvili behaved inadequately when he started bombing Tskhinvali. This has been reflected everywhere.”

***Bidzina Ivanishvili**, the Prime Minister of Georgia.
2012*

“We have bombed our population... How can we say that we want [territorial] integrity?”

***Salome Zurabishvili**, the presidential candidate
supported by Georgian Dream. 2018.*

In 2007 Salome Zurabishvili blamed the Georgian authorities for bombing of a radar in the village of Tselubani, in order to put the blame on Russia.

“When everything, all preconditions are present, starting a massive airstrikes against your population is either stupidity, the stubborn decision of a crazy president or a kind of strange agreement with our arch-enemy.”

***Salome Zurabishvili**, presidential candidate supported
by Georgian Dream. 2018.*

“The main condition, which could make this [Russian] scenario work, were the actions of Saakashvili’s government. If not for this opportunistic approach and stupidity, Russia would have never achieved its goals. This was her [Salome Zurabishvili’s] clarification and it fully conforms with our official position.”

***Irakli Kobakhidze**, Chairperson of the Georgian Parliament.
September 2018.*