



# GRASS Disinfo Brief

**MONITORING PERIOD:**  
September 25 – October 2

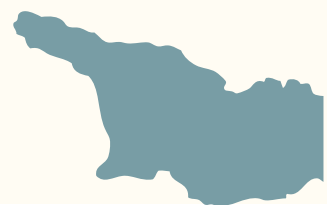
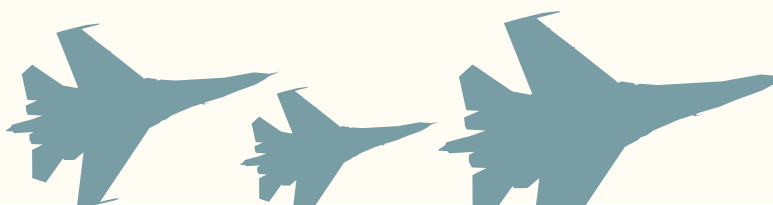


- GD keeps pushing on “Global War Party” narrative as the State Security Service states that USAID-funded trainers are part of a plan to overthrow the government
- GD escalates criticism towards President Zourabichvili about foreign visits, Partskhaladze’s case persists
- GD says Georgia was mistreated by not being granted candidate status, pressures EU “to not repeat past mistakes”
- Russian FM Sergey Lavrov says restoration of flights was agreed with Gharibashvili’s government
- Amid the SSSG’s statement, pro-Russian Alt Info forms “Anti-Maidan” movement, vows to organise people against a potential “Western-sponsored coup d’etat”
- Pro-Kremlin groups frame the EU as a destabilizing force in Georgia
- Pro-Russian propaganda asserts that close relations with Russia are essential to restoring Georgia’s territorial integrity
- Propaganda blames the US for attempts to overthrow the government and drag Georgia into the war, says incoming Ambassador Dunnigan is coming with the same mission

**GD keeps pushing on “Global War Party” narrative as the State Security Service states that USAID-funded trainers are part of a plan to overthrow the government**

Following the initial statement by the State Security Service of Georgia (SSSG) on September 18th, which warned of a plot by a group both inside and outside the country to destabilize the nation and overthrow the current government, the SSSG issued another announcement on October 2nd. The latest statement alleged that three Serbian activists, Sinisa Sikman, Jelena Stojsic, and Slobodan Djinovic, affiliated with the 2003 Rose Revolution in Georgia, had arrived in Tbilisi on September 25<sup>th</sup>. According to the SSSG, they arrived in Georgia at the invitation of the East-West Management Institute, which the USAID funds.

The statement issued by the SSSG claims that these individuals, associated with the organization "Canvas" and former Serbian "Otpor" members, have a personal experience of participating in revolutions and instructing others on organizing violent protests. The SSSG's statement indicated that their visit's primary objective was to establish communication and provide training to young individuals and influential non-governmental organizations. The training sessions from September 26th to September 29, 2023, targeted a group expected to play a pivotal role in violently attempting to overthrow the government. As proof, the SSSG released hidden camera footage from the training sessions. The Security Service also reported that on September 29, 2023, Sinisa Sikman, Jelena Stojsic, and Slobodan Djinovic were interrogated during which they allegedly attempted to conceal the true purpose of their stay in Georgia to



avoid anticipated criminal charges. Their testimonies, according to the SSSG, contradicted the evidence gathered during the investigation. On September 30th, 2023, the three individuals departed from Georgia and returned to Belgrade.

The US embassy has since issued a statement, calling the allegations false and fundamentally mischaracterizing the goals of the US assistance to Georgia. Despite the unjustified attacks, the statement affirmed US continued support of the Georgian organizations that help people protect their democratic rights and future.

- Georgian PM Irakli Gharibashvili addressed the matter, highlighting that the government has uncovered the intentions of destructive, hostile, anti-national, and anti-state entities operating within the country, often with support from foreign sources. The Prime Minister emphasized the unsettling nature of foreign nationals entering Georgia to provide training on inciting a revolution and using violence to overthrow the government. He clarified that any attempts at disruption and destabilization orchestrated by such radical elements would not be tolerated. Furthermore, the Prime Minister expressed his disappointment that it was USAID that invited and funded the visit of those foreign nationals. The PM added his hope that the USAID would provide pertinent clarifications.
- Speaker of the Parliament Shalva Papuashvili assessed the situation as a “dark day for US support in Georgia.” He claimed that American taxpayer funds are directed towards orchestrating revolutionary processes, deliberately preparing individuals for civil unrest, and inciting violence. Papuashvili underscored the need for USAID to provide clarity on this matter, emphasizing that this isn't the first time the organization has been embroiled in such controversies. Notably, he recalled that USAID was aware of their grantee's, ISFED's false PVT findings during the 2020 elections but failed to inform the government or the Georgian public, even though these findings were exploited to fuel unrest in the country.
- In his statement, the Speaker of the Parliament also argued, unlike the United States, Georgia lacks a transparent system for monitoring the income of foreign funds, leaving the public in the darkness, with such information only surfacing through investigations carried out by the SSSG. He suggested that adopting a Foreign Agent's law, proposed in March 2023, would greatly enhance public awareness regarding such instances and reveal the extent of foreign financing. The speaker also noted that the violent actions witnessed during the March 7-8 protests deprived the Georgian people of their right to access such information.
- Georgian Dream Chairperson Irakli Kobakhidze stated that SSSG provided evidence proving that the training was meant to prepare for a revolution in Georgia is disturbing. He highlighted that what's even more unsettling is that this training received funding from USAID, calling for a clear explanation from the American partners. According to Kobakhidze, similar activities and radical groups have been identified before, such as Peter Ackerman, the founder of the International Center for Nonviolent Conflicts, who allegedly trained opposition parties and NGO members to plan a revolution. Kobakhidze linked SSSG's allegations with a “second front” conspiracy, saying that since 2022, the



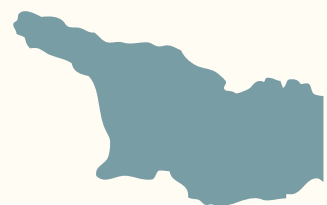
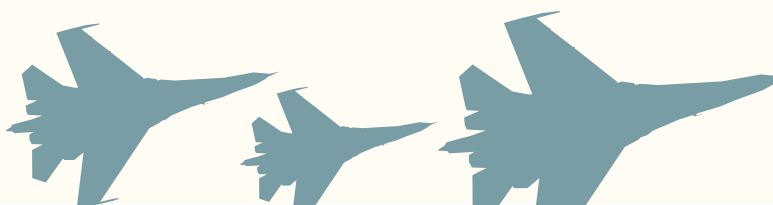
radical groups have been attempting to open a second front in Georgia and as it seems, the plan is still in motion.

- Secretary General of GD and Tbilisi Mayor made similar comments, expressing disapproval and underlining that the SSSG once again provided evidence that an insidious plan has been developed by Georgia's internal and external enemies. Kaladze followed suit in emphasizing that USAID's involvement is disturbing, requesting clarifications from their end. Just like the Chairman of the Parliament, Kakha Kaladze also brought attention to USAID's funding of ISFED and its mistake during the 2020 parliamentary elections. He emphasized that the accumulation of such concerning and disappointing incidents with USAID's involvement directly reflects enmity.

### **GD escalates criticism towards President Zurabishvili about foreign visits, Partskhaladze's case persists**

As the impeachment proceedings against President Zurabishvili at the Constitutional Court of Georgia draw nearer, Georgian Dream intensifies its criticism of her.

- The Georgian PM, Irakli Gharibashvili once again decried President Zurabishvili, recalling her statement about how the GD government is not fulfilling the 12 recommendations issued by the European Commission and that the Georgian foreign policy has become vague in the last years. The PM argued that the President's actions and statements were sabotaging Georgia's chances of receiving candidate status, hence he refused to be her accomplice by granting governmental approval for her foreign visits. As an additional justification for the government's decision, the PM claimed that President Zurabishvili was unable to even convince French President Emmanuel Macron to support Georgia's candidate status, stating that the French President was the only one questioning Georgia's geographic belonging to Europe. As for the impeachment procedure launched by GD earlier in September, the PM emphasized that while the impeachment procedure is a formality and GD does not have enough votes to go through the process, the ruling party was obligated to respond to a violation of the constitution.
- Speaker of the Parliament, Shalva Papuashvili once again assessed the President's foreign visits as counter-productive, highlighting that the government was right for not approving Zurabishvili's visits. Papuashvili noted that rather than voicing unconditional support for Georgia's candidate status, the Latvian President, after meeting with President Zurabishvili, stated that Georgia should join European Union's Common Foreign and Security Policy, including EU sanctions against Russia. According to Papuashvili, Georgia joining sanctions against Russia without security or economic guarantees will escalate the situation, thus this particular issue has been off the table for a long time during discussion with Western partners. The fact that the Latvian President



repeated this issue demonstrates the damaging effects that President Zurabishvili's visits have inflicted on Georgia, according to the Speaker of the Parliament.

- Secretary General of GD and Tbilisi Mayor, Kakha Kaladze, affirmed that the constitution clearly states about how the President should be permitted by the government to hold foreign visits, therefore by not doing so, the President violated the constitution. Kaladze stated that the President always asked for permission in the past but this has changed as Zurabishvili is now following the radical opposition's agenda.
- Deputy Chairman of the Parliament, Giorgi Volski also assessed the statement made by the Latvian President about Georgia's need to join sanctions against Russia. According to Volski, Zurabishvili should have informed the Latvian President that Georgia is in compliance with international sanctions and makes sure that the country is not used by Russia to evade sanctions. As Mr. Volski continued, Zurabishvili should also have told the Latvian President about the potential economic consequences for Georgia if it were to join sanctions against Russia, while Russia would be minimally, if at all, affected. Volski emphasized that if the President did not to inform her Latvian counterpart about these consequences, then she is acting against the interests of Georgia.
- Commenting on Partskhaladze's case, Georgian Dream MP, Archil Talakvadze stated that the issue has been resolved and every state institution – the Ministry of Justice, NBG, investigative agencies acted in accordance with the rules established by law. Despite initial speculations that the investigation might not commence or that the government or the ruling party would obstruct the termination of Partskhaladze's citizenship, the investigation was indeed launched, and the Ministry of Justice promptly sent the necessary documents to the President, he continued. Talakvadze suggested that the President's U-turn, opting not to immediately terminate Partskhaladze's citizenship, might be attributed to the objective of keeping this issue on the political agenda, as the ruling party opponents do not have anything else to capitalize on.

### **Georgian Dream complains about Georgia's mistreatment last year by not being granted candidate status, pressures EU "to not repeat past mistakes"**

- Prime Minister Gharibashvili emphasized that during discussions with European leaders he underlines that given the substantial reforms implemented, the progress achieved, and the challenging geopolitical circumstances, Georgia merits candidate status. Any other decision would be another strategic mistake and mistreatment of Georgia by the EU, - he said. The Georgian people do not like unfairness and will not accept any attempt to put Georgia in the back while it is the leader amongst the Associated Trio. He highlighted that Georgia excels both Ukraine and Moldova by a significant margin in numerous areas. Consequently, Gharibashvili claimed that Georgia is unquestionably deserving EU's candidate status, and any negative decision in this regard would be absolutely unacceptable and deeply offensive to both Georgia and its people.

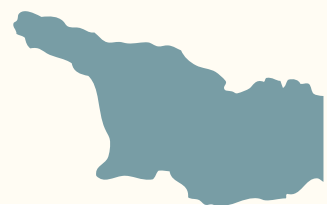
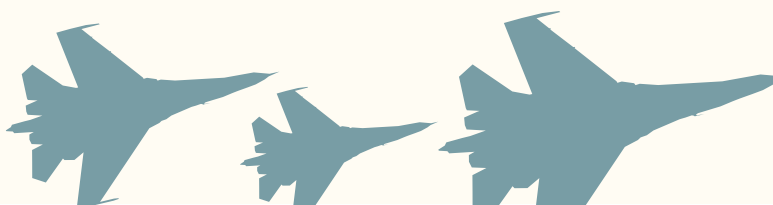


- Speaker of the Parliament, Shalva Papuashvili participated in the European Conference of Presidents of Parliament. Speaking to journalists about his visit, Papuashvili emphasized the importance of conveying political messages and clarifying that the European Union must not repeat the mistake made last year. He underlined that the decision regarding Georgia's candidate status carries a significant message to the Georgian people, reflecting the EU's stance towards the enduring struggle of the Georgian people over the long term. Papuashvili noted that by its very nature, candidate status is a small step for the EU, but it is a big step for Georgia. Therefore, it is important for EU member states to fully understand this responsibility. Additionally, Papuashvili highlighted that the unjust decision made last year had led to disappointment within Georgian society, a sentiment that became evident through public attitudes. Despite Georgia having one of the highest levels of support for joining the European Union, exceeding 85 percent, there has been an 11 percent decrease in the past year among those who hold a positive view of the European Union, the speaker noted.
- Kakha Kaladze, Secretary General of GD and Tbilisi Mayor, also noted that Georgia is well ahead of Ukraine and Moldova, which were granted candidate status while Georgia was mistreated. Despite the mistreatment, as claimed by Kaladze, the ruling party is doing everything for the country's difficult path towards European integration and hopes that a fair decision will be made by the European Commission.
- GD MP Beka Davituliani stated that during Josep Borell's visit a plan was developed to further work on the 12 recommendations, which GD plans to comply with. According to Davituliani, neither the EU nor Georgia have the luxury to leave Georgia without candidate status.

### **Russian FM Sergey Lavrov says restoration of flights was agreed with Gharibashvili's government**

On September 28<sup>th</sup>, in an interview with the Russian news agency "TASS", Russian Foreign Minister, Sergey Lavrov, stated that diplomatic relations between Georgia and Russia were cut by Saakashvili when he attacked Ossetians and Russian peacekeepers with the US support. Lavrov mentioned that when Moscow observed the current Georgian government's interest in normalizing relations, they engaged in discussions with Mr. Gharibashvili and agreed to resume flights and lift the visa regime. He also noted that the introduction of the visa-free regime and the resumption of flights "makes our relations more convenient and comfortable".

- PM Gharibashvili responded to Sergey Lavrov's statement, noting that the introduction of the visa-free regime was a decision made solely by the Russian President, which he stated himself. As for direct flights, while there were no formal talks with the Russian side, relevant Georgian agencies, such as the Aviation Agency under the Ministry of



Economy were involved in issuing permissions to hold flights in Georgia, which was already openly known and there is nothing scandalous about it. According to the PM, the Georgian government welcomed the resumption of flights from Russia which would benefit Georgia and therefore, through the Aviation Agency, made an agreement with non-sanctioned companies to take flights in Georgia.

- The Chairperson of the Human Rights and Civil Integration committee, Mikheil Sarjveladze denied Lavrov's allegations. Sarjveladze claimed that Lavrov's statement was only in the interest of the opposition to criticize the ruling party.
- GD MP Aluda Ghudushauri asserted that he is not interested in what Sergey Lavrov says. The position of an occupying country is already clear and needs no further inspection.
- Pro-Russian social media profiles expressed disapproval towards the ruling party members for denying direct talks with the Russian government.

### **Amid the SSSG's statement, pro-Russian Alt Info forms "Anti-Maidan" movement, vows to organise people against a potential "Western-sponsored coup d'etat"**

Following the statement made by the State Security Service of Georgia on September 18<sup>th</sup> about a plan to overthrow the government by foreign and domestic actors, pro-Russian Alt Info announced the formation of an "Anti-Maidan" movement aimed at countering a potential "Western-sponsored coup" in Georgia. As their statement read, they suspect that the European Commission will make a negative decision on Georgia's candidate status, deliberately sparking protests in the country which will aim to overthrow the government, leading to a scenario similar to what happened in Ukraine in 2014. "Anti-Maidan" movement plans to mobilise and organise funds and people throughout Georgia to be on stand-by in case such situation occurs. The group set up 24-hour hotline through which volunteers will be able to enlist in the movement.

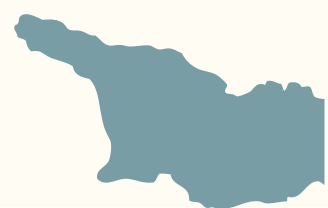
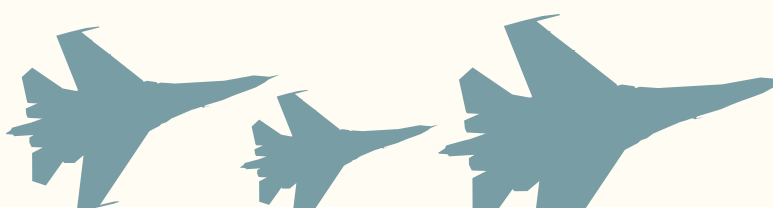
- Alt Info member and pro-Russian propagandist, Shota Martinenko announced that they have been anticipating a Maidan-like revolution in Georgia for a long time and the Georgian State Security Service confirmed their worries. According to the propagandist, the government does not have enough resources to counter the threat posed by the West and its agents to protect Georgia's sovereignty. If the coup proves to be successful, Georgia will find itself in the similar situation as Ukraine, as the whole idea why the coup is being planned is to open a second front against Russia, leading to Georgia's destruction. Due to lack of resources compared to the West, Georgia is vulnerable and therefore it is required to mobilise and organise people against this threat. The movement will organise groups in the regions and enlist them via telephone. This way, when the enlisted will be called upon, Alt Info will have a considerable reactionary force. He promised that they will have an organizational unity large enough to suppress resistance by any means necessary.
- Another Alt Info leader stated that the "Western-sponsored" organisations and media outlets will try to discredit the movement by spreading disinformation about it, thus they should not be trusted as they are part of the "Maidan" conspiracy.



- Others from the movement asserted that there is a big probability that the European Commission will not grant Georgia candidate status, sparking protests in the country which will then be transformed into a “Maidan-like” revolution. The preparatory process is already underway, local forces are in constant coordination with their Western partners as all of this is supported by the Western governments. In a different occasion, during Alt Info’s broadcast, the same propagandist said that as the EU Association Agreement was used to overthrow the government in Ukraine in 2014, EU candidate status will be utilized to do the same in Georgia, which will lead to direct confrontation with Russia, as in the case of Ukraine.
- A pro-Russian clergyman who frequently features in Alt Info's broadcasts has been promoting the view that the government is being too lenient toward the opposition, and this approach will ultimately lead the country towards destruction. Even during the March 7-8 demonstrations, he pointed out that only one person was arrested, suggesting that the government is easily intimidated. According to this clergyman, the "Anti-Maidan" movement is being led by genuine patriots who are committed to mobilizing public support to counter "war and perversion."
- Pro-Russian propagandist and Sezoni TV broadcast anchor, Nikoloz Mzhavanadze, endorsed the movement, stating that the Maidan events resulted in the loss of territories, war and the establishment of Western agent networks in Ukraine. According to the propagandist, the same is being planned for Georgia. Mzhavanadze recalled the SSSG’s statement, reiterating that the Ukrainian government is planning a coup in Georgia and demanded that Georgia cut ties with Ukraine’s “fascist regime”.
- Recently, TBC Bank has blocked one of the designated accounts meant for collecting funds. Alt Info propagandist suggests that this incident could be interpreted as further evidence of Western involvement in an attempt to incite a Maidan-style revolution in Georgia, speculating that certain banks are supporting this agenda.
- Pro-Russian social media profiles actively shared content on social media about the “Anti-Maidan” movement, calling on people to join in.

### **Pro-Kremlin groups frame the EU as a destabilizing force in Georgia**

- Pro-Russian propagandist stated on Alt Info that for Georgia, returning to the European family means it has to make sacrifices, and in this case the sacrifice includes opening a second front against Russia. According to the propagandists, people are being manipulated and led to believe that EU integration and candidate status means that Georgian citizens will be wealthier, which is a lie. The EU will not share its wealth with





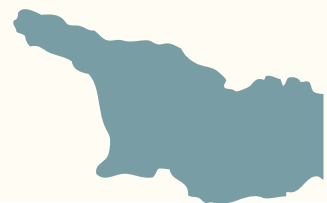
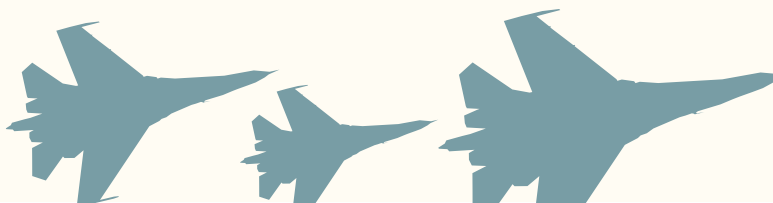
Georgia as it only spends money on establishing pro-Western groups within the country to use them at any giving moment.

- According to another propaganda source, the “Euro-hysteria” of the past thirty years has widened the separation between Georgians and Abkhazians, because Abkhazians see that ambitions of Western integration brought no benefits to Georgia. As Georgia gets closer to integrating with the Europe, devoid of morals, Europe, it will become even more unacceptable for the Abkhazians.
- As per another propaganda source, in the West, Georgia is only viewed as a polygon, a potential second front to weaken Russia. The Western powers are like parasites, not using their own soldiers and utilizing other vulnerable countries to fight Russia, like they did with Ukraine.
- Propaganda claims that the West assists Ukraine with weapons as they want to prolong the war to weaken Russia. Fifty million Ukrainians are currently living in war because its faith is governed by powers based on all kinds of immoral principles, meaning the West – propaganda continued. Furthermore, this narrative contends that the notion of Ukrainians fighting for democracy and freedom is deceptive; it posits that the West's actions have been instrumental in provoking the conflict and the same could happen in Georgia.
- Propaganda asserts that the coup that took place in 1991-1992 against the first President of Georgia, Zviad Gamsakhurdia, was planned in the West and executed by its then vassal – Russia. The West is attempting to do the same in 2023.
- One of the anchors on Alt Info’s broadcasts emphasized the importance of refusing Western integration, as this has brought nothing but harm to Georgia. She argued that the Georgian people should instead prioritize finding ways to distance themselves from Western integration, which would, eliminate many of the problems and threats facing the country. Each person should get this idea of European integration out of their minds as Georgia is not and will never be European, - she concluded.
- Propaganda on Alt Info asserts that individuals who support Western integration are speculating that if Georgia does not attain candidate status, it will forfeit its European future. However, as propaganda argues there is nothing good in the European future, as Europe is a declining power, facing numerous challenges, notably the promotion of what it describes as a pervasive lifestyle and immigration from Africa and the Middle East.
- A different propagandist claimed that Georgian people are being told fairy tales about the benefits of EU and NATO membership, while in reality the West has many problems on its own and does not have the capacity to help Georgia. The assistance is provided by the West to Georgia is not intended for the benefit of the people but rather directed towards NGOs and pro-Western agents who are tasked with fulfilling western objectives.

**Propaganda blames the US for attempts to overthrow the government and drag Georgia into the war, says incoming Ambassador Dunnigan is coming with the same mission**



- A Facebook page titled “Agents”, which appears to be created with the aim of discrediting the West, the opposition, and dissenting voices in Georgia, published a video about the newly appointed US Ambassador to Georgia, Robin Dunnigan and her Deputy, Alan Purcell. The video provides an overview of their careers, emphasizing their past roles in curating the Baltic states, Poland, and Ukraine. It suggests a connection between their previous assignments and Mikheil Saakashvili, insinuating their involvement with him and revolutionary processes in the post-Soviet space. The video contends that due to their past high-ranking positions within the State Department, their designation to Tbilisi indicates a special mission is set for Georgia, hinting that the US diplomats will be involved in the Maidan-like revolution teased by the SSSG.
- Sezoni TV anchor, Nikoloz Mzhavanadze blames the US for the dispersal of protests during Saakashvili’s government in November 2007. He alleges the US of being behind attacks on the Georgian church and Patriarch Ilia II, as well as actions against Georgia’s state interests. According to this propagandist, the actions of the US have ultimately resulted in the occupation of Abkhazia and the Tskhinvali region. He goes on to claim that the US openly denounced the protection of Christianity and Georgian identity on July 8th. The propagandist concluded by stating that Georgia never had a bigger enemy than the US.
- One of the leaders of Alt Info, Giorgi Kardava, accused a number of individuals within the Biden administration and the U.S. State Department in instigating the Maidan events in Ukraine. According to Kardava, U.S. Secretary of State Anthony Blinken and Deputy Secretary of State Victoria Nuland possess expertise in matters related to the post-Soviet region and will use their competencies to stage a Maidan revolution in Georgia, too. The notion that the US wants to establish freedom and democracy in Georgia is a fairy tale and people are slowly realising that, as claimed by Kardava.
- A pro-Russian propagandist on Alt Info stated that Georgia has been a victim of a liberal dictatorship for the past thirty years, meaning Georgia is a vassal tasked with fulfilling the geopolitical needs of the US, and any sign of disobedience from Georgia is perceived as a punishable act to its colonisers. The punishment in this case involves overthrowing the government via violent methods.
- Former Minister of State Security of Georgia, Igor Giorgadze, who has been residing in Russia since being accused of an unsuccessful terrorist act targeting Georgian President Eduard Shevardnadze in the 1990s, stated in an interview with a Russian news agency that during the start of Russia’s aggression in Ukraine in 2022, the US Ambassador to Georgia, Kelly Degnan, directly offered support to Georgian PM Irakli Gharibashvili to regain control over the occupied territories by force. According to the Giorgadze, Gharibashvili asked about possible loss of human life, to which the Ambassador allegedly answered that fight for democracy comes at a cost. In the end Irakli Gharibashvili refused



the proposal, arguing that Georgia had spilt enough blood already, as claimed by Giorgadze.

- A propagandist on Alt Info stated that the US openly admitted to providing \$5 billion for the Maidan events with the aim of facilitating the change of government in Ukraine.
- Propaganda blames the US for Georgia's territorial losses, claiming that specific plans were devised in Washington to spark conflicts in Abkhazia and the Tskhinvali region. According to propagandists, the US deliberately worsens the relationship between Georgia and Russia, Georgians and Abkhazians, Georgians and Ossetians.
- Propaganda alleges that the funding that the US provides to Georgia was directed to pervert the new generation. American kindergartens and schools do not help children to become successful doctors, lawyers and engineers, rather they teach them about subversion, sabotage, perversion and anti-Georgian sentiments. The funds provided to Georgia by the US are not used for the benefit of the Georgian people, it is utilised to brainwash the new generation and help them build NGOs. These NGOs, the narrative goes, could then be leveraged by the Western interests when required.

### **Pro-Russian propaganda once again asserts close relations with Russia is essential to restoring Georgia's territorial integrity**

- Sezoni TV broadcaster argues that the Russia is resolute about reuniting Georgia but the Georgian side is refusing.
- A propagandist on Alt Info argued that the belief that Western integration guarantees Georgia's security is an illusion. According to this perspective, the West is incapable of protecting Georgia from Russia because it fears a direct conflict with Moscow. This is cited as the reason for the West's reluctance to accept Georgia as a member of the EU and NATO.

The propaganda message suggests that it's time for Georgians to recognize the need for fundamental changes in foreign policy. In terms of territorial integrity, it warns that if Georgia continues to pursue a pro-Western foreign policy, Russia could annex the occupied territories, leading to the permanent loss of Abkhazia and the Tskhinvali region.

- Another propagandist stated that despite Georgia not pursuing NATO membership in the early 1990s, Russian officials detected anti-Russian sentiments in the country. Their suspicions were later confirmed during Shevardnadze's presidency when he openly declared that Georgia would seek NATO membership.
- According to a propagandist on Alt Info, Georgia will never restore territorial integrity without restoring diplomatic relations with Russia and holding direct talks with Russian officials. Loss of Georgian territories was result of a wrong geopolitical decision to pursue Western integration, and the keys to restoring control on Abkhazia and Tskhinvali region lies in Moscow.
- A propaganda source highlighted that thirty years is enough time to realise that Georgia has only suffered with the anti-Russian policy and has not been able to move forward in



any direction, neither economically, nor demographically, nor in terms of territorial integrity.

