

**GEORGIA**

**საქართველო**

Wednesday April 16 -- Wednesday, May 7, 1997

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Thursday April 17

Left Atlanta 7:45 p.m. last night. Uneventful flight to Frankfurt. Slept better and longer than usual on the flight, more rested. Getting accustomed to overnight flights across the Atlantic. Now sitting in Istanbul airport 5 p.m. their time waiting a couple of hours for flight via Turkish Air to Tbilisi. First time I have come in by Istanbul, although I left that way when I was here in December and January a few months ago. Two big advantages: (1) you check your bags through from Atlanta to Tbilisi, and (2) fly by Delta to Istanbul and then Turkish Air--a western airline and not an Aeroflot piece--to Tbilisi. Left Atlanta 8 p.m., will arrive in Tbilisi 2 p.m. Atlanta time the next day--which is 12 midnight Tbilisi time. So about 20 hours time, which is about what it takes no matter which route one takes.

Bob Parrish, a former Grady Hospital administrator, was supposed to fly with me and set up a healthcare administration school in Tbilisi. He arrived at the airport in Atlanta and couldn't find his passport, which he thought he had when he left home. So no Parrish on flight. As with most experienced international travelers, I make sure about my passport before checking other important items, such as whether one's pants are zipped!

On the flight have been reading *Stalin* by Edvard Radzinsky. A compelling book. In the early eighties all the Kremlin and Soviet archives were thrown open, and Radzinsky promptly made use of them to write this book. Then they were unpredictably closed again in the late eighties, to be closed ever since. This is then the only book to be written about Stalin making use of the archives, and it is fascinating. I have been saving it for the trip, and plan to give it to Archil Kobaladze, my counterpart with our partnership in Tbilisi, when I leave. I am still in the part where "Koba," as Stalin called himself then, is called "the Caucasian" by other members of the party. The book is replete with wonderful Georgian names of early individuals who were involved, such as Asatiani and Chkheidze, Beso and Keke, and place names such as Didi Lilo. A lot of material about his growing up in Georgia in Gori (where I have been) and Tbilisi, and events in Georgia during the 1900-1917 period.

I have been impressed often by how reading can set up a powerful feeling-mood-emotion-tone in the mind, and this book has done so with my mind on this trip, getting it set up in anticipation of being in Georgia. My visits to Stalin's birthplace in Gori, the house in Tbilisi where he printed revolutionary tracts and going down the road he traveled as a youth from Gori to Tbilisi have been interesting parts of my visits here. My friends in Georgia view this interest of mine in the early revolution and Stalin with an emotion I can't quite put into words: mindful attention is the best I can do. But I have always been interested in the history of a region, beginning as a youth with the

legend of the man in my home town of Washington, Georgia who was said to have been buried standing in his grave with a loaded 12 gauge shotgun in his hands, so he could best the Devil when he came to get him!

There is a good story in the Stalin book which Stalin liked to tell about the word "own:" "Saint Francis taught men to live without property. One monk asked him: 'Can I at least have a Bible of my own?' St Francis answered: 'If today you have your own Bible, tomorrow you'll start giving orders--telling somebody, 'Go and fetch my Bible.'"

I am surrounded here in the transit lounge of the Istanbul airport by a duke's mixture of the peoples of the world. Dark Armenians, brown Turks, blue-eyed Aryan Germans, fat Americans, Asians, Georgians who I can now recognize from a mile away, and a host of others. Reminds me of one of my favorite books about this region, *The Tooth Merchant* by Cyrus Sulzberger of *New York Times* fame. A mystery-adventure story built around the myth of Jason and the tigers teeth, mixed with a fantasy about Stalin as a dying man. Wonderful writing, with descriptions of people I'd give my own eye teeth if I could replicate in my writing.

Friday, April 18, 1997

<u>Friday, April 18, 1997</u>	
01:00	Pick up from the airport (Istanbul Flight) Transport to Betsy's
11:00	Round Table meeting with with Rector Metreveli, Minister Jorbenadze, Amiran Gamkrelidze, TSU Medical faculty Board, Judy Wold and Archil Kobaladze at TSU
12:00	Meeting with Rector Ramaz Khurodze at GTU
13:00	Lunch with Zviad Kirtava
19:00	Dinner at Alexander Aladashvili's house

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Arrived in Tbilisi at 1 a.m. to waiting group of about ten of my friends here. In bed at Betsy's by 3:30 a.m., tired as the devil. I have known Betsy since first coming here August 1992. Washington insider type who came here and established a guest house that resembles the ones in Highlands, NC, and similar places. A fabulous place to stay. Coddled beyond belief. E.g., I bring my own coffee from Atlanta--Espresso blend from the Coffee Plantation in Toco Hills, since the coffee here is so atrocious. Lovingly brewed daily for me. Uneventful sleep except for a rooster who kept crowing at 4 a.m., obviously with a disturbed hypothalamus.

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<sup>1</sup>These schedules on occasion may not reflect what is given in the narrative, since meetings are often changed or created "on the fly."

Struggled up at 8:30 a.m., discovered my European shower reflexes were still intact (i.e., didn't flood the floor with their miserable flexible shower head way of bathing), and met the five Emory students who are doing one month's elective here at 9 a.m.<sup>2</sup> They have been here about three weeks. Two things became immediately apparent, and were enlarged upon subsequently.

First, they had bonded irreversibly with their Georgian "families," i.e., the people with whom they are staying. Andy Trickey is staying with a single woman who doesn't speak a word of English, and who stays up late worrying if he doesn't come home. Yong Kim was told by his family he wasn't eating enough meals at home. Kevin Kahn is staying with a Georgian oncologic surgeon who has a sixteen year old son, and the three have bonded for eternity. Kevin and the surgeon stay up much of the night eating, drinking and talking and just enjoying each other's company. Kevin, an athletic sort, has gained so much weight he says he has to keep his shirt out so it won't be apparent he can no longer button his pants! Jason Hitner<sup>3</sup> is staying with a family with an extraordinarily beautiful daughter (according to Andy Trickey, who is a world class authority on beautiful women), and apparently the entire family has decided he needs to marry her. Minnie Salujeh is staying with a similarly devoted family.

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<sup>2</sup>This is the third year we have offered this elective, and I fear it might be the last. Two students came the first year, four last year and five this year. We give each of them \$1500 to cover expenses, about 90% of which goes for airfare. Tbilisi State Medical University puts them up with families of the faculty and students, so all expenses are paid over here. We got a fund from the Dean three years ago for expenses associated with the Tbilisi project, but I don't see any prospects of getting any more, and the money is just about gone. Each student has a project, as I have said previously. One of them led to the discovery that 60% of newborns are hypothyroid (due to lack of iodinated salt), and this in turn has led to a project to correct the deficiency.

The students themselves feel this is one of their most significant and enjoyable life experiences, and I regret very much seeing it go.

<sup>3</sup>Jason has made an enormous hit with all Georgians he has met. He plays the guitar, the piano and sings. He spent several weeks in Europe before coming here, and told me he would play for money in places such as Trafalgar Square. Or, he would see a bar in Paris with a piano, would saunter in and talk with the manager, and get a free dinner for playing and singing for two hours. Said he could do this anywhere for two hours and get \$20. He paid his way through Europe in this fashion, with a small guitar slung over his shoulder. He has done the same thing (without the money) here in Georgia, and has totally captivated the Georgians, who love to play the guitar, sing and dance. He showed me the thick calluses on the fingers he uses to finger his guitar. He says traveling musicians are a "magnet for beautiful young women."

Second, they have been having enormous trouble with their projects due to the competition between the Tbilisi State Medical School, who are their hosts, and the Georgian agencies with which they have their projects. E.g., two of them are working with the Jordania Institute (gynecology, obstetrics and birth control) with respect to sexual practices and AIDS. The medical school effectively kept them from working with the Institute for most of their stay here, because "the physicians there are not on our faculty." Also true with Kevin Kahn and his prosthetics project.

Andy Trickey, who is testing patients in the tuberculosis hospital for AIDS, has had his test materials impounded in customs for three weeks because he didn't have the proper paperwork. Etc. I decided we need to give serious thought to another arrangement next year. It seems reasonable for the Medical School here to host them, since we do that for their medical students for six months in Atlanta. But most of their projects are inevitably going to involve state agencies, which is where all the action is occurring, and the ill will between the medical school and everyone else is virtually insurmountable.

The difficulties they are having doesn't trouble me at all. The goal of their being here for one month is to immerse themselves in a vastly different culture. Period. That is clearly enormously successful.

Then to a meeting at Tbilisi State University. *The* university in Georgia. Thirty thousand students. Equivalent to the University of Georgia and other land grant universities. We have been working with TSU for three years to set up a new: nursing school; medical school; school of allied health (a new concept here); and a health administration school. Judy Wold, Dean of Nursing at Georgia State University, and Laura Hurt, chief medical-surgery nurse at Grady, have been setting up the nursing school. Nurses here are at the level of nurses aids in the U.S., and the new school will change all that. Much more detail about the curriculum for both nursing school and medical school in my last report. We at Emory, especially Jack Shulman, have been working to help the new medical school.

A word about healthcare personnel here. There are 30,000 physicians, and roughly 12,000 are needed. Similar ratio with nurses. There were two medical schools<sup>4</sup> (one was actually a postgraduate school) until the breakup of the former Soviet Union in 1991, and about thirty private medical schools sprang up overnight. Chiefly because the students paid tuition, and, just like the U.S. pre-Flexnerian years, the professors do it for the money. The Ministry of Health is now in the process, working with us and

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<sup>4</sup>However, the principal medical school, Tbilisi State Medical University (the one who hosts the students) had several thousand students.

others, of coming up with licensure and credentialing procedures, western-style, for physicians and other healthcare personnel, and for facilities, including medical schools. The street wisdom is that only three medical schools will be left: TSMU, TSU (new one), and one private.

TSU had a medical school until around 1920 when the Soviets decreed all medical schools were to exist as separate and independent institutions not connected to a university. TSU has felt raped ever since, and schemed to get back its medical school.

TSU has never had a nursing school, and the departure for the nursing school is even greater than that of the new medical school. Nurses' professional level is basically that of a nurse's aide in the U.S. The level of nursing is exemplified by the fact that there are zero nurses in the country who speak English, while there are quite a lot of physicians. Efforts to improve the nurses situation have been hampered greatly, since there are no U.S. nurses who speak Georgian. This has led to the conclusion that initially perhaps there will be a significant number of physicians involved in the new nursing school. In fact, the person chosen to be the first dean is a physician, George Danelia, who has just spent two months at Georgia State University with Judy Wold. An unsatisfactory situation, but one learns to work with what one has.

The meeting today was to seal formally the agreement starting the U.S. style nursing school and medical school, with a table of organization, etc. Present were the Rector of TSU, Roin Metreveli, the Minister of Health, the new deans of nursing and medicine, Judy Wold and myself, the senior faculty of the health sciences division, and George Shakarishvili of the World Bank project here.

Judy spoke of the importance of the new school, and how Georgia State was working closely to establish the curriculum and train faculty members, and of their plans for accomplishing this. I spoke about the importance of the two schools to health care reform in Georgia, and about how essential it was to replace the European model of medical education (high school with six years of medical school) with the U.S. model.

I said at this moment Georgia was focused upon the importance of technology and physicians trained in the use of the latest technology, and that was totally understandable given their situation. The U.S., I said, has had the technology and knowledge for several decades now, and we are currently facing a vastly different situation: who to treat, who not to treat, when to let a patient die, whether to help a patient die, whether and how to ration scarce resources such as organs for transplantation, what to do about cloning human beings, and similar thorny issues. Georgia will be in similar circumstances in a decade, I said, and at that time they needed physicians and nurses who had a broad general educational background, and

who had the wisdom to tackle those sorts of issues. (I never miss an opportunity to bring up the general education point.)

Then to a meeting with Ramaz Khouradze, rector of Georgian Technical University. The Georgia Tech of Georgia, with around 30,000 students. I am immensely fond of Ramaz. About 48 or so, generous presence, a no-bullshit let's cut to the business at hand engineering sort. He and I are working hard to get a relationship between his university and Georgia Tech in Atlanta. We are working with Dr. Teddy Püttgen, who is dean of the Lorraine branch of Georgia Tech in Metz, France. Teddy has sent a list of detailed questions to Ramaz, dealing with questions such as whether they want a branch of Tech or another type of relationship, whether it will be postgraduate only (as in France), and similar questions. The Georgians are drafting their responses, and I hope there will be a meeting soon. I suggested to Ramaz he might go to Lorraine for the first meeting.

We also discussed an energy project we are trying to accomplish. The father of Brian Hage, my administrative assistant, works with a division of GE that takes used jet engines and converts them into generators to produce electricity. All sizes, from baby ones that might power a steel factory (Ramaz is chairman of the board of the Rustavi Steel Factory, just down the road from Tbilisi, and one of the largest in the former Soviet Union), to large ones that could provide power to a city of 500,000. Brian's father goes all over the world selling these engines (recent \$40 million deal with Cairo), and we are hopeful he can come over here soon.

Another joint project that is just in the thinking phase is a relationship between Georgian Technical and the bioengineering prosthetics division of Georgia Tech. The chair of that division in Atlanta has an extensive international project involving Oxford University in England and other institutions, and is interested in establishing a relationship with Georgia. One that among other things would involve training prosthetics technician. This would fit in well with the prosthetics project that Robin DeAndrade of Emory and the Atlanta VA Hospital is working with. As I noted in my last report, Georgia has about 7000 below the knee (mostly) amputees, due to the Abkhazian war, trauma and vascular disease. The International Red Cross has established three prosthetics centers in Georgia that turn out about seven prostheses a week, with a waiting list longer than two years. They will leave next year. The American International Health Alliance, our funding agent, arranged for Fitzsimmons Army Hospital to donate its prosthetics factory to Georgia when Fitzsimmons closed several months ago. The equipment is now here in crates and will be installed in a refinished building in about three weeks. Robin DeAndrade will be coming over then to assess the situation, and to begin planning the prosthetics project after the departure of the Red Cross.

I went to the National Information Learning Center that Carol Burns, the director of the Emory medical library, opened for the Partnership in December, as recounted in my last trip report. Talked with Zviad Kertava, the rheumatologist who is Library Director. The Center is doing fabulously, mainly due to Zviad's efforts. The Soros Foundation here in Georgia gave us a \$50,000 grant, and Carol has recruited a librarian from the University of Cincinnati, Karen Marsh, to come here in two weeks for a four month stay as Codirector for Library Operations. At various times in the year Carol will send librarians with selected expertise here for a week to one month. Zviad and I discussed two areas that are our primary concern now.

First is Internet access. We now pay \$1200 a month for 19.2 access 24 hours a day. Service is through copper telephone system wires, and has some problems, but is largely acceptable. We need more speed and larger bandwidth, if we are to accomplish our goals of being a "baby" National Library of Medicine. We can get 28 kb service now for \$1800 a month, and in September 64 kb for \$3000 per month. A year ago similar service was quoted to us at \$7000 per month, so prices are declining.

A big problem is that funding agencies, such as AID, don't give money for monthly access. And the Minister of Health needs his pitiful budget to do all sorts of other things. The Minister of Communications has told the Minister of Health we can have a license for our own satellite, but the equipment would cost fearsomely (\$100,000 or so) and we would not be allowed to use it for commercial purposes, which is the only way we could afford it. Also would take a lot of time and energy that can be spent in better ways. The third possibility is that we might get Internet access through the "Partners for Peace" (PfP), of which more later. The Partners is a group of nations that comprise NATO plus other nations that wish to belong to NATO but for various reasons (political) do not. The goal, as I understand it, is to extend a lot of NATO benefits to these others nations. The PfP have four goals, one of which is telemedicine.

Internet access is a problem we must solve, and shortly, but it is exceedingly difficult.

The second issue is a network of regional libraries. Our goal is to establish a countrywide network, much like the National Library of Medicine in Bethesda and the regional library network throughout the U.S. We have chosen Kutaisi, Georgia's second largest city, as the initial one. We plan to go there next week and start the process.

Other issues we touched upon included selling of NILC services as a means of getting money. This is already happening: subscriptions to NILC services, such as Internet access, are sold. Ultimately this is an area that might bring in a modest amount of money, e.g., through giving Internet classes and the like.

Governance is another area. We want to model the NILC's relationship to the government of Georgia as the NLM relationship to the U.S. government, with a Board of Regents, and being under the Minister of Health. The three parties, so to speak, are the NILC, the Minister of Health, and our Partnership, which has contributed the money and is continuing to support the operating budget. We also need to settle this issue with respect to the Emergency Medical Training service, which the partnership has established (more later). We will probably tackle all these challenges when all parties are present at a meeting in Emory of all 24 NIS partnerships.

The coming of Karen Marsh will greatly enhance all of the NILC activities, and this is eagerly awaited. I pointed out to Zviad that, as the shrewd and sagacious director of the NILC, who is steeped in Georgian politics and culture, he is the one who will ultimately assure the success of her visit.

A light (by Georgian standards) dinner at the home of Alex Aladashvili and his new wife. Alex just spent two months with us at Emory. He is around 42, single until three months ago, son and grandson of famous physicians here in Georgia. Exceptionally able: smart, erudite, smooth in the best sense, a "new" Georgian type. New director of the schools of nursing, medicine and health administration at TSU. His wife is about 29, a physician. His mother lives with them. Former English as second language professor. Very broad education, English better than mine, interested and interesting.

Conversation at the table turned to the question of primary care and specialties in the new health care system. The World Bank has encouraged the extensive development of primary care, given pretty much entirely by family practitioners, pediatricians and obstetricians. Consultants from England have written reports detailing this plan. Preventive medicine will also be an emphasis. I pointed out there was a total absence of internal medicine in any of the schemes, and made the point that internal medicine was one of the cornerstones of any system of health care. Internal medicine, certainly in the U.S., is not only firmly based upon the Flexnerian model, but is at the heart of scholarly activities in medicine. I said I felt the presence of a well developed specialty of internal medicine was essential to the long term health of the medical profession in Georgia.

Alex reviewed history of internal medicine here. Some years ago, when he was a student, there was a strong internal medicine presence. But then the Soviets emphasized specialties, which in the U.S. would be called subspecialties of internal medicine. Under this system cardiologists begin their training immediately out of medical school. This leads to the absurdities I have observed so commonly over here. E.g., I was asked to see a famous composer who had a stroke while his congestive

failure was being treated in a cardiology hospital. I asked for an ophthalmoscope. "Sorry," I was told, "ophthalmologists don't come to this hospital, so there are no ophthalmoscopes." Same for reflex hammer. Only instruments present were ancient EKG machine and stethoscopes (tubes about six feet long). The medical students are not taught to do comprehensive physical examinations, so cardiologists only listen to the lungs and the heart and take the blood pressure.

The World Bank is entirely right in that primary care and preventive care should be the emphasis for the *immediate* and near term needs of Georgia. And they are right in that there must be a strong emphasis on babies and women. But we also must look at the long term survival and health of the system, and that calls for the strong and healthy presence of internal medicine. Alex and I agreed about this, and I later made this point in strong language to the Minister of Health, who also agrees. The trick is to balance the immediate and urgent needs with long term requirements.

I went to bed in my aerie, the top apartment at Betsy's. This apartment has been used previously by the on-site managers, and only recently was given to guests. At the very top, a large area partially divided into two rooms, plentiful windows, adjacent to a large sun deck where Betsy has cocktail hour for the guests in the summer. "Your little piece of heaven," as one of the other guests described it to me. This night there were strong winds, which made wonderful loud noises throughout the night. I was reminded of the "back room," as we called it, in the home on the farm where I grew up in Washington, Georgia. The sounds (and feel) of the wind in the wintertime were forever etched in my memory, and tonight was highly evocative of that old back room.

Saturday, April 19th

Saturday, April 19, 1997
Trip to Gori with Emory medical students

I had breakfast with the Emory students, and then we took off for Gori, Stalin's birthplace. Andy Trickey and Minnie Salujeh were in the car with me. Andy was full of a trip to Telavi he and his "family" had made the day before. They went to the home town of the father of the family. There was a performance of dancing and other activities solely in honor of Andy. Then a huge Georgian dinner complete with many toasts, huge amounts of food and lots of wine, just for Andy. Arrived back home at 2 a.m., impressed out of his mind. Then spent the rest of the night with Kevin Kahn, another senior, and his family. Kevin is the one who bonded with the surgeon and his son with whom he is staying. They drank and talked all night, until they had to take

Kevin to the airport at 5 a.m.

They told me of a meeting at Tbilisi State Medical University with the Emory students and the entire student body, where the Georgian students asked questions of the Emory students. One of the Georgian students asked about the American system of health care. Yong Kim, an Emory student, launched into a lengthy exegesis. After a protracted time Jason Hitner whispered to the translator to "tell the Georgian students to clap, and he will stop." The translator did, the students responded, and Yong stopped with a look of satisfaction and pleasure on his face.

Jason Hitner, who is going into pediatrics at Columbia in New York, spent a month in Europe before coming here. He took his guitar, and survived by playing it, he told me. E.g., he would play in Trafalgar Square. Or he would walk along a street in Paris and find a restaurant with a bar and empty piano, and play two hours for a free dinner and tips (\$20 or so an hour, he said). He did this throughout all of Europe for a month. Showed me his fingers, which had extensive calluses due to fingering his guitar so much. Jason has exploited this talent while here in Tbilisi, and as a consequence is much beloved by a large number of beautiful young Georgian women. I have a number of slides that show Jason playing with two to three beautiful young honeys draped over him. As he said to me, "Musicians are a magnet for women!"

On the way to Gori we passed by **qlemomHame**, a castle the Georgians defended against the Persians in the fourteenth century or so<sup>5</sup>. One of my favorite sites in Georgia, due clearly to the association. I don't have any pictures of it, and resolved to get some next week.

At Gori we met the chief doctor of the Gori region and his associates. They took us through the Stalin Museum. His cottage where he was allegedly born (see December trip report) is there, encased in marble. The museum, which is a giant marble edifice,

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<sup>5</sup>The name is an obscenity, which I periodically forget and have difficulties in getting the Georgians to tell me again. The tale is the Persians surrounded the castle, thinking to drive the Georgians out by cutting off their water and food supplies. Unbeknownst to the Persians, there was a tunnel which ran some distance to a river, so the Georgians had no problems with water or food. Each day at sundown, the Georgians would go to the parapets of the castle and shout **qlemomHame!** which is a command to perform a certain act. On my first visit to Gori when the Abkhazian war was at its height, and many young Georgians were being killed, I gave a toast, in which I said I toasted the brave young Georgians, who I said should shout the same thing to the Abkhazians each day (I used the Georgian word and not the translation, of course). There was an immediate commotion, with the old Georgian men at the table rushing up and kissing me, to my great discomfiture. **ksnis** (Ksnis) is the official name.

contains many pictures of Stalin (or **SOSO**, his Georgian nickname of "Soso," or **foba** his Russian nickname of "Koba.") not available elsewhere, such as pictures of him and his first family. The last time I was there I was not allowed to take but one picture. This time, with the influence of the chief doctor, I was allowed to take as many pictures as I wished. I must have taken 100. Unfortunately the electricity went out just as I came to his death mask (one of nine taken), and the focusing mechanism on my camera wouldn't work. I did it manually, and hope I will get good results, but doubt it.

We went to the square, which has a gigantic towering statue of Stalin, the only extant one. Then to a restaurant for a Georgian table. About ten of us, including the students. Usual toasts and engorgements. Jason played his guitar and sang, with the Georgians lustily joining him. Georgians love music. Jason and Minnie told me every house they have visited has a piano, which non-musical me had never noticed. Since then I have confirmed the truth of this.

Back to Tbilisi, where the students and I went to a jazz soul music restaurant they had discovered. This was a new place, and even one year ago it would have been unthinkable to find such. Now every street has its two new small restaurants, and there are a number of such music bars. Afterwards I went to a new exclusive club that Betsy of my hotel has founded along with several Georgians. An elegant richly decorated establishment with large rooms and a lot of smaller rooms designed to encourage talking and dealing. Lots of leather and marble. Old English style with modern design. I got there at midnight, after the jazz place. Still packed. Opening night. I met and talked with Paula Feeney, the director of US AID in Georgia (which funds our partnership), and the wife of the U.S. Ambassador, William Courtney. She talked with me about our partnership.

Sunday, April 20th

<u>Sunday, April 20, 1997</u>
9:30 Trip to Sagarejo to Shota Japaridze's house with Emory medical students

This morning we went to the weekend/summer home in Sagarejo of Shota Jeparidze, the ENT surgeon who had treated my ear infection when I was here in

December. He is an exceptionally bright and "forward-thinking" individual.<sup>6</sup> Several people spontaneously mentioned to me that "he is always trying to learn." We went to the village where his house is, and found that everyone asked knew how to give directions to where he lived--obviously an important person in the neighborhood. A lovely house, reminds me of summer homes of Atlantans in Highlands, N.C.

We immediately left and took a before-dinner trip of about 30 minutes into the surrounding countryside, ultimately ending up in an isolated part of the country. We got out, walked up a steep hill in a wild, mountainous area without any sign of humanity, and suddenly came upon the ruins of an awesome castle. This turned out to be the summer castle of King Gorgasali built in the 4th century. Gorgasali is an icon of Georgian history. He named Tbilisi ("warm") when he shot a pheasant (I almost made a mistake and put *peasant*--probably a Stalin Freudian slip!) that fell into a hot spring, and when fished out was cooked. Highly instrumental in establishing Christianity as the state religion. Statues and things named for him all over the place. The NILC has a "board room" that I have labeled the King Gorgasali Room. He died in the castle we were visiting after a battle with the Turks. Some of the Emory students were along with us, and we had a wonderful time making pictures and exploring the ruins. King Gorgasali--and early Georgian history--suddenly became a reality I could deal with in my mind.

After dinner Jason Hitner played the guitar and the three young women students sang along with him. Singing and harmonizing are an integral part of the Georgian table, as well as Georgian culture and everyday life. I was impressed again with the warmth and emotion that literally floods the Georgian table, and which form a mainstreams of Georgian culture.

Another aspect of Georgian culture is that they are highly cognizant of beauty, which is reflected very much in their art. Young Georgian women are often stunningly attractive, and they carefully choose dresses and styles which set off their beauty. Most of them have black eyes and black hair, so black is a frequent color for clothes. I once made a nonjudgemental clinical sort of comment about a mole on a beautiful young woman's face, and it turned out immediately that she was inordinately fond of

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<sup>6</sup>The Georgians and I both unhesitatingly divide everyone into the old Soviet type of thinkers and behaviors, and the "new mentality" type of progressives who are striving to move ahead (themselves and/or the country). There is usually no problem at all in fathoming who belongs to which group, with a very sharp demarcation. The extremes are highly impressive, ranging from a 65 year old former Communist bigwig to young, brash and aggressive physicians who are working to set up an HMO at the other end. Age doesn't do the trick. There are examples of both groups at both ends of the age spectrum.

it and felt it complemented her beauty in a very satisfactory fashion.<sup>7</sup>

Monday, April 21

<u>Monday, April 21, 1997</u>	
11:00	Meeting with Sandro Kvitashvili, UMCOR at ATHP office
13:00	Meeting with Avtandil Jorbenadze, Minister of Health
14:00	Meeting with George Shakarishvili at WB PCU
16:30	Meeting with Tengiz Tsertsvadze, AIDS Center Director
19:00	Dinner at Nata Avaliani's house

This morning I had a meeting with the Sandro Kvitashvili, deputy director, and Gogi, medical director, of the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR). Sandro is about 27 or so. He received his Master's of Public Administration at Cornell or Columbia, and then spent two months with us at Grady before coming here to work first for the UN, and now for UMCOR. Bright, charming, handsome, one of the leaders of the future Georgia.

UMCOR is a large non-governmental organization (NGO), that does magnificent work in many countries of the world. I had met with Art Keys of the Washington office just before I came, and although I had been familiar with them in Georgia for several years, I had had no formal contact. I took the advice of Art and Nicole Jordania, also in the Washington office, and arranged this meeting. Their budget in Georgia is around \$3 million (I didn't write this down, and may be wrong), and comes from a variety of sources, such as US AID, the UN, etc. I took especial note of seven of their projects, which I give below as an example of the kind of superior work an organization such as UMCOR does in Georgia and similar areas:

1. Provide free drugs to all children in Tbilisi under 14 years of age. Six pharmacists work on this project.
2. Provide free medical services to "vulnerable people." About 5000 sick children per month. Funded (only through September, unfortunately) by the Overseas Development Association. They have a careful quality control mechanism, whereby they monitor the prescribing practices of physicians who prescribe for the recipients. They provide educational programs for physicians related to their specific prescribing practices.

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<sup>7</sup>A young Georgian male once spent some time with us at Grady. He had a mole on his face, and one day I offhandedly said there was a plastic surgeon who really liked to remove moles, and perhaps he might consider it. He reacted as though I had suggested he have a *brisse*.

3. Distribute medical supplies to hospitals that are sent here through various agencies
4. There are 330 patients with diabetes insipidus in Georgia, and they provide them with vasopressin. About \$50,000 per year. Funding runs out in a few months, leading to the specter of all of these patients having a terrible death. I am going to suggest to an organization I know in Atlanta that they might consider this as a project.
5. Project to teach people new ways of making a living. They teach and then set up in business farmers and housewives, and ask for a small percentage of the profit to continue with the program. Business such as: farming (poultry, pigs, buffalo); sausage making; sewing; laundry; transportation with minivans. I thought this was a fabulous project.
6. Agricultural monetization. A planned project in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, which will supply UMCOR with 1500 tons of free sunflower oil, which UMCOR will sell and invest the proceeds into UMCOR programs.
7. Youth houses in Tbilisi and Sokhumi. Day residences after school for children under 14 years. There will be computers and a lot of fun things to do. Goal is to have learning experiences that will be aimed at getting the interest of the students. They are also doing this in Bosnia.

They also have cooperative project with Georgian NGOs, such as the Curatio International Foundation (see later) and the Medical Association of Georgia (the republic of). Sandro said they have a lot of health care data they have accumulated.

I was so impressed with their programs I asked to have another meeting and see some of their work later in the week.

I went to Megacom, which is one of two cellular phone providers here. The CEO is a close friend of Lado Gurgenidze, a friend of mine who got his MBA at Emory and now heads a unit in one of the Dutch banks in Moscow (Mees Pierson EurAmerica). Through Lado's help I got a discount: \$100 a day and 40 cents a minute. I found the cell phone to be indispensable. It works a lot better than the ordinary phone system, and is useful for someone like me who is constantly on the move while here, but has to keep in touch with all sorts of people as schedules change and opportunities to see people arise. I later found out there is another company that is said to be cheaper. A third company is setting up business. I gather all of them use digital technology, since they have just been started.

Then to the AIDS center and met with Tengiz Tsertsvadze, the Director. Minnie

Salujeh, our Emory student, has been working with his group this month. Minnie brought over a questionnaire in Russian (prepared and given to people in St. Petersburg, Russia) about knowledge of AIDS and sexual practices in the young people. There was a gigantic outcry by parents when she gave it. Tengiz had gathered all of his people together, along with Minnie, and had prepared a presentation along with the requisite champagne and food. Some instructive facts from his presentation:

Thirty percent of blood transfusions given were tested for AIDS in 1996. Less tested for hepatitis B, none tested for hepatitis C. Now there are 30 reported cases of AIDS here, most from the port cities where infected individuals get it from sailors. However there are an estimated 700 cases. Contrasts with about seven cases two years ago. In Ukraine, the neighboring country, the number went from 800 to 10,000 in the period of one year! Tengiz feels the same exponential increase may well occur here, given the widespread IV drug abuse, no screening for AIDS to any degree, lack of disposable needles for IVs and dental procedures, widespread lack of knowledge and/or practice of safe sex. They do have the ability to do the polymerase chain reaction, and can quantitate viral load, although their resources for this at the moment are limited.

Tengiz is immensely able, and I am very impressed by his drive and abilities. An infectious disease person, about fifty I would judge, and definitely a Georgian with the "new mentality." Carlos del Rio, of our department, has applied jointly with Tengiz for a \$100,000 grant for AIDS from the world aids foundation. Carlos is optimistic this will be funded. Carlos is a very impressive member of our Infectious Disease division. He did his house staff training and ID fellowship with us, was Chief Resident at Crawford Long, and then returned to Mexico where his father was Chief Justice of the Supreme Court. In addition to private practice and teaching, he became the "AIDS Czar" of Mexico. He did this for several years, then came back to us. Runs the AIDS unit at Grady Hospital. Very well connected in the world of AIDS.

Dato, my driver, and I went to the Metechi Hotel to read a four day old copy of the *International Herald Tribune*<sup>8</sup> and have a beer on the patio overlooking the river and the city. One of my favorite places to sit and think, talk or just soak up the atmosphere.

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<sup>8</sup>Obtaining the news of the outside world by newspaper is practically impossible over here. Planes arrive here about five days a week, and are not reliable for the vendors to get daily papers. In addition up to now there has been little demand for English newspapers such as the *Tribune*. CNN Worldwide is available, but who has the time to sit and watch it, and you basically only get the headlines.

To Nata Avaliani's for dinner, with George Shakarishvili and Eka Asatiani (coming to Emory as intern in July). Nata is about 27, graduated in pediatrics,<sup>9</sup> and has worked in the Partnership office for the last four years. Going to London to get her masters in public health in September. From a long line of very distinguished pediatricians here in Georgia; her grandfather, who I met a year ago just before he died in his eighties, was a famous pediatric surgeon. She has just married Bata, an economist, who will do graduate work in Bruges while she is in London.

I went at midnight with Alex Aladashvili to the airport to pick up Bob Parrish. Bob was one of the principal administrators at Grady for many years, and is now a consultant for healthcare. Headed the ambulatory operations. Very knowledgeable and a highly talented administrator. I had talked to George Shakarishvili of the World Bank project about funding Bob's visit here to plan for a Health Administration school. This is a crying need here. There is absolutely no administrative infrastructure in western practices, since such was unknown here until health care reform started six years ago. The association of health care administrators of the U.S. has been giving one week seminars, in association with our partnership. And a few people have gone to the US for several months of training. But, as the Minister says, he needed short courses beginning yesterday.

Bob arrived via Delta to Istanbul and Turkish Air to Tbilisi (like me), but *sans* luggage. Turned over by Delta to Turkish Air, but not put on plane. An hour's discussion with a old Soviet type mentality individual before giving up and deciding to tackle the issue again the next day. No room tonight at Betsy's for him (but will be tomorrow night), so I took him to the Metechi Hotel (\$225 night and nothing, versus \$100 with everything at Betsy's), but I wasn't sorry about this, since it would ease him into Georgia in a western style hotel. To bed at 3 a.m.

Tuesday, April 22nd

Tuesday, April 22, 1997	
11:30	Meeting with Rector Khetsuriani and Otar Gerzmava at TSMU
13:00	Lunch with Dr. Jikia, Military faculty member
14:00	Meeting with Ulana Trylowsky and Sandro Karumidze,OSGF
16:00	Meeting with Tamaz Kereselidze, WHO at ATHP Office
17:00	Meeting with Zviad Kirtava at the NILC
19:00	Dinner with Sandro Kvitashvili

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<sup>9</sup>Medical schools here and in the former Soviet Union were divided into pediatric and "other" medical schools. You had to decide which to apply to, and this situation continues. The new medical school we are working to set up is like the US schools.

Began today with a visit to Tbilisi State Medical University and a meeting with Rector Khetsouriani and Otar Gerzmava. The Rector and I have had a complicated relationship over the years. The curriculum and practices of TMSU are definitely former Soviet Union, and the rector rules with an iron hand, tolerating no dissent. Initially we took three course directors at Emory for two months each, hoping they would come back and change significantly the content and way in which the courses here were taught, but that came to naught. Other efforts to influence the curriculum and practices have come to nothing also. The rector has had various wishes over the years that we have not agreed with, such as desiring the National Information Learning Center to be located in TMSU. We had earlier noted that there was zero concept of sharing resources, and so chose to situate the NILC as an independent organization existing outside any other institution. Etc. On the plus side we have enjoyed immensely the students who have spent time at Emory (17 of them), and as I have noted previously they take good care of our students over here, as long as they relate solely to their faculty. So both sides have seen pluses and minuses in the relationship. I have long since concluded the rector is intransigent and inflexible, and demands from his associates rigid unwavering loyalty to the former Soviet/Teutonic "Herr Professor, mein Fuhrer" way of doing business. But perfection does not exist, as the fox observed to the Little Prince.<sup>10</sup>

We discussed at length our interrelationships. They get free access to Internet through the NILC, and are dissatisfied with the quality of the connection. I agreed fully with him; we are unhappy, too. He desired our students work only with his faculty when they are here. I merely observed that was a problem we needed to discuss further, since I had no desire at this meeting to do more than politeness and see what he wished to put on the table. I told him at length about our developing relationship with the "Center for Total Access"<sup>11</sup> of the U.S. Army, and a proposed visit by them

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<sup>10</sup>"Does your planet have dogs?" the fox asked the Little Prince.  
"No," said the Prince.  
"Does your planet have chickens?"  
"No."  
"Perfection does not exist," said the fox sadly.

<sup>11</sup>The U.S. Army telemedicine center at Fort Gordon in Augusta. Emory (Mort Silberman) has developed a warm relationship with them. Betsy Blakeslee, their consultant, and Brigadier General Steve Xenakis, the commander, and we are planning to get together with the Partners for Peace and see what we can work out in Tbilisi. More about this later.

this summer. The military medicine faculty of TMSU will be one of the participants. This was the first time I had told the rector all the details and he listened closely. I could see his mind working on all the permutations and possibilities with respect to TMSU and his agenda.

As I took my leave, I (perversely and thoughtfully) gave him a very nice present. He didn't open it then, but will later and will do some thinking about what that means about how I view him and TMSU. It suits me for our relationship to continue to have its subtleties and complexities. Only way to do business with him. Only other choice is pure adversity, and once again as the Young Prince observed, perfection doesn't exist.

On my December/Jan. visit I had visited the Military Medicine faculty of TMSU, and had noted that amongst the 25 or so older people on the faculty, there was only one, a young man, who spoke English, Gela Jekia. I was interested in sounding him out, and seeing if he might be the point person for us to work with on the Military Medicine faculty. I explained this to Khetsouriani, knowing he would view this unexpected request with suspicion, and would make the faculty member pay for it if he didn't understand my purpose. Gela and I repaired to the ethnographic park, a favorite place of mine in Tbilisi. A large park on the hill overlooking the city, with reproductions of old houses in all the parts of Georgia as well as a lot of historical artifacts such as winemaking equipment. We have lunch on the porch of the restaurant, with a magnificent view of the city. A clear, bright, luscious spring day. I discovered that Gela was a pharmacist, with a wife and child. Very good English, smart. Filed him away for the future.

A visit to the Soros Open Society of Georgia: Ulana Trylowsky, Jessie Trylowsky and Sandro Karumidze<sup>12</sup>. They are bright, articulate and very thoughtful people who head up Soros here. They have given us \$65,000 to help open the NILC, and to support a U.S. librarian, Karen Marsh from the University of Cincinnati, who will spend four months here helping Zviad Kertava develop the NILC. We had a long talk about their and our plans and ambitions about Georgia. I told them about the Health Administration school, and our developing concept of a health informatics network linking the 12 or 13 regional health centers throughout Georgia, including relationships with the general libraries in each location. They are quite interested in possible interrelationships, and are highly supportive.

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<sup>12</sup>I have just been appointed to the advisory board of the Medical Internet Project, one of Mr. Soros's projects. Plans are to develop informatics in the largest sense of the word in six Eastern European countries. Also on the board are Don Lindberg of the National Library of Medicine, Jim Foege of the Carter Center, and Ellen Misciewicz formerly of Emory but now of Duke. We have our first meeting in about one month, and I hope in time that the project might be extended to Georgia at some time in the future.

A meeting with Tamaz Kereselidze, director of the World Health Organization in Georgia; also head of medical informatics in the Ministry of Health. A wonderful person who is massively civilized and erudite, and highly knowledgeable. We discussed various projects that he and the partnership are pursuing: tuberculosis, AIDS, informatics.

Met with Zviad and Alex and reviewed agenda for meeting with Minister of Health tomorrow. Made an outline, which was translated into Georgian. I have become totally convinced this is the best way to transact business with him.

Dinner with Sandro of UMCOR. New French type restaurant just opened. Quiet, intimate, excellent food, good talking place. We discussed his ambitions, his life here, his work with UMCOR (including his boss, Lisa Kestner, who he thinks is truly outstanding), and his recent divorce. A good evening.

Wednesday, April 23rd

<u>Wednesday, April 23, 1996</u>	
10:00	Meeting with Avtandil Jorbenadze, George Shakarishvili Laura Hurt, Mr Parrish and Zviad Kirtava at the MOH
12:00	Meeting at Military Faculty of TSMU Talk for students at TSMU
15:00	Students' Festival at TSMU
18:00	Interview for Georgian TV
19:00	Dinner at Dr. Akhaladze's house with Emory medical ents

Alex picked me up to take me to the meeting with the Minister. He casually mentioned something about the current medical school at Tbilisi State University, the place we are working to establish a US type medical school. I asked him to repeat, and then repeat again. I was struck dumb to learn that for about three years there had existed at TSU an old type medical school, with about 20 students in each class. Alex insisted I had been told this before, but it obviously hadn't registered. I let my strong emotion show clearly on my face, and was quiet. I finally told him I had had my fill of working with old style schools with entrenched power structures and people who were territorially invested in keeping things the same. I said we had had too much experience with working with a curriculum, bringing course directors over to Emory, and then having nothing change. After that I said nothing, resolving to do a lot of thinking. Alex insisted the current medical school will be dismantled completely after the new one gets going successfully, and that there were in fact no entrenched powers.

I had a meeting with Avto Jorbenadze, the Minister of Health, and reviewed the

agenda topics I had sent him in advance. I prepared these comments with Paul Klever and others as noted who are involved in the Partnership. They were translated into Georgian by people in Atlanta and faxed to the Minister. I then prepared an outline of the Agenda for my meeting this morning, and had it translated into Georgian for Avto, also. This is the first time I have prepared agenda and outlines in advance, had them translated into Georgian, and given to relevant people such as Avto who are not fluent in English. I found this to be highly useful. I noted Avto had made copious notes on the agenda faxed to him, he read the outline in advance, and made notes during the presentation and discussion. Incomparably better than merely relying on the translation during the presentation.

Outline of Agenda for Meeting with  
the Minister of Health

Wednesday April 23, 1997

1. Partnership funding & next year's budget: discussion deferred to later date
2. New Schools and Continuing Education
  - A. Nursing School at Javakishvili State University: new model
  - B. Continuing education of nurses  
New Learning Center from AIHA
  - C. Medical School at Javakishvili State University: new model
    - i Curriculum (U.S.), selection of course directors
    - ii Course directors visit to Emory in August 1997
  - D. Health Administration School at Javakishvili: planning stage
  - E. School of Public Health: for discussion
3. National Information Learning Center
  - A. Co-Director for Operations from U.S. (Soros): Karen Marsh
  - B. Governance: three parties; MoH; NILC; Atl-Tbilisi
  - C. Funding for NILC to sustain and enhance present operations
    - i AIHA
    - ii MoH committed budget
    - iii Selling of services
    - iv Other
  - D. Support of other institutions and regional health departments
    - i Tbilisi State Medical University
    - ii Regional health departments: Kutaisi first perhaps
    - iii Others: other regions; other institutions
  - E. Internet access
    - i Severe problem: 19.2 now; \$1200 per month; poor service
    - ii Now 28 needed; \$1800 per month
    - iii September: 64 kb possible for \$3000 per month + \$2500 for modem. Badly needed.
    - iv Satellite dish for NILC??
    - v Partners for Peace military venture: see below
4. Future Plans for Regional Network: NILC; NHMC; others
  - A. Regional Health Centers
  - B. Medical Information
  - C. Large data bases; surveillance; outcomes research
  - D. Collaboration with general libraries
  - E. Partners for Peace (see below)
  - F. Georgia, then Transcaucasus
5. Telemedicine
  - A. Visit of U.S. military this summer: plan agenda
    - i Ministers of Health and Defense
    - ii Military Hospital and other military facilities
    - iii Institute of Trauma
    - iv Military Medicine Faculty of TSMU
    - v NILC
    - vi Soros Foundation
  - B. Teleradiology: Radiology & Interventional Dx. Institute
  - C. Telecardiology: Children's Cardiac Surgical Center
  - D. Distance learning: new schools; TSMU; residencies;  
Center for Continuous Education
  - E. NILC and Regional Networks
6. Medical Education
  - A. New schools: see above
  - B. Tbilisi State Medical University
  - C. Residency development: radiology followed by others;
  - D. Internal medicine specialty and residency: cornerstone
7. City Hospital #2  
Plans for future
8. Prosthetics and Rehabilitation Collaboration
9. AIDS and Tuberculosis
10. Iodine deficiency
11. EMS training center: expansion?
12. Cardiology collaboration with Atlanta: visit of Dr. Morris
13. GAMEDCO

This outline summarizes the state of our current projects

I went and had a meeting with the Military Faculty of TSMU. This is one of the groups the telemedicine project with the military will deal with. The U.S. military wants to learn of the military medicine experiences in the Abkhazian and South Ossetian wars. There are about 25 or so faculty members, most of them in their late fifties or sixties. I had met them in December. The dean had given a very organized presentation reviewing briefly some of the differences in military medicine of various armies, saying that the Israelis were outstanding and explaining why. I spoke with him again this time, and found him to be shrewd and well organized. They have a floor in the medical school building. The classrooms are clean and neat, and have a lot of demonstrations on the walls that appeared to me to be well planned. I explained to them about the U.S. military visit, and our desire to have a one day conference about Georgian military medicine experience. It turns out they had just had such a conference, and several projects were underway to summarize various areas. They showed me a book of abstracts of the conference in Georgian. I asked if I could have it, but it was their only copy. We agreed they would work together with the Minister of Health and the Trauma Institute to plan the conference.

I went to the auditorium of TSMU. Each year there is a big student entertainment production that occurs in the afternoons of several days, with different faculties sponsoring each afternoon. This time the Emory students were part of the presenters. First came Andy Trickey and Minnie Salujeh, who presented a dialogue that revolved around a pun on a Russian word and English word involving intercourse. I didn't understand until later the pun, but I got the message it was quite funny when the audience screamed with laughter, and the lad running the sound at a table in front of me collapsed on the floor and cried with laughter. Then Jason Hitner sang and played his guitar, and Yong Kim did the same. They brought down the house. The auditorium is huge, filled with young students and the faculty, and the enthusiasm for all the acts, including the Emory students, was overwhelming. A really good event.

Dinner that night at the home of Akhaladze, head of finances at TSMU, and the host of Minnie Salujeh. Also has a daughter, Tea, who has developed a romantic attachment with Jason Hitner. Jason, Andy, Yong and Minnie were all there. I invited Bob Parrish, for his first experience at a *supra*. The usual enthusiastic toasting, singing, eating, talking, in a highly festive atmosphere. A tinge of melancholy because the students were leaving the next day for Istanbul and then Emory in a few days. Turned out that Otar was planning to go to the airport at 5 a.m. to see them off. I felt this was above and beyond the call of duty. Bob Parrish was mesmerized by the entire affair.

Thursday, April 24th

Thursday, April 24, 1996	
10:00	Meeting with Rector Metreveli, Mr. Parrish and George Shakarishvili at TSU
11:30	Meeting with Marina Gudushauri at Trauma Center
13:00	Meeting at UMCOR office
16:00	Meeting at the EMS Center
18:00	Meeting with Alexander Aladashvili

A meeting with Roin Metreveli, rector of TSU, this morning to formalize with a letter of intent the beginning of the planning phase for the new Health Administration School. Bob Parrish, Alex, Metreveli and others. I said the new school: would fill an important and desperate need; one role of a university was to meet this kind of need of a country; there needed to be short courses as well as one or two year degree-granting courses of study; the short courses would have a large volume and would consequently generate money; scholarly activities needed to be part of the plan for the school.

I congratulated Roin on his reelection last week as rector. I said I had heard there was more than one candidate, and that this was in contrast to certain other elections<sup>13</sup> we had heard about. I said this was a sign of a healthy democracy. Roin preened and gave me a copy of a handsome new book in English he has just written about the history of Georgia. I also wrote his name in Georgian, which pleased him<sup>14</sup> no end. He was even more pleased to be able to correct my spelling.

We then had an organizational meeting of the people involved, which included the associate dean and dean of the business school, which is where the school will be located. Discussed the organizational structure and curriculum briefly.

Went to the Trauma Institute and met with Marina Gudushauri, the Director. Marina is about 40 or so, incredibly attractive and very bright. Visited us in Atlanta last year. A pediatric orthopedic surgeon. We discussed the prosthetics project, which is housed in her institute. The International Red Cross will discontinue its activities next year and

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<sup>13</sup>Ketsuriani was reelected unanimously, after having fixed the faculty by-laws so that only candidates who were fulltime faculty members could run. This effectively cut everyone out, since his faculty knows that to challenge him is to face certain termination.

<sup>14</sup>roin metreveli. I have discovered that writing in Georgian immensely impresses all Georgians, even though my verbal abilities are abysmal, to say the least. I can do quite well with the 33 letters of the alphabet.

leave the country<sup>15</sup>. Our partnership, through the excellent connections of Jim Smith, the director of AIHA, secured the equipment of the prosthetic factory at Fitzsimmons Army Hospital when it shut down a few months ago, and had it shipped here. Marina is preparing a place for it, and the equipment will be installed in about three weeks. Robin DeAndrade of Emory's orthopedic department will come over with the chief technician at the Atlanta VA, and lay plans for a permanent prosthetics enterprise. I noted in my December/January report there was a backlog of 7000 cases of mostly below the knee amputations, and the current operation only produces seven or so limbs a week. The question will be whether to purchase a computer driven machine, for about \$40,000, or whether to pay the Atlanta VA cost for the materials (apparently \$300 or so) and let them make the backlog. They have the machine, with a lot of unused capacity, and can produce 15-20 prostheses per day. A cast would be made of the stump over here, the measurements would be digitized in a simple device, and sent electronically to Atlanta, and the limb produced. One problem would be how to get them back over here without a lot of expense. This and other questions will be dealt with on Robin's visit.

Our second task with Marina was to begin to draft the agenda for the visit of Betsy Blakeslee and the U.S. Army in a couple of months or two. The telemedicine project. We had a long discussion of the various political bases that have to be touched, and came up with a final draft which is on the next page.

A visit to UMCOR, meeting Sandro again, and the the director, Lisa Kestner. Visited one of the pediatric clinics that they supply with free pharmaceuticals. I asked the chief doctor what she would like most to have. Answer: ekg machine and a stable heat supply. We had a talk about the infectious diseases they see. This particular clinic serves an affluent neighborhood, so all the children got immunized even when this was not happening in rural areas. No polio; one or two cases of diphtheria. Back and lunch with Lisa and Sandro. Lisa is from the U.S., mid-thirties I would judge, and a seasoned NGO person. Very competent executive in a low key fashion. We talked about the problem with diabetes insipidus, and their innovative projects I described earlier.

I met with Dito, the emergency physician type who runs the EMS center. AIHA and the partnership set this up a bit over one year ago. Gail Anderson, Medical Director of Grady Hospital, was instrumental in its beginning. AIHA has set up similar centers

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<sup>15</sup>At least that has been the plan ever since they started. The people involved are said to be trying to arrange to stay and continue, since they like the work and country quite a lot.

Saturday, May 3, 1997  
Working Paper: Draft #3  
Visit to Georgia of Dr. Betsy Blakeslee  
and U.S. Military

Purposes of visit:

- To establish a relationship for the sharing of information related to casualties due to warfare
- To establish a telemedicine network

Organizers of visit: Ministry of Health of Georgia  
Atlanta-Tbilisi Health Partnership  
Center for Total Access of U.S. Army

Parties involved

- Ministers of Health and Defense and Foreign Affairs
- Trauma Institute
- Main Military Hospital in Tbilisi
- Military Medicine Faculty of Tbilisi State Medical University
- National Information Learning Center

Visits with President Shevardnadze and Ambassador Courtney

Concept: establishment of telemedicine projects in Georgia

1. Remote clinical site in village in inaccessible high mountains
2. Distance learning capabilities several sites
3. Provision of broad band satellite access to:
  - Military Hospital
  - Other military facilities to be chosen
  - Trauma Institute
  - National Information Learning Center
4. Selected military medical applications of telemedicine to the battlefield
5. Teleradiology and telecardiology demonstration applications

Draft Agenda

First Day

Begins with meeting with Minister of Health  
Then meetings with: Minister of Foreign Affairs; U.S. Ambassador and military attache; Minister of Defense; Minister of Health; Visit to Military Hospital; Visit to National Information Learning Center.

Second Day: continuation of meetings; preconference planning by chairs of conference and presenters in afternoon.

Third Day

(There will be a mock session 1-2 weeks before visit for rehearsal of presentations and critique.)

A. Morning: Lessons from Abkhazian and South Ossetian Military Operations in Georgia

1. Welcome & Response
2. Partnership for Peace: goals & objectives-Georgian & U.S. sides
3. Overview of Abkhazian and South Ossetian Military Operations
  - Military Summary -Georgian military
  - Medical Analysis -Georgian physicians
3. Possibilities for Specific Topics:
  - Mines & Other Explosive Devices: injuries, treatment, outcomes
  - Injuries Produced by Different Types of Military Action
  - Injuries to Children in the War Zones
  - Orthopedic Strategies for Treating Bone Defects Produced by Warfare
  - Use of External Fixation and Elizarov Lengthening Devices in Bone Injuries in Warfare
  - Civilian Wounds in the War Zones
  - Others

Presenters will include: Institute for Trauma; Military Hospital; Military Medical Faculty

B. Afternoon: Telemedicine

Succeeding Days

- Suggestions:
- visits to potential sites: high mountains; remote villages; seaside
  - meetings with Minister of Communications, Georgian Technical University, and others
  - visits to military academy and other military facilities

throughout the Newly Independent States<sup>16</sup>. The former Soviet Union did not have the concept of training "first responders" such as policemen, firemen and emergency medical technicians. Instead all the resuscitation training was done with personnel in hospitals and polyclinics<sup>17</sup>. The EMS center trains 50-100 people a month. To date they have trained 680 individuals in 100 hour courses: 30 government security officers; 45 nurses; 21 mountain guides; workers of the Department of Disaster Control (similar to FEMA in U.S., I think; earthquakes and the like); and the rest physicians. Workers on the oil pipeline are about to start. Courses are 10-15 US dollars (15-20 lari) depending upon the ability of a particular group to pay and the length of the course.

I thought it was time to think about expanding the center to other regions of Georgia. Dito said there so far had been little interest. Ambulance services in cities outside Tbilisi are poorly organized or simply not present. Some progress has been made. A lot of progress has been made in Tbilisi. In 1992 there were 15 ambulances in Tbilisi, a city of about 1.5 million. Now there are many more, a number of them private. E.g., Curatio has a fleet of ambulances.

Dito gave me a want list for the Emory computer store of electronic media, which Paul Klever and I will see if we can get for him.

A discussion with Dato, the computer engineer of the NILC, about going to the US for training in telemedicine. Betsy Blakeslee sent me an email just before I left saying the East-West Center of the University of Maryland wanted to train four people from the NIS in telemedicine; four months, stipend of \$10,000. Physician or computer person. Dato has a smashingly beautiful wife and new baby, and was reluctant to go if it meant leaving them for four months (I agreed; I wouldn't either). The stipend is a bit modest to support them all in Baltimore for four months.

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<sup>16</sup>AIHA was founded in 1992 by Jim Smith, the Executive Director, and Larry Gage, a Washington insider-lawyer type who is also Executive Director of the National Association of Public Hospitals. Funding is around 15-20 million or so a year, largely or entirely (I think) from US AID. Has set up about 24 partnerships such as ours in the NIS and Bosnia. In addition, they have brilliantly come up with certain common resources that they have established in many of the partnerships, such as the EMS training centers, toxicology information centers and informatics centers.

<sup>17</sup>This word, which has always struck my ears strangely, is the European synonym for our word "clinic." They are perhaps simply more fastidious than we are, and use a word that indicates there is more than one type of clinic present--pediatrics, surgical, etc.

Archil and I decided on Kaha Popashvili, a young cardiologist who came to Atlanta and spent two months with John Merlino at Crawford Long Hospital studying echocardiography. He is the editor of the medical journal put out by the partnership, and is outstanding: a "new mentality" type, to quote Alex Aladashvili.

To Metechi Hotel to read newspapers, which were four days old at least. Then bought some more slides--\$6.25 for 36 exposure Kodak elite, 100 ASA, which I think is pretty much what I pay in Atlanta. Met with Dato Kavtaradze, a former student who came to Emory for six months, who has been searching for a good map with Georgia at the center and showing the surrounding areas. All of them show Georgia down at the bottom, and don't give the geographical relationships I wish in order to make a slide showing Georgia as one of the crossroads of the East and West, and susceptible to invasion from both sides.<sup>18</sup> I finally decided to go to the cartography department of Georgia and have one made to my specifications. Dinner with Irina Chanturishvili<sup>19</sup> and Beso, a nephew of hers who works in the Georgia IRS, and who wishes to come to the US for further study. Applying for a World Bank summer fellowship in Washington this July. Hasn't heard yet.

Friday, April 25th

<u>Friday, April 25, 1996</u>	
9:30	Meeting with George Gotsadze at Curatio Office
11:00	Meeting with Atlanta Nursing delegation and George Shakarishvili at WB PCU; to NILC to find space for new nursing resource center
12:00	Meeting with medical school course directors at TSU
16:00	Meeting with Kakha Paposhvili, Medical Journal
17:00	Visit proposed apartments
19:00	Dinner with Georgian interns going to Emory

George Gotsadze of Curatio Group picked me up. I have known George since I first started coming here in 1992. About 30, trained as obstetrician, worked with UMCOR, now in this private group. Exceptionally able. In 1992 George and three of his close friends from medical school formed Curatio, which they set up as a private medical corporation to sell medical services. They started as a fee for service group selling

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<sup>18</sup>I am giving a lecture at the Cosmos Club in Washington in late May on Georgia, and I have been assembling the slides I wish to use.

<sup>19</sup>Mother of Levan Vasadze, who lived with me two years while getting his MBA at Emory. She came to Emory while he was there, and worked at the Emory Medical Library for four months. Now librarian of the USIA library here.

services, mainly emergency calls initially, to international groups working in Tbilisi. They then noted their physicians had a lot of idle time, so they added ambulances. A problem was that Georgia never trained general practitioners, so there were a lot of problems their physicians could not handle. So they networked with specialists who did fee for service, while their staff physicians were paid a salary. They now have 87 employees, an ambulance service, and a health plan which provides to its subscribers: primary care; emergency calls; specialist consultation and care; and a discount pharmacy network. Weaknesses of the plan: no quality hospitals, and they cannot control the costs of the ones they deal with--who also try to steal their patients; and insurance is high-risk, given the quality and cost of inpatient services. The company now is a limited shareholding company.

Question: where to go now? Establish HMO? They have begun preliminary discussions with Kaiser International. They have discussed buying a hospital. One of their number is now getting a Master's degree at Columbia University in New York, and he will be a great asset when he returns (Akaki Zoidize). I met Dato, who worked in City Hospital #2 when our partnership started, and who was given at that time the opportunity to come to the US: "but there would be nothing for me to do when I returned, so I didn't take the offer." (Smart.) The discussions amongst the four about the future obviously wax hot and heavy on many occasions.

In 1994 they took advantage of a law that enabled them to use 10% of their profits to set up a charitable foundation, Curatio International Foundation, thereby saving money on taxes. "To do good as we see fit. A 'think tank' for the health system in Georgia." Their list of projects undertaken was impressive.

I was so excited with their accomplishments and thinking that I suggested George, Dato, Bob Parrish and myself have dinner later.

Then went to the World Bank unit and met with Laura Hurt<sup>20</sup> and her two nurses from Grady, and George Shakarishvili. Laura does the continuing education for practicing nurses in Georgia, and Judy Wold of Georgia State is establishing the new nursing school. Laura has been involved in the partnership several years, and has done a job so excellent words cannot describe it. She brings groups of nurses to Grady and train them to come back and teach their colleagues: "training the trainers". She provides them with a curriculum and slides in Georgian to bring back! They stay a month or

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<sup>20</sup>Laura is a remarkable individual, probably amongst the two or three most competent and organized individuals I have ever known. She taught at the former Grady nursing school, then was an executive nurse at Emory and DeKalb General hospitals, and now is chief of Medical Surgical Nursing at Grady. Working on a PhD in administration at Georgia State.

two, and she plans every minute. This time she brought to Georgia Lila, one of her clinical specialists from Grady, and Julia, a nurse on 12A at Grady who came over from the former Soviet Union several years ago and went to Georgia State to get more education as a nurse before coming to Grady. Julia and Lila are teaching a course for the Georgian nurses this week. They had all three gone to Tashkent last week for a conference on medical education in the NIS, put on by Jim Smith and AIHA from Washington. Laura relates to Leah, the chief nurse in the Ministry of Health, who is another highly able person. Laura, Judy and their associates will have the nursing profession in Georgia up to world class levels long before we have the physicians up and running.

George Shakarishvili of the World Bank at our meeting asked Laura to work with Judy and come up with a comprehensive proposal for nursing development in Georgia. He and the Minister will consider it for funding. George said three big areas they were looking to fund were: nursing; health administration; and retraining physicians as family practitioners.

Laura, George and I went to the NILC, where we discussed with some heat the question of the location of a new Nursing Resources Learning Center that the parent organization of our partnership, American International Health Alliance in Washington, DC, will be giving to Georgia in the next few months. Aimed at providing resources for practicing nurses to come and improve their knowledge and skills. I wanted the center to be on the floor with the rest of the partnership enterprises.<sup>21</sup> The large toilet area was the only available space. I maintained people could go up or down one flight to the toilets. Zviad of the NILC was adamantly against this. Laura Hurt, George Shakarishvili and I finally decided to recommend it be put in the World Bank Continuing Education Center, which will be on the floor above our NILC. Perfect place for it. Two rooms, one containing books and electronic media resources, the other mannikins and other information aimed at physical assessment and similar skills.

I went out to the Biological Faculty building of TSU, and met with proposed course directors for the new medical school. I wrote about this at some length in my last

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<sup>21</sup>We have a wing of an old building, constructed soundly in the early 1900s as a hospital. Somewhere around 12,000 sq.ft. The NILC occupies one side of the corridor, and the partnership offices and the EMS training center the other. The World Bank Continuing Education Center will occupy the same space on the floor above. The National Health Management Center (think tank and manager of health care reform) of the Ministry of Health occupies similar spaces. The Minister told me one time he "wanted all Western enterprises in one space, so he could tell his people 'there is where you go to find out how we are going to set up the health care system of Georgia.'"

report. The new medical school will start September, 1998. The course directors for the first year will come to Emory in the fall of 1997 to work with their counterparts and plan courses quite similar to the ones given at Emory, but with appropriate Georgian additions. The challenge now is to find course directors who have good abilities in English and who will be "US type" course directors.<sup>22</sup> In my interviews with the potential course directors I followed this outline:

- Asked them to tell me their c.v. in detail
- Current research interests
- Teaching assignments, in detail, for the past year
- If they were presently in charge of a course, asked them to tell me how they had gone about planning it. If not, tried to get an idea of how they would go about "organizing" a new type course in their field. ("Organizing" made immediate sense to them, while "directing" did not.)

Alex and I met initially and had lunch with six candidates. I made some points about how I think US courses and medical education are different from that practiced in the former Soviet Union, in a nonjudgemental fashion. I spoke of the course director as the essential person, who organized the course, attended every lecture even when given by another faculty member, and whom had exceptionally close relationships with the students in a collegial fashion. I also spoke about how hard the students were expected to work, and how the courses were quite intensive. I thought two of the six would be excellent course directors, in neuroscience and cell biology. Their English was excellent, and this was an important factor.

Back to NILC and met with Kakha Paposhvili, the editor of the *Medical Journal* published by the partnership. Kakha is the young cardiologist who spent some months with John Merlino at Crawford Long, and whom we nominated to have further training in telemedicine at the East-West Space Center of the University of Maryland. Kakha chooses articles from current western journals that he feels will be of broad interest to Georgian physicians and translates them into Georgian. Thirty or so pages each

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<sup>22</sup>Georgian professors follow the European system of "Herr Professor." A senior professor, often the chair, "organizes" each course and a variety of faculty gives their assigned lectures. There is little contact between faculty and students, and less between the course organizer and the students. In addition, as nearly as I could discern most of the basic science courses consisted of two hours of lecture a week and two hours of laboratory, certainly a lot less than we give. In my interviews with potential course directors I found a lot of variation in whether or not US texts were used. Some courses relied heavily upon US texts, all of which had been translated into Russian. E.g., some of the people immediately told me "I contacted my friends in the US and used their help in deciding the texts and other materials to use." Others continued to use the old Soviet Union resources. (An important caveat to put here is that these are generalizations based upon a small sampling, and may be wrong.)

month. Last month 2000 copies were distributed. One hundred to each of the major cities outside Tbilisi: Kutaisi; Batumi; Poti. Fifty to Telavi and Gori. The rest to Tbilisi. These copies go to the regional central hospitals in each location. He has now hired a new commercial director and set up an in-house distribution system.

Zviad Kertava and I went to view potential apartments for Karen Marsh. He showed me a lovely one, a condo with several bedrooms, a large balcony, and completely furnished with maid, laundry and cooking services for \$400 a month. We immediately emailed Carol Burns and recommended we rent it for Karen. Carol is sending two or three of her librarians here for several week stints. Each is specialized in some aspect of library operations. They can stay in the condo also. Zviad, Archil and I also agreed some method would be found of making transportation available to Karen and the other librarians on a fairly continuous basis. The sense of freedom that gives one in Tbilisi is highly important, in my opinion, to a general sense of wellbeing, leading to excellent performance. Having to beg someone each time you need to go somewhere is not good.

I had a talk with George Shakarishvili about the heating in the library. This winter the library was completely dysfunctional, due to extreme cold. The electricity was off about 60% of the time, and since the rooms are heated largely by space heaters, and are large with heavy cement walls, there was basically no heat. The World Bank is spending a lot of money renovating the space above us into a high class continuing education center. Zviad had said there had been some discussion about whether the project would be able to accommodate replacing the radiators in the NILC and putting them onto the central heating service planned for the space above. I pointed out to George we were all in this together. The World Bank goals of education would be impotent without the NILC. I said I would take a plane back for the specific purpose of begging the appropriate officials to include it in the project if that were necessary. I feel exceptionally strongly about this point. I have gotten accustomed to the "old type mentality" being completely unwilling to share resources, but cannot accept it in the newer types.

Zviad and I had a long talk about the NILC hours. The staff arrive now at 10 a.m. (standard beginning time for Georgia), and do their work, with the computers made available to subscribers to the services somewhere around 1 p.m., and lasting until 7 p.m. or so. Night classes are also given several days a week. I encouraged him to try to make the computers available at longer times, and he agreed. But, that having been said, there is considerable difficulty about the salaries. The principal staff are paid around 60l a month (\$46 dollars). By way of contrast, the subway workers are paid around 150l (\$115) a month. We are in danger of losing our staff, all of whom are excellent: young, enthusiastic, knowledgeable, devoted. Zviad and I agreed to

discuss with Carol Burns and Paul Klever a new salary scale, and to then desperately see if the money can be found. The Minister and I had talked at some length, based on a memo from Carol to me and included in my agenda for the Minister, about the need for a stable budget for the NILC. Archil feels the Minister's commitment of \$15,000 a year is the maximum he can give, and the Minister will have difficulty justifying even that. We will have to see what our AID budget can accommodate<sup>23</sup>. Another challenge.

Another NILC issue is the tremendous necessity for a car. A decent used one will be about \$3000. We do not have this money, but I will try to see what we can do.

To Betsy's around 8 p.m., and called the office in Atlanta. Eleven a.m. Atlanta time. Several crises. Quite difficult and distasteful to need to survive problems on two continents simultaneously. Goes with the territory.

Long talk with Bob Parrish about his planning for the health administration school. Fun to see him experiencing the same complex mixture of emotions all of us who come over here have initially: wonder, frustration, love of people and country, challenge, etc.

To dinner with the four interns who will start their preliminary year at Emory in July. One woman, three men. I have known them about three years now. Eka, the woman, spent six months with us at Emory as a junior medical student. Alex is a 32 year old cardiologist here. Vaktang finished medical school a year ago and did a year of infectious diseases. Koba is a 32 year old surgeon. All made close to 90 (exceptionally high) on their ECFMG tests. Intelligent, personable, wonderful work ethic, totally motivated. I predict they will be amongst our top house staff this year.

Saturday, April 26th

Saturday, April 26, 1996

GURIA with Minister Jorbenadze

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<sup>23</sup>An omnipresent difficulty is exemplified by the budget for May-April 97-98--i.e., budget for next year. We have zero idea what it will be. Every year for seven years we have been told, October through June, that we will probably get nothing for the next year. Each year we have gotten from \$400,000 to \$850,000 (former for this year), less about 32% overhead for AIHA. Planning is impossible. Another part of this is that there is no way, if one follows AID's practices, of planning programs that span a several year period. Not the way to do business.

Breakfast at Betsy's with Jesse, a lawyer from Oklahoma over here for several weeks helping Parliament write the new local election law. Jesse is representative of a certain type of person from other countries I am continually meeting at Betsy's and elsewhere, now that I have learned to recognize them. They have a stable profession in the U.S. or another country--in Jesse's case practicing law--and spend time going to other countries doing some specialized work. Jesse has done the same thing in Bosnia. They (like some of the rest of us) have gotten hooked on it. Not the expatriate type, such as the ones working in the Non-Governmental Organizations, and who spend their entire career doing it. But a few weeks or so each year.

Jesse said there were at a stalemate in writing the local election law for governors and mayors, because the politicians cannot agree on who should be elected and who should be appointed. Both are appointed by the President now. The ruling party, to generalize, wants appointment (naturally), while the opposition wants election. I spoke later with some Georgian politicians about this, and a compromise seems likely: the governors and mayors will be appointed another five years, then elected; except for smaller towns, where they will now be elected.

Then Guria (**guria**) with Avto Jorbenadze, the Minister of Health, to visit the home where he grew up. On several occasions in Atlanta I have taken Avto to my farm where I grew up in Washington, Georgia, and for three years he and I have tried to visit his home town of **lanhxuti** ("Lanchooti"). It is in Guria, a province in Western Georgia, about 4-5 hours of hard driving from Tbilisi. The home town of Shevardnadze, **mamati** ("Mamati"), is the next village<sup>24</sup>. Both of Avto's sons were with us: Rezo, who is a junior in medical school and did most of the driving, and Boota, about 17, in high school, apparently slated to become an economist, and George Shakarishvili. Nino, Avto's wife, who is a physician with a public health background, stayed at home translating a public health book into Georgian. Tomorrow, Sunday, is orthodox Easter Sunday. Either Sunday (everything outside Tbilisi) or Monday (Tbilisi) is a "day of memory" in Georgia, where families visit the cemetery to pay honor to loved ones who have died. Nino's family is buried in Tbilisi, so she will visit the cemetery there with her parents, while Avto and his sons and I will

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<sup>24</sup>Something like 90% of the top governmental officials are from Guria. During the time of Gamsukurdia, president just before Shevardnadze, about 90% were from his province. No different from the rest of us. Many of the early communists in Stalin's time came from Guria. An agricultural area where a lot of tea is produced, as well as fishing on the seacoast. To my surprise Guria was not in my trusty guide book. No ruins.

visit his parents graves in Guria<sup>25</sup>.

The road was full of deep potholes, and the driving was quite rapid. Avto had as usual insisted that I, as the honored guest, sit in the front seat, while I much preferred sitting in the safer back seat. We were in the Minister's official car, a new Russian Volga. No power steering; primitive heating/air conditioning controls; ancient layout of controls--e.g., the ignition switch is below the steering wheel, and reached only with maneuvers that would do a gymnast proud. Regular gasoline at about \$1.20 a gallon. I was surprised to learn that you could get up to 98 octane in Georgia (about 93 is highest in US). The tag, on front and back, proclaimed this was the car of an individual of ministerial rank in the government: AAA 220. We sped at high speeds immune to the frequent clusters of traffic cops, who saluted the car. We climbed up the mountains dividing eastern from western Georgia, and went through a 1-2 mile tunnel that is quite old. The sign at the beginning said "Traffic not free," meaning it was a toll tunnel. I saw no visible ventilation in the tunnel.

Just after the tunnel we stopped for lunch, and by chance met a former minister of agriculture (late 1980's), who was later vice prime minister, and now a member of Parliament. Of generous proportions, cherry red face, an avuncular man in his early fifties. With him was the chief of all police for that region. They had just had a *supra* set up, and perforce of necessity we must of course join in. He and Avto had had many dealings with each other in their official capacities, and many toasts were directed to Avto. When it came my time to give a toast I gave a toast to "one of the most important things I have ever learned; it was on the farm, it was from cows, and I suspect all successful politicians and academicians know it: how to avoid the cow crap when walking through the pastures." There was a bit of a pause after this toast, and I judged it had not been the resounding success I had hoped for.

One interesting fact that came from the meeting had to do with Avto and President Shevardnadze. During the Abkhazian war Shevardnadze had stayed to the last, and was barely saved in time; Avto had stayed with him until the end, according to the former minister.

We came to Avto's home in Guria about 9 p.m. After the mountain divide it had become quite cold, and none of us were prepared. I was shivering, and this persisted until I was in bed with a huge quilt over me. The houses in this region are quite distinctive: two storeys, with bedrooms and living rooms on the second storey, reached by outside stairs that are quite prominent on most houses; downstairs

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<sup>25</sup>A comment by someone later revealed that it is not the custom in Georgia ordinarily to invite strangers to one's home on Easter, or to go to the cemetery.

kitchen, bathroom and the like. No central heating. About two surrounding acres, and a lot of farming around the house. This turned out to be typical. Farmers who once worked on the large collective now cultivated intensively the land around their house, deriving all their income from this. I saw cows, geese, chickens, a brooding hen. They showed me the old fashioned corn mill where they make all their corn meal. Water was from an old pump--at least 30 years old--that pumped from an open well with water about eight feet down. Water pumped to storage tank about 10 feet above the house.

In the yard of the big house was a small house where Zekia, the sister of Avto's father, held forth. She clearly is the current matriarch of the family, and oversaw the farm. No one lives in the big house, where we stayed. Avto's father was an agronomist, who was head of the collective (2,500 acres; 125 families farmed it), and then became head of agriculture for the region. They had a car when Avto grew up, so clearly they were one of the leading families in Guria. His mother died of a stroke when I was here last April. The land around the house, and in the entire region, was rich, black and fertile. They do of course add fertilizer. I asked, and they did not know the mix they use, and I could not tell if they tested the soil now. A small portable laboratory was in the yard, and Avto's father used this to test the soil of the collective. A lot of the land was turned for spring planting. The farmers rent tractors for a day to do this.

The small house, where Zekia lives, has three rooms. A living room/bedroom with a small very hot woodburning stove, an adjacent room where the food was prepared, and the room where the corn mill was kept. It ground steadily during supper, providing a nice background sound. I was fascinated by the preparation of food, the first night and thereafter. It was done in several places. The kneading and raw preparation was done in the adjacent room. There was also a fire on the floor (dirt), and a large hook suspended from the ceiling held a boiling pot of grits (hominy over here). In the living room certain items were cooked on top or in the tiny oven of the woodburning stove. Other items were cooked on or in a small electric stove in the corner. The second night we bought a huge fish from a roadside stand by the seacost, and it was cleaned outside, where shish kebob was cooked also. Complex meals were prepared effortlessly, or so it seemed to me. The preparation and the different places were choreographed like a Balanchine production. People who knew exactly what they were about, and went about their business with practiced ease. The food was out of this world, to put it mildly. About four women continuously were in and out preparing food, and their husbands and children ate with us. I gathered Zekia's place was the gathering place for the farmers who inhabited the four or five surrounding houses, each with their two acres or so.

We had a wonderful *supra* in the living room area of the small house. We had visited and put our luggage in the large house. Beautiful. Pictures of Avto's grandfather when he was in a rodeo in the U.S. back in the 1910's. Always loved horses, and many pictures of him on them. I asked about what had happened to him during the purge of the thirties. Most of the Georgians I know lost a grandfather then. Turned out he was too old, and the father too young to be killed.

I had picked up on the fact that one had to get up and go outside to go to the bathroom. It was very cold, I was shivering and tired, and I had no intention of setting up my volume status so I had to get up during the night. So I eschewed wine, except for a minimum amount needed to participate in the toasts, and mostly drank Borjomi, the salt-laden (2000 m.eq./bottle) bottled spring water that is ubiquitous in Georgia. I was rewarded by an uninterrupted night's sleep.

Sunday April 27th

Sunday, April 27, 1997
EASTER SUNDAY

Got up fairly early and washed my face and shaved. No bathing. Then had a hot cup of tea with Zekia, and wonderful bread<sup>26</sup>. They had a type of bread that is only made and sold and served on Easter. Raisins in it. Excellent. Zekia was for many years the postmistress. The mail service was totally disrupted in 1992, both internally and from the outside, and is just now returning. In Tbilisi I noted FedEx, DHL, and UPS offices. They use the passenger planes. We can send regular mail from Atlanta now, but takes several months to get there.

After breakfast we drove to Soupsa (*supsa*), where the new oil terminal is being built. Will be finished end of this year, cost \$40 million. Azerbaijani oil will flow through Georgia and be put on ships at the terminal. Large controversy with Russia a couple of years ago about the pipeline. Compromise, with Russia getting another one later. Supplies a gigantic oil field, and hopefully will result in many good things for Georgia. We stopped by the side of the sea and bought a five pound fish (sturgeon, I think);

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<sup>26</sup>The bread in Georgia is fantastic. Later in Tbilisi I took a picture of the place where bread is made. Two people there, one a young man who had worked there a year, the other a lady who had been there fifty years. A large slab of dough, about the size of a plate, is plastered to the side of a huge cement oven, shaped like a beehive, with electric coils in the bottom. I couldn't see why it didn't fall off, but it didn't. After about ten minutes it had cooked, and was lifted off with a huge flat ladle. This is just one type of bread, of course. All of it is wonderful.

for dinner tonight. Then to the sea, where Avto showed me a lot, next to one he has, that he wants me to retire to. I decided to give it a considerable amount of thought, and told him so. Then to the village where Shevardnadze's house is. An elderly lady lives in it and tends to it. Very similar to Avto's.

The day had turned gray and with a lot of drizzle. Drove through a mountainous countryside with many, many small homes, each with an acre or two. Winding road. Tea plots abounded. Everyone walking. Almost no one has cars. Then to Avto's cemetery plot, where his family is buried. About 30 or so people buried in a plot about 12 x 24 feet; buried on top of each other. Avto's mother, father and grandparents in middle in separate plots, then a stone with the rest of the names. The tombstones of his immediate family were large, with pictures engraved on them. Avto lit a candle at each.

Then a remarkable experience that I was unprepared for: a visit to the collective. One thousand hectares (about 2500 acres, I think), 125 families of the village worked it. The road was unbelievable: potholes several feet deep, virtually impassable in places, part of it a stream which we ventured right into to my great but concealed distress. About six miles of road through the collective. Huge, rolling green fields with abandoned and deteriorating buildings. No one lived there; they all took shuttles back and forth each day. Incredibly beautiful countryside. Very fertile appearing land.

That night at dinner Thomas, the head of the collective, was present. A long talk. He said it was one of the best and most productive collectives in the former Soviet Union until 1988. One thousand hectares, 120 in tea. Produced 200 tons of tea a year at its height; 20 tons last year. High quality tea. But then Gamsakhurdia<sup>27</sup> angered Russia, who stopped buying tea from Georgia, and started importing cheaper teas from Turkey and India. Twenty-five hundred villagers worked on the collective, which made about \$3 million a year (actually rubles, but for practical purposes same as dollar) of which one-third was paid as salaries. Each family was paid around \$50,000 a year. The collective was told from central authorities exactly what and how much to produce each year. The rubles all became worthless in 1992, and all savings vanished overnight, except for the rare individuals who had put their money into gold and diamonds--and virtually no one did this. The collective land is now rented out to individuals, but no one takes advantage of this because they don't have the money to buy fuel and fertilizer. So they farm their tiny plots and survive fairly well. One of them told me he got up at 6 a.m. in the summer to milk the cows and start working, but about 10 in the winter since it was dark until about then. A law is now being written

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<sup>27</sup>First democratically elected President of Georgia. Then overthrown by uprising of the people. Highly nationalistic, severed all relations with Russia.

that will enable the former collective workers to buy the land, but how will they have the money farm it, asked Thomas? Thomas blames the former minister of agriculture with whom we ate yesterday for the beginning of the decline.<sup>28</sup>

Monday, April 28th

<p><u>Monday, April 28, 1997</u></p> <p>KUTAISI Travel back to Tbilisi</p>
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Breakfast again of tea and hot bread with cheese. Day overcast and quite cool, but not the penetrating cold of the previous two days. We drove about two hours to Kutaisi, where we met with the Mayor, Temur. I had met him several years ago. He is about 45, wife and three children, a rising young communist until the overthrow, and now a rising and influential politician. Mayor of Kutaisi, one of the five or so oldest continuously occupied cities in the world (1000 b.c. or so if I remember correctly). I like him a lot. He has a Thursday 11 p.m. live television show that anyone can call in to and he will listen to their problems. Has all his heads of departments there on air with him. Sandro of UMCOR told me he saw this happen a few weeks ago on the show: an old lady called in, and said her block had had no electricity for several days. The Mayor had the appropriate department head get the man responsible for that area on the phone, and asked him what was the problem. The man mumbled some explanation. "Unsatisfactory!" exclaimed Temur; "You're fired!" All on TV.

On the way back we ran into a blinding snow storm about one hour from Tbilisi. And the last of April!

Tuesday, April 29th

<p><u>Tuesday, April 29, 1997</u></p> <p>10:00 Meeting with Gela Kachukhashvili at NHMC 12:00 Meeting with Archil Kobaladze at ATHP office 13:00 Lunch at Zviad Kirtava's house 15:00 Meeting with Kakha Paposhvili 19:00 Dinner with George Gotsadze</p>
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<sup>28</sup>Thomas reminded me a lot of my Uncle Norman Higginbotham, a shrewd and astute farmer who was famed for being the source of wonderful advice for other farmers. On the county commission, etc.

A brisk and beautiful spring day. My little room at the top of Betsy's is fabulous. I could stay here a long time.

Bob Parrish and I went to the NILC so he could take a look at it. The NILC will be quite helpful in terms of providing information to the students in the health administration school.

Zviad and I had a discussion about Internet. George Kashia of Sanet had just come over. Sanet is our Internet provider, and George said we can get 29.9 access now for a few hundred dollars more (we have 19.9 now), and 64 kb access in September for \$2500 a month. This is highly necessary, given our plans. But where will the money come from?

A meeting with Gela Kachukhashvili, who is head of informatics for the Ministry of Health. A highly knowledgeable and very smart person. We talked at length about the concept of networking the regional health centers as I have described before. I also said I hoped in time for electronic medical records to be part of the health system in Georgia. Putting these in City Hospital #2 is what I have in mind. I gave Gela a copy of a paper we are working on about the computerized medical record we have had at Grady for many years (THERESA).

To Zviad's house for a *supra*. I was quite opposed to this, since there was a lot to do, but he was insistent, saying his family had prepared for me in Kutaisi the day before, and his father had brought the food to Tbilisi this morning since I had been unable to meet with them. I said no more than one hour, but of course it took between two and three<sup>29</sup>. I like Zviad's father a lot. I got a lot of amusement with clinking my glass on his for the toasts. When a Georgian respects you, he or she clinks their glass at a lower level than yours, indicating respect. A subtle part of the toasting ritual. They don't know I know this, and when I deliberately put my glass lower than theirs, they get quite disturbed, not being sure that I know and am doing this to indicate respect to them, or just ignorantly putting it there. Zviad's father eventually put his glass actually below the table in an effort to get it lower than mine,

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<sup>29</sup>*Supras* are very enjoyable, and are part of the warp and woof the the culture of Georgia. Inseparable from the people. But they get quite difficult. Everyone I deal with insists I come to their house for a *supra*, and they are offended and hurt when I don't. It is inconceivable to them to honor someone any other way. I try and try to get across the point of coming over for 30 minutes for drinks, but this is not part of their culture and they simply will not do it. Even when I say I can only stay 30 minutes, they dutifully put out a *supra*.

and then suddenly understood what I was up to.

A meeting with Kaha Popashvili to discuss his going to the telemedicine course in the US. He was excited, and I am exceptionally pleased he has agreed to go. Perfect.

A long talk with Archil, my counterpart here, and professor of clinical pharmacology. We discussed all of our projects, and how to handle them. We are pleased with how they are going.

A picture-taking session with Dato, my driver. To the Turkish Baths, the surrounding churches and synagogue. Then to Betsy's where Irina Chanturishvili came over for wine and a general discussion.

Bob Parrish and I went to dinner with the Curatio people, George and Dato, at George's condo. A long and interesting discussion of their ideas and decision making at the moment. They are young, energetic and optimistic. A lot of discussion amongst themselves about what to do now. There is some tension between them and the Ministry of Health staff, that is understandable to me. The best way to proceed at this moment is unclear, and the need so urgent, that there is plenty of room for uncertainty and differing points of view. Curatio is wrapped up in the private aspects of health care, new and exciting to them, while the Ministry people are involved with the governmental aspects. I pointed out to George and Dato that they could not afford for the Minister to fail, and needed to help with their ideas and energy. Bob Parrish suggested they do something such as taking a catchment area with a hospital, and set it up as an HMO and do a demonstration project. A lot of interesting discussion. I like them a lot, and will look forward to keeping up with them.

Wednesday, April 30th

<u>Wednesday, April 30, 1997</u>	
8:30	Breakfast with Bob Parrish and Amiran Gamkrelidze
10:00	Meeting with course directors at TSU
11:00	Students Selection at TSMU
13:00	Meeting with Tamar Dekanosidze at Department of Pathology, TSMU
14:30	Lunch at Dato Kavtaradze's house
15:00	Bob Perrish'es lecture at TSU
	Meeting with Minister Jorbenadze, Bob Perrish, George Shakarishvili and ArchilKobaladze

Had breakfast with Bob Parrish, Amiran of the National Health Management Center, Alex Aladashvili and Archil. We discussed at some length the proposed new health administration school. Bob gave his initial impressions, and what he planned to say to the Minister. Amiran stressed the need for short courses to start as soon as possible. We talked about faculty from Georgia State. The short courses will start in

September, run 3 weeks each, and have about 15 people. A big effort will be made from the beginning to start training Georgian faculty to give the courses.

A second meeting with the course director candidates. Suitable course directors who are fluent in English, and can thus come to Atlanta, are scarce. The ones who have come so far have been quite young. E.g., mid-twenties, no teaching experience, working on PhD. Not appropriate. By the end of the meeting Alex and I had confirmed Cell Biology and Histology, and Neuroscience. Still need: Biochemistry; Physiology; Microbiology.

To TSMU and interviewed seven students to come to Emory. Four quite good, two acceptable, one worry about English and spontaneity. The Minister's son and the Executive Associate Dean's daughter amongst them. Will take results back to Emory and have a discussion with Jack Shulman. We don't have a lot of money left, and must set priorities. Otar told me some of them could pay their own way and come as regular elective type students.

The Minister had asked me to meet with the revered Chief of Pathology and begin to think about the state of pathology in Georgia. Tamar Dekanosidze is about 70 and I met her the first time I came in 1992. She reminds me a lot of Evangeline Papageorge. Rima Beriashvili, who came and spent two months with Whit Sewell two years ago, is her right hand.

Tamar said there were 53 pathologists in Georgia: 51 in Tbilisi, one in Telavi and one in Kutaisi. These are classical pathologists who can do everything from autopsies on. There are six residents in training. Formerly everyone was required to train in Moscow or St. Petersburg. They identify promising students in their third year of medical school and add some special courses in biology, chemistry and physics during the remainder of medical school. Then a five year residency:

- 1st: "subordinate;" lectures, dissections, etc.
- 2nd: internship
- 3/4th clinical
- 5th special training (I take it cytology and the like)

When I asked what was needed, she cried, saying no one had asked her this question for years. She focused on equipment, such as an electron microscope, teaching microscopes and the like. This is an area I need to look into in some detail in the future.

A *supra* at the home of Dato Kavtaradze, of whom I wrote in December report.

Awaiting results of USMLE exam. They were sent to me, and are probably in my mail at home. I will call him.<sup>30</sup>

To TSU, where Bob Parrish gave a lecture to the faculty and interested students of the Business School. The students, most around 18 or 19 I judged, listened with rapt attention. Simultaneous translation into Georgia. A group of older and some young faculty members. During the question period, I made some comments about the fact that Georgia was on the verge of a revolution in health care, and it would be an exciting time to be a manager. Non-physician administrators are a new concept to Georgians. There was a lapse in the translation, and I asked the students how many needed translation: "None!" was the immediate reply. Archil later observed there was a need for translation: for the faculty. I left heartened about the possibility of able students being interested in health administration. They clustered around us afterwards and asked questions about their efforts to get more exposure to Internet. Clearly very conversant with computers.

Back to the NILC, and a talk with Zviad about his need for a car. Especially with Karen Marsh and Emory librarians coming. Then he told me he had discovered the cartographer to do the map, and we agreed on this.

To the Minister's office, where Bob Parrish presented his conclusion. He had visited many of the hospitals in Tbilisi and talked at length with the senior people in each. He concluded at least two-thirds of them should be destroyed immediately: dirty, unattractive, very poorly planned with respect to function. He had met with faculty at TSMU who gave what they described as a health management course; Bob said it was a public health course. He suggested hospitals be offered audits, which would analyze how they could be improved. This would be part of the health administration school. The Minister accepted and agreed with his conclusions.

Out to the Hippodrome to visit Peplum, the five year old Arabian stallion I ride when I'm over here. He was in fine fettle, and excellent shape. Then a *supra*. A friend of Andro Kacharava's (a PGY II resident with us), Merab Gelashvili, was there. Merab is a colonel in the army who I met in the US a year ago. He plans to come back and go to general staff school in the US. Lasha and Levan, two of the principal horse people were there, along with a Georgian stock breeder whose farm I would like to visit in the future. Warm, emotional toasts with the theme of friendship. One of the toasts said something like this: "I have a wife, son and daughter, but these, my friends, they are different." A toast to wives, and some probing about my not being married. I made

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<sup>30</sup>Note added later. He passed, with a very high score!

some comment about you could choose: one good woman for 30+ years, or several for 4 or 5 years. "But we have that, too!" chorused the young married men, to my surprise (at the public statement of what Georgian men ordinarily keep to themselves).

Back to Betsy's quite late, a call to Atlanta.

Thursday, April 31

<u>Thursday, May 1, 1997</u>	
9:00	Meeting at the US consular's office with Eliko Mkheidze
10:30	Meeting with Marina Gudushauri at Trauma Center
11:00	Meeting with Guliko Chapidze at the Institute of Therapy
12:30	Lunch
14:00	Meeting with Ilia Chkhikvadze at CH #2
15:30	Meeting with Gia Khechinashvili, TB center director
16:30	Meeting with Alex Tsiskaridze, Neurobiology Course director

To the U.S. Embassy with Eliko Mkheidze, Andro Kacharava's mother. A bit over a year ago I signed an "invitation" for her to come to the U.S. For a visit to Andro. Some months later, while making rounds at Grady, I was called by the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service at the Atlanta Airport and asked if I knew an "Ellen McKenzie," who said I knew her and had invited her to the U.S. Caught off guard, I said no. I asked if I could speak with her, and of course was told no. The woman who called was curt and accusatory. An hour later Toby and I figured out who she was. I called back, and was told she was being deported. No amount of pleading changed that. Eliko told me later that the translator was quite poor, and made a lot of errors, and was later fired. I talked the next day with the officer on duty, who told me I had better get to know who I was dealing with before issuing them an invitation<sup>31</sup>. Now I had written another invitation, and Eliko and I went to the Embassy to see if there would be any problems. Dealt with Tim Richardson, Consular Officer, who was very helpful and easy to talk to. He feels there will be no problem this time. We will see. This

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<sup>31</sup>A year later I went through Moscow to Tbilisi, then came back to visit Levan on the way out. I was held six hours and escaped being deported by a hair because the travel agency had only gotten me a single entry visa, instead of a double entry. The Russian INS was very rude and hostile, not allowing for hours to let me see Levan, who was on the outside wondering what the devil was happening to me. Finally got in with payment of \$500.

I have ended up having an equally poor opinion of U.S. INS, based on my experience with Eliko. Rude, not very bright, a holier-than-thou we know it all attitude. I am sure not all are like this, but one really bad experience either in Moscow or Atlanta certainly fixes an attitude.

time I will be prepared, and go to the airport to meet her.

To the Trauma Institute and worked on another draft of the military telemedicine agenda visit. It began to take shape in a highly satisfactory fashion. It will be filled with abundant political mine fields, with involvement of the Georgian military, faculty of medicine at TSMU, U.S. Embassy, Georgian Foreign Minister, and others too important to even think about. We are happy, however, with our concept of the day's conference. The U.S. military has had no experience with casualties during warfare since the Vietnam days, and most veterans of that war, like me, are retiring from the military. They would like to have access to war casualty data, and of course Georgia has had abundant experience, to put it mildly. This is what the US wants. In turn they will give Georgia, through the Partners for Peace, a telemedicine setup, and will work with the Georgian military to give them technology and the ability to do good things with their civilian counterparts. The idea is that will help stabilize the military, as well as given both US and other military establishments an opportunity to prove their relevance by demonstrating how technology and knowledge they have can be exported in a highly useful fashion into the civilian world. This will done for all the nations like Georgia who wish to participate. Stabilizing democracy in them.

Alex Aladashvili and I visited the cardiology institute of Guliko Chepidze. She is a cardiologist who is Mrs. Shevardnadze's closest friend, and who I got to know well when Mrs. S spent a month in Atlanta last year. I was impressed. Clean, beautiful persian type rugs all over the floors.<sup>32</sup> The government has purchased a cardiac cath laboratory from GE which will be installed in 2-3 months. Alex and I had a long talk, echoed by others later, about the fact there will be cardiac catheterization and PTCA without cardiac surgery backup. Alex had talked with Doug Morris in our department, and plans to choose cases who either are virtually terminal and have nothing to lose, or cases where complications requiring surgery are very low. At some future date the surgery will begin. I wished him good luck.

I am hoping Doug will come out in the spring. Alex and I had dinner with him when Alex was here two months ago, and to my surprise Doug has been fascinated by the former Soviet Union for many years. Has a large library of material, and knows a lot about it. He showed me the Radzinsky book that I spoke of earlier.

To the Europa restaurant for lunch with Archil and Marina Gudushauri. Sat on the veranda overlooking Rustaveli Avenue. Bright, crisp spring day, people out and about,

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<sup>32</sup>Made to order in a Georgian town near Zugdidi, close to the coast I think, called Senaki (senaki). I made a note of this and hope we can get some for the NILC at some affluent time in the future, if that ever occurs.

a grand experience. After lunch I took a look at their bar, and did my test for first class bars: do they have McCallan's Scotch, arguably the best in the world? To my great surprise they did. Most restaurant bars in Atlanta don't.

To City Hospital #2 with Nata Avaliani, the administrator of the partnership office, to visit Iliia, the head doctor. This is where we started our partnership in 1992, with the goal of turning it into a model western hospital. Boggled down in inability to get a new 125 bed wing completed. The World Bank contributed \$5 million, and there is present on Iliia's desk two wonderful books by a European architectural firm giving the plan for the renovation.

Only one problem: 1250 Georgian refugees from the Abkhazian war inhabit the building, even to the point of selling their rooms to others. The refugee issue is very ticklish politically, to put it mildly. President Shevardnadze has appointed a commission to decide what to do with respect to the hospital. Obviously he and the Minister of Health are caught between a rock and a hard place: the refugee problem, vs the healthcare problem. Iliia explained at some length the strategies about solving the problem. It seemed to me simply giving them another and perhaps better place would be eminently satisfactory. No. The refugees are opposed to the President, not feeling he has done everything he can to solve the war and get them back to their homes, and will do whatever they can to embarrass him. In addition some of the people are not refugees at all, but Georgians who have come to Tbilisi and find this a good place to stay. I am glad someone else is tackling this issue and not me. Iliia thinks it will be solved in some fashion by September.

Bill Casarella and Crawford Long hospital donated a mammography machine which is now in #2, still in a crate. It is very hard for the hospital to come up with a plan that most effectively uses the machine, given the present largely dysfunctional state of the hospital. But they feel it is theirs, since they are the partnership hospital. A long monologue from Iliia to me about loyalty to the partnership, his multiple problems and huge work to try to solve them (all true), and so forth. I told him about the radiology residency Bill Casarella is planning to set up, and the visit in one month of Perry Sprawls and Srini McKundan of Bill's department. I said firmly we would wait until then to solve the question of the location of the mammography machine, since it would be a part of the equipment related to the radiology residency. Another monologue, with some Biblical allusions on both parts about loyalty and the like. I made some quips and finally brought a smile to his face. I sympathize with his problems a lot.

Another problem. About a year ago Bill Casarella persuaded GE to donate a used 1989 or so model CT scan to the hospital, and we announced it. Then GE backed out, citing problems with maintenance support. We are continuing to try to persuade them,

and I hope the buying of the GE cardiac cath lab for the cardiology center will persuade them to change their mind. I will talk to Bill on my return.

Back to the NILC and met with Gia Khechinashvili and his assistant Irakly of the TB Institute. They are working closely with Hank Blumberg of our Infectious Disease Division. I like and respect both of them enormously. Irakly is working on his USMLE; exceptionally bright. Would like to have him as an intern in the future. Hank is quite knowledgeable about resistant TB. They don't know in Georgia if they have any or not, since the electricity doesn't stay on constantly enough for culturing. Based on experience with neighboring countries there is great concern, however.

They were warmly pleased about Andy Trickey and his work. Asked me several times to send another student for a project. Turns out he tested 100 patients, and none of them had AIDS. But this was voluntary, and now they are going to test the next 100 consecutive admissions themselves.

They badly need second hand culture equipment. I will talk to Hank Blumberg and we will see if some can be found and sent over when the Georgia National Guard comes over this summer. Also need pulmonary and tb textbooks and other teaching materials, both simple for staff and complex for physicians.

They wanted to know when Hank Blumberg was returning. They are looking forward a lot to his visit. Hank has received a research grant from Emory, and he and Gia have put in for a larger grant from the NIH. He applied the the Emory Medical Care Foundation for another grant, but was turned down. This has upset me quite a bit. The EMCF has a large fund set up specifically for the faculty geographically located at Grady to do research. They didn't feel Grady faculty doing research in Georgia was appropriate. Research is research, it seems to me, and the focus is the faculty at Grady and not the location of the research. Georgia offers us a unique opportunity to do research not now possible in the U.S., and if we have an able individual like Hank who is excited and enthusiastic, then we should move ahead. This is especially pertinent since the funds are basically undersubscribed.

I arranged with Zviad to set them up an email account at the NILC, where they can communicate with Hank and others. They will check it several times a week.

They have obtained the funds to send a technician to work with Hank to learn about modern methods of culturing TB. She will come to Grady in the near future. They are waiting to hear from the NIH in July or September to hear about the joint grant they presented with Hank. We are all hoping.

Another discussion with Zviad about how the NILC can make money selling services.

We discussed e mail, short courses and the like. We are both looking forward to Karen Marsh's ideas about this. Discussed salaries again, and our fear we will begin losing excellent people if we cannot find some way to increase the salaries.

To dinner at a fine old Georgian restaurant with the Minister, George Shakarishvili, Guram (one of the Deputy Ministers who runs finance), George Gebunia and his father. George is an oncologic surgeon, about 35, who injured his hand and cannot do surgery any more, and now wishes to take a management course--e.g., MBA--in the US. Problem is he made too low on the TOEFEL exam (given to people abroad to assess their abilities with English; certain score required by all US schools for admission), in spite of having spent six months or a year in the US. The dinner was given by his father so we could all meet and see if there were any solutions.<sup>33</sup> On ordinary conversation he has no problem, to my ear.

His father made a fascinating host. He was one of the two or three "second secretaries" of the Georgian communist party when Shevardnadze was First Secretary, and also held the portfolio at that time of being Mayor of Tbilisi. After Shevardnadze departed to Moscow the new man gave him a lateral move as head of the subway system, which he continues to head. He says they pay \$208,000 a month for electricity; 600,000 riders a day; \$0.15 per ride; 5,000 workers. They pay \$115 to \$153 per month to their workers. All of them began quitting three years ago due to poor working conditions and poor salaries, so they of necessity increased the pay. It is now amongst the highest in Tbilisi, and he said many professors had come for jobs to moonlight.

He wants to find health insurance for his 5,000 workers, plus 1500 pipeline workers. Wants comprehensive insurance. So far hasn't been able to find anyone able/willing to do this. Asked me if I knew of anyone in the U.S. who would be interested in setting up a company to do this in Tbilisi.

Told a story about when Shevardnadze left to become Foreign Minister of the Soviet Union, they desperately needed a big shipment of wires for the subway system. Made by the Ministry of Defense. Months, and nothing. So they called Shevardnadze in Moscow, and after a day of the aides checking who they were, they were allowed to talk with Shevardnadze. He called the Minister of Defense, who called Mr. Gebunia, and said with some heat that he had been Minister of Defense for twelve years, and had only spoken with the Foreign Minister three times (!), and who the hell did they think

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<sup>33</sup>A few days later George Shakarishvili got an announcement from Boston University about a three month management course they are just starting that has no language requirement. Problem solved.

they were to asked the Foreign Minister to call him about some wires? The wires came the next day.

To Betsy's and called Atlanta. An intern at the end of the year discovered not to have been given a diploma by his school. Juha called the school. Hadn't taken some tiny course.

Question by Juha: why didn't you call us when you knew he had matched with us and you were not going to give him a diploma?

Answer: our attorneys advised us that would be a violation of his privacy rights.

California.

Friday, May 2nd

Friday, May 2, 1997	
8:30	Breakfast with George Danelia at Betsy's
10:00	Patient Examination at ATHP Office
11:30	Meeting with Pridon Todua at the NILC
12:30	Meeting with Sergo Tabagari, Biochemistry Course Director
14:30	Lunch
16:00	Meeting with Otar Gerzmava at the NILC
17:00	Tour of the Burning Center

Another bright, sunny and beautiful day. Breakfast with George Danelia. George is a physician who was appointed director of the new nursing school, and spent two months with Judy Wold at Georgia State. About 30, father dean of the philology division of TSU<sup>34</sup>. George wanted to discuss his future. He has decided to be a neurosurgeon, and told me of his proposed training program. Basically graduate from medical school and then spend five or so years working with neurosurgeons in the Neurology Institute. He is thinking about this, but in the meantime wishes to continue with the nursing school. One of the problems is that George hasn't been given authority or responsibility, and being a young person doesn't know how to move on out without either. We discussed this at some length.

To the NILC where I saw a private patient, a friend of Gia Kechinashvili. A 45 year old former policeman who had a stroke in 1995 leaving him with a moderately severe left hemiparesis, but without cortical problems such as neglect. No English, so Irakly was

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<sup>34</sup>Philology is a big deal in Georgia; huge school; as nearly as I can tell it is the equivalent of a general education degree. I gather most of the graduates teach school, but I may be wrong.

my translator. I began as I usually do in these circumstances of seeing a patient who has had an acute problem some time in the past, by taking a meticulous history up to the time of the ictus. Not much of note on first pass, just mild hypertension. I persisted, out of habit more than suspicion, and suddenly he said something about having episodes of "confusion." To make a long story short, he had episodes for 12 years of obvious migraine headaches and his mother had them also. Then a stroke, most likely as a complication. I reassured him to the best of my ability about no recurrence if he was treated for migraine (this is actually an unsettled question in the literature, with evidence on both sides), and talked about physical therapy, etc. He had been carried as a stroke due to hypertension.

To the Railway Hospital and a meeting with its chief doctor, Prydon Todua. About 45 or so. One of the brightest and most able of the "new mentality" physicians in Tbilisi. A radiologist who has built a truly modern small hospital, complete with new Siemens MRI, and all the other technology such as Dopplers and the like. Modern laboratory. He is continually improving himself and his staff, sending them to Europe and the US for courses. He will be the chief of the radiology residency, and Perry Sprawls and Srinivasa will work with him. He often leaves some waves in his wake as he forges ahead with a tremendous amount of energy and ambition. Reminds me a lot of Temur, the Mayor of Kutaisi, and Shota Jeparidze, the ENT surgeon.

I began the conversation with profuse praise of everything he had done, and then talked about the new radiology residency and the upcoming visit. I am looking forward to a first class radiology residency that can serve as a beginning model for the development of other residencies. He showed me all his new equipment and new building since I was there a year ago.

Back to the NILC and a second meeting with a candidate for one of the unfilled course director slots. We had found an eminently satisfactory individual for this particular slot, but he is not on the faculty at TSU, and the chair of the department had gotten his back up ("he is not one of us") and refused a faculty appointment. I instantly felt at home when told of this complication. I still couldn't make up my mind.

Lunch at a nice restaurant, the Orient, owned by Georgian Technical University. Archil, Nata, Dato the driver and myself. Outside on the terrace. As Andy Trickey, the student, says, life is good.

A meeting with Otar Gerzmava of TSMU. He talked about his difficulties with this and that and the other. A resounding familiarity of the usual academic problems with students, superiors, colleagues, money, space and facilities.

A meeting with Dito, of the EMS center, and Leah, of the nursing office in the Ministry. The partnership has given Dito two computers, and another is planned for Leah but is some time away. She desperately needs a computer, because she is writing new regulations on nursing. A long document that will be a presidential decree. Some difficulty about sharing the computers. We went around about this several times, and I twisted Dito's arm severely and wrote out a memo that all of us signed to the effect that one of the computers would be in the nursing office from 2 pm to 6 pm each day. They all had the grace to smile at the end.

Archil and I went to the Burn Center Hospital. The night before I had met Lasha Iashvili, who was at the dinner with the horse people. About 32, an anaesthesiologist. Smart and personable. His father is the chief doctor. He showed us a portfolio of burn victims he had taken to Shevardnadze in 1970, and convinced him to fund a burn center. It has 80 beds with 40 patients today. Adult beds 30; children 25; ICU 12; plastic surgery 25. We went on a tour. Pitiful burn patients in squalid conditions, but as near as I could tell receiving superb treatment within the limits of their resources. I had been quite impressed by Dr. Iashvili. Articulate, organized, enthusiastic about his specialty and his patients, a truly good physician.

We went through the pitiable conditions, and then with some ceremony and suspense, which I couldn't figure out, they threw open a large door, and we went into a small ambulatory plastic surgery operating center that could exist in any upscale US hospital. Chrome, glittering up-to-date equipment, computerized records. Turns out they had scraped together all their resources a year ago and made this small oasis where they do ambulatory plastic surgery on patients who can pay. They use the money to help support the much larger operation on poor destitute burn patients. Only burn center in Georgia.

Archil and I were bowled over. To say the least. Left with the idea of doing anything we could to help these truly excellent people.

To Eka Asatiani's family for dinner. She is the one who spent six months with us as a student, and now will be a preliminary intern. Made very high on the USMLEs. Beautiful, charming, talented. Her father is second in charge of the Georgian equivalent of the General Accounting Office. He and his boss have a record of absolute integrity and competence. They have been responsible, I hear, for the demise of more than one Finance Minister. Thirty-five people at a groaning *supra*. The Minister of Health, and a host of other high level politicians. As noted before, they are all from Guria. Jeffrey Whitney, Executive Director in Georgia of Howard Energy International (the international consortium building the pipeline) was there, and I greatly enjoyed seeing another American being introduced to a *supra*, with the requisite toasting and

drinking. We were both subjected to the ram's horn toast. I had learned the hard way, and absolutely insisted on a very small amount of wine. I gave a toast to the future of Georgia, hitting on what I feel were some important themes about hard work, leapfrogging technology, and the like. Jeffrey was sucked into one of the arms wrapped around the other toasts, and downed a significant amount of wine from a quite large horn. He'll learn.

I was weary about midnight, and began to prepare to leave. Eka's mother and father had a tearful meeting with me, saying how they were going to miss her, were worried about her being away so far, and so forth. I reassured them to the best of my ability. Eka showed me downstairs and told me she had had a really difficult time persuading them to let her go, both as a student and now. But she was determined to get the best possible education. All of them are really nice and admirable people whom I like a lot, and have much respect for.

Home to call Atlanta and hear some more problems. Collapsed in bed with gratitude.

Saturday, April 3rd

<u>Saturday, May 3, 1997</u>	
12:00	Meeting with Ramaz Khurodze and Archil Kobaladze at GTU
14:00	Meeting with Course Directors at the NILC
15:00	Lunch with Amiran Gamkrelidze and Alexander Aladashvili
19:00	Dinner with Medical students at Natia Esiashvili's house

A dreary, gray rainy day with penetrating cold. Had breakfast with George Bear, a clinical faculty member of New York University, and protégé of Saul Farber, who is over working out a streptokinase project with World Bank funding. One of their rare forays into acute medicine. Now many patients with acute myocardial infarctions don't go to the hospital, because little is done for them, except keep them for an average of 15 days (Chepedize unit). George's goal is to do some public education about the signs of acute MI, and then set up a unit in the Cardiology Institute that will instantly give streptokinase. He is working this out very nicely. He also has some good ideas about preventive cardiology. I arranged a meeting with Archil Kobaladze, who has been working with Virgil Brown in our department, so far without any success at getting funding.

George told me a revealing tale. At the Cardiology Institute the ICU is on the sixth floor. On good winter days the electricity is available 60% of the time, so he asked them what they did with new MI admissions and no electricity for the elevator. Answer: they toted them up the stairs. After much persuasion, George convinced

them to put the ICU on the ground floor.

I had lunch with Lado Gurgenidze and Sandro of UMCOR. Lado got his MBA at Emory and I got to know him well, and we have remained close, as noted before. Lado has been offered a 12,000 sq ft house, beautifully built, 40 minutes outside Tbilisi for \$7000. Decided not to take it because no sewage, and would take a lot of trouble to get everything working. Hard to do from Moscow. Also I think he isn't ready for it. Too much into the world of high international finance and his ambitions for the future. He is about 28, and has a bright future. Highly analytical and has a lot of common sense, as well as wisdom.

Met with two more candidates for course directors. Still not satisfied.

I met with Alex Gvelsiani, a neurosurgeon about 40 who does microvascular neurosurgery at the Neurology Institute. Interested in 3rd ventricle and brain stem tumors. MDPH with lot of Moscow training. Liked him a lot. Would like to come to Emory for a visit. Some months ago I sounded out Dan Barrow about this, and he was quite receptive. I told Alex to let me know when he was ready for me to approach Dan. He knows George Tindall well. Says they are desperately in need of up to date information about newer techniques and methods of treatment.

Over to Georgian Technical University to meet with Ramaz Khouradze, the rector, just back from Germany. We talked about Teddy Püttgen of Georgia Tech and how to work out a visit. I will meet with Teddy and his vice president on my return. It may be that a visit by Ramaz to Lorraine might be the next step, or else a visit by Teddy here. Also talked about visit of Betsy Blakeslee and US military, and how GTU would need to be included, since they may well provide much of the technical support of the telemedicine project. Talked about potential visit of Toby's father with jet engines for electricity for the Rustaveli Steel Plant, of which Ramaz is Chairman of the Board. He is preparing answers to questions sent by Mr. Hage, and I asked him to fax them to us for us to forward.

Lunch with the crew: Archil, Alex, Amiran, Temur Khouradze (provost of TSU; brother of Ramaz; the man who makes it happen at TSU) to discuss our plans at TSU of new medical school, nursing school and health administration school. We are all pleased with the progress we have made to date. I made some strong statements about the need for independence of the school's dean, and said we did not need to deal with any "mini-Khetsourianis." A satisfactory conversation. But much, much to be done. I am following my usual practice of having absolutely zero expectations, and thus will be delighted and gratified with anything. I asked Temur how much on average he paid his faculty. TSU has 30,000 students, a large faculty. About \$115 (150 lari) a month.

Went to pick up my map that is geocentric with respect to Georgia. Turns out all the countries have been labeled in Russian! No one of us thought to specify the language. I also had the impression they didn't know English. I carefully wrote in block letters all the countries and seas, and Archil put the Georgian words by each. Will pick up map Monday.

To the Turkish baths, to get an appointment for the next day. The students told me they had some in Istanbul, and they were fabulous. Alexander Dumas wrote a small essay about his enjoyment of the Tbilisi Turkish baths. There are some new ones. But all of them are filthy, so I forgot about the idea.

To Betsy's and called Levan in Moscow to finalize the arrangements for my visit to him on Monday.

To dinner at Natia Esiashvili's with ten of the seventeen Georgian students who have spent time with us at Emory. A delightful occasion, as usual. They are all working like Trojans on preparing for their USMLE exams, and are at various stages: one exam taken and passed, awaiting results, just about to take both of them. They had a *tamadan* and toasted just like any true young Georgian learning the ritual. One gave a toast to the id and its importance to humanity, to be immediately countered by another one giving a toast to the superego. I gave a toast to their future, focusing on each of them in turn and making personal warm remarks. I know all of them quite well now, as well as their parents and siblings. Present were George (who had a syncopal episode the first day on the team at Grady with Stan Smith), Nick (from Telavi, and a close friend of the intern James Cruse), Natia (who I think wants to go into neurology), Tina (father dean of the faculty of pediatrics, a surgeon), Vaso (wrote about him in last chronicle; Stalin grew up in his grandfather's home in Gori), Temuri (his father was my first Minister of Health), and Dato (in whose home I had the meal). It takes an enormous amount of grit for them to take the exams: little electricity; very poor to absent resources; cost of \$900, which is a year's salary or more for their families; travel to Ankara, Turkey to take the test. One has to admire and respect them greatly. They asked me to give their warm regards to people in our department: Stan Smith, Fernando Holguin, Carlos Franco-Paredes, and John Borowski in the dean's office. They were much taken with the notion of Fernando being engaged. One of them remarked that 50% of Fernando's time was spent enjoying the company of multiple beautiful women, and they were looking forward to seeing how he adapted to monogamy.

I always enjoy talking about their perceptions of the Georgian and English languages. They continually have new observations. Tonight they brought up the fact that

Georgian doesn't have the articles *a*, *and*, and *the*. Russian doesn't have them either, and of course they all are fluent in Russian. Nick said it was completely impossible to explain to a Georgian, even one experienced in English, the function and need of articles. I have now listened, and noted that there is a paucity of articles in the English of Georgians. Another point is that, like Spanish, there is one word, *es* (ES) for *he*, *she*, *it*. They tell by the context. Explains why South Americans and Georgians are continually getting gender confused--at least in speech!

Sunday, May 4th

<u>Sunday, May 4, 1997</u> Meeting with Course directors Visit to Akaki Lekiasvili's family Visit to the castle Dinner with Alexander Aladashvili
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A bright and beautiful day, with a wonderful breeze blowing through my eyrie at the top of Betsy's. I had planned originally to leave at 11 am and go to the horse ranch outside of Tbilisi. But on Saturday I had canceled that, since the weather was so bad and I thought it would persist. So I worked on this report and took phone calls. In the afternoon Dato, Zviad and I went out to the fortress I previously described as being called an obscenity with respect to the Persians in the 17th century. On top of a small mountain, huge and impressive, with a breathtaking view of the river and surrounding areas. A made for photography opportunity.

Back and interviewed a candidate for the physiology course director. We had been worried about finding a suitable one. A woman about 50 who was absolutely superb. Lot of teaching experience, used American texts and could discourse beautifully on organization of a course. Sold. A second interview of one of the courses we are having difficulties with, and had same results of not being happy.

I told Alex we needed now to start working on the new medical school giving USMLE I and II as part of the required curriculum for the students, just like we do in the U.S. We also discussed trying to get the school accredited through the US LCGME. There are at least two schools with this precedent.

To the home of Aka Leikashvili for a mini-*supra* (to my dismay; had hoped for only drinks). Aka spent six months with us, and just last week passed USMLE I and II. He made very high marks on the medicine shelf exam with us, and he will be a superior intern. His father was president of the wine-growers union during the former Soviet Union, and I usually see them when I come over.

Dinner with Alex and his wife. Reviewed with satisfaction our progress this visit. Alex said four course directors will be ready to come to Atlanta (physiology, cell biology and histology, neuroscience, perhaps biochemistry). No one in anatomy speaks English, so we have given up on that. Alex will need to come over some time again in the near future. We are having the AIHA annual partnership conference at Emory for two weeks in October, and he will come then, perhaps. We have invited Tom Lawley, our new dean, to go to Tbilisi some time in the near future.

Monday May 5th

<u>Monday, May 5, 1997</u>	
10:00	ATHP office
12:00	Meeting with Jano Kekella, Institute of Geography
12:30	Visit to Gia Bokuchava's family
17:00	Depart Tbilisi to Moscow

Got up with the rooster with the disturbed hypothalamus and worked on this report and began packing. Dato the driver took me to get a haircut, done with much trepidation. I said over and over "very little!" and it turned out well. To the NILC and final conversations with Archil and Zviad about business. Picked up my map.

Had lunch with Givi Bokuchava and his wife, two of my favorite people. Retired professor of mechanical engineering at Georgian Technical, written many papers and several texts on grinding--diamonds and the like. Gia, his son, came over 2-3 years ago. PhD in computers, a genius. Helped us plan the NILC for a year, now works at a company in Atlanta that makes and provides a file server for large companies'--such as AT & T--home pages. Gia has become the executive vice president, and they have gone from ten to eighty or so employees. Gia will become a Georgian Bill Gates. Givi and I talked about the problem of getting Gia married. Givi has "five beautiful young prospects." He has had no success. I murmured something to the effect that the problems with the Persians and the Georgians and the obscurity was that the Persians couldn't cut off the source of water for the Georgians. And perhaps that applied to Gia.

In the yard of the apartment house a very elderly pathetic bent lady appeared, begging. Archil meticulously went out his way to give her some money. I have often been impressed by this invariable response, done with the utmost courtesy and consideration, of Georgians to people in difficulty who are begging.

Paid off the cell phone (\$270), looking forward to a cheaper rate with competition the

next visit. Indispensable.

To the airport for the 5 p.m. Alak (piece of Aeroflot) flight to Moscow. Equivalent of L1011. Packed. Three abreast. Two hour flight. Met by Levan at the airport after an anxious period when they couldn't find my luggage. A very Russian woman supervisor--stern, generous proportions, no-nonsense--found the bags. I kissed her.

We met Levan's close friend Tom Kosco and had dinner. Fascinating person. About 37 or so. Grew up in Pennsylvania. To Rice and became metallurgist, since his father was one. Then discovered he was clumsy, and got a combined JD-MBA from the University of Chicago. Took Russian for some reason, developed a close relationship with someone from St. Petersburg. Partner for eight or so years at a very prestigious US law firm. Then decided to come to St. Petersburg, where he taught corporate law and finance in one of the universities. He and Levan have worked together at two firms now, and are discussing setting up their own partnership. He is about to move to St. Petersburg, and asked me to visit him there the next time I come. I will. I liked him a lot.

Tuesday, May 6th

Up late in the day, worked on this report. Met Tom, who gave me a tour of the Moscow subway system. Stalin started it just before WW II, and finished thereafter. Murals and frescoes and statues everywhere. Huge halls with colonnades. Spotless. Cars old but spotless. I was impressed out of my mind.

A five mile walk to the Kremlin and around downtown Moscow. Dinner at night with Levan, Nino (Levan's friend), and Lado Gurgenzidze, who is back in town from Tbilisi.

Wednesday, May 7th

Got up early this morning and fulfilled a longtime ambition: seeing Lenin in his tomb. Got in a short line at 10 am, was led into the tomb by a guard. Red marble, understated somber sepulchral splendour. Down the stairs. Lenin lies on a bier enclosed in glass. Absolutely lifelike. Could have died two days ago. Short trimmed Van Dyke beard. Exquisitely lit. Waxy hands and fingers. A very real sense of what he might have been like when alive.

Then outside, and marched behind the viewing stand and marble tomb for Lenin along to the the burial places of the Communist pantheon of distinguished leaders, their buried ashes with a statue of them. Almost at the end, placed without distinction amongst marshals and people such as Molotov, there was suddenly the statue of Joseph Stalin. All the writing was in Russian, but his face was unmistakable, and I knew

the dates of his birth and date which were on the statue. If I remember correctly, he was with Lenin, and then Kruschev had him cremated and unceremoniously placed with the others. Stalin may have considered himself the founder of Communism, almost on a par with Lenin, but by God his colleagues had their say at the end!

Off to the airport, and the 2 p.m. Delta flight to New York and thence to Atlanta.

#	DRAFT BUDGET: MINISTRY OF HEALTH	Cost (thousand lari)	USA \$
	<i>Programs nomination</i>		
	<u>I- Medical Prevention Programs</u>	<u>9,000</u>	<u>7,258</u>
1	Immunization of population	4,800	3,870
2	Prevention of Infectious Diseases	1,000	806
3	Implementation of "healthy lifestyle"	250	201
4	Prevention of sexually transmitted diseases (STD)	600	483
5	AIDS prevention and treatment	600	483
6	Provision (support) of information systems	300	241
7	Prevention of endemic goiter and program of native radiation investigation	500	403
8	Prevention of drug abuse	500	403
9	Safe blood program	250	201
10	Active reveal of morbidity	200	161
	<u>II - Programs of medical insurance</u>	<u>42,500</u>	<u>34,274</u>
11	Psychiatry	3,500	2,822
12	Pthysiatry (Tuberculosis)	3,500	2,822
13	Obstetrics	7,450	6,008
14	Treatment of Infants (age 0-2 years)	12,000	9,677
15	Additional medical assistance to infirmity category	8,000	6,451
16	"....." above the State standards and outside state medical programs	600	483
17	Prevention and treatment of infectious diseases	2,000	1,612
18	Prevention and treatment of oncology diseases	3,500	2,822
19	Hemodialysis program	500	403
20	Additional treatment for diabetes	1,000	806
21	Children's cardiosurgery programs	250	201
	<u>III - Other healthcare Programs</u>	<u>8,500</u>	<u>6,854</u>
22	Additional treatment of population of high mountains	700	564
23	Additional medical care of war invalids	500	403
24	Medical checks of military selectees	200	161
25	Medical care of orphans	700	564
26	Catastrophes and medical reserves	500	403
27	Medical science and education	5,116	4,125
28	Restoration of the most important medical organizations	1,500	1,209
29	Management and reforms	800	645
30	State sanitary control and hygienic standardization	600	483
	<b>Total:</b>	<b>62,116</b>	<b>50,093</b>