

GEORGIA

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Saturday, October 10--Monday, October 19, 1998

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Atlanta-Tbilisi Healthcare Partnership
Summary of Projects: October 1998

NGO conversion of partnership	Should occur in next few weeks. Will be composed of present projects of the partnership: NILC; EMS training center; current office; nursing activities.
MBA school	Opened during this visit by the rectors of the three universities that have established the consortium to be called "The Caucasus Business School." Will have forty students, who begin taking prerequisites Jan. 1999 and start a two year course Sept. 1999. Partnership with Georgia State University in Atlanta, Bijan Fazlollaha.
Kutaisi Regional Center	On the books to open in 1999, assuming funding is obtained. Have been given 22 rooms in former hospital. Will have satellites of: NILC; EMS training center. Will be the focus of nursing continuing education and many nursing activities in partnership with the Imereti healthcare region. Will plan on putting Women's Wellness Center here in partnership with World Bank perinatal center, which is scheduled for 1-2 years.
National Information Learning Centre (NILC)	Flourishing but in need of stable funding. Especial need for stable salaries of about \$40,000 a year. Applying to Soros Foundation for core funding for five years. Need to upgrade the equipment, for which we will apply to US AID. Plan to establish network around Georgia, and later the Caucasus region. Hope to establish Distance Learning Room in 1999, that can be used by any institution for connections with other sites in Georgia and the rest of the world.
Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Training Center	Fantastically successful with training of a considerable number of Georgians of all ages and locations in Georgia. Emphasis on policemen, firemen and the like.
Nursing	Nursing School at Tbilisi State University just about to get started formally, being sponsored by Georgia State University. Dean has been selected, space given and curriculum planned. Continuing education for practicing nurses planned in detail by Laura Hurt of Grady. A Nursing Learning Resource Center will be established probably in association with the Nursing School.
Tuberculosis and AIDS	Joint research projects between Emory and Tbilisi in both, funded by NIH and World AIDS Foundation, with substantial amount of money for preventive education. Will consider establishing model centers for both in Kutaisi Center. Considering what can be done for Safe Blood program.
Prosthetics	In the planning stage for establishing CAD-CAM technology in Georgia, ultimately serving entire Caucasus region.
Medical Education	Now have thirteen residents in training programs at Emory, all of whom are doing well. New medical school at Tbilisi State University in planning stages, future not entirely clear.
Technical Assistance	Planning radiology residency and imaging center of excellence. Assisting development of cardiac catheterization and angioplasty laboratory, in connection with other institutions. Poison Control Center assistance in progress, anticipate increase. Exploring continuing to explore micronutrient deficiencies, notably iodine and iron, with view of establishing plan for eradication, with Emory School of Public Health. Discussing assessing traumatology in Tbilisi and laying plans for tackling the problem.

Saturday October 10

Left Atlanta at 1:30 p.m. to New York to catch Delta flight 30 to Moscow at 6 p.m. This is trip #12 or 13 since we started our relationship with Georgia in 1992, funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development (AID). That cycle of funding has now run out and I am enroute to Tbilisi to plan with our partners on what to do for the next several years, and how to present those plans to the American International Health Alliance (AIHA) --the non-governmental organization in Washington through which AID gives the funds. Just last week AIHA signed the contract to be AID's agent for this next funding cycle, as they have been since 1992.

We have just completed our report of our six years activities. I quote from the beginning:

The American International Health Alliance (AIHA) health partnership project between Atlanta, Georgia, and Tbilisi, Georgia, funded under a cooperative agreement with the United States Agency for International Development, has existed since October of 1992 when the eleven charter partnerships were announced.

There have been many accomplishments during this period. A central theme of the Atlanta-Tbilisi Health Partnership has been a dual focus upon both short term and long term projects. Some projects have had a sharply limited focus and others a broad scope. The steadily developing collegial relationships that have occurred during the years as the partners have traveled back and forth have been richly productive of increasing insights into the ways in which Atlanta-Tbilisi can be of benefit to Georgia in the present and future. The accomplishments of the past six years are viewed by the partners as stepping stones into the future.

Our current goal is to put together plans that will get us funding for another cycle of three years.

It strikes me that I now prepare for trips to Georgia in the same light as a one or two day jaunt to Washington. Georgia has become interwoven into the fabric of my life such that going there is like going down to the farm in Washington, Georgia: pleasurable, full of anticipation, but not a big deal. Stark contrast to most of the trips since the beginning in 1992, where my view was similar to what I would have now of preparing to go like John Glenn out into space.

I have been reading recently several really excellent books that prepare one's mind for the former Soviet Union: *Lenin's Tomb* and *Resurrection* by David Remnick and *The Wars of Eduard Shevardnadze* by Ekedahl and Goodman. Remnick was a *Washington Post* reporter in Moscow starting in about 1988 and lasting through the breakup. He

has just been named editor of the *New Yorker*. The book *Lenin's Tomb* viewed solely as a book without regard to its content is one of the two or three best books I have ever read. It creates the atmosphere of the former Soviet Union largely through interviews by Remnick with a myriad of people, interspersed with insightful comments and relevant history. He does this flawlessly in a number of ways: structure; word choice; sentence construction. In college I wrote an essay on how Hardy in *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* utilized nature--verdant pastures, old gnarled trees, storms--to set the stage for the crucial episodes of the book. Remnick does this kind of thing with similar mastery, but has a much more difficult task. The sense of what the Soviet Union is and was, in all its complexity and *chiaroscuro*, comes through loud and clear. A "must read" book. I give some examples below, both for an idea about what occurred during the break-up of the former Soviet Union, and to give a flavor of the book:

Little more than a month after the Congress closed and Moscow shifted into its mode of summer torpor, perestroika spun out of control, first in the coal mines of Siberia, then in mines all across the country, from Ukraine to Vorkuta to Sakhalin Island. After July 1989 the Kremlin could never again have any confidence at all that it was the master of events. After July 1989, the illusion of a gradual, Gorbachev-directed "revolution from above" was over.

The "revolution from below" began when a group of coal miners in the Siberian town of Mezhdurechensk walked off the job at the Shovikovo mine, led by their shift leader, Valery Kokorin. The main issue was soap. The miners were angry, too, that their equipment was pitiful, that the work was wretched and underpaid, that food supplies were meager and benefits nonexistent. But what galled them most was the grit in every crevice of their bodies, the inability to come home from work and wash themselves clean. There was no soap.....

After a five-hour flight and a half-hour ride through the Siberian taiga to the city of Kemerovo, I got my first glimpse of the working-class rebellion. In Armenia I had seen hundreds of thousands of demonstrators on the streets and almost as many in Lithuania, Estonia, and Latvia. But there had never been anything quite so dramatic as this, nothing that had so vividly illustrated the disintegration of the workers' state and the changing mind of a broad sector of the people.....

The Siberian miners had an instinctive sense of media and imagery. They made for great television, and they knew it. Though they were not working, they came to the meetings dressed as "miners," smeared with coal dust, wearing their helmets and gritty work clothes and boots. At dusk, they created an even more spectacular image when they turned on their Davy lamps. It seemed as if tens of thousands of huge fireflies had invaded the square and gone into a frenzy. The speakers, of course, took their turns under the feet of the city's biggest statue of Lenin. The irony was lost on no one.....

There had been strikes before in the Soviet Union: bus drivers in the city of Chekhov, airline pilots who refused to fly until safety standards were improved. But the symbolism of the miners' strike was extraordinary. The miners embodied the vanguard of the proletariat, a bastion of Bolshevism in the old days. To look out at the great crowd of them in Lenin Square was to see a kind of poster for what had once been called "the masses." And now the masses were walking off the job and declaring that socialism had not delivered anything--not even a bar of soap.....

Even in the beautiful summer weather, the villages near the Yagunovsko mines were dismal places, more miserable than anything I had seen in West Virginia or the north of England. The miners and their families lived either in tiny wooden houses, shacks with a tin chimney, or, more often, two- and three-story apartment flats known as barracks. Families were packed into these dwellings, and somehow they could not keep them clean. No one took the garbage away. There was no hot water. Indoor plumbing was rare; in winter, that meant a trip to the outhouse in temperatures forty degrees below zero. Men confided that they and their wives were humiliated that they had to make love in rooms while their children were sleeping, or pretending to sleep. They had not been able to buy contraceptives of any kind for months. "The abortionist is the busiest man outside the mine," one woman told me. The children in the villages seemed to have no toys and wandered through the streets, playing army, hurling sticks and stones. They were filthy and their teeth were already yellowing. Their parents' teeth were rotten, and the lucky ones had caps made of brilliant silver or gold. They all looked older than they were. Men in their fifties who had just gone on pension were hunched over and sinewy from crawling through the mines and swinging a shovel since they were fifteen. They wore greasy jackets and caps. When you shook their hands, they felt like a fighter's hands, rough and pillowy, swollen from too much work. Their eyes were vacant and filmed with rheum. The women, at least the ones who worked above ground, seemed to have more spirit in them, but not much. They were women who, after a certain age, had seen their husbands fall sick or break down and die.....It was a miserable life.....If there were pleasures in the life of the miners beyond those of good talk and family, I did not see them. The most obvious pleasure killed them: in the morning, retired miners lined up at a vodka truck, and seconds after they'd made their score, they drained the bottles. When they could not get the real thing, they made moonshine out of everything from hair tonic to canned peas. I saw one drunk lying in the street drinking water out of a puddle.....

(Remnick goes down into the mine.) The labyrinth of alleys and tunnels and chutes had filled with water, which made the walking all the harder. As we made our way down the main shaft we began to stumble along through water a foot deep. The bottom was like the muck at the bottom of a pond, and after a few minutes my boots were filled with bits of coal, sharp-edged chunks that began to slice my ankles and blister the soles of my feet. Not one of the miners said a word about it. Along the way, we passed men, many of them in their fifties and sixties, tucked into crevices and cracks only a couple of feet high. They lay on their backs, or in

some other contorted position, chipping at the coal face or repairing some part of the support structure. When they opened their mouths, coal dust would fall in. The men who had been working for an hour or more were completely black, and all you could see in the half-dark was their flashlights, their eyes, and their teeth. I glanced into one corner and saw three miners, black figures in shadow-light, and they did not move or speak. They were on their ten-minute break....

Valentina Alisovna, a member of the mine's Party committee, was one of my guides. She watched me listen and take down the long, numbing litany of complaints: the horrible work conditions, the danger, the disgust with a life that goes nowhere. Party leader or not, she seemed ashamed, and at one point her eyes filled with tears. "We live like pigs, I'm sorry to say it, but it's true," she said. "The mine is a century behind the times. When we go home we can't count on electricity. The water goes out on us. I'm no capitalist, but it's obvious this system has done nothing for us."

- *Lenin's Tomb: The Last Days of the Soviet Empire*. David Remnick. Vintage Books. 1994. pp. 223-229.

On Andrei Sakharov:

What made Sakharov unique was not his suffering alone. Others had suffered much more. And what made him unique was not his ideas. He shared his ideas with men and women who were dissidents even before he was.... "My father's ideas were not original," Sakharov's son Efrem told me. "His ideas of morality and liberty had all been said before. It was his fate to bring received wisdom to a place it did not yet exist." The story of the perestroika years--the years between the rise of Gorbachev and the collapse of the Soviet state--was, to a great extent, the story of change inside the hearts and minds of individuals. Sakharov's life and thought prefigured that change in such a dramatic way that I would not hesitate to call him a saint. He was the dominant moral example of his time and place.

Sakharov was a scientist whose metaphors and sense of truth were rooted in an understanding of cosmology, the "magic spectacle" of a thermonuclear explosion, the calculus of the Big Bang. His unerring sense of rightness, like that of scientist-moralists from Galileo to Oppenheimer, was steeped in his understanding of the scientific problems of light and time, his firsthand appreciation of both the laws of the universe and man's tragic tendency to turn progress into catastrophe. He held in mind, it seemed, a picture, even a music, of eternity. Sakharov once turned to his wife and said, "Do you know what I love most of all in life?" Later, Bonner would confide to a friend, "I expected he would say something about a poem or a sonata or even about me." Instead, Sakharov said, "The thing I love most in life is radio background emanation"--the barely discernible reflection of unknown cosmic processes that ended billions of years ago.

Sakharov was a man inclined toward the purities of theoretical physics but who became the conscience of the Soviet Union, a political actor in spite of himself.

His physics and his politics grew out of the same mind, the same sense of wholeness and responsibility. "Other civilizations, perhaps more successful ones, may exist an infinite number of times on the preceding and following pages of the Book of the Universe," Sakharov wrote in his Nobel Prize lecture. "Yet we should not minimize our sacred endeavors in the world, where, like faint glimmers in the dark, we have emerged for a moment from the nothingness of unconsciousness into material existence. We must make good the demands of reason and create a life worthy of ourselves and of the goals we only dimly perceive." pp. 164-5

I am also reading a book about Shevardnadze during the trip. Notable so far for its information about him as a party leader in Georgia and his early interactions with Gorbachev.

Greeted former US Ambassador to the Soviet Union, Art Hartman, on the plane to Moscow. Art was ambassador in Moscow under Reagan, and is clearly one of the giants in that position. Last year he and I served together on the Long Range Strategic Plan for International Activities of the National Library of Medicine. Sitting in front of me was Boris Nemtsov, deputy prime minister of Russia last year under Chernomerdyn. Very much an up and comer. Some people think he has the potential to be president some day. Fortyish. Looked to be an earthy sort of man with a warm spontaneous smile. Some of the Russian passengers came and talked with him and he handled them with warmth and interest. Western style politician.

Sunday October 11

Met at Sheremetievo airport by Levan, my close friend, a young man from Tbilisi who lived with me for two years while getting his MBA at Emory. Now is the number two person at Aton, an investment bank in Moscow. The fourth largest investment bank in Russia. I was here in June, and I was of course very curious about the current situation in Russia.

Levan says they came through unscathed, via a lot of liquid assets in dollars. The only problem is now they have nothing to do. Russian companies are for sale, but the foreign investors are completely uninterested at present. A big change from June, when he was working twenty hours a day--like an intern!

Lunch at TGI Fridays. Not a soul in the place, which is quite large. Levan says ordinarily on Sunday afternoons it is so crowded you have to wait a long time. Walked along one of the main streets with import specialty shops. Perhaps one person in the showrooms. Once again, on Sundays they are packed. Not many people on the streets. A streetside speech by Russian Nazis, railing against the current government

interlarded with many antisemitic comments, according to Levan.

The *Moscow Times* (an outstanding English newspaper) reports imports in September were down 45%. Equally startling is a poll that 30% of Russians said they would vote for Bill Clinton to be President of Russia, were he to run--a higher percentage than any Russian. Makes you wonder. Also an article about the Pentagon spending \$50 million on Viagra that included some good lines: "The brass are not being profligate with this seed money." "The Pentagon says it has to establish a firm \$50 million limit on the capsule erector sets." "Russian soldiers demand Viagra, saying they must be standing tall when they cross swords with Americans in the future."

Now on Air Georgia down to Tbilisi. 1250 miles. Seat companion Paata Vadachkoria. Twenty-seven. Works for a Turkish bank in Tbilisi. Computer degree from Georgian Technical University. Wants to come to U.S. and get his MBA when he has saved enough money in about two years. I told him about the MBA program Georgia State University is setting up in Tbilisi. Sister is staying with the mayor of Ball Ground, Georgia, near Atlanta, and attending school. Wife and one child. Quite ambitious.

Met at airport by Georgian friends: Archil Kobaladze (Director of our partnership office here), Maia (administrator), Irina and Shio (Levan's parents), and Beso's mother. Beso is twenty-five and is living with me now in Atlanta while working on his MBA at Georgia State. He is the cousin of Levan.

Went to a restaurant for a brief catch-up session. I gave Archil a wonderful column in the current issue of *Fortune* on President Clinton. Archil, like everyone else I encounter outside the U.S., is fascinated by the entire Lewinski episode. I told him of a conversation between me and Peter Lichty. Peter is a current junior student who spent a month here in June on an elective. In his previous life he was a Vanderbilt educated lawyer. Pete hates Clinton and feels he should be impeached for lying. I replied it was lying about sex, and theorized that had been true probably at one time or another of every human being. "Haven't you ever lied about sex?" I asked Peter. He told me with a lot of passion "I have never lied under oath!" I promptly pointed out that while lawyers apparently made a distinction between lying under oath and on other occasions, to us ordinary human beings lying was lying. Archil, who likes Peter a great deal, inordinately enjoyed my recounting of this exchange.

To Betsy's Guest House and collapse.

Monday, October 12

Crisp, bright and beautiful fall morning. Breakfast with Elizabeth James, a

neonatologist from University of Missouri. Here for the second time on a Project Hope mission, funded by the World Bank, on neonatal resuscitation. Shared her perceptions and experiences. Huge number of pediatricians, poor training in neonatology. Large number of newborn infections and death because they are unwilling to send newborns home with umbilical cord still attached. They remove it surgically, leading to infection and often death. Nurses leaving lecture room in astonishment that nurses in the U.S. were allowed to use stethoscopes ("We would never be allowed to do that in Georgia!"). The *Georgian Times* of Friday had this article:

The death rate of children and mothers in Georgia increased dramatically, according to research by the UN Children's Protection Fund. A doubling in the cases of abortions among children ages fourteen and under, a doubling in drug consumption among teenagers, as well as significant increases in sexually transmitted diseases.

Archil picked me up at 10 a.m. We went to Georgian Technical University (GTU) and connected with Bijan Fazlollahi and George Turkia. Bijan is a professor in Georgia State University in Atlanta, who visited Tbilisi with me last year. Bijan in his former life was born in Iran and did various jobs in his youth, such as working in a steel mill for the Soviets. He is now in the Business School of Georgia State. He set up an MBA program in Baku, Azerbaijan, in a private university. It has been quite successful, and has graduated its first students. He has obtained a \$500,000 grant from the Eurasia Foundation (which gets much of its money from US AID) to set up a similar program here in Tbilisi. We have been working to set this project up for over a year now. Three institutions (GTU, Tbilisi State University and the Institute of Economic Relations) will form a consortium, the Caucasus Business School. Each of the three parent schools will be responsible for a certain portion of the curriculum. George Turkia of GTU will be the dean, with an associate dean from each of the three universities.

Bijan is highly organized and efficient, as befits someone who has been highly successful in this part of the world. We met with Ramaz Khurodze, the rector of GTU (equivalent of Georgia Tech; about 30,000 students; Tbilisi State University is the equivalent of the University of Georgia, with about 33,000 students; the Institute of Economic Relations is new, about 1000 students). Bijan said five things needed to be done:

1. Set up the consortium as a legal entity under Georgia law
2. Plan the opening, with President Shevardnadze and the U.S. ambassador in attendance if possible
3. Select the faculty, each of whom would spend one semester in Atlanta
4. Recruit 40 MBA students, who could pass the equivalent of the GMAT exam

and pay 1500 lari tuition (\$1 US dollar = 1.32 Georgian lari).

5. Begin to plan for undergraduate students. Their tuition: 1000 lari/year

A visitor at our meeting is Hamlet Isaxanli, the rector of the private university (Khazar University) in Baku, Azerbaijan, where Bijan set up the MBA school. Came across as highly intelligent and effective. He talked later at some length with Archil and me about whether or partnership here might do some things with his university. We agreed to explore this.

Bijan plans for students who are admitted to the MBA program to take prerequisite courses Jan. 1999, and then start their MBA course in September 1999. It will be a two year course. There will be five areas of specialization:

1. General management
2. Accounting
3. Marketing
4. Hospitality
5. Health care management

Bijan has been so kind as to include the latter because we need it so desperately in the health sector. There are at the moment a maximum of two individuals in all of Georgia who have any concept of western health care management techniques. Archil suggested we ask Avto Jorbenadze, the Minister of Health, if he could pay the tuition for ten of the MBA students with the agreement they would specialize in health care. We will ask him.

Bijan brought up the importance of distance learning from Atlanta to Tbilisi. In our budget for the National Information Learning Centre (NILC) we have proposed setting up a room for distance learning. The NILC is the library connected to the internet that our partnership established and opening in December 1977. It has been wildly successful.

Bijan talked with Ramaz Khurodze about the possibility of a visit by the president of Georgia State University. He would also see the nursing school that Judy Wold of Georgia State is establishing with Tbilisi State University. Everyone agreed we would aim at such a visit in the not too distant future.

We then visited the Institute of Economic Relationships. This is a new small business school of 1000-1500 students founded by the Minister of Education. The rector, Guram Tavartkiladze, met with us. His person for the Caucasus Business School is George Goganidze, a highly energetic young associate professor type. Bijan brought

up his plan to send the faculty from here to Georgia State for one semester of study. He will send 27 of them, beginning with three in January 1999. He brought up the importance of "sustainability" to the U.S. donors of the project: they needed to see that the business school was going to be a permanent enterprise. The first step in this is to prepare a three year budget. While this sounds simple on the surface, there is a lot behind the scenes. The budget will have to show where the tuition money that is collected will reside, what account the money paid to the faculty will come from, and other similar items. This addresses a key point: will the Caucasus Business School be an independent entity (albeit formed as a consortium) that collects and disburses money, or will it simply be a front for the three institutions, who will collect the money themselves and use it as they see fit.

I was struck during both meetings by incoming cell phones calls. Countries such as Georgia have sophisticated cellular phone systems that contrast with their primitive land based systems. The cell phones here are of the latest digital type--and have been for several years--with caller identification, etc. Everyone I work with over here has a cell phone, including myself. They are absolutely indispensable.

Archil and I had lunch at a Georgian "fast food" place. Shish kebab. Outside on a patio, with a broad boulevard in front of us. Cool air, beautiful day. Then I went back to my room and had a one hour nap to try to catch up on jet lag.

Met at the partnership office with a group from England. They have a contract funded by the World Bank to train physicians in primary care. Led by a lady who is the associate dean for postgraduate education at London University; did not catch her name. The faculty come here for a week at a time. Next one is Dr. Michael Grenville from the North Thames division of the university. They have taken about eight physicians from Georgia for training in London. Several of these came along to our meeting with her. The plan is for these eight to be trainers, who now will train others, etc.

I tried to discreetly probe into the nature of the training. We have had a lot of experience with the clinical skills of Georgian physicians: almost forty interns and senior students have come to Emory now from Georgia. The medical school clinical training is far below U.S. standards. The physicians who do become highly skilled do so during their initial years after graduation, which appears to me to be similar to virtually every country other than the U.S. and Canada. But I suspect only the top group develops these excellent clinical skills. No one has carefully assessed the clinical skills of a cross-section of Georgian physicians. One of the problems is that they are highly specialized from the beginning of medical school. E.g., if you are going to be a pediatrician, you start out in that part of medical school. In a similar vein the hospitals are highly

specialized. I have told before of going into a cardiology hospital to see a famous composed suffering from a stroke, and asking for an ophthalmoscope. "Ophthalmologists don't come to this hospital, so we don't have an ophthalmoscope," I was told. Same was told me when I asked for a reflex hammer. An early intern of ours from Georgia who had specialized in cardiology in Tbilisi told me he had not been taught to look into eyes; he only examined the cardiovascular system.

With this in mind I asked about the clinical skills of the Georgian physicians who had been taken to London. I said it would not be productive to train physicians how to treat otitis media if they couldn't look at a tympanic membrane and tell that otitis was present. I was told that the clinical skills had been assessed, although no details were known. This was as forward as I thought it advisable to be. The conversation ended with all of us agreeing that we should seek ways of supporting each other's project. E.g., we are planning a regional educational center in Kutaisi that will be ideal for primary care emphases.

To a reception at Metechi Hotel (now the Sheraton) for the President of Chevron Overseas, Richard Matzke, and his wife Billie. Chevron is starting up in Georgia, and this was the inaugural. Ramaz Khurodze's son David will be the general manager. I met Mr. Temur Chkonia, who is Mr. Coca-Cola of Georgia. I went to an opening of his bottling plant, the only Coke plant in the region, several years ago. Coke has been quite successful; the streets are covered with bright red and white Coke umbrellas. He also produces Stalin vodka, and Shevardnadze vodka. He told me he is opening the McDonald's franchise in Tbilisi, with one being built downtown, and up to six planned.

To a private after-reception affair. Admired greatly Billie Matzke, wife of the president, who flawlessly characterize a chief exec's wife: warm, spontaneous, interested and inquisitive about everyone, about Georgian history and Georgian people. I asked how they were flying out--Istanbul? Vienna?--and was told the Chevron plane would take them first for a refueling stop in Greenland, then a change of pilots in Minnesota then finally to the California base--16 hours.

A big topic in Tbilisi continues to be the large oil pipeline from Baku in Azerbaijan. There are four potential routes:

1. Baku through Georgia to Ceyhan in Turkey. This route, preferred by the U.S., has the advantage of bypassing the Bosphorus. Cost about \$4 billion, which is double the cost of each of the three possibilities listed below.

2. Baku through Georgia to the Georgian seaport of Supsa. There is already a small pipeline using this route, recently built. The disadvantage of this is that tankers

from Supsa have to sail through the Bosphorus.

3. Russian route from Baku to Novorossisk, which is also on the Black Sea.
4. Iranian route, from Baku to the Persian Gulf.

No decision has been made about its course. Most authorities feel it will cross Georgia and end in Turkey. A report during my visit was that instead it would end in Georgia on the Black Sea port of Supsa, and not go to Turkey, at a savings of \$2 billion dollars. A decision was supposed to be made while I was here, but it was delayed due to the presidential elections in Azerbaijan. The feeling is that it will bring \$40 million or so into Georgia's economy each year. A secondary and perhaps even more important benefit is that Georgia will then become very important to the strategic interests of the US and benefit in many ways from this:

The Caspian region has emerged as the world's newest stage for big-power politics. It not only offers oil companies the prospect of great wealth, but provides a stage for high-stake competition among world powers. This grand rivalry has become with an intense competition for control over pipeline routes that will carry Caspian oil to foreign markets. Much depends on the outcome, because these pipelines will not simply carry oil but will also define new corridors of trade and power. The nation or alliance that controls pipeline routes could hold sway over the Caspian region for decades to come. The Clinton Administration has been exerting every form of persuasion at its disposal to convince the oil companies to choose a route that would run from Baku, the capital of oil-rich Azerbaijan, through Turkey to its Mediterranean port of Ceyhan. But it is evidently losing the battle. Administration officials, Congressional aides and oil executives said in interviews last week that the companies will probably decide that the American-backed pipeline is too expensive to build now. The companies are expected to announce that they will rely on a much shorter pipeline that is already being built from Azerbaijan to the port of Supsa, on Georgia's Black sea coast, or an enlarged pipeline along the same route. From Georgia the oil would be loaded into tankers and shipped across the Black Sea toward Europe--a move that not only would deny potentially billions of dollars in revenue to Turkey, an American ally, but would mean a sharp increase in oil tanker traffic through the narrow Bosphorus strait (which runs through the center of Istanbul and splits it into European and Asian parts--kw), which Turkey strenuously opposes (for fear of wrecks and ecological destruction--kw).....Unfortunately for the Administration, however, the Baku-Ceyhan route is also the longest and most expensive to build of all proposed routes (kw: cost \$4 billion, which is apparently about \$2 billion more than the Baku--Supsa pipeline). Last year the oil companies discreetly asked the Clinton Administration if it would be willing to pay part of the cost of building its favored Baku-Ceyhan pipeline. They were told that any such payment would be viewed as a Government handout to the oil industry, and therefore politically impossible.

Unable to subsidize the Baku-Ceyhan line themselves, American officials urged Turkey, through which most of the line would run, to offer the companies a generous package of incentives and tax breaks. They said this week that Turkey never produced such a package, and complained that the instability of Turkey's Government has made it a difficult partner. *New York Times* October 11, 1998.

Tuesday, October 13th

A wonderful breakfast with Jessica Henman, which Archil had arranged. She is a degree R.N. from the U.S., who is here with her husband for a five year stay. He is a protestant missionary (Church of Christ?), also a computer person who helps Zviad in the NILC. Jessica is around 30, and is the best example of a very bright, involved person who wants to be productive. She has cast around the nursing arena to try to find some anchor from which she can use her considerable nursing skills to help Georgia. Hasn't been able to find a satisfactory base. It was Archil's idea that she would be ideal to work with Laura Hurt and Judy Wold in our plans for the future of nursing in Georgia: a nursing school which Judy is setting up at Tbilisi State University, and the continuing education of practicing nurses which Laura is undertaking. A really big problem is we have no point person here in nursing. Judy and Laura are continually frustrated at not being able to communicate directly with anyone. Try as we might, we have been unable to find any nurses who speak English. Judy's new school has a person we think will be an excellent dean, Dr. Gela Arabidze, but even he doesn't speak English. This makes faculty training at Georgia State University in Atlanta very difficult, to say the least.

We have accomplished a lot in nursing the last six years, however, due to the skills and abilities of Laura Hurt and Judy Wold. I quote from our six year report:

- Institutional reform of nursing as an independent profession was begun throughout Georgia
- A core base for nursing education was begun
- The start of establishing managerial nursing infrastructure at the Ministry and regional levels
- Nursing delegations completed intense "train-the-trainer" exchanges at Grady Health System. E.g., during 1997 there were 54 nurses trained in "Nursing Leadership," and 30 nurses in "Nursing Skills" courses. Four nurses spent one month in Atlanta in an advanced leadership and teaching course.
- A national conference on Nursing Leadership was held in 1996.
- A second national nursing conference was held in 1997, training nurses in physical assessment and skills development.
- The Georgian Nursing Association was established with the aid and

encouragement of Atlanta-Tbilisi in 1996.

- The Minister of Health created the position of Chief of Nursing in the Ministry.
- Tbilisi State University has moved toward establishing the country's first university level nursing school.
- Opened the Nursing Learning Resource Center in the World Bank Continuing Education Center in May, 1998.

We need to move now to the next level, and for that we need the right person in Tbilisi. I thought Jessica would be perfect. She is bright, highly motivated and has exactly the right sort of temperament to do the job. It will offer her a structure in which she can exercise her skills and talents, and will be of great benefit to us.

A visit to the Ministry of Health, beginning with Amiran Gamkrelidze, the Deputy Minister. Highly able, very articulate in English. A pulmonologist with a particular interest in asthma and allergy. He asked how many Georgian house staff we had? I told him: seven interns (transitional and preliminary programs); four PGY II residents; and two PGY III residents. In addition: one is on the general medicine faculty; one is a nephrology fellow; one is in psychiatry; one is practicing general internal medicine in Florida, and one is doing a neurology fellowship at Yale. Eighteen total since we began the program in 1993. I also said they had performed superbly as a group, making very high schools (often eighties or higher) on the national in-service exam in internal medicine.

This brings up a conversation I had earlier with Archil. We now have a critical mass of Georgian house staff, so there can be some beginning generalizations. A number of them have never gotten a car, so they perforce of necessity live close to Marta, and are tethered to their apartments when outside the hospital. I have noticed they have little social interactions, but basically stay in their apartments and study continually. Very serious about their work. But over the long haul this has consequences, and has been some mild depression in one or two cases. They largely fit into the hospital and social culture without much turbulence. There has been a small amount of "I am the doctor, you are the patient" mentality, but very little. There was one public homophobic comment that lead me to have a meeting with all the foreign interns and talk about cultural differences. I have worried that they don't reach out to the other house staff, becoming a part of the larger group socially, but stay to themselves pretty much. I have brought this up to them collectively and individually. The interns this year are a lot more socially interactive than the previous ones, and I am watching that with interest. I have tried to be wary of coming to conclusions with a very small group, since sampling error is a big possibility. So I am watching the new interns carefully, to see if they continue the closed group style, or do become very much integral parts of the larger group of house staff. I would like it a lot if one or two of

them were clearly chief resident material. These are people who can be identified even as interns as future chief residents. They are leader types. Spontaneous, warm, sociable, highly communicative. People liked and loved by the other house staff, who often speak of them. A large number of South American house staff have fit this mould over the years. On the other hand, our experience with Georgians is barely five years old, so it is too early and the sample too small to have any such expectations now.

I have also been keeping a close eye on what they want to do with their careers. One of the current interns is going to do radiation oncology. She will be the first Western radiation oncologist in Georgia. Another is going into hematology/oncology. Two are going to be neurologists (neurology is a big deal in Georgia, just as elsewhere in the former Soviet Union). Two are going into infectious diseases. The others are thinking of cardiology, or are undecided. I am pleased with this diversity. They have the potential to be the leaders of Georgian medicine, beginning in just a few years. I wish we were able to have specialists in other fields, such as surgery, but house staff training in surgery in the U.S. is almost impossible for a foreigner to breach.

Andro Kacharava, who finishes his PGY III year this month, is going to Galveston with Marschall Runge to become a cardiologist. Andro has a PhD, already has demonstrated promise in research, and has the potential to become the leading academician in medicine in Georgia in the future. We almost lost Andro to private practice in the American state of Georgia due to family concerns. I violently objected to this. Andro's family made a really good point: Andro could not go back to Georgia now and practice what he had learned in the U.S. This is unquestionably true, and is of great concern. My point was that Andro would finish in five years, and things would be different then.

But back to the conference at the Ministry. The Minister, Avto Jorbenadze, came into the room. He is my third minister of health: the first one lasted only the first visit; the second one rapidly became foreign minister, a post he continues to hold. Then Avto became minister five years ago. We have become quite close over that time. I gave him a brief updating of what I was up to in Tbilisi this time. I brought up the issue of the house staff we are training at Emory, and pointedly said they either had to have a suitable environment to return to, or they would be lost to Georgia. He said the World Bank hospital project would be finished in two years, and it would be have the technology, equipment and facilities they needed.

I told him about my dream for that period. To have the funds to support Emory faculty to come over for a month at a time, setting up their area of expertise--cardiology, surgery, gastroenterology and the like--and to teach for the month. I said

this would require considerable money, both for expenses and to pay their salaries to the medical school while they were gone. He and I agreed this was a worthy endeavor, and one that we really needed to do. God only knows where the money will come from.

This brings to my mind another issue: our partnership has been funded since 1992 by US AID, under their "health partnership" program. This program had its inception then, and has been so successful I understand it has been used as a model for partnerships in other areas. It works like this: AID gives money to an NGO, in our case the American International Health Alliance, which takes out overhead (25% or so), and engages U.S. universities and institutions such as hospitals to start a partnership, such as ours, with a NIS counterpart. The success of this program has led to what will be the beginning of another cycle of funding, which is why I went to Georgia. The new funding for the NIS is said to be in the neighborhood of \$70 million (this is rumor, and may be totally wrong). A lot is made of the "volunteerism" of the U.S. institutions, such as hospitals and medical schools. No money comes to them. Just expenses for trips both ways.

This was a good idea when it started, building upon the "let's give it to private enterprise" idea of the Reagan years. But the health environment has changed greatly now, and the faculties of medical schools do not have enough time to spare to donate virtually any of it to overseas institutions. The field is replete with major institutions who have suffered the blood bath of a red bottom line the last two to three years. I gave a presentation of our project to the new administration a year ago, and the remark was that "when faculty are overseas no one is doing their job here." In other words, for the partnership concept to prosper in this time, the universities must be paid to compensate for faculty time. (I keep out of this problem by taking my vacation time of one month a year to do the partnership activities in Georgia. Even then I get criticism.) Otherwise they will not participate to any substantive degree. A corollary is that for the partnerships to be truly successful there must be a broad-based long term involvement, such as we have been trying to build. Small one or two shot deals probably do more harm than good, since they raise expectations but produce little or no benefit. To put this another way, AID money needs to be given for overhead both to the nongovernmental organizations and the universities and other institutions.

A subsidiary problem that bedevils me is the difficulty for institutions such as ours to get money from AID. How to be successful in getting funding requires no less skill than getting grants from the NIH. There are a large number of nongovernmental organizations who exist solely on AID money. They have developed to a fine art the methodology of going through all the hoops to obtain the money, just as basic

scientists do with respect to the NIH. People like me don't have the time or interest to develop these skills. And it would be a waste of our time, which can be better spent devising ways of helping the countries. AID needs to come up with some way to make it easy for institutions who want to do this to get involved. Right now we are facing mountains of paper work and rigid adherence to all sorts of rules, many of them unknown to us, about what money can be spent for, and how to write the proposals. AID as a governmental institution who is devoted to helping the rest of the world would be well advised to take note of these problems on the part of universities and similar institutions, which is where the resources lie. The resources don't lie with the nongovernmental organizations, who at best are facilitators, and at worst are simply striving to perpetuate themselves.

The Minister brought in Art Holbrook at the end of our meeting. Art is a retired dentist from LaGrange, Georgia, who has been working with Poti and Zugdidi in Georgia, through the LaGrange-Poti Sister Cities program, as long as we have had our partnership. He has done a remarkable job, planning the renovation of hospitals and health facilities, bringing people to LaGrange for training and garnering the support of the local politicians for his endeavors. He and I agreed again we would work closely together in the U.S. with our joint efforts.

To a meeting at the Metechi Hotel called by US AID to discuss ideas for funding the next three years. The money has been allocated by Congress, somewhere around \$3 to \$4 million for Georgia. Around the table was about thirty representatives of the nongovernmental organizations in Tbilisi. The question put forth was: if you had only one thing to do for Georgia, what would it be? The answers were predictable; the rule of law; human rights; education; macroeconomics; root out corruption. I kept my peace until I felt I had to speak. I said there was an old house with a well a few hundred yards from where we were meeting. Near the bottom of the well was a tunnel that reached a small room under the house. In the room, during the early 1900s, was a hand-operated printing press upon which the communists had printed much of the propaganda used to convince the Georgians and others to support the Communist revolution. I said the actual printing press was in the house and all of them should go see it. I asked then the question: what would the communists in 1900 have said in answer to the question "what do you want?" The answer: a printing press and paper. In a similar vein, I said, my answer to the question now was simple: electricity. With electricity one can heat homes, feed hungry bellies, teach children, print informative materials about the rule of law and macroeconomics, provide working hospitals, etc. And, I said, every winter there is no electricity for about 50% of the time. A Georgian woman enthusiastically supported my comments. Then the leader rapidly sought other answers, passing by the suggestion about electricity. That is not what they were about, of course. Electricity is dealt with in another part of the AID

labyrinth. The need for the primacy of the electricity problem is so evident I don't understand why everyone doesn't think so. At least part of the reason is that a few areas in Tbilisi are supplied with electricity virtually all the time: where the members of parliament and other important people live. They don't go into the hospitals and see no patients except one or two who have brought their own small portable stoves. They don't see the cold operating rooms, the absolute inability to give any sort of care. They don't see the cold classrooms where students won't go. I asked one of the Georgian medical students what he did about studying in his one-room apartment during the winter. "I don't," he said. "I have to stay in bed all the time to keep warm."

We are concerned about what is happening in AID in Georgia. The new plan for the Caucasus region for the next three years has AID setting up a regional officer for health care, who will come up with the strategic plan for each country and the region (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia). AIHA, who now has the contract for administering the partnership funds for the region, will also have a regional office in Tbilisi. AID hired a Sudanese physician, with an MPH from Johns Hopkins, several months ago to be their regional officer. I had known him earlier, when he worked for an NGO in Tbilisi. I had interviewed him for a job with our partnership, and had been impressed by him. Then a few days ago he was summarily fired. I used this word with someone in the Embassy and was corrected: "a mutual agreement." The rumor (and it is only that) is that he was visited in the Embassy by some Sudanese, and became offended when the Embassy security demanded to know what they wanted. To be interpreted in the light of the American Cruise missile attacks in Sudan recently, we suppose. At any rate, AID seems to be rudderless, and to have no health care strategic plan. That is no problem: we have one. On the other hand, they may choose to wish to develop their own!

Lunch in a small excellent Georgian restaurant near the Metechi with Archil and Zviad. We discussed converting our partnership into a Georgian nongovernmental organization. We agreed to do this. The members will be: the National Information Learning Center; the Emergency Medical Services training center; the nursing activities; and other less discrete projects, such as what we are doing with medical education.

To the NILC and a meeting to review what is being done in the nursing activities. We discussed Jessica Henman's involvement, which received the enthusiastic approval of the other nurses. I answered my email on Eudora.

A forty-five minute nap at Betsy's to help with jet lag.

A meeting with Tengiz, the director of the AIDS Institute. He is working closely with Carlos del Rio of our infectious diseases division. They have gotten a \$350,000 grant

from the World AIDS Foundation for prevention. Tengiz had some tentative plans drawn up for the next three years. Most of them had to do with equipment and drugs. We agreed we would rework the plan when he comes to Atlanta shortly, with the idea that AID will only go for prevention and education, and we must look to other places for equipment and drugs. Tengiz brought up the problem of hepatitis in Georgia, of which here has been little assessment. I suggested we get with Tom Boyer in Atlanta when he comes. Tom is an internationally known hepatologist who has a lot of interest in hepatitis.

A drink with Archil in the Europa restaurant. Discussed the NGO conversion and the need to find a faculty member for the health care part of the MBA school.

To dinner with Irina, her husband Shio, her mother and father, and her sister and her husband. The latter two are the parents of Beso, the student who is staying with me while working on his MBA at Georgia State University. Irina's son Levan, who lived with me two years in Atlanta while getting his MBA from Emory, is the one I visited in Moscow. Irina spent four months with us in Atlanta when Levan was there, working in the Woodruff Medical Library. She now is the USIA librarian in Tbilisi. I had a great time with her mother and father, whom I have known for five years now. He is Levan. About 78, a famous professor in Tbilisi State University. Speaks passable English. A wonderful man. He and his wife have a farm at Challa, where they have just had their sixtieth anniversary. This was a week long festivity attended by the entire family, including Levan from Moscow. He pressed on me his home brew of plum vodka, which he proudly makes and drinks himself. I tried it, liked it, but estimated by tongue test and aroma that it was well over 100 proof. Irina said he distilled it twice. Rich golden color, potent bouquet.

His wife is quiet. Since she doesn't speak English I have not interacted with her to any extent before, but I had always gotten the idea she was a dominant force in the family. To my amazement I discovered she had been a pediatric orthopaedist in her time. I asked how she spent her time: reading. She is now on *The Idiot* by Dostoyevsky for the fourth time. I remarked to Irina I had never seen any books in their house. This touched a sensitive nerve, and I was promptly shown a large library. Turns out they had a large library which they lost during the revolution and fires in 1992. The husband Shio is a lover of books, and is continually bringing them home from used book stores. I reviewed the titles: would have done an academic in philosophy justice. All the great Russian writers, plus many European (Hardy) and a few U.S. ones.

Wednesday, October 14th

Awakened to no electricity, but hot water was present. I showered with the door opened to the hall, hoping there wouldn't be much traffic. I had once again adjusted to European showering, and didn't get the floor too wet. I also remembered to put on my money belt, indicating I had acclimatized. The first few days I dress totally then discover I have forgotten the belt. Levan Bakanidze came to have breakfast with me. He was a student from Tbilisi to Emory a year ago. Plans to go into surgery. I had been concerned, because I knew and had told him it would be doubtful for him to get a U.S. position. He has decided to become a resident at the Institute of Oncology, and become a cancer surgeon. He wants me to visit there and discuss the possibility of cooperation. We settled on Friday.

George Turkia, the dean of the business school at Georgian Technical University (and the new dean of the MBA school), came to talk. He wants my support for a DNA mapping program. This is the Human Genome Diversity Project of Luca Cavalli-Sforza of Stanford University. The goal is to probe the genetic continuity of thousands of populations of populations around the globe. E.g. the Basques and Georgians, and determine their lineages. This proposal has run into heavy ethical fire on ethical grounds and fears that it might violate indigenous peoples rights and it is stalled for lack of funds (see *Science*, 24 Oct 1997, p. 568). George says the equipment for Georgia will only cost \$100,000. I suggested he send me the details and I will see if any of our faculty might be interested in getting involved in the project. I did say the principal investigators were the ones who needed to obtain the money to support it.

I saw a 37 year old Georgian cardiologist from the city of Kaspi at the request of the minister. She was widowed three years ago when her husband was killed in the civil war with Abkhazia. She now wants to come to the U.S. to be trained in echocardiology. She told me about her usual daily activities (a favorite way of mine of getting people to talk and of beginning to figure out some things about them). Hospital between eight and nine; rounded on about fifteen patients of hers; then outpatients. Then I asked her to tell me about some individual patients. A 47 year old man with an acute myocardial infarction. Risk factors of smoking, obesity, diabetes and hypertension. Crushing substernal chest pain. Placed on heparin. Then a five year old with "an acute myocardial infarction." I expressed amazement. I told her I wasn't at all certain about the possibilities of coming to Emory, and would get back with the deputy minister.

I next met with Gia Kechniashvili, director of the Institute of Tuberculosis. He is working closely with Hank Blumberg of our department. They have gotten some grants from the NIH. He brought along two young medical graduates: Kaha Dvalidze and Data Arveladze. Both Gia and Tengiz of the AIDS institute are superb at mentoring young Georgian physicians. Gia says the ministry has \$3.5 million in the budget for TB this

next year, to be spent on salaries, medical services and drugs. The presence of resistant TB is unknown, since the electricity does not stay on long enough to culture the bacillus. In neighboring countries, such as the Ukraine, it is a significant public health problem. Gia presented his wish list for next year for us to help get funding for. He wants to set up a model diagnostic laboratory and Directly Observed Therapy in three regions of Georgia; cost would be \$150,000 per region. We discussed seeing if we might put this in our plans for the Imereti region, where we plan to set up a regional health center. Archil and I think it might be possible to do this for \$50,000, although we are not sure AID will go for it in the partnership program. We will discuss the plans with Hank Blumberg.

A noontime meeting at Tbilisi State University. Roin Metrevelli, the rector of TSU, Ramaz Khurodze, the rector of GTU, the rector of the Institute of Economic Relations, the American Ambassador, Bijan and me. Plus others. The purpose was the formal announcement of the Caucasus Business School. Roin gave a talk, then Bijan. Then me. I was surprised, hadn't prepared anything, but managed to mutter some appropriate words. Then the U.S. ambassador, who had some interesting comments about this being the first of this sort of joint collaboration between the U.S. and Georgia, and he did not intend for it to be the last. He is new as of four or five months ago. Just here from Belarus, where the U.S. has quite an adversarial relationship. Came across as a genuinely nice and helpful person.

Some comments about Roin Metrevelli. Rector of TSU, the big university of Georgia. It has 30,000 students, 15-20 faculties, beautiful buildings near the center of Tbilisi. I have met and dealt with him many times since 1992. A tall, powerful man, 55-60. An historian of Georgia. For some reason I had never inquired about him, thinking he had been a professor all his career and had risen to be chief executive of the university. A chance remark by Archil led me to ask about him and discover his interesting history. He was a communist rising star, first as head of Komsonol (the Communist youth organization) in Georgia, then as a principal member of the Communist party in Georgia. He was a principal contender for the job of First Secretary in Georgia when Shevardnadze got the job. He immediately quit his post in the party and became associate director of the Georgian History Institute (I don't have this name quite right). He stayed there a number of years and published books and articles on the history of Georgia. He then became rector of a small institute. At this time, seven or more years ago, Shevardnadze no longer felt he was a threat and TSU was having many problems. So he became rector of TSU. A politician who adaptively became an academician (he holds the title of academician, which is the professor *summus* of the former Soviet Union). I had read a couple of years earlier that a poll had shown him to be amongst the top three most popular individuals in Georgia, and had mistakenly believed this was simply because he was rector of the largest university.

Rector Metrevelli then led us on a one hour drive to the old town of Mtskheta, which was the old capitol of Georgia, until about the fourth century a.d. Today is *Mtskhetoba* day, where everyone goes to the town and visits the cathedral of Svetitskhoveli (1029 a.d.), one of the most sacred christian places in Georgia. The old kings of Georgia are buried on the floor. We took pictures outside the cathedral. The courtyard and entire town was saturated with people in a festive mood.

We went to the home of Gocha, a physician about 35, who is head of the hospital and medical services at TSU. I have known him for several years, and think highly of him. His home is in the town itself, and a huge *supra*, or Georgian feast, had been laid down. The toasts were led by Roin, and were many. Sitting next to Gocha was a young oncologic surgeon, who Archil says has an excellent reputation. Then a third man, about 40, who is one of the new wealthy of Tbilisi. He has contributed a lot to the health care side of TSU, apparently as an investment. There was a German Lutheran preacher at the table with his wife. He came to Tbilisi some years ago, sold his home in Germany, and built a beautiful church, home and surrounding German community. He gave two long toasts that displayed nicely his verbal talents as a minister. I gave a toast to Roin and Temur Khurodze. Temur is the provost of TSU, the brother of Ramaz Khurodze, the rector of Georgian Technical University. Temur is one of my favorites. Low-key, highly effective, no baggage nor bull.

Bijan Fazlollahi sat next to me, and during the long toasts I took the opportunity to get his history. Born in Iran in 1939, where his father was one of the Shah's generals. Spent some time in Maryland in high school. Degree in mechanical engineering from MIT in 1962. In 1966 he built a steel factory in the middle of the desert in Iran for the Russians. Alex Rondeli, a famous professor and good friend in Tbilisi now, was the translator at the factory during that period, and they came to know each other well. In 1971 he ran a German bus manufacturing company in Iran; he was the plant manager. In 1973 he became head of the Iranian Port Authority, which he did until the Ayatollah came to power. He became president of a geotechnical lab for the ministry of roads in 1976. In 1979, after the Ayatollah came to power, he became some sort of board member. Then in 1984 he received his PhD from Syracuse University in computers and information science. Then to GSU, where he is a professor in the Business School. Quite a history.

Back to Tbilisi, and a late night conversation at the house of Archil. His son Sergo came in. Sergo is 17, a devotee of baseball and fine soccer player, who is recovering from infectious mononucleosis. He and Archil and I discussed his future schooling. He is tentatively planning to attend TSU for one or two years, then go to the U.S. for professional training, perhaps in law. I lobbied for him to take the SAT now, and see if

we can get him into a really good U.S. school from the beginning. Or failing that, after one year of TSU.

Thursday, October 15th

Levan Kacharava, brother of Andro the PGY III resident, came and we had a 7 a.m. Turkish bath. A good way to start the day. I was rubbed almost painfully by a sponge of sorts ("*mekise*") that scraped off the first layer of the epidermis. I like so much a quote from Alexander Dumas' visit to the Turkish baths of Tbilisi in the last century that I will quote it again, as I did a year ago:

".....we followed our guide to the private rooms beyond. The first was a vestibule with three benches, where we undressed and were each given a small towel. Then we went to the second room. I confess I had to come straight out again, for I thought my lungs would burst in that hot, steamy air, but after standing in the doorway for a while I grew more accustomed to it and managed to go inside. The stark simplicity of that inner room was almost biblical. It was all of bare stone and contained three stone troughs full of water so hot that at first I could not even put my finger in the coolest of them.

Alexander Dumas, *Travels in Caucasia*, translated by A.E. Murch

Levan, in true Georgian style, had vodka afterwards. I simply couldn't stomach the stuff at 8 a.m., and demurred.

Back to Betsy's and breakfast with David Arvelidze, who had been with Gia of the Tuberculosis Institute earlier. He is applying for internship. Personable, articulate, good reputation as highly motivated student, but only 78 or so on the USMLE tests. I expressed some pessimism as gently as possible, but promised to consider him for a subinternship next year if he didn't get in any place. This will enable me to write a letter for him based on work at Grady, and might be of some help next year.

To the NILC where I answered email and met with the nurses briefly. Then met with Dito, who is head of the EMS training center. Dito is outstanding. He started the center, with the advice of Gail Anderson, who has just left Grady as chief of staff. The need for the EMS is based upon the Soviet lack of a "911" or "first responder" network. The only individuals trained in resuscitation were physicians in hospitals. AIHA set up a "model" for an EMS center, which we established in Tbilisi. I quote from our report to AIHA about the activities of the EMS the last six years:

- Since the opening 60 training courses have been held, 56 in the training center and four at remote sites: Zugdidi/Samegrelo region; Gali/Abkhazia; Gudauri; and Supsa.
- Twenty-two programs have been special programs for nonphysicians and children
- Other special programs have included governmental guards, car drivers, mountain

guides and four day courses in First Aid for pipeline companies.

- 1492 people have been trained in the EMS TC since its opening

Physicians	722
Nurses	159
Red Cross	7
Dept. Extreme Situations	28
Mountain guides	38
Government guards	33
Students	96
Rescuers	106
Car drivers	35
General population	45
Children	142
Pipeline companies	81

- The distribution of trainees by age:

26-37 yy.	47%;
18-25 yy.	20%;
36-50 yy.	16%;
6-17 yy. –	11%;
51-60 yy.	6%.

This sort of activity over the long haul will have a lot of impact upon the citizenry of Georgia. We are now planning to establish satellite centers in other regions such as Kutaisi and Zugdidi, and to begin to do training in advanced trauma care and nuclear disasters.

Andrew Giorgadze came by, and he and I went to lunch with Archil. I have met Andrew the last three times I have been here. About 26, just graduated from medical school here. Great friend of David Kuprashvili, who spent five months as a student with us. So when I come over David brings him along to meet with me. Grew up until age ten in St. Petersburg. Left there with his father when his mother died and came back to Tbilisi. Father a physician in the Kaspi region of Georgia. Andrew's principal language is Russian. Archil says his Georgian needs a lot of improvement. English in fact is better than Georgian. He speaks English with a faint english accent. He is quite personable, very articulate, handles my questions with great skill. I have been generically encouraging to Andrew on the previous occasions. Then one month ago he emailed me that he had passed the USMLE Part I with a score of 249, which is the 99+ percentile! This is an unheard of score in Tbilisi, and puts Andrew into an entirely different universe. This is the score that a few of our top students at Emory make. It is especially remarkable given the fact that he basically did all this on his own, given the poor quality of his school here. He is quite interested in medical oncology, and clearly has immense potential. I promised him he could come to Atlanta after he passes Part

II in March, and study for one or two months in order to take Part III in Philadelphia. This is the first year that foreign medical graduates have had to take a practical examination that will test their clinical skills. I asked him about his usual daily schedule: twelve hours of solid study, without distraction, every single day.

I met with George Gotsadze of the Curatio. This is a group of three young, exceptionally able and ambitious physicians I have known several years now. In a previous report I gave their plans, working with Kaiser, to set up a model HMO in Tbilisi. A year ago all of us had lunch, and decided the group needed to help the Ministry of Health. George told me of the projects they have with the Ministry. They have prepared a series of recommendations on hospital financing by the government, and have had a series of workshops for chief doctors detailing what needs to be changed. They have come up with a hospital restructuring plan for Georgia: decreasing the beds; decreasing the infrastructure; renovations; selling certain hospitals. The plans begin with Tbilisi, and will be presented to the Minister next month. By the end of the year they will deliver a package of recommendations for all hospitals in Georgia.

They are advising the Ministry on the second World Bank loan, the plans for which should be finished in a few months. The plan will have two main points: the financing of health services, and a fifteen year plan for primary health care. George said in 1997 the money spent on health care was 83% from private sources, and only 17% from governmental sources. He said the small amount of government spending on health is a disgrace.

Then George turned to their practice. They now have 6,000 enrolled in Tbilisi. Kaiser has dropped out due their large losses in the U.S. last year. They have all the plans for a demonstration project and are trying to find funding.

Met with Nata Avialiani, who was the principal person in Archil's office for several years. Beautiful, personable, smart, etc. About 30, an M.D. from Tbilisi State Medical University. She is just back from Brussels, where she got an MPH. Her husband Bhata did some work in economics during the year. Now working for the Minister on the World Bank project. We have proposed her for the AIHA regional office in Tbilisi. Two outstanding examples of the young people of Georgia.

A late meeting with the Minister of Health and Amiran. We reviewed our plans for the next three years (see front page). He said he would fund ten people at \$1500 a year tuition for a scholarship in health care in the MBA school. We discussed the need for a faculty member in health care. He had no ready suggestions.

Went to George Turkia's house to visit Bijan, who had been sick all day. He had had chills and fever upon awakening, followed by vomiting yellow fluid, then abdominal pain that had persisted. Some suggestion of left flank pain. I examined his abdomen. Soft, very few bowel sounds, definite generalized rebound. He had however, begun to feel a bit better. I was quite concerned. The last thing I wanted to face was an exploratory lap on him in Tbilisi. Afebrile. I gave him Cipro, and decided to see what the next day would bring.

Dinner with Archil in a new restaurant, one of many. A casino at the other end of the building.

Levan Kacharava came by and we walked a couple of miles at eleven p.m. to a restaurant and had a drink and a long talk. Levan is about 30, and is quite an entrepreneur. I first met him in 1993. At that time he was mostly a young lad who was studying art and painting pictures. The transformation since then has been amazing. He has been to Atlanta several times. He has investments in many different areas, and is continually going to Europe to do deals. I predict he will become exceedingly wealthy and influential. I enjoy talking with him a lot. Met his girl friend Nino, a tall woman with bright and penetrating eyes. Came across as exceptionally bright.

Friday October 16th

Saba Bezhanishvili and Giorgi Katsitadze picked me up and we went to the baths. They are both applying for internships, and spent six months with us as students in Atlanta. Saba made in the 92nd percentile on the USMLE, and Giorgi made almost as high. Saba wishes to be a neurologist, and Giorgi a pediatrician. Giorgi has published a book on drugs in pediatrics in Georgian. All the doses and complications. He gave me a copy when I was here in May, and I was quite impressed. They will both make excellent interns.

Archil and I went to the Embassy and met Lisa Boyd, who is leaving for the U.S. in a couple of days. She has been looking after health care and a number of other issues for AID for the last several years. She was hired by Sheri Carlin. Sheri was an Emory nurse who got an MPH, and let me persuade her to come to Tbilisi for a year when we were just getting our partnership off the ground. Sheri has now become a permanent AID person. I had dinner with her in Washington a couple of weeks ago. She is preparing to go to Russia, which means she is learning Russian over the next six months. Good luck. Lisa gave us some useful suggestions about planning the next several years.

A meeting with Temur Khurodze, provost of TSU, to discuss the new MBA school and

nursing school. George Turkia was there. The TSU representative in the Caucasus Business School consortium, David Aslanishvili, was there. Thirty, works part time as the investment advisor in a Tbilisi bank, dressed as elegantly as any young U.S. banker. Very smart and articulate. Will help the school live up to Bijan's prediction that it will be outstanding.

We brought up to Temur the need for space in the nursing school. We told him we had decided tentatively, to be finally decided by Judy Wold, to move the Nursing Learning Resource Center from the World Bank Continuing Education Center (due to problems with the Director) to the nursing school. We would need more space for it than he had promised for the nursing school. Archil was quite persuasive, and we agreed to meet Temur later and go over some space he had in mind.

To a meeting at the Oncology Institute of Georgia, arranged by Levan Baknadze. We met his uncle, the chief of thoracic surgery, Revaz Gagua, and the director, who is the father-in-law of the Minister of Health. The institute has 650 beds, with some 350 patients per day now. Surgery patients have a stay of 20 days, chemotherapy and radiation patients 14 days. No CT scan. Cobalt, 25 years old. Do use computers to plan radiation. Eleven clinical divisions: e.g., children's; head and neck; breast; gu; gyn; chemotherapy; etc. Cost per day is \$120. Average of \$640 for complete diagnosis and therapy. A bit over 200 physicians. The director was startled to hear that two of our house staff from Georgia, Natia and Eka, were going into radiation oncology and medical oncology. "Who sent them?"

The hospital was vintage Georgian hospital: peeling plaster; dirty floors; missing cement; large, dark, windy halls. But there was a twelve bed unit, costing around \$300,000, that Germans had invested. Any patient can come here and pay \$135 a day for everything: diagnostic studies (CT scan at another center included if needed); surgery; chemotherapy. Complete renovation, with bright airy rooms, excellent furniture.

We spoke at some length about cooperation. I was surprised at a complete lack of knowledge of the academic or even cancer institute set-up in the U.S., but on reflection remembered I had known zero about such in the former Soviet Union. I explained how the secret was to find a U.S. physician in a particular area who could visit their Institute and become interested, bond with them and return to U.S. and find resources and support training. Much as we have done in tuberculosis and AIDS and nursing. I said they needed to have physicians who could speak English for the projects to work. They decided to do some thinking.

A visit with Temur in the space he proposed for the nurses. About five rooms,

adequate, could be renovated to be quite decent. Temur went about his business of provosting while we were there, visiting several classrooms where English as a second language was being taught. Intense, quite young, highly motivated appearing students. Bare surroundings, narrow benches and tables seen in U.S. schools in the thirties.

Lunch at a fast food place with western Georgian cheese bread. Like lasagna with a light, fluffy cheese.

Meeting with the nurses and Jessica, to propose she work closely with them. All parties agreed. Now need to talk to Judy and Laura in Atlanta and let them get to know Jessica. I predict our nursing activities are about to take off.

I called the American Embassy about Andro Kacharava's mother. She had applied this week for a visa to come to Atlanta for several months, and astonishingly it had been turned down. I spoke to the counsel, Mark Moody, who came across as wanting to help. He said there was information in their computer from the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) of the U.S. that made it impossible to give her a visa. He said it would be quite helpful for her son and her to come down and talk to him about it, but of course the information was confidential and he couldn't talk about it with me. I thanked him. About three years ago I was called one afternoon while making rounds at Grady by someone in the INS at the Atlanta airport, who asked if I knew "Eliko Mkheidze." I said no initially, but after a lot of frustration and no help from the INS officer I suddenly figured out she was Andro's mother, who I had agreed to sponsor. I had forgotten that in Georgian fashion she does not go by her married name. I was told she was going to be put on a plane and immediately deported. I plead in vain. I went to the airport, where I was told by the INS that the reasons they deported people was their business, and no one else's. But several months later they agreed to a visa for Eliko, and she stayed here seven months. So it makes no sense that they won't give her one now. Three years ago I was almost deported from Moscow because the travel agency had not gotten me the right visa for Russia. Eight hours and \$500 dollars and a lot of dealing with rude and unhelpful Russian INS officials finally got me in. Since that episode, and the one in Atlanta with Eliko and the INS, I have had strong opinions about immigration services in all countries.

Gaioz Vasadze came in for a meeting. He is head of informatics for Georgia. Informatics, broadly defined, used to be a really big deal in the former Soviet Union. Deals with all aspects of hospital and health care information. He is about 65 or so, wizened, philosophical, devoted to his area, and a favorite of mine. Most of his conversation is at a high philosophical level, illustrated with charts and tables.

Met with Zviad, his deputy and director of computing for the NILC, and Archil. Lisa

Boyd had said that when she goes to hospitals none of the doctors had heard of the NILC. This was a devastating comment. We all agreed it needed to receive emergency attention. E.g., Zviad could visit every hospital in the city and give a Power Point presentation of what the NILC could do for the physicians and nurses. We agreed other means of advertising needed to be explored also. Then we talked about complaints about the quality of the connections from our remote users. Agreed that the problem needed to be discovered and fixed. The point was made they have to get something from us they can't get from the Internet provider, Sanet. That is access to Ovid and other data bases. Everyone agreed promotion had to become a top priority.

David Chanturia came along. He is about 20 years old, a senior student in TMSU medical school, and the deputy director of the ministry Amiran had asked me to let him do several months elective at Emory and pay for it himself. Try as I might, I could get only two or three word sentences out of him. Came across as shy and too young to survive and thrive on the wards of Grady. I thought perhaps he was just intimidated by me, and asked Archil to interview him. Same results. I then asked him how could I get him to be spontaneous and talkative with me? "Become friends," he said. "How?" I asked. "Go fishing with me." I thought this was a novel answer, albeit impractical. I told him I would be back in the next few months, and the burden was on him to figure out how we could get together and have good conversations.

Archil and I went over some health care financing figures for 1997. There were \$313 million lari (\$1 = 1.30 lari) spent on health care, 87% private and 13% governmental, as I said previously. Of the 87% that was private (273 million):

Secondary and tertiary care:	107 million
Primary care	87 million
Drugs	79 million

The average Georgian family of 3.5 people spent 50 lari on their health care. This data is from a report by the Actuarial Research Corporation, July 28, 1998. A quote from the report:

The primary goal (of the report) concerned the working-out of a preliminary matrix structure of national healthcare expenditures and development of expenditures accounting process via redistribution/pooling of financial risks according to health care sector dynamics.

The newly developed national health care expenditure matrix revealed that 313 million Georgian Lars (GEL) had been spent in 1997 and 87% of this number was composed of out-of-pocket payments. Besides, there is an evidence of dominating catastrophic

payments, what is related to inadequate mechanisms of risk redistribution.

According to UNICEF 1997 research, 2.5% of all households had spent more than 2800 lari during the year and the sum of these payments was equal to 40% of all out-of-pocket payments. Reduction of catastrophic payments by means of a special governmental program, which would improve the risk redistribution mechanisms, requires significant budgetary funding. Reliance on private insurance represents an alternative, but today it is difficult to predict the degree of its importance for problem solving.

The Government of Georgia (GOG) is currently reviewing the opportunities for possible new methods of healthcare-related risks redistribution and healthcare funding. The country's healthcare system and State Medical Insurance Company (SMIC) are currently working on the issues related to provision of medical care for 0-2 year-old children, socially insecure groups of population and patients with diseases such as are tuberculosis, cancer and mental illnesses. Other governmental institutions, including the Ministry of Defense, the Ministry of Social Provision and Labor and the Ministry of Health are also taking part in solution of above problem. Municipalities are taking the responsibilities for financing of Emergency Care and other services.

However, municipal and federal programs are facing serious financial deficits, associated with low total revenues from taxes, low indicators of tax collection and low priority place of healthcare within the governmental financial system. SMIC provided only 53% of planned volume of funding in 1997. Because of inadequate governmental funding the cash payments (mostly composed of unofficial out-of-pocket payments) proportion increase reached 87% in 1997. Unavailability of effective risk redistribution mechanisms creates an additional problem: high level of cash payments makes relevant governmental control of healthcare financial system impossible.

It will be very difficult to increase the effectiveness of governmental funding and to reduce the volume of out-of-pocket (=private) payments until proper development of state and private (third payer parties) financing occurs. Other reserves may include quality control, control of excess provision (for instance, inflated bed numbers) and qualified medical personnel optimization.

The Government of Georgia is currently working on learning and determining new strategies for supporting healthcare via improvement of governmental control and creation of alternative risk redistribution mechanisms. Recent and current reforms are significant, but their positive effects has not been optimally effective because of several disadvantages of financial system. However, past financial and organizational difficulties are becoming less severe and governmental financial support is steadily increasing. At the same time, in addition to increasing healthcare system effectiveness (via healthcare infrastructure optimization), there is interest for conduction of research/study concerning possible outcomes of wider restructuring, paying especial attention to the issues of coordination of governmental healthcare funding with much wider private funding.

-Translated from Georgian by George Danelia

Archil says one important conclusion to learn from this is there is a wide-open opportunity and market for private health insurance.

I then met with nine applicants for internship. Talked to them, got their USMLE scores. Three were in the 87-92nd percentile on Part I. I gave them no encouragement, but told them I would see them when I returned, and perhaps in the future might be able to be of some help in getting in to a program.

Back to Betsy's, where she was in full throat with the president of the Absolut Bank in Tbilisi. She wants to borrow \$60,000 to complete the renovation on her guest house. He told her fine, it would be 38% interest. She went through the ceiling, saying she had gotten money in July from another bank at 2% per month. "But that was July," he said. A different ball game now.

Dinner with Maureen and Ed Brandt. She is the nurse at the U.S. Embassy, whose daughter married one of our senior medical students in July. A wonderful person. Ed is administrator of CARE in this region. Two other CARE people came along, and we ate at a new pizza establishment just opened. She is now working most of the time for the DCM, Martin Adams. We talked about electricity. She says in her apartment building there are old people who live on the twelfth floor, and in winter time they go up not to come down until spring. For one thing, you can never count on the elevators working or, worse still, stopping in mid-flight, stranding you for hours.

Went to visit Bijan. I had been getting reports on him throughout the day, and he was feeling better. In the afternoon he had had one episode of severe left flank pain, that radiated to the abdomen. I punched his left costovertebral angle, and he hit the ceiling. I was by now fairly certain he had pyelonephritis, with or without a stone (he had one several years ago), and felt okay about his leaving at 5:30 a.m. on Turkish Air for Istanbul and Atlanta. I surprised him by taking a couple of pictures of him in his debilitated state, which I will show when the Caucasus Business School graduates its first people.

Archil and I dropped by the Georgian equivalent of a supermarket. Condoms were displayed prominently at the checkout stand, new for Georgia in my coming here: Wet and Wild; Erotica; Midnight Delight. Quite a change. Previously the physicians had resisted birth control. Some Georgian women I know have had fifteen abortions. The abortions fill out the wallets of the physicians, as opposed to condoms and birth control pills.

Went to my room at midnight, to have a call from a medical school applicant

downstairs. I invited him up. He wanted to tell me how much he would like to come to the U.S. I thanked him for his interest.

Saturday, October 17th

Levan Bakanidze came over for breakfast, to ask me how the Oncology Institute should do with respect to its desire to work with us. I told him for them to make suggestions and let us consider them.

Irina came over and took me out for a haircut. I thankfully was able through her to keep from being scalped. She talked to me about her desire to have a car. Her husband, who has a Mercedes given him by Levan, says Tbilisi is too dangerous for her to drive--read that he feels that is the way to keep his car intact. I suggested she buy the equivalent of a pickup that is old and durable, and would protect her when she has wrecks. Only problem is Georgia has no pickups.

Then with Archil to the NILC, where he and I and Zviad worked on our plans of what to submit to AIHA for the next three years. Then out in the courtyard I saw a lot of medical students, who had just taken the first certifying examination for licensure ever given in Georgia. The AAMC had worked with Amiran to set this up. Two thousand questions had been distributed earlier, and of these 250 were asked. The state medical school had a passage rate of 85%, the private ones about 50%.

We had lunch at a fish restaurant on the river. The river is discolored and low. There has been very little rain this summer, raising fears about even less electricity than usual this winter, since a lot of it comes from hydroelectric sources. Interesting fish, including sturgeon with pomegranate sauce, which is a favorite of mine. Don't understand why we rarely see it in US.

Went to a beer pub--all glitzy and neon lights--with two students. David Kuprashvili, who spent six months here, and Andrew Giorgadze. David has decided to become a computer person, and leave medicine. We talked about this and about the difficulties of living in Tbilisi. David has a one-room apartment. He says it is so cold in winter that he can only stay in bed when he is there. This led to a discussion of how they spent their time. Tonight David is going with his girlfriend and Andrew is studying.

I was picked up at Betsy's at six by Amiran, the Deputy Minister, and Marina, the Assistant Minister for Health, and we went back to Mtskheta for dinner at one of the fine restaurants there. A small group: the Minister; Amiran; Marina; me; the ex-Minister of Finance. The latter was *tamada*, or toastmaster, and he proved to be as good with his tongue as with his calculator.

We discussed at some length the financial situation. There is a new Minister of Finance, who was appointed a year or so ago. About 28 years old, from the part of Georgia known as Guria. This is where Shevardnadze is from, and there is an uncommonly large number of his associates from there--reminds me of the U.S. and Arkansas. According to the *Georgian Times* about 1-1.5 million *lari* should be collected in tax each day, and the amount collected is less than fortyfold that. This has led to a severe crisis. The government does not have money to pay salaries. The ministries cannot fund projects. E.g., the Ministry of Health this year committed to funding the NILC somewhere around \$50,000, and it has not produced the money. Leads to severe personal hardships, with staff being unstable. We are especially worried about this with respect to the NILC. The IMF has said it will not give the next allotment to Georgia before it was scheduled in January. There are strong rumors the *lari* will be devalued 50%. The *Georgian Times* in Tbilisi, in its singular English, said a great fear was that the government would "emit" money from its printing presses.

The toasts proceeded rhythmically. It came to be my turn. We had been discussing that Georgia needed to become clear about its strengths, and find its place in the world. It used to be the California of the former Soviet Union: the agricultural bread basket, the supplier of all the wines, and the resort center, with the Communist elite having their *dachas* on the Black Sea. I said I wanted to toast the strengths of Georgia, and I wanted to do so in the context of a session I had that afternoon with two young Georgian men, David and Andrew. During the conversation, I said, we had discussed what each of us was going to do tonight. Andrew was going to study, David to have an intimate time (hopefully) with his girl friend, and I was going to go to dinner with the Minister. Each of us, I said, was obviously going to play to his strength: Andrew to his brain, me to my tongue, and David to whatever. In a similar fashion Georgia needed to decide the strength it would play to, and there were a number of interesting possibilities, given the talent, intelligent and intense motivation of its citizens--illustrated here tonight.

After dinner the Minister insisted we go to the Dzhvari Monastery, built somewhere around the fourth century A.D. It is one of the important historical icons of Georgia. Stands on a huge promontory overlooking Mtskheta. We hurtled up the mountainous road at 11 p.m., and walked up to the church. Cold, windy, stars littering the skies, a few lights of Mtskheta below. Surreal. Reminded me of my first visit to Georgia, in August 1992. The first day I spent in Georgia we were trundled off to Dzhvari as the first event of the day. Introduced me properly to the Georgians: people who revere their past and their Christian heritage.

Tonight the Minister was clearly feeling a need to go back to his past, for we then

tore down the mountain roads once again and went, at midnight, to visit the cathedral of Sveti-tskhoveli, just as I had done on Mtskhetoba day earlier in the week. The cathedral of course was locked tight, so we had brandy and coffee at a small cafe nearby.

A late night return to Betsy's, where Saba and David Tsanova came by to say goodbye. I called Beso Zhgenti, the MBA student who is living at my home in Stone Mountain, and found everything was going well in Atlanta. Collapsed.

Sunday October 18th

Packed. Breakfast with Archil and Irina. She surprised us both by talking about six young Georgians who returned a few months ago from the U.S. with their masters degree in librarianship. We immediately decided to enlist them one way or the other in the NILC. They are the people who will ensure the survival and extension of what we are trying to do at the NILC with respect to introducing Georgians to the information age. She also told us about a young lady who had just returned from the U.S. with an MPH degree from Boston. Archil called her instantly and set up an appointment. Irina is worth her weight in gold.

Archil and Irina bantered. About virtually any subject. They did so with gusto and evident pleasure. This is a common characteristic of Georgians, who delight in playful conversational interchanges. Full of humor, witticisms, slyly pointed remarks. A not unexpected trait in the people who invented the *supra* and *tamada*.

We went to the airport and I left for Moscow. Flew business class, a necessity when flying Aeroflot, and Archil had kindly arranged for me to go to the VIP lounge upon arrival in Moscow. This is another highly useful way to travel. No huge lines, cold and cavernous rooms where the herd principle is used, or waiting for anything. An accommodating customs agent, usually a woman, collects the passports and brings them back later; the luggage is brought separately. Telephones, food, booze, opulent surroundings. The Communist elite knew exactly how to take care of themselves, while letting the proletariat suffer in barns.

Met by Levan, and we went downtown and then for a stroll in Manej Square. Just opened a few months ago, during the celebration of the 800th (??) anniversary of Moscow. Near the Kremlin and Red Square. Has surface and underground components, much like a U.S. mall--e.g., Lenox Square. But sumptuous, with extensive use of marble. Large and spacious. Upscale stores, such as Tiffany and Cartier. A fair number of people, but I didn't see many buying in the upper end places. Levan said it was designed and constructed by a Georgian. Same one who did the statue of Peter

the Great in Moscow. He has the animus of the artists of Moscow due to his success in getting these two plums. Large numbers of prostitutes. Young, gorgeous, highly sophisticated make-up, dressed elegantly in tight-fitting leather. Straight blonde hair. \$100.

Long walk in Red Square, talking about the current financial situation in Moscow. Levan's firm, Aton, has been around the fourth largest investment bank in Russia. He is the corporate financial officer. They have just bought one of their competitors, and are now about the second largest investment bank. Lost \$10 million betting on financial instruments that the government would honor its commitments. However, most of their money was offshore in dollars, and they have survived the crisis quite nicely. Only problem is there is nothing to do. Foreign investment has fled with the speed of light.

Levan is continuing to work on a deal he has had in the works for quite a while. There is a huge producer of diesel engines, Tutaev Diesel, in the town of Iaroslavl about two hours from Moscow. Built by the communists about five years ago at a cost of around \$1 billion, and is one of the most modern factories in Russia. Used to supply spare parts to Detroit Diesel. Levan says it can be bought now for around \$3-4 million. A big problem is when it was built it was tied into supplying resources to the surrounding town, which was apparently a common practice. So it owes the town millions of dollars in "taxes." The trick for Levan is to get this bill forgiven. He has done this for other companies, but it takes a lot of doing. He says the plant has enormous potential. The Russian economy is truck-based, and the current fleet is quite old. I will put all of this up to Pat McGahan, the manager of Cummins Diesel for the southeast. His son Tom was a student and house officer with us, and I have known them many years. Pat gave us a diesel generator for the NILC, which has been absolutely indispensable. It kicks on automatically every time the electricity goes off, and even now, in the fall, when I sat in the NILC ever so often I would see a flicker in the lights followed by the generator kicking on.

One of the most attractive characteristics of travel to another country and culture is the feeling of being immersed in it. Due to being in the place, reading the newspapers, seeing the people as they go about their activities, having conversations with them about the things that matter most at the moment, reading about the history in a book such as *Lenin's Tomb*, seeing the buildings, the smells and the like. One example: a lot of discussion has been occurring the last few days about impeaching Yeltsin due to dementia. Apparently on TV in Belarus or another place he was confused and did not know where he was. On Moscow TV there was a series of interviews with some of the Russian governors of provinces, soliciting their opinion about impeachment. One of them was Nazdatenko, the governor of the Vladivostok area, who was in Atlanta two

years ago as a patient of mine and Angel Leon at Crawford Long. There is this palpable sense that affairs of great moment and of unpleasant--even malignant--potential are in the process of occurring.

The predominant feature of this particular visit as a traveler, in Tbilisi and especially in Moscow, has been the sense of the economic climate and its effect upon the people. It is one thing to read about it in the *Times*, and quite another to feel you are a part of it. The immediate future of the region is quite worrisome, Moscow and Russia even more than Tbilisi and Georgia. I read an article in the *New York Times* during this trip that contrasted what was occurring in Russia to China as both have been in transition to a market economy. The thrust of the article was how one of the U.S. investment banks (Goldman, Sachs) had made huge amounts of money from Russia, while purporting to be helping her. The article said China had greatly restricted the inflow of foreign money out of fear that foreign investors would have as their sole goal enrichment of themselves and not help to China.

The House of Unions, like so many buildings in Russia, has served many different masters. In the 18th century, A Crimean prince commissioned its construction in Moscow. Russian nobles later converted it to a private club. Lenin, Stalin and Brezhnev lay in state behind its bright green facade. And in June, as Russia lurched toward a financial crisis that set off global shock waves, the House of Unions was rented for a glittering celebration of capitalism, with one of the country's most ardent bankers, Goldman, Sachs & Company, as its host. Goldman flew in former President George Bush, paying him more than \$100,000, and entertained Russia's former Prime Minister. But between toasts to United States-Russian ties, the talk was about what really mattered to Goldman and many Wall Street brethren: deals.....

Bankers helped the Russian Government borrow billions from foreign investors before it could reliably collect taxes to pay them back. Bankers flattered the country's oligarchs, an emerging class of elite businessmen, with generous loans that many commercial banks shunned as too risky. They helped regional governments raise money for farms through "agro bonds" even though the system of money-draining Soviet-style collectives never ended. With the help of investment bankers, Russia built a roaring bond market, but never developed a bricks-and-mortar banking system that provided loans the conventional way. "What the Russian problem reflects is that today's bankers often don't have long-lasting concerns about customer-client relations," said Paul A. Volcker, the former chairman of the Federal Reserve. He noted that Russia was part of a broader problem in many emerging markets, where local companies and governments have tried to raise money quickly by issuing securities even before they are ready to handle the demands of shareholders and debt payments. "Greed prevails over prudence," he said. Russia's experience stands in sharp contrast to the developing world's other heavyweight, China. In the last seven years, foreign companies have invested about

\$181 billion in China, much of it to finance long-term industrial joint ventures or wholly owned foreign factories. Though investment bankers eagerly knocked at the door, Beijing has restricted the freedom of its companies and local governments to borrow money abroad, fearing such money could leave as quickly as it came. Some Wall Street bankers acknowledge that in pursuit of profits they glossed over some warning signs about Russia--corporate corruption, failure to pay loans on time, gross accounting irregularities and tax evasion--because they were blinded by the country's enormous natural wealth. *New York Times* October 18, 1998

Levan gave several examples of this occurring at high governmental financial levels. There were other examples given in Tbilisi. The overwhelming feeling is that governmental officials and other powerful and wealthy individuals, e.g., the "oligarchs" in Moscow, have only goal: personal enrichment, and to hell with the country. The desire to better one's country and society is apparently not present in many if not almost all people in these categories.

We went back to his apartment and later had dinner in Planet Hollywood, which is just across the street. Next to it is a large gambling casino. Its owner, an American, was shot and killed about a year ago as he walked out of it onto the street. Some business about politicians coming into a back room in the casino and pictures of them being taken surreptitiously for either blackmail or "protection."

Monday, October 19th

Up after restless and mostly sleepless night due to a very hot apartment. No air conditioning, of course. Unheard of in private apartments in Moscow. The maid came and told Levan her child was sick, so she had to leave. She has lasted a year now. The previous one drank heavily, and was discovered quite drunk while left to care for the Levan's son who at that time was two months old.

For some reason, perhaps the conjunction of the maid and the poor economic situation, I was reminded of my mother. During the height of the Depression she had a maid who came occasionally and helped mom. We lived on a farm, and economic matters were much worse than in Moscow now. No money, just food that was raised on the farm. During the afternoon when the maid was outside Mom happened to come across a large ham the maid had wrapped and secreted, waiting her going to her house later. Mom quietly cut off one-fourth of the ham, wrapped it up, and left the package--considerably diminished in size--where she had found it. Later she found the maid had indeed taken the package. Neither of them ever said a word about it. One of the most thoughtful, sensitive and diplomatic occurrences I have ever come across.

There was no hot water. Apparently this happens periodically to entire blocks, while

some unspecified work is done on the central system. All steam and water, including hot water, in cities of the former Soviet Union is centralized. I shaved with difficulty and was generous with scent.

A long and tiring but pleasant flight to New York then Atlanta. A trip that has accomplished what I set out to do .