

# Work in the Caucasus

## Georgian Republic

11-18 January 2007

23 May - 4 June 2007

Since our work began, we have been extensively involved in research on the Caucasus region. In January, 2007, we focused our attention on developments in Georgia and Dr. Stephen Bowers traveled to Tbilisi in order to meet with both scholars and government officials. The overall objective in this visit and his subsequent visit in May and June was to study regional security issues, develop opportunities for academic collaboration between Liberty University and local universities, and to examine cultural developments in this region of the Caucasus.

During his time in Tbilisi, Professor Bowers delivered a series of lectures on US perspectives on the security sector concerns. Bowers, who retired from the US Army as a Lieutenant Colonel, based some of his presentations on his military experience. The audience for the presentations consisted of analysts from the Georgian Ministry of Interior and other governmental organizations which have responsibility for the conduct of foreign policy. At the conclusion of this program, Dr. Bowers was invited to continue his work in the future as part a professional development program.



In order to develop an understanding of key professional development concerns, Dr. Bowers met with officials at the Ministry of Interior's Analytical Department and the Georgian Police Academy. On 17 January, he met with Kakha Khizanishvili, Director of the Police Academy, in order to discuss prospects and needs for in-service training that might be consistent with the capabilities of Liberty University's Helms School of Government, the base for the Center for Security and Science.

## Security Sector Work

The work began with a series of meetings at the Ministry of Defense on 24 May. Our first meeting was with Ms. Nini Bakradze who is Head of the Planning, Policy and Analysis division of Public Relations Department. Ms. Bakradze outlined the main tenets of Georgian military policy and explained Georgia's interest in NATO membership. Professor Bowers is shown in the picture on the right with Ms. Bakradze.



An important step in advancing the prospect of NATO membership has been the introduction of western practices in financial and human resources management. Following the meeting with Ms. Makradze our group met with Mr. Nodar Kharshiladze, Head of Defense Policy and Planning, and Ms. Maka Petriashvili who is Head of the Human Resource Policy Division of the Defense Policy and Planning Department.

The above picture shows two of the LU students flanked by Mr. Patriashvili (*on the right*) and Maia Mushkudiani (*on the left*).

Our work in the Ministry of Defense continued on Friday, 25 May when we met with Colonel Tariel Londaridze who is Head of the Academy of Defense of Georgia. COL Londaridze was accompanied by the entire faculty of the Academy and explained Academy mission. The result of this meeting was his commitment to appoint a point of contact to begin the process of exploring avenues for our participation in the work of the Academy. In particular, COL Londaridze is interested in the joint development of instructional programs for use in the Academy. During our time in Tbilisi, Dr. Bowers gave them a presentation on Psychological Operations.

On Wednesday, 30 May, Dr. Bowers visited the Foreign Intelligence Special Service. Because FISS head Anna Zhvania was in Israel recovering from surgery, he met with Foreign Intelligence Special Service Deputy Head George Gabunia and Senior Analyst Sergei Kapanadze for a discussion of FISS reforms.



Following the FISS visit, we met with Mr. Batu Kutelia who is the Deputy Minister of Defense. Mr. Kutelia (*pictured on the left with Dr. Bowers*) spoke at length about the modernization of Georgia's defense establishment and his plans for NATO membership. He also explained ways in which we might participate in the development of the modernization program. In particular, Mr. Kutelia was interested in educational programs that would support professional development within the MOD.

More generally, he suggested that one of the greatest needs facing Georgia at this time is a broader understanding of the work being undertaken by Georgia's reformers. He encouraged us to host conferences and undertake research that will familiarize Americans, especially those in government and academia, with the progress being made by the Georgian reform program. Mr. Kutelia also arranged for us to attend a special military demonstration for embassy staff members and journalists on 1 June at the Mukhrovani military base near Tbilisi.

Given the fact that securing NATO membership is one of the main goals of the administration of Georgian President Saakashvili, the LU group spent considerable time exploring this objective with relevant officials. On Thursday, 31 May, we met with Ms. Nanuka Jorjoliani who is the Head of the NATO Information Centre in Georgia. Ms. Jorjoliani explained the operation of the NATO information facilities in Georgia, including the one that is located in South Ossetia, and demonstrated their success in promoting public understanding of the advantages of NATO membership.

On 1 June, we met with staff members of the Georgian Foundation for Strategic and International Studies (GFSIS). GFSIS, which is directed by Ambassador David J. Smith, is the most influential foundation in the entire south Caucasus region (Georgia, Azerbaijan, and Armenia) and enjoys close professional relationships with key institutions in Georgia. GFSIS is actively consulted by policy-makers in Washington. Ambassador Smith arranged for several members of the GFSIS staff to make presentations about their work on Caucasus security issues. The LU students, all of whom had studied these issues prior to coming to Tbilisi, responded to those presentations and raised a series of questions regarding future prospects for Georgia and the Caucasus region. Ambassador Smith, who is familiar with the Caucasus projects developed by Dr.



Ambassador David Smith (*center*) is shown here with two of his staff members and the LU group.

Bowers in recent years, volunteered to assist in our efforts to develop programs relating to the development of this region.

## Academic Collaboration

**The Ilia Chavchavadze State University:** An important goal of the work of the LU group was to identify opportunities for academic collaboration. On Monday, 28 May, we had our first meeting with faculty members of the Ilia Chavchavadze State University who are developing the Georgian Security Studies Center which will be based at the Ilia Chavchavadze State University. The Georgian Security Studies Center was represented by Professor David Aparadize and Professor Giorgi Gvalia who is the coordinator for the Center.



The LU group is shown here with Professor Aparadize (*center*) and Professor Gvalia (*right*).



On 1 June, Dr. Bowers met with University Rector Dr. Gigi Tevzadze.

In an effort to facilitate the creation of a working relationship between ourselves and the Ilia Chavchavadze State University, Dr. Gigi Tevzadze, University Rector, proposed a draft for a collaboration agreement. On 30 May, the LU group met with a group of international affairs students at the Ilia Chavchavadze State University, (*pictured below*) all of whom spoke English and were interested in sharing insights with our students. Dr. Bowers made a presentation for the Georgians and the meeting was followed by a series of subsequent meetings between our students and the Georgian students. LU graduate student Bente Staton, who is preparing a research paper on Abkhazia, will be collaborating in her work with one of the Georgians who is a refugee from that region.



Dr. Bowers made a presentation for the Georgians and the meeting was followed by a series of subsequent meetings between our students and the Georgian students. LU graduate student Bente Staton, who is preparing a research paper on Abkhazia, will be collaborating in her work with one of the Georgians who is a refugee from that region.



**The Georgian Institute for Public Affairs:** On 29 May at 11:00 AM, we had a meeting with Levan Tsutskiridze the Rector of the Georgian Institute for Public Affairs (GIPA). GIPA organized Georgia's first security studies fourteen years ago and the organization is active in the area of joint research and publications with a number of prominent American universities including Johns Hopkins University's Central Asia Caucasus Institute (CACI) in Washington. Dr. Tsutskiridze was a post-graduate student there in 2002-



2003 when Bowers' Center for Security and Science worked in cooperation with CACI on several projects and is, therefore, familiar with our previous work.



Dr. Bowers with Dr. Tsutskiridze

GIPA has just opened a school of government and is very interested in establishing a partnership with the Helms School of Government. Dr. Tsutskiridze will be in Washington for two weeks in July and is interested in meeting with relevant LU officials in order to explore avenues for cooperation on a broad range of topics including intelligence studies, international affairs, and law enforcement.

**Ministry of Education and Science:** Our preparation for the visit to Georgia included a study of Georgia's development of a post-communist educational system. One interesting feature of this system has been the introduction of classes on Christian education in public schools. As a result of our interest in this topic, on 31 May we met with two officials in the Georgian Ministry of Education and Science. The two officials with whom we met were Lela Maisuradze, who is the head of the Strategic Planning Department, and Giorgi Zedginidze, who is responsible for social science courses. Both were extremely helpful in providing information about how this work is being conducted and expressed a willingness to support any studies that LU students or faculty might wish to pursue on this or other topics related to post-communist education in Georgia. Former JMU President Ronald Carrier, who has worked with us in developing programs in the post-communist states, has expressed an interest in sharing his studies on university reform with the Georgians and Ms. Maisuradze agreed to assist Dr. Carrier in this effort.



## Cultural and Educational Events

Additional activities for the group included a special tour of the Parliament of Georgia and attendance at a performance at the Georgian Folk Theatre “NABADI” (shown in picture on the right). The performance, which was a part of the celebration of Georgian national Independence Day, was a stylized treatment of 2,000 years of Georgian history.



In October, 2006, Georgia opened its Museum of Soviet Occupation in order to provide a vivid, documented presentation of the consequences of the Soviet era on Georgia’s development. While the museum is not yet open to the general public, it has been denounced by Russia’s President Putin. On 25 May the LU group was privileged to visit the museum and, for a period of two hours, a Georgian historian explained the exhibits and outlined the impact of Sovietization on Georgia.



On 26 May, our hostess, Maia Mushkudiani, took the group to Mtskheta, Svetitskhoveli, and Jvari, as well as to Gori where they visited Stalin’s museum and the ancient Gori Fortress. This trip also included a tour of the two thousand year old cave dwellings at Uplistsikhe. Finally, on 2 June, joined by students from the Ilia Chavchavadze State University, we traveled to eastern Georgia and visited the famous monasteries in Nekresi (pictured on the right), Gremi, Alaverdi, and Iqalto.



In order to fully explore the opportunities presented by the institutions with which we met, Ekatarina Janishvili (pictured on the left), a management graduate of the Georgia Railway Institute in Tbilisi, has agreed to serve as representative of the Center for Security and Science for the remainder of 2007. She will help in maintaining contacts for us within Georgia and work as a research assistant on south Caucasus topics.