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U.S. foreign policy and coverage of Georgia in The Washington Post (1990-2000)

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**U.S. FOREIGN POLICY AND COVERAGE
OF GEORGIA IN *THE WASHINGTON POST*
(1990-2000)**

A Thesis

Presented to

The Faculty of the School of Journalism and Mass Communications

San Jose State University

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Science

by

Lia Chakhunashvili

May 2001

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ABSTRACT

U.S. FOREIGN POLICY AND COVERAGE OF GEORGIA IN *THE WASHINGTON POST* (1990-2000)

by Lia Chakhunashvili

This thesis explores the extent of U.S. foreign policy influence on the coverage that former Soviet Republic of Georgia received in *The Washington Post* since the breakdown of the Soviet Union. Content of all articles mentioning Georgia, published in *The Washington Post* from 1990 to 2000 – 186 in total – is analyzed using both quantitative and qualitative methods of inquiry. In addition, the foreign news reporting patterns prevalent in the case of Georgia are examined.

This study reveals that during the last decade, *The Washington Post* closely followed U.S. foreign policy agenda toward Georgia. The country favored by the U.S. Government was equally favored by the American newspaper. The degree of agreement with the foreign policy was consistent throughout the whole researched time-period. The study concludes that deficient newsgathering routines and economic pressures rather than deliberate efforts of official Washington made *The Washington Post* vulnerable to U.S. foreign policy influence.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Interaction between foreign policymaking and foreign news producing communities in the United States has differed at different stages of the country's history. Although the scholarly debate regarding the direction and extent of influence has been leaning in favor of policymakers at times and in favor of news producers at others, what remains unchallenged is the existence of influence itself. It is widely believed that foreign policymakers use media for advancement of their causes. In addition, the nature of media itself and the mechanisms of newsgathering and reporting allow streams of influences from the foreign policy arena to enter the media system more or less freely. On the other hand, the impact of media on the conduct of foreign policy is obvious. Recent technological developments and social-political changes added new dimensions and actors to foreign policymaking, and reshaped the role of media in it. The media influence both the content of foreign policy and the speed of its implementation. Foreign policymakers depend on media both for information and for the assessment of changes in public opinion.

The dissolution of the Soviet Union in the early '90s brought new challenges to the world politics and its main actors. In the place of one state, 15 newly independent states emerged. These states shared the Soviet past, but their cultural, political, economic, and social parameters broadly differed. As former Soviet republics were trying to assume new roles in global affairs, the rest of the world, including the United

States, was deciding how to approach them. The United States had to develop foreign policy toward each former Soviet republic taking into consideration their regional role and importance to American interests. The new geopolitical reality challenged not only American policymakers, but American journalists as well. They had to venture into unexplored, complex reality, where the framework they had used for years for understanding of the Soviet Union was no longer valid.

Along with the Baltic countries, Georgia was one of the first Soviet republics to gain independence. Since then, the government of the United States has treated Georgia favorably. Foreign policy of Republicans and Democrats towards Georgia has not differed significantly and has been consistent on almost every major issue.

The dynamic environment in which former Soviet republics, including Georgia, are building the new states, and evolving response of other nations to their search for new identities, ensures sufficient ground for testing of some of the communication theories, such as agenda-setting and gatekeeping, commonly applied for explaining and understanding the patterns of foreign news coverage.

Statement of the Problem

The members of the scholarly community almost uniformly agree that the media are players in the construction of foreign policy debate, but disagree on the role they play. Do journalists function as independent, critical observers of U.S. foreign policy or are presidents and other state actors able to structure and control media coverage of their foreign-policy initiatives?

To answer the above questions, the study researched the coverage Georgia received during the last decade in one of the most influential American print media – *The Washington Post*. Content of all news items covering Georgia, published in *The Washington Post* from 1990 to 2000, 186 in total, was analyzed to determine to what extent does it reflect U.S. foreign policy agenda toward Georgia. For the purposes of this study, the term “news items” designated any type of journalistic work published in the press, including, but not limited to an editorial, an article, a news-brief, and a feature story. The study applied the term “foreign policy” as defined by the Dictionary of World Politics: A Reference Guide to Concepts, Ideas and Institutions:

Foreign policy refers to the activity where state actors act, react and interact. Those making policy straddle two environments – an internal or domestic and an external or global environment. The domestic environment forms the background context against which policy is made. Thus factors such as the resource base of the state, its position geographically in relation to others, the nature and level of development of its economy, its demographic structure, its ideology and fundamental values will form the domestic or internal milieu. The international or external environment is where policy is actually implemented (Evans & Newham, 1990, p.123).

The study looked at topic selection, tone of coverage, level of the rendered importance and degree of objectivity. In addition, the study explored whether the

coverage Georgia received complied with the patterns of foreign news producing described in scholarly literature.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

Theoretical framework

The theory of agenda-setting is instrumental for understanding the complex processes of foreign policymaking and the role of media in it. Although the theory elaborates more on the power of media to influence policy decisions and public opinion, it also explains how viewpoints of policymakers are reflected in media.

McCombs and Shaw were the first to test the ability of media to create pictures of the world in the minds of the public. Their 1968 Chapel Hill study gave birth to a new communications theory, later named “agenda-setting,” concerned with the transmission of issues of salience from the media agenda to the public agenda, and the media’s role in framing those issues in the minds of the public (McCombs & Bell, 1996).

According to McQuail (1998), the agenda-setting presupposes a process of influence, transferring from the priorities of political or other interest groups to the news priorities of media, where news values and audience interests play a strong part, and from there to the opinions of the public. Within the frames of agenda-setting theory: (a) public debate is represented by salient issues, (b) the agenda derives from a combination of public opinion and political choice, (c) media news and information reflect the content and order of priority of issues, (d) the representation of issues in the media exerts an independent effect on issue content and on relative salience in public opinion.

Within the range of applicability of agenda-setting theory, media scholars developed several models exploring political processes of foreign policymaking, including the Mutual Exploitation model and the Indexing hypothesis. While some aspects of the models coincide, they describe the role of media in foreign policymaking processes differently.

Another communication theory that is useful for understanding the interaction of foreign policymaking and news producing is gatekeeping. Gatekeeping describes “the process by which selections are made in media work, especially decisions whether or not to admit a particular news story through the ‘gates’ of a news medium into the news channels” (McQuail, 1998, p. 213).

Gatekeeping helps explain why some aspects of foreign policy are more frequently and better highlighted in media, while some remain muted and peripheral. Many media scholars have applied the gatekeeping theory to the description of foreign news gathering and reporting practices.

Symbiosis

Bernard C. Cohen, the author of the most comprehensive study exploring the nature of behaviors which shape the content of foreign affairs coverage and the character of the mechanisms by which that coverage affects the political processes of foreign policymaking, published findings of his research in 1963.

All participants of foreign policy process, including officials from different branches of government and media professionals, depend on each other for information,

judgment, and evaluation. By influencing each other on the matters of foreign policy, they become engaged in a symbiotic relationship.

Although Cohen's study focuses mainly on the influences of the media on foreign policymakers, it also discusses the transfer of influence in the opposite direction. One part of the study describes the use of media by foreign policy officials and the patterns of thought that shape those uses.

Cohen distinguishes three kinds of voluntary contributions from foreign policymakers to foreign affairs coverage, representing three levels of exploitation of the media in the service of foreign policy. The first level is the handout, or the formal statement or release, offered to correspondents, who generally regard it either as a form of official propaganda or as unimportant and irrelevant information. The second level includes the more serious attempts to keep correspondents informed on major or continuing aspects of American foreign relations. The third type of voluntary contribution consists of the deliberate instrumental use of the press to achieve specific foreign policy objectives.

In Cohen's model, the media bear the largest responsibility for shaping foreign policy information. Reporters are inclined to be suspicious when significant information is freely offered to them. They look for motives behind such acts and search for truth. The foreign policy officials, on the other hand, are not disposed to give away information on current policies unless some instrumental purpose can be served by doing so. They would rather let the reporters come to them with specific questions. In that way they protect themselves against the possibility of giving out information for which there is no

present demand. An important consequence of these described practices is that the initiative as well as a large part of the responsibility for the definition of news is passed to the correspondents.

Mutual Exploitation Model

In 1989-1993, Patrick O’Heffernan researched perceptions of senior U.S. foreign policymakers on the role of the mass media in the U.S. foreign policy process in order to reexamine Bernard Cohen’s thesis in light of changes in both media and policymaking that took place since Cohen’s book was published.

O’Heffernan (1993) argues that Cohen’s unit of analysis – the interaction between reporters and their sources – while an appropriate focus in Cohen’s time, when both the foreign policy and foreign news communities were part of the same small, congenial Washington establishment, is not the case any more. Two distinct global institutions have replaced the symbiotic Washington circle, described by Cohen: the worldwide U.S. foreign policy and diplomatic community, and a global media industry. Each of these entities tries to create its own version of reality around the world, and both are ready to support, manipulate, or attack the other for their own benefit.

The media today are a part of the policy process, but the government has also become part of the media process. The symbiosis depicted by Cohen has been replaced by coevolution, the process by which two entities grow and develop with one another, incorporating each other into their own existence, sometimes for mutual benefit, sometimes for mutual injury, often both at the same time. From the policymakers’

perspective, a significant element of policymaking involves using and influencing the media. Policymaking cannot be done without the media, nor can the media cover international affairs without government cooperation (O’Heffernan, 1993).

The opinion of O’Heffernan is echoed by Matlock (a career diplomat who served as U.S. ambassador to the Soviet Union during the Gorbachov era), in an interview with *Media Studies Journal*: “I don’t think you can make a flat statement that the media set the agenda or simply follow an agenda set by any government. It’s an interplay...” (Pease, 1993, p. 49).

O’Heffernan (1993) refers to his updated model of press-government interactions in foreign policy as “a mutual exploitation model of mass media and foreign policymaking.”

Indexing Hypothesis

Jonathan Mermin (1999) analyzed media coverage of U.S. intervention in the post-Vietnam era. Mermin based his research on the Indexing hypothesis offered in 1990 by Bennet. The spectrum of debate in the news, the Indexing hypothesis asserts, is a function of the spectrum of debate in official Washington. If there is a debate inside the American government over U.S. policy, critical perspectives appear in the news. If government policy has bipartisan support in Washington, critical perspectives expressed outside the government are not well reported. Mermin constructed a Marginalization version of the Indexing hypothesis to see whether critical perspectives are ignored or marginalized in the news if they are not first expressed in Washington.

The researcher applied the Indexing hypothesis to the eight cases of U.S. military intervention in the post-Vietnam era. In four of the cases, U.S. intervention won bipartisan support in Washington. In the other four cases U.S. intervention generated conflict in Washington. The four Washington consensus cases are the bombing of Libya in April 1986, the invasion of Panama in December 1989, the deployment of U.S. troops to Saudi Arabia in August 1990, and the Gulf War in January 1991. The four Washington conflict cases are the invasion of Grenada in 1983, the doubling of the American deployment in Saudi Arabia in November 1990, the raid on a faction hostile to U.S. forces in Somalia in October 1993 that constituted the decisive turning point in the U.S. intervention in Somalia, and U.S. intervention in Haiti in September 1994. Mermin examined *The New York Times*, ABC's *World News Tonight*, and the *MacNeil/Lehrer Newshour*. The focus of his analysis was critical viewpoints not attributed to foreign sources.

Mermin's study revealed that in their coverage of U.S. intervention in the post-Vietnam era, *The New York Times*, *World News Tonight*, and the *Mac Neil/Lehrer Newshour* made no independent contribution (except at the margins) to foreign policy debate in the United States. The spectrum of debate in Washington, instead, has determined the spectrum of debate in the news. The evidence supported not just the correlation version of the Indexing hypothesis, but the Marginalization version as well. Coverage of critical viewpoints on U.S. interventions does not increase from a reasonable baseline in the news when U.S. policy generates conflict in Washington, but is marginalized in the news when official actors are united.

Berry (1990) echoes the finding of Mermin: "Public debate on the national interest and goals of foreign policy is vital if practical and logical policy is to be formulated. ... However, we have found that debate is not going to appear in the news, unless political figures themselves conduct it" (p. 145).

Mermin offers a number of examples to illustrate how government officials exploit the agenda-setting power of media to win public support for their foreign policies. One example is a campaign launched by the Reagan administration in 1983 to justify the U.S. military intervention in Grenada. Another example is a campaign, launched by the Bush administration to win support for the U.S. intervention in Panama in 1989. The U.S. bombing of Libya in 1986, and the U.S. intervention in Haiti in 1994 also conform to the pattern.

While discussing some of the most frequently cited examples of the impact of media coverage on foreign policy, Mermin argues that almost in every case, there is some evidence available suggesting that the agenda was set by policymakers and not vice versa.

Many experts believe that the media emerged as independent critics of U.S. foreign policy in the 1960s, reporting the Vietnam War in terms that contradicted the official declarations of the Johnson and Nixon administrations. Journalists were said to have generated public opposition to the war with stories that encouraged Americans to question the wisdom and the credibility of their government. In the 1980s, researcher Daniel C. Hallin found that critical coverage of the Vietnam War was a result of mounting opposition to American policy inside the U.S. government. Until critical

perspectives on the war had been expressed in Washington, no alternative to the White House position on the nature of the conflict in Vietnam and the need for U.S. intervention could be found (except at the margins) in the news (Mermin, 1999).

Graber (1997) arrives at the same conclusion. If the media are generally supportive of government policies, how can their adverse comments about the Vietnam War be explained? The answer is, she suggests, that the media emphasized the government's positions until many respected sources voiced their strong dissent. At that point, the media continued to give the administration's views on the war the largest amount of coverage. Even when protest was featured, the media gave voice primarily to "respectable" dissenters, not to political and social outcasts. Overall, despite some coverage that challenged the official version of international policies and American foreign policies, the tone of news stories supported prevailing stereotypes about the world.

The case that is most often cited as the evidence of the impact of media on U.S. foreign policy is the decision to send American troops to Somalia. Many believe that television news caused the United States to intervene in Somalia in 1992. Somalia appeared on American television just before major changes in U.S. policy in August and November 1992, and these stories might well have influenced the decision of the Bush administration to act. One possibility is that independent journalistic initiative put Somalia on the news agenda. That was the case in the 1984 Ethiopian famine, when after a series of NBC stories on Ethiopia, American aid to that country soared. A second possible explanation is that Somalia appeared on American television simply because it

had not been ignored in Washington. In this scenario, television coverage of Somalia in the summer and fall of 1992 originated not as the independent initiative of journalists, but in the interaction of journalists engaged in routine newsgathering practices and sources in Washington who made efforts to get Somalia onto the news agenda (Mermin, 1999).

A second case that is often cited as the evidence of the impact of television news on the American foreign policy agenda is the war in Bosnia upon the division of Yugoslavia. Bosnia had become a major story on American television in May 1992. The war in Bosnia emerged as a major issue in Washington on April 7, when the Bush administration granted diplomatic recognition to the newly independent states of Bosnia, Croatia, and Slovenia. Before April 7, not one story on Bosnia had appeared on the major networks in 1992. As of April 19, when the first cluster of Bosnia stories on the evening news began – Washington had demonstrated great interest in the conflict. On April 15, the State Department declared Serbian actions in Bosnia to be completely outside the bounds of civilized behavior (Mermin, 1999).

In the spring of 1991, television news made the ill-fated rebellion of the Iraqi Kurds against the regime of Saddam Hussein a major story in the United States. The evening news reported the plight of the Iraqi Kurds in poignant terms and pointed out the failure of the Bush administration to act on their behalf. An examination of White House actions before the Iraqi Kurds made the news, however, indicates that the Bush administration itself had made a major contribution to the framing of the crisis as one the United States could do something about (Mermin, 1999).

The case of Afghanistan, described by Utley (1997), provides one more example, confirming Mermin's conclusions. In the 1980s, the war in Afghanistan received extensive television news coverage because the story was about Soviet expansionism. After the Soviet Union's withdrawal in 1989, news coverage in general and network television coverage in particular plummeted, even though Afghan factions were fighting each other with brutal intensity. Not until Taliban forces occupied Kabul and cameras recorded the excesses of the victors and their vision of Islamic law – hanging bodies and women ordered to stay at home – was the American news appetite whetted again.

The case of Iranian revolution also confirms the validity of the indexing hypothesis. Did the American press, as democratic theory supposes it should, critically examine the assumptions of policymakers about a country thought to be a major and reliable ally? Did American journalists exercise judgement independent of official Washington in reporting Iranian life under the shah?

To answer these questions, William Dorman and Mansour Farhang (1988) analyzed coverage of Iran in *The New York Times*, *The Christian Science Monitor*, *Newsweek*, and *Time*, in the magazines listed under *Reader's guide to Periodical Literature*, by United Press International and Associated Press, *The Washington Post*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *Chicago Tribune* and *Los Angeles Times* from 1951 to 1978.

The researchers found that the American news media more often than not followed the cues of foreign policymakers rather than exercising independent judgment in reporting the social, economic, and political life of Iran under the shah, and journalists

proved easily susceptible to ethnocentrism, a condition that served the policy goals of official Washington remarkably well.

Earlier, in 1982, Trattner pointed to the ever-increasing role of the U.S. government in determining the foreign affairs news agenda:

Government is likely to have more and faster information on a subject than anyone, especially of a sensitive or intelligence nature. Being a prime source, what it is able or willing to provide can be decisive in how, even whether, a story is written. Moreover, the press cannot ignore where Washington puts its key emphases in foreign policy and must give these more attention than would otherwise be the case (p. 103)

Neither Participants, nor Passive Puppets

Berry (1990) argues that the press is neither a powerful force in foreign policy nor is it managed by the government in what it reports about foreign policy. Berry came to this conclusion after analyzing *The New York Times'* coverage of U.S. foreign policy. He looked at the foreign policy of the John Kennedy administration toward Cuba and its coverage; foreign policy of the Lyndon Johnson administration toward Vietnam and its coverage; foreign policy of the Nixon administration toward Cambodia and its coverage; foreign policy of the Carter administration toward Iranian hostages and its coverage; and foreign policy of the Reagan administration toward Lebanon and its coverage.

Berry discovered that different patterns emerge at foreign policy formulation, execution, and outcome stages. He used five variables to explain those differences: 1.

Getting the story; 2. Reporters' knowledge/reporters' acceptance of a policy consensus (a paired variable); 3. Cultural bias; 4. Meeting deadlines and other actions to satisfy editors; 5. Protecting sources and access to sources.

At the foreign policy formulation stage, getting the story demands a focus on what U.S. officials say and do. Naturally, the President and his National Security Council dominate page one because they dominate foreign policy formulation. At the execution stage, what U.S. officials, diplomats, intelligence agents, or soldiers are doing also garners the lion's share of press coverage. All this makes reporting largely consistent with U.S. foreign policy. At the outcome stage, getting the story means reporting on whether the foreign policy is having the intended effect abroad. Reporters rely less on what U.S. officials say and do and more on what foreigners say and do. When foreign events are inconsistent with policy, reporters are disposed to report just that – regardless of obvious attempts by the executive to manipulate the media. Consequences dominate the news. The story gets depth. The main reason for more incisive, in-depth reporting is the fact that the reporters know far more about foreign policy at the outcome stage than at the formulation stage (Berry, 1990).

Journalists bring some knowledge to their coverage of events. Journalists are also part of Washington's foreign policy consensus with its set of assumptions. Both variables are inversely proportional. The more knowledge journalists have in an area, the less they rely on the foreign policy consensus to explain events and vice versa. Reporters need a story line because foreign policy events are very complex. As a rule, reporters are generalists. In addition, reporters simply do not have the time that scholars have to

devote to in-depth studies of particular areas. Finally, few people are knowledgeable enough to judge the consequences of foreign policy action. Consequently, in analyzing foreign policies in their formulation and execution stages, journalists rely heavily on the foreign policy consensus and assumptions emanating from Washington. Reporters are susceptible to the consensus when stories break because they are part of the political establishment. However, at the outcome stage, journalists have been compelled to develop knowledge about an area. Reporting and learning go together. Most journalists are intellectually quick. At the outcome stage, they have results to compare with intentions. The resulting knowledge frees them from a reliance on Washington's foreign policy consensus. Reporters have more confidence in their own judgments and can write analysis (Berry, 1990).

A journalist' cultural bias is not "my country is right or wrong." It is, instead, a natural bias to have the United States succeed, so that it is secure, prosperous, prestigious, and contributing to world progress. However, at the outcome stage, when policy appears to be failing, reporters' cultural bias drives them to critical analysis. They do not want their country to continue down a dead end path. Flagging ineffective or costly foreign policy is patriotic (Berry, 1990).

The pressure of deadlines inhibits deep analysis at the policy formulation and execution stages. These foreign policy stages are fast-paced. Journalists have to move fast themselves. Editors expect stories with an accurate, up-to-date description of what is going on and will look skeptically at critical, outside the consensus, foreign policy analysis. Editors do not want their reporters to be policy players because that makes

them part of the story. Editors know that reporters and the newspaper destroy their credibility if they act as the blatant advocates. However, at the outcome stage, journalists have more time to evaluate foreign policy. When policy fails, editors rarely defend a described foreign policy consensus. They expect the reporting to be inconsistent with Washington's foreign policy (Berry, 1990).

Preserving sources inhibits critical analysis. At the formulation and execution stages, reporting inconsistent with government policy will anger the officials involved. The result for a journalist may be the loss of a source or the loss of access to a source. In the early stages of foreign policy, named and unnamed sources got their views out without much distortion or prejudice. Transmitting official statements is the price for getting statements. However, at the outcome stage, sources tend to be foreign officials and low-level U.S. officials who are in the field and who often are not important enough to protect. In addition, the authors of failed policies can hardly expect to be protected by friendly reporters. Reporters have their jobs to do. The outcome stage also includes more opposition sources when policy is failing. Reporting inconsistent with policy could then be attributed to congressional critics and not to the reporter, thereby preserving relations with sources (Berry, 1990).

Image Distortions

Newsom (1990) explains why and how the nature and limitations of the American media create biases that result in partial, and, at times, distorted pictures of events and policies. The resources available to bring the external world into American households

are limited. The news that reaches the United States from abroad is the result not only of economic choices, but also of competition. Not only are resources limited, but also the windows through which news is presented. News and pictures of foreign events that come to the United States through human effort – reporters, correspondents, cameramen, and producers – bear the imprints of their personalities. The approach is U.S. and Western oriented, both in the choice of news and in the cultural context within which it is presented. In response to space and time limitations and in efforts to explain complex problems, coverage becomes oversimplified.

Graber (1980) proposed that partly because news about foreign countries reflects American foreign policy interests, the world image as seen through the American media is often distorted. The American press assesses foreign countries largely in terms of U.S. interests, with little attempt to explain their culture and their concerns from their own prospective.

Graber (1980) argues that the various gatekeeping factors (political, economic, cultural, etc.) result in foreign affairs coverage that lacks depth and breadth, that emphasizes the simplest of themes, and that may distort facts in the interest of timeliness. She cites the stories that preceded United States intervention in the Dominican Republic in 1965 as the case in point.

When news reached the United States in late April and early May 1965 that a military coup was in progress in the Dominican Republic, American correspondents were sent to cover the scene. Upon arrival, they were not allowed to visit the cities and countryside because of military activities. Instead, they received a briefing from the

American ambassador based on second-hand information. Because of the pressure to meet the earliest publication deadlines, stories were sent out before they could get verified. Since they had come from an authentic source, no disclaimers were made. *The Los Angeles Herald Examiner* reported that Cuban communists had arranged the insurrection and that the loss of life was horrifying. *Time* magazine reported atrocities. Other media repeated the story. On the basis of such reports, President Lyndon Johnson, with the approval of the Organization of American States, sent more than one thousand Marines to the Dominican Republic to quell the rebellion, stop the bloodshed, and halt the march of communism. When the correspondents were finally allowed to visit the cities and countryside, they discovered that none of the stories they had reported were true. Instead of the one thousand to one and a half thousand bodies, which, according to President Johnson, had made the intervention imperative, there were fewer than a dozen. Only a small number of the forces seeking to overthrow the established government were communists. But by that time it was too late to undo the severe political damage done to the Dominican Republic and to the reputation of the United States (Graber, 1980).

Gatekeeping

One of the questions Graber (1997) wanted to answer when undertaking a study of the processes of foreign news making, was: "How do governments use the media to further their policy objectives around the world?"

Graber discusses foreign news selection criteria, foreign newsgathering patterns, gatekeeper characteristics, and the effects of gatekeeping on foreign news coverage.

While commenting on circumstances influencing foreign news coverage, Graber notes the factors listed below as particularly important.

American foreign correspondents are distributed unevenly throughout the world. More are stationed in friendly locations than in neutral or hostile ones. American correspondents abroad have to operate within the context of American politics and American political culture. Besides reflecting the American value structure, stories must conform to established American stereotypes. In addition, foreign correspondents operate under ever-increasing economic pressure. First, they have to produce appealing stories that attract big audiences and keep the media profitable. Second, they must avoid or minimize huge production costs (Graber, 1997).

Intraorganizational norms and pressures also influence news selection. Foreign news is gathered by a small enough group of reporters to allow for much personal contact and cooperation among them. Because the wire services perform the initial gatekeeping tasks for most newspapers and electronic media, topic selection is quite uniform. In the U.S., elite papers then take the lead in framing the stories, and editors and reporters throughout the country follow suit (Graber, 1997).

Burt (1990) refers to the same phenomenon as a "herd journalism" – the tendency of the media to cover the same events in much the same way, ignoring other developments and other issues. Burt believes that "herd journalism" offers government spokesmen enhanced opportunities to define the news by steering them toward the story of the day. It also leads to a "sequential" approach to the news – a stream of different stories from day to day and week to week, reported without context and perspective.

Foreign correspondents often have to comply with the requirements of their host countries, Graber (1980) notes. Many host governments are politically unstable and fear for their survival if they receive unfavorable publicity. Consequently, they heavily censor foreign correspondents. American foreign correspondents remain vulnerable to public relations efforts of the foreign governments – when they lack direct access, they have to relay on information provided by the foreign government.

Media diplomacy – attempts by correspondents in the United States and abroad to inject themselves directly into the political processes, and attempts by the U.S. and foreign leaders to use news media to further their causes – is often helpful in solving conflicts. However, it also leads to serious problems. Sometimes it forces government officials to react to unforeseen developments with undue haste (Graber, 1980).

The bulk of foreign affairs news for American media actually originates in Washington from various beats in the executive branch, especially the White House, the State Department, and the Pentagon. The President's view tends to dominate whenever situations are controversial (Graber, 1980).

Foreign correspondents prefer to report predictable events, such as elections or summit conferences. The decision to film particular foreign stories abroad is usually made in the United States, because the media's home offices consider themselves in closer touch with the interests of American audiences. Foreign bureaus do the actual filming. Audiences are more likely to pay attention to a story that is linked explicitly to U.S. interests. Linkage to the U.S. concern is especially important for regions with which average Americans are least familiar (Graber, 1980).

In support of her conclusions, Graber (1980) cites findings of sociologist Herbert Gans. Gans examined foreign affairs news in television newscasts and in newsmagazines, and identified seven most frequently covered topics. First in order are American activities in foreign countries, particularly when presidents and secretaries of state visit. Second are events that affect Americans directly in a major way, such as wars, oil embargoes, and international economic problems. Third are relations of the United States with Communist and formerly Communist states. Internal political and military problems of these countries are emphasized. Fourth, elections in other parts of the world are covered if they involve a change in the head of state. There is also a sentimental attachment for covering the major (and minor) activities of European royalty. Fifth are stories about dramatic political conflicts. Most wars, coups d'état, and revolutions are reported; protests, as a rule, are covered only when they are violent. Left-wing coups receive more attention than right-wing coups. Sixth are disasters, if they involve massive loss of lives and destruction of property. Seventh are the excesses of foreign dictators, particularly when they involve brutality against political dissidents.

The media's preference for news about current happenings has led to concentration on rapidly breaking stories in accessible places, Graber (1997) argues. Pressure for timeliness and novelty also fragments news presentation and usually precludes a follow-up. This gives major events an unwarranted air of suddenness and unpredictability. They have neither a past nor a future – merely a brief presence in the parade of current events.

Foreign news reported in the American press is based primarily on American sources that stay closely to the mainstream line (Graber, 1997).

The problems of producing domestic news are magnified for foreign news reporting. Staffs are smaller, research facilities are more limited, language barriers are laborious, and transmission difficulties may be enormous. The need to keep news stories brief is particularly troubling because foreign events are often unintelligible without adequate background information or interpretation. Usually a single theme must be selected to epitomize the entire complex story (Graber, 1997).

Foreign news also neglects major social problems, particularly political and economic development issues. Social problems are difficult to describe in brief stories, visual materials are often lacking, and changes come at a glacial pace. Some social problems are extremely complex; most reporters are ill-equipped to understand let alone describe them. When they do describe them, the focus is on their dramatic negative aspects: shortages, famines, conflicts, and breakdowns (Graber, 1997).

The thrust of most foreign news stories provides support for government policies. The media usually accept official designations of who America's friends and enemies are and interpret their motives accordingly. Whenever relationships change, media coverage mirrors the change (Graber, 1997).

Because the executive branch is the prime source of foreign affairs news, it can, most of the time, set the agenda of coverage and frame stories to reflect official perspectives (Graber, 1997).

Because of all the factors described above, Graber (1997) concludes, that foreign affairs coverage in the U.S. is ample, dramatic, and up to date, but that it lacks depth and breadth. It stereotypes and oversimplifies, and often distorts facts in the interest of timeliness.

Nokes suggests that the government, not the news media, dominates the national news agenda (1990).

More often than not, the President and his administration can determine when something becomes news, and how long it stays in the news. They can do this simply by giving an issue attention or not giving it attention. A President and his administration can put the desired spin on a story through selective release of information to the public, emphasizing what they want to be emphasized and withholding contradictory information. Reporters under the pressure of deadline do not always have time to get the other side of the story. What's more, a skillful administration can time events or activities to serve its own purposeful agenda. This is true with a number of events, including summit meetings and the President's foreign trips. Under certain circumstances, deliberate attempts to influence media coverage may be constructive – provided the intention is explicit and the purpose legitimate. Yet, the enormous power of the government to influence the media is also open to great abuse (Nokes, 1990).

Information as a Currency of Power

Kurz (1990) discusses the impact of the news media on foreign policy in the context of the role media plays in mediating, exacerbating, and exploiting conflict

between the executive and legislative branches of the U. S. government. The discussion sheds some light on the extent foreign policymakers in different branches can use the media for their advantage as well.

Kurz describes the sources of differences between the executive and legislative branches and their relations with the press.

The main source of differences is the way power is organized in the two branches. The executive branch is organized in a hierarchical manner. Congress, by contrast, is highly decentralized. Another major difference between the legislative and executive branches is the general presumption that governs everyday business. In Congress, all business is normally considered open, subject to strong and vigorous public debate. It is the exceptions, mostly details of intelligence and military matters, that are handled behind closed doors or locked in vaults. The opposite is true for the executive branch. Congressmen and senators are more open to the press than are executive branch personnel. A further difference lies in the willingness of staff-level officials to talk to the press. In Congress, even the most junior staffer regularly talks to reporters “on background.” In the executive branch, the most senior of staff officials usually avoid reporters unless the office of a cabinet secretary clears the conversation (Kurz, 1990).

The above-described situation leads to the following: in Congress, the media often, although not always, are seen as allies. In the executive branch, especially away from the White House political operation, the press is more often than not seen as an antagonist (Kurz, 1990).

Most national security officials – the military, intelligence officers, and foreign policy specialists – avoid, even if they do not fear, the press. Reporters are seen as troublemakers or worse. Only upon rising through the ranks to senior office do reporters become part of their lives. Even then, the national security official who cultivates the press remains an exception (Kurz, 1990).

The attitude of members of Congress toward the press is nearly the opposite. Where getting elected and staying in office is at stake, press relations are carefully cultivated. According to Kurz (1990), legislators form alliances with the press because they share a common interest, often a rivalry, against the executive. These alliances solidify during times of controversy and tension with a President.

In the foreign affairs arena, reporters regularly tap sources in the executive branch who are inaccessible to the Congress, or who are unwilling to speak openly in contradiction of official administration policy. Reporters also regularly rotate, or at least travel, between Washington and foreign hot spots. This yields access to sources and information that may be unavailable even to the executive branch intelligence agencies (Kurz, 1990).

Kurz, very much like Cohen, is convinced that a symbiotic relationship between the media and members of Congress often develops. Congress can provide the context for the hot news discovered by the press by calling hearings and scheduling floor action, often in direct response to press interest and attention. It is just as usual for a congressional hearing to be sparked by a news report as it is for the press to report on the congressional action. On other occasions, Congress, through hearings or public

statements, provides the news hook, which allows reporters to push new information past their editors to the public. While these alliances may initially form as a matter of convenience, they often result in long-standing relationships. Trading information among a variety of sources is a vital aspect of the way business is transacted in Washington.

Another factor that serves to cement the alliance between members of Congress and the media is the reassurance each gets from the other. Congress and the press provide each other with the legitimacy to challenge a President. No senator, congressman, or reporter takes on the President without great trepidation. The executive branch and the President himself have enormous power to embarrass or politically penalize individuals who expose and pursue controversial matters. White House efforts to dissuade a publisher or an editor from developing a story not to the President's liking are very much a part of press relations. A congressional inquiry grants some, though not complete, protection from this (Kurz, 1990).

Similarly, elected representatives, even powerful ones, are usually reluctant to challenge a popular president. Even when they have clear evidence of abuse, they seldom take independent action before they have been empowered by press reports that serve to catalyze public opinion (Kurz, 1990).

Kurz (1990) also comments on the impact of new technologies on the way foreign policy is conducted. In the interplay of relations between the Congress, the executive and the media, information is the "currency of power." Control of information is vital for controlling the initiative in foreign policy. The increased public availability of technology to acquire and disseminate information has significantly weakened the ability

of the executive branch to monopolize information. The collection, analysis, and dissemination of intelligence by the U.S. government are an executive branch responsibility. This includes both analysis of information on events overseas as well as secretly collected intelligence. How this role is managed, and who receives this intelligence, is a critical issue in determining who makes and is involved in foreign policy decisions. Today, presidential control over intelligence is drastically reduced. Media access to technology that was once the exclusive domain of governments has changed the nature of who knows what and when, thus altering the terms of the policy debate. The use of satellite communications allows the media to transmit information on breaking events at the same time it happens or shortly thereafter. The availability of real-time news on a crisis means that the Congress and the public can know of events the same time the President does. The news media can now keep pace with and often anticipate classified reporting by the State Department and the intelligence agencies.

Leaks

One of the classic methods that foreign policymakers can use to influence media is a leak. Newsom (1996) discusses the origins of the leaks and explains their impact on the foreign policy.

Newsom (1996) cites the typology of leaks developed by Stephen Hess: the ego leak (to satisfy a sense of self-importance), the goodwill leak (a play for future favor), the policy leak (a straightforward pitch for or against a proposal), the animus leak (used to settle grudges), the trial-balloon leak, and the whistle-blower leak. He adds to the list the

following categories: the advance-spin leak (by releasing the substance of an important document before the official date with favorable comment on the conclusions, the way is paved – it is hoped – for a favorable public reaction when it is released), the demonstration leak (administrations at times believe not enough is known of significant secret efforts in support of policies, and an official disclosure of such efforts might require an official response from an adversary), the signal leak (information is sometimes given out unofficially in order to warn another country of a possible reaction to policies or deployments), the foreign leak (not all embarrassing leaks come from U.S. sources), and the professional leak (many of the reporters who cover the White House and State Department have been in Washington much longer than most officials; they know how the government works and can detect the signals of major events).

The impact of the leaks according to Wallach (1996) is that a great deal more classified information is deliberately leaked by the government in its efforts to manage the news than is disclosed, on an allegedly unauthorized basis, by reporters. Such “authorized” leaks frequently have as much impact on national security as the allegedly unauthorized ones do.

Newsom (1996) also discusses the role the media can play in diplomacy and the ways foreign policymakers can use media for their policy objectives. A Secretary of State may find it tactically useful to leak a possible negotiating ploy to put pressure on an opposing side. A national security adviser may tell a reporter about a policy option to test public reaction. A President may use a press conference to send a message to a country with which the United States has no diplomatic relations. Negotiators may

publicly reject or reveal an adversary's position as a means of sabotaging or delaying an agreement.

Foreign News Coverage and Diplomacy

Gilboa (2000) explains how interrelated revolutionary changes in politics, international relations, and mass communications have expanded the media's role in diplomacy and how policy decisions limit or enhance media opportunities.

Gilboa (2000) applies six models to describe the basic taxonomy of interactions between media and diplomacy. The models are classified into two groups. The first group includes the models that deal with the limitations officials impose on media coverage and the degree to which negotiations are exposed to the media and public opinion: (a) secret diplomacy, (b) closed-door diplomacy, and (c) open diplomacy. The models in the second group deal with the opposite phenomenon – exclusive utilization of the media by officials and sometimes by journalists to promote conflict resolution processes: (a) public diplomacy, (b) media diplomacy, and (c) media-broker diplomacy.

Gilboa (2000) created the closed-door and the media-broker models and he revised other four, well-known models.

Secret diplomacy is characterized by the total isolation and exclusion of the media and the public from negotiations and related policymaking. Traditionally, diplomacy was secret, but as the world has become more democratic and more accessible to media, it has become more difficult to conduct diplomacy in secrecy. The public demands information about negotiations; in general, the media satisfy this demand. Yet, in a few critical and

highly sensitive cases, even well known, high-level policymakers have been able to pursue secret negotiations (Gilboa, 2000).

The secret diplomacy model presents a difficult dilemma for officials who may have to lie to the media and the public in order to ensure that the negotiations remain secret. If they do tell the truth, they could endanger the chances of reaching an agreement with the other side. If they lie, they compromise one of the most important principles of public service. For journalists, diplomacy successfully kept secret is tantamount to professional failure. The media are expected constantly to be abreast of developments in government circles. Yet, sometimes the media's misconceptions help officials to maintain secrecy. The less likely journalists are to believe enemies are holding talks, the less likely they will be to pursue leads that point to the existence of such talks. Although officials committed to secret negotiations invest considerable effort to deceive the media, they sometimes do make mistakes on which journalists, surprisingly, often fail to capitalize (Gilboa, 2000).

In closed-door diplomacy, the media are partially excluded, and media coverage is narrowly confined to mostly technical aspects of the negotiating process. Secrecy cannot be always assured in high-level negotiations among several heads of state or ministers, should these negotiations last for an extended period of time. Although politicians and officials are able to deceive the media and disappear for a short period of time, they can not leave their offices for a long time. High-level politicians who need several days for intensive negotiations and want to minimize the adverse effects of open diplomacy can use closed-door diplomacy. In closed-door diplomacy, the participants

are effectively isolated from their respective domestic public opinions, from opposition forces, pressure groups, other states, international organizations, and transnational actors, as long as the negotiations continue (Gilboa, 2000).

Politicians and diplomats view closed-door diplomacy as the next best option after secret diplomacy because this model still offers them substantial control over media coverage. Yet, the media and the public know that a significant diplomatic event is taking place and press for information on the progress of the talks. Officials, particularly of the parties to the conflict, cannot satisfy the public need for details and deny themselves an effective and useful tool – manipulation and use of the mass media – that they routinely employ to affect public debate over policy issues (Gilboa, 2000).

For journalists, closed-door diplomacy could be more challenging than secret diplomacy. Reporters who know that a significant diplomatic event is going on are under enormous pressure from their editors and the public to provide information about the event, but they have very little to report on. They are almost totally cut off from their normal sources and are unable to conduct interviews or to receive information at press conferences. Therefore, media coverage of closed-door diplomacy becomes inherently limited and problematic. In the absence of the hard news, most of the coverage is confined to background stories, human-interest stories, speculation, and vague assessments (Gilboa, 2000).

Open diplomacy refers to negotiations that are readily accessible to the media and to public scrutiny and debate. In this model, negotiators often conduct official press conferences, hold briefings, grant interviews, and even allow reporters access to

conference rooms. In the open version, the public knows not only who is negotiating, where and when, but also the general agenda and the main goals of the negotiations. However, even the most open talks are not fully exposed to the public. Specific bargaining positions are seldom revealed. Even in the most open version, officials prefer to keep some cards close to their chests and leak information to the media in order to influence both the positions of the other side and their own domestic environment (Gilboa, 2000).

The open diplomacy model especially challenges officials who feel they have to win public support for diplomatic moves primarily through the use of the mass media. Diplomats think more about what they should say (how to send right signals to impress the public), than about what they should do. Journalists welcome the open diplomacy model because they regularly receive a flow of information about the talks, and thus they participate more in the negotiation process. Even under the most favorable conditions of exposure and access, however, media coverage of contemporary negotiations, especially by television, has been frequently criticized as too limited and superficial. As a result, a public that depends on television news may receive somewhat distorted images of diplomatic talks and consequently may form unfounded opinions and adopt unrealistic expectations (Gilboa, 2000).

In public diplomacy, state and non-state actors use the media and other channels of communication to influence public opinion in foreign societies; international broadcasting plays a special role (Gilboa, 2000).

Media diplomacy refers to uses of the mass media to communicate with state and non-state actors, to build confidence and advance negotiations, as well as to mobilize public support for agreements. Media diplomacy is pursued through various routine and special media activities, including press conferences, interviews, and leaks, as well as visits of heads of state and mediators in rival countries and spectacular media events (Gilboa, 2000).

Global television has increased the speed at which diplomatic messages are exchanged from weeks to minutes. This change represents a serious dilemma for policymakers, particularly in crisis situations (Gilboa, 2000).

Media diplomacy requires close cooperation between officials and journalists. Sometimes this cooperation leads to cynical manipulation of the media for political purposes (Gilboa, 2000).

In media-broker diplomacy journalists temporarily assume the role of diplomats and serve as a mediators in international negotiations (Gilboa, 2000).

From the governmental prospective, only officially authorized diplomacy is legitimate. However, at times journalists do step in to the negotiation process directly or try to bridge different sides. Occasionally, journalists keep their activities secret (Gilboa, 2000).

In background conversations or in specific interviews with high level policymakers, experienced and well-known journalists may identify a potential for negotiations or attempt to negotiate on behalf of a particular actor (Gilboa, 2000).

In an official interview, a series of questions and answers may create a diplomatic move or accelerate one that is already in making. In this mode, journalists function as mediators and catalysts for negotiations (Gilboa, 2000).

In certain secret cases, officials use reporters to ensure secrecy. A veteran diplomatic correspondent would have accumulated considerable knowledge and experience about the intricacies of negotiations, perhaps as much as professional diplomats, and could execute a diplomatic mission effectively. The secret variant raises different professional and ethical dilemmas. Journalists may have an interest in the success of the diplomatic move they help to initiate or are drafted to advance (Gilboa, 2000).

The media-broker model may represent the most controversial interaction between officials and diplomats. Many theories of press-government relations advocate an adversarial role for the media vis-à-vis the government. The media are supposed to report professionally and objectively and to critically examine official policies and actions. All the media-broker diplomacy variants may potentially compromise this task (Gilboa, 2000).

Leaders of state and non-state actors are using the media more and more as a major standard instrument for communication and negotiation. Prominent journalists have even occasionally assumed the role of diplomat in both crisis and peacemaking situations. These uses of media have had significant impact on the conduct and coverage of diplomacy. That's why a study of the media's involvement in diplomacy is becoming increasingly important, concludes Gilboa.

Foreign Policy and Media Studies

Ramaprasad (1984) analyzed *The New York Times*' coverage of India between 1973 and 1980 (a period characterized by subtle U.S. foreign policy changes toward India) to see whether trends in news coverage were related to trends in U.S. foreign policy toward India in those years. She studied trends in both the length and prominence of coverage for both bias and topic categories. She expected the coverage of favorable/positive topic news to be larger and more prominent in favorable foreign policy periods than in unfavorable foreign policy periods and vice versa. The analysis failed to show any relationship between *The New York Times*' coverage of India between 1973 and 1980 and U.S. foreign policy toward India in that period. In covering India – an ideologically similar country – during a time when there was no direct U.S. involvement (especially of an antagonistic nature) in it and no drastic U.S. foreign policy changes toward it, the chances for a patriotic bias on the part of the U.S. press as well as for any extensive dependence of the press on government for information were limited, Ramaprasad concluded.

Shoar-Graffari (1985) analyzed performance of *The New York Times* and *The Times* in covering Iran from 1968 to 1978. He expected that they would be dependent on government “information subsidies” and the relevance of foreign news in terms of national interests of the base country would play a special role in news selection. Using content analysis, the researcher comparatively examined the selection, emphasis, treatment and sources of coverage against a background of the United States and Great

Britain's policies and interests in Iran and the Persian Gulf. Results of content analysis showed that Iran's international relations received more coverage than its internal affairs, and more specifically, that this coverage focused on topics and issues related to the interests of newspapers' respective base countries. Also, both newspapers relied heavily on official sources of information in their coverage. Analysis of treatment for the combined coverage of newspapers found a change from favorable to a highly unfavorable treatment after the oil crisis of 1973-1974. The shift was statistically significant for *The New York Times*, but not so for *The Times*, though the direction of trend was similar. The U.S. shift, however, showed an apparent divergence from the stated policies and posture at the time. Divergence in press-government positions vis-à-vis Iran could be attributed to an increased level of interdependence in U.S.-Iran relations and the loss of consensus in U.S. policy, and hence, the assumption of an independent watchdog role by *The New York Times* after the crisis of 1973-1974, concludes Shoar-Graffari.

Malinkina and McLeod (2000) analyzed newspaper coverage of conflicts in Afghanistan and Chechnya by *The New York Times* and *Izvestia* to examine the impact of political change on news coverage.

Malinkina and McLeod (2000) refer to features shaping media coverage in any system described by Shoemaker and Reese (1996). These factors include: (a) individual influences on media content such as education, ethnicity, personal values and beliefs, and the political orientation of individual media workers; (b) media routines that constrain individual media workers and affect what gets defined as news and portrayed as social reality; (c) organizational influences, which include differences in the organization's

internal structure, policies, goals, projected markets, and policies set by the individuals that control the media organizations; (d) extra-media forces such as sources of information and revenue, government, various powerful social institutions, the utilization of technology, and the economic environment; and (e) ideology, which is defined as a symbolic mechanism that serves as a cohesive and integrating force in a society.

Malinkina and McLeod cite Herman and Chomsky (1988) who propose that in the United States, five filters narrow the range of news to make it responsible to the needs of the government and major power groups. These filters are: the concentrated ownership of the media, advertising as a major source of revenue, reliance on the official sources of information, “flak” from government and business officials, and anticommunist ideology.

Herman and Chomsky (1988) emphasized a double standard in the news coverage practiced by the U.S media in their condemnation of the Soviet invasion in Afghanistan, interventions in Czechoslovakia and Hungary, and use of humanitarian reasons to justify the U.S. intervention in Vietnam and Grenada. Zaremba’s (1988) examination of press coverage of the 1973 Arab-Israeli War by different newspapers from different countries revealed considerable differences in perceptions and interpretations of the conflict based on the political and ideological alliances of the newspaper’s home country. Paletz and Vinson (1994) analyzed international news coverage of the KAL Flight 007 incident by different newspapers from different countries and found that by careful selection and interpretation of facts, and the strategic use of headlines, newspapers frame their content to suit their own objectives according to their political, economic, and ideological affiliations.

Malinkina and McLeod (2000) discovered that there were no significant differences in *The New York Times*' coverage of the Afghan and Chechen conflicts. *The New York Times* opposed the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan and the Russian intervention in Chechnya. The harsh criticism of both conflicts and the lack of significant differences in *The New York Times* were unexpected given the change in U.S. foreign policy interests. The lack of change in the coverage by the *New York Times* may be the result of several factors. First, it may indicate that foreign policy interests are not as powerful in shaping news coverage as Herman and Chomsky's Propaganda Model purports them to be. Alternatively, it may also be indicative of the fact that there is some ideological residue of the Cold war that continues to influence events involving Russia. Third is the fact that both events involved a violent intervention by a large nation against a smaller group of people; the similarity between the two situations may have led to a similar pattern of coverage by the *New York Times*. Any change in U.S. foreign policy interests brought about by the demise of the Cold War did not seem to have a large impact on the coverage of *The New York Times*, conclude Malinkina and McLeod.

Chapter 3

Latest History of Georgia (1990-2000), and Georgia's Significance for U. S. Foreign Policy

Brief Overview of History

Emerging from the ruins of the Soviet Union, Georgia is building a new state. Transition from authoritarian regime to democracy has been extremely painful. Georgia has been plagued by civil war, ethnic conflicts and chronic economic problems. With the help of the international community, the country is slowly recovering from its initial shock.

Georgia is located in Southwestern Asia, on the Black Sea coast, bordering Armenia, Azerbaijan, Russia, and Turkey. Slightly larger than the state of West Virginia, it is home to approximately 5.1 million people (July, 1999 estimation). Georgians comprise 70 percent of population, while Armenians comprise 8 percent, Russians and Azeris comprise 6 percent each, Ossetians comprise 3 percent, and Abkhazs comprise 2 percent. Seventy five percent of the population is Christian Orthodox, 11 percent is Sunni Muslim, and eight percent is Armenian Apostolic. The official language is Georgian – a South Caucasian language, linguistically distant from Turkic and Indo-European languages (CountryWatch, 2000; Slider, 1995; Twining, 1993).

Georgia is an ancient country and Georgian is one of the oldest living languages in the world. Archaeological evidence indicates a Neolithic culture in the area of modern Georgia as early as the fifth millenium B.C. Between that time and the modern era, a

number of ethnic groups invaded or migrated into the region, merging with numerous indigenous tribes to form the ethnic base of the modern Georgian people (Slider, 1995).

In the last centuries of the pre-Christian era, Georgia was strongly influenced by Greece to the west and Persia to the east. In 330, adoption of Christianity as a state religion ultimately tied Georgia to the neighboring Byzantine Empire (Slider, 1995).

In the 11th and 12th centuries, Georgia reached the peak of its development. The country was well known in the Christian West. The Crusaders viewed Georgian monarchs David IV the Builder, and later, Queen Tamar, as an important allies.

The Mongol invasion in the 13th century marked the beginning of decline. Century after century, Georgia has had to defend itself against various Muslim invaders including Turks, Persians, and Arabs. The Muslim invaders left a trace in culture and social-political organization of the country. After the fall of the Byzantine Empire to Turks, Georgia's isolation from the Christian West grew.

Georgian kings attempted to ally politically and militarily with the Christian countries of the West; however, unsuccessfully. In the 16th century, after Spain's major victory over Arabs, Constantine, King of Georgia, tried to persuade Isabelle, Queen of Spain, to help Eastern Christians in their battle against Muslim invaders and provide military support to liberate Constantinople. The dream of the Georgian king never was realized. Another major attempt took place in the early 18th century when on the request of Georgian King Vakhtang VI, Georgian diplomat Sulkhan Saba Orbeliani traveled to France and Italy to seek assistance from the Western Christian kingdoms for Georgia's struggle against Persia. Orbeliani met the Pope of Rome and Louis XIV, the King of

France. The European powers expressed sympathy for the Georgian cause, but they were not willing and able to do more. In the late 18th century, Georgia, exhausted by the wars with Muslim neighbors, turned to Orthodox Russia for protection. Russia and Georgia signed the Friendship Treaty of Georgievsk in 1783. Georgia maintained the right to manage its internal affairs independently and agreed to coordinate its foreign policy with Russia. In exchange, Russia agreed to provide military support against various Muslim enemies. However, Russia did not abide by the provisions of the Treaty, annexed Georgia, and exiled the royalty in 1801. From that time on, Georgia, while enjoying security, became caught in a subordinate relationship that lasted nearly two centuries (Melikishvili, 1990; Kveselava, 1999; Slider, 1995).

After several unsuccessful attempts to overthrow Russian rule, the first Republic of Georgia was established on May 26, 1918, following the collapse of Czarist Russia. Before becoming independent, Georgia briefly participated in the short-lived Federal Republic of Transcaucasia. Georgia declared independence under the protection of Germany to prevent opportunistic invasions by the Turks. The major European powers recognized Georgia's independence, and in May 1920, Russian leader Lenin officially followed suit. In February 1921, the Red army reoccupied the country, and Georgia became part of the Soviet Union, first as a part of the Transcaucasian Republic, and from 1936, as a union republic (Slider, 1995; Twining, 1993).

In seven decades as a part of the Soviet Union, Georgia maintained some cultural independence and Georgian nationalism remained a significant, though at times muted,

issue. In economic and political terms, however, Georgia was thoroughly integrated into the Soviet system (Slider, 1995).

In the late '80s, Gorbachev's simultaneous policies of glasnost and continued control energized the nationalist movement in Georgia, which pushed the republic out of the central state before the Soviet Union fell apart. In April 1989, Soviet troops broke up a peaceful demonstration in Tbilisi using sharpened shovels and lethal gas. Twenty Georgians, mostly women and children, were killed and hundreds were injured. Consequent outrage of the Georgian public accelerated the speed of the events. In October 1990, the opposition pressure on Communist government resulted in a multiparty election. The election decisively rejected the Communists and gave a resounding popular mandate to the Round Table/Free Georgia block headed by Zviad Gamsakhurdia, a long-time Georgian dissident. Rather than consent to participate in Gorbachev's March 1991 referendum on preserving a federation of Soviet republics, Gamsakhurdia organized a separate referendum on Georgian independence. Ninety nine percent of Georgian voters voted for independence. When the Soviet Union collapsed at the end of 1991, Georgia refused to participate in the formation or subsequent activities of the Commonwealth of Independent States. On April 9, 1991, the Supreme Council of the Republic of Georgia declared independence from the USSR. In May 1991, Gamsakhurdia became the President of Georgia, receiving over 86 percent of the votes, in the first popular presidential election in a Soviet republic (Slider, 1995; Twining, 1993). The political platform of a new government was "balanced Georgian nationalism" (Kveselava, 1999, p. 247). Gamsakhurdia's government initiated a number of progressive reforms, but soon

faced a rigid criticism. The radical opposition, backed by paramilitary groups, questioned its legitimacy. The moderate opposition accused Gamsakhurdia of being a dictator. The allegations against Gamsakhurdia's government included abusing freedom of mass media, suppression of ethnic minorities, resistance to market economy, and lack of commitment to Western values (Kveselava, 1999). Disagreement between Gamsakhurdia and the opposition leaders grew and soon they, along with the some members of Gamsakhurdia's government, including the Prime Minister and Minister of Defense, rebelled against the President. The civil war started. On January 13, 1992, after 2 weeks of severe fighting, Gamsakhurdia and his armed supporters fled Tbilisi and sought shelter in neighboring Armenia, and later, Chechnya (Slider, 1995; Twining, 1993). The winners – the opposition – referred to the event as a “popular democratic rebellion,” but the overthrown government saw it as a “coup d'état” inspired by Russia and the United States and executed by criminal groups (Kveselava, 1999).

In the aftermath of Gamsakhurdia's ouster, the Parliament ceased to function. The Military Council took the control over country. Shortly thereafter, an interim Political Consultative Council was formed. This council was intended to serve as a substitute parliament, although it only had the right to make recommendations. Legislative functions were granted to a new and larger body, the State Council, created in early March 1992 (Slider, 1995; Twining, 1993).

Eduard Shevardnadze, Georgian, who twice served as a foreign minister for Gorbachev and served as a republic Communist party leader in Tbilisi for 13 years before joining Gorbachev's cabinet in Moscow, offered his assistance to the Military Council.

On March 7, 1992, Shevardnadze returned to Georgia and headed the State Council until a national election (Slider, 1995; Twining, 1993).

National parliamentary elections were held in October 11, 1992. Shevardnadze was chosen by 90 percent of voters for the post of Speaker of the Parliament. On November 6, 1992, he was elected Head of State by the Parliament and was considered a de facto President (Twining, 1993).

The continued decline of the economy during 1993, exacerbated by the conflict in one of Georgia's autonomous parts – Abkhazia, led to increasingly vocal political opposition in the legislature and elsewhere to Shevardnadze's policies. In late June 1993, Shevardnadze requested the legislature to grant him added emergency powers. His request was granted. The gradual enhancement of Shevardnadze's powers has raised concerns. Despite the fact that the Shevardnadze's government expressed commitment to Western democratic ideals, the opposition complained that it abused both human rights and press freedom (Slider, 1995; Twining, 1993).

In 1993, Gamsakhurdia tried to regain the power by military means; however unsuccessfully. His cause apparently lost, Gamsakhurdia either committed suicide (Slider, 1995; Twining, 1993), or was assassinated in January 1994.

Two major ethnic conflicts occurred in Georgia during the first years of its independence, threatening to tear the country in several sections. Because of these two conflicts, approximately 300 thousand people became internally displaced. The Abkhaz, a Turkic people who speak their own distinct language and who are primarily Sunni Muslim, have been seeking independence from Georgia and closer ties with Russia. Both

Georgians and the Abkhaz claim disputed territory as historically inherited. Serious clashes between the Abkhaz, a group of 80 thousand people who constitute a 17 percent minority in the republic, and Georgians, who constitute a 46 percent majority, led to a number of deaths in July 1989. The Abkhaz declared independence on July 23, 1992. Armed conflict ensued, with the Abkhaz aided by Confederation of Caucasus Peoples Muslim volunteers. Formed in November 1991, the Confederation has sought to protect the interests of Caucasian minorities against Georgian and Russian hegemony. Composed almost wholly of Sunni Muslims, the Confederation includes people from Kabardino-Balkaria, Dagestan, and Chechnya, and elsewhere. Soon after the Georgian National Guard began military operations in Abkhazia in August 1992, the sides entered Russian-mediated ceasefire talks. These talks resulted in four ceasefire agreements (CountryWatch, 2000; Slider, 1995; Twining, 1993; Nichol, 1993).

After the failure of the second Russian-mediated ceasefire resulted in renewed fighting, on July 2, 1993, Shevardnadze sent a letter to U.N. Security Council session requesting it to examine the conflict. The U.N. Security Council issued a statement calling on “all the parties to cease military action immediately” and adhere to the ceasefire agreement of May 14, 1993. The Security Council promised to consider a report and proposal by Boutros-Ghali, made on July 1, just before the offensive, to send 50 U.N. observers to Abkhazia to reinstate the ceasefire, with logistical support from Russia. On July 6, the Security Council adopted an emergency resolution on sending a first group of 50 U.N. observers to Abkhazia, through directing that they not be mandated and deployed until the ceasefire was in place (Nichol, 1993). The last agreement between

Georgia and Abkhazia was signed on May 14, 1994, in Moscow with both sides agreeing to a cease-fire and separation of forces (CountryWatch, 2000; Slider, 1995). During and after conflict, the Abkhaz received substantial political and military support from Russia. No country, including the United States and Russia, has recognized Abkhazia as a sovereign state (CountryWatch, 2000; Slider, 1995).

The South Ossetian Autonomous Oblast (territorial-administrative unit instituted by Soviet authorities), a constituent part of Georgia, has sought to join the North Ossetian Autonomous Republic, located to its north in the Russian Federation. The Ossetians are primarily Orthodox Christians who speak Russian and Ossetian in the north and Ossetian and Georgian in the south. The South Ossetian Democratic Republic was established on September 20, 1990, but was declared illegal by authorities in Moscow. On December 21, 1991, the South Ossetian Supreme Soviet, which had already announced its intention to join Russia, declared independence. Georgia, under the leadership of Gamsakhurdia, resisted all independence efforts, and the formation of a South Ossetian National Guard led to armed confrontations with Georgian forces. Despite Gamsakhurdia's replacement by Shavrdnadze, hostilities intensified in March and April 1992. There were reports that Russian volunteers were aiding the Ossetian rebels. South Ossetian leaders asked Russia for protection. Yeltsin and Shevardnadze arranged for a ceasefire to take effect on June 28, 1992. Based on this agreement, called the Dagomys Accord, Russian, South Ossetian, and Georgian peacekeeping troops wearing UN-style blue helmets and armbands created a buffer zone between South Ossetia and Georgia in July, 1992 (CountryWatch, 2000; Slider, 1995; Twining, 1993; Nichol, 1993).

In addition, Georgia's central government failed to establish a credible relationship with some relatively autonomous parts of Georgia, populated by Georgian sub-ethnicities, such as Ajara and Mengrelia. Ajara, an autonomous republic south of Abkhazia on the Black Sea, maintained a conservative, authoritarian regime over which Tbilisi exercises tenuous control. The population of Ajara is less than 400 thousand, of which one-fourth are ethnic Ajarians. Ajarians speak a dialect of Georgian and were converted to Islam in the 17th century (CountryWatch, 2000; Slider, 1995; Twining, 1993; Nichol, 1993). The issues of division of power between the center and the region contribute to the tension between Tbilisi and Batumi (capital of Ajara). However, Ajara considers itself an integral part of Georgia and is faithful to the idea of united Georgian statehood (Kveselava, 1999).

Mengrelians number over 400 thousand – about 10 percent of Georgia's population. They speak a South Caucasian language not mutually intelligible with the Georgian. Mengrelians also speak Georgian, are culturally assimilated with Georgians, and identify with an independent Georgia (CountryWatch, 2000; Slider, 1995; Twining, 1993). Most Mengrelians supported Gamsakhurdia's government and refused to accept Shevardnadze's government as legitimate.

In September 1993, after the fall of Sukhumi to the Abkhaz forces, Shevardnadze, recognizing the necessity of outside military help to maintain his government and territorial integrity of Georgia, agreed to join the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) on terms dictated by Russia (Slider, 1995).

Beset by civil war and ethnic conflicts, Georgia began to stabilize in 1994. In 1995, a new constitution was adopted. The constitution created a mixed presidential-parliamentary system with a strong President and envisioned a federal system with a strong central government. The executive power in Georgia is granted to the President who is both head of state and head of government. Presidents are elected for five-year terms and are limited to two consecutive terms. A presidential candidate who receives the majority of the popular vote when more than half of eligible voters participate wins the presidency (CountryWatch, 2000).

In 1995, nationwide presidential and parliamentary elections were conducted. Shevardnadze easily defeated his challengers. Shevardnadze's party, The Citizens' Union of Georgia (CUG), a pro-government party formed in late 1993, won 107 out of 235 seats. CUG was dominated by young reformers, but also included Soviet bureaucrats loyal to Shevardnadze from his days as leader of Soviet Georgia. CUG's closest challenger was the National Democratic Party of Georgia, which won 34 seats. At the time, of the 11 main political parties in Georgia, four were pro-government and seven were opposition parties (CountryWatch, 2000).

The new government focused its attention on implementing an economic reform and reforming parliament. The new parliament instituted wide-ranging political reforms supportive of higher human rights standards; however, problems persisted, largely because of the unwillingness of some law enforcement and criminal justice officials to support constitutionally mandated changes (CountryWatch, 2000).

In November 1999, parliamentary elections were held again. The CUG campaigned on a pro-Western, pro-NATO platform, arguing in favor of the removal of Russian military bases in Georgia, and increased Western and United Nations assistance with the situation in Abkhazia. With regard to domestic policy, the CUG promised judicial and military reforms, and privatization of state-owned enterprises. The All-Georgian Union for Revival was the primary opposition to the CUG in the elections. Headed by the leader of Georgia's Autonomous Republic of Ajara, Aslan Abashidze, the Revival campaigned against moving too close to the West, against closing Russian bases in Georgia, and against privatizing key transportation and energy sectors. Other parties included the left-of-center Georgian Labor Party, the National Democratic Alliance – Third Way Bloc, and the “Industry Will Save Georgia” Bloc. The Labor Party campaigned on a platform based on a neutral foreign policy, and the creation of a Western European style welfare state. The National Democratic Alliance – Third Way Bloc presented a pro-Western, pro-business platform. The Citizens' Union of Georgia won 132 seats. Its nearest competitor, the Revival Bloc, won 58 (CountryWatch, 2000).

Surviving two assassination attempts (in August 1995 and February 1998), President Shevardnadze was reelected in April 2000.

Although separatist conflicts in Abkhazia and South Ossetia have been dormant since spring 1994, political settlements remain elusive. Russian peacekeepers are deployed in both regions, and a U.N. Observer Mission is operating in Abkhazia (World FactBook, 1999).

While the relationship between Ossetians and Georgians is slowly improving, the Abkhaz separatist dispute continues to absorb much of the government's attention. The Georgian government has offered the region considerable autonomy in order to encourage a settlement that would allow the internally displaced persons (IDPs), the majority of whom are ethnic Georgians, to return home, but the Abkhaz insist on independence. On October 3, 1999, the Abkhaz separatists held a presidential election and a referendum on independence. The only candidate, Vladislav Ardzinba, was elected President. Shortly after the elections, the Abkhazian Parliament declared independence from Georgia, and requested recognition by the international community. This recognition had not been forthcoming, and the Georgian government continued to condemn both the presidential election and the declaration of independence. Abkhazia continued to refuse to accept any power-sharing agreement with the government in Tbilisi (CountryWatch, 2000).

Economy

General overview.

According to GDP World Rankings, in 1998 Georgia had a gross domestic product (GDP) of \$9.3 billion, and a GDP per capita of \$1,821. This placed Georgia 124th out of 191 countries in terms of GDP and 140th out of 191 countries in terms of GDP per capita (CountryWatch, 2000).

Georgia's economy has traditionally revolved around Black Sea tourism, cultivation of citrus fruits, tea, and grapes, mining of manganese and copper, and output

of a small industrial sector producing wine, metals, machinery, chemicals, and textiles. The country imports the bulk of its energy needs, including natural gas and oil products. Its only sizable internal energy resource is hydropower (CountryWatch, 2000).

From 1991, isolated from its suppliers and traditional markets, as the ties with other former Soviet republics loosened, the Georgian economy experienced severe setbacks. Strikes with demands of independence in the beginning, and civil war and ethnic conflicts later, greatly contributed to the decline of economy. Georgia became dependent on international aid for survival.

GDP fell by 45 percent in 1992, 29 percent in 1993, and a further 10 percent in 1994. With the help of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank, Georgia made substantial economic gains since 1995, increasing GDP growth and slashing inflation. GDP in 1996 rose by 11.2 percent, and by 11.3 percent in 1997. In 1998, with the negative impact of the financial crisis in neighboring Russia, it rose by 2.9 percent. Despite the progress, Georgia remains poor. An analysis by the IMF shows that GDP per capita in 1998 stood at \$3,330 in purchasing parity terms, compared with \$6,474 for Russia. Official statistics suggest that up to 70 percent of the population live below the subsistence minimum (*The Financial Times*, November 22, 1999).

Georgia still suffers from energy shortages. However, after privatization of the distribution network in 1998, energy deliveries started to improve (CountryWatch, 2000).

Although some progress can be observed, infrastructure and communication facilities are still underdeveloped.

All prices, and most trade, have been liberalized, legal-framework reform is on schedule, and massive government downsizing is underway. Most enterprises have been already privatized (CountryWatch, 2000).

Foreign investment climate.

The Law on Promotion and Guarantees of Investment Activity and the Law on Entrepreneurship are the two most important pieces of legislation applying to foreign investment (CountryWatch, 2000). The legal framework that relates to foreign investment, along with the government's economic strategy, aims to establish favorable conditions for foreign investors. In general, the laws do not discriminate between foreign and local investors. An exception is agricultural land ownership. The laws do not allow foreigners to own agricultural land, and put a limit on leases at 49 years. However, the property can be gained through acquisitions, mergers, takeovers, and greenfield investments. The laws allow unlimited foreign ownership in some sectors, but sharply limit foreign investment in infrastructure. Georgian legislation does not require foreign investors to reinvest profits locally (CountryWatch, 2000).

IMF figures suggest that the annual average foreign direct investment per capita into Georgia from 1994 to 1998 was just \$37, lower than all the former Soviet transitional states except Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, and compared with an average of \$112 across all the former Soviet transitional states (*The Financial Times*, November 22, 1999).

Corruption.

Although the business environment is improving, it remains burdened by government influence and bureaucracy. Georgian and foreign businessmen routinely cite

corruption as a serious impediment to the conduct of business. The government is considering various means to combat corruption, but without much success. To date, no high-level official has been prosecuted for corruption. No foreign investor has been found guilty of corruption (CountryWatch, 2000).

Currency.

The Georgian government introduced lari in October 1995. It is now the only legal currency for domestic transactions. Foreign investors may convert or transfer any amount of funds, associated with an investment, into hard currency. Any amount of lari generated by foreign investors can be sold for hard currency through interbank auction at a legal market-clearing rate or converted in banks that have a hard currency operation license. The new investment law does not impose any duties on profits or capital repatriation from Georgia. After paying all applicable taxes, there is no limit on the inflow or outflow of remittances of profits, debt service, capital, gains, returns on intellectual property, or imported inputs. Foreign exchange can be held in Georgian banks. Residents can also purchase foreign currency to conduct international transactions. Still, Georgia's economy is based on cash. Traveler's checks are unknown there, and credit cards, while gaining recognition at upscale hotels and restaurants, are rarely accepted (CountryWatch, 2000).

Banking.

A banking system in Georgia is in an early stage of development. Laws regulating banking do not limit the free flow of financial resources, but, in practice, the

flow is restrained because of poor and unreliable inter-bank communication (CountryWatch, 2000).

Transit corridor.

The realization of the idea of becoming the transportation-communication corridor connecting Europe and Asia, is of outmost importance for Georgia. Participation in international projects, such as Eurasian Transportation Corridor and Silk Road (the ancient spice-trading route caravans traveled through the Caspian and Caucasus regions to reach Europe), open new opportunities for the country.

Georgia has always been a natural transportation route for oil from the Caspian Sea to the Mediterranean, and the first pipeline was built in 1904 by the Swedish Nobel brothers (*The Financial Times*, November 22, 1999). An early oil pipeline, linking Georgia's Black Sea port at Supsa, south of Poti, with Baku in Azerbaijan, and a new rail ferry route across the Black Sea, connecting Poti, Georgia, to Ilichovsk, near Odessa, in the Ukraine, has been operating since April 1999. Azerbaijan, and its main foreign oil consortium, use this pipeline instead of the Russian pipeline that passes through several of the Russian Federation's southern republics, including Dagestan and Chechnya, on its way to Novorossiisk on the Black Sea. Two other pipelines have been under discussion throughout 1999 and into 2000. One is the main export pipeline carrying oil from Baku, Azerbaijan, through Georgia and Turkey to Ceyhan, Turkey's Mediterranean port. Another is the Trans-Caspian Gas Pipeline (TCGP), which would run from Turkmenbashi in Turkmenistan, across the floor of the Caspian Sea to Baku, Azerbaijan, through Georgia, to Erzurum, Turkey. The presidents of Azerbaijan, Georgia, and

Turkey signed several agreements concerning the Baku-Ceyhan oil pipeline at the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) summit in Istanbul in November 1999. These three countries, and Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan signed additional agreements concerning the shipping of the latter two states' oil via the Baku-Ceyhan pipeline. Furthermore, in Istanbul, the presidents of Azerbaijan, Georgia, Turkmenistan, Turkey, and the United States signed an agreement on the Trans-Caspian Gas Pipeline (CountryWatch, 2000). Although transit fees are expected to bring the Georgian government revenues of only about \$12 million (\$0.18, which Georgia is paid for the transportation of a barrel of oil, is small in comparison to the usual price of about \$2 a barrel) in the beginning, it is hoped that an international transportation corridor through the key Black Sea ports of Poti and Batumi will mark the beginning of large-scale foreign investment in the Georgian economy (*die Neue Zurcher Zeitung Online*, September, 1997).

The above described pipeline projects put Georgia in the center of the U.S. Caspian Sea strategy. Initially, not everybody in Washington was equally convinced of the political benefits and commercial viability of routes through Georgia. Some foreign experts speculated that, by supporting Caspian projects, the U.S. aimed at excluding and diminishing Russia's influence in the region, thus turning the projects into political rather than economic enterprise. Official Washington denied such intentions, and insisted that it has been motivated by commercial considerations, and the desire to help the region build democracy.

At the London Oil and Gas Symposium, held in May, 2000, Ambassador John S. Wolf formulated the U.S. Caspian energy goals as follows: (1) to strengthen the independence and prosperity of the new states of the Caspian region; (2) to bolster U.S. energy security by ensuring the free flow of new sources of hydrocarbons to world markets unfettered by regional competitors and geographic choke-points, such as the Bosphorus and the Straits of Hormuz; (3) to reestablish economic linkages among the new states of the Caspian region to mitigate regional conflicts; and (4) to enhance business opportunities for companies from the U.S. and other countries. Wolf stated that the U.S. Caspian policy will not change in the foreseeable future, no matter which administration comes to office, because, first, the U.S. Caspian policy enjoys broad bipartisan support – sponsors of the Silk Road Strategy in the Senate and House are Republicans, and second, the policy is built on the aspirations and policies of the countries and governments in the region (Wolf, John S., London Oil and Gas Symposium, London, United Kingdom. May 31, 2000. Archive Site for State Department [on-line]).

Defense Forces

In September 1993, following the defeat of the Georgian militias in Abkhazia, Georgia began the process of building a modern army. Substantial progress has been made, including the creation of a single military force under a unified command structure, which answers to elected civilian officials. However, there is no professional non-commissioned officer corps. The enlisted personnel are conscripts unable to evade military service. Desertion, poor discipline, and equipment shortages continue to be

problematic. In addition, the military has little transport, supply, or communications capability (CountryWatch, 2000).

Foreign Relations

General relations.

President Shevardnadze's stated objective is full integration into every European and Atlantic-European institution. *The Financial Times* cites him as saying: "Georgia is oriented towards universal ideals, democratic values – you may call them western or American; this is the course of the country" (November 22, 1999). Alexander Rondeli, Georgian political analyst states: "Pro-western feelings are logical and understandable in Georgia. The population is mostly worried about security and because of this, they look to the west" (*The Financial Times*, November 22, 1999).

The West was sympathetic to the struggle of the Soviet Union republics for independence. The mistreatment of republics by Russian authorities and military was regarded as the evidence of failure of Gorbachev's policies (*U.S. News & World Report*, April 24, 1989).

Under Gamsakhurdia, Georgia's efforts to break out of the diplomatic isolation of the Soviet period were stymied by the reluctance of the outside world to recognize breakaway republics while the Soviet Union still existed. Romania, which granted recognition in August 1991, was one of the few countries to do so during the Gamsakhurdia period. Several Georgian delegations came to the United States in 1991 in an effort to establish diplomatic ties, but Washington largely ignored those efforts. This

situation changed in March 1992, when Shevardnadze returned to Georgia and became chairman of the State Council. In March 1992, Germany became the first Western country to post an ambassador to Georgia. The United States recognized Georgia's independence on December 25, 1991, and established diplomatic relations on March 29, 1992. The U.S. embassy in Tbilisi was established on April 23, 1992, and the first ambassador was appointed on August 11, 1992. Georgia became the 179th member of the United Nations in July 1992, the last of the former Soviet republics to be admitted. By December 1992, six countries had diplomatic missions in Tbilisi: China, Germany, Israel, Russia, Turkey, and the United States. Seventeen other countries began conducting diplomatic affairs with Georgia through their ambassadors to Russia or Ukraine (CountryWatch, 2000; Slider, 1995; Twining, 1993).

Georgia's long tradition as a crossroad for East-West commerce was interrupted by the trade practices of the Soviet Union. In 1993, Shevardnadze traveled widely among the former Soviet republics and elsewhere to solidify Georgia's international position and to solicit aid. By September, Georgia had diplomatic relations with seventy-eight countries and economic cooperation treaties with sixteen (Slider, 1995; Twining, 1993).

Georgia is a member of numerous international organizations including the United Nations and many of its specialized and regional agencies, such as UNCTAD, UNESCO, UNIDO, the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (the World Bank), and IMF. The Georgian government is committed to economic reform in cooperation with the IMF and the World Bank. Georgia is also a member of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), the North Atlantic Cooperation Council

(now the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council or EAPC), NATO's Partnership for Peace (PfP), the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the Council of Europe and World Trade Organization (WTO). Georgia joined the Black Sea Economic Council on June 25, 1992, along with Russia, Ukraine, Turkey, Greece, Romania, and other regional powers.

President Shevardnadze plans to apply for NATO membership within five years. However, the Alliance officials say that they have plans to work with Tbilisi only under the Partnership for Peace program. They are reluctant to become involved in a region as complicated and violent as the Caucasus, and NATO is careful not to anger Moscow. Georgian officials say that they are fully aware that the country is a long way from meeting the Alliance's, or the European Union's, standards (*The Financial Times*, November 7, 2000).

Relations with neighboring countries.

Of particular importance to Georgia's post-communist foreign policy and national security was the improvement of relations with neighbors on all sides – Armenia, Azerbaijan, Russia, and Turkey. This goal was complicated by a number of ethnic and political issues as well as by historical differences (CountryWatch, 2000; Slider, 1995; Twining, 1993; Nichol, 1993).

Of all countries, Georgia's relations with Russia were both the most important and the most ambivalent. Russia, and previously the Soviet Union, was deeply involved at many levels in the conflicts in South Ossetia and Abkhazia. Russia seemingly holds

the key to a resolution of those conflicts in a way that would avoid the fragmentation of Georgia. Trade ties with Russia, disrupted by Gamsakhurdia's struggle with Gorbachev and by ethnic conflicts on Georgia's borders with Russia, also are critical to reviving the Georgian economy (CountryWatch, 2000).

Russia recognized Georgia's independence in mid-1992 and appointed an ambassador in October. In 1993, Russia's official position was that a stable, independent Georgia was necessary for security along Russia's southern border. The conditions behind that position were Russia's need for access to the Black Sea, which was endangered by shaky relations with Ukraine, and the need for a buffer between Russia and Islamic extremist movements, which Russia feared in Turkey and Iran (CountryWatch, 2000).

Russian military policymakers openly talk about Georgia's strategic importance to Russian national security. Such statements raise suspicions that Russia would take advantage of Georgia's weakened position and sweep the little republic back into the empire as it did in 1801 and 1921 (CountryWatch, 2000).

Relations between Georgia and Russia became increasingly tense in the latter half of 1999 as the Russian-Chechnyan conflict worsened. From August 1999 onward, Georgia repeatedly accused Russia of violating its airspace, bombing and subjecting Georgian villages to artillery fire, and injuring and killing Georgian civilians. At times, Russia admitted to being responsible and compensation was discussed. At other times, Russia refused to concede that it had violated Georgia's territorial sovereignty. In turn, Russia repeatedly accused Georgia of allowing goods, including arms, to be smuggled

into Chechnya, across the Georgian-Chechnyan border. Periodically, Russia also accused Georgia of either closing its border to Chechen refugees, or of allowing able-bodied men to seek refuge in Georgia. Georgia denied all of these accusations. More than five thousand Chechen refugees who have made their way to Georgia are putting an increasing strain on the Georgian economy. Georgia has requested the assistance of the international community in dealing with these displaced persons. Relations between Georgia and Russia during this time, however, were not completely sour. At the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) summit meeting in Istanbul in November 1999, Russia agreed to significantly reduce its heavy weaponry in Georgia by the end of 2000. Russia also agreed to decommission and dismantle a military base near Tbilisi and another base in Abkhazia by July 1, 2001. Russian base closings were, and continue to be, a high priority of President Shevardnadze (CountryWatch, 2000).

Georgia has taken some steps to reduce its dependence on Russia, acquiring coastal patrol boats in 1997 to replace Russian border units along the Black Sea coast. In 1998, Georgia assumed control of its Black Sea coast and about half of its border with Turkey in line with a June 1998 agreement with Russia. Since 1997, Georgia's Parliament has sharpened its rhetoric against Russia's continued military presence on Georgian territory (CountryWatch, 2000).

Among the former Soviet republics, the neighboring Transcaucasian nations of Armenia and Azerbaijan have special significance for Georgia. Despite Georgia's obvious cultural and religious affinities with Armenia, relations between Georgia and Muslim Azerbaijan generally have been closer than those with Christian Armenia.

Economic and political factors have contributed to this situation. First, Georgia's fuel needs have made good relations with Azerbaijan vital to the health of the Georgian economy. Second, Georgians have sympathized with Azerbaijan's position in the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan over the ethnic Armenian enclave of Nagorno-Karabakh because of similarities to Georgia's internal problems with Abkhazia and South Ossetia. Both countries are committed to the principle of inviolability of state borders in defending national interests against claims by ethnic minorities. In December 1990, under Gamsakhurdia, Georgia signed a cooperation agreement with Azerbaijan affecting the economic, scientific, technical, and cultural spheres. In February 1993, under Shevardnadze, Georgia concluded a far-reaching treaty of friendship and cooperation with Azerbaijan, including a mutual security arrangement and assurances that Georgia would not re-export Azerbaijani oil or natural gas to Armenia (CountryWatch, 2000; Slider, 1995; Twining, 1993; Nichol, 1993).

In the early 1990s, Armenia maintained fundamentally good relations with Georgia. The main incentive for this policy was the fact that Azerbaijan's blockade of Armenian transport routes and pipelines meant that routes through Georgia were Armenia's only direct connection with the outside world. The official ties that Georgia forged with Azerbaijan between 1991 and 1993 strained relations with Armenia, which was in an undeclared state of war with Azerbaijan throughout that period. Nevertheless, Gamsakhurdia signed a treaty with Armenia on principles of cooperation in July 1991, and Shevardnadze signed a friendship treaty with Armenia in May 1993 (CountryWatch, 2000; Slider, 1995; Twining, 1993; Nichol, 1993).

Despite a history of episodic Turkish invasions, Shevardnadze chose Turkey as an economic and diplomatic partner. Georgians took advantage of the opening of border traffic with Turkey to begin vigorous commercial activities with their nearest “capitalist” neighbor. In 1992, Georgia became a member of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization, which is based in Turkey. In December 1992, Turkey granted Georgia a credit equivalent to \$50 million to purchase wheat and other goods and to stimulate Turkish private investment in the republic. Georgia also signed several diplomatic agreements with Turkey in the early 1990s, including a Georgian pledge to respect existing common borders and official Turkish support of Georgian national integrity against the Abkhazian separatist movement (CountryWatch, 2000; Slider, 1995; Twining, 1993; Nichol, 1993).

Georgia and the United States.

When the Soviet Union collapsed and the Cold War ended, the United States faced a new task, dictated by the changes in its foreign policy interests – to encourage and help New Independent States of the former Soviet Union to transform themselves into partners in the international community.

The United States has historically had few interests in the Caucasus region, except for some diplomatic contacts during the early 1920s, and humanitarian and cultural contacts emphasized by the Armenian Diaspora in the United States. Before the breakup of the Soviet Union, the United States supported efforts to resolve the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan, and expressed concern about the deteriorating political and human rights situation in Georgia. Some in Congress, along with policymakers and

academics, had argued that events in Georgia and the Caucasus region remained peripheral to the U.S. interests. They believed that U.S. interests are mostly affected by developments in Russia, and that the major focus of U.S. assistance should remain Russia rather than Georgia or other non-Russian former Soviet republic. They asserted that Russia, in terms of its capabilities and influences, could act as an engine in promoting democratization, the creation of free markets, arms reductions, and stability in the rest of the former Soviet Union, including Georgia. Noting the many problems bedeviling Shevardnadze, many of these observers held out small hope that, with or without U.S. assistance, Georgia would be able to foster democracy, free enterprise, and regional peace. The political instability in Georgia and the region, they asserted, was a reason for the United States to avoid increasing involvement. Some suggested continuing humanitarian aid but focusing other aid on more stable states. A few argued against any U.S. involvement with the Shevardnadze regime, since it resulted from the overthrow of Gamsakhurdia, a popularly elected President. Some also asserted that Shevardnadze is unfit to rule given his past human rights abuses as security chief and Communist Party leader. Another view, however, is that the United States should enhance its role in Georgia, on the grounds that political stability in Georgia can foster or enhance stability in neighboring states. These include Russia, a U.S. partner, Turkey, a U.S. strategic ally, and Armenia, which because of its Diaspora population in the United States, has special ties to the United States. Advocates of this view note the importance of containing Iranian influence in the troubled region and Turkish concerns over Iran, Russian troops, and refugees. They urge continued U.S. humanitarian and technical aid and other support

for the Shevardnadze government. Those who support closer ties to Georgia believe that stabilization in this key Caucasus country will result in long-term political and economic benefits for the entire region (Nichol, 1993).

Shortly after recognizing Georgia's independence and establishing diplomatic relations, U.S. Secretary of State, James Baker, visited Georgia on May 26, 1992, Georgia's national independence day, to demonstrate support for Shevardnadze's government. In his address, Baker referred to his old friend Shevardnadze as a "courageous leader who is known and respected internationally" (Nichol, 1993).

The Bush and Clinton Administrations have both supported Shevardnadze in his efforts to bring stability to Georgia and to safeguard its territorial integrity (Nichol, 1993).

The U.S. Department of State denounced the presidential elections and a referendum on independence held by Abkhaz separatists on October 3, 1999, as unhelpful and detrimental to the efforts to resolve the conflict, and refused to recognize the independence of Abkhazia (Rubin, James P., U.S. Department of State. Office of the Spokesman. Press Statement. October 1, 1999. Archive Site for State Department [online]).

In 1999, the U.S. government supported Georgia's decision not to get involved in the Chechnyan conflict and issued a statement defending its sovereignty:

The United States welcomes the December 11 statement by the Georgian Foreign Ministry reiterating Georgia's opposition to the use of its territory by any forces involved in the conflict in Chechnya. We strongly support the

sovereignty and territorial integrity of Georgia. The recent comments by Russian Prime Minister Putin pledging Russian respect for those principles are crucial to avoiding any spillover of the conflict beyond the borders of Russia (Foley, James B., U.S. Department of State. Office of the Spokesman. Press Statement. December 11, 1999. Archive Site for State Department [on-line]).

Despite the fact that some of the actions of the Georgian government were criticized in Washington, President Shevardnadze has enjoyed continued support from the U.S. government. This support has been based on Shevardnadze's reputation for helping end the Cold War during the Gorbachov period, and to some degree on the personal relations he has forged with world leaders and diplomatic communities (Nichol, 1993).

In a letter congratulating the Georgian people on the occasion of the parliamentary elections held in October, 1999, the U.S. Department of State stated: "The U.S. is pleased that the Georgian electorate has endorsed Georgia's reformist course under President Shevardnadze's leadership. The U.S. looks forward to continuing close and productive cooperation with the Georgian government and parliament" (Rubin, James P., U.S. Department of State. Office of the Spokesman. Press Statement. November 1, 1999. Archive Site for State Department [on-line]). Later, in a letter congratulating Shevardnadze on reelection, the U.S. Department of State expressed concerns regarding "serious irregularities in the conduct of the elections, including instances of ballot stuffing, media bias, and lack of transparency in vote counting and

tabulation” (Rubin, James P., U.S. Department of State. Office of the Spokesman. Press Statement. April 10, 2000. Archive Site for State Department [on-line]).

Several interrelated U.S. policy interests in the former Soviet Union, including Georgia, are enumerated in the Freedom Support Act (Sec. 101 and Sec. 498, P.L.102-511). These include regional stability, democracy building, creation of free markets, protection of human rights, and alleviation of suffering (Nichol, 1993).

Soon after recognizing Georgia’s independence, the United States granted it the Most Favored Nation status. Granting the Most Favored Nation status is an agreement on specific favorable trade relations, such as granting of credit or lowering import tariffs, designed to boost the economy of a weaker state (Raymond, 1992). Most former Communist countries of Eastern Europe, as well as Russia, were granted the Most Favored Nation status (Piano & Milton, 1993).

In the early '90s the U.S. government and the government of Georgia signed several important agreements, including agreements on investment, technical assistance, and trade relations. The Investment Incentive Agreement was signed on June 27, 1992, and entered into force on June 27, 1992. An agreement regarding cooperation to facilitate humanitarian and technical economic assistance was signed on July 31, 1992, and entered into force on July 31, 1992. The Agreement on Trade Relations was signed on March 1, 1993, and entered into force on August 13, 1993.

During the last decade, Georgia received substantial aid from the United States (see Table 1). In 1992 and 1993, the United States’ aid to Georgia totaled to \$224 million, most of it allotted for humanitarian needs, placing Georgia second in the United

States foreign aid per capita among the former Soviet republics (CountryWatch, 2000; Slider, 1995; Twining, 1993; Nichol, 1993).

Table 1

U.S. Assistance to Georgia

Year	Amount
1995	\$118 million
1996	\$121.2 million
1997	\$108.1 million
1998	\$143.9 million
1999	\$146.87 million

The 1995 annual report on U.S. government assistance to and cooperative activities with the New Independent States of the former Soviet Union praises Georgia for overcoming civil war and separatist conflict, slashing inflation, meeting all of its IMF targets, introducing a stable national currency, holding fair elections, and reducing lawlessness. The report also comments on the failure of Georgia to fight corruption, and to revitalize its economy burdened by a foreign debt of over one billion dollars, devastated by a combination of war, state control and mismanagement, and rampant crime (U.S. Department of State. FY 1995 Annual Report on U.S. Government Assistance to and Cooperative Activities with the New Independent States of the Former Soviet Union. Office of the Coordinator of U.S. Assistance to the NIS [on-line]).

During 1996, U.S. government assistance to Georgia continued to transit from humanitarian aid to development assistance, with an increasing share of resources being devoted to democracy and governance programs. The 1996 annual report on U.S. government assistance to and cooperative activities with the New Independent States of the former Soviet Union praises the reformist course of Georgia's President. According

to the report, the country's court system and police organizations improved as the government began to pay more attention to rule-of-law issues. However, serious problems such as corruption and organized crime, remained. Georgia succeeded in rescheduling of a significant portion of its foreign debt, but the remaining debt and the country's poor credit rating restricted the economic growth (U.S. Department of State. 1996 Annual Report on U.S. Government Assistance to and Cooperative Activities with the New Independent States of the Former Soviet Union. Office of the Coordinator of U.S. Assistance to the NIS [on-line]).

Although humanitarian programs continued to be an important component of the U.S. government assistance effort in Georgia, in 1997 it focused more in the areas of democracy and governance, including judicial reform and development of independent media, and economic restructuring. The 1997 annual report on U.S. government assistance to and cooperative activities with the New Independent States of the former Soviet Union comments on Georgia's achievements in political and economic spheres. Economic growth exceeded 10 percent. Although direct foreign investment continued to play only a modest role, many foreign companies started to explore investment possibilities. However, corruption and energy problems remained unsolved (U.S. Department of State. 1997 Annual Report on U.S. Government Assistance to and Cooperative Activities with the New Independent States of the former Soviet Union. Office of the Coordinator of U.S. Assistance to the NIS [on-line]).

In 1998, U.S. government assistance programs in Georgia supported comprehensive market reform, economic restructuring, energy sector reforms, democratic

reforms, and the development of Georgia's capability to guard its borders and create a military force suitable for its security needs. "Political and economic reform moved forward in Georgia in 1998, but at a somewhat slower pace than during the previous year," states the report. The Georgian government was distracted by a number of domestic emergencies, such as the attempted assassination of President Shevardnadze, the military defeat during renewed fighting in May in the Gali area of Abkhazia, and the subsequent influx of 40 thousand internally displaced persons from Gali into Western Georgia. Georgia was also hit hard by Russia's economic crisis. On November 15, 1998, Georgia held local elections, the first under the country's new constitution (U.S. Department of State. 1998 Annual Report on U.S. Government Assistance to and Cooperative Activities with the New Independent States of the Former Soviet Union. Office of the Coordinator of U.S. Assistance to the NIS [on-line]).

The 1999 annual report on U.S. government assistance to and cooperative activities with the New Independent States of the former Soviet Union comments on successes in the political and economic spheres, such as parliamentary elections, and judicial reform to increase the independence of the judiciary, and privatization of Georgia's energy sector. Georgia acceded to the Council of Europe in April of 1999. However, notes the report, these accomplishments were overshadowed by a growing economic crisis caused by a failure to undertake other key reforms, such as fighting corruption and improving revenues. Salary, pension and other government arrears continued to accrue, and Georgia's electricity supply remained insufficient. Progress toward a resolution of ethnic separatist disputes in Abkhazia and South Ossetia was slow.

The United States, as a member of the Friends of the Secretary General on Georgia, actively participated in the attempt, led by the United Nations, to find a resolution to the conflict that would support Georgia's territorial integrity. The U.S. government was also actively engaged in the conflict resolution process, led by OSCE in South Ossetia (U.S. Department of State. 1998 Annual Report on U.S. Government Assistance to and Cooperative Activities with the New Independent States of the Former Soviet Union. Office of the Coordinator of U.S. Assistance to the NIS [on-line]).

The U.S. government closely monitored the human rights situation in Georgia. In 1993, the U.S. government, alerted by the reports of human rights offences against opposition figures, urged the government of Georgia to observe international human rights principles. The U.S. government cited improvement of Georgia's human rights record as a prerequisite for continuing the aid (CountryWatch, 2000; Slider, 1995; Twining, 1993; Nichol, 1993).

In 1993, the U.S. Department of State report on human rights practices in Georgia noted the following occurrences: the paramilitary groups along with the police repressed the opposition and robbed and intimidated the population; the armed conflicts with Abkhazians and supporters of former President Gamsakhurdia brought forth allegations of human rights violations on all sides, including killings of prisoners and civilians, and looting of villages; freedoms of speech and press, and of assembly and association, were severely curtailed, and the state of emergency imposed censorship not only on military subjects but also on political discourse; the separatist forces committed widespread atrocities against the Georgian civilian population, killing many women, children, and

elderly, capturing some as hostages and torturing others (U.S. Department of State. January 31, 1994. Georgia Human Rights Practices, 1993 [on-line]).

Attempts to reform the police, security services, armed forces, and paramilitary forces were only partly successful in 1994, noted the U.S. Department of State report on human rights practices in Georgia. Corruption among law enforcement officials and police brutality remained pervasive. Police mistreated detainees during pretrial detention. CIS peacekeepers were unable to create a safe environment in Abkhazia for the return of internally displaced persons. The Abkhazian authorities called for ethnically cleansing Abkhazia of all Georgians, and tortured, raped, killed, expelled, and imprisoned hundreds of Georgians and other non-Abkhaz. In South Ossetia, a two-year cease-fire, monitored by CIS peacekeepers, partially succeeded in curbing human rights abuses. Human rights abuses continued in the rest of Georgia, including extrajudicial killings, hostage-taking, beatings of detainees and demonstrators, arbitrary detentions, and denial of fair public trial. Freedom of speech, press, assembly, and association were significantly less restricted, although some instances of abuse still occurred (U.S. Department of State. February, 1995. Georgia Human Rights Practices, 1994 [on-line]).

In 1995, the Georgian government instituted a number of reforms reflecting its commitment to improve human rights record, but the 1995 U.S. State Department report on human rights practices in Georgia noted that significant problems remained. Police and security forces tortured and beat detainees, prison conditions remained inhuman, corruption was widespread in the judicial system, and detainees were often denied fair and expeditious trial. Abkhaz separatists tortured and killed dozens of civilians in the

area that they control, and Georgian partisans committed killings in reprisal (U.S. Department of State. March, 1996. Georgia Human Rights Practices, 1995 [on-line]).

The human rights abuses described in the 1995 report continuously occurred in 1996. The 1996 U.S. State Department report on human rights practices in Georgia noted that the reformist, elected civilian authorities maintained inadequate control of the security forces. The report commented on achievements as well, such as the growing awareness of individual rights among the population, and increase of the number and variety of NGOs. "The Parliament is more active and reformist than its predecessor. Independent newspapers show a greater willingness to criticize government policies" (U.S. Department of State. January 30, 1997. Georgia Human Rights Practices, 1996 [on-line]).

Senior government officials openly acknowledged serious human rights problems, and sought international advice and assistance. However, while structural reforms designed to improve respect for human rights continued to be implemented, there was no change in the practices of the law enforcement agencies, noted the 1997 and 1998 U.S. State Department reports on human rights practices in Georgia. Inhuman prison conditions, along with abuse, led to deaths in custody. Corrupt and incompetent judges seldom displayed independence from the executive branch, leading to trials that were neither fair nor expeditious. Law enforcement agencies limited freedom of assembly, violently dispersing peaceful rallies. The government constrained some press freedoms (U.S. Department of State. January 30, 1998. Georgia Human Rights Practices, 1997;

U.S. Department of State. February 26, 1999. Georgia Human Rights Practices, 1998 [on-line]).

According to the U.S. Department of State report on human rights practices, in 1999 the Georgian government's human rights record was uneven. Police and security forces continued to torture, beat, and otherwise abuse prisoners and detainees. Georgian human rights groups reported that these abuses declined again during the year, continuing a trend begun in 1998; however, Human Rights Watch reported no substantial improvement. Most government promises of reforms remained unfulfilled (U.S. Department of State. February 25, 2000. Georgia Human Rights Practices, 1999 [on-line]).

Despite the above criticism, during all these years, the U.S. government supported the government of President Shevardnadze, believing in his commitment to Western values and blaming failures in the implementation of various reforms on forces and circumstances outside of the President's control.

Chapter 4

Methodology

Newspaper Sample

The search through Lexis/Nexis showed that during a 10-year period, from January 1, 1990 to October 1, 2000, there were 186 news items mentioning Georgia published in *The Washington Post* (see Table 2 and the Appendix A).

The search with the word “Georgia” brought out a number of news items about the U.S. State of Georgia. To avoid retrieval of this irrelevant information, the database was searched with the following combinations: “Tbilisi, Georgia,” “Batumi, Georgia,” and “Sukhumi, Georgia.” Since this way of searching excluded articles about Georgia that do not mention Georgia’s major cities, the database was also searched using word “Georgia,” coupled with the names of the neighboring countries: “Georgia, Russia,” “Georgia, Turkey,” “Georgia, Azerbaijan,” “Georgia, Armenia,” and “Georgia, Chechnya.” In addition, the articles were searched by the last names of Georgia’s ex-President and current President – “Gamsakhurdia” and “Shevardnadze.” The news items that mentioned Shevardnadze in the capacity of Soviet foreign minister were excluded from the study.

Table 2

The Washington Post Sample by Year

Year	Frequency	Percentage
1990	2	1.1
1991	28	15.1
1992	37	19.9
1993	30	16.1
1994	21	11.3
1995	8	4.3
1996	0	0
1997	17	9.1
1998	13	7.0
1999	20	10.8
2000	10	5.4
Total	186	100

The Correlation between U.S Foreign Policy and Newspaper Coverage

U.S. foreign policy was reconstructed based on the official documents, scholarly works, and newspaper and magazine articles. The documents included the U.S. Department of State press statements and press releases, annual reports on U.S. government assistance to and cooperative activities with the New Independent States of the former Soviet Union, U.S. Department of State country reports on human rights practices, and treaties between the U.S. and Georgia.

The period studied (1990-2000) was broken down into eight segments, each reflecting a significant event and/or development in the latest history of Georgia and corresponding changes in U.S. foreign policy (see Table 3). Coverage by *The Washington Post* over those periods was examined and compared.

Table 3Georgia and U.S. Foreign Policy

Events and dates from Georgia's history	U.S. foreign policy towards Georgia	Republicans/ Democrats
Georgia struggled for independence. However, it remained part of the Soviet Union. The first multiparty elections brought the end of the Communist rule and empowered a political coalition headed by dissident Zviad Gamsakhurdia (1990). Georgia declared independence from USSR (April, 1991). Gamsakhurdia became the first elected President of Georgia (May, 1991).	Though sympathetic toward the aspiration of the Soviet Republics to gain independence, the U.S. remained a neutral observer (1990). The United States was reluctant to establish diplomatic relations with the country torn apart by civil war and ethnic conflicts (1992). The U.S. viewed nationalist policies of Georgia's first President with suspicion (1991-1992).	Consensus
Civil war started, Gamsakhurdia fled Georgia and the Military Council took over (December 1991, January 1992). Eduard Shevardnadze returned to Georgia and headed the State Council – an interim legislative body (March, 1992).	The United States recognized Georgia's independence on December 25, 1991.	Consensus
Parliamentary elections were held, and Shevardnadze became the Head of State (October, 1992). The Parliament granted Shevardnadze unlimited power and his political opposition complained about human rights and press freedom abuses (1993). Gamsakhurdia tried to regain power and died in unknown circumstances (1994).	The U.S. established diplomatic relations with Georgia on March 23, 1992, opened Embassy in Tbilisi on April 23, 1992, and appointed the ambassador on August 11, 1992. The U.S. granted Georgia the Most Favored Nation status (1993).	Consensus
Abkhazia declared independence and armed conflict between Georgians and Abkhaz followed. Georgia was defeated (1992-1993). South Ossetia declared independence and armed conflict between Georgians and Ossetian followed. Georgia was defeated (1991-1992).	The U.S. recognized territorial unity of Georgia and did not recognize neither Abkhazia nor South Ossetia as the independent states. The U.S. called for the peaceful settlement of the conflict (1991-1993).	Consensus

(table continues)

Table 3 (continued)

Events and dates from Georgia's history	U.S. foreign policy towards Georgia	Republicans/Democrats
Georgia started to stabilize (1994). New constitution was adopted (1995). Presidential and parliamentary elections were held. Shevardnadze became a President and his party (CUG) gained the majority of the parliament seats (1995). Reforms in all fields were in full blossom. The national currency was introduced, enterprises were privatized, judiciary system was restructured (1994-2000).	The U.S. intensified technical and financial support in all fields. Georgia became one of the largest recipients of U.S. aid per capita (1994-2000).	Consensus
Parliamentary elections were held and Shevardnadze's party won the majority of seats (November, 1999). Shevardnadze was reelected (April, 2000).	International observers noted some violations during the elections. However, the U.S. accepted new Parliament and President as legitimate (1999, 2000).	Consensus
The construction of first pipeline connecting Caspian oil-reach region to the Black Sea ports of Georgia was completed (1999). The discussions over three other gas and oil transportation routes continued (2000).	The U.S. strongly backed construction of the pipelines through Georgia as the alternatives to routes through Russia. The U.S. rendered substantial financial and political support to the pipeline projects (2000).	Consensus
Russia accused Georgia of aiding Chechen rebels, while Georgia accused Russia of violating its airspace and bombing of its civilians (1999).	The U.S. Department of State issued a statement condemning Russia's wrongful behavior against sovereign Georgia and expressed readiness to further support Georgia (1999).	Consensus

The extent to which an article was in agreement with U.S. foreign policy was coded as follows: "very much in agreement" was assigned numeral 5; "somewhat in agreement", 4; "both in agreement and disagreement", 3; "somewhat in disagreement", 2,

and “very much in disagreement,” 1. News items, in which it were impossible to determine the degree of agreement with foreign policy, were assigned numeral 0.

The degree of objectivity of coverage was examined to detect whether the similarities between foreign policy and coverage were due to objective circumstances. In order to determine existence of objective circumstances, coverage that Georgia received in *The Washington Post* and historic accounts written by both Americans and non-Americans were compared. Special attention was paid to the evaluation of major political events such as ethnic conflicts and civil war. Georgian sources included a doctoral dissertation by Igor Kveselava, approved at Tbilisi Technical University, a manual on history of Georgia (XIX-XX centuries) by Merab Vachnadze and Vakhtang Guruli, recommended for those preparing for entrance exams at Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University, and a textbook on history of Georgia (XIX-XX centuries) by Merab Vachnadze and Vakhtang Guruli adopted for instruction in high schools with the approval of the Ministry of Education of Georgia. Non-Georgian sources included CRS Report for Congress “Georgia in Transition: Context and Implications for U.S. Interests” by Jim Nichol, “Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia: Country Studies” by G. Curtis, “The New Eurasia: A Guide to the Republics of Former Soviet Union” by David Twining, and CIA World FactBook/CountryWatch.

In addition, the degree of objectivity was measured by examining to what extent the news items corresponded to the standards of objectivity adopted in conventional journalism. According to McQuail (1998), objectivity is a particular form of media practice, and a particular attitude to the task of information collection, processing, and

dissemination. The main features of objectivity are: adopting a position of detachment and neutrality toward the object of reporting (thus an absence of subjectivity or personal involvement); lack of partisanship (not taking sides in matters of dispute or showing bias); attachment to accuracy and other truth criteria (such as relevance and completeness).

The news items that satisfied all three criteria listed above were regarded as having high degree of objectivity and were assigned numeral 4; the news items lacking one of the three criteria were regarded as having medium degree of objectivity and were assigned numeral 3; the news items lacking two out of the three criteria were regarded as having low degree of objectivity and were assigned numeral 2; editorials that by their nature are subjective were assigned numeral 1. Numeral 0 were assigned to the news items in which it were impossible to identify degree of objectivity.

In order to detect similarities and differences between U.S foreign policy and coverage by *The Washington Post*, the portrayal of Georgia's first and second Presidents, Zviad Gamsakhurdia and Eduard Shevardnadze, and Shevardnadze's rival in 2000 presidential elections Aslan Abashidze, by *The Washington Post* was studied. U.S. foreign policy did not favor Gamsakhurdia and Abashidze, while it strongly supported Shevardnadze. The descriptions of Gamsakhurdia, Shevardnadze, and Abashidze were compared. The number of articles favorably and unfavorably portraying Gamsakhurdia, Shevardnadze, and Abashidze were counted.

Measurement

The content of the news items from *The Washington Post* was analyzed.

“Content analysis is a research method that uses a set of procedures to make valid inferences from text” (Weber, 1990).

The unit of analysis was each entire news item, mentioning Georgia. The main measurements that were used are content subject categories, importance/interest, closeness to action, and tone of coverage.

Content subject categories were used to understand how the newspaper depicted Georgia. To determine how much attention was paid to Georgia, “importance/interest” measurement was used. To see what factors influenced the accuracy, relevance, and completeness of coverage, measurement “closeness to action” was used. To detect how favorably or unfavorably was Georgia perceived, the tone of coverage was measured.

Content subject categories.

Categories developed by Paul J. Deutschman, slightly changed and adopted to the studied reality, were used to classify the content of the news items (Huang, 1984).

Category definitions are as follows:

1. War and defense: armed conflicts, casualties and loss, military exercises, maneuvers, arms control, defense treaty, arms embargoes, arms sales, military aid, military buildup, peace talks, military officer visits, and war prisoners;

2. Economic activity: any activities of import and export, industries, financial and business fields, energy and oil problems, inflation, economic summits, investments, interest rates, U.S. dollar values, unemployment, and strikes;

3. Politics and government: foreign policy of the government and relations with other countries, such as refugees/ internally displaced persons, hostages, financial and humanitarian aid, and human rights; political activities, such as elections, appointment of officials, high-ranking official visits, political assassinations, anti-government demonstrations, general administration and policies of government; Parliament and legislation; CIA and FBI activities; political wrong-doings such as scandals, bribes, and misuse of political funds;

4. Accidents and disasters: any natural disasters, such as earthquakes and landslides, and man-caused disasters such as nuclear accidents, environmental pollution, airplane crashes, and traffic accidents;

5. Crime: general crime, such as murders, robberies, smuggling, riots, hijacking, kidnapping, drug dealing, burglary, and inmate violence;

6. Culture, history and arts: traditional arts, life-styles, tourism, and special events;

7. Science and invention: any scientific or technological advancement or problems in the fields of medicine, space, computer science, engineering, agriculture, natural sciences, transportation, and energy conservation;

8. Education: educational systems and cultural exchange programs;

9. Public health and welfare: government or private health and welfare systems for the public, such as pension plans, unemployment, children's hospitals, and health centers;

10. Miscellaneous: any news, which cannot be classified into the above categories.

News items covering war and defense issues were assigned numeral 1; news items covering economic activities were assigned numeral 2; news items covering politics and government were assigned numeral 3; news items covering accidents and disasters were assigned numeral 4; news items covering crime were assigned numeral 5; news items covering culture, history, and arts were assigned numeral 6; news items covering science and invention were assigned numeral 7; news items covering education were assigned numeral 8; news items covering public health and welfare were assigned numeral 9; news items covering issues other than listed above were assigned numeral 10.

Importance/interest.

Importance/interest was determined by:

- The number of words in the news item, with the longer ones indicating more interest;
- The placement in the publication, with the front pages and first pages of the sections indicating more attention;
- The type of news item, with editorials indicating more attention;
- The context, with news items devoted solely to Georgia indicating more attention.

News items consisting of no more than 200 words were assigned numeral 1; news items consisting of 200 to 500 words were assigned numeral 2; news items consisting of

500 to 1,000 words were assigned numeral 3; news items exceeding 1,000 words were assigned numeral 4.

News items that appeared in the first five pages of the section A, were assigned numeral 1; news items that appeared in the rest of the section A, were assigned numeral 2; news items that appeared in the first five pages of the section B, were assigned numeral 3; news items that appeared in the rest of the section B, were assigned numeral 4; news items that appeared in the first five pages of the section C, were assigned numeral 5; news items that appeared in the rest of the section C, were assigned numeral 6; news items that appeared in the first five pages of the section D, were assigned numeral 7; news items that appeared in the rest of the section D, were assigned numeral 8; news items that appeared in the first five pages of the section E, were assigned numeral 9; news items that appeared in the rest of the section E, were assigned numeral 10; news items that appeared in the first five pages of the section G, were assigned numeral 11; news items that appeared in the rest of the section G, were assigned numeral 12; news items that appeared in the first five pages of the section H, were assigned numeral 13; news items that appeared in the rest of the section H, were assigned numeral 14; news items that appeared in the first five pages of the section M, were assigned numeral 15; news items that appeared in the rest of the section M, were assigned numeral 16; news items that appeared in the first five pages of the section N, were assigned numeral 17; news items that appeared in the rest of the section N, were assigned numeral 18;

News-briefs were assigned numeral 1; news were assigned numeral 2; feature stories were assigned numeral 3; editorials were assigned numeral 4; news items other

than listed above were assigned numeral 5. For the purposes of this study the term “news-brief” designates short factual account, while the term “news” refers to more comprehensive one.

News items covering Georgia were assigned numeral 1; news items mentioning Georgia while discussing regional issues were assigned numeral 2; news items, mentioning Georgia in other than regional context were assigned numeral 3.

Closeness to action.

Closeness to action was determined by:

- The author of the news item, with staff written news items indicating greater degree of closeness;
- The dateline, with those reported from the place of action indicating greater degree of closeness;
- Status of major source, with Georgian sources indicating greater degree of closeness.

News items the authors of which were not identified, were assigned numeral 0. News items written by *The Washington Post* staff writers were assigned numeral 1; news items prepared by *The Washington Post* foreign service were assigned numeral 2; news items written especially for *The Washington Post* were assigned numeral 3; news items reported by the news agencies were assigned numeral 4.

News items dateline of which were not identified, were assigned numeral 0. News items reported from Georgia were assigned numeral 1; news items reported from Russia were assigned numeral 2; news items reported from America were assigned numeral 3; news items reported from elsewhere were assigned numeral 4.

News items where sources were not identified, were assigned numeral 0. News items where primary source were the higher-level officials from Washington, were assigned numeral 1; news items where primary source were the lower-level officials from Washington, were assigned numeral 2; news items where primary source were Georgian officials, were assigned numeral 3; news items where primary source were Georgian citizens, were assigned numeral 4; news items where primary source were American citizens, were assigned numeral 5; news items where primary source were Georgian experts, were assigned numeral 6; news items where primary source were American experts, were assigned numeral 7; news items where primary source were Russian officials, were assigned numeral 8; news items where primary source were Abkhazian officials, were assigned numeral 9; news items where primary source were employees of international organizations, were assigned numeral 10; news items where primary sources were others than mentioned above, were assigned numeral 11.

Tone of coverage.

The perception of Georgia was measured by the general tone of coverage classified as positive, neutral, and negative. Definitions, developed on the basis of the classification suggested by Huang (1984), are as follows:

1. Positive: items reflecting aspiration of Georgia to become a truly democratic country (such as the improvement of human rights record, participation in international agreements, improved treatment of minorities) and depicting reforms underway in Georgia;

2. Negative: items, which report conflict (social or ethnic) and disorganization, and political and economic instability and/or weakness;
3. Neutral: items, which reflect neither favorable nor unfavorable conditions either through balance of content or lack of controversial material.

“Positive” news items were assigned numeral 1; “negative” news items were assigned numeral 2; “neutral” news items were assigned numeral 3.

Hypotheses

To detect U.S. foreign policy influence on the coverage Georgia received in *The Washington Post* from 1990 to 2000, this study examined three hypotheses:

Mermin (1999), Graber (1980 & 1997) and Berry (1990) have independently arrived at the same conclusion – the critical perspectives regarding U.S. foreign policy appear in the news only when there is a debate inside the American government.

Therefore: critical views expressed in *The Washington Post* regarding Georgia should be consistent in terms of both content and timing with the criticism expressed inside the American government.

Berry came to the conclusion (1990) that different patterns of interdependence between foreign policy and the coverage it receives in media emerge at the foreign policy formulation, execution, and outcome stages. At the foreign policy formulation stage, the stories focus on what U.S. officials say and do. At the execution stage, what U.S. officials, diplomats, intelligence agents, or soldiers are doing also gets the lion’s share of press coverage. Both at the foreign policy formulation and execution stages the reporting

is largely consistent with U.S. foreign policy. At the outcome stage, stories focus on whether the foreign policy is having the intended effect abroad. Reporters rely less on what U.S. officials say and do and more on what foreigners say and do. Sources tend to be foreign officials and lower-level U.S. officials who are in the field. The story gets depth, because the reporters know more about foreign policy at the outcome stage than at the formulation stage. If Berry's conclusions are correct, it can be hypothesized that the levels of agreement with U.S. foreign policy in the coverage that Georgia received in *The Washington Post* from 1990 to 1993, from 1994 to 1998, and from 1999 to 2000, should differ. Initially the newspaper should have been closely following the U.S. foreign agenda. Dissenting voices should have appeared from the second half of the '90s. There will be more critical viewpoints expressed in 1999 and/or 2000 than in 1991, 1992 and/or 1993 (H2a). There should be more in-depth articles published in 1999 and/or 2000 than in 1991, 1992 and/or 1993 (H2b). There should be more Georgian officials and lower-level American officials cited as the major sources in the news items, published in 1999 and/or 2000 than in the news items published in 1991, 1992 and/or 1993 (H2c). More reporting should be done from the field in 1999 and/or 2000 than in 1991, 1992 and/or 1993 (H2d).

Graber (1997) argues that American correspondents abroad have to operate within the context of American politics and American political culture. Stories reflect the American value structure and conform to established American stereotypes. Audiences are more likely to pay attention to a story that is explicitly linked to the U.S. interests. Linkage to the U.S. concerns is especially important for the regions with which average

Americans are least familiar. The media usually accept official designations of who America's "friends" and "enemies" are and interpret their motives accordingly.

Therefore: news items about Georgia published in *The Washington Post* should link the story with the U.S. foreign policy interests (H3a) and view Georgia as a "friend" of the United States (H3b).

The hypotheses were tested using both quantitative and qualitative methods of research.

Intercoder Reliability

The researcher coded all 186 news items. One assistant coder coded random sample of 20 news items – 11 percent of all news items. Assistant coder was instructed on how to do the coding. The assistant coder coded news items by type of news item, focus of news item, content subject categories, tone of coverage, degree of objectivity, status of major source, and portrayal of Gamsakhurdia and Shevardnadze. Holsti's formula was used to determine the intercoder reliability. When correlation coefficient was 0.80 or above, intercoder reliability was considered acceptable (see Appendix B). Intercoder reliability coefficient ranged from 0.80 to 0.95.

Chapter 5

Results

General Statistics

Out of 186, One hundred and eight news items (75 percent) were focused on Georgia, while 44 (24 percent) covered Georgia in context of broader regional issues (see Table 4).

Table 4

Focus of News Item

Context	Frequency	Percentage
Georgia	138	74.2
Regional	44	23.7
Other	4	2.2
Total	186	100

The majority of news items focused on Georgia were published in 1991, 1992, and 1993 (see Table 5).

Table 5**Focus of News Item by Year**

Year	Georgia	Regional context	Other context
1990	1	1	0
1991	17	11	0
1992	28	9	0
1993	26	4	0
1994	12	8	1
1995	5	2	1
1996	--	--	--
1997	13	2	2
1998	12	1	0
1999	15	5	0
2000	9	1	0
Total	138	44	4

The majority of news items, 82 (44 percent), were features. Sixty-six (35 percent) were news, 17 (9 percent) were news-briefs, and 15 (8 percent) were editorials (see Table 6).

Table 6**Type of News Item**

Type	Frequency	Percentage
News-brief	17	9.1
News	66	35.5
Feature	82	44.1
Editorial	15	8.1
Other	6	3.2
Total	186	100

The majority of feature stories and news were published in 1991, 1992, and 1993, while the majority of news-briefs appeared in 1998, 1999, and 2000. More editorials were published in 1997 and 1999 than in 1991, 1992, 1993, 1992, 1995, 1996, 1998, and/or 2000 (see Table 7).

Table 7

Type of News Item by Year

Year	News-brief	News	Feature	Editorial	Other
1990	0	0	2	0	0
1991	0	8	19	1	0
1992	0	19	17	1	0
1993	2	11	16	1	0
1994	0	3	15	2	1
1995	0	4	2	1	1
1996	--	--	--	--	--
1997	0	10	4	3	0
1998	7	2	1	1	2
1999	4	6	4	4	2
2000	4	3	2	1	0
Total	17	66	82	15	6

The vast majority of news items appeared in the section A. Twenty-five of them (13 percent) were published in the first 5 pages and 133 (72 percent) in the rest of the section A. Twenty-one out of 25 news items published in the first 5 pages of the section A, were front page stories. Twenty news items (11 percent) were published in the first 5 pages of the B, C, D, E, G, and H sections (see Table 8).

Table 8**Placement of News Item**

Placement	Frequency	Percentage
A, 1-5	25	13.4
A, the rest	133	71.5
B, 1-5	8	4.3
B, the rest	2	1.1
C, 1-5	6	3.2
C, the rest	3	1.6
D, 1-5	1	0.5
D, the rest	2	1.1
E, 1-5	2	1.1
G, 1-5	1	0.5
H, 1-5	1	0.5
M, the rest	1	0.5
N, the rest	1	0.5
Total	186	100

The above-mentioned sections in different editions of *The Washington Post* covered different topics. Their headings kept changing. Nevertheless, content of some sections remained relatively consistent from issue to issue. For example, section A most frequently covered national and world news, and section B in most cases was Metro.

Most stories in A section appeared in 1991, 1992, and 1993 (see Table 9).

Table 9**Placement of News Item by Year**

Year	A, 1-5	A, The rest	B, 1-5	B, The rest	C, 1-5	C, the rest	D, 1-5	D, The rest	E, 1-5	G, 1-5	H, 1-5	M, the rest	N, The rest
1990	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1991	8	18	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
1992	7	29	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1993	3	24	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
1994	1	18	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
1995	0	6	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
1996	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
1997	4	6	4	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
1998	0	11	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
1999	1	13	2	1	2	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
2000	1	6	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
Total	25	133	8	2	6	3	1	2	2	1	1	1	1

Thirty-eight news items were longer than 1,000 words (20 percent). Thirty-seven news items (20 percent) were shorter than 200 words. Most news items were from 500 to 1,000 words long, 86 in total (46 percent). Twenty-five news (13 percent) items were from 200 to 500 words long (see Table 10).

Table 10**Number of Words per News Item**

Number of words	Frequency	Percentage
Up to 200	37	19.9
From 200 to 500	25	13.7
From 500 to 1000	86	46.2
Over 1000	38	20.4
Total	186	100

The majority of longer stories – more than 500 hundred words long – were published in 1991, 1992, and 1993 (see Table 11).

Table 11**Number of Words per News Item by Year**

Year	Up to 200 words	From 200 to 500 words	From 500 to 1,000 words	Over 1,000 words
1990	0	0	2	0
1991	4	2	14	8
1992	9	3	15	10
1993	5	5	15	5
1994	1	1	14	5
1995	1	1	4	2
1996	--	--	--	--
1997	0	6	6	5
1998	8	2	2	1
1999	5	5	8	2
2000	4	0	6	0
Total	37	25	86	38

The majority of news items were written especially for *The Washington Post* – 76 news items (41 percent) were prepared by *The Washington Post* foreign service, and 32 news items (17 percent) were written by staff writers. Nineteen news items (10 percent) were prepared by the news agencies (see Table 12).

Table 12**Author of News Item**

Author	Frequencies	Percentage
Staff writer	32	17.2
WP foreign service	76	40.9
Special to WP	3	1.6
News agency	19	10.2
Not identified	56	30.1
Total	186	100

The majority of news items prepared by *The Washington Post* foreign service appeared in 1991, 1992, and 1993 editions. At the same time, *The Washington Post*

printed information prepared by the news agencies predominantly in 1991, 1992, and 1993.

Table 13

Author of News Item by Year

Year	Staff writer	WP foreign service	Special to WP	News agency	Not identifiable
1990	0	2	--	--	--
1991	4	17	--	3	4
1992	3	22	0	8	4
1993	2	19	0	5	4
1994	5	7	2	--	7
1995	0	4	0	0	4
1996	--	--	--	--	--
1997	8	3	0	0	6
1998	1	2	0	0	10
1999	5	0	0	0	15
2000	4	0	1	3	2
Total	32	76	3	19	56

In 70 news items (38 percent) the dateline was not identified. Fifty-eight news items (31 percent) were reported from Russia. Forty-eight news items (26 percent) were reported from Georgia. Only one (0.5 percent) was reported from the United States. Nine news items (5 percent) were reported from places other than Georgia, Russia and the U.S. (see Table 14).

Table 14**Dateline of News Item**

Dateline	Frequency	Percentage
Georgia	48	25.8
Russia	58	31.2
The United States	1	0.5
Other	9	4.8
Not identified	70	37.6
Total	186	100

Since 1997, more news items were reported from Georgia than from Russia, reversing the trend prevalent in the first half of '90s (see Table 15).

Table 15**Dateline of News Item by Year**

Year	Georgia	Russia	The United States	Other	Not identified
1990	0	2	0	0	0
1991	6	14	0	1	7
1992	14	17	0	2	4
1993	10	14	0	0	6
1994	2	5	0	4	10
1995	2	3	0	0	3
1996	--	--	--	--	--
1997	2	0	0	2	13
1998	6	2	0	0	5
1999	2	1	1	0	16
2000	4	0	0	0	6
Total	48	58	1	9	70

Georgian officials were the primary source in 85 news items (46 percent). In 12 news items (7 percent) higher-level officials from Washington were the major source and in another 12 news items (7 percent) lower-level officials from Washington were the major source. In 21 news items (11 percent) Russian officials were the major source. Employees of international organizations were the major source in five news items (3

percent). Georgian citizens and American citizens were the major sources of two (1 percent) and five (3 percent) news items, respectively. Georgian experts and American experts were the major sources of two (1 percent) and one (0.5 percent) news items, respectively. Abkhazian officials (quoted by Russian news agencies and/or TV) were the major source of two (1 percent) news items. Ossetian officials never were the major source of any news item. In the rest of news items – 39 in total (21 percent) – the major source was other than listed above or it was not identified (see Table 16).

Table 16

Major Source in News Item

Status of the major source	Frequency	Percentage
High-level officials from Washington	12	6.5
Lower-level officials from Washington	12	6.5
Georgian officials	85	45.7
Georgian citizens	2	1.1
American citizens	5	2.7
Georgian experts	2	1.1
American experts	1	0.5
Russian officials	21	11.3
Abkhazian officials	2	1.1
Employees of International Organizations	5	2.7
Others	11	5.9
Not identified	28	15.1
Total	186	100

Georgian officials were the primary sources in the majority of news items published in 1991, 1992 and 1993. Since 1995, Russian officials were rarely quoted as the major source (see Table 17).

Table 17**Major Source in News Item by Year**

Year	Higher-level officials from Washington	Lower-level officials from Washington	Georgian officials	Georgian citizens	American citizens	Georgian experts	American experts	Russian officials	Abkhazian officials	Employees of intern. Organizations	Others	Not identified
1990	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
1991	3	1	14	0	1	0	0	7	0	0	0	2
1992	1	0	21	1	0	0	0	4	0	1	5	4
1993	1	2	18	0	0	0	0	3	1	0	1	4
1994	3	2	3	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	5	4
1995	0	0	4	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	2
1996	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
1997	0	5	7	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	4
1998	0	0	9	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	2
1999	3	2	6	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	0	6
2000	1	0	2	0	3	1	1	0	1	1	0	0
Total	12	12	85	2	5	2	1	21	2	5	11	28

Out of 186 news items, the largest share – 81 (43 percent) – covered politics and government. The second largest group of news items – 52 (28 percent) discussed war and defense issues, including ethnic conflicts and civil war in Georgia, and regional armed conflicts. Crime, with 25 articles (13 percent), occupied the third place. Ten news items (5 percent) covered economic activities. Two news items (1 percent) covered accidents and disasters. Six news items (3 percent) covered culture, history and arts. There were no news items discussing science and invention, education, and public health and welfare (see Table 18).

Table 18**Content Subject Categories**

Categories	Frequency	Percentage
War and defense	52	28.0
Economic activity	10	5.4
Politics and government	81	43.5
Accidents and disasters	2	1.1
Crime	25	13.4
Culture, history, arts	6	3.2
Miscellaneous	10	5.4
Total	186	100

The majority of news items discussing war and defense issues were published in 1992, 1993 and 1994. The majority of news items discussing economic activities were published in 1999 (see Table 19).

Table 19**Content Subject Categories by Year**

Year	War & defense	Economic activity	Politics & government	Accidents	Crime	Culture, history & arts	Miscellaneous
1990	0	0	2	0	0	0	0
1991	7	0	18	2	0	0	1
1992	14	1	20	0	0	1	1
1993	18	0	5	0	4	2	1
1994	10	2	7	0	0	0	2
1995	1	1	5	0	0	0	1
1996	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
1997	0	0	2	0	13	2	0
1998	0	0	11	0	1	0	1
1999	2	4	7	0	5	0	2
2000	0	2	4	0	2	1	1
Total	52	10	81	2	25	6	10

One hundred fourteen news items (61 percent) depicted negative processes and events, such as various conflicts and disorganization, while only 14 news items focused on positive topics such as reforms (see Table 20).

Table 20

Tone of Coverage

Tone	Frequency	Percentage
Positive	14	7.5
Negative	114	61.3
Neutral	58	31.2
Total	186	100

Most news items focused on negative topics were published in 1992 and 1993, 29 and 27 respectively. Many news items focused on negative social-economic processes in 1991 and 1994, 20 and 17 respectively. Most positive coverage occurred in 1997 and 1999, with four news items in each year (see Table 21).

Table 21

Tone of Coverage by Year

Year	Positive	Negative	Neutral
1990	0	0	2
1991	1	20	7
1992	1	29	7
1993	0	27	3
1994	2	17	2
1995	0	3	5
1996	--	--	--
1997	4	0	13
1998	0	9	4
1999	4	6	10
2000	2	3	5
Total	14	114	58

One hundred and eight news items (80 percent) demonstrated high degree of objectivity. Ten news items demonstrated medium degree of objectivity. Only three news items (2 percent) demonstrated low degree of objectivity. Fifteen news items (8 percent) were editorials and thus subjective (see Table 22).

Table 22

Degree of Objectivity

Degree of objectivity	Frequency	Percentage
Low	3	1.6
Medium	10	5.4
High	148	79.6
Not identifiable	10	5.4
Subjective/editorials	15	8.1
Total	186	100

One hundred twenty two news items (65 percent) completely agreed with U.S. foreign policy, while only four news items (2 percent) disagreed substantially. Fourteen news items (8 percent) somewhat agreed, while only one news item (0.5 percent) somewhat disagreed. Nine news items (5 percent) agreed and disagreed at the same time. Breakdown of the degree of agreement with foreign policy by year has not revealed any pattern (see Table 23 and Table 24).

Table 23**Degree of Agreement with Foreign Policy**

Degree of agreement	Frequency	Percentage
Very much in disagreement	4	2.2
Somewhat in disagreement	1	0.5
Both in agreement and disagreement	9	4.8
Somewhat in agreement	14	7.5
Very much in agreement	122	65.0
Not identifiable	36	19.4
Total	186	100

Table 24**Degree of Agreement with Foreign Policy by Year**

Year	Very much in agreement	Somewhat in agreement	Both in agreement and disagreement	Somewhat in disagreement	Very much in disagreement	Not identifiable
1990	2	0	0	0	0	0
1991	20	1	0	0	1	6
1992	29	4	0	0	0	4
1993	24	1	0	0	0	5
1994	10	2	3	0	1	5
1995	5	1	1	1	0	1
1996	--	--	--	--	--	--
1997	13	1	1	0	0	1
1998	6	0	0	0	0	7
1999	11	2	2	0	1	2
2000	2	2	2	0	1	4
Total	122	14	9	1	4	36

Departure from Objectivity

Quantitative analysis confirmed the high level of adherence to the standards of objective reporting by *The Washington Post* while covering Georgia. The exceptions were news items relying on information and/or quoting Russian news agencies and TV. Due to a number of political, social, and cultural factors, Russian media don't operate

according to the principles of Western journalism. In news reporting, they do not always separate facts from opinion, especially when Russian geopolitical interests are involved. The coverage of Georgian-Abkhazian conflict is the case in point. When *The Washington Post* reported news prepared by its own staff or developed stories based on information supplied by the Western news agencies, it classified Abkhazians as “separatists” (1997, March 25, p. A17; 1994, June 16, p. A42; 1993, July 15, p. A20; 1993, March 20, p. A17; 1995, November 7, p. A19; 1993, September 29, p. A25), “secessionists” (1994, July 24, p. C7), “rebels” (1994, June 22, p. A16; 1993, October 22, p. A28; 1993, September 29, p. A25; 1993, September 26, p. A41; 1993, September 23, p. A1; 1993, September 22, p. A30; 1993, July 3, p. A20; 1992, October 6, p. A18), “insurgents” (1994, June 21, p. A11), “separatist rebels” (1994, February 5, p. A1; 1993, September 26, p. A41; 1993, July 7, p. A28; 1993, July 3, p. A20), “ethnic separatists” (1994, February 3, p. A21), while in the stories based on or/and quoting Russian news agencies and TV, Abkhazians involved in the conflict are identified as “Abkhazian activists” (1992, August 18, p. A12).

Diversions in the newsgathering process caused the above-described departure from the norm. *The Washington Post* might have been constrained by one or the combination of the following factors: lack of direct access, lack of facilities, safety considerations, and deadline pressures.

Editorials

Ten out of 15 editorials published in *The Washington Post* during the last decade interpreted the reality in Georgia the same way official Washington did, while only three

offered an entirely different perspective. The remaining two agreed with general policy but questioned some of its aspects. One out of the three opposing editorials disagreed on U.S. Caspian energy policy. Another criticized Washington for allowing Russia to conduct peacekeeping operations in Georgia. The third editorial defended and justified the actions of Gamsakhurdia's government, whom official Washington regarded as nationalistic.

U.S. Energy Policy in Caspian

In total 13 news items commented on one or the other aspect of U.S. energy policy in the Caspian region, three of them editorials. Eleven news items displayed a favorable attitude toward its prospects, while only one news item opposed it. The remaining news item expressed criticism regarding some of its aspects. One out of 3 editorials agreed with the reasonability of U.S. energy policy in Caspian, while one questioned its commercial and political viability. The third editorial partially disagreed with U.S. foreign policy in Caspian, demanding from the U.S. government to pay more attention to the human rights records of the foreign governments it supports.

Image of Georgia

One hundred fourteen (60 percent) out of 186 news items covered conflicts such as civil war and ethnic clashes, social disorder, and political assassinations. Thus, the mosaic of conflicts constituted the major part of Georgia's portrait in *The Washington Post*.

The following descriptions of Georgia reinforced its image as a country lost in the political and social chaos: "A post-Soviet civil war had laid waste to this beautiful land. Warlords sparred for territory, people were going hungry, and guns were quite literary the only law" (1999, May 2, p. B7), "the small, impoverished nation" (1999, August 21, p. A16), "Georgia is in a part of the world where instability and ethnic conflict remain the norm" (1998, February 14, p. A 28), "Georgia is one of the smallest republics of the former Soviet Union, but none outstrips it in terms of civil disorder" (1993, September 15, p. A21), "small, strife-torn Caucasian nation" (1994, February 4, p. A25), "Georgia has been racked by separatist rebellions and civil strife since the Soviet Union collapsed, becoming one of the most lawless republics in the region" (1993, August 18, p. A24), "Georgia, rich in history and natural beauty, has incurred years of hardship and turmoil as a result of its border wars with the breakaway province of Abkhazia. Living standards, once among the highest of the former Soviet republics, have plummeted" (1999, August 1, p. E1), "Small republic of 5.5 million people, situated at the crossroads of the Christian and Muslim worlds...slid into ethnic conflict and despair after the Soviet Union collapsed" (1995, November 4, p. A19), "Georgia...is now grappling with one of the most severe economic crises in the former Soviet Union" (1994, June 4, p. A11),

“Georgia has become the nightmare scenario for life after communism” (1992, January 18, p. A19).

Some news items described the natural beauty of Georgia and its bright economic prospects. Some authors were impressed by the reforms underway in Georgia. The examples of such news items are as follows: “Georgia was bountiful and gorgeous then, one of the most affluent and pleasant Soviet republics. It had soaring, snow-capped mountains, a sun-dappled Black Sea coast, old churches and exuberant, well educated people eager to embrace Western ways and business after decades under communism” (1994, May 21, p. A15), “Georgia, with 5.4 million people in an area about the size of West Virginia, is known for its mountains, seaside resorts, vineyards, hospitality and tough, intensely patriotic people” (1993, October 24, p. A1), “Georgia is a fertile, starkly beautiful country of 5.4 million people on a territory little bigger than West Virginia” (1993, September 23, p. A1), “Georgia, a gateway from the oil fields to world markets” (1998, March 8, p. C3), “Georgia’s economic prospects are bright, although it lacks indigenous resource” (1997, March 25, p. A17), “Georgia...has been making great progress on political and economic reform under President Eduard Shevardnadze” (1997, March 1, p. A22).

Extensively Covered Incidents

The coverage of two incidents with the potential of affecting Georgian-American relations clearly demonstrated the influence of U.S. foreign policy on story framing. One case concerns Giorgi Makharadze, a Georgian diplomat who in 1997, while driving

drunk, caused an auto accident near Dupont Circle in Washington, DC, that killed a 16-year-old girl and injured four others. Another case involves Hillary Clinton's brothers – Hugh and Tony Rodhams – who planned to invest \$ 118 million in a hazelnut business in Ajara, semi-autonomous part of Georgia, ruled by Aslan Abashidze, a political opponent of President Eduard Shevardnadze. Both cases received extensive coverage. The first case facilitated discussion on diplomatic immunity and its consequences for ordinary citizens, and the second case facilitated discussion regarding the place and roles of the President's relatives in politics.

Case of Giorgi Makharadze.

Sixteen news items were dedicated solely to the case of Giorgi Makharadze, two of them editorials. All news items portrayed Georgia as a country committed to Western values and abiding by international agreements, and its President as a responsive and responsible leader. Makharadze was portrayed as a person ready to assume full responsibility for his action. The news items provided sufficient background information about Makharadze's diplomatic career, and about the external and internal pressures President Shevardnadze had to face while deciding to waive Makharadze's diplomatic immunity. After Shevardnadze waived Makharadze's diplomatic immunity, two editorials praised him for taking the "unusual and courageous step" (1997, January 19, p. C6; 1997, January 11, p. A20).

Case of Hugh and Tony Rodhams.

Five news items were dedicated to the case of Rodhams, two of them editorials. The White House was disappointed to learn about the Rodhams' hazelnut business with

the potential of benefiting Abashidze and urged the brothers to withdraw. Both Republicans and Democrats considered the Rodhams' enterprise harmful for U.S. foreign policy interests. Both editorials in *The Washington Post* agreed with the viewpoint of official Washington. One editorial identified Abashidze as "the leading political rival of Georgia's president and staunch U.S. ally, Eduard Shevardnadze" (1999, December 29, p. A27). The same editorial commented on the Rodhams' business:

This is a particularly bad moment, as it happens, for members of the First Family to be wandering the Caucasus. Russia is fighting a bloody war in Chechnya, just across the border from Georgia. The Russians have been squeezing Georgia, too, including recent military attacks on Georgian border posts. Meanwhile, the Rodham's pal Abashidze is reportedly getting Russian help in his political battle against Shevardnadze. So there's more at stake here than nuts (1999, December 29, p. A27).

Another editorial recognized the importance for the former Soviet republics of attracting foreign investment, but nevertheless criticized the Rodhams' decision: "The problem is that...Rodhams got involved with a questionable cast of characters, stepped into Georgia's fractious internal politics and caused problems for the government of Georgia, a loyal U.S. ally" (1999, September 16, p. A25).

Presidents and Presidential Candidates

One hundred seventeen news items out of 186 mentioned Shevardnadze, 65 – Gamsakhurdia and four – Abashidze.

Out of 65 news items that mentioned Gamsakhurdia, only 3 (5 percent) portrayed him in a positive light, while 37 (57 percent) demonstrated a negative attitude. Twenty-five news items (38 percent) were neutral (see Table 25).

Table 25

Portrayal of Gamsakhurdia

Evaluation	Frequency	Percentage
Negative	37	56.9
Positive	3	4.6
Neutral	25	38.4

Out of 117 new items that mentioned Shevardnadze, 48 (41 percent) portrayed him in a positive light and 5 news items (4 percent) in a negative. The majority of news items – 64 (55 percent) – remained neutral (see Table 26).

Table 26

Portrayal of Shevardnadze

Evaluation	Frequency	Percentage
Negative	5	4.2
Positive	48	41
Neutral	64	54.7

Eight out of 10 editorials mentioning Shevardnadze treated him favorably, while two were neutral. Two out of 4 editorials mentioning Gamsakhurdia were neutral. One treated him favorably and one criticized him.

Only four news items mentioned Abashidze, and all of them portrayed him in a negative light (see Table 27).

Table 27**Portrayal of Abashidze**

Evaluation	Frequency	Percentage
Negative	4	100
Positive	0	0
Neutral	0	0

Most negative coverage Gamsakhurdia received in 1991 and 1992. Since 1996, *The Washington Post* has not commented on him at all (see Table 28).

Table 28**Portrayal of Gamsakhurdia by Year**

Year	Positive	Negative	Neutral
1990	0	--	2
1991	2	15	2
1992	1	16	12
1993	0	3	6
1994	0	1	2
1995	0	2	1

Shevardnadze received negative coverage in 1992 – during civil war, in 1993 – when the Georgian government was largely criticized for violating human rights, and later in 1995. Most positive coverage Shevardnadze received in 1997 (see Table 29).

Table 29**Portrayal of Shevardnadze by Year**

Year	Positive	Negative	Neutral
1990	0	0	0
1991	1	0	2
1992	5	2	12
1993	5	1	16
1994	5	0	13
1995	3	2	1
1996	--	--	--
1997	13	0	2
1998	5	0	7
1999	8	0	8
2000	3	0	2

Zviad Gamsakhurdia.

Most adjectives and metaphors, used by *The Washington Post* to describe Gamsakhurdia clearly demonstrate or imply a negative attitude toward him. Some of the descriptions can be understood as conveying a positive image, and some – as neutral. The authors of news items rarely “label” Gamsakhurdia directly. They prefer to quote opposition figures, members of his government and/or ordinary citizens. Those quoted often criticize Gamsakhurdia for being a despot intolerant of dissent. In some instances, a negative attitude toward Gamsakhurdia could be recognized from the context.

Some of the descriptions attributed to *The Washington Post* authors portrayed Gamsakhurdia as nationalist: “ardent nationalist” (1991, April 1, p. A14), “nationalist hero” (1993, October 19, p. A16), “dissident nationalist”(1991, December 24, p. A1), “fiery Georgian nationalist” (1994, January 6, p. A15), “fiery nationalist” (1993, November 8, p. A14; 1993, October 21, p. A20), “nationalist politician” (1993, October 24, p. A1), “ultra-nationalist president” (1993, March 20, p. A17), Gamsakhurdia

“antagonized large sections of the population with his authoritarian brand of nationalism” (1992 October 11, p. A44), “Both Mutalibov and Gamsakhurdia were victims of bungled attempts to manipulate nationalist feelings to their own political advantage following the collapse of the old Communist order” (1992, March 7, p. A15), “Soon after he became Georgia’s leader, Gamsakhurdia began repressing the republic’s national minorities, such as Ossetians and Abkhazians” (1992, January 18, p. A19).

Some descriptions of Gamsakhurdia involve stronger language: “Gamsakhurdia showed signs of political paranoia” (1991, December 23, p. A1), “notorious president” (1991, March 23, p. A19), “Gamsakhurdia’s authoritarian style and xenophobic policies” (1992, January 8, p. A17), “Gamsakhurdia was worshipped almost as a messiah by his partisans ...who saw him as an anti-Soviet hero and champion of a peculiarly Georgian code of tough pride and machismo” (1994, January 6, p. A15), “The son of one of Georgia’s best-known writers, he gained respect as a dissident in the late Soviet era, fame as his country’s first elected president after independence in 1991 and notoriety as a deposed leader who sought to regain power by violence last year” (1994, January 6, p. A15), “He developed a brand of authoritarian populism...built around a sometimes xenophobic sense of Georgia’s national identity” (1992, January 18, p. A19), “For some, he is the embodiment of Georgia’s independent tradition, a saint-like leader who delivered the nation from the godless Communists. For others, he is a dictator who imprisoned his political opponents and cut Georgia off from the civilized world” (1992, January 6, p. A1). Some descriptions are even cynical. For example, in one of the news

items, Gamsakhurdia is referred to as “a former translator of poetry,” and thus incapable of being a political leader (1991, October 5, p. A20).

Some of the examples of contexts that infer the negative image of Gamsakhurdia are as follows: “The deposed leader’s authoritarian style and xenophobic policies cost him much of his popularity, particularly among urban intellectuals, but he remains a charismatic figure for a minority of Georgians, including many workers and peasants” (1992, January 8, p. A17), “An elegant figure with gray hair and moustache, he still wears a statesman’s uniform of gray-flannel double-breasted suit. When he appears in the basement corridors, the defenders stand and applaud him” (1992, January 6, p. A1).

Negative image of Georgia’s first president is projected by comparing Gamsakhurdia to Shevardnadze. In one of the news items Gamsakhurdia is mentioned as a “chief rival” to Shevardnadze (1993, November 8, p. A14). Another news item commented about Gamsakhurdia: “His bitterest enemy was Eduard Shevardnadze, the former Soviet foreign minister” (1993, October 24, p. A1).

Most descriptions that can be considered positive commented on Gamsakhurdia’s past merits: “an intellectual and former political prisoner” (1991, October 5, p. A20), “a veteran anti-Soviet dissident and human rights activist” (1992, January 6, p. A1), “former dissident” (1992, October 11, p. A44; 1990, October 30, p. A13), “a beloved figure in the Soviet era because of his insistence on self-determination of Georgia” (1994, January 6, p. A15), “a Soviet era dissident” (1993, October 19, p. A16). A few adjectives used to describe Gamsakhurdia also convey positive emotions. One example of such reference is

the following: “The determined and forceful Gamsakhurdia is also a calculating politician” (1991, April 14, p. B1).

Descriptions that can be considered neutral include: “ousted president” (1993, October 19, p. A16; 1993, October 21, p. A20), “late Georgian leader Zviad Gamsakhurdia” (1998, February 26, p. A18), “former president” (1998, February 16, p. A18; 1993, October 24, p. A1), “deposed president” (1994, February 3, p. A21), “the first popularly elected president in Georgian history” (1992, October 11, p. A 44).

Eduard Shevardnadze.

The Washington Post portrayed Shevardnadze as a positive political figure. His past merits in global politics were continuously emphasized. He was praised for his efforts to help his impoverished nation. At the same time, *The Washington Post* reported on Shevardnadze’s not so glorious past as a Communist leader of Soviet Georgia. At times, *The Washington Post* mildly criticized him for one or the other non-democratic decision or occurrence in Georgia, such as bad human rights record or violations during the elections.

Some of the descriptions that shed a positive light on Shevardnadze are as follows: an “old fishing buddy of former secretary of state James A. Baker III, is widely seen in Washington as leader of the good guys in Georgia” (1999, September 22, p. A31), “a staunch U.S. ally” (2000, January 1, p. A6), “Shevardnadze...is being honored for his commitment to democratic reform, in a region where that can be dangerous” (1999, September 22, p. A31), “respected president” (1998, June 11, p. A22), “Now 72 and deeply engaged in what may be an even more challenging task – the presidency of

Georgia – Shevardnadze remains a man of wisdom and surprise” (1999, May 2, p. B7), a “diplomat-turned-daredevil” (1993, September 23, p. A1). Description of Shevardnadze’s appearance also conveyed positive disposition: “white haired leader” (1993, September 23, p. A1), “white-haired, pink-cheeked, courtly statesman” (1993, September 23, p. A1).

The favorable attitude of official Washington toward Shevardnadze is reported by the following quite:

...Baker declared that it is “very, very important for Georgia to stay on the reform course.” In a verbal embrace of his old negotiating partner, he added: “We could not be more confident that this will be true as long as Eduard Shavardnadze is in a high capacity” (1992, May 26, p. A12).

Some of the examples of Shevardnadze’s portrayal as the leader that helped the world to become a better place to live are as follows: “He told Georgian TV that Russian hard-liners ‘cannot forgive me [for withdrawal from] Afghanistan, Eastern Europe, the reunification of Germany, the collapse of the USSR and the fight for Georgian independence” (1998, March 8, p. C3), “He helped end the Cold War and allow the nations of Central and Eastern Europe to regain their freedom with a minimum of blood shed” (1998, February 14, p. A28), “Shevardnadze, as foreign minister to Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev, played a pivotal role in the end of the Cold War” (1998, February 11, p. A27), “Shevardnadze, known internationally as the former Soviet foreign minister who helped end the Cold War” (1995, November 4, p. A19), “By his contribution to peacefully dismantling the Soviet empire, former Soviet foreign minister

Eduard Shevardnadze earned enduring American regard” (1994, March 10, p. A20), “Shevardnadze dismantled the Warsaw Pact and freed the nations of Central Europe to pursue their own destinies” (1999, May 2, p. B7), “Shevardnadze, a former Soviet foreign minister who is highly regarded in Washington because of his role in allowing Eastern European nations to break free of Soviet domination” (1994, March 8, p. A9).

Some of the examples of mild criticism toward Shevardnadze are as follows: “The silver-haired Shevardnadze, who returned to his homeland two years ago to ‘save’ it from the post-communist chaos, has had his reputation severely tarnished by the collapse” (1994, June 4, p. A11), “Although most Georgian intellectuals have rallied around Shevardnadze, the support is far from unanimous” (1992, October 11, p. A44), “His government, although not Shavradnadze personally, is considered thoroughly corrupt by many Georgians” (1994, June 4, p. A11), “Shevradnadze, who is widely respected abroad for his years as Soviet foreign minister under Mikhail Gorbachev, is eager to move his economically suffering country closer to the West. But the criticism of the elections could cast a shadow on his aims ” (2000, April 11, p. A17).

Aslan Abashidze.

Negative image of Abashidze is mainly projected by contrasting him with Shevardnadze: “one of the Shevardnadze’s chief rivals” (2000, January 1, p. A6), “a political rival of Shevradnadze” (2000, January 1, p. A6), “a leading political rival of Georgia’s president and staunch U.S. ally, Eduard Shevardnadze” (1999, December 29, p. A27), “a political leader who is a rival to Georgian President Shevardnadze. The United States considers Shevardnadze’s government an ally (1999, September 22, p.

A31), “dangerous rival to Georgian President Shevardnadze” (1999, September 16, p. A25).

Negative image is also projected by referring to Abashidze’s connections with destructive political forces and criminal figures: “Abashidze is reportedly getting Russian help in his political battle against Shevardnadze” (1999, December 29, p. A 27), “...linked to alleged mobster, named Grigori Loutchansky. The State Department refused to grant Loutchansky a visa to the United States in 1995” (1999, September 17, p. A5).

None of the news items referred to Abashidze by his official title. Instead he is identified as the “local political boss in Batumi” (1999, December 29, p. A27), “local political prince” (1999, September 16, p. A25), “controversial Georgian political figure” (1999, September 17, p. A5).

Civil War

The 1992 civil war is classified as “a coup,” “a bloody putsch,” “a bloody uprising,” “a bloody revolt,” and “an armed insurrection.” Images of opposition leaders involved in the overthrow portrayed by *The Washington Post* can be considered negative. The newspaper reported on the instrumental role of these leaders in bringing Shevardnadze to power. At the same time, the efforts of Gamsakhurdia to regain power later in 1993 were treated along similar lines. Now it was his offensive that was classified as a rebellion against the legitimate government.

The civil war was described as follows: “Georgians have suffered a coup, civil war, unbridled lawlessness and economic devastation” (1995, November 4, p. A19), “a coup that toppled nationalist President Zviad Gamsakhurdia” (1995, November 7, p. A19), “...the coup that ousted nationalist President Zviad Gamsakhurdia in early 1992” (1995, November 6, p. A16), “Gamsakhurdia was ousted from power in a coup orchestrated by local warlords” (1994, July 24, p. C7), “...the former Soviet foreign minister, who took power in 1992 after a bloody putsch” (1995, November 6, p. A16), “Georgia’s first elected president was overthrown” (1994, February 3, p. A21), “He was overthrown in a bloody uprising” (1994, January 6, p. A15), “He was ousted in an uprising in January 1992” (1993, November 8, p. A 14), “...overthrown in a bloody revolt” (1993, October 24, p. A1), “Deposed in a revolt” (1993, October 21, p. A20), “Ousted in a bloody revolt” (1993, October 20, p. A31), “Gamsakhurdia was ousted in a bloody revolt” (1993, September 15, p. A21), “armed insurrection” (1992, October 11, p. A44; 1992, September 8, p. A14), “First elected leader was driven out by armed rebels” (1992, October 12, p. A29).

The forces involved in the overthrow of Gamsakhurdia’s government were described as follows: “rebel troops” (1991, December 29, p. A1), “rebel paramilitary forces” (1992, March 11, p. A16), “Sakartvelos Mkhedrioni, once powerful, heavily armed militia that has become synonymous with violence and gangsterism...brought Shevardnadze to power in 1992 and had been his allies in war”(1995, November 4, p. A19), “Ioseliani, a charismatic former underworld boss in the Soviet era, now commands Sakartvelos Mkhedrioni, a self-styled paramilitary group that is the closest thing

Shevardnadze has at this point to a coherent fighting force” (1993, October 20, p. A31), “Shevardnadze is increasingly dependent on bands of armed men, most prominent among them an outfit of a few thousand militiamen called Sakartvelos Mkhedrioni” (1993, October 19, p. A16), “The Mkhedrioni, considered tough patriots by their supporters and murderous gang of looters by their opponents, primarily are loyal...to Dzhaba Ioseliani, a popular playwright and convicted armed robber with whom Shevardnadze has been forced to make a political alliance” (1993, October 19, p. A16), “The Mkhedrioni were one of two armed forces that ousted Gamsakhurdia in fighting in Tbilisi in January 1992” (1993, October 19, p. A16), “Dzhaba Ioseliani, a leading member of the self-proclaimed Military Council that overthrew Gamsakhurdia just eight months after he won a landslide election victory” (1992, January 7, p. A1), “Ioseliani, a former literary critic and professor of philology who has served a prison sentence for bank robbery” (1992, January 7, p. A1).

Efforts of Gamsakhurdia to regain power by military force in 1993 was described as an “insurrection against Shevardnadze’s government” (1994, January 6, p. A15), “armed revolt” (1993, September 23, p. A1), “a revolt against the government” (1993, October 24, p. A1). Gamsakhurdia himself is identified as a “Georgian rebel leader” (1994, January 6, A.15).

Military groups lead by Gamsakhurdia against Shevardnadze’s government were described as “rebel band” (1993, October 24, p. A1), “anti-government rebels” (1993, October 21, p. A20), “Gamsakhurdia’s partisans” (1993, October 21, p. A20), “Gamsakhurdia’s rebels” (1993, October 20, p. A31).

Ethnic Conflicts

The news items covering ethnic conflicts in Abkhazia and South Ossetia provide background information about the causes of the conflicts and communicate viewpoints of all sides involved. In 1990 and 1991, when the U.S. government was not decided on how to respond to the complaints of minorities living in Georgia, the American media had no story line for interpreting them. In 1990 and 1991, *The Washington Post* described the situation in South Ossetia and Abkhazia without making any value judgments. Later, when official Washington backed territorial integrity of Georgia, the newspaper became sympathetic toward Georgia's official stand.

Abkhazia.

Since 1992, Abkhaz fighters are classified as "separatists," "secessionists," "rebels," and "insurgents." Some of the examples are as follows: "Abkhaz separatists" (1997, March 25, p. A17; 1994, June 16, p. A42; 1993, July 15, p. A20; 1993, March 20, p. A 17), "separatists in Abkhazia" (1995, November 7, p. A19), "Abkhazian secessionists" (1994, July 24, p. C7), "insurgents" (1994, June 21, p. A11), "Abkhazian rebels" (1994, June 22, p. A16; 1993, October 22, p. A28; 1993, September 29, p. A25; 1993, September 25, p. A41; 1993, September 23, p. A1; 1993, September 22, p. A30; 1993, July 3, p. A20; 1992, October 6, p. A18), "ethnic separatists" (1994, February 3, p. A21), "separatist rebels" (1994, February 5, p. A1; 1993, September 26, p. A41; 1993, July 7, p. A28; 1993, July 3, p. A20), "Abkhazian separatists" (1993, September 29, p.

A25), “Abkhazian nationalist leaders” (1993, September 29, p. A25), “Abkhazian separatist forces” (1993, September 27, p. A12), “separatists” (1993, January 8, p. A15).

Abkhazia is referred to as an integral part of Georgia: “separatist region of Abkhazia” (1995, November 4, p. A19), “breakaway Abkhazia region” (2000, June 2, p. A27; 1995, November 6, p. A16), “Abkhazia region of Georgia” (1994, July 24, p. C7), “Abkhazia, a coastal province controlled by another group of rebels” (1993, November 8, p. A14), “breakaway Black Sea region of Abkhazia” (1992, October 6, p. A18).

Some news items reported on violence directed by Abkhaz against Georgians: “The Abkhaz victory...was followed by what many witnesses say was a brutal campaign of ‘ethnic cleansing’ directed by the Abkhaz against ethnic Georgians” (1993, October 24, p. A1), “The fall of ...Sukhumi ...was allegedly followed by atrocities against ethnic Georgian civilians; extensive brutality directed by the victors against civilians” (1993, October 22, p. A28), “A reporter who traveled extensively through western Georgia in recent days, interviewing refugees from the fighting in Sukhumi in a half-dozen places, found the accounts of violence to be fairly consistent” (1993, October 22, p. A28).

South Ossetia.

South Ossetia is classified as an integral part of Georgia: “breakaway region, South Ossetia” (1995, November 4, p. A19), “South Ossetia, another region of Georgia where there has been ethnic conflict” (1997, March 25, p. A 17), “South Ossetia – an autonomous region in Georgia” (1994, July 24, p. C7), “secessionist region of South Ossetia” (1992, June 21, p. A25).

Since 1992, the conflict in South Ossetia is referred to as “a secessionist rebellion: “Shevardnadze faces another secessionist rebellion, in South Ossetia” (1993, September 23, p. A1). Ossetian fighters are referred to as “Ossetian rebels” (1993, July 15, p. A20), “Ossetian separatists” (1992, July 15, p. A12).

Human Rights

The Washington Post highlighted poor human rights records of both Shevardnadze’s and Gamsakhurdia’s governments, and of the Military Council. In addition, the newspaper commented on Shevardnadze’s humble human rights record while a leader of Soviet Georgia.

Regarding Gamsakhurdia’s government, *The Washington Post* reported: “Opposition leaders and some journalists complain that newspapers critical of the government have been closed down and political activists imprisoned” (1992, October 11, p. A44.), “Western human rights groups such as Amnesty International have accused Gamsakhurdia of numerous human rights violations in his eight-month rule, including arbitrary arrests of his political opponents, rigid control over mass media and repression of non-Georgian national minorities” (1992, January 8, p. A17), “U.S. officials have criticized his human rights record” (1992, January 1, p. A1).

In 1995, *The Washington Post* quoted Human Rights Watch and other human rights groups accusing Georgia’s government of systematic abuses of human rights. Human rights defenders insisted that Shevardnadze himself was implicated in wrongdoings (1995, March 25, p. A28).

The Washington Post criticized the Military Council's actions against peaceful protesters and journalists:

Military council gunmen used automatic rifles and smoke grenades to disperse a demonstration by supporters of ousted president Gamsakhurdia. After breaking up the demonstration, the gunmen herded several Western photographers and ...forced them to hand over their film at gunpoint (1992, January 8, p. A17).

The Washington Post commented on Shevardnadze's past: "Shevardnadze defended his record as party boss in Tbilisi...but he acknowledged 'serious mistakes' in failing to protect human rights campaigners from KGB persecutions" (1992, March 11, p. A16), "One of the principal charges against Shevardnadze...is the execution in 1983 of six young Georgians who tried to hijack a plane to Turkey" (1992, January 8, p. A17).

Recognition of Georgia's Independence by the United States

The U.S. government did not recognize Georgia's independence while Gamsakhurdia was the leader of the country. The U.S. government regarded Gamsakhurdia's government as authoritarian and nationalistic, not worthy of U.S. political and financial support. Human rights violations constituted one of the strongest arguments in the case. The position of the U.S. government upset Gamsakhurdia's government as well as some independent experts. The U.S. government refused to cooperate with the self-proclaimed Military Council after Gamsakhurdia's ouster.

The Washington Post mirrored concerns of official Washington. The newspaper reported on the visit of U.S. Congressional delegation to Georgia. The delegation “had found ‘numerous incidents of human rights violations’ and a disturbing lack of democracy in Georgia, one of the republics now seeking sovereignty.” Gamsakhurdia “has claimed ‘almost absolute power’ and dissidents in the southern republic ‘are not safe to express opposition.’ He denied the existence of political prisoners during their talks, but agreed to allow Amnesty International and the OSCE to investigate” (1991, September 10, p. A21). *The Washington Post* commented on the negative role of Gamsakhurdia in the recognition of Georgia’s independence: “More and more political leaders here are saying that Gamsakhurdia’s behavior may be the factor blocking recognition of Georgian independence in the West” (1991, September 18, p. A1), “While Gamsakhurdia was the first politician in the Soviet Union to win the presidency of a republic in a free vote, he quickly alienated the West with his policies” (1992, January 1, p. A1). *The Washington Post* also reported the point of view of U.S. Secretary of State:

Baker...described the government of Georgia as “authoritarian” and “undeserving of our acceptance or support.” State Department spokesman Joseph Snyder described the government of the besieged Georgian president, Zviad Gamsakhurdia, as having a “poor” record on democratic principles and internationally recognized human rights (1991, December 27, p. A1).

The Washington Post reported on growing dissatisfaction of official Tbilisi with the United States: “Recalling a widely reviled 1939 Soviet pact with Nazi Germany...

Gamsakhurdia accused the United States...of conspiring in a 'kind of Molotov-Ribbentrop agreement' to deny Georgia recognition of its independence" (1991, September 11, p. A25). The newspaper also quoted a Georgian official charging the U.S. administration:

The foreign minister of Georgia...has sent a strongly worded letter to Baker protesting U.S. criticism of that newly-independent state and charging that Washington's public attacks "encourage more violence" by armed groups seeking to overthrow the existing government because they leave the impression that such groups have the support of the United States (1991, December 27, p. A1).

Some independent American experts criticized the decision of the U.S. administration and advocated the Georgian cause as deserving "West's generous support:"

The hostility of the West to Georgia's national aspirations compared with the widespread sympathy for the Baltic republics can be explained either by ignorance or by a bias that favors Northern Europeans. In either event, it is misplaced. Nothing short of a full-scale Soviet invasion can stop Georgia's drive for independence, since it is supported by nine-tenths of population (1991, June 9, p. D7).

Peacekeeping in Abkhazia

One more topic that raised a lot of controversy and received profound coverage is peacekeeping in Abkhazia. The U.S. government tried to lobby the United Nations on behalf of Georgia to request deployment of U.N. peacekeeping forces in Abkhazia. *The Washington Post* reported that the United States was ready to contribute finances to the operation, but not troops:

President Clinton yesterday endorsed the idea of a United Nations peacekeeping force for the troubled former Soviet republic of Georgia, and his aides began consultations with Congress about where to get the money to pay for it...The problem facing the administration is that the United States is about \$1 billion in arrears on payments to the United Nations, and is thus in a poor position to lobby for the dispatch of yet another U.N. peacekeeping force that would not include U.S. troops (1994, March 8, p. A9).

The measure would have helped Georgia to avoid presence of Russian peacekeepers under the auspices of CIS. The U.S. government could not achieve the agreement with the United Nations. Georgia was forced to accept Russian peacekeepers.

The Washington Post criticized the U.S. government for not helping Georgia more vigorously: "...there has been little American investment in the Caucasus region and U.S. diplomats, when they have bothered with the republics, have tended to nudge them back into Moscow's arms" (1993, October 24, p. A1). The newspaper cited complaining Georgian diplomat:

National security adviser Japaridze, who has lobbied for Georgia in Washington, described his reception by Clinton administration officials and Congress: “The feeling we got was ‘Okay, guys, we appreciate your struggle for sovereignty, but you should understand big political games. You still are in the Russian sphere of influence. Try to find some way to solve your own problems’ (1993, October 24, p. A1).

Topic Selection

The topics covered were very much the same from year to year.

In 1991, the following topics were covered: civil war in Tbilisi, U.S. – Georgian relations, the actions of the Soviet army against independent-minded republics, the visit of the U.S. Congressional delegation to Georgia, an earthquake, Gorbachev’s struggle to preserve the Soviet Union, and Georgia’s struggle for independence (referendum, declaration of independence, and elections).

In 1992, the following topics were covered: Shevardnadze as a political figure, elections, war in Abkhazia, civil war in Tbilisi, kidnapping of government officials, war in South Ossetia, the U.S. position on Georgia’s independence, Gamsakhurdia’s personality, prospects of Austrian Hotel Metechi in Georgia, and the fate of Soviet sportsmen.

In 1993, the following topics were covered: fighting between Shevardnadze’s and Gamsakhurdia’s forces, Georgia’s decision to join CIS, U.S. – Russian relations, the war

in Abkhazia, Stalin's museum, Russia's role in region, Shevardnadze's attempt to resign, assassination of a CIA employee, and a note on Georgian soccer team.

In 1994, the following topics were covered: Russia's role in the region, peacekeeping in Georgia and the U. S. position on the issue, Russian peacekeepers in Georgia, prospects of Austrian Hotel Metechi in Tbilisi, Shevardnadze's press-conference in Washington, Russian-Georgian friendship and military cooperation treaty, and the suicide of Gamsakhurdia.

In 1995, the following topics were covered: elections, Shevardnadze as a political figure, assassination attempt on Shevardnadze, U.S. energy policy in Caspian, human rights abuses, Russia's policy in Caucasus.

In 1996, there were no news items published covering Georgia.

In 1997, the following topics were covered: the fate of Georgian diplomat Makharadze who committed a crime in America, U.S. energy policy in Caspian, U.S. assistance to Georgia, Georgian movie reviews.

In 1998, the following topics were covered: a murder of an UN employee, U.S. energy policy in Caspian, U.S. help in removal of nuclear material from research reactor, assassination attempt on Shevardnadze, kidnapping of international organization employees, the fate of Georgian diplomat Makharadze who committed a crime in America.

In 1999, the following topics were covered: the fate of U.S. citizen who committed crime in Georgia, the Rodhams' hazelnut business, U.S. energy policy in Caspian, elections, Pope's visit to Georgia, the fate of Georgian diplomat Makharadze

who committed a crime in America, and Georgia's position in NATO bombing of Kosovo.

In 2000, the following topics were covered: kidnapping of international organization employees, elections, the fate of Georgian diplomat Makharadze, U.S. energy policy in Caspian, the Rodhams' hazelnut business, an archaeological discovery, and success story of a Georgian soccer player in the American team.

Table 30**U.S. Foreign Policy and Coverage of Georgia**

Events and dates from Georgia's history	U.S. foreign policy towards Georgia	Coverage of <i>The Washington Post</i>
Georgia struggled for independence. However, it remained part of the Soviet Union. The first multiparty elections brought the end of the Communist rule and empowered a political coalition headed by dissident Zviad Gamsakhurdia (1990). Georgia declared independence from USSR (April, 1991). Gamsakhurdia became the first elected President of Georgia (May, 1991).	Though sympathetic toward the aspiration of the Soviet Republics to gain independence, the U.S. remained a neutral observer (1990). The United States was reluctant to establish diplomatic relations with the country torn apart by civil war and ethnic conflicts (1992). The U.S. viewed nationalist policies of Georgia's first President with suspicion (1991-1992).	Georgia's struggle for independence (referendum on independence, declaration of independence, and elections) was thoroughly covered. Concerns of the U.S. government over human rights and lack of democracy in Georgia, and dissatisfaction of Georgian officials with the decision of the U.S. government to delay recognition of Georgia's independence, was reported. Georgia's first democratically elected President was portrayed as nationalist and authoritarian.
Civil war started, Gamsakhurdia fled Georgia and the Military Council took over (December 1991, January 1992). Eduard Shevardnadze returned to Georgia and headed the State Council – an interim legislative body (March, 1992).	The United States recognized Georgia's independence on December 25, 1991.	Civil war received an extensive coverage. Reports were filed from the field. Not much sympathy was expressed toward ousted Gamsakhurdia's government. Visit of James Baker to Georgia was covered. The Military Council was criticized.
Parliamentary elections were held, and Shevardnadze became the Head of State (October, 1992). The Parliament granted Shevardnadze unlimited power and his political opposition complained about human rights and press freedom abuses (1993). Gamsakhurdia tried to regain power and died in unknown circumstances (1994).	The U.S. established diplomatic relations with Georgia on March 23, 1992, opened Embassy in Tbilisi on April 23, 1992, and appointed an ambassador on August 11, 1992. The U.S. granted Georgia the Most Favored Nation status (1993).	Elections were covered. Shevardnadze was portrayed as a leader that liberated the Eastern Europe from Communism. Human rights record of Shevardnadze's government was criticized. Efforts of Gamsakhurdia to regain power were covered. His offensive was classified as the rebellion.

(table continues)

Table 30 (continued)

Events and dates from Georgia's history	U.S. foreign policy towards Georgia	Coverage of <i>The Washington Post</i>
Abkhazia declared independence and armed conflict between Georgians and Abkhaz followed. Georgia was defeated (1992-1993). South Ossetia declared independence and armed conflict between Georgians and Ossetian followed. Georgia was defeated (1991-1992).	The U.S. recognized territorial unity of Georgia and did not recognize neither Abkhazia nor South Ossetia as the independent states. The U.S. called for the peaceful settlement of the conflict (1991-1993).	Georgian-Abkhazian and Georgian-Ossetian conflicts were covered. Georgia was favored over Abkhazia and South Ossetia. Both regions were described as the integral parts of Georgia. The reasons behind Georgia's decision to join CIS were discussed.
Georgia started to stabilize (1994). New Constitution was adopted (1995). Presidential and parliamentary elections were held. Shevardnadze became President and his party (CUG) gained the majority of the Parliament seats (1995). Reforms in all fields were in full blossom. The national currency was introduced, enterprises were privatized, judiciary system was restructured (1994-2000).	The U.S. intensified technical and financial support in all fields. Georgia became one of the largest recipients of U.S. aid per capita (1994-2000).	Georgia's economy was reviewed. U.S. energy policy in Caspian was discussed. Elections were covered. Human rights record of Shevardnadze's government was criticized. Role of Russia in the region and its implications for Georgia were also discussed. Issue of peacekeeping in Abkhazia was highlighted.
Parliamentary elections were held and CUG won the majority of seats (November, 1999). Shevardnadze was re-elected President (April, 2000).	International observers noted some violations during the elections. However, the U.S. accepted new Parliament and President as legitimate (1999, 2000).	Elections were criticized. U.S. energy policy in Caspian was discussed. U.S. assistance to Georgia was discussed. Case of Makharadze was covered.
The construction of first pipeline connecting Caspian oil-reach region to the Black Sea ports of Georgia was completed (1999). The discussions over three other gas and oil transportation routes continued (2000).	The U.S. strongly backed construction of the pipelines through Georgia as the alternatives to routes through Russia. The U.S. rendered substantial financial and political support to the pipeline projects (2000).	U.S. energy policy in Caspian was discussed. Case of Makharadze and the hazelnut venture of the Rodhams were covered.

(table continues)

Table 30 (continued)

Events and dates from Georgia's history	U.S. foreign policy towards Georgia	Coverage of <i>The Washington Post</i>
Russia accused Georgia of aiding Chechen rebels, while Georgia accused Russia of violating its airspace and bombing of its civilians (1999).	The U.S. Department of State issued a statement condemning Russia's wrongful behavior against sovereign Georgia and expressed readiness to further support Georgia (1999).	U.S. energy policy in Caspian was discussed. Case of Makharadze and the hazelnut venture of the Rodhams were covered.

Chapter 5

Conclusions

The results of qualitative and quantitative analyses confirmed that *The Washington Post*, while covering Georgia during the last decade, was influenced by U.S. foreign policy frames toward it. At times, *The Washington Post* exercised independent judgment regarding Georgia. The newspaper let dissenting voices of Georgian officials and citizens, and American experts reach its audience. Nevertheless, the look at the broader picture suggests that for a variety of reasons, *The Washington Post* was compelled, even doomed, to evaluate Georgia through the prisms constructed by U.S. policymakers.

The following two factors made it difficult to trace foreign policy influence in the news items published in *The Washington Post*. First, historic accounts written by both Georgian and non-Georgian sources largely coincided with the descriptions of events and processes in *The Washington Post*. Was it foreign policy influence that framed the coverage or was it the reality that determined this outcome? Second, *The Washington Post* remained highly faithful to the objectivity standards. This approach apparently neutralized some of foreign policy influence, and forced some other into more subtle forms. Consequently, foreign policy influence often could be detected mainly through linguistic and/or source choices.

In general, *The Washington Post* provided its readers with a comprehensive, relatively less distorted picture of Georgia. Nevertheless, topic selection in *The Washington Post* can serve as an evidence for media gatekeeping theory. Most topics,

including U.S. energy policy in Caspian, the Rodhams' business in Georgia, the fate of Georgian diplomat Makharadze who committed a crime in America, treatment of employees of international organizations in Georgia, Georgia – NATO relations, and Georgian-Russian relations, were explicitly linked to the U.S. interests. The conflicts were extensively reported and emphasized. Elections and visits of high-ranking U.S. officials to Georgia and of high-ranking Georgian officials to the United States were covered comprehensively. Complex social issues were underreported. Relatively “soft” topics were covered only when they had an international angle. One example of such a topic is the discovery of fossil skulls – the oldest human ancestor remains ever found on the Eurasian land mass – in Georgia (2000, May 12, p. A3). Another example is a review of the Georgian movie that was nominated for Oscar as the best foreign language movie (1997, May 21, p. E1; 1997, May 16, p. N46). Culture and history usually were outlined in a few sentences as a part of the bigger picture about politics and economy. Another gatekeeping pattern that should be noted is the attraction of media to political scandals. Even such a serious newspaper as *The Washington Post* proved not to be any exception. *The Washington Post* devoted too much attention to the cases of Makharadze and the Rodhams. Other factors that caused the newspaper to intensify the coverage could be the close proximity of *The Washington Post* to the White House, and the fact that the car incident took place in the center of Washington, DC. From 1997 to 2000, 16 items were dedicated solely to Makharadze – more than to the discussion of U.S. energy policy in Caspian.

Topic selection confirmed first part of the third hypothesis (H3a) – only stories linked to U.S. foreign policy interests were destined to find their way to the printer's shops. Almost all news items published in *The Washington Post*, an exception being a brief note on the Georgian soccer team, were in one way or the other important for the U.S. readers.

Despite the fact that the majority of topics *The Washington Post* covered were negative, the attitude of the newspaper toward Georgia remained benevolent throughout the whole decade. Even when *The Washington Post* disagreed with U.S. foreign policy – which can be characterized as highly favorable – the critique was not directed against Georgia. On the contrary, the newspaper demanded from the U.S. government to further intensify political and financial support for Georgia (March 14, p. A19; 1997, March 1, p. A22). This fact can be considered as the most compelling indicator of U.S. foreign policy influence. It also confirms second part of the third hypothesis (H3b), which envisaged that *The Washington Post* would treat Georgia, whom U.S. foreign policy viewed as an ally, as a “friend” of the United States.

Because positions of Democrats and Republicans concerning major developments in Georgia did not differ – both support and critique were consensual – it was impossible to test the first hypothesis based on critique expressed only by one or another party. As a result, the hypothesis was modified to test whether bi-partisan critique of one or the other issue in Washington coincided in terms of timing and content with the critique published in *The Washington Post*. The answer was affirmative. One example of such coincidence is the case of the Rodhams. Democrats and Republicans alike were upset by the

Rodhams' enterprise in Georgia. The newspaper broke the story only after official Washington expressed concerns publicly, and supported its position. Another example concerns human rights abuses and lack of democracy in Georgia. *The Washington Post* raised the issue only when the U.S. government, and international human rights groups and observers did so. The topic appeared in *The Washington Post* in 1993 when the U.S. government criticized the Georgian government for suppressing political opponents, in 1995 when Human Rights Watch complained for the same reasons, and in 2000, when international observers criticized elections in Georgia.

The influence of foreign policy was clear in the depiction of Georgia's Presidents. Although Shevardnadze was brought to power by criminal rebels, official Washington chose to accept him. The U.S. government overlooked his past as a Communist party leader. Official Washington opted to support Shevardnadze rather than democratically elected President Gamsakhurdia, whom it regarded as a nationalist. The United States, along with the other Western countries, ignored Gamsakhurdia's appeal for support against opposition forces.

As Georgia's President, Shevardnadze succeeded in establishing good relations with foreign countries, but failed to manage Georgia's internal affairs efficiently. Corruption pervades at all levels of government, human rights are violated systematically, economic problems are chronic, and the majority of population lives in poverty. Despite this fact, *The Washington Post* continuously glorified Shevardnadze the same way official Washington did.

Another indicator of foreign policy influence is editorials. The vast majority of editorials interpreted Georgian reality the same way the U.S. policymakers did.

The Washington Post interpreted the civil war and ethnic conflicts in Georgia in the frames suggested by U.S. foreign policy. The Military Council that took power after the coup drew the antipathy of the U.S. government as well as of *The Washington Post*. *The Washington Post* questioned whether democracy could be built by non-democratic means. However, as soon as the Military Council delegated the executive power to Shevardnadze, the attitude of both U.S. Government and *The Washington Post* changed.

Degree of agreement between newspaper coverage and U.S. foreign policy did not change in the way the second hypothesis suggested. During all time intervals – from 1990 to 1993, from 1994 to 1998, and from 1999 to 2000, *The Washington Post* followed the U.S. foreign policy agenda equally closely.

There was more criticism expressed in the first half of '90s than later.

Most feature stories and longer articles appeared before 1995, while most news-briefs were published in 1998, 1999, and 2000.

In the news items published before 1994, the vast majority of sources were Georgian officials. In 1991, there were 14 Georgian officials cited versus four American. In 1992, there were 21 Georgian officials cited versus one American, and in 1993, there were 18 Georgian officials cited versus three American. In 1999, there were six Georgian officials cited versus five American, and in 2000, there were two Georgian officials cited versus one American.

More news items were reported from Georgia before 1994 than after. In 1991, six news items were reported from the field. In 1992, 14 news items were reported from the field. In 1993, 10 news items were reported from the field. In 1999, two news items were reported from the field. In 2000, four news items were reported from the field.

Throughout the decade, *The Washington Post* demonstrated high degree of interest in Georgia. Approximately 40 percent of the news items mentioning Georgia were from 500 to 1,000 words long. Approximately 16 percent were longer than 1,000 words. *The Washington Post* dedicated fifteen editorials to Georgia, which constituted approximately eight percent of all news items about Georgia. Approximately 22 percent of news items were published in the first five pages of the sections. Approximately 85 percent of all news items were published in A section. Approximately 11 percent of the news items were displayed in the front page. Approximately 75 percent of all news items were dedicated solely to Georgia.

Because news items did not always identify position of the writer, dateline, and identity of sources, it was quite difficult to understand exactly how close reporting was to the action. Approximately 40 percent of all news items that had the position of writer identified were reported by *The Washington Post* foreign service and 17 percent were reported by staff writers. Twenty-five percent of news items that had dateline were reported from Georgia and 31 percent were reported from Russia. Georgians were the major source in 48 percent of the news items.

Findings of this research do not render Berry's (1990) conclusion obsolete. The researcher might have applied the hypothesis to an unreasonably long time-period. The

hypothesis might be more useful if applied to detect changes in the coverage of a single conflict and/or controversy. Conflicts in Georgia were short and they did not receive enough attention and display in *The Washington Post* to have allowed the researcher to properly test Berry's proposition. Besides, there were no dramatic changes in U.S. foreign policy observed during those conflicts. The hypothesis could be better tested on the coverage of a country where conflict was stretched in time and raised a lot of controversy both inside the Washington community and among the American public.

Above discussed findings support theory of "symbiosis" suggested by Cohen in 1963 rather than any other theories developed later. The researcher found no evidence of the media's influence on U.S. foreign policy toward Georgia, while the influence of U.S. foreign policy on the coverage Georgia received in an American newspaper was apparent. Nothing indicates that in case of Georgia the Washington officials deliberately leaked the information to manipulate the media. U.S. foreign policy influence detected by the researcher could be a result of extensive utilization of government's "information subsidies" by *The Washington Post*.

However, further research is needed to evaluate the degree and reasons of foreign policy influence on American media. This study was limited to one print media outlet – *The Washington Post*, and to one country – Georgia. A comparative study of the coverage Georgia received in two or more American newspapers as well as a comparative study of the coverage two or more former Soviet republics received in American media may provide a better insight.

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Appendix A

***The Washington Post* Sample**

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Remnick, David. (1990, December 11). Gorbachev asks party for support; Communists' aid sought in battle with 'extreme nationalists.' The Washington Post, p. A14.

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Appendix B

Intercoder Reliability

Category	Reliability coefficient
Type of news item	0.85
Focus of news item	0.95
Content subject categories	0.90
Tone of coverage	0.80
Degree of objectivity	0.80
Status of major source	0.80
Portrayal of Gamsakhurdia	0.85
Portrayal of Shevardnadze	0.80