

Georgia: Is the US Preparing Another Color Revolution?

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Region: [Europe](#)

Theme: [Intelligence](#)

The Port Of Discord

Georgian banker Mamuka Khazaradze, the co-founder of the country's largest universal bank and the man behind the Anaklia Port project, recently had a falling out with the government after being charged with money laundering and thus decided to [form his own political party](#) called "Lelo" in an attempt to unseat his opponents during next year's parliamentary elections as revenge. This in and of itself wouldn't be an event worthy of international attention had it not been for the fact that the US Embassy in Georgia [signaled its support](#) for him after the charges were made and reiterated that it also continues to support his Anaklia Port project as well. About that investment, it's planned to be the country's largest one in history and envisages the creation of a deep-water port for facilitating Chinese-European trade. It's an interesting idea in principle that was formerly supported by the government, but the authorities balked at demands from potential international creditors that they underwrite the hundreds of millions of dollars in loans that would be required for its completion.

The Argument Against Anaklia

That's a sensible enough stand for the state to take, however, considering just how risky of a venture the Anaklia Port is. On the one hand, the argument can be made that there's definitely a demand for trans-Black Sea shipping along China's many New Silk Roads, but on the other, the case can also be put forth that the costs far exceed the predicted revenue when considering that the People's Republic also plans to use the Arctic Silk Road maritime road, the Eurasian Land Bridge, the [Middle Corridor](#), and traditional Pacific-Afro-Asian ("Indian") Ocean-Mediterranean maritime routes as it is so it's unlikely to come to depend on Anaklia enough to the point to justify this massive project. It's true that its Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) is one of the financiers, but that's more out of financial interest than anything too strategic. China's modus operandi is to always have access to as many trade corridors as possible in order to avoid dependence on any given one, so it's unsurprising that would make its capital available for financing yet another one of them for that purpose.

The issue, however, is that the US is also interested in Anaklia Port and potentially intends to make it an alternative to both the Eurasian Land Bridge and the Middle Corridor, the first of which runs through Kazakhstan-Russia-Belarus while the latter connects Central Asia with the Caucasus via the Caspian and then Turkey en route to the EU. From a logistics standpoint, it's already a possible bottleneck loading and unloading cargo at the Caspian ports, so it's not that efficient to repeat this process once more at Anaklia when goods transiting through Azerbaijan can just continue along the newly launched [Baku-Tbilisi-Kars](#)

[railway](#) on the way to the EU. Ditto that logic when it comes to the comparatively more cost- and time-effective unimodal Eurasian Land Bridge that Russia is facilitating through its ongoing work on the [Meridian Highway](#) that will reduce travel time across the country. As such, it's completely understandable why the state doesn't want to underwrite this risky project, though it's that disagreement between the ruling party and Khazaradze that the US is exploiting.

American Infowar Narratives

The American-influenced innuendo being bandied about right now is that the founder of the ruling Georgian Dream party and the country's current de-facto leader Bidzina Ivanishvili is much too pragmatic towards Moscow, with the government's refusal to underwrite the Anaklia Port project's international loans being held as purported "proof" that he's "doing Russia's bidding" by "sabotaging" a project that could supposedly compete with its nearby Novorossiysk port and also cut it out of China's trans-continental Silk Road connectivity. These nascent information warfare narratives are entirely misleading because they distract from the fact that the Anaklia Port is of questionable economic viability at best and is likely nothing more than a "patriotic" means for Khazaradze to get even richer with a wink and nod from his US partners at the general population's expense. If the government gave him what he wanted, then it would probably end up being the case that taxpayers would have to pay for the project if it didn't pan out as expected.

From "Strategic" Port To Color Revolution Debt Trap

That scenario would ultimately necessitate a reduction in social spending to compensate for its international financial commitments and possibly even requesting loans from the World Bank and other US-backed institutions if it couldn't afford it, further compounding the looming economic crisis that America could later exploit with ease through a [Color Revolution](#) for regime change purposes. There is no realistic scenario under which the Anaklia Port replaces Russia's Eurasian Land Bridge or Turkey's Middle Corridor, let alone one in which this project proves profitable enough for the Georgian people to justify their government underwriting the loans that Khazardze is seeking, but Washington wants Tbilisi to commit to it because of its supposedly anti-Russian and -Turkish optics, as well as the US' intent to see Georgia entrapped in debt so as to facilitate the forthcoming regime change scenario through "electoral" means or a Color Revolution failing the success of the former. Returning to the present day, it can therefore be concluded that the Anaklia Port project is a domestic economic dispute that's since been externally exploited by the US for political and strategic purposes.

Khazardze's new political party comes into play because it could function as both the most radical faction of the hyper-nationalist opposition (possibly leading anti-Russian riots in the future just like the ones that [broke out this summer](#)) and the wedge for dividing the two main political forces in the country and thus creating an opportunity to become the post-election kingmaker on which the ruling party might be forced to depend and thus make concessions towards if it doesn't win next year's parliamentary polls with a convincing majority. The US is so firmly against Ivanishvili because it regards him as being "too friendly" towards Russia, which incenses the neoconservatives in the American "deep state" who have a pathological hatred towards their Old Cold War-era rivalry and are convinced of the Russiagate conspiracy theory that President Putin supposedly controls Trump to this day. It's worthwhile noting that the parliamentary elections have to be held by October

2020, but regardless of what time they occur, they'll still happen in a pivotal election year for the US and could thus create a "deep state"-manufactured international crisis for further pressuring Trump to take a harder line towards Russia in an attempt to secure his own re-election later that November.

Concluding Thoughts

Georgia is a little-thought-about country with an outsized strategic significance for Russia, China, Turkey, and the US. The first-mentioned has an interest in retaining pragmatic relations with the state whom it fought a defensive war against in 2008 after its then-leadership killed Russian peacekeepers and civilians in an unprovoked late-night attack against its two autonomous regions at the time, while the other two multipolar states regard the Caucasian one as a crucial transit state for facilitating their Silk Road trade. The US, however, realizes that it could throw Georgia into chaos comparatively easily in order to harm all three of its aforementioned rivals' interests by jeopardizing Russia's physical security through a crisis on its southern borderland and the possible emergence of a hyper-nationalist government there along the model of Ukraine's post-Maidan one, while also throwing a spanner right in the middle of China's Middle Corridor by potentially disrupting trade across the Caucasus. Altogether, this means that the outcome of Georgia's latent US-provoked political crisis could have a disproportionate impact on Eurasian stability, which is why observers should continue to closely follow events there as they develop across the next year ahead of the upcoming elections.

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