

PABLO PINTO

Ok. So, welcome to the final panel of the conference today. We have five presentations so we have to get started early so we have some time for questions and answers afterward. My name is Pablo Pinto, I'm an Assistant Professor in the Political Science department at Columbia University, and I'm a member of the Saltzman Institute of War and Peace Studies. It's my pleasure to have here Leon P. Pezhestun [PH] on current political affairs in Georgia, and look through lens of the Rose Revolution and current democratic developments in Georgia today. We're gonna start with Christopher Walker, who's Director of Studies at Freedom House. And Christopher, the floor is yours.

CHRISTOPHER WALKER

Thank you very much. I'd like to first thank the Saltzman Institute and the Harriman Institute, and also special thanks to Lincoln Mitchell for the invitation to Freedom House. And I'd also like to recognize his prescience for organizing this event in such a timely way. I thought it would be useful, just in a few minutes, to offer a few of developments in Russia through the lens of Freedom House findings. I suspect many of you are familiar, at least with the basic framework we use for evaluating democratic performance. The Georgian case has been a unique one, and it's been one that we've followed very closely. We think it's also important to share this information because our findings have been invoked in the Georgian case by critics and supporters alike, either to make the case against what's been happening in recent years, or to make the case for what's been happening since the Rose Revolution. I suspect this is a function of the reality that Georgia really has a mixed record over the last four years. And if you look closely at our findings, you'll see it's a record both of some impressive achievements, certainly in the post-Soviet region and context, but it's also an unfinished story. And it's a partial success. If you look at the way we describe the Georgian

democratic landscape, it's one that's unconsolidated. And if you look at the various tools we use, we look in four different ways in our annual reviews, you see that this is not something that one can refer to as a fully consolidated democracy. There are some real gaps there. I think what we saw earlier this month was in some ways an expression *in extremis* of the real gaps that exist in the Georgian political system right now. That is to say, you have an executive who's sucked the oxygen out of the political space. He's an overwhelming figure. Over time, I think he's become less willing to listen to alternative voices. The same time you have an opposition that has proven itself to be ineffective, not capable of offering a meaningful alternative, certainly not in terms of policy choices. The other critical dimensions of democratic development that one would look at, that we look at in terms of electoral process, independent media, anti-corruption efforts, civil society, all of these are to one degree or another incomplete, partial stories. And I think this is something that has really gotten lost in a lot of the reporting, in a lot of the discussion that's become impassioned. There was a sense, I think, at the outset, with a little bit of irrational exuberance shortly after the events of late 2003, to say that the story was finished. And that was, while perhaps not entirely unexpected, a very unproductive way to characterize events, because it's expectations so high, both for domestic audiences and international audiences. It left an enormous amount of room for failure. I think one could argue that the tumult and turmoil of three weeks ago was really amplified by the fact people had come to understand, at least in the collective mind's eye, that this was something profoundly different. And I think, again, I would make the distinction. If you look at regional findings in Freedom House's evaluations, and you go through the non-Baltic former Soviet Union, there clearly is a distinction. I think there's only one other case where one could make a credible case that you've had the sort of political ferment and meaningful political advance, albeit unconsolidated,

unfinished, that is, in Ukraine today. And Georgia's a dramatically different case. It's a different sort of change, which we can discuss during the Q and A. Nevertheless, I think we shouldn't, on the basis of the recent snapshot of Georgia, throw the baby out with the bath water and veer entirely in a different direction, and try to take a more sober and balanced look at both the achievements and the gaps that exist there. I'd also note that, and this has come up in many of the other discussions earlier today, that the sort of ambitions the Georgian authorities have had and Georgian society have had over the last few years, have been done under enormous duress. President Saakashvili has been knocked for invoking a Russian hand in the protests earlier this month. We've never know the extent of that, I think he misplayed his hand by using that card in this instance. But that doesn't diminish the fact that there's been a relentless set of activities in recent years to obstruct Georgia's progress. It's a fact. And you can go down the checklist, the last panel, I think, cited a number of those. That can't be discounted as part of the challenge today. So, in conclusion, just to offer some thoughts for the rest of this discussion, it's clear that in the aftermath of the state of emergency, Georgia is at a pivotal point in its development. Right now, you could argue the coming weeks and months, this near term, will determine whether the country can manage to move forward into the ranks of more mature and advanced democratic states, or whether it will slip and miss this opportunity, lose its chance for domestic consolidation of the nascent democratic advances it's made, and perhaps in the process also lose the support and backing it's had from its friends in the West, which would be disastrous. I think what this suggests as well, just to tie the loop here, the very sort of exuberance that was used in evaluating Georgia's performances at the very outset, which caused these sorts of expectations, also caused Western observers, Western policy makers, Western assistance providers, to take a certain sort of posture towards helping Georgia, when if you look at,

just as one frame of reference, Freedom House's analysis, which showed, just to give you one example, regress, in several areas, from the last year of the Shevardnadze era, to put this in perspective. So if you look back five years ago at our findings, look at the most recent findings we have ending December 31, '06. There are actually two or three areas where the country is doing slightly worse than it was at that time. There are a couple of areas they're doing slightly better. Overall, it's about the same. That really doesn't square with this notion that there's been significant advance, it's really been a mixed story. A story that still, I think, holds promise, I would argue. Nevertheless, I would suggest this really is an opportunity for people of good faith, good will, who would like to see Georgia's ambitions to succeed to rethink their approach and commit the sort of investment both morally, politically, and materially, to ensure that this doesn't come a failed democratic experiment.

PABLO PINTO

Thank you, Christopher. Before moving to the next person, I would like to invite you all after the panel to join us for a reception outside this room for drinks and food. And we are all welcomed to join us. We're moving next to Nicholas Gvosdev, Director in Chief of *The National Interest*.

NICHOLAS GVOSDEV

Thank you very much. And thanks for the invitation and to Saltzman and Harriman for putting this together. It's interesting to be back here since I was able to be present at the inaugural Saltzman forum in 2005, when Madeleine Albright had been the keynote speaker and really sort of drove the discussions for the day, and the theme was on the promotion of democracy and its role in US policy. And even back then, even though

there were starting to be certain signs of worry because of the way elections had been going, primarily in the Middle East and specifically in the Palestinian Territories, there was still a good deal of residual optimism about the way in which the promotion of democracy more or less could fit seamlessly in with other US foreign policy objectives, US security objectives, promoting good relations with other states. And I would think that now, two years later, most of that optimism is receding, it's evaporating, as more of the revolutions that were being cited, either stalled or have difficulties. I don't know, Lincoln, that you arranged the events in November, but since we're always talking about conspiracy theorists and hidden hands, maybe it wasn't the Russians, maybe it was Lincoln who arranged for the difficulties in November so that it would make this conference even more relevant. But on a more serious note, the fact that what happened in Georgia in November, even if it, as Chris just noted, about the not looking at this in neglecting the larger picture, but still really raised questions about the viability of the various revolutions. I guess to some extent the Orange Revolution is a little bit back on track. More concern about whether or not the Serb Revolution that sort of started off this wave of revolutions will remain in tact, depending on what happens in Kosovo. For the Bush administration, which increasingly was relying on the Rose Revolution as its one major success, it could continue to point to as some of the other revolutions it was using to buttress the freedom agenda faltered. Then what happened in Georgia really begins to raise questions and we began to see immediately in the aftermath of the events in November. Once again, the old debates about, "Do you support personalities? Or you support procedures? Does process matter more than results? Is it better to have parliamentary systems and moving away from hyper-presidential ones?" And so all of this is now in the context of our discussions here today. And in addition, this conference, even though it's specifically about Georgia, it really can't escape that there

are three unwanted visitors in the room as well. One of them, of course, is Pakistan. And again, the timing of events in Georgia and Pakistan, perhaps unfortunate for Georgia to suddenly be raised in comparison not with some of its neighbors in the former Soviet space, where it would generally look like it was doing pretty well. But suddenly to be compared with Pakistan and to have events there be sort of side by side I think raised issues. And that really brought up the question from the US side about the extent to which the promotion of democracy is and should be the central focal point of policy and even in terms of the relationship and the idea of, well did the US want to support democracy in Georgia in a kind of abstract fashion, or was it tying itself in Georgia as it has been in Pakistan to a specific leader and a specific procedure, and you stick by Saakashvili the same way you stuck by Musharraf. Second of course, is that the discussion about Georgia in light of what has been happening in Russia. And comparisons about what happens in hyper-presidential systems. That the idea that you sort of consolidate power around a president so that he is free to act and to move and to push ahead. These, again, were some of the initial justifications for a greater degree of assumption of authority by President Putin in his first term of office. And then the concerns that, well, if you sort of get rid of checks and balances and you get rid of independent media and marginalize the opposition, does this sort of lead you down a slippery path so that where Putin's second term, does that sort of provide us, perhaps, a picture of where Saakashvili's second term could go? So that has come up. And then finally, Ukraine. The extent to which Ukraine, perhaps, has had a better experience with democracy, but as a result it traded having a more effective government. The fact that it's taken three months for the Orange Coalition to try to reconstitute itself. The fact-, the first time that the Orange Coalition came in after 2004, it may have had good democratic credentials, but it wasn't particularly effective in a lot of reforms dealing

with corruption. You have the economy really slow down in economic growth in 2005. And that's why I was interested from this morning's session when Andrew Sidamon-Eristoff made this list of Saakashvili accomplishments, and they are real accomplishments. Reforming of the legal system, GDP growth, growth in foreign direct investment, declining in the poverty rates. It does raise the question: would these accomplishments have occurred if Georgia had adopted the kind of parliamentary, or a greater move to a parliamentary system that Ukraine had done after the Orange Revolution? Or did it require a relatively strong presidency? I also couldn't help but draw the comparison, and again, it may be unfortunate for some, but many of these accomplishments that we being listed were in fact, until several weeks ago, a number of the accomplishments that people said Musharraf was making in Pakistan. That because you had sort of gotten rid of ineffective, squabbling parliamentary government of the '90's, that Pakistan, in fact, was doing a lot better economically and was building up a more modern state apparatus. And so, then this question of well, what-, can you have democracy and state building at the same time? I think it's a question we'll probably be debating, and we'll be getting questions about. And then just to close, is really what in the end are we looking for? Would we be happy with the Saakashvili who was in effect the Georgian Lee Kwan Yu? Not maybe particularly wedded to immediate democratic checks and balances, but working to build up a stronger state, and Singapore, of course, was in a dangerous neighborhood. It had its Russia in a threatening Malaysian Federation to the north. But building the foundations for a first world economy and a great deal of prosperity and a strong middle class. If that perhaps is a comparison that we're not as comfortable with, what about a Nehru or a Yoshida in Japan effectively creating a system of one-party governance that does have competitive elections, but where you essentially have a single ruling party and movement that guides policy for

decades to come, would that be a satisfactory outcome of squaring this need to build institutions and stabilize the country, and yet not fall completely out of the democratic count? I don't want to give, or actually in many cases, don't really have clear answers I could give on this. I posed these more as questions. But I think these are the kinds of questions we'll be dealing with. We'll certainly be dealing with them after the January election, because that's when the United States and Europe, having made the elections a test, are going to have to then rule on this questions as to whether or not they think Georgia gets to stay in the club of democracies or not. And we do have some indications that the US may be prepared to accept a wider birth, perhaps, than the Europeans will. But that remains to be seen, and especially if we hold the Georgian elections in January in comparison with what we're likely to see Sunday for the Duma in Russian and then for the presidential raise in March. Maybe in that comparison, you might not look at the Georgian and say that they're up to a standard of France, but given the neighborhood that they're in, we're happy to keep Georgia as one of the democracies and on track for integration in the West. But I think one of the things that this session at least will probably do is raise more questions than answers at the end of the day. But these are the questions that we'll need to keep asking for the next several months, if not several years.

PABLO PINTO

Thank you, Nick. We move next to Stephen Jones, Professor of Russian and Eurasian Studies at Mount Holyoke College.

STEPHEN JONES

Thanks very much. I'd like to thank Lincoln for arranging this conference. I must say,

when I first stepped into the Harriman Institute, and downstairs in the lobby, and I saw this poster in front of me, it said [SPEAKS GEORGIAN] and I thought, “Ok, they’re already campaigning...” [AUDIENCE LAUGHTER] This was an election poster for 2004 and it referred to a party called “Industry Will Save Georgia”. And there it was, downstairs, in the month before the January 5th elections. But thanks for this opportunity to talk about Georgia and reflect on the last four years. And thinking about it, I thought I would start with maybe trying to draw some parallels between what happened on November the 7th and what happened on November the 23rd. And of course they’re rather superficial parallels, but I’m sure all of us, when we were looking at the events, I don’t know whether we were looking at them on CNN again or not. But, they did resemble very much the events of this November, those that occurred four years ago. They looked the same, at least. There was the favorite rallying place outside Government House. And all the megaphones and the banners. Cries for the president’s resignation. And I was thinking, “Why don’t they just recycle those tee shirts they were wearing that said [SPEAKS GEORGIAN] “Resign!” Four years ago, they could just put them on again. There was, of course, a focus on elections as there was in 2004. There were claims of illegal government actions. The opposition, this time, was more or less united, and the media, namely Imedi, played the central role in the conflict. And finally, of course, none of us were expecting it as we probably weren’t expecting it four years ago either, including, I suspect, US officials on the ground, who this time, as in November 2003. And Richard can tell us about this. We’re watching rather helplessly, I gather, hoping desperately, and with a peaceful resolution. But besides the rather superficial parallels, I think there are some startling similarities below the surface, too. Firstly, I think those street movements of 2004 and 2007 resembled what Ken Jowitt has called, “movements of rage”. In other words, they were fundamentally driven, I believe,

not by a desire for constitutional change, or even elections. And I think this is where the current opposition with its esoteric demands for technical fixes don't really get it. But by an [UNCLEAR] sense of desperation connected to unchanging or even worsening conditions of poverty, unemployment, and government indifference, and that really, in many ways, has not changed over the last four years. Other things have changed.

Secondly, in both cases, the events could have turned out quite differently, and much less seriously for both governments. The climactic *De Neumond* [PH] of both events in 2004 and 2007 were essentially, I would argue, determined by government actions more than they were by the rebels or the revolutionaries themselves. And it reminds one of the comments that people like Louis Manier [PH] and Detokeville [PH], who in their writings constantly point out that it's rarely revolutionaries that make revolutions.

Governments do. And thinking about why they went in the direction that they did, clearly, Shevardnadze, and reading comments by Zurab Zhvania and others,

Shevardnadze had an opportunity and, right up until the last two or three days to back down and renew elections in 2004 and the Rose Revolution would not have occurred.

And similarly in 2007. Saakashvili essentially refused to negotiate with his opponents over the ideas of the postponed parliamentary elections. And of course, as we know, he sent in the riot police. So, in both cases it's interesting that just a little more flexibility may have resolved the situations. But, the differences, too, of course are very stark. The Rose Revolution, after all, was peaceful. And it ended in a change of government. The events in 2007 ended in violence and the reassertion of state power. The Rose Revolution had far more extensive public support, and it faced a feeble government with a history of uncontrolled corruption. November 2007 happened in the midst of dynamic economic growth, improved infrastructure, including a reliable electricity supply, a resourceful and solvent government, and ecstatic international approval of government

policies. In short, to sum it up, the context of the Rose Revolution in 2003 was what one might call a “subsiding state.” And the context of November 2007 was a “surging state.” And this is where I come to my thesis as to why the 2007 events occurred with such devastating consequences, and why I believe it will likely occur again in Saakashvili’s second term, presuming he does get elected. And I would say it’s likely to happen again particularly if Saakashvili gains a strong mandate on January the 5th and feels there’s no need to fundamentally change the direction of government policy. The “surging” Georgian state, and I’m sorry about using this old cliché, but, like the Roman god Janus, looks in two directions, toward what I would call, “de-stating” or withdrawing from the economy and the social sphere as rapidly as possible. That’s one side of this surging state. And on the other hand, to “re-stating” or reasserting coercive-, that is the state’s coercive and extractive abilities. That means better enforcement of tax collection. A strengthened financial police to fight corruption. The centralization of authority. Rebuilding a strong interior ministry and army. And a focused drive for territorial unity. I would argue that these dual policies, on the one hand if de-stating, on the other hand this re-stating, simultaneously weaken what Michael Mann, American political scientist, has called “infrastructural state power,” and by that he means essential the mechanisms through which the state supports and promotes human and social capital. So on the one hand it seems the policies are to withdraw the state, and by doing so weaken the state’s mechanisms for maintaining contact and establishing support among the population, and on the other, the policy of what Michael Mann calls “despotic power,” but by that, he doesn’t mean a “despotic government,” he simply means the mechanisms through which the state controls and monitors citizens’ activity. The result has been a citizenry that despite its approval of a visibly more assertive state, for example, unity with Adjara or control of corruption or military strength, is

increasingly alienated at the same time by the state's invisibility in their own lives, in part as a result of the privatization of hospitals or the lack of intervention in issues of unemployment, or the lack of intervention in agriculture and so on. And it's the tension, I would argue, between these two policies that the Georgian government is pursuing simultaneously, that is the de-stating and the re-stating, that set the conditions for the protests this November. However, the outcome, that is a result more of the inability of the government, to deal with them effectively, and was the result of a more specific Georgian interpretation of what Mann calls the state's despotic power, or its coercive abilities. Let me just mention three, and I'm going to use Saakashvili's own statements on this issue just to give us a clue as to what Georgian government ideology is, if we can call it that. Firstly, in a televised address too the Georgian on November the 24th, Saakashvili declared, "A fundamental question is being decided: whether Georgia is going to be fulfilled as a state, or whether 'they' will be able to shake the foundations of the state." Now this, of course, raises the question as to who "they" are. It probably includes the opposition, Russia, and other enemies of Georgia. But essentially what he's saying is that, and he's emphasizing the role of the state, clearly, that the state has to be strong because its existence in the neighborhood and given internal threats to, is always under threat. Secondly, at the national movement's party congress a day earlier, on the fourth anniversary of the Rose Revolution, Saakashvili declared, "We are a young revolutionary government. We are idealists and we are maximalists. That is our party's major strength." Now, that was an address to the party. And one would expect, maybe, a different type of rhetoric. But a revolutionary government means many things, but it means at least two things. Firstly, it knows what is best for the people. And secondly, it should not be obstructed in achieving its goal. Thirdly, on November the sixth in a TV broadcast on the eve of his decision to disperse the already bedraggled demonstration, he

declared, “Keeping focus means that everything we do should be done faster.” Speed, clearly, is the essence. Saakashvili is in a hurry because he has only one term left. The government, in other words, has to catch up. The movement is everything. So we’ve got these out of these three features that I want to emphasize. Firstly, the importance of demonstrating the state’s coercive power in a time of crisis, in contrast, of course, to Shevardnadze. Secondly, the dedication to a goal of irreversible change. And thirdly, the need to get reforms implemented quickly. And these three features, I would argue, underlie the decision, to bite back hard on November the 7th. I think these three quotations, and of course we could talk about other citations from Saakashvili where he talks more about the importance of inclusions and democracy, but I think it suggests that in many ways the Rose Revolution, and I think it was Nicholas, maybe, who mentioned this earlier, is perhaps more about rebuilding the state at this stage than it is about rebuilding democracy in Georgia. I’m not generally optimistic, I must say, about Saakashvili’s second term, because I’m not sure how much the tensions between what I call the infrastructural and the despotic power will or can even change given Georgia’s poor economic conditions, its hostile international environment, its internal territorial threats, and the government’s wholly idealist and almost fanatical commitment to an unsupervised market. Three things, possibly, could solve Saakashvili’s dilemma and his political skin. Prosperity would be the first. Territorial unity would be the second. And inclusion of the population and the opposition would be the first. The first and the second are unlikely. But the third, I believe, is doable. On appointing Lado Gurgenidze as Prime Minister he declared quote, “We should be very...” quote, “...concrete and open with the people. And there should be no distance at all between the government and the people.” End of quote. If he follows through on this then he has a chance of creating the invincible state he wants and Georgia needs. The state, I think, is more or

less in place now. And now it's time for a bit more democracy and a bit more inclusion.

PABLO PINTO

Thank you very much. And now, we're moving to Alexander Sokolowski, who's a senior political process appraiser for Europe and Eurasia, the United States Agency for International Development.

ALEXANDER SOKOLOWSKI

Thank you. Like a couple of my far more accomplished colleagues, I'd like to start off with a disclaimer. I also work for the US government, unlike them, who no longer work for the US government, I still do. I would like to keep it that way. [AUDIENCE LAUGHTER] So I'm going to start off with a disclaimer, which says that my thoughts here are my own, my own personal thoughts and they don't represent those of USAID. I'd also like to start off by thanking the organizers here, the Saltzman and Harriman Institutes. I think this is a great time specifically to look back over four years. I think specifically because of what happened earlier this month in November, there can be a tendency to look only at what's happened and sort of look day to day rather than looking over that longer four year period. I'm also grateful because I was in Russia while those events were occurring, and I got, I think, a very specific perspective on those events from the Russian media. So it's very refreshing to get some other perspectives on what happened there. My central question is how should we look at the development of the political party sphere in Georgia specifically, and how this affects broader democratic development. I'll argue that the central challenge for parties in Georgia is to avoid letting the dynamics of political competition and familiar post-Soviet patterns of authority push Georgia into what could be called a "party of power" syndrome. But

before I get into the challenges, I'd like to talk a little bit about what has gone right. As Chris was talking about, I don't think we need to throw out the baby with the bath water, and if we look at some of the things that we think may have gone right in this four year period, that may be a basis for going forward. First and perhaps most obviously, but sometimes it's important to state the obvious, is that parties matter in Georgia. And as someone who looks at the region as a whole, that's actually relatively unusual in the post-Soviet space. At least parties in the sense of as parties that are societally based. If you look at places like Russia, Kazakhstan, or even neighboring Azerbaijan, political leaders dominate parties so much that parties tend not to be institutions that structure politics very well. I think in Georgia you could argue that parties do in fact structure politics quite well, that political leaders, even within the United National Movement, have invested in parties as vehicles for political competition. I think, also, the recent events on November 7th demonstrate that when the opposition parties get together, they can also prove to the ruling party that they make a difference, and that they matter.

Second, Georgia has had a strong and coherent ruling party. Now, again. When we look at recent events, we may say, "Gee, we're concerned about the party becoming too strong and dominating society." But, I think it's important to note where parties were in 2003 and how United National Movement was able to transform itself from a relatively small, minority party that got about 27% of the voters, so, into a dominant political force, and what that has meant for the ability to create some kind of coherent reform in the country. Think of the counter-factuals in other countries. Think about Yeltsin's Russia. Think even about Ukraine under Yushchenko. So there have been some benefits to having a party that's a cohesive force at the helm of governments institutions as a way of carrying out some kind of positive reform program. Third, until recently, and I stress until recently, it could be argued without controversy that the ruling party

accepted a substantially greater degree of pluralism than in other countries in the region. The UNM was not in favor of, or was not trying to place significant institutional or legal restraints on the ability of opposition parties to operate, which again, you couldn't say for a lot of other countries in the region. For most of this period, many of the obstacles to building parties in Georgia were not present. They were absent. The opposition enjoyed the freedom to assemble and to operate. Although far from perfect, there was a critical mass of diversity of perspectives in electronic mass media, particularly on Imedi TV. And problems with the electoral, though significant, were not of such scope and depth as to substantially affect their overall outcomes. So, to the extent that Georgia can sort of restore these freedoms coming out of the November 7th events and into this next electoral cycle and beyond, I think we'll be able to say that Georgia has begun to regain its footing on democracy. Fourth, Georgia's parties have shown real interest in adopting party values, methodologies, and standards for competition from more mature democracies. Now again, that doesn't sound like much, but when you compare it to a lot of other countries in the region, I think you're looking at countries where they're at least questioning about whether or not these are values, methodologies, and practices that they want to adopt, or in the case of Russia's, where they are actually saying that no, these are not standards that they want to adopt. We can look at the cooperation that the government has extended to groups like the National Democratic Institute and International Republican Institute as far as trying to bring in these techniques and practices and values from more mature political parties in the West. So with that, I'd like to move on to the areas of concern, which are, I think, substantial. First, when we look at political parties overall in Georgia, we see a number of problems. First, with some exceptions, the government and opposition parties do not differ, or are not based along traditional societal cleavages along which parties tend to be enduringly based.

Here I'm thinking about urban-rural, rich versus poor, class, religion, region, things like that. Parties tend not to be organized along those cleavages, and often that hints at a problem in the stability of the party system. Second, politics has become more about the struggle for power itself and about the rules of the game, rather than ideas about what to do with that power. Third, there are really high levels of acrimony and distrust even in the presence of relatively low levels of ideological polarization. And here I'm not just talking about post-November 7th, I'm talking about even 2006, 2005, you have parties that really don't have that much that's not in common. Their major positions on major issues like NATO, European integration, and so forth, are basically the same. But yet, there's this very strong distrust and very strong acrimony. And those are things of concern. When we look at the United National Movement, the party which I think, of course, is the most important, and the one that controls the party system, or at least conditions the party system most carefully, the thing I'm most concerned about is United National Movement falling into what could be called a "party of power" syndrome. And what I mean by this is that United National Movement could become first, less connected and responsive to society, more of a top-down administrative structure, become less motivated by ideology and programmatic goals, and more motivated by the preservation of power, become saddled by entrenched special interests and to succumb to endemic corruption, become populated by careerist and political opportunists seeking to access to state control resources rather than contributing to reform efforts. And finally, likely begin to either repress the opposition or itself begin to crumble or split. In this way, if it is not careful, United National Movement might start to follow the unfortunate developmental trajectory of Shevardnadze's Citizens Union of Georgia, CUG. Although United National Movement is aware of this danger and seems to be determined to avoid it, the legacies of the Soviet past act as a kind of gravitational force

pulling on parties in this direction. There's actually an interesting quote that Victor Chernomyrdin, former Prime Minister of Russia had made when he was trying to form a new, progressive party supposedly in Russia in the mid-'90's, called [SPEAKS RUSSIAN] or "Home is Russia". And he said, "You know, we worked, we tried, and we hoped for the best, but somehow it still came out like the Communist Party of the Soviet Union." [AUDIENCE LAUGHTER] And, I'm basically arguing that there are patterns of authority and patterns of behavior that affect all post-Soviet parties that tend to pull them into that sphere. I think already we're starting to see, and we have started to see some behaviors on the part of the United National Movement, which caused some concern about it starting to fall into the spiral of "party of power" syndrome. First is the use of administrative resources. During the 2006 local elections campaign, there was considerable cases in which United National Movement at least blurred the lines between the state and the party itself. And there were some cases specifically with regard to the local races in Tbilisi where they may well have crossed that line. Second is reduced openness to dialogue with civil society and opposition parties. NGO and think tank representatives have noted a decrease in the government's willingness to talk to them at all. Recently I met with representatives of the Republican Party, and they said that in the last two years, Saakashvili had been willing to meet with them as a party once. So, there's this overall sense, I think, that society, NGO's, think tanks, that the government to some extent is too busy for them and feel like, as Professor, was saying, that they had all the answers and they don't need to talk to, really, anyone else. And then third, and I think most dramatically, are the events of November 7th, where we're starting to see, again, things that make us have concern about a party that seems to be very concerned about maintaining power and not engaging with folks. It seemed to represent a significant step toward the syndrome, lack of openness, lack of flexibility,

lack of responsiveness to what society was asking for. Next, the dynamics of political competition have moved Georgia towards this syndrome. In seeking rapid, extensive, transformative change, United National Movement has fought for not just political power, but for predominant political power in the country. And this has at least limited the possibilities for checks and balances on executive authority. During much of this time, United National Movement has sought to press its advantage, even though it has already been in power, wherever it could. A couple of, I think, key examples of this are first, the selection of electoral arrangements that favored large parties. In other words, they selected an electoral system, seven percent threshold, other kinds of a system that they call the “majoritarian system” which really was in a lot of ways, which they’ve since compromised on, where things that allowed a party in United National Movement’s position to do quite well. So there wasn’t much of a magnanimous approach towards design of electoral systems. Second, there was insistence on leaving itself a wide window for setting election dates and manipulating those dates. So for the local elections in 2006, there was a kind of surprise at the time when the elections were left open. And then more recently, this controversy over the date of the parliamentary elections. Again, these are things that are within the law, but it was a way in which the United National Movement was trying to press its advantage and perhaps unnecessarily so. Third, I think that United National Movement has really made little effort, or it could have made more effort to cultivate a constructive, moderate opposition. If you think about it, parties like the Republican Party, the Conservatives, New Rights, and Georgia’s Way, should really be in the role of constructive opposition. These are parties that when you look at what they’re calling for, it’s not really very different at all from what United National Movement is calling for from a programmatic perspective. But these parties feel like they’ve been ignored, they feel like they’ve been shunted aside,

and they feel like they've been dealt with unfairly. And so to some extent they've moved in a more radical direction. I'm not trying to argue that this is purely the fault of United National Movement and the government, and that the opposition parties have nothing to do with it, but I think that there is a case in which if United National Movement had wanted, and does want, it could try to cultivate more of a moderate and constructive opposition. Now quickly to the opposition parties because I want to be even-handed and fair here, and not only criticize one side. But I do want to point out that I think because the United National Movement has been so powerful in Georgia, it's had greater ability to affect the overall dynamics of the political party system. First, the major opposition parties are relatively weak, both from a programmatic and organizational standpoint. A lot of people have talked already about the opposition's inability really to provide constructive alternatives to what United National Movement and Saakashvili have proposed. And I think that's relatively a fair criticism. Secondly, the opposition has not been able to maintain what I would call "smart unity" with regard to coalitions. In other words, I don't think it's fair for folks to say, "Ok, all opposition, you should get together." Because obviously parties like the New Rights and the Labor Party don't have a heck of a lot in common programmatically. However, there are a cluster of relatively moderate-centrist parties that I can't really figure out why they're not running together and why they're not in more of a coalition. Now, there have been coalitions, but those coalitions have tended to be temporary grand coalitions that are generally short-term in nature and are only partial to go against the government. Secondly, as I've mentioned earlier, many opposition parties, with the notable exception of the Labor Party, are not formed on the basis of enduring social cleavages. Class, religion, ethnicity, or urban-rural divides. They're parties that are based, often mostly on personalities. Now, you could argue that United National Movement is oriented

largely around a personality as well, but when you're in the opposition and you're trying to distinguish yourself from the government, I have had a number of meetings with the opposition figures in Georgia where I've asked them, "Well what's your platform?" And they say, "Well, our platform's essentially that of United National Movement, we'll just do it better." And that's not probably as useful to voters, or doesn't create as clear a choice for voters as one would like. Next, opposition parties I think have not yet achieved full organizational maturity in the sense that they haven't achieved full coverage of the country with networks of regional chapters. Major parties, major opposition parties such as the Republicans, New Rights, Conservatives, claim to only have coverage of about 60% of the country. Now, Georgia's not a particularly big country and it shouldn't be that difficult for them to get coverage, to get chapters in every major city or town in the country. And one indication of this was during the 2006 local elections, in many cases United National Movement representatives ran unopposed because opposition parties just didn't field candidates. A couple other things I'd just like to mention. The quality of discourse and interaction on policy issues between the ruling and opposition parties has been relatively low as well. As I've said before, opposition parties haven't been so great about proposing constructive alternatives, but for its part, United National Movement has passed on opportunities to engage with the opposition. During the 2006 local elections it didn't bother to participate in debates. United National Movement's campaign really was focused on Saakashvili as an individual and an implicit message that they had done well, but they didn't really say to the Georgian public what they planned on doing in the future. This issue of high levels of distrust had set in I think well before the November events. And again, this is surprising because of the fact that it's not really based on programmatic ideological differences. It's based almost on familial disputes. A lot of these people in the

opposition actually at one point or another were with United National Movement, such as the Republicans who were in coalition with the United National Movement.

Georgia's Way, leader Salome Zourabichvili was Foreign Minister, and this isn't even talking about Ukrashvili [PH]. So, a lot of these disputes and this acrimony does not seem to have a programmatic basis. So what's the way forward, looking at all these concerns that we have? What can we do? I think one thing may be to encourage United National Movement, Saakashvili and actually all parties in Georgia to think about what legacy they'll leave behind in Georgia. As was mentioned here before, Saakashvili may be entering into his second term. A central goal of the ruling party should be creating a situation in which United National Movement wouldn't have to be so concerned about losing power through elections. This means cultivating a constructive and moderate opposition, engaging in more frequent and substantive dialogue with the opposition over policy decisions, and making institutional changes that give the opposition more of a voice. What I'm thinking about here, and maybe it would be useful to talk to United National Movement about is Samuel Huntington's "two-turnover" rule. He talks about democratic consolidation in a country after transition if they've had two turnovers of power since the transition. And so it's hard to talk to a party and say, "Hey, you should want to give up power." But one thing they should think about leaving behind is a legacy in which they wouldn't be concerned about United National Movement being in the minority and being in the opposition. A lasting legacy would be a more resilient, balanced political architecture and party system in which the alternation of power would be smoother and a less revolutionary process. This is not asking for political altruism, but asking that all parties, and especially the ruling party, see that creating this kind of institutional architecture isn't all of there interests, and in the interest of Georgia.

PABLO PINTO

Thank you. Our last panelist is Lincoln Mitchell, the Arnold Saltzman Professor in the Practice of International Poetics of Columbia University.

LINCOLN MITCHELL

Thank you, Pablo. It's always great to be the last speaker on a Friday afternoon right before cocktail hour. [AUDIENCE LAUGHTER] I'm sure that what you want to do is hear another talk, but I think I have something to contribute here, so we're going to move forward. Giving a talk on democracy in Georgia I think always brings out the inner procrastinator in anybody, because there's absolutely no percentage in preparing your talk in advance, because things change. Having said that, I'm not going to spend a lot of time going through a blow by blow of what recently happened. Instead, I'm going to look at a couple of questions. How did we get where we are? And what might we do to move forward with particular regards to democracy in Georgia? Now, being neither the Queen of England nor somebody with a tapeworm, I should probably specify what I mean when I say, "we." And I'm thinking of "we" in an inclusive sense here. "We" Americans, which I happen to be. "We" Georgians, which a lot of you happen to be. And "we" people who care about what happens in Georgia and want the best for Georgia, which I think most of us fit that category, regardless of where we come from. I want to begin by just giving a little context for this talk. First, I think that the post-Rose Revolution government of Georgia has achieved a lot of accomplishments. Fortunately, one of the advantages of going last is you've heard a lot about those accomplishments already, so I don't need to spend my time discussing them. But those are real accomplishments. And the Georgian government deserves credit for those. Moreover,

they've done it in the shadow of what might be called a "difficult neighbor." And I think that needs to be recognized also. However, and here I'm going to wade into something that some of my colleagues have said, the Georgian government has argued that they have prioritized state-building, not democracy during these years. Saakashvili has referred to Ataturk as a model in an interview with the *Financial Times* a few years ago, for example. I think this is an argument made of convenience, and I think this question of whether a parliamentary system would have got you somewhere different, a parliamentary system in early 2004 gets you a huge majority with Misha leading that parliamentary majority. I believe that a government as popular and confident as the Rose Revolution government in the early years strengthened itself by doing things more democratically. That process gets a little better, they probably get better laws, and they get more buy-in from more parts of society. I think, in fact, they weakened the Georgian state by pushing things quickly, by cutting corners constantly. Second, in particularly in the first panel, we talked a little about the strategic import of Georgia. And if you're the United States, the global power, all countries, virtually, are strategic. But I think there's a unique reason why Georgia is strategic, which has to do with democracy. A semi-democratic or semi-authoritarian, but competent pro-America state in the middle of the former Soviet Union, with no natural resources, is really of moderate value to the United States. Not no value, but moderate value. A democracy in that part of the neighborhood, in the former Soviet Union, is tremendously important to the United States. So when you think of the strategic value of Georgia I think democracy places a big part of that. Success for democracy in Georgia breathes life into the US, and also European program of democracy assistance, of believing that democracy can continue to grow. Failure of democracy in Georgia, in fact, does quite the opposite and provides evidence for those who say, "Look, we've reached the end of

the line of democracy, we should walk away from that a little bit.” Last point I would make it, I’m something of a cynic by disposition—in case you don’t get that from this talk—but I want to be clear that I believe there still is hope for democracy in Georgia. The signs are not all that bad. Georgia remains, in a kind of tallest building in Topeka kind of way, the most democratic non-Baltic country in the Soviet Union, with the possible exception of Ukraine. That’s a lot of qualifiers. [AUDIENCE LAUGHTER] But there’s something there to that. I think four years of better elections, which we’ve had in Georgia now. Less corruption, a public commitment to democracy by the government, buttressed by frankly widespread agreement that their future lies with the West, and that means democracy, are all good signs. They’re far from guarantees, but they’re all good signs. So, question that I would start with is how do we get from kind of the days of wine, roses, and khachapuri in late 2003, early 2004, to where we are today? Immediately after the crackdown on November 7th, the Western media, in addition to the kind of inevitable puns about thorns, roses, withering, [AUDIENCE LAUGHTER] I’m not a horticulturist by training, so I’m going to end there, kind of offered two different narratives. The first—maybe this is kind of the Anne Applebaum in the *Washington Post*—democracy has failed in Georgia primarily because of wrong-headed US policies with regard to Georgia. And the second was that this, these events of the 7th of November were a mistake. But otherwise things were going well in Georgia. And if the January 5th elections go well, democracy will be back on track in Georgia. And I think that is interestingly both come to reflect US policy, but also become to winning-, if you look closely at the media, that’s the narrative that’s in the ascendancy now. I think both of these stories get it wrong for different reasons. With regards to the first, this is clearly a blow for democracy in Georgia, but it’s not the end. There is still hope, there still is potentially a future. And second, the notion that

democracy started to go wrong on November 6th and 7th when Saakashvili decided to disperse this rally really misses the point. In many respects the development of democracy in Georgia has been decidedly mixed since the early days of the Rose Revolution. As Chris has pointed out some of the details, and as others have pointed out some of the details, I'm not going to go into the details. But you see it in a lot of places. You see it in both the style, the substance, and the process for the constitutional amendments. Some of the kind of gray area elections mishagosh that you've seen. You see it in the weakness of the legislature, the weakening of the free media. Those are not good indicators. And it didn't begin in November of 2007. But I think what I've described above only tells a limited part of the story. It's important to look at the actions and role with regards to democratic development of Georgia's biggest and most important ally, and that of course is the United States. Andrew Eristoff earlier today talked about that it's often overlooked—the important contributions that US and United States and our allies have made to the reform process in Georgia. And I think that that's a very good point. But, the US has also been a key partner in Georgia's democratic development. And the nature of that partnership and that assistance should be considered as well when looking at the US relationship. Again, part of this from the US angle has to do with what our goals are. If we want a kind of semi-democratic, pro-American, functioning state over there, we've succeeded. And we should be happy about that. But our rhetoric has suggested we want a little bit more. We want the democracy, and I'll get back to that in a minute. But, I think the failure of the US government to challenge this erosion has been increasingly conspicuous and increasingly troubling in the last four-ish years. And I think it really began almost from the get-go. Additionally, the substance of democracy assistance has changed in Georgia, and a couple of earlier discussions touched on this. But let me just stress this. Civil

society organizations, particularly under the new Georgian constitution, here I'm talking the January 2004 constitution, could have potentially played a very, very important role providing the balance to a powerful government. This is what they did in the Shevardnadze years. They were the watchdogs. They were the advocates. They drew attention to the problems of Georgian-, the government, of the corruption. It's hard to imagine the Rose Revolution without the active Georgian civil society. And a lot of that funding, expertise, assistance came from the United States. That's changed a lot since the Rose Revolution. A lot of those programs have been cut. Some of that is for budget reasons. It also seems, as someone who watches this closely, that the sense now is that-, or beginning then, was that the engine of democratization in Georgia is now the government, and we're going to put our resources there. And what you got there was contributing to the strengthening of the Georgian state, which is a probably, given the circumstances, a good goal. But it's not democracy and it's not democracy assistance. And those two shouldn't be confused. Second issue I would raise kind of broadly here, is that the US policy of praising Georgia's accomplishments in other areas, in reform, in investment climate, in all of those kind of things, but not criticizing what was increasingly clearly shortcomings in democracy lead the Georgian government to believe that they could move further away from democracy without any consequences from the United States. And they did. In short, without reverting to more colorful metaphors, the US acted as an enabler as Georgian democracy slipped further and further away. And that's a big part of how we got where we are now. And without that context, you miss it. So, where do we go from here? And, how can we, here I'm being limited in my "we", how can we the United States help Georgian democracy get back on track? And I'm going to look at that from that perspective. First, I want to be very clear that the upcoming election is far from the only indicator of the future of Georgian

democracy. The notion that a good election on January 5th means Georgian democracy is back on track, and some of my colleagues here have raised this in other ways, is wrong. Good elections in Georgia on January 5th are absolutely necessary for Georgian democracy to be back on track, but they are far from sufficient. Now, having said that, there are already some serious questions which have emerged about this election, which we should at least keep in mind. First, how will the Imedi issue be resolved? What kind of conditions will the government put on Imedi before letting it back on the air? And what kind of discussion is that to be having in a democracy in the first place? But clearly, without a non-government supporting media, the context for a free and fair election is difficult. Secondly, how much Russia baiting will the government do before the election? And I don't say this to belittle the threat of Russia, and the reality of the differing views that the Georgian people and the Russian government would like to see Georgia go. That's very real, and that's a very difficult challenge for Georgia. Having said that, Russia baiting in Georgia is a bit like calling someone "soft on terrorism" in the United States. It's what you do in a political campaign. Now, on the one hand I know this, because I was accused of being a KGB agent in Russia by the government. The previous government. Which I'm not. [AUDIENCE LAUGHTER] But, [CHUCKLES] a point of clarification. [AUDIENCE LAUGHTER] Campaigns can get nasty and rhetoric can get nasty. But when you back this up with actions that really aren't democratic in nature, shutting down television stations, jailing people, letting people out of jail, following people. All of this kind of thing, which is happening there-, the problem gets to be greater. It's also, to me, worth noting that while Saakashvili has rightfully and honorably called for ample election observation, people who are in the election observation business will tell you a good election observation mission hits the ground three months out, because you have to do your pre-election work. You have to

get your long term observers to really get a sense of the texture of what's going on. Clearly, just the chronology of that, makes this impossible in Georgia. So, with all those problems, still, January 6th is more important than January 5th. And as far as I see it, assuming things go reasonable well in the election, there are three possible outcomes. And kind of going from least likely to most likely...the least likely is that someone other than Saakashvili wins outright in the first round. Now, that's very unlikely. Parenthetically, if that does happen, we might-, we'd likely find that a government lead by David Gamkrelidze or Levan Gachechiladze, just to pick the two obvious ones, would be pretty easy for the United States to work with, right? These are not people that would take Georgia in a dramatically different path. Others, it might be a little different. But, I think that's a very hypothetical question. The second possibility is that there's a runoff. And a runoff is a very big deal. If there's a runoff, Saakashvili, even though he very likely would win that runoff, clearly has to re-examine the extent to which he has a mandate. He can't fall back on that rhetoric. However, I don't bet on elections, I don't bet on anything. But I think if I were in Las Vegas, I'd be giving odds that Misha wins this outright in the first round. And if that happens, January 6th, 7th, 8th is an important decision node. On the one hand, you could imagine a situation...I'm not sure it's a likely situation, but where Saakashvili looks back on the last three months, sees it as a humbling experience, and sees the need to redouble his efforts to commit Georgia to meaningful democracy. There's also a possibility of another situation. A situation where Saakashvili goes before the Georgian people and the world and says, "In a time of crisis, I lay down my presidency. I went before the people and I got re-elected. And now I have my mandate back." And the trends that we've seen since 2004 continue or accelerate. I don't know which he's going to do if he wins. I know which I'd like him to do. But, I think the role of the United States is to push him towards choosing that first

option if we care about democracy in Georgia. And let me conclude by making five kind of specific recommendations. There are many things that we can do. These are five that I'm making because I think I have particular insight or because I think they could be overlooked. First, we need to move towards supporting institutions, not individuals. And I think everyone kind of knows that already. But Georgia's a difficult case, because on the one hand, it's very hard to separate Saakashvili's personality, his vibrancy, his intellect, his humor, his physical and moral courage, his language skills, his huge personality—and I don't mean that in a critical way—from democracy. That's underpinned by a personal relationship at the highest levels between our government and their government. It's not too many places where President Bush goes and eats, particularly in that part of the world—and eats a good a meal, frankly to begin with— [AUDIENCE LAUGHTER] But then goes and dances and is visibly happy to be with the president of that country. Nonetheless, we've put all our eggs in that basket and we've seen where it's gone. We have to get back to building institutions. Secondly, and this I'm going to be very brief because I touched it already and I think it's obvious: reinvigorate civil society. If the United States does nothing else during Saakashvili's second term, but puts a lot of money into civil society organizations that can pick up that watchdog role, pick up that advocacy role, it will be a tremendous contribution, and that's all I'm going to say on that. The third point is to distinguish between reform and democratizing. These are two different things. This process does matter. Getting a bunch of good laws is good. It probably makes the state stronger and the country a better place, but it's not democracy. And in a country where democracy is important, we have to keep that in mind. I'm trying to be brief on these, if people want more we can get into it later. But I would just leave it at that. We should continue to applaud the reforms the government has undertaken, but understand this separately. The fourth thing

I would say, is don't over promise. Anybody who has done anything in politics from being an ambassador to running for City Council in any country in the world knows that that's a fundamental rule of politics. I used to do political consulting and I would tell people literally running for City Council, one of the first things I would tell them. Saakashvili has broken this. But, we heard earlier that our expectations for Georgian democracy were overblown. But in fact, that's buttressed by the rhetoric from the President that says the same thing. Saakashvili clearly has a weakness for high-falutin', overblown rhetoric. And that creates problems for him. If Saakashvili frankly has delivered, probably the best democracy in the region, that's not nothing. But he's promised kind of Plato's *Republic* on the Black Sea. And that's not realistic. And that conflict, that disparity, frustrates the people in Georgia, which is one of the reasons you saw such turnout at the demonstrations. But similarly, our rhetoric about Georgia has been, starting January 5th, 2004, this is a democracy. The Rose Revolution was a democratic breakthrough that could have gone either way. That's all it was. But for a lot of political reasons that others have raised, we embraced it like it was democracy. The last thing I would say is, again, I'm an old political consultant, don't get spun. We need to be more rigorous in evaluating democracy in Georgia, "we" here, the United States. Verbal commitments for democracy, no matter how eloquent, no matter how good the English, the English language being used on the part of the government, should not obscure the real problems with Georgian democracy. It's not helpful to them and it's not helpful to us. But this has been the case. The Georgian government, through media campaigns, through public appearance, is very good at presenting itself. I work all over the former Soviet Union. I suspect others here too, would also agree with me when I say nobody spins like the Georgians. And that's a tremendous strength of Georgia but we need a little more sophistication to that notion. Let me just give you

some recent examples by Saakashvili. “I do not want to be...” ...this is a quote, “I do not want to be the president of a country that limits mass media and declares emergency rule.” This was like, November 10th. I understand what he’s trying to say there. But that shouldn’t be taken at face value as a statement of contrition. “I would like...”...another quote, this is from a speech I got off his website: “I would like everyone to know that each baton hit on our citizens was also a hit on me. And the tear gas that the police used made me cry as well.” Again, I think there is an element of contrition there, but that shouldn’t be used as evidence of that. Last point, and then I’ll be quiet. The big winner in recent weeks in Georgia is not the opposition, and it’s not Saakashvili, it’s Vladimir Putin and the Russians, right? The weakness of Georgian-, the visible shortcomings of Georgian democracy, the chaos on the streets of Tbilisi, this is what the Russians want to see, and this is what people who do not want to see a strong Georgian state want to see, a strong, competent, functioning Georgian state that serves the Georgian people. There’s no doubt that the Georgians would like to see Saakashvili fail. But, the problem is that the threat and the reality of that threat shouldn’t be leveraged to undermine democracy in Georgia. Ultimately, that will weaken the Georgian state. The success of genuine democracy in Georgia is really the most powerful message that Saakashvili and Georgia can send to their northern neighbor. And I think the question is how can they do that, and how can we help them do that. Thank you.

PABLO PINTO

Ok. Thank you so much. We’re going to open for questions and answers, questions from the public and I will take one question at a time. Please, please...say your name.

PAUL ROBERTI

Right. For anybody who wasn't here earlier, my name is Paul Roberti, I was the treasury advisor in Tbilisi from 2001 to 2004. One thing that I thought was absent from every panel today was the talk about development of a middle class. You cannot have an effective democracy without a middle class. We've seen it here in our own country. Very few of the programs that I saw instituted while I was in Georgia, whether it was by my own country, the United States of America, or by our Western allies, or by the international financial institutions, were aimed at developing a middle class. Until the average Georgian has a stake in society, until he has something that he wants to protect, will he fight to have a court that will give him an honest and true verdict. He can make sure his kids can get educated, things like this. So, the middle class, I think, is something we're missing here. And we really, all of us, should really think about how we can develop it.

PABLO PINTO

Thank you. [UNCLEAR] take on this?

LINCOLN MITCHELL

I think you're right, you know.

PIERRE CHINGELAI

My name is Pierre Chingelai [PH]. I'm American-Georgian and one of the facilitators of Georgian Studies Program, establishing Georgian Studies Program at Columbia University. I have one comment regarding Imedi TV station. There are very serious

issues, there are concerns regarding the true substance of News Corporation affiliations or relationship with Imedi. Based on the following facts, and there are three very important issues. First one is that the agreement that supposedly transferred the management of Imedi TV to News Corporation is one page documents signed only by representatives of Mr. Badri Patarkatsishvili, granting a power of attorney over 100% Imedi TV shares to News Corporation for a one year period. The document is dated October 31st, 2007, and was registered on November 13th, 2007. Six days after, Imedi TV closed. The only compensation to which News Corporation is entitled to, its duties, according to the terms of the agreement is thirty five hundred dollars per month. This is ridiculous. Second is, since August 2006, Mr. Patarkatsishvili and others have made numerous public states claiming that News Corporation is a shareholder of Imedi. To the knowledge of the government of Georgia, News Corporation itself has not made any public statements confirming or clarifying this arrangement. Furthermore, according to Article 61 and 62 of the Georgian law on broadcasting, ownership changes must be filed with the Georgian National Communications Commission within ten days of the occurrence. And third one, based on the discussion with the sole permanent representative of News Corporation in Tbilisi, Mr. Louis Richardson, the level of actual management of control of the content of Imedi TV's broadcast has been rather superficial. In the frames of Georgian legislation, News Corporation had no official status in Imedi and acted instead in a merely advisory capacity. I would like to, based on these three facts, I would like to ask you one question: if CNN or any other company had such shady business going on in Georgia, how would US government feel?

PABLO PINTO

Is this question addressed to any panelist?

PIERRE CHINGELAI

To all of them.

PABLO PINTO

All of them, ok. Does anybody want to take it.

ALEXANDER SOKOLOWSKI

I can try to take that, partly. [CHUCKLES] And, that is just to say, this has to do with, in some ways, I would take it this way if I was talking to the government of Georgia. I would say, "It's in your interest to have a perception that you have a free media during this period. If Imedi is not on TV, there is going to be a strong perception that during the electoral period, there was not a free media, and there was not an opportunity for the opposition to present its views. Therefore, we would hope that you would make every effort that you could to find a way to see if Imedi could be on TV and to rebroadcast. I understand it's a complicated issue. There are these difficult things, but similar conversations were had in the past about countries where you don't end up having any kind of opposition in the parliament. It's just not how a democracy looks. And if you want to have your democracy look like a democracy even if there are problems, you sometimes want to go out of your way and find ways to get elements of that kind of democratic equation in place.

STEPHEN JONES

I could add to that...

PABLO PINTO

Sure.

STEPHEN JONES

I think when you say [UNCLEAR] and one of the problems is of course, the lack of transparency in the business world in Georgia. And I think if you look, probably at most media outlets, particularly electronic ones who you might say, who started too, for example, had some shady business and dealings going on. You could argue in some sense that even public broadcasting in Georgia is shady in terms of its relationship with the government. So, it's not just a problem of Imedi. It's a much broader problem then, in the media generally.

CHRISTOPHER WALKER

I would also put it in the context of the larger media landscape in Georgia today. If you look at Freedom House's evaluation of Georgia on the press freedom side, it's a country who sits in our middle category, but right on the cusp of a not free media for a variety of reasons. I think a government that is secure in its position, that's eager to promote a democratic landscape, should do everything in its power to make sure that it's availing as many avenues for communication as possible. I think Alex's point is an important one, in particular for external audiences, but just as important as getting the real substance of an open media sector on track in Georgia for local audiences.

PABLO PINTO

I would appreciate if we keep your questions brief because you have a long line of

people waiting.

VASIL RUKHADZE

Ok, I'll try my best to be brief. I have two questions. One questions for Professor Lincoln Mitchell and one question for Professor Stephen Jones, but I'll make real quickly the comment. When we talk about the perfection of democracy in Georgia, I actually read many pessimistic articles lately. I just want to mention and remind the audience what Georgia we're talking about. When we talk about the transparency of courts, I want to remind that four years ago there were no courts to talk so, in radical terms in Georgia. And the justice was delivered by the [SPEAKS GEORGIAN] or the "Thieves in Law" to the public. This is the fact. And many officials will prove this. The second, when we talk about economic shortcomings, I want to remind the audience that Georgia had a budget of five million dollars which equals half of Orange County, the budget, right now, in New Jersey. That was back in 1999. And when we talk about the perfection of democracy in Georgia, I want to remind people that four years ago, ethnic and-, I mean the religious minorities in Georgia were beaten up on every corner of every single city. This is a country which we started from, our state-building process, very painful. And I just wanted to mention this briefly. Democracy is not an end product. It's a developing, very painful process. And Georgia is just going through this project. I mean, the process. The question. The biggest shock which was delivered to the Western world and democratic world was the closure of Imedi TV. It's understandable, it's completely unimaginable for a Western audience and society to see, I don't know, the BCC or like Mr. George mentioned or a CNN or Fox TV closed down by the administration of Britain or America. But also, it's unimaginable for BBC or British government to hear the calling from, let's say, Saudi oligarch, or oil magnate, of

overthrow of American or British government. So, this is a parallel. And the Georgian government very clearly...Georgian government very clearly requested the monitoring of the European Commission on the financial transactions of Imedi TV and basically monitoring, regarding professional journalism at Imedi TV, impartial. Mr-, Professor Lincoln Mitchell, what do you think about this proposal for Georgian government? And to Professor Stephen Jones, you, if I understood you correctly, you attempted to compare the recent events in Georgia to that of the Rose Revolution. Do you see any similarities between these events and 1991 events in Georgia? And do you find any similarity between the events in Estonia, Latvia, Georgia, and the cyber attack and this kind of events, or you think it's just a coincidence in time?

LINCOLN MITCHELL

Let me try to answer that. First thing I would say is that I think that some of your description of Georgia in 2003 is not entirely accurate, I lived in Georgia for all of 2003. Religious minorities weren't getting beaten up on the corner. I spent time in religious minority communities. This is not 1995 anymore, by the late Shevardnadze years. The biggest shock to the West, at least as I saw it unfold, being in New York the whole time, was not the shutting down of Imedi, just by point of record. The biggest shock was tear gas and rubber bullets used by the Georgian government on their own people. Having said that, I want to try to answer your specific question about Badri and Imedi. I have a quote here, and I'm going to read it slowly. First I want to say, I don't know that the Saudi analogy works. As far as I know, Badri is a Georgian. In my experience, people born in Tbilisi whose last name ends in -shvili are generally Georgian. If I'm wrong on that, or if there's something else going on there, maybe we could talk about that later. "Georgia under..." ...this is a quote, "Georgia under Saakashvili is a danger to the

world. Ousting Saakashvili...” said Patarkatsishvili, “...is the central focus of my life. A matter of life and death.” A matter of life and death. Asked if he would spend his last Tetri to defeat Saakashvili, Patarkatsishvili replied, “If someone guaranteed it.” Pretty heavy stuff there. Not really the words of Badri. That’s George Soros talking about George Bush. [AUDIENCE LAUGHTER] [PAUSE] I would just say that governments shouldn’t be setting up an organization to monitor journalists. And look, I certainly agree with you that Democracy is difficult. And I think that I said as a throw away line, and I’m a New Yorker so when I say the tallest building in Topeka, people get upset. My editor is from Kansas, and I said that to him once, and he said, “Hey there are tall buildings in Topeka.” [LAUGHTER] And he may be right. I want to be very clear on that, I think Georgia has made some very strong accomplishments in a number of sectors. Very strong in a number of sectors. Less clear and more mixed record, but mixed implies both positive and negatives, with regards to Democracy. But there's something about the gestalt of Democracy that’s missing there. And I think a government that says we’re gonna set up a board to essentially look at how journalists report, isn’t getting that gestalt. And the other thing I would say in answer to the previous statement about Imedi is that it is to Saakashvili’s advantage to have a station out there attacking him. It is to his advantage in terms of how he presents himself to the rest of the world, and it is to his advantage in terms of the outcomes he’s going to get in Georgia.

STEPHEN JONES

When I was comparing 2004 to 2007, I pointed out that there were some rather superficial similarities from the outside, and that there were some interesting parallels under the surface too. One of those interesting parallels I thought was, you know, in a

sense, the Rose Revolution rather than a colorful revolution was actually quite a colorless revolution in terms of its ideology. It didn't really change much from the Shevardnadze era in terms of its ideas. In terms of its implementation it was of course very different and certainly it's made tremendous advances. But one of the problems, and this is where I draw a parallel between 2004 and 2007 perhaps, is there is a fundamental problem as I tried to suggest between, the problem that Shevardnadze had in some sense was this absence of contact between population on the one hand and the government on the other. That bridge in some sense was not connected and the reason it was not connected was largely apathy in the government in the last few years and lack of economic progress, a great deal of cynicism and corruption at the top. Now Saakashvili has taken a different route, state building has of course been one of his primary policies. But you know, in some sense, the result has not been that different if he was trying to democratize Georgia in terms of regaining some involvement by the population, gaining some participation by the population in the process of building the state or democratizing the country. In that sense, I think the similarity is quite significant and quite interesting that that bridge has still not been spanned between, for different reasons and because of different types of policies, but the population came out, 50,000 people came out for many reasons, but one of the reasons was again just this sense that you know, the government is indifferent to our conditions. And that is I think one of the more important parallels that I was trying to draw between the two.

WOMAN

[SPEAKS GEORGIAN] I want also to address some of the issues that Mr. Jones mentions that we're not expecting what happened of November 7th and also

[UNCLEAR] that it was shock. But I can tell you that it was expected for many people

who are living in Georgia. And for example, when I was in Syracuse every morning I was turning on computer and I was watching whether they are still there or not anymore. And so what my question is that maybe US and others should listen more to local NGOs or position parties because this was not shock and this was not unexpected for us. And another I want to talk about and to ask about Democracy because I think all of you agree that the priority for the government was state building. And my question is that, state building is good for the country, and maybe there were talks about Parliamentary and Presidential republics, maybe Presidential is good, too, and maybe it's good for US and maybe it's not good for other countries, but my question is whether over long term, is it good to put more attention on state building and less attention on Democracy and how it will work in five years, in ten years? And we can compare it to Russia where the state building is also the main aim of President Putin and he has a very high approval rating and his party, and now during the transition of the government of the President and Parliament and everybody knows what will be the outcome, and can we somehow think that this is a approach when we're looking only at state building and we are forgetting to worry about Democracy? And my last point is that I think [UNCLEAR] mentioned that there is a hope and all of you mention that there is a hope and there should be certain steps undertaken by the Georgian government. And Mitchell mentioned that there is not end of Democracy. And my question is what should happen to say that this is end of Democracy? So maybe can you point out for example, in one year, if this happen, if this happen, if this happen, this is end of Democracy. Thanks.

STEPHEN JONES

Yeah. In principle, of course there does not have to be any contradiction between state building and Democracy building, in fact, normally one would hope they go together. I

think you know, in some sense, Saakashvili was right and he had tremendous support from the population at the time to rebuild the state because you know, at some level clearly if the state, and this was Shevardnadze's problem and of course it was Yeltsin's problem, it was a problem in Ukraine as well, is that unless you have a functioning state, unless you have a state that at some level can respond and produce results, then Democracy building is gonna be much harder. So that's one issue. But I do think that in many ways, Saakashvili in his rhetoric and in his policies has over-emphasized the state building part of reform. And as a consequence we had November. Now, it was a shock or wasn't a shock. You know, at some level also, I was expecting I must tell you, and actually I had a word with, when I was in Georgia last I was speaking with Ambassador John Teft and he asked me, "What do you think the most important issue is here in Georgia?" And I said, "Well I think you know, the problem is that the government still is failing to reach out and involve the population in the process of Democracy building." And I think you know, in some sense that it's boomeranged on Saakashvili. And it was sort of, I mean I was sort of expecting it to happen, and you know, unless Saakashvili does something different and of course now he's talking very much about emphasizing social programs and economic support, welfare support and raising pensions, raising teacher salaries and so on, the question is, to what degree is this election erring and to what degree will he follow through? And this is where I think you know, the question of the sort of support he gets on January 5th might take him in. If he gets a really strong mandate that may no longer be the issue. Just one final point, though. I think your Georgia is, although there's been tremendous growth, I think Georgia still faces a fundamental problem that it's a very poor country. And it simply doesn't have enough money to provide the sort of support that the population is demanding. And I'm not sure how Saakashvili is going to solve that. I mean he can double teacher's salaries, but quite

honestly that's not gonna make much difference. So you know, I think the deeper structural problem for Georgia is how in a small country, an impoverished small country in a rather hostile neighborhood, albeit with USAIDs supporting it and so on, you know, how is it going to get out of this hole and it's a very difficult task.

PABLO PINTO

Lincoln...

NICHOLAS GVOSDEV

Look I think with this question and some of the previous ones we're also coming to something that I think Lincoln, you alluded in your use of the tallest building in Topeka analogy. Which is, is it enough? In other words, is what you have in Georgia enough now for it to qualify to move into the Euro-Atlantic Institutions? Because if it is, if we use the argument that if a building in Topeka is tall enough to be considered a tall building by New York standards, then that has implications. If however, if the implication is that if Imedi TV stays closed, that means that the Bucharest summit for NATO next year, there's no membership action plan for NATO, and Democracy's being used a kind of standard for membership as it is for NATO and the European Union, and the question of well is it enough, isn't it enough, takes on a different meaning. And also as we've seen with the new entrance into the European Union, once a state usually gets in, the height of the building is usually enough and it stays there, it doesn't keep growing as we've seen in Poland and the Czech Republic and Hungary and elsewhere that once their buildings qualified by Topeka and New York standards, they didn't keep adding extra floors. And so if the issue then is that we, meaning the United States, want to continue this process, we want the building to keep moving up and one of the ways to

encourage that building to keep being built up is you know, membership in the larger democratic community of nations, then that begins to you know, take this out of just being a theoretical discussion about what we think Democracy has arisen and has real world political implications starting with Bucharest next year. And then you know, this point about Democracy and what the NGOs and the other like, I mean it's interesting, there's a wonderful quote from the last administration of Assistant Secretary of State George Moose was being asked about why wasn't the US doing more to support Democracies and NGOs, and as long as virtue is its own reward. You know, you should do this because it's a virtuous thing to be Democratic, but you really shouldn't be expecting much of a payoff or any sort of quid pro quos in that and therefore, you know, it does come back to this question, is it enough? And if I think one of the discussions on January 6th is going to be very strong both in state and NSC and then among with us and our European allies, is this enough? And not whether Georgia will continue forward, or whether or not you hit the 40th floor and that's a tall enough building for Topeka, maybe not by New York standards, or Trump standards, but is it enough to get in? And I think that's what some of the underlying discussion is that we're hearing here about Democracy, not what you should do or not do, who's standards you should compare to or not. And the like. So I'm going to turn it back over to you.

LINCOLN MITCHELL

After this conference, I'm going to apply to Harriman for funding for an architectural trip to Topeka because I have no idea [LAUGHTER] how tall the tallest building there is. I think this question of state building versus Democratic development is an important one, but it's a case by case question. What are your goals, what are your expectations? I think what's so troubling about Georgia is that it was a unique opportunity. You had a

strong leader with a vision and frankly the right one about the direction in which to take the Georgian state. You had a man elected President who won a free and fair election by any standard with over 90% of the vote in January of 2004. There are very few Presidents in the world who are frankly in my view, they're as legitimately as Saakashvili is, I believe that. However, and that's why I don't think he should have resigned. You don't resign because a couple protesters are out there, you don't call for new elections, you're the President, you govern. But with that behind him, he didn't need to create this question. This question shouldn't have come up in Georgia. He didn't have to choose between it because he had the mandate. And then to top it off, you go into March of 2004, you have another election not just by those standards of the region, but by the standards of most of the world a good Parliamentary election. Which gives the newly elected President three months or so after his election an enormous legitimate majority in Parliament, a Parliament chaired over by another one of the Rose Revolution leaders, Burjanadze. This shouldn't have come up. If he doesn't cut the corners, cause I don't want to think about, I'm not in a place to really put this in comparative term, but if you want to think about Georgia, this shouldn't have come up. If he doesn't cut the corners, if the process is more deliberative, if a little shouting at the President and criticism is considered to be OK, you have in my view, a stronger and a more Democratic Georgian state. I'm going to briefly answer the direct question, what would I consider the end of Georgian Democracy? [LAUGHS] I believe that North Korea is just a pre-transition state. No. [LAUGHTER] But I think that suspending of already scheduled elections would be very troubling. Mass arrests of opponents would be very troubling. A continued and growing crackdown on media and communication. Those would be things, I don't think you're going to see that in Georgia. I'm a cynic by disposition, I'm not that cynical. But those are things that would mean the end, and

maybe a consolidated authoritarian regime, I don't think we're going to go there, I certainly hope not.

PABLO PINTO

Let me collect the questions here, because we are past our time and I want to give a chance to the panelists to respond. So...

WOMAN

So I'll just try very quickly. I'm Yolena Rujadza [PH] I was the President of the Russian Association here at Columbia last year. And this year I'm participating in Georgian Studies Center, I'm going to make a few remarks and then ask one complete question at the end. Remarks will be on the speech of Alexander Sokolowski which I appreciated very much and on Professor Jones and also on Lincoln Mitchell's comments. I just wanted to mention that no one is disputing the fact that Georgia remains for the most part, a very poor country. However, what was done by President Saakashvili in my view in the last four years, and I visit Georgia every year, this year I stayed there in the summer for two months. I went all over the country. What was done for Georgia by President Saakashvili in the last four years exceeded everything that was done in the last two decades by various Georgian governments there for the country. In the recent interview of a Russian Parliament member Golina Starovoitova ...

PABLO PINTO

Could you ask the question because we have four more people lined up and...

WOMAN

Sure, OK I wanted to mention that Golina Starovoitova said to Russian TV channel that Georgia has quote on quote developing Democracy with Petrovsky in [UNCLEAR]. Petrovsky [UNCLEAR], Petrov, Peter the Great's methods. I think it is important to remember the ethnographic composition of Georgian society. Georgians are not Germans with their blameless work ethics. We have a country that just came out from Communism, Saakashvili inherited a very, very corrupt society. Corrupt to the root. So in my view it would be impossible not to use Petrovsky [UNCLEAR] in a society like Georgia. That's one point. Second point is that we have a layer in the Georgian society generation of my father, my aunt and my relatives who found themselves useless in current environment of fast changing market economy or fast changes. I wanted to remark about a revolutionary government which should not be opposed that Stephen Jones mentioned. The young revolutionary government. The way of society in Georgia who are the older generation that found themselves useless now are the ones who compose the majority of people who come out. Another part have come out to protest against the government. Another smaller part is the young people who can't find themselves or who found ways to come to the west to get their education here and now find the power and mental ability to oppose Saakashvili who was there first. The question...[OVERLAP]

PABLO PINTO

I have to stop you. We have three more people trying to ask questions. [OVERLAP]

WOMAN

OK the question is, what do we do with all the layer of our society, the lost generation of people, the intelligencia who grew up during the Communist period who don't know how to work really under other circumstances than Communist, what do we do with them? How do we see us solving this problem? Because I think that this is the key issue.

PABLO PINTO

I have to stop you. I'll ask the next person to ask a question please, I'll take the questions and then we can answer, give a chance to the panelists.

WOMAN 2

Yes, very briefly I want to raise comments, but very forceful, I think it's very appalling to say that any country deserves Petrovksi [UNCLEAR]. I think no country has in its DNA a dictatorship emphasized by President Bush and no country deserves Petrovsky [UNCLEAR] especially me and my family certainly do not. So that's shortly said. My question is, in case I'm one of the skeptics concerning Georgia's government's performance. I think one thing that distinguishes current affairs in Georgia from the events that lead to Rose Revolution is that Georgia is a divided society now much more than before. Cutting short, it's 50% you can see in the audience it's very hot, intense emotional. So the current government has incredible responsibility to be conciliatory and unifying and I don't think it is capable of doing this. So in case the worst case scenario materializes and through electoralism formally free elections on the election day because elections are not free in my opinion due to several serious violations which are taking place for the moment. Saakashvili wins again his Presidency and then having regained

his mandate, he goes after critics, opposition, independent people like me, like other people that have been critical of his rule. What are the foreign policy options of the United States, what the US should do, and will do? Thank you.

PABLO PINTO

Thank you. Please ask a question. [LAUGHTER]

NONA SHANGILOYA

Yes, I will, I promise. My name is Nona Shangiloya [PH] and I just want to ask you a tricky question, and well I guess, it's a million dollar question too, where do you exactly find the golden medium between Democracy and law and order? Because in many of the statements I heard from this very distinguished panel, I hear lots of hypocrisy, and I'm not liking that. So and another question is, could you please name one of the main opposition television stations in the United States? [LAUGHTER]

PABLO PINTO

Thank you.

NONA SHANGILOYA

And what is the definition of opposition television? My understanding after 16 years living in the United States is there is FCC who sets regulations for all the TV stations in the United States, and everybody follows and obeys those regulations. Is it possible in Georgia and is this a nice approach to you know, Democratic movement? You know, this is the only way to solve the problem. I don't see any other ways because this is a deadlock. So...

PABLO PINTO

Thank you. [UNCLEAR] There won't be any more questions. No, I mean we still have the panelists to answer and we are way beyond our time. Sorry about that.

MAN

My quick question is, under the current conditions in Georgia, what are the Georgians chances of entering NATO in next two to three years?

PABLO PINTO

Thank you.

MAN

Two more. [LAUGHTER]

PABLO PINTO

No, it's 5:20 already.

MAN

We can talk [INAUDIBLE].

PABLO PINTO

Give them chance to talk and we have a reception waiting for us. I don't want to make you responsible for keeping the people from going to the reception. So, something I have to...who wants to take that? Go ahead.

CHRISTOPHER WALKER

On the NATO issue one thing that's clear is that what happened in November for some European states was like Yanukovich coming to power in Ukraine in 2005 which was the sigh of relief of ahh, we can take the NATO question off the immediate burner. My sense from Washington though is that as we've said before, good election in January means things go back on track which means you have a summit in Bucharest which endorses continued movement for NATO membership. Linked to that, what happens if things go bad, what are the US policy options? I think that the US doesn't have many options it's willing to look at, it's not gonna cut Georgia off completely for the same reason that Musharraf has never been completely cut off in the last few months despite calls and in the sense of well what about Democracy and the like? I think that the view there will always be to see the glass half full as long as possible. The same way by the way frankly that people did with Putin's Russia for so many years. You could always find positive developments until you know, I think that glass started to leak a lot. I don't see that the US will, unless there is you know some of the things that Lincoln talked about, these major steps that are taken and even there, I think it'll be more protests, I think the question was raised in one of the earlier sessions about the US responses to the elections in Azerbaijan, and or the US response to the elections in Kazakhstan. I don't know I disagree with you to some extent Lincoln, I think that yes, Democracy is an important strategic value for the US and Georgia but there still are other strategic values there that if Democracy declines as one of those major strategic values, the other ones rise and we find a way to live with it. No, I don't see that there would be, because in the end, the argument in Washington will be, all you're gonna do is deliver the country to Russia if you cut it off and therefore better to work and build again so I don't see that

there would be a strong, I think you'd see a lot of complaints, I think a lot of demarshes (sic), things like that, but no I don't see that there would be a major US response if it went down the way as Lincoln described of what he could see at the end of Georgian Democracy.

PABLO PINTO

Let me give Alexander a chance to respond.

ALEXANDER SOKOLOWSKI

Sure I want to respond to a couple of the questions, one which is, is there a happy medium between order and Democracy and then also this discussion about state building versus Democracy. I would just echo what I think other people have said here so far is that there shouldn't necessarily be a conflict between the two and the point that I've been trying to make that we should make to the Georgian government is that part of the state building project about making the state strong should include making the state resilient and responsive. States that are responsive and resilient are stronger in a different way and are more likely to avoid the kind of things we saw on November 7th. Again, I don't think there's any necessarily golden mean, but I think they are not mutually exclusive and you can try to maximize both Democracy and things like order and state building. And state strength. On the question of what do you do with the older generation? Talk to them. I just thought I'd include something with my personal life, my wife is Russian and her parents are from that generation and we have a lot of very interesting discussions about what Democracy should be in Russia and what it means to live in a Democracy. So, talk to them.

CHRISTOHER WALKER

I would say in terms of what the west should do, the US in particular in the short term is to make it clear that the election should be run as freely and fairly as possible in the short term there. But I would reiterate what Lincoln Mitchell said and that is these elections are part of a much larger puzzle and the longer term success of Georgia, the sorts of outcomes that would benefit ordinary Georgians over the mid to long term that will also benefit the transatlantic community and the community of Democratic states are going to come by what happens after that date, both by decisions made by the Georgian people, and by those who are hoping for a Democratic Georgia from the outside. Just very quickly on the notion of opposition TV, I'd make one quick observation to say that one television station who's owner is also deeply involved not only in the US, globally and in Georgia, whose station now is not regarded as an opposition TV will probably have a shot to become an opposition television station in January '09, so to the extent, that's changed a bit in the US context, we may get to see that opportunity soon.

STEPHEN JONES

What to do with the older generation? You know, older generation perhaps does have different values to some degree than the younger generation. But I think that Alex's idea that you talk to them, you institute policies that they feel are basically honest and you try and eliminate corruption from the government, you try and create some degree of openness. If you do all those things, I think you might be able to bring the older generation around as much as the younger generation. And the other thing that you might be able to do also and I think this is a fundamental issue that maybe we've not

really tackled, Lincoln did mention the difference between on the one hand reform and on the other Democracy, and I think they're in some sense there's a very significant tension between the two. Saakashvili has decided on a particular type of economic reform which is a market that's unregulated let's say by the government, and it's that sort of context where for example, the recent labor code that was passed doesn't really give ordinary citizens and ordinary employees much labor rights. This is where they spend you know, a good deal part of their lives at work, but limited rights that they can exercise. You know, I think that at some level if Saakashvili is gonna bring the population round, if he's going to gain support, not only does he have to show rigor and patriotism, but he has to show economic reform that actually benefits the population in some way or another. And I think he faces a dilemma in this respect because I've said, you know, Georgia is poor and he has limited resources and he feels at this stage you know, that 25% of the budget should be spent on the military and I can understand why he wants a strong military. But perhaps a better balance in this case. You know, I think this, this idea of super Freedmanite (sic) polices have been showed to fail in many other poor countries and I'm not sure that it will succeed in Georgia too. Regarding US possibilities, I think that and the US government knows this of course that it has you know, limited ability to influence other governments. It's been their direct experience over many, many years. But I think in the Georgian case actually, it probably has more potential to influence Saakashvili than say it does Aliyev of Azerbaijan or Kocharian in Armenia. I think that you know, when Saakashvili is given a good talking to by American officials that he actually listens because it's absolutely crucial for him to at least that's the way he sees it for Georgia to join NATO and become integrated much more effectively in European structures. So I think regarding Saakashvili actually US government does have significant influence.

PABLO PINTO

Lincoln do you...

LINCOLN MITCHELL

Yeah I'll just make a few comments. I'm a little bit I guess, upset, just internally because I think of myself as a supporter of Georgia as a friend of Georgia, as somebody who takes Georgia's sides in international conflicts, often irrationally because it's Georgia. It's not my country, but it's Georgia and I like it. So that's the spirit in which I've made these comments. Also by my profession, by my scholarship, my focus is Democracy. I know how much a lot of things are better. If you walked around the old city of Tbilisi in 2002, and walked around it now you wouldn't recognize it. I mean it is like night and day. And the woman who made that comment is 100% right. But I think Democracy is important and it's uniquely important in Georgia and we have to have an honest discussion about that. This question of what do you do with the old people, so to speak is a very difficult one. I hope to be an old person one day. [LAUGHTER] And I'm not sure of the answer, and obviously there are unique challenges in the former Soviet Union, but I think you don't talk down to them, you don't say, "We have the right answers and get out of the way." And you engage them in the process. And sometimes you get to policies that they're not going to like. But having invested in the process earlier you're gonna get a better reaction in the long run. What should/will the US do if the post-election Saakashvili government cracks down as a paraphrase of the question? It's obviously a two part question, I'll answer the second part first. What will they do? What they're doing now. What should they do? It really depends. I mean at that point, I think the US government has to make a decision. Are we really in the business of developing

Democracy in Georgia? Or are we in the business of building a relationship with a relatively important state, and supporting that government. And if they opt for the latter, that's OK. As an American that's an OK decision for our government to make. Maybe as a Georgia fan I'd prefer the former, but I can certainly understand the reasoning for the latter. And I just think there needs to be, from the American side, all I would ask is that a decision be made. We decide what we want and we create a program that gets us where we want. It doesn't seem like a crazy idea. Where is the golden medium? This is a difficult one. And you know, I admittedly am an advocate of Democracy broadly and probably have a higher tolerance for chaos than some. But I'm still not 100% sure that this is the real question, I mean that there are an awful lot of undemocratic regimes with weak rules of law and chaos. And there's an awful lot of Democratic regimes, Democratic governments with good rule of law and order. And I would say frankly the United States, I mean it can be a little nutty, but there's a fair amount of stability in this country. People for the most part, obey the laws, and I think we have a reasonably strong Democracy. So I just don't, I mean where is the golden medium? The short answer is I don't know. The longer answer is I'm not sure that that, I think that that's a way of thinking that reflects an important question but perhaps not the whole picture. I'm not gonna touch the NATO issue because others have and it's not my area of expertise.

Where is the opposition television in the United States? The first thing I would say is what we're really talking about is independent television. Television or newspapers or whatever that really are in no way influenced, supported sponsored by the government. And the answer is there's a lot of that in the United States. Where is the opposition television? Obviously if we have a President Clinton or Obama, you'll see it pretty fast on FOX, [LAUGHTER] where is it now in the Clinton administration? I would say *The New York Times* [UNCLEAR] television is at this point an opposition media outlet. And

it's not an unimportant one and I'm hoping that no one here is from the *The New York Times* and is gonna attack me for saying that. [LAUGHTER] But as a fourth generation reader of *The New York Times* I feel comfortable enough saying that. There are NPR, Radio Pacifica, these are opposition to this government media outlets, and they're important. They're not the biggest in the country, but they're important. Individual, *The Daily Show* on Comedy Central is an enormously influential program, and enormously opposition to Bush. And I don't speak Georgian well enough to know if there's anybody on Georgian television that just makes fun and admittedly sometimes in a childish way, of the President the way you see there. We can laugh at *The Daily Show*, we're supposed to laugh at *The Daily Show*. But the point is a real one. There are, what's his name, Keith Olbermann on MSNBC. These are, these are not networks, but these are networks that are independent, running very oppositional programming. So and again, I don't understand the harm of Imedi, even if we assume all the bad things about Badri [PH] are true, I'd take the risk. If I were advising the Georgian government of how to build a Georgian state.

PABLO PINTO

OK thank you so much. We are way past our schedule. And thank you the audience and the panelists.

[APPLAUSE]