*Information about interviewee:*

*Tengiz Pkhaladze is the advisor of the President of Georgia and the former secretary of Foreign Affairs. The Interview was conducted in Tbilisi, Georgia.*

*R= Respondent – Tengiz Pkhaladze*

*I=Interviewer – Sam Wrighton*

I: When did Georgia realise that Russian passportization was occurring?

R: It started quite long ago, let's say in the last century, in the early 90s after the collapse of the Soviet Union. When Georgia and other former Soviet republics became formerly independent sovereign states. Specifically in Georgia, we can talk about the Caucasus which can talk a bit more about later, but it is a very sensitive, very important area and specifically Georgia as a gateway to this element. Gateway of Russia power, projection of Russia's power in this part of the world, as far as Georgia started forming, after becoming independent it's obvious, but forming its own foreign policy, or other policies, then Russia decided to give Georgia a lesson. Keep us on a short leash. They tested first, I was in the government first, we heard this information that we checked officially with the Russian officials which they did not like, but we learned that in different parts of South Ossetia, including also Abkhazia, they started issuing Russian passports. The reaction from the Georgian side was quite negative, then we started talking among ourselves about the reasons why Russia wanted to do this. Again, I heard a couple of years ago Russia had a new doctrine or foreign policy in which they say that Russia has power to defend to anybody which considers themselves a Russian citizen, any place, globally. I think this was one of their elements, Russia's passportization, but not totally that. If you speak about Georgia, if you speak about Abkhazia, South Ossetia it was a pretext, and if we speak about whatever happened in South Ossetia in 2008, it started a long time ago, I always say maybe centuries ago. Russia's interest towards the Caucasus, was quite obvious many many years ago, so this conflict, Ossetia and Abkhazia have conflict with Georgia, this trap Russia purposely laid down many, many years ago and they made a decision to activate it. Using whatever happened from our side as a pretext or an excuse to move ahead and that’s how it started. The history of this war is quite well known and passportization was one of the basic elements of that. If we speak a bit about a different issue, we can be critical about the Russian empire, Russian or Soviet Empire, but whatever they were doing, my family for example, along with millions of Soviet families, we were victims of Stalin's purges of 1937, then I retrieved documents and my grandfather was executed in 1937. I retrieved some documents from archives, which were fabricated it legally appropriated, there is a verdict and sentence to execute. This sentence was proved by 3 male witnesses saying 'yes, we verified that this person was a Soviet enemy of the state'. Whatever Russia is doing, this passportization included, Russia legalise it. Legally they say 'ok, these guys are citizens of the Russian Federation and we will do whatever we can just to defend their security, their safety, whatever'. This is one of their tools. Naturally it is much broader. Passportization is one of the elements of the power projection since the dissolution of the Soviet Union. In Soviet times it was easier to control, but after the after the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the emerging of the independent republics, Russia and I heard this so many times in Moscow, Russia wants to control. Russian empire Czars wanted to control the Caucasus, for whatever reason, from both sides, that was an issue when they started this war in the Causes in the 18th Century, and then until the dissolution of the Soviet Union, and the emerging of these independent republics, Georgia and Azerbaijan, it was obvious for Russia that they lost control of the caucuses and they needed to, and they started whatever they were doing up until now, and passportization was the element of Russia's offensive to increase influence in this part of the world, because the Caucasus as a gateway and Georgia is a small but very important gateway in this bigger gateway. With this war in 2008 Russia accomplished what they were thinking, after the dissolution of the Soviet Union, now they can control the Caucasus, they broke centuries when the south was in Russia, and now they can control the Caucasus from both sides, from Abkhazia and South Ossetia. It is about territories, not about the Abkhazians or Ossetians, they do not care about them, they do not care much about Georgia, but they care about the territories, about security, projection of their power, and access to power from different parts of the world. During Soviet times, the Caucasus were a very important strategic point to reach from the Middle East, Asia. Ossetia was a corridor going from that part of the Caucasus up to Afghanistan and further. It is not only about conflict between Georgia and Russia or Abkhazia and Ossetia, there are bigger strategic elements to this. We summarise it being about the projection of Russian security power, hard power, and maybe promotion of their soft power. Geographically, I have spoken about this issue a lot with different foreigners Sam, and if you look geographically at this part of the world, you will find out that Russia and Georgia, Georgia does not neighbour Russia directly. There are these Muslim enclaves between us. Which is now part of the Russian Federation Chechnya, Dagestan and what is ironic is that, how many years have passed since Russia's Caucasian war, the fought in the Caucasus for more than 40 years, but they still have problems there. Putin, personally you know, and his regime, still have problems in these enclaves, in Chechnya, Dagestan. Putin is in full control, if we speak about vertical control, in Russia, but if we speak about Kadiroa, if we speak about Dagestan, he needs to fix these relations and start over. It is not that they are in Putin's and Moscow's control, of course, in this regard, Russians are taking this into account their own power. This passportization is technical. You issue a passport to whoever, to an Ossetian, to an Abkhazian, but passportization for Russians is much wider, much deeper, how to dominate and to humiliate the other side.

I: With regards to the conflict, did passportization change anything, practically from the Georgian side? Did it alter the way Georgia had to deal with the territories?

R: Passportization was, as we say, a fact on the ground, we knew that it existed. We knew that Ossetians and Abkhazians had Russian passports. But there are some nuances with this regard. We know that the Ossetian are happy with their Russian passport, in Tskhinvali

region, if we speak about this kind of territory, we know, from my information, that close to 30,000 Ossetian living in Tskhinvali and ironically this part of the territories is recognised by Russia and another couple of states, as an independent states, where there are close to half a million North Ossetia, and the capital of Northern Ossetia is an autonomous republic. Passportization as an element is different in Abkhazia where the spirit of independence, sovereignty, desire to keep Abkhazia is very high. As I said, Ossetians are happy with their Russian passport, and there are quite strong sentiments to join the Russian Federation, and they have referendums or whatever. In Abkhazia, being happy, I would say, technically about passportization, it was interpreted by the Abkhaz as a counterbalance to Georgia. In general, passportization or Russification, did not make them happy. The sentiment for independents, for keeping their own language, identity, culture is quite strong. Russians understand that and obviously passportization is a legal element also, and with your own passport, Russian, Georgia, British, you can travel with it, but Ossetians and Abkhazians cannot travel abroad with their passport. The international community did not recognise the passports of Ossetians and Abkhazians. It is quite confusing this situation, as anything Russia tries to accomplish is. Instead of resolution issues and problems, they usually confuse and create more. It backfires to Russia, if you look, I will send this very interesting document, with different scenarios, for 2030, the developments that may happen in Russia. Many things may happen in Russia, and this passportization they used directly to humiliate Georgia, it may, by 2030, someone from Russian states, may say 'if Abkhazia is independent, why are we not independent?'. I am just exaggerating, this may happen, it may not. This passportization has also a negative side for Russia's territorial integrity, Russia's political stability. Until Putin's power, until he has power to control and dominate internally in Russia, it may work, but if something happens, and things happen usually, this passportization may work quite against Russia's interest and their own internal stability. I think. Nobody wants Russia to be unstable to be crumbling. It is not in the interest of Georgia, but things happen. You know Russia's peace agreement, Russia was happy just a couple of months before the Bolshevik Revolution, then boom, it exploded. Sometimes things just explode in Russia, physically and politically and whatever, unfortunately.

I: Do you believe that there are any humanitarian elements to passportization?

R: There could be. You know, if you spoke to some Russian experts, they may explain or talk to you, that it is humanitarian, that Georgia is not controlling Abkhazians or Ossetians, and now they are independent. That Abkhazia and South Ossetia doesn't have the capacity to take care of their own citizens, medically and so on. I've heard this so many times from Russians. If you care that Russia doctors will treat you in Abkhazians or Ossetian children, we are not against that. I strongly doubt that Russia has enough capacity. That is what I heard from many diplomats posted in Georgia, the UK ambassador they from time to time travel to Abkhazia, less to Ossetia or Tskhinvali, they come back devastated. Nothing is happening there. There is no humanitarian assistance, coming from Russia, as you describe, Russia quite absolutely correctly said, have their own demographic problems, their own humanitarian problems to take of their own citizens. I was looking at amazing photos of Moscow restaurants, I travelled a lot, I've never seen such high quality, but you just need to go 5 or ten kilometres and it’s like the stone age. It is like anything else, in terms of empire, just to play these games, as usually happens in Russian history, it is very unfortunate because, Russia's stability is very important. These games usually backfire on Russians. I doubt, for example, a couple of Abkhazian leaders, whom I knew quite well, they were treated in Moscow hospital, things like this happen in any place. If we place this in this Russian humanitarian assistance, they were treated there and unfortunately, they passed away. So the capacity to use their humanitarian assistant capacity wise it is so weak. Russia is weak. Russia is strong militarily, security wise, but humanitarian and economic capacity is so weak, and I doubt that they can practically help Ossetians and Abkhazians. They use passportization, in a very clear-cut way, politically. They use this to undermine us. They are doing this, using the same pattern, in Ukraine and Donbas, they are using it there, if they find it necessary, they can do it elsewhere. They've done it in Moldova. It is technical, legal, and there is no obligation, any time they feel it appropriate, they can say, 'ah we need to defend our citizens'. They can use this as a pretext to move around. It is about neighbourhood, they are not talking about Russian citizens in the UK, or the United States of America, or Europe. What I heard about, that nobody talks about by the way, which will be very interesting for your study: you know when we speak about Russian Empire and the war in the Caucasus, they know that they used, for example, they didn't use passportization by that time, but they used, quite effectively, Russian Cossacks, and they created military fore points in the Caucuses, using these Russian Cossacks, which used to be quite independent, by that time. What I heard now, they played a very important and active role in conquering the Caucasus, these Russian Cossacks, and they settled there. What I heard, travelling to Jordan a couple of years ago, with Russian activities in this part of the world, Russia is now very active in this part of the world, the Middle East, they are using now Chechens, as they used in the 18th Century Cossacks. They are creating Chechen fore points in different parts of Syria. So anytime, Chechens are formally citizens of the Russian Federation, it is hypothetical, we don't want this to happen, but they could say 'ah we need to defend our citizens in Jordan or Syria'. These are just kind of political games played by Russia and I am not an expert, so maybe other countries are doing this, but Russia has used this passportization in this story. Whatever Russia is doing, these are messages coming from Russia to their Western partners, saying we care about our neighbourhood. You need to realise that Russia wants to be recognised in this part of the world. Russian interpretation of what this neighbourhood means, I personally have a problem with this,

I: There is a paradox here. You say that Russian passportization is a technical, legal process, yet by conducting it, they violate international laws and norms relating to territorial sovereignty. Passportization itself, however, is in a legal grey area.

R: You know my friend, when we speak about Russia and their only interpretation. If you talk to Russia, that is my message to my Western colleagues and Russian perspectives. I talk so long about that, with your Professor, Neil Macfarlane. We can talk and we understand for example, as a Georgian for example, I can understand why the West needs Russia as a partner, because the Westerners need to fix different issues in different parts of the world, and they need Russian capacity. They will never be friends, loving each other, but they need to manage this relationship, but my message to my western partners, is, of course we understand that you may need Russia in Syria, in South China, in arms control it is obvious, but on the other hand, to have so called cooperative Russia, not a friendly Russia. To be cooperative here and there. You will never have this Russia, until Russia fixes its relationship with its immediate neighbours. You will never have Russia cooperate with you, the UK, the USA, with Germany, with NATO, with the EU. The same Russia is using passportization dealing with countries like Jordan with Azerbaijan or whatever. Russians interpret in a different way with you the West, even with us, the Georgians, notions like cooperation, engagement, neighbourhood, security, stability, passportization even, as far as we are talking about this issue. Talking with Russians, they do not care. I remember talking with a Russian, a very good friend of mine, I said "Peter, why do you like Abkhazians more than Georgians?". He started laughing his head off. I said "why". He said, "you are so naive, because we hate them, we hate them, and we hate you too. What we need is our territory". He said, "it is not about me, I do not care about your territory", but there are some people in Moscow which look at Georgia, Abkhazia, Ossetia as a piece of territory to project their power. That is how Russians look this region. It is also about mental maps, Sam, due to, I don't know, sometimes I think it is genetic, some kind of DNA, they still think that it still belongs to their own territory still. I have so many times with Russian close friends, saying 'ah, are you happy you have independence" and that's it. In the early 90s, Neil and I thought that it was a generational thing, that young Russians would understand this, and they would be different. They are no different. They are the same, imperialistic and maybe they care less about Georgia, they do not care about Georgia and Azerbaijan but the sentiments. Let's use as a metaphor, passportization is an instrument to project their own power, to control and dominate. When I talk to them, I ask them 'why do you need to dominate, what is the purpose?', they start in Russia saying, 'you betrayed us, you are pro-American, you are pro-European'. You have had so many times this typical Russian argument. So passportization, it started as a kind of technical element, issuing passports, but it has behind it, in the beginning it was done to deliver as many Russian passports as possible, and keeping Georgia closer to Russia. Later, it is about power. They can use this passport anytime for different reasons, humanitarian, military, security, cultural, trade, economic, so they think in that way, but on the other hand, if you talk to Ossetians and Abkhazians, I doubt that Russia has accomplished this. Abkhazians are using these Russian passports to travel to Moscow to do some business there and this and that. But I would not say they love Russians more with these Russian passports, that is not the case.

I: Why does Russia bother with rhetoric? Who is it aimed at?

R: Again it is about how Russians interpret international law. If you ask Russians why you did this in Crimea, why you did this in Ossetia, you recognised for example, Ossetia and Abkhazia, why did you do that? They have their own interpretation of international law. They can sit down with you and talk for hours with you. For me it is absolutely unacceptable, but that its, that is Russian psyche. If we speak about explanations about politicians and policy makers, if you stop some people in Moscow's streets and talk to them about the same issues that we have been talking about, they do not care about it, they don't care about Abkhazia, Ossetia or Georgia. By the way, very thorny issues, passportization, if you walk in Tbilisi, it is very hot, in Tbilisi, they are full of Russian speaking tourists., they do not go to Abkhazia for vacation, where they have Russian passports, they prefer to come to Georgia. I was in Batumi, you know it’s a city on the Black Sea shore, last year, we were on the beach with my family and I saw that somebody was coming to take a place on the beach, in his swimming whatever, and he was with his kids and wife, he went to swim and his body guards were in black, he said I am 'Russian from St Petersburg' it is very hot, i said, I saw that there are big stones on the beach, so why don't you go to beaches in Abkhazia, where the beaches are like paradise. One day, if you went to Abkhazia it was like going to paradise, now it is devastated. I said, why didn't you go there, it is independent, it is closer to you. He said, 'it is insecure for me to go there'. This is the Russian paradox. They invested so much. Passportization is also about money, you need to invest a lot. And now they cannot go there because it is insecure and indeed there are a lot of things, a lot of news coming, they are attacking Russian tourists, they kidnap they do this. This is kind of a soup opera made by Russia, they did passportization and they come to Georgia, they enjoy life here. Tskhinvali is not secure; they do not want to go to Abkhazia. They prefer to say here. So I asked, why do you need the bodyguards on the beach?' He said it’s about prestige, he said 'I am Russians'. Everybody was looking at him, with 6 bodyguards. They do not want to go to Abkhazia, they invest so much politically and financially into this passportization process and that is it.

I: Can I talk with you about Ukraine?

R: Yes, it is my big pain because I like this country, I have so many friends there, but they are ironically they are going to go through the same process which Georgian has gone through since the early 90s since we became independent. Of course, we are not perfect, and it will take long before Georgia becomes... international observers keep saying Georgia is better than Armenia, Armenia is better than Azerbaijan, I would agree ok maybe. But I would love Georgia to be better than Bucharest in Romania, maybe we are on the same level. I wouldn’t talk like that to my Romanian friends. They say Romania is the second Roman Empire, you have a lot of sentiments like this. Someday, maybe Georgia, in some time, it could be compared to the Baltic states, that is my dream. But we are moving, sometimes in a very clumsy way. It is complicated to move ahead; it is not easy. The purpose of why I am recalling this. Remember I have been in Georgian politics since 1989 and I was in the process of transition from the Soviet to whatever we are now, what we call democracy, but I see that we are still climbing, and it is not the end of the story and it won't end. Democracy doesn't end. It is a permeant process of perfection. We are better of course, but unfortunately Ukraine, which is much bigger, very complex, very diverse, very polarised, has to go the same way which Georgia went through throughout these 30 years. I hope Ukrainians will succeed, but it won't be an easy transition, because if we speak about Russia and the Caucasus, it is one element that Russia would have in the future. How Russia will deal with the Caucuses in general, with geography, and how Russia will deal with their relations with Georgia and Azerbaijan. If you look at any map, we are just small elements of this geographical landscape, but Ukraine is huge and unfortunately Russians for them it is rather painful what kind of country Ukraine is coming. For Russia of course, Russian history, Russian psyche, Russian psychology, their perception of the world, Ukraine matters very much, so we always say that everything depends on Ukrainians but it is about Russian interference, and Russian interpretation of power and Russian understanding that if they keep a weak neighbour around Russia, it would make Russia more secure and stronger. It is absolutely rubbish. I talk to them openly at public gatherings, saying you need to have stronger neighbours, stronger are your neighbours, stronger you are yourself. But their psyche their interpretation is absolutely different. Regarding Ukraine, of course, they care, but it would be a long long transition for Ukraine. I heard from some very very close Ukrainian friends, they said to me, 'Tedo, or one, cannot even imagine how deeply Russians have penetrated the political fabric of Ukraine, it is not only about military, or intelligence. On different levels, on different levels of society, penetration. Georgia is a state, fully independent, make our own decisions, standing with both feet on the ground, you need to get rid of this penetration. It does mean that you should not have any relations with Russia, but it is about domination, about controlling, not letting you, Ukraine, Georgia, Azeris, to take control of your own business. Of our own life. In Georgia it was terrible, it was not easy, it is still going on, but we are relatively small, but if you look at Ukraine, which is close to 50 million, the geography is different, in the middle of Europe. Russian of course cares about that. Whatever happens with Crimea. Crimea is a bit different, emotionally and historically different, but what is happening in Eastern Ukraine is terrible.

I: One theory I have heard from some Ukrainian journalists, who have said, there might be a benefit from Crimea and Donbas, in that they lost the territory, but they have greater solidarity on the rest of the state.

R: Yes, solidarity, it is as if whatever has happened in Ukraine, Crimea and Donbas, it has consolidated Ukrainians. They are closer unified, stronger. Sam in Ukraine specifically, in any country, independent countries like Georgia, Azerbaijan, it is not only about relations with Russia or whoever, it is about making our own countries function as democracies, economies. It is about making people’s daily life normal. It is about making our own countries stronger domestically. We try to make a lot of steps in this direction, we have progress and this progress has been acknowledge by the international community. When you look around it is a different country, but there is still progressed to be made. When you look at Ukraine, it is huge, and you need to not only take care of relations with Russia, but take care of your daily lives of your citizens and make them believe that whatever you are doing is for them, and not just about improving relations with Russia and fixing relations with them. In the end, as it happened and is still going on with Georgia, it is not only about post-Soviet space, the key element is domestic, make your own country normal. Institutionalised democracy with strong institutions and economical diverse and democratic. We tried to do that in Georgia and people acknowledged that we are more of less successful in that regard, but Ukraine needs to the same thing in a much broader and more diverse format. They are so big; they are so diverse. Demographically, ethnically they are so different. You have Hungarians, Romanians, Russians, Jews, and these are different emotions, histories, legacies, habits and you need to take care of this, and it is not only relations with Russia. Russia uses your weaknesses, they are doing this up until now, they are doing this in Ukraine. If these negative events, horrible events, terrible events in Ukraine, I have heard the same thing, it is consolidated and made Ukrainian sovereignty unified, it is very good. But they need to take care of their business. It is not only about Donbas; it is about making the people's lives who live in Donbas better than they used to be.

I: Do you believe dual citizenship should be interpreted as threat to national security?

R: I am working for some private company, we are building a huge deep-sea port on the Black Sea. We have a lawyer, his name is Levat, I said to him, after I saw your questions, I said Levat, can you give me your interpretation on dual citizenship. He said it has two sides, there is nothing bad in that, but if you talk about dual citizenship, Georgia-UK, Georgia-Germany, Georgia-USA, where it is legally permitted, but when you speak about Russia. Anything you talk about Russia, the first thing that comes to one mind, you are scared, every time you think about Russia, you never interpret it in a positive way, you always try to find something negative in that. We talked about that, when you have Georgians with this Russian citizenship, it's amazing, a lot of Russians are moving to Georgia to live, they say 'ah we feel secure, we love it, it is much better than in Russia, we can open our own businesses'. It is much easier to do here; it takes one hour or less to open a business. They may apply for Georgian citizenship but in the end with this legacy we have with Russians, we welcome them. People are very nice people, a bit emotional and a bit crazy but they are very friendly towards foreigners. We have politicians in the parliament that say ' there are a lot Russian songs in the different restaurants', but it is ok, but in the end with Russians and Ukrainians, when you stop thinking about the legacy of relations with Russia and how Russians may interpret, you saw 'wow, ok, if you know for example, there is a Russian living in Georgia, any place, if some day, someone in Moscow says, 'something negative is going on towards our citizens, in Georgia' and they use this as a pretence and an excuse to do something, and that is always there, maybe it is psychological and maybe Russians would never do this, but I say this just for you to think about it. We are always scared of hard power. It is indeed scary. Even the way Mr Putin demonstrates his controls and this and that, and Russians are still quite capable. What about soft power? Hard power as an instrument for domination and control, but can Russia use soft power elements for their domination and control? Because, you know, Russians come and they settle in Georgia, they open business, they are happy. For example, my grandson goes to French school, and I took him yesterday and I saw an Ethiopian, he was a tall man, bringing his daughter, I said "Hello! What are you doing here?' He said, "I live here". There were some Russians, it is okay. Ethiopians would never do that, but some day, Russia might say 'there are some problems with our citizens in Georgia'. The balance between positive soft power and negative soft power again in the West you didn't think about it long, and in a very precise way, but in countries like Georgia, were the collective memory is still very much wary. I am not telling you I think about it every day but from time to time, I read these different things, watching different videos, I think ' wow, I like my new Russian neighbour'. By the way, we have a lot of Iranians, our office is on the left side of the river in Tbilisi and sometimes it feels like you are in Tehran. A lot of Iranians, a lot of them open with no scarves, they enjoy living here. It is ok. There are a lot of Russians, there are different restaurants in the neighbourhood, but I never think about Iran. We have a long present history with Iran and Turkey, but I never think about Iranians or Turks. A lot of Chinese for example. Russians are very nice, those who are here, and in general, it is not about people of course. When I meet them, I think it is so nice. Then I come home I think, it's good, but on the other hand, if Russia uses them like they used passportization, some ethnic Russians, you know how it happens, something happened with me in Georgia. It is not only political steps made by Russians, but also mental legacy which would be on your mind permanently. That is reality. There is no way for us to change geography, unfortunately or maybe fortunately, but we need to live with our neighbours. But Russia needs to acknowledge that it is over, there will not be an empire they had centuries ago, there will not be an empire like the Soviet Union, a unique one. They need to recognise independence. They still have problems recognising the independence of Georgia and Ukraine. I was the ambassador of Georgia to the United States for 8 years, and I talked about it a lot in speeches, in the end, stories and interpretations, saying the Finlandization would be very good for Ukraine, to deal with Russia. A friend of mine was a famous diplomat, who was ambassador of Finland to Germany and Russia, he wrote an answer to a speech, Russia's future to become democratic, vibrant, state would depend a lot on whether Ukraine succeeds to become, independent and democratic as possible. But Russia looks at this thinking, we need to make Ukraine as weak as possible, it would be better. We need to make Georgia weaker. We need to implement passportization. It is not only about changing, it is about a mental revolution, it usually takes long, and do we need drastic changes in Russia, I don't know. But in the end, they need to recognise it is over, whatever it used to be, during Soviet, imperial Czarist, it will never come to an end. Being powerful doesn't mean that you should dominate. There are different elements of that. Before Russians understand that, do be a different definition of a powerful country, then tanks. I will tell you, in the middle of the 90s, that again gives you a very clear cut mental dilemma of Russia, I was interviewed in the mid-90s by a most influential Russian TV channel, about Russian-Georgian relations and we talked long, journalists published this article and the title of this article was 'What is Russia's interest in Georgia, to have banks or tanks?' and there was an interview with me and we talked about this and that. The next day I get a call from Moscow, a very close Russian friend of mine, who unfortunately passed away, very nice and highly educated. He said, 'what kind of bullshit you published?' I said, "what are you talking about". He said, 'the title of it: whether Russia wants tanks or banks". I said, "what is the problem with it", he said "we want both. We want to have to tanks and we want to have banks". So until Russia's approach to anybody, specifically towards its immediate neighbourhood, it is like this, we want both, Russia will be problematic not only for Georgia, Ukraine, and Baltic States, it will be a big problem for Russians, because in the end, it will undermine Russia's stability and security. Because you cannot live permanently with this intention to dominate. If you are not making your country, domestically stronger, you cannot project your power in Aleppo, if 10km from Moscow, people are hungry.