

Tbilisi Report

May 30--June 11, 1995

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Tuesday May 30, 1995

Left Atlanta at 5:30 p.m. En route to Frankfurt and thence to Tbilisi.

Wednesday, May 31, 1995

Uneventful flight. Eight hours, leaving Atlanta 5:30 p.m., arriving Frankfurt 8:30 a.m., then faced with uninviting prospect of waiting until the Air Georgia plane arrives from Tbilisi, which is usually late in the afternoon. The Admirals Club at Frankfurt is a lifesaver. Only place to wait, other than milling around the huge airport. A complicating factor that we have become used to is that one can never find out where the Air Georgia ticket counter will be. Changes every time, and the airport authorities deny there is any such airline. The man at the Admirals Club now recognizes me when I ask him to find out the counter: "It's you again," even though I haven't seen him for eight months.

Then a long wait in line with other Georgians, and an argument inevitably about whether you will pay for the extra bags. Usually don't have to, but did this time (\$60 for 15 kgms). Sitting in lobby now waiting for the gate assignment, which means the plane hasn't yet arrived. Usually takes nineteen hours from the time I lift off at Atlanta until I collapse in my Tbilisi bed. Easily the worst hours of the trip, with the possible exception of flying Air Georgia (a "Babyflot"). The time difference is another problem: six hours ahead of us in Germany, nine hours in Tbilisi. I generally count on getting back in sync on the fifth day after I arrive.

Now at the gate awaiting arrival of bus to take us out to the plane. The plane was ready to leave on time, almost unheard of. Russian; a TU 154. Looks very much like a Lockheed Tristar. About 200 people. Very little space. I am sitting now with my face four inches from the seat back in front of me (I measured it), one leg scrunched under the seat, the other one out in the aisle. I have quietly promised myself I am going to investigate business class on Air Georgia. The restrooms have one cloth towel. The Georgians are a convivial bunch: vodka is passed around liberally; there is much walking around and networking; many card games. Virtually everyone smokes. Just had some serious turbulence; the Georgians and I crossed ourselves, and absolute silence reigned for several minutes.

I am typing this on a really super laptop: the Macintosh 520 color Powerbook. The hard disk on my office computer is named Osler, so I named this one Osler Jr. Then I remembered the name of Osler's son, and renamed it Revere. I am feeling very historical. On this trip I am reading *Order out of Chaos*, the new biography of John Shaw Billings by Carleton Chapman. I am just beginning to appreciate what a truly extraordinary person he was. Founder of: the National Library of Medicine; the New York Public Library; and the Public Health Service. A significant participant in the structuring of Johns Hopkins Medical School and the building of Johns Hopkins Hospital.

Arrived at midnight; about twenty-two hours since leaving Atlanta. Met at airport by several friends: Irina Chanturishvili, mother of Levan who has been living with me and going to MBA school at Emory; Archil Kobaladze, who is professor of medicine and head of our office in

Georgia; Dr. Zangaladze, father of Andro, a neurologist who has been at Emory a year; Rima Beriashvili, course director of pathology who spent two months at Emory last year; and Gaucha, my driver for my time here, and his wife Tamuna.

Went to Betsy Haskell's guest house, and spent some time talking with Archil about what is occurring here before collapsing in bed. We plan on going to Borjomi early tomorrow morning. This is a mountain resort where we have joined with the Ministry of Health to put on a workshop conference about health reform¹.

Betsy Haskell, who owns the guest house, became a friend the first time I visited Georgia in August 1992. Wife of executive at a computer company of some sort who suddenly died in his forties. She became involved with Congress in providing educational tours for congressional delegations from foreign countries who came to Washington to learn about democracy, and became friends with the Republic of Georgia, and one of their economic advisers. Came here in 1991, has been here since. She had asked that I bring \$2800 in cash, since some of her guests had paid with travelers checks. There are no banks here that supply dollars, although they are the favored exchange, with rubles next, and the official Georgian currency, coupons (about \$1 million = \$1) being avoided like the plague. I did this, and was told otherwise they would have been unable to meet their payroll this week due to shortage of dollars. I had brought other things for Betsy, including a huge amount of loose cotton used to remove makeup--in high demand, can't get here.

Went to my room, same one I had a few months ago. Betsy has just opened an annex, and had scheduled me to be in a new suite that is her pride and joy at \$175 a night. I E- mailed this was too grand, not to mention too expensive, and how about my usual \$75 a night room? I collapsed dead in bed at 2:30 a.m.

Thursday, June 1

Awakened at six-thirty, after four hours of sleep, which followed the twenty-two hours deprivation. Reminds me of being a house officer. Awakened to a rooster crowing. A beautiful late spring-early summer day. Breakfast at Betsy's, then to Borjomi. A two hour trip through beautiful countryside--the "heart of Georgia," as Archil describes it. Flat fields with wheat, large mountains, the river Gura, which arises in Turkey, flows through Georgia and ends up in the Black Sea. The houses were old and in need of paint and such. Factories were dilapidated, often abandoned. But fantastically beautiful land.

Arrived at Borjomi and immediately stepped into a mess. The conference had been set up by our Public Health school, our Partnership office in Tbilisi and the Ministry of Health. I quote from

¹Our budget last year was about \$250,000. This year, due to how US AID was with our efforts, it is \$800,000. We have three big projects and a number of smaller ones. Health Reform is one of the three big ones. We have been working with the Ministry of Health on Health Reform since June 1993 now. Shevardnadze signed the first decree for the new system when I was here Dec. 1994: minimum benefits package for all citizens; an insurance fund contributed to by employees and employers; and increasing privatization. This year Jim Setzer, Deb McFarland and Richard Saltman of Emory Public Health will spend sixteen weeks in Georgia, working closely with the Ministry leaders and regional district leaders.

The other two big areas are an EMS training project for firemen and policemen, and a "baby National Library of Medicine" project.

the invitation to it:

The Ministry of Health and the Atlanta-Tbilisi Health partnership invite you to attend the fourth Borjomi workshop on the reform of the Georgian health care system 28 May - 2 June 1995. The workshop will analyze and discuss the current status of the health care reform program which includes the reorganization of the health care delivery system, development of new mechanisms to finance health services and changes in the management of the health system. Plans for the next stages of the reforms will be discussed and adopted.

The daily schedule of presentations was impressive. The Minister of Health began, followed by an analysis of the changes by the associate minister in charge of reform (who is exceptionally able), followed by "Mechanisms for Setting Prices" etc. Larry Gage, who is President of the American Hospital Association, and is an influential Washington lawyer closely associated with the American International Hospital Alliance (AIHA; the organization which funnels funds from US AID to our partnership) spoke about starting a Georgian Hospital Association modeled upon the AHA. Each succeeding day had a similar schedule.

The problem was that virtually all the players disappeared after the first day, leaving the two faculty from Emory and a few others. The statement was that the International Monetary Fund had declared health care reform the only successful program in Georgia and had asked for detailed plans for further implementation in a few days, so the Minister and his associates all had to return posthaste to Tbilisi to prepare the report. Whatever the reason, the two Emory faculty were absolutely furious when I arrived and virtually ready to leave. They considered their efforts to be onanism. They did agree to continue with the people who were present, and in fact had a highly productive day. (I sat in a corner and slept intermittently, being barely able to sit upright.) The recommendations they are writing at the same table I am typing this are excellent. We are about to have a Georgian dinner and then all return to Tbilisi. I have braced myself for a necessary postmortem on what went wrong and what needs to be done so it won't happen again, else the Public Health faculty, who are vital to the health reform efforts, won't come back for the fifteen weeks over here they have planned for this academic year.

We ended the meeting with a Georgian dinner, complete with toasts, a lot of food. The day turned out successfully, with everyone present, including the faculty, agreeing it had been productive. In the car back we discussed what to do, and concluded Jim and Debbie needed to come up with explicit plans for their next two visits, including who or what functional level of individual needed to be present, and have the Minister sign them. We will try to accomplish that before Jim leaves five days hence.

Back in Tbilisi at 11 p.m. Had a long talk with Betsy Haskell about the current political situation. Elections are scheduled for Sept/Oct, and so far the constitution under which they will be held has not been completed. Crime seems to be less, and the economic situation is improved.

To bed with gratitude.

Friday, June 2, 1995

Awakened feeling a lot better. A gorgeous day: low sixties I estimate, sunny. Roosters crowing, dogs barking, birds singing. I saw a large number of purple martens out the window, reminding me of the farm where I grew up. I don't see them in Atlanta. Had breakfast with Debbie McFarland and Jim Setzer. They are going later to the Ministry to discuss the conference. My plans are to see potential sites for our partnership office and National Learning Resources Center², and to have lunch with the Ambassador, Kent Brown. He is leaving permanently tomorrow; will be Ambassador in Residence at Emory with the Carter Center beginning in September. He called Archil and asked to have lunch with us. The State Department lets its ambassadors take sabbaticals in universities. State pays half their salary, the university the other half. They are expected to spend half their time teaching and half learning, so to speak. I am really excited about Kent coming to Emory. His presence will help our project immensely, I hope.

Archil and I visited the two potential sites for the Emergency Medical Service (EMS) project, the Partnership office and the Library: The National Learning Resources Center³. The first is in a large old building housing the Minister of Health's new Health Policy Planning Center. No one has totally understood what the Minister's concept is about this, but it seems to be a combination of a think tank plus the people implementing health care reform. There are two areas we might have, one 4000 sq. ft., the other 8000. Huge, solid cement building, probably one of the earliest built after Soviets arrived. Will need some cleaning and remodeling. The money for this is hard to come by, even a small amount of it. Next we went to the National Catastrophe Center, where there were about ten rooms we could use. Recently remodeled. The Center is the nerve plexus of catastrophe response of all sorts. The Director is excited about having the EMS training center. We will train 100 people a month; two week course. Policemen, firemen, etc. It turns out the Soviets many years ago decided to anchor prehospital resuscitation to clinics, and not to firemen and policemen and like as the U.S. did. Today all of the Newly Independent States are hungry for EMS setups like the U.S. One of the most popular things we do. Jim Smith, director of AIHA, has spearheaded the entire effort, and has been a genius at it. Gail Anderson from our faculty at Grady had led it for our partnership, and also has been involved in the entire effort in the NIS.

I left seeing the placement was going to be an extraordinarily difficult decision. The EMS part would fit better into the Catastrophe Center: rooms ready; Director excited and obviously able. Putting it in the other center with the Library and Partnership office, on the other hand, puts all of our people and building together, forms a critical mass, and allows niceties such as computers networked together. We decided to return on Tuesday and agonize some more, meanwhile having worked some on the Library setup.

²We are calling the Georgian NLM the National Learning Resources Center. Carol Burns, the Emory Medical Librarian, is heading up the project. We will have the NLRC (and we have in hand the budget of about \$133,000 for it), a file server at Georgian Technical University, and a Regional Library Network (satellites in Tbilisi at the medical school, hospitals) as well as in important cities such as Kutaisi, Poti, Batumi, Zugdidi and Telavi. The main purpose of my visit this time is doing the preliminary work for the NLRC.

³There was an initial question whether to separate the EMS from the other two. The Minister of Health made it clear though that he wanted all of them together, in the same building he plans to put the WHO Collaborative Center (for maternal and child care) and the World Bank Continuing Education Center. He wants "all aspects of the American way of doing things to be in one place for its impact."

Then lunch with Kent Brown, the U.S. Ambassador who will come to Emory in the fall as Ambassador in residence. He has been ambassador since I began coming here in August 1992, and I like him a lot. We talked at length about Emory and the Carter Center, and the possibilities for him in general. Then a wideranging discussion of the current political and economic situation in Georgia. Elections are due in November, but the new constitution under which they will be held has not been completed. A big holdup is the situation in Abkhazia, which still is independent, and peace talks are continuing with difficulty. The Russians have begun actively supporting reintegration of Abkhazia, but it is clear this will be done only after a war, which has to have Russian support. The economy has continued slow but steady improvement. There is a group called the Mehedrioni (“horsemen”) that was formed initially to aid in national catastrophes, then began involved in the civil war, and were supportive of Shevardnadze. Since then numerous splinter groups have formed, some of which are suspected to be involved in crime. Shevardnadze issued a decree allowing them to be armed some years ago. He has just revoked that decree. The chairman of the joint chiefs of staff of the U.S. was here two weeks ago. His name is Shaklishvili, and his family came from Georgia. He was warmly received. Taken to visit the house of his family, and he was given the deed for him and his brother to own(!). Kent said it was clearly the house of a family of substance many years ago. Archil promptly said there were two branches of the family, one in Eastern and the other in Western Georgia⁴.

After lunch we went to the Partnership Office, which is in the Ministry of Health building. Archil and I spent the afternoon working on my schedule while I am here, and discussing our plans about projects. We visited a meeting that Jim Setzer and Debbie McFarland were having with the Health Reform Task Force. There were frank exchanges relating to the conference held in Borjomi. I sat quietly as tension waxed and waned. The net result at the end of the day was a frank understanding on both sides with respect to the problems, with an amicable resolution. As nearly as I could tell the problems had to do with miscommunication. Or, it may have been that in these situations where two groups of people, one of whom is in severe straits, get together there has to be a bonding ritual! Whatever. The two faculty and the Task Force ended up with a detailed plan of how the faculty will help with health care reform. Deb McFarland is an authority on insurance systems. She will help them write the law setting up the insurance fund, and how it will be regulated, as well as the details of how it will work, even down to the forms to be used. Jim Setzer will be involved in how money flows from one area to another, pricing, and a number of other parts.

Archil and I then went hunting me some deodorant (I always forget something; last winter it was my overcoat). We initially went to the one and only supermarket in Tbilisi, SuperBabylon, a joint venture with a Dutch chain. No deodorant; sold out. Then to a boutique, which had Armani spray deodorant. I sprayed some on my hand, and liked the scent. Price? “\$40.” I decided what was on my hand was worth \$10, and declined to buy it. Finally found some very old stick deodorant that nevertheless worked.

Then we went to check out a new restaurant Archil had heard about. A joint venture with partners in Tbilisi, St. Petersburg and somewhere in Germany. Very elegant. Could be in any American or European city. We decided to come back at night and have dinner with Debbie

⁴Knowledge of genealogy and family is possessed by every Georgian in great detail. The only comparable situation in my experience is the people in Wilkes County, Georgia, where I grew up, where a familiar statement is “Well, of course. He is a Martin, and that is how they are.”

McFarland.

Returned to hotel and had a drink and talk with Betsy Haskell in her new annex. Just across the street from the main one I am staying, and only opened a week ago. Betsy did all the decoration, and it is elegant. Has a huge suite of three rooms. There is an adjoining house that she can buy and decorate for \$50,000 that shares a wonderful garden with the other one. She is agonizing about whether to buy it also. I am betting she will.

The three of us had dinner at the new restaurant. Waiter Tamaz, who is just finishing a hotelier course at Tbilisi State University, and is then going to open his own restaurant. Debbie filled us in on the conversation with the Health Reform Task. We also talked at some length about a possible Health Care Administrators School.

Saturday, May 3

Awakened to another beautiful day. Archil came over at 10:15 and he and I went over our plans, especially the ones for the National Learning Resources Center. We decided we wanted to have a "Charge" from Parliament or the President. From my experiences with the National Library of Medicine and other organizations I have been impressed with how functionally effective such charges are. They are trundled out on all sorts of occasions and pretty much followed. On Monday I will E mail Don Lindberg of the NLM and ask him to send me the NLM's charge, which I remember fairly well, but not in detail. Then we will have a committee made up of the main power players: Minister of Health; Rectors of the major universities; Director of Academy of Sciences; etc. Then an implementation committee of users, including the computer people, librarians, scholars, scientists, a student, etc. Then a Director, two associate directors (one computer, one librarian), and an American Co-Director who will be temporary. A central problem is where to locate the Center administratively: independent, under Ministry of Health, National Library, etc. These questions, plus the names of the committees members I plan to have settled by the time I leave at the end of next week. A lot of delicate politics will be involved.

Archil and I went up a noon to the Metechi Palace Hotel and had beer out on the patio. They have an Austrian beer, Gold Fassl, that is my favorite beer. I have hunted far and wide for it in the U.S., to no avail. The patio has a wonderful view of Tbilisi, high up on a hill, with a gentle wind blowing over it almost constantly. In the far distance there are the sounds of a living city: car horns honking, dogs barking, etc. A peaceful and serene place that is a favorite of mine.

At 1 p.m. Archil and I had lunch with John Stewart. John is here on a Fulbright from the University of Tennessee in Knoxville, and has set up a Public Administration Institute, at the specific request of Shevardnadze. The need for an administrative infrastructure schooled in the methods of the West is palpable, just as there is one for a health administration infrastructure. John and I were in contact before he came over, and he sent me his plan--highly detailed and instructive to me. I am using it as a model for the Learning Resources Center, along with some very shrewd advice from Vladimir Slamecka in Atlanta. Vlad is retired chair of informatics at Georgia Tech, a longtime and valued friend, who now spends his time setting up Internet in underdeveloped countries. John, his wife Nancy, Archil and I had a wonderful two hour session, discussing his experiences with his School, politics and life in the Republic, and advice to Archil and me about our Center. Later this week I will give a lecture to John's students.

Then Irina Chanturishvili and her husband Shio picked me up to spend the rest of day and night with them. Their son Levan Vasadze has lived with me the last two years and I have supported him as he has gotten an MBA at Emory. He graduated three weeks ago. Received a wonderful offer from Coke, and another from an investment bank with headquarters in New York and an operation in Moscow. After several weeks of agony Levan decided to take the Moscow job. Coke was solid and predictable, and he would have ended up comfortably at the top of middle management, probably, or at the lower part of top management. The company from New York was set up by two of Michael Milliken's former partners, and supported financially by the European Redevelopment Fund (or some such name): a "Leveraged Buyout Boutique," as we say in the financial business. It buys and sells companies. Levan decided the latter was more in his style: exciting; lot of potential; stock options.

They took me by a new flat they are building in a twenty story condo building. They had started this in 1990, and only recently have been able to begin to finish it⁵. I made appropriate sounds of admiration, and they took me to one of the rooms and told me it was mine! Shio said this was their return to me for Levan living with me for two years. It is away from the main part of the living space, and they expect me to keep my belongings there, and to use it when I come to Tbilisi. I was stunned, and couldn't quite respond. I murmured appropriate words and decided this required digesting.

We then went on up in the mountains to their current place. Their home in the middle of Tbilisi was destroyed during the uprising in 1991, and the government put them up in Tskaneti, a village of former communist dachas in the hills above Tbilisi. They have what was a summer house there. Only problem is the water is on only about two days a week--the bathtub is their cistern. Tskaneti is also where many Abkhazian refugees are. When we take walks we come across them. Dour is an understatement. No smile or acknowledgement of my greetings. Irina says they are mostly farmers who were driven out of rich farmlands by the Black Sea, losing everything, including in many cases family members. They are clearly desperately unhappy.

While I was in Tbilisi Joyce Neu of the Carter Center of Emory University arrived. President Carter had sent a letter to Shevardnadze expressing interest in the situation, and Joyce was on her way to visit Abkhazia. I spent some time with her and Steve Carrig, who heads the Georgia desk at the State Department a few weeks ago. Steve had just returned from a visit to Abkhazia, and he said the place was totally devastated, populated only by the virulent hatred of the Abkhazians for the Georgians. He pointed out how difficult return to normality will be. There are about 250,000 Georgians run out of Abkhazia, and when and if they return they will live next door to someone who killed their wife or son. At least the fighting has ceased, and talks are occurring. The economic situation of the Abkhazians will undoubtedly play an important role in an eventual resolution. Shevardnadze has made return of the refugees an anchor of his governmental policy. Covert Russian military support of the Abkhazians with military equipment made their victory reality, and now the Russians have withdrawn their support--in return for Georgia becoming a member of the Newly Independent States, and signing leases with Russia

5I helped Irina come to Atlanta for four months last year that she spent with Carol Burns and the Emory library, learning electronic data base searching techniques, and in general learning about modern librarianship. She has been a librarian at Tbilisi State University for several years. She got a job with the United States Information Service a few months ago, and is now the head librarian in the new USIS Library at Tbilisi State. More about this later.

for them to occupy several military bases in Georgia. Speculation has it that Shevardnadze needs to reconquer Abkhazia before the fall elections in order to ensure his election. Probably not true, but I suspect at some time there will be a short war.

I have become close with several of Levan's friends. Young men in their early twenties. Each visit I get together with them on several occasions. They came up and we all had dinner together. They told me that, although the temperature now was sublime, the summer was looking to be unusually hot, with the thermometer reaching 40° Centigrade (104 F) one day last week. Afterwards we walked and talked. Tskaneti is on high hills, or small mountains, and the overlooks are beautiful. There was a gentle breeze, and the air had a brisk freshness to it. Then to bed at the summer house.

Sunday, June 4th

Awakened feeling like it was morning, and not some ungodly U.S. time. I put on my underwear and then automatically reached for my money belt. This is when I realized I had indeed completed my adaptation: it usually takes 4-5 days for me to remember to put on my money belt before I put on my pants and shirt.

This reminded me to reexamine my realization when I arrived a few days ago that for the first time on this trip--my sixth since the first in August 1992--I had no sense of being a stranger in a strange land. I noticed that upon entering the country I felt completely at home, no different than going down to my farm, or up to Marietta. I had no sense of difference, and the lack of this was palpable. I had clearly crossed a threshold.

After breakfast we went down into Tbilisi. There was a flat tire, and I told Irina and Shio about my father's recollection of when he was an eighteen year old young man growing up on the farm, and spending his week-ends in the small town of Washington, Ga. That was around 1915, when cars were just becoming popular, and his family had one. The inner tubes were balloon tubes, and were always getting a puncture and going flat. My father said he and his brothers spent their weekends "fighting, making love (different word--onomatopoeia), and fixing flats"! This is very true in Georgia nowadays. One doesn't go a mile without seeing some poor soul struggling with a flat tire.

I requested we revisit the new flat. I took a lot of pictures, especially of my room. I had recovered, and told them how appreciative I was, and how I was looking forward to it. I said I would start bringing over clothes the next trip to have on my visits.

I had asked Goucha my driver to meet me at 11:30 a.m. At the hotel with his wife Tamuna. They are in their early twenties. I have become fond of both of them, and enjoy spending time with them. We went back to my favorite watering place at the Metechi Palace Hotel, and had beer while looking down on Tbilisi. Tamuna has a degree in English and in computer usage, and translates and types at the Gymnastic Association. She makes \$4 million coupons (Georgian currency) a month: \$5 U.S. Goucha, whom she has been trying unsuccessfully to get to learn English, asked if I could help find her a job. I told them I would press for her to be hired when we got our library working.

At 1 p.m. George, a member of the first group of four medical students who came to Emory

from Tbilisi, and his father picked me up. He had arranged for us to visit the home of Lado Goudiashvili, one of the most famous Georgians painters of this century. Died in late 1980's at about age 90. A member of the group in Paris 1910-20: Picasso; Mogdigliani (his close friend); Alice B Toklas and Gertrude Stein, et al. His granddaughter and her husband Dato occupy his home now. Dato is a Stone Age archeologist and works with some archaeologists from the U.S. excavating sites in Western Georgia, which has rich troves of Stone Age artifacts.

We went into the main room. Huge--I estimate 100 x 80 ft. Ceiling very high--two floors of ordinary home. Gigantic numbers of oil paintings and line drawings--several hundred I estimate. Pictures from every period in a very long life. Studied still lifes from early, Picasso-like abstractions from the middle period, and pastel colored delicately drawn figures from later. An absolutely overwhelming visual impression. To suddenly and unexpectedly walk into that room was one of the more unusual sensations I can remember. Dato took us around and gave a highly informative talk about the pictures, the periods and life of his grandfather-in-law. We went through the large room and five smaller rooms. Then I retraced our steps and took a lot of pictures. In the large room I was most fascinated by a large number of caricatures. Goudiashvili had a virulent hatred of Communism. There were many wickedly vicious caricatures of Stalin and Lenin. One was of beauty imprisoned in a cage, and the Beast Stalin. If they turn out well, I will make some copies and send with this report. In the bedroom the bed faced a wall with a stunning full length portrait of a Balanchine (another friend) ballerina. John Updike had visited the home recently, and had said he would like to stay in that bed forever. On a dresser was a picture of Ted Kennedy and the old man. Kennedy stayed two hours longer than he had planned. There are many of his pictures in the museums, but the ones here were his--Picasso's Picassos. The artist had specified that they were to stay in his home, and anyone and everyone who wished to see them would be welcome. Simply call.

I was asked to sign the guest book. Last signature? Rafsanjhani, about two weeks ago.

We then sat down--me, George, Archil, George's father (a scholar on Iran on the university faculty), Dato--and had a light Georgian lunch and talked. I had been told I would have a Georgian dinner with all eight former students, but I decided I must have made a mistake, so I spun out the time in that remarkable visual environment. As we left it turned out we were then going to meet the other students, who had assembled the usual giant Georgian table! Before all this is over I will weight 300 lbs.

There have now been eight students who have completed six months with us, and a group of four who are with us now. I meet with all of the "alumna" when I go to Tbilisi. I have told them they are special to us, and we will do all things we can to help them. They are all studying hard to take the USMLE exams, and this is extraordinarily difficult. There are few textbooks. They have to pay \$400 and travel to Turkey to take the test (and consider a secretary makes \$5 a month). They are not skilled in taking multiple choice tests, and their background medical school education is awful at best. I spoke to them at some length about the importance of them working hard and taking the test. I sensed they become discouraged at times due to the extraordinary difficulties studying for the USMLE in Tbilisi, sharpened by the differences in Tbilisi and what they became accustomed to in Atlanta. One of them told me of his experience with his oral examination for graduation from medical school. The question was how to approach acute renal failure. He gave the U.S. approach, while the examiner wanted the Russian approach of years ago.

They told me one of their big difficulties at Emory was the lack of typing ability--i.e., putting their data bases into the computer. I left them feeling more optimistic than not about their determination to succeed and come to the U.S. for internship, but appreciating very much the uphill struggle. A big problem is the lack of textbooks and other educational materials, a problem that our library project (below) will basically cure. Then there is the money problem and travel to Turkey. I have sounded out the NBME about giving the exam in Georgia, but they won't because there are too few takers to outweigh the expense needed to make sure about security problems.

George told me of the experience he had with his mother during February. She had acute cholecystitis. The hospitals had no electricity or heat, and he felt she would be worse off there. He went out into the black market and obtained antibiotics, and nursed her himself for several weeks. And in their home they had no heat, no electricity and no water most of the time.

I then went and had dinner with Levan's friends, in the home of his friend George. George has a beautiful wife and young son. They live in the flat of his father and mother. I had been there Christmas, but his father, who has a construction company, had been in Khazakstan on a project. The father is about my age, a tiny bit stout, very extroverted. He had some of his friends. One of them was the owner of the hotel in Batumi, a resort on the Black Sea. The father gave a toast, saying he had not been there when I visited Christmas, and "it is not good for the owner not to be in his house to greet his guests." Toasts, wine and talking gradually increased. The father and his friends started singing old Georgian songs. We discussed politics, Georgian people, etc. George and I talked again about his coming to Atlanta and going to business school, and agreed to have a longer talk about it later in the week.

Monday, June 5, 1995

I awakened in the middle of the night with an upper respiratory infection: sore throat and fairly severe earache. I started fantasizing the way you do in the middle of the night, half awake, half dreaming, and in this case half sick. I decided I probably had a serous otitis media, and wondered what I would do if I needed ENT attention. I decided this was probably an area I could trust, as opposed to some others. I did tell myself we needed to get on with the business of bringing medicine over here up to speed, so when we come over we don't need to worry about competence, supplies and the like.

I had breakfast with Zurab Nadareishvili. He is a neurologist, about 33 years old, who flew to Atlanta in May from Seattle--where he had been attending the American Academy of Neurology annual meeting--to ask me if I could help him get a research position in the U.S. with the idea of ultimately taking the USMLE and doing his neurology again over here. He spoke English beautifully and had a very good CV, with research in the neuroimmunology of multiple sclerosis. I carefully told him I basically could not deal with many people individually, and had chosen to work instead with the director of the neurology institute in Tbilisi, and let him do all the individual dealing. Having told him that and aroused no expectations, I sent his CV to our former house officer and my good friend Mike Racke. Mike left Emory at the end of his neurology residency and did five years of outstanding work on the immunology of m.s. at the NIH, and went to Washington University in St. Louis in September, as an up and comer in that line of

work. Mike responded that he thought he could work out something for Zurab, consequently our meeting. Mike had E mailed me his CV to send to Zurab, who I found had analyzed it in minute detail. E.g., he had inferred Mike was tall (6'7") because of his involvement in basketball listed in the CV. He had analyzed every single paper of Mike's. He and I decided on the E mail we would send Mike: Zurab would do whatever, from technician work to post-doc; wife and child would come several months after he did; he would love to work as a post-doc up to three years before going into residency, etc. I liked Zurab a lot: very bright, quiet, thoughtful, personable. I think he and Mike will get along famously.

Left the hotel at 9 a.m. and went to meet with Ramaz Khouradze, the rector of Georgian Technical University. The Georgia Tech of the Republic of Georgia. 30,000 students. Ramaz ia around 50. I initially met him for an hour in Atlanta a year ago, then met with him when I was here over Christmas. We have had extensive correspondence through his faculty member on leave, who has been working with us in Atlanta the last year, Gia Bokuchava. Gia, about 29, has been working with us on planning the library project. Archil, Ramaz and I agreed on the main details. We will set up a library center that will be connected to a file server at Georgian Technical University. The file server then will connect with regional libraries in the major cities of Georgia, as well as with hospitals and other places in Tbilisi, enabling all of them to access the electronic data bases in our central library, and through it the Internet and medical databases in the U.S. (Medline, BRS Colleague and the like). This project is the focus of my visit this time, and will occupy most of my thoughts and time. Ramaz has appointed one of his faculty, Otar Zamburidze, to be his point person on the project, and we met him. I liked him immensely, and see that he will be a tremendous asset to the project.

We then went for a meeting of the Faculty Senate. A Georgian who is in his sixties and graduated from Harvard addressed them first. Guivy Zaldastani. Businessman in Boston now. The rector said he was quite famous in Georgia, and was a friend of people in the U.S. such as Shakhishvili, etc. I enjoyed his talk. He told them a mentality change was what Georgia needed, and it was the most difficult thing to achieve. I was interested to observe his technique, which was to pause before answering questions and look out the window. I felt this was for effect, and commented on it later to Archil. Archil smiled and said it was because his knowledge of Georgian was rusty and he needed time to phrase his answers. Archil also said the audience was unaccustomed to a Georgian of Zaldastani's age and eminence having basically a fairly sparse vocabulary, and it put them off a bit. The audience was about 80% greyheads and the rest young; mostly men, some women. All the questions, soliloquies and dialogues came from the greyheads. The young listened intently and said nothing.

When I spoke I described our partnership and focused on the library project, stressing that it was based on the need of Georgia for information. I said Georgia was like a man with a brain that was alive and excellent, but was cut off from input and output totally to the world. I likened Georgia to Stephen Hawking (the English astrophysicist with amyotrophic lateral sclerosis), except they had total lack of communication with the outside world. I finished by saying William Osler had given a talk in which he said the secret of success lay in one word--a word known to everyone who had been productive from the ancients to the modern--and that word was work--hard work, incessant work, work whether old or young, infirm or well. And that, I said, is what they needed to do.

Then Archil and I had a hurried lunch with the Rector and Otar Lomburidze, and discussed our

plans for the coming week. Also discussed how to handle the Rector of Tbilisi State University, who I was to meet later in the day. I was told to stroke him enormously--his wisdom, his standing, respect for him, etc.--typical American bullshit, Georgian style.

Then to the medical school. The rector began by asking me how were the students doing. This is the third group of four students. Up to now when he has asked me this question I have always told him they were working hard and were quite serious. My goal was to get things underway, and to be quite positive. This time I told him they had varying abilities, and I described these without naming names. Then I told him their bedside skills needed quite a lot of work: I said these were "challenges" that all of us faced in working with their students. I said their factual knowledge of medicine was quite poor, based upon their background. I said they scored below the fifth percentile in the NBME shelf exam in medicine, while our students averaged somewhere around the 65th percentile. I could tell he was very upset, and Archil later told me I basically had pretty much unhorsed him.

Of note with respect to this is that we had sent two Emory students--Amy Baxter and James Cruse-- to Tbilisi in May, and one of them had set up a miniature Kaplan course, complete with books, course outlines, questions, tapes with answers to questions, bibliography⁶. I told him I felt not only the students but the faculty needed to review this material quite carefully, since only then could they begin to see the differences in what their students were taught, and what they needed to know to come up to our standards.

The other Emory student worked with Jim Setzer of the Public Health School, and examined the cord blood of 100 or more newborns. He discovered a majority had elevated TSH levels, and were consequently hypothyroid. We had know there has been no iodinated salt in Georgia for two years, ever since the factory that iodinated it in Armenia broke down. The consequence is more than clinical myxedema: studies have correlated a significant lowering of the IQ of entire populations with access to iodinated salt. A frightful prospect, and one that I used as a point in some talks I made.

We then got down to the meat of the affair, with the Rector wanting to know where we were going to locate the library. I told him probably the National Health Planning Building, which is a few kilometers from the medical school. He became quite angry, and spoke at length about how it should be in the medical school. He was joined in this by the librarian, Taliko. I said many other people would be using it--practicing physicians, nurses, CDC people, businessmen--and it needed basically to be independent. I also said it would be in a building with the WHO Collaborative Center (focused on maternal and child health, with a lot of educational programs needing access to classrooms and information) and the World Bank CME center, which also needed information. I said we wanted to put these together in a building with the EMS training center and the Partnership Office, not only to make an educational cluster with impact, but to allow ease of administration.

Another reason, one I obviously did not mention, was that when the Morehouse library people brought over a computer and CD ROM drive two years ago, the Rector had promptly seized them and basically kept them, only giving them up after great difficulty. He since then has come across as one of those people whose main agenda is to acquire for himself and not to share or

⁶Amy had been on the faculty of Kaplan, teaching about the MCAT; she persuaded Kaplan to donate this material.

be cooperative. The library project will fail if it doesn't exist in an environment where many constituencies cooperate in its evolution, and everyone can use it. While I understood the rector's desire to have the library in the medical school, in all ways he has come across as the opposite of a team player. This is in polar contrast to Ramaze Khouradze, the rector of Georgian Technical University, and Roin Metrevelli, the rector of Tbilisi State University. So there is no way I would ever agree to the library being in the medical school.

The rector's librarian, Talicho, who has come to Emory and Morehouse on several occasions for training, supported him with a stridency that I thought went beyond her obvious need to be supportive of her boss. I had initially thought she would be perfect for the librarian slot in the new library, but I have changed my mind, and decided she would be a destructive force, acting on his orders. Regretfully, since she is basically the only medical librarian over here who has any concept of modern methods. We will just have to train others who are loyal to the concept of a library that is open to everyone. The rector kept at his argument forcibly and uninterruptibly, saying I had told him he had wisdom and was outstanding and I wanted him to be a principal adviser on the project (I had done this in January and at an earlier point in this meeting I had said it again), and he was therefore using his esteem in my eyes to insist the best place for the library was in the medical school (hoist by my own petard). I finally just brought the conversation to a close without in effect admitting we had been adversaries: "I really appreciate your wisdom and prescience, etc. etc."

We then went and met with the rector of Tbilisi State University (TSU), Roin Metrevelli. He is an eminent scholar, and I had dinner with him, Khouradze, Carol Burns and her husband Tom when the two of them visited Atlanta. Tom Burns is an eminent scholar in the same or closely related field, the Visigoths of around the eighth century. Tom is coming over here in July with Carol, and I made sure the rector remembered he had invited Tom through me: "We will take care of him; don't worry."

I knew his various agenda, and they were the same as mine. We started out talking about our library project. He is highly supportive and will help in every possible way. He told me how much he appreciated Irina Chanturishvili, Levan's mother, in her help with his USIS library, and knew that was because I had brought her to the U.S. and enabled her to be trained. Then we talked about a nursing school at TSU, which he very much wants. Our nursing contingent, Judy Wold from Georgia State University and Laura Hurt from Grady, had visited him a few weeks ago. He and I then agreed with me that Georgia desperately needs a nursing school with a modern curriculum, one that can bring the nursing profession up to our level. The nurses now are basically high school graduates who are handmaidens to the physicians. He and I agreed we would pursue this project aggressively, and model it after John Stewart's Public Administration Institute.

We then took up the question of a similar concept for a Health Administrators School. This is another one of those infrastructure questions: as Georgia modernizes its health care system, it has to have administrators who know how to make it work. We agreed we would work on this also. I need to find someone who wants to spearhead this, as Judy Wold is doing with nursing. Deb McFarland of the Public Health School has indicated she wants to talk more about this, and I hope she will be interested.

We then got to what I knew was his pet project, his desire to start a new medical school in TSU.

There are two reasons he wishes to do this: Tbilisi State Medical University was started in TSU and then given independent status somewhere around 1920, and TSU has wanted it back ever since; he has a biological faculty that has all the basic science branches, and he wants to build on them. He wanted to know if I would help him. I said I was always willing to help him, but there were some points I needed to make. He had indicated he viewed the medical school as a source of income (which I assume the other faculties are). I said this at least was not true of U.S. medical schools: they lost money, and a considerable amount of it, on medical education. I gave a little discourse on how academic medical centers made money on clinical practice and research grants, and lost it on medical students, who required expensive equipment that other students did not require. I said a second problem is that he would have to fire 95% of the current faculty in his biological sciences division, based on my experiences with the faculty of Tbilisi State Medical University: they were old, inadequately trained, and simply were not up to a modern curriculum. I told him he would have to be willing to undergo this grief, because it was a totally necessary step. Then I said it would take an immense amount of his own time for several years. The problems with the startup were not something he could delegate, and he had to realize that. He promptly said he had had to give up most of his research because of the time needed to be president. I said also I knew his biological science faculty wanted a medical school, and he had to be aware this was a self-serving desire. Finally I said, if he wanted to pursue it he should first get some outside advisers who could review every aspect of the problem in a completely objective fashion and made recommendations to him. I could tell he did not like this brutal frankness, but he took it well. His vice rector, Temuri Khouradze (brother of Ramaz at GTU) told me later it had given him a lot of things to think about, but he thought the rector would want to continue.

We then went next door and visited Irina Chanturishvili in her new United States Information Services library. Apparently this is something the U.S. sets up in every country where we have an embassy. Two large beautifully furnished and remodeled rooms. About 4,100 books, which form a core library put in all the libraries. I looked at the titles and was quite impressed. They cover a wide range of subjects from economics to sociology to constitutional history. There is also CD ROM material. The library is about a month away from opening, and I could see it would be a highly valuable resource. I am impressed at the sagacity of our government at doing this sort of thing.

We then went to our partnership office and picked up E mail from my office. I wrote a long note to Paul Klever about our severe need for a U.S. director of our office here and a Georgian director. We have had a tremendous struggle with AID and AIHA about the need for us to have a U.S. director "on the ground" as the NGOs say (non-governmental humanitarian organizations such as Save the Children). Our activities have become so large I feel they are imperilled if we don't do this, and am tremendously dismayed at the magnitude and length of efforts it is taking to convince AIHA of this. They blame AID, and AID people say it is AIHA. I think we have gotten this settled, but then I have thought it had been nailed down previously and that turned out not to be the case. I also sent an E mail to Don Lindberg, Director of the National Library of Medicine, and asked him for the president's charge to the NLM and any other materials of incorporation--bylaws and the like--that might be useful to us as we set up a baby NLM in Tbilisi.

Then back to the hotel, where I found Don and Kenny, the two managers (Fargo, North Dakota), and other clustered around a large obviously Russian woman dressed in black (as is the wont of women in this part of the world). I told them later they reminded me of flies clustered around a

particularly luscious bit of honey. She is the manager of Angelique Varoom, a young beautiful redheaded Russian woman of about 20 who is known as "Russia's Madonna." Angelique, her boy friend and bodyguard were on my floor, where I was the only other roomer. They wanted to rent my room also, Don said, "because they like to walk around naked." He had told him he could not dislodge me ("a frequent and valued guest" etc.) and that besides, this was a family hotel and people needed to use bathrobes. I complained bitterly at this, and later told a lot of people how "the fool that runs my hotel told Angelique she could not walk around naked." All the males understood instantly my plaint!)

We then had a Georgian dinner at Archil's house. We had planned this as our initial approach to the Soros Foundations for funds for our library project. So Ulana, the Soros head in Georgia, came. She is about 30, beautiful, highly intelligent. Family Ukrainian, she grew up in U.S., speaks "beautiful Russian" according to Archil. Ramaz Khouradze of GTU and John Stewart came. Ulana brought Sandro, a Georgian computer expert who works for Soros. About 35, very bright, a nice person. We had a really good conversation. Ulana's husband is Jessie, an English teacher, who is Cajun (a Cajun with the first name of Jessie didn't seem right to me). John was there because of his support for our project. We had a good conversation, talking about our project, and decided to have a meeting Thursday and get down to business.

An interesting subconversation during dinner was between me and Ramaz. GTU has 33,000 students; 5,000 faculty of whom 500 are full professors. He laid off 2,000 faculty last month and plans to do more. The Georgian government gives him \$100,000 per year, and he has a total budget of \$600,000. The rest he gets through various places and various ways. He is clearly very creative and aggressive in identifying money. The budget figure gave me insight and perspective into what we are putting in. Our budget of \$130,000 for the library project, and \$70,000 more for the EMS training center, is one-third of the entire budget for a technical university of 33,000 students! I have no idea what the budget of a similar institution in the U.S. would be, but would guess easily \$500 million.

Wednesday, June 7

Breakfast today with Michele Lipner, who works with the UN Humanitarian Appeal. I got to know her when I was here Christmas. A long-time NGO worker, formerly with Save the Children here. Bright and talented. She updated me on the various currents flowing in the NGO community, told me she was planning to go back to the U.S. and get another job soon.

Then went to the office of Avto Jorbenadze, the Minister of Health. He and I have gotten to be close friends since he became Minister. We both think very highly of each other, and view each other as a principal partner in changing health care in Georgia. He is about 38, from military medicine and public health background. Smart, sophisticated, determined, endlessly energetic. We were kept waiting due to "an unexpected visitor" according to the secretary. Archil of course found out who the visitor was: the rector of the medical school. No surprise. I decided to make sure the rector saw me when he came out, and thereby knew that I knew he had been to see Avto. I had no doubt about the outcome of the visit. When I saw Avto he said he had been "raped by the rector." The rector's visage, however, looked otherwise, and such turned out to be the case.

He began by talking about health care reform. Said the legal base had been established, and would begin in its entirety on July 1, 1995. There will be a new decree by Shevardnadze next week. There had been a surprising development a few days before. The International Monetary Fund had told the government that health care reform was the best thing going, and was, in their view, the key to economic reform in the country. Consequently the IMF wanted health care reform to be given the number one priority. To use their words: "Health care reform is the key sector in macroeconomic reform." This then is powerful support for everything Avto and we are doing. Avto is taking advantage of this support, and moving along rapidly. The World Bank plans⁷ were coming along nicely, and he was satisfied. He spoke at length and with great emotion about how all this was possible only through the partnership with Emory, Grady and Morehouse. He said there would be an appropriate recognition next year in May during their Independence Celebration (May 23, I think).

Avto wanted to know what our plans were for the library. I told them to him in some detail. Of course Archil had already briefed him at length. To the amazement of Archil he instantly agreed to all of them: he would provide the space and staff and other details. He felt everything should be together: library; EMS training center; partnership office. He said he wanted the WHO Collaborative Center and the World Bank CME to be there, along with his Health Policy Planning Group. He asked me to present the programs of our partnership to the Council of Ministers on Thursday, assuming it met. (I prepared, but Shevardnadze was called out of town unexpectedly and it was canceled.)

Then we went to the building where we thought we might move. Where the Health Planning Policy group under Amiran is now. Former Institute of Traumatology. Marble building, about 100 years old. Immensely solid. Amiran showed us two potential locations. One of third floor, about 4,000 sq. feet, another virtually the entire second floor, about 9,000 sq. ft. By the end of the week we had decided upon the latter. It has 21 offices. Many of the walls are false, and easily removed. I wanted to have as much space as possible, due to my experience that you always find you need more than anticipated. Another important thing was that, although the rooms were in need of new flooring and remodeling, we don't have any remodeling money, and at worst we can still use them without doing much. Also, I could see we could ask individuals and corporations in Tbilisi and the U.S. to give the money for remodeling individual rooms, putting their names on them. This cost will probably be modest (less than \$5,000 I suspect), and is more easily obtainable than getting \$100,000 at once. A modular concept, so to speak. We have a very small amount of remodeling money in the EMS budget (??\$8,000), and it won't go far, to say the least. We will of course have to do wiring and lighting in order to start. We also will have to have a secure electrical and heat supply. I told Amiran we should try to get WHO and the Bank to supply a large generator and heat supply for the entire building. It will not be usable in the winter if we can't have that. I am sure we have just about enough money to manage that for our space if we have to.

⁷We have worked closely with Avto in submitting a request for a loan from the World Bank for health care reform. Teams from the WB have come to Georgia and we have gone to Washington. Al Brann of Pediatrics and the WHO Collaborative center at Emory has spearheaded the maternal and child health part, and in fact got \$90,000 from the WB to write up the recommendations that will be part of the Bank's plan. The figure is now for about \$12 million, and it will start in January 1996. Many of our efforts, e.g., Preventive Cardiology and Health Promotion, are aimed at bridging the time between now and when the Bank money kicks in.

We then went to the Catastrophe Management Center, which also has space we might use. This is where all catastrophes are reported and managed. Six rooms, partially remodeled, and a director whom I liked. He made the point it would make sense to put the EMS there. I agreed that was true, considering solely the EMS. On the other hand, there was no security, no ability to have separate electricity and heat.

We ate lunch on the run in the car (catchapurri) and went to John Stewart's Institute of Public Administration at GTU for me to lecture to his 25 students. John is from the University of Tenn. Shevardnadze made a personal plea to the U.S. to set up his Institute, since the public administration western-style infrastructure is as meager as that of health care. So John and people at the Embassy drew up a wonderful plan, which John sent me before he went out to Tbilisi. While it is at GTU, and has a close relationship there, it actually reports to the office of the president,⁸ has its board of distinguished citizens, funding from several sources and a detailed plan. It has a room of one computer for each student, a core library, and an agreement that the Georgian government will translate major important texts. U.S. professors come out for about one month each. The Director is Georgian, with a U.S. Co-director for several years. John is the current one. Each stays about six months. A key point is the development of Georgian faculty. I have taken a lot of this for planning of our library and for the future with respect to the nursing and health administrators schools.

I enumerated all the partnership programs for the students, and then spent some time on the library project. Once again I emphasized the need of Georgia for communication with the outside globe in terms of Internet and data bases. At the end they had no questions, so I used a ploy I often use at home: each one had to ask me a question they thought I would not like to answer⁹. I deliberated started with the two physicians I knew to be in the group. So one of them really had at me. Why were we supporting only the state medical school? He himself had started a private medical school just the year before, and it was much better than the state one. (There are about 24 such schools that sprang up like mushrooms after a spring shower after the uprising against former president Gamsukurdia was successful and Shevardnadze came to power). I told him they were of variable quality, most of them worthless, and that we would be obligated to evaluate each of them individually if we went that route. And that generally old established institutions were a lot better. We had this discussion until I moved on to the next one. I felt he illustrated very nicely some of the problems with, as people like Avto and Archil say, "changing the mind set to where it is like the West."

The current one month professor had arrived the day before. Named Sy (forgot last name). Former city manager of San Diego and some other large cities. Exceptionally able.

I was extraordinarily impressed by John and the Institute. He had told me of the problems he had initially with electricity, heat and facilities. He had ended up doing a lot of remodeling personally.

⁸John pointed out this needs to be changed. The President doesn't need a lot of institutes reporting to him.

⁹I have had a lot of experience with this maneuver. It intimidates people, so has to be used carefully. Also, you need enough time so they ask question that you can answer in such a way as to cause them to laugh. Most of the time by the end of the process everyone is relaxed, bonded, and in a good humor. But one has to use care.

We then went out to the central library of TSU, which sits out on a plane in a valley pretty much by itself. I had visited it on my January visit, and the previous day I had asked the TSU rector, without giving any explanation, if I could visit it again. So the Vice Rector, Temuri Khouradze, met Archil and me there. We were joined by the Librarian, who previously had impressed me as a leftover from the former Soviet days, with a similar mind set. The building is beautiful. Built just as the Soviet era ended, it was originally envisioned to be a busy and important library. It has over 400,000 sq ft of space, about 10,000 of which is used, by my estimation. Five stories above ground and four under ground. Huge amounts of free beautiful space, with large windows bringing in the outside. Nice architecture. In short, it will be perfect for the Library of Medicine when we get ready to expand it in 3-5 years, which is what I had in mind when I asked for the visit¹⁰. We did not get to visit the auditorium, because the director didn't have a key, and the people who did had already gone home (5 p.m.). This confirmed certain of my ideas about the rector, among others. Then we couldn't visit the underground space, because the electricity wasn't on, and no one had a flashlight. But I was told both areas were up to the quality of the ones I saw, and I believe it. I didn't reveal my plan during the visit, but merely asked Temuri to have a beer with Archil and me on the patio of the Metechi at 5 p.m.

Then we went to the medical school, where I had agreed to come and see space the rector wanted us to occupy. The visit started out with a long and strident monologue by the rector as to why we should use the medical school. He went on and on. I replied carefully, being firm about reasons for being elsewhere, but putting in plenty of stroking--to no avail. The torrent continued. Then he brought in Dr. Taitishvili, an eminent cardiologist and professor who has just spent two months with us in Atlanta. Purpose was to see how we teach students clinical medicine, and to see how our house staff program is set up, and to get ideas about postgraduate training¹¹. I thought we would have a good and elevating talk about medical education, but such out not to be the case. Dr. T. wanted to complain about his treatment, to wit: he had been routed through Cincinnati when he came over, and that was unnecessarily long; he was not met at the airport by Paul Klever, but fortunately some Georgian students were there and met him; he did not like to stay in the International Villa at Emory, because it was a twenty minute walk from the medical school; it was a difficulty to have dinner with Emory meal tickets, since he had to go to the cafeteria, and he should have had money; he had told me he wanted to give a lecture to the students and I had said okay, but never mentioned it again (true; I forgot); he had asked me to get the permission of Cecil's textbook editors for the Georgians to translate it, and I had not done this¹² etc.

I estimate I am the recipient of about twenty or more such conversations each week from

¹⁰Later I told Amiran I thought the National Health Policy Building, with our library, etc., would wind up like the NIH. Started out in one building, now has forty or so. I told him about moving the library. To my surprise, he told me he also had a plan about the library, which he wasn't ready to divulge!

¹¹My administrator Toby calls him "Tater," and it has corrupted me; I have to deliberately abolish the name in my mind every time I think of him. Damn Toby.

¹²I have spoken three times over four months with the associate editor, have been referred by him to Saunders, wrote them twice, got no answer, called the editor again, finally got a letter from Saunders saying the person in charge of that was out of the country for two months.

students, house staff and faculty, so have great experience with these episodes: I listened intently; kept my face expressionless; apologized profusely and was not defensive. Out of the corner of my eye I could see two things. The rector was watching me carefully. Archil was looking to the side and tapping his fingers rapidly on the table. I have learned this finger tapping by Archil is like a lion or cat waving its tail when greatly irritated. All of these complaints were new to me. Some I thought quite appropriate, others not.

In the car Archil exploded, telling me how inappropriate the “behavior of my countryman was, and I am deeply embarrassed and humiliated.” He spoke passionately about how Dr. T. should have never told me those things, especially in front of the rector. Then he calmed down and decided it was deliberate by the rector, and retaliation for what I told the rector previously about the Tbilisi students. I decided Archil was quite right. I knew the episode deeply offended Archil’s Georgian principles about what was appropriate for guests. I emphasized to him that it was highly useful information, I was not offended, and I was the recipient of endless episodes of this sort.

The rector then sent me and Talicho the librarian to see his space. But the diatribes had taken all the time, and I firmly told her I would have to see the space the next day, when I was scheduled to spend half a day interviewing potential new students. This was totally unsatisfactory to them, but I felt they had brought it upon themselves.

Then to the Metechi for the meeting with Temuri. I told him I wanted the library building in 3-5 years, and what about it? I told him the NLM would kill for the space (true; it has about five uncluttered beautiful areas the size of the main floor of the NLM; and this is just the beginning). He of course was quite surprised, but immediately said he thought we could do business. We both agreed with the change in information storage--digitization, etc.--we both could exist happily in all that space. He was clearly delighted that anyone felt space they had was useful in the future. We agreed this is a topic we will keep on the back burner, and see how things turn out.

I went back to the hotel and ran into Joyce Neu from the Carter Center, who had just arrived. Her Emory travel agent had booked her on a plane from Geneva (I think) to Frankfurt that did not fly that one day. So she had had to go through Moscow after getting a Russian visa sent emergently to her. She was planning to go to Abkhazia, which she did just before I left.

I then went with Archil to have dinner with the Ruras. For those of you who read my trip report in January, they are the parents of a young Georgian in Atlanta who has become a close friend of mine. They are close to Jabba Ioseliani, the number two man in the country. He supplied a car and driver (Goucha) last visit and this one also. He always comes when I have dinner at their home. A highly intelligent man. Russian prisoner as young man for 15 years, released and got his PhD in art history, was a professor, and then had a checkered career before becoming a distinguished government leader. I can always tell when Archil is totally engaged intellectually with some person or event: he doesn’t translate. So it is every time we have a meal with Jabba. Archil is totally engrossed with the conversation to the exclusion of everything else.

Mr. Rurua is also quite fascinating. He is a graphic designer of books, but has an encyclopedic knowledge of ancient Georgia, and has given me some fascinating artifacts. He is also a collector of many interesting things. He is always a joy to listen to. The talk ranged around

politics. Jabba founded a group that initially served to help with catastrophes, such as the earthquake in the late 80's: the Mehedrioni ("horsemen"). This then became a group of guerilla fighters during the uprising against Gamsukurdia, and then later was certified by Shevardnadze to be allowed to continue to carry weapons. One problem is that there arose many splinter factions, some of which apparently became engaged in criminal activities. One such group, as I understand it, recently shot someone in cold blood. Accordingly Shevardnadze ordered all of the Mehedrioni to lay down their weapons. To everyone's surprise they did so. This action has been widely interpreted to be a carefully calculated move against Jabba and his people by Shevardnadze. On the other hand many people point out that Jabba is resourceful and highly astute, and one shouldn't pay any attention to it. At any event, at the dinner Jabba was quite impressive, as usual. In January I presented our library project to him, and he in fact suggested having the archive part of it, i.e., digitizing ancient Georgian documents. He inquired about the project, and clearly continues to be quite interested and supportive.

Shortly after dinner began I became aware I was becoming ill: aching all over, nausea. This slowly progressed, with me concealing as well as possible how I felt. I pretended to eat. Finally I had to say I had to leave. I had of course to give a toast in order to do so. I said I had a headache, and told them about Angelique Varoom and her proclivity to walk around naked. I said I had lain awake all night hoping to get a glimpse of her. This went over well and I left. In my room I became increasingly ill, and had explosive diarrhea followed by hard shaking chills. Even feeling the way I did, the clinician in me couldn't help but admire and marvel at the sheer artistry of the chill. I felt a sense of impending doom, then had these wracking chills, much like a bone being shaken by a large dog. I took two Cipro and went to bed. Slept off and on, still feeling febrile and aching all over. I ordinarily take one Cipro a day when I am in Georgia, and I did so this time (in spite of what the infectious disease people say).

Wednesday, June 7, 1995

I awakened in the morning weak but well. Had breakfast with Joyce Neu, and was told she was on her way that day or the next to Abkhazia. I asked her what I needed to tell her relatives and friends in Atlanta. Answer: be sure to see about my cat, who will run out of food in two weeks. Done.

Archil had canceled our schedule for the day due to my being ill the night before. So he and I worked on two papers for my presentation to the Council of Ministers, not knowing then it had been canceled. I prepared a succinct description of the library project and a two page summary of the history, funds, number of visits, and listing of our projects. Archil translated them into Georgian.

We had lunch at a "fast food" place that I like very much. Run by two or three ladies, and has wonderful food. I had a soup and by later in the day began to feel okay. We went and viewed again the space and discussed it. Both of us felt this was a critical decision. Part of the problem has to do with how we will be connected to the Internet and to GTU, where the file server will be located. We had discussed several possibilities: copper wire laid down and dedicated to the project (problem: slow speed; since I am planning to have full Internet connection at some point, e.g., 128 kps, copper wire won't cut it); leased telephone lines (cheapest, but same objection); microwave (expensive); fiberoptic cable. The latter we had decided was the best thing to plan to do if we can afford it. We discovered it costs \$1000 per kilometer, but it needs some sort of

bonding and measuring apparatus that costs an additional \$5000 for the entire setup. The advantage of course is speed. It will serve us up to 256 kps, which is a Holy Grail of the future. But we were afraid of the distance between our various sites. We had measured them carefully on a city map, and they come out in total to be a bit less than 5 km. But Archil and I still worried about whether this was the right decision, and whether we have the funds for it. As Archil said, he and I have been fortunate in having not made a single serious mistake during our entire enterprise since August of 1992 and in this, our biggest and most visible project to date, we surely don't want to make a mistake.

We finally decided the second floor with 9,000 sq. feet and 21 offices is where we should put everything, and set up a meeting later in the week with the Minister to finalize it.

I then returned to the hotel and Levan's friends George and Irakly picked me up and took me to the Turkish baths. Tbilisi is famous for them, and I generally try to go every visit. Alexander Dumas wrote a famous small essay about his pleasure there. We took beer and relaxed in the very hot natural sulfuric waters of the bath.

That evening Archil and I were invited to dinner at the home of George Tsitsishvili. He is about 75, and is a famous critic. Has been published everywhere. He wore these metal spring kind of things in the middle of his sleeves on his forearms. I have seen older men with these before, and haven't been able to figure them out. Archil said shirts in earlier times were not made with different sleeve lengths, and you had to have these bands to adjust the length. That explanation made immediate sense.

Mr. Tsitsishvili made an initial toast and passed the job of tamadan, or principal toaster, to Roin Metrevelli, the rector of TSU. Archil said Roin runs a very traditional Georgian table, with the protocols about toasting being followed strictly. The guests were interesting. There was Dato, the Minister of Culture. I had met him at the Ruruas in January and again at their dinner earlier in the week. He is a highly regarded poet. Temuri Khouradze, vice rector of TSU and brother of Ramaz, rector of GTU, was there. Mr. Tsitsishvili's brother Dato was there. Apparently a businessman. Zurab Nadareishvili was there, the neurologist who will go to Washington University. His wife is the daughter of Tsitsishvili, and he is the one who apparently organized the dinner. The President of the Academy of Sciences came. He is a nuclear physicist who ran a large establishment of some sort in Moscow during Soviet times. Everyone's wife and daughters were present. A long toast to the U.S. and its methods of doing things was given by Roin. Other toasts rolled down the line. Archil prodded me to give one, and I used as my theme that "I wasn't in business to help stupid people," and enlarged on the concept of the intelligence and abilities of the Georgian people and how our partnership with them was so important to us..

I was interested in the ecology of the table as dinner proceeded and the toasts continued. It broke up into small segments of groups of people talking to each other. The Minister of Culture got a guitar and began singing old Georgians in a wonderful voice. The ladies made up groups at each end of the table.

George Tsitsishvili's brother got up and began a talk. I discovered to my surprise that I was being made an honorary member of the organization Tbiliseli, which is a charitable organization. I was given a pin for my label that is quite handsome, and an impressive diploma

Archil told me it was time for my final toast, so I properly asked the permission of Roin to do so. I said it was to “the earring that was not present.” They all sat up and paid attention at this of course, since it was so odd. I told about an old man I saw in Zugdidi (Western Georgia; closest town to Abkhazian conflict) in the hospital. He and his son were running to their house and a mine went off, killing the son and blowing off the old man’s legs. He dug a shallow grave and buried his son, and then crawled for help. When I saw him he had been in the hospital months and had an intractable osteomyelitis, and I suspect eventually died. I talked about what that meant about character and love and what it said about Georgian. I said Georgians valued things such as love and loyalty. I said that if I had been at such a dinner in the U.S. with a lot of young people many of them would have an earring on their left ear, and that we worried about the values of the young. But Georgians are soundly rooted in their respect for the traditional values. And that, I said, was the earring that wasn’t present.

Mr. Tsitsishvili took me into his study, which was a large rooms with books lining all the walls, and the fruits of scholarly activities in piles everywhere. He gave me two very fine old books, which I left with Archil so I can put them in my room at the Vasadze’s when it is ready.

In the car leaving Archil told me it had been a fascinating gathering for me. He said the core of the establishment of old Tbilisi families had been gathered there tonight, and it meant I (= our partnership and what we are doing) had been accepted. I took this with a grain of salt.

Thursday, June 8th

I had breakfast this morning with Mr. Leikshvili, the father of Aka, who is one of the students with us at Emory now. Aka had told me his father was president of the wine grower’s union, and I wanted to meet him. We had a fascinating talk. The wine industry of Georgia--and the first implements for making wine were found in Georgia and dated about 4000 years ago--is in the same bad shape as health care. In 1991 Georgia produced 450,000 tons of grapes (the U.S., he said, produces about 5 million tons per year); 1992: 150,000. 1993: 70,000. 1994: 12,000. There are many problems. No fuel for the tractors and other machines. No money for fertilizer or pesticides. No money to grow new grape vines that are resistant to pests. He said 80,000 hectares are under cultivation (x 2.6 for acres); 18,000 belong to the state,. The rest are small plots belonging to individual farmers, about 1-2 hectares each. During Soviet times there were only huge collectives. He says the microclimates of Georgia are amongst the world’s best in being suitable for many varieties of grapes.

I told him I had never had an excellent Georgian wine. He smiled and brought out a gift for me, a 1956 Saperavi red. He said Georgia had a fair number of high class wines until the late 1950’s, when the communists decided they wanted quantity and not quality. It did not pay to turn out small volumes of high quality wine. So everyone stopped producing them. Apparently there are some slight rays of hope, with some foreign firms evincing some interest.

Then I went with Archil to the Soros Foundation for our meeting. Ulana, her husband Jessie and Sandro were there. We had a wonderful talk. They said this was their first year of operation in Georgia, and they want to be very productive. Their budget has been doubled for next year, to their great surprise. They have \$75,000 that they have to use by the end of 1995, and they would like to enter into our library venture provided it was up and running during 1995. I took a deep breath and said it would be. They want to use much of the money for “Internet packages,”

where people and organizations will compete for the money to get the necessities for training in and use of E mail within Georgia. This fits perfectly with us, of course. Our library can train people in the use of E mail and the Internet. We ended with the concept that when Carol Burns comes in July we will all sit at the table and decide how we can work together. The initial idea is that they will fund the minimum necessary for file server capabilities at GTU, and fund five or six small regional library centers in Poti, Kutaisi, etc. Each will consist of a computer and terminal, connected to the file server at GTU via microwave and telephone line, a printer and copier. We will train the people who will run these, which will be in the center of health care districts, and they in turn will teach others how to use E mail and the Internet. Ulana sent me a letter later that she had written for me to write to her, saying we supported her concept of Internet packages, and would like to work with them. In turn she sent me a letter saying how important she thought our plans were, and how they looked forward to working together now and in the future. A highly satisfactory outcome that I have high hopes for.

I then visited Jim Hutcheson, head of USIS, at the U.S. Embassy. We talked about his library, about Irina Chanturishvili and her value to him since she was practically the only librarian in Georgia who had any knowledge of modern library methods, and USIS libraries in general.

Another visit to Amiran and thinking at some length about the space. We surveyed it again, and got the floor plan with all the measurements. I will take this to Carol Burns. We will put the EMS center at the beginning, since we can get it working first. Then the rest will be divided between the library and partnership office. I emphasized to Archil the necessity of finding out how much it will cost to remodel each room, so we can start thinking about how to do that.

Had lunch at GTU with Otar Zumbiridze, and discussed the ins and outs of the connectivity business: fiberoptics, copper, etc. He had gotten all the pricing information, and we decided finally fiberoptics were the way to go.

Then Archil, Otar and I went for a meeting at Mimosi Hard. (Don't ask why the name; Archil asked the President, who couldn't tell him.) This is the company that will connect Jeffrey Steele's Parliament Internet project up with Internet¹³. So they are the ones we depend on to get our 19,700 connection. We met with George and Nicholas, who are the principal people with the Internet part of the company. It was the most surprising meeting I have had in the last four years in Georgia. I went in expecting the sort of warm cooperation we get from virtually everyone, with the possible exception of the rector of the medical school--and even he cooperates in his own fashion. And these are two young computer people who have been communicating with Gia Bokuchava in Atlanta, and I thought were friends and associates of his. The meeting began with palpable hostility and an unwillingness to say anything to us. I would ask questions, such as when they thought the line would be operative, what could we do to help, and met with unflinching "we have no information." They then said we would only have access to a terminal in their building, not connection via modem or whatever for 19,700. We explained we thought otherwise, but they were rudely insistent. They started talking about Internet addresses, and I asked them how much we would have to pay for a SLP account, and how much access could we get for how much money.

They said I was not asking questions "in a correct way" (i.e., technically correct), and I would

¹³US AID has given a grant of about \$500,000 to the Congressional Human Rights Organization in Washington to set up Internet for members of Parliament of Georgia. Jeffrey Steele is in charge of it.

have to do so if I wanted any answers.

I could see Archil had been drumming on the table with his fingers again, and he suddenly erupted for about five minutes in explosive Georgian. After that the atmosphere changed a lot for the better, although there was never the sort of warm cooperative spirit I had expected. We left with the idea we probably wouldn't get anything from them. (I later talked to Sherry Carlin, who funds the entire project through US AID. She said they were totally mistaken. We had been promised access as we had thought, not terminal access, and she would see to it.). Archil in the car told me about what he had told them. He said he thought they were quite worried that the project was getting so large they would lose money. The agreement is that Mimosi Hard support the project free, and they get to use any excess to sell commercially, and they get all the equipment at then end of three years. The Mimosi company is much more extensive than the computer part. It builds ports, and does other large projects. So it isn't hurting for money from its other projects. E.g., they had a large model of reconstruction they are doing at the port of Batumi. Archil told them even if they lost a little money, they would be the first with Internet capabilities, and they could exploit this. He also pointed out to them, he said, that they got the Internet project only because he had suggested them to AID, and they were coming across as greedy, grasping people who were not grateful.

All of us left the meeting with grave doubts about the reality of any sort of Internet connection. We had known we could count only on 19,700, and we could do with that while we get our ducks in a row and get more resources for more access. But it was discouraging that we might not have any. We felt the entire project, in fact, was looking quite shaky.

Then we went to City Hospital #2. This was the initial focus of our partnership, but for this year we have no funds for it. This is because our plans were anchored to new construction: renovation of the second floor of the old building for new laboratory and outpatient space, and completion of an 180 bed new addition in which we were going to put a CT scanner and other equipment. The IMF wouldn't let the government put any money into new construction for the last two years.

To my surprise I was shown new construction on the second floor. Iliia, the chief doctor and CEO, had raised funds from private sources. He thinks it will be finished in two weeks. And Avto told me later in the week that he had \$250,000 in his ministry's bank account to apply to the new building. He said it was a certainty, that next Wednesday the Council of Ministers will formally approve of it. (That was one of the reasons he wanted me to talk to them, to tell them in detail all the things the partnership was doing.)

We plan ultimately to bring it all together at City Hospital #2: medical education; post- graduate education; health care reform; new techniques and technologies. So I was quite excited. I will, however, based on experience, wait until it is happening before beginning to lay plans about it.

I then left hurried for a visit with George Rurua. When I had dinner with them Tuesday night George had invited me to go to their friends who have a horsebreeding farm. We had discussed this in January, but hadn't been able to do it. So I blithely went there, expecting only to admire some beautiful racing horses. They took me to a park just out from downtown Tbilisi, that they had made into a complex with A frames for a hotel, a restaurant, swimming pool and other amenities for people to stay. They are now in the process of building and renovating. I was quite

impressed.

Then they said they wanted to show me a horse. They brought out this beautiful Arabian stallion, roan, four years old. He pranced and bounced around, obviously a poorly controlled bundle of atomic energy just waiting to explode. Absolutely beautiful, and at the peak of young horse conditioning.

“This is our gift to you,” George said.

Absolutely, total stunned silence on my part.

I had to have this repeated several times before I understood. We have the papers, they said, for you. His grandfather won a famous race in Russia. He comes from the finest bloodlines.

“How about riding him now?”

I simply didn't know what to think or how to react. I did know I wasn't about to take him on at that moment, late in the day, and completely unprepared. I suggested I come out at seven a.m. And ride him the next day. Accepted.

A characteristic of the horse that appealed a lot to me as a fairly experienced horse person (I have owned horses the last 25 years; now have two thirty year old ones on my farm that I have had many years) was that he reached over and nuzzled me repeatedly when I went to him. This is a good sign with horses--means they are “people” horses.

We then went and had a Georgian table. It was now 5 p.m. And I had dinner at 7 with the Shevardnadzes. The company was fascinating. There were the Ruruas, about whom I have spoken before. There was Dato, about 30, who turned out to be the Vice Mayor of the district, had a PhD in robotics from somewhere in Switzerland; Lasha, who was the general manager of the horse enterprise; had been all-Russian horse champion in his early twenties; also around 30; George, who rode with me the next day, who had also been a champion horse rider. About 7-8 other young men. Malphaz, the father-in-law of Andro Kacharava, an MD PhD who has doing research with us for two years and is about to enter the house staff program. And George Rurua.

Every time I have been to the Ruras and had dinner there has been a large number of young men, clearly devoted to Jabba loseliani. They have without exception been highly intelligent, extremely motivated and very personable. I take it they are the best of and the core of the original Mehedrioni. One way of looking at them is that they form a formidable political group, as well as obviously a group of individuals who, whatever their political persuasion, will be key to the future of Georgia.

There came the time for toasts. Eventually one was made to Archil. After the tamadan had finished Archil let me know in no uncertain terms that, as his friend, I had to “second” the toast. So I said I was toasting my friend Archil, and it was directed at his ability with--here I paused and reached down to the table and picked up a cucumber and displayed it--a cucumber. There was a fascinated silence, especially on the part of Archil. Then I said back in the twenties in the U.S. there was a very famous strip teaser, Gypsy Rose Lee. And, I said, my biochemistry teacher in

medical school when a young man had gone to see--experience is probably a better word--her on many occasions. He said she wore long gloves that reached above her elbow, and she was able to arouse the males in the audience to incredible pitch by the artistry with which she slowly peeled off those gloves--even more than other strip teasers as they undressed completely. Archil, I said, was equally an artist at using the cucumber at the Georgian table to make it appear he was eating a large amount, while in reality he was only peeling and eating one cucumber. He was my teacher at the Georgian table, I said. A most satisfactory toast, to use Nero Wolfe's favorite accolade, in my opinion!

Back to the hotel, and away to meet Manana Shevardnadze and her husband Gia. Manana's daughter Tamuna works with me and runs the house staff applicant office in the Department of Medicine. She graduated from Emory a year ago with honors in psychology, and is taking a year or two deciding what to do from there. Thinking about law school. Her husband Dato accompanied me to Tbilisi in January, as you might remember. He has just finished his Master of Laws and is also debating what to do. Manana, Gia, Archil and I went to a supper club newly opened, and saw some good shows. Toasts followed protocol: people we love; people who are not here; our families, etc. I proposed one to "son-in-laws:" I know Dato well of course, and also know George Gotsadze, Archil's son-in-law, quite well. George is about 29, an obstetrician-gynecologist who works for United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR; may have names wrong). He is outstanding. I spoke in some detail about the characteristics of both these son-in-laws, to the obvious interest of the mother and father.

Friday, June 9th

Got up early, put on jeans and went out to ride my new horse. His name is Peplum. I was loaned boots. They are styled quite different from our riding boots--very long, supple, have square toes instead of pointed ones. The horses there are all ridden English style, and I of course am a Western rider. This posed a problem of two. First was the saddle. They showed me cavalry saddles, which are to me a cross between the Western and English saddles, so I chose to ride on one of them. I found it quite satisfactory, and in fact did not miss my usual saddle. (The Georgians call western saddles "armchairs.")

I got on Peplum, and found him more sedate than the day before--sleepy, I thought--to my relief. But still a pistol. We rode for about two hours, vigorously, as my legs the last two days have attested to. I had not ridden much for the last year, and greatly enjoyed it. I discovered Peplum, like my Georgian friends, spoke Georgian. It took me a bit to figure out how to communicate with him--get him to go faster, turn, go slower, etc. I learned fairly rapidly by watching George closely as he guided his horse, and also Peplum turned out to be a quick study. The riding area was gorgeous. Huge open spaces and other areas with many trees. I decided in the future on my visits to plan on coming out around 5 p.m. each day and ride Peplum. We rode by a barn that housed Jabba's horse, a splendid Arabian given to him by some general.

Back to the hotel and had breakfast with Guivy Antelava, a friend of Dato's, Tamuna's husband mentioned above. Guivy graduated from medical school a year ago, and desperately wants to come to Atlanta and work at some laboratory or even menial job while studying for the USMLE tests. I had met him when I was here in January. He is a nice young man, and I like him. Very determined. I carefully gave him no hope, so as not to arouse any false expectations that I might not be able to deliver upon. I said I would look around, but just wasn't sure anything could

be found.

Then we went to visit Stan Music at his home, a splendid house owned by the U.S. Embassy. Stan is the CDC's person in Georgia, having been sent out in January to set up an epidemiology unit to survey infectious diseases. The purpose is to train Georgians to do this. He had a lot of problems with salary issues. Apparently initially AID had promised to pay the Georgians as they learned, then that fell through. Eventually the regional AID Director went to Washington and insisted, so Stan got off to a slow start. But during this period it became apparent the unit would best serve Georgia by surveying not only infectious diseases but also chronic diseases. So Stan is now engaged busily in training Georgians to do this. Seemed to be to be similar to the AHCPH in the U.S., and extraordinarily valuable. He does all the training in his home, because only there does he have secure electricity and heat. Otherwise he cannot use the computers, etc., during the winter time.

I was extremely impressed by Stan and what he is doing. He is clearly the sort who lands on his feet in a different culture and immediately becomes highly effective, just as John Stewart. I promised I would have dinner with him when I return in October. He suggested I get to know Victor Rothenberg at the School of Public Health when I return, and I will do so.

Then we always means Archil and me) visited the Director of the Academy of Sciences, about whom I spoke earlier. We told him about the Library project, and he was quite interested. Said we needed to speak with his person who was involved with the Internet, Dr. Kikinadze. We immediately arranged this for later in the day, and this turned out to be a propitious meeting.

Then I went to the Medical School, and interviewed about ten students to select the ones who will come next to Emory--in the fall. I discovered more than the number we can take who came across as bright and able.

I then met with about 30 students who are taking the Kaplan course set up by Amy Baxter. They complained at length because they did not have textbooks and journals to study for the questions. The course has a bibliography, and unfortunately there are very few English texts available, so the students are frustrated because after missing a question, seeing the right answer, and reading a small paragraph about it, they cannot study further. A real problem. I told them I was really happy they were having this reaction. It meant they were obviously very hungry to learn, and were highly motivated. I said we were setting up a library, that I planned to be operative in the fall, that would have all the material they needed. I was sorry it could not be earlier, I said. I also made the point that it would be elsewhere since "many different groups will need to use it." (I had a sneaking suspicion the rector the librarian had encouraged them to be energetic about this complaint, although I could tell it was genuine--and in fact they are dead right.)

A brief meeting with the rector, who said I needed to see his space. I simply did not have time, and knew I was not going to use it, so I firmly said I didn't have time, and left. I have decided probably the most effective way to handle the rector is to be just as aggressive as he is.

Archil and I and Otar Lomburidze had lunch at the Stuttgart, a German restaurant that was quite good. We then went and met at GTU with Dr. Kiknidze of the Academy of Sciences. He turned out to be the father of George Kiknidze, who spent two months here last year at the School of

Public Health. I got to know George well, and visited his hospital when I was here in January. A very able and promising anaesthesiologist who is COO of a hospital. Dr. Kiknidze told us NATO was putting about \$250,000 into an Internet project for the Academy of Sciences--i.e., the leading scientists of Georgia. He showed me a four page summary. There will be 64 kps access, going up to 128 and even perhaps 256 later if needed, through a Russian satellite. He thinks the project will be running in the fall. I read the description carefully, and immediately saw something striking. I gave him our two page proposal where I had summarized the project for the Council of Ministers, and sat back to see if he saw what I had seen. He did, and very fast. A smart man. He became excited and pointed out we were planning to train librarians and other users in how to use the Internet and how to search data bases. His project had only the training of ten librarians for two weeks in Prague, and nothing else. He proposed on the spot that they give us access to Internet, and in return would we train librarians and give them a steady supply? I instantly shook hands and wanted to jump up and shout hosanna! An interesting point is that as far as we can tell access to the Russian satellite is only \$2000 per month, which is much cheaper than the figure for the U.S. Satellite (\$7,000). If so, this means we will eventually be able to afford access ourselves through user fees.

The three of us left the meeting quite excited. Of course we have a lot to do with looking into the fine details of the project, seeing how to connect with the satellite, etc. And based on experience in Georgia I won't believe it until it occurs. But a big initial step, and one that wiped out completely the bad taste left in my mouth by Mimosi Hard.

Then another good meeting. We went to the Georgian National Archives and met with the director, Zurab Makharadze. He of course knows Archil¹⁴. We explained our project, and told how we wanted to begin with him a project to set up an electronic data base of important Georgian archival material. He became very excited, and told us he had been wanting to do this for some time. He gave us a newsletter from the U.S. From the international society of archivists, where there were several notes about this was beginning to be the thing in archiving. He pointed out the documents by law could not leave his building. I told him I did not expect them to do so, but thought the planning and training for the project could begin in the library, and it would be carried out by his people in their place. He wanted to know if we could provide minimal hardware: computer, scanning device, etc. I said I thought this was entirely possible, but I would have to look into it carefully (don't promise what you are not sure you can deliver principle). All of us left the meeting excited again.¹⁵

Then a meeting with the Minister of Health. He and Archil and I agreed on the following with respect to the Library project:

- The U.S. type director of our partnership will also be the U.S. Head of the implementation Committee
- The Georgian Director of our office would be the Georgian co-chair of the implementation committee, along with Otar Zumburidze. The Minister will propose someone to us. Young, smart, very energetic, good with people. Good administrator. By making

¹⁴Our Partnership has been phenomenally successful. This success is due totally to one person: Archil Kobaladze. He knows everyone and everyone knows him. He is immensely shrewd and astute. Fabulous with people. A man of vision. His country owes him a tremendous debt of gratitude.

¹⁵The library project will energize many different sectors, as the meeting at the Archives illustrates.

him/her the Georgian in the partnership office we can pay enough to get someone good

- The location would be the second floor of the National Health Building
- Target opening date first of November this year
- A secretary-type would be designated who would work with all of us to set up a detailed agenda for Carol Burns, so she can hit the ground running in July
- The members of the Board of Trustees and Implementation Committee will be named in next two weeks.
- The Library will be incorporated and have a Charge from Parliament or the Head of State.

I gave him comparable documents for the National Library of Medicine in the U.S.

He also said Al Gore had signed some important agreements with the Russian prime minister that had good economic implications for Georgia, and it looked as though Mrs. Gore would visit Georgia later in the next few weeks. He asked if I would see if I could get to her knowledge of what our Partnership was doing for Georgia. I told him I thought I could.

I left the meeting quite pleased with accomplishments of the visit.

Then the Embassy and a meeting with Sherry Carlin. She is the director of AID for Georgia, and began in Tbilisi as the director of our partnership office. The reason we have \$800,000 this year (vs. \$250,000 last year, and the only partnership group to have any increase in funding, much less such a huge amount) is her work in health care reform as the director of our partnership. An RN in our Division of Cardiology who worked in the cardiac cath lab, and then got her MPH from Emory. Exceptionally able. I had taken her over two years ago over the strenuous objections of ALHA, feeling the key to our success was someone like Sherry on the scene. I was right. She and I reviewed all our projects and where we are with them. I asked her to give her input to Jeffrey Steele and his Internet project, and make sure we had our access in the library, and not some damn terminal located in Mimosi Hard. She expressed her anxieties about the project. A good meeting.

That evening Roin Metrevelli of TSU gave a Georgian dinner in a complex that displays Georgian culture: huge acres overlooking Tbilisi; representations of Georgian culture such as typical Mengrelian cottages, etc. A beautiful place. Dinner was on a porch overlooking Tbilisi. The president and about six faculty members--all philologists--from the University of Hamburg were his guests also. He made a big to-do about Emory and Hamburg with his toasts. A high point of the evening were four TSU faculty members who had the equivalent of a U.S. barbershop quartet. They are a well-known musical group in Georgia: The Four Gias (all named Gia). I talked with one of them, who turned out to be a nuclear physicist. They sang superbly and entertained us throughout the evening.

Then a late night visit to say good bye to the Ruras. Mr. Rurua had given me an old pin, and I wanted to get all the information about it. They gave me all sorts of letters and gifts to bring back to their children.

Back to the hotel at midnight, to be surprised by Amiran and the directors of the institutes of neurology and psychiatry. We had tried to meet with them the last ten days, since both of them are coming to Emory in the last half of September and/or first half of October. I gather Amiran had found them and brought them, willingly or not! We talked at some length about the plans

for their visit. I want the neurologist to become acquainted with Mahlon DeLong's procedure for discovering and mapping electrophysiologically a certain tiny nucleus in the basal ganglia for amelioration of the symptoms of Parkinsonism. Mahlon is the world's leader in this. The Institute of Neurology of Georgia was one of the two or three centers for epilepsy surgery in the former Soviet Union and they have marvelous neurologists and neurosurgeons. I want to explore with Roman, the Director, and Mahlon the possibility of them setting up a similar center in Tbilisi. We have just started planning to assess the mental health of Georgia (drugs in the young; stress; political fragmentation and Bosnian like problems), and the psychiatrist will meet with the faculty here who are interested in that. We agreed on these objectives.

Saturday June 10th

I got up at 6 a.m. and did my packing, then worked on my notes of the visit. At 9 a.m. Archil arrived with Laurens (**), who is the Tbilisi based director of the Eurasia Foundation. They are quite interested in the Internet and similar activities. I gave him our detailed plan as prepared by Carol Burns, then used as my talking paper the two page summary I had prepared for the Council of Ministers. Laurens appears to be in his mid-thirties, and I was quite impressed with his manner and obvious ability. He kept interrupting me, saying, "wait, this is a lot to comprehend in a short time." At the end he said: "This is a really important project for Georgia, having more implications than even you realize." At that point I knew we were home free, and once again wanted to shout Hosanna! Just as with the NATO project. He explained that while they were proscribed from grants to health, they could give sector grants that had important implications for the entire country, and he could see many ways in which we could work together. We left it that he would carefully review the proposal, I would communicate with his office in Washington, and he would meet with Carol Burns and Soros when she comes.

My idea is that we, Soros and Eurasia will sit at the table and see how we can all work together to achieve our individual and collective goals. We clearly all three have many areas in which we can help each other, not only this year but in the future. An exciting prospect.

Then I met with Akram, a 35 or so year old Sudanese who now works with Save the Children and is looking to leave. He could be the U.S. type director of our partnership. In the presence of Archil we discussed the job, the requirements (I said someone who was people-savvy and had superior interpersonal skills). He wanted the ability to come up with programs on his own, and I said that was essential. We left it that Archil, Bernice (Washington AIHA) and Paul Klever (Atlanta office), would get together in Tbilisi this coming week and think about him.

Finally a trip to the airport and fond farewells with all my friends who came to see me off. An uneventful flight to Frankfurt. Seat mate was fascinating: Sarb Basrai. From Yuba City, California. 39. An agricultural lawyer. His group, a farming collective in California, has a contract with AID to work with the farmers of Georgia to form collectives, in essence. (Shades of the former Soviet Union.) Highly articulate, extremely interesting. He and I had dinner in Frankfurt that evening and had a great conversation. I plan to keep in touch.

One final note. At the Frankfurt Hotel (The Steigenbruger) I ordered draft beer. The German draft beer, in my opinion, is the best in the world, and I always treat myself. The bartender took it from the tap, then started cleaning up the bar. I was thirsty and tired, and became increasingly irritated, feeling he should be giving me my beer instead of cleaning up. After a

minute or two he went back, the head having settled, and carefully added some beer to the mug. Then another minute or two, and another addition. Then he handed the mug to me with a flourish. I was completely unprepared for this ritual, it having never happened before to me in the U.S.

Just another example of cultural uniquenesses, and how it doesn't pay to jump to immediate conclusions.