Let's face a few facts. We know that Donald Trump can't continue with current US foreign policy and has no interest in doing so. We know that part of that policy has long been turning certain countries into regional CIA dirty tricks bases. We know that one of those countries is Georgia, whose previous governments were very happy to live under such an arrangement, for the usual percentage, but now has a government which is equally pro-US but doesn't have the criminal tendencies of its predecessor.

So what the US does in Georgia under Trump will be a template for what we can expect in other countries, such as Yemen, which the US has entered to do the things it would never be allowed to do at home. For once the US will be seeking to impose a change of its own regime, not that of the countries it intervenes in. It has been a long time since this happened, and therefore it is difficult to see what template will be used: assuming Trump takes any notice of previous precedent, or listens to any advice, neither of which seem to be his style.

So what can we expect the Trump Administration to do in Georgia, which will then roll out in other countries? We asked Jeffrey Silverman, Georgia Bureau Chief for Veterans Today, and found him answering some of the same questions for the Georgian media. Here is his take on what the world will see more of over the next four years, and where it leaves everyone who gets in the way.

**Friend of the public enemies**

"It has been suggested that Trump will recall US Ambassador Ian Kelly. Kelly has been no friend of Georgia or the American people, who want change, and probably has no future now, as he was personally chosen by Obama. It is too early to know for sure if Trump has recalled Kelly, as no information can confirm this as yet. But recently Kelly has been very active, holding several meetings in January and even visiting the border crossings at Nabakevi-Khurcha and Otobaia-Orsantia to personally observe the situation in the Gali region, as the residents there oppose the closure of the Administrative Boundary Lines connecting the Georgian breakaway region of Abkhazia with Georgia proper. He has also congratulated Georgia on its visa liberalisation result and said he was very happy with that.

"One of the problems with Kelly is that he continues to support what is left of former ruling United Nation Party, UNM. Such behaviour is embarrassing to me, as a native born American who has lived in Georgia since 1991. He and so many before him, former US Ambassadors like Richard Miles, John Bass, John Tefft and Richard Norland, still cling to the shirt-tails of former Georgian president Mikheil Saakashvili and his corrupted minions.

"We should keep in mind that Trump has many enemies, including members of the former US government who will try and spoil relations for their own self interest. But America will continue to support Georgia’s sovereignty and territorial integrity regardless. The US is well aware of what Georgia has contributed to its illegal wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, providing more troops than any other country in terms of population, and more dead soldiers in body bags.

"The rump UNM’s plan, no matter what it may claim, is to bully and coerce its way back into power by bringing
down the elected government. The Georgian Dream has taken the middle ground quite effectively, and is now seen as a pro-Western party, although the UNM still tries to convince the world it isn't. But there has never been a multi-party democracy in Georgia, and most political parties, at least the major ones, are based on the cult of one individual, not a defined political platform.

"Too many in Georgia are not thinking of what is best for Georgia but what is best for their own hidden agendas and bank balances. Much of Trump’s policy toward Georgia will be based on how far it assists the efforts now being made by Kiev to ramp up the war in east Ukraine. Georgia’s covert involvement in the Maidan Square killings, for which it provided Georgian hired killers, is not going to go down well when it is fully revealed, but Georgia will still be expected to toe whatever the new line is.

Everyone's country but its own

"Trump does not really have a policy on Georgia so far, but his enemies (he has lots of them, including many former US Ambassadors to Georgia) will try to portray him as idolising Putin, and use whatever he does in Georgia for this purpose. It is important to keep in mind that 1.5 million Georgians have emigrated to different countries, many are now living there illegally and nearly 100,000 are in the United States. If Trump and immigration are not willing to shut their eyes this could have a very negative effect on Georgia and its economy, as at least 80,000 families are living on the salaries their relatives are receiving from working in the US, and if they are deported to Georgia the results might be devastating.

"Overall it is not likely that American policy towards Georgia will change much. But if the Russia Federation really did help Trump win the election via cyber attacks than now Trump has to show his appreciation. It is also claimed that the Russians have some recordings about Trump which can discredit him, and the American intelligence service has apparently confirmed that such recordings exist. If this is so, Georgia's future depends more on what Russia wants than what the United States wants.

Georgia is a no man’s land between the competing interests of the United States and the Russian Federation. The situation kind of reminds me of the famous World War II movie Casablanca, where an exiled American and former freedom fighter, Rick, runs the most popular nightclub in town. His bar is the meeting place for spies and all kinds of shady characters. The same can be said of Georgia, as here is where competing interests meet and act as if they are the best of friends.

Trump is the equivalent of the loyal but still corrupt Frenchman who kills the Nazi Major Strasser—who symbolises what is left of the UNM, Saakashvili’s corrupt and murderous regime. However there are many Nazi Majors here, including those involved with Admiral David Shimp. Shimp is some kind of Professor of Government and Public Policy at Caucasus University. It is worth noting that the next Dean of Caucasus University will be another ex-UNM criminal, Dimtri Shashkin.

There is an retired Admiral Shimp, and who is also linked with Anderson Consulting, a security firm which many in the intelligence community. Many claim that Anderson is a CIA front company. It is clear in retrospect that Shimp and various people in the US State Department, including those some linked to Anderson Consulting, provided the Command & Control for the failed coup attempt in Georgia last year which tried to reseat Saakashvili. There is also a direct connection between Anderson and various Georgian ports and arms shipments linked directly to the conflicts in Ukraine and Syria.

Out of mind but still in sight

"Despite the change of government, there are still too many former UNM members working in key ministries, the courts and even regional and local government. Georgia is still infected with a disease which will afflict it for many years to come. Some of the UNM crooks who ran away like rats when the Georgian Dream first came to power have come back. Several had diplomatic and foreign passports, which have kept them out of Georgian and foreign jails and enabled them to rehabilitate themselves within the political system, though not with the Georgian public.

"Former Tbilisi Mayor Gigi Ugulava has been released from jail at the request U.S. Senators John McCain (R-AZ) and Lindsey Graham (R-SC), as he is needed to help cover up the connection between them and various illegal deals in Georgia, including the plot a few years ago to overthrow the government. These senators are involved in international arms trafficking, and I have provided documentation on various deals they have been involved in to the Georgian prosecutor’s office, at its request. But when Ugulava was released it was widely assumed there must have been some sort of hidden agreement between him and Ivanishvili, and when Ugulava said that Saakasvili didn't
deserve to be the leader of the UNM any more as he had destroyed the party this idea gained credence

"The Georgian Dream government has brought hope, and an end to terror, as people no longer live under constant
fear of having their property stolen or of being arrested on fake charges. The UNM was a mafia organisation with a
top down design. People now have greater political and economic freedom, but unfortunately there are few
opportunities to use it as the model of government is still too centralised and top down. Only through participatory
democracy can this be changed.

"No-one yet seems able or willing to say it, but the Georgian Dream would have done considerably better, and
fulfilled more of their promises during the past four years, if they had not also being battling against the anti-state,
undermining tactics of the UNM and their foreign partners, for whom regime change and revolution are a way of
life, regardless of what that means for the citizens of Georgia.

Nowhere to go but down

"Georgians will now be granted visa free travel with the EU. Technically Georgians have visa free access to Israel
too, but visitors from Georgia often show up at the airports and get turned back, as the visas issued are not what
they purport to be. This will cause lots of disappointments, as Georgians will realise that they can never be accepted
as so-called Europeans. Even Georgian Jews who have legally emigrated to Israel under the Law of the Return have
the reputation of being no more than petty thieves, and this is the case in many European countries too.

"The visa regime between Georgia with Russia was recently relaxed, but it is unlikely that this was a product of
negotiatiions between Putin and Trump. There is evidence however that the point of it is to try and weaken Europe
with so-called refugees. Georgia will accept them, while countries like the USA, Britain and Switzerland will prevent
them from entering and fast track their deportations. It is ironic that many members of the EU are looking for ways
to leave it, as it is proving a failed experiment, but Georgia is clamouring to enter it.

"All of this will have an impact on the innocent Georgians who just want to travel, study and be able to visit their
families. A country derided as the home of petty crooks and the people Europe doesn't want will find it increasingly
difficult to find friends. After all Georgia has done for the US this is hardly the way it should be treated - but having
been made into a beggar by the previous government, it can't become a chooser now, and will be abandoned as an
embarrassment by an Administration which wants change, but is appointing all the enforcers of the old policies to
positions of power in Washington".

Ignorance is not bliss

There are further clues which suggest that the new Administration's policy will be to declare it an embarrassment,
but keep it as a dirty tricks base notwithstanding. One of these is the return of Dmitri Shashkin. He was previously
the minister of defense and education minister, and in the last capacity he introduced many new books of a
significantly lower standard than the previous ones. This was part of a longstanding UNM campaign to cut Georgians
off from their language, culture and faiths, make their education worthless and thus prevent them having any sort of
life unless they pretended to be things they are not, a move which convinces no employer in the West.

When the elections are routinely rigged in Georgia we are told the country is a "young democracy". In other words,
its people don't know how to behave. Governments can rig elections and people have little or no power to do so, but
this allegation fits nicely with the Western portrayal of Georgians as petty criminals. It adds further fuel to the
argument that Georgians are not reliable partners, so the West can pull out of this embarrassment whilst at the same
time staying to protect its own interests there from Georgians - leaving all the dodgy projects in place without giving
Georgia even nominal oversight of what s going on.

Georgia is not the only US "partner" which a much poorer record on human rights, rule of law and democracy than
the West wishes to admit. There are plenty of other countries which could be jettisoned as embarrassments to the
ideals of the US, and probably should be.

But they are not longstanding dirty tricks bases or located on the strategic energy and smuggling routes between
East and West. Some countries you can just scale back a commitment to, or ignore. Georgia has to be either lauded
or demonised to explain the Western presence there, and now the policies which lauded it are perceived to have
failed, Georgia is going to be dragged down with those who pursued them.

The George W. Bush Administration became notorious for declaring many different countries enemies. The projected
change of policy of this Administration looks like being seeing how many former friends it can ruin for doing what the US wanted them to do. That may be the change Americans want, but they don't have to live in the countries affected. If you can't say that all Italian-Americans are in the Mafia you also can't say that every Georgian is an embarrassment because they come from that country, but that is where we are heading.

*Henry Kamens, columnist, expert on Central Asia and Caucasus, exclusively for the online magazine “New Eastern Outlook”.*