

The Mote and the Beam¹

or

*Isn't truth stranger than fiction?*²

(May 2024)

One can read in the Gospels of Matthew (7:3-5) and of Luke (6:41-42) the biblical parable of "*the mote and the beam*."

The Caucasus country of Georgia is currently experiencing violent turmoil. Her president, Salomé Zourabichvili, has just vetoed a law proposing to regulate so-called "*foreign influence*".

The president of Georgia (Georgian: საქართველოს პრეზიდენტი) is the ceremonial Head of State as well as the Commander-in-Chief of the Defense Forces. The Georgian Constitution defines the presidential office as "*the Guarantor of the Country's Unity and National Independence*".

This short study of the mayhem caused by a law regarding foreign influence will address:

1. The state of similar laws in different parts of the world, and
2. The particulars of the Georgian president's life and career

The sources are Wikipedia.

The author of this modest study will welcome any comment susceptible to help him better understand the applicability and limits of the Matthew and Luke parable in the contemporary world.

¹ Or perhaps the Mole and her Dream?

² "*Truth is stranger than fiction, but it is because Fiction is obliged to stick to possibilities; Truth isn't.*", Mark Twain, in "*Following the Equator: A Journey Around the World*"

1. State of similar laws in different polities of the world

Georgia

Proposed "Law on Transparency of Foreign Influence", which requires non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to register as "agents of foreign influence" or "organizations carrying the interests of a foreign power" and disclose the sources of their income if the funds they receive from abroad amount to more than 20% of their total revenue.

United States

Foreign Agents Registration Act of 1938 (FARA) imposes public disclosure obligations on persons representing foreign interests. It requires "foreign agents"—defined as individuals or entities engaged in domestic lobbying or advocacy for foreign governments, organizations, or persons ("foreign principals")—to register with the Department of Justice (DOJ) and disclose their relationship, activities, and related financial compensation. The penalty for a willful violation of FARA is imprisonment for not more than five years, a fine of up to \$250,000, or both.

Russia

Under the Russian foreign agent law, non-governmental organizations, media outlets and private individuals have to designate themselves "foreign agents" in all external communication if they engage in "political activity" and receive any foreign funding. Specifically, it requires anyone who receives "support" or "influence" from outside Russia to register and declare themselves "foreign agents".

Australia

Australia's Foreign Influence Transparency Scheme Act (FITSA), enacted in December 2018, is based explicitly on FARA and was drafted in collaboration with the U.S. Department of Justice. Like its American counterpart, FITSA establishes registration obligations for individuals and entities that undertake certain activities aimed at "political or governmental influence" on behalf of foreign principals. The law imposes a lifetime obligation on former cabinet ministers to register any activity they undertake on behalf of a foreign principal unless an exemption applies.

Canada

Since 2021, Canada has considered implementing a foreign agent registry modeled on the disclosure laws of the U.S. and Australia. As of August 2022, the Senate was considering Bill S-237, An Act to Establish the Foreign Influence Registry, which would publicly name all federal lobbyists acting for "a foreign government, an individual or entity related to a foreign government" and require disclosure of payments and identities of foreign clients, with penalties of up to \$200,000 in fines and two years' imprisonment. Unlike FARA, the proposed act emphasizes activities on behalf of governments, with sponsor Leo Housakos of Quebec stating that it would "[expose] those who seek to influence on behalf of foreign regimes" and "countries like" China, Iran and Russia.

European Union

In March 2023, it was reported that the European Commission was working on a foreign agents law which would require commercial and nonprofit organizations around the European Union to reveal non-EU funding pertaining to transactions such as paying for academic study. This law aimed to contain influence of Russia and China and limit the corruption scandals such as Qatargate. A preliminary questionnaire supposed to feed into an impact assessment was sent out to the NGOs on behalf of the European Commission. The legislation is supposed to be modeled on the disclosure laws of the U.S. and Australia.

Section 2 next page

2. The Life and Achievements of Her Excellency, Salomé Zourabichvili, current President of Georgia, Commander-in-Chief of the Georgian Defense Forces, and Guarantor of Georgian Unity and National Independence

(in French, English at bottom)

<i>Année</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>Détails biographiques et carrière</i>
1952:		Naissance à Paris; nationalité française;
1970-1972:	18	Institut d'études politiques de Paris (Science-Po);
1972-1973:	20	Colombia University à New York, classe de Zbigniew Brzezinski;
1974:	22	Abandonne ses études pour rejoindre le service diplomatique français;
1974-1977:	22	Troisième secrétaire de l'ambassade de France à Rome;
1977-1980:	25	Deuxième secrétaire à la mission permanente de la France auprès des Nations unies à New York;
1980-1984:	28	Agent au centre d'analyses du ministère des Affaires étrangères;
1984-1988:	32	Première secrétaire de l'ambassade de France à Washington;
1986:	34	Visite la Géorgie pour la première fois, à l'âge de 34 ans;
1988-1989:	36	Première secrétaire auprès de la Conférence pour la sécurité et la coopération en Europe à Vienne;
1989-1992:	37	Seconde conseillère à l'ambassade de France à N'Djamena (coïncide avec la prise de pouvoir d'Idriss Déby dans un coup d'État soutenu par la France);

1992:	40	Nommée première secrétaire à la mission permanente de la France auprès de l'OTAN à Bruxelles;
1993-1996:	41	Représentante permanente de la France auprès de l'Union de l'Europe occidentale, à Bruxelles;
1996-1997:	44	Conseillère technique au cabinet du ministre des Affaires étrangères à Paris;
1997-1998:	45	Inspectrice au ministère des Affaires étrangères à Paris;
1998:	46	Sous-directrice des Affaires stratégiques à la direction des Affaires stratégiques, de la Sécurité et du Désarmement au ministère des Affaires étrangères à Paris;
2001:	49	Directrice des Affaires internationales et stratégiques au sein du secrétariat général de la Défense nationale. Elle collabore également au bureau des Affaires stratégiques pour l'OTAN;
2003 à 2004:	51	Ambassadrice extraordinaire et plénipotentiaire de France en Géorgie;
2004:	52	En mars 2004, alors qu'elle est encore en poste en tant qu'ambassadrice de France à Tbilissi, le Parlement géorgien lui accorde la double nationalité géorgienne, permettant ainsi au Président Saakashvili de la nommer ministre des Affaires étrangères;
2018:	66	Abandonne la nationalité française pour devenir présidente de la Géorgie, Commandant en Chef des Forces de Défense Géorgiennes, et Garante de l'Unité Géorgienne et de l'Indépendance Nationale.
2024:	72	Ne saurait en aucune manière, forme, ou apparence être considérée comme un agent d'influence étrangère.

See English translation next page

<i>Year</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>Particulars and Career</i>
1952		Born in Paris; French nationality;
1970-1972	20	Attends the Institute of Political Studies in Paris (Sciences Po);
1972-1973	21	Attends Columbia University in New York, under the tutelage of Zbigniew Brzezinski;
1974	22	Abandons studies to join the French diplomatic service;
1974-1977	22	Third Secretary at the French Embassy in Rome;
1977-1980	25	Second Secretary at the Permanent Mission of France to the United Nations in New York;
1980-1984	28	Officer at the Analysis Center of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs;
1984-1988	32	First Secretary at the French Embassy in Washington;
1986	34	Visits Georgia for the first time, at age 34;
1988-1989	36	First Secretary at the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe in Vienna;
1989-1992	37	Second Counselor at the French Embassy in N'Djamena (coinciding with Idriss Déby's seizure of power in a French-supported coup);
1992	40	Appointed First Secretary at the Permanent Mission of France to NATO in Brussels;
1993-1996	41	Permanent Representative of France to the Western European Union in Brussels;
1996-1997	44	Technical Advisor at the Cabinet of the Minister of Foreign Affairs in Paris;
1997-1998	45	Inspector at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Paris;

1998	46	Deputy Director of Strategic Affairs at the Directorate of Strategic Affairs, Security, and Disarmament at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Paris;
2001	49	Director of International and Strategic Affairs within the General Secretariat for National Defense. Also collaborated with the Strategic Affairs Office for NATO;
2003-2004	51	Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of France to Georgia;
2004:	52	In March 2004, while she is still serving as French ambassador in Tbilisi, the Georgian Parliament grants her dual Georgian citizenship, allowing President Saakashvili to appoint her as Minister of Foreign Affairs;
2018	66	Renounces French nationality to become President of Georgia, Commander-in-Chief of the Georgian Defense Forces, and Guarantor of Georgian Unity and National Independence.
2024:	72	Could not, in any way, shape, or form, be considered an agent of foreign influence.