

Georgian President Mikhail Saakashvili planned to leave the country

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The information barrier in Georgia has complicated the local population's ability to understand how the events truly unfolded in South Ossetia. For over two weeks, the Georgian intelligence has maintained control over foreign news sources.

All Russian sites and "enemy TV" have been blocked. However, the government's official propaganda was dealt a serious blow yesterday when the country's only Russian-language newspaper Vecherniy Tbilisi published an interview with renowned political scientist Ramaz Klimiashvili.

Klimiashvili said that "based on information from the presidential chancellery and U.S. governmental structures, Mikhail Saakashvili requested that a plane be sent in for him when the threat neared of Russian forces taking Tbilisi."

When the news began to spread, Klimiashvili writes, the opposition started to panic. Despite their many differences, Saakashvili was maintaining control over the situation and "without him at the helm the country would sink into chaos."

The political scientist says Saakashvili wouldn't have launched a full-scale military operation without U.S. consent.

"Was the U.S. really unaware that Russia would respond just like they did years back in Kosovo?" he asks. "I don't exclude the possibility that to a large extent Bush was interested in seeing Russia's reaction — whether the country was ready to utilize the Kosovo option. Russia was forced to act decisively to avoid looking helpless in the eyes of the Caucasus people."

Klimiashvili believes that little good will come of the South Ossetian war.

"I don't doubt the August affairs may one day be seen as more of a catastrophe than Georgia's loss of Abkhazia in 1993," he said. "We don't yet know what is really going on... If the U.S. is involved here, then the guilt should be on their conscience."