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# Trends. The Shevardnadze Assassination Attempt: The Extinction of Extinction?

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As described in a previous IBPP article (see "Bombing Iraq as Therapeutic Intervention: Symptom Substitution as Consequence"), extinction of a noxious behavior is often characterized by interludes or "spikes" of that behavior's exacerbation. The seemingly well-planned, but ineffectively implemented, assassination attempt against Eduard Shevardnadze, President of Georgia, illustrates this empirically-derived finding.

Since the disestablishment of the Soviet Union, formal and informal Russian efforts have continued to deny real sovereignty and independent economic development to the former Soviet republics. This has especially been the case in the new nation-state that possess potentially lucrative natural resources, e.g., oil, and/or significant geostrategic import. The efforts of leaders of these states to effect deals establishing oil pipelines that do not transverse Russian territory seems to be an especially sensitive point of contention. Sabotaging these and similar economic initiatives may well prevent them, significantly heighten their cost and lower expected profits, and induce collaboration with Russian governmental, commercial, or various "front entities" as the fruits of a protection racket.

"Spikes" exemplified by the assassination attempt occur for they often lead to extinguishing attempts at extinction. Hopefully the failure at extinguishing the life of Shevardnadze will not be translated into the success of extinguishing extinction. (See Lalli, J.S., & Casey, S.D. (1996). Treatment of multiply controlled problem behavior. *Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis*, 29, 391-395; Lerman, D.C., & Iwata, B.A. (1996). Developing a technology for the use of operant extinction in clinical settings: An examination of basic and applied research. *Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis*, 29, 354-382; LeVine, S. (February 18, 1998). Police show film of attack on Georgian leader. *The New York Times*, <http://www.nytimes.com>; Piazza, C.C., Fisher, W.W., Hanley, G.P., et al. (1997). The use of positive and negative reinforcement in the treatment of escape-maintained destructive behavior. *Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis*, 30, 279-298; Terrorism in Algeria: The Psychology of Extinction. (January 9, 1998). *IBPP*, 4(1).)