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# Hollywood Tries to Explain Georgia's War

By Paul Rimple

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On June 5, action film director Renny Harlin will be in Tbilisi to open "5 Days in August," his film about the 2008 Russia-Georgia war. Shot nearly two years ago, the long-anticipated release is sure to revive debate over how much government funding went into the production of a movie detractors dismiss as propaganda.

The film is about a group of war correspondents who find themselves behind enemy lines when Russia invaded Georgia in 2008. They witness war crimes only to find the world media focused on Beijing.

Papuna Davitaia, a deputy from the country's ruling party, co-wrote the story and co-produced the film. He believes that an action movie with battle scenes and explosions is the best means to inform the general public about what really happened.

Russia was much quicker to get its version of the war out six months after the cease-fire. "Olympus Inferno" is an action film about a U.S. entomologist and Russian journalist who stumble into the conflict to discover how Georgia and the United States secretly start the war

and commit genocide. The contemptible plot was taken at face value by many people who still believe U.S. soldiers fought alongside Georgians and that as many as 2,000 people were killed in Tskhinvali.

While it's too early to know how many facts and just how much fiction is in Harlin's film, we do know Harlin had public buildings and the Georgian army at his disposal, including tanks and helicopters, which cost a lot of money to deploy and operate. Just how much money the state provided to the $20 million budget is unknown. Georgian President Mikheil Saakashvili has insisted the government did not fund Harlin's movie, although David Imedashvili, who co-wrote the film with Davitaia, told Time magazine, "The initial funding for the project came from a Georgian government fund."

The question shouldn't be how much the government invested, but was it worth it? Harlin has directed nothing but failures since the 1990s. Yet nobody in Georgia seems concerned that the film may likely be another Harlin flop. What matters here is that Hollywood has come and made a movie about Georgia.

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