

**DEPARTMENT OF STATE****[Public Notice: 10346]****Determination Under Section 7070(c)(1) of the Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Appropriations Act, 2017 Regarding the Central Government of Venezuela**

Pursuant to section 7070(c)(1) of the Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Appropriations Act, 2017 (Div. J, Pub. L. 115–31), I hereby determine that the Government of Venezuela has recognized the independence of, or has established diplomatic relations with, the Georgian territories of Abkhazia and Tskhinvali Region/South Ossetia.

This determination shall be published in the **Federal Register** and on the Department of State website and, along with the accompanying Memorandum of Justification, shall be reported to Congress.

**Rex W. Tillerson,**  
*Secretary of State.*

[FR Doc. 2018–04532 Filed 3–5–18; 8:45 am]

**BILLING CODE 4710–29–P**

**DEPARTMENT OF STATE****[Public Notice: 10343]****U.S. Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy; Notice of Meeting**

The U.S. Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy will hold a public meeting from 10:30 a.m. until 12:00 p.m., Tuesday, March 20, 2018 at the Rayburn Office Building, room 2200 (45 Independence Ave SW, Washington, DC 20515).

The public meeting will be on *Optimizing diplomatic engagement: An evidence-based, results-oriented approach*. The session will include a presentation and discussion of recommendations on improving the assessment of State Department public diplomacy programs.

This meeting is open to the public, members and staff of Congress, the State Department, Defense Department, the media, and other governmental and non-governmental organizations. An RSVP is required. To attend and make any requests for reasonable accommodation, email Michelle Bowen at [BowenMC1@state.gov](mailto:BowenMC1@state.gov) by 5pm on Friday, March 16, 2018. Please arrive for the meeting by 10:15am to allow for a prompt start.

The United States Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy appraises U.S. Government activities

intended to understand, inform, and influence foreign publics. The Advisory Commission may conduct studies, inquiries, and meetings, as it deems necessary. It may assemble and disseminate information and issue reports and other publications, subject to the approval of the Chairperson, in consultation with the Executive Director. The Advisory Commission may undertake foreign travel in pursuit of its studies and coordinate, sponsor, or oversee projects, studies, events, or other activities that it deems desirable and necessary in fulfilling its functions.

The Commission consists of seven members appointed by the President, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate. The members of the Commission shall represent the public interest and shall be selected from a cross section of educational, communications, cultural, scientific, technical, public service, labor, business, and professional backgrounds. Not more than four members shall be from any one political party. The President designates a member to chair the Commission.

The current members of the Commission are: Mr. Sim Farar of California, Chairman; Mr. William Hybl of Colorado, Vice Chairman; Ambassador Penne Korth-Peacock of Texas; Anne Terman Wedner of Illinois; and Ms. Georgette Mosbacher of New York. Two seats on the Commission are currently vacant.

To request further information about the meeting or the U.S. Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy, you may contact its Executive Director, Dr. Shawn Powers, at [PowersSM@state.gov](mailto:PowersSM@state.gov).

**Shawn Powers,**

*Executive Director, Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy, Department of State.*

[FR Doc. 2018–04505 Filed 3–5–18; 8:45 am]

**BILLING CODE 4710–45–P**

**SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD****[Docket No. MCF 21080]****National Express Transit Corporation—Acquisition of Control—Aristocrat Limousine and Bus, Inc.**

**AGENCY:** Surface Transportation Board.

**ACTION:** Notice Tentatively Approving and Authorizing Finance Transaction.

**SUMMARY:** On February 5, 2018, National Express Transit Corporation (National Express), an intrastate passenger motor carrier, and Brenda Baxter, Richard Wright, and Ralph Wright (collectively, Sellers) (National Express and Sellers collectively, Applicants), jointly filed an

application for National Express to acquire from Sellers control of Aristocrat Limousine and Bus, Inc. (Aristocrat), an interstate and intrastate passenger motor carrier. The Board is tentatively approving and authorizing the transaction and, if no opposing comments are timely filed, this notice will be the final Board action. Persons wishing to oppose the application must follow the rules.

**DATES:** Comments must be filed by April 20, 2018. Applicants may file a reply by May 7, 2018. If no opposing comments are filed by April 20, 2018, this notice shall be effective on April 21, 2018.

**ADDRESSES:** Send an original and 10 copies of any comments referring to Docket No. MCF 21080 to: Surface Transportation Board, 395 E Street SW, Washington, DC 20423–0001. In addition, send one copy of comments to: Andrew K. Light, Scopelitis, Garvin, Light, Hanson & Feary, P.C., 10 W. Market Street, Suite 1400, Indianapolis, IN 46204.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Nathaniel Bawcombe at (202) 245–0376. Federal Information Relay Service (FIRS) for the hearing impaired: 1–800–877–8339.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** National Express is a motor carrier incorporated under the laws of Delaware that provides intrastate passenger transportation service and utilizes approximately 774 passenger-carrying vehicles and 855 drivers. Additionally, National Express, which does not have interstate authority from the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA), owns and controls two passenger motor carriers that do hold FMCSA interstate carrier authority: Rainbow Management Service Inc. (Rainbow) (MC–490015), which provides interstate and intrastate charter and special party passenger services in New York, and Trans Express, Inc. (Trans Express) (MC–187819), which provides interstate and intrastate passenger transportation services in New York. National Express is indirectly controlled by a British corporation, National Express Group, PLC (Express Group). Express Group also indirectly controls the following interstate and intrastate motor carriers of passengers (collectively, National Express Affiliated Carriers):

- Beck Bus Transportation Corp., which holds interstate carrier authority (MC–143528), is primarily engaged in providing student school bus transportation services in Illinois;
- Durham School Services, L.P., which holds interstate carrier authority (MC–163066), is primarily engaged in