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SECRET

PAGE 01 MOSCOW 25965 01 OF 04 120322Z
ACTION H-03

INFO LOG-00 ADS-00 AMAD-01 DS-00 EUR-01 SS-01 /006W
-----937179 120323Z /38

P 120321Z SEP 91
FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4937

RELEASED IN PART
B1, 1.4(D)

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 04 MOSCOW 25965 '

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DEPT. PLEASE PASS CSCE COMMISSION

E.O. 12356: DECL: OADR
TAGS: PREL, PGOV, PHUM, OREP, UR
SUBJECT: CODEL HOYER IN GEORGIA: OPPOSITION CHARGES
"DICTATOR" GAMSAKHURDIA SUPPORTED COUP

1. SECRET - ENTIRE TEXT.

SUMMARY
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2. GEORGIAN OPPOSITION LEADERS VOICED STRONG
CRITICISM OF PRESIDENT GAMSAKHURDIA DURING MEETINGS
WITH CODEL HOYER SEPTEMBER 7-8, CHARGING THAT
GAMSAKHURDIA'S GOVERNMENT IS BECOMING MORE AND MORE
DICTATORIAL. TWO OF GAMSAKHURDIA'S FORMER ALLIES,
EX-PRIME MINISTER TENGIZ SIGUA AND EX-FOREIGN

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 MOSCOW 25965 01 OF 04 120322Z
MINISTER GEORGIY KHOSTARIA, ASSERTED GAMSAKHURDIA
COLLABORATED WITH THE LEADERS OF THE ABORTIVE AUGUST
19 MOSCOW COUP AND ATTEMPTED TO DISBAND THE GEORGIAN
NATIONAL GUARD. OTHER OPPOSITION LEADERS COMPLAINED
OF FREQUENT HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS AND OF MEDIA
SUPPRESSION. CIVIL UNREST CONTINUED SEPTEMBER 11 AS
GAMSAKHURDIA'S OPPONENTS ESTABLISHED BARRICADES ON
TBILISI'S MAIN STREET AND GOVERNMENT FORCES BLOCKED
ENTRANCES TO GEORGIA'S PARLIAMENT BUILDING NOT FAR
AWAY.

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3. CODEL HOYER'S TRIP TO GEORGIA RECEIVED CONSIDERABLE PRESS COVERAGE, INCLUDING A FRONT-PAGE ARTICLE IN "IZVESTIYA." THIS IS THE FIRST OF TWO CABLES ON THE VISIT. THE SECOND WILL DETAIL PRESIDENT GAMSAKHURDIA'S REMARKS TO THE CODEL. END SUMMARY.

ALLEGED COMPLICITY WITH YANAEV
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4. DURING CODEL HOYER'S VISIT TO GEORGIA SEPTEMBER 7-8, MEMBERS OF THE OPPOSITION NATIONAL CONGRESS AND FORMER MEMBERS OF GAMSAKHURDIA'S GOVERNMENT ASSERTED THAT PRESIDENT ZVIAD GAMSAKHURDIA HAD COLLABORATED WITH SOVIET VICE-PRESIDENT YANAEV SHORTLY BEFORE THE ABORTIVE COUP ATTEMPT AND HAD AGREED TO IMPLEMENT ALL OF THE EMERGENCY COMMITTEE'S DECREES IN EXCHANGE FOR SUPPORT. AS PART OF THE ALLEGED DEAL, GAMSAKHURDIA AGREED TO DISBAND ALL INFORMAL MILITARIZED FORMATIONS, INCLUDING THE NATIONAL GUARD. THE

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 MOSCOW 25965 01 OF 04 120322Z
INTERIOR MINISTRY WOULD RECEIVE FULL CONTROL OF SECURITY OPERATIONS. GAMSAKHURDIA ALSO REPORTEDLY AGREED TO DISSOLVE ALL LOCAL GOVERNMENTS, INCLUDING MAYORS AND PREFECTS. FORMER PRIME MINISTER TENGIZ SIGUA ALLEGED THAT GAMSAKHURDIA'S PEOPLE MET WITH YANAEV ON THE EVENING OF AUGUST 18 IN MOSCOW. THE NEXT DAY, SAID SIGUA, GAMSAKHURDIA FORMALLY ORDERED THE NATIONAL GUARD TO DISBAND WITHIN FOUR DAYS. INTERIOR MINISTER JABULANI LATER SHORTENED THE DEADLINE TO ONE DAY. HOWEVER, THE NATIONAL GUARD REFUSED TO DISBAND. THE HEAD OF THE NATIONAL GUARD, GENERAL TENGIZ KITOVANI, TOLD THE CODEL THAT WHILE HE LEGALLY ANSWERED TO THE PRESIDENT, HE NO LONGER TRUSTED GAMSAKHURDIA AND SO NOW WOULD ANSWER "ONLY TO THE GEORGIAN PEOPLE."

FORMER MINISTERS JOIN THE OPPOSITION
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5. SIGUA, WHO MET WITH THE CODEL OUTSIDE OF TOWN IN THE NATIONAL GUARD ENCAMPMENT WHERE HE IS NOW LIVING, TOLD THE CODEL GAMSAKHURDIA HAS NOT KEPT PROMISES OF DEMOCRACY MADE DURING THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION LAST

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SPRING AND HAS INSTEAD TURNED GEORGIA INTO A
DICTATORSHIP. HE ACCUSED GAMSAKHURDIA OF APPOINTING
LOYAL SUPPORTERS WITHOUT REQUISITE QUALIFICATIONS TO
POSITIONS OF INFLUENCE AND COMPLAINED GAMSAKHURDIA IS
"TRYING TO CREATE A COUNTRY LIKE ALBANIA." SIGUA
CONTINUED THAT ON AUGUST 15 HE GAVE THE PRESIDENT AN
ULTIMATUM TO REFORM AND TURNED IN HIS RESIGNATION.

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 04 MOSCOW 25965 01 OF 04 120322Z
6. FORMER FOREIGN MINISTER GEORGIY KHOSTARIA, WHO
WAS DISMISSED FROM HIS POSITION SHORTLY BEFORE THE

SECRET

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SECRET

PAGE 01 MOSCOW 25965 02 OF 04 120325Z
ACTION H-03

INFO LOG-00 ADS-00 AMAD-01 EUR-01 SS-01 /006W
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P 120321Z SEP 91
FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4938

S E C R E T SECTION 02 OF 04 MOSCOW 25965

INFO MOSCOW POLITICAL COLLECTIVE

COUP, SAID DEMOCRACY AND INDEPENDENCE ARE
INEXTRICABLY BOUND; GEORGIA COULD NOT HAVE ONE
WITHOUT THE OTHER. UPON HIS RETURN FROM A TRIP TO
THE U.S. IN MAY, HE CONTINUED, HE HAD PROPOSED

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SEVERAL MEASURES TO STRENGTHEN DEMOCRACY HE HAD ENCOURAGED GAMSAKHURDIA TO LIFT RESTRICTIONS ON OPPOSITION NEWSPAPERS, TO GRANT OPPOSITION PARTIES REGULAR AIR TIME ON LOCAL TELEVISION, AND TO HASTEN THE PROCESS OF PRIVATIZATION. KHOSHTARIA MAINTAINED THAT GAMSAKHURDIA AT FIRST ACCEPTED THESE IDEAS AND BEGAN TO SET UP MEETINGS WITH THE OPPOSITION. LATER, HOWEVER, GAMSAKHURDIA REVERSED HIS POSITION AND "BETRAYED GEORGIA." BOTH SIGUA AND KHOSHTARIA INSISTED THEY WOULD NEVER WORK AGAIN IN GAMSAKHURDIA'S GOVERNMENT.

SHEVARDNADZE TO RETURN?

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SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 MOSCOW 25965 02 OF 04 120325Z

7. KHOSHTARIA CONTINUED THAT HE HAD URGED GAMSAKHURDIA TO PUT ASIDE PRIOR DIFFERENCES WITH FORMER SOVIET FOREIGN MINISTER EDUARD SHEVARDNADZE AND OFFER HIM THE CHANCE TO RETURN TO GEORGIA TO HELP IN THE FORMATION OF AN INDEPENDENT GEORGIA. AS AN ALL-UNION ACTIVIST WITH AN INTERNATIONAL REPUTATION, KHOSHTARIA BELIEVED THAT SHEVARDNADZE COULD CONTRIBUTE POSITIVELY TO THE TRANSITION. IN A SEPTEMBER 11 MEETING IN MOSCOW WITH EMBOFF, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] ECHOED KHOSHTARIA'S SENTIMENTS, ADDING THAT OPPOSITION FORCES IN GEORGIA WIDELY PERCEIVE SHEVARDNADZE AS THEIR GREATEST HOPE FOR DEMOCRACY AND INDEPENDENCE. HOWEVER, KHOSHTARIA COMMENTED THAT GAMSAKHURDIA CONTINUES TO RESIST ANY COOPERATION WITH SHEVARDNADZE.

8. THE SEPTEMBER 9 EDITION OF "IZVESTIYA" CARRIED A FRONT-PAGE ARTICLE ON THE SITUATION IN GEORGIA WHICH DETAILED THE CODEL'S MEETING WITH SIGUA, KHOSHTARIA, AND OTHER OPPOSITION LEADERS. "IZVESTIYA" REPORTED THAT THE CODEL URGED THE GEORGIANS TO SEEK A PEACEFUL RESOLUTION TO THE CONFLICT. GEORGIAN MEDIA PROVIDED EXTENSIVE COVERAGE OF THE VISIT. OPPOSITION LEADERS TOLD HOYER THAT LOCAL TELEVISION BROADCAST SEGMENTS OF CONGRESSMAN HOYER'S DISCUSSION WITH GAMSAKHURDIA. HOWEVER, THEY CLAIMED THE NEWS DELIBERATELY MISTRANSLATED HIS REMARKS IN ORDER TO SHOW STRONG CONGRESSIONAL SUPPORT FOR PRESIDENT GAMSAKHURDIA.

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SECRET

PAGE 03 MOSCOW 25965 02 OF 04 120325Z
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9. POPULAR FRONT CHAIRMAN NODAR NATADZE MAINTAINED THAT DESPITE GAMSAKHURDIA'S CLAIMS OF DEMOCRACY, THE MECHANISMS OF THE GEORGIAN GOVERNMENT ESTABLISHED SEVENTY YEARS AGO ARE STILL BASICALLY THE SAME. HE ACCUSED THE PRESIDENT OF USURPING THE AUTHORITY OF THE LEGISLATIVE BRANCH, OF STIFLING THE MEDIA, AND OF VIOLATING THE ELECTION LAW. NATIONAL CONGRESS MEMBERS ECHOED HIS COMPLAINTS, CITING INTIMIDATION OF VOTERS IN THE WEEKS BEFORE THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION. THEY ASSERTED MANY VOTERS WERE TOLD THEY WOULD LOSE THEIR JOBS IF THEY DID NOT SUPPORT GAMSKHURDIA. WHEN MEMBERS OF THE CODEL INQUIRED WHY INDEPENDENT FOREIGN ELECTION OBSERVERS AND THE INTERNATIONAL PRESS HAD NOT REPORTED THESE IRREGULARITIES, ONE GEORGIAN CLAIMED THE OBSERVERS NOTICED VIOLATIONS BUT CHOSE NOT TO SPEAK OUT, SINCE THEY WERE SELECTED BY THE GEORGIAN MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS. THE NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY'S PRESS SECRETARY, IRINA SARISHVILI (WIFE OF GEORGIY CHANTURIA, CHAIRMAN OF THE NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY), EXPLAINED THAT ELECTION OBSERVERS ARRIVED ONLY ON THE DAY OF ELECTION AND HAD NOT WITNESSED EVENTS PRIOR TO ELECTION DAY. ONLY TWENTY-FIVE PERCENT OF ELIGIBLE VOTERS IN TBILISI HAD TURNED OUT FOR THE ELECTION, SHE CLAIMED. ALSO, SHE ADDED, DEMOCRATIC ELECTIONS DO NOT GUARANTEE DEMOCRACY.

RESTRICTIONS ON MEDIA DESPITE NEW PRESS LAW
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SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 04 MOSCOW 25965 02 OF 04 120325Z

10. IN ADDITION, SAID SARISHVILI, GAMSAKHURDIA HAS

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PAGE 01 MOSCOW 25965 03 OF 04 120327Z
ACTION H-03

INFO LOG-00 ADS-00 AMAD-01 EUR-01 SS-01 /006W
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P 120321Z SEP 91
FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4939

S E C R E T SECTION 03 OF 04 MOSCOW 25965

INFO MOSCOW POLITICAL COLLECTIVE

SEVERELY RESTRICTED THE PRESS. SHE ASSERTED THAT MANY MOSCOW-BASED NEWSPAPERS ARE NOT ALLOWED TO ENTER GEORGIA; SOME LOCAL PAPERS HAVE BEEN SHUT DOWN. IN OTHER CASES THE GOVERNMENT HAS PREVENTED PUBLICATION OF CRITICAL MATERIAL BY CLAIMING A SHORTAGE OF PAPER OR BY SAYING THE PAPER'S EMPLOYEES REFUSE TO PRINT THE OFFENDING MATERIAL.

[REDACTED]

THE GOVERNMENT CLOSED FOUR NEWSPAPERS DURING THE FIRST WEEK FOLLOWING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF A NEW PRESS FREEDOM LAW, CLAIMING A LACK OF PAPER.

[REDACTED] COMMENTED THAT EVEN SOME GOVERNMENT PAPERS HAVE CLOSED, SINCE "WRITERS ARE HUMAN AND WHEN THEY WRITE SOMETHING CRITICAL, THE WHOLE PAPER GOES." [REDACTED] ADDED THAT ALTHOUGH THE PRESS LAW PROVIDES FOR THE FREE ESTABLISHMENT OR PURCHASE OF

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 MOSCOW 25965 03 OF 04 120327Z

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NEWSPAPERS, 'THERE IS NO CAPITAL AVAILABLE TO FINANCE
NEW OPERATIONS. UNCLASSIFIED

12. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] TOLD THE CODEL THE GOVERNMENT HAS DENIED HIM ACCESS TO OFFICIAL INFORMATION SOURCES, INCLUDING TO PARLIAMENT SESSIONS, SINCE APRIL 9. WHEN HE TRIED TO APPEAL THE DECISION TO THE PARLIAMENT'S SECRETARIAT, HE LEARNED OF A CRIMINAL CASE AGAINST HIM, ALTHOUGH HE NEVER RECEIVED AN EXPLANATION OF THE CHARGES. HE CLAIMED THEY TOLD HIM MERELY THAT CHARGES WERE FILED BECAUSE HE HAD PUBLISHED CRITICISM OF GMSAKHURDIA. LATER, THE ATTORNEY GENERAL ADMITTED HE WAS UNDER PRESSURE TO PROSECUTE THE CASE AND URGED HIM TO STOP WRITING.

13. [REDACTED] ADDED THAT UPON RETURNING HOME ON APRIL 9, HE FOUND TWO BULLET HOLES IN HIS FRONT DOOR. IN THE FOLLOWING WEEKS, HE CONTINUED, PEOPLE APPROACHED HIM IN THE STREET URGING HIM TO EMIGRATE. IN ADDITION, HE CLAIMED, FOR SEVERAL WEEKS A MAN CARRYING AN AUTOMATIC WEAPON WAITED OUTSIDE HIS HOUSE EACH DAY AND ASKED HIM FOR A CIGARETTE. HE TOLD CODEL MEMBERS THAT ALTHOUGH THE SURVEILLANCE NOW IS NOT AS OBVIOUS, THIS IS ONLY BECAUSE HIS NEW SHADOWS ARE PROFESSIONAL GEORGIAN KGB OFFICIALS.

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HOW REAL THE THREAT?

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14. ALTHOUGH THE OPPOSITION LEADERS WERE VERY VOCAL
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 MOSCOW 25965 03 OF 04 120327Z
IN THEIR CRITICISM OF GMSAKHURDIA, THEY PROVIDED CODEL LITTLE CONCRETE EVIDENCE TO SUPPORT THEIR CLAIMS, PARTICULARLY OF HIS ALLEGED COMPLICITY WITH YANAEV AND THE EMERGENCY COMMITTEE. NATIONAL CONGRESS REPRESENTATIVES, WHO ARRANGED THE CODEL'S MEETING WITH SIGUA AND KHOSTARIA AT THE NATIONAL GUARD OFFICES, ORIGINALLY TOLD THE CODEL THE TWO WERE IN HIDING THERE. THE NEXT DAY, HOWEVER, THE OPPOSITION HAD NO OBJECTION WHEN THE CODEL TRAVELED TO THE MEETING IN A LARGE BUS WITH A GOVERNMENT-PROVIDED POLICE ESCORT, SUGGESTING THE PERCEIVED NEED FOR SECRECY WAS EXAGGERATED.

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15. AT A PRO-GOVERNMENT RALLY IN ~~UNCLASSIFIED~~ SEPTEMBER 7, PARTICIPANTS PROFESSED SUPPORT FOR GAMSAKHURDIA. SOME OF THE DEMONSTRATORS CHIDED OPPOSITION SUPPORTERS ON THEIR WAY TO ANOTHER NEARBY RALLY ORGANIZED IN FRONT OF THE NATIONAL CONGRESS' HEADQUARTERS, SAYING THE GEORGIAN PEOPLE MUST SUPPORT THE PRESIDENT IN ORDER TO MAINTAIN STABILITY AND TO WORK FOR GEORGIAN INDEPENDENCE. OPPOSITION LEADERS ACCUSED GAMSAKHURDIA OF BUSSING IN SUPPORTERS TO CREATE THE APPEARANCE OF POPULAR SUPPORT.

16. TENSIONS MOUNTED ON SEPTEMBER 11 WHEN NATIONAL INDEPENDENCE PARTY MEMBERS CONSTRUCTED BARRIERS IN FRONT OF THE PARTY'S HEADQUARTERS ON TBILISI'S MAIN STREET. THE PARTY'S CHAIRMAN, IRAKLI TSERETELI, TOLD REPORTERS THAT "THIS IS A DRASTIC FORM OF PROTEST...BUT TODAY THIS IS THE ONLY WAY TO DEMONSTRATE TO THE PEOPLE THAT A DICTATOR HAS TAKEN
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 04 MOSCOW 25965 03 OF 04 120327Z
POWER." AT THE SAME TIME, FORCES LOYAL TO
GAMSAKHURDIA BLOCKED ACCESS TO THE PARLIAMENT

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PAGE 01 MOSCOW 25965 04 OF 04 120328Z
ACTION H-03

INFO LOG-00 ADS-00 AMAD-01 EUR-01 SS-01 /006W
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S E C R E T SECTION 04 OF 04 MOSCOW 25965

INFO MOSCOW POLITICAL COLLECTIVE

BUILDING, ALSO LOCATED DOWNTOWN. A MEMBER OF THE NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY TOLD EMBOFF BY TELEPHONE ON THE MORNING OF SEPTEMBER 11 THAT GOVERNMENT FORCES HAVE "PROVOKED" THE OPPOSITION SUPPORTERS, BUT THAT NO VIOLENCE HAD YET OCCURED. SHE WOULD NOT DESCRIBE THE FORM OF PROVOCATION, HOWEVER.

BUT GAMSKHURDIA SEEMS WORRIED

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17. GAMSAKHURDIA HIMSELF APPEARED EXTREMELY PREOCCUPIED AT THE OFFICIAL DINNER HE HOSTED FOR THE CODEL ON SEPTEMBER 7. ALMOST ONE-HALF OF THE INVITED GEORGIAN GUESTS (INCLUDING SOME CABINET MEMBERS) DID NOT ATTEND THE DINNER, WHICH WAS STRANGELY SUBDUED AND FEATURED LITTLE OF THE FREQUENT TOASTING CHARACTERISTIC OF GEORGIAN FEASTS.

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 MOSCOW 25965 04 OF 04 120328Z

17. CODEL DID NOT HAVE AN OPPORTUNITY TO CLEAR THIS CABLE PRIOR TO DEPARTURE. STRAUSS

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