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ACTION EUR-00

INFO	LOG-00	ADS-00	INR-07	SS-00	CIAE-00	DODE-00	H-01
	MSC-01	NEA-06	NSCE-00	NSAE-00	HA-09	L-03	TRSE-00
	PM-10	PA-01	OMB-01	NRRC-01	SIL-01	INRE-00	USIE-00
	SP-02	M-01	SNP-01	C-01	PRS-01	P-02	T-01
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R 061913Z APR 89
 FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
 TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0342
 INFO AMCONSUL LENINGRAD
 EASTERN EUROPEAN POSTS
 AMEMBASSY ROME
 AMEMBASSY LONDON
 AMEMBASSY BONN
 AMEMBASSY PARIS
 AMEMBASSY ANKARA
 AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 MOSCOW 08922

ROME ALSO FOR INS

E.O. 12356: DECL: OADR
 TAGS: PGOV, PINS, PINR, PHUM, UR
 SUBJECT: POLITICAL TURMOIL IN GEORGIA OVER ABKHAZIA

1. C - ENTIRE TEXT.

SUMMARY
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2. ABKHAZIA OBKOM FIRST SECRETARY BORIS ADLEYBA HAS PUBLICLY SUPPORTED DEMANDS FOR GRANTING UNION REPUBLIC STATUS TO ABKHAZIA, AN AUTONOMOUS REPUBLIC IN GEORGIA, ACCORDING TO GEORGIAN DISSIDENT SOURCES.
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SOME GEORGIAN ACTIVISTS BELIEVE MOSCOW IS BEHIND THIS DEMAND IN AN EFFORT TO UNDERCUT POPULAR SUPPORT FOR THE GEORGIAN NATIONAL MOVEMENT. AN APRIL 1 INCIDENT IN THE ABKHAZI CITY OF LESELIDZE WAS THE REPORTED

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE
 REVIEW AUTHORITY: ROBERT O HOMME
 DATE/CASE ID: 17 MAR 2010 200902056

CAUSE OF MASS DEMONSTRATIONS IN TBILISI ON APRIL 4-5. WITH THE DEMONSTRATIONS CONTINUING APRIL 6, TBILISI WAS REPORTED TO BE LARGELY "PARALYZED." WE CANNOT CONFIRM THESE REPORTS--SOME OF WHICH COME FROM SOURCES WHO HAVE BEEN PRONE TO EXAGGERATE IN THE PAST--AND SUGGEST THAT THEY BE TREATED WITH CAUTION.

END SUMMARY
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ABKHAZIA FIRST SECRETARY: ALTERING STATUS QUO
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3. ON MARCH 15, ABKHAZI OBKOM FIRST SECRETARY BORIS ADLEYBA SIGNED A PETITION TO THE USSR AND GEORGIAN SUPREME SOVIETS DEMANDING EITHER UNION REPUBLIC STATUS FOR THE ABKHAZI AUTONOMOUS REPUBLIC, OR DIRECT RULE FROM MOSCOW ALONG THE LINES OF NAGORNO-KARABAKH, GEORGIAN DISSIDENT SOURCES REPORTED. (THIS DESPITE THE FACT THAT ONLY 17 PERCENT OF THE REPUBLIC'S POPULATION IS ETHNICALLY ABKHAZI.)

4. SOME LEADING GEORGIAN INDEPENDENCE ACTIVISTS CONSIDER ADLEYBA'S ACTION TO HAVE BEEN BLESSED BY MOSCOW IN AN ATTEMPT TO UNDERCUT POPULAR SUPPORT FOR THE GEORGIAN NATIONAL MOVEMENT. IN THE VIEW OF THESE ACTIVISTS, ADLEYBA WOULD NOT HAVE TAKEN SUCH A STEP WITHOUT MOSCOW'S SUPPORT. SEVERAL GEORGIAN ACTIVISTS SAID THEY VIEWED ADLEYBA AS A POLITICAL OPPORTUNIST AND NOT AN ABKHAZI NATIONALIST. ON THE OTHER HAND, A CONFIDENTIAL

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MOSCOW INTELLECTUAL SAID HAS HAD HEARD FROM GEORGIAN FRIENDS THAT ADLEYBA HAD SIGNED THE PETITION UNDER "DURESS." HAD HE REFUSED, THE PETITIONERS WOULD HAVE MOBILIZED THE LOCAL POPULATION TO VOTE AGAINST HIM IN HIS BID TO BE ELECTED TO THE CONGRESS OF PEOPLE'S DEPUTIES. (THE APRIL 5 "IZVESTIYA" CONFIRMED THAT ADLEYBA WAS ELECTED.)

GEORGIAN NATIONALISTS SEE MOSCOW'S HAND
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5. ACCORDING TO NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY (NDP) SOURCES, TENS OF THOUSANDS OF GEORGIANS MARCHED ON THE GOVERNMENT HOUSE IN CENTRAL TBILISI ON MARCH 25 IN PROTEST AGAINST WHAT THEY CALLED A

MOSCOW-SUPPORTED CAMPAIGN TO SEPARATE ABKHAZIA FROM GEORGIA. GEORGIAN ACTIVISTS INCLUDING GEORGIY CHANTURIYA (NDP PRESIDENT), ZVIAD GAMSAKHURDIYA (ST. IL'YA THE RIGHTEOUS SOCIETY LEADER), AND AKAKI BAKRADZE, AN ADVOCATE OF GEORGIAN AUTONOMY WHO WENT ON TO WIN ELECTION MARCH 26 RACE FOR A SEAT IN THE CONGRESS OF PEOPLE'S DEPUTIES REPRESENTING THE TBILISI NATIONAL-TERRITORIAL DISTRICT, PARTICIPATED IN A MARCH 25 MEETING WITH GEORGIAN SUPREME SOVIET OFFICIALS THAT GREW OUT OF THE DEMONSTRATION. THE GEORGIAN OFFICIALS REPORTEDLY GAVE ASSURANCES THAT THEY OPPOSED ABKHAZIA'S SECESSION.

ABKHAZIA SHOOTINGS SPARK MASS DEMONSTRATION
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6. GEORGIAN ACTIVISTS, INCLUDING MERAB KOSTAVA, ZVIAD GAMSAKHURDIYA AND GEORGIY CHANTURIYA, REPORTEDLY ORGANIZED PRO-GEORGIAN DEMONSTRATIONS MARCH 31 IN SUKHUMI (THE ABKHAZIA REPUBLIC CAPITAL)

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TO SHOW THE WEAKNESS OF POPULAR SUPPORT FOR ABKHAZI SECESSION. ON APRIL 1, THERE WERE PRO-GEORGIAN DEMONSTRATIONS IN SEVERAL OTHER ABKHAZI CITIES IN ADDITION TO SUKHUMI, INCLUDING LESELIDZE. IN LESELIDZE, THE DEMONSTRATORS NUMBERED SEVERAL THOUSAND, ACCORDING TO GEORGIAN DISSIDENT SOURCES. A GROUP OF ABKHAZI REPORTEDLY FIRED ON SEVERAL BUSES CARRYING PRO-GEORGIAN DEMONSTRATORS IN LESELIDZE. A FEW PERSONS REPORTEDLY WERE INJURED, PERHAPS EVEN

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CRITICALLY. GEORGIAN ACTIVISTS ALLEGE THAT LOCAL (GUDAUD) RAYKOM FIRST SECRETARY OZGAN ORGANIZED THE ATTACK. THESE SAME SOURCES CLAIM ALSO TO POSSESS PHOTOGRAPHS OF OZGAN MEETING WITH THOSE WHO CARRIED OUT THE ATTACK. (WE HAVE NOT SEEN THESE PHOTOGRAPHS AND CANNOT CONFIRM THIS CHARGE.)

7. ON APRIL 4, SEVERAL TENS OF THOUSANDS OF DEMONSTRATORS REPORTEDLY GATHERED IN FRONT OF THE TBILISI GOVERNMENT HOUSE, ACCORDING TO IL'YA CHAVCHAVADZE SOCIETY SOURCES. ON APRIL 5, THEIR NUMBERS REPORTEDLY SWELLED TO AS MANY AS 100,000. SOME 100 PERSONS, INCLUDING NDP HEAD GEORGIY CHANTURIYA AND THE HEAD OF THE NEWLY-CREATED NATIONAL INDEPENDENCE PARTY, IRAKLI TSERETELI, THERE BEGAN A HUNGER STRIKE. THE DEMONSTRATORS REPORTEDLY DEMANDED:

- ADLEYBA'S RESIGNATION;
- THE BRINGING OF CRIMINAL CHARGES AGAINST OZGAN;
AND,
- THE CESSATION OF "MOSCOW'S ANTI-GEORGIAN POLICIES."

TBILISI REPORTEDLY PARALYZED

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8. TBILISI REPORTEDLY WAS "LARGELY PARALYZED" APRIL 5. THE UNIVERSTIY, AS WELL AS MOST SCHOOLS AND INSTITUTES, WERE SHUT DOWN, ACCORDING TO OUR

SOURCES. THE ACADEMY OF SCIENCES INSTITUTES
REPORTEDLY WERE CLOSED, AND ABOUT ONE-HALF OF PUBLIC
TRANSPORTATION SUSPENDED. WORKERS AT THE LARGE
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DMITRIY AIRCRAFT FACTORY ARE REPORTED TO BE OUT ON
STRIKE; LIKEWISE AT THE TBILISI ELECTRICAL POWER
PLANT. AS OF APRIL 5, THE GEORGIAN MEDIA, REPORTEDLY
HAD GIVEN NEARLY NO COVERAGE TO THE DEMONSTRATORS.
TRANSPORT WORKERS IN SUKHUMI REPORTEDLY HAVE ALSO
BEEN ON STRIKE SINCE APRIL 2 IN PROTEST AGAINST THE
PURPORTED SHOOTING INCIDENT.

9. ACADEMICIAN SAKHAROV (PROTECT) TOLD A NATO
AMBASSADOR APRIL 3 THAT GEORGIAN SOURCES HE
CONSIDERED RELIABLE REPORTED THAT TROOPS FROM TBILISI
WERE DEPLOYED TO ABKHAZIA OVER THE APRIL 1 WEEKEND TO
FORESTALL POSSIBLE ETHNIC DISTURBANCES AS A RESULT OF
RISING ETHNIC TENSION THERE. GEORGIAN DISSIDENT
SOURCES REPORTED THE SAME. SAKHAROV ALSO REPORTED HE
HAD HEARD THERE WERE ANTI-GEORGIAN DEONSTRATIONS IN
SUHUMI MARCH 31, AND HE DREW A PARELLEL WITH THE
SITUATION IN ABKHAZIA AND THAT IN NAGORNO-KARABAKH IN
LATE 1987, I.E., BEFORE THE KARABAKH CRISIS BLEW
UP.

COMMENT

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10. WHILE WE DO NOT DOUBT THERE IS SOME ETHNIC
TENSION IN GEORGIA, WE SUGGEST THAT THE DETAILS
PROVIDED ABOVE--SOME OF WHICH COMES FROM SOURCES WHO
IN THE PAST HAVE BEEN PRONE TO EXAGGERATE--BE TREATED
WITH CAUTION.

11. LENINGRAD MINIMIZE CONSIDERED. JOYCE

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