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R 050845Z JUN 89  
 FM AMEMBASSY HELSINKI  
 TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9706  
 INFO MOSCOW POLITICAL COLLECTIVE  
 AMEMBASSY HELSINKI  
 USIA WASHDC 9789

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 05 HELSINKI 04148

// FOLLOWING IS LENINGRAD 1654 //

DEPT PASS INS HQS AND CSCE COMMISSION

ROME ALSO FOR VATICAN AND INS

PARIS AND MUNICH FOR RFE/RL

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E.O. 12356:DECL:OADR  
 TAGS: PGOV, PHUM, UR  
 SUBJECT: CONVERSATION WITH GEORGIAN DISSIDENT

1. CONFIDENTIAL - ENTIRE TEXT.
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2. SUMMARY
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IN MAY 27 CONVERSATION WITH LENINGRAD CONOFF, A  
 PROMINENT GEORGIAN DISSIDENT:  
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--ACCUSED THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT OF WAGING "GENOCIDE"  
 AGAINST THE GEORGIAN PEOPLE, THROUGH THE USE OF  
 CHEMICAL POISONS AND "ECOLOGICAL WARFARE";

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

--CREDITED THE MAY 19 RELEASE OF LEADING NATIONALISTS TO POPULAR THREATS OF A GEORGIAN GENERAL STRIKE;

--DESCRIBED ONGOING COMPETITION FOR CONTROL OF AN EMERGING GEORGIAN POPULAR FRONT;

--REPORTED GROWING ANTI-MILITARY SENTIMENT, EXPRESSED BY HUNGER STRIKES IN OPPOSITION TO THE SOVIET DRAFT;

--DISCUSSED INTER-ETHNIC RELATIONS IN GEORGIA, WARNING OF KARABAKH-LIKE SITUATIONS IN ABKHAZIA AND SOUTHERN OSETIA;

--ACKNOWLEDGED RECENT IMPROVEMENTS IN THE OFFICIAL GEORGIAN MEDIA AS WELL AS THE OBJECTIVITY OF THE GEORGIAN COMMISSION INVESTIGATING THE APRIL 9 TBILISI TRAGEDY; AND

--PREDICTED CAUTIOUSLY THAT GEORGIA'S COMMUNIST PARTY AND GOVERNMENT LEADERSHIP COULD EVENTUALLY PRESS FORWARD WITH A BALTIC-STYLE AUTONOMY PROGRAM.  
END SUMMARY.

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3. LENINGRAD CONSULATE OFFICER ON PRIVATE VISIT TO TBILISI MET MAY 27 WITH ZVIAD GMSAKHURDIA (STRICTLY PROTECT), A FORMER ARTICLE 70 POLITICAL PRISONER (1977-79) AND FOUNDING MEMBER OF THE GEORGIAN HELSINKI MONITORING GROUP. GMSAKHURDIA HAD BEEN CONFIDENTIAL

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ARRESTED IN TBILISI ON APRIL 9 OF THIS YEAR FOR "HOOLIGANISM" IN CONNECTION WITH THE UNAUTHORIZED DEMONSTRATION DISPERSED VIOLENTLY THAT DAY BY MILITARY TROOPS, AND HAD ONLY BEEN RELEASED FROM 40 DAYS OF DETENTION ON MAY 19. HE HAD ALSO BEEN A KEY SPEAKER DURING MAY 26 GEORGIAN INDEPENDENCE DAY CELEBRATIONS (SEPTEL).

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4. GMSAKHURDIA SEEMED TO BE PLEASED BY CONOFF'S VISIT, ESPECIALLY IN VIEW OF THE FACT THAT THE SOVIET MFA HAD DENIED PERMISSION FOR OFFICERS FROM EMBASSY MOSCOW TO VISIT TBILISI THE SAME WEEKEND. HE NEVERTHELESS HOPES TO SEE EMBASSY VISITORS WHENEVER POSSIBLE, IN PART TO HAND OVER A PETITION ADDRESSED TO THE USG AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS BY OVER

20,000 GEORGIANS. GAMSAKHURDIA RECEIVED CONOFF IN THE ELEGANT AND PALATIAL HOUSE WHICH SERVES SIMULTANEOUSLY AS HIS FAMILY HOME AND AS A STATE-RUN MUSEUM TO HONOR GAMSAKHURDIA'S LATE FATHER, WHO WAS APPARENTLY ONE OF GEORGIA'S BEST-KNOWN WRITERS IN THE EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURY.

5. ACCUSATIONS OF GENOCIDE  
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GAMSAKHURDIA MINCED NO WORDS IN STAKING OUT HIS POSITION AS A FERVENT ADVOCATE OF GEORGIAN INDEPENDENCE AND A BITTER CRITIC OF THE CURRENT SOVIET LEADERSHIP, INCLUDING CRITICIZING PRESIDENT GORBACHEV AND EVEN FOREIGN MINISTER SHEVARDNADZE AS ENEMIES OF THE GEORGIAN PEOPLE. HE OPENED THE CONVERSATION BY STATING THAT GEORGIANS ARE IN DANGER FROM "THIS EMPIRE OF EVIL", WHICH WANTS TO COMMIT "GENOCIDE"

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AMEMBASSY HELSINKI

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 05 HELSINKI 04148

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THROUGH CHEMICAL POISONS AND "ECOLOGICAL WAR".

6. THE DISSIDENT CLAIMED THAT THE WHOLE TOWN OF TBILISI WAS POISONED BY THE USE OF CHEMICAL SUBSTANCES TO BREAK UP THE APRIL 9 DEMONSTRATION, AND THAT SPECIAL "POISON CAPSULES" HAD SINCE BEEN FOUND ON THE CITY'S STREETS; THESE MATTERS HAD BEEN CONFIDENTIAL

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BROUGHT TO THE ATTENTION OF GEORGIA'S SPECIAL MEDICAL INVESTIGATION COMMISSION AS WELL AS THE UNITED NATIONS, HE SAID. THE ECOLOGICAL WARFARE CHARGE WAS BASED MAINLY ON ALLEGATIONS THAT DANGEROUS CLIMATE CHANGE AND OTHER KINDS OF DAMAGE ARE CAUSED BY HYDROELECTRIC PLANS BUILT IN GEORGIA'S MOUNTAINOUS COUNTRYSIDE.

7. AFTERMATH OF APRIL 9 EVENTS

WITH REGARD TO THE EVENTS OF APRIL 9 IN TBILISI, GAMSAKHURDIA CLAIMED THAT AS MANY AS 100 PEOPLE HAD BEEN KILLED WHEN THE MILITARY DISPERSED A LARGE CROWD WITH GAS AND SHOVELS. OVER 450 HAD BEEN HOSPITALIZED, OF WHICH ABOUT 200 REMAINED IN HOSPITALS MAY 27 FOR TREATMENT OF GAS EFFECTS AS WELL AS INJURIES INFLECTED BY MILITARY SHOVELS. WHILE CHALLENGING THE OFFICIAL DEATH TOLL OF 21 HOWEVER, HE COULD OFFER NO NAMES OF

ADDITIONAL VICFIMS--CLAIMING THAT THE AUTHORITIES ARE "TERRORIZING" THE VICTIMS' PARENTS TO COVER UP THE MAGNITUDE OF THE MILITARY'S "CRIMES".

8. GMSAKHURDIA SAID THAT ONE OF GEORGIA'S MOST URGENT DEMANDS IS TO GAIN ACCESS FOR A UNITED NATIONS EXPERT GROUP TO STUDY THE APRIL 9 EVENTS, THOUGH HE ACKNOWLEDGED THAT THE CHANCES OF ESTABLISHING SUCH A GROUP UNDER UN AUSPICES ARE PRACTICALLY NIL. HE ALSO HOPES THE US CONGRESS WOULD BE INTERESTED IN SENDING AN INVESTIGATIVE COMMISSION TO TBILISI. HE NOTED THAT THE GEORGIAN VICTIMS HAD RECEIVED MEDICAL ASSISTANCE FROM THE INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE RED CROSS AS WELL AS WEST GERMAN AND AMERICAN DOCTORS,  
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THOUGH HE COMPLAINED OF SOVIET UNRESPONSIVENESS TO URGENT ACCESS REQUESTS BY TOXICOLOGISTS FROM THE AMERICAN GROUP "PHYSICIANS FOR HUMAN RIGHTS". THE DISSIDENT ALSO HOPED FOR PROGRESS IN THE US CONGRESS ON EFFORTS TO FORMALLY DECLARE THAT GEORGIA HAD BEEN ILLEGALLY ANNEXED BY THE SOVIET UNION.

9. FOUR OF SIX DETAINEES RELEASED MAY 19  
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GMSAKHURDIA REPORTED THAT HE WAS AMONG SIX NATIONALIST LEADERS ARRESTED APRIL 9; FOUR OF WHOM WERE RELEASED MAY 19 FROM DETENTION IN TBILISI. HE CREDITED HIS RELEASE TO THE FACT THAT "THE WHOLE GEORGIAN PEOPLE" HAD THREATENED TO CONDUCT A GENERAL STRIKE MAY 19 ON THE DETAINEES' BEHALF. CHARGES AGAINST GMSAKHURDIA ARE STILL PENDING UNDER ARTICLE 226.3 OF THE CRIMINAL CODE FOR VIOLATIONS OF PUBLIC ORDER (I.E., HOOLIGANISM) THOUGH HE SUSPECTED THAT THE AUTHORITIES THEMSELVES WERE UNSURE OF WHETHER TO PURSUE THE CASE.

10. TWO APRIL 19 DETAINEES CONTINUED TO BE HELD IN WESTERN GEORGIA, WHICH GMSAKHURDIA EXPLAINED BY THE FACT THAT THEY ARE "NOT SO POPULAR". HE IDENTIFIED THE DETAINEES AS:

--NODAR IMNADSE, WHO WAS CHARGED WITH ORGANIZING ILLEGAL DEMONSTRATIONS AND PISTOL POSSESSION (A CHARGE WHICH GMSAKHURDIA ACKNOWLEDGED TO BE TRUE, THOUGH HE SAID IMNADSE NEEDED A WEAPON TO DEFEND

HIMSELF AGAINST MOSLEM "MURDERERS" WHO OPERATE IN ABKHAZIA WITH KGB AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT SUPPORT); AND

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INFO MOSCOW POLITICAL COLLECTIVE  
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 03 OF 05 HELSINKI 04148

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--KAKHO DOBORDSHGINIDSE, A MEMBER OF THE ST. ILYAS SOCIETY, WHO CONTINUED TO BE HELD ON HOOLIGANISM CHARGES.

11. COMPETITION FOR PEOPLE'S FRONT LEADERSHIP?  
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FOLLOWING HIS RELEASE FROM DETENTION, GMSAKHURDIA HAD IMMEDIATELY RESUMED POLITICAL ACTIVITIES AS A LEADER OF THE HELSINKI GROUP (ROUGHLY 100 MEMBERS), A MEMBER OF THE ST. ILYAS SOCIETY GOVERNING BOARD, AND AS A FOUNDER OF THE EMERGING GEORGIAN POPULAR FRONT (GPF). THE GPF HAS SO FAR RECEIVED NO OFFICIAL STATUS, THOUGH IT WAS ACKNOWLEDGED IN THE OFFICIAL PRESS AS A MAJOR ORGANIZER OF THE MAY 26 INDEPENDENCE DAY CELEBRATIONS, AND THERE SEEMED TO BE SOME COMPETITION UNDERWAY FOR ITS CONTROL.

12. GMSAKHURDIA SAID THAT THE MAIN MEMBERS OF THE GPF WERE THE ST. ILYAS SOCIETY (SEVERAL THOUSAND INDIVIDUALS) AND THE HELSINKI GROUP, ADDING THAT "MORE MODERATE GROUPS" DO NOT TAKE PART IN THE PF'S ACTIVITIES. ON THE OTHER HAND, HE ALSO CITED GOVERNMENT EFFORTS TO "TAKE OVER" THE GPF WHICH WOULD EVENTUALLY CAUSE HIM TO LEAVE THE GPF IF THEY WERE SUCCESSFUL. GMSAKHURDIA SAID THAT CURRENT GPF MEMBERSHIP IS ABOUT 13,000, BUT THAT THIS FIGURE INCLUDES COLLECTIVE MEMBERSHIPS BY LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS REPRESENTING AS MANY AS 100,000 PEOPLE. HE SAID THE GPF HAS VERY FEW COMMUNIST PARTY MEMBERS AND THAT IT HAS DEVELOPED A GEORGIAN ECONOMIC AUTONOMY PLAN.

13. EVERYBODY FOR INDEPENDENCE  
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AMONG THE OTHER IMPORTANT INDEPENDENT GROUPS IN GEORGIA, GMSAKHURDIA IDENTIFIED THE NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY ("NOT TOO SERIOUS", IN HIS VIEW), THE PARTY OF NATIONAL INDEPENDENCE, THE CHAVCHAVADZE SOCIETY AND THE SOCIETY OF NATIONAL JUSTICE. ABOUT FORTY OTHER  
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GROUPS EXIST, INCLUDING A NEWLY ESTABLISHED "APRIL 9 SOCIETY", MADE UP OF "COMMON PEOPLE" RATHER THAN THE INTELLIGENTSIA; ALL THESE GROUPS, ACCORDING TO GAMSAKHURDIA, FAVOR TOTAL GEORGIAN INDEPENDENCE.

14. GROWING OPPOSITION TO SOVIET MILITARY  
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THE GEORGIAN NATIONALIST MOVEMENT AND THE APRIL 9 TBILISI KILLINGS HAVE HAD A PREDICTABLE IMPACT ON THE POPULARITY OF THE SOVIET ARMED FORCES, WHO ARE INCREASINGLY VIEWED BY GEORGIANS AS BOTH ILLEGAL OCCUPIERS AND OUTRIGHT MURDERERS. GAMSAKHURDIA REPORTED THAT ABOUT 90 YOUNG PEOPLE HAD STARTED AN ANTI-DRAFT HUNGER STRIKE MAY 26 IN FRONT OF A HOSPITAL ON TBILISI'S CHAVCHAVADZE PROSPECT, DEMANDING THE RIGHT TO EITHER PERFORM THEIR MILITARY SERVICE IN GEORGIA OR TO AVOID THE ARMY ALTOGETHER FOR RELIGIOUS REASONS. GAMSAKHURDIA STATED OMINOUSLY THAT IT IS VERY DANGEROUS FOR GEORGIAN BOYS TO SERVE IN RUSSIA, WHERE GEORGIAN SOLDIERS' HAVE ALLEGEDLY BEEN "KILLED AND TORTURED." HE CLAIMED THAT AN ANTI-MILITARY MOVEMENT WAS BUILDING THROUGHOUT GEORGIA, WHERE MANY FAMILIES WERE STILL SUFFERING "TRAUMA" FROM THE LOSS OF A RELATIVE OR FRIEND ON APRIL 9.

15. INTER-ETHNIC RELATIONS IN GEORGIA  
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IN DISCUSSING INTER-ETHNIC RELATIONS WITHIN GEORGIA, GAMSAKHURDIA SHOWED LITTLE TOLERANCE FOR THE REPUBLIC'S INDIGENOUS MINORITIES AND WARNED OF KARABAKH-LIKE SITUATIONS DEVELOPING IN THE ABKHAZIA AUTONOMOUS SSR AS WELL AS THE SOUTHERN OSETIAN AUTONOMOUS OBLAST'. HE

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DESCRIBED THE ABKHAZIAN AS "THE TRAITORS OF THE CAUCASUS"  
 AND AS "CORRUPTED PEOPLE" WHO "WANT TO RUSSIFY THEMSELVES",  
 CLAIMING THAT THE ABKHAZIAN NATIONAL MOVEMENT IS ACTUALLY  
 PROVOKED BY MOSCOW AND LED BY "TURKISH MOSLEMS" AS A TYPE  
 OF GEORGIAN "INTERFRONT". HE INITIALLY CHARACTERIZED THE  
 POLITICAL POSITION OF ABKHAZIAN AUTHOR FAZIL ISKANDER AS  
 "NEUTRAL" BUT NEVERTHELESS FELT IT NECESSARY TO POINT OUT  
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THAT ISKANDER IS AN ETHNIC PERSIAN AND A "GREAT LIAR".

16. ACCORDING TO THE GEORGIAN NATIONALIST, A SECOND GEORGIAN "INTERFRONT" -- A REFERENCE TO THE PRO-RUSSIAN GROUPS WHICH HAVE EMERGED IN THE BALTICS -- WAS BEING EXPLOITED BY MOSCOW AMONG THE 60,000 OSETIANS IN SOUTHERN OSETIA. GAMSAKHURDIA CLAIMED THAT HE HAD JUST RECEIVED REPORTS OF GEORGIANS BEING BEATEN IN SEVERAL OSETIAN VILLAGES, CLAIMING THAT THE OSETIAN POPULATION IS "VERY AGGRESSIVE". GEORGIANS ARE BEING OPPRESSED ON THEIR OWN LAND IN ABKHAZIA AND OSETIA, ACCORDING TO GAMSAKHURDIA, WITH THE POTENTIAL FOR MORE VIOLENT CONFLICTS. HE FEARED THAT RESULTING CURFEWS AND MARTIAL LAW COULD SPREAD THROUGHOUT GEORGIA.

17. RELATIONS WITH ADZHARIANS IMPROVING  
- - - - -

IN CONTRAST TO THESE DIRE DESCRIPTIONS OF ETHNIC CONFLICT IN ABKHAZIA AND OSETIA, GAMSAKHURDIA SAID THAT RELATIONS WERE IMPROVING BETWEEN GEORGIANS AND THE 200,000 ADZHARIANS WHO MAKE UP THE MAJORITY OF THE ADZHARIAN AUTONOMOUS SSR. HE SAID THAT MANY YOUNGER ADZHARIANS HAD ACCEPTED CHRISTIANITY, THOUGH THE OLDER GENERATION GENERALLY STUCK TO ITS MOSLEM BELIEFS. AFTER LANDSLIDES IN ADZHARIA MAY 1989, ACCORDING TO GAMSAKHURDIA, SEVERAL THOUSAND ADDITIONAL ADZHARIAN MOSLEMS HAD CONVERTED TO CHRISTIANITY AT A MASS CEREMONY IN BATUMI. THESE MASS CONVERSIONS, WHICH WE CANNOT CORROBORATE, REPORTEDLY RESULTED FROM THE FACT THAT A CHRISTIAN CHURCH HAD SURVIVED LANDSLIDES IN AN AREA WHERE ALL OTHER BUILDINGS WERE DESTROYED.

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18. GEORGIAN MEDIA MORE OBJECTIVE  
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DESPITE HIS STRONG DISTRUST OF ALL OFFICIAL SOVIET INSTITUTIONS AND OFFICIALS, OUR DISSIDENT INTERLOCUTOR ACKNOWLEDGED THAT THE GEORGIAN MEDIA HAD BEEN QUITE OBJECTIVE IN THE WAKE OF THE APRIL 9 TBILISI TRAGEDY. HE SAID THAT THE GEORGIAN-LANGUAGE PRESS AND TELEVISION ARE EVEN BETTER THAN THE RUSSIAN-LANGUAGE PRESS, BUT HE GAVE A POSITIVE ASSESSMENT TO ALL THE LOCAL MEDIA.

19. GEORGIAN JOURNALISTS ARE NOT EVEN PRESSURED TO WRITE PRO-GOVERNMENT PIECES, ACCORDING TO GAMSAKHURDIA, BECAUSE THE AUTHORITIES ARE DEEPLY AFRAID OF "IRRITATING PEOPLE" BY ATTEMPTING TO USE SUCH HEAVY-HANDED TACTICS. THOUGH THE PRESS HAD NOT PROVIDED A CROWD ESTIMATE FOR THE MAY 26 INDEPENDENCE DAY CELEBRATIONS, NUMEROUS UPBEAT ARTICLES AND PHOTOGRAPHS OF THE MASSIVE POPULAR DEMONSTRATIONS RECEIVED PROMINENT PLAY IN BOTH GEORGIAN AND RUSSIAN-LANGUAGE PAPERS (SEVERAL EXAMPLES BEING POUCHED TO INR/IL/P).

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20. GEORGIAN EXPERTS INVESTIGATING APRIL 9 EVENTS  
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GAMSAKHURDIA ALSO FAVORABLY VIEWED THE WORK OF THE COMMISSION ESTABLISHED UNDER THE GEORGIAN SUPREME SOVIET TO INVESTIGATE THE APRIL 9 EVENTS, THOUGH IT HAD NOT RESOLVED WHAT GAMSAKHURDIA REGARDS AS A DISCREPANCY BETWEEN THE OFFICIAL AND ACTUAL DEATH TOLLS. REPORTS OF THE COMMISSION'S MEDICAL AND CHEMICAL/TOXIOLOGICAL SUB-COMMISSIONS WERE PUBLISHED IN RUSSIAN-LANGUAGE PAPERS

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DURING CONOFF'S VISIT TO TBILISI, BOTH OF WHICH STRONGLY  
CRITICIZED THE MILITARY'S ACTIONS.

21. FOR EXAMPLE, THE CHEMICAL/TOXIOLOGICAL SUB-COMMISSION  
REPORTED THAT SOVIET TROOPS HAD USED THE SAME TYPE OF  
"CS" GAS WHICH U.S. TROOPS HAD BEEN FORCED TO STOP USING  
IN VIETNAM BECAUSE OF ITS NEGATIVE EFFECTS ON THE HUMAN  
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ORGANISM. THIS SUBCOMMISSION CONCLUDED THAT "AN  
ABSOLUTELY UNJUSTIFIED BARBARIAN ACTION WAS CARRIED OUT  
AGAINST THE PEACEFUL POPULATION OF THE REPUBLIC" BY THE  
ARMED UNITS, WITH "POISONOUS SUBSTANCES" WHICH THEY HAD  
"NEITHER A MORAL NOR A LEGAL RIGHT" TO USE.

22. PROSPECTS FOR BALTIC-TYPE REFORM MOVEMENT?  
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IN VIEW OF THE GEORGIAN GOVERNMENT'S APPARENT WILLINGNESS  
TO OPEN UP THE PRESS, TO CONDUCT AN OBJECTIVE INVESTIGA-  
TION OF THE APRIL 9 EVENTS, AND TO ALLOW THE MAY 26 IN-  
DEPENDENCE DAY CELEBRATIONS, CONOFF INQUIRED WHETHER  
GAMSAKHURDIA SAW ANY HOPE FOR THE REPUBLIC'S AUTHORITIES

TO ASSERT NATIONALIST DEMANDS THEMSELVES VIS-A-VIS MOSCOW. GMSAKHURDIA WAS SKEPTICAL ABOUT THE WILLINGNESS OF THE CURRENT GEORGIAN SUPREME SOVIET AND GOVERNMENT TO PLAY THE KIND OF ROLE THAT REPUBLIC-LEVEL AUTHORITIES ARE PLAYING IN THE BALTICS, THOUGH HE NOTED THAT THE GEORGIAN AUTHORITIES SEEM MORE CAREFUL OF PUBLIC OPINION AFTER APRIL 9. HE SAID THAT THE NEW PARTY FIRST SECRETARY, GIVI GUMBARIDZE, SEEMED "WILLING TO LISTEN" AND COULD THEREFORE LEAD GEORGIA ON A BALTIC-TYPE COURSE IN THE FUTURE. GMSAKHURDIA SAID THAT GUMBARIDZE HAD NOT BEEN A VERY VIVID FIGURE IN HIS PREVIOUS PARTY POSTS, INCLUDING THAT OF TBILISI PARTY FIRST SECRETARY.

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23. DISSIDENTS IN CONGRESS, DILEMMA OVER LOCAL ELECTIONS  
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GMSAKHURDIA NOTED THAT TWO "DISSIDENT" FIGURES, ALAKI BAKRADZE AND PARMEN MARGVELASHVILI, HAD BEEN ELECTED TO  
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THE USSR CONGRESS OF PEOPLE'S DEPUTIES FROM GEORGIA. ASKED WHETHER PRO-INDEPENDENCE FORCES WOULD COMPETE IN THE UPCOMING ELECTIONS TO LOCAL AND REPUBLIC-LEVEL SOVIETS, GMSAKHURDIA REPLIED THAT THIS WAS AN UNRESOLVED QUESTION. WHILE HIS FIRST INCLINATION WOULD BE TO AVOID ANY ASSOCIATIONS WITH SOVIET POWER, HE ALSO SAW THE PROSPECT OF NOMINATING PRO-INDEPENDENCE CANDIDATES AS A MEANS TO HELP DEFEAT SOVIET POWER. GMSAKHURDIA'S APPARENT ASSUMPTION, WHICH LENINGRAD CONOFF WOULD HAVE NO REASON TO CHALLENGE, WAS THAT VIRTUALLY THE ENTIRE GEORGIAN PEOPLE WOULD VOTE FOR PRO-INDEPENDENCE CANDIDATES IF FAIR ELECTIONS WERE HELD. MILES

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