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CLASSIFIED BY POLMINCOUNS GEORGE KROL. REASON 1.5 (B/D).

REF: (A) MOSCOW 13072 (B) TBILISI 3087

1. (S) SUMMARY: DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER MAMEDOV TOLD AMBASSADOR VERSHBOW OCTOBER 30 THAT ACCORDING TO THE RUSSIAN MINISTRY OF DEFENSE, NO RUSSIAN PLANES FLEW OVER OR BOMBED POSITIONS IN THE KODORI GORGE OCTOBER 28-29, DESPITE GEORGIAN ACCUSATIONS TO THE CONTRARY. MFA GEORGIA DESK CHIEF TEREOKEN ECHOED MAMEDOV'S STATEMENT. TEREOKEN FURTHER CONFIRMED THAT ONE RAILWAY CAR FULL OF RUSSIAN MILITARY EQUIPMENT LEFT GUDAUTA BASE AND ENTERED RUSSIA OCTOBER 29 (REF A) AND THAT TWO OTHER RAILWAY CARS ARE LOADED AND AWAITING ABKHAZ PERMISSION TO LEAVE FOR RUSSIA. THERE ARE NO PLANS TO WITHDRAW PERSONNEL UNTIL TBILISI AGREES THAT APPROXIMATELY 340 RUSSIAN "GUARDS" CAN REMAIN AT GUDAUTA. TEREOKEN SAID THAT ABKHAZ AUTHORITIES WOULD NOT ALLOW ANY OUTSIDE OBSERVERS TO WITNESS THE WITHDRAWAL. TEREOKEN TERMED GEORGIAN PARLIAMENTARY SPEAKER ZVANIA'S OCTOBER 25-28 VISIT TO MOSCOW POSITIVE IN TONE BUT EMPTY OF RESULTS. ACCORDING TO THE GEORGIAN EMBASSY, ZVANIA AND RUSSIAN DUMA SPEAKER SELEZNEV AGREED THAT BOTH SIDES SHOULD AVOID RECRIMINATIONS. TEREOKEN DENIED MEDIA REPORTS THAT DEFENSE MINISTER SERGEY IVANOV WAS PLANNING TO VISIT TBILISI SOON BUT DID NOT RULE OUT A VISIT COMPLETELY. END SUMMARY

2. (S) ON OCTOBER 30, DURING A PREVIOUSLY SCHEDULED MEETING, AMBASSADOR VERSHBOW RAISED REFTTEL B REPORTS
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ALLEGING RUSSIAN PLANES HAD VIOLATED GEORGIAN AIRSPACE AND BOMBED AREAS OF THE KODORI GORGE. THE AMBASSADOR STRESSED THAT SUCH INCIDENTS, IF TRUE, AND IF CONTINUED, COULD BE DISASTROUS FOR U.S.-RUSSIAN RELATIONS AND SPOIL THE UPCOMING SUMMIT MEETING OF OUR PRESIDENTS IN THE U.S. MAMEDOV AGREED THAT SUCH INCIDENTS WOULD HAVE A NEGATIVE EFFECT ON THE SUMMIT, BUT QUOTED THE RUSSIAN MINISTRY OF DEFENSE AS CATEGORICALLY DENYING THAT RUSSIAN PLANS WERE INVOLVED IN ANY INCIDENTS IN GEORGIAN AIRSPACE.

3. (S) MFA GEORGIA DESK CHIEF TEREOKEN, ECHOING MAMEDOV'S CLAIMS, DENIED TO US OCTOBER 30 REPORTS OF RUSSIAN PLANES BOMBING KODORI GORGE IN ABKHAZIA. HE ALSO DENIED THAT THERE WERE ANY RUSSIAN VIOLATIONS OF GEORGIAN AIRSPACE, SAYING THAT THERE HAD BEEN NO RUSSIAN PLANES FLYING NEAR THE AREA ON EITHER OCTOBER 28 OR 29. ACCORDING TO TEREOKEN, THERE WERE CREDIBLE REPORTS OF ABKHAZ HELICOPTERS BOMBING THE AREAS "WHERE THE TERRORISTS WERE" BUT THAT REPORTS OF PLANES IN THE AREA MIGHT AS WELL HAVE BEEN ABOUT "UFOS." MOSCOW, HE EXPLAINED, DOES NOT HAVE THE TECHNICAL CAPABILITY TO DETERMINE WHETHER THERE WERE FOREIGN PLANES IN THE REGION. UNDERSCORING THAT HE "WAS NOT ACCUSING

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