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ACTION EUR-01

INFO	LOG-00	AID-00	BIB-01	CIAE-00	SMEC-00	INL-02	OASY-00
	DODE-00	DOEE-00	DS-00	OIGO-01	FBIE-00	H-01	TEDE-00
	INR-00	IO-10	LAB-01	L-01	MCO-01	ADS-00	MOFM-04
	MOF-03	M-00	NRRC-00	NSAE-00	NSCE-00	OIC-02	OMB-01
	PA-01	PM-00	PRS-01	P-01	SCT-00	SP-00	SS-00
	TRSE-00	T-00	USIE-00	SA-01	SNIS-00	NISC-01	PMB-00
	DSCC-00	PRME-01	DRL-09	G-00	/044W		

-----C06B57 281650Z /38

P 281632Z APR 95
FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0027
INFO AMEMBASSY VILNIUS
AMEMBASSY RIGA
AMEMBASSY TALLINN
MOSCOW POLITICAL COLLECTIVE
CIS COLLECTIVE
USMISSION GENEVA

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SECTION 01 OF 03 MOSCOW 014317

GENEVA FOR KELLY CLEMENTS

E.O. 12356; DECL: N/A
TAGS: PREL, PGOV, RS
SUBJECT: RUSSIAN FORCES ATTACK ON SAMASHKI:
DIFFERING VIEWS ON ATROCITIES
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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE
REVIEW AUTHORITY: THEODORE SELLIN
DATE/CASE ID: 22 OCT 2009 200901541

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[REDACTED] BELIEVES REPORTS SUGGESTING THAT A PREMEDITATED MASSACRE BY DRUNKEN AND DRUGGED FEDERAL TROOPS TOOK PLACE IN SAMASHKI, CHECHNYA APRIL 7-9 ARE INACCURATE. WHILE ACKNOWLEDGING THAT ATROCITIES TOOK PLACE, HE ACCUSES THE INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE RED CROSS (ICRC) OF UNBALANCED STATEMENTS AND OF TAKING SIDES WITHOUT A THOROUGH INVESTIGATION OF THE FACTS. [REDACTED] WAS IN THE SAMASHKI REGION ON APRIL 10 AND OVERFLEW THE TOWN BY HELICOPTER THE SAME DAY. [REDACTED] ACCOUNT NOTWITHSTANDING, SEVERAL RUSSIAN AND INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS ORGANIZATIONS, AS WELL AS INGUSHETIAN GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS, HAVE REPORTED MANY EYEWITNESS ACCOUNTS OF ATROCITIES BY UNDISCIPLINED FEDERAL TROOPS; PERHAPS ONLY A THOROUGH INVESTIGATION CAN UNCOVER WHAT REALLY HAPPENED IN SAMASHKI.
END SUMMARY.

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SAMASHKI: ONE CORRESPONDENT'S VIEW

2. [REDACTED] TOLD POLOFF ON APRIL 21 THAT HE STRONGLY BELIEVES REPORTING BY NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS AND MOST JOURNALISTS ON THE BATTLE IN SAMASHKI APRIL 7-9 HAS BEEN INACCURATE.

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[REDACTED] WAS PARTICULARLY CRITICAL OF ICRC ACCUSATIONS THAT "DISPROPORTIONATE AND INDISCRIMINATE" FORCE WAS USED BY FEDERAL TROOPS. HE SUGGESTED THAT THE ICRC "HAS LOST ITS NEUTRAL STATUS AND BECOME A PARTY IN THE CHECHEN PROPAGANDA FRAY."

3. REPORTS SUGGESTING THAT THE RUSSIAN MILITARY SENT DRUNK AND DRUGGED SOLDIERS INTO THE VILLAGE TO KILL NONCOMBATANTS INDISCRIMINATELY IN ORDER TO "PSYCHOLOGICALLY" DEFEAT THE CHECHEN PEOPLE ARE

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--THE SYRINGES FOUND IN THE STREETS OF SAMASHKI AND PRESENTED BY SOME AS EVIDENCE THAT RUSSIAN TROOPS WERE DRUGGED DURING BATTLE ACTUALLY CONTAINED MORPHINE, CARRIED BY ALL MVD TROOPS IN FIRST AID KITS AND USED BY WOUNDED TO PREVENT PAIN SHOCK;

[REDACTED] OBSERVED THAT ONLY INDIVIDUAL BUILDINGS WERE DESTROYED OR BURNED DOWN, AND THAT MANY PARTS OF THE TOWN REMAINED INTACT;

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--TWO ARMY TANKS ASSISTED THE MVD ASSAULT ON THE TOWN, BUT OTHERWISE FEDERAL TROOPS DID NOT USE HEAVY WEAPONS; IN FACT, ACCORDING TO [REDACTED] HEAVY ARTILLERY WAS SITTING UNUSED OUTSIDE THE CITY LIMITS DURING THE ATTACK, AND GROUND ATTACK AIRCRAFT WERE NOT USED IN THE OPERATION;

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--FEDERAL FORCES SUFFERED FAIRLY SERIOUS CASUALTIES--AT LEAST TWELVE DEAD AND FORTY SERIOUSLY INJURED--INDICATING THAT THE RUSSIANS FACED SERIOUS OPPOSITION FROM DUDAYEV'S FORCES;

--SAMASHKI IS A KEY RAIL AND ROAD LINK IN THE REGION THAT THE FEDERAL FORCES NEEDED TO TAKE IN ORDER TO REGAIN CONTROL OF RAILWAY TRAFFIC.

EXTENT OF ATROCITIES

4. [REDACTED] WAS QUICK TO ACKNOWLEDGE THAT INDIVIDUAL FEDERAL TROOPS DID COMMIT CERTAIN ATROCITIES. ACCORDING TO HIS OBSERVATIONS AND CONVERSATIONS WITH RUSSIAN OFFICERS, MVD COMMANDERS APPEAR TO HAVE LOST CONTROL OF THE OMON SPECIAL FORCES

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P 281632Z APR 95
FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0028
INFO AMEMBASSY VILNIUS
AMEMBASSY RIGA
AMEMBASSY TALLINN
MOSCOW POLITICAL COLLECTIVE
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GENEVA FOR KELLY CLEMENTS

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ALS I TALKED TO WERE
EMBARRASSED BY WHAT THESE TROOPS HAD DONE,"

[REDACTED]

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5. IN ADDITION, THE CHECHEN PRISONERS WERE CLEARLY
BEING MISTREATED IN THE DETENTION CENTERS BY THE
FEDERAL FORCES. [REDACTED] SAID HE SAW SOME OF THEM:
"MANY HAD BRUISED FACES AND WERE HUNCHED OVER; I WAS
TOLD THAT MANY HAD BROKEN RIBS, AND THEY CERTAINLY
LOOKED TO BE IN BAD CONDITION." ACCORDING TO

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[REDACTED] THE GENERALS AGAIN EXPRESSED THEIR
DISAPPOINTMENT BECAUSE THEY WERE UNABLE TO EXCHANGE
BATTERED PRISONERS FOR THOSE HELD BY DUDAYEV'S FORCES.
IN FACT, [REDACTED] SAID, PRISONERS TO BE EXCHANGED
WERE BEING ORDERED OUT OF THE DETENTION CENTER IN
MOZDOK AND SENT TO LESS BRUTAL FACILITIES FOR A WEEK'S
TIME SO THAT THEY COULD HAVE A NORMAL PHYSICAL
APPEARANCE AT THE TIME OF THE EXCHANGE.

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OTHER VIEWS ON SAMASHKI

6. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] TOLD EMBOFFS IN NAZRAN ON
APRIL 24 THAT HIS OWN INVESTIGATION SUGGESTED THAT
RUSSIAN TROOPS CARRIED OUT ATROCITIES "OF AN UNUSUALLY
SADISTIC NATURE." ACCORDING TO HIS INFORMATION, THREE
HUNDRED SIXTY-ONE HOUSES HAD BEEN BURNED DOWN IN

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RECOGNITION. [REDACTED] ATTRIBUTED THE BRUTALITY TO SEVERE
LACK OF DISCIPLINE AMONG THE TROOPS, PARTICULARLY THE
OMON SPECIAL FORCES UNITS.

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7. THERE HAS BEEN A SIGNIFICANT AMOUNT OF DEBATE IN THE MOSCOW PRESS ABOUT WHAT REALLY HAPPENED IN SAMASHKI. IN A SPEECH TO THE RUSSIAN STATE DUMA LAST WEEK, DUMA DEPUTY STANISLAV GOVORUKHIN, CHAIRMAN OF A SPECIAL PARLIAMENTARY COMMISSION TO INVESTIGATE THE CHECHEN CRISIS, STRONGLY DEFENDED THE MILITARY'S ACTIONS IN SAMASHKI. BASING HIS REMARKS ON A RECENT VISIT TO THE REGION, HE ACCUSED HUMAN RIGHTS ORGANIZATIONS OF FALSIFYING THE EVIDENCE FOR POLITICAL PURPOSES. HIS REPORT WAS FAR DIFFERENT IN TONE FROM THAT OF DUMA DEPUTY ANATOLIY SHABAD, WHO VISITED SAMASHKI ON APRIL 12 AND REPORTED THAT RUSSIAN TROOPS HAD CARRIED OUT A MASSACRE. A GROUP OF FEDERATION COUNCIL DEPUTIES WHO VISITED SAMASHKI TOLD A PRESS CONFERENCE ON APRIL 25 THAT "UNJUSTIFIED AND CRUEL ACTIONS AGAINST CIVILIANS" TOOK PLACE IN SAMASHKI AND THAT EVIDENCE WOULD BE PASSED TO THE PROCURATOR GENERAL'S OFFICE.

8. EMBASSY CONTACTS IN RUSSIAN AND INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS ORGANIZATIONS, INCLUDING THE SOLDIERS' MOTHERS OF RUSSIA COMMITTEE AND THE QUAKER PEACE AND SERVICE COMMITTEE, CONTINUE TO ASSERT THAT THERE IS CLEAR EVIDENCE A PREMEDITATED MASSACRE TOOK PLACE. REFUGEES FROM SAMASHKI HAVE REPORTED TO THESE ORGANIZATIONS MANY STORIES OF INDISCRIMINATE KILLING OF CIVILIANS AND BURNING OF PRIVATE HOMES.

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GAUGING MILITARY ATTITUDES

9. ASKED TO COMMENT ON THE PSYCHOLOGICAL STATE OF THE TROOPS IN CHECHNYA AND BEYOND, [REDACTED] ASSERTED THAT THE MILITARY IS BECOMING DANGEROUSLY CYNICAL OF CIVILIAN AUTHORITY, AND SPECULATED THAT GENERALS ARE CLOSE TO THE POINT AT WHICH THEY MIGHT REFUSE TO CARRY OUT ORDERS IF THEY DO NOT BELIEVE SUCH ORDERS ARE IN THE MILITARY'S INTEREST. HE NOTED IN PARTICULAR THAT HE FELT A SIGNIFICANT AMOUNT OF RESENTMENT AMONG FEDERAL OFFICERS IN CHECHNYA THAT PRESIDENT YELTSIN DID NOT VISIT THE TROOPS DURING HIS RECENT TRIP TO THE NORTH CAUCASUS. INSTEAD, THE TROOPS' PERCEPTION WAS THAT HE SPENT ALL OF HIS TIME VACATIONING AND SIGHTSEEING, EVEN TAKING A PLEASURE FLIGHT OVER MOUNT ELBRUS (THE HIGHEST PEAK IN THE CAUCASUS RANGE). THIS WAS A SERIOUS MISTAKE ON YELTSIN'S PART, [REDACTED] COMMENTED; "THE GENERALS AND THEIR TROOPS ARE LIKELY TO REMEMBER THIS PERCEIVED SNUB FOR SOME TIME."

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10. [REDACTED] ALSO SUGGESTED THAT GEN. ALEKSANDR
LEBED, CONSIDERED BY MANY TO BE WIDELY POPULAR IN THE
MILITARY, IS NOW CONSIDERED BY MANY OFFICERS TO BE OUT
OF FAVOR. LEBED'S INITIAL OPPOSITION TO THE CHECHEN
OPERATION WAS NOT WELL RECEIVED BY THOSE CARRYING OUT
THE ORDERS AND, ACCORDING TO [REDACTED] THIS HAS NOT
BEEN FORGOTTEN. HE NOTED AS EVIDENCE OF THIS TREND A
POLL OF RUSSIAN SERVICEMEN PUBLISHED IN "IZVESTIYA" ON

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COMMENT

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11. [REDACTED] IS GENERALLY CONSIDERED AN OBJECTIVE
OBSERVER WHO ACCURATELY REPORTS WHAT HE SEES AND
HEARS. HOWEVER, HE CLEARLY SYMPATHIZES WITH THE
DIFFICULTIES FACED BY THE TROOPS ON THE GROUND, A
TENDENCY WHICH UNDOUBTEDLY AFFECTS HIS VIEWS IN THIS
CASE. THE LACK OF DISCIPLINE AMONG THE FEDERAL FORCES
HAS BEEN A SERIOUS PROBLEM SINCE THE BEGINNING OF THE
CHECHEN OPERATION. [REDACTED] AND
OTHERS HAVE CALLED FOR AN INVESTIGATION OF THE
SAMASHKI EVENTS; PERHAPS ONLY IN THIS WAY WILL THE
TRUE EXTENT OF AND MOTIVATIONS FOR THE SAMASHKI
ATROCITIES BE REVEALED.

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12. FOR USMISSION GENEVA: POST HAS NO INFORMATION
THUS FAR ON GEN. YEGOROV, EXCEPT THAT HE IS MVD
(INTERNAL TROOPS), NOT ARMY.

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