

Georgian republic's coalition apparently falling out

TBILISI, U.S.S.R. — Georgian President Zviad Gamsakhurdia's coalition appeared to fracture Sunday when some members stormed from a raucous parliament session, accusing their leader of becoming a dictator.

"This is definitely an authoritarian regime," said Tedo Patashvili, chairman of the foreign affairs committee

and a member of the Ilya The Just Society, a faction of Gamsakhurdia's coalition.

Gamsakhurdia appeared calm despite the walkout, but later warned his political opponents against stirring up trouble.

"We are not going to attack the opposition, but they had better not try

the patience of the Georgian people," he told reporters during a break in the one-day legislative session.

"If they do, the people will direct their anger against the provocateurs," Gamsakhurdia added.

The minister of material wealth, Igor Cheidze, also announced that the government had nationalized all Soviet

factories and businesses in the territory. It wasn't clear how many enterprises the law would affect or when.

The walkout followed debate over whether to televise the proceedings to the 5.5 million Georgians. Speakers argued that a live broadcast would inflame an already tense situation in

Georgia, but critics said it would be undemocratic.

Lawmakers voted 78-72 with 18 abstentions to tape the session and edit it for broadcast later. Angered by the vote, 39 opposition lawmakers stormed out, including several members of Gamsakhurdia's coalition.

Harkin jumps into campaign

WINTERSET, Iowa — Iowa Sen. Tom Harkin jumped into the Democratic presidential race Sunday with a populist's fiery call to "take back government from the privileged few" and return the party to its roots.

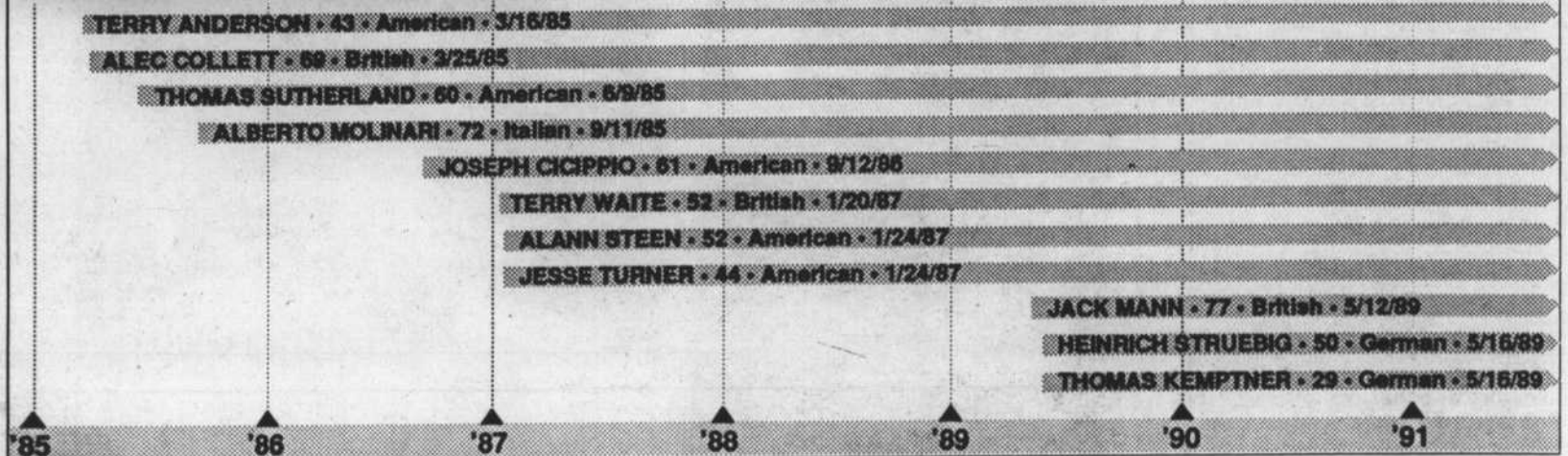
Harkin spelled out a campaign aimed at "the people who pull the load and pay the taxes," those he said had been betrayed by "the greed and selfishness of George Herbert Walker Bush and J. Danforth Quayle."

He dismissed his odds against President Bush, even as he touted his bid to "start investing here in America."

"There are those who say that we're a long shot, that we can't win," Harkin said. "I'm here to tell you that George Herbert Walker Bush has feet of clay and I intend to take a hammer to them."

HOSTAGES MISSING IN LEBANON

Here are the 11 Western hostages missing in Lebanon, their age, country and date taken captive:



Shiite cleric urges one-time hostage swap

BEIRUT, Lebanon — Lebanon's top Shiite Muslim cleric said Sunday that a Western hostage would be released in weeks, but urged a one-time swap involving Western captives and Arab prisoners to end the crisis.

Sheik Mohammed Mehdi Shamseddine's statements came amid in-

tense speculation that freedom for one or two of the Western hostages was imminent. Other religious leaders with ties to the kidnapers had predicted a hostage release in a matter of days.

Shamseddine called for a comprehensive swap — rather than gradual

releases — of Arab prisoners held by Israel in return for the 11 Westerners held by Shiites in Lebanon. But Israel says the detainees will only be freed after a full accounting of its seven missing servicemen.

Amid other signs of movement on the hostage issue, Iran's foreign min-

ister, Ali Akbar Velayati, called for all parties to cooperate with U.N. Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar, who is leading diplomatic efforts to free the captives.

Iran has helped secure the release of hostages in recent years.

Burning season Fires in Amazon continue to rage

SAO SEBASTIAO DE TOCANTINS, Brazil — It's burning season in the Amazon Basin and a thick haze of smoke and ash shrouds the rain forest.

Fires by ranchers and farmers this year are expected to destroy 5,000 square miles of forest, an area slightly larger than Connecticut, according to government estimates. That would be about 40 percent of the amount burned last year.

Already, three children have died from respiratory ailments related to smoke inhalation in northern Para state, and airports can open only sporadically because of poor visibility. Forest fires have damaged electric lines, causing periodic blackouts.

A smoke cloud stretched almost 4,000 miles in early September, from the northeastern state of Maranhao to remote Acre on Brazil's western border with Peru.

In this small village in the southeastern Amazon Basin the sun rises an eerie red, trapped behind a gray shroud, and sets the same color at day's end.

"Ten years ago this entire region was covered by virgin rain forest," the Rev. Miguel Elouso Rojo said as he squinted through

smoke rolling across the windshield of his pickup truck. "Now it is total desolation."

Rojo drove past mile after mile of blackened land, with only an occasional palm tree still standing. A few skinny cows walked amid the ruins, picking at the little green that remained.

The lovely Tocantins River passes just a few hundred yards in front of the village's Roman Catholic church. But during the burning season, Rojo says, he almost forgets that it exists.

Though it is illegal to burn the jungle for farming or ranching, the practice is routine. Fires are set as soon as the dry season begins, normally in August.

More than 250,000 square miles of rain forest — about the size of Texas — have been burned in the Amazon, whose 2 million square miles contain 30 percent of the world's remaining rain forest.

The burning destroys lush vegetation that produces huge amounts of oxygen. Meanwhile, the smoke is believed to contribute to the "greenhouse effect," which many scientists say is causing a gradual warming of the planet.

Gates makes bid for top CIA post

WASHINGTON — Robert Gates began his intelligence career 25 years ago in a quintessentially Cold War role: as an intelligence officer minding Minuteman nuclear missiles at Whiteman Air Force Base, Mo.

On Monday, he will try to persuade the Senate Intelligence Committee that he is the man to become the new leader of the Central Intelligence Agency, to lead America's spy institutions beyond the Cold War.

But before he can look to the future, Gates must defend his past.

Intelligence Committee Chairman David Boren, D-Okla., who has been one of Gates' biggest supporters, said the nominee's chances "will depend on how he conducts himself in the hearings."

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