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File Folder SOVIET POLICY SEPTEMBER 1982-OCTOBER 1982

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ID	Doc Type	Document Description	No of Pages	Doc Date	Restrictions
153916	CABLE	MOSCOW 10771 <i>R 6/2/2015 M452/2</i>	5	9/8/1982	B1
153917	REPORT		2	9/9/1982	B1
153918	PAPER	RE. DEVELOPMENTS IN THE SOVIET UNION <i>R 11/29/2016 M452/2</i>	13	ND	B1
153919	MEMO	PAULA DOBRIANSKY TO WILLIAM CLARK RE. WALL STREET JOURNAL ARTICLE ON SOVIET LEADERSHIP <i>R 6/2/2015 M452/2</i>	1	9/27/1982	B1
153920	REPORT	RE. SOVIET SPACE	18	10/1/1982	B1
153922	REPORT		2	10/1/1982	B1
153921	REPORT		1	10/27/1982	B1

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EXDIS
USNATO FOR BURT/WARD
E. O. 12356: OADR
TAGS: PEPR, PINT, UR, US, PL
SUBJECT: AMERICAN EXPERT ON SOVIET SUCCESSION POLITICS,
FOREIGN POLICY ATTITUDES AND POLAND

REF: MOSCOW 10600

1. (C - ENTIRE TEXT)

2. SUMMARY: AN AMERICAN EXPERT ON THE USSR AND EASTERN EUROPE HAS SHARED SOME OF HIS INSIGHTS ON SOVIET SUCCESSION POLITICS AND FOREIGN POLICY ATTITUDES WITH EMBASSY. THE PICTURE THAT EMERGES IS ONE OF 1) KREMLIN SUCCESSION POLITICS STILL BEING PLAYED OUT, 2) A DICHOTOMY IN SOVIET THINKING ABOUT HOW TO DEAL WITH THE UNITED STATES, AND 3) SERIOUS SOVIET CONCERN OVER THE CONTINUING PROBLEM IN POLAND.
END SUMMARY.

3. PROFESSOR SEWERYN BIALER OF COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY'S RESEARCH INSTITUTE ON INTERNATIONAL CHANGE (PLEASE PROTECT FULLY) STAYED ON IN MOSCOW AFTER THE RECENT DARTMOUTH CONFERENCE SESSION (REFTEL). IN SEVERAL CONVERSATIONS WITH EMBASSY OFFICERS, BIALER, WHO KNOWS A NUMBER OF SOVIET ACADEMICS AND OFFICIALS INTIMATELY,

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SHARED SOME OF HIS INSIGHTS IN STRICT CONFIDENCE.

SUCCESSION POLITICS

4. IN A CONVERSATION AUGUST 31, BIALER SAID HE HAD BEEN STRUCK BY THE DEGREE TO WHICH THE STAFF OF THE INSTITUTE OF THE USA AND CANADA WERE "ALL" TALKING ABOUT CHANGES THEY EXPECTED TO SEE IN THE SOVIET UNION OVER THE COURSE OF THE NEXT YEAR. THE INSTITUTE'S DIRECTOR, GEORGIY ARBATOV, TOLD BIALER HE WOULD BE "VERY DISAPPOINTED" IF THERE WERE NO "MAJOR CHANGES" IN THAT TIME. HE WENT ON TO STRESS HIS CONNECTIONS WITH YURIY ANDROPOV, THE FORMER KGB CHIEF AND CONTENDER TO SUCCEED BREZHNEV; ASKED ABOUT CHERNENKO, ARBATOV GAVE BIALER THE IMPRESSION CHERNENKO WAS NOT THE MAN TO WATCH.

5. BIALER SAID HE THOUGHT ANDROPOV'S PROMOTION TO BE A SECRETARY OF THE CPSU CC HAD MADE ANDROPOV THE "HEIR APPARENT" AND NOT JUST A CONTENDER FOR POWER BEHIND THE THRONE; IN SUPPORT OF THIS CONCLUSION HE NOTED THAT ANDROPOV'S ELEVATION MUST HAVE REQUIRED APPROVAL OF THE FULL POLITBURO.

6. SUBSEQUENT CONVERSATIONS WITH SOVIET INTERLOCUTORS APPARENTLY LED BIALER TO REVISE SOMEWHAT HIS ESTIMATE OF ANDROPOV'S CHANCES. IN A MEETING WITH EMBOFFS ON SEPTEMBER 5, BIALER, WHILE STILL SEEING ANDROPOV AS THE FRONT RUNNER, STATED THAT IT IS HIS IMPRESSION THAT THE SUCCESSION HAS NOT BEEN FINALLY DECIDED AND THAT CHERNENKO'S POWER BASE MAY BE BROADER THAN IS GENERALLY THOUGHT. THE AMERICAN ACADEMIC SAID HE WAS TOLD THAT CHERNENKO HAS BEEN IN CHARGE OF CADRE APPOINTMENTS FOR THE LAST FIVE YEARS. IF SO, IN A SUCCESSION STRUGGLE, HE MAY BE ABLE TO CALL IN A NUMBER OF IOU'S.

7. BIALER SAID THAT HE IS ALSO NOW PREPARED TO GIVE GREAT CREDENCE TO THE HYPOTHESIS THAT ANDRRPOV'S TRANSFER TO THE SECRETARIAT WAS ACCEPTED BY OTHER MEMBERS OF THE POLITBURO, NOT AS A MOVE TO POSITION THE FORMER KGB CHIEF FOR THE SUCCESSION, BUT AS A MEANS OF REMOVING THE POLICE-INTELLIGENCE ORGAN FROM SUCCESSION MANEUVERING. (BY REPLACING ANDROPOV OF THE KGB WITH A "PROFESSIONAL COP" WITH NO LEADERSHIP STATUS, SOVIET LEADERS, ACCORDING TO THIS ARGUMENT, HAVE PROTECTED THEMSELVES FROM ANOTHER BERIA.) WHILE CONCEDING THAT ANDROPOV MAY NONETHELESS USE HIS NEW POST TO ADVANCE HIS SUCCESSION CHANCES, BIALER SAID
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USNATO FOR BURT/WARD
HE IS SIMPLY NOW LESS SURE OF HIS ORIGINAL VIEW THAT
THE TRANSFER INTO THE SECRETARIAT MEANS THAT ANDROPOV
IS THE "HEIR APPARENT."

(EMBASSY COMMENT: IN A CONVERSATION WITH EMBOFF
SEPTEMBER 4, YUGOSLAV POLITIKA CORRESPONDENT RISTA
BAJALSKI ADVANCED MUCH THE SAME VIEW. LIKE BIALER,
HE SEES ANDROPOV AS THE FRONT RUNNER, BUT, LIKE
BIALER, HE BELIEVES THAT ANDROPOV DOES NOT YET
COMMAND A MAJORITY ON THE POLITBURO. BAJALSKI
BELIEVES ANDROPOV'S SUPPORTERS TO INCLUDE USTINOV,
GROMYKO, KIRILENKO, AND SHCHERBITSKIY. CHERNENKO'S
SUPPORTERS ARE: BREZHNEV, KUNAYEV, TIKHONOV, AND
GRISHIN. BAJALSKI FURTHER SPECULATED THAT, AMONG
ALTERNATE POLITBURO MEMBERS, KUZNETSOV, ALIYEV,
SHEVARDNADZE, AND PERHAPS PONOMAREV COULD BE COUNTED
ON TO SUPPORT CHERNENKO. END COMMENT.)

8. REGARDING ANDROPOV'S POLITICAL VIEWS AND LIKELY
FUTURE POLITICAL BEHAVIOR, BIALER SAID HE WAS AWARE
OF THE MODERATE IMAGE CULTIVATED BY ANDROPOV AND
NOURISHED BY SOME OF HIS ADMIRERS, BUT HE CAUTIONED
THAT, ONCE IN THE TOP JOB HIMSELF, ANDROPOV MIGHT
TURN OUT TO BE SOMETHING QUITE DIFFERENT FROM HIS
FORMER "IMAGE."

SOVIET FOREIGN POLICY: HOW TO DEAL WITH THE U. S.

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9. PROFESSOR BIALER, ASKING THAT HIS INFORMATION BE PROTECTED, SAID HE HAD WITNESSED A CLASH OF OPINIONS BETWEEN GEORGIY ARBATOV OF THE USA INSTITUTE AND VALENTIN FALIN, FORMER AMBASSADOR TO BONN AND A LEADING SOVIET EXPERT ON WESTERN EUROPE. SPEAKING TO THE AMERICAN PARTICIPANTS IN THE DARTMOUTH GROUP, ARBATOV TOOK THE LINE THAT THE REAGAN ADMINISTRATION WAS IMPOSSIBLE TO DEAL WITH, BUT THAT, IN THE LONG RUN, DETENTE COULD BE REESTABLISHED -- WHEREAS FALIN, THE EUROPEANIST, THOUGHT THE CHANGE IN THE UNITED STATES WAS SYSTEMIC AND LONG-LASTING. THE COROLLARY TO THIS WAS THAT ONE COULD HAVE DETENTE, AND ESPECIALLY TRADE, WITH WESTERN EUROPE EVEN IF THE UNITED STATES WAS NOT WILLING TO "PLAY BALL." WHEN BIALER COMPLIMENTED FALIN ON THE HIGH QUALITY OF SOVIET PROPAGANDA TO WESTERN EUROPE RECENTLY, FALIN REPLIED, "ALL WE HAVE TO DO IS QUOTE YOUR PRESIDENT."

10. BIALER DESCRIBED ARBATOV AS HAVING "LITTLE HOPE" OF SERIOUS NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE U. S. ADMINISTRATION, AND AS SAYING HE WOULD BE "PLEASANTLY SURPRISED" IF IT TURNED OUT OTHERWISE. ACCORDING TO BIALER, ARBATOV ARGUED THAT IT WOULD BE IMPOSSIBLE TO SPLIT THE WEST EUROPEAN ALLIES FROM THE U. S. IN ANY MEANINGFUL WAY; THEREFORE THE USSR MUST WAIT, DO WHAT IT COULD IN THE MEANTIME WITH AMERICA'S ALLIES, BUT FOR DIFFERENT REASONS THAN FALIN WOULD CITE. FALIN'S VIEW IS THAT ONE SHOULD ISOLATE THE AMERICANS BY BREAKING THE EUROPEANS AWAY. BIALER CONCLUDED THAT INF WOULD BE A VERY IMPORTANT ELEMENT IN THIS SOVIET FOREIGN POLICY DEBATE. IF THE U. S. SUCCEEDS IN DEPLOYING THE PERSHING-IIS AND GLCMS IN EUROPE, THE "AMERICANISTS" WILL HAVE WON THEIR POINT, BIALER SAID.

POLAND

11. BIALER QUOTED ORIENTAL INSTITUTE DIRECTOR PRIMAKOV AS SAYING SEPTEMBER 1 THAT THE DISTURBANCES THE PREVIOUS DAY IN POLAND HAD BEEN "SURPRISINGLY SMALL." BIALER APPARENTLY DOUBTED THE SINCERITY OF THIS REMARK; HE SAID HE HAD IT ON THE AUTHORITY OF "VERY GOOD FRIENDS" HERE, WHOM HE WOULD NOT NAME BUT TRUSTED IMPLICITLY, THAT THERE WAS
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EXDIS
USNATO FOR BURT/WARD
"GREAT TENSION" OVER THE QUESTION OF POLAND AMONG
SOVIET OFFICIALS, AND THAT, GIVEN THIS TENSION,
THERE WAS A TENDENCY FOR THEM TO TAKE HARDER AND
HARDER POSITIONS ON THE ISSUE, IN ORDER TO PROTECT
THEMSELVES POLITICALLY. THE SOVIETS REFERRED TO
THIS PRACTICE AS TAKING OUT EXTRA INSURANCE
(PERESTRAKHOVKA), BIALER SAID.

(EMBASSY COMMENT: BIALER FEELS STRONGLY THAT POLAND,
UNLIKE AFGHANISTAN, IS A GUT ISSUE FOR THE SOVIETS. HIS
CONTACTS WERE UNIFORMLY HARD-LINE ON POLAND, WHILE MUCH
LESS SO ON AFGHANISTAN AND OTHER ISSUES. NOR DOES
BIALER FEEL A SUCCESSOR REGIME CAN AFFORD TO BE ANY MORE
FLEXIBLE ON POLAND. HE BELIEVES, THEREFORE, THAT THE
U. S. SANCTIONS POLICY WILL NOT PROVOKE ANY CHANGES IN
MOSCOW'S ATTITUDE. END COMMENT.)

12. BIALER QUOTED RETIRED LT. GEN. MIKHAIL MIL' SHTAIN
OF THE USA INSTITUTE AS SAYING THAT THE USSR WAS
ALREADY SEEKING ALTERNATIVE LINES OF COMMUNICATION
THROUGH CZECHOSLOVAKIA TO THE GDR. MIL' SHTAIN SAID
THE EVENTS IN POLAND HAD ALREADY AFFECTED THE MILITARY
BALANCE IN EUROPE, ACCORDING TO BIALER, WHO ADDED
HIS OWN VIEW THAT MILITARY AND SECURITY QUESTIONS
ARE PARAMOUNT IN SOVIET CONCERN ABOUT POLAND.
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MEMORANDUM FOR MR. WILLIAM CLARK

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THE WHITE HOUSE

Subject: Views of Robert Ford, former Canadian Ambassador to the Soviet Union.

Attached is a paper prepared by Robert Ford, former Canadian Ambassador to the Soviet Union, that the Secretary thought you would find interesting.

L. Paul Bremer III
L. Paul Bremer III
Executive Secretary

Attachment:
As stated above

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Dept. of State Guidelines, July 21, 1997
BY RW NARA, DATE 2/11/13

ASSESSMENT OF DEVELOPMENTS IN THE SOVIET UNION

A paper by R.A.D. Ford, Special Adviser on East-West Relations to the Department of External Affairs

The way in which the USSR develops in the next few years will be deeply affected by foreign affairs and above all relations with the United States. They must therefore be examined together.

It is obvious that the USSR is in deep trouble in the economy, agriculture, Eastern Europe, relations with the West, Afghanistan. All of these problems will be accentuated after the departure of Brezhnev since it is almost certain that power will once again have to devolve on a troika and be even more dispersed among the leading members of the hierarchy, making it harder for difficult decisions to be taken.

It would be a mistake to talk in terms of divisions between a hard-line and a soft-line but there are certainly differences of opinion about policy, which can be summed up in the following three trends:

- (I) Because of the immobilism of the last years of Brezhnevism and the innate caution of the leading Soviets there will be a strong tendency to follow present policies with perhaps minor variations.

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BY RW NARA DATE 11/29/10

This means no major innovation in foreign or international affairs, with a continuing effort both to strengthen the armed forces; and to maintain a measure of good relations with the West without making any substantial concessions.

(II) The leadership is fully aware of the deepening economic crisis and the desirability of trying to increase economic growth and improve the production and quality of consumer goods and the standard of living, but there is certainly no consensus about how to go about it. The three main options opened to them are: economic reform; an effort to return to détente as a means of providing capital and technology which would make it unnecessary to indulge in their risky business of economic reform; a serious effort to reach an agreement with the U.S. on arms control and reductions as the only means of reducing the proportion of GNP devoted to the military. The leadership faces the difficulty, as outlined later, of finding a way to implement any of these policies without running into massive resistance from the military, from the orthodox party bosses and from the hardliner nationalists. Finding a solution will depend very much on circumstances and the emergence of a strong leader.

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(III) Others will argue that détente was a mirage, that there can be no accommodation with the West, that deterrence (in the Soviet sense) must depend on adequate Soviet military strength, and that therefore the share of the GNP absorbed by the military and the military industries must be increased.

I think that the inclination of the Soviets would be for (I). It coincides with their conservative style and requires the least amount of initiative, but circumstances may not permit the continuation of the present policies of improvisation. Strained relations with the West, which may easily get worse, over Poland for example, and a perceived threat to their economic and their political system may force them to take decisions they would otherwise prefer to avoid.

A determined effort to return to détente would require a strong man with a solid political base and army support, neither of which conditions seem very likely, and in any event would quickly run into the obstacle of Afghanistan and/or Poland since it seems improbable that very much progress could be made in restoring East-West relations without as a minimum some concessions on the Soviet side on these issues, and in both areas the security problem looms large in Soviet eyes, and therefore involves the military.

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As regards economic reforms, it would take a very strong leader to introduce measures which most of the Soviet hierarchy, and all the little communist bosses around the country would consider dangerous innovations affecting their power and also liable to lead to demands for political reforms as well, and which would also infect the East-European empire.

What I think most likely is a combination of (I) and (III). The Soviets' preference is for continuity, but the situation will probably facilitate an increase in the role of influence of the military accompanied by a growth of great Russian nationalism. The role of the military could also be enhanced because of the power struggle and the reluctance of any of the contenders to advocate policies opposed by the military.

No matter what path the succession leaders choose, there are a few hard facts with which they will have to live. The first is the continuing, if not increasing share, of the GNP which will have to go to the military. The second is the inability of the country to feed itself adequately under the present system. The third is the awe-inspiring inefficiency in most branches of the economy, particularly consumer-goods and their poor quality, the devastatingly low standard of living.

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The military-industrial complex is the one exception to the rule because it is the only branch of the economy where the users can and do insist on quality. The fourth fact is the low morale reflected in the high death rate and very low birth rate among the Russian population who are gradually seeing their numerical superiority whittled away.

There is no answer to these and the innumerable other economic and human problems. But in spite of a crying need for economic and administration reform, I think it highly unlikely that anything more than mere tinkering with the system can take place. Therefore, the attraction the Soviet system seems to exert on so many people, particularly in the Third World, and in spite of its manifold and repugnant drawbacks, ought to decline. Since at the same time the regime will clearly have to maintain and tighten its control, and human rights will be even less observed in future than in this poor present.

How can we influence Soviet developments?

While there is a limit on the extent to which the West can affect the policies of a succession government in the USSR, we should not underestimate what can be done - for better or for worse. Let us assume, first, a Western policy of declared hostility with the aim (specific or not) of achieving clear

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military superiority, of weakening the economy and of hastening the eventual collapse of the Soviet system.

The result of such a policy, and it need only be perceived on the Soviet side, would be:

- (I) A strengthening of the position of those Soviets who argue that the West is unalterably opposed and that détente is a fraud and a delusion; an increase in great Russian nationalism and anti-americanism.
- (II) A determination, agreed by both the military and civilians, that the USSR must never be in a position of military inferiority no matter what the economic cost; and, inevitably, a considerable increase in the influence of the military.
- (III) The rejection of any idea of economic reform; a tightening of belts; an even greater reliance on internal discipline; repression against Jews, troublesome minorities, religious, nationalist and political dissidents; and a tighter grip on the East-European empire.

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(IV) No direct challenge to the USA; but a greater tendency to take risks in order to exploit weak points in the Third World and to utilize politically the Soviet military force.

A western policy of outright hostility might work in the long run, by weakening the Soviet system at its most vulnerable point, therefore accentuating the problem of survival for the political system and the leadership. But it will not work in the short run as the Soviets are capable of sacrifices they think necessary to survive, and danger lies precisely in the short run because it is in this period that the West will be in a real or conceived position of military inferiority.

This kind of policy could therefore have a negative effect on Soviet developments. It is less likely that we can do very much to encourage developments which we would consider advantageous to the West. The most obvious alternative policy would be a determined effort on the part of all NATO countries to improve economic and political relations with the USSR. There are major obstacles of which the first is the impasse over Afghanistan and Poland. The second is the need to reestablish military parity before negotiating in depth with the Soviets. The third is the danger, in a period of economic recession, of giving away too much for illusory gains. The exception is arms reduction and control, an area in which Soviet civilian

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leaders might feel there was a possibility of cutting back military expenses and military influence.

To be even moderately successful, such a policy would have to be coordinated with our European allies. The main element in détente is, of course, US-USSR relations but if an improvement in relations between Moscow and Washington took place strictly in a bilateral context, there would be an alarmed European reaction, and even more troublesome would be an attempt by the Europeans to go it alone.

I am skeptical that at this time we could gain very much from an obvious effort to reverse the process of the last few years, even if it were politically possible. Nor do I think it would have a great enough effect internally; that is by promoting a moderate line in Moscow, to justify the risks we would run.

A third option, which I personally prefer, is a kind of western attentism accompanied by an effort not to make things worse and by a self-restraining ordinance which will admittedly be difficult because of the very different nature of our systems. It would be unwise to seek a better relationship before we are strong enough (and I do think it was necessary for the U.S.A. to demonstrate its strength and its will) and before the Soviets are ready for it. Any precipitate offer or move on the part of the West would be suspect in Soviet eyes.

The one conjuncture which I think might make the Soviets ready to be less truculent would be a double realization by them that the civilian economy was continuing badly to decline; and that the U.S.

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was not seeking the downfall of the Soviet regime and the breakup of its empire. This seems to me the only combination which would convince the Soviets that they could and should endeavour to reduce the military slice of the GNP, and if this is not done, there seems no way in which the standard of living, already disastrously low, will not further deteriorate.

The question can legitimately be raised whether on the other hand the Soviets themselves are seeking military superiority. I think the difficulty in considering the question of the military balance stems from a widely differing approach to the subject. The West tends to look at the military balance in strictly military terms and often restricted to one area, i.e. intermediate range nuclear weapons, or conventional forces in Central Europe. But the Soviets, fully cognizant of their economic weaknesses, of the threat from China, of the unreliability of their East European allies, look at the strategic balance taking all factors into consideration, and their conclusions are invariably that, at the very best, there is no more than an approximate balance in correlation of forces.

The exasperating factor in dealing with the Soviets is that they seem to see no contradiction in proclaiming a political philosophy which assumes the inevitable downfall of the capitalist states, while objecting if we foretell collapse of communism. The difference is that Marxism-Leninism, while useful and necessary

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to keep the party in power, and occasionally as an adjunct to foreign policy, is not the basis on which realistic policies are formulated. They do not follow a strategy aimed at the destruction of capitalism in the U.S.A., for example, and are therefore alarmed when they sense that their destruction might be the aim of the U.S. (they are realistic about distinguishing between what they consider politically necessary anti-Soviet declarations and practical measures).

In a secondary way, I think it important that an effort be made to avoid unnecessarily humiliating them. They are extremely sensitive and insecure about their place in the world. A lot can be gained by giving them at least the appearance of political parity with the U.S. Real parity is a long, long way off.

I have no illusions about the Soviets and my expectations from détente in the past and whatever might develop in the future are low-key and realistic. The Soviets are not going to alter their fundamental view of the world, and they will be unable to resist small victories at our expense if the opportunity presents itself, and no matter what the state of our relations.

But I think the Soviets may be reaching one of the periodic water-sheds in their history, when they feel the time has come to pause and consolidate their gains. After the immobilism of the present, there may come a recognition that they have pushed their people too far, too hard; that their hold on Eastern Europe is

becoming more difficult and more expensive; and that the confrontation with the U.S. has become counter-productive and even dangerous, and could create more military, technological and economic problems than they would like to envisage. Their experience and ideology justify the occasional pause. Brezhnev would find it difficult. His successors might find it easier. The problem for them will be to find a way to make concessions necessary to ease tensions.

No matter which policy direction is taken, the new leaders are likely to be just as tough and difficult as Brezhnev and company, perhaps even more so until they consolidate their position or until some exceptional man comes to the fore. I do not see one on the horizon but then Khrushchev looked an unlikely candidate to be a reformist leader, and Sadat beside Nasser appeared a cypher. The Russians always prepare surprises for us.

The next few years are going to be particularly difficult in East-West relations because of the concatenation of a number of circumstances.

- (i) The assumptions on which the peace of Europe rested since World War II are beginning to wear thin. These are the division of the Continent into two areas in which each sides' mandate held sway,

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which will be increasingly questioned; and the doctrine of approximate nuclear balance which is losing some of its validity in light of the new technology.

- (ii) An American Administration which has decided to try to restore military power and the political will of the West and to challenge the USSR more directly than has been done in the past.
- (iii) Problems in the economies of Western industrialized nations creating strains in the Western alliance.
- (iv) New players on the scene, particularly China and Japan, and new problems in inflammable areas such as the Gulf and the Middle-East, complicating the East-West struggle and globalising it.
- (v) Finally, all of this will coincide with a transfer of power in Moscow and the accentuation of economic problems inside the USSR.

Within five years to a decade, the famous correlation of forces of which the Soviets are so fond of talking will begin strongly to shift in our favour, provided the West does not do something suicidal. But we have to get through the coming 5-6 years which will be dangerous because of the above combination of circumstances and because of the real or perceived Soviet military superiority.

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It seems logical in that period to avoid letting the Soviets exploit their only really valid card. Perhaps we should reexamine the only indisputably advantageous element in agreements worked out in the seventies-crisis limitation between the super-powers and try to revive it in a realistic and unemotional way accepting that relations are confrontational but controllable.

The Soviets are obsessed with the U.S. It is the only power that really counts for them. While they would like ideally a relationship of parity which is probably unrealistic and unattainable given their ideological motivation, I do not believe they would be adverse to something more limited and more closely related to the actual situation.

MEMORANDUM

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

September 27, 1982

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~INFORMATION

MEMORANDUM FOR WILLIAM P. CLARK

FROM: PAULA DOBRIANSKY (M)

SUBJECT: Wall Street Journal Article on Soviet Leadership Succession

Attached for your information is an insightful Wall Street Journal article (Tab I) on the Soviet leadership succession. The author, David Satter, asserts that Brezhnev's power base is waning and cites as evidence Brezhnev's inability to either promote or protect his loyalists. Specifically, the article maintains that with the death of Suslov, Brezhnev's influence has been seriously diminished. It also mentions that in January 1982, Boris Buryatia, the reported lover of Galina Churbanov -- Mr. Brezhnev's daughter -- was arrested and in July, Sergei Medunov, the First Party Secretary of the Krasnodar oblast and a close personal friend of Brezhnev's, was removed from his post. Both Buryatia and Medunov have a reputation for corruption and also, have been perceived as "symbols of the value of Mr. Brezhnev's protection." That is, until Suslov's death they were thought to be invulnerable because of Mr. Brezhnev's support.

I find Satter's analysis quite convincing -- especially, the implications he draws for the Soviet leadership succession. He maintains that the decline of Brezhnev's power base seriously attenuates Chernenko's leadership prospects and enhances Andropov's standing. Specifically, despite his nominal relinquishment of KGB chairmanship, Andropov continues to exercise close control of the security apparatus, as manifested by Vitaliy Fedorchuk's (a close crony of Andropov) appointment as Chairman of the KGB. Hence, Satter aptly points out, it is likely that "an anti-corruption campaign" would be exploited by Andropov as a means of demoting and eventually defeating potential political opponents. Ergo, a replay of the Khrushchev-Malenkov struggle is likely whereby Andropov would strive to portray Chernenko and other Brezhnevites as corrupt domestically and "too soft" internationally. If Andropov succeeds in this endeavor with the backing of the security forces and the military, it can be anticipated that whatever his personal predilections, he would have to pursue hardline domestic and foreign policies, at least until he sufficiently builds up his own influence.

Attachment:

Tab I Article from the Wall Street Journal, September 15

cc: Bailey, Blair, Boverie, Myer, Pipes, Sims

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BY RW NARA DATE 11/15

INTERNATIONAL

Brezhnev's Power Base Weakening

Soviet Leader Unable To Protect Loyalists

By DAVID SATTER
Special to THE WALL STREET JOURNAL
Although Soviet leader Leonid Brezhnev remains formally in control, there are increasing signs that his hold on power is weakening as a subterranean struggle intensifies to determine which member of the ruling Politburo will eventually take his place.

President Brezhnev, who will be 76 years old in December, held talks with leaders of three Eastern European countries while vacationing in the Crimea last month and there isn't any hint in the official press that he isn't fully in command and carrying out his normal responsibilities.

In the Soviet system, however, the most important indicator of political strength isn't necessarily a leader's formal responsibilities but rather his ability to promote loyalists to high Communist Party positions and to protect those already in place.

In this respect, Mr. Brezhnev has suffered a series of defeats since the death in January of Soviet ideologist Mikhail Suslov, a party veteran who, for many years, was regarded as his most important source of political support. The latest apparent setback for Mr. Brezhnev came with the removal from his post of Sergei Medunov, the party leader in the Krasnodar area, the richest agricultural region in the Soviet Union. Although little known in the West, Mr. Medunov, a close personal friend of Mr. Brezhnev, was one of the Soviet Union's most powerful provincial officials. He also had a reputation for being one of the most corrupt.

By all indications, the death of Mr. Suslov upset the political equilibrium that had existed for years in the Soviet Politburo and a new balance hasn't been reestablished.

Chernenko Brezhnev's Choice

Mr. Brezhnev's own choice to succeed him as leader is evidently Konstantin Chernenko, his administrative aide and close colleague for more than 36 years. But Mr. Brezhnev no longer seems to have the ability to determine promotions to the highest party posts.



After Mr. Suslov's death in January, party officials were instructed to direct ideological questions, which previously would have been decided by Mr. Suslov, to Mr. Chernenko, and it was assumed that Mr. Chernenko would take over Mr. Suslov's role after the Central Committee meeting in May.

The May meeting ended, however, with Yuri Andropov, the former head of the KGB security police, being moved up to the Secretariat, the party's principal administrative organ, where he was given the responsibility for ideology that had been expected to go to Mr. Chernenko.

In addition, Mr. Andropov appears to have won a victory in the choice of Vitaly Fedorchuk to succeed him as head of the KGB. Mr. Fedorchuk, an obscure Ukrainian career officer, was promoted over the head of Georgy Tsinev, the first deputy chairman of the KGB and a supporter of Mr. Brezhnev.

It is generally believed that, in light of Mr. Andropov's elevation, the struggle to be Mr. Brezhnev's successor has narrowed to a contest between Mr. Chernenko and Mr. Andropov, with Mr. Chernenko, who hasn't any independent power base such as the army or the KGB, counting heavily on Mr. Brezhnev's support.

More Evidence

If so, the removal of Mr. Medunov can only be a victory for Mr. Andropov because it is the latest piece of evidence suggesting that Mr. Brezhnev can't any longer protect those who have relied on him in the past.

The removal of Mr. Medunov appears to be consistent with a pattern established with the arrest in January of Boris Buryatia, the reputed lover of Galina Churbanov, Mr. Brezhnev's daughter. Like Mr. Medunov, Mr. Buryatia had a reputation for corruption. And like Mr. Medunov, he had been thought, until the death of Mr. Suslov, to be invulnerable because of Mr. Brezhnev's support.

Mr. Medunov and Mr. Buryatia, a reputed black-market operator, were conspicuous in their behavior. Mr. Buryatia, who has been implicated in a diamond theft, often wore diamonds. Their behavior made them symbols of the value of Mr. Brezhnev's protection; it stood to reason that if there was any weakening in Mr. Brezhnev's authority, they would be among the first to be affected.

There was an attempt to arrest Mr. Buryatia after diamonds taken in the Dec. 27 burglary of the Home of Irina Burgrimova, a Soviet lion tamer, were found in his possession. The arrest, however, was blocked by Mr. Suslov who, although an ascetic himself, always acted to protect the reputation of the party elite.

The KGB reportedly objected strongly to the ban on the arrest of Mr. Buryatia. Mr. Suslov died a short time later and Mr. Buryatia was arrested by the KGB on Jan. 29, the day of Mr. Suslov's funeral.

The Medunov Case

A similar pattern of longstanding protection coming to an unexpected end, in the wake of the death of Mr. Suslov, is reflected in the case of Mr. Medunov.

The Krasnodar region, where Mr. Medunov had been the absolute boss since 1973, includes the Black Sea resort city of Sochi, where millions of Soviet citizens take their vacations. It had become a place where bribery was virtually institutionalized, with officials taking large payments in cash to allocate hotel rooms or apartments, to provide jobs or to arrange promotions.

In December 1978, Pravda, the Communist Party newspaper, in an article about the Krasnodar region, said that it had received many letters, which complained of official wrongdoing, from residents of the area.

At least some of the complaints to Pravda were written by a group of Soviet war veterans in Sochi who were gathering information about official corruption. But no action was taken against Medunov and, according to Soviet sources, Sergei Afanasyev, the editor of Pravda, almost lost his job for raising in print the issue of corruption in the Krasnodar region.

The veterans who made the complaints faced various forms of retribution. Some lost their jobs. Others were placed in psychiatric hospitals or imprisoned.

The Mayor Sentenced

In November 1980, Mr. Medunov's direct subordinate, Vyacheslav Voronkin, the mayor of Sochi, was sentenced to 13 years in prison for massive corruption and bribe-taking. Mr. Medunov remained untouched.

The situation finally changed this year. In announcing the removal of Mr. Medunov on July 24, Pravda said that he was being released from his post "in connection with his transfer to other work," making it clear that he had been removed and not promoted.

The ability to promote and protect loyalists is critical to building a power base in the bureaucratized Soviet system, and the removal of Mr. Medunov, like the arrest in January of Mr. Buryatia, suggests that, with Mr. Suslov gone, the Brezhnev power base has weakened at least to the extent that Mr. Brezhnev can't any longer offer unconditional protection to those with whom he has personal ties.

This doesn't mean that Mr. Brezhnev's position as leader is threatened. But if Mr. Andropov, with the backing of the KGB and other security forces, is able to assert his authority against that of Mr. Brezhnev regarding specific cases of corruption, he can undermine the self-confidence and sense of security of the Brezhnev loyalists as a whole.

This can only lessen the chances that Mr. Chernenko will succeed Mr. Brezhnev as leader because the Brezhnev loyalists are his only base of support.

Mr. Andropov currently is regarded as the second most powerful man in the Soviet Union. And, backed by the security forces, he has every incentive to use charges of corruption as a means of eliminating potential political opponents. The fate of Mr. Medunov and Mr. Buryatia are the first indications that, if there is a confrontation, the Brezhnev loyalists may lack the means to withstand a determined assault.

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