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Soviets Angry at French Leak

Kremlin Report Noted Espionage Successes

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PARIS, April 1—The leaking by French intelligence services of secret Kremlin documents indicating the scope of Soviet industrial espionage activities in the West has provoked a diplomatic row between France and the Soviet Union.

The influential Paris newspaper Le Monde went ahead today with the publication of a second article devoted to Soviet intelligence-gathering operations despite warnings by the Soviet Embassy here that such a step could jeopardize new economic negotiations between the two countries. The talks, which are being attended by a Soviet deputy prime minister, opened as scheduled in Paris today.

The documents, details of which also were leaked to the government-owned television station TF1, illustrate the importance attached by the Soviet Union to the collection of scientific information in the West.

They were reportedly crucial in persuading France's Socialist president, Francois Mitterrand, to expel 47 Soviet officials in Paris for alleged spying two years ago.

Western diplomats here noted that the publication of the documents bolsters Mitterrand's claim to have taken a tougher line toward the Soviet Union than his conservative predecessors. The documents date back to the period before the Socialist election victory in May 1981.

The main document published by Le Monde and TF1 is a report by the Soviet government's war industry commission summarizing espionage successes in the aeronautic sector for the year 1979.

It said that the country's intelligence operatives abroad had managed to acquire 156 technical "samples" and 3,896 documents—saving the Soviet military aircraft industry 48.6 million rubles (about \$65 million).

Couched in the dry bureaucratic jargon of Kremlin planners, the report hailed the achievement of Soviet spies in increasing their productivity significantly over the previous year.

It said that, of the western secrets stolen in 1979, 87 samples and 346 documents had been adapted to Soviet military use—as

compared with only 64 samples and 316 documents in 1978.

Le Monde quoted French counterintelligence officials as depicting the Soviet War Industry Commission (VPK) as the coordinator of the Kremlin's technical espionage activities abroad. It said that the commission distributed lists of western military patents that it wanted to acquire among five agencies directly responsible for intelligence gathering including the KGB (committee for state security), GRU (military intelligence), and the Soviet Academy of Sciences.

In a statement over the weekend, the Soviet Embassy here called the French media reports "flagrant disinformation" and "a campaign of slander" against the Soviet Union. It called on the French government to prevent the publication of further "fraudulent" documents.

Among the Soviet fighter aircraft whose construction was accelerated thanks to stolen western technologies, according to the documents cited by Le Monde, are the MiG25, the Su27, and the Su25. The Soviet report said that Soviet engineers had succeeded in using western techniques to overcome development problems on the Su25 fighter, which was put into service at the beginning of the decade, by assisting in the construction of a high-performance wing.

Political analysts here said that the leaking of the Soviet documents to Le Monde and TF1 appeared to reflect a high-level French government decision, the motives for which remained unclear.

Franco-Soviet relations have improved somewhat during the past few months after a period of severe strain at the beginning of Mitterrand's seven-year term in office when France sided firmly with the United States in the controversy over the deployment by NATO of American nuclear missiles in Western Europe.

Today's meeting of the bilateral economic commission was dominated by French complaints about its large trade deficit with the Soviet Union.

In an interview over the weekend, French Industry Minister Edith Cresson blamed political reasons for the Soviet failure to buy as much capital equipment from France as from other western countries, notably West Germany.

French officials have hinted that France could reduce its imports of Soviet gas unless measures are taken to reduce the trade deficit with Moscow, now running at more than \$500 million a year.