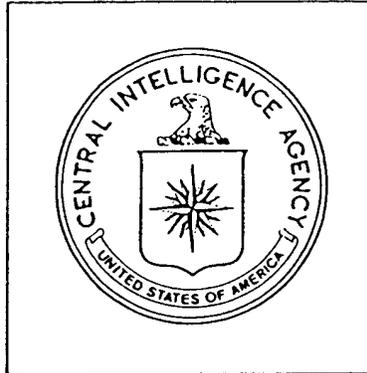


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SOVIET UNION - EASTERN EUROPE

This publication is prepared for regional specialists in the Washington community by the USSR - Eastern Europe Division, Office of Current Intelligence, with occasional contributions from other offices within the Directorate of Intelligence. Comments and queries are welcome. They should be directed to the authors of the individual articles.

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Background on Gromyko's Call
for Talks on the Indian Ocean

Foreign Minister Gromyko's statement at the UN on Tuesday that Moscow is prepared to talk to "other powers" about reducing outside military activity in the Indian Ocean is probably more a tactic to put the US on the defensive rather than an expression of a genuine Soviet goal. The advantages that would accrue to the USSR from an Indian Ocean arms control agreement are considerable, and if they are serious about pursuing them, we expect that they will approach the US bilaterally.

Gromyko's offer comes on the heels of other signs of Soviet concern about Washington's success over the last year in mobilizing sentiment of the coastal countries against Soviet naval activity in the Indian Ocean and in persuading these countries to grant the US military additional access to monitor Soviet activity. The Soviets are especially concerned about the change in policy of the governments of Australia and New Zealand, which allow port calls by US nuclear-powered ships. They also fear that the US will replace the British when they withdraw from Gan in the Maldives and from Masirah in Oman.

Despite General Secretary Brezhnev's denial at the party congress last February and again during Prime Minister Gandhi's visit to the USSR in June that the USSR had any bases in the Indian Ocean, most of the countries in the area accept the fact that Moscow has a base in Somalia. The Soviets probably calculate that by coming out publicly in favor of talks on the Indian Ocean they will put the onus on the US for being insensitive to the concerns of countries on its periphery. They may also hope to strengthen congressional opposition to any further expansion of US naval activity in the Indian Ocean.

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Moscow's enthusiasm for the idea of arms control in the Indian Ocean seems to have waned considerably since the Soviets first approached the US about the idea of issuing a joint declaration "limiting military bases and fleet concentrations in the Indian Ocean" in March 1971.

For one thing, acceptance of special restrictions for the Indian Ocean would be a dangerous precedent that could erode Soviet positions at the Law of the Sea conference and on freedom of the seas.

For another, the Soviet navy probably does not relish the idea of restrictions on its activities and especially would not want to engage in talks on the Indian Ocean while the USSR is in an inferior bargaining position. The navy would probably also object to the idea of talking only with the US as long as significant French naval forces are located in the Indian Ocean. (~~CONFIDENTIAL~~)

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Kirilenko's 70th Birthday

Soviet party secretary Andrey Kirilenko's 70th birthday last month was saluted with appropriate honors, including the publication of his collected speeches and articles. In garnering his second "Hero of Socialist Labor" award and official praise for his speeches, Kirilenko has caught up with the other senior leaders--General Secretary Brezhnev, President Podgorny, Premier Kosygin, and party secretary Suslov. All except Brezhnev have already celebrated their 70th birthdays. Brezhnev, whose honors came early, will be 70 in December.

A review of Kirilenko's collected works in *Pravda* on September 29 is not yet available here, but the embassy reports that while it reserved direct personal praise only for Brezhnev, Kirilenko is depicted as a wise, experienced leader in defense, internal party affairs, economics, and foreign policy. Earlier reviews of the collected works of other leaders were also laudatory, and Kirilenko has apparently received his due.

As Brezhnev's unofficial deputy, Kirilenko still seems the most likely interim successor in the event of the General Secretary's sudden death or incapacitation, and these almost obligatory honors do serve to draw attention to his favorable position in the hierarchy.

With his second "Hero" award, he joined a select group entitled to have a bust erected in his hometown. Brezhnev's was unveiled with some fanfare in May, Podgorny's with less publicity last month. Kosygin's and Suslov's have not yet appeared. (~~CONFIDENTIAL~~)

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Bucharest PCC Meeting Now
Deferred Until November

A Warsaw Pact Political Consultative Committee session will now apparently take place in Bucharest in November or December. Earlier reports had suggested it would be held in late October (*Staff Notes*, September 23).

A high-ranking Romanian official in Bucharest recently told the US ambassador that the PCC would meet in November "in any case," although the dates were not yet firm. The Soviet political counselor in Bucharest has confirmed the November date, but added that the gathering might come as late as December. He hinted that Brezhnev is likely to tie an official visit to Romania on either end of the session. Both sides have reportedly agreed to increase exchange visits of high officials, and a trip by the Soviet leader has been rumored for several months.

The main topic, according to the Romanian, will be a review of strategy before the Belgrade CSCE follow-on meeting in 1977. The group reportedly will also consider earlier Romanian proposals for establishing "periodic consultative mechanics" at the foreign ministers level. The Romanian official stressed that both topics fit in with Bucharest's desire to emphasize the Warsaw Pact's political rather than military aspects. He added that he doubted that the group will discuss basic changes in the Pact's military structure.

Romania's proposals to establish "periodic consultative mechanics" may be an attempt to sidestep a reported Soviet proposal for a permanent coordinating secretariat--presumably with a strong Soviet secretary-general. Bucharest is not averse to periodic discussions of foreign policy, but has persistently resisted the formation of supranational bodies that might seek to dictate Romania's foreign policy.

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The Romanians have complained about Soviet attempts to play down the significance of the Belgrade meeting, and will probably welcome the chance to discuss European security topics. Bucharest and Moscow interpret the Helsinki accords differently, but will probably be more willing than in the past to find common ground in hopes of preserving the surface calm that now prevails in bilateral relations. ~~(CONFIDENTIAL)~~

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USSR-Hungary

The Hungarians are pleased with Moscow's choice of Boris Sevykin to head the Hungarian section of the Soviet party Central Committee, according to a clandestine source. They believe that Sevykin, who has served more than four years in Budapest, is more favorably disposed toward Hungary than was his predecessor, Leonid Mosin.

Mosin's removal in early August may have been prompted by the publication in *Pravda* August 7 of an article unusually critical of Hungary's controversial economic reform. The article, which was undoubtedly approved by Mosin's section, expressed satisfaction with the current situation in Hungary, but criticized earlier "erroneous views" and "incorrect measures" that had "reduced the party's leading role" in the Hungarian economy.

While the Soviets have in the past been uneasy about Hungary's economic experimentations, they had heretofore refrained from direct criticism in the press. Budapest probably regarded this action as a breach of inter-party protocol--especially because it came long after Hungary had taken steps to reassert the party's pre-eminence in the economy.

The source claims that Kadar engineered Mosin's removal during his meeting with Brezhnev in the Crimea, but Mosin had, in fact, been transferred to a less prestigious job outside the apparatus at least two weeks earlier.

The Hungarians' anticipation that Sevykin will be more tolerant than his predecessor could be misplaced. We have one report that the Soviet embassy in Budapest has taken a more skeptical view of Hungarian developments than has Moscow. Sevykin was the number-two man in the embassy and presumably had a hand in shaping that opinion. ~~(SECRET)~~

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The Soviets and the West German Elections

Soviet relations with West Germany are central to Moscow's policy toward Europe and its policy of detente. The Federal Republic's size, wealth, and position in Europe make the matter of who runs the country a vital Soviet concern. As the West German election campaign goes into its final days, the Soviet Union has gone out of its way to demonstrate that it favors a victory for the ruling Social Democrat - Free Democrat (SPD/FDP) coalition.

The most dramatic Soviet gesture in support of the Schmidt government was the announcement on September 19 that Soviet party chief Brezhnev would visit the West German capital, probably late this year. The invitation to Brezhnev had been extended and accepted in October 1974 during Chancellor Schmidt's visit to Moscow, but during the following two years, Soviet relations with the West German government fluctuated and the visit was repeatedly postponed.

Soviet concern that the progress made in their relations with West Germany in the early 1970s might be undermined was evident in the period following the European security conference last year. Among the targets of Soviet comment was Minister of Defense Leber, a conservative Social Democrat, who has advocated building up the West German military in the face of growing Soviet strength and has disparaged the force reduction proposals advanced by the Soviets at the Vienna MBFR talks. The Soviets were also disturbed by the increasingly critical attitude of Foreign Minister Genscher, the leader of the Free Democrats, who has insisted that the bilateral legal assistance, cultural exchange, and scientific-technological cooperation agreements under negotiation apply to West Berlin as well. As preparations for the West German election campaign quickened last spring, Ambassador Falin openly admitted that he could barely tolerate the foreign minister and implied that one advantage of a victory

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by the Christian (CDU/CSU) parties in the October elections would be the selection of a new man for that position.

The May Note

In a statement handed simultaneously to Schmidt and the world press on May 22, the Soviets said that "certain quarters" who question West Germany's Ostpolitik cannot be strictly categorized by their political labels. In other words, the Soviets recognized that there were "reasonable" politicians in the Christian parties and that they could work with a "reasonable" CDU/CSU government. The statement called those who raised the specter of overwhelming Soviet military strength agents of the West German armaments industry and promoters of larger West German military budgets. The choice for West Germany, the statement concluded, was either peace or war.

In milder terms, the Soviet note reiterated Moscow's desire for disarmament, peaceful coexistence, and closer bilateral cooperation with West Germany. Even though the Soviets implied that they could work with a CDU/CSU government, they explicitly approved the efforts by the ruling coalition to improve relations. In the Soviet view this would have been "simply unthinkable" before 1969 when Christian Democrat-led governments "were unable or, perhaps, not all willing" to pursue constructive cooperation with the USSR. If irresponsible circles would stop trying to frustrate detente, Moscow promised in the note that it would be ready to move on to regular political consultations, probably on the French model; additional treaties expanding bilateral cooperation--implying progress in the three negotiations stalled on the Berlin clause; and increased exchanges and trade.

The Campaign

Having made its position public, Moscow lay back. The West German parties were concentrating on domestic issues, and the Soviets realized that

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no good purpose would be served if by their actions or statements they called attention to the ruling coalition's somewhat tarnished Ostpolitik. But Moscow was not quiescent. It stepped up the number of approvals for exit visas for ethnic German Soviet citizens, promoted trade fairs in West Germany and West Berlin, and let pass minor incidents on the transit routes to Berlin. The steps were designed to be helpful to the ruling coalition, as well as to demonstrate to the West German voter the practical benefits of good relations with the USSR.

As the campaign heated up, the Christian parties shifted the emphasis to foreign policy and accused the Schmidt government of having given much away for little in return. They promised to reassert German interests in a forthright way if elected in October. The opposition's accusations were given particular point by a number of incidents on the West German border with East Germany and East German interference with buses loaded with young Christian Democrats en route to West Berlin to demonstrate against the Berlin Wall. At the same time, the Soviets contributed to the upsurge of negative publicity on relations with the East by issuing a sharp protest against plans to allow West Berlin to participate in the new European parliament that would serve the European Community.

Even so, Soviet support for East German sovereignty on its borders and on the transit routes was fairly low key. The Soviet statement on the European parliament was a careful defense of existing Soviet legal positions rather than the opening salvo of a larger campaign directed against West Berlin and West Germany. Moscow's caution on the neuralgic Berlin question was also evident in the delay of six days before any commentary was issued in support of the East German interference with travel to West Berlin, the less than authoritative medium in which it appeared, and the brief time allotted for further commentary on this subject.

After additional meetings in West Berlin at which CDU/CSU officials and politicians challenged

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the Soviet view of West Berlin's ties with West Germany, the Soviets felt compelled to respond. They issued a series of attacks on the CDU/CSU, in particular against CSU leader Strauss and CDU Hesse leader Dregger, whom they called relentless advocates of an anti-communist, anti-Soviet, cold war line. Conversely, commentary hostile to Genscher ended. Instead he was elevated to the status of statesman alongside Schmidt for advocating continued adherence to Ostpolitik.

Soviet Ambassador Falin held a highly publicized meeting with Genscher on August 26. Although Falin gave Genscher no sign of Soviet concessions on the three stalled treaties, backed East Germany's actions during the summer months, and reiterated standard Soviet positions on Berlin, he sought to keep the atmosphere of the meeting calm. He urged the promotion of a "reasonable atmosphere" around West Berlin, and if Genscher worked for this, he said, the Soviet Union would be his "best friend." Following the meeting it was announced that the West German and Soviet foreign ministers would confer in New York in late September. Both sides conveyed the impression that new developments in bilateral relations would be discussed.

For the Soviets, the West German elections were not simply a choice between the forces of darkness and those of light. Even while they were speaking and acting in ways helpful to the ruling coalition, the Soviets continued to criticize the government and keep open lines of communication to the opposition. After all, the Soviets, too, could read poll results. Human nature may also have played a part. Within days after his fence-mending talks with Genscher, Ambassador Falin was once again defaming the foreign minister, for whom he seems to have a genuine dislike. Of more significance, Falin held a cordial meeting with a prominent Christian Democrat politician to register Soviet uncertainty about the current views of the ruling coalition and to reiterate Soviet willingness to conduct a "constructive" policy with a CDU/CSU government.

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The resulting uproar from the Social Democrats forced Falin to apologize and to convey an optimistic picture of Soviet - West German relations in an interview appearing in a Bonn newspaper. Falin said that the Genscher-Gromyko meeting in New York would produce a new exchange of ideas, and that he foresaw no difficulties in reaching agreement on the three stalled treaties as long as the solutions were "based on the Quadripartite Agreement." Differences over Berlin, he said, should not be exaggerated, and the ties between West Berlin and West Germany could, in fact, be developed, so long as the ground rules were followed. As additional balm to the aggrieved Social Democrats, Falin indirectly criticized those CDU/CSU politicians who persist in the "hardly constructive" tactic of reopening questions that have been solved and insisting on solving insoluble problems in relations with the East.

The Soviet media supported Falin's gestures with a series of successively sharper attacks on the CDU/CSU, with party leader Kohl a specific target in the barrage. One particularly sharp commentary referred repeatedly to the "wild" attacks, full of hatred, on the East made by "Strauss and his satellite Kohl" and predicted the Christian parties would be defeated in the elections. Other commentaries, citing Western press reports that linked Strauss with payoffs from Lockheed, flatly charged the CSU leader with corruption.

After the Elections

Having made their position clear, the Soviets have reduced their coverage of the elections to bland reportage focusing on the benign effect of the impending Brezhnev visit and tendentious extracts from statements by leading West German politicians and from the West German press. The announcement of the Brezhnev visit listed Schmidt as the host, conveying the impression that further progress could be made in bilateral relations after the elections. The Soviets probably feel that this exercise in atmospherics can do Schmidt no harm,

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and if, as they think, he pulls off a narrow victory, they no doubt believe they will be in a good position to guide the course of bilateral relations along more productive lines.

If, contrary to Soviet expectations, the opposition parties win the day, the initial Soviet reaction would be to back off until cabinet posts are filled and a government program emerges. The Soviets would undoubtedly exploit those contacts in the CDU/CSU they have cultivated over the years. They could also use the planned Brezhnev visit as a means to explore the new government's attitudes toward the East. If the situation seemed unpromising, the visit could always be postponed. Even though CSU leader Strauss, who is a likely candidate for the Minister of Finance post, is particularly disliked in Moscow, the Soviets would probably cut off their anti-Strauss propaganda while they see how he behaves in office. Similarly, should an incident involving West Berlin or East Germany take place, the Soviets would react very cautiously, with a sharp eye on the CDU/CSU response. The cardinal rule in Moscow's foreign policy is readiness to deal with whoever is in power, regardless of past feuds, if there is even a shred of hope of gaining some advantage. Soviet-German relations have frequently seen this principle in practice in the past, and there is no sign Moscow will deviate from it after the election returns are in. ~~(SECRET)~~

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