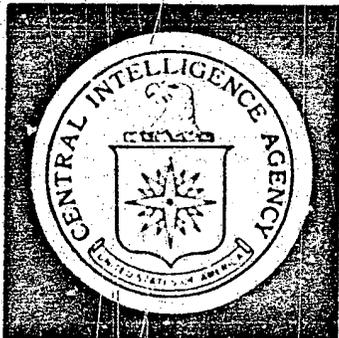
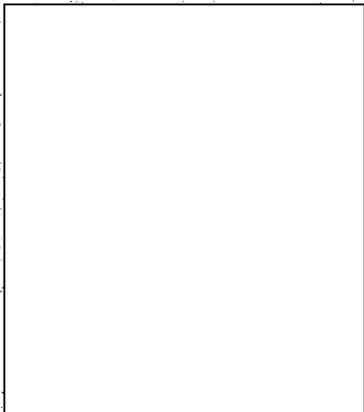




~~SECRET~~



DIRECTORATE OF
INTELLIGENCE



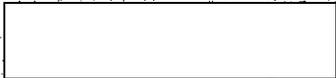
Intelligence Memorandum

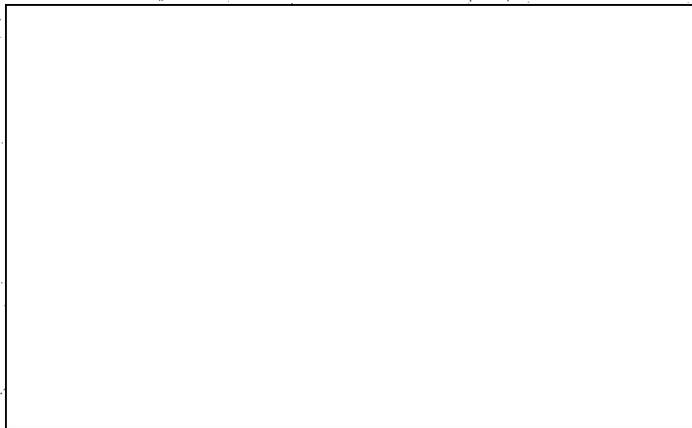
ANDREY KIRILENKO AND THE
SOVIET POLITICAL SUCCESSION

HR70-14
(U)

~~SECRET~~

15 March 1971
RSS No. 0050/71





~~SECRET~~

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
Directorate of Intelligence
15 March 1971

INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

ANDREY KIRILENKO AND THE SOVIET POLITICAL SUCCESSION

Andrey Kirilenko has many of the requisites to become the Soviet Union's next "number one," replacing Leonid Brezhnev in the post of Party General Secretary upon the latter's retirement, fall, or demise, should any of these occur. For one thing, as Brezhnev's senior cadres secretary, Kirilenko directly controls the appointment of Party personnel to the highest posts in the regime, and thus is better placed than his colleagues to build the necessary political support for such an advance. Perhaps more important is the steady increase in his real power and authority in the top Party leadership over the past several years. With Brezhnev's support, he appears to have gained an edge over the other senior secretary serving as the General Secretary's deputy, Mikhail Suslov. There may well be, therefore, some formalization of Kirilenko's de facto position as Brezhnev's second in command at the 24th Party Congress, which is scheduled to convene in late March.

The possibility of Kirilenko's actually succeeding Brezhnev in the top Party post sometime in the future depends to a decisive degree, of course, on his having developed and maintained sufficient support among the regime's leading oligarchs: the members of the Party Politburo who make all major policy decisions and who will settle the issue of the political succession. These leaders have tended since Khrushchev's ouster to fall roughly into three categories: 1) the "Ukrainian group," (those officials, not necessarily Ukrainian by nationality or birth, who served under Khrushchev in the Ukraine),

Note: This memorandum was prepared by the [redacted] Directorate of Intelligence, and was coordinated within the Directorate.

-1-

~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~

which is generally aligned with Brezhnev in terms of power interests; 2) the "outsiders" of the Politburo, who tend periodically to make trouble for Brezhnev, and whose leading example is trade union chief Aleksandr Shelepin; and 3) the two outstanding "independents," Kosygin and Suslov, who have sufficient seniority and prestige to avoid long-lived factional commitments in the Party's internal power struggles.

Kirilenko's relations with the central figure of the Ukrainian group, Brezhnev, are fairly good despite a few differences of emphasis in their policy views. Their apparent personal closeness is likely to have evolved from their long association in heavy-industrial supervision in the Party during their Ukrainian period and later, and is reinforced by the general similarity of their policy views. The General Secretary seems to have reached a comfortable understanding with his cadres secretary in Party-organizational questions. Brezhnev has proceeded with relative freedom in removing Shelepin's clients from key positions but has left most other personnel areas alone. Kirilenko may conceivably have favored more moderate treatment than Brezhnev would have preferred for some of Shelepin's deposed supporters, but in any event he apparently has avoided offending Brezhnev through excessive favoritism and personal patronage in his own filling of routine vacancies.

The strength of Kirilenko's political ties with other individuals in the Ukrainian group is as varied as their bureaucratic positions and interests are mixed. Soviet "President" Nikolay Podgornyy, once a strong rival to Brezhnev but now without much of a Party power base, seems close to Kirilenko in policy outlook. In fact, Podgornyy appears to have preserved many of his political connections with him and the rest of the Ukrainian group. Therefore, assuming him to be politically active when the succession is decided, Podgornyy probably would give Kirilenko his vote of confidence, at least over competitors from outside the Ukrainian group.

First Deputy Premier Dmitriy Polyanskiy, whose connections with the Ukrainian Party organization are real but less obvious than those of Brezhnev or Podgornyy, rose through the ranks roughly parallel with Kirilenko until

~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~

the late 1950s. The emergence of Frol Kozlov at that time as Khrushchev's heir-designate resulted in a temporary setback for Kirilenko (and Brezhnev), but did not adversely affect Polyanskiy's (or Podgorny's) career. Despite his apparent political connections with Kozlov, Polyanskiy managed to hold his position when the Ukrainians regained the ascendancy in 1963. Inherent in the Polyanskiy-Kirilenko relationship, however, is the potential for disagreement arising from their differing bureaucratic interests. Indeed, Polyanskiy's vested interest in rapid agricultural development seems at times to have clashed with Kirilenko's strong commitment to a policy of increased labor productivity and efficiency and his apparent desire to channel some agricultural funds elsewhere.

Ukrainian Party boss Petr Shelest, who rose under the aegis of Podgorny and has a history of rivalry with some of the Ukrainian associates of Brezhnev and Kirilenko could play an important part in the political succession. Shelest, in addition to controlling the Ukrainian Party organization, may have assumed leadership of the forces which Podgorny once marshaled on the national level. Shelest may in fact be trying to undermine Brezhnev's influence in the Ukrainian group, and this further complicates Kirilenko's position.

Kirilenko apparently has tried to keep open his lines to the regime's younger non-Ukrainian leaders despite their critical attitudes toward Brezhnev. Shelepin, the leading "outsider" among Politburo members, and Kirilenko seem to have a common approach to many policy problems: for example, they both have an evident distrust of detente with the West, and particularly with the United States. Brezhnev's maneuverings in 1966 brought them into rivalry in the Secretariat, however, and the transfer of Shelepin to the trade union post in 1967 appeared eventually to separate him from Kirilenko, who was drawn closer to Brezhnev. But while Kirilenko has not visibly sought to hinder Brezhnev in his repeated efforts to downgrade Shelepin's supporters, the weight of the evidence suggests that Brezhnev has not yet succeeded fully in disrupting the relationship between the two.

-3-

~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~

First Deputy Premier Kirill Mazurov is another "outsider" with whom Kirilenko could become allied in the political succession. The two men have worked together since 1965 in the sphere of industrial management, Kirilenko on the Party side and Mazurov in the government. They appear to have similar views in this area, as well as in foreign policy. Differences with Brezhnev and rivalry with Polyanskiy complicate Mazurov's own future, but so far they do not seem to have significantly worsened his relations with Kirilenko.

A third "outsider," RSFSR Premier Gennadiy Voronov, has a long history of rivalry with Kirilenko in terms of both power interests and policy views. Several major gains which Kirilenko made in consolidating his hold on the Party cadres apparatus in the RSFSR since 1962 were at the expense of Voronov's influence in this sphere. In the Communist political spectrum Voronov has the reputation of a "moderate" who apparently favors concessions in economic policy that conflict with Kirilenko's more orthodox approach in most economic areas.

Premier Aleksey Kosygin, one of the two "independents" of the Politburo whose place in the top leadership is crucial to the succession issue, may have little direct contact with Kirilenko. The main rivalry between the Secretariat and Council of Ministers centers on Brezhnev and Kosygin, and Kirilenko's position in this competition seems to shift with the issues. More importantly, on a number of domestic and foreign policy questions Kirilenko and Kosygin appear to hold opposite views, although they have apparently arrived at a consensus of sorts in policy on industrial management and planning. Brezhnev's position has favored sometimes Kosygin, sometimes Kirilenko, and occasionally neither.

The presence of the other "independent," Party Secretary Mikhail Suslov, seriously complicates Kirilenko's chances in the succession. With more than 23 years' continuous service in the Secretariat, Suslov has enormous prestige and considerable power in spite of his having specialized almost exclusively in ideology, propaganda, and foreign Communist relations. The limited evidence suggests that Suslov and Kirilenko are in fact

-4-

~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~

engaged in a struggle for position and power, without necessarily being in opposition on matters of policy. In making personnel appointments, Kirilenko has shown his hand in the provinces, where a large number of technocrats have risen to the post of Party boss, but Suslov has apparently had a moderating influence on Kirilenko's placement of cadres in the central posts, where a majority of appointees have been apparent compromises.

Several men who are at present lesser lights, primarily at the level of alternate member of the Politburo and member of the Secretariat, could become important in the political succession. Arvid Pel'she, chairman of the Party Control Commission and a full member of the Politburo at age 72 appears destined for retirement soon; however, as long as he remains active he probably would side with Suslov (his patron and reported brother-in-law) rather than Kirilenko. Among the Politburo alternate members, possible Kirilenko supporters in a crisis include Party Secretary Dmitriy Ustinov, a quasi-"independent" who oversees all Soviet defense-related industry; and KGB Chairman Yuriy Andropov, whose past political connections with Suslov and others have not prevented the development of ties to Kirilenko. Larger question marks among the other potentially important figures in the succession picture are Party secretaries Ivan Kapitonov and Petr Demichev, responsible for supervising respectively the cadres sector and the propaganda machine. Kapitonov has worked for Kirilenko in the cadres apparatus since 1965 but has not clearly revealed his political sympathies. Demichev seems most closely allied with Shelepin and apparently has had little contact with Kirilenko.

On the basis of the foregoing, Kirilenko's influence within the leadership can be summarized as generally quite strong when compared with that of his closest competitors. His firmest support comes from the Ukrainian group, but he apparently has some political contact with the younger "outsiders," and could well enter into an alliance with them in the succession. There are, however, any number of imponderables affecting Kirilenko's chances to become the "number one" man in the Party, the first being Brezhnev's health -- political and otherwise. The most likely prospect is for Brezhnev's receiving a mandate at the 24th Party Congress.

-5-

~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~

to continue as Party boss for another 4-5 year term. Therefore, Kirilenko's best opportunity for taking command himself would seem to be the General Secretary's physical incapacitation or early death. A second important consideration is Kirilenko's age. Brezhnev actually is a few months younger than Kirilenko (though apparently less healthy). Should Brezhnev seem likely to remain General Secretary for a few more years, Kirilenko could decide to bid instead for the premiership with the support of the Party boss.

What kind of successor might Kirilenko be? His policy views may be summarized as neo-Stalinist for the most part. His foreign policy views reveal the mind of a fairly orthodox Marxist-Leninist who is highly suspicious of the West. Kirilenko has thus far had relatively few dealings with Western statesmen, in contrast with Brezhnev for example, who had some such contacts under Khrushchev during a three-year term as Soviet President. Kirilenko's cautious lip service to a policy of detente is infrequent and carries tough conditions which appear almost to rule out its application to the US and he has been in the forefront of those leaders who champion the "Brezhnev Doctrine" of limited sovereignty and of defense of 'socialist gains'. In his public statements Kirilenko has come as close as any other top Soviet leader to explicit advocacy of a forward policy. He has termed the rendering of Soviet aid to the Vietnamese and Arabs not only a 'revolutionary duty' but also a requirement of Soviet security. He also has been very critical, incidentally, of the Communist Chinese leadership and has defended the Soviet policy of attacking Peking's political and ideological positions and building up a "secure defense" against any (that is, Chinese) encroachments; he has however, remained within the general framework of Brezhnev's policy of not shutting the door on hope for a reconciliation with China in the long run.

The militancy Kirilenko reveals in foreign policy statements has its corollary in domestic policies, especially in the cultural and social spheres. Although he apparently has accepted the rationale behind increased consumer-goods production in recent years, Kirilenko has argued against immediate aid to agriculture and housing in the allocation of resources. He long has favored the use

~~SECRET~~

of exhortation and persuasion over the application of material incentives to production; in addition, he has failed to endorse the major wage gains of recent years which Brezhnev, for one, has defended

Kirilenko has revealed something of an undogmatic, technocratic bias, however, in his views on economic management. His speeches on this theme over the years have consistently promoted pragmatic solutions to the long-standing managerial problems of the Soviet economy. Significantly, the (for him) rare mention of Stalin during the early 1960s -- Khrushchev, of course, had numerous public supporters of his de-Stalinization campaign then -- was in the context of criticism of the dictator's "dogmas," the stereotypes and rigid policies which, according to Kirilenko, prevented honest appraisals of the economy and hampered science and technology. In line with his economic pragmatism, Kirilenko has been one of the few Soviet leaders to associate himself publicly with the creation of a business management school along bourgeois lines.

As in the case with Soviet leaders in general, little is known about Kirilenko's real views on defense and strategic questions, although something of his general attitude can be inferred from the domestic and foreign policy positions described above. His only public statement on SALT to date was a strictly pro forma assertion in April 1970 that the talks can produce results "if the United States makes an honest attempt to solve the problem at hand and not try to achieve one-sided gains." This cautious remark is consistent with Kirilenko's generally cynical attitude toward the US which has been to the effect that the US government is two-faced in wanting good relations with the Soviet Union while waging war against another socialist country (North Vietnam). These views no doubt underlie Kirilenko's repeatedly expressed opinion on the need to increase Soviet defense capabilities in view of a "dangerous" international situation.

It would appear that in most of these questions Kirilenko's hard-nosed views are fairly close to Brezhnev's

~~SECRET~~

conservative position and indeed probably have had a stronger impact than those of most other Politburo members on the thinking of the basically cautious General Secretary in relation to the other policy-makers. Kirilenko's militancy toward the US and the rest of the "imperialistic" West is not quite as strident as that of Suslov or Shelepin, but it appears in sharp relief against Premier Kosygin's more moderate position. If therefore, Suslov and Kosygin fairly represent the ends of the spectrum on the question of Soviet-US relations with Brezhnev somewhere near the middle, then Kirilenko evidently would fall close to Brezhnev, but on Suslov's side.

Against this background Kirilenko would appear to be little more imaginative in the post of General Secretary than Brezhnev has been. Kirilenko in the post of Premier probably would be perceptibly less open to foreign-policy negotiation than Kosygin has seemed to be. In either the Party or the government post Kirilenko might be inclined to sanction somewhat greater risks than the post-Khrushchev leadership has taken especially in its dealings with the US in international problem areas, and to endorse an even more repressive policy at home. It is, of course, possible that the greater responsibilities of a higher office and increased contact with Western representatives might induce Kirilenko to moderate somewhat his present views. One factor arguing against any very serious such modification in Kirilenko's views, however, is his apparent disinclination to yield to opportunistic considerations, as reflected in his unusually consistent position on policy issues over the years.

A likely general feature of a Kirilenko regime, therefore, would doubtless be its continuation and intensification of the main policies of the present leadership. Kirilenko would probably be not at all inclined to slow the momentum of the present trend away from the relative laxity of the Khrushchev years but on the contrary would be likely to press even harder than he has pushed until now to tighten economic and social discipline. The task of countering such a strong trend could be undertaken only by someone less closely identified with the post-Khrushchev

- 8 -

~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~

neo-Stalinism. who might challenge Kirilenko's right to be "number one" much as Khrushchev himself proceeded successfully to wrest the top Party job away from Malenkov in 1953

-9-

~~SECRET~~

~~Secret~~

~~Secret~~