

Central Intelligence Agency



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DIRECTORATE OF INTELLIGENCE

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SOVIET-WEST EUROPEAN RELATIONS AFTER THE FIRST INF DEPLOYMENTS

Summary

The Soviets have not allowed relations with those West European countries which accepted the new US missiles to be adversely affected. Initial signals following Chernenko's accession to the Party leadership indicate that the Soviets will continue this effort to maintain good relations. Judging from their actions, they do not want to risk serious damage to their larger equities in Western Europe and are particularly solicitous of economic ties. They have, nevertheless, dealt some minor diplomatic snubs, presumably to appear to make good on their public threats to retaliate politically. Soviet leaders may believe that the suspension of arms talks and announced military countermeasures are sufficient demonstration of their intent to respond firmly to NATO's deployments.

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This memorandum was prepared in the Office of Soviet Analysis. Comments and queries are welcome and may be addressed to Chief, Current Support Division, telephone

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Soviet Leaders Accentuate the Positive

1. There has been no downturn in bilateral political and economic contacts with the USSR since West Germany, the UK, and Italy decided last fall to proceed with INF deployment. West European leaders--many of whom feel strong domestic pressure to ameliorate the East-West atmosphere--possibly would try to put the best face on Soviet diplomatic behavior, particularly when characterizing it for US officials. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] leads us to believe the Soviet restraint and cordiality toward the West Europeans has been accurately described by Western leaders. [REDACTED]

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2. The Soviets' uninterrupted dialogue with the West German government is most noteworthy because the Soviets made it clear that they saw last fall's Bundestag debate as opening the door to NATO's deployments throughout Western Europe.

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-- [REDACTED] Soviet security expert Daniil Proektor reportedly contended in early February that deployment had affected the political climate between the two countries, but economic and cultural relations would not deteriorate.

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3. Similarly, Soviet-British exchanges--which have remained at a fairly low and infrequent level since the Afghanistan invasion--have continued. [REDACTED]

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- An Izvestiya article marking the 60th anniversary of diplomatic relations criticized the UK's support for allegedly aggressive US policies, but emphasized the USSR's desire for bilateral cooperation.

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4. Soviet-Italian relations remain low-key but positive.

- The Moscow meeting in mid-December of the Soviet-Italian Mixed Economic and Scientific Commission was highlighted favorably in the Soviet press, and the Italians assessed the Soviets' forthcoming attitude as reflecting a desire to end their diplomatic "isolation" following their walk-out from the Geneva INF talks.
- Gromyko discussed the possibility of a spring visit to Rome with Foreign Minister Andreotti at the CDE opening. Gromyko's sharply anti-US rhetoric during his meetings in Stockholm with Andreotti and his other West European counterparts reportedly did not dilute the impression that the USSR wanted to maintain good relations with US allies. Andreotti and Italian President Pertini indicated to reporters that this impression was confirmed by their talks with Chernenko and Gromyko after Andropov's funeral.

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Soviet Motives

5. The Soviets' conciliatory approach, in our view, almost certainly is motivated in large part by hopes of influencing the Allies' attitudes toward further deployments--including the West German government's views on a moratorium--and of inducing the Belgians and Dutch to decide against any deployments on their soil.

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- Gromyko has reaffirmed his intention to visit Brussels early this year, and any such visit would be used to lobby against deployment of the cruise missiles scheduled to be operational in Belgium in March 1985.

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- The US Embassy in Moscow speculated that the fact that the Belgians and Dutch sent lower level delegations to Andropov's funeral than they sent to Brezhnev's might spur Soviet efforts to reassure and cultivate the two remaining INF basing countries.

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6. The Soviets have said publicly that they are pleased with and will be responsive to recent statements by West European leaders advocating better relations with the East. Kohl, Thatcher, and Andreotti all have expressed the desire for a more positive dialogue with the USSR. Vadim Zagladin, deputy chief of the Central Committee's International Department, told [redacted] that Thatcher's interest in better Soviet-British relations was "important," and recent Soviet commentary on Kohl and Italian Prime Minister Craxi has urged them to give substance to their professed desire to ameliorate the East-West atmosphere.

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Non-INF Countries

7. The USSR's relations with West European countries not included in NATO's deployment plans have been particularly active.

- The French, for example, regarded Deputy Premier Arkhipov's visit in late January to sign a major trade protocol as a signal of Soviet interest in closer ties despite Paris' strong opposition to Soviet efforts to include French forces in an INF agreement.

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- The Soviets also welcomed a Spanish parliamentary delegation in January, and recently praised political and economic ties with Norway without mentioning the repercussions of the Treholt spy scandal.

- The Soviets have also remained largely silent about the Swedes' most recent highly-publicized submarine hunt, probably to avoid further damaging the USSR's image in

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the Nordic region while the CDE is in session in Stockholm. [REDACTED]

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Economic "Business As Usual"

8. Throughout this period the Soviets have appeared particularly concerned--as they did even before deployments got underway--about insulating their increasingly broad and diverse economic relations with the West Europeans from the impact of INF.

- Soviet media portrayed the mid-November session of the Soviet-West German Mixed Economic Commission as a useful exchange promoting expanded economic relations, and made no mention of INF. At this session, the Soviets refrained from signing any contracts or holding intensive discussions of specific projects perhaps to send a more general economic and political message to the West Germans. Nonetheless, the volume of Soviet-West German trade has not apparently been affected since deployment.
- The Soviets told the Italians at their Economic Commission meeting in December that they would sign \$2 billion in contracts with Italian firms in 1984. The Italians reportedly were surprised that the Soviets had not demanded the quid pro quo of natural gas purchases, leading them to conclude that the USSR wanted to build diplomatic bridges to the West after the Geneva walk-out.
- Similarly, French officials reportedly regarded the Soviets' forthcoming attitude in negotiating a trade protocol on 3 February as a political signal of the USSR's desire for better relations with France. [REDACTED]

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9. West European assistance is especially important at present to the USSR's energy development plans--a critical matter entirely independent of INF deployment. Mindful of the 1982 pipeline-related US sanctions, the Soviets almost certainly are eager to ensure that West European equipment suppliers and energy customers remain favorably inclined toward trade with the USSR.

- The Soviets currently are negotiating with the West Europeans for equipment and financing for "sour gas" projects at Astrakhan and Tengiz in Soviet Central Asia and for offshore oil and gas development efforts in the Barents and Caspian Seas and off Sakhalin Island.
- Preliminary discussions of such long-term prospects as a coal slurry pipeline and synthetic fuels development indicate that the USSR hopes to profit by its economic collaboration with Western Europe long into the future. [REDACTED]

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Minor Snubs

10. While seeking to protect its larger equities, the USSR nevertheless apparently has felt compelled to give some substance to warnings to the West Germans, British, and Italians that proceeding with INF deployments would have consequences for bilateral relations. Soviet press commentary on those governments' security policies has remained sharply critical. The Soviets continually remind West Germany that they regard it as second only to the US in culpability for allegedly accelerating the arms race. Italy and especially the UK are being warned that their alleged slavish submission to US security dictates deprives them of sovereignty and the good will of the socialist states. [redacted]

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11. Beyond this press campaign, the Soviets have been selective, cautious, and at times contradictory in their retaliatory gestures.

-- In December, [redacted] the Soviet Foreign Ministry instructed its embassy in Bonn not to issue visas to any conservative West German politicians. The move was explained as retaliation against the conservative parties, whose representatives in the Bundestag had voted unanimously to proceed with deployment.

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-- The Soviets reportedly also ignored a West German government request that Politburo member Grigoriy Romanov call on officials in Bonn following his attendance at the German Communist Party's congress in early January. [redacted] officials in Romanov's delegation reportedly also failed to meet with West German Social Democrats, whose opposition to the Kohl Government's INF stance the USSR approves.

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-- During the late January visit of the British Liberal Parliamentarians, Politburo candidate-member Boris Ponomarev--who has a reputation for irascibility--reportedly dismissed Thatcher's efforts at East-West conciliation as a "cosmetic operation." USA and Canada Institute chief Georgiy Arbatov and other Soviet officials, on the other hand, were encouraging about the prospects for improved Soviet-British ties.

12. Initial Western concerns that new altitude restrictions the Soviets imposed in late February on Allied flights in the three Berlin air corridors might be a reaction to INF so far have proven unfounded. The Soviets evidently do want to secure permanent restrictions on Allied air activity in the corridors. The new restrictions were applied, however, in response to Allied complaints about the hazard posed by Soviet military aircraft crossing the corridors, and do appear aimed, at least in part, at

improving air safety. Soviet officials have repeatedly insisted that the USSR wants to maintain the status quo regarding Berlin, suggesting that they appreciate the backfire potential of exploiting Berlin to signal dissatisfaction to the West. The US Mission in Berlin concluded in early March that the Soviets were relying on the current improvement in inner-German relations and on the difficulties of Allied coordination to get the air regime they want without risking a Berlin crisis. []

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The Dialogue on Security Issues

13. Having failed to forestall implementation of NATO's 1979 INF decision, the Soviets appear to be focusing on efforts to limit the deployments. They may calculate that frequent consultations and direct reassurances to the West Europeans of the USSR's benign intentions could undermine NATO consensus for full deployment as planned.

- Soviet officials are trying to appeal to West European governments' sense of sovereignty, portraying INF [] as a dangerous plan forced on Western Europe by the US. TASS's announcement in early February of the arrival at Comiso, Sicily of the first US cruise missiles, for example, put no blame on the Italian government but instead characterized the weapons as "Washington's 'dangerous gifts' which jeopardize the security of (Italy itself)." []

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14. Beyond INF, the USSR's long-range objective of undermining US-West European solidarity on the full range of security issues adds to Moscow's incentive to keep the Soviet-West European dialogue alive.

- Soviet officials take every opportunity to try to persuade their West European counterparts that the arms control impasse and the general deterioration of the East-West climate is due not to Soviet, but to US intransigence and belligerence.
- By having set a date for resumption of the MBFR talks and by taking an active role in the CDE--both of which are important to Europeans because they are multilateral rather than superpower negotiations--the Soviets evidently hope to ensure that the West Europeans remain receptive to the USSR's security proposals and arguments. For example, Soviet officials--including General Secretary Chernenko in his meeting with the Canadian Prime Minister after Andropov's funeral--continue to express interest in Trudeau's peace initiative without committing the USSR to active support. Similarly, the Warsaw Pact's 10 January chemical weapons proposal probably was intended in part to play upon West German interest in the issue. []

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15. The Soviets' shift of focus to direct discussions and appeals to West European leaders in part reflects an awareness that the dispirited and divided peace movement is no longer able to help the USSR accomplish its objectives, if indeed it ever was.

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16. This does not mean that the Soviets have any intention of ignoring the peace movement.

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-- They are continuing to support and counsel elements of it, and to cultivate other groups and parties in Western Europe who do not now support NATO's INF deployment plans--notably the West German Social Democrats--to maintain pressure on NATO governments regarding INF and other security policies.

-- At a public lecture in Leningrad in early February, a Soviet academic intimated, in fact, that the USSR's propaganda effort might have to be strengthened to contend with the possibility that the peace movement's focus might shift to Warsaw Pact countermeasures.

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17. The Soviets' willingness to maintain normal political relations suggests they believe military countermeasures such as basing new missiles in Eastern Europe and their suspension of the INF talks and START are sufficient to demonstrate the Warsaw Pact's intent to match NATO's deployments with military strength. A forceful military response also could strengthen the Soviets' political hand with the West Europeans, although it could also backfire by proving that the "Soviet threat" used to justify NATO's INF plans is indeed real.

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Outlook

18. We believe the Soviets will continue to deal closely and positively with the West Europeans, despite the recent tension over security issues. This was apparently the course under Andropov, and initial signals from Chernenko indicate that the USSR will continue and possibly augment its efforts to ensure an uninterrupted and mutually advantageous dialogue with Western Europe. Should the Chernenko regime seek improved relations with the US, the Soviets' West European contacts could promote an even broader dialogue. The MBFR talks and the CDE could provide the means for sending such signals to the West.

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19. The Soviets nevertheless have not foresworn any of the tactics they used in an effort to stop the INF deployments in the first place. While maintaining a productive dialogue with the

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West European regimes the USSR will continue, in our view, to encourage opposition elements to undercut popular support for NATO. Although the Soviets are putting a positive face on relations with the Hague and Brussels, Soviet warnings probably will again increase in volume as the deadlines approach for Belgium and the Netherlands to make deployment decisions.

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