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The Implications of Brezhnev's Cadre Policies for the Soviet Political Succession

Central Intelligence Agency
National Foreign Assessment Center

October 1978

Key Judgments

There is substantial evidence that Leonid Brezhnev, as leader of the Soviet Communist Party, has been more constrained than his predecessors in appointing his supporters to key bureaucratic slots:

Turnover within the party's central elite, the Central Committee and Central Auditing Commission, has decreased with each party congress since Khrushchev's removal.

Elites holding important positions within the party's republic and regional organizations also have enjoyed substantially improved job security.

The marked reduction of elite turnover has limited the opportunities for political manipulation of party cadres by Brezhnev or anyone else. This appears to reflect a conscious policy in contrast to Nikita Khrushchev's frequent and, at times, capricious use of the cadre weapon. The Brezhnev leadership has sought also to prevent political conflict over vacancies in key positions:

There has been a substantial decline in the forced removal of individuals from office for political wrongdoing or incompetence; death and retirement are the leading causes of removal from the central elite.

Replacements for those vacancies that do occur usually have been selected from among the subordinates of the official being replaced; thus it has been difficult for Polit-

buro members to maneuver their proteges into areas or institutions not connected with their own background and experience.

Although Brezhnev has maneuvered some opponents out of the Politburo and Secretariat and thereby secured key assignments for allies and supporters, the evidence suggests an alteration of ground rules in the game of Soviet politics. He has not attempted to remold the elite into one beholden only to him because:

- He did not push sweeping policy or organizational reforms that would have generated significant opposition within the party establishment.
- He understood that excessive cadre manipulation breeds insecurity that can fuel political opposition.
- He recognized the advantage in associating the central elite's own well-being with his continued tenure in office.

Continued cadre stability in the post-Brezhnev era could be promoted by:

- The natural desire of Politburo members to limit the new general secretary's ability to exploit the powers inherent in his office.
- The support of elites who now dominate the Central Committee and have a vested interest in maintaining the current approach.

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- The prospect of political advancement that officials now in key subordinate positions can anticipate under existing arrangements.

Pressure for politicization of cadre assignments could grow from:

The disenchantment of lower level officials whose career prospects have been hindered by prolonged stability at the top.

The belief of some Politburo leaders that major policy changes are required to deal with numerous, long-avoided problems and that new top-to-bottom leadership is needed to push through such changes.

- An aggressive new general secretary who uses powers inherent in his office to staff elite positions with his supporters.

Given the political sensitivity of cadre policy, these conflicting pressures will probably intensify the divisions within the post-Brezhnev leadership. As a result, formation of a new political consensus could be more difficult and the succession struggle more protracted. The political balance in the Soviet elite, nevertheless, appears to favor "stability of cadres." If it is maintained by the new leadership, the institutional support for collective leadership would be strengthened and a return to one-man rule significantly inhibited.

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PREFACE

This memorandum examines the future implications of Brezhnev's and Khrushchev's contrasting cadre policies [

A statistical presentation of some of the information from the data base is contained in the charts and graphs in the appendix.

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The Implications of Brezhnev's Cadre Policies for the Soviet Political Succession

Introduction

Soviet politicians have traditionally had difficulty balancing their somewhat contradictory preferences for strong centralized authority and collective leadership. While the decisionmaking system is a collegial one on paper, in practice it has more often than not evolved into one-man domination, if not dictatorship. The evident unwillingness of Soviet leaders to constitutionalize the responsibilities and prerogatives of certain political offices and functions has been a principal reason for this. Quite purposefully, the relationships between major institutions have remained ill-defined and the powers inherent in most political roles ambiguous.

As a consequence, the power of a general secretary is as dependent on his political ability as it is on the authority derived from his institutional position. Khrushchev was particularly adept at maneuvering within this adaptable political environment. He skillfully manipulated personnel assignments, organizational and structural reforms, and policy priorities to expand his own power and to undercut that of his rivals. While these tactics proved beneficial, the insecurity and resentment his policies engendered among his immediate colleagues, as well as lower level officials, contributed in the long run to the erosion of his political support and to his eventual downfall.

Khrushchev's successors were not content with merely removing him, however. They also wanted to repeal some of the policies associated with his rule and to prevent certain abuses from recurring in the future. Cadre policy loomed particularly large in this effort. Under Khrushchev, frequent personnel shifts and demotions, even of his staunch supporters, were commonplace. Local party organizations were often as-

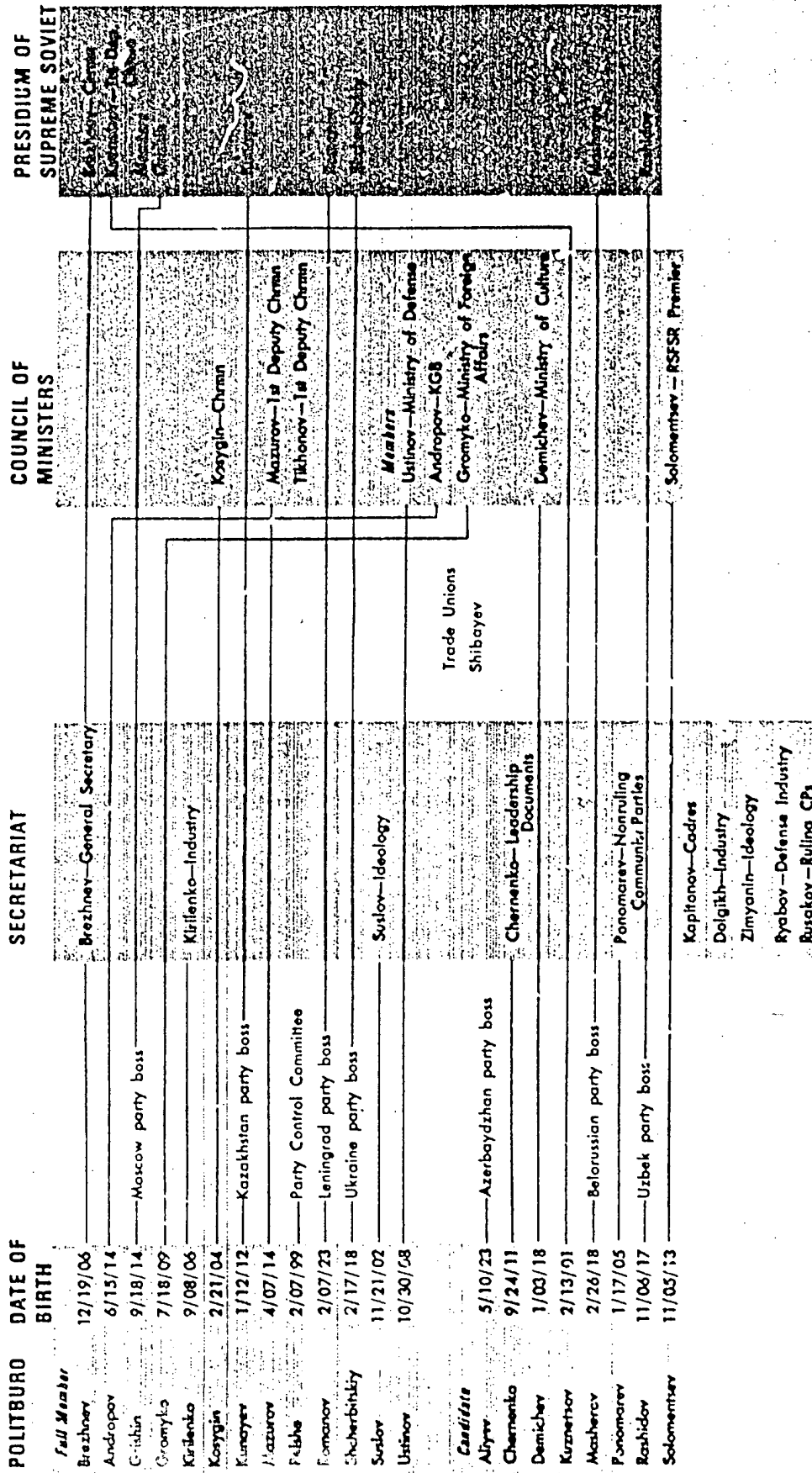
signed outsiders as first secretaries. Few could feel comfortable or secure in their jobs. This insecurity was institutionalized at the 22nd Party Congress in 1961 in a party statute requiring a fixed rate of turnover in the party's leading organs. Khrushchev was thus provided with numerous opportunities for maneuvering supporters into key positions and opponents out, creating in the process a political balance congruent with his power ambitions.

Brezhnev's Cadre Policies

Brezhnev clearly wanted to preserve some flexibility in assigning cadres to key positions while at the same time mollifying supporters of increased cadre stability. At the 23rd Party Congress in 1966 he endorsed the call to repeal party rules prescribing turnover, but he also argued that the party should retain a general provision requiring systematic "renewal of cadres" along with continuity in leadership and that young and energetic officials should be promoted more boldly. In spite of his expressed objective, however, stability and continuity of leadership in the Brezhnev era have clearly prevailed over systematic renewal of cadres. As the discussion in the appendix shows, job security and regularized promotion practices have been the norm since 1965. The turnover rate for key national, republic, and regional officials has been reduced substantially from the level established by Khrushchev. Death and retirement, rather than political expulsion, have emerged as the principal causes of removal from the elite. And vacancies have been filled primarily from among the ranks of the departed official's subordinates.

Manipulation of cadre assignments, of course, has not disappeared entirely from the Soviet political scene. Its use, however, has become

Interlocking Directorate of the Soviet Leadership



more selective and localized chiefly within the highest levels of the political establishment—that is, within the Politburo and the Secretariat. Brezhnev has skillfully created and used vacancies in both institutions to transform them into groups more favorably disposed toward him. Some of Brezhnev's colleagues in the Politburo have employed the same tactics. Kirilenko, for example, probably had much to do with elevation of his Sverdlovsk associate, Yakov Ryabov, into the Secretariat in 1976. Leningrad party boss Grigoriy Romanov, the youngest member of the Politburo and a possible Brezhnev heir, appears to have influenced a number of recent appointments to lower level positions in the bureaucracy.¹

As previously noted, however, there has been no return to the flagrant manipulation of large numbers of cadres that was associated with Khrushchev. In view of the considerable personal power he has acquired, Brezhnev's failure to challenge this creeping depoliticization of personnel policy seems incongruous. Several considerations have probably shaped his passivity on this score. First, the new policy was enacted during the early years of Brezhnev's term, before he had sufficient power to prevent it. He probably recognized that if he supported continuation of extensive cadre turnover while he was relatively weak, his position would be endangered. He chose, therefore, to associate the vested interest of the elite in enjoying the fruits of increased job security with his continuance in office, thereby turning a potential weakness into a source of strength.

Second, both Stalin and Khrushchev needed great personal power to carry out ambitious and often controversial policies. Only by defeating their opponents could their programs be implemented. Brezhnev, on the other hand, has generally avoided such controversial initiatives and has

¹ Several of Romanov's Leningrad associates have been assigned to important posts outside the oblast over the last three years: V. N. Ignatov, then second secretary of the obkom (the oblast party committee), became the first secretary of Voronezh obkom in 1975; the mayor of Leningrad, V. I. Kazakov, was named a deputy chairman of the RSFSR Council of Ministers in 1976; and B. I. Arlatov, Ignatov's replacement as obkom second secretary, was appointed ambassador to Poland in April of this year.

adopted a leadership style that balances competing interests rather than challenges key institutional groups. This middle-of-the-road course has inhibited the emergence of widespread opposition within the elite and the corresponding need for any systematic replacement of personnel.

Third, Brezhnev himself may have sympathized with the desire of many party workers for increased cadre stability and continuity. As already noted, he gave this idea some support in his report to the 23rd Party Congress, and he did so again at the 24th Congress in 1971. In addition, in 1974 a published account of Brezhnev's activities in Kazakhstan during the mid-1950s suggested that he preferred to leave effective officials in a given post until their assignment could be successfully concluded, even if this meant postponing a promotion to higher level work.

After Brezhnev

Despite the sharp decline over the last 14 years in the use of cadre manipulation to achieve political advantages, Brezhnev's successor, in the absence of a constitutional limitation on the use of leadership power, could decide or be given scope to rejuvenate the central elite. Nevertheless, there has been definite movement toward creeping institutionalization of Soviet personnel policies during Brezhnev's tenure. A relatively predictable formula for achieving and maintaining status in the elite has emerged. Shifts that threaten these expectations and calculations would almost certainly encounter serious opposition. In fact, personnel practices associated with the Brezhnev era have probably become so ingrained that only severe pressures—stemming, most likely, from gross mismanagement of the Soviet economy—could bring about a change in approach.

At the same time, present cadre policies obviously have not benefited all equally. Three different elite constituencies are discernible. The major beneficiaries of these policies are those senior party and government officials who occupy top managerial positions in their respective bureaucracies. This group, although the smallest of the three, is naturally the most politically significant and powerful. Most were born between 1910 and

1920 and recruited into the party's ranks from 1938 to 1945; they dominate the Central Committee. The cadre policies of the Brezhnev era have served them well and extended the length of their service at the pinnacle of the Soviet political system. As a result they clearly have a stake in perpetuating the status quo. During the succession period they will probably unite in support of the leadership faction most closely identified with this objective.

The second, and by far the largest constituency within the elite establishment, is formed by party officials who, for the most part, entered the party after Stalin's death and now hold leadership positions below the central and republic levels. The high degree of stability engendered by the current approach to cadre policy has limited their advancement opportunities. The result has been frustration, resentment, and perhaps even alienation within the ranks.

These younger officials reportedly hope the changes caused by the passing of the Brezhnev generation will produce some additional headroom. They would be inclined to ally themselves with the younger more ambitious leaders willing to advocate change on the ground that the Soviet political system is suffering from "hardening of the arteries" and needs new approaches to some of its systemic problems. Leningrad party leader Grigoriy Romanov, for example, who has publicly argued that "an excessively long stay in the party apparatus in the same position can frequently cause loss of interest in the work" and that attention should be given to how such individuals "can best be used in the future," could attract support from this group.¹

There is a third constituency, however, neither totally swayed by power and privilege nor com-

¹ Romanov has actively implemented this philosophy during his tenure as party leader in Leningrad. Since 1970 he has appointed four new obkom second secretaries, eight obkom secretaries, two gorkom (party committee at the city level) first secretaries, three gorkom second secretaries, and nine gorkom secretaries. For the most part, however, these changes have not occurred at the expense of departing incumbent officials. None of the nine obkom officials who have changed jobs has been clearly demoted, and only six of the 15 city officials have suffered from the personnel shifts (only three of these six had initially received their appointment during Romanov's tenure).

pletely frustrated by its inability to advance quickly, that will probably play a key role in determining whether the current approach to cadre policy becomes a permanent feature of Soviet politics. Individuals in this group, recruited mainly from the post-World War II generation of party members, have already reached the career takeoff stage and hold key subordinate positions to the ministers and obkom first secretaries who now form the core element in the Soviet political elite. This group will profit from existing procedures and therefore have a strong reason for supporting the current system. On the other hand, in view of the lengthy apprenticeship they must endure, as well as the reported concern among younger functionaries generally about the need for fresh ideas and revival at the top, members of this group might sympathize with the need for a leadership turnover. A Politburo faction committed to reinvigorating Soviet policy might be able to draw on this constituency for support during a succession as its members obtain senior elite status.

On the whole, the political balance reflected in the career objectives of these three elite constituencies favors stability. Only if an overwhelming Politburo majority believed that change and rejuvenation of the elite was essential to the health of the system would the status quo bias of the seniors in the Central Committee be overridden. Such a broad consensus, of course, is not very likely in succession politicking. The sensitivity of cadre questions alone would make consensus difficult. However persuasive the logic for developing a better method for circulating elites, no Soviet leader is likely to accept such arguments in view of the consequences of such a change for his political future. Moreover, those in the leadership who are not so ambitious and powerful have an obvious interest in constraining their more aggressive associates and will almost certainly resist any attempt to obtain a general mandate for change. Where replacements become unavoidable, the leadership probably will seek to narrow the choice to generally acceptable candidates from within the established elite.

Current cadre policies are likely to be maintained in the post-Brezhnev era. They could be

modified, however, as a result of the increasing debate and conflict within the leadership over a number of serious and difficult economic problems—namely, sagging economic growth rates, insufficient agricultural production despite enormous investments, and looming energy shortages. These problems and others are evident now, but there is no indication that the current leadership is willing to tackle them head on. Potential solutions are too controversial and the prospects for success too uncertain for Brezhnev to risk much political capital at this stage.

This passivity is not likely to continue after Brezhnev leaves. A decade of partial neglect has already complicated the prospects of corrective measures, and the implications of further delay should be evident to many members of the Soviet elite. Nevertheless, considerable controversy over what needs to be done is likely. For some older and more senior leaders the present priorities, organizational forms, and managerial techniques have virtually become enshrined as dogma. These leaders are likely to argue that change should be directed primarily toward making the existing system more efficient through administrative tinkering.

Younger and less senior leaders, however, may feel no particular loyalty to the conventional way of doing business; rather, they would probably prefer to define the issue in terms of correcting ills and stimulating development through major policy departures. Clearly, the proponents of radical change have the more onerous task. Proposals to shift priorities and revamp organizations would stimulate considerable controversy and threaten the existing institutional and political distribution of power. The ensuing debate, moreover, would force party officials to make choices that could endanger their political future. These suggestions would surely provoke opposition not only from those who were ideologically committed to the present system but also from those imperiled by the change.

Finally, the prospects for a more politicized approach toward personnel policy in the post-Brezhnev era would grow if a particularly ambitious and clever leader who believed change was

essential became general secretary. The office's powers could be exploited to curtail severely the collective's control over policy in general and cadre matters in particular. Since the Secretariat has a special role in verifying the fulfillment of party directives and in assigning party cadres to key positions throughout the Soviet bureaucracy, the general secretary is in a unique position to direct these activities.

The new general secretary is likely, however, to inherit the post with diluted authority. Succession has always initially led to a degradation in the power of the general secretary relative to that of his predecessor. Moreover, each successor has been more limited than his predecessor in choosing tactics for expanding his power vis-a-vis the collective. Khrushchev gained power in part on the premise that he would not use it to terrorize his colleagues. In addition to this limitation, Brezhnev has not had a free hand to manipulate cadre assignments. Quite conceivably, a new general secretary's colleagues, guided by the lessons learned from Brezhnev's use of the position, will attempt to add new restrictions, further limiting his tactical options.

Prognosis

Against the background of conflicting pressures for continuity and change, "stability of cadres" will be one of the more difficult issues that a new leadership must face in the post-Brezhnev era. The political sensitivity of this question, however, is much greater than for most other domestic problems since it is closely related to the quest for greater political power. Debate on this issue consequently will probably intensify the political cleavages within the new leadership. Policy formulation in other areas may become more contentious as a result.

The outcome of the debate over cadre policy remains uncertain, but political forces favoring continued stability appear to have the upper hand. Aspiring leaders should be able to garner the support of the entrenched establishment and gain a significant advantage over other contenders in succession infighting who would challenge the status quo. It seems likely, therefore, that the

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present approach to cadre assignment will survive Brezhnev.

At a minimum such a development would be a significant step toward institutionalizing power relationships within the regime. The collegial aspects of leadership decisionmaking would be strengthened. Overcoming oligarchic barriers to greater personal rule would be difficult and policy formulation would, as now, reflect leadership consensus more than individual dictate. In

this environment the leadership style pioneered by Brezhnev would become the model for ambitious leaders to follow. Although this strategy would not prevent the emergence of a strong general secretary—indeed, Brezhnev has skillfully demonstrated the power potential inherent in it—future party leaders would, like Brezhnev, find the political system much less subject to their control than the one faced by either Stalin or Khrushchev.

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and should be directed to*

APPENDIX

COMPARISON OF CADRE POLICIES UNDER
BREZHNEV AND KHRUSHCHEV

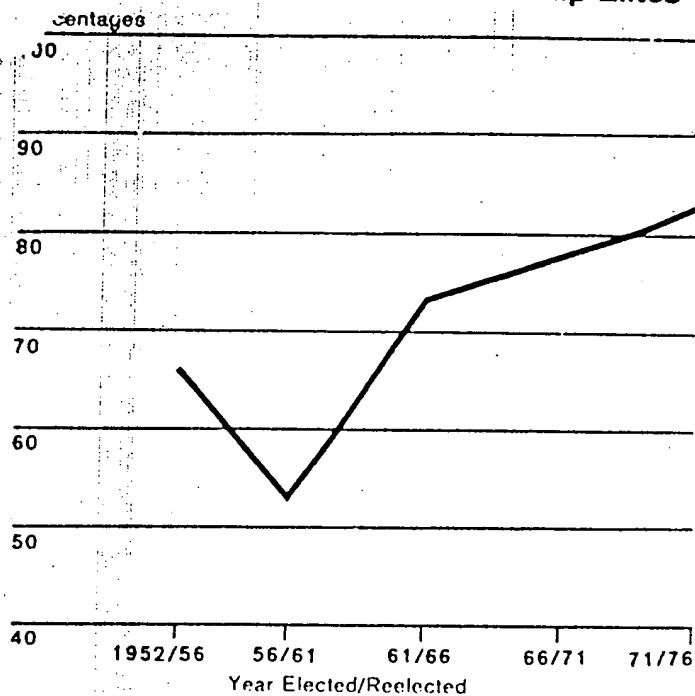
Statements by Soviet officials in the early post-Khrushchev years indicated that considerable support existed for increasing job security and, implicitly, for limiting the ability of ambitious Politburo officials to manipulate assignments to their political advantage. Yet, Brezhnev's formulation at the 23rd Party Congress suggested that he was trying to maintain some of the top leadership's traditional flexibility in personnel matters. Which viewpoint has prevailed? More specifically, to what extent has job security increased? And what factors now govern removals from and promotions to high-level elite positions?

Stability of Cadres

Cadre stability has reached extraordinary levels during the Brezhnev years. Members of the Central Committee and Central Auditing Commission, for example, have had a very good chance of retaining their leadership status within the elite (see figure 1). Stability within these groups has been higher at each of the three party congresses since Khrushchev's removal than it was in either 1956 or 1961. Moreover, the reelection rate has steadily increased throughout the Brezhnev period, advancing from 73 percent in 1966 to 83 percent in 1976.

While increased political security is evident for virtually all segments of the elite, figures 2 and 3 also show that certain segments of the elite have benefited more than others. Khrushchev's purge of the central elite in 1961 did not give preferential treatment to those with higher status; Central Committee members were only slightly less likely to be replaced than members of the Cen-

Figure 1
Reelection Rate of Central Leadership Elites

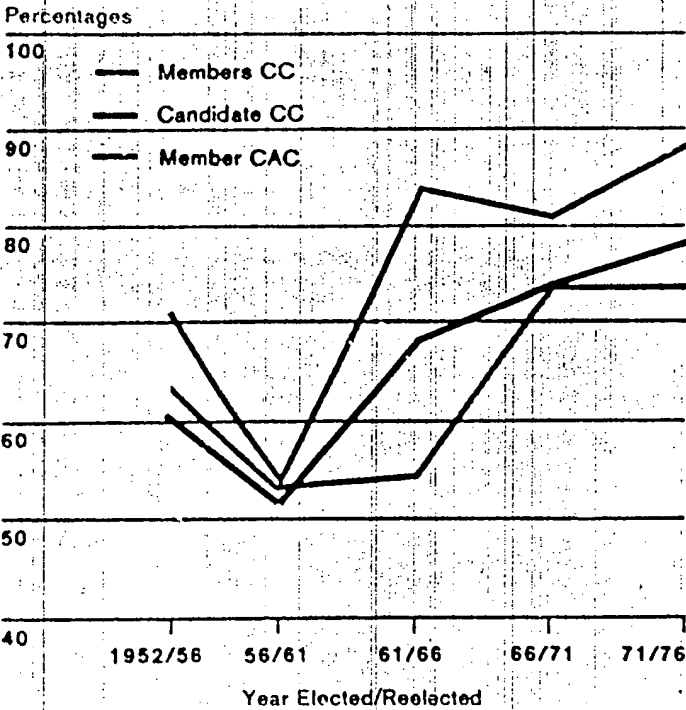


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NOTE: A member of the central leadership (the combined memberships of the Central Committee and Central Auditing Commission) was considered reelected if he was chosen as a member of either of those organizations at the following party congress. Only living members of the central leadership at the time of the next congress figure in these calculations. Thus, for example, the figure reported for 1971/76 means that approximately 83 percent of those elites elected in 1971 and alive in 1976 were elected to either the Central Auditing Commission or the Central Committee in 1976.

tral Auditing Commission. Since then, however, the higher the status within the central elite, the greater the likelihood of retaining a seat at the next party congress. Almost 90 percent of the Central Committee was reelected in 1976, but only about three-quarters of the Central Auditing Commission retained their jobs.

Figure 2
Reelection Rates of the Central Committee
and Central Auditing Commission



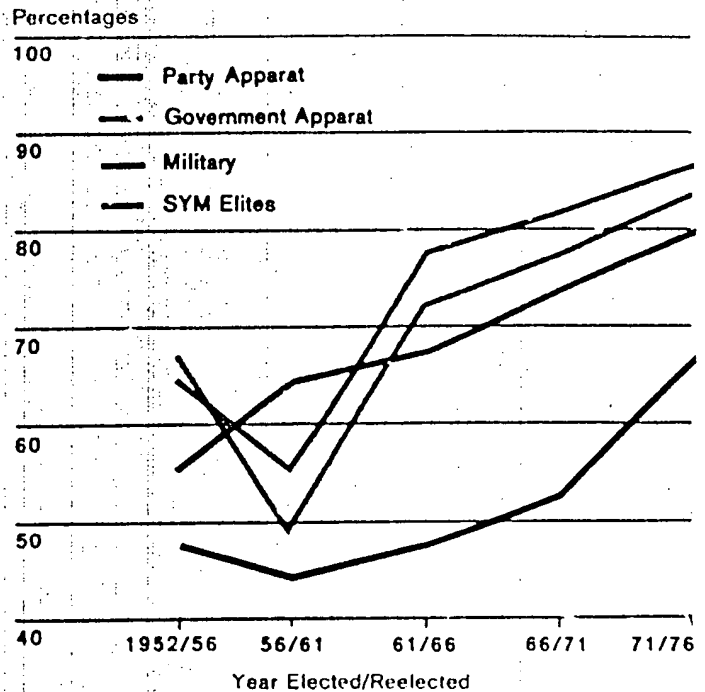
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NOTE: In this graph, reelection refers to the percentage of each group, alive at the time of the next congress, who were elected to either the Central Committee or the Central Auditing Commission at that congress. Hence, the data reported under 1961/66 for members of the CAC mean that almost 55 percent of its members in 1961 still alive in 1966 were elected as members of the CAC or as candidate or full members of the Central Committee in 1966.

It is equally obvious that representatives of the party apparatus have received more favorable treatment during the Brezhnev period than have their government counterparts. Government officials, in turn, have been retained at a higher rate than representatives of the military or other groups such as workers, peasants, and intelligentsia. Thus, when examined closely the data show clearly that even the meager turnover rates achieved under Brezhnev have been inflated by a disproportionate turnover in groups not close to day-to-day political administration.

The continuity observed in the representative organs of the national elite can also be found in similar institutions at lower levels of the party

Figure 3
Reelection Rate of Representatives of
Institutional Bureaucracies in the Central
Committee and Central Auditing Commission



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NOTE: The elite was divided into four categories: Party officials (including individuals holding posts in the Komsomol, the trade unions, and other public organizations), government officials, military leaders, and symbolic elites (workers, peasants, factory managers, and so on). The reelection rate refers to the percentage of each group elected at one congress and still alive at the time of the next congress who were elected to either the Central Committee or Central Auditing Commission.

apparatus. Turnover of political leadership in republic politburos occurred at twice the rate in the Khrushchev period as compared with the Brezhnev era (see table 1). Although there is considerable regional variation, cadre stability has increased in 12 of the 14 republics since 1964. Ten of the 14 republics averaged annually over two removals from their politburos during the Khrushchev period, whereas nine republics have averaged one removal or less during the post-Khrushchev years.

The same trend is apparent in the republic party secretariats. Secretariat turnover was 45 percent higher under Khrushchev. For 11 of the

Table 1

Average Yearly Turnover of Republic Politburos¹

Republic Cluster	Republic	Khrushchev	Brezhnev
		1955 to Oct 64	Nov 64 to present
Baltic		6.7	1.6
	Estonia	1.9	.43
	Latvia	2.6	.64
	Lithuania	2.2	.57
Western Republics		4.8	3.2
	Belorussia	1.2	1.0
	Moldavia	2.2	.79
	Ukraine	1.2	1.4
Caucasus		6.2	4.4
	Armenia	1.6	1.7
	Azerbaijhan	2.5	1.1
	Georgia	2.1	1.6
Central Asia		13.3	5.3
	Kazakhstan	2.1	1.4
	Kirgiz	2.5	.93
	Tadzhikistan	2.6	1.0
	Turkmen	2.8	1.0
	Uzbekistan	3.2	1.0
Total		30.8	14.5

¹ These data were computed by determining the number of removals from the candidate or full membership of each republic politburo during each period and dividing these numbers by 10 for the Khrushchev period and 14 for the Brezhnev era (by the length of their leadership periods). The data indicate the average number of removals from the respective clusters or republics during each year of the two administrations. Since Khrushchev did not fully emerge as the most important Soviet leader until 1955, the changes that occurred during the period from 1953 through 1954 were not included.

14 republics, the average yearly turnover rate in the secretariats was higher in the Khrushchev period than it has been since his removal (see table 2). In fact, all republic secretariats in the Brezhnev period have had a turnover rate of less than one member, as compared with the Khrushchev years, when only 50 percent fell into this category.

Finally, the post-Khrushchev leadership has opted for unprecedented continuity in positions that are the backbone of the party and government administrative hierarchy: the USSR Council of Ministers and obkom first secretaries. Only 38 removals in the Council of Ministers have occurred in the 1965-1978 period, and 16 of these were due to death and an additional nine to retirement on pension.

The contrasting turnover rates for the obkom leadership are particularly striking. Overall, the

removal rate under Brezhnev is less than half what it was under Khrushchev. On the average, there were almost 27 removals from obkom leadership positions per year in the Khrushchev years as compared to 12 removals per year under Brezhnev (see table 3).

While the degree of decline in obkom leadership turnover varies by region, every republic shows a lower rate in the post-Khrushchev period. In the Russian Republic (RSFSR) continuity has bordered on constancy. Since Brezhnev took office in 1964, 32 percent of the oblasts in the RSFSR have not had a leadership change, and another 46 percent have changed only once. During the Khrushchev period (1955-64) the figures were 5 and 28 percent, respectively.

There is no republic-level party organization in the RSFSR, and the obkom first secretaries in the 76 oblasts of that republic answer directly to

Table 2

Average Yearly Turnover of Republic Secretariats¹

Republic Cluster	Republic	Khrushchev	Brezhnev
		1955 to Oct 64	Nov 64 to present
Baltic		1.2	1.3
	Estonia	.1	.3
	Latvia	.7	.6
	Lithuania	.4	.4
Western Republics		2.5	1.8
	Belorussia	.6	.5
	Moldavia	.9	.6
	Ukraine	1.0	.7
Caucasus		3.0	2.2
	Armenia	.7	.6
	Azerbaijhan	1.2	.7
	Georgia	1.1	.9
Central Asia		5.5	3.1
	Kazakhstan	1.3	.9
	Kirgiz	1.1	.7
	Tadjikistan	.5	.5
	Turkmen	1.1	.6
	Uzbekistan	1.5	.4
Total		12.2	8.4

¹ See table 1 for description of the method used in making these calculations.

and are appointed by the central party leadership in Moscow. Most of these obkom leaders, in fact, have ex-officio status in the central party organs. The stability of the RSFSR oblast leaderships—compared to their counterparts—therefore, is another manifestation of a phenomenon already noted: proximity to the center of power has increased the chances for retention for party cadres under Brezhnev.

Limiting the Effects of Turnover

In spite of the high level of cadre stability since 1964, the current leadership is not the same as the one Brezhnev inherited. Gradually, almost imperceptibly, over the 14 years since the coup against Khrushchev, the leadership in the various republics, the Council of Ministers, the oblasts, and the central elite has substantially changed. This evolution has not had an unsettling effect on the leadership in general, however, because of the marked decline in politically motivated removals and the increase in regularized promotion opportunities.

Table 3

Average Yearly Turnover of Oblast First Secretaries for Major Republics¹

Republic	Khrushchev	Brezhnev
	1955 to Oct 64	Nov 64 to present
RSFSR	14.2	5.4
Ethnic oblasts	3.1	1.1
All others	11.1	4.3
Ukraine	4.5	3.0
Belorussia	1.3	.9
Kazakhstan	4.6	2.1
Uzbekistan	2.0	.9
Total	26.6	12.3

¹ A removal of a first secretary in an oblast, kray, ASSR (autonomous republic), or autonomous oblast was considered a turnover even though the person removed may have assumed the same position in another oblast, kray, ASSR, or autonomous oblast. The turnover rates were then calculated in the way described in table 1.

Under Khrushchev, it was relatively rare for individual obkom first secretaries to die in or retire from office. Political demotions, however, were quite common, accounting for almost 50

Table 4

Career Development of Obkom First Secretaries Under
Khrushchev and Brezhnev (Percentages)¹

Subsequent Position	RSFSR		Ukraine		Kazakhstan		Uzbekistan		Belorussia		Total	
	K ¹	B ¹	K	B	K	B	K	B	K	B	K	B
Death or retirement	7.8	26.7	13.3	11.9	4.4	17.2	—	15.4	—	8.3	7.1	19.2
Demotion ²	54.2	38.7	20.0	42.2	63.0	31.0	45.0	38.5	38.5	25.0	48.5	37.8
Lateral move ²	26.8	22.7	42.2	23.8	10.9	34.5	25.0	30.8	7.7	25.0	25.6	25.6
Promotion ²	11.3	12.9	24.4	21.4	21.7	17.2	30.0	15.4	53.8	41.8	18.8	17.4
No. of removals	142	75	45	42	46	29	20	13	13	12	266	172

¹ K refers to appointments made under Khrushchev from 1955 to October 1964; B refers to appointments made since October 1964.

² These concepts clearly involve subjective analytical judgments. In general, an assignment was considered a clear *demotion* if any of the following occurred: (1) individual transferred to other work with no further specification of assignment from other sources; (2) individual loses central elite status after being reassigned; (3) individual assigned to lower level republic position in party apparatus or comparatively lower level slots in the government bureaucracy—for example, deputy minister of a ministry or deputy head of a Central Committee department. An assignment was considered to be a *lateral move* if the individual's political status was not substantially affected. Assignments to another obkom, to an ambassadorship, or to ministerial rank within the Council of Ministers fit into this category. An assignment was considered a *promotion* if the individual's status was improved. Assignments such as Central Committee or republic secretary, deputy chairman of the USSR Council of Ministers, and chairmanship of a republic council of ministers were defined as meeting this standard.

³ Only oblasts that existed during both administrations were used in these calculations.

percent of all transfers from this position. The situation has changed dramatically since 1964 (see table 4). Under Brezhnev, death or retirement as the cause for removal from the obkom elite has increased by 170 percent; demotions have declined by 22 percent. Of the five republics examined, moreover, only the Ukraine is at variance with this pattern. The factional dispute between Brezhnev and Ukrainian party chief Petr Shelest within the national leadership and the latter's eventual purge from the Ukrainian leadership and replacement by Brezhnev's associate, Vladimir Shcherbitskiy, triggered a number of shifts that account for this variation.

Even more important, reliance on a "natural" process of cadre replacement has been increasingly evident within the Central Committee and Central Auditing Commission during the Brezhnev years (see table 5). Although death and retirement accounted for only 27 percent of the removals of party and government officials from these organizations in 1966 (the first congress following Khrushchev's removal), 60 percent of the departures were attributable to these causes in 1976. Demotions, on the other hand, declined by almost 44 percent during the same period.

Table 5

Reasons for Removal of Party and Government Workers
From the Central Elite, 1966-76 (Percentages)¹

Reason for Removal at Party Congress	Party Congress Year		
	1966	1971	1976
Died	14.0	21.7	30.4
Retired	12.9	18.5	29.1
Demoted	73.1	59.8	40.5
Number of cases	93	92	79

¹ Only party and government officials were included in this analysis.

Consequently, as the removal rate from the central leadership has declined, nonpolitical factors have become the most important reason for those departures that do occur. Elites who have attained Central Committee or Central Auditing Commission status, therefore, can confidently expect to maintain their status until they reach retirement age, barring a serious political miscalculation.

The deemphasis on partisan politics in filling vacant posts in the central elite has provided a second and equally powerful barrier against ex-

exploitation of gradual leadership turnover for political advantage. Since most of the Council of Ministers and RSFSR obkom first secretaries are ex-officio members or candidate members of the Central Committee, vacancies in these positions could ultimately have a dramatic impact on its political makeup. The power to determine replacements in key administrative vacancies would allow an ambitious leader eventually to alter the composition of the Central Committee and to create a strong base of factional support.

The evidence clearly suggests, however, that for the most part such manipulation has not occurred. The data on new appointments to the Council of Ministers (see table 6) indicate that a clear preference in filling ministerial vacancies has been given to those in secondary positions in the respective ministries or closely related ones. Overall, almost 71 percent of those appointed held a post within the government bureaucracy prior to their ministerial assignments, and 63 percent were in positions closely related to the post they filled. Moreover, almost 50 percent of all top ministerial assignments made after 1972 have gone to individuals in leading positions

Table 6

Career Origin of Newly Appointed Ministers of the USSR Council of Ministers, 1966-78 (Percentages)¹

Origin of Previous Position	Time Period ²		Total
	1966-72	1973-78	
Government bureaucracy	62.5	77.8	70.6
Same ministry	12.5	48.2	33.3
Related ministry ³	41.7	18.5	29.4
Other	8.3	11.1	7.9
Party apparatus	37.5	22.2	29.4
National post	12.5	7.4	9.8
Regional post	25.0	14.8	19.6
Number of cases	24	27	51

¹ Given the substantial alterations in the size and structure of the Council of Ministers during the Khrushchev period, any comparisons of changes in that period with those in the Brezhnev era would be misleading.

² These data cover new appointments to the Council after it had been restored to its pre-Khrushchev form in 1965.

³ The creation of eight new ministries within the Council accounted for 33 percent of all new appointments to the Council from 1966-72. Only three new ministries were created after 1972, and as a result there was a sharp decline in assignments from related ministries.

within the ministry that they were selected to head. Leading work in the party apparatus, on the other hand, has become less relevant as a prior experience for new ministers, accounting for only slightly more than one fifth of all replacement after 1972.

A similar pattern of in-house replacements is apparent in assignments to certain key obkom first secretary positions (see table 7). Appointment of local officials within the RSFSR rose from 41 percent under Khrushchev to almost 72 percent subsequently. This rise paralleled the virtual abandonment of the Khrushchevite practice of cross-posting first secretaries from one obkom to another in the RSFSR and the sharp decline (43 percent) in selecting replacements from within the ranks of the Central Committee apparatus.

A different pattern is observed, however, in obkom first secretary assignments in the other four republics examined. Recruitment from within obkoms has not significantly increased in any of these republics, and in Belorussia and the Ukraine it has substantially declined. Concomitantly, cross-posting of obkom first secretaries increased in Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and the Ukraine, while Belorussia drew primarily on cadres at the republic level for its obkom replacements. These variations probably reflect the greater autonomy enjoyed by republic leaders since 1964, as well as the factional struggle that rocked the Ukraine during this period.

Nevertheless, the key factor affecting selection of a replacement in an obkom position appears to be the effect the choice will have on Central Committee membership. In cases where the obkom leader is virtually assured of being elected to the Central Committee at the next party congress, there is a definite tendency to fill the slot from among the subordinates of its former leader. Almost all the RSFSR obkoms have this status, but only a sprinkling of obkoms in the other republics do. Even outside the RSFSR, however, those obkoms which have attained central leadership status are more likely to have their leaders picked from within (37 percent) than obkoms not having such status (27 percent).

Table 7

Location of Previous Position for Obkom First Secretaries Appointed
Under Khrushchev and Brezhnev (Percentages)

Location of Previous Position	Republic Apparatus											
	RSFSR		Ukraine		Kazakhstan		Uzbekistan		Belorussia		Total	
	K ¹	B ¹	K	B	K	B	K	B	K	B	K	B
Same oblast	41.0	71.8	60.9	45.2	19.5	20.0	27.3	26.3	50.0	27.2	40.5	47.8
Different oblast (Obkom first secretary) ²	36.7	12.7	26.1	40.5	46.3	65.7	36.4	52.6	28.6	27.2	35.9	34.8
Republic post	(70.1)	(7.8)	(17.4)	(26.2)	(9.8)	(31.4)	(13.6)	(26.3)	(7.1)	(27.3)	(16.8)	(18.0)
National	5.0	5.6	13.1	14.3	31.7	11.4	36.4	21.0	21.4	45.5	14.1	12.9
Number of cases	17.3	9.9	—	—	2.4	2.9	—	—	—	—	9.5	4.5
Number of cases	139	71	46	42	14	11	41	35	22	19	262	178

¹ K refers to appointments made under Khrushchev from 1953 to October 1964; B refers to appointments made since October 1964.

² As a percentage of assignments from different oblasts.