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~~Top Secret~~**BULGARIA:****Hardliners Purged at Snap Plenum**

New General Secretary Petur Mladenov removed the remaining hardliners from the leadership yesterday at a hastily scheduled Central Committee plenum, responding to public demands and paving the way for more reform. [redacted]

Mladenov dropped five Politburo members and 26 Central Committee members, reinstated former Politburo and Secretariat member Aleksandur Lilov, and elevated the Minister of Finance to the Politburo and a relatively unknown regional party leader to the Secretariat. Former party leader Zhivkov was expelled from the Central Committee and denounced. [redacted]

Dissident groups are planning a massive demonstration in Sofia tomorrow to put pressure on Mladenov to adopt political reforms at another plenum set for Monday. [redacted] organizers expect at least 100,000 participants, twice the size of the largest previous demonstration. [redacted]

Comment: The regime almost certainly called yesterday's plenum to preempt the demonstration and to undercut dissidents' demands: Mladenov probably hopes his clean sweep of hardliners from the leadership will placate the public's demands for change. The demonstrators, however, are not likely to be satisfied by leadership shifts, and dissident leaders intend to call for free elections, a multiparty system, and other reforms. [redacted]

Mladenov's purge of Zhivkov holdovers and elevation of allies and moderates will give him a relatively free hand. Moscow undoubtedly is pleased at the new gains for Bulgaria's reformers and probably hopes Mladenov's reforms will preclude regime-threatening uprisings. Mladenov probably intends to present a detailed economic reform program on Monday but would prefer to avoid political reforms that would diminish the party's authority. Some of his new colleagues have hinted at concessions to pluralism, however, and he may be compelled to go further than he would like. [redacted]

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