



Director of
Central
Intelligence

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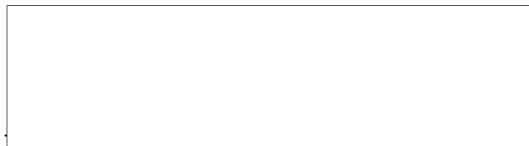


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USSR:

Gorbachev on Chernobyl'

General Secretary Gorbachev projected to his domestic audience the image of strong leadership that had been missing since the Chernobyl' accident, but his speech will do little to redress the damage to Soviet credibility abroad; at the same time, he tried to show that his foreign policy is not hamstrung.

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Gorbachev emphasized the heroic response of the populace to the tragedy and the "unrestrained anti-Soviet attack" from abroad. Although he acknowledged that the accident was serious, he sought to reassure the public that the worst was over and attacked Western criticism that Moscow had been slow and uninformative. The Soviet leader seized the opportunity to criticize the Tokyo summit for ignoring recent Soviet arms control proposals and announced the extension of the USSR's unilateral nuclear testing moratorium.

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Comment: Following his 19-day public silence on the accident, Gorbachev sought to project an image of a strong, take-charge leader solicitous toward those affected and willing to tackle problems head-on. His attempt to reestablish the regime's credibility by attacking Western criticism probably will be successful. Most Soviets will be impressed by the amount of information—by Soviet standards—that has been provided, as well as the highly unusual picture of a Soviet leader addressing the nation at a time of national calamity.

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In his speech Gorbachev seemed to imply that there would be no leadership recriminations over the issue, at least for now. He did appoint Premier Ryzhkov as the senior party figure responsible for the investigation.

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Gorbachev's replay of the now-familiar but fallacious line that Soviet delays in releasing information were negligible when compared with the US response after the Three Mile Island accident probably was designed to refurbish Moscow's tarnished image with West European leftist parties and the antinuclear movement.

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Gorbachev's announcement extending the moratorium was an attempt to show that Soviet foreign policy would not be disrupted by the accident, as well as to shift attention away from the disaster. His reiteration of an offer to meet with President Reagan to discuss nuclear testing also is part of that effort.

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USSR:

Containment Plans for Chernobyl' Reactor

The Soviets are trying to cap the damaged Chernobyl' reactor to ease cleanup and encapsulation.

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General Secretary Gorbachev yesterday explained the Chernobyl' accident as a steam-hydrogen explosion resulting from an electric power surge. *Pravda* quotes Yevgeny Velikhov, Vice President of the Academy of Sciences, as saying it will take months to construct the permanent concrete tomb, which will include a complex cooling system. A shaft will be dug underneath and filled with concrete to support the damaged reactor.

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Other cleanup measures under way include a plastic coating being sprayed on the soil of the reactor site and nearby areas. After the coating solidifies, it will be removed, lifting radioactive material with it for disposal. About 360,000 square yards (300,000 square meters) are being sprayed each day.

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The roofs of all the buildings and installations are being coated to prevent rain from washing off radioactive deposits into the drainage system. Sealing of the drainage system from the Pripjat' River was completed on Tuesday, and a 100-foot (30-meter) concrete wall will be constructed in the ground around the complex to contain any contaminated runoff or groundwater seepage.

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Comment: The vulnerability to the effects of electric power surges suggested by Gorbachev's speech probably exists in four highly similar reactors and possibly in several other graphite-moderated Soviet reactors.

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