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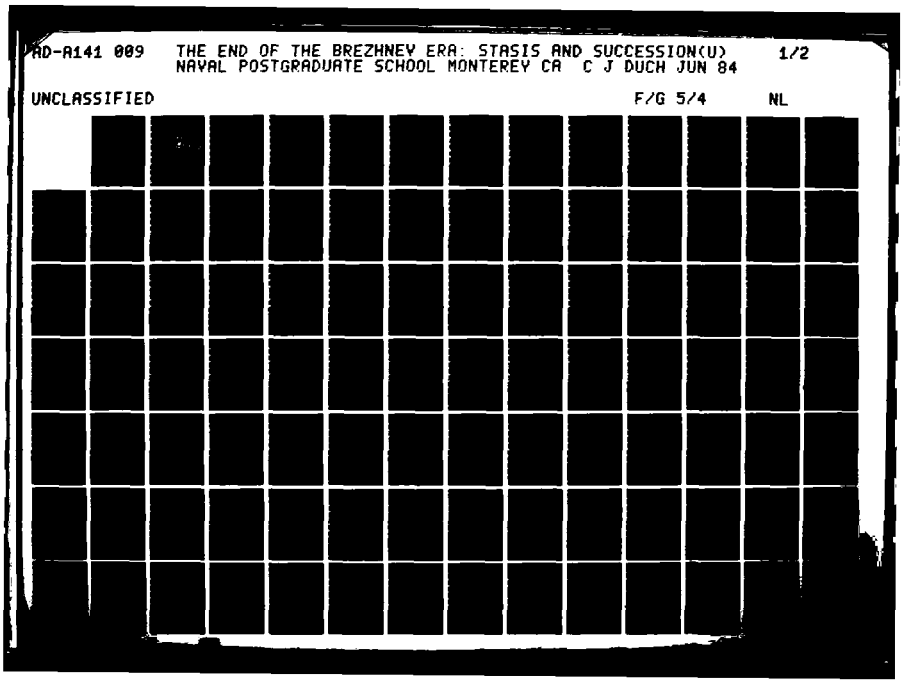

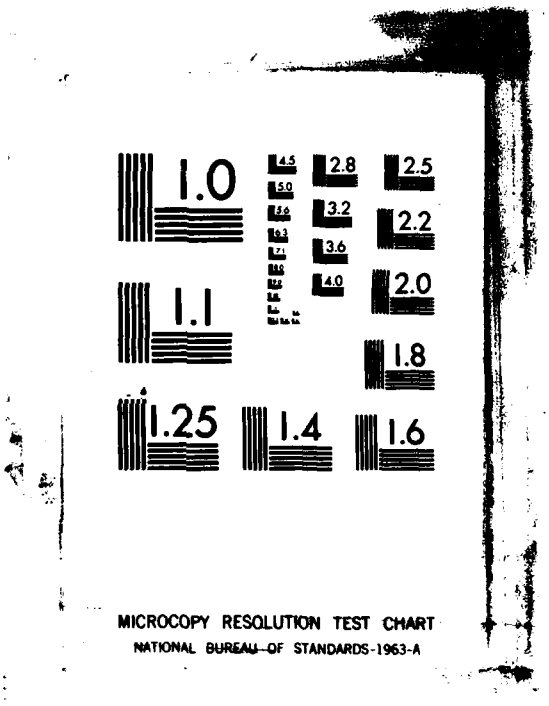
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THESIS

The End of the Brezhnev Era:
Stasis and Succession

by

Charles Joseph Duch

June 1984

Thesis Advisor: J. Valenta

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In the absence of constitutional guidelines for political succession in the USSR, the Brezhnev succession proceeded on an ad hoc basis. The election of Yuri Andropov as General Secretary in November 1982 followed an intense period of political coalition building, which ensued after the death of Party Secretary Mikhail Suslov in January 1982 and Brezhnev's serious illness in March of the same year. Andropov's victory over his chief rival,

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Party Secretary Konstantin Chernenko, indicated that a coalition with foreign policy interests was able to control the succession and defeat a coalition of economic managers. The equipoise in the Politburo after Andropov's election indicates that key domestic and foreign policy issues were not completely resolved with Andropov's election and that future changes in the leadership may indicate a corresponding policy evolution.

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The End of the Brezhnev Era: Stasis and Succession

by

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Captain, United States Air Force
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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

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ABSTRACT

In the absence of constitutional guidelines for political succession in the USSR, the Brezhnev succession proceeded on an ad hoc basis. The election of Yuri Andropov as General Secretary in November 1982 followed an intense period of political coalition building, which ensued after the death of Party Secretary Mikhail Suslov in January 1982 and Brezhnev's sericus illness in March of the same year. Andropov's victory over his chief rival, Party Secretary Konstantin Chernenko, indicated that a coalition with foreign policy interests was able to control the succession and defeat a coalition of economic managers. The equipoise in the Politburo after Andropov's election indicates that key domestic and foreign policy issues were not completely resolved with Andropov's election and that future changes in the leadership may indicate a corresponding policy evolution.

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A. DEFINING THE TRANSITION TO ANDROPOV

During the afternoon and evening of Nov 10, 1982, about ten members of the Politburo and half again as many candidate members met in the Kremlin to discuss the election of a new General Secretary.[1] The choice of a successor to Leonid Brezhnev had not been decided prior to his death, though the issue had been undoubtedly discussed privately. During the discussions, Yuri Andropov emerged as the winner over Konstantin Chernenko in the struggle to succeed Brezhnev. Andropov's election as General Secretary, decided by the Politburo and ratified by the Central Committee days later was the culmination of the nearly nine months of political competition between Andropov and Chernenko that ensued after the death of long-time Kremlin power-broker Mikhail Suslov in January.

Brezhnev's death on November 10 focused world attention on the process of Soviet succession politics. The death of Stalin, nearly 30 years previous, was the last previous occurrence of the death of a ruling General Secretary. The occasion of a Soviet political succession played against the panoply of a Soviet state funeral is of compelling interest, combining something of the drama and secrecy of the election of a new Pope with the global significance of an American presidential election.

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[1]The identity of the participants in this meeting is dicsussed in Chapt. 3.

Although succession politics are compelling as spectacle, they are, like most of the workings of Soviet domestic politics, impervious to easy analysis. Many of the commonly held theories concerning the Brezhnev succession were misinformed yet became part of the accepted journalistic canon concerning succession events. Andropov's election was portrayed as an element of of a KGB power play and Chernenko's candidacy was viewed exclusively as an effort to ride Brezhnev's coattails. After Andropov's election, he came to be seen as a political reformer, while Chernenko was viewed as hanging on to power by maintaining himself at the head of a network of Brezhnev cronies. While, as is the case with most caricatures, these representations of Andropov and Chernenko contain an element of truth, a close study of the succession reveals a much more complex picture.

The tension and significance of the Brezhnev succession is encapsulated in the struggle between Andropov and Chernenko that crystalized during the Spring of 1982 with Andropov's successful bid to become a Party Secretary and thus gain a platform from which to challenge Chernenko for Brezhnev's office. Although the public record offers little to differentiate the positions of Andropov and Chernenko, Chernenko's avid advocacy of economic innovation and his concern with ideological issues, especially involving notions of Leninist leadership styles and party democracy, suggest that Chernenko's candidacy was pitched largely to members of the hierarchy concerned with domestic issues, while Andropov's key supporters, both in the Spring prior to the Central Committee meeting that elected him a Party Secretary and at the November 10 meeting that elected him as Brezhnev's successor were Defense Minister Ustinov and Foreign Minister Gromyko. Paradoxically (considering Andropov's image in the West as a "reformer"), to the extent

that Andropov's and Chernenko's political positions are defined by the constituencies from which they draw support, economic intensification would likely be implemented at a quicker pace under a Chernenko regime than under Andropov, as is commonly held. In any case, the issue of whether Chernenko or Andropov is General Secretary is of secondary importance to the political cast of the coalition that they lead.

The work of analysing the political events associated with Brezhnev succession is only marginally concerned with the events that capture world attention. In the place of dramatic and distinct events, the sovietoligist is confronted with making sense out of a series of essentially "non-events", the subtle shift in an ideological line or the gradual erosion of a Politburo member's standing in the hierarchy. A few indicators of political heterodoxy pass through the official policy of secrecy and projecting unanimity and a close examination of these can discern unambiguous political trends or changes in the hierarchical relationship among members of the leadership. For example, Politburo member Andrei Kirilenko, once thought to be the likely Brezhnev successor, suffered a series of decisive political setbacks at the end of 1981 that eliminated him as a factor in the Brezhnev succession. Interestingly, within the purview of popularized Kremlinogy, Kirilenko was still being touted as a candidate to succeed Brezhnev in the fall of 1982 at the same time that the coup de grace to Kirilenko's public career was being prepared to be delivered at the November Central Committee meeting which relieved him of his offical duties.

In reconstructing the story of the Brezhnev succession, this paper will show the linkage of a series of thematic events, i.e. events that are linked by the fact that they are elements of a policy trend or a long term shift in the

relationships of Politburo actors or the constituencies they represent. The decline of Kirilenko in late 1981, for example, was associated with general reassessment of the role of heavy industry that was taking place (Kirilenko was Senior Party Secretary supervising heavy industry) and coincidentally was associated with the rise of Konstantin Chernenko in the hierarchy and the latter's emergence as a major contender to replace Brezhnev as General Secretary.

Politburo decisicnmaking is largely through consensus or the formation of coalitions that can control a majority on a given issue. Although theoretically, Politburo decisions are determined by a majority vote, on most issues, the decision of the Politburo can determined without a formal vote. In Stalin's day, the Politburo followed the dictates of the General Secretary. The Brezhnev legacy is a Politburo decisionmaking process that relies on consensus. Practically speaking, the consensus is largely determined by the most senior members of the Politburo or those members with special expertise on the agenda item at issue. When the Politburo is divided on an issue, as it was in the discussion of Brezhnev's successor, the consensus-builders become coalition leaders. Although there is much talk about the "identity of views" among Politburo members concerning the historical evolution of Soviet policy, the bottom line concerning Soviet decisionmaking is that in key matters under dispute, policy is determined not by "historical forces" but rather by ad hoc Politburo coalitions that can muster a majority on any given issue.

The dynamics of coalition formation are the requirements for survival of individual actors. Dennis Ross has suggested that the coalition maintenance has become the basis for the kind of oligarchic rule that characterizes the Soviet political process today. In reference to the consensus rule that emerged under Brezhnev, Ross states that

the General Secretary has become a broker between rival coalitions on fractious issues.

> Especially in the Post-Khruschev period, discussion of contentious issues has increasingly been delayed and the content defused by the Politburo's deliberate use of *ad hoc* committees to cope with divisive problems.[2]

After Brezhnev's death, the cautiousness inherent in the requirement for coalition maintenance and the tendency of the Politburo to evade potentially fractious issues was heightened. Although the requirement to elect a new General Secretary forced the issue between Andropov and Chernenko, it is not surprising that the election of Andropov was accompanied by the maintenance of Chernenko's position in the hierarchy and the evolution of a sort of ruling diumverate.

Apart from the strictures of Soviet decisionmaking, the Brezhnev succession was influenced by certain key themes of Soviet domestic politics of the 1981-2 time period, involving policy themes likely to be important throughout the Eighties. The chief issue is the problem of revitalizing the Soviet economy and the resultant debate which entails polarization of domestically-oriented and security-oriented political contituencies on the many social, industrial, and even foreign policy issues that impact of the performance of the Soviet economy. The general aims of what the Soviets call "economic intensification", increases in productivity, raising the level of material incentives for workers, etc., are not controversial. However, the pace and scope of the economic innovations required to achieve these results are.

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[2]Dennis Ross, "Coalition Maintenance in the USSR," *World Politics*, Vol. XXXII, Oct. 1979-July 1980, p. 259.

The issue of reforms is being adressed on many levels. On the level of state and regional planning, the Soviets are considering changing the means of accounting. Current economic plan quotas are set by a net profit system which compares an enterprise's inputs and outputs. Some industries are now experimenting with a contract fufillment acounting method, which implies a sensistivity to the quality and type of product produced, not merely the quantity. At the level of production units, various innovations are being discussed. At all levels, the issue of economic intensification bears on two politically sensistive issues, centralization of administration of the economic sector and the allocation of resources among competing constituencies. Especially in regard to the relative primacy of defense industries in the Soviet economy, the economic debate touches on some of the essentially Stalinist foundations of the current regime.

The economic debate and the emergence of coalitions responsive to domestic and security constituencies respectively in the Politburo are the chief themes of the Brezhnev succession. Chernenko emerged from the 26th Party Congress in February 1981, which he largely orchestrated, and the economic debate in the fall of 1981 as being the Politburo member most open to ambitious attempts toward economic intensification. Clearly, Chernenko was both leading and being led by Brezhnev on this issue. Brezhnev's general support for economic intensification evidently raised concerns among the military which led to an extraordinary Kremlin meeting between Brezhnev and the military chiefs just weeks before his death. Andropov's emergence as a candidate to succeed Brezhnev is evidence of the thematic bifurcation of the political elite into domestically oriented and security oriented coalitions. The fact that Andropov's candidacy was supported (perhaps initiated) at

its very beginning in March and April 1982 by Defense Minister Ustinov and Foreign Minister Gromyko demonstrated that Andropov functioned throughout the pre-succession as a counter to Chernenko and the constituencies that favored large scale economic intensification.

However, Soviet domestic politics cannot be described merely in terms of long term trends and many athematic elements must be taken in account as well. The death of Mikhail Suslov in January 1982 and the timing of Brezhnev's illnesses and eventual death were important athemetic events of the Brezhnev succession. Suslov's death accelerated the pace of succession maneuvering by removing his potentially decisive voice from the Politburo deliberations that decided Brezhnev's successor. The timing of Brezhnev's death was essential to Andropov's success. If Brezhnev had died either prior to Andropov's relinquishing his post as KGB chairman or during September or early October 1982 when Andropov was out of the public eye and likely ill, the closely run succession showdown between Andropov and Chernenko may have had a different outcome.

B. SUCCESSION: THE LIMITS OF PRECEDENT

The term 'succession,' within the context of Soviet politics has focused, prior to the death of Brezhnev, on four political crises, shown in Table I . Although it is common to speak of succession, the difficulty in analysing succession crises as distinct events in Soviet domestic politics as opposed to the continual pulling and hauling of Politburo Politics is apparent when one attempts to define the time period of the various succession crises.

For example, assuming that Lenin's death on January 21, 1922 indicated the onset of the Lenin succession crises, when did this crises end? One can argue with justification

that Stalin achieved clear superiority over his Politburo colleagues at the 13th Party Congress in 1925. However, choosing 1925 as the terminus for the Lenin succession, excludes Stalin's struggle against the right opposition, which was clearly part of the pattern of Stalin's political struggle after Lenin's death. If a late date, say 1934 (17th Party Congress) is selected to represent the end of the succession crises, one still has to deal with the purges of the late thirties. Suggesting even more ambiguity is the fact that it can be argued that the Lenin succession did not begin in 1924 with Lenin's death, but in December 1922 at the time of his first stroke.

Although the nature and duration of Soviet successions remains somewhat indeterminate, leadership transition in the USSR has characteristically entailed the devolution of power from a single leader to a collective leadership (See I). In nominating Yuri Andropov for the post of General Secretary, Konstantin Chernenko cited his "passion for collective work," paying lipservice to a the Leninist norm of collective leadership, but also speaking to the desires of a political elite that distrusts concentrated power. Perhaps the best definition of political succession in the Soviet Union is that it encompasses the sequences of events that include initial shift toward a collective and the realignment of power relationships that follow the replacement of a established leader. A succession crisis represents a maximum value in the oscillation between the Leninist norm of collective rule and the tendency of the Soviet political system to evolve, in defiance of this norm, into an autocratic system.[3]

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[3]C.f. Myron Rush, How Communist States Change Their Rulers, (Cornell Univ: Ithaca (N.Y.), 1974), p. 3. "Succession in Communist states thus involves an initial shift from personal rule to oligarchy ("collective leadership"), which has been unstable, tending to shift back to limited personal rule."

TABLE I

Leadership Crises in the Soviet Union, 1924-64

Year	Incumbent (position)	Successor (s) (position)
1924	Lenin (1) d. Jan 21	Stalin (2) Zinoviev (3) Kamenev (4)
1953	Stalin (1,2) d. Mar 8	Malenkov (1) Molotov (5,6) Beria (5,7)
1957	Khrushchev (2)	Malenkov* Molotov*
1964	Khrushchev (1,2)	Brezhnev (2) Kosygin (1)

(1) Chairman of the Council of Ministers
(2) General Secretary
(3) Head of the Comintern, Leningrad Party leader
(4) Moscow Party leader
(5) First Deputy Chairman, Council of Ministers'
(6) Minister of Foreign Affairs
(7) Minister of the Interior

* The attempted coup of the 'Anti-Party Group failed. The conspirators had planned to Malenkov Chairman of the Council of Ministers and Molotov First Secretary of the Party.

C. MODELLING SOVIET DECISIONMAKING

In current theory, there is a dichotomy between group and unitary actor theories for modelling Soviet decision making. The choice of theory is central to evaluating the significance of the maneuvering involved in the Brezhnev succession. As the narration of succession events in Chapter 4 demonstrate that the issue of Andropov's election as General Secretary was by no means predetermined, the question arises as to the significance of the dissagreement

within the Politburo concerning the choice of Brezhnev's successor.

The Unitary Actor (Totalitarian) theory sees expressions of Politburo disagreement as essentially superficial. In this view, such disgreements are transient in view of the long-term goals to which all Soviet leaders are committed. Although the totalitarian school was born in the milieu of the Cold War and offered an anlysis of the Stalinist political order, it is not easy for advocates of group models to refute the contention that the Soviet Union is shaped by long-term goals of ideological domination and hegemony over its neighbors. The argument has been made that Andropov was the logical choice for General Secretary because his KGB backround was appropriate to pursuit of these objectives.

The totalitarian model is not wholly the product of Cold War analysis and the secrecy with which the Soviet political process procedes. It is implied by the notion of democtratic centralism that the Soviet themselves espouse:

> Democratic centralism signifies the following: election of all leading party bodies; from the lowest to the highest; periodical reports of party bodies to their party organization and to higher bodies; strict party discipline and the subordination of the minority to the majority; and the obligatory nature of decisions of higher bodies for lower bodies.[4]

This is the norm as expressed in the party ideology. In practice, this dictates that party official sound alike in their official pronouncements. As an example of the difficulty in establishing the provenance of some slightly new propaganda theme, much confusion has arisen concerning Andropov's utterances on the entire "reform" package. Thus, Andropov's Lenin's Birthday Speech in April 1982 did not differ markedly from Chernenko's April Kommunist article,

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[4]Great Soviet Encyclopedia, 3rd. ed., s.v. "Communist Party of the Soviet Union."

though they had both were engaged in a political fight concerning Andropov's election to the Central Committee Secretariat.

The unitary actor theory has a certain explanatory power in describing the development of Soviet power over the long term; however, equally compelling is the fact that a close analysis of Soviet policy evolution shows substantial divergences not apparent when only the broad expanse of policy over the long term is viewed. The evidence for conflict within the Soviet ruling hierarchies is firstly the evolutionary nature of the hierarchy in which the survival of any single member is contigent upon conformitity with the rules of the game. The Brezhnev era had many examples of such political casualties, the most noticeable in the period of this succession being Kirilenko. This is the a posteriori evidence that Robert Conquest has pointed out is continually available,[5] e.g. the denunciations of Khrushchev's "hare-brained schemes and sloganeering" at the Central Committee Plenum that deposed him and more currently the removal of Kirilenko from the Politburo after Chernenko usurped his place as Politburo member closest to the General Secretary. Conquest also argues convincingly a priori that conflict is inevitable in politics.

> "To govern is to choose," and so there will always be conservative and progressive, left and right divisions in any political grouping, however narrow its spectrum of ideas.[6]

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[5]Robert Conquest, "After The Fall: Some Lessons," Problems of Communism, January-February, 1965, Vol. XIV, p. 19.

[6]Ibid.

Because of the official policy of projecting unanimity and the secrecy with which policy deliberations are held in the Soviet Union, policy differences between Politburo members and the existence of opposing factions in the Politburo must be inferred from a close reading of official reports and speeches. For example, concerning Poland, an important issue in pre-succession maneuverings, passages with differing intent are contained in Brezhnev's report to the 26th Party Congress. At different points in the report, the leadership seems to intend to convey on one hand a tough line and on the other to project a conciliatory approach. Although it is difficult to ascertain where each member of the hierarchy stood on the Polish issue, it is possible to establish with some certainy the affiliation of some key members of the hierarchy in regard to the policy options that were discussed.

D. POLAND: A CASE STUDY

A close look at the official report of the 26th Party Congress reveals the divergence of opinion among the leadership. In discussing Poland, the report first states that the "pillars of the socialist state in Poland are in jeopardy," a condition prevailing because, as the report goes on to say, "Opponents of Socialism supported by outside forces are stirring up anarchy, seeking to channel events into a counter-revolutionary course."[7] This language was very similiar to Suslov's rhetoric later in 1982.

Immediately following this hard-line view, a the report gives a soft-line analysis for the cause of the Polish problem:

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[7]Report of the Central Committee of the CPSU to the XXVI Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Moscow: Novosti) 1981, p. 14.

> The events in Poland show once again how important it is for the Party to play close heed to the voice of the masses, resolutely to combat all signs of bureaucracy and voluntarism (and) to actively develop socialist democracy.

In discussing the world communist movement, the report suggests:

> As the influence of the Communist Parties grows, the tasks facing them are becoming more and more complex and diverse. And sometimes that gives rise to divergent appraisals and differences in approach to concrete issues of the class struggle... As we see it, this is completely natural. Communist parties have had dissimilar opinions in the past as well. The facts have proved convincingly that even in the presence of differences of opinion it is possible and necessary to cooperate politically in the fight against the common class enemy. (My emphasis)[8]

This section of the report, which makes several references to the Lenin canon, is the work of individuals, who are not exactly advocating pluralism in the world communist movement, but are hinting at an analogy between the Polish and Soviet economies and the need for economic change in the USSR. Earlier, the report had sugessted that the Soviets could, in reference to economic matters, "study the experience of the more fraternal countries more closely and utilise it more broadly."[9] But then the report concludes, reverting to a hard line infused with orthodox ideology: "As our Party sees it, difference of opinion between Communists can be overcome, unless, of course, they are fundamental differences between revolutionaries and reformists, between creative Marxism and dogmatic sectarianism or ultra-left adventurism. In that case, of course, there can be no compromises."[10]

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[8]Ibid. p. 22-3.

[9]Ibid. p. 11.

[10]Ibid. p.24.

The identity of some of the key players in the debate is revealed by the proceedings of an ideological conference held less than three months after the close of the Party Congress. The conference proceedings are significant in that they seem to project the 'hardline' language used in the 26th Party Congress report. Suslov convened this ideological seminar on April 20, 1981 on the subject of ideological work in the Party. Party Secretaries Ponomarev and Rusakov were other prominent participants in the ideological seminars, which, coming so soon after the Twenty-Sixth Party Congress (February 1981), were a carefully orchestrated conservative response to developments in Poland. In opening remarks, Suslov said:

> The sharpening of the ideological struggle in the international arena should also be taken into account. Our class enemies are operating still more brazenly and craftily. By showering slander and appealing to all kinds of predjudices left in people's minds and by maliciously interpreting the shortcomings and difficulties in our life, the enemies are trying to break class-conciousness and belief in our ideals. And it would be wrong to ignore the effect of alien ideology on the conciousness of a section of the people.[11]

After setting the line on the threat of "alien ideology" at the Moscow conference, Suslov flew to Warsaw to deliver the same message to the Polish party.

The spectrum of the policy debate, of which the ideological conference in April was conservative view, was demonstrated by the report of the conference issued in 1982, Toward a High Quality and Effectiveness in Ideological Work: Materials on the All-Union Seminar of Ideological Workers in Moscow, April 20-25, 1981. Although the position papers presented in this collection were conservative, Chernenko's Lenin Day 1981 Address was included, though Chernenko was

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[11]Radio Moscow, April 20, 1981, reported in FBIS, Daily Report, The Soviet Union. April 21, 1981, p. R1

not a participant in the conference. Chernenko's speech, which on ideological matters resembled the soft-line presented in the 26th Party Congress report, was included in the collection evidently to balance the conservative bias of the conference. This fact not only points to the existence of difference of opinion on how ideology affected policy toward Poland, but it indicates also that the moderates were in a position to alter somewhat the ideological tendency of what was in effect a document authored by Suslov. The existence of a middle position in the policy debate was indicated by a report to the conference given by Rusakov which stated that a council to evaluate "new economic mechanisms and technical innovations" had been established involving Soviet and East Bloc ministers.[12] That such a cooperative venture existed was suggested by the party congress report; its genesis was no doubt a centrist bureaucratic response to the Polish crises of the summer of 1980, i.e. form a committee to look at the problem.

In this case, the positions of at least some of the policymakers could be predicted by the bureucratic politics model. Suslov, for example, as senior secretary supervising cadre and propaganda took an ideologically rigorous line. The opposition to Suslov most likely came from those concerned with the international and economic costs of adopting the hard line. Chernenko for one seems to have advocated policies ccnsistent with the conciliatory language contained in the 26th Party Congress Report. Difficulties arise in implementing the bureaucratic politics model however when one considers the fact that the bureaucratic niches may change without a comensurate change in their political affiliations. For example, Chernenko took over

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[12] Za Vysoe Kachestivo i Deystuennost Ideologisheskoi Raboty: Materialy Vsesoyuznogo Seminara-Soveshchaniya Ideolilicheskikh Rabotnikov, (Moscow: Politzdat) 1981.

Suslov's duties after the latter's death, yet there is no evidence that his policy orientation on Bloc relations moved closer to Suslov. Politburo coalitions are fluid, and while the policies of any given player may be influenced by his bureaucratic position, other factors are at work as well. In fact, a hierarchy of influences that govern a given policymaker can be established.

E. CHOOSING UP SIDES

The paramount influence of course in coalition formation is the requirement for position maintenance within the power elite. This overrides policy differences and personal animus, as was the notable case of the anti-Khrushchev coalition of June 1957 that included disparate players such as Molotov, Malenkov, and even a Khrushchev protogee: Dmitri Shepilov. Dennis Ross has described the chief factor in the temporary alliance of opposing forces as "the actor's fear of the alternative. Specifically, their fear that the breakup of the equilibrium or coalition may occasion possibly devastating 'results..."[13] Within the context of the Brezhnev succession, it appears that a variegated consensus backed the demotion of Kirilenko, though some players, notably Defense Minister Ustinov, may have been aligned with Kirilenko in the economic debate of the fall of 1981. This is a clear example of an actor's ancillary concerns outweighing the influence of policy orientation or bureaucratic position.

Beyond the requirement for position maintenance, the other factors that influence coalition formation exert an influence that is policy-relative. Jiri Valenta has cited the fundamental juristictional determinants of coalition formation:

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[13]Ross, op. cit. p. 259.

> The pursuit of various bureaucratic responsibilities with respect to contituencies leads to organizational conflict, disagreements over budgetary allocations, organizational values, scope of authority, organizational sense of mission, and self image. Organizations less concerned with the budgetary implications of their organizational missions...are are interested mainly with their self image and influence in the Soviet decision-making process.

In contrast to this, Valenta points out that other bureaucracies are more concerned with budgetary allocations that the vagaries of "image."[14] On the thematic issue of economic intensification, a key coalition determinant in 1981-2, the bureaucratic politics models fairly accurately predicts the affiliation of key Politburo players.

It is possible for athematic or non-policy considerations to affect the outcome of policy. A factor in the formation of the coalition against Khruschev in 1957 was a general revulsion with his personal demeanor. Reportedly, Shepilov complained to the Central Committee that Khrushchev scratched his armpits while meeting with foreign heads of state and that this was unbecoming in a leader.[15] It is possible that this sort of ad hominem consideration played a part in the formation of the coalition against Chernenko, for he had been unprepossessing to say the least in his performance at the Vienna Summit in 1979.[16]

Apart from the dynamics of the tension between collective and autocrat rule, the lack of common features between succession crises suggest that there are no rules governing Soviet succession. George Breslauer has asserted that there is a certain periodicity to succession crises, that a leader

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[14]Jiri Valenta, "The Bureaucratic Politics Paradigm and the Soviet Invasion of Czechoslovakia," Political Science Quarterly, Vol. 94, No. 1. p. 57-8.

[15]Conversation between Nasser and Khrushchev, 1958. Mohamed Heikel, The Sphinx and the Commissar, (New York: Harper and Row, 1978), p. 92

[16]See #41.

requires seven years to consolidate his rule,[17] In regard to the power politics of succession, Roy Medvedev and others have suggested that a key role has been played by the military in determing the outcome of leadership crises.[18] However, it seems most useful to view Soviet leadership crises as chiefly determined by the immediate political past rather that being responsive to historical generalization.

What dynamism that exists within the Soviet political system is a result of the fact that Soviet leaders do not serve fixed terms of office and can be called to account for their policies should a noticeable failure occur. In practice the General Secretary can be turned out of office at any of the regular Thursday Politburo meetings. It is imperative then that the General Secretary carry with him the majority of his collegues on key policy issues. Stalin was able to do this by dictat. Brezhnev tried to rule by consensus, in general adopting conservative, low risk policies. However, even this tact requires a skillful political touch. Brezhnev himself in an especially illuminating remark at the time of the Czech invasion in 1968 suggested the hazards of being on the wrong side of a crucial policy debate. He told a member of the Czech government who had been summoned to Moscow after the Russian tanks entered Prague:

> You thought that because you were in a position of power you could do as you pleased. This was your basic mistake. I also cannot do what I desire. I can realize perhaps only a third of what I would like to do. If I had not cast my vote in the Politburo in favor of military intervention, what do you suppose would have happened? Certainly you would not be sitting here. And perhaps I would not be sitting here [19]

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[17]George Breslauer, "Political Succession and the Soviet Policy Agenda," Problems of Communism, May-June 1980, Vol. XXIX, p. 30.

[18]Roy Medvedev, "The Soviet Army Is Still Kingmaker," The Los Angeles Times, December 19, 1982.

This is an eloquent statement of the manner in which policy can affect power politics in the Politburo.

Finally, although Soviet succession poitics are played for high stakes, it seems that the choice of a new leader involves improvisatien and a great deal of chance. The effect of the timing cf Brezhnev's death on the election of Andropov as his successor has been alluded to before. The crisis atmosphere that has attended the death of a Soviet leader may be no more than an attempt to mask the essentially inadequate manner in which Soviet leaders are chosen. Thus, Brezhnev's death engendered a political scramble which was accompanied by the appearance of political crisis, including the appurtenances of such crises: a news blackout of over twenty-four hours concerning Brezhnev's death and increased security in Moscow. Although the death of Brezhnev had been anticipated in the Soviet Union for some time, a smooth transfer of power to his successor had not been prepared at the time of his death. Only after lengthy Politburo discussions during which Andropov overcame the opposition of his Politburo collegue, Konstantin Chernenko, was the immediate crisis overcome, allowing Andropov to emerge as the new General Secretary. Although the crisis over naming a new General Secretary was short, lasting less than two days (By the time Chernenko nominated Andropov as General Secretary to the Central Committee on Nov. 12, the issue had been long decided), it pointed out again the tenuous relationship between supreme political power in the Soviet Union and any constitutional office and the haphazard manner in which the Soviets have transferred power from the death of Lenin through the present. Because policy orientation is one of the elements that figure in the formation of Politburo coalitions, it is always possible that sharp

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[19]Jiri Valenta, The Sovet Intervention in Czechoslovakia, 1968 (Johns Hopkins Press), 1979. p. 144.

policy changes could attend a change in the leadership. However, the Brezhnev succession is largely a study in why policy changes did not occur along with the election of Andropov. In fact, the election of Andropov likely attenuated the pulse of change.

Although the equipoise in the Politburo after Brezhnev's death suppressed the initiation of a dynamic policy, the necessity for the Soviet leadership to face an increasingly complex set of problems engendered by the flattened growth curve for the economy and exigencies of a global policy indicates that the Post-Brezhnev collective will eventually have to initiate fundamentally new solutions. The lasting significance of a close study of the Brezhnev succession is that within the tension of the Andropov-Chernenko struggle is encapsulated the political issues which will determine the course of change after the initial phase of Andropov's tenure.

II. PROLOGUE TO SUCCESSION, NOVEMBER 1981 TO APRIL 1982

A. "COMRADELY SPIRITS AND GOOD HUMAN FRIENDSHIPS"

Leonid Brezhnev celebrated his seventy-fifth birthday on December 19, 1981 at a Kremlin gala attended by the entire ruling hierarchy of the CPSU. Mikhail Suslov was the senior member of the hierarchy at the event and led the Politburo, Secretariat, and all the First Secretaries of the Union Republics in paying homage to the General Secretary. As toast followed toast, washed down with vodka, a feeling of great warmth was created among Brezhnev and his guests. Apart from any personal affection felt for the General Secretary the assembled leadership had prospered during the decade and a half of Brezhnev rule.

After receiving his second Order of Lenin, Brezhnev, perhaps overwhelmed by the fraternity of the celebration, gave a talk that became apolitical and sentimental. He spoke fondly of his Politburo collegues, remarking of the harmony of that body:

> There is a genuine mutual understanding in the leadership, a single view about the aims of our policy, internal and external, and about the ways leading to those aims...there is a sincere respect for each other, a genuinely comradely spirit and good human friendship."[20]

Even after making allowances for the warm atmosphere of the occasion, Brezhnev's comments on the unanimity and cooperation among Politburo members could be taken as probably being sincere and substantially correct. For a decade and a

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[20]Moscow Domestic Radio Service, December 19, 1981. Reported in FBIS, Soviet Union, Daily Report, Dec. 21, 1981, p. L 9.

half the CPSU had enjoyed unprecendented stability of cadres, contrasting sharply with the tumultuous Khrushchev years. During his long tenure, Brezhnev had been able to create a substantial chain of clients, both in the Moscow leadership and in the Union Republics. He had effectively reshaped the Politburo since the beginning of the seventies by eliminating members with independent power bases who challenged his policy consensus. By December 1981, the Politburo was constituted, with the exception of Suslov, of those who owed their current prominence in some degree to Brezhnev, and whose policies fit the Brezhnev consensus. The extent of Brezhnev's influence on the Politburo during his tenure is shown in Table II . Since members of the Politburo had been selected largely on the basis of fitting into the consensus policies of the Brezhnev years, it was not surprising that Brezhnev should sense unanimity among them.

After exchanging several more toasts with Suslov, Brezhnev continued by alluding to a topic that was on everybody's mind: the succession.

> Dear friends, when the time comes to cross a new watershed in one's life, one begins to think involuntarily of the things that happened and of the things to come. There is no need to talk much of the past. It is well known, and , I think we do not have to blush about it. The thoughts tend to dwell more on what the party and the people are to do in the years ahead. And in what, frankly speaking, one would like to be involved as long as one has the strength.[21]

In indicating a desire to be involved "as long as one has the strength," Brezhnev signalled to his audience that he had no intention to resign his posts in the near term. The formulation "as long as one has the strength" holds out the possibility of possible resignation in the future, but many

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[21]Ibid. L 13.

TABLE II

The Evolution of the Politburo, 1966-1982

April 1966	February 1982
Voronov (1972)	Brezhnev (1957)
Shelest (1972)	Kirilenko (1962)
Shelepin (1975)	Pel'she (1966)
Polyansky (1976)	Grishin (1971)
Podgorny (1977)	Kunaiev (1971)
Mazurov (1978)	Shcherbitskiy (1971)
Kosygin (1980)	Andropov (1973)
Suslov (1982)	Gromyko (1973)
Kirilenko (1982)	Romanov (1976)
Brezhnev (1982)	Ustinov (1976)
Pel'she (1983)	Chernenko (1978)
	Tikhonov (1979)
	Gorbachev (1980)

*Two other individuals served as full Politburo during the period, 1966-82, but died during their tenure. They were:
Kulakov 1971-8
Grechko 1973-6

The table lists all full members of the Politburo from the period of the 23rd Party Congress to the end of the Brezhnev era. The table shows members after the 23rd Party Congress with the year of departure in parenthesis and members as of February 1982 with election date in parenthesis.

of Brezhnev's collegues must have seen this as a signal that he would hang on to power until the end.

The period of November and December 1981 was a period of relative strength for Brezhnev. He made his last trip outside the country in November for a summit meeting with Helmut Schmidt in Germany. His health had become an issue among Western journalists during this trip, but all in all he had performed better than during his previous summit with Schmidt in 1978.[22] In retrospect, it can be said that the

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[22]After the meetings with Brezhnev, the Germans issued a statement that they had been "impressed with the physical stability" of Brezhnev. The Soviets through press spokesman L.M. Zamyatin issued a "denial" of the German

period around the Brezhnev jubilee was the apogee of Brezhnev's tenure as General Secretary. During this period, the Brezhnev 'cult', attenuated though it was, was in full swing. Brezhnev received the usual awards from Socialist's countries; Moscow publishing houses cranked out Brezhnevalia in many forms. Among other works by or dealing with the General Secretary, the 3rd Edition of the official Brezhnev biography, a book of Brezhnev memoirs, and a book authored by Brezhnev dealing with relations between the Soviet Union and West Germany appeared. In addition, a 'Brezhnev' art exhibit opened in Moscow and a play, "Rebirth," based on the Brezhnev memoirs, played in November and December at the Moscow Art Theater. In the policy realm, the declaration of martial law in Poland on December 13 represented an acceptable denouement to the crisis over Poland that occupied much of the Soviet leadership's attention in 1981. Although the book was still out on Poland, Jaruzselki had provided the Soviets with a low-cost solution to the problem of creeping pluralism, saving Brezhnev the embarassment of another Prague.[23]

In contrast with the political equipoise of December 1981, 1982 developed into a restive year for Soviet domestic politics. The chief issue was the political succession. During the year, periodically Brezhnev experienced health crises. After falling ill on a flight from Tashkent to Moscow in March, Brezhnev never again assumed a regular work schedule. He was out of sight for a month after his March

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report, which, either because the German statement was misinterpreted or because the Soviets wished to have the last word on the subject, stated that Brezhnev was in good health and was working seven- hours days. "A Tribute to a Spry Brezhnev Brings an Edgy Soviet Reply," The New York Times, November 25, 1981, p. A14.

[23]However the potential volatility of the Polish situation is demonstrated by the fact that Gen. Jaruzselski was the only top Eastern European leader to be absent at the jubillee.

illness, surfaced for the Lenin Birthday and Mayday celebrations in the early Spring, maintained a light schedule schedule in the early summer, and then spent a long late summer vacation that ran close to two months. Brezhnev's return to political activity in late September did not begin auspiciously, as examination of the details of the public realtion debacle connected with his Baku speech demonstrate. By the autumn, Brezhnev was close to being politically hors de combat, as his closest associates were maneuvering to succeed him and rumors about the post-Brezhnev era were rampant in Moscow.

B. NARROWING THE FIELD

Events between the Central Committee Plenums of November 1981 and May 1982 drastically altered the character of the Brezhnev succession from what had been anticipated just a year or two previously. The elimination of Suslov, through death, and Kirilenko, by ordinary political means, as potential successors meant that the succession struggle in 1982 evolved into a two man race between Andropov and Chernenko, neither of whom had been a member of the five man ruling clique that dominated most of the Brezhnev era (Suslov. Kosygin, Podgorny, Kirilenko, and Brezhnev). The elimination of Suslov and Kirilenko from the succession sweepstakes affected the eventual outcome not only in terms of their personalities and the constituencies they represented, but it determined a structural change as well in the outcome.

With the elimination of the last two members of the October 1964 leadership as succesors to Brezhnev, it became certain that the passing of Brezhnev would entail the generational change that Sovietologists had predicted would occur. However, this generational change did not

necessarily involve younger men taking over key party and state posts, rather it meant the passing of leadership to a new party cohort, from those that had risen to prominence under Khrushchev to those that had risen under Brezhnev. The elimination of Suslov and Kirilenko as contenders meant that no candidate could demand the post of General Secretary by virtue of his seniority in the Politburo or his prestige as a Party elder. This greatly reduced the possibility of an interim candidate for the General Secretaryship.[24] The death of Suslov and the fall of Kirilenko determined that the successor to Brezhnev would be selected from a remarkably homogeneous group. In this sense, the Brezhnev succession is structurally more akin to the Khrushchev succession than the Stalin succession, which involved two different generations of leaders (See Table III). The generational change that took place in the top leadership from 1957-60 with the expulsion of the anti-party group and then in 1964-65, when Khrushchev and Mikoyan, the last remaining members of Stalin's Politburo left the scene did not occur immediately after Brezhnev's death. The group that rose to power after 1957 was largely eliminated in Brezhnev's consolidation of power in the 70's (See Table II). Because the Politburo was so thouroughly reconstituted since 1971, it is a virtual certainity that the Brezhnev generation, superannuated as some of its members are, will maintain key

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[24]Seemingly, Arvid Pel'she was the one exception, being the oldest by far of the Politburo members (b. 1899) and having the most seniority on that body after Brezhnev's death. (He was elected as a full member in 1966.) However, Pel'she, a Latvian had been a secondary player in the Brezhnev Politburo, never ranking higher than fifth in the hierarchy. Pel'she was never a factor in the succession struggle as it unfolded in 1982, as he had a very light public schedule after Suslov's funeral, and he was absent from the Politburo on public occassions during the crucial month leading up to Brezhnev's death. Pel'she was not in Moscow during the Politburo deliberations after Brezhnev's death, though there is speculation that he was consulted by telephone and cast his lot with Andropov after it was clear that Andropov had formed a winning coalition.

posts for a number of years. This supposition is reinforced by the slow pace of personnel changes in the top leadership since Brezhnev's death.

TABLE III

Party Cohorts and Soviet Successions Since 1953

CPSU Politburo

Full member	Date Elected
Stalin Succession	
Molotov	1926
Voroshilov	1926
Kaganovich	1930
Khrushchev	1939
Beria	1946
Malenkov	1946
Differential	20 yrs.
Khrushchev Succession	
Suslov	1955
Brezhnev	1957
Kosygin	1960
Podgornii	1960
Kirilenko	1962
Differential	7 yrs
Brezhnev Succession	
Grishin	1971
Andropov	1973
Chernenko	1978
Differential	7 yrs

The political fall of Andrei Kirilenko occurred considerably before the November 1982 Central Committee Plenum that relieved of his duties in the Secretariat and Politburo. Kirilenko's fall is intriguing in that he was a close Brezhnev ally, the most senior ranking member of

Brezhnev's client chain, the Dnepropetrovsk Group, and was, for a long time, considered Brezhnev most likely successor. As party secretary supervising cadres and heavy industry, Kirilenko had amassed power second only to Brezhnev in the mid-seventies. At that time, Kirilenko was advantageously placed vis-a-vis his Politburo collegues in that he evidently shared a close personal relationship with the General Secretary. At the ceremony celebrating Brezhnev's seventieth birthday in 1976, Kirilenko was the only member of the Politburo to use the familiar form of you (ti) in speaking to Brezhnev.[25] Kirilenko was the most likely successor to Brezhnev in the mid-seventies.

The decline in Kirilenko's political fortunes coincided with the rise of Konstanin Chernenko into the top party leadership. Chernenko was brought into Politburo in 1978 and usurped Kirilenko's position as the member of that body closest to the General Secretary. It was Chernenko, not Kirilenko, who travelled with Brezhnev to the Vienna Summit in 1979 just a few months after joining the Politburo. Coincidentally, Kirilenko's patronage seemed to be in decline; Yakov Riabov, a Kirilenko protoge, was demoted from the Secretariat to become a deputy chief of Gosplan in April 1979.

Brezhnev had placed Chernenko in the key post of Head of the General Department of the Central Committee as early as the 23rd Party Congress (1966), thus his sponsorship of Chernenko on this extremely high party level coincided with the extremely close political relationship between Brezhnev and Kirilenko. Thus Kirilenko's political decline was not an inevitable result of Chernenko's growing power. The reason Kirilenko became politically expendable for the General Secretary in the late seventies was Brezhnev's sense

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[25]Jerry Hough, Soviet Leadership in Transition (Washington D.C.: Brookings), 1980, p. 154.

that Kirilenko's power had grown to the point where it could challenge his own. Brezhnev's own use of his position of heir apparent to overthrow Khrushchev in 1964 was a precendent for such a development. If Zhores Medvedev is correct in asserting that Kirilenko had headed an effort to replace Brezhnev at the time of the latter's illness in 1979,[26] Brezhnev's evident abandonment of Kirilenko in 1981-2 can simply be traced to an act of lese majeste.

The mechanism of Kirilenko's decline was not simply Brezhnev's expressed personal preference for Chernenko, but involved the nexus of policy and realpolitik. The emerging policy and propaganda themes that were initiated at the time of the 26th Party Congress (February 1981) heightened Kirilenko's political vulnerability, especially the campaign for economic intensification and the renewed drive to infuse party cadre with a "Leninist" leadership style. Kirilenko was associated with the traditional Soviet reliance on heavy industry and a passe leadership style. Thus, Kirilenko was a target for those looking to set blame for the economic slowdown that occurred in the mid-seventies. As an advocate of traditional management tecniques and investment priorities, his advocacy was inimical to the group of economic planners, perhaps identified inappropriately as economic reformers in the West, that were pushing innovations to achieve what the Soviets call economic "intensification."

Kirilenko's political position may have been complicated by the fact that he was the object of the anti-corruption campaign that began to be publicized in late 1981. Kirilenko's vulnerability to charges of corruption may involve Andropov in Kirilenko's fall. Kirilenko was linked with former Interior Minister N.A. Schelokov[27] as one

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[26]Zhores Medvedev, Andropov (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1983).

[27]Revoved as Interior Minister in December 1982.

involved in shady dealings and the abuse of high position.[28] It is possible that Andropov as head of the KGB possesed evidence implicating Kirilenko in the sort of financial peculation and fiduciary abuse for which lower level officials in the Soviet Union are often shot. Although Andropov's role in Kirilenko's fall can only be speculated upon, Kirilenko's removal from the Secretariat and Politburo worked to the advantage of Andropov. In the fall of 1981, Kirilenko and Suslov must have appeared to Andropov to be more formidible obstacle to the General Secretaryship than Chernenko.

Events in the Fall of 1981 indicated that Kirilenko was suffering a serious political decline. The key event was the debate over the that cccurred prior to the November Central Committee Plenum. The tecnical issue was the revision of the just effected 11th five-year-plan. The essence of the issue was a modified version of the perennial light vs. heavy industry debate. The problem for Soviet planners was how to provide for a continued high rate of military spending while accomodating a degree of increase in Soviet standard of living. During the first decade of Brezhnev's rule, key indicators such as consumption of meat per capita and wages showed a substantial improvement in Soviet living standards. However, in the late seventies the growth rate approached zero. With the example of Poland before them, Soviet planners were forced to attempt to mitigate the effects of economic stagnation. Apart from locked-in defense expenditures, a readjustment of investment priorities was a reasonable first step.

Expelled from the Central Committee in June 1983. Schelokov is the most prominent idividual affected by the anti-corruption drive of the early Post-Brezhnev era.

[28]Roy Medvedev, "Andropov's First 100 Days", Dagens Nyheter, February 22, 1983, p.4.

By November 16, 1981 the economic debate had been resolved. Brezhnev told the plenum of the Cental Committee: "I will begin with food. The problem of food is, on the economic and political level, the central problem of the whole five year plan... The Politburo of the CPSU Central Committee has supported the government's proposal for reducing by 30 billion Rubles the volume of capital investments and construction originally planned for the five-year plan."[29] The winners in the struggle were the government economic planners. On the Politburo level, it represented a defeat for Kirilenko. Brezhnev then criticized by name the ministers for construction, heavy industry, and industrial construction, thus making absolutely clear which constituencies lost the policy debate.

Kirilenko was then snubbed in the matter of awards. A subtle shift in the relative strength of Kirilenko and Chernenko was indicated by the honors that they received on the occassion of their birthdays in September.[30] Kirilenko received an Order of the October Revolution for his seventy-fifth birthday; Chernenko received the Order of Lenin and a second Hammer and Sickle Gold Medal for his seventieth birthday. More significant was the fact that the Chernenko award presention was more elaborate and received more press coverage. While presenting the award to Chernenkc, Brezhnev gave him a very personal blessing:

> You (familiar) are of course a restless man. But this is a good restlessness when you are thinking constantly of how you can do more and do it better for the country and for the working people. That is how a communist should be. I know you do not like empty words... You bring to everthing the party requires of you efficiency, accuracy, combined with a creatively bold approach.[31]

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[29]Pravda, November 17, 1981, p. 1.

[30]Andrei Kirilenkc, b. Sept. 8, 1906. Konstantin Chernenko, b. September 24, 1911.

[31]Radio Moscow, September 24, 1981. Reported in FBIS,

Curiously, all the Moscow-based members of the Politburo and Secretariat attended the Kremlin ceremony honoring Chernenko, except Kirilenko and Pel'she. Pel'she's absence can be explained by the fact that he had been vacationing in Latvia since the beginning of September.[32] Kirilenko's absence may have been related to the growing competition with Chernenko.

Mihail Suslov, the kingmaker of the October 1964 anti-Khrushchev coup, died on January 25, 1982 after a brief illness. Suslov's prestige was such that, had he survived Brezhnev, he might have been an interim choice for General Secretary. At the very least, Suslov would have replayed the crucial role he played in the years after 1964 when his support of Brezhnev was probably decisive in the latters eventual ascendency. His departure had a profound psycological effect as well. It was unlikely that a candidate could suceed Brezhnev without Suslov's support while he lived. But it is unlikely that Suslov would countenence any overt moves against Brezhnev. Suslov's role as a guardian of Brezhnev's prestige has surfaced often in speculation concerning the death of the first deputy director of the KGB, Semyon Tsvigun. Reportedly, Suslov reprimanded Tsvigun for implicating Brezhnev's daughter Galina in an investigation of corruption involving circus performers.[33]

Daily Report, Soviet Union, Sept. 25, 1981, p. R1.

[32]Sovetskaya Latviya, September 2, 1981.

[33]Suslov's role is a persistent element in the many speculative accounts of the Tsvigun affair. C.f. KGB defector Vladimer Kuzichen's account in "Andropov, the KGB and Corruption in Russia", The Daily Telegraph of London, Jan. 23, 1983, pp 8-9. Also: John Burns, "Two Scandals Have Moscow All Abuzz," Feb. 27, 1982, and, "After Suslov's Death, a String of Soviet Surprises," March 6, 1982, The New York Times.
The death of Semyon Tsvigun is an interesting footnote to the Brezhnev succession, one that has drawn much speculation from Sovietologists and journalists. Unfortunately, the many interesting speculations concerning Tsvigun's death are based on little real evidence. A typical overdrawn account of the Tsvigun affair appears in Andrew Nagorski's "The

Apart from the structural change entailed by the elimination of the two remaining collegues of Brezhnev from the October 1964 collective and the psycological impetus given to the succession struggle by Suslov's passing, the elimination of the two senior secretaries and Politburo members had an effect on the policy agenda of the succession year. Suslov had been the Politburo member who initiated the propaganda initiative against the Poles in the summer of 1981 and he had maintained the hard line on Poland that was a factor in the declaration of martial law on December 13, 1981.[34] Kirilenko had been the loser in the economic debate in the fall concerning investment priorities.

Both the Soviet economy and Poland were key issue in 1981, and were important agenda items for the 26th Party Congress held in February 1981. The report of the Congress was essentially a compromise document, one which did not decide these key policy debates. Kirilenko's economic views and Suslov's ideological stance on Eastern European affairs

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Making of Andropov, 1982," Harpers, February 1983. The Tsvigun affair fully explicated probably would reveal much about the dynamics of Soviet domestic politics about this time. The facts are these: Gen. Semyon Tsvigun died unexpectedly on January 20, 1982, a possible suicide. Tsvigun had been a close friend of Brezhnev's and had been Brezhnev's eyes and ears at the KGB since the time of the shakeup at that organization that involved making Andropov KGB Chief in 1967. When Tsvigun died, his obituary was signed by Andropov, Ustinov, Gorbachev and Chernenko; Brezhnev was a noticeable ommission. According to rumors, Brezhnev did not sign the obituary because of his displeasure with the investigation that affected his daughter, Galina. However, this supposition is drawn only from two facts, that Brezhnev did sign the obituary and that an investigation was taking place. (Subsequently, some of the principals were arrested.)

If in fact Brezhnev was dissatified with Tsvigun, it is possible that the cause of the dissatifaction was other than the investigation that centered around tha Moscow Circus, an area of peripheral interest a Head of State and the Party boss, no matter how close his daughter was to circus performers. The rumors had it that Tsvigun committed suicide after being confronted by Suslov (It may have well been Andropov, Chernenko, or any other prominent personage) with committing a faux pas in bringing the investigation to the doorstep of the General Secretary. This element of the theory is especially weak as it is unlikely that Tsvigun, as an experienced apparatchik would committed such a fundamental error. Of course, it is possible to theorize that

represented the traditional vantage points in these debates, and the Congress report had to take their views into account. With their passing from the scene the Brezhnev consensus became that much narrower. Chernenko described the problem of competing approaches to a Leninist social development by suggesting a dichotomy between old and new:

> A struggle between the old and new is taking place, and not only creative but negetive tendencies exist. These, for example, include parochialism and a narrow departmental approach, bureaucratism and conservatism.[35]

The old/new dicotomy was at the center of one of the fundamental issues of the succession year, "Leninist" leadership style. The Lenininist style, according to party ideologue such as Chernenko, was opposed to what was characterized as the "old" approach. The fall of Kirilenko suggests that, within the Politburo and its inch-wide spectrum of policy differences, the willingness to innovate became a prime political discriminator in the succession year.

Tsvigun was 'set up' by a higher-up, like Andropov, but this is moving into the realm of pure speculation. In any case, Tsvigun's responsibility for the investigation of 'Boris the Gypsy' has never been established. Further, the investigation was carried on after Tsvigun's death resulting in arrest of the principals. If an attempt to protect Brezhnev from adverse publicity had been attempted, it singularly failed: there was worldwide publicity of Brezhnev's daughter's involvement with circus performers. This result could not have pleased those who wished to cover up the scandal.

The relationship between Tsvigun, Brezhnev and Chernenko is nonetheless germane to events of the succession year subsequent to Tsvigun's death. Especially in relation to the shift in the top leadership of the KGB in May and December 1982 and the role of Geyder Aliyev in the succession, as Tsvigun had a close working relationship with Chernenko in 1951-2 when they both worked in Moldavia, and Tsvigun was the head of the Azerbaijan KGB when he recommended a protoge to replace him when he became Andropov's deputy: Geyder Aliyev

[34]For Suslov's role in Polish-Soviet affairs in 1981, see Chapter 1.

[35]Pravda, June 15, 1983.

C. CHERNENKO BEGINS TO RUN

The Chernenko-Kirilenko contest was decided by late January 1982, when Chernenko was the beneficiary of the reordering of the hierarchy after Mikhail Suslov's death. On January 24, 1982 Chernenko was listed ahead of Kirilenko in a report on the makeup of the Suslov funeral commission; the order was: Grishin, Pel'she, Chernenko, and Kirilenko.[36] During televised funeral proceeding, Chernenko appeared in the front rank of mourners, with Brezhnev and Tikhonov, ahead of Kirilenko and the rest of the Politburo. Chernenko was now second secretary behind Brezhnev. At Suslov's funeral, the hierarchy stood: Brezhnev, Tikhonov, Chernenko, Kirilenko, Grishin, Pel'she, Gromyko, and Andropov.

Chernenko was well placed to benefit Suslov's vacancy in the Secretariat. He began to take on the attributes of a candidate running for high office. Five days after the Suslov Funeral, it was announced that Chernenko had left for Paris as the head of the Soviet delegation to the French Communist Party Congress. There had been no indication prior to Suslov death that Chernneko would travel to Paris. Suslov and Ponomarev had led the CPSU delegation to the PCF Congress in 1972, and in January 1981, Marchais, leader of the PCF, conferred with Brezhnev, Suslov, and Ponomarev in Moscow. The fact that Chernenko was chosen to go to Paris was geared to enhance credentials as Brezhnev's heir in two regards: It established him as Suslov's successor in dealing with inter-party relationships; and it gave him experience in diplomacy, a field in which he was perceived to lack credentials.[37]

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[36] Pravda, January 24, 1982. The order was righted for the obituary that appeared on January 28, with Kirilenko appearing ahead of Chernenko. (Pravda, January 28, 1982.)

[37] A contemporaneous analysis by Michel Tatu viewed the

As a close associate of Brezhnev, Chernenko was able to get foreign policy experience not available to other Politburo members. For example, on October 26, 1981, he met with Nicaraguan junta member Bayardo Arce,[38] and two days later he conferred with the Yugoslav Ambassador.[39] For Chernenko, meeting foreign government figures and ambassadors, functions usually reserved for Brezhnev, Tikhonov, or Gromyko, was a sign of his special relationship with the General Secretary. In terms of diplomatic experience, the Paris trip gave Chernenko a leg up on Andropov, who had never led a CPSU delegation to a Western country or in fact had ever officially travelled outside the communist sphere.[40]

Chernenko may have been being groomed for a foreign policy role as early as the June of 1979, only seven months after his election to voting membership in the Politburo. In June 1979, he accompanied Brezhnev, Gromyko and Ustinov to the Vienna summit. Carter's appraisal of Chernenko's position at summit meeting is interesting.

> Most of our immediate attention was focused on the other man of the Soviet team, Konstantin Chernenko. We had what we believed to be good intelligence information that Chernenko might well be the heir apparent, destined to lead the Soviet Union whenever the leadership had to change. Throughout our entire series of meeting in Vienna, he never made a noticeable comment. (My emphasis)[41]

Paris trip a a legitimization of Chernenko's credendentials as Brezhnev's successor. See Michel Tatu, "Le Dauphin de M. Brejnev?", Le Monde, February 4, 1982, p.8.

[38]Moscow TASS in English, October 26, 1981, reported in FBIS, Daily Report, The Soviet Union, October 28, 1981, p.K2.

[39]Pravda, October 29, 1981, p.4.

[40]Andropov had still not travelled to the West at the time of his election as Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet in June 1983.

[41]Jimmy Carter, Keeping Faith (New York:Bantam Books), 1982, p. 246.

It is interesting to note in Carter's account how Gromyko's active role contrasted with Chernenko's. Gromyko's support for Andropov in the succession contest, may have been rooted in the fact that he felt a certain contempt for Chernenko's foreign policy competence as opposed to the experience Andropov had accumulated as KGB chief and member of Politburo policy group oriented toward security issues such as the Defense Council. It may also have entailed the understanding that Gromyko would continue to have near autonomy in the conduct of foreign policy. By the end of the Brezhnev era, Gromyko was the dominant foreign policy voice, even perhaps to the exclusion of Brezhnev. According to Zbigniew Brzeninski, it was in fact Gromyko, not Brezhnev, who was the dominant figure for the Soviet side at the Vienna Summit.[42]

After Suslov's death, Chernenko assumed an expanded role in relations with foreign communinist parties. As the head of a visiting delegation to the PCF Congress, Chernenko was within his competence as Suslov's successor. However, his meeting with French Prime Minister Pierre Mauroy was not routine and suggests an appreciation of Chernenko's role as a potential successor by both the French and Soviets. The Chernenko-Mauroy talk achieved nothing of substance. Mauroy used the occasion to lecture Chernenko on human rights abuses in the Soviet Union and Soviet interference in Polish internal affairs, subjects that probably were not on the Soviet delegations agenda of topics for discussion. In his first face-to-face discussion with a leader of a Western nation, Chernenko called the French attitude on Poland "exaggerated," and voiced surprise that France would formulate "political conditions for the development of trade exchanges between the two countries." Chernenko added that

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[42]Zbigniew Brzezinski, Power and Principle, New York: 1983, p. 343.

Soviet peace intentions were "sincere, with no ulterior motives."[43] In addition to his meeting with Mauroy and attending sessions of the Congress, Chernenko met with the French Press, granting an interview to a french periodical. When asked what the jobs were for individual Politburo members, Chernenko refused to shed any light on the subject, but jokingly stated that "they all had enough work to do."

When he returned to Moscow, Chernenko's position ahead of Kirilenko in the party hierarchy was reconfirmed. Again he stood ahead of Kirilenko at the funeral of General Grushevoi in late February. The Grushevoi funeral was significant as well in another regard. Television coverage showed Brezhnev crying during the memorial ceremonies for his old war buddy. Brezhnev had, of course, had recourse to venting his emotion in stressful situations in the past; for example, during the Czech crises of 1968 Brezhnev was shown crying on Czech Television. However, in the officially sanctioned Soviet press, where even cigarettes were airbrushed out of photos of Stalin, the sort of human frailty exhibited by the film of Grushevoi's funeral was rather remarkable. Brezhnev's crying over a dead friend and contemporary, shown on television suggested that end of the years of Brezhnev's rule was approaching.

Soon after this, it is rumored, Brezhnev publically exhibited signs of approaching senility. In early March, the Moscow-based Politburo with notable exception of Kirilenko, attended a performance of the play, And Thus We Shall Win, at the Moscow State Theater. The presence of the Politburo at a performance meant that the content of the play was being officially sanction. It treated the last period of Lenin's life. As such, it was probably part of Chernenko's campaign to encourage a Leninist style of

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[43]AFP in English, February 6, 1982, reported in FBIS, Daily Report, Western Europe, February 8, 1982, p. K1.

leadership in the party.[44] In the middle of the performance, Brezhnev is reported to have blurted out, "Look, Lenin's over there."

Kirilenko, whose political fortunes were on a steep decline, disappeared completely during a critical phase of the succession. Kirilenko's last public appearance until May 1, 1982 was on March 3. Rumors from a "Soviet source" explained Kirilenko's absence by the fact he was suffering from artereosclerosis,[45] or he may just have been suffering from a political 'disease.' In mid-March, all members of the Politburo, except Kirilenko, attended the All-Union Congress of Trade Unions. On March 16, Chernenko, along with Ivan Kapitonev, supervised the installation of Stepan Shalayev as Chairman of the Central Council of Trade Unions, replacing Aleksey Shibayev, who had been installed by Kirilenko at a previous congress in 1976.[46] It is clear by the time of the Trade Union Congress that Chernneko had become senior secretary supervising party cadres.

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[44]The play had opened late in 1981 and had caused some controversy as it appeared to favor NEP-type economic policies. Additionally there was criticism in the play of a certain unamed leader which was thought by some to refer to Brezhnev. This is unlikely since the play received the imprimatur of the Brezhnev and Chernenko when they attended a performance with other Politburo members. It is rumored that the targeted unnamed leader was in fact Kirilenko, which may be substantiated by the fact that he did not attend the play with other members of the Politburo. (Or he may just have been ill.) Though the most likely possibility considering the subject matter of the play and Chernenko's probable support for the production is that the unnamed leader is Stalin. Chernenko had written negatively about Stalin. According to Marc Zlotnik, several passages in Chernenko's writing criticize Stalin and Stalinism, viz.: "Mistakes and distortions within the personality cult harmed socialist democratization and party and state building." See: Marc Zlotnik, "Chernenko's Platform," Problems of Communism, Nov-Dec, 1982, p. 72.

The play seems to have won official acceptance slowly. It had opened for over a month when it received a favorable review in Pravda. (See: Pravda, January 21, 1982.) The article appeared coincidentally on the day Suslov slipped into a coma.

[45]"High Soviet Official Unseen in Weeks," The New York Times, March 21, 1982.

[46]Pravda, March 17, 1982. p. 1. It is significant in

Brezhnev's health was suspect at this time. A scheduled live television broadcast of a Brezhnev speech to the Trade Union Congress was cancelled and a taped version aired the next day. Then later in the month, a major address concerning foreign pclicy, including an overture to the Chinese, that Brezhnev gave in Tashkent, capital of the Uzbek S.S.R., was broadcast only in taped highlights. After the incident at Grushevoi's funeral it appeared that a policy had been adopted to to protect Brezhnev from the strain of lengthy performances in front of live television cameras.

However, no media policy could protect Brezhnev from his own failing health, which took a severe turn for the worse in late March. He fell ill aboard a plane on a flight from Tashkent to Moscow and was carried from the plane on a stretcher. When Brezhnev's return from Tashkent was not broadcast on March 25, speculation began that he was ill, or even dead. In following days, there were indications that something was in fact wrong. A scheduled meeting between Brezhnev and the President of the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen was postponed. Brezhnev's personal physician, Yevgeny Chazov,[47] cancelled a trip to Britain, and a guard was put up around the Moscow clinic used by Politburo members.[48] It was rumored that at one point Brezhnev was clinical dead, but that his physicians successfully resuscitated him. Responding to the rumors, on April 5, the Soviet foreign ministry stated that Brezhnev was on a "routine winter vacation."[49]

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regard to the "labor discipline" campaign of the Post-Brezhnev era that Chernenko in replacing the ineffectual Shibayev initiated this campaign.

[47]Interestingly, Chazov was raised to full membership status in the Central Committee at the May 1982 plenum.

[48]"Soviet Leaders' Clinic Remains under Close Guard," The New York Times, April 4, 1982, p.14

D. CHERNENKO: ACTING GENERAL SECRETARY

By the end of March, with Brezhnev either near death or on a "routine winter vaction" and Kirilenko completely out of sight since March 3, Chernenko was as senior Party Secretary the highest ranking functioning member of the Politburo. Since Suslov's death, the political situation had evolved to the point that Chernenko had acquired immense power in his hands. He was in charge of several Central Committee Departments, adding Suslov's responsibilities to his direction of the very important Central Committee General Department that he had directed since 1966. Additionally, he had usurped Kirilenko's position as senior secretary in charge of cadres. At least four secretaries were reporting to Chernenko to some degree: Kapitonev, Zimianin, Rusakov, and Ponomarev. Chernenko chaired the weekly meetings of the Secretariat and naturally played a leading role in the regular Thursday meetings of the now depleted Politburo. He no doubt was a leading force in the Politburo Committee that drafted the economic report for the May 82 Central Committee Plenum.

Chernenko was an ad hoc first secretary during this period, which meant that to some extent, he was able to demonstrate the salient characteristics of a Chernenko administration. Probably, at this time he picked up ex officio membership in the Defense Council (If he hadn't already been a member) and along with Tikhonov, Ustinov, Gromyko, and perhaps Andropov formed a collective national command authority in Brezhnev's absence.

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[49]"Soviet Foreign Ministry says Brezhnev on Routine Winter Vacation," The New York Times, April 6, 1982, p. A6.

TABLE IV

Active Moscow-Based Politburo, Early April, 1982

Konstantin Chernenko	CC Secretary
Nikolai Tikhonov	Chairman, Council of Ministers
Yuri Andropov	KGB Chief
Dmitri Ustinov	Defense Minister
Andrei Gromyko	Foreign Minister
Mikhail Gorbachev	CC Secretary
Victor Grishin	Moscow Party Boss

Chernenko's ideological program was displayed in an article he wrote in April for Kommunist. The article clearly established Chernenko's leading role as a leader willing to innovate to achieve economic intensification and his commitment to a "leninist" style of party work. Part of this program was a willingness to engage in criticism of deficient leadership and unsuccessful economic institutions. Of course, this had to be done within the context of orthodoxy to the essential precepts of Marxist-Leninism. The limits of criticism that Chernenko was prepared to tolerate were suggested by the fact that at the time that he was advocating self-criticism within the CPSU, he used his position as Suslov's ideological heir to cudgel the Italian Communists for advocating pluralism.

The core of the article dealt with the nexus of party work, proper leadership style and economic intensification:

> Harm is caused by those economic leaders who prefer an administrative style based strictly on directives, or those who go the other extreme and rely on economic incentives alone. Of course, economic incentives like administrative directives are essential. Building communism just on working people's enthusiasm is mere utopia.

Chernenko went on to qualify his support for economic incentives, stating that an appeal must also be made to worker's "pride, professional honor, and ideological conviction." Although the article attempted to cover several bases, it was clear that Chernenko was aligning himself with those wishing to expand the scope of economic innovations. Most of the 'reforms' intended to increase labor productivity, the Schekino Plan, the Brigade Contract System, and the Abasha agricultural plan, were based on economic incentives.

The themes that informed Chernenko's writings were by no means innovative or daring. Rather as chief ideologue he was waging a propaganda campaign aimed at mobilizing support for the consensus position on economic intensification, though such a campaign would be of more interest to certain constituencies than others. The constituency for which Chernenko spoke was to a degree defined by its position in the bureaucracy, being contituted by government and party official concerned with economic productivity. Moscow insiders sensed that during this period Chernenko was appealing tc younger party leaders seeking fundamental changes, as opposed to more cautious, incremental policies being favored by traditionalist.[50] This conjecture is supported by Chernenko's favorable reference to new as opposed to old style of leadership in his June 1983 Plenum speech.

In retrospect, two facts about the April Kommunist article are significant in regard to events in the Post-Brezhnev era. The first is the call for labor discipline. Chernenko castigates the "unlawful enrichment of all sorts of dodgers, speculators, rogues, and scroungers." The second point is that the article as a whole is a virtual draft of Chernenko's report to the June 1983 plenum and the

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[50]Dusko Doder, "For Soviet Media, Silence Is Golden," The Washington Post, May 21, 1982, p. A 28.

subsequent Central Committee resolution. A textual analysis indicates that many of the same arguments are recapitulated and the same catch phrases occur. For example, the statement: "The building of Communism is not a great favor to the masses, it is their vital concern," occurs in both the Kommunist article and the plenum report, both occuring at the conlusion of the argument. Besides demonstrating the enduring stolidity of Soviet prose, this fact indicates that Chernenko was at the center of the group formulating propaganda themes and ideological matters throughout the period of 1982-3.[51]

Apart from the appointment of Shalayev as the head of Trade Unions in March, there were no other significant personnel appointments during the period of Chernenko's ascendencey. Georgi Tsinev was named as first deputy to Andropov at the KGB in March replacing Tsvigun, but this was a routine promotion.[52] Actually, the Tsinev and Shalayev appointments were made in the period prior to Brezhnev's illness. The dispensing of patronage was evidently put on hold while the outcome of Brezhnev's illness was in doubt. In late March and early April, Chernenko's chief public efforts were in the fields of ideology and propaganda. The April Kommunist article was the center of this effort, but the themes struck in the article were echoed the publication of the second edition of his book, Questions of the Work of the Party and State Apparatus, in May,[53] and the well orchestrated press campaign that reviewed and publicized the book. By mid-summer, virtually every major journal and

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[51]Cf. Konstantin Chernenko, Kommunist, April 1982, No. 6.
For Chernenko's Plenum report and the Central Committee resolution, Pravda, June 15, 1983, p 1-3; June 16, p. 1-2.

[52]"Soviet Reports Appointment of Deputy Chief of the KGB," The New York Times, March 15, 1982, p. 2.

[53]Vorrosy raboty partiynogo i gosudarstvennogo apparata, (Moscow: Politizat), 1982.

newspaper had chipped in with a laudatory review of Questions of the Work of the Party and State Apparatus. A typical review ran: "Chernenko stressed the role of the 26th Party Congress as 'the determining event in the period which has now begun,' he expands on the theme of 'Leninist' style of leadership, and states that the main task of the CPSU is 'steadily improving the people's material and spiritual life and creating the most favorable conditions for the all round development of the individual."[54]

A significant issue in the succession is the question: Was Chernenko able to establish a client chain in the top leadership in the months after Suslov's death? As has been shown, the system of nomenklatura had been in the main quiescent during the Winter and early Spring. However, Chernenko was able to garnish support in two ways:

1. He was in a sense the custodian of Brezhnev's patronage net and functioned as a conduit to the General Secretary.
2. Chernenko as propagandist had virtually unlimited access to the official media and he could use the media to speak for various constituencies.

Superficially, these look like ephemeral advantages. Malenkov enjoyed similiar advantages and was defeated by Khrushchev who had acquired a substantial number of clients during his period as Moscow and Ukrainian Party Boss, as well as his years as Party Secretary in charge of cadres immediately prior to Stalin's death.[55] However, Chernenko's

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[54]Review of Chernenko's Questions of the Work... "The Most Important Duty of Communists," Voprosy Istorii KPSS. August 3, 1982.

[55]Malenkov supervised the party apparatus from 1948-50. In 1950 Khrushchev was appointed to the Secretariat. Malenkov from 1950-3 began to function more and more and Stalin's deputy, leaving the running of the party to Khrushchev. As Khrushchev had already established power bases as Party leader in the Ukraine and the Moscow Gorkom, he had a formidable foundation to work upon when he began to work for the Central Committee of the CPSU.

advantages were considerable within the context of the Politburo as it had evolved by April 1982. With the passing of Suslov, and the political demise of Kirilenko, no other member of the Politburo could match Chernenko's client system, even if it were held at one remove.

Party Secretary Vladimir Dolgikh, Azebaijani Party First Secretary Geidar Aliyev, and Georgian Party First Secretary Edouard Shevarnadze were aligned with the plans for economic intensification being pushed by Chernenko. They all more or less embodied the precepts of "Leninist" leadership and new managerial style that Chernenko favored. Part of the the new managerial style, especially characteristic of Shevarnadze and Aliyev's rule in their respective Union Republics, was a wilingness to employ a certain ruthlessness in shaking up complacent beuracracies and inefficient enterprises. Shevardnadze described an instance of managerial malfeasance:

> There was a time when nepotism, favoritism, and localism were widespread in cur republic. What could be more contrary to Leninist principles than promotion by wire pulling rather than on the basis of a man's real attributes?...Throwbacks to the past still occur. Here is a case for you a member of our Central Committee apparatus talephoned a party raikom and ordered that a friend of his, an unworthy man... be set up as chairman of the raion potrebsoius. When this became known an immediate decision was taken. There is no place for such a man either in the Central Committee or in any leading work at all. And he was punished to teach others a lesson.[56]

The manner in which a powerful Secretary can cause a shift in power through the use of patronage is demonstrated by the tenure of Malenkov and Khrushchev as Secretary in charge of Cadres. After Malenkov replaced Zhdanov in 1948, 35 of 58 first secretaries of regional party committees were replaced. During Khrushchev's purge of the party apparatus in 1954-5, only 20% of these Malenkov nominees had not been demoted. Khrushchev's of the Party. Hough considers that because of his key Party positions in the Ukraine and the Moscow Gorkcm, Khrushchev controlled at least 25% of the delegates to the 20th Party Congress, and these do not include supporters that he gained during his tenure as Party Secretary after 1950. (Jerry Hough and Merle Fainsood, How the Soviet Union is Governed, pp. 200-4.)

[56]Interview with Shevardnadze by V. Kozhemiako and G. Lebanidze, "The Leader's Authority," Pravda, 14 May, 1983,

The natural locus for support for economic intensification was the Presidium of the Council of Ministers. It was this body under Malenkov and Mikoyan that attempted to forward a program of economic reform in November 1953 and which, under Kosygin in 1964-5 and again in 1970, tried to move the Soviet economy away from traditional investment priorities. Finally, in 1981-2, it appears that the the economists at Gosplan and the Council of Ministers were having a say in determining Party policy. In delivering his report the the November 1981 Central Committee Plenum, Brezhnev used the formula, "The Politburo of the Central Committee supports the Governments request..," which was a significant indication that the role of the Council of Ministers in the economy was expanding. The Chairman of the Council of Ministers, Nikolai Tikhonov, though no innovator, for bureaucratic reasons was aligned with the trend toward innovations. During the period in late March and early April when Chernenko was filling in for Brezhnev, Tikhonov was the closest to Chernenko in terms of policy affiliation among the members of the Politburo.

As an institutional entity, the economic managers attached to the Council of Ministers favored economic innovations, engaged in criticism of the economy, and favored a shift in investment priorities away from heavy industry. On April 23, the USSR Council of Minister met to review "the fulfillment of the USSR state plan for economic and social development and the USSR state budget for the first quarter

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p. 2.
That the above was not an isolated instance and the the willingness of the new managers to use the "new broom" technique is indicated from these laconic remarks by Shevardadze: "Of course the establishment of authority requires constant dedication. Anyone who is not capable of this has no place among the leadership. For example: When we started our work following the resolution on the Tbilisi Gorkom, several ministers and party raikom officials handed in their resignations. They realized that the new, far more complicated tasks were beyond their powers." (Ibid.)

of 1982," i.e., the blueprint adopted by the Central Committee in November 1981 at the suggestion of the government. The minister's note that personal income had been rising and domestic construction was being carried cut on a large scale. However:

> At the same time seious shortcomings in the fufillment of plan targets were noted at the session. The production plan was underfulfilled by enterprises in ferrous metallurgy, the construction materials industry, light industry, the meat and dairy industry and certain other sectors.

The Council of Ministers stated that almost the entire non-military sector of the economy was in trouble and prescribed a list of reforms, guided by the precepts of the 26th Party Congress, and specifically the Central Committees decisions at the November 1981 Plenum. Tikhonov presided over the meeting, which was also attended by Dolgikh, Central Committee Secretary in charge of heavy industry.[57]

During the spring of 1982, with Chernenko's influence on the ascendent, his group of supporters benefited, not only by being associated with the dominant policy line at the time, but by receiving other leadership perks as well. Extensive press coverage was given to the ideas and activities of Aliyev and Shevarnadze, whose regimes in Azerbaijan and Georgia were held up as economic and managerial models. TASS reported on Shevardadze's views on improving the tea crop, an indication that for the Tass editors Shevardnadze possessed a near universal competance to pontificate on just about any subject.[58] On April 26, the Order of Lenin was presented to the City of Tblisi, and in September, Azerbaijan received the same award. In April 1982, Aliyev

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[57] Pravda, April 24, p.2.

[58] TASS Domestic Service, reported in FBIS, Daily Report, The Soviet Union, April 14, 1982. p. R 6.

was selected to make a goodwill trip to Mexico. Such an unusual trip outside the Soviet Union for an Azeri Party First Secretary was an indication that Aliyev was held in high favor by the leadership.[59] Dolgikh was promoted to candidate status in the Politburo after the May 1982 plenum, and Aliyev was promoted at the November 82 plenum to full status. Had Chernenkc's ascendency in the Secretariat remained unchallenged, the group of his associates would have benefited even further.

However, Chernenko's ascendency in party affairs, propaganda and the formulation of domestic policy did not extend to security issues and foreign policy. Thus, though the logic of political events in March-April 1982 would point to growing political power for Party Secretary Chernenko, a counter trend developed, involving political cohesion among Politburo members responsible for security and foreign policy issues. The alliance between Andropov, Gromyko, and Ustinov that occurred during the period of Brezhnev's absence was a result of concern with the evolution of economic policy, Chernenko's ascendency (which perhaps threatened the collective leadership), and the sense that Brezhnev's successor should emerge from the ranks of those in the foreign policy establishment who had been most responsible for guiding the Soviet Union to superpower status in the Sixties and Seventies. Brezhnev's absence from Moscow, which was an opportunity for Chernenko to cut his teeth as party leader, ironically also provides the context of a challenge to Chernenko's growing power by a coalition that was led by Andropov.

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[59]The selection of a Caucasian Party First Secretary to be an emissary to a third world country is not unusual by Soviet standards. What makes Aliyev an unlikely candidate in this particular case is that Aliyev as a Muslim did not match up well with the fact that Mexico has a largely Roman Catholic population.

After he left Tashkent on March 25, Brezhnev was out of public view for about 4 weeks. By April 21, the rumor that he had died had circulated extensively in Moscow. The rumor had been started by the foreign diplomatic and press corp which had taken note of activity at the Central Committee building.[60] Brezhnev appeared on April 22, 1982 at Lenin's Birthday celebration, conspicuously remaining for Yuri Andropov's speech in order that his presence be noted by television cameras.[61] Brezhnev's death was the wrong inference to make from the evidence of unusual political activity in Moscow. In actuality, discussions were being held among the leadership in prepation for the May Central Committee Plenum.

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[60]Paris AFP in English, April 21, 1982, reported in FBIS, Daily Report, Soviet Union,

[61]Doder, op. cit..

III. THE FINAL BREZHNEV CONSENSUS

A. THE ANDROPOV FACTOR

The celebration held in the Kremlin on April 22, 1972 commemorating Lenin's Birthday occured in a political milieu dominated by the impending succession and the evolving contest between Party Secretary Konstantin Chernenko and KGB Chief Yuri Andropov. The chief significance of the event was that it marked the return of Brezhnev to public view, his first appearance since March 25. Brezhnev was able to walk to the podium and stood unaided during the playing of the Soviet national anthem. In terms of public perceptions Andropov benefited by being the main speaker at the well publicized rally, but Chernenko was not ignored by the cameras either. During Andropov's speech, Brezhnev turned to chat with Chernenko on at least one occasion that was captured by the television camera.[62] At the rally, Chernenko appeared to rank third in the hierarchy while Andropov ranked perhaps sixth or seventh. Kirilenko and Pel'she remained absent.

Andropov's Lenin's Birthday address was the only major address that he delivered in 1982 before being elected General Secretary. The fact that Andropov was chosen to make the speech indicates very little in terms of his bid for a position in the Secretariat. This was the third time Andropov had spoken on this occasion. (Chernenko had given the Lenin's Birthday address in 1981.) Andropov did not use the occasion to make a strong policy speech or delineate an "Andropov Program." The address stuck close to the consensus

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[62]Moscow Domestic Television, April 22, 1982, reported in FBIS, Daily Report, The Soviet Union. April 23, 1982, p. R2.

formulations that derived from the 26th Party Congress. In terms of policy, Andropov's speech was of secondary importance and was probably to an extent derivitave of Chernenko's April Kommunist Article. The day before Andropov's speech, TASS broadcasted a review of Chernenko's Kommunist article, which in a sense established the provenance of the propaganda themes of Andropov's address.[63]

Andropov's address was non-controversial, reflecting consensus views, concentrating on the theme of economic revitalization, prominent since the November Plenum.

> The main sphere of the the activity of the people is the economy. Therefore, it is here that there is so much significance in the conscientious creativity of the masses, their initiative and spontaneous activity, their desire and ability to work honestly. The party's requirement that every person be reached clearly reflects the concern that this "everyman" should not be lost sight of as a personality, that his voice and his opinion should be heard and taken into account.[64]

To a Westerner, the fact that a KGB chief would evince such tender concern for the Soviet everyman seems a bit odd. However, Andropov was merely reiterating the then current line on socialist democracy. Andropov's speech somewhat paraphrases:

> Rights and freedoms have a clearly expressed aim: to draw the broad mass of the people into the management of the state and society. This is the essence of socialist democracy. Lenin said: "Political liberty means the freedom of the people to arrange their public, state affairs.[65]

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[63]Tass International Service in Russian, April 21, 1982, reported by FBIS, Daily Report, Soviet Union, April 22, 1982, R1.

[64]Moscow Domestic Service in Russian, April 22, 1982, reported in FBIS, Daily Report, Soviet Union, April 23, 1982, p. R1.

[65]Konstantine Chernenko, Human Rights in Soviet Society (New York: International Pub.), 1981, p. 7.

This is from a Chernenko work that was a belated propaganda respose to Carter's Human Right's policy. The comparison demonstrates the lineage of the "ideas" in Andropov's speech. Sharing the same propaganda themes, the speeches of Andropov and Chernenko could have be written by the same speechwriter, as is indeed likely in some cases. Although Andropov's and Chernenko's policy orientation only slightly differentiated in the months prior to Brezhnev's death, the differences were significant in that they reflected the competing constituencies that supported the candidates rather than a divergence in policy.

On May 24, 1982, Andropov's appointment to the Central Committee Secretariat was announced, making apparent that Andropov would contest Chernenko for the Brezhnenev succession. Andropov most likely began to politic for the post of General Secretary only after Suslov's death, quite apart from whatever ambitions he held prior to this date. Suslov kept the lid on succession maneuvering as long as he was alive, and the fact that his death portended an accelerated succession struggle was apppreciated immediately by Sovietologist in the West and, it appears, by politicians within the Soviet Union.[66]

Andropov had been considered a possible candidate for the succession for a long while. Analogously to the situation pertaining to Cardinals considered papabile prior to the election of a new Pope. Elements of Andropov's credentials were his personal qualities, his sophistication and intelligence, qualities apparent at least in reference to his Politburo collegues. These characteristics have impressed Western analysts. Jerry Hough wrote in a

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[66]See: Thomas Ferenczi, "La disparation de M. Souslov risque de modifier les equilibres fragiles au sein du bureau politique," Le Monde, January 28, 1982. p. 4.
Also, Jiri Valenta, "With Suslov Gone", The New York Times, Feb. 22, 1982, p 23.

pre-succession analysis, "If the Central Committee selects the best-qualified major contender as Brezhnev's successor, then it will surely select Andropov."[67] By March 23, rumors were circulating Moscow that Andropov preferred "a political to a police 'role.'"[68] The rumor campaign in Moscow was the smoke to the fire of the restructuring of the Politburo that occurred coincidentally with Brezhnev's fourweek illness that began on March 26. Except for unofficial reports, there were no indications of maneuvering among the top leadership. Nevertheless, they were occurring. On May 1, 1982, Andropov appeared to rank eighth in the hierarchy atop Lenin's tomb. Significantly, in Baku, the capital of Azerbaijan, Andropov's portrait was hung fourth, behind Brezhnev's Tikhonov's, and Chernenko's.[69] This was a good indicator of Andropov's enhanced status, as the year before, Chernenkc's portrait had been hung fourth in Baku, which anticipated Chernenko's official change of status by six months or more. Then on May 24, Andropov was appointed as Central Committee Secretary, the first unambiguous public sign since Suslov's death that Andropov was positioning himself as a candidate to be Brezhnev's successor.

Andropov's growing political strength was demonstrated two days later when he stepped down as KGB chief, completing the transfer from a "police" to a "political" role, and Vitali Fedorchuk, the head of the Ukrainian KGB, was named as his replacement. The appointment of Fedorchuk was important in that it demonstrated that Andropov could block Chernenkc in matters of personnel appointments.[70]

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[67]Hough, op. cit. "Soviet Succession: Issues etc." p.32.

[68]Paris AFP in English, March 23, 1982, Reported in FBIS, The Soviet Union, Daily Report, March 24, 1982, p. R7.

[69]Photo in Bakinskii Rabochii, p.3. May 2, 1982. Romanov also appeared in a higher position: 5th.

[70]"KGB Chief Quits for Higher Duties," The New York Times, May 27, 1982. p. 3.

Finally, on May 31, capping Andropov's political efforts of the Spring, Andropov stood ahead of Kirilenko at an ceremony during which Brezhnev received a medal from Le Duan.[71] Chernenko and Andropov were now one/two in the Secretariat behind Brezhnev.

B. POLICY AND THE ANDROPOV COALITION.

The milieu for Andropov's precipitous rise in the hierarchy was the power vacuum that existed after Suslov's death, a situation exacerbated by the absence of Kirilenko during the months of March and April and, more importantly, Brezhnev's absence for a month after March 26. It was probably during this period, in late March and early April that Andropov put together the coalition that secured his election on May 24 as Central Committee Secretary. This occurred in spite of Chernenko's ascendency in party and economic affairs. By May 1, when Andropov's picture was hung fourth in Baku, it is likely that the decisions involving the strengthening of Andropov's position vis-a-vis Chernenko were already weeks old.

The core of Andropov's winning coalition in the Spring was defined along essentially policy-orientation lines in the diminished ruling Politburo of Chernenko's regency (See table IV). With the absence of Suslov, Kirilenko, and Brezhnev, the key Politburo-led committee, the Defense Council, was reconstituted. The membership of this body at this time was: Chernenko, acting first secretary; Andropov, KGB Chairman; Ustinov, Defense Minister; Gromyko, Foreign Minister; and Tikhonov, Chairman of the Council of Ministers. The membership of the Defense Council at this time was probably identical to the membership in the early

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[71] Pravda, June 2, 1982, p. 1.

Post-Brezhnev era as identified by Vernon Aspurturian.[72] Within the Defense Council group there was a natural division between members with essentially domestic Constituencies, and members with primary national security

TABLE V

Constituencies of Members of Defense Council, April 1, 1983

Domestic	National Security
Chernenko	Andropov
Tikhonov	Gromyko
	Ustinov

interests. (See Table V). Tikhonov was a member of the Council ex officio as Head of Government and likely had little input in security policy decisions. Chernenko's experience in foreign affairs was limited and had been acquired only recently, and for a senior Soviet leader he had a noticeable paucity of associations within the Soviet military.[73] Andropov, Ustinov and Gromyko were concerned that the Soviet international position not be constrained by

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[72]Vernon Aspurturian, "Soviet Foreign Policy at the Crossroads," Paper delivered to The Conference on the Superpowers in Europe, June 26-9, 1983, Bad Kreuth, FRG, p. 25. Prof. Aspurturian noted that the constituency of the Defense Council was probably revealed during the October 29, 1982 Kremlin meeting between the party hierarchy and the military chiefs. With the deletion of Brezhnev, this group (Andropov, Chernenko, Gromyko, Ustinov, and Tikhonov) formed the main defense policymaking group at the time of Brezhnev's absence in March 1982 and subsequent to Breznev's death. They also were the Politburo participants in the October 29 meeting.

[73]Zhores Medvedev, Andropov (Oxford, Uk: Basil Blackwell, 1983), p. 99.

the requirements of domestic economic development. Certainly, Gromyko, who had been the key foreign policymaker in the Politburo since the late seventies, did not wish to see his authority pass to Chernenko. Apart from the group with national security interests, others in the leadership were concerned that the campaign for economic intensification might be implemented at too quick a pace.

The Politburo maneuverings that took place prior to Andropov's election to the Secretariat by the Central Committee represented Chernenko's first serious political setback in 1982. Andropov was able to secure the support of the essentially the same forces that were instrumental in his November election as General Secretary. According to a Soviet source with access to the Central Committee, this group included Ukrainian Party First Secretary, V.V. Shcherbitskii.[74] On the other hand, a group with primary responsibility for the economy coalesced around Chernenko at this time. The "special working group" of the Politburo charged with drafting the Food Program that Brezhnev identified in his May 1982 Central Committee Plenum Report was functioning at this time.[75] Chernenko unquestionably headed this group, which, after all, determined the Party Program through the mechanism of the May Plenum resolution.

Although Andropov's move to the Secretariat was in a sense a victory for anti-Chernenko forces, the policy and personnel changes effected by the May Plenum and the subsequent appointment of Fedorchuk as Andropov's replacement taken in total appears to be a compromise result. Certainly, there is nothing in the events of May to suggest that the Andropov victory had been at the expense of

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[74]"Westerners Hear Talk That Andropov May Have Been Victor in a Struggle," The New York Times, Nov. 15 1982, p. 8.

[75]Tass in English, May 24, 1982, reported in FBIS, Daily Report, The Soviet Union, May 25, 1982. p. R 2.

Brezhnev's authority. The Plenum resolution, the last of the Brezhnev era, concerned itself with food production, Brezhnev's pet issue.

While Andropov's election to the Secretariat was a political setback for Chernenko and portended his defeat in November, it does not follow that Andropov was an unacceptable to Brezhnev as a senior party secretary. As well as holding similiar policy positions, Andropov and Brezhnev evidentialy had a cordial personal relationship, with Andropov occupying an apartment upstairs from Brezhnev in the apartment house on Kutezovskii Prospekt. Although Brezhnev no doubt favored Chernenko to be his successor, his chief concern was to insure the continuity of his policies. In this sense, Andropov's election as General Secretary was acceptable. It is unlikely that Brezhnev had second thoughts about Andropov, of the type Lenin expressed in his Last Testament concerning Stalin In any case, the key discussions involving Andropv's transfer probably took place prior to April 22, that is, while Brezhnev was still recuperating. Presented with a fait accompli upon his return to Moscow, Brezhnev's illness thus rendered him passive in this key debate.

Chernenko's argument opposing Andropov's move to the Secretariat was that such an important personnel change should be postponed until after the succession and that the most important issue to be addressed by the May Plenum was the Food Program. After losing his bid to prevent Andropov from moving to the Secretariat, Chernenko made an effort to place a political ally in the post of KGB chief. Chernenko was unable to attain this objective, because a Politburo majority did not want to risk the potential eventuality of Chernenko becoming General Secretary and having an ally as KGB chief. This would be a high risk scenario, reminiscent of the Malenkov-Beria diumverate in the months after

Stalin's death. The candidates Chernenko proposed were likely Chebrikov and Aliyev. However, again Andropov was able to block him, by astutely naming a candidate with connections to neither himself or Chernenko.

> Chernenko proposed two candidates on the Politburo's behalf, but a third, proposed by Andropov, was elected--an unprecedented event in the Central Committee. Brezhnev avoided being directly involved in the confrontation.[76]

Reportedly, Aliyev was dissapointed with not getting the top KGB job.[77]

The appointment of Fedorchuk has all the earmarks of a political ccmpromise scrupulously wrought to preserve a delicate political equipose, rather than an Andropov power play. Senior to Fedorchuk were Tsinev and Chebrikov, both first deputy charman of the KGB. But both likely were politically unacceptable to Andropov because of close association with Chernenko through Brezhnev. One former associate of Fedorchuk's has claimed that the Ukrainian was Brezhnev's choice for the top KGB job,[78] a possibility that reinforces the notion of Brezhnev as an arbiter in the Chernenkc-Andropov struggle.

The shift of Andropov from the KGB to the Secretariat involved one of the most sensitive issues in Soviet domestic politics, the relaticnship between the head of the KGB and the General Secretary. The subordination of the security forces to the political authorities had been firmly established after the fall of Beria in July 1953, after which the

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[76]"Andropov a Cautious No. 1," La Stampa (Turin), Dec 12, 1982, pp 1-2.

[77]"Aliyev, Rising Star in the Kremlin," Los Angeles Times, November 29, 1982. p.1.

[78]Peter Deriabin with T.H. Bagley, "Fedorchuk, The K.G.B, and the succession," Orbis, Vol. 26, No. 3, Fall 1982, p. 630.

former Ministry for State Security (MGB) was reestablished as merely a State Committee (KGB). The October 1964 collective evidently further defined the KGB role by establishing an unstated rule that the the occupants of the position of Chairman of the KGB should not be a client of the General Secretary. Neither Semichastnei nor Andropov were Brezhnev clients; the former was associated with Schelepin and when he was purged in 1967, Andropov's candidacy to replace him was forwarded by Suslov.[79] Events during the succession year confirm this policy. While the succession was in doubt, Fedorchuk, an essential neutral candidate was placed at the head of the KGB. After Andropov's election, Fedorchuk was replaced by Chebrikov in December. Chebrikov attended the same Metalurgical Institute in Dnepropetrovsk as Tikhonov[80] and was associated with Chernenko through the Brezhnev client chain. Thus, the desired balance between the General Secretary and KGB Chief was again achieved by Dec 1982.

C. THE CONSENSUS ON THE ECONOMY: THE FOOD PROGRAM

The food program announced by the May Plenum indicated that the top leadership was still inclined to support economic programs designed to enhance Soviet standard of living. This was based on the belief that increased consumer welfare could yield increases in labor productivity. The election of Andropov to the Secretariat was

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[79]Andropov's role in the collective leadership indicates that he was aligned to Suslov and his rise in the leadership may have countered by the early seventies the increasing weight of Brezhnev's clients in the Politburo. To insure that the KGB would not pursue policies hostile to the General Secretary, two Brezhnev clients, S.K. Tsvigun and V.S. Chebrikov were named Andropov's immediate deputies. These clients included Kirilenko and Shcherbitskii (members of Brezhnev's Dnepropetrovsk Group) the defense minister, Marshal A.A. Grechko (a Brezhnev in-law), and D.A. Kunaev, who worked under Brezhnev during his period as Kazakh Part First Secretary.

[80]Zhores Medvedev, Andropov, p.121.

irrelevant to this policy trend, but the upgrade of Dolgikh's status to candidate member of the Politburo was in line with the trend toward economic intensification.

In his report to the Central Committee, Brezhnev stated that measures to provide the country's population with foodstuffs within the shortest possible period was an urgent economic and sociopolitical task.[81] Brezhnev's mentioned the constancy with which the party had attempted to improve agricultural production under his leadership, citing the improvements in the lives of the rural population and the increased investment in the agricultural sector that followed the March 1965 Central Committee Plenum. Realistically, though, Soviet agriculture remained the weakest part of the Soviet economy. The perennial nature of the food problem in the Soviet Union was underscored by the fact that the the Brezhnev era opened and closed with Central Committee Plenums devoted to the problem of agricultural production.[82]

The Soviet Union had had poor harvests since 1979. The 1981 harvest had fallen perhap 40 million metric tons short of the planned grain production figure. Even though Brezhnev had abandoned autarky in temperate zone food products in the early seventies, these shortfalls caused enduring problems for the Soviet government. The crisis in Poland loomed as an example of social turmoil resulting from food shortages. In fact, the Moscow leadership had to cope with a butter shortage in Moscow in December of 1981, which coincided with the period of crisis leading up to the declaration of martial law in Poland (December 13, 1981). According to the Moscow correspondent for Le Monde, Soviet

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[81]Tass in English, May 24, 1982, reported in FBIS, Daily Report, The Soviet Union, May 25, 1982. p. R 2.

[82]Viz.: the March 1965 and May 1982 Plenums. The October 1964 Plenum was concerned with ousting Khrushchev and establishing the collective leadership.

officials were associating their problems with the problems of the Poles.

> Of course the situation is worse in the provinces. "It is much more grave than in Poland," we were told by a Soviet source. Ration cards exist in many towns, the same source told me.... This poverty is not new. What is new is that it is spoken of openly. Of course, the propaganda official tries to explain that it is all the fault of the Poles.[83]

With butter shortages in Moscow and even the party and government elites forced to consume stale bread occassionally, the consensus for the Food Program involved was included those who simply wished to preempt social disruptions as well as those who favored economic innovations. The problems of the infrastructure of the food industry were described in an article by V. Arkipenko that appeared in April in Kommunist, the same issue that contained Chernenko's article on ideology and organizational work.

Appearing when it did, the article was part of the propaganda groundwork for the policy resoulution of the May Plenum. According to the article, Bread and the People, inefficiency in the sectors of the economy that transport, store, and process food products exacerbates the problems caused by an insufficiency in agricultural production. The failures of the bread production enterprises are typical. It is not uncommon for Soviet bakeries to sell loaves that are either burned, incompletely baked, or totally misshapen. In an investigation in Irkutskaya Oblast, 24 of 48 investigations of baking enterprises resulted in the rejection of at least part of the products tested and in five cases, the entire output of the baking plants was condemned.

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[83]"Depuis trois semaines Moscou manque de beurre," Le Monde, December 4, 1981, p.6.

The scope of Arkipenko's criticism extended beyond the baking enterprises. The problem is not just located at the baking plants. Often flour is improperly milled, tainted by infestation, or adulterated with low grade fillers. The mills themselves often receive unwashed and infested grain. On the other side of the production cycle, the baked loaves are improperly stored and wrapped, as few bakeries are supplied with plastic trays or wraps to prevent spoilage. Finally, Arkipenko assignsto the bread truckers "the leading and far from honorable position in the staleness conveyor belt."[84] In addition to the problems of the bread industry, Arkipenko criticizes failures in the consumer industries sectors: "The best way to preserve its (bread) freshness is to keep it in breadboxes, the latest models of which are exhibited at the Bread Baking Industry Scientific-Industrial Association. They have seperate partitions for rye and wheat bread, with saucers and vents. However, this item is simply not to be found in the stores, for industry has not taken up its production."

And:"Stale bread could be used better if automatic electric toasters (operating on the same principal as self-regulating irons) were available. Slice the bread, put it in the toaster 5 minutes before the meal, and put on the table hot and crusty slices that are enjoyed by both adults and children. This would be good...if such appliances were available in stores."

Arkipenko's article suggests that the policy orientation of those who favor economic intensification may include favoring light over heavy industry and a reduction in defense spending. Suggesting that the "gun or butter" choice was an element in the economic debate, Arkipenko wrote in Kommunist, "We must admit that the light and food

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[84]V. Arkipenko, "Bread and People," Kommunist, No. 6, Apr. 1982, pp. 89-100.

industries fell behind the headlong development of heavy industry, particularly the part related to the country's defense." Traditionalist may have found the expression of this sentiment unsettling. Demonstrating the pervasiveness of the new economic thinking, however, the military journal Krasnaia Zvezda published an article admitting that the preferential development of heavy industry was in part to blame for the Soviet Union's inadequate food production.[85] With official journals sanctioning such talk it would be surprising if some constituencies such as the military did not feel increasingly uncertain about their allotment of economic resources.

D. LAME DUCK GENERAL SECRETARY

When the May Central Committee Plenum closed, Brezhnev had in effect, completed his formal party functions. Brezhnev was on vacation much of July and all of August.[86] When he returned to work in September, he suffered an unusual embarrassment when he gave his first live televised speech since April in Baku on September 26. Brezhnev's performance on that occassion gave the impression of a leader confused and not fully in control. The rumors of Brezhnev's resignation were commonplace in the late summer, and perhaps by that time support to evict Brezhnev from his post had reached the Politburo, even the inner group around the General Secretary. In the early summer, it was commonplace to speak of Brezhnev putting in "two hour work days," and the clear evidence of Chernenko and Andropov running after Brezhnev's position did not enhance the image of durability.

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[85]N. Karasev, "Central Problems of the Five-Year-Plan," Krasnaia Zvezda, May 7, 1982, p. 2.

[86]Brezhnev vacationed in the Crimea from July 3 to August 3.

Andropov's political gains that culminated in the May Central Committee Plenum did not detract from Chernenko's political prestige, which continued undiminished. This phenomenon resulted from the fact that Andropov and Chernenko were both operating within the same policy consensus. On June 2, Czechoslovak Party Chief Gustav Husak presented Chernenko at a Kremlin ceremony an award honoring Chernenko's seventieth birthday. Considering the fact that Chernenko had turned seventy on September 24, over eight months previous, the award spoke more to Husak's appreciation of Chernenko's high political status than to his appreciation of the Russian's contribution to Czechoslovakia.

The summer months were a quiescent period in regard to succession politics. Myron Rush's assertion that Andropov's tenure as secretary from May to November "attracted little public notice" and that he "delivered no public speeches during this period" is substantially 'correct."[87] However, Andropov did make some public appeareances and speeches. On June 22, Andropov attended ceremonies associated with the Dimitrov centenery at the Kremlin, and on June 24 he gave a short speech accepting awards on behalf of the entire Politburo during the celebrations for the Kievan sesquimillenium.[88] Andropov's general absence from the propaganda campaign for the Food Program was contrasted with the vocal support given to the program in speeches by Tikhonov, Gorbachev and Chernenko. Andropov positioned himself to secure the support of the constinuencies who favored keeping the pace of economic change slow. Traditional groups viewed with some alarm calls for NEP-type reforms, such as appeared

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[87]Myron Rush, "Succeeding Brezhnev," Problems of Communism, Vol. XXXII, January-February, 1983, p. 4.

[88]Radio Moscow, Jun 22, 1982, reported in FBIS, The Soviet Union, Daily Report, Jun 23, 1982, p F12. Radio Moscow, Jun 24, 1982, reported in FBIS, The Soviet Union, Daily Report, Jun 24, 1982, pp R1-2.

in an article written by Anatoli Butenko in New Times. Butenko said that the current economic system was "divorced from the masses,[89] Although Andropov was generally silent on economic matters in 1982 prior to his election as General Secretary, it is likely that Andropov had distanced himself from the views of economists like Butenko. In contrast to Andropov, Chernenko displayed no reticence in speaking about economic issues, making a series of speeches endorsing the recent resolutions of the Central Committee and Supreme Soviet concerning the Food Program. In Krasnoyarsk, Chernenko called for "a complete restructuring of the economy."[90]

Although Andropov was not prominent in the campaign for the Food program and dissappeared entirely from public view during September and most of October, he was being actively touted as a potential successor to Brezhnev in the Western Press. The development of Andropov's media persona in the Western press had a life of its own, apart from Andropov's actual activities. Western journalists tended to downplay Andropov's KGB backround and instead speak of his "competence and backround in foreign 'affairs."[91] Reporting in more depth on Andropov's personality, The New York Times carried an interview on June 13 with Soviet emigre, Vladimir Sakharov.[92] Sakharov is quoted as saying:

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[89]Anatoly Butenko, "Socialism in Form and Deformation," New Times, Feb. 1982.

[90]"Matching Up To New Tasks", Sovetskaya Rossiya June 16, 1982, pp 1-2.
The different approach to the matter of "discipline" that Chernenko adopted contrasting with Andropov's labor discipline campaign in the immediate Post-Brezhnev era was also suggested by the Krasnoyarsk speech. He said: "There is much talk of discipline. The problem is that the words are not always backed up with painstaking daily orginizational work or a flexible, well conceived cadre policy." (Ibid.)

[91]"KGB Chief Quits for Higher Duties," The New York Times, May 27, 1982.

[92]"Russian says US Fascinates KGB's Chief(sic)," The New York Times, June 13, 1982. p.24.

I think he's likely to be more understanding than the present Soviet leadership of the internal constraints in the country, of the political facts.

Sakharov goes on to say that Andropov understood US politics, " was interested in American popular music, favored Western alcoholic beverages such as Scotch and French Cognac and had Western books in his home library, ranging from How Green Is My Valley to.... Valley of the Dolls." Andropov's purported taste for jazz, his ability to speak English, and his general sophistication, opposed to the somewhat boorish image of Politburo members in the West, became standard elements in both analyses of Andropov that appeared in the Western media both before and immediately after Andropov's election as General Secretary.

When Brezhnev returned to Moscow at the beginning of September after his two month working vacation in the Crimea, there was a rampant rumor campaign pointing to an imminent Brezhnev retirement. "Soviet Government sources" stated that Brezhnev would probably retire amid unprecedented honors in December, at a time to coincide with the sixtieth anniversary celebration of the formation of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.[93] "Diplomatic Sources" in Bonn reported to the German News Agency on September 5 that Brezhnev was seriously ill, working one hour a day, and about to step down in favor of a troika led by Andropov, possible including Tikhnaov and Chernenko. In reports circulated France, Andropov was cited as the source of these rumors.[94]

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[93]"Soviet Officials Hint Brezhnev May Retire By End of This Year," The New York Times, September 5, 1982, p. 11.

[94]Hamburg DPA in German, September 5, 1982; Paris Domestic Service in French, September 4, 1982: Reported in FBIS, Daily Report, The Soviet Union, September 5, 1982.

Recognizing the pervasiveness of the rumors, the Soviet Foreign Ministry replied: "These reports are nonsense."[95] Thus, on September 24, Brezhnev made what turned out to be his last trip outside the Moscow area, partly to dispell the notion of infirmity. In travelling to Baku, for the ostensible reason of presenting the order of Lenin to the Azerbaijan S.S.R., Brezhnev's coterie likely felt the General Secretary would demonstrate political viability. Additionally the trip served to put the Brezhnev imprimatur on Aliyev and the Azerbaijan managerial innovations. For all of these reason the visit, which lasted from September 24-27, was extensively covered by Soviet television.

However, an embarrassing performance in a speech given by Brezhnev in Baku on September 26 that was broadcast on national television largely vitiated these goals. The Baku Speech is made more significant by the fact that seemingly a policy to shield Brezhnev from potentially embarrassing media performances was reversed at the last moment. The risks of allowing Brezhnev to perform on live television had been demonstrated at the 26th Party Congress in February 1981, when Brezhnev's speech was only shown in the opening and closing remarks, the bulk of the lenghty speech being read by a Soviet announcer. Earlier in 1982, Brezhnev's speech to the Trade Union Congress in March was pre-empted at the last moment, presumeably on account of Brezhnev's suspect health.

However, in spite of this cautious media policy, Brezhnev was compromised at General Grushevoi's funeral when he was shown weeping. Evidently there was some difference of opinion concerning just what could or could not be shown. When Brezhnev was carried from his plane on the return from Tashkent in March, the television cameras were definitely

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[95]Hamburg DPA in German, Ibid.

absent. This usual policy of caution then makes all the more intriguing the logic of the decision to interrupt regular daytime broadcasting with a live television remote from Baku on September 26 of a Brezhnev speech.[96]

The central event of the Baku trip was an award ceremony before a joint session of the Azeri Central Committee and Supreme Soviet held Lenin Palace in Baku. In his opening remarks, Aliyev thanked Brezhnev for the award in terms that suggested the gratitude was felt personnaly by Aliyev as much as on behalf of the Republic:

> The award (Order of Lenin) from the motherland and the high appraisal inspired working Azerbaijan to new achievements; every person putting his labor, energy and soul into the common couse. The people thought and dreamt of one thing, to be worty of the honor of receiving this award from the hands of that most dear, beloved person, one of the greatest men of our times, corade Leonid Ilich Brezhnev.... (my emphasis)[97]

After the meeting was opened and Brezhnev rose to speak, a series of untoward events occurred, all covered by a live televisicn broadcast.[98] As Brezhnev began to deliver his speech, his aide Aleksandrov became concerned, and began leafing through a folder. He then got up and walked off the podium. Soon Aliyev followed him. As the camera showed Brezhnev speaking and Aleksandrov's and Aliyev's seats empty, the remaining officials on the dais were looking off camera, where evidently a discussion was taking place.

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[96]For accounts of the broadcast and speech, see FBIS, Daily Report, The Soviet Union, Sept. 27, 1982, pp. R1-24.

[97]Ibid, p.R7.

[98]Regular daytime programming had been interrupted with the announcement, "In a few minutes time, central television and all-union radio will begin a direct relay from Baku of the solemn meeting of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Azerbaijan...." Ibid. p.R5.

When Aleksandrov approached the rostrum where Brezhnev was speaking, there was some agitation in the audience. Brezhnev continued to read his speech, evidently oblivious to Aleksandrov standing next to him. Aleksandrov then said to Brezhnev: "Leonid Illich, I beg..."

Then, the audience inexplicably began to applaud. Brezhnev said, "I am not at fault, Comrades," which was greeted with more applause. Finally in a complete breakdown of decorum, the audience was shown on television laughing and smiling. After a delay, Brezhnev began to read a new text, stating "I shall have to start at the beginning."[99]

The circumstance of the Baku speech, occuring as it did among rumors of Brezhnev's resignation, raises the possibility that incident of the mistaken texts was contrived to embarrass the Brezhev politically. This view is supported by the fact that the Baku incident was broadcast contrary to to a policy to minimize Brezhev video exposure that had been in effect for some time. In that the effect of the embarassment of Brezhnev was to give credence to the elements in the party that favored the General Secretary's resignation, it is possible that Brezhnev was in fact "set up." Such an interpretation would point to the connivance of Brezhnev's aide Aleksandrov, and probably Aliyev, which seems a very remote possibility. However, the sense that Brezhnev should step down was evidently gaining credence at that time and the theory that Brezhnev was set up cannot be ruled out completely. The incident may have been simply the result of ineffectual preparation on the part of Brezhnev's aides, the Azeri hosts, or most likely, Brezhnev himself. It any event, the televised proceedings from Baku on September 26 gave a graphic representation of the ineffectual management and growing physical debility of the leadership.

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[99]Op. Cit.

E. THE FINAL DAYS

The sense that a leadership crises was brewing in Septenber was enhance by the fact that two senior party secretaries, Andropov and Kirilenko, were absent from public view during the month of September. Interestingly, Andropov was absent on September 24 from the funeral of Marshal Bagramian, an event that was attended by every other memeber of the Moscow Politburo and Defense establishment, except those participating in the Brezhnev trip to Baku and Kirilenko, whose political status, on the decline since September of 1981, was under severe attack.[100] In early October, Kirilenko's name was not amony signatories to an obituary for the Tatar First Secretary Musin, a notable omission.[101] In connection with rumors that Kirilenko would retire in mid-November, "unofficial sources" reported that Brezhnev would retire in December as General Secretary and retain his position as Head of State, maintaining the perquisites of office for himself and his family.[102]

The rumor that Brezhnev would quit his post as General Secretary and retain the post as President of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet is intriguing, apart from the fact that the rumor associated with it, that Kirilenko would resign, proved to be true. Brezhnev serving as President, while relinquishing his post in the Secretariat, was a strategy that most supported Chernenko. If Chernenko was indeed Brezhnev's number one candidate, which is almost certain, then one can envision a scenario in which Brezhnev as elder statesman would remain in the Politburo to lend his

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[100]For an account of the Bagramian funeral proceedings see, "Moscow TV Coverage of Marshal Bagramian Funeral," FBIS, Daily Report, Soviet Union, Sept. 23, 1982, pp. V1-2.

[101]Pravda, October 5, 1982.

[102]"Senior Soviet Official to Quit, Diplomats Told," The Los Angeles Times, October 26, 1982.

authority to Chernenko, as the latter transitioned into the role of General Secretary.

On October 26, several hundred top military leaders down to the corp commander level and the top political leadership met for an extraordinary meeting in the Kremlin. Meetings of this type had occurred in 1967 during the crisis over naming a successor to Defense Minister Rodion Malinowsky and in 1972 prior to the Nixon summit. Brezhnev claimed to have called the meeting at the behest of Ustinov, and it is possible that the intent of the meeting was to shore up Ustinov's position within the defense establishment, as he was mentioned by Brezhnev three times in a short speech. The rhetoric was horatory, as Brezhnev avoided making any commitments to increasing military spending, though the intent of the meeting was to placate those in the military who felt that the campaign for economic intensification might entail cutbacks in military expenditures. It may be that contributing to the disenchantment of the military was, as Zhores Medvedev suggested, the unhappiness of the military over Brezhnev's posing as a war hero and other excesses of the Brezhnev 'personality cult.'[103] The malaise within the military may not have been focused on any specific issue but a general unhappiness with the trend of events in the final Brezhnev years and an apprehension felt by the

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[103] Zhores Medvedev, Andropov, p. 101. Medvedev says that Brezhnev's glorification of his war record was "a source of derision among the military." Though it seems unlikely that this could have been a major issue in the relationship between the military establishement and the political regime, there a precedentfor the "rewriting" of history becoming a significant issue in political-military relations. This occurred in 1956 and it involved Zhukov's support for de-Stalinization, which a more accurate appraisal of the role played by Stalin during the war. After Stalin's death in 1953, numerous memoirs of Soviet commanders appeared, which downplayed the idea that Stalin had masterminded the victory of the Nazis. The continuing reemergence of "rewriting" history as an issue in the Soviet Union reaffirms the validity of the quip: The key to success in Soviet politics is not the ability to predict the future, but an ability to predict the past.

military leadership concerning the political ramifications of the Brezhnev succcession. All in all, Brezhnev's speech was a rehearsal of the themes of Grishin's and Ustinov's speeches delivered in connection with the Great October Revolution ceremonies, which reflected an increase in the level rhetoric aimed at the United States.[104]

In the final weeks before Brezhnev's death, Andropov's public role was muted as compared to his Politburo coleagues, Chernenko, Ustinov, and Grishin. Chernenko travelled to Georgia on October 28 to present the Order of Lenin to the city of Tbilisi. Chernenko represented his visit as a personal embassy from the General Secretary.

> We have a duty to Tibilisi, the capital of Georgia, Leonid Illich said to me in conversation the other day. The city has been awarded the Order of Lenin, and it would be good to present the award. I hoped to find time myself, but the preparations for the CPSU Central Committee plenum and the USSR Supreme Soviet session and other urgent business simply do not permit me to leave Moscow, even for a short time.[105]

It is possible that among the matters in preparation for the CC meetings were the promotions of Ryzhkov and Aliyev. While there were certainly political issues to deal with in Moscow, for which Chernenko as head of the General Department had important responsibilities as well, the Baku incident of September 26 must have weighed in the decision to keep Brezhnev at home.

On November 5, the Moscow leadership convened for a Kremlin celebration dedicated to the anniversary of the Great October Revolution. Grishin was selected to give the speech, his third opportunity at this forum. It is perhaps

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[104] Kommunist, No. 16, November 1982, pp 14-16. Chernenko and Andropov both attended the October 26 meeting, the first time they had been seen together in public since May 1.

[105] Pravda, October 30, 1982, p.2.

significant that Chernenko had never spoken on this occassion and had been passed over again. The Grishin speech reflected the new tougher Kremlin line on the international situation, advocating "ideological vigilance," a theme absent from Andropov's Lenin's Birthday address. The lineup on this occasion showed that the leadership stood: Brezhnev, Tikhonov, Chernenko, Andropov, Grishin, Ustinov, Gromyko, and Gorbachev. At this event again, the television cameras showed special favor to Chernenko, as he was shown together with the General Secretary during the playing of the national anthem.[106]

The Brezhnev Politburo was mustered for the last time on November 5, 1982, the anniversery of the Great October Revolution. Kirilenko, whose portrait had not been hung on the Nevskii Prospekt, was absent, confirming that he was politically hors de combat. Pel'she continued to be absent, giving rise to rumors that he had died.[107] Ustinov gave a short address which again pledged the Soviet Union to follow "Lenin's peace policy," but went on to adopt the harder line current since the October 26 meeting that "the Communist Party and the Soviet Government are taking necessary measures to consolidate the country's defenses and enhance the vigilance of the Soviet People." On top of the Lenin Mausoleum, the leadership stood left to right: Ogarkov, Ustinov, Brezhnev, Tikhonov, Chernenko, Andropov, Grishin, Gromyko, and Gorbachev. After the speech, the camera showed a select group of the leadership talking to a group of little children. The group was comprised of Brezhnev, Tikhonov, Chernenko, and Andropov. This confirmed that

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[106]Moscow Domestic Television, Nov. 5 1982, reported in FBIS, Daily Report, Soviet Union, Nov. 8, 1982, p 01-13.

[107]Denied by a member of Pel'she Moscow staff to a French reporter: "Arvid Pel'she is alive and in good health," the reporter was told. (AFP in English, Nov. 6, 1982, reported in FBIS, Daily Report, Soviet Union, Nov. 16, 1982, p. R1.)

Andropov had passed Grishin in the hierarchy and now ranked fourth, just behind Chernenko.

Brezhnev stood for two hours on the Lenin Mauoleum on Sunday, November 7. It was his last public appearance. On Wednesday Morning he suffered a heart attack and sometime between 0800-0900 hrs his heart stopped beating.[108]

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[108] Pravda, Nov. 12, 1982, p. 1.

IV. THE POST-BREZHNEV CONSENSUS

A. GENERAL SECRETARY ANDROPOV: A PASSION FOR COLLECTIVE WORK?

The first public indication that Andropov had defeated Chernenko in the leadership struggle was the announcement that he had been chosen to lead the funeral commission.[109] The official line on the succession was that Andropov was the unanimous choice of the special Central Committee Plenum that on November 12. Novosti director, Lev Tolkunov,[110] described the CC session that elected Andropov:

> There was no problem in deciding who would be chosen since Konstantin Chernenko had nominated Andropov for the post of Party General Secretary. The election of Andropov was unanimous. Some five hundred people, including candidate members of the CC, attended the meeting and all raised their hands when Andropov was nominated.[111]

Chernenko's nomination of Andropov was meant to project unanimity. Chernenko cited Andropov as being Brezhnev's "closest associate" and as having "a passion for collective work." The bulk of Chernenko's speech was an enconomium of Brezhnev's leadership and regret for his passing. In these latter sentiments at least, Chernenko was no doubt sincere.[112]

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[109] It may be more than accidental that Stalin led Lenin's funeral commission and Khrushchev, Stalin's.

[110] Named editor of Izvestiia soon after Adropov's accession.

[111] The Daily Yomiuri, Nov. 14, 1982, p 1, reported in FBIS, Daily Report, The Soviet Union, Nov. 16, 1982, Annex, p.3.

[112] Radio Moscow, Nov. 12, 1982, reported in FBIS, Soviet Union, Daily Report, November 12, 1982, R4.

Ulimately, however, the predictable Central Committee unanimity staged on the morning of November 12 is irrelevent. The actual Andropov-Chernenko struggle took place at the Politburo meeting on November 10, just hours after Brezhnev's death, but prior to its public announcement (see

TABLE VI

Chronolcgy of The Brezhnev Funeral

Nov 10	Early A.M	Brezhnev suffers a heart attack and is taken to the Politburo Clinic.
	0830 hrs	Effort to revive Brezhnev cease.
	Afternoon & Evening	Politburo deliberates succession; Andropov chosen General Secretary.
Nov 11	1100 hrs	Official Announcement of Brezhnev's death.
	1600 hrs	Andropov announced as head of funeral commission.
Nov 12	Late A.M.	Chernenko nominates Andropov for General Secretary to the Central Committee. Election Unanimous.
Nov 15	1245 hrs	Brezhnev buried in the Kremlin. Five minutes of silence observed across the USSR

Table VI). The showdown that had been set up by the May Central Committee Plenum climaxed in the Politburo deliberations that proceded in the crisis atmosphere of the immediate hours after Brezhnev's passing. Rumors of a power struggle between Andropov and Chernenko appeared almost immediately in the Western press,[113] and their validity has

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[113]See: "Westerners Hear Talk That Andropov May Have Been Victor in a Struggle," The New York Times, Nov. 15, 1982, p 8.

subsequently been established. One of the first "leaks" by an official source concerning the Chernenko-Andropov duel was a statement given by Pravda editor, Afanasyev, at the time of the funeral, "Chernenko had the possibility of replacing Brezhnev. But many responsible men of sincerity chose Andropov instead."[114] Afanasyev's contention is supported by Izvestiya commentator, Alexander Bovin:

> People would like to know who voted for Andropov as General Secretary and who voted for Chernenko. This could influence policy and that is why they are so interested.[115]

A struggle between Andropov and Chernenko is implicit in Bovin's remarks, which is a tacit admission that the official line suggesting unanimity was misleading and that a showdown did in fact occur.

At the time of Brezhnev's death there were twelve members of the Politburo who could participate in the vote for a new General Secretary.[116] However, a number of factors determined that the selection of Brezhnev's successor would be made by a smaller group. By this time Kirilenko was not an active Politburo member,[117] and Pel'she remained absent from Moscow during the funeral, as he had been throughout much of 1982.[118] Presumably other non-Moscow based members

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[114]Interview in Tokyo Kyodo, Nov. 16, p 1. Reported in FBIS, Daily Report, The Soviet Union, Nov. 16, 1982, B2.

[115]Interview of Bovin in Dagen Nyheter, February 27, 1983, p 10.

[116]Of course, nominally the General Secretary is elected by the Central Committee, but the Politburo, as the CC's executive organ, in effect make the determination.

[117]Kirilenko walked with Brezhnev family and was not included in any groupings of Politburo members during the Brezhnev funeral. He formally "resigned" his Politburo post at the next CC Plenum.

[118]There were rumors about this time that Pel'she was dead. He appeared in public however at the end of the month.

of the Politburo, such as Dikmuhammed Kunaiev, may have missed some of the early discussions.

Though Pel'she may have been consulted by phone, the ultimate configuration for the Politburo meeting to elect Brezhnev's successor was likely ten voting members present. With ten voting members, an awkward majority of six to four would be required, unless a non-voting chairman was named. Medvedev describes the crucial Politburo session that elected Andropov:

> It is clear that a meeting of the Politburo was called for the evening of November 10. We know that it temporary Chairman was Shcherbitsckii. After an acount of the circumstances surrounding Brezhnev's death, Soviet Defense Minister Ustinov delivered an address in which he proposed Yuri Andropov as the new General Secretary.[119]

If Shcherbitskiy did chair the meeting, it probably indicated that he was neutral in the deliberations. Certainly it did not indicate that he voted with the majority.[120] A precedent for one member assuming a temporary chairmanship of the Politburo meetings was Mikoyan chairing the Presidium meeting at which Khrushchev attempted to reverse the decision of his collegues in 1964. Mikoyan was probably neutral at that time or even slightly sympathetic to the First Secretary.

The Politburo deliberations on November 10 were decisive in determining that Andropov would become General Secretary. Wolfgang Leonhard demonstrated, through an analysis of the contents of the edition of Kommunist that went to press just prior to Brezhnev's death, that the editors of that journal

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[119]Roy Medvedev, "Three Steps: From Balance to Crisis," Dagens Nyheter, Nov. 27, 1982, p.4.

[120]Reportedly Shcherbitskiy supported Andropov in his successful bid to join the Secretariat in May. As a member of Brezhnev's "Dneprpetrovsk Group", he may have been acceptable to both sides.

were not expecting Andropov to emerge as General Secretary, but on the contrary were pushing Chernenko.[121] The contention that the Andropov had the election sewed up prior to Brezhnev's death and thus that the Politburo was presented with a fait accompli on November 10 is incorrect. While it is true that the core of Andropov's support was in place after the key Pclitburo deleiberations in April that led to Andropov's moving to the Secretariat, the death of Brezhnev signalled that another round of horsetrading was to take place. Even among Andropov supporters, the matter of insuring a collective leadership was a key agenda item in the deliberations. The matters of subsidiary appointments to the Politburo and Secretariat had to be discussed. In all these matters, it seems that the chief intent of the leadership was to insure that a balance of forces exist between Andropov and Chernenko.

Concerning the key issue of who would become the new General Secretary, coalitions would at first form along the lines of the key vote in the Spring to elect Andropov to the Party Secretariat, and again the foreign/domestic policy orientation distinction was an important imput into coalition formation. Chairman of the Council of Ministers Tikhancv forwarded Chernenko's candidacy and, as in the Spring, Defense Minister Ustinov and Foreign Minister Gromyko were key supporters of Andropov. Policy, however, was not the sole determinent in the building of Andropov's winning coalition.

It is quite possible that no actual polling of the Politburo took place on November 10 in regard to the election of Brezhnev's succesor, save perhaps a formal unanimous vote after it had been established in the discussions that Andropov had acquired majority support among his

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[121] Wolfgang Leonhardt, "Die Wachablosung, Gedanken zu Breshnew un Andropow," Osteuroppa, March 1983, pp. 7-8.

collegues. Again, the key to Andropov's election was not the attainment of what Khrushchev derisively called "a mathematical majority." Rather, it was the fact that he first secured the support of senior Politburo members who could act as coalition builders and then the support of key swing votes. A schematicized version the architecture of coalition building on the question of electing a new General Secretary is shown in Table VII.

TABLE VII

Coalition Building on the Chernenko-Andropov Showdown

Coalition Builders	
Pro-Chernenko	Pro-Andropov
Chernenko	Andropov
Tikhonov	Gromyko
	Ustinov
Swing Votes	
Grishin	
Shcherbitskii	
Pel'she*	
Junior Members	
Gorbachev	
Romanov	
Kunaiev	
Non-Participant	
Kirilenko	

*Not present at the Kremlin meeting, but possibly consulted by telephone.

Of course, awaiting the publication of the minutes to the meeting that elected Andropov or the memoirs of one of the participants, a reconstruction of the events that took place must be to an extent speculative. The account presented here is consistent with the logic of Politburo coalition building.

Chernenko could call on the support of members most closely aligned with Brezhnev: Tikhonov and Kazakh First Secretary Kunaiev. Tikhonov's selection in 1978 to be First Deputy Chairman, Council of Ministers, in effect put him in line to become Kosygin's replacement, giving Brezhnev closer control over the Soviet Government, securing yet another high office for a member of Brezhnev's Dnepropetrovsk clique. Kunaiev owed his political fortunes completely to Brezhnev, their carreers rising and falling in unison. Kunaiev lost his post as Party Secretary in Kazakhstan when Brezhnev was 'demoted' in 1960 and gained the position back when Brezhnev came back into power in 1964. Chernenko could likely count on these two votes added to his own, and considering the outcome, that was perhaps the limit of his solid support.

Andropov's power base was more variegated. By all accounts Ustinov and Gromyko were the key members of the Andropov coalition; indeed Ustinov's backing was possibly decisive.[122] Ustinov is supposed to have nominated Andropov for the post of General Secretary at the Novemeber 10 meeting and Gromyko to have seconded the nomination.[123] This is supported by the fact that after Andropov's election, Ustinov and Gromyko both improved their rankings in the hierarchy and were especially prominent during the regular Central Committee Plenum held at the end of November.

If Chernenko's support came from the Politburo members closest to Brezhnev, the inverse was true of Andropov's support. Andropov benefitted from the fact that Suslov had remained an independent power broker in the Politburo during the Seventies, and that Suslov's clients as well as

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[122]Interview with Medvedev in La Repubblica (Rome), Jan 4, 1983, p.4.

[123]Leo Wieland, "End of the Dnepropetrovsk Clan," Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, Dec. 7, 1982.

Brezhnev's entered the Politburo during this period. In addition to Andropov himself, Gorbachev and Romanov were associated more closely with Suslov than Brezhnev. In addition to this Group, Moscow Party Boss Grishin, perhaps more than any of the other members of the Politburo, had an independent power base. Others such as Gromyko, who had been an ambassodor to the U.S.A. in the early forties, as well as Grishin, who had occupied high party posts since the Khrushchev era, were reportedly unhappy about Chernenko's swift rise in the hierarchy on Brezhnev's coattails since the late seventies. Additionally, Gromyko was thought to resent Chernenko's intrusions into the foreign policy sphere during Brezhnev's last years.

Considering the least influential members of the Politburo in the coalition building scheme, it is interesting to note Mikhail Gorbachev's prominence in the early Andropov regime, which suggest a political payback for his support of Andropov during the succession debate. From a policy point of view Gorbachev cannot be described as inimical to Chernenko's economic program. However, Gorbachev was connected with Andropov, however peripherally, through Suslov. And, as the most junior member of the collective, his influence was slight and he would naturally seek to vote with the majority. In any case, the junior members of the Politburo would not have an effect on the outcome unless they voted as a bloc, and by acquiring at least Gorbachev's vote Andropov could safely disregard this group. The key to Andropov's winning coalition lay in the votes of the swing group. When Andropov was able to secure the support of Grishin and Shcherbitskii, in addition to Ustinov, and Gromyko, his election was certain.

The decisive policy determinent that brought together Andropov's winning coalition was the differentiation of Andropov's and Chernenko's economic policy that occurred in

the summer, and the sense that the pace of social and economic change might be too swift under Chernenko. Chernenko had few ties to the constituencies upon which the regime based it stability: the defense establishment and the KGB. Regional Party leaders like Scherbitski, Romanov and Grishin may have been dubious of Chernenko advocacy of a "Leninist" style of leadership, party democracy, and economic restructuring.

Chernenko had committed a tactical blunder in a speech given in Tblisi at the end of October that may have alarmed his collegues. Chernenko stated:

> Unfortunately, there are still leaders who feel uncomfortable on a platform in front of the masses. But if they are competent people and principled and honest Communist, they have nothing to fear. Criticism from below, although, unpleasant, is necessary and useful to everyone.[124]

Elements of Chernenko's personal style may have weighed against him as well. Brezhnev himself described Chernenko as "restless" in a speech honoring Chernenko on the occasion of his obtaining the Order of Lenin. "You (familiar) are of course a restless man," Brezhnev continued, "But this is a good restlessness when you are thinking constantly of how you can do more and do it better for the country and for the working people. That is how a communist should be."[125] No doubt some of Chernenko's Politburo collegues were wary of the fact that the logic of Chernenko's party democracy carried to the extreme could mean dismissals of even Politburo members. On the other hand, Andropov was a known quantity and his tenure at the KGB indicated that he could be judicious as well as tough. Even among supporters,

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[124] Pravda, October 30, 1982, p.2.

[125] Radio Moscow, September 24, 1981. Reported in FBIS, Daily Report, Soviet Union, p. R1.

Chernenkc's political durability in the Post-Brezhnev era may have been suspect, since heretofor his political prominence had been exclusively due to Brezhnev's patronage.

Ancillary to the question of naming a successor to Brezhnev as General Secretary is the issue of who took over the command of the Soviet armed forces after Brezhnev's death. One of the pcsition's vacated by Brezhnev's passing was the chairmanship of the Defense Council, constitutionally the supreme command authority in the Soviet Union. It is supposed that its chairman, the post occupied by Brezhnev, is Commander-in -Chief of the Soviet Armed forces. Although it is logical to consider that Andropov now commands this authority by virtue of his being General Secretary of the CPSU, this fact has never been formally announced. Though it virtually certain that Andropov became the man with his "finger on the button," there are no known provisions for a smooth tranfer of this authority and there is some question as to just who was in control in the hours after Brezhnev died.

In 1953, Beria's political strength was enhanced by the fact that he had supervised the Soviet nuclear weapon's program prior to Stalin's death. The influence of the military has often been cited in Brezhnev's consolidation of power after the October 1964 coup. The fact that Brezhnev was probably designated the CC of the Soviet military by the October coup plotters is an aspect of Brezhnev's power consolidation that is overlooked. Brezhnev's control of the Soviet 'black box' was an unstated but potent bargaining chip in his power consolidation.

In regard to civilian control of the military, the Soviets prefer, in theory, to rule as a collective. However, the demands of command and control in the nuclear age makes imperative that the defense council grant certain provisional powers to its chairman as a requirement of

responding quickly to an emergency. No doubt the arrangements for a transfer of command authority was one of the first issues addressed after Brezhnev's death. It appears that Defense Minister Ustinov took control of the Soviet command authority as a temporary measure. This no doubt added weight to Ustinov's counsel at the Politburo meeting on November 10, perhaps even forcing the issue in favor of Andropov. During the Brezhnev funeral, Ustinov played a prominent role, giving a speech at the Brezhnev burial ceremonies and moving ahead of Grishin in the party hierarchy.

Ustinov was a part of the four man team in control during the Brezhnev funeral, which consisted of General Secretary Andropov, Chairman of the Council of Ministers Tikhonov, Party Secretary Chernenko, and Ustinov himself. It is intriguing that this group did not walk from the Trade Union Hall to Lenin's Mausoleum with the Brezhnev funeral cortege with the other members of the Politburo, but evidently were transported there in an armored limousine. It is quite possible that this arrangement was a result of requirements having to do with the Soviet command authority, especially since the group in the limousine with the addition of Gromyko were the Politburo members of the Defense Council during Brezhnev's absence in the Spring.[126] Although the Soviets have asserted that the Andropov accession met the requirements of a quick, smooth transition of power, this transition at the nexus of political control and military command authority was not as expeditious as the Soviets would have liked. Possibly, the multiple issues involved in the composition and control of the Defense Council were not solved until the round of Central Committee and Supreme Soviet meetings held later in November.

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[126]Soviet Television Broadcast of Brezhnev Funeral. Reported in FBIS, The Soviet Union, Daily Report November 15, 1982, p P8.

Brezhnev was buried at 12:45 in the afternoon on November 12 amid the greatest pomp of a Soviet State funeral since the death of Stalin, nearly thrty years previously. Gun salutes were fired in all major Soviet cities and work was to be stopped at all factories and enterprises at the moment of burial. Factory sirens and boat horns were sounded for three minutes. TASS even reported on the requiem mass said for Brezhnev's soul at the Moscow Cathedral. Patriarch Pimen, along with metropolitans, members of the Holy Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church celebrated the mass. TASS was careful to note that occasion of the mass was the "death of the President of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR," and not the General Secretary of the CPSU.[127]

Andropov, Ustinov, A.P. Aleksandrov, and Victor Pushkarev, a Moscow worker, gave adreesses at the funeral. Andropov's speech stressed continuity with the agenda of the final Brezhnev years.

> The party will continue to do everything necessary to further raise the living standards of the people, for developing the democratic mainstays of Soviet society, for strenghthening the the economic and defensive might of the country, and for strengthening the friendship of the fraternal peoples of the USSR... The CPSU will undeviatingly translate into life the decisions of 26th congress of the party and will of the Soviet people.[128]

It was noticeable that neither Tikhanov, as Head of Government, nor Chernenko, Brezhnev's closest friend in the Politburo, gave speeches, indicating that perhaps some wounds were leftover from the struggle to elect Brezhnev's successor.

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[127]TASS in English, Nov. 14, 1982, reported in FBIS, Daily Report, Soviet Union, November 15, 1982, p. P6-7.

[128]Ibid, p. P9-10.

Throughout the Brezhnev funeral, the standing of the the leadership was difficult to discern exactly, as individuals occupied various spots in the line-up to the right and left of Andropov during different phases of the ceremony. What was clear however was that Andropov, Tikhanov, Ustinov, and Chernenkc formed a special group in the leadership, as they did not walk in the procession from the House of Unions to the Lenin Mausoleum in Red Square, but were conveyed in limousines. After the speeches were given the leadership lined up to act as pall-bearers and then stood in roughly

TABLE VIII

Politburo Hierarchy at Brezhnev's Funeral

1. Andropov
2. Tikhanov
3. Chernenko
4. Ustinov
5. Gromyko
6. Grishin
7. Shcherbitskii
8. Gorbachev
9. Kunaiev

the same order at graveside (See Table VIII). The Brezhnev era closed when Brezhnev's coffin was somewhat unceremoniously dropped when workmen attempted to lower it into the grave. The dropping of Brezhnev's coffin was not intended to insult the memory of the late General Secretary, but millions of Soviet television viewers must have drawn exactly that conclusion.[129]

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[129]According to Zhores Medvedev, the incident was the result of poor Soviet workmanship: "Watching the funeral proceedings live on television in London, I first thought it was a deliberate symbol. Later I discovered that it was an

B. STALEMATE

Two questions emerged after Andropov's election: What would be the direction of Soviet Policy under Andropov? and, How quickly would Andropov consolidate his power? In regard to the policy issue, it is difficult to ascertain the extent to which new policy initiatives were implemented under Andropov. The issues commonly held to be Andropov initiatives, the campaign for labor discipline and some restructuring of the economy, are hardly new themes. There was a propaganda campaign for labor campaign under Brezhnev in the early seventies and the economic intensification issue certainly did not belong exclusively to Andropov. The lack of a clearly defined "Andropov Program" was related to the limitations placed on the General Secretary in the current collective leadership.

The issue which has received more than a mere gloss from Andropov was the anti-corruption drive. However, it would be wrong accept uncritically the commonly expressed assumption that Chernenko was the guardian of the Brezhnev system of cronyism and was thus inimical to the anti-corruption drive. In his June 1983 Plenum Speech, Chernenko was sharply critical of Soviet social scientists (which includes Brezhnev associates) and has removed personnel under his supervision, in spite of their long association with Brezhnev.

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accidental sign of the shoddiness which penetrated all segments of society during Brezhnev's years in power. It is said that although his coffin was made to normal Kremlin specifications, it was not strong enough to hold a heavy corpse. When the coffin was lifted to be placed on the catafalque for the lying in state on 12 November, the bottom collapsed and Brezhnev's body fell through the hole. Within a couple of hours a new metal-plated coffin was produced as a replacement. It was this change that caused the slip which millions of Soviet viewers watched in amazement. The two funeral attendents found... the (reinforced) coffin too heavy for them." (Zhores Medvedev, Andropov, pp. 23-4.)

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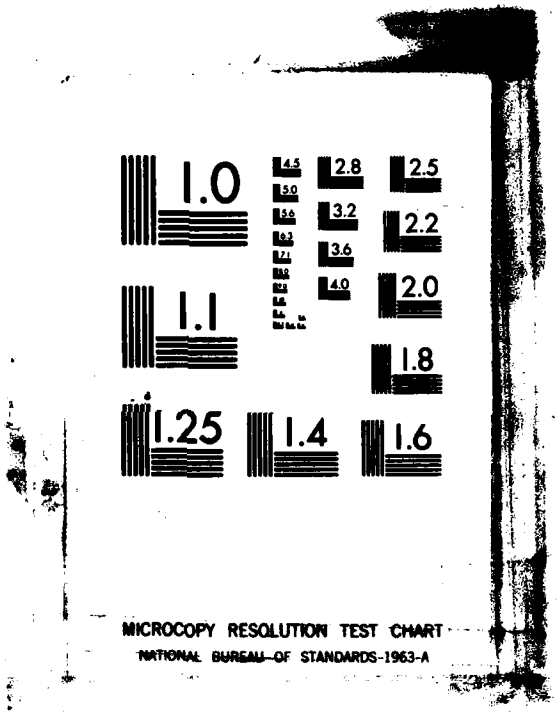
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Roy Medvedev has assessed the negligible changes of Andropov's first one hundred days as being a result of the Soviet method of transferring power.

> In the first 100 days since Brezhnev's death, there have been no changes even vaguely comparable with those which take place during a US President's first months in the White House. The new leader simply takes over the new leaders post, not his influence or power.[130]

Of course, this is a precise description of the inertia of the early Andropov era; however, such inertia is not inherent in the Soviet system. In fact the rule has been that periods of succession have involved policy shifts, as was the case with the dynamic policy reversals which occurred in the first hundred days of the Post-Stalin and Post-Khrushchev eras. The fact that this did not occur after Brezhnev is the result of two factors. First, as was the case after Lenin's death, there was a general satisfaction in the Post-Brezhnev era with the policies of the preceding leader. Secondly, Andropov's power in the Politburo was effectively checked by Chernenko's, resulting in a political stalemate.

Although the political stalemate resulted in a degree of lethargy in terms of policy formulations, Andropov's rule was a period of political tranquility dominated by a power-sharing modus vivendi between Andropov and Chernenko. The most graphic expresion of this arrangement was the exceptional formulation used in the prologue to the June (1983) Plenum Report in which Chernenko is invoked as giving the report that formed the basis of discussion for the Central Committee and Andropov is described as the head of the Politburo.[131] The Central Committee formula bears the same

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[130]"Andropov's First 100 Days," Dagens Nyheter, Feb. 22, 1983, p. 4.

[131]June (1983) Central Committee Resolution, reported by

mark of political compromise that was shown by the gesture of Chernerko nominating Andropov at both the Central Committee meeting in November 1983 that elected Andropov General Secretary and the Supreme Soviet Session in June 1984 that elected him as President of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet. Chernenko's language on these occasion also suggests compromise, not capitulation. For example, in nominating Andropov for President in June, he stated that the Politburo "found it expedient" that Andropov simultaneously hold the top party and state post.[132] One report elaborated on the power-sharing arrangement between Andropov and Cherneko by stating that when "Andropov went to Prague for an East Bloc summit conference in January, he appointed Chernenko as his deputy."[133]

The perhaps contentious nature of the political equilibrium of Andropov's term is suggested by the fact that absences due to illness among the top leadership engendered rumors of a power struggle. Andropov evidently required recuperation away from Moscow both during March and November of 1983 and Chernenko was absent from public view in April. Chernenko's absence from the April 22nd Lenin's Birthday celebration and Andropov's absence from the Nov 7th Great October Revolution day celebration indicated in retrospect only the frail health of the leadership. Alexander Bovin's commented on this issue:

> It would have been logical to talk of a power struggle before the power handover. But now that it has taken place, you can hardly talk of a power struggle. On the contrary, I think we now have a fairly well united

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TASS, June 15, 1983, reported in FBIS, The Soviet Union, Daily Report, June 16, 1983, p R 12.

[132]Robert Gillette, "Soviets name Andropov as President in Show of Unity," The Los Angeles Times, June 17, 1983, p.10.

[133]AFP in English (Paris), reported by FBIS, The Soviet Union, Daily Report, May 2, 1983, R3.

collective leadership. I see no signs of a power struggle and I am, after all, closer to the Kremlin than my honored friends, the Kremlinologist. It only takes me fifteen minutes on the bus to get to the Kremlin.[134]

In actuality the collective leadership was not informed by unified political objectives as Bovin suggested, but rather by the fact that a political stalemate had occured due to the equipoise in the Politburo between contending coalitions. Herein was the paradox of Andropov's consolidation of power. On the one hand, he acquired in a short period the offices of General Secretary (November 1983) and President of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet (June 1984). Additionally, by May 1984, he was publicly acknowledged as Chairman of the Defense Council and Head of the Politburo. In the the accumulation of honorifics, Andropov was certainly ahead of Brezhnev, for whom it took 17 months to acquire even the title of General Secretary (October 1964 to March 1966).

On the other hand, Andropov did not consolidate his power in terms of personnel appointments. There were few additions to the senior leadership, as Andropov did not set in motion the kind of client network needed to cement his leadership. In this regard, Andropov's long tenure at the KGB was an unfortunate hiatus from the Party Secretariat. Andropov's subordinates from his days as Party Secretary in the Sixties, of which Rusakov was perhaps the most prominent, were not likely to form a powerful client chain in themselves. In the same vein, Chernenko maintained his stature as a Senior Secretary. In the immediate Post-Succession period, he solidified his position as heir to Suslov, being elected to Suslov's old job as Chairmen of the Foreign Policy Commission of the Soviet of the Union at

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[134]Interview with Alexander Bovin, Dagens Nyheter (Stockholm), Feb. 27, 1983. p.10.

the same Supreme Soviet meeting that failed to elect Andropov President of the Presidium.

Andropov's failure to unambiguously consolidate power and Chernenko's continuation as a viable coalition leader was evidence of the power sharing that attended Andropov's tenure as General Secretary. Though apparently stable, the Post-Brezhnev system is inherently volatile, as any one of a number of critical issues may have an impact on the political struggle.[135] Thus the choice of a leader in a time of crises will be both an outcome and determinant of policy change. As Andropov and Chernenko represented in the Soviet decisionmaking process leaders around which groups representing foreign policy and domestic interests respectively might have coalesced, the decisive outcome of the leadership struggle in the Post-Brezhnev era will be a resolution of the corpeting interests of these constituencies.

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[135]Frane Barbieri suggests that the number of troublespots that the Politburo must engage necessitates that the current collective will break up:

> It is impossible to envisage without conflicts the leadership of a world power that is waging a direct war (In Afghanistan) and several wars via intermediate belligerent countries (In Asia and Africa), is involved in the quelling the rising of an entire nation in the context of empire (In Poland); and is itself experiencing the most profound domestic crisis. ("Andropov a Cautious #1," La Stampa (Turin), Dec. 12, 1982, pp. 1-2. Cf. #5 for Conquest's discussion of the inevitability of such disputes.

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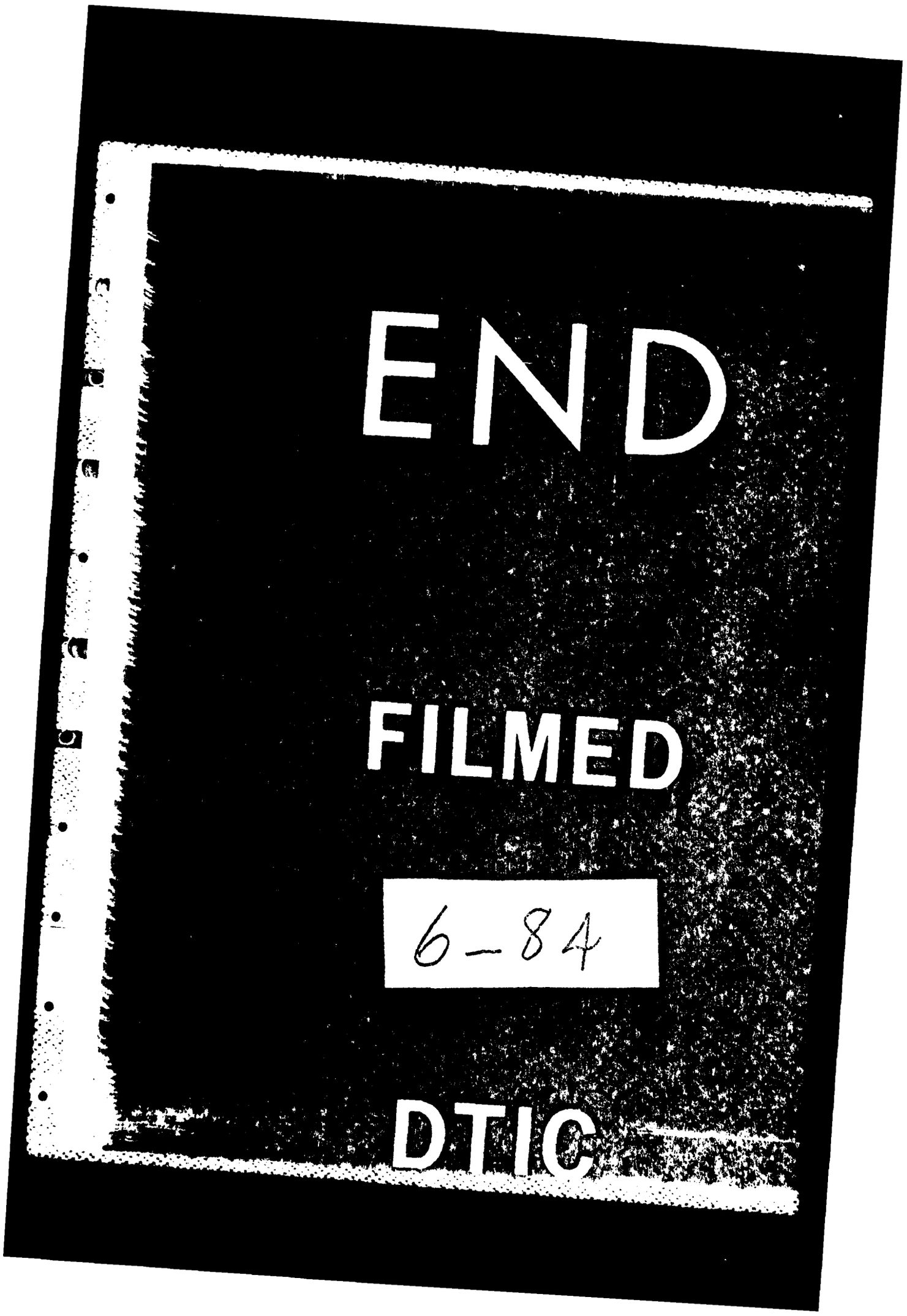
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