



Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

29 November 1982

*[Handwritten mark]*

Prime Minister

A.F.C.  $\frac{20}{11}$

*Jan John*

The Brezhnev Succession

/ Mr Pym thought the Prime Minister might find it  
/ helpful to see the enclosed copy of a submission from  
/ the Department, together with Sir J Bullard's covering  
/ minute, which attempts to distill impressions of the  
/ first two weeks of Andropov's tenure of the General  
/ Secretaryship of the CPSU.

/ You may also like to see the enclosed note by  
/ the Research Department on Andropov's past, and a recent  
/ letter from Bryan Cartledge in Budapest, which reports  
/ a view of Andropov from Hegedus, Prime Minister of  
/ Hungary during part of Andropov's period as Ambassador  
/ to Budapest in the mid-50s.

*Yes sir*

*[Handwritten signature]*

(R B Bone)  
Private Secretary

A J Coles Esq  
10 Downing Street

Sir J Bullard

cc: Mr Goodison  
Mr Gillmore  
Defence Department  
Planning Staff  
ACDD  
NAD  
WED  
Research Department

### THE BREZHNEV SUCCESSION

1. Andropov has now been General Secretary of the CPSU for two weeks. Following yesterday's unexpected failure to nominate a President it may be worth while trying to distill the impressions of these first two weeks.

#### The Man

2. The adjectives which occurred most frequently in Western reports of meetings with Andropov at Brezhnev's funeral were tough, intelligent, informed, assured. He clearly wished to project himself as the new boss. We should nevertheless remember that he is 68 and has already had at least one, and possibly as many as three heart attacks. He will not be in charge for another period of 18 years like Brezhnev. The other factor to be borne in mind is the weight and inertia, not to mention the vested interest of the Party and administrative bureaucracy, which any General Secretary inherits.

3. As far as the West is concerned, although Andropov has never, to our knowledge, visited a western country he is undoubtedly one of the best informed of the Politburo members.

#### The Message

4. Although there has been emphasis on continuity there have also been one or two interesting notes in the foreign policy field.

5. As far as foreign policy towards the West is concerned, there has been an interesting change of emphasis between the speeches made by Andropov at the Central Committee meeting at which he was chosen as General Secretary and the speech at Brezhnev's funeral and the Central Committee meeting on 22 November. In the earlier speeches Andropov referred to would-be aggressors being dealt a crushing retaliatory blow, to not begging for peace from the imperialists and relying

/on the



on the invincible might of the Soviet Armed Forces. These elements were absent from the 22 November speech. Although Andropov stressed the importance of 'maintaining our defence capability at a proper level' he gave great emphasis to the themes of detente and peace. Some of his other formulations could be interpreted as a desire for better East/West relations.

6. The other main foreign policy message is a desire for better relations with China.

7. Andropov has also highlighted Soviet economic failings. Although the themes stressed were the same as those picked out by Brezhnev on similar occasions, Andropov was particularly blunt. He spoke of extending the independence of enterprises and collective State farms, and said that there was a need to take account of 'the experience of fraternal countries' (probably Hungary). It is just possible that faced by the mounting problems of the Soviet economy Andropov might try bolder experiments than hitherto has been the case.

#### The Future

8. While, after two weeks it is clear that Andropov is firmly in the saddle his position is not quite as dominant as had been first supposed. The changes made at the Central Committee Plenum were nominal and the clear implication of the failure to elect a President was that there was disagreement which Andropov was unable to resolve. He will need time to consolidate his position and move his own supporters into key positions.

9. On the domestic front, the economy and corruption will be his main preoccupations. It will be interesting to see how strongly the campaign on the latter is pushed.

10. On the external front the overtures toward China are likely to be pursued vigorously. It is too soon to say whether there may be any change on defence or human rights (the easiest and least 'expensive' way of influencing Western public opinion would be to release The Siberian Seven, Shcharansky or another well known dissident). The course of the CSCE and Geneva negotiations will test that. Although there have been considerable rumours about movement on Afghanistan, the basic problems still remain and it is hard to see any rapid solution which would not entail an unacceptable climb-down on the Soviet part. And that is hardly the way in which Andropov would like to start his term of office.

*NHR A Broomfield*

N H R A Broomfield  
Eastern European and Soviet Department

26 November 1982

CONFIDENTIAL

Private Secretary

cc PS/Mr Hurd  
PS/Lord Belstead  
PS/Mr Rifkind  
PS/PUS  
Mr Wright  
FED

Mr Goodison  
Mr Gillmore  
Defence Dept  
Planning Staff  
ACDD  
NAD  
WED  
Research Dept

THE BREZHNEV SUCCESSION

1. I agree with Mr Broomfield's analysis. In Andropov we clearly have a much more thoughtful antagonist than Brezhnev was in his last years, and potentially much more active. I share Mr Broomfield's doubts as to whether a Soviet change of course in Afghanistan is really likely, but I would expect other developments in the relationship with China: the press is speculating about some adjustment of Soviet support for the Vietnamese adventure in Cambodia, and the Hungarian Ambassador today put his money on withdrawal of some of the Soviet defences on the Chinese border, adding the detail that the Mongolians themselves would welcome this. I also think it possible, as you know, that Andropov may propose a summit meeting with President Reagan. He may not be quite so dominant in Moscow as some had supposed: but the Germans say that when Andropov saw Carstens for an hour in Moscow, Gromyko (who has been Foreign Minister for 25 years) did not open his mouth.

2. You may like to send Mr Broomfield's minute to No 10, with or without my comments above.

*J Bullard*

26 November 1982

J L Bullard

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Mr Broomfield (EESD)

ANDROPOV

1. As Mr Murrell has told you we intend to produce a comprehensive note on Andropov incorporating all the strands of evidence we have about him. Meanwhile, the following are our views in the light of the many attempts that are being made to characterise his role in the past and project it into the future.

2. Andropov and Hungary. It goes without saying that Andropov's role in the Soviet invasion and the running of Hungary thereafter must have been considerable. His treatment of the then Hungarian leaders will have been as duplicitous as was required of him. But as Ambassador, and with Mikoyan from the Presidium and Serov of the KGB running the operation and frequently in Hungary, Andropov's role will have been that of the executive on the spot rather than the policymaker. As to his relations with Hungary since, he will have got to know Kádár, and the latter told ex-President Nixon that Andropov was a "moderate man, who knew Hungary well, a man with whom one can speak". Both his personal knowledge and his professional involvement with the Eastern European countries from 1957-67 presuppose that Andropov has followed the development of Hungary with attention and possibly sympathy. He may well want to draw on his experience of the Hungarian reform when he looks at the Soviet economy. But he will presumably be well aware of the many differences between the circumstances of the 2 economies.

3. Andropov and Czechoslovakia. As "bloc" secretary until mid-1967 and Chairman of the KGB thereafter, Andropov will have been closely involved throughout the development of the Prague Spring. But we have no evidence as to what advice he offered. At the time of the invasion he was still only a Candidate Member of the Politburo. His advice as Chairman of the KGB is most likely to have been confined to the feasibility of particular operations.

4. Andropov and Afghanistan. Kuzichkin's article in Time magazine of 22 November claims that the KGB warned against allowing Afghanistan to go Communist in 1978 and against the people whom the Politburo chose to back - Taraki and Amin. He does not actually claim that Andropov opposed the invasion. As Mr Beel has pointed out in recent minutes (attached for ease of reference) we do not know what Andropov's position actually was, but he is on record as justifying the Soviet intervention in standard and uncompromising terms. This would not prevent him from trying now to achieve a shift in the Soviet position. Presumably, if he had argued in the Politburo at an earlier stage that the Russians were slipping into a quagmire in Afghanistan, he will now be in a better position to persuade the rest of the Politburo of the soundness of his views.

5. Andropov and Poland. Andropov has also been closely involved, first in his capacity as Chairman of the KGB (he was one of the Soviet delegation which had talks with Polish leaders in early 1982),

/and



and latterly in Suslov's old job as Party Secretary responsible for foreign affairs.

6. Andropov and the dissident movement. Throughout the period that Andropov was head of the KGB, we noted that the Party had adopted a flexible policy of selective repression of individual dissidents, employing a variety of tactics, including exile and forcible incarceration in mental hospitals, assaults and harassment as well as actual deprivation of liberty. Andropov can presumably take much of the "credit" for this. In Monday night's Panorama programme Bukovsky (himself the beneficiary of an unprecedented exchange with the Chilean Communist leader Corvalán) pointed out that the essence of Andropov as chairman of the KGB was not whether he was "liberal" or "hard-line" but that he was clever and managed to achieve results (eg in the exiling of Sakharov and expulsion of Sdzhenitsyn) which satisfied the Politburo's requirements that dissidents should be silenced without totally antagonising the West.

7. Andropov the man. It is worth perhaps quoting 2 heads of missions reports from our Ambassadors in Budapest in 1954 and 1956, which do not suffer from the hindsight that is now colouring the reports of people who knew Andropov in those days: "He has a scholarly and serious aspect and is always to be seen deep in conversation with the Hungarian Party bosses. He has learned some English since he became Ambassador, and I find him consistently friendly" (1954). "With Westerners he sticks to generalities and the Party line, speaking in a monotonously high pitched unmodulated voice. He has recently made good progress with spoken English and seems to have more than a nodding acquaintance with English literature (his favourite writer, surprisingly is Oscar Wilde). He gives the impression of being shrewd rather than intelligent, and at present makes every protestation of friendship". (1956)

8. Granted that Oscar Wilde is in fact quite a well known author in the Soviet Union, these reports do seem to supply some basis for the consistent stories that Andropov is among the more sophisticated of the Politburo. But the best proof of his intellectual qualities has come in the last few months: firstly from the Finnish SDP Delegation who had talks with him in late October and were very impressed with him and his ability to speak straightforwardly and without notes; and secondly from the Americans and Germans, who have formed the same opinion since his election as General Secretary. But Harrison Salisbury claims Andropov listens to foreign English language broadcasts on his short-wave radio.

9. We should perhaps pay less attention to Andropov's purported interest in jazz, modern art etc. This seems fairly commonplace among the privileged class in the Soviet Union.

10. Conclusions. Any attempt to label Andropov as a "liberal" or a "hard-liner" is likely to be fruitless and misleading. What does emerge from this brief survey of Andropov's recent experience is that he has been very closely involved in all the major crises of the "socialist commonwealth" over the last 25 years. He is also a man capable of thinking for himself and apparently well-informed and confident in his dealings with Western statesmen. Privately, he may have opposed both the intervention in Czechoslovakia and the invasion of

/Afghanistan

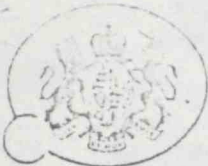


Afghanistan. But if he had pushed his opposition to any great lengths he would not have ended up where he has. He may well have argued against an invasion of Poland. If he has done these things, it will have been on the basis of a hard-headed assessment of where Soviet interests lay, not from any latent devotion to the Western concept of "liberalism".

*M B Nicholson*

M B Nicholson  
Soviet Section  
Research Department  
G52A/3 233 8076

19 November 1982



BRITISH EMBASSY

BUDAPEST

17 November 1982

N H R A Broomfield Esq  
EESD  
Foreign and Commonwealth Office  
LONDON SW1

*My Dear Miguel,*

ANDROPOV: HUNGARIAN REACTIONS AND RECOLLECTIONS

1. When he composed his 1956 despatch on "Hungary: Heads of Foreign Mission", Sir Leslie Fry had this to say about the future General Secretary of the CPSU:-

"Soviet Union

M. Iouri Andropov, Ambassador (July 26, 1954).

M. Andropov, who is not a professional diplomatist, attained some prominence in the Soviet hierarchy before the war, and during it was stationed at Murmansk, where it seems he was in the habit of exchanging vodka for whisky with British sailors. He now suffers from angina, however, and is usually on a teetotal regime. Of scholarly and serious aspect, he is frequently to be seen deep in conversation with the Hungarian Communist leaders: with Westerners he sticks to generalities and the party line, speaking in a monotonously high-pitched, unmodulated voice. He has recently made good progress with spoken English, and seems to have more than a nodding acquaintance with English literature (his favourite writer, surprisingly, is Oscar Wilde). He gives the impression of being shrewd rather than intelligent, and at present makes every protestation of friendship. His bustling wife has a remarkable capacity for hard liquor when she is not suffering unduly from high blood-pressure; and her standard of dress is steadily improving."

2. Andropov was Counsellor and Charge d'Affaires, and subsequently Soviet Ambassador in Budapest from 1953 to 1957. His role in the Soviet suppression of the 1956 uprising is well known. It was to Andropov that Janos Kadar declared that he would fight Soviet tanks "with his bare hands" if they returned to Budapest: and it was probably Andropov's advice which resulted in the selection of Kadar to lead the reconstituted Hungarian Communist Party (HSWP) and to preside over the reconsolidation of Soviet power in Hungary. As a result of his time in Budapest, and from

/other

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other connections with Hungary, Andropov is perhaps better known to the Hungarians than to any other non-Soviet people. His son, Igor, a professional diplomat currently serving with the Soviet Delegation in Madrid, apparently spent his formative years in Budapest, is said to speak good Hungarian and to be a close friend of Janos Berecz, former Head of the International Department of the Central Committee of the HSWP and now editor of the Party daily Nepszabadsag. Andropov's daughter is said to be married to Dr Adam Juhasz, a State Secretary in the Ministry of Industry who studied in the Soviet Union. I hope that in the next few months we shall be able to identify and talk to some of the people who knew Andropov during his time here.

3. As a first step, John Birch today sought out, at his flat, Andras Hegedüs, who was Hungarian Prime Minister from 1955 to 1956, when he was displaced by Imre Nagy and went to live in the Soviet Union. Hegedüs is now a dissident Marxist academic and lives privately in Budapest. Hegedüs said that he had known Andropov very well between 1953 and 1956. He recalled that in 1953 the Soviet Union had become alarmed at rural unrest in East Germany and had feared that it might spread to other socialist countries. Andropov was then Counsellor in the Soviet Embassy and headed the Russian team that, together with the Hungarians, drew up plans for agricultural reform. Hegedüs, as Deputy Prime Minister and Ministry of Agriculture, went on many visits to the countryside with Andropov. Unlike other Soviet officials, Andropov apparently approached the problem with a relatively open mind and a willingness to learn. He was skilful in handling local Party and agricultural officials, alert to the unrest in the countryside and willing to recommend changes even though they cut across accepted doctrine. Hegedüs recalled a long air journey from Moscow to Budapest in the company of Andropov and the then Secretary-General of the Belgian Communist Party. The Belgian had argued that under capitalism the lot of the peasantry would become worse and worse; Hegedüs contended that the facts proved this Marxist doctrine to be false and Andropov supported him.

4. Hegedüs continued to see Andropov regularly when he became Soviet Ambassador in 1954 and found him a good and easy person to do business with. He said that he was not an intellectual but was nevertheless very intelligent and always willing to listen to the Hungarian viewpoint. Hegedüs last saw Andropov in 1956 and had no contact with him during his years of exile in the Soviet Union: he accepted that his views were formed long ago and that much could have changed. He had not seen Andropov as General Secretary material: he thought that Andropov probably lacked the steel to drive to the top. Furthermore, he had been Soviet Ambassador in a country which had risen against the Soviet Union and consequently seemed a poor bet

/for





for advancement. In a sense, however, Kadar had rescued Andropov, since Kadar was Andropov's choice in 1956 as the leader of the new Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party and he had made a success of it; reports of a personal bond between the two men were not just propaganda. Andropov had spoken quite good and fluent Hungarian by the time he left and his association with Hungary had been maintained. Hegedüs said that he knew from his friends in the Central Committee that news of Andropov's election had been received with relief, even elation. He suspected that the eventual outcome had been known to the Hungarian leadership much earlier in the year. His own assessment was that Andropov would not attempt to rein in Kadarism and that he would have a more subtle touch in relations with other socialist countries.


5. There are, as Hegedüs implied, indications that the leadership of the HSWP may have known of the choice of Andropov to replace Brezhnev for a considerable time, perhaps even for months. The selection of Sandor Rajnai to succeed Szürös as Hungarian Ambassador in Moscow probably owed a good deal to the fact that Rajnai had been responsible for Hungarian/Soviet relations in the Hungarian MFA during Andropov's mission here and therefore knew him well. As Hegedüs said, Andropov is regarded here as a man who knows Hungary and understands "Kadarism". He is reported - how reliably I cannot yet judge - to have favoured economic reform and to have resisted arguments by Politburo colleagues in favour of putting pressure on Hungary to end the reform process. Although no immediate changes are foreseen in Soviet/Hungarian relations, it seems to be assumed in official circles that ideological constraints on economic and political reform will be reduced as a result of Andropov's appointment.

6. The reaction of ordinary Hungarians is more cautious and there are naturally those for whom Andropov personifies everything which they detest about the Soviet Union, exemplified by its invasion of Hungary in 1956. To them, Andropov is the cynical liar who denied that the Red Army was returning to Budapest. His tenure as Chairman of the KGB is seen as the worst period of persecution and repression in the Soviet Union since Stalin died. To such people, Andropov's new pre-eminence brings no encouragement.

7. We are reporting separately on the manner in which Brezhnev's death and Andropov's appointment was treated publicly here. In short it was matter-of-fact, almost indifferent. The present mood seems to be one of "business as usual" with the Russians but with some expectation that Hungary will now be accorded

/preferential





preferential treatment within the bloc. It remains to be seen how realistic this expectation may be.

Yours ever,

Bryan.

Bryan Cartledge

cc: HM Representatives at: Moscow  
Warsaw  
Prague  
East Berlin  
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