

2011

Andropov and the U.S. media : a comparative study of Yuri Andropov's premiership of the USSR as viewed through the New York Times and the Chicago Tribune

Frederick S. Schultz
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A Thesis

entitled

Andropov and the U.S. Media: A Comparative Study of Yuri Andropov's Premiership of
the USSR as viewed through the New York Times and the Chicago Tribune

by

Frederick S. Schultz

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty as partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
Master of Liberal Arts Degree

Michael Jakobson, PhD., Committee Chair

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The University of Toledo
May 2011

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An Abstract of

Andropov and the U.S. Media: A Comparative Study of Yuri Andropov's Premiership of the USSR as viewed through the *New York Times* and the *Chicago Tribune*

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Yuri Vladimirovich Andropov was the leader of the Soviet Union from November 12, 1982 until his death on February 9, 1984. During this period, Yuri Andropov was reported on extensively in the *New York Times* and *Chicago Tribune*. The polemical cleavage between the traditionally left-wing *New York Times* and the right-wing populist *Chicago Tribune* was minimal in their respective coverage of Andropov's tenure as General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. Notwithstanding the issue of nuclear arms control, the Left-Right deviation between the two newspapers did not exist. Both newspapers exhibited a center-right orientation in their coverage of Mr. Andropov in particular and the Soviet Union as a whole.

In memory of Raymond J. Kelly, Jr.

Acknowledgements

This monograph would not have been possible without the love and support I received from my mother, Mary E. Kenney; and sister, Major Corey Schultz, USA. Without their love and financial support this thesis would not have been possible. Furthermore, my mother's willingness to utilize her skills as an archivist allowed her to provide me with numerous articles used in the thesis.

I would also like to thank Dr. Michael Jakobson of the University of Toledo's history department who advised me on this project; his knowledge of Russian and Soviet history has been an invaluable resource since my undergraduate years. Dr. Margarita Balmaceda, who over a decade ago encouraged me to investigate the history and development of the KGB during and after the Soviet period. Finally, I would like to thank Dr. Andrea Graziosi for encouraging me to research a topic relating to Yuri Andropov.

Table of Contents

Abstract	iii
Acknowledgements	v
Table of Contents	vi
List of Figures	x
List of Abbreviations	xi
Preface	xii
I. The Articles and the Analysis	1
A. Article Number One: “Yuri V. Andropov”, <i>New York Times</i> , November 11, 1982	1
B. Article Number Two: “Top Leaders in Kremlin and Men Believed Likely to Figure in the Succession”, <i>New York Times</i> , November 12, 1982	2
C. Article Number Three: “Ex-Chief of KGB: New Communist Leader Emphasizes ‘Invincible Might’ of Military,” John F. Burns, <i>New York Times</i> , November 12, 1982	4
D. Article Number Four: “A Polished Party Man: Yuri Vladimirovich Andropov”, Serge Schmemmann, <i>New York Times</i> , November 13, 1982	6
E. Article Number Five “New Chief: Tough, Shrewd and Worldly,” Hendrick Smith, <i>New York Times</i> , November 13, 1982	7
F. Article Number Six “Andropov Is Added to Top State Body,” <i>New York Times</i> , November 24, 1982	7
G. Article Number Seven “Most likely candidates for top post,” Howard A Tyner, <i>Chicago Tribune</i> , November 12, 1982	8
H. Article Number Eight “Few policy shifts by Kremlin seen,” Howard A Tyner, <i>Chicago Tribune</i> November 12, 1982	9
I. Article Number Nine “Inside Andropov’s Mind,” William Safire, <i>New York Times</i> , October 11, 1982	11

J. Article Number Ten “Washington Reacts: Clark Informs Reagan- Official Says President May Go to Funeral,” Hendrick Smith, <i>New York Times</i> , November 11, 1982	13
K. Article Number Eleven “After Brezhnev,” Flora Lewis, <i>New York Times</i> , November 12, 1982	14
L. Article Number Twelve “TASS Statement on Choice of Andropov as Party Chief,” reprinted in the <i>New York Times</i> , November 13, 1982	15
M. Article Number Thirteen “A legacy of contrasts for Andropov: Old problems still plague Soviet Union,” Howard A. Tyner, <i>Chicago Tribune</i> , November 12, 1982	17
N. Article Number Fourteen “U.S. views Andropov as diplomat,” <i>Chicago Tribune</i> , November 13, 1982	18
O. Article Number Fifteen “Soviets elect Andropov to No. 1 post,” Howard A. Tyner, <i>Chicago Tribune</i> , November 13, 1982	20
P. Article Number Sixteen “So Tango,” <i>New York Times</i> , November 14, 1982	22
Q. Article Number Seventeen “The Scrutable Kremlin,” Russell Baker, <i>New York Times</i> , November 17, 1982	24
R. Article Number Eighteen “Yuri Andropov, the ‚liberal’,” <i>Chicago Tribune</i> , November 14, 1982	24
S. Article Number Nineteen “Military likely had big say in Andropov’s rise,” Howard A. Tyner, <i>Chicago Tribune</i> , November 13, 1982	25
T. Article Number Twenty “The Strategic Tango,” Tom Wicker, <i>New York Times</i> , November 28, 1982	26
U. Article Number Twenty-One “Inside Andropov’s Mind (2),” William Safire, <i>New York Times</i> , December 6, 1982	28
V. Article Number Twenty-Two “Cross in the Cross Hairs,” William Safire, <i>New York Times</i> , December 16, 1982	29
W. Article Number Twenty-Three “China Says It Awaits Concessions From the New Soviet Leadership,” Christopher S. Wren, <i>New York Times</i> , November 26, 1982	31

X. Article Number Twenty-Four “Theater Nuclear Politics,” Anthony Lewis, <i>New York Times</i> , December 27, 1982	32
Y. Article Number Twenty-Five “Kremlin watchers need tea leaves,” James Yuenger, <i>Chicago Tribune</i> , November 15, 1982	33
Z. Article Number Twenty-Six “Chernenko is seen as president,” <i>Chicago Tribune</i> , November 16, 1982	34
AA. Article Number Twenty-Seven “Shultz plays down new mood music from Soviets,” John Maclean, <i>Chicago Tribune</i> , November 19, 1982	35
BB. Article Number Twenty-Eight “Reagan bid to Soviets: Andropov takes tough line toward West,” Howard A. Tyner, <i>Chicago Tribune</i> , November 23, 1982	37
CC. Article Number Twenty-Nine “Let’s Negotiate With Andropov,” W. Averell Harriman, <i>New York Times</i> , January 2, 1983	38
DD. Article Number Thirty “Inside Andropov’s Mind (3),” William Safire, <i>New York Times</i> , January 3, 1983	39
EE. Article Number Thirty-One “U.S. Terms Moscow’s Criticism a Ploy,” Bernard Gwertzman, <i>New York Times</i> , January 3, 1983	40
FF. Article Number Thirty-Two “Andropov gives workers a pep talk in rare visit to factory,” Howard A. Tyner, <i>Chicago Tribune</i> , February 1, 1983	40
GG. Article Number Thirty-Three “An internal critic is silenced,” I.F. Stone, <i>Chicago Tribune</i> , February 4, 1983	41
HH. Article Number Thirty-Four “Andropov’s Tall Order: Rousing the Loafers,” John F. Burns, <i>New York Times</i> , January 4, 1983	42
II. Article Number Thirty-Five “Andropov has shown his style, but substance remains hidden,” Howard A. Tyner, <i>Chicago Tribune</i> , February 20, 1983	42
KK. Article Number Thirty-Six “A news flash for Soviet citizens: Their troops are in a war,” Howard A. Tyner, <i>Chicago Tribune</i> , March 13, 1983	43
LL. Article Number Thirty-Seven “Hospitalization of Andropov told,” <i>Chicago Tribune</i> , March 25, 1983	43

MM. Article Number Thirty-Eight “Andropov rips Reagan plan as road to nuclear war,” <i>Chicago Tribune</i> , March 27, 1983	43
NN. Article Number Thirty-Nine “Reagan and Andropov,” James Reston, <i>New York Times</i> , January 8, 1983	44
OO. Article Number Forty “War of Secrets,” William Safire, <i>New York Times</i> , April 28, 1983	45
PP. Article Number Forty-One “The Soviet Union,” Marshall I. Goldman, <i>New York Times</i> , August 14, 1983	46
QQ. Article Number Forty-Two “Under Andropov, Policeman’s Lot Isn’t Happy One,” John F. Burns, <i>New York Times</i> , August 14, 1983	47
RR. Article Number Forty-Three “Who Decides in Russia?” Flora Lewis, <i>New York Times</i> , September 6, 1983	48
SS. Article Number Forty-Four “Andropov’s rival misses Politburo meeting,” <i>Chicago Tribune</i> , April 19, 1983	50
TT. Article Number Forty-Five “The Americanization of Andropov,” Bill Lewis, <i>Chicago Tribune</i> , April 23, 1983	50
UU. Article Number Forty-Six “Ask old peace-loving Yuri,” Michael Kilian, <i>Chicago Tribune</i> , May 20, 1983	51
VV. Article Number Forty-Seven “Ailing Soviet leader cancels 2 meetings,” <i>Chicago Tribune</i> July 5, 1983	52
WW. Article Number Forty-Eight “Andropov urges reforms to boost Soviet economy,” <i>Chicago Tribune</i> , August 16, 1983	53
XX. Article Number Forty-Nine “For a hardheaded détente,” Richard Nixon, <i>Chicago Tribune</i> , October 4, 1983	53
ZZ. Article Number Fifty “Andropov Improving, Top Soviet Aid Says,” <i>New York Times</i> , January 7, 1984	54
II. Conclusion: Exit Stage Right	55
References	65

List of Figures

Figure 1. Portrait of Yuri Vladimirovich Andropov.....	xii
Figure 2. Portrait of Mikhail Suslov.....	3
Figure 3. Transcript from the Central Committee, Communist Party Soviet Union December 10, 1979.....	9
Figure 4. Cartoon of the Russian Bear consuming Korean Airlines Flight 007.....	49

List of Abbreviations

BAM.....Baikal-Amur Mainline
CC.....Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
CIA.....Central Intelligence Agency
COMECON.....Council of Mutual Economic Assistance
CPSU.....Communist Party of the Soviet Union
Cheka.....All-Russian Extraordinary Commission for Combating Counter-Revolution and Sabotage
FBI.....Federal Bureau of Investigation
GOSPLAN.....State Committee for [economic] Planning
GS.....General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
INF.....Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty
ICBM.....Intercontinental Ballistic Missile
IRBM.....Intermediate-Range Ballistic Missile
KAL.....Korean Airlines
KGB.....Committee for State Security
MAD.....Mutually Assured Destruction
MIRV.....Multiple Individually Targeted Re-Entry Vehicle
MX.....Missile Experimental also known as “Peacekeeper”
MVD.....Ministry of Internal Affairs
NATO.....North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NKVD.....People’s Commissariat for Internal Affairs
PRC.....People’s Republic of China
RIA [*Novosti*].....Russian International News Agency
RF.....Russian Federation
SALT..... Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty
START.....Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty
SDI.....Strategic Defense Initiative
TASS..... Telegraph Agency of the Soviet Union
USSR.....Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

Preface



Figure 1 Portrait of Yuri Vladimirovich Andropov

The sudden collapse of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) in August, 1991 combined with a prevailing moral framework for analysis has discouraged literatures on Soviet leaders from the death of Josef Stalin to the rise of Mikhail Gorbachev for a variety of reasons. Firstly, the leaders after Stalin had survived the terror and emerged from, to quote Moshe Lewin, a „ruling class without tenure.’¹ Therefore, it was the goal of the post-Stalin leaders to prevent a new terror and support the

¹ Moshe Lewin, „The Social Background of Stalinism’, in *Stalinism: Essays in Historical Interpretation*, ed. Robert C. Tucker, (New York: W. W. Norton 1977), p.130

bureaucracy which buttressed their leadership. In turn, the leaders sought to “normalize” tenure of the ruling *nomenklatura* and prevent systematic disruption within domestic interest groups and, by extension, foreign policy.

Secondly, none of the Soviet leaders in this period of interregnum between Stalin and Gorbachev had any sensational appeal to Western journalists Khrushchev notwithstanding. The personage of Yuri Vladimirovich Andropov encouraged no positive dialog within Western media outlets for Andropov surfaced, surprisingly, from the ranks of the KGB and not the Communist Party to become General Secretary (GC) in November 1982. The West’s only reference point to Andropov was the role he played in crushing the Hungarian uprising and the fact that he was Chairman of the KGB. From a humanitarian perspective the opinion was generally negative, and this viewpoint does much to taint the reporting within the American press without considering the greater problems facing the USSR during the 18 months Andropov was GC.

Andropov was brutal and as historian Andrea Graziosi states, “a believer in socialism in a Soviet sense,”² but he also understood the desperate situation the Soviet economy was in and did attempt to instill discipline and reform within the system.

Thirdly, American historiography has been affected by the United States’ victory in the Cold War. Francis Fukuyama famously declared that history was no longer relevant due to the triumph of liberal democracy over every form of government.³ This has allowed a certain level of “schematic intellectual hubris” to blur the vision of many students of Russian and Soviet history.

² Interview by author, April 16, 2010

³ Francis Fukuyama, “The End of History?”, *National Interest*, Summer 1989

This paper is intended to mitigate the bias of the third conceptual point by objectively analyzing two American newspapers of record, the *New York Times* and *Chicago Tribune*, in a comparative format during the period of Andropov's leadership in the USSR from November 12, 1982 until his death on February 9, 1984. The comparison of the two newspapers will provide the reader with a specific example of what historian Martin Malia has called, within the context of Western views of the Soviet Union, „a kaleidoscope of conflicting perceptions.’⁴

My research will attempt to contribute something to what is presently the general lacking of historical scholarship on the leadership of Andropov as viewed from a succinctly American perspective. Even with the collapse of the USSR and the subsequent opening of the Soviet archives, Andropov remains a distant and mysterious figure who is largely written off as thug and career *apparatchik* of the KGB.

However, the fact that Andropov became the leader of the country from the shadowy world of the security services is a historical distinction that is shared only by former President and current Prime Minister of the Russian Federation Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin. Both men are considered “hardliners” by American media outlets, yet the focus of their reforms, especially regarding the Soviet/Russian economy are largely overlooked in the popular press.

There are certainly historical antecedents to suggest that the police state that existed in the USSR were formed in tsarist times. Historian Richard Pipes points out that “the Cheka and its successors assimilated the practices of the tsarist state police to such an extent that as late as the 1980s, the KGB distributed to its staff manuals prepared by

⁴ Martin Malia, *Russia Under Western Eyes: From the Bronze Horseman to the Lenin Mausoleum*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1999), p.293

the Okhrana [tsarist secret police] nearly a century earlier.”⁵ Putin certainly would have been exposed to the protocols followed by the KGB as he entered the service in 1975. However, this paper is not intended to be a comparative study on the regimes of Andropov and Putin. This point is made to show the importance of using history as a tool to analyze the present and future leaders of the Russian Federation.

It is important to remember that the comparative analysis made in this paper does little to take into account, other than by caveat, the Soviet viewpoint. American media sources, as this paper points out, were quite uniform in their criticisms of the Soviet system. Therefore, the expected opposition from the *New York Times* in comparison to the *Chicago Tribune* and vice-versa, is not always apparent.

The theoretical question of whether or not American media became uniform in its opposition to the Soviet Union does not represent the main thrust of this work. It is however important to qualify this as not a comparative work on the Cold War historicities of the United States and the Soviet Union, but a comparative work between two newspapers with the American Cold War context.

The research herein supports a theory of harmony within the *Time's* and *Tribune's* approach to the Soviet Union in general, and specifically toward the figure of Andropov. There are important differences, somewhat subtle in nature, between the two newspapers and these differences will be highlighted in the monograph.

The articles which comprise the background of this monograph feature two of the more heralded writers of the Cold War period; William Safire of the *Times* and Howard A. Tyner of the *Tribune*.

⁵ Richard Pipes, *A Concise History of the Russian Revolution*, (New York: Vintage Books, 1995), p. 399

Safire, who previously served as a speechwriter for President Richard M. Nixon and was the target of National Security Advisor Henry Kissinger's "national security" wiretaps, was viewed as a darling by the American Left especially in the aftermath of the Watergate scandal. However, this view is not appropriate for Safire's political affiliation was quite moderate and his popularity among the Left was increased by the chance that Kissinger had his phone tapped. In reality, Safire was more of a "Rockefeller Republican," meaning he balanced moderately conservative views on business with a more progressive approach to social policy. He also took a hard-line on foreign policy.

Tyner, who was Moscow bureau chief for the *Tribune* when Andropov was GC, possessed political views which were more in line with the conservative principles harbored by America's industrial and agricultural heartland. The Taft Republicans and hardened populists such as Wisconsin Senator Joseph McCarthy and Father Charles Coughlin were viewed favorably by the *Tribune* notwithstanding McCarthy and Coughlin's Roman Catholicism.

Regardless of personal background of writers such as Tyner and Safire, and the newspapers they wrote for in general, the differences in viewpoint vis-à-vis the Soviet Union were minimal at best. The lack of a stark contrast between the reporting of the *Times* and *Tribune* should not frustrate the reader, but serve as an example of the popular approach of the United States toward the Soviet Union during the later periods of the Cold War and during the reign of Andropov in particular. This conformity as well as the minute differences in reporting should interest the historian in the continuing attempt to understand this important part of world history.

Finally, a note should be made on the benefit of being able to obtain significant archival evidence from both the United States and the Russian Federation which serve as

a benchmark for analyzing the historical accuracy of the articles examined in his monograph.

Chapter One

The Articles and the Analysis

Article Number One: “Yuri V. Andropov”, *New York Times*, November 11, 1982

The above article ran in the *Times* on the day before Andropov publicly became leader of the Soviet Union. It included a simple enunciation of Mr. Andropov’s official history, as reported by Soviet media sources (e.g., TASS, RIA Novosti). The article states that Mr. Andropov, as KGB Chief, „was credited with restraining the agency’s excesses.’ The article does not define what the term excesses refer to, but presumably it references the KGB’s consistent violations of human rights standards. This begs the question: was Mr. Andropov a reformer or did he simply represent the logical evolution of the unwinding of the Stalinist state within the confines of Soviet bureaucracy? The article is not clear on this matter and appears to be biased only in as much as U.S. presuppositions on the USSR existed.

The American viewpoint on human rights is rather schizophrenic and lacked self-consciousness. As historian John Gaddis has written, the United States is selectively self-interested or disinterested in their actions within the international systems based on national interests.⁶ My intent here is not to justify the actions of the Committee for State Security (KGB), but simply to inform the reader that any reform within the system would not be viewed as important by the majority of the U.S. press for the organization had been written off long before as “evil.” Whether or not this was true is not the point, but history is concerned with postulating what actually happened and then proscribing a value judgment to the organization based on a historical continuum.

⁶ John Lewis Gaddis, *The United States and the End of the Cold War: Implications, Reconsiderations, Provocations* (New York; Oxford University Press, 1992), p.10

To suggest that Andropov was the same in his thinking as former Chekist chiefs Lavrenti Beria or Genrikh Yagoda is to accept that the Soviet bureaucracy produced and controlled Stalin and not vice-versa.

Article Number Two: “Top Leaders in Kremlin and Men Believed Likely to Figure in the Succession”, *New York Times*, November 12, 1982

The above article ran in the *Times* on the day that Andropov officially became leader of the Soviet Union. Whereas this was an established fact in the USSR, it had yet to be confirmed by Western media outlets.

The article list four possible candidates to succeed the recently deceased Leonid I. Brezhnev as General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (GS). The candidates included the following: Yuri V. Andropov, Konstantin Ustinovich Chernenko, Viktor Vasilyevich Grishin, and Andrei Andreyevich Gromyko.

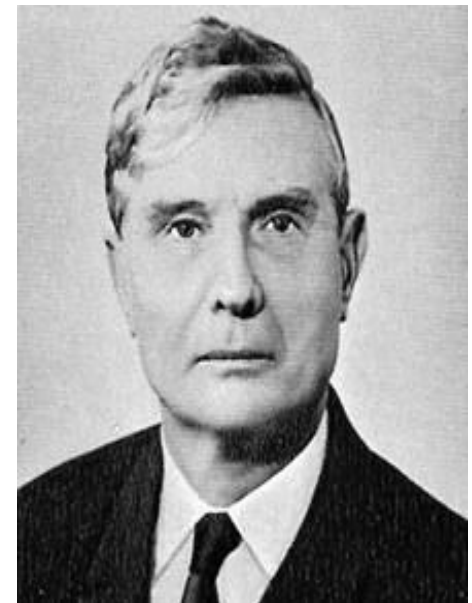
The article cites the fact that Andropov was chosen to be the head of the funeral commission for Brezhnev as a likely sign that he was indeed tabbed to succeed the departed native of Dnepropetrovsk, Ukraine. Subsequently, the historical record indicates that the *Times* was correct in its estimation of Andropov as successor.

The article cites the historical fact that Andropov’s heading of the KGB was a „poor springboard’ to the position of General Secretary. In turn, when Andropov left the position as KGB Chief in May1982 to rejoin the secretariat of the Central Committee, this move may have been a sign that he was being groomed to be Brezhnev’s successor. Again, the *Times* commentary here has historical credence and merit. Generally speaking, this article is in line with the *Times*’ stated mission as being a paper of record and the article appears to report historical facts on the life of Mr. Andropov. However, the history is reported in a traditional linear chronology which allows the reader to believe that

Andropov's career began as a low-level party apparatchik in the Komsomol leading through ambassadorial appointments in Hungary, etc. The Western lens did not understand that the appointment as Ambassador to Hungary was a demotion after the de-Stalinization campaign of Khrushchev.

Sovietologists Arnold Beichman and Mikhail Bernstam (1983), suggest that Andropov's banishment to Hungary came as a result of his involvement with a "Brotherhood" of ideologues, which was led by Mikhail A. Suslov, and intended to help execute Stalin's second purge against Beria, Khrushchev and other members of the Central Committee apparatus. Stalin's untimely death prevented a second purge from taking place. Ironically, as Khrushchev defeated Beria and eventually Molotov, Voroshilov, Kaganovich, and Malenkov; he did so at the expense of turning to Suslov's Brotherhood for help. Khrushchev was able to turn to Suslov for help because he had been rehabilitated around 1954-1955.

Figure 2 Portrait of Mikhail Andreyevich Suslov



Eventually, Khrushchev was overtaken by the Brotherhood and one of its own, Leonid Brezhnev, rose to power. In the end, Andropov's rise to power was represented the two-decade long process of reinstating Stalinism by Suslov's „cabal.”⁷

Beichman and Bernstam's argument makes sense in a chronological framework. Suslov *et. al* lost significant power immediately following Stalin's demise, but were rehabilitated within four to five years. However, to suggest anyone within the Soviet

⁷ For more see Arnold Beichman and Mikhail S. Bernstam, *Andropov: New Challenge to the West* (Briar Manor, New York: Stein and Day, 1983), pp. 161-172

Union desired a return to Stalinism and the terror which went along with it is an extrapolation of history.

Therefore, hindsight being twenty-twenty, we know that Andropov's career was not that of a typical American politician who starts at lower levels of government and eventually runs for the presidency after creating enough political momentum. An accurate comparison to Andropov in the U.S. context would be the career of Richard M. Nixon, who after suffering defeat in the California governor's race ascended to the Presidency in 1968.

It is important to emphasize that the *Times* does not offer a particular political perspective on the personage of Andropov; if anything this article appears to take a "wait and see" approach to the new leader. This article does not exhibit any polemics.

Article Number Three: "Ex-Chief of KGB: New Communist Leader Emphasizes „Invincible Might' of Military," John F. Burns, *New York Times*, November 12, 1982

The article comments on Andropov's rhetoric on the foreign policy of Brezhnev and focuses specifically on the approach the newly elected GS would have towards arms control. Furthermore, Mr. Burns provides a general excursus on past power-sharing arrangements within the CPSU and what these arrangements might mean for Andropov's leadership. He also comments on Andropov's view of the current state of the Soviet economy.

Andropov is quoted by Burns as stating that Brezhnev was a „tireless fighter for peace' and praised him for „removing the threat of world nuclear war hanging over mankind.'

Within the context of the same speech, Andropov mentioned the necessity of increased vigilance by the Soviet armed forces. „We know well that the imperialists will

never meet one's pleas for peace. It [peace] can only be defended by relying on the invincible might of the Soviet armed forces.'

Andropov was showing deference to the military by playing to the armed forces predisposed mentality to respect strength. It would be rash to suggest that this necessarily meant Andropov intended to have a more aggressive stance toward arms-control agreements vis-à-vis the United States; the speech was intended to pay homage to the organs of Soviet power in which the military played a significant role.

Burns' article comments on the remarks made by Konstantin Chernenko on the importance of party unity and thus may have indicated that Andropov would not have unilateral control over all elements of the power organs. Burns hints that Andropov and Chernenko could have been headed for a power sharing government similar to the first few years of Brezhnev's rule in which then Prime Minister Alexi Kosygin played a significant role.

Burns is careful to point out Andropov's remarks about the necessity of reform within the Soviet economy; Chernenko's comments that 'we [USSR] have a detailed, balanced socioeconomic program,' differed from Andropov's remarks and corresponding actions as GS.

This article is important for numerous reasons. First, Burns begins to formulate an opinion on Andropov's future policies many of which were true. Andropov certainly attempted to reform the economy, even though he proved unsuccessful in this endeavor.

Secondly, Andropov began to take a harder line with the United States on disarmament talks, in particular on the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty (INF). The INF talks did not move forward until the rise of Mikhail Gorbachev in 1985. The Soviets possessed a significant strategic advantage in this area and Andropov's shift away

from détente was one of the more interesting facts of his leadership. The Reagan Administration had already scrapped détente and therefore Andropov's rhetoric within the context of Burns' article and his actions as GS were, from a realist perspective of international relations, no more aggressive than the United States.

Article Number Four: "A Polished Party Man: Yuri Vladimirovich Andropov", Serge Schmemmann, *New York Times*, November 13, 1982

Schmemmann's article attempts to personalize and some would argue sanitize Andropov's image. Andropov is described as a man who "had lived several years abroad [from the USSR], even if in an East European [Warsaw Pact] country; he had developed tastes for Western novels and music, Scotch and tennis; he spoke fluent English."

The article also provides the reader with an interesting perspective on the relationship between Andropov and "Stalinist party ideologue" Mikhail A. Suslov. It has been claimed by some Sovietologists of the day that Suslov was to play an intricate role in the purges Stalin planned at the time of his death in 1953 (i.e., the Doctors' Plot) and Andropov would have been a low-level accomplice in the matter.

This article follows the pattern of early articles of Andropov's ascendancy to the USSR's top power position in that it had little information available in which to editorialize or opinioned the article. However, Western fear of the KGB, which was even greater in the United States due to the tradition of Red Baiting and McCarthyism, may have led to an immediate negative reaction in the American press. This was certainly not the scenario in Schmemmann's article that was quite balanced. We might say Schmemmann's article was more "Russophile" as opposed to "Russophobe."

Article Number Five “New Chief: Tough, Shrewd and Worldly,” Hendrick Smith, *New York Times*, November 13, 1982

The article written by Hedrick Smith states that Mr. Andropov “is regarded here as a tougher, smarter, shrewder competitor for the United States than Leonid I. Brezhnev.” Whereas Smith’s assessment of Andropov was accurate, it is not understood without the proper historical context. More succinctly, the installation of Andropov as GS was a response to the weakening of détente on the part of the United States through policies such as the Jackson-Vanik Amendment, and the Reagan Administration’s hardline policy on arms control

Smith’s assertion that Andropov was more “widely traveled” hinting of course that he may be more susceptible to reform was probably overstated; just because somebody enjoys Western scotch and jazz music does not make one a humanitarian.

Duke University professor Jerry F. Hough is quoted within the article by calling Andropov’s ascension „encouraging.’ We must remember that the fact that Andropov died suddenly made his legacy quite incomplete. If however, Andropov set the stage for a chronology which led to the rise of Gorbachev and the corresponding reforms, Andropov may be considered at least a quasi-reformer.

Article Number Six “Andropov Is Added to Top State Body,” *New York Times*, November 24, 1982

This article begins to analyze the curious internal movements of the Soviet government during the first weeks of Andropov’s reign. Andropov was added to the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet but was not made its Chairman.

The article defines who is a member of a member of the Presidium and mentions the elevation of Geidar A. Aliyev, a former KGB colleague of Andropov’s and leader of the Azerbaijan Soviet Socialist Republic to full membership in the Politburo. This was an

important event in Andropov's centralization of power around himself so that he would be able to dispense policy more effectively.

Whereas the *Times* has no visible point of bias on this matter, it is clear that Aliyev's promotion and the later promotion of Georgia Soviet Socialist Republic leader Eduard Shevardnadze would have lasting effects in the administration of Gorbachev and the development of the post-Soviet Southern Caucasus. Both Aliyev and Shevardnadze played important roles in the post-Soviet sphere. Shevardnadze's role as a peace brokering Foreign Minister in relations between the U.S. and the USSR was perhaps one of the most overlooked acts in contemporary Soviet history.⁸

The most difficult matter to judge during the rule of Andropov was his past role as a hardliner with that of the new realities of leadership. What I suggest here is that although Andropov ascended to power by playing the role of a neo-Stalinist, the geopolitical and domestic realities of the USSR made it necessary for him to adjust and moderate his leadership style. This would not be a new reality in the history of the nation state or empire as in the case of the USSR; Begin, Sadat, and even Nixon changed their attitudes when they ascended to positions of power.

The article also mentions the return, after illness, of Arvid Y. Pelshe, who was the last remaining member of the Politburo that had participated in the Revolution of 1917.

Article Number Seven "Most likely candidates for top post," Howard A Tyner, *Chicago Tribune*, November 12, 1982

Tyner's article is quite similar to that of John F. Burns' *Times* article from November 12, 1982 in that it lists the possible candidates to succeed Brezhnev. However,

⁸ Marina Vashakmadze, "Shevardnadze Wanted to Share Gorbachev's Nobel Prize," *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty*, October 2, 2009 Accessed at: http://www.rferl.org/content/Shevardnadze_Wanted_To_Share_Gorbachevs_Nobel_Prize/1842367.html

there is one particular candidate that Tyner mentions which Burns does not; the possibility of the 54 year-old Mikhail Gorbachev rising to lead the USSR. Tyner makes the important historical distinction that Gorbachev would be the first Soviet GS not to have participated in the Second World War.

Gorbachev was a student of Andropov and shared with him the opinion that the Soviet economy was sick. Andropov and Gorbachev had different approaches to changing the Soviet economic system. According to Wayne Merry, a U.S. diplomat who was present with U.S. Vice President George H.W. Bush when he met with Andropov just after he was named Brezhnev's successor, claims that Andropov's approach to the „sick' economy was to “ratchet up the pressure on a fundamentally flawed system.” Andropov was trying to instill discipline on a system which was fundamentally dysfunctional.

Gorbachev took the other approach, which was to attempt to change core aspects of the centrally planned economy and oppressive political system through *Perestroika* and *Glasnost*. Tyner's article shows vision in the sense that it recognizes the rising star of Gorbachev even though it was not possible to see the diametric shift in policies Gorbachev would pursue.

The article itself is reflective of *Tribune*'s conservative tendencies in that it assumes that Brezhnev's policies represented hard line policies and that Andropov would continue them based on statements made by the Central Committee.

Article Number Eight “Few policy shifts by Kremlin seen,” Howard A Tyner, *Chicago Tribune* November 12, 1982

Tyner's article attempts to project future policy shifts under the regime which was to replace Leonid Brezhnev. Whereas the article states that changes remain unlikely, it also projects Yuri Andropov as the future Soviet leader.

Tyner's comments on the Soviet leaderships' future plans were based on Brezhnev's last years of inept leadership which was characterized by announcements of achieving "communism" and the focus of ceremonial attention on Brezhnev in that he was continually having awards bestowed on himself.

This is not to say that Brezhnev did not have a series of focused economic and foreign policy initiatives which he attempted to implement in the waning years of his rule. For example, Brezhnev initiated and recognized the importance of the completion of the BAM (Baikal-Amur Mainline) of the Trans-Siberian railroad, which was designed to extract raw materials from the USSR's Far East and deliver them to international markets in exchange for desperately needed foreign currency.

One area where the Andropov and Brezhnev regimes were quite similar was the support for the Soviet war in Afghanistan. We know this to be true from the transcripts of Politburo meetings in December, 1979 in which Andropov overrules Chief of the General Staff, Marshal Ogarkov's objection to the proposed invasion and is supported by Brezhnev (see transcript below). One may extrapolate from the passage that Andropov was playing a major role in the implementation of Soviet foreign policy long before the death of Brezhnev.

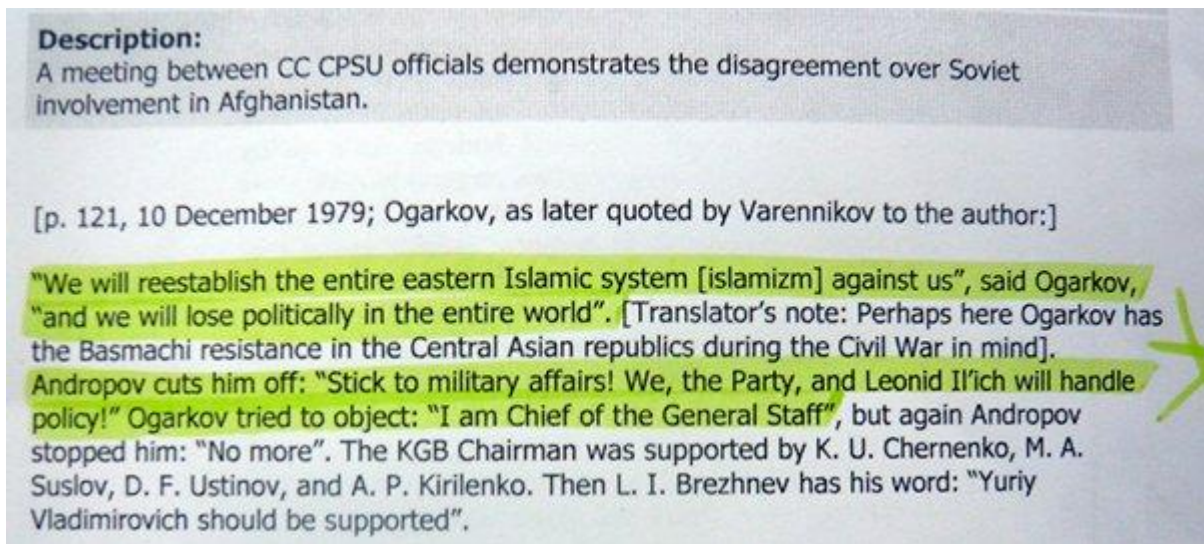


Figure 3 Transcript of meeting of the Central Committee, Communist Party of the Soviet Union, December 10, 1979

Therefore, it is accurate to say that Tyner's article was bestowed with appropriate foresight into certain aspects of Soviet foreign policy of the soon-to-be leadership of Yuri Andropov. However, the major differences were in the recognition of the dysfunctional nature of the Soviet domestic economy, which Brezhnev had become benign to long before his death.

Tyner's article makes another important observation of Andropov, which is that he appeared to be in poor health when standing beside Brezhnev shortly before the latter's death.

"...Andropov, 68, looked un-well Sunday when he stood with Brezhnev and other Kremlin leaders atop the Lenin Mausoleum for the Red Square parade marking the 65th anniversary of the Bolshevik Revolution."

Article Number Nine "Inside Andropov's Mind," William Safire, *New York Times*, October 11, 1982

This essay written by Safire a month before the death of Brezhnev is a hypothetical, Michener-style, look “inside” the mind of Yuri Andropov who Safire accurately believed to be the next GS. In short, Safire extrapolates what *might* take place within the Kremlin under the rule of Andropov.

Ironically, the article itself is much more in line with conservative strains of American thought as opposed to that of the Left.

Firstly, the article states, in a negative tone, that the possibility of a Chernenko led Soviet Union would lead to the continuance of the Brezhnev policy of “[attempting] to entice the Americans into détente.” The policy of détente was the enemy of the American Jackson-Democrats⁹, who by the late 1970s had evolved into the Neo-Conservatives and included in their ranks the likes of President Gerald Ford’s Chief of Staff Richard Cheney and Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld.

Interestingly, Safire projects the possibility that Andropov will attempt to make a quantum leap away from the policies of Brezhnev. “My [inferring Andropov] line begins with a necessary cult of personality. I would be as different from Brezhnev as he was from Khrushchev, and as Khrushchev was from Stalin. Any change must appear to be a great change.” Safire’s suggestion of a great change is one that should be examined carefully and thoroughly for several reasons.

⁹ The term “Jackson-Democrats” refers to the followers of Democratic Washington Senator Henry M. “Scoop” Jackson. Jackson was a vociferous opponent of the policy of détente and the policy’s originators President Richard Nixon and National Security Advisor Henry Kissinger. Jackson’s Chief of Staff, Richard Pearle, wrote the Jackson-Vanik Amendment (Title IV, U.S. Trade Act of 1974), which linked Soviet trade privileges to emigration, but was ostensibly designed to destroy détente and SALT (Strategic Arms Limitation Talks). For more on Jackson-Vanik and its political undercurrents see: “Détente and its Discontents,” in Kissinger, Henry A. *Diplomacy* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1994) and Ginsberg, Julie “Reassessing the Jackson-Vanik Amendment,” *Foreign Affairs*, July 2, 2009

Firstly, the article distinguishes itself from Tyner's article (see Article Number 8 above) in that it suggests major policy deviations under an Andropov headed USSR from the past policies of Brezhnev.

Secondly, it states that Andropov was willing to broker a deal with the West for the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan. Safire suggests that Andropov knew that the war was not going well and it was no longer in the USSR's best interest to continue to fight the war in Afghanistan.

Furthermore, Safire states that Andropov's willingness to compromise on the Afghan issue in contrast to the U.S. position of a full and complete removal of all Soviet forces from Afghanistan. Safire charges that were Grishin or Chernenko to be named GS, they would have willingly and wantonly continued the conflict in Afghanistan. In this sense, we might say that Safire's essay in the *Times* portrays Andropov as a more moderate, compromising candidate than the other probable choices for the seat of GS. Certainly Safire looks beyond the fact that Andropov was the former Chief of the KGB and attempts to understand how he would behave in the role of GS.

Article Number Ten "Washington Reacts: Clark Informs Reagan- Official Says President May Go to Funeral," Hendrick Smith, *New York Times*, November 11, 1982

Smith's article focuses on the possibility of a "power sharing" agreement between the possible successors to Brezhnev; namely Andropov and Chernenko. The article cites American officials' belief that Chernenko was in the "No.2 position" in relation to Brezhnev due to his proximity to the recently deceased leader over the past few months.

However, Andropov is not ruled out as a possible successor to Brezhnev due to his appointment to the Secretariat of the Central Committee replacing the recently deceased M. Suslov (d. January 25, 1982).

The article does not articulate any particular political bias as it focuses more on the form of government likely to take shape inside the Kremlin as opposed to any proscriptive policy initiatives which may be coming after the seating of a new General Secretary.

Article Number Eleven “After Brezhnev,” Flora Lewis, *New York Times*, November 12, 1982

Flora Lewis’ article is more coddling toward the Left in that it supported President Reagan’s rhetorical comment that his purpose was to seek better relations with Moscow and supported Reagan’s notion that the two countries shared the same „will for peace.’

The article continues by commenting on the shared power concept suggesting that Andropov might become General Secretary while Chernenko would become Prime Minister.

Lewis insight into the KGB and the fact that Andropov served as the head of that organization is also quite moderate compared to writings in the *Tribune* as well as the *Times*. Lewis quotes an unnamed member of the Polish military as believing the „KGB is the only part of the apparatus [the Soviet government] that really knows what is going on in the rest of the world, so he [Andropov] will be the most realistic.’ This view suggests that’s the KGB’s exposure to the institutions and culture of the West may have had a moderating affect on Andropov’s policy prescriptions.

Whereas the majority of Andropov’s initiatives were hardly moderate, it can be said that the KGB had a greater understanding of the issues facing the USSR. This brings to light one of the less-appreciated aspects of the Soviet system: the organization that was charged with maintaining the status quo also understood how fragile the status quo truly was. As former CIA executive Harry Rozitske states, “the singular power of the KGB

derives from its combining both the functions of internal security and secret foreign operations, as if the FBI and the CIA in the U.S were operating under a single chief.”¹⁰

The fact that the KGB had intimate knowledge of the Soviet and capitalist systems led to a internal battle within the mind of a figure such as Andropov or even that of present Russian Federation Prime Minister Vladimir Putin; strict internal discipline must be maintained for the survival of the regime, but the lack of a productive economy as a result of cynicism would render the Soviet system impotent when attempting to challenge the global economy.

The USSR’s use of double taxation treaties with countries such as Cyprus (1982) allowed for the KGB to participate in foreign markets and acquire foreign currency covertly while oppressing dissidents at home.¹¹

Lewis’ article therefore allows for the possibility of a KGB man such as Andropov to be able to undertake the role of a reformer if, perhaps only in a limited manner. Furthermore, it should come as no surprise that of the discussed articles, all with the exception of the Lewis work are consistent in their Right leaning bias toward Andropov and the Soviet system. The differences in the articles are trivial. The charge of inconsistency lies not with the *Tribune*, but with the *Times* as most Americans consistently view the paper as left-leaning.

Article Number Twelve “TASS Statement on Choice of Andropov as Party Chief,” reprinted in the *New York Times*, November 13, 1982

Although the TASS article does not officially emanate from the *Times* or the *Tribune*, the fact that the *Times* decided to publish the statement of an official propaganda organ of the Soviet government is significant.

¹⁰ Harry Rozitske, *The KGB: The Eyes of Russia* (New York: Doubleday, 1981), p.62

¹¹ Graham Stack, “High Price of Havens,” *Kyiv Post*, July 29, 2010

It is of little significance that TASS praised Andropov's membership in the „Leninist Communist Party of more than 50 years,' as the statement was already preordained and granted the party's imprimatur. However, the fact that the *Times* granted “equal time” to a Communist Party propaganda organ may be viewed in the context of left-leaning bias. Certainly, the Right would have a valid and cogent point in arguing that TASS would surely not offer to reciprocate by publishing one of William Safire's previously described articles in the pages of the Leninist Communist Party's propaganda paper.

The publication of the TASS article may be viewed as Western liberalism's attempt to demonstrate to the USSR that a free and open press is beneficial to all and in fact the United States was not opposed to engaging in a dialoged about the merits of socialism. This view is altruistic, and certainly would open the *Times* to attack of coddling Communism from the American political right. It is difficult to understand the intent of the *Times* in this situation; was the paper attempting to bring to light the ideological opacity of the Soviet system or was in playing to the ageing crowds of liberals and socialists within America?

Martin Malia suggests that even by the late 1960s, Soviet dissidents who supported the notion that Lenin's revolution had been hijacked were few and far between. One such author was Roy Medvedev, who continued to hold to the Trotskyite line that Stalin had „usurped' Marx's principles and a return to „true' Leninism would breathe life

into the decaying Soviet system.¹² Interestingly, Roy Medvedev's brother Zhores, would later author a work on Yuri Andropov.¹³

It is fair to say that the *Times*' publication may be an exhibition of "leftist" political sentiment when we consider the myopic focus of this work, but when we consider the greater picture of Western-Soviet convergence this effect is significantly mitigated.

Article Number Thirteen "A legacy of contrasts for Andropov: Old problems still plague Soviet Union," Howard A. Tyner, *Chicago Tribune*, November 12, 1982

Tyner's article defines the economic, military, foreign policy, and social challenges facing Andropov as he took power after the death of Brezhnev. One salient point mentioned by Tyner is the low fertility rate of the Slavic peoples of the Soviet Union which has led to a demographic imbalance in favor of non-Slavic, and in particular Muslim peoples. This is one of the longest lasting Soviet legacies as the Russian Federation stands to lose one-fifth of its Slavic working population by 2030.¹⁴

Tyner criticizes the shortages prevalent in Soviet agriculture and the continuing suppression of dissent by the political police. Tyner distinguishes between dissent in the satellite states such as Poland, largely as a result of the Roman Catholic Church's opposition to Communism, and dissent in the Soviet Union. "The average Soviet citizen is conservative, respectful of authority and unlikely to question the status quo. Dissenters represent only the tiniest fraction of the Soviet public."

¹² Martin Malia, *Russia Under Western Eyes: From the Bronze Horseman to the Lenin Mausoleum* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1999), p.394

¹³ See Zhores A. Medvedev, *Andropov* (New York and London: W.W. Norton and Company, 1983)

¹⁴ Nicholas Eberstadt and Aproova Shah, "Russia's Demographic Disaster," American Enterprise Institute (May, 2009), p.7

The question of Jewish emigration is raised within the context of the article and Tyner's criticism of Brezhnev's reduction in the number of émigrés allowed out of the USSR is noted. There is evidence to suggest that this was an unfair criticism of Brezhnev and indirectly Andropov in the sense that the drop in emigration was in response to the U.S. Congress' contradiction of détente vis-à-vis the Jackson-Vanik Amendment (see footnote above). Obviously, this is not a moral observation, but simply a recognition of the revocation of tacitly agreed policies on Jewish émigrés between the Nixon and Brezhnev Administrations. The conservative line of Jackson-Vanik, and especially the negative affect it had on Soviet agriculture allowed Brezhnev to make a diplomatic move which was amoral, but understandable in the realm of amoral state actors.

It is not clear if the article begins to lay the foundation for a moralistic attack on the Soviet Union. Indeed, it was under Andropov's leadership that President Ronald Reagan labeled the USSR the "Evil Empire." What is clear from the article is that the USSR was facing enormous challenges as Andropov ascended to power. The important historical consideration here is what exactly Andropov intended to do in order to correct these problems. There exist many contradictions within Andropov's policies; on the one hand he ratcheted up worker discipline, crushed dissent, and paid homage to the Soviet military leadership, but on the other hand he most probably hand-picked Mikhail Gorbachev as his successor (which was not observed).

Article Number Fourteen "U.S. views Andropov as diplomat," *Chicago Tribune*, November 13, 1982

The article extrapolates that Andropov's tenure would be a continuance of Brezhnev's policies with very few acceptations. The article predicts certain aspects of Andropov's regime which turned out to be true and some which turned out to be false.

The oft-repeated statement that Andropov was a „closet liberal’ due to his taste for jazz music and tango dances did not translate into an individual who’s policy prescriptions were reformist. Andropov showed little patience with domestic discontent as demonstrated by his continuation of the Brezhnev Era policy of placing dissidents in psychiatric wards. The use of psychiatric wards to house dissidents was indicative of Soviet thinking; one who dared to challenge the beatific Soviet view of Marxism must have been insane.

The *Tribune* article states that Andropov would attempt to decentralize the economy and target the agricultural sector for reform. The fact that Andropov had exposure to Western ideas through his leading of the KGB allowed him to understand the profound weakness in the Soviet system of planned economy. However, Andropov was not able to separate the weakness of the system from his belief in Marxist-Leninist ideology. It was in fact Lenin’s twisting of Marxist economics which allowed the Soviet economy to develop in the manner in which it did. Therefore, in order for Andropov or any other Soviet leader to solve the economic woes of Gosplan, they would have to question the ideology which allowed them to ascend to the highest position in the USSR.

The article points out that Andropov would have to pay deference to the leadership of the Soviet military. Andropov knew that this segment of Soviet society had to be placated and he increased military expenditures. It should be noted that the Reagan Administration was also increasing military expenditure at the time Andropov became General Secretary. Regarding military affairs, the *Tribune* takes a noticeably conservative line and includes un-rebutted quotations from U.S. chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Gen. John Vessey.

The *Tribune* points out that Andropov would be, according to an unnamed U.S. diplomat, „more pragmatic in outlook in foreign affairs than either Brezhnev or Chernenko.’

The question of liberal-conservative cleavage is very difficult to detect in this article. The article represents a balanced, standard American depiction of Andropov from early in his leadership.

Article Number Fifteen “Soviets elect Andropov to No. 1 post,” Howard A. Tyner, *Chicago Tribune*, November 13, 1982

Tyner’s article theorizes that Andropov was a “strong” candidate for the leadership position because he was named General Secretary, as opposed to First Secretary of the CPSU as was the case with Khrushchev and Brezhnev. Tyner extrapolates that Andropov must have been a much stronger candidate than Chernenko.

Tyner reports on the view shared by Sovietologists that the immediate appointment of Andropov was a sign that there had been little debate within the Central Committee as to who would replace Brezhnev. Chernenko announced to the Kremlin insiders that Andropov has „assimilated Brezhnev’s leadership style, Brezhnev’s concern for the interest of the people, and Brezhnev’s ... determination to stand up to the machinations of aggressors.’

Whereas the statement of the Kremlin spokesman represents Soviet desiderata, the election of Andropov did signify a deviation from the likely election of Chernenko and the subsequent rigid continuation of Brezhnev’s policies. One must also consider the obvious fact that no Western analyst or journalist had appropriate information available to them so that they could make a solid assessment of the process of selection of a GS. We

must keep in mind of the date of this publication as it was in the early hours of Andropov's ascendancy.

What then does all of this say about right or left leaning bias regarding the reporting of Soviet affairs by the *Tribune* and Tyner in particular? In the end, it was not humanly possible to make an open and accurate assessment of exactly why the Central Committee chose Andropov. Western intelligence services would not have known about the discussions in the inner-sanctum of the Kremlin unless they had an agent planted in the meetings. Therefore, we must reduce our analysis of Tyner's article and all of the other articles within this paper to the assumptions the authors drew at the time of their writing. Whereas the West was able to judge Andropov by his few policy prescriptions implemented as GS, the early basis for journalistic analysis was based solely on assumptions made off of his past service as Hungarian Ambassador and KGB Chief.

The *Tribune* leans slightly to the Right of the American political center as the *Times* move slightly to the Left. The interesting point here is that although the American Midwest was much more conservative than the East Coast, the *Tribune* and *Times* published articles on Soviet affairs show far less deviation than their readership probably did.

It should be noted that even within the readership of these two papers, the Soviet question and the corresponding approaches to this question ran the gambit of domestic orientations. For example, the "Jackson Democrats" (see footnote above) were notoriously liberal on issues relating to U.S. domestic social policy. Therefore, issues relating to the USSR did not fit neatly into the Democratic or Republican parties. Malia explains:

In fact, of course, the political alignments on the issues in these debates [political orientation toward the Soviet Union] were hardly so neat as a simple Right-Left dichotomy would suggest: good socialists could be ardent cold warriors and good conservatives could champion détente.¹⁵

Article Number Sixteen “So Tango,” *New York Times*, November 14, 1982

The *Times* sends out an emotional plea to American President Ronald Reagan to take proactive measures in relations to the new GS by attending the funeral of Leonid Brezhnev. The tone of the article is one that “begs” Reagan to soften his diplomatic approach to the USSR, reinstate détente, and listen as opposed to lecture the new Soviet leadership.

The article presupposes that the Reagan Administration had been the more aggressive party in U.S.-USSR relations in the waning years of Brezhnev. There is sufficient evidence of Reagan’s relatively aggressive position via the USSR in that the Administration was hostile to SALT II, had begun a new military build-up, and had been rhetorically cold toward the Kremlin.

The article fairly assesses the past problems of Brezhnev and duly criticizes the Soviet campaign in Afghanistan; the treatment of dissidents like Andrei Sakharov and Anatoly Shcharansky; Brezhnev’s inconsistencies with the using détente as a „hunting license for Soviet gains’ while sending troops to Afghanistan and Africa. It is difficult to say that the article is blatantly biased towards the Left. On the contrary, the article is simply suggesting to Reagan to take a second look at the personage of Andropov or „listen before prejudging.’

It is more appropriate to look at the article in a dialectical sense for the majority of Americans had grown to question or outwardly condemn the Soviet experiment by the

¹⁵ Malia, p.390

time Andropov came to power. Whereas many Americans were sympathetic to the USSR including Eugene V. Debs, Emma Goldman, and Alger Hiss; by the early 1950s, America's view of "Uncle Joe's" USSR had changed dramatically. With the advent of the dissident movement in the late 1960s and especially after the release of Solzhenitsyn's *Gulag Archipelago*, Americans became more unified in their desire to see the abolishment of the USSR. In this sense, President Reagan's labeling of the Soviet Union as the "Evil Empire" may have represented more of a consensus in American public opinion as opposed to "right-wing rhetoric."

American daily papers were, for the most part, lock-step with American public opinion. After the Great Depression, American popular opinion of the USSR was at an all-time high. Due in part to the fanciful journalism of the *New York Times'* Walter Duranty, many Americans viewed the Soviet Union as a viable alternative to the economic despair found in the United States. However, as the Second World War ended and an unprecedented economic boom began, Americans reverted back to their bourgeois and populist tendencies and opposed Moscow.

Of course, much of the American hostility to the USSR was justified and history has proven it correct. However, this opposition took on a new form of zealotry as the Brezhnev Era came to a close. By the time of Andropov, America had lost the ability to define itself in a positive manner and relied on defining itself in opposition to the Soviet Union.

The use of the term „tango' was in fact used by President Reagan himself, and the *Times* was suggesting the President turn towards the middle as opposed to continuing the soliloquy of increased procurement of weapons.

Article Number Seventeen “The Scrutable Kremlin,” Russell Baker, *New York Times*, November 17, 1982

The Baker article is similar in composition to article 16 in that it uses dance styles as metaphors for diplomacy. Baker presents the ascendancy of Andropov as an opportunity for Reagan to reach out diplomatically, all be it with caution. The article encourages dialogue between the U.S. and the USSR. The article is consistent with the *Times*' suggestion that bi-lateral discussions on arms control and economic questions would benefit humanity.

Baker produces a balanced article that equally assesses the association of the Andropov and Reagan leaderships with the KGB and CIA respectively; the „dreaded KGB’ juxtaposed to the „evil CIA.’ Baker extrapolates that this is part of the reason Reagan sent former Director of Central Intelligence and current Vice-President George H.W. Bush to represent the U.S. at Brezhnev’s funeral and exchange greetings with Andropov.

It bears repeating that the article should not be viewed as a radical Left deviation. More accurately, the article reflects a rather centrist position in line with most European countries at the time notwithstanding Helmut Schmidt and Francois Mitterrand’s pending request for U.S. tactical nuclear weapon deployment in Europe.

Article Number Eighteen “Yuri Andropov, the „liberal’,” *Chicago Tribune*, November 14, 1982

The *Tribune* makes jest of the Western media’s characterizations of Yuri Andropov as possessing „liberal’ tendencies. The tendencies in question refer to the eccentricities and Western tastes of Andropov such as his affinity for jazz music and cognacs. Incidentally, Russian affinity for fine cognacs predates the Cold War by a long-shot.

The article points out with exceptional clairvoyance that “it is possible, of course, that Mr. Andropov will not be the party leader long enough for the West to explore his alleged liberalism” If Andropov was viewed as a transitional figure why was the West’s response to him so hardened? Andropov did take a hard line on arms control, but it may be argued that he faced an already inflexible Western alliance when he took office. Conversely, Andropov may have been trying to appease the military leadership in the USSR. American preconceptions of the powers of a Soviet leader were, generally speaking, that of an absolute monarchy. However, astute Moscow watchers knew that there were internal political squabbling and positioning that took place in the Kremlin.

The answer to why the U.S. took a hawkish line on Andropov lies more in America’s history as opposed to analysis of the dynamics taking place in the USSR at the time. America has always been focused on a “great man” theory of history which does not allow for a class analysis of why events have unfolded the way they have. This is not to say that the Marxist diagnosis of history is correct, it simply demonstrates that Americans tend to focus on *form* as opposed to *process*. Therefore, the unanswered question surrounding Andropov is whether or not he intended to set about on a process of reform which was only realized under Gorbachev. It is possible that if the U.S. had been more focused on process, there would have been more opportunity for convergence as opposed to the “all or nothing” proposition of the American Right. The article represents typical Midwest populist views of the USSR.

Article Number Nineteen “Military likely had big say in Andropov’s rise,” Howard A. Tyner, *Chicago Tribune*, November 13, 1982

Tyner accurately points out that Andropov found it necessary to court the military in order to defeat Chernenko for the position of General Secretary. The author suggests

that Andropov continued Brezhnev's recent policy of strengthening military expenditure in order to court favor with this important element of Soviet political power. However, Tyner also points out this was done "in response to the buildup of U.S. military might initiated by President Reagan."

Tyner also cites Andropov's desire to shift political power to regional secretaries (a later policy of Boris Yeltsin) and begin a process of decentralizing economic planning. Tyner's article is balanced and historically accurate.

It would not be fair to judge the reporting as politically slanted even though the title suggests a more right-leaning position than the actual body of the article produces. In this sense we might charge the *Tribune* editors with possessing a Right bias for selecting a section of the article which fits a hawkish position. Substantively speaking, a charge of bias is difficult to sustain if we consider the content of the article in its totality.

Article Number Twenty "The Strategic Tango," Tom Wicker, *New York Times*, November 28, 1982

The American deployment of the MX missile in the early 1980s represented one of the more controversial issues in the Cold War. Wicker argues in the article that the deployment of the MX represented a destabilizing Intercontinental Ballistic Missile (ICBM) due to its 10 Multiple Individually Targeted Re-Entry Vehicles (MIRVs) thus making it a „first strike' weapon.

The issue of arms control was one of the most divisive in topics debated in the Western press during the Cold War. Arguably, arms control presented a polarizing debate between the Right and Left factions in American politics for the entire Cold War and beyond. In fact, the recent heated debate over the New START treaty which was signed

in April, 2010 between presidents Obama and Medvedev ¹⁶has caused outcry in the United States Senate over whether or not the Treaty weakens or strengthens America's strategic position.¹⁷

Regardless of the merits of the arms control debate, Wicker's article provides historians with an excellent example of a cleavage towards the Left from the *New York Times*. However, the debate over nuclear weapons was much more about universal human norms, than technical military strategy. The United States was debating the role nuclear weapons should play in the Western world not just the Soviet Union. The debate was dynamically different from the human rights and economic debate which we see near Western uniformity vis-à-vis the Soviet Union.

Wicker points out that Andropov would view President Reagan's call for „positive' Soviet steps regarding arms control as “cynical” due to the deployment of the MX platform.

More importantly, we must analyze this article in the context of “America undecided” for if there was public consensus on arms control policy the *Times* would have reflected the public view. It is correct to view Wicker's article as a reflection of the American Left, but only in the context of an “issue unresolved.” Conversely, although there are valid historical arguments regarding the negative affect Jackson-Vanik had on Jewish emigration, articulated by Henry Kissinger among others. The American media

¹⁶ Note: The Russian Federation assumed all responsibility for Soviet-era arms control agreements when the USSR dissolved in 1991.

¹⁷ “Arms treaty with Russia hits snag as GOP Balks,” Peter Baker, *New York Times*, November 16, 2010

consistently reported in favor of the legislation.¹⁸ Arms control was a more controversial issue, but also an easier issue to broach with the American public.

Article Number Twenty-One “Inside Andropov’s Mind (2),” William Safire, *New York Times*, December 6, 1982

Safire composes a follow-up work to his October 11, 1982 article that is a fantasy composed as if Andropov were writing. One paragraph stands out in regards to the immense skepticism that Safire viewed Andropov. “And now to work. In Brezhnev’s time, we caught up with and surpassed the Americans in nuclear striking power; in my time, we will consolidate our strategic position in some sort of SALT treaty, and fix our economic mess with the active aid of the West.”

The article takes a Right leaning approach to the issue of arms control and suggests that arms control must be linked to economic packages. Furthermore, the cynical tone that Safire writes in coupled with his reference in the article to Edgar Allan Poe’s ‘Purloined Letter,’ suggest a strong anti-Soviet approach.

Safire dabbles with geopolitical issues by extrapolating that the Soviet thrust into Afghanistan was part of a greater push to gain access to oil resources in the Persian Gulf. Certainly, there is historical precedent which could be cited regarding Russia’s desire for a warm water port, but an empire’s desire and capacity are two separate matters. Even though Safire is writing an essay, he is lulling the reader into an unrealistic expectation. Safire’s essay is an accurate depiction of the suspicion many Americans viewed the USSR.

¹⁸ For an example of an argument against the Jackson-Vanik Amendment including the negative affects it had on Jewish emigration from the USSR see: Anne Hessing Cahn, *Killing Détente: The Right Attacks the CIA* (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1998), pp. 39-44

The important point of the article is that it offered a rather right-leaning viewpoint from an author inaccurately associated with the Left due to the Kissinger wire taps (see above) within the pages of a paper that is said to be left-leaning. All of those charges do not add up in light of Safire's commentary on Andropov and the *Times*' consistent center-right articles regarding the USSR and Andropov.

Article Number Twenty-Two "Cross in the Cross Hairs," William Safire, *New York Times*, December 16, 1982

In the article, Safire broaches the question of who organized Turkish national Mehmet Ali Agca's May 13, 1981 assassination attempt on Pope John Paul II in St. Peter's Square. Safire all but accuses Andropov, who was head of the KGB when Agca made the attempt the Pope's life, of ordering the assassination.

Furthermore, Safire suggests that the failed assassination attempt led John Paul II to take a softer approach to the forces of Communism and the USSR in particular. Examples: in Latin America, clandestine Vatican financial support of anti-Communist forces is curtailed now that the Banco Ambrosiano, closely affiliated with the Vatican bank, has gone bankrupt; in the U.S., bishops determined to undermine the U.S. nuclear deterrent receive no admonition from the Holy See; in Rome, John Paul II, forgiving as St. Sebastian, receives Yasir Arafat, in whose Beirut camp the assassin was trained; in Poland, Archbishop Juzef Glemp withdraws from and weakens Lech Walesa.

Not only are many of Safire's statements of questionable veracity, the manner and tone that he writes in is right-leaning. The penultimate question is why did Safire take such an approach to the assassination issue 18 months after the event had occurred?

The answer to the question is two-fold and lies in the heart of the American historical consciousness. Most prominent at the time was the deepening ideological

perceptions between the majority of American population and the Soviet Union. This fear began with the post-Second World War Rosenberg trials, McCarthy inquiries, and rise of organizations such as the John Birch Society. In 1982, with many Soviet dissidents calling for the total destruction of the Soviet system (see above), Safire was writing to an audience that was more than ready to declare ideological victory over the USSR.

Safire subtly charges the Vatican with codling of Muslims such as Arafat and Agca himself who John Paul II, in the spirit of the Christian tradition, forgave for attempting to assassinate him. One of the explanations for Safire's criticism is that he may have been playing to the audience of recent émigrés from the Soviet Union that lived in New York City. Many of the Soviet dissidents and recent émigrés to America were of Jewish heritage and one of the of their typical rallying cries was increased U.S. support for the state of Israel in opposition to the Soviet backing of the Arab block. However, by 1982 the Soviet Union was viewed as an ideological "evil" by countries such as Saudi Arabia which was funding the Mujahedeen in Afghanistan and as an unreliable strategic partner by countries such as Egypt. By 1982 Egypt had long disassociated itself from the USSR and signed the Camp David Accord with Israeli hardliner Menachem Begin. The tying of the USSR to anti-Zionist forces was a line which settled well in the émigré community whether or not it held up under critical analysis.

The other theme Safire draws upon with his audience is the strong anti-Catholic element which has always been present in America since the country was founded. Therefore, any story written in 1982 that was set as polar opposites the pro-Arab, "red" Vatican against the enlightened, anti-Communist, and pro-Zionist West was bound to sell papers. In short, Safire's journalism is sensational and lacks depth. This does not mean

that Safire's writings were in anyway contrary to the thoughts of much of the American public; in fact the story is an accurate reflection of American public opinion.

Article Number Twenty-Three "China Says It Awaits Concessions From the New Soviet Leadership," Christopher S. Wren, *New York Times*, November 26, 1982

Wren's article brings to light one of the most important aspects of the last two decades of the Cold War: the issue of Sino-Soviet relations. Nixon's policy of détente coupled with the opening of diplomatic relations with Peking allowed the United States to drive a wedge between the Peoples' Republic of China (PRC) and the Soviet Union. The subsequent balancing act was labeled by Nixon and Henry Kissinger as "Triangular Foreign Policy." The policy was not only effective, it subsequently aggravated both the Soviet Union and American Right.

Wren's article focuses on the mixed messages being sent in the initial diplomatic transfers between Andropov and the PRC. The article cites the arrival of PRC Foreign Minister Huang Hua to the funeral of Leonid Brezhnev and his subsequent statements as points of interest and possible reconciliation. After meeting with Andropov, Hua returned to Peking only to retire the next day. Wren speculates that Hua's retirement was forced upon him after he told reporters he was „optimistic' about the next round of Sino-Soviet consultations.

Wren's article is decidedly balanced and does not include any Right-Left orientation. The fact that the Nixon policy towards China was so effective, made the coverage of Sino-Soviet relations far less sensational and entertaining topic to be broached by America's main-stream media. The PRC could not be labeled as "Maoists" for it had undertaken massive economic reforms in the years following Nixon's visit and Mao's death. In fact the paths the USSR and the PRC subsequently took after the deaths

of Stalin and Mao are rather different. Khrushchev denounced Stalinism rhetorically, but did little to reform the decaying Soviet economic system.

Article Number Twenty-Four “Theater Nuclear Politics,” Anthony Lewis, *New York Times*, December 27, 1982

The theme of Anthony Lewis’ article is one that has shown the clearest cleavage in our assessment of the *Times* and *Tribune* thus far; the debate about nuclear arms control and, in the case of Lewis’ article, the debate over intermediate range (IRBMs) and tactical nuclear weapons¹⁹. The question of the role tactical nuclear weapons would play in Europe affected the early debate about overall nuclear arms reduction in the Andropov Era.

The article explores President Reagan’s „zero-sum’ option, which was a proposal that assured the USSR that the United States would not deploy Pershing 2 and other tactical nuclear cruise missiles in exchange for the removal of all Soviet IRBMs deployed in Eastern Europe at that time. At the time, the Soviets had around 245 SS-20 IRBMs deployed in the European theatre. Andropov’s position was that the USSR would reduce the number of deployed SS-20 missiles from 245 to 162 in exchange for American assurances that none of the 572 new cruise and Pershing 2 missiles would be deployed in Western Europe. Andropov believed that the number 162 represented “zero” because it matched the number of nuclear weapons deployed by the French and British.

Lewis is succinctly less “hawkish” than the Reagan Administration is his suggestion that Andropov’s proposal was reasonable. He cites the concern of the United States’ European allies, in particular Germany, which viewed the Andropov proposal as

¹⁹ Author’s Note: Tactical Nuclear Weapons are generally defined as nuclear weapons with a range of under 500 miles and possessing warheads of under 10 kiloton yield (1kt = 1000 metric tons of TNT). Intermediate Range Ballistic Missiles have a range of 3000-5500km and may have a substantially higher yield than tactical nukes, many times identical to those carried by ICBMs.

better than the dramatic net-increase in weapons on European soil as proposed by the U.S.

Lewis explains:

To Washington that offer [Andropov's offer to reduce the number of SS-20s to only 162] is unacceptable because it would still leave the balance of those particular weapons at 162 Soviet, zero American. But to a German concerned about nuclear weapons such an imbalance may look better than the perceived alternative. That is no agreement, more Soviet weapons, more coming, and 572 new U.S. missiles that would be tempting targets for the Soviets.

Lewis is proposing that the U.S. reconsider a zero-sum option and look for a point of balance in the debate about intermediate range nuclear weapons.

Certainly the issue of nuclear posture regarding the Soviet Union vis-à-vis Europe was an extraordinarily complex affair which, could not be simplified as the "balance of terror" formula as proposed by Thomas Schelling which later would be used to develop the MAD (Mutually Assured Destruction) nuclear force posture by U.S. Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara.²⁰

Herman Kahn produced deterrence theories based on a "U.S. Advantage," drew criticisms from the Left as an unthinkable strategy of "nuclear war fighting."²¹ The truth probably lied somewhere in between the two theories, but since both involved unimaginable carnage, they have stirred emotions within the West to the present day. Certainly, the American Left and Right took sides on the issue of nuclear posture, and the *Times* appeared on the side of MAD more often than not.

Article Number Twenty-Five "Kremlin watchers need tea leaves," James Yuenger, *Chicago Tribune*, November 15, 1982

²⁰ Keith B. Payne, *The Great American Gamble: Deterrence Theory and Practice from the Cold War to the Twenty-First Century*, (Fairfax, Virginia: National Institute Press, 2008), p.31

²¹ For a summary comparing the Schelling and Kahn schools of thought on nuclear deterrence see: Ibid, pp. 51-53. Also see Thomas C. Schelling, *The Strategy of Conflict* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1960) and Herman Kahn, *Thinking About the Unthinkable* (New York: Horizon Press, 1962)

Yuenger takes a guarded approach to the article by stating that no one really knows who will replace Brezhnev out of three candidates: Andropov, Chernenko, and Andrei Kirilenko. Interestingly, Yuenger focuses on the generational gap in the Soviet leadership; the young technocrats desired détente and the older leaders desired a hard-line approach.

It is not likely that Andropov was a “compromise candidate” between hardliners and reformists inside the Kremlin. More accurately, Andropov was biding his time before he would have his opportunity to ascend to the highest level of power. When Andropov arrived at the pinnacle of power, he realized the depraved state of affairs that the USSR was in and attempted economic reforms.

Yuenger’s article does not show any clear political deviation. The article does force one to consider something quite peculiar about the Soviet system; the only person who was truly free to offer objective analysis of the system was the man at the very top. One could not rise within the Soviet system by being creative, but only by being a devoted bureaucrat. Certainly, the post-Stalin period distinguished itself as a “victory for the bureaucracy.” Andropov challenges this in an ephemeral manner by expressing an affinity for Western delicacies and privately displaying an interest in American tastes. However, we cannot use these as a basis of suggesting Andropov would view the West anymore favorably. What is much more probable is that Andropov knew the extensive problems of the Lack of Soviet competitiveness due to his ability to access external intelligence reports as director of the KGB.

Article Number Twenty-Six “Chernenko is seen as president,” *Chicago Tribune*, November 16, 1982

The *Tribune* runs a typical *non sequitor* article regarding the age and positioning of all members of the Politburo as they appeared in public. Perhaps this was a natural way to judge a closed society which was totalitarian in nature. There is nothing in the article that suggests polemical bias of any sort.

**Article Number Twenty-Seven “Shultz plays down new mood music from Soviets,”
John Maclean, *Chicago Tribune*, November 19, 1982**

Maclean lays forth a very balanced and direct article regarding Secretary of State George Shultz’s approach to Andropov as well as the particular issues involving American-Soviet diplomacy. George Shultz was a very balanced political figure as he had risen to power in the détente spirited Nixon Administration.

The article addresses the foreign policy issues of Arab-Israeli relations, the building of a gas pipeline from Siberia to Western Europe, and questions regarding the increases in the U.S defense budget. The pipeline project is of particular interest for its completion, in the face of stiff opposition from the Reagan White House, has proved to be one of the lasting legacies of the Cold War and serves as one of the mechanisms of current Russian power. It should be noted that the U.S. opposition was focused at its Western European allies. Marshall Goldman explains,

In the effort to deny the USSR such a weapon, Reagan launched an intense effort to prevent the pipeline’s construction. In 1984, he asked his friend, British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, to prevent the English firm, John Brown Engineering, from selling the Soviets the compressors they needed to move gas through the pipeline from the super giant Urengoi natural gas field in West Siberia to Germany. Similar pressure was put on General Electric, another manufacturer of turbines and compressors. These efforts failed, however, and the pipeline was eventually completed.²²

Adding muscle to his rhetoric, Reagan banned the export of General Electric compressors and pumps, the preferred technology used in most of the world’s gas

²² Marshall Goldman, *Petrostate: Putin, Power, and the New Russia* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), p.48

pipelines. When the pipeline contractors sought non-U.S. manufacturers, Reagan followed suit by ordering that similar bans would also apply to any non-U.S. manufacturers that utilized U.S. technology in their products. This created a rift with his otherwise ideological soul mate, Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher of England. Close as she was to Reagan, her first allegiance was to the British public. She wanted the jobs that would come from building the pipeline compressors that would go to the British company John Brown. It could easily fill in if GE could not. In the end, she ignored the U.S. demand that England impose export restrictions and instead allowed John Brown to build and export the necessary compressors.²³

Even though the Urengoi pipeline was completed after Andropov's death, it represents one of most successful and enduring projects of the post-Khrushchev period. It is apparent from Maclean's article that both Shultz and Andropov knew what was at issue with the pipeline. In a certain sense, the article is so balanced it shatters the façade of Cold War rhetoric in favor of a more rational analysis. The fact that Andropov was keenly aware of the absolute necessity of acquiring hard currency for the faltering Soviet economy also suggests he was aware of the necessity of reform.

The issues of substance which affected the outcome of the Cold War were not given sufficient coverage by the media. Topics such as human rights and the dissident movement, not to mention the Soviet security apparatus were given much more attention than economic issues such as the Urengoi pipeline or Brezhnev's struggle to complete the Baikal-Amur Mainline (BAM), which was designed to carry raw materials from Siberia and the Far East to Western markets in exchange for desperately needed foreign currency. This encouraged a coverage of personality and rhetoric that led newspapers to cover *non sequitor* rhetoric as opposed to substantive issues. In fairness, the *Times* and *Tribune* were less sensational in their coverage of the USSR than other newspapers.

²³ Ibid., pp.137-138

Andropov fit neatly into the “novel” that many newspapers enjoyed covering for his Western tastes coupled with his emergence from the shadowy world of the KGB made for a “faction-style” real-life spy novel.

Article Number Twenty-Eight “Reagan bid to Soviets: Andropov takes tough line toward West,” Howard A. Tyner, *Chicago Tribune*, November 23, 1982

Within the context of the article, Tyner portrays Andropov as a hardened *Sovok* or *homo sovieticus*²⁴ that was bent on taking a hard line regarding arms control negotiations with the United States.

“The newly-elected Soviet leader told the West not to expect Moscow to make concessions to get a reduction in international tensions. Any kind of unilateral military cuts are out of the question, he said, because the Soviet people „are not naïve.” Is this statement truly one of aggression or was it simply the natural response to the Reagan Administration’s defense build-up? It may be argued that the USSR had violated the spirit of détente as much as a decade before, but it would not be fair to hold Andropov accountable for Brezhnev’s past sins two-weeks after the latter’s death.

George Shultz had fired the first salvo in negotiations by requesting unilateral reductions in Soviet forces. When we consider the context in which Andropov made his statement, he appears more like a diplomat than a Soviet *apparatchik*.

Tyner does mention Andropov’s criticisms of the USSR’s centrally planned economy and his statements on the steps the Soviet people needed to take to reform it. A balanced analysis of the article demonstrates how the author is able to spin the unknown in the direction of his choosing, since little was known about the inner-workings of the

²⁴ The term *homo sovieticus* refers to a person that is “soviet by birth,” or exhibits thinking like a Soviet bureaucrat. Visiting Professor of political science at Johns Hopkins School for Advanced International Studies Taras Kuzio brought the term to my attention.

Kremlin. Instead of just delivering the facts, which were delivered with equally terse rhetoric by both the U.S. and GS Andropov, Tyner chooses to favor the U.S.

These subtle points are important especially in papers of record such as the *Tribune* and the *Times*. The pattern that has been consistent has been a well-developed cleavage regarding the issue of arms control. The *Times* ran a few articles in favor of a more moderating stance; Tyner's article was strictly in favor of a hawkish position regarding defense. It bears repeating that the issue of arms control was one which was not settled within the domestic political debate.

Article Number Twenty-Nine "Let's Negotiate With Andropov," W. Averell Harriman, *New York Times*, January 2, 1983

Harriman's article printed in the *Times* provides an excellent contrast to the article published by Howard Tyner which appeared in the *Tribune*. The issue addressed by both articles relates to arms control.

Firstly, the *Times* allowed the publication of an article that suggests balance and moderation within the article's heading as well as the body of the work. Secondly, Harriman lays out a different historical context which judges the Soviet position regarding security in a different light. The context is the enormous suffering which the Soviet people endured during the Second World War. The Soviet Union lost 27 million soldiers and civilians in the Second World War. Conversely, the United States suffered less than 500, 000 casualties in World War Two and few of those were civilian fatalities.

Harriman, it should be noted, had a poor, some would say racist, opinion of the Slavic and non-Slavic peoples of the Soviet Union.²⁵ This notwithstanding, Harriman was an experienced diplomat who had negotiated with the Soviets and served as Ambassador

²⁵ Serhii Plokhy, *Yalta: The Price of Peace*, (New York: Viking, 2010), pp.64-65

to the Soviet Union. The article suggests that a more moderate approach to U.S.-Soviet arms control would be beneficial to the world community. It is fair to say that the *Times* is supporting a position that was viewed as being left-of-center if we consider 1980s American politics as defining our spectrum of analysis. If we cast aside the polemical prism, it is apparent that Harriman is simply suggesting that the Reagan Administration listen to what Andropov and the Soviets had to say.

Article Number Thirty “Inside Andropov’s Mind (3),” William Safire, *New York Times*, January 3, 1983

Safire again uses the “faction” style of writing to extrapolate what policy positions Andropov was taking regarding foreign policy positions vis-à-vis the United States. Safire accuses Andropov of attempting to “wear the Americans down” regarding the arms race just as he did with Western Europe regarding the Urengoi natural gas pipeline.

Safire states that Andropov was hostile to all Western ideological initiatives such as the London based “democracy project.” Furthermore, the issue of intermediate range nuclear weapons takes center stage in the article as Safire decries Andropov’s victories in arms negotiations.

Safire’s article in the *Times* is not only misleading, and in many instances historically false, the style in which he writes is exceedingly polemical and biased towards the American Right. Safire’s writing expresses undertones typical of the American Neo-Conservatives who believed every Soviet policy and diplomatic move was intrinsically aggressive.²⁶ Certainly there were elements of the Soviet system which were aggressive, but there were also elements that were more benign and defensive.

²⁶ An example of this orientation was the Team B group, chaired by Richard Pipes, which concluded that the CIA was underestimating the strength on Soviet forces due to the natural aggressiveness of the Soviet system.

Safire's article proves that the *Times* was not exclusively a left-wing newspaper. Even on the issue of arms control, which the *Times* took more of a center-left position on, there was always room for right-wing dissent. Conversely, other than the arms control issue, the *Times* seldom allowed for a left-wing position on the majority of topics relating to Andropov's premiership.

Article Number Thirty-One "U.S. Terms Moscow's Criticism a Ploy," Bernard Gwertzman, *New York Times*, January 3, 1983

Gwertzman provides the reader of his article with a balanced view of the arms reduction talks taking place in Geneva. Edward L. Rowny who was the U.S. chief negotiator during the talks accused Andropov of using a negotiating ploy in his cooling towards the U.S. after an initially optimistic view of being able to reduce IRBMs.

The article is much more indicative of what should be printed in a newspaper of record. The Safire series titled "Inside Andropov's Mind" looks like a fantasy compared with the level of objectivity present in Gwertzman's piece. The article shows no signs of being polemically charged.

Article Number Thirty-Two "Andropov gives workers a pep talk in rare visit to factory," Howard A. Tyner, *Chicago Tribune*, February 1, 1983

The issue of worker productivity as a sub-set of the overall Soviet economy was the single-largest issue facing Andropov during his time as General Secretary. „The shirker, the bad workman and the loiterer do not damage themselves nearly as much as they hurt society as a whole,' Andropov told workers and Communist Party officials at a plant. Andropov was right, and Tyner's reporting was accurate.

The article brings to light the area in which Andropov attempted to reform the economy to the best of his ability. However, he was throwing gasoline on a self-immolating economy. Tyner gives credit to Andropov for taking steps toward reform, but

American public opinion was already settled as to the disaster that was the Soviet economy circa 1983. The article is free of polemics and political bias.

Article Number Thirty-Three “An internal critic is silenced,” I.F. Stone, *Chicago Tribune*, February 4, 1983

Stone’s article touches upon the topic of Andropov’s treatment of Soviet dissident Roy Medvedev. Interestingly, Stone compares Medvedev to Catholic theologian Peter Abelard and equates Andropov’s treatment of Medvedev to the Pope’s silencing of Abelard. Stone’s comparison is fascinating for his article fits the *Tribune*’s reputation of being conservative and a source of Cathalophobia.

Stone misinterprets Roy Medvedev. Firstly, Medvedev was a Trotskyite in as much as he believed that the Bolshevik Revolution had been hijacked by Stalin. Secondly, Medvedev did not, like so many dissidents by 1983, seek the absolute destruction of the Soviet system. He only sought to reform some of the internal problems within the USSR, namely freedom of the press. In fact, Medvedev would become a high-level member of the Communist party under Mikhail Gorbachev.

Stone is correct in stating than Medvedev’s writings were only circulating the USSR in *samizdat*. However, by omitting the fact that Medvedev was not trying to bring down the USSR, Stone suggests that Medvedev was a dissident in the form of a Sakharov or Solzhenitsyn. Therefore, it is fair to say that Stone’s article is polemical and right-leaning by omission.

Roy Medvedev was an interesting and complex character. He was both a Leninist and reformer in one. He continued to live in Russia after the fall of the USSR and is presently a supporter of V.V. Putin. Complex characters like Medvedev deserve more concrete analysis than given my Stone in his *Tribune* article.

Article Number Thirty-Four “Andropov’s Tall Order: Rousing the Loafers,” John F. Burns, *New York Times*, January 4, 1983

“In his first major speech, Mr. Andropov declared war on „shoddy work, inactivity and irresponsibility.’

The *Times* provides Burns with a forum to discuss the important issue of Andropov’s domestic economic reforms. The amount of space that the *Time’s* devoted to the issue was significantly larger than a similar article run by the *Tribune* on February 1, 1983 (see above). Even though there is no visible polemical deviation, the fact that the *Times* gave generous time to an important issue which lack Left-Right cleavage in America is an important distinction.

Article Number Thirty-Five “Andropov has shown his style, but substance remains hidden,” Howard A. Tyner, *Chicago Tribune*, February 20, 1983

Tyner’s article exhibits the standard bellicose *Tribune* position against Andropov due to his involvement with the KGB. “Privately, Soviet citizens admit that his 15 years as head of the KGB secret police worries them. They worry about how stern the new „boss’ can be and about how much the KGB will intrude on their lives under him.”

There is no specific stated political position taken in the article. However, the myopic viewpoint of Tyner and the *Tribune* as a whole could be viewed as a center-right bias. The article provides us with the penultimate example of the inbred Right bias of the majority of American newspapers; historical perspective and human action in the present was dismissed in favor of certain *dei fide* precepts such as the nature of the Soviet system being inherently evil. The Soviet system was much more complex than most Western media outlets assumed, and this narrowness was reflected in the reporting of the many newspapers including the *Tribune*.

Article Number Thirty-Six “A news flash for Soviet citizens: Their troops are in a war,” Howard A. Tyner, *Chicago Tribune*, March 13, 1983

Nobody of sound mind would argue that it was not a mistake by the Soviet government to invade Afghanistan in 1979. Tyner’s article focuses on the lack of coverage in the Soviet press on Soviet troop levels and casualties in Afghanistan. The article is objective, accurate, and does not exhibit any polemical deviations.

Article Number Thirty-Seven “Hospitalization of Andropov told,” *Chicago Tribune*, March 25, 1983

It was well-known that Andropov was in a state of ill-health when he as ascended to the position of General Secretary. The grave state of Andropov’s health was not known by Western media outlets although it became increasingly apparent that the GS was not long for this world.

The article is not polemically charged and does not attempt to extrapolate to what degree Andropov was in poor condition. The article was based upon official Soviet press reports.

Article Number Thirty-Eight “Andropov rips Reagan plan as road to nuclear war,” *Chicago Tribune*, March 27, 1983

Ronald Reagan’s Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI), more commonly known as the Senator Ted Kennedy coined “Star Wars,” was one of the most controversially issues in U.S. Soviet relations. SDI has traditionally been viewed by the American Right as the initiative that broke the back of the Soviet military industrial complex. The scientific viability of SDI was questionable, but the economic repercussions of the project benefited the United States.

Regardless of the scientific feasibility and the eventual economic chaos SDI brought to the Soviet military industrial complex, Reagan’s initiative was an aggressive

step in the arms reduction debate. Reagan's advisors admitted that the SDI project was a long-term project which would be difficult to complete. "The officials said that there was no likelihood of concrete results from the Reagan proposals for 15 or 20 years, and that the technology to be developed probably would not be used without discussions with the Soviets on radical arms reductions."

The article mentions Andropov's accusation towards Regan of "displaying a flippant attitude toward war and peace and of telling a „deliberate lie' about Soviet nuclear policy." Soviet nuclear policy was aggressive, but SDI was recognized as a destabilizing force in nuclear arms control policy.

The *Tribune* article is interesting in that it tacitly approves of Andropov's reaction to SDI not because it viewed him as a peacemaker, but because SDI appeared to be such a far-fetched idea. This article was one of the few *Tribune* articles which painted Andropov in a positive light.

Article Number Thirty-Nine "Reagan and Andropov," James Reston, *New York Times*, January 8, 1983

Reston's article attempts to diagnose the internal political struggle of the Reagan Administration which was taking place between those that wanted to take a hard line with Andropov and those that desired a more moderate approach. The article provides the reader with an excellent example of how far to the Right the debate about the Soviet Union had shifted. Reston explains how Reagan and his high level policy makers were being pushed by Senators such as North Carolina Republican Jesse Helms to take a more stringent line toward the USSR. "...some odd things are happening in Washington among the people who are defining the Reagan Administration policy on nuclear arms control and the people who are negotiating that policy with the Soviet Union."

For example, President Reagan appointed Eugene Rostow, former dean of the Yale Law School, and Paul Nitze, former State and Defense official who had negotiated the strategic arms control in the past, to direct his arms control policy. They were the leaders of the Committee on the Present Danger, and were regarded, and even criticized at the time of their appointments, as being intellectual hawks, highly skeptical of Soviet arms control policy.

The Committee on the Present Danger was viewed in the late 1970s as a group of Republican extremists led by former members of the Ford Administration including Chief of Staff Richard Cheney and Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld. In 1983, the fact that the views of men like Rostow and Nitze were viewed as less reactionary than others in the same camp serves as an example of how the country as a whole had shifted to a right of center political position.

Reston's article makes Andropov appear more moderate, and suggests he is much more rational than many of the American hawks. The article does not have a Right-Left deviation, but it is indirectly favorable to Andropov. If anything, the article has a Right-Right deviation.

Article Number Forty "War of Secrets," William Safire, *New York Times*, April 28, 1983

Safire's essay criticizing the actions of the KGB is simultaneously accurate and inaccurate. The article's accuracies include the statements regarding the KGB's increased attention to industrial espionage against the West. In fact this is precisely what Vladimir Putin would be tasked with doing in the late 1980s he was stationed in Dresden and East Berlin. Andropov was quite open about the USSR's desire to acquire Western technology. Therefore, one might extrapolate that the KGB was given direct, or more probable, indirect marching orders to attain information on Western technology.

Safire's inaccuracies include his determination that the KGB would necessarily become more powerful than the Communist Party apparatus even if Andropov courted the army's support of his leadership. In the USSR, the party always reigned supreme. For an accurate depiction of the increased influence of the KGB within Soviet society, one would have to look at the reforms put in place by Andropov when he led the organization. For instance, Andropov began to recruit more refined, intellectually oriented men to join the KGB as opposed to the traditional enforcer type. These men were lured into the KGB's service by propaganda but also of the material benefits an officer could receive as being a member of the "Red Bourgeoisie." The legacy instilled by Andropov during his 15 years did not just change the role the KGB men played within society during Soviet times, it has carried over two decades after the fact as the ex-KGB officers, now known as *siloviki* (strong men), now govern the Russian Federation.

Safire would have been able to more accurately judge the role the KGB played under Andropov's rule by looking at history, not by extrapolating on matters that little information was available save for the typical diplomatic expulsions and so forth. Another example of Andropov's attempt to use his KGB ties in order to affect Communist Party affairs was his successful attempt to have Geydar Aliiev appointed to the Central Committee apparatus.

Safire's article is not politically charged, but it certainly lacks depth and historical intuition.

Article Number Forty-One "The Soviet Union," Marshall I. Goldman, *New York Times*, August 14, 1983

Goldman's letter to the editor is directed at the criticism Edward Hewett directed at Goldman's book, *USSR in Crisis: The Failure of an Economic System*. Goldman explains:

The first example [criticism of Goldman's book] he cites is „Finland has been ... Finlandized... Poland has ... become Polandized.’

After Mr. Hewett's imaginative use of ellipses and extracts, I found the phrase rather silly myself. In context, the statement reads: „One of the reasons why the Soviets advocated détente was because they realized it would contribute to the general relaxation of tension in Europe. This in turn has helped to weaken support for NATO so that in the extreme, Finland has been, and even Norway may become, Finlandized- that is, neutralized. However, détente is a two-way street. Just as there has been erosion in the NATO alliance, so there is an echo effect in the East, where the Russians now find themselves also having to contend with antinuclear protests in Rumania and East Germany. In the extreme, Poland has already, and it appears Rumania may soon, become Polandized. Thus, each side finds it is forced to yield up hostages to the other.’

Goldman's letter to the *Times* exemplifies the best and worse points of the debate about the Soviet Union within the context of the U.S. media. He provides the reader with a well thought out opinion of the positive and negative aspects of détente from a U.S. policy perspective. He is also forced to defend himself from the attacks which appear to be based on semantics.

Goldman alludes to the complexity in attempting to discern the intentions of Soviet policy makers, in particular, Andropov. Basing statements off of objective criteria was not an easy task due to the totalitarian Soviet state. Nonetheless, Goldman uses economic analysis based on empirical evidence to arrive at his less-than politically charged conclusions. In short, the article lacks the “populism” of many of the articles which appeared in the *Tribune*.

**Article Number Forty-Two “Under Andropov, Policeman's Lot Isn't Happy One,”
John F. Burns, *New York Times*, August 14, 1983**

Burns' article focuses on an important aspect of Andropov's domestic reform agenda. Andropov attempted to reform the internal police forces or *militiya* (Ministry of Interior, MVD) by sacking Brezhnev appointee Nikolai A. Shchelokov and replacing him with former KGB officer Vitaly V. Fedorchuk. Furthermore, Andropov also demoted the son-in-law of Brezhnev, Lt. Gen. Yuri M. Churbanov to a junior position in the *miliya*. It had been alleged that Churbanov accepted bribes from organized crime groups operating in the UzbekSSR for some time. Burns' highlights other allegations against Churbanov:

General Churbanov's prospects after the death of Mr. Brezhnev looked increasingly gloomy after a scandal broke earlier last year, in which several friends of his wife, including the director of the country's circus organization, were arrested on charges of smuggling and hoarding of embezzled property, including diamonds.

The reported questioning of Mrs. Churbanov in the case was a major embarrassment for her husband, whose responsibilities in the Ministry of the Internal Affairs were said to have included oversight of the U.B.Kh.S.S, the anti-fraud division of the police.

The article addresses the issue of corruption in the USSR and subsequently speaks favorably towards Andropov and his effort to reform the bureaucracy. Internal corruption especially within the economy had become systemic under Brezhnev and Andropov recognized the danger this posed to maintaining order within society.

The article speaks favorably of Andropov, but does not exhibit any polemical cleavage in regards American electoral politics.

Article Number Forty-Three "Who Decides in Russia?," Flora Lewis, *New York Times*, September 6, 1983

Flora Lewis poses two important questions within the context of her article. Firstly, was Andropov able to control the Soviet Union's military in light of the shooting

down of Korean Airlines Flight 007 which was a civilian 747. Secondly, was American and Soviet rhetoric preventing an objective and accurate account of just how and why the aircraft was shot down? Lewis explains:

But it is vital to strip away the polemics and natural emotional outrage to get as near to the facts as possible, so as to see the implications. Washington should quickly disclose as many details as it can [the Soviets claimed that Flight 007 was conducting an espionage flight]. This is needed to prevent any misleading silences from becoming political boomerang after the explosion of rhetoric, as well as to identify sane new measures to curb itchy trigger fingers.

Lewis suggests that a relaxation in rhetoric was the only way in which to find a



Figure 4 Cartoon of the Russian Bear eating Korean Airlines Flight 007

solution to the KAL 007 affair and to finding concrete solutions to the difficulties in U.S. - Soviet relations. Lewis approaches the issue of diplomacy with the USSR in a much more relaxed manner than other newspapers were at the time. It is not fair to charge Lewis with polemical bias for suggesting a lowering of rhetorical exchanges. Certainly, she paints the USSR in a more favorable light, but only in comparison to other authors which made extreme claims against Andropov government.

Article Number Forty-Four “Andropov’s rival misses Politburo meeting,” *Chicago Tribune*, April 19, 1983

The *Tribune* article focuses on the fact Konstantin Chernenko was missing from the Politburo meeting. Chernenko was a 71 year old man at the time and was not in good health. The article’s title is phrased in a manner which indicates that the reason for Chernenko’s absence might be related to his „rivalry’ with Mr. Andropov. It is true that Chernenko was attempting to replace Brezhnev as GS, but to suggest that such a sickly man had the power to play a game of subversion and intrigue against the absolute ruler of the USSR is stretching the truth.

The *Tribune* points out that “there was no public explanation for his [Chernenko’s] absence [and] such hints often are the only clues provided by the highly secretive government on the status of its top leaders.” Why then did the *Tribune* use the word „rival’ to describe Chernenko when there was no reason to believe that the two men were at an ideological bottle-neck? In fact, Andropov was months away from death and Chernenko was not far behind.

The title of the article provides a subtle example of how an event without polemical charge may be misrepresented by an editor’s use of a few words. Insufficient evidence exists within the context of the body of the article to judge the article to be polemically charge in one direction or another, but given the general direction of American public opinion during Andropov’s rule, a few words could lead an audience to extrapolate a negative view of the General Secretary.

Article Number Forty-Five “The Americanization of Andropov,” Bill Lewis, *Chicago Tribune*, April 23, 1983

Lewis is highly critical of the Kremlin's attempts to characterize Andropov as a Western style liberal due to his ephemeral tastes for whiskey and jazz music. He criticizes Western media outlets for focusing on these issues as opposed to looking at more substantive factors in Andropov's leadership. Lewis is accurate in his criticism of the coverage of Andropov's Western taste for the issues were not germane to how he would act as leader of the USSR.

The point in the article where Lewis exhibits bias is when he de-links the ephemeral issues of taste with the reforms launched by Andropov against corruption. Andropov, as exhibited by the article in the *Times* (see above Article 44), did attempt to curb corruption in the MVD as well as other sectors of the bureaucracy. Therefore, it is accurate to depict Lewis' article as displaying a polemical bias against Andropov in favor of a right-wing agenda. The article lacks objectivity and fact. Lewis' unfairly extrapolates certain conclusions based on unrelated issues. More specifically, just because Andropov preferred whiskey over vodka, did not make him more or less likely to battle corruption within the Soviet Union. The issue of taste should be separated from the issue of pursuing an anti-corruption agenda.

Article Number Forty-Six "Ask old peace-loving Yuri," Michael Kilian, *Chicago Tribune*, May 20, 1983

Kilian's sarcasm is apparent in his use of the phrase „peace-loving' in the article's title. However, the title pales in the Russophobia exhibited within the context of the article which is based on hypothetical letters from U.S. citizens to Andropov. The fictional responses by Andropov within the body of the article depict Andropov as some sort of "village idiot." For example, Kilian phrases Andropov's supposed response in broken English by shifting word order and omitting the form of to be. The reader is not

informed that the Russian language does not have any focused word order similar to English or German and omits the form of to be in the present tense.

The article exhibits anti-Andropov bias and a right-wing orientation by its structure and content. It is not fair to charge the *Tribune* with supporting a right-wing agenda per se, but the paper certainly exhibits an absence of journalistic integrity in favor of a more populist and romantic manner of reporting. Since the majority of Americans accepted the Reagan line of the Soviet Union as a malevolent “Evil Empire,” the level of sensationalism which could be utilized in everyday articles about Andropov and the USSR had few limits.

The fact that the *Tribune* is considered a newspaper of record makes Kilian’s use of satire inappropriate for the medium in which it is being communicated. Perhaps *National Lampoon* or the *National Enquirer* would have been a more appropriate forum for the article.

Article Number Forty-Seven “Ailing Soviet leader cancels 2 meetings,” *Chicago Tribune* July 5, 1983

The article portrays an accurate account of the grave state of Andropov’s health as well as the grave condition of the Geneva nuclear arms control talks. Andropov was a very sick man.

The Geneva talks were under assault from many different fronts. Rhetorical statements from Andropov and Reagan did not help the substantive negotiations taking place in Geneva. Furthermore, domestic political considerations in both the United States and the Soviet Union were hampering the possibility of an agreement on nuclear arms reduction. In the United States, domestic politics had taken a sharp turn to the Right. Public figures that in the 1970s were considered hawks were now under attack from conservative

Republicans as being soft on the USSR (see above Article 41). Reagan delivered his “Evil Empire” speech in the British House of Commons on June 8, 1982 some seven months before the ascendancy of Andropov to the position of General Secretary.²⁷

Article Number Forty-Eight “Andropov urges reforms to boost Soviet economy,” *Chicago Tribune*, August 16, 1983

The *Tribune*'s article is of particular interest because it accurately depicts the grave situation the Soviet economy was in as Andropov's health was in a precipitous state of decline. Andropov is quoted as stating, „Existing possibilities and increased social requirements dictate the need to seriously raise the level of the entire economic work, to substantially enhance the efficiency of the economy and to turn our entire huge economy into an unflinching, well-adjusted mechanism.’

Andropov accurately diagnosed the USSR's problems, namely an economy which was desperately inefficient when compared to capitalist systems, but he would not be in office long enough to implement substantial reform.

Article Number Forty-Nine “For a hardheaded détente,” Richard Nixon, *Chicago Tribune*, October 4, 1983

Former President Nixon delivers a balanced view of the issues facing Yuri Andropov and the United States. Nixon states where the U.S. and the USSR stand on the issues of arms control and economic assistance.

In relation to arms, which was the most divisive of the topics broached by the *Times* and *Tribune*, Nixon suggests that the United States come to terms with not possessing the overwhelming nuclear superiority they possessed at the beginning of the Cold War. However, he advocates the U.S. production and deployment of the MX missile

²⁷ President Ronald Reagan, “The Evil Empire,” Speech to the House of Commons, June 8, 1982 accessed at: <http://www.mtholyoke.edu/acad/intrel/evilemp.htm>

in order to present Soviet superiority in the field of nuclear arms. In short, Nixon advocates a position of equilibrium on the issue of nuclear posture.

Nixon dissects the problems of the USSR's macro-economy. He also chastises the Soviet Union for bankrupting itself by propping up foreign governments in places like Mozambique, Cuba, Nicaragua, and Angola. The solution to these problems, Nixon suggests, is for the United States to open up trade relations with the USSR in exchange for non-involvement in the countries mentioned above. Nixon refers this policy as linkage.

One might argue that the fact that the *Tribune* was playing to its traditionally conservative audience by granting Richard Nixon a forum to vet his opinion, but the message of Nixon's article was much more moderate than, for example, William Safire's previously mentioned works in the *Times*. Therefore, the Right-Left political divide was based more on image and less on ideas. Image politics reached high-tide during the Andropov-Reagan standoff over arms control and image remains of critical importance in American presidential elections.

Article Number Fifty "Andropov Improving, Top Soviet Aid Says," *New York Times*, January 7, 1984

The above article was published when Andropov was seriously ill and near his death. Kremlin spokesman Vadim V. Zagladin is quoted in response to queries about Andropov's health saying, 'he [Andropov] is working and taking part in all party affairs.' History now tells a quite different story for we now know Andropov was near death.

The article serves as a reminder that Andropov's tenure as leader of the USSR was incomplete and makes it difficult to judge.

Chapter Two

Conclusion: Exit Stage Right

When Andropov became General Secretary in 1982, numerous events had taken place which led to the solidification of Western public opinion of the USSR. Many of these instances had been brought on by the Soviet leadership, however, the negative rhetoric provided by the American leadership served to cement a general perception of the USSR as a illegitimate state. Martin Malia explains the negative approaches of the Soviets and the rhetorical commentary of the United States that led to a coalescing of American public opinion in favor of a “zero-sum” option of dismembering the USSR.

But soon, as we have seen, the West found itself on the far side of détente. With the invasion of Afghanistan, SALT II went by the board; and with [Andrei] Sakharov’s exile to Gorki for protesting it, the last of the dissidents was silenced. By the turn of the 1980s Soviet Russia offered the world a bleaker visage than at any time since Stalin’s death. In the first half of the decade, Western public opinion on the Right anxiously echoed Reagan’s castigation of the Evil Empire, and on the Left it agonized over the dangers of a new Cold War.²⁸

From a historical perspective, the USSR had not arrived at a point of greater illegitimacy since the end of Stalin’s purges and the outbreak of the Second World War. Soviet leaders from Brezhnev to Chernenko attempted to keep the USSR together by convincing the population that the USSR had saved the world from the plight of Nazism and to a lesser degree capitalist imperialism. Although the first part of the line of reasoning had basis in fact, the disparaging odds that Soviet citizens faced in their everyday lives began to override nostalgia by the early 1980s and by the end of the decade the Soviet “Experiment,” to quote historian Ron Suny, had lost all ideological fuel.

²⁸ Malia, pp.401-402

Demographics allowed the Western consensus to sustain itself through the 1990s. Ironically, the American analysis of the Soviet Union was utopian and absolutist in its approach to defeating the USSR. At some point, late in Brezhnev's tenure, the United States became convinced it was in a fight to the death with the Soviet Union. The United States' self-perceived "exceptional" position vis-à-vis the USSR could be summarized by former Green Bay Packers' football coach Vince Lombardi's famous saying, "winning isn't everything, it's the only thing." Thus, by the time Mikhail Gorbachev became General Secretary in 1985, any attempt by the USSR to re-define and reform itself was met with overwhelming U.S. pressure to deliver the *coup de grace* to the "Evil Empire."

For the apologists, chief among them Roy Medvedev and Trotsky himself, the suggestion that the Bolshevik Revolution represented a point of positive human development which was hijacked by Stalin, does not stand up to historical analysis. It was this hijacking which eventually brought about the dismantling of the Soviet Empire. Malia offers an explanation in contradiction to the apologists.

The answer [to why the Soviet Union collapsed] really is quite simple, and the dissidents had spelled it out well before the actual day of reckoning. The cause of the Soviet collapse was the intrinsic unviability of the upside-down Leninist Party-state as a „social' system; this, in turn, derived from the intrinsic impossibility of the Marxist fantasy of human emancipation through socialism-as-noncapitalism. In consequence, after the initial success of Stalin's red-hot drive to build socialism, the system congealed into a systemic Lie concealed only by the „wooden language' of the One True Teaching. Soviet socialism had in fact been an illusion throughout its career; ideology alone had made it appear to be real as its obverse on the capitalist side of the looking glass.²⁹

Richard Pipes offers a more philosophical explanation of why the Soviet Union failed.

“Communism failed because it proceeded from the erroneous doctrine of the

²⁹ Malia, pp.406-407

Enlightenment, perhaps the most pernicious idea in the history of thought, that man is merely a material compound, devoid of either soul or innate ideas, and as such a passive product of an infinitely malleable social environment.”³⁰

The absolutist ideology of the early Bolsheviks had, by the 1990s, been matched in conviction by the American Right which had won the ideological battle in absolute terms. The British novelist John Le Carre described the irony of both Russian history and the U.S. reaction to the Soviet Union in his 1995 fictional work *Our Game*.

If we're talking the Doctor's [a reference to a character in the novel] public renunciation of radical socialism, we're talking his article entitled „Death of an Experiment,' published *Socialist Review* November „ninety-two. The Doctor linked his decision to an analysis of what he termed the underground continuum of Russian expansionism whether it was conducted under tsarist, Communist, or, as of now, federalist flag. He also referred to the West's newfound moral orthodoxy, which he likened to the early phases of Communist social dogma without the fundamental idealism to go with it.³¹

The irony is how dogmatic and imperialistic the United States has become in the imposition of its values on the rest of the world. There is a difference in that the United States seeks the implementation of global “democracy” by imposing Isaiah Berlin's concept of “negative liberty” on foreign countries regardless of the presence of Western values in the countries. Whether it was Tony Blair's ill-conceived bombing of Serbia or George W. Bush's “preemptive war” in Iraq, Anglo-American values continue to be imposed by force. Furthermore, U.S. imperialism includes no positive dialectic, but only the opportunity for one to participate in a consumer society.

³⁰ Pipes, p. 405

³¹ John Le Carre, *Our Game*, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1995), p.15

One might question the applicability of these comments in a paper written about the ideological cleavage of two of America's premier news papers during the rule of one of the Soviet Union's more stoic and less humanitarian leaders. The answer is that there was very little Right-Left cleavage between the *Times* and *Tribune*, which was representative of the United States' body politic as a whole. On the subject of Andropov himself, both newspapers worked from the predisposed notion that the Soviet Union was not a legitimate nation-state. Thus, the papers simply told a different variant of the essentially same tale. The Gospel of Luke might be superficially different than the Gospel of Matthew, but there is no deviation between the two as to the Divinity of Jesus Christ. The *Tribune* and the *Times* were different gospels about the same story; their differences were ephemeral at best.

History is in general agreement that the Soviet Union was illegitimate, but the United States was not able to offer a positive alternative. Andropov's reforms were focused on disciplining an already decayed system; the *Times* and *Tribune* accurately depict this fact. However, the fact that writers like Safire, Tyner, Burns, *et al* could offer no alternative to the USSR by defining what America *was* (only that it was not the USSR), has left a nation searching for what it stands for well into the twenty-first century.

The consensus opinion, as represented by the examination of the articles related to Andropov's leadership in the *New York Times* and *Chicago Tribune* was center-right to far-right in orientation. It was as if Augustine and Thomas Aquinas were arguing over the specific age of the Apostle Luke and the Apostle Matthew; though this conversation may have stimulated the audience, it would never arrive at a diametrically different conclusion about the veracity of the Christian theology. In this sense, there are some minor

deviations which took place between the *Times* and the *Tribune* regarding their coverage of Andropov.

Firstly, the *Times* presented a more Left leaning position on nuclear arms control. Numerous articles and editorials encouraged the United States to take a more moderating position vis-à-vis Andropov and the Soviets. This was not a radical position similar to that supported by Bertrand Russell and others in the freeze movement; it was a position that suggested that diplomacy was best achieved through moderating dialogue as opposed to demagogic rhetoric.

The argument over arms control and what position the Reagan Administration should have taken in relation to Andropov is highly debatable. The hawkish position taken by Reagan found its roots in the anti-détente members of Republican President Gerald Ford's administration and the staff of Democratic Senator Henry M. Jackson. In particular, the Team B review board, inspired by Albert Wohlstetter and chaired by Richard Pipes, sought to discredit the CIA's analysis of the Soviet Union's military capabilities.

Ford's Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld and Chief of Staff Richard Cheney were vocal supporters of the idea that the Soviet Union was violating the spirit of détente. The critique began under a shadow of controversy as Director of Central Intelligence William Colby was dismissed by President Ford for opposing the creation of a committee of outside experts, many of whom had little or no expertise in arms control, from critiquing the CIA's professional staff. Nevertheless, the experiment went forward with Pipes, Paul Wolfowitz, and Paul Nitze serving on Team B. Nitze would later serve as a negotiator in the arms control talks in Geneva during Andropov's tenure.

American arms build-up began, not with Reagan, but during the Carter presidency. The stage was set for rhetorical theatrics when Andropov emerged from the murky world of the KGB to become General Secretary. Perhaps the hawks were right that Andropov was subtly derailing détente from his position as KGB chief; in the end it did not matter that the CIA was correct and Team B was guilty of polemical hyperbole because the Right won.

The Team B argument was representative of a greater domestic political debate taking place in the United States since the Eisenhower Administration; the issue of the arms race and the military industrial complex was never fully decided in the minds of many Americans. In fact, the U.S. consensus revolved around the West's superiority in human rights and standard of living as opposed to military expenditure. If there was a domestic consensus on arms control, would the *Times* and *Tribune* reporting reflect a balanced pro-Soviet/ pro-U.S. position? If we use the issues of human rights and economic systems as benchmarks, the answer would be no. Thus, any suggestion that there existed any left-wing opinion voiced in the newspapers examined in the study did not exist in the sense of a U.S.- USSR position, but only in the narrow context of domestic political debate. It was within this debate that the American Neo-Conservatives effectively monopolized the bully pulpit to redefine the middle position on the arms control debate. By the time Andropov came to power, Nitze himself was under attack by the radical Right for codling the Soviets (see above).

In summary, we can say the *Times* presented a more moderate position on the issue of arms control which had been pushed further and further to the right of the political spectrum since the mid-1970s.

To a lesser degree, the *Times* exhibited a more moderating approach to the issue of Andropov's economic reforms. The *Tribune* was more apt to write this off as pure posturing on the part of the Soviet *vozhd*. However, we now know that Andropov was well aware of the fact that the Soviet economy was decaying; that Gosplan was an inefficient method of managing the Soviet economy; and that the COMECON (Community of Mutual Economic Assistance) was draining the USSR in favor of the Warsaw Pact countries and other satellites such as Cuba.

The topic of the economy was not broached by the newspapers as much as the issue of arms control, but the public consensus that the Soviet economy was a farce already existed. To suggest that any U.S. citizen truly thought it was better to live in Andropov's USSR as opposed to the United States was bordering on the insane.

The appropriate question for the media to ask related to the issue of convergence: could the Soviet and Western systems of economy merge in order to produce a more benign form of socialism? Some scholars, such as Katherine Verdery have even suggested that a socialist system emerged in the grey economy underneath the centrally planned Soviet system.³² However, for the purposes of this paper, Andropov was not in power long enough to explore the U.S. media's coverage of economic convergence.

In the end Yuri Andropov's tenure as General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union was but a hiccup within the context of the overall Soviet experiment. It is difficult to speak of "Andropov's Legacy" as GS, but it is possible to extrapolate that his leadership of the KGB allowed him to hone new professionally minded sophisticates which make up the leadership of today's Russian Federation.

³² See Katherine Verdery, *What was Socialism, and What Comes Next?* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1996)

The *Tribune* and the *Times* cannot be held accountable for failing to recognize the historically important role Andropov played as leader of the KGB. Historically speaking, it would have been difficult to engage in a rational debate about the role of the KGB after the release of Whitaker Chambers' *Witness* which exposed the role of Alger Hiss as an NKVD (forerunner to the KGB) agent.

Retrospectively, Andropov also deserves credit for the promotion of Mikhail Gorbachev, who the Western media fell in love with. Andropov served as the penultimate transitional figure that may have placated the hardliners while promoting the reformers. It is not accurate to portray Andropov as a neo-Stalinist lackey of Suslov or a Western minded liberal.

Andropov as a neo-Stalinist is a thesis supported by Vladimir Solovyov and Elena Klepikova in their book *Yuri Andropov: A Secret Passage into the Kremlin*. The authors describe the swiftness and brutality Andropov was capable of acting when he subjected an English subject, Mikola Sharygin-Bodulyak to a ten-year prison term on a trumped up espionage charge. When asked about his decision by subordinates, he responded: „I trust the queen of England will not declare war on us because of Sharygin.”³³This story, although anecdotal, was an accurate depiction of the brutality Yuri Andropov was capable of, but it would be equally unfair to characterize Andropov as a liberal just because he hosted then 10 year old Samantha Smith of Maine in Moscow. Lou Holtz once said that “it’s not as good as it seems; it’s not as bad as it seems; the truth lies somewhere in between.” This statement accurately depicts Andropov’s rule in the Soviet Union.

³³ Vladimir Solovyov and Elena Klepikova, *Yuri Andropov: A Secret Passage into the Kremlin* (New York: Macmillian Publishing Company, 1983), pp.44-45

What then became of the United States media, in particular the *New York Times* and *Chicago Tribune* in the wake of the USSR's disintegration some seven years after Andropov's death? The answer to this question is problematic for the lack of bi-polar global adversaries has forced media outlets to direct their reporting in one of two directions.

In the first instance, they could have decided to be more subject-specific and fact based in their reporting. Otherwise, they may decide to deviate into the fantasy land of sensationalized tabloid reporting. Both papers were able to sustain a less-sensationalized type of format well into the 1990s. This was an era that featured the removal of a major controller of the flow of information, the USSR, but also did not have the massive informational flow brought about by the internet and more modern forms of social media. In a certain sense, it was a brief return to journalism's Golden Age.

Presently, the internet combined with the profit driven motives of newspapers and newsrooms have changed the purpose of news in America. The Era of "infotainment" has truly begun, and the truth is ostracized in favor of titillation and sensationalism. Coverage of the Russian Federation, and the personage of Vladimir Putin in particular, jumps from Cold War style, ideologically charge type of reporting to sensationalism about ephemeral issues of the current Prime Minister's personal life (although this is much more prevalent in Europe).

In summary, the case of Andropov as viewed through the U.S. media was close to conclusion before he even took control of the USSR. The American political climate was such that almost any Soviet leader associated with Brezhnev stood to suffer polemical

criticism from the U.S. media and body politic. It was this body politic that did not allow for major deviation by the *Tribune* and *Times* on issues relating to U.S.-Soviet relations. Unfortunately, this has prevented historians from gathering an accurate assessment of Andropov as a historical figure. Furthermore, it has contributed to the unanswered questions of just what values and institutions does the United States stand for and support in a proactive manner.

In summary, former Speaker of the House Thomas J. “Tip” O’Neal was right when he announced that “all politics is local.” O’Neal’s words did not just reflect the American peoples’ opinion about education or the environment, but foreign policy as well. The polemical deviations within the *Tribune* and *Times* were limited, and the conflicts that did exist over policy questions related to Andropov’s USSR were due to a lack of consensus among Americans not because of ideological considerations.

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