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## HOW MOSCOW MEDDLES IN THE WEST'S ELECTIONS

### INTRODUCTION

It seems, at times, that democracy is the Soviet Union's favorite political system. After all, the Kremlin keeps participating in Western elections. Last year the Soviets tried to influence elections in West Germany and Britain. And this year it is America's turn. For months, Moscow's statements and actions have been aimed at defeating Ronald Reagan. Its overture earlier this month to open negotiations with the U.S. on a ban of anti-satellite and space weapons is just one salvo in this strategy. This was followed by the Kremlin's provocative detention of two U.S. diplomats in Moscow and the banning of the U.S. Ambassador's traditional televised Fourth of July Address to the Soviet people.

Although Soviet leader Konstantin Chernenko denied on April 8 that Soviet policy tries to manipulate the outcome of the U.S. elections, Moscow has missed almost no opportunity in recent months to worsen U.S.-Soviet relations and heighten international tensions--and to pin the blame on the Reagan Administration.

Moscow's disinformation campaign has aimed at convincing American, European, and world public opinion that U.S. military and political policies are the root cause of international conflict and instability. Moscow consistently has portrayed the U.S. as an aggressive, militaristic, and neocolonial/imperialistic power so as to isolate the United States from its friends and allies and to incite Third World governments.

It methodically has sought to exacerbate latent European anxieties over U.S. strategy for a nuclear war limited to the European continent, thus casting doubts on the true motives of U.S. and NATO defense policy. And Moscow incessantly has assailed the U.S. as the prime cause of the nuclear arms race, in contrast to the "peaceloving" Soviet Union. It has charged that the

United States is fundamentally uninterested in seriously negotiating equitable arms control agreements and has denounced U.S. charges of Soviet treaty violations as smear propaganda.

In November 1983, Moscow walked out of the Geneva arms control negotiations, ostensibly to protest deployment of intermediate range nuclear forces (INF) in Europe. Despite U.S. flexibility, Moscow has refused to return to the bargaining table. In December, the Kremlin announced forward deployment of SS-20 missiles in East Germany and Czechoslovakia as well as stepped up patrolling by Soviet missile carrying submarines along U.S. shores.<sup>1</sup> In March, it charged the White House with support of "state terrorism" and condemned U.S. foreign policy as "adventurist" and irresponsible.<sup>2</sup> Moscow has also snubbed Western pleas to spare the life of Nobel laureate and human rights activist Andrei Sakharov, who is on a hunger strike until authorities allow his wife, Elena Bonner, to travel to the West for medical treatment. The Soviet Union continues its crackdown on dissidents and denies them basic human rights in flagrant violation of the Helsinki accord.<sup>3</sup>

Then in May, the Kremlin declared that it would boycott the Los Angeles Olympic games. Just prior to this the Soviet press compared the Reagan Administration to the leaders of Nazi Germany and Reagan himself has been portrayed as the crony of a top Nazi. Having failed to dislodge incumbent governments through the ballot box in West Germany and Britain in 1983 and to block deployment within NATO states of U.S. new medium-range nuclear missiles, Moscow is clearly pulling out all the stops to ensure the defeat of Ronald Reagan this fall. The Kremlin leaders unmistakably view the 1984 presidential election as their best chance to ensure continuation of Soviet strategic ascendancy.

#### SOVIET MEDDLING IN GERMAN ELECTIONS

The March 6, 1983, election in the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) confronted Moscow with a challenge and opportunity. The fall of Chancellor Helmut Schmidt's government in October 1982 had derailed Moscow's strategy of exacerbating the widening rift within the Social Democratic Party (SPD) on security policy to achieve the repudiation of NATO's 1979 decision to deploy intermediate range nuclear missiles. By contrast, the ruling Christian Democrats, led by Helmut Kohl, were unequivocally committed to accept Pershing II and cruise missiles to offset the growing numbers of SS-20 intermediate-range nuclear missiles targeted on Western Europe.

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<sup>1</sup> Frank J. Prial, "Soviets Won't Set a Date to Resume Strategic Talks," The New York Times, December 9, 1983.

<sup>2</sup> Morton Kondracke, "Soviet Manipulation of U.S. Politics," Baltimore Sun, April 18, 1984, p. 13.

<sup>3</sup> Pravda, May 21, 1983; FBIS, May 25, 1983.

But the new government's call for early elections also afforded the Kremlin the opportunity to turn the March elections into a referendum on missile deployment. As had been expected, the Social Democrats rejected missile deployment at their party convention in November 1982 and called for a fundamental reexamination of the premises of German security policy. Their candidate, Hans-Jochen Vogel campaigned against missile deployment, and the party's left-wing openly joined forces with the militantly anti-American "peace" movement. For Moscow, the stakes were tremendous. A defeat of the ruling Christian Democrats promised not only a halt to NATO's missile deployment and a rejection of U.S. leadership but, potentially, a radical alteration of the West German security policy.

Consequently, the Soviets made an all-out attempt to bring down the Kohl government. Soviet preference for the anti-deployment Social Democrats went far beyond mere tacit approval.<sup>4</sup> The Soviet efforts to defeat Chancellor Kohl included the use of the West German peace movement, direct appeals to German voters, and threatening Soviet statements.

Organizing and supporting peace movements in the Federal Republic was a key Soviet strategem. Explains J. A. Emerson Vermaat, a leading Dutch authority on the European peace movement:

[As the West German elections grew near] the Soviet Union launched a 'peace' campaign aimed at preventing the deployment of improved Western nuclear weapons in Europe. In pursuit of this goal, the Soviet Union... sought to arouse Western public opinion and to direct it against the measures aimed at redressing the eroded European strategic balance. A major role in Moscow's strategy was played by the orchestration of a 'peace offensive' through a variety of front organizations as well as the utilization of the organizational skills available in some West European Communist parties.<sup>5</sup>

The Soviets also made extensive use of direct appeals to the West German voters. For example, less than two weeks before the election, the Soviets organized mass demonstrations in Leningrad and Minsk urging the West German voters to reject Kohl's pro-deployment policies.<sup>6</sup> These demonstrations were staged exclusively for the benefit of West German television cameras. Included in the "Minsk appeal" was a call for West German citizens "to defend themselves against stationing of new American medium-range

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<sup>4</sup> Anatoliy Pavlov, "The Foreign Policy Concept of the S.P.D. Platform," Moscow Radio, February 17, 1983, in FBIS, Western Europe, February 23, 1983, p. G12.

<sup>5</sup> J.A. Emerson Vermaat, "Moscow and the European Peace Movement," Problems of Communism, November-December 1981, p. 43.

<sup>6</sup> John F. Burns, "Moscow Still Hopes For Upset in Bonn," The New York Times, March 5, 1983, p. 3.



missiles."<sup>7</sup> This prompted the West German government to accuse the Soviets of a "gross violation of the principles" of the 1975 Helsinki Accords, which bans one government from interfering in another's internal politics.<sup>8</sup> Bonn also complained that this was not the first time the Soviets had interfered in the West German political process. Commented Chancellor Kohl, "One was used to this sort of thing."<sup>9</sup>

The Soviet effort to unseat Kohl's ruling coalition culminated in a blitzkrieg of threatening media statements. In a Pravda interview, for example, Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko warned the Europeans to show "political maturity" by "distancing themselves from the Reagan Administration's position" on the deployment of the new U.S. intermediate-range nuclear weapons.<sup>10</sup> Gromyko later threatened that deployment of the U.S. missiles would lead to "an extended nuclear confrontation" in which the Federal Republic would not "be ignored."<sup>11</sup> This was an undisguised warning that West Germans could face war unless they rejected Kohl.

Similarly another Soviet article admonished the West Germans that their "peace and security" would be jeopardized if Chancellor Kohl were reelected.<sup>12</sup> In the coup de grâce, a Novosti Soviet News Agency press release in Bonn stressed that Kohl's reelection could lead the Federal Republic "to the nuclear gallows."<sup>13</sup> A Bonn government spokesman denounced the Soviet Foreign Minister's Pravda interview as a "remarkable piece of insolent interference."<sup>14</sup> Kohl called the Soviet intimidation "crass interference" in the Bundestag elections.<sup>15</sup> So partisan was Soviet involvement in the German elections that even the Social Democrats felt compelled to distance themselves from the Soviet position out of fear of being considered servile followers of Moscow.<sup>16</sup>

But Moscow did not limit itself to denunciations of the Kohl government's support of missile deployment and Washington's negotiating strategy at Geneva. It also charged the Christian Democrats

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<sup>7</sup> "Tass Appeal: Interference in FRG," in FBIS, Western Europe, March 2, 1983, p. J1.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> "Gromyko's Remarks: 'Crass Interference,'" in FBIS, Western Europe, February 28, 1983, p. J1.

<sup>10</sup> Burns, op. cit., p. 3.

<sup>11</sup> In Morton Kondracke, "Will the Soviets Meddle With our Election?" The Washington Times, April 20, 1984, p. C1.

<sup>12</sup> Burns, op. cit., p. 3.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> "Gromyko's 'Insolent Interference,'" in FBIS, Western Europe, February 25, 1983, p. J3.

<sup>15</sup> "Gromyko's Remarks: 'Crass Interference,'" in FBIS, Western Europe, February 28, 1983, p. J1.

<sup>16</sup> "SPD Rejects Gromyko's Call," in FBIS, Western Europe, February 28, 1983.

with brazen anti-Sovietism and sought to discredit their ability to maintain peace through alliance with the "militarist circles" in Washington. It played on the emerging neutralist sentiment and alleged that close association with the U.S. would invariably embroil Bonn in a military conflict with the Soviet Union.

The Kremlin also tried to evoke fears of a resurging German territorial revanchism and warned against its implications for constructive relations with the Soviet Union and its allies. It recalled that the Christian Democrats had opposed vigorously Willy Brandt's Ostpolitik in the early 1970s and had not dropped their rejection of the territorial status quo in Europe.<sup>17</sup> Helmut Kohl's participation in a CDU election rally in West Berlin was decried as "a provocation against the policy of peace and detente."<sup>18</sup>

In the final analysis, Moscow's sledgehammer tactics probably backfired. Moscow failed to topple Kohl. His bloc of Christian Democrats and the Christian Social Union won 48.8 percent of the vote to capture 244 Bundestag seats which, with the 34 Free Democrat seats, gives the governing coalition a comfortable 278-seat majority in the 498 member parliament. The fact that Moscow did not succeed does not make its attempt to influence the West German elections any less alarming.

#### MOSCOW'S MEDDLING IN THE BRITISH ELECTIONS

Moscow was not deterred by its failure in West Germany and tried to meddle in the June 9, 1983, elections in Great Britain. As in West Germany, the British elections were dominated by a divisive debate over the deployment in Europe of U.S. cruise missiles and a sharp polarization of the political parties on the future of Britain's independent nuclear deterrent force. The incumbent, Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, and her Tories favored not only the deployment of these weapons on British soil but were also committed to modernizing the aging Polaris submarines with U.S.-made Trident II missiles. Thatcher's opponents, the Labor Party led by Michael Foot, demanded the rejection of U.S. nuclear missiles and unilateral nuclear disarmament.

Margaret Thatcher had never been Moscow's favorite because of her close ideological association with the Reagan Administration and her support for Washington's defense policies. During the election campaign, the Kremlin stepped up its familiar pattern of "active measures" to defeat or cripple Thatcher's government. Moscow's agents scurried around Britain to incite opposition to Thatcher's defense and economic policies, to aid anti-nuclear groups, such as the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND), and

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<sup>17</sup> Radio Moscow, February 23, 1983.

<sup>18</sup> TASS, February 22, 1983.

to hail the Labor Party's realistic approach to relations with the Soviet Union.

Moscow assailed Thatcher's call for elections a year ahead of schedule. It charged that Thatcher intended to preempt and disarm the growing anti-nuclear movement before its growing popularity might jeopardize her electoral prospects. Soviet propaganda stated that "Washington's stooges" had called the elections on Washington's orders to avoid a change in government that would almost certainly necessitate a reconsideration by NATO of its plans to deploy nuclear weapons in Britain. Furthermore, the Kremlin accused her of trying to wrap up the elections before the British economy slumped.<sup>19</sup>

Soviet propaganda portrayed Thatcher as a warmongering maniac possessed by anti-Sovietism and a fervent follower of Reagan's militaristic foreign policy, intent on turning the British into "nuclear hostages" of the United States<sup>20</sup> by "supporting unconditionally the U.S. and NATO plans which endanger the cause of peace."<sup>21</sup> Moscow also alleged that Thatcher is ready to "sign Britain's death warrant" by expressing her determination to use the Polaris nuclear deterrent in retaliation.<sup>22</sup>

Her steadfast refusal to take into account the British "independent nuclear deterrent" in the calculations of the East-West balance also drew heavy criticism from Moscow, while Labor's willingness to do so was applauded as evidence of its serious commitment to arms control and disarmament.<sup>23</sup> In the same vein, the Kremlin called the rapid increase in the strike power of Great Britain's nuclear submarine fleet an important factor in the increase of international tensions and the arms race and endorsed the Labor Party's opposition to the acquisition of Trident II and its calls for unilateral disarmament.<sup>24</sup>

Moscow exhorted the British electorate that the so-called special British relationship with the U.S. ran counter to the interests of the British working class. It claimed that it would make Britain Washington's nuclear battleground. The Kremlin also charged that, contrary to genuine British interests, "Washington's stooges" at Downing Street were not interested in settling the Falklands conflict by diplomatic means and terminating their financially draining military presence because of Washington's desire to turn the islands into a NATO base similar to Ascension and Diego Garcia. Finally, Moscow portrayed Britain and its Tories as Washington's appendage whose interests could be flouted

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<sup>19</sup> Radio Moscow, May 31, 1983 (BBC Summary of World Broadcasts, June 2, 1983).  
<sup>20</sup> Radio Moscow, May 27, 1983 (BBC Summary of World Broadcasts, May 30, 1983).  
<sup>21</sup> TASS, May 16, 1983 (BBC Summary of World Broadcasts, May 18, 1983).  
<sup>22</sup> TASS, June 1, 1983 (BBC Summary of World Broadcasts, June 3, 1983).  
<sup>23</sup> Radio Moscow, May 27, 1983 (BBC Summary of World Broadcasts, June 3, 1983).  
<sup>24</sup> TASS, May 25, 1983 (BBC Summary of World Broadcasts, May 26, 1983).



with impunity if they collided with U.S. objectives. In this context, Soviet propaganda played up the U.S. embargo of British pipeline equipment bound for the Soviet Union and the costs this had inflicted on the British economy.<sup>25</sup>

Moscow contrasted Thatcher's increased military spending with the Labor Party pledge to cut military expenditures in half.<sup>26</sup> In addition, warned Moscow, Thatcher was planning to turn "the British trade unions into a submissive appendage of the establishment and abolish the achievements of their long and determined class struggle."

Finally, Moscow attacked the Tories for hypocrisy in charging the Soviet government with gross violations of human rights to cover up Britain's own violations. According to Kremlin propaganda, the Tory government had established a "special secret group to coordinate the activities of opponents of the anti-nuclear movement" and was using the "powerful police machinery" to hunt down members of the peace movement,<sup>27</sup> who were then confined without trial in British jails. The Thatcher regime was charged with suppressing fundamental human rights, and for flagrant racial discrimination at home and colonial oppression in Northern Ireland. In a final crescendo on election eve, Moscow likened Margaret Thatcher's potential reelection to the rise to power of "Bierhaus Fuehrer" Adolf Hitler, who started immediately "with smashing the unions, strengthening the police apparatus, and reprisals against peace champions."<sup>28</sup>

Despite its campaign, Moscow failed to bring down Thatcher. To the contrary, the Tories picked up 100 seats, giving them a solid majority of 150 seats in Parliament. The radicalism of Labor's positions on arms control, unilateral disarmament, and economic policy were clearly unpalatable to the conservative instincts of the British electorate, and the Kremlin's heavyhanded propaganda and open embrace of Labor was probably as counterproductive as its unabashed endorsement of the Social Democrats in West Germany.

#### SOVIET INTERFERENCE IN THE AMERICAN ELECTION

The Soviets redirected their attention to the United States after having failed in West Germany and Great Britain. From Moscow's perspective, its relationship with Ronald Reagan had been an unmitigated disaster. It had seen the President rapidly closing the U.S.-Soviet military gap and successfully begin deploying new American nuclear weapons in Western Europe; and they

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<sup>25</sup> Radio Moscow, June 3, 1983 (BBC Summary of World Broadcasts, June 7, 1983).

<sup>26</sup> Radio Moscow, May 27, 1983 (BBC Summary of World Broadcasts, May 30, 1983).

<sup>27</sup> Radio Moscow, May 14, 1983 (BBC Summary of World Broadcasts, May 17, 1983).

<sup>28</sup> Radio Moscow, June 3, 1983 (BBC Summary of World Broadcasts, June 10, 1983).

had haggled with him for three years over three separate arms control bargaining tables, finding him unwilling to settle for cosmetic concessions that left intact Soviet advantages. The Strategic Arms Reduction Talks (START), the Intermediate Nuclear Forces talks (INF) in Geneva, Switzerland, and the Mutual and Balanced Force Reduction talks (MBFR) in Vienna, Austria, seemed deadlocked unless Moscow was prepared to accept genuine arms reductions.

The initial Soviet hope that Ronald Reagan, like Richard Nixon, would gravitate toward a more accommodating position once in office had been proved false. Moscow's expectation that congressional constraints and public opinion would temper Reagan's tough-minded policies had likewise been proved incorrect.

The Soviet rulers apparently decided in mid-1983 that only the defeat of Ronald Reagan in 1984 would engender a fundamental alteration of U.S. policy toward the Soviet Union and arrest the reassertion of American leadership in the world. Official confirmation of Soviet disillusion with the Reagan Administration came personally from the late Soviet leader, Yuri Andropov. He stated: "If anyone has any illusions about the possibility of an evolution for the better in the present American Administration's policy, recent events [after the downing of Korean Airline flight 007] have dispelled them once and for all."<sup>29</sup> According to influential Soviet commentator Aleksandr Bovin, Moscow expected that the Reagan regime's growing isolation from its allies, the firm rebuff from the Soviet Union, and the expansion of the anti-war movement will lead "to a new alignment of political forces within the United States."<sup>30</sup> Since Moscow deemed that these conditions would defeat Reagan, it appears that the Kremlin devised a comprehensive strategy to manipulate the 1984 U.S. Presidential elections.

To ensure Reagan's defeat, Moscow has developed a two-pronged approach. First, it tries to depict the President as a danger to international peace, who carelessly wanders on the brink of nuclear catastrophe and is the source of international tensions because of his quest to impose U.S. world domination. Second, the White House is portrayed as being uninterested in arms control agreements with the Soviet Union and having initiated an open-ended arms race to restore U.S. military superiority.

Reagan never has received favorable treatment in the Soviet media, of course, but by mid-1983 Soviet propaganda attacks reached new levels of virulence. As NATO deployment of U.S. intermediate-range nuclear weapons in Europe became almost inevitable and, even more so after the Soviet downing of Korean Airlines flight 007 brought Moscow worldwide condemnation, the Kremlin

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<sup>29</sup> Pravda, September 29, 1983.

<sup>30</sup> Izvestia, November 16, 1983.



threw its propaganda machine into full gear against the White House. A statement attributed to Andropov personally assailed Washington for "heaping mountains of slander on the Soviet Union and socialism as a social system...(in its) endeavor to justify (its) dangerous and misanthropic policy."<sup>31</sup> The Kremlin charged the White House with reckless international behavior, exacerbating international tensions through its "militaristic" foreign policy and threatening the very existence of peoples by its nuclear brinkmanship. Moscow even claimed that the White House was preparing the American people psychologically for a nuclear showdown with the Soviet Union.

The Kremlin plays consistently on U.S. domestic opposition to White House policy toward Central America. It deliberately exaggerates the limited scope of U.S. involvement, charging that U.S. forces are "participating in combat operations...and are sustaining losses...[and that] 'zinc coffins' are arriving at the Arlington military cemetery as they did in the years of the Vietnam war."<sup>32</sup>

These attacks are part of Moscow's plan to cast Ronald Reagan as the world's most dangerous leader and to fuel fears among the American people of imminent war. Moscow television labeled the President as the most "bellicose" president "who has adopted the Truman warpath and does not deviate from it an inch."<sup>33</sup> Georgi Arbatov, the Director of the KGB-affiliated Institute of the U.S.A. and Canada, claimed at a recent roundtable in Paris that the Reagan Administration "is the most anti-Soviet and the most militaristic in the entire history of our relations with the United States."<sup>34</sup> Thus, in order to lessen international tensions and reduce the danger of war, the American people must rid themselves of the "monster" in the White House.

The second theme in Moscow's disinformation campaign is to portray the Reagan Administration as the chief obstacle to nuclear arms control. The Kremlin charges that Reagan is not sincere about curtailing the arms race and, instead, aims "primarily at achieving military superiority over the Soviet Union and the other Warsaw Pact countries." Added Soviet Defense Minister Ustinov: the United States "has unleashed an unrestrained arms race and is commissioning more and more new systems of nuclear and conventional weapons."<sup>35</sup> Consequently, the Reagan Administration is to be held responsible for the breakdown in the arms control negotiations. The Soviets vowed not to return to the bargaining table until Reagan showed "concrete signs" of his

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<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> Sovetskaya Rossiya, September 13, 1983.

<sup>33</sup> Moscow Television, April 10, 1984.

<sup>34</sup> Georgi Arbatov, "Arbatov Calls U.S.-Soviet Relations 'Very Bad.'" FBIS, March 21, 1984, p. A1.

<sup>35</sup> Pravda, February 23, 1983.

willingness to negotiate in earnest (i.e., agreeing to remove from Western Europe the 32 cruise missiles and 9 Pershing II single warhead missiles leaving 252 Soviet triple warhead SS-20s in place).

In essence, the Soviets are making the claim that they cannot do business with Ronald Reagan. And by refusing to negotiate with him at the arms control talks, the Soviets prevent any relaxation of tension. These attacks on Reagan are meant to persuade Americans that improved U.S.-Soviet relations can only come about by removing the President from office.

By contrast, Moscow cheers the policies of Reagan's opposition. Extolling the proposed Democratic platform, Pravda writes:

They are right on target in pinning the blame for the sharp exacerbation of the international situation and the deterioration in Soviet-American relations on the White House incumbent and his "team."...All this is so contrary to present U.S. policy that it is hard to believe that such a voice could speak out at all in Washington today. Of course, it belongs to an opposition which is struggling for power. All the same, it is a sober voice.<sup>36</sup>

Similarly, Moscow Television labeled as "perfectly accurate" Senator Gary Hart's scathing attack on the Reagan Administration, in which Hart emphasized that its foreign policies do not "meet the reality of the international situation" and were "suffering failure after failure."<sup>37</sup> Additionally, Tass Radio lauded Walter Mondale for strongly criticizing "the militarist-foreign policy of the Reagan administration."<sup>38</sup>

In May, the Soviets announced that their team would not participate in the Los Angeles Summer Olympic Games. With the exception of Romania, all Soviet client states joined the boycott. Moscow charged that the U.S. authorities had repeatedly violated the Olympic Charter by "fanning anti-Sovietism and conniving with various reactionary and extremist groups."<sup>39</sup> When Reagan assured Moscow in a personal letter of the safety of Soviet athletes, the Kremlin launched a bitter attack on the President's credibility, and suggested that presidential assurances had never been backed up by practical deeds in the past.<sup>40</sup>

<sup>36</sup> Tomas Lokesnichenko, "A Sober Approach," Pravda, March 19, 1984; FBIS, March 24, 1984, p. A4.

<sup>37</sup> Moscow Television, February 29, 1984.

<sup>38</sup> Moscow Television, January 3, 1984.

<sup>39</sup> Radio Moscow, May 14, 1984, commentary by Soviet NOC Chairman Mavat Gramov.

<sup>40</sup> The Washington Post, May 12, 1984.

In another attempt to stress the poor climate in U.S.-Soviet relations, Moscow this year barred the U.S. envoy, Ambassador Arthur A. Hartman, from delivering his traditional Fourth of July television address. In the past, such action was always prompted by embassy refusals to alter the text of the speech so as to meet specific Soviet objections. Thus, in 1980 Ambassador Thomas J. Watson, Jr., was barred after refusing to remove a reference to Afghanistan. But the summary rejection of Hartman's speech as "part of President Reagan's reelection campaign" is unprecedented and gives a clear indication of Kremlin hostility and determination to bring about his defeat in November.<sup>41</sup>

Then on July 4, Moscow rounded up and detained for two hours two American officials assigned to the Moscow embassy to monitor human rights in the Soviet Union. They were charged with improper activities and gathering information hostile to the Soviet Union after a routine meeting at a public place with prominent human rights activist. Evidently, the Kremlin's desire to cut off all unofficial contact between Soviet citizens and foreigners so as to cover up the regime's systematic violation of human rights is stronger than its respect for the immunity of foreign diplomatic personnel.<sup>42</sup>

#### AMERICAN AWARENESS

In an important article on recent Soviet behavior, two American scholars point out: "The Soviet leadership has begun to focus on the much longer-term goal of eroding the political base of Western leaders and speeding their replacement."<sup>43</sup> Then the authors add:

Soviet leaders have resorted to tactics used immediately after World War II and even policies pursued soon after the Russian revolution: Look for exploitable differences in the opposing camp; appeal to the people over the heads of their government; establish a diplomatic position and not fuss much with it in the hopes of achieving unlikely compromises.<sup>44</sup>

Similarly, an American envoy recently returning from Moscow brought home the following message: "They're [the Soviets] not interested in doing anything which would contribute to the reelection of the President."<sup>45</sup> Yet few U.S. citizens probably

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<sup>41</sup> "Moscow Bars a Speech on July 4th by Envoy," The New York Times, July 5, 1984.

<sup>42</sup> "Tass Accuses 2 U.S. Diplomats," The Washington Post, July 7, 1984.

<sup>43</sup> Lawrence Caldwell and Robert Levgold, "Reagan Through Soviet Eyes," Foreign Policy, Fall 1983, p. 16.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., p. 14.

<sup>45</sup> Francis Clines, "Scowcroft Pessimistic on Soviet Ties," The New York Times, April 10, 1984, p. A3.



seriously considered the possibility of deliberate and systematic Soviet interference in the American political process.

A recent New York Times commentary entitled "An Arms Control Craving," expressed bewilderment at the fact that Americans were holding Reagan responsible for the deterioration in Soviet-American relations "in spite of the demonstrative Soviet walkouts from negotiations on nuclear weapons, and in spite of mounting evidence of Soviet violations of existing arms control agreements."<sup>46</sup> Few American voters probably have realized the link between the "new cold war" and the Soviets in influencing the U.S. election. When Americans finally recognize this link, Moscow's strategy is certain to backfire and fail, as it did in West Germany and Britain.

## CONCLUSION

The Soviet Union is currently meddling in the 1984 U.S. presidential election. The Kremlin rulers have seized every opportunity to worsen U.S.-Soviet relations and increase international tension. Moscow hopes that the American voters will associate Ronald Reagan with this "new cold war." As the November election approaches Americans should not be surprised by additional Soviet actions against Reagan.

Americans must understand that Moscow is trying to cast their votes for them. It would be a serious error to blame the President for something over which he has no control: the Soviets' threatening behavior.

On June 14, 1984 President Reagan held a press conference at the White House. During the press conference America's leading reporters bombarded the President with questions asking what he would do to improve U.S.-Soviet relations? A better question would have been to ask Soviet leader Konstantin Chernenko when Moscow would quit playing political games and return to the bargaining table? The answer, if truthful, would be after the November presidential elections.

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<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

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