

11 AUG 1983

**Yuriy Vladimirovich ANDROPOV**  
(Phonetic: ahnDRAWpuf)

USSR

*General Secretary and Member,  
Politburo, Central Committee,  
Communist Party of the Soviet  
Union\**

*Addressed as:  
Mr. Secretary*



Yuriy Andropov succeeded Leonid Brezhnev as General Secretary of the CPSU on 12 November 1982, the day after Brezhnev's death was announced. A member of the ruling Politburo since 1973, Andropov is one of only three people who have dual status as full members and Central Committee secretaries. When he took his new job, he indicated that collective leadership would continue to be the rule in the Soviet Union. At

present, however, he appears to be clearly in charge, even though the extent of his power has not yet been defined. As the Soviet leader, Andropov faces formidable domestic challenges, including an entrenched and aging bureaucratic structure, a Communist Party riddled with cynicism and corruption, and an economy whose performance is in serious decline. We believe that he has the resourcefulness, astuteness, and political skills needed to take on these problems. [redacted]

25X1

Andropov is perhaps the most complicated and puzzling of all the current Soviet leaders. A sophisticated man, he is probably better informed on foreign affairs, and on at least some domestic matters, than any other Soviet party chief since Lenin. Throughout his entire career, Andropov has shown a single-minded devotion to the Communist cause. He appears to have a capacity for ruthlessness, but it is possible that what seems ruthless to a non-Soviet observer is, to Andropov, merely an action to support or further the cause of Communism and the supremacy of the Soviet state. [redacted]

25X1

Andropov does not fit the stereotype of the dull, gray bureaucrat. He is reserved and unassuming; his quiet approach is unusual among Soviet leaders. Serious minded and pragmatic, he exudes self-confidence. He is suave and gentlemanly—even when dealing with his victims. He listens to new ideas, gathers information carefully, relies on exhaustive staff work, evaluates consequences and possible actions cautiously, and acts resolutely. His approach is to try to win through stratagem and maneuver but to resort to force when all else fails and he deems the risks acceptable. [redacted]

25X1

Among his closest personal and professional friends, Andropov counts Defense Minister Dmitriy Ustinov, Foreign Minister Andrey Gromyko, and, paradoxically, former CPSU Secretary Andrey Kirilenko—one of those he edged out in the competition for leadership. He appears to have been close to the late party ideologue Mikhail Suslov, the patron of Soviet conservatives, whose views are still shared by many in the leadership. Andropov was close to Brezhnev professionally for years, and the late General Secretary clearly regarded him as an astute adviser. [redacted]

25X1

At the same time, one of the most striking features of Andropov's background is his independence. He is a political loner. Unlike many of his colleagues, he did not fawn upon Brezhnev but treated him in a straightforward manner. Andropov is not regarded as the protege of any senior Soviet leader past or present. By the same token, unusual for the Soviet system, only a few men can be characterized as his own proteges. Even though he has long functioned within a framework of collective decisionmaking, he is, by all accounts, his own man. [redacted]

25X1

\* Since June 1983, also serving as Chairman of the Presidium, USSR Supreme Soviet. [redacted]

25X1

(cont.)  
CR M 83-10298

25X1