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The Socialist International: Its Organization and Activities

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A Research Paper

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The Socialist International: Its Organization and Activities



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A Research Paper

This paper was prepared by
European Issues Division, Office of European
Analysis

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It has been coordinated
with the Directorate of Operations and the
National Intelligence Council. Comments and queries
are welcome and may be addressed to the Chief,

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European Issues Division, EURA

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**The Socialist
International:
Its Organization
and Activities**

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Key Judgments

*Information available
as of 11 March 1983
was used in this report.*

The Socialist International (SI)—which holds its biennial congress in Lisbon from 7 to 10 April—is a West European-centered organization that in recent years has branched out to encompass some 50 socialist and social democratic parties worldwide. Once little more than a debating society and a source of patronage for its members, the SI now engages in global political activity in its efforts to foster disarmament, improve North-South relations, and protect human rights.

The transformation of the SI owes much to its president, former West German Chancellor Willy Brandt, who believes that the organization must deal pragmatically with non-European political groups and their problems, both to increase its prestige and to offer a socialist alternative to Communism. In practice, however, we believe SI actions have often tended to legitimize radical groups, some of which enjoy Soviet or Cuban backing.

Although the SI's cohesiveness and formal powers are often overestimated—and its ability to provide material assistance is virtually nil—political groups try hard to influence its policies. The Soviet Union and other Communist regimes employ covert tactics in efforts to influence the SI. More overtly, by claiming that they sincerely want “peace,” the Soviets are able to perpetuate a disarmament dialogue with the SI that has propaganda advantages for Moscow. Privately, the Soviets regard the socialists as serious rivals in the Third World.

Despite the proliferation of members, the West European parties continue to dominate the SI because of their extensive involvement and the size of their financial contributions. Among them, the West Germans have the greatest influence, with the French increasingly a close second. The Swedes and Austrians play important roles, as do the Spanish and Portuguese parties.

Nonetheless, Third World members exert strong and sometimes decisive influence on issues related to their regions. SI meetings in recent years have taken on a “mini-UN” flavor as the new members and observer groups have added their parochial causes to the organization's agenda. Indeed, the disorganized nature of SI meetings and the tendency of the established West European members to defer to the judgment of those most affected by a particular issue have often made for resolutions in support of radical causes.

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We believe that the SI's more responsible leaders are now having second thoughts about some of the more radical parties and causes the organization has supported. During the past year, for example, the SI has subtly qualified its support of the Sandinistas in Nicaragua and assumed a lower profile regarding the Salvadoran conflict. There are also signs that the SI will henceforth be less receptive to the applications of prospective Third World members.

Further, most SI leaders in our judgment seem to realize that their efforts to contribute to peace in Central America, the Middle East, and the disarmament field have hit serious snags. Each of these areas has thus been deemphasized in favor of other issues such as the world economic recession, North-South relations on a general level, and Southern Africa.

The fundamental differences in outlook between the SI and the United States are likely to persist. The socialists will continue to work against what they see as a tendency by the superpowers to divide the world into blocs, whether in Europe or the Third World. Thus, despite the belief of many party leaders that they are promoting Western interests, the SI's activities in some areas probably will continue to run counter to US policies.

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**The Socialist
International:
Its Organization
and Activities**

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The Socialist International

The Socialist International (SI) is an umbrella organization encompassing some 50 socialist and social democratic parties. Formed in 1951 to promote democratic socialism, the SI traces its lineage to the First and Second Internationals, founded in 1864 and 1889 respectively. According to SI statutes, its specific purpose is "to strengthen relations between the affiliated parties and to coordinate their political attitudes by consent."

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For more than two decades, the SI was little more than a debating society and a minor source of political patronage for West European party functionaries. Since the mid-1970s, however, changes in SI personnel and policy have propelled the socialists' into global political activity and enhanced their political influence. Willy Brandt's election as president of the SI in 1976 constituted a major turning point for the organization. Worried that the SI had become irrelevant to international politics, Brandt and Social Democratic colleagues such as Egon Bahr believed that it should concentrate on the most challenging global issues, especially peace, North-South relations, and human rights.² They also thought that the SI parties needed to deal pragmatically with non-European political groups, both to increase the SI's prestige and to offer a socialist alternative to what Bahr called the Communist sickness.

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Thus the SI came to support a wide assortment of political movements which had some pretensions to being socialist and democratic in orientation. In the Third World, leftist credentials sometimes took precedence and a commitment to democracy was left to later missionary work by the SI. The SI's campaign to become a major actor worldwide has proceeded on several fronts:

- Third World parties have been admitted.

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¹ The term "socialists" is used throughout the paper as a matter of convenience to characterize the socialists, social democrats, and labor party members who participate in the SI.

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² For analysis of the SI's activities in specific issue areas, see appendix A.

- SI meetings now take place more frequently in locations outside Europe.
- Well-publicized SI missions have visited Third World areas to consult not only with member parties but also with the major actors on controversial issues.

In its post-1976 spirit of activism, the SI has stated its support for some "liberation movements," including a few that have had Soviet or Cuban backing such as the South-West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO) in Namibia and the Revolutionary Democratic Front/Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FDR/FMLN) in El Salvador. Such support was a departure from earlier SI behavior. SI rules were also stretched to allow membership for the ruling party of a leftist one-party state: the New Jewel Movement (NJM) from Grenada. Moreover, many other new Third World members have urged a dialogue with radical regimes. Although West European members worry about the frictions and the radicalizing effects of expanded membership, they seem reluctant to use their financial and political muscle to rein in the debate.

Role and Activities

The SI serves several important purposes for member parties. It provides a *public platform* where party leaders benefit from the prestige of the organization as a whole. The SI's well-publicized meetings allow party leaders to seek public support for their individual interpretations of international issues. It also affords them opportunities to demonstrate fidelity to socialist principles which are sometimes inexpedient to implement at home.

The SI serves as a *meeting ground* where party officials exchange views and information on political questions. Meetings give the parties a chance to persuade their colleagues from other countries to support their perspectives on issues. For some parties—especially the smaller ones—these meetings afford an opportunity to seek out and adopt positions

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consistent with a leftist consensus; they are better able to protect their flanks at home if they can say that their sister parties agree with them. [redacted]

Increasingly, SI meetings also provide a *place to plan* future SI activities in substantive fields, such as the creation of a committee to study disarmament, or the dispatching of an SI mission to the Middle East. SI missions and committees do not push a particular policy line with their outside interlocutors because they generally are not given a policy line. Rather, they look into problems, and their findings sometimes provide a basis for SI resolutions. [redacted]

Finally, SI meetings are a *reminder* to all participants about the socialist traditions of internationalism and fraternal good will. The SI's long history, so often invoked, reassures members about the durability of socialist principles. [redacted]

The SI is unable to formulate a coherent policy because on substantive issues it operates more like an academic conference than a government. Nevertheless, party leaders have increasingly viewed the organization as a promoter of broad values on which they can agree. In our judgment, they generally believe that through its contact with political forces around the world the SI can boost the appeal of democratic socialism as an alternative to Communism or capitalism. While SI leaders know that radical groups gain stature from such meetings, they hope that, at the same time, the groups' more-belligerent attitudes can be moderated. [redacted]

The SI's main activity is generating resolutions, and, to the extent that it "decides" political questions at all, it operates on the principle of unanimity. In practice, when controversial questions are at issue, unanimity is usually achieved through generalities. SI resolutions sometimes exert a minor influence over the positions of parties or even governments. The Belgian socialist parties, for example, in government and in opposition have tended to accept the SI's analysis of Central American problems. Nevertheless, resolutions are in no way binding. There is no attempt by the SI as a whole to measure the conduct of its members against the organization's pronouncements. [redacted]

Organizational Features

Formally, the main decisionmaking body of the SI is the biennial congress, which all member parties and selected observers may attend. The congresses are massive public relations operations. Important decisions normally are taken beforehand by smaller meetings, and the congress does little more than ratify resolutions and elect the president, the vice presidents, and the general secretary.³ The next SI congress will take place in Lisbon from 7 to 10 April 1983. [redacted]

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The SI usually elects more than a score of vice presidents, whose selection depends on the importance of their party, their personal prestige, or the importance attached to some region or cause. Other than the president, the general secretary is the only important full-time SI official. He oversees the SI's small headquarters in London and handles administrative matters that cannot be taken care of at periodic SI meetings. The current general secretary, Bernt Carlsson of Sweden, who is to be replaced at the approaching congress, has been in the post as long as Brandt has been president. [redacted]

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[redacted] He has been reined in by party leaders during the past year and he now has little scope for independent action. [redacted]

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The SI debates major political issues at its semiannual bureau meetings, which are attended by two representatives from each party. More often, however, decisions are made by the executive committee (or presidium), composed of the president, the general secretary, and the vice presidents. Meeting as often as necessary, the executive committee decides how to implement SI resolutions, prepares major meetings, and alters political guidelines in response to changing developments. Various committees which meet between the major conferences give greater continuity to the study of particularly important issues and often affect the SI's attitude on these issues. [redacted]

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As president, Brandt has considerable authority to convene meetings, decide who may attend, and issue declarations in the name of the SI. He is obliged to tread carefully, however, to preserve the outward harmony of the organization, and on occasion his decisions have been amended to reflect more accurately the SI consensus. The French and Italian parties were unsatisfied with Brandt's soft public statement on behalf of the SI regarding martial law in Poland, for instance, and demanded an executive committee meeting which eventually published a stronger denunciation. [redacted]

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sufficient resources to support them financially.⁵ [redacted]

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Patterns of Influence

In our judgment, the West European parties have always had the greatest impact on the SI's political course. With a few exceptions, the influence of specific parties is commensurate with their financial contribution and level of activity—two factors which usually go together. Thus, the West German SPD, which contributes the most money and manpower, is the most influential party. The Swedes and Austrians play an important role as well. [redacted]

SI meetings in recent years have taken on a "mini-UN" flavor, as the new members⁴ and observer groups have added their own parochial causes to those promoted by the West European members. The confused and poorly organized character of these meetings affects the SI's political course. The process of proposing and passing resolutions, for example, has become so muddled that it is easily exploited by parties to promote their special interests. It is clear from press reporting and the results of SI meetings that, ensconced in their convention hotels and full of fraternal good fellowship, party leaders are often unconstrained by standards of political caution under which they operate in their own capitals; in short, romanticism is rampant. Strong disagreements plague the SI in its private sessions, but it tends to close ranks when challenged or pressured. [redacted]

There are other paths to influence, however. We believe that the Spanish and Portuguese parties have grown in stature recently because of the role their leaders have played in developing contacts for the SI outside Europe. A few parties are accorded a respectful hearing in a particular issue area—for example, the Finnish party in disarmament matters. In our judgment, Third World members also exert strong and occasionally decisive influence in the SI's treatment of regional problems. [redacted]

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Discussion at SI meetings indicates that the French socialists have gained greater prestige within the SI recently, largely because of their newfound status as a governing party. Prior to 1981 there was substantial friction in the SI between the leaders of the French and West German parties. Since Francois Mitterrand became President of France, [redacted]

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[redacted] the parties have agreed to meet periodically to discuss political questions, including SI activities. They appear to realize that the organization

⁵ The press and Third World groups sometimes confuse the Friedrich Ebert Foundation (FES), the West German Social Democratic Party's political action affiliate, and the SI. The FES has a permanent presence in some Third World countries, but it has no organizational relationship with the SI. Although West German Social Democrats shape its policy, much of its money comes from the West German Government. This money is often used to fund specific projects in support of friendly parties abroad. Despite the separate identities of the FES, the SPD, and the SI, we doubt that recipients or potential recipients of financial aid always understand the distinctions. As a result, the SI may enjoy a greater reputation as an international actor than it deserves. [redacted]

The SI's annual budget [redacted] is a modest one for such a large organization. The biggest contributors are the West Germans, Swedes, and Austrians. The bulk of this money goes into administrative expenses, conferences, and the SI's magazine. Occasionally, SI-sponsored meetings are funded outside the normal budget by a group of member parties. Nevertheless, we believe the SI's resources generally are not sufficient to allow for significant financial aid to "fraternal" parties or movements. The SI can provide such groups publicity and moral support that may be parlayed into increased international legitimacy, but [redacted] it does not have

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⁴ See appendix C for a list of member parties. [redacted]

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would be largely ineffective without harmony between them

Knowledgeable insiders now view the French as serious competitors with the West Germans for the distinction of "most influential party," but we believe that the French are likely to fall short of that unless they increase their contribution of less than \$20,000 annually to the SI budget.

Third World and Communist Pressure

Since the late 1970s, the SI has attracted increasing attention from Third World and Communist countries seeking to influence its positions

Contacts with prominent socialists also proceed on a day-to-day basis in individual capitals.

The Salvadoran National Revolutionary Movement (MNR) and the Nicaraguan Sandinistas, for instance, attend and speak at SI meetings as members and observers, respectively. In addition, the Salvadoran insurgents also pursue their public relations campaign through offices in capitals where socialist parties are important, including Bonn, Paris, Madrid, London, Rome, and Brussels. Representatives of the Democratic Revolutionary Front played an important role early in the conflict in fostering the idea that the Salvadoran junta was corrupt and that the insurgents had popular support.

The SI also attracts groups from the Middle East and Africa.

In our judgment, many of the major party leaders in the SI were flattered by the first wave of attention they received from nonmember countries early in the Brandt era. In their attitudes toward Third World groups, some leaders provided a degree of support which, we believe, they later regretted. While some leaders still strongly support radicals in certain areas (for example, Bruno Kreisky in the Middle East and Olof Palme in southern Africa), Brandt and other leaders like Spain's Felipe Gonzalez and France's

Lionel Jospin have become less outspoken. Although faulty decisions about Third World movements may recur, the opposition within the SI to further expansion of Third World membership, does suggest a more critical attitude.

The Soviets also devote extensive overt and covert resources to efforts aimed at influencing the SI. Although Soviet officials normally do not frequent SI meetings, they meet with socialists individually or in groups to try to persuade them to oppose US security programs like INF (intermediate-range nuclear forces) or to endorse ideas the Soviets find useful, such as European nuclear-free zones. At the same time, they try to prevent or tone down SI criticism of Soviet policy in Afghanistan or Poland and to make the SI less effective in its efforts to turn liberation movements away from the USSR.

In our judgment, however, the process of consensus formation in the SI would make direct control over the substance of SI positions very difficult. To be effective, the Soviets would have to recruit at least one—and probably more—of the most prominent SI leaders. Even this would not guarantee that these leaders' views would command a consensus at meetings.

Moreover, recruiting a major leader would be a formidable task. Although these leaders often criticize US policy, we believe that none is sympathetic to Moscow. All have reached a political pinnacle in their own countries, and such connections could jeopardize

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their careers. The international secretaries and staffs of individual parties play an important role in preparing drafts of SI resolutions. We do not know whether the Soviets have penetrated any of the party secretariats. If so, they might be able to put a particularly anti-US twist into some drafts. These resolutions, however, would still require approval by party leaders. More importantly, Soviet influence in many cases would not be crucial because the criticism of US policy found in some resolutions originates in widely shared attitudes within the drafting parties. We estimate that infiltration of the SI secretariat in London, on the other hand, would have only a limited effect because its functions are largely administrative and it has virtually no influence over SI positions on substantive issues.

statements.

[Redacted]

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In our judgment, virtually all member parties find Communist systems repugnant and want to prevent Communist expansion. Nevertheless, their perception of the need for constructive relations, combined with a sense that protest is futile, prevents them from denouncing such regimes, especially in Eastern Europe.

[Redacted]

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We believe the SI's propensity for occasionally taking positions that undermine US policy flows much more from their independent analysis of the issues than from Communist influence—of which SI leaders have become increasingly wary. Nonetheless, this does not reduce—and indeed may increase—the potency of their efforts against US policy.

[Redacted] 25X1

The SI World View

Since the late 1970s, the SI has established contact, both inside and outside its organizational framework, with liberation movements and other groups that it previously would have shunned because of their radicalism. Such contacts helped build the SI's prestige and in some cases helped parties forge ties that promoted the political and economic interests of their countries. More generally, this change of emphasis reflected the socialists' growing dissatisfaction with what they saw as the superpowers' tendency to view the Third World in an East-West perspective.

[Redacted] 25X1

By the time of Brandt's accession to the presidency, the public statements of many West European socialists indicated that in their view "anti-Communism" was a weak foundation for Western policy. It was commonly accepted in Western Europe that the gap between the rich and poor nations was widening, while political oppression continued to thrive in the Third World. Thus, conditions in the Third World were supposedly fostering revolutions which were impossible to repress and morally wrong to oppose. But the revolutionary impulse was generally nationalist rather

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We believe that the Soviets' most effective tactic in dealing with the SI has been to convey the impression that they sincerely want peace. SI members flatter themselves that they can contribute to peace and stability worldwide, and are willing to talk to almost any government to achieve their goals. This is in marked contrast to the SI's attitude in the pre-detente era, when any contact with Communists was frowned upon. On the other hand, many of the more conservative parties in Western Europe, beginning with the French Gaullists in the mid-1960s, have long pursued such contacts.

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Other Communist regimes try to influence the SI.

[Redacted]

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Although SI resolutions commonly contain harsh language about rightwing regimes, especially in South Africa, Latin America, and Turkey, criticism of human rights violations in Communist countries is less frequent, and non-Communist leftist governments almost always escape unscathed. The 11 exiled social democratic parties of Eastern Europe often bring up human rights abuses, but, except in the case of a few celebrated dissidents or the unavoidable issue of martial law in Poland, little of this is reflected in SI public

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than Communist. [redacted]

With an optimism typical of the West European left, most SI parties now operate on the assumption that Third World countries' main goals are self-determination and nonalignment. [redacted]

[redacted] Support for "liberation movements," however, leads the SI into conflicts of ends and means. Such groups, whether in or out of power, often display no concern for the democratic practices the SI endorses. From the public statements of SI leaders, we believe some have decided that revolutionary movements they perceive as having popular support can be preferable to authoritarian governments operating behind a constitutional facade. With the exception of Grenada's New Jewel Movement, however, the SI has not allowed parties which rule undemocratically to be members, and the major parties often urge the Grenadans and the Sandinistas to institute democratic reforms. [redacted]

We detect disagreement within the SI over the degree of political democracy it can demand or expect from Third World countries. [redacted] a majority of SI parties want these countries' implementation of democratic practices to be a major criterion in decisions about SI support. A few party leaders, however, apparently believe that the Third World's major economic and social problems make effective parliamentary democracy impossible. This has led to a schizophrenic SI outlook on radical regimes, most notably in Nicaragua and Grenada. For the longer term, the SI has publicly advocated massive economic aid by the industrialized nations to the Third World to help create conditions more conducive to democracy. The record of socialist governments on development aid, however, does not always match their rhetoric. For example, while the Norwegian and Dutch parties maintained a strong commitment to such aid while in power, the West German Social Democrats and French Socialists have given such programs relatively low priority. [redacted]

On European security issues, the period of detente during the late 1960s and 1970s has, in our judgment, shaped the SI's outlook more than any other factor. The influential central and north European SI parties—especially the West German SPD which under Brandt and Bahr inaugurated *Ostpolitik*—are the strongest supporters of the idea of reduced tensions with the East. Detente is in keeping with the traditional socialist emphasis on peace and internationalism, but it became especially popular in West Germany because it allowed increased contact with friends and relatives in East Germany and seemed to keep alive the idea of eventual German reunification. [redacted]

Detente is popular in central and northern Europe generally because it lessens the psychological and financial strain on the populace by appearing to reduce the risk of war. Moreover, the stigma attached to contacts with Communist regimes has diminished as West European political institutions have grown stronger and the possibility of internal subversion by Communists has appeared to diminish. In our judgment, the belief of many socialists in detente is strengthened by a conviction that their parties would be hurt if it ended. Karsten Voigt, an SPD spokesman on foreign affairs, argued in an article last July that conservative parties thrive in a period of international tension. [redacted]

During the past few years, some SI leaders have been quick to blame the United States for world tensions. [redacted] Brandt criticized the United States in January 1982 for seeking military superiority over the USSR. Olof Palme of Sweden and Gro Harlem Brundtland of Norway have made similar statements publicly. Distrust of US motives, however, has rarely been visible in SI statements on disarmament, due to the SI's consensus rule. Even though the concern with nuclear dangers is strong within the SI, the north European parties cannot override other parties, such as the French and the Portuguese, which hew carefully to the concepts of military balance and deterrence. [redacted]

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Nevertheless, in our judgment, the sharp rise in East-West tensions has affected profoundly the thinking of most West European SI leaders, as it has West European opinion generally. The socialist parties today are important centers of activity for those who believe that West European interests—especially détente—should be asserted more forcefully in relations with the United States. [redacted]

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Prospects

The SI's upcoming congress is unlikely to produce much drama, though it may bolster the Portuguese socialists in parliamentary elections later in April. The parties have agreed to three main themes for the congress:

- Economic justice and development.
- Security, peace, and disarmament.
- Regional issues.

[redacted]

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In our view, the SI's overall attitude toward Third World problems is unlikely to change any time soon. Its positions on specific issues will remain subject to alteration, however, due to external changes and shifts in the balance of power within the organization. Thus, it is possible that at some point the SI will reflate its rhetoric on Central America or try to present itself as a mediator. [redacted] 25X1

On the other hand, the SI's handling of specific issues may sometimes be moderated by information or protests by outside governments such as the United States, particularly if factual errors in the SI analysis can be pointed out. Evidence about human rights violations or Soviet ties of SI-supported groups are unlikely to produce a public reversal in attitude—which would embarrass SI leaders and threaten the organization's prestige—but it could in some instances lead to qualification of SI support and a less enthusiastic public stance. [redacted] 25X1

SI criticism of Communist regimes can also be encouraged marginally by persistent informational efforts. Nevertheless, the SI probably will continue to devote more attention to abuses in Western countries like Turkey and Third World states such as Guatemala. Member parties believe that they have some chance of effecting improvements in these countries by influencing their governments and Washington. [redacted] 25X1

Non-European membership in the organization is not likely to increase substantially. [redacted]

[redacted]

For the longer term, the SI will remain an organization in search of a role. Despite widespread publicity about its activity since 1976, the organization has been ineffectual in helping to resolve specific international problems. The SI is likely to continue to seize issues with a flourish, only to deemphasize them and move on to something else when opposition develops and reality sets in. [redacted]

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There is some realization among SI leaders that their efforts to contribute to peace in Central America, the Middle East, and the disarmament field have hit serious snags. Each of these areas has been deemphasized during the past year in favor of other issues: the world economic crisis, North-South relations on a general level, and southern Africa. [redacted]

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Because of its West European orientation, the SI will also continue to focus heavily on Atlantic and East-West relations. Greater European influence in world affairs (including NATO), promoting detente, and protecting East-West trade will be priorities for most West European members. These goals are shared to some degree in other parts of the political spectrum, but socialists feel a special responsibility for seeking detente and are more optimistic than conservatives about the lengths to which detente can and should go. It also suits their electoral self-interest to be seen steering a "moderate" course between the two super-powers. Only a long period of recurrent world crises which changed the parties' perceptions of international affairs would stand much chance of altering this philosophy.

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In sum, the publicity the SI attracts and the political pressure it generates will continue to be troublesome factors in international relations. Despite the belief of many party leaders that they are working on behalf of Western interests, the activity in some areas will probably continue to run counter to US policy.

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Appendix A

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Issues

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Disarmament

We believe that the SI's increased involvement in disarmament questions over the past few years above all reflects West European popular concern, borne out in numerous public opinion polls, about the arms race. While the SI has always placed strong emphasis on the need to promote peace and oppose "militarism," the SI's formal activities in the disarmament field increased markedly only after the neutron bomb issue emerged in Western Europe in 1977-78. In our judgment, many party functionaries began to believe that a wave of new and unnecessary weapons programs were being planned that could sweep aside earlier progress in arms limitation. [redacted]

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With West European public opinion strongly in favor of detente, identification of socialism with the fight against the arms race also had an obvious political attraction. Trips by party representatives to Washington and Moscow to discuss arms control tended to enhance the stature of the leaders and parties involved. [redacted]

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Not all SI parties, of course, had the same priorities in pushing for involvement in disarmament efforts. Like so many SI initiatives, disarmament work was placed in the hands of the parties which over the years had shown the most interest in it. In this case, the Finnish Social Democrats, with their long tradition of specific (albeit abortive) arms control proposals, took the lead. The Austrian socialists, who as representatives of a small, neutral country bordering Eastern Europe had a similar history, also took a prominent role. These parties along with the other Scandinavians and the Dutch are normally the strongest lobbyists for disarmament efforts within the SI. [redacted]

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Such activity also serves a purpose for parties that are more cautious about disarmament. For leaders under pressure from their party left wings (or from rival parties further to the left), disarmament activity by the SI furnishes proof of their concern for peace without demanding specific statements that might be unpopular in NATO councils. [redacted]

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The SI's most recent efforts to promote disarmament began with its decision to sponsor a conference on disarmament in Helsinki in 1978, with spokesmen present from both the United States and the Soviet Union. [redacted]

We believe that the goals of the Soviets in their dialogue with the socialists were threefold. First, they hoped to convince some delegates that there was merit in their arms control positions. Second, they wanted a forum that would help them publicize their analysis of security issues and lend credence to it. Third, they probably wanted to play up the "historic" significance of a socialist-Communist dialogue in order to exacerbate differences among SI parties about such relations. [redacted]

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The Soviets proposed a high-level dialogue with the SI, but Brandt turned this aside by engineering the creation of a lower level SI "study group" on disarmament. The study group undertook an ambitious research effort which included consultations in Washington and at the UN, as well as in Moscow. [redacted]

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During the group's trip to Moscow in 1979 and a similar trip by Brandt as SPD chairman in 1981, the Soviets bombarded the socialists with a wide variety of implied threats and concessions on arms issues, while playing to world opinion. According to US officials, SI representatives listened to specific Soviet arguments with a good deal of skepticism. Their main aim, however, was to encourage US-Soviet negotiations on European-based nuclear weapons, and they

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sometimes perceived reason for optimism when the Soviets indicated an apparent openness to negotiation.

[Redacted]

The study group's report has been extremely slow to develop; although drafts have been produced, the report has never been finalized. The draft report, as presented to the Madrid SI congress in 1980 and amended several times since, is a mundane endorsement of earlier and existing arms control forums spiced by some visionary suggestions for global security.

The draft calls for a comprehensive ban on nuclear testing. It also appeals for progress in strategic arms talks, the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe and the Mutual and Balanced Force Reduction negotiations. It praises the idea of a Conference for Disarmament in Europe, vaguely endorses the concepts of regional disarmament and nuclear-free zones, and appeals for a halt in international arms sales. The report suggests a mechanism whereby nations would divert a percentage of money spent on armaments into development aid for Third World countries, and it advocates an agreement between the major powers to abstain from developing new military technologies. The study group's report has not yet taken a position on whether NATO's INF deployment should take place; it has welcomed any steps toward removing missiles of this kind in East and West, while noting that time for an INF agreement between the United States and USSR is growing short.

The draft report is ambiguous on military questions. It says that disarmament should take place in an equitable and balanced manner but also argues that peace and security cannot be attained through military balance and deterrence doctrine. In our judgment, these ideas reflect differing views within the SI over the extent to which the question of military balance can be ignored in efforts to dispel mistrust between East and West.

During the past year, disarmament has not been a central theme in SI statements. Moreover, a scheduled trip by the study group to Moscow in early 1982 proved to be a failure because of the crackdown in

Poland.

[Redacted]

The perennially tentative disarmament study has been remanded again to the group for further study. According to a Finnish official who talked with US Embassy officers, the study group—which is now called the Disarmament and Arms Control Advisory Council—has been having trouble deciding what it should now be studying. The SI leadership sees little point in sending the group to Moscow and Washington again.

According to US officials last November, the French socialists—who are sensitive to SI studies that might undercut French Government policy on nuclear weapons—suggested that the SI was placing too much emphasis on disarmament. Disarmament will appear on the agenda of the Lisbon congress, but pressure from the French, the Italians, and some of the other parties probably will prevent a radical resolution. It is likely, however, that the SI will refer favorably to the possibility of nuclear-free zones or an "interim solution" on INF deployment.

The views of SI party leaders on disarmament run the gamut from cynicism to missionary zeal. In our judgment, few socialists believe that the SI's Advisory Council will find a magic formula for resolving arms control problems. Many do believe, however, that the SI's activities encourage the superpowers to negotiate. Although SI leaders make little claim to expertise in this field, their statements and actions indicate that they think the key to progress in arms control is the political will to reach an agreement, not facts and figures.

Eastern Europe

In our judgment, the SI's central European center of gravity has strongly influenced its policies toward

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Eastern Europe. A majority of its members favor what might be called the West German soft line on Eastern Europe, although this attitude does not always emerge publicly. Other parties such as the French or Italians sometimes inject contrasting points of view. [redacted]

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Karsten Voigt summarized mainstream SPD views about Eastern Europe in an article last July in which he argued that the liberalization all socialists seek for Eastern Europe can only occur through evolution, not aggressive popular opposition. Moves that threaten the systems in East European countries, asserts Voigt, only result in greater repression and heightened East-West tensions. From the standpoint of Western policy, detente rather than confrontation is the preferred policy for encouraging an evolution toward pluralism. Socialists should therefore deal with existing regimes, while making it clear that they disapprove of the Communist system. [redacted]

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[redacted] all SI parties except the Italian PSDI opposed the idea of sanctions against Poland after the imposition of martial law. Public statements suggest that some opponents of sanctions agree with Voigt's ideas. Others oppose action because they believe sanctions are ineffective or might damage their countries' economies. Future SI statements are unlikely explicitly to oppose sanctions against East European regimes or the Soviets, but support for such actions is unlikely. [redacted]

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We believe that when well-publicized cases of East European repression occur, there is usually some pressure within the SI for a strong denunciation, notably from the French and Italian socialists who find the issue useful as a weapon against their domestic Communist rivals. The West Germans and Austrians, therefore, may have to allow stronger statements than they would like, but these are likely to be less severe than most Western government statements. [redacted]

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Central America

In recent years, the most frequent subject of disagreement between the SI and the United States has been

Central America. There have been two major turning points in the evolution of SI attitudes toward this region:

- The Nicaraguan revolution, which convinced many West European SI leaders that revolution was both constructive and inevitable in many Latin American countries.
- The decision of the SI-affiliated National Revolutionary Movement in El Salvador to leave the junta and join the insurgency, thus giving the insurgents a veneer of respectability while reinforcing the impression that they had popular support and momentum. [redacted]

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Several factors have helped make the SI more receptive to the idea of revolutionary change in Latin America than in other areas. The post-1976 drive to recruit Third World parties attracted many Latin American parties, almost all of which were suspicious or even hostile toward the United States. These immediately became a strong pressure group demanding that the SI oppose authoritarian regimes in the region. West European parties also agreed in 1980 to the creation of an SI Committee on Latin America and the Caribbean. Although the SI president and general secretary were included as ex officio members and West European parties could attend as observers, in practice the Latin Americans often held meetings on their own and took responsibility for drafting resolutions to be presented at SI meetings. Since the SI traditionally has sought advice from the member parties most directly involved in regional issues, the West European parties could not have controlled the committee's activities even if they had wanted to. [redacted]

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We believe that the views of SI parties on Latin America are also heavily influenced by political analysis emanating from the region, exemplified by a symposium on Latin American democracy sponsored by the Friedrich Ebert Foundation (FES) last October. According to a US diplomat who attended that

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meeting, even participants in the "democratic mainstream" agreed that representative democracy was often a device used by elites to dominate the masses. Many speakers played down the importance of constitutional forms. The skeptical attitude of West European socialists about elections in El Salvador, for example, derives in part from such ideas, which are often replayed in Europe. [redacted]

Much of the current academic literature on Latin America also stresses economic underdevelopment and "dependency" on the large industrial economies—especially the United States—as an explanation for political problems in the region. The solutions most often invoked are economic aid to these countries and help in throwing off the "yoke" of multinational corporations. These ideas too find favor among the socialists. [redacted]

Until about 1981, however, there was little recognition among the West Europeans that the advice they were getting might be unsound. In our judgment, most West European party leaders have little time to focus on Latin America, which is low on their personal lists of priorities. Many do not have staffs that can brief them adequately on the region. Moreover, the rushed and haphazard nature of SI meetings usually ensures that resolutions prepared by Latin Americans will pass largely unchanged. [redacted]

We estimate that for West European parties, Latin America is also a topic on which the normal balancing constraints of domestic politics and national interest are weak. It is easier for party leaders to uphold the cause of the downtrodden in this region than in Africa, for example, where governments are generally connected with Western Europe by an intricate network of economic and political ties. We believe, moreover, that some socialists have opposed US support for the Salvadoran Government because they envision another Vietnam war. The influential West German SPD, in particular, is sensitive to the possibility of the United States becoming involved in a Third World morass that might reduce the attention it devotes to Europe. [redacted]

Nicaragua. The SI's strong interest in Nicaragua dates from 1978 when its first mission to the Caribbean recommended special attention to this key candidate for "democratization." During the period of resistance to the Somoza regime, virtually all SI members sympathized with the insurgents. According to press reports, the Venezuelan Government, controlled at that time by the SI-affiliated Democratic Action Party, provided arms and other supplies, while West European parties contributed some money. The FES provided funds to the Sandinistas for travel and for courses in democratic socialism and trade unionism. [redacted]

SI party leaders were enthusiastic about the Sandinistas' eventual victory, which they interpreted publicly as a harbinger of a democratic society in Nicaragua. The SI's Madrid congress in 1980 created an International Committee for the Defense of the Nicaraguan Revolution. This group, chaired by Felipe Gonzalez and composed of top socialist leaders, is supposed to promote self-determination and nonintervention in Nicaragua. [redacted]

We believe that the enthusiasm of many SI leaders for the Sandinistas has soured since 1980. Beginning with Mario Soares of Portugal, who by March of that year was calling attention in SI forums to Communist influence in Managua, many leaders have avoided praise of Nicaragua and tried to encourage the Sandinistas to moderate their repressive domestic policies. The high point of this trend came in March 1982 when the Venezuelan Democratic Action Party refused at the last minute to host an SI meeting in Caracas if the Sandinistas came. In the end, however, this episode revealed party leaders' overwhelming concern about the organization's prestige and independence. Resentment against perceived US pressure, reinforced by the effects of the Falklands crisis, led the SI to close ranks. [redacted]

[redacted] they decided to maintain solidarity with Nicaragua and continue to encourage aid, while pursuing a more "critical" dialogue. Since then, the ambiguous formula of private

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25X1 criticism and public support for the revolution's "original aims" has prevailed. [redacted]

Nicaragua now occupies a smaller part of the SI's time, energy, and press releases. Several SI missions to the region were planned and canceled before a low-level group went last December. According to reports from the US Embassy in Managua, the socialists warned the Sandinistas in private that democracy, pluralism, and nonalignment were prerequisites for their support, but the Sandinistas subsequently used the visit to substantiate their claims of broad international backing. [redacted]

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With Sandinista faults increasingly apparent, the West European SI members in recent months have edged toward an analysis that is as much West European as socialist. While acknowledging that the FSLN has looked increasingly toward the Eastern Bloc for support, they insist that this process may be arrested by maintaining contact with Nicaragua. West European socialists frequently suggest—as Elena Flores of the Spanish party recently did to US officials—that the Soviets do not want another Cuba in Nicaragua. This optimism is encouraged by the fact that they, unlike the United States, have little to lose if their diagnosis is incorrect. The socialists frequently cite the example of postrevolutionary Portugal, which they claim they helped bring back to the Western fold by maintaining contact and encouraging democratic practices after the United States had seemed to concede the country to the Communists. In public statements and conversations with US officials, West European SI members are especially critical of alleged US-sponsored military pressure on Nicaragua, which they contend unites Nicaraguans behind the regime while giving the more radical of the Sandinistas an excuse for greater repression. [redacted]

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Unless the Sandinistas actually profess allegiance to Moscow, they almost certainly will continue to be invited to attend and to speak at SI meetings. The publicity the Sandinistas receive will encourage West European governments to continue their relatively high level of economic aid to Nicaragua. The Sandinistas are unlikely to be granted membership in the SI, however, unless Nicaragua shows definite signs of becoming a pluralist state. [redacted]

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El Salvador. The SI's positions on El Salvador have also changed since 1980. In its resolution at the Madrid congress that year, the SI called on the United States to stop supporting the Duarte government, which it condemned as a "despotic regime." The resolution declared the SI's "deepest solidarity" with the insurgent forces. At about the same time, General Secretary Carlsson told US officials that the United States should get on the winning side in Central America—the side (he implied) of the insurgents. [redacted] 25X1

During 1980-81, the SI's lack of reliable information on Central America markedly affected its stance. Guillermo Ungo, the head of the SI-affiliated National Revolutionary Movement in El Salvador, had an especially strong influence over SI meetings. [redacted] 25X1

After the SI's early statements on the Salvadoran conflict became a subject of controversy, however, intensified contacts with US officials and with a variety of Latin American parties provided a broader base of information which had some moderating effect on SI statements. Since 1981, the standard SI position has been solidarity with its member party, the MNR, rather than the FDR/FMLN. Moreover, the implicit hope for a guerilla victory has faded, replaced by emphasis on negotiations between the government and the insurgents. In this context, the SI endorsed the 1981 Franco-Mexican declaration, which called the insurgents a "representative political force." [redacted] 25X1

SI leaders were harshly critical in their public statements regarding the March 1982 elections in El Salvador, insisting despite much evidence to the contrary that the population was not free to express its true preferences. Since the elections, however, the SI has largely ceased its earlier "initiatives" on El Salvador. [redacted] 25X1

In our judgment, most SI members now realize that their efforts on the El Salvador issue are ineffectual. They perceive the current Salvadoran Government as

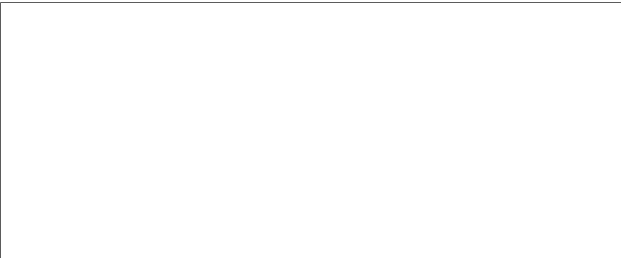
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farther to the right than the previous one, and believe that only the United States can nudge it toward negotiations. And although the larger SI parties such as the West Germans and the French were willing to risk some US displeasure as long as they perceived a chance of promoting a settlement, they have no desire to antagonize the United States and create problems for themselves in other areas when they have no leverage. [redacted]

Despite increasing doubts about the insurgents' goals and prospects, SI parties are still openly critical of El Salvador's human rights performance, failing to distinguish between rightwing terrorists and the government. SI leaders, in our judgment, will probably continue to pontificate about US "mistakes" in El Salvador, although they will probably keep SI pronouncements less strident than they were in 1980-81. Many of these parties will continue to leap at new formulas for a negotiated settlement. [redacted]

The SI's Future in Latin America. West European countries will probably broaden their economic and political interests in Latin America in the coming years, and the SI will undoubtedly try to keep step. By increasing its visibility, particularly in South America, however, the SI may experience greater strains over specific issues. Some West Germans have already complained to US officials about the lack of an institutional check on Latin American members. Efforts are under way to get all resolutions cleared with a coordinating committee before they are brought to the floor at a conference. Similar efforts to control the Latin Americans have been made before, however, and in our view the reluctance of the West Europeans to confront the Latin Americans openly probably will prevent much change. [redacted]



Middle East

The attitude of SI members toward the Middle East has changed over the past 10 years from relative indifference to active concern and involvement. Until the early 1970s, the most important influence on SI positions came from the Israel Labor Party (ILP), which as a longtime member had close ties with most of the West European party leaders, especially the West German Social Democrats. We estimate that party leaders made relatively little effort to seek other perspectives on the Middle Eastern situation until they—like all West European politicians—were brought up short by the 1973 Arab-Israeli war. In the aftermath of that conflict and the Arabs' use of the oil embargo as a weapon, the European Community almost immediately recognized the right of the Palestinian people to what it called a "national identity," and the socialists also began to show greater appreciation for Palestinian arguments. [redacted]

A more active search for a Middle East peace also fit well with the growing desire of SI leaders to deal with important problems outside Western Europe. Some parties probably were also affected by the increasing international support for the Palestinian cause—for example, at the UN. Finally, although these factors would have sufficed to make the SI more receptive to Arab views, we believe that many of its more specific actions were attributable largely to Chancellor Bruno Kreisky of Austria, who took an active interest in Middle Eastern problems. [redacted]

Kreisky has insisted publicly that the PLO be treated as the representative of the Palestinian people, who should have their own state. It was largely due to Kreisky's efforts that the SI approved three separate factfinding missions—led by him—to the Middle East during the mid-1970s. If it had not been for Kreisky's zeal, some member parties might have maintained for a longer time their reserve about face-to-face contact with PLO representatives. [redacted]

At the SI's congress at Geneva in 1976, a vague resolution was passed which cited the right of all people to self-determination within secure and recognized borders. During this period, the formal position

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of the SI was similar to that of the European Community and other West European political groups. The most dramatic indications of SI sympathy with the PLO, however, came when Willy Brandt, apparently through Kreisky's influence, accepted the idea that "selected Palestinian representatives" should be included in Middle Eastern negotiations. [redacted]

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In 1979, Kreisky and Brandt met with Yasir Arafat in Vienna—though not on behalf of the SI. Nevertheless, Brandt stated publicly that the PLO did not seek to destroy Israel and said that he would advise the SI to continue contacts. [redacted]

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[redacted]

state. No SI party leader today would wholly accept the ILP's analysis of the Middle East; in our judgment, many believe that the Israelis are not the best judges of their own interests. [redacted] 25X1

Kreisky has suggested publicly several times that the ILP be expelled from the SI for what he terms its obstructive attitudes toward peace efforts. After the Israeli invasion of Lebanon last year, Felipe Gonzalez also suggested expulsion. The French and West Germans, however, successfully opposed such a move. [redacted] 25X1

[redacted] 25X1

At the most recent semiannual bureau meeting, the ILP was able almost singlehandedly to prevent passage of a resolution explicitly recognizing a role for the PLO in the peace process. Such ideas have been debated almost constantly in the context of the upcoming congress, and the ILP will face increasing demands that they show flexibility. We believe, however, that unless the other SI members discover a mechanism for bypassing the consensus rule and thus the ILP, these ideas will remain in limbo. The West Germans, as usual, have quietly taken the lead in controlling resolutions for the congress. [redacted]

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Despite contacts with the PLO by some prominent SI members, the organization's resolution on the Middle East at Madrid in 1980 did little more than implicitly endorse the Camp David process, calling on the Israelis, neighboring countries, and the Palestinians to negotiate peace. Felipe Gonzalez, Benedetto Craxi, and Mario Soares, who had argued for recognition of the PLO, criticized the Madrid resolution as a step backward from stands taken earlier by the SI and the EC. [redacted]

[redacted]

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In our judgment, the socialists generally believe that Arafat can be encouraged toward greater moderation by engaging him in a dialogue with the SI. This would supposedly enhance his prestige, provide him with "role models," and perhaps make him more reluctant to take radical actions which could endanger the dialogue. The strongest supporters in the SI of the Palestinian cause and the most severe critics of Israeli policy have been the Austrians and the Spanish, with the Italians and Swedes occasionally joining in. The British Labor Party and the Dutch Labor Party were formerly the most frequent defenders of the ILP interpretation, with some support from the French. During the past few years, however, the Israel Labor Party has become increasingly isolated on the question of PLO attendance at SI meetings, PLO participation in negotiations, and a possible Palestinian

Despite their doubts about the wisdom of ILP positions, we believe that most West European SI members hesitate to take actions that place the party in an awkward situation at home and reduce its chances of ousting the Begin government. They are also reluctant to risk alienating the United States now that the Reagan administration has "recognized the Palestinian problem." Kreisky, who in an election year needs to demonstrate a good relationship with the United States, has publicly praised the President's Middle Eastern policy. [redacted] 25X1

Another moderating influence has been Kreisky's gradual replacement as the SI's point man on the Middle East by Mario Soares. Although Soares has also argued over the years for greater recognition of

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the PLO, he praised the Reagan proposals in conversations with US officials last September. His initial draft report on the post-Lebanon Middle Eastern situation was cautious and limited in scope. Soares has implied publicly that the United States is the only country with influence on the current Israeli Government. These perceptions reduce the likelihood of a Middle East resolution at Lisbon that would conflict sharply with US policy. Emphasis during the next few months probably will be on encouraging the withdrawal of foreign forces from Lebanon. [redacted]

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Southern Africa

The SI recently has become more actively involved in southern Africa, largely at the behest of the French and Portuguese parties. They have taken the lead in promoting a conference in Tanzania with the so-called Frontline States. [redacted]

[redacted] In keeping with past SI statements, SWAPO probably would receive an endorsement. South African military incursions into Namibia almost certainly would be condemned. Reflecting the viewpoint of the French and most other SI parties, the conference might urge Namibian independence regardless of Cuban military involvement in the region. [redacted]

The SI already has postponed the conference from June 1983 until later in the year, however, and the project now depends on resolving disagreements among prospective participants. [redacted]

the SPD has said that it will not accept "acrimonious accusations" against South Africa. The French party, despite its strong interest in resolving the Namibia question, probably also would like to avoid the issue of an economic boycott. [redacted]

The Frontline States, however, are sure to demand a strong denunciation of South Africa and may also be lobbying for tangible pressure against that country.

[redacted]

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Aside from the publicity involved, the main aim of the SI parties seems to be to strengthen groups in southern Africa which are friends—or potential friends—of the SI. To achieve this goal, the SI will try to present itself as a supporter of the Frontline States' interests. The fact that the SI's sympathy with those states only extends to a certain point, however, will prove a difficult obstacle to the success of a conference.

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Appendix C
SI Membership

Country	Political Party
Full members	
Argentina	Popular Socialist Party
Australia	Australian Labor Party
Austria	Socialist Party
Barbados	Barbados Labor Party
Belgium	Socialist Party (BSP and PSB)
Canada	New Democratic Party
Chile	New Democratic Party
Chile	Radical Party
Costa Rica	National Liberation Party
Denmark	Social Democratic Party
Dominican Republic	Dominican Revolutionary Party
El Salvador	National Revolutionary Party
Finland	Social Democratic Party
France	Socialist Party
Germany, Federal Republic	Social Democratic Party
Great Britain	Labor Party
Grenada	New Jewel Movement
Iceland	Social Democratic Party
Ireland	Labor Party
Israel	Labor Party
Italy	Social Democratic Party
	Socialist Party
Jamaica	People's National Party
Japan	Democratic Socialist Party
	Socialist Party of Japan
Korea, Republic of	United Socialist Party
Luxembourg	Luxembourg Socialist Workers' Party
Malaysia	Democratic Action Party
Malta	Malta Labor Party
Mauritius	Mauritius Labor Movement
Netherlands	Labor Party
New Zealand	Labor Party
Northern Ireland	Northern Ireland Labor Party
	Social Democratic and Labor Party

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Country	Political Party
Norway	Labor Party
Portugal	Socialist Party
San Marino	Unitary Socialist Party
Senegal	Socialist Party
Spain	Spanish Socialist Workers' Party
Sweden	Social Democratic Party
Switzerland	Social Democratic Party
Turkey	Republican People's Party
United States	Democratic Socialist Organizing Committee Social Democrats USA

Consultative parties

Cyprus	EDEK Socialist Party
Paraguay	Febrerista Revolutionary Party
Venezeula	Democratic Action

Consultative parties in exile

Bulgaria	Social Democratic Party
Czechoslovakia	Social Democratic Party
Estonia	Socialist Party
Hungary	Social Democratic Party
Latvia	Social Democratic Party
Lithuania	Social Democratic Party
Poland	Socialist Party
Romania	Social Democratic Party
Yugoslavia	Socialist Party



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