

RADIO TV REPORTS,

4701 WILLARD AVENUE, CHEVY CHASE, MARYLAND 20815 (301) 656

FOR PUBLIC AFFAIRS STAFF

PROGRAM The Larry King Show

STATION WTOP Radio
MBS Network

DATE February 14, 1984 12:05 A.M. CITY Washington, D.C.

SUBJECT Interview With Claire Sterling

LARRY KING: We have a return visit tonight from this world's finest reporters, Claire Sterling. Her previous book -- her previous visit was the reason for the previous book. The Terror Network was a major seller. And now Miss Sterling is the author of The Time of the Assassins, published by Holt Rinehart Winston, billed as under -- the underbilling is "The journalist who first brought the plot to kill the Pope into the open now brings us the inside story she alone is qualified to tell." The Time of the Assassins: Anatomy of an Investigation....

We welcome to our microphones Claire Sterling, the veteran journalist. Her previous work, The Terror Network was -- that was a major seller.

CLAIRE STERLING: Yes, it was.

KING: What I mean, you really did well with that book.

STERLING: Yeah.

KING: Did you expect to? Do authors ever...

STERLING: No. I thought I was going -- I had a big fight on my hands, but in the end it did very well.

KING: How did you -- let's go back a little -- get into this particular niche you got into? Not just a foreign correspondent, but a foreign correspondent who is interested in terrorism, a foreign correspondent who uncovers things, a kind of, you

C.I.A. Seeks to Read Moscow Auguries

By PHILIP TAUBMAN

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, Feb. 12 — When the Soviet leader Leonid I. Brezhnev died 15 months ago, the Reagan Administration was ready. In a memo to President Reagan, William J. Casey, the Director of Central Intelligence, picked Yuri V. Andropov as a dark horse closing fast at the finish to succeed Mr. Brezhnev.

Mr. Casey and the Soviet experts at the Central Intelligence Agency apparently were not as prescient on this occasion. When Mr. Andropov died Thursday, the C.I.A. dismissed the first news reports about the death, saying they were unfounded.

After acknowledging that the Soviet leader was dead, intelligence officials said Friday that Mikhail S. Gorbachev, a member of both the Soviet Communist Party Politburo and the Secretariat, seemed to be the most likely candidate to succeed Mr. Andropov as General Secretary of the Communist Party. Those officials said Mr. Gorbachev was followed, in order, by Grigory V. Romanov, also a member of the Politburo and the Secretariat; Defense Minister Dmitri F. Ustinov; and Konstantin U. Chernenko, the last of the three men who are members of the Politburo and the Secretariat.

By today, the consensus in the C.I.A. and the Reagan Administration was that Mr. Chernenko, a Brezhnev protégé who was outmaneuvered by Mr. Andropov in 1982, would emerge at least temporarily as the new Soviet leader.

The initial betting on Mr. Gorbachev illustrated the difficulty of trying to analyze, much less predict, the decisions and actions of the Soviet leadership, intelligence officials said. Mr. Gorbachev, although the youngest member of the Politburo at 52, was widely believed to be Mr. Andropov's personal choice for a successor.

Passed Over Once

Mr. Chernenko was not only passed over once for the top spot, but was also associated with an old-guard leadership that Mr. Andropov had indirectly criticized. He is 72 years old. His selection, intelligence offi-

cialists said, would probably reflect a reluctance among older Soviet leaders to turn over power to younger men like Mr. Gorbachev who might rule for 20 years or more.

As the C.I.A.'s Soviet analysts scrambled over the weekend to keep up with developments in Moscow, they could appreciate the assessment of Richard Helms, a former C.I.A. director, who described the Kremlin leadership as "the toughest target of all" for American intelligence agencies.

"If Chernenko is not officially named in the next 24 hours, we'll know there's a donnybrook going on in the leadership," one intelligence official said.

The deliberations inside the Kremlin cannot be photographed by American satellites. Nor can the conversations and politicking in the Politburo be monitored by electronic eavesdropping equipment, intelligence officials say. They said the United States was once able to collect information by intercepting the radio conversations of Soviet leaders as they rode around Moscow in limousines. The Soviets eventually learned about that practice and ended it by encoding the communications.

The C.I.A. depends on information gathered by agents and collected from sources both inside the Soviet Union and abroad. "It's old-fashioned intelligence," one C.I.A. official said. "The Kremlin is one place where we can't depend on high technology to penetrate the target."

This weekend the C.I.A.'s experts on the Soviet Union, directed by Robert M. Gates, the Deputy Director for Intelligence who is a Soviet authority himself, pored through volumes of computerized information about Soviet leaders.

Working in a nondescript office building in Vienna, Va., a Washington suburb, the staff of the Soviet department prepared papers for Administration officials about the succession process itself, compiled profiles of leading candidates, and examined the implications for the Soviet Union and the United States of the selection of

specific individuals as the new General Secretary.

Chairman of Commission

The growing consensus that Mr. Chernenko will succeed Mr. Andropov, intelligence officials said, was based primarily on his selection as chairman of the funeral commission and on his appearance at the head of the line when Soviet leaders passed by Mr. Andropov's body.

Within days of Mr. Brezhnev's death in November 1982, the C.I.A. produced a 29-page classified report on Mr. Andropov that included a detailed account of agency reports on his background, his ascent to power, an assessment of his likely impact on the Soviet Government and relations with the West, and a description of his personal life and health.

In a summary, according to an Administration official, the report concluded that "Andropov will be a formidable adversary." The report added: "He is perhaps the most complicated and puzzling of all the current Soviet leaders. He is ruthless, clever, well-informed, a tough fighter and cunning."

Much of the report, intelligence officials said, was drawn from the Soviet press, interviews with Soviet defectors and émigrés and observations by American intelligence agents and diplomats in Moscow. The lack of inside sources, the officials said, was evident in the report's comment that Mr. Andropov had married twice but it was unclear whether his second wife was alive. On Saturday intelligence officials in Washington felt the confusion about that issue had been resolved when Mr. Andropov's widow, Tatyana, appeared beside the bier in Moscow.

Intelligence officials declined to describe in detail this weekend's C.I.A. reports about the policies and health of Mr. Chernenko, Mr. Gorbachev or other Soviet leaders, except to say that Mr. Chernenko might prove to be an interim leader. They said Mr. Chernenko has suffered for years from emphysema.

The key power broker in the succession, as he was when Mr. Brezhnev died, is probably Marshal Ustinov, the officials said.

STAT

STAT

Inside Information From Kremlin Hard To Come By in U.S.

* * *

Lack of Intelligence Data
Has Officials Speculating
On Andropov's Successor

By DAVID IGNATIUS

Staff Reporter of THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

WASHINGTON—Last Friday morning, as the world reacted to the death of Soviet leader Yuri Andropov, a cable arrived on the desks of senior U.S. officials from an American ambassador overseas. The cable knowingly predicted that Mr. Andropov would give up his post as Soviet head of state next month, but remain as Communist Party leader.

The ill-timed cable illustrates a basic intelligence-gathering problem for the U.S.: At a time when the Soviet Union is going through a crucial change of leadership, the U.S. knows almost nothing about decision-making within the Kremlin.

"You would be shocked at how little we know" about the Soviet Union, says a senior administration official who reads the daily flow of intelligence reports. "If we confessed our ignorance, we'd be better off."

The lack of intelligence information is so chronic that, according to one congressional source, the U.S. "had absolutely no idea" where the ailing Mr. Andropov was for more than four months. By one account, U.S. intelligence agencies went at least 152 days without being able to fix Mr. Andropov's location. Previously, since 1922, the longest the U.S. had ever been in the dark about a Soviet leader's whereabouts was 10 days, according to this source.

In the effort to locate Mr. Andropov, a U.S. Embassy officer in Moscow at one point stationed himself on a street corner near the Kremlin and tried to spot the Soviet leader's limousine. A motorcade eventually appeared, but the embassy man couldn't spot Mr. Andropov.

"If there is a weakness in our intelligence apparatus, it's in our ability to figure out what the leaders of the Soviet Union are going to do in any given situation," says Richard Helms, former director of the Central Intelligence Agency. He notes that in some cases, "we may not even divine for some time that a decision has been made, let alone the nature of it."

The U.S. is in the dark now, as the Soviets are struggling to choose a new leader, because of its inability to penetrate the tiny group of Soviet officials who are privy to major decisions. Malcolm Toon, former U.S. ambassador to the Soviet Union, estimates that a maximum of 100 Soviet officials actually know what's going on—and they aren't talking.

Inevitably, this causes some serious U.S. miscalculations. Senior administration officials say they were convinced that Mr. Andropov would reappear in public last December at a scheduled meeting of the Supreme Soviet, partly because of Soviet leaks that seem, in retrospect, to have been disinformation.

To be sure, there have been some recent intelligence successes in evaluating the Soviets. Months ago, U.S. analysts correctly diagnosed that Mr. Andropov was suffering from a kidney failure, complicated by diabetes. "We knew he was going to die, but we didn't know when," says an influential U.S. official.

U.S. information about Mr. Andropov's health came partly from several American doctors who visited recently with Dr. Yevgeny Chazov, a top Soviet medical authority who treats members of the Politburo. U.S. officials also note reports that the American doctors who visited Dr. Chazov may have provided him with medical equipment to help treat Mr. Andropov.

A senior administration official notes one ironic benefit of the lack of inside information about Kremlin politics: Because the U.S. knows so little, it isn't tempted to try to play favorites among the Soviet leadership. The official argues that any such attempt to manipulate Soviet decisions would be "a snare and a delusion."

"Even if you owned a member of the Politburo, that wouldn't give you the whole story," explains another senior U.S. official. "You would have to own them all."

STAT

KOPPEL: Good evening. I'm Ted Koppel, and this is Nightline. The battleship New Jersey shelled targets in Lebanon today. But in capitals around the world, it's not the sounds of fighting, it's the signal from Washington that's getting the most attention. What will the U.S. pullback in Lebanon mean in the long run? We'll talk about the consequences of the U.S. move with Richard Helms, former director of the CIA and former U.S. ambassador to Iran, and with former CIA deputy director, Admiral Bobby Inman. STAT

KOPPEL: With us live now in our Washington bureau is Richard Helms, former director of the Central Intelligence Agency and former U.S. ambassador to Iran; and from our affiliate, KVUE, in Austin, Texas, Adm. Bobby Inman, former deputy CIA director. Gentlemen, both of you have spent a professional lifetime analyzing events such as these. Ambassador Helms, those big guns off the coast of Lebanon now, are they covering a retreat or somehow setting a new policy?

RICHARD HELMS (Former CIA Director): I don't know that they're doing either, Ted. It seems to me that, uh, with the collapse of the Gemayel government and the disintegration of the Lebanese army, that it's very sensible to pull our Marines out of Beirut and put them aboard the ships at sea. After all, the president, I believe it was last December, said that if the government of Lebanon were to collapse, there was no point in keeping the Marines there. And with the current fighting going on, it seems to me the Marines are a target and they're accomplishing almost nothing of their original mission and, therefore, the time to do is (sic) cut our losses, get them out, and then reassess the situation and see what we can do constructively in a atmosphere (sic) in which the Marines are no longer the issue.

KOPPEL: Well, you raise an interesting point, namely, the statement that the president made last December. It seemed to me that by saying if the government collapses, he was almost saying to the Syrian government, 'Put enough pressure on the Gemayel government, cause it to collapse, and we'll pull out.' HELMS: Well, I don't, I'm sure that that isn't what he had in mind.

KOPPEL: Oh, I'm sure it wasn't. HELMS: And I, and I can't believe that the Syrians took it as meaning that, either. Uh, after all, the situation of the sectarian fighting and so forth is a factor of Lebanese politics, and it may well be that when the Lebanese face the stark reality that there're no more peacekeeping forces there, they may settle down, get some sense of their own, and start to try to put a government back together again that can run the country.

KOPPEL: Admiral Inman, you remember the lamentable days back during the, the last few years of our role in Vietnam, when it at times seemed as though our policy in Vietnam was that we had gotten in there so that we might have the right to withdraw our troops from Vietnam. This is almost beginning to sound the same way. I mean, here we've been in there for 17 months now with the Marines so that we have what, the right to be able to pull them out again? That's not a successful policy. What is our policy? ADMIRAL BOBBY INMAN (Former Deputy Director, CIA): Well, inevitably, you've got a, a no-win situation when you have an unstable government. If you look at this situation in perspective, it was the collapse of the Lebanese army in 1975 that brought about the collapse of the governments and essentially dividing the country of Lebanon, and particularly the city of Beirut, into Christian and Moslem enclaves. Uh, we read a lot of articles after the Israeli invasion that the situation was changed, that now was

CONTINUED

WASHINGTON TIMES

1 February 1985

ARTICLE APPEARED
ON PAGE 1C

CORD MEYER

Scenario for a Bay of Pigs?

Even before he has had a chance to savor his massive electoral victory, President Ronald Reagan finds himself on a collision course with the Democratic majority in the House over the covert aid the United States has been giving the Contras fighting in Nicaragua.

In the Senate, the new chairman of the Intelligence Committee, Dave Durenberger, R-Minn., is telling the administration that the only way to save the arms aid to the guerrillas is to go public.

To deepen Mr. Reagan's dilemma, the influential voices of former CIA directors Richard Helms and James Schlesinger are being raised to warn that the heavy involvement of the intelligence agency in this controversial and no-longer-secret project is eroding the agency's support in Congress over the long term.

Rolling with these punches, Mr. Reagan has made it clear that he has no intention of abandoning the Contras by permanently cutting their supply lines. But he has agreed that all possible ways of assisting the guerrillas be explored to see if there are practical options other than CIA funding. Since the vote on whether to renew the CIA arms aid cannot be held until March, the administration has a month to decide on its strategy.

It is likely that few decisions in the next four years will more profoundly affect the American position in the world and Mr. Reagan's place in the history books than how he manages this enormously difficult dilemma involving the future of Central America. In their initial review of the available options, Reagan officials are finding no easy alternative solutions, and the renewal of quasi-secret CIA funding may turn out to be the only realistic way of helping the Contras.

At first glance, Mr. Durenberger's proposal to make the arms assistance available by open vote as part of the foreign aid package has the appeal of forthrightness and simplicity. But under the law, the United States can only give such military aid to duly recognized governments or international entities and the president would have to report openly to Congress within 60 days and obtain the support of both Houses.

In effect, "going public" with military aid to the Contras would require breaking relations with the Nicaraguan government and giving some kind of formal recognition to the main guerrilla group. A U.S. Congress that balks at quiet support to the Contras is not ready for a virtual declaration of war against the Sandinista regime that would eliminate the remaining possibility of negotiation, persuasion, and pressure.

Until the conclusion is reached that there is no hope of getting the Sandinistas to agree to an open society and free elections, a complete diplomatic break is premature. At present, it would not have the support of most Latin countries nor of our European allies.

If publicly voted U.S. arms aid to the Contras is a mirage, there remains the possibility that friendly third countries might be persuaded to provide the arms the U.S. Congress is reluctant to supply. In fact, one or two governments have stepped in to assist the Contras since the U.S. aid was suspended last May.

But this assistance was a stop-gap measure designed to see the Contras through to the promised renewal of U.S. aid this year. If it becomes clear that the United States is permanently terminating its aid, there is little hope that others will help when they see the United States is unwilling to protect its own vital interests.

If it turns out that CIA funding, with all its drawbacks, is the only feasible way of supplying the Contras, Reagan officials believe that the predictably disastrous conse-

quences of American withdrawal can change enough votes to save the aid. A decision to cut off the Contras would amount to a congressionally mandated Bay of Pigs and would send out the signal that the United States has again proved to be an unreliable ally.

The Sandinistas would take the U.S. pullout as a green light for a major offensive with their helicopter gunships to crush the Contras and to impose a militarized state on the Cuban pattern. The democratic opposition groups that still exist openly inside Nicaragua have consistently warned that the Contra threat is their only protection against a Sandinista crackdown.

Released from the necessity of defending its own territory from the Contra attacks, the large Sandinista army would be freed to step up the flow of arms and trained guerrillas into El Salvador and Guatemala. A very major increase in the American assistance programs to Honduras and Costa Rica would be necessary over many years to have a chance of preventing their retreat into a frightened neutrality. Aid to the Contras is cheap at the price, when the cost of its withdrawal is soberly calculated.

Finally, the Reagan administration can make a strong case that a renewal of aid to the guerrillas at this critical moment could have a dramatic impact on the Nicaraguan civil war. Symbolizing American determination to stay the course, this decision would present the Sandinistas a choice between the eventual risk of defeat or the holding of the genuinely free elections they once promised.

Cord Meyer is a nationally syndicated columnist.

STAT