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The Foreign Policy Views of Mikhail Suslov

Central Intelligence Agency
National Foreign Assessment Center

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Key Judgments

As the chief guardian of ideology in the Soviet leadership and the overseer of relations with the foreign Communist world, Mikhail Suslov has played a special role in the formulation of Soviet foreign policy. His doctrinaire approach—nurtured by early training as a theoretician, by experience as a chief executor of the party cultural line under Stalin, and by narrow job responsibilities during a party career spanning almost half a century—has inclined him to place ideological principle before expediency in the formulation of foreign policy strategy.

Suslov's fundamental antipathy toward and distrust of the West impels him to define the limits of detente more narrowly than most other Soviet leaders. He sees competition and confrontation as the dominant elements in relations with the United States. His extraordinary concern for the maintenance of internal control and the limitation of flow of Western ideas and influences into the Soviet Union have probably also led him to be less inclined than other Soviet leaders to make concessions to the West.

In relations with the Communist world, Suslov has regarded any devolution of power from Moscow with consternation. His hostility toward polycentrist tendencies in Eastern Europe, toward Eurocommunist ideas in Western Europe, and toward all forms of nationalism within the

Soviet Union itself are part of an ideologically inspired adherence to the concept of an ever-expanding centralized socialist state.

Suslov's voice in the leadership today is one that:

- Urges caution against pushing detente too far.
- Refuses except in extreme circumstances to loosen controls over Eastern Europe or the international Communist movement.
- Places a high premium on support to "liberation movements" in the Third World.
- Criticizes China for its "left deviationism."

Suslov inspires awe in many of the party rank and file and commands considerable respect even from his peers. He is the senior member of the Politburo and the Secretariat in terms of tenure, a veteran whose service to the Party goes back so far that it includes work on a Poor Peasants' Committee during the Soviet Civil War, an internationalist who supervised the Baltic purges after World War II and who led the crusades against Tito and Mao, an ideologue whose orthodoxy is tempered with intellectual sophistication, and a politician more interested in the substance than the trappings of power.

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Suslov's departure from the Soviet leadership, when it comes, will create a vacancy not easily filled. Other Politburo members who have occasionally betrayed a skeptical view of detente—including Kirilenko, Mazurov, and Romanov—will be deprived of one of their most powerful and articulate champions.

Several among the younger Politburo candidate members and secretaries—Masherov and Zimyanin among them—appear to share much of Suslov's basic outlook on the world, but they

lack his prestige and authority. Ponomarev, who has worked under Suslov's supervision for many years and has the requisite background for the job, is the most visible candidate to replace Suslov as senior ideology secretary. Ponomarev's age, however, may necessitate his own retirement in the not too distant future.

If Suslov departs while Brezhnev remains in power, the result could be a perceptible tilt toward the more flexible foreign policies Brezhnev has pursued.

The Foreign Policy Views of Mikhail Suslov

Introduction

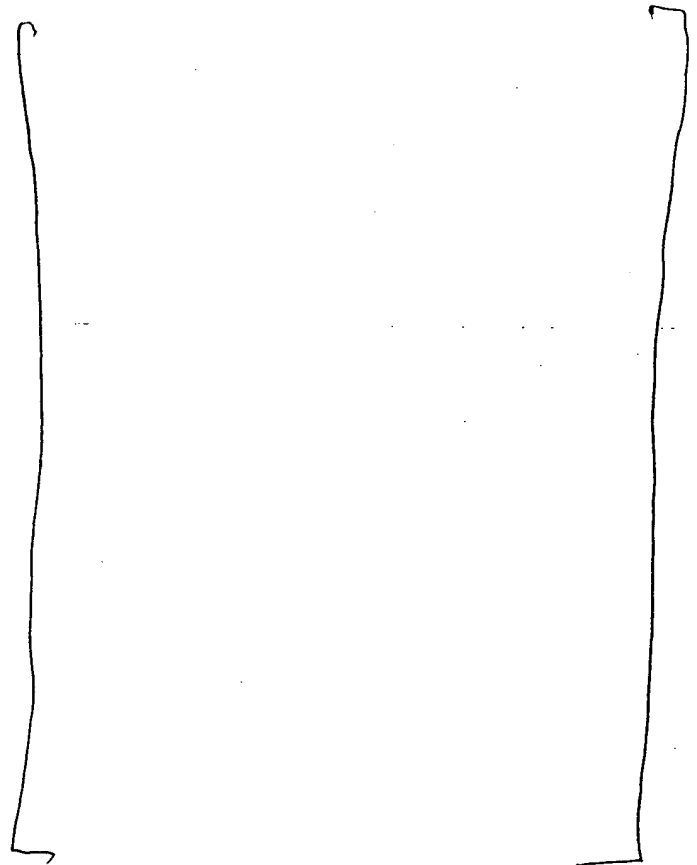
Mikhail Suslov is the chief guardian of Soviet Marxist ideology in the Soviet leadership today. He approaches foreign policy from a doctrinaire perspective nurtured by his early training as a theoretician, by his experiences as a chief executor of the party cultural line under Stalin, and by narrow job responsibilities during a party career spanning almost half a century.

Unlike most of the current lot of top Soviet leaders, Suslov was not trained as an engineer or manager. Instead, he steeped himself in Marxist-Leninist theory, studying in the 1920s at a leading economics institute and later at the Institute of Red Professors. His early career was spent not in work of a practical or administrative character, but largely in pedagogical and agitation-propaganda work. During the late 1920s and again briefly after World War II, he was a teacher, first at Moscow State University and then at the Central Committee's Academy of Social Sciences. In the early 1930s he worked in the organization that preceded the Soviet Control Commission, which served as a watchdog over the government bureaucracy. In the late 1930s he served as a secretary of Rostov *obkom* (oblast party committee) and subsequently as first secretary of Stavropol *kraykom*. During World War II he was in charge of partisan forces in the Stavropol area. From 1947 to 1949 he headed what was then the Central Committee's Administration for Propaganda and Agitation, after which he served for two years as chief editor of *Pravda*.

While most Soviet leaders at one time or another have held positions in the government bureaucracy, Suslov's entire career has been within the party apparatus. Moreover, his role in foreign affairs has been confined largely to deal-

ings with foreign Communist parties. In spite of his key involvement in the formulation of foreign policy in some areas, as party secretary in charge of relations with the foreign Communist world he has had little personal experience in dealing with "bourgeois" governments and minimal contact with non-Communists of any sort. This lack of broad exposure has doubtless contributed to Suslov's dogmatism.

Suslov's outlook may also have been influenced by his personal participation in policy execution during the Stalin years. He was more



Mikhail Suslov

heavily involved than any other current Politburo member in the purges of the 1930s, as well as in the early postwar cultural crackdown and the purge of party officials during the "Leningrad Affair" in the late 1940s. In addition, Suslov played an important role in the suppression of nationalism in border areas annexed by the Soviet Union after the war. As chairman of the CPSU Central Committee's Bureau for the Lithuanian Republic, Suslov supervised the exile or deportation of thousands of Lithuanians whose loyalty was suspect in the late 1940s.

Against this background, Suslov emerged in the 1950s as something of a "high priest" of Soviet Communism. As the leading Soviet Marxist theoretician both in foreign and domestic policy, he has remained aloof from political factions based on personal loyalties rather than policy views. He has apparently used his considerable authority and influence to prevent leadership collectivity from being undermined by personal dictatorship, whether by Khrushchev or Brezhnev. Suslov is not uninterested in power, but is more inclined than most Soviet leaders to seek power as an instrument for the attainment of ideological ends rather than for building a personal political "machine."

Suslov's commitment to traditional Marxist-Leninist objectives and his predilection for speaking and writing in theoretical terms do not preclude tactical flexibility on his part. They do generally incline him to subordinate expediency to ideological principle in the formulation of Soviet foreign policy strategy.

Relations with the United States and Western Europe

It would be oversimplifying to tag Suslov as an "enemy of detente." Suslov has expressed no objection in principle to limited cooperation with the West, evidently viewing cooperation as a tactic serving the larger objective of creating opportunities for the Soviet Union to improve its strategic position and extend its influence in the world. Suslov's speeches suggest that he believes detente has on occasion benefited the Soviet

Union by lulling the West into passivity, thus sapping the vigor of the Western response to Soviet involvement in Angola and other Third World areas. Additionally, although it is likely that the idea of the Soviet Union's becoming a major trading partner with the "bourgeois" West is distasteful to him, on balance he evidently does value the commercial benefits that might accrue from improved relations with the West. In a [] discussion with [] in 1971, he noted that the development of economic relations between the United States and the Soviet Union was indispensable for improving bilateral relations. Finally, Suslov probably shares the general desire of the Soviet leadership to avoid direct involvement in war in a nuclear age. At least since the early 1960s he has publicly cited the threat of atomic war as a factor making relaxation of tensions with the West desirable. However fervent his commitment to the expansion of Soviet power, he doubtless wishes to create safeguards against a nuclear holocaust.

For Suslov, however, no amount of window dressing can make detente more than a pact with the devil. He continues to see competition and confrontation as the most important elements in relations with the United States. Suslov's reticence in touting detente implies that he believes Brezhnev and others have at times bordered on euphoria in assessing its benefits. Presumably, he fears that having embraced detente as a means of expanding Soviet influence, Soviet leaders will allow the means willy-nilly to prejudice the end by creating so great a stake in the status quo that their force and will in the struggle against "imperialism" in the Third World will be weakened.

Moreover, Suslov continues to distrust the motives of Western statesmen. This distrust is reflected in public references to the strength of "revanchist" or reactionary forces in the West, and in his tendency to recall past hostile actions of Western states against the Soviet Union. He has devoted considerably more words to the "crisis of capitalism" than has any other Soviet leader and appears to believe that present Western moderation toward the Soviet regime reflects

the West's weakness rather than any fundamental change in the nature of "imperialism." Some leaders, especially Brezhnev and Kosygin, have noted on occasion that the forces of "realism" and reason are increasingly gaining the upper hand in Western governments. Suslov has taken a different tack. In December 1973, for example, in claiming that a "changed correlation of forces" and a growth of Communist strength in the world had forced the West to the negotiating table, Suslov added:

Of course, the matter also depends to a certain extent on the realism of those who formulate the policy of the leading imperialist states. However, one cannot but see that this very realism results from the necessity to adapt oneself to the new situation and by no means bears witness to a change in the nature of imperialism.

Unlike Brezhnev and Kosygin, Suslov has never made favorable personal references to the diplomacy of such Western leaders as Brandt, Pompidou, De Gaulle, Schmidt, and Giscard.

In playing down the mutual interests served by improved relations, Suslov probably believes that the West—deeply troubled and debilitated by the "crisis of capitalism"—is in the poorer bargaining position and could be pressed harder for concessions by the Soviet Union, in whose vigor and economic vitality he probably has greater faith than most of his colleagues.

Suslov's fundamental antipathy for and distrust of the West also impels him to define the limits of detente more narrowly than most other Soviet leaders. Some of these leaders have gone so far as to suggest the permanence of detente. Brezhnev at one point declared that detente had already become "irreversible," and Party Secretary Andrey Kirilenko has stated that summit meetings are acquiring a "regular nature" and that the "system" of treaties and agreements between the Soviet Union and Western states constitutes "something close to international law." Similarly, former President Nikolay Podgorny stated in 1975 that "a constantly functioning mechanism has been set up for political

contacts at the summit level." Suslov has never implied an acceptance of the institutionalization of detente.

There have also been indications that Suslov is more reluctant than most leaders to downgrade Soviet military power. He is rumored to have sided with military generals in successfully opposing Brezhnev's effort to appoint a civilian minister of defense in 1967. He is not among those Politburo members who on occasion have called for "supplementing political detente with military detente." During the late 1960s Suslov, along with Politburo members Aleksandr Shelepin and Kirill Mazurov, publicly attempted to justify sacrifices by the Soviet consumer, citing continued uncertainty in the international arena and a consequent need for a strong Soviet military. He has not repeated this argument in the 1970s, but neither has he turned the logic around—as has Kosygin—to imply that a relaxation of international tension will free more resources for the consumer sector of the economy. Just as idealistic Russian socialists of an earlier prerevolutionary day condemned *meshchantsvo* (crass materialism), so Suslov sees "consumerism" as a "bourgeois" interloper in a Communist society, which should properly be motivated by loftier spiritual and Spartan goals. Clearly, Suslov subordinates "butter" to "guns."

A major consideration tempering Suslov's willingness to negotiate meaningfully with Western states has been his extraordinary concern for the maintenance of internal control and his consequent desire to limit the flow of Western ideas into the Soviet Union. The extent of Suslov's anxiety about foreign influence can be seen in his opposition over the last several years to Politburo decisions to issue passports to Soviet cultural figures with a record of dissident involvement. He is said to have opposed giving sculptor Ernst Neizvestnyy a passport in 1975, arguing that Neizvestnyy should instead be made to leave the country as a common emigrant in order to impart the correct ideological message to the West. In 1976 he argued against extending the passport that permitted cellist Mstislav Rostropovich to live abroad.

It is not merely intellectual dissent that disturbs Suslov. He apparently fears that the "freer movement of people and ideas" will open Soviet society to a whole host of ideas and influences from the West that are, from his point of view, not only politically subversive but socially disruptive and morally unhealthy. Identifying Western concepts of liberty with license, he seems apprehensive that extensive contact with the "decadent" West will expose the Soviet people not only to alien political ideas of civil liberty, political democracy, and national self-determination, but also to crime, terrorism, pornography, and drugs, and generally to a breakdown of order and discipline.

Because of the depth of these concerns Suslov is probably less inclined than any other senior Soviet leader to make concessions to the West in the area of foreign contacts. Suslov's expressed desire for cooperation with the West has been particularly weak at times when Western negotiations with the Soviet Union have raised the issues of freer movement of people and ideas and human rights rather than focusing on arms limitations and economic ties.

Despite his consistent adherence to this world outlook, Suslov has over time adjusted his policy views in accordance with his appraisal of the relative "correlation of world forces." Suslov was not inclined toward cooperation with "bourgeois" states, with "progressive" non-Communist parties in the West, or with "liberal" elements in East and West European Communist parties until the late 1960s. At that time, Suslov gave sign of having decided that a greater threat to the Soviet Union lay in the "left deviationism" of the Chinese Communists than in the "right opportunism" of some European Communist parties. This evaluation of Suslov's position is fortified by his treatment of the question of cooperation in a "united front" between Communists and social democrats. The question of how far in the interest of political expediency Communist principles can be compromised without abandoning Communism itself was a major point at issue between both Moscow and European Communist parties and Moscow and the Chinese.

Suslov's orthodox position with regard to "united front" tactics had been expressed in October 1965, when he asserted publicly that Stalin's refusal to join forces with social democrats in the West during the 1930s had been the correct policy and that the social democrats had been solely responsible for the split in the workers' movement that had facilitated the rise of fascism. By 1966, however,

Suslov had been persuaded to accept the position of the "liberal" wing of the Finnish Communist Party, which advocated precisely this sort of cooperation with social democracy.

In 1966, also, Suslov had urged the reunification of the left and right wings of the Indian Communist Party and called for a united front with other leftist parties in India. At about the same time, he began to acknowledge that a "progressive" although "nonsocialist" democratic movement existed in Western Europe.

It was not until March 1969, however, that Suslov made public remarks directly refuting his previous opposition to "united front" tactics. In a speech on the Comintern anniversary, he directly criticized Stalin's opposition to political cooperation with Social Democrats. According to Suslov, Stalin had been wrong in thinking that social democracy represented the "main danger," and his mistake must not be repeated. That Suslov was "out front" on this issue was suggested by the fact that East German party chief Ulbricht, speaking from the same podium, continued to oppose cooperation with the Social Democrats.

Suslov reaffirmed his position later in 1969, in an article which noted that Lenin had not been hostile to all non-Communist groups but had struggled to unite "the most diverse contingents of the working class, including those under reformist influence." In October 1969 Suslov noted with approval the growing participation of non-proletarian elements in the struggle for social progress in the West.

By seeming in this way to approve alliances between Communists and social democrats, Suslov provided an ideological justification for an opening to West Germany, where Social Democrats led by Willy Brandt were making efforts to improve relations with the Soviet Union. Suslov publicly endorsed the improvement in relations with West Germany and France a year earlier than did his Politburo colleague, Ukrainian Party leader Petr Shelest, the strongest critic of Brezhnev's detente policies at that time.

In the early 1970s, however, there were indications that Suslov was not enthusiastic about the direction detente was taking. The truncated version of a speech he delivered in June 1971 contained virtually no comments on foreign policy but did call for increased Soviet military might. He stated:

If imperialism has not unleashed a new world war and is unable to foist its will by brute force on recently liberated peoples, we are primarily obliged for this to the Soviet Union and the powerful socialist system and its armed forces, which have everything necessary to repulse the attack of any enemy and to strike a crushing blow at any aggressor.


By contrast, Brezhnev, Kosygin, Podgorny, and Kirilenko, in speeches given at this time, all made moderately positive references to the strategic arms limitation talks then in progress. By May 1972, Suslov, along with Shelest, is reported to have opposed the decision to go ahead with the scheduled US-Soviet summit in Moscow and the consummation of SALT I despite the US decision to mine Haiphong harbor and bomb North Vietnam. In a speech three months later Suslov gave the regime's most explicit public warning of alleged efforts by "certain forces" in the United States to distort the spirit and the letter of SALT agreements.

Suslov's doubts about the wisdom of pursuing detente with the United States evidently reached an apex in 1974. Suslov's basic distrust of the West may have been aggravated by a perception that the United States was up to mischief in

conducting "shuttle diplomacy" in the wake of the October 1973 Middle East war, and also by US insistence that Jewish emigration from the Soviet Union was a legitimate issue in bilateral US-Soviet relations.

[suggested that Suslov opposed the 1974 Soviet-US trade agreements. He was said to have been instrumental in putting pressure on Brezhnev to reject US proposals offered by Secretary Kissinger in March 1974. An important Suslov speech to a Moscow audience on the eve of a summit meeting that summer was unusually tough on the West. In contrast to similar speeches by other top leaders (including Brezhnev, Kosygin, Kirilenko, and Podgorny), Suslov's talk made no reference to President Nixon's forthcoming visit. Warning that new offensive weapons were being "feverishly" developed in several "capitalist" countries, he maintained that unceasing confrontation continued to characterize US-Soviet bilateral relations. He went on to contend that rather than restraining Soviet activities in the Third World, detente serves to "open up more favorable prospects for the further advance of revolutionary forces." Statements to the effect that detente does not attenuate the struggle for "national liberation" are common, but Suslov's swaggering contention regarding new "prospects" (on the eve of major Soviet intervention in Angola) was not standard.

During the summit, which followed shortly, it is said that Suslov was noticeably aloof at the Kremlin dinner, as well as at the final reception for the US party. Later in 1974, when the issue of Jewish emigration arose as an obstacle to passage of Congressional legislation on US-Soviet trade, Suslov reportedly disagreed with Brezhnev and Kosygin about the wisdom of making a conciliatory gesture of some sort to suggest a degree of Soviet flexibility on the issue. According to one plausible rumor, at a Politburo meeting preceding a Central Committee plenum in December 1974, Suslov and Shelepin sharply criticized Brezhnev's handling of Soviet-US relations and the trade-emigration controversy. Suslov also is said to have charged Brezhnev during



Suslov (second from right) along with other senior leaders accompanies Brezhnev to Moscow airport for recent trip to Prague

this period with having exceeded Politburo instructions for negotiating on SALT at Vladivostok in November 1974.

As the overall Soviet appraisal of Vladivostok gradually became more positive and the Soviets began to use some of the wording of the agreement as an argument against the deployment of US cruise missiles, Suslov also came to register publicly his acceptance of the Vladivostok agreements. In a speech in April 1975 he referred favorably to the interim SALT agreements, and in remarks to a visiting delegation of US Senators in July 1975 he made a strong brief for them. At Brezhnev's birthday celebration in December 1976 he subscribed to Brezhnev's pro-SALT formula that the danger of thermonuclear war had lessened.

Suslov retreated, however, in the early months of 1977, when the US Administration was bearing down heavily on the human rights theme and SALT negotiations seemed stalled. Although Soviet criticism of the US human rights offensive has been so uniformly shrill as to make distinctions between the views of different Soviet leaders extremely difficult to discern, it can be said that no Soviet leader has outdone Suslov in vituperation. Suslov has not made as direct a connection between US "interference" in Soviet domestic affairs and the overall development of bilateral relations as has Brezhnev, but he has strongly denounced as hypocritical the "entire shrill slander campaign about 'human rights.'"

Suslov was the only Politburo member who strongly opposed

Brezhnev's trip to West Germany in early May 1973. Shortly after Brezhnev's return, Suslov gave a speech in Stavropol in which he made no reference to Brezhnev's trip, instead rousing bitter memories of World War II by recalling the activities of the Hitlerite "barbarians . . . bandits, foul rapists, and murderers" in Stavropol. By contrast, Kirilenko, Shcherbitskiy, and Kosygin, who also gave speeches about this time, praised the results of Brezhnev's trip to Bonn.

China

Until the late 1960s Suslov was a major advocate of pursuing a conciliatory policy in the East and a hard line toward the West. Heavily involved in the formulation and execution of policy toward China since the 1950s, Suslov clearly had considered the threat from Western "imperialism" the main danger to the Soviet Union. He evidently had greater sympathy from an ideological standpoint for Chinese Communist policies than did many of his colleagues.

There were indications as early as 1957 that Suslov differed with Khrushchev over the tactics to be used in dealing with the Chinese. According to the Chinese press, for example, Soviet negotiators led by Suslov made important concessions to the Chinese on the wording of the joint documents eventually adopted by the world Communist meetings of 1957 and 1960, but Khrushchev was unwilling to ratify these concessions. It seems likely that in the early 1960s Suslov was also less inclined than Khrushchev to anathematize Eastern Communist parties that supported the Chinese Communists, preferring instead a course of compromise designed to lure them back to the fold.

It is against this background of relative reasonableness on the Chinese issue that Suslov's February 1964 report on relations with the Chinese, delivered at a CPSU Central Committee plenum, must be read. According to subsequent reporting, Suslov's speech—which attacked the

"nationalist arrogance" of the Chinese leaders (whom he labeled the "main danger" to the world Communist movement), condemned Mao's "personality cult," and advocated a world Communist conference to deal with the "fundamental" problem of Mao—did not accurately reflect Suslov's own views. It appears that Khrushchev drastically toughened up Suslov's draft report and that Suslov himself attempted to block publication of the report in its final version.

Ironically, in spite of his reaping the hatred of the Chinese Communists as a result of the report, Suslov in the early 1960s reportedly continued to be optimistic about the possibility of an accommodation with the Chinese once Mao departed the scene. At the time of Khrushchev's removal, Suslov was said to have denounced the Soviet leader for widening the Sino-Soviet split and for ostracizing Albania and alienating Romania in the process. Suslov's speeches, like those of Shelepin, in the period after Khrushchev's ouster were marked by an absence of provocative criticism of the Chinese.

With the onset of the Chinese Cultural Revolution in the late 1960s, however, a few scraps of evidence suggest that Suslov was moving closer to the strong anti-Chinese position that the Chinese had been attributing to him since 1964. In a speech in February 1968, Suslov—who as far as is known had not publicly attacked Chinese leaders by name since 1964—denounced the "Mao Tse-tung group" for its "complete deafness" to the "language of proletarian internationalism." In 1970, according to a Soviet intellectual, Suslov's support for censuring a "Stalinist" novel was won on the grounds that the Chinese had praised the book.

That Suslov's attitude toward the Chinese had stiffened at the time of the Cultural Revolution was also suggested, indirectly, by indications of a relaxation in his position with regard to "liberal" elements within both East and West European Communist parties. Suslov now began to show greater toleration of diversity among European Communist parties and of political cooperation with Western social democratic parties.

It may be that Suslov considered China lost to the Communist movement for all practical purposes and that the potential breakup of the unity of Communist parties in Eastern and Western Europe appeared to him a greater threat than the loss of China.

Suslov has made public statements since the late 1960s which suggest, in fact, that he advocates a harder line toward China than some other Soviet leaders. He has, for example, not gone beyond the standard formula expressing a desire for the normalization of state relations between the Soviet Union and China, whereas Brezhnev and Kosygin have seemed to hold out hope for a more comprehensive reconciliation. Thus Brezhnev has advocated normalization "on the broadest possible basis," while Kosygin has called for normalization "at least" on the state level.

In like manner, Suslov has stated that "an even sharper opposition to detente" than is found in the West comes from China, while Brezhnev has implied that the Soviet Union and China are engaged in a common struggle against imperialism. In general, Suslov has hit harder than most Soviet leaders the theme of Chinese anti-Soviet collusion with "reactionary" elements in the West. Suslov has also engaged in personal criticism of Chinese leaders.

In spite of his increasingly hostile ideological stance toward China in recent years, Suslov has not matched the rhetoric of some Soviet leaders in denouncing China. Also, he has not referred publicly, as have others, to China's nuclear missile potential, or called for a defensive military buildup against the East as well as the West, or explicitly used the Chinese threat as a justification for increased military expenditures.

East and West European Communist Parties

Suslov's conception of the proper relationship between the CPSU and European Communist parties derives from a world view that impels him to regard any devolution of power from Moscow with consternation. His hostility toward polycentrism in the Communist world and toward na-

tional "deviations" from the Soviet model parallels his opposition to all forms of nationalism within the Soviet Union itself, whether espoused by the dominant Russian majority or by oppressed ethnic minorities. Among Soviet leaders, Suslov is an outspoken adherent of a centralized state, but for him the impulse toward the creation of a unitary state (and, by extension, of a unified international Communist movement centered on Moscow) is dictated by Marxist ideology rather than Russian chauvinism.

The main thrust of Soviet Marxist ideology since Lenin's time has been toward centralized political and economic decisionmaking, uniform cultural forms, and obliteration of national distinctions. This is why Suslov, although doubtless sharing the usual prejudices of a dominant ethnic group, has not condoned neo-Slavophile ideas or attempted to utilize traditional Russian nationalism as an integrative political force for the Soviet regime, as have some other leaders—such as former Politburo member Dmitri Polyanskiy and even Brezhnev. Suslov is one of a handful of Soviet leaders who have continued in the 1970s to condemn "great power chauvinism" (a codeword for Great Russian nationalism) as well as "bourgeois nationalism" (a codeword for minority nationalism). While reference to the latter was and is *de rigueur*, reference to the former has become generally passe. Seen in this light, there is no contradiction between Suslov's postwar role in crushing national opposition to Soviet rule in the Baltics, his reported opposition in the early 1970s to the "nationalist" tendencies of former Ukrainian party chief Shelest, and his simultaneous support of several attacks on Russian nationalist novelists. Although considerations of Realpolitik and a desire for greater political control are presumably not unimportant in his thinking, his commitment to ideological purity appears to be the motive force in his rejection of national forms of Communism. It is not therefore surprising that in the 1950s and early 1960s Suslov gained the reputation of being the foremost Soviet exponent of doctrinal orthodoxy and of rigid Soviet control of Communist parties both in Eastern and Western Europe.

While Suslov at that time undoubtedly realized that armed uprising was not a realistic alternative in Europe, he evidently was not entirely comfortable with the emphasis Khrushchev placed on the theme of the "peaceful" path for the advent of Communists to power, or with the repudiation of the Stalinist doctrine that the consolidation of Communist power is accompanied by a sharpening of class struggle. In a 1956 speech, Suslov accused "revisionists" of "ignoring the teaching of the unavoidability of a sharp class struggle during the period of transition" to Communist victory. In a 1961 speech, Suslov insisted that only through the use of force or at least the threat of force could the working class retain power, once having achieved it. He maintained that a withering away of state power would "disarm the proletariat in the face of its internal and external enemies and would undermine its victory." The state, he added, "must use its sword without hesitation against antisocial elements." Thus, although in Suslov's view Communists might be able to enter a West European government through "parliamentary" means, they then must not hesitate to sunder their alliance with "bourgeois" elements and shed legal means in order to consolidate their power within the government. In 1968, Suslov stated that:

The Marxist principle that the bourgeoisie will never voluntarily yield its power holds true even today. But the experience of the workers movement demonstrates that the forms of revolutionary coercion can vary.

Suslov particularly deplored the difficulties that the "soft" attitude of European revisionists toward the United States and armed struggle created for Soviet relations with the Chinese and other militant and anti-American parties (such as those in Cuba, North Korea, and North Vietnam).

The Italian Communist Party, in particular, found Suslov intransigent on the subject of the "parliamentary" approach to political power. The Italians in the 1960s were also convinced

that Suslov was less willing than Brezhnev to tolerate independence from Moscow. In 1965, for example, Suslov was reported to have opposed bilateral relations between the Italian and other nonruling Communist parties, preferring instead that Moscow serve as the coordinating center of the movement.

Suslov's overriding concern for orthodoxy and control during this period was also manifest in his dealings with East European Communist parties. Suslov's functional responsibility as the party secretary overseeing relations with both ruling and nonruling Communist parties probably increased his interest in preventing irreparable divisions within the movement, if necessary by compromise but preferably by maintaining strict discipline. Suslov reportedly had been instrumental in the Soviet decision to abandon the Hungarian Stalinist, Rakosi, evidently because he reached the conclusion that Rakosi did not command enough popular support to make his regime viable. Suslov, however, played a leading role in crushing the 1956 Hungarian revolt, and he also earned the lasting antipathy of the Yugoslavs by his early identification with Cominformist sentiment.

It was Suslov who had presided over the 1948 Cominform Conference that brought into the open the conflict between Tito and the Soviet Union by issuing a detailed condemnation of the Yugoslav party. Suslov, whom Tito had publicly named as the representative of the "Stalinist" trend in Soviet policy, also delivered the report condemning revisionism at the 1957 world Communist conference. During the early 1960s, when the expulsion of the Yugoslavs from the world Communist movement became a central condition for Chinese cooperation with the Soviets, there was evidence of sparring between Suslov and Khrushchev on the Yugoslav issue. According to Khrushchev's memoirs, Suslov insisted that Yugoslavia was no longer a Communist country.

The special enmity with which the Yugoslavs regard Suslov has evidently persisted. In March 1977 []

As far as is known, Yugoslavia remains the only East European country which Suslov has never visited.

Although Suslov earned the undying hostility of the Yugoslavs by his actions and policies during the 1950s and early 1960s, his views on many of the tactical issues separating Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union apparently changed during the late 1960s. The shift in Suslov's tactics during this period demonstrated that he was capable of considerably more sophistication and flexibility than had previously been supposed. The counterpart to his movement toward a relatively hard line toward China was his movement in the opposite direction with regard to policy toward European Communist parties. In February 1968, for example, when a conference was held in Budapest preparatory to the convening of an international Communist conference scheduled for later that year, Suslov made a speech in which he attempted to allay the suspicions of some European Communists that the coming conference was a step toward the establishment of a new Comintern. Thus, he gave assurances that "the setting up of some guiding international center of the Communist movement is out of the question" since "there is absolutely no need for such a center." At the same time, he registered support for unity of action with "left-wing socialists and social democrats." It was in this speech also that he renewed his attack on the Chinese leadership, denouncing it in stronger terms than he had used since 1964.

The best evidence of Suslov's move toward a more flexible approach in dealing with East European Communist parties came out of the 1968 crisis presented by the Czechoslovak experiment in "socialism with a human face." Suslov was not as visibly involved in trying to negotiate a return to orthodoxy with the Czechoslovaks during the spring and summer of 1968 as were several other Soviet Politburo members. But he clearly had a major voice in deliberations

outside the public purview, and he is reliably reported to have used his voice to urge moderation on his Politburo colleagues.

There is some question as to when Suslov began to speak in favor of steering a conciliatory course on the Czechoslovak issue.

Suslov had reservations in July 1968 about the Soviet decision to go to Cierna and meet with the Czechoslovaks on Czechoslovak soil. Evidently Suslov was reluctant to support a Soviet move that could be viewed as a concession to the Czechoslovaks.

At other times during the crisis, however, Suslov is reliably reported to have advocated a "soft" approach toward dealing with the problem. We have the testimony of the Czechoslovak leaders themselves, as well as other sources, that Suslov was "conciliatory and humane" at the meeting in Cierna. His behavior is said to have contrasted sharply with that of Shelest, a leading advocate of a "Hungarian" solution (quick military intervention) rather than a "Polish" solution (gradual political pressure).

After the invasion Suslov appears to have continued to advocate a moderate and gradualist course in reestablishing controls. He reportedly was severely critical of the hard-line stance adopted by Chervonenko, the Soviet Ambassador in Prague. Suslov is also said to have opposed the imposition of extremely stringent censorship on Czechoslovak newspapers. Further, he instructed Soviet journalists in the fall of 1968 to cease direct attacks on Czechoslovak leaders by name. And Suslov.

In 1969, urged full support for the current Prague leadership. Brezhnev, who spoke on the same occasion, was less supportive.

Suslov's concern about the disruptive effect that military action in reimposing orthodoxy in Czechoslovakia might have on Soviet relations

with European Communist parties was probably the decisive factor in causing him to favor greater efforts to achieve a political solution to the crisis. He had a particular reason at this time for not offending the European Communists. The Soviets had scheduled a world Communist conference in 1968 to demonstrate solidarity against the Chinese. In the event, the disarray created in Communist ranks by the Soviet-led intervention forced a postponement of the conference until 1969. Suslov was personally very involved in the campaign to woo fence-sitting Communist parties and to ensure that the conference run as smoothly as possible.

Further evidence of Suslov's willingness to stomach a relatively greater degree of independence from Moscow during this period was seen in a speech in March 1969. Suslov reiterated his polycentrist theme of February 1968, noting that the "organizational form according to which leadership of the entire movement was exercised from one center" had become a "hindrance" after 1943 and was not appropriate for "today's conditions." This appears to have been a tactical retreat on the eve of the international Communist conference, for in the 1970s, Suslov reverted to his earlier hard-line position concerning the European parties.

Since 1970, Suslov's position seems, in fact, to have become increasingly intransigent. In 1970 he was criticizing "revisionist flunkys of imperialism" who try "to remove from the agenda the necessity of a revolutionary transformation of capitalist society." At the same time he issued a call for Communists to expel from their ranks "those who direct their whole activity not against the class enemy, but against existing socialism." In 1972 he stated that the "task of rebuffing nationalist deviations was acquiring great significance" for Communists. In 1973 he rejected the revisionist thesis that the role of the working class in the struggle against capitalism was declining and declared that, on the contrary, it was growing.

Since 1975, Suslov has seemed particularly alarmed about the phenomenon of Eurocommu-

nism. He has apparently neared the end of his patience with the French, Spanish, and Italian parties as they became increasingly outspoken in their criticism of Soviet internal policies after the Helsinki Accords were signed in August 1975. Some reporting about the attitudes of Suslov and Party Secretary Ponomarev in dealing with Eurocommunism suggests that they may have decided that it is more desirable to have small, loyal parties in Western Europe than large, rebellious ones. In his speech on the Comintern anniversary in September 1975, he voiced opposition to "any and all attempts to introduce various opportunistic and nationalistic ideas into the ranks of the international Communist movement." In a March 1976 speech to the Academy of Sciences, Suslov barely stopped short of reading the Eurocommunists out of the world Communist movement:

Marxism has been inconceivable outside Leninism and apart from Leninism. . . . Proletarian internationalism is not just one of the elements or aspects of Marxism-Leninism. It permeates the entire content of the theory and practice of scientific communism . . . the entire history of Marxism is a history of the rise and development of proletarian internationalism. . . . The enemies of Marxism have begun more and more often to don Marxist clothes . . . they . . . seek . . . to substitute bourgeois liberalism for Marxism. . . . *Those things the opportunists present as some "regional" or "national" version of Marxism have nothing in common with revolutionary theory and do harm to the cause of the working class. . . . We Soviet Communists consider the defense of proletarian internationalism the sacred duty of every Marxist-Leninist.*⁴

According to several reports, during the last several years Suslov has clashed with Brezhnev over policy toward Eurocommunism, charging

⁴ The italicized sentence was censored out of *Pravda*, *Kommunist*, and most central newspapers, possibly because some in the Soviet leadership considered the language unnecessarily inflammatory.

Brezhnev with following a suicidal course that was allowing Eurocommunist trends to escalate. Italian Communist leaders have commented that they have been relatively well received and treated by Brezhnev, in contrast to Suslov. Indeed, Suslov appears to hold very strong views on this issue. In January 1977 at a meeting of pro-Soviet West European Communist parties, he harshly criticized the Italian, French, and Spanish Communist Parties, which he referred to as the "axis" of Eurocommunism. C

I denounced Spanish Communist Party head Carrillo for working to undermine the teachings of Marxism-Leninism itself. Minimizing the differences between the Spanish party and the Italian and French parties, he claimed that the Italians and French did not lag far behind the Spaniards in taking up anti-Soviet positions.

In view of the tenor of his recent remarks about Eurocommunism, it is very likely that Suslov initiated or approved the June 1977 *New Times* attack on Carillo. That this article represented a controversial position in the Soviet spectrum of views on Eurocommunism became clear when subsequent articles in Soviet publications failed to reiterate the *New Times ad hominem* attack on Carillo. Suslov does not appear to have retreated. He took another swipe at the Eurocommunists in a speech during the celebration of the October Revolution anniversary last year. Although he reiterated the now *pro forma* assurance that there is no longer a "single international center" of Communism, he went on to stress that the CPSU's role was increasing, since it possessed "the most advanced theory," in contrast to those who could "only build socialism on paper."

Suslov has also participated in the debate over the "lessons" of Chile, which has become a touchstone for views on the role of force in the Communist drive to political power. This debate has become more pronounced since the removal of the Communists from the junta in Portugal in the fall of 1975. The general line of those associated with Suslov, such as Ponomarev, has

been that Communism failed in Chile because of a reluctance to use force against "bourgeois" enemies and that the Chilean experience thus tends to invalidate gradualist, reformist, and parliamentary means as a viable approach to socialism. The opposing, "liberal" argument, as presented in some Soviet journals, has been that Allende failed because he did not control extreme leftist elements or attract moderates to build a broader base of support.

Suslov addressed this issue in an October 1977 *Kommunist* article, in which he contended that the use of force by Communist parties was indispensable and that he opposed the participation of any Communist party in a coalition which it did not control:

It is not enough for the working class to seize state power; it must also be able to retain it. . . . The revolution is solid only when it can not only win but also defend its gains and oppose the forces of reaction and counter-revolution. . . . Not only . . . its (the working class's) participation in the administration, but also its seizure of political power (is necessary). . . . The historically substantiated policy of broad social alliances and of unification of all leftist and democratic forces . . . does not eliminate this task but makes it even more urgent and important.

Indirect evidence that Suslov's doctrinaire views apply to Eastern as well as Western Europe was provided on the occasion of Suslov's 75th birthday in November 1977. The reaction of East European leaders to this event varied from one country to another, according to the orthodoxy of the individual regimes. The heads of the conservative regimes of East Germany, Czechoslovakia, and Bulgaria praised Suslov as a theoretician and honored him with high state awards. The media of the country with the most conservative regime, East Germany, gave the event the most publicity. But Hungary's more liberal and independent Kadar simply sent a message of congratulations, the text of which was not published in the Soviet press, and Poland's Gierek sent no message at all.

The Third World

Suslov's attitude toward "national liberation" movements appears to be a mix of two conflicting beliefs, stronger in him than in most leaders: on the one hand, a greater ideological commitment and hence a greater willingness to confront "imperialism" in the Third World; on the other hand, a greater concern over the tendency of indigenous national liberation movements to be ideologically impure and independent from Moscow's control. Suslov's ambivalence toward the Third World was exemplified by his behavior during the Algerian-French conflict of the 1960s. He seems to have approved Communist participation in and Soviet support of the Algerian insurrection. Once Algerian independence was achieved, however, he appeared less inclined than Brezhnev to recognize Algeria as a legitimate "socialist" country.

Cuba and Africa

Like other Soviet leaders, Suslov rarely makes more than passing references to Latin America in his speeches. He may be more enthusiastic about Castro's revolutionary militancy than some Soviet leaders, but he probably is somewhat wary of Castro's maverick tendencies.

As Castro has moved in the 1970s to bring Cuban institutions and policies in line with the Soviet model and demonstrated his willingness for Cuba to play a proxy role in Africa, Suslov's enthusiasm for the Cuban variety of Communism has probably increased. It was Suslov who headed the Soviet delegation to the first Cuban Party Congress in December 1975, and it was Suslov who greeted Castro at the airport when he arrived in Moscow two months later, at the time of the 25th CPSU Congress. In his speech at the Cuban Party Congress, Suslov was much more positive about Cuba's achievements than was Brezhnev during his 1974 visit to Havana, although in the main Suslov's appraisal probably reflected the evolution of Soviet policy more than any divergence between him and Brezhnev. Suslov's speech employed formulations which had by that time become standard. He included the pre-

Castro period as a legitimate part of the Communist movement in Cuba; paid polite tribute to the progressive role of Jose Marti, an earlier Cuban non-Marxist revolutionary; emphasized the international solidarity of the Communist movement; praised the documents that came out of the congress culminating a trend toward reduction of personal and arbitrary elements in the economy and government; and acknowledged Cuba's participation in the national liberation movement, though without mentioning Angola specifically. In passing, Suslov acknowledged Cuba's influence on the revolutionary movement in Latin America, something the Soviet leadership was unprepared to do before Castro made his peace with other, more bureaucratic and conservative, but Moscow-backed Communist parties in the hemisphere. Finally, Suslov warmly flattered Castro personally as "that ardent revolutionary and splendid Communist, a man enjoying tremendous authority throughout the world."

[Ponomarev, whose views on international affairs evidently correspond closely to those of Suslov, was a major advocate of the joint Soviet-Cuban involvement in the Angolan Civil War, in opposition to Foreign Minister Gromyko.]

in February 1976, at the height of the war, Suslov approved for publication in *Pravda* an article that strongly affirmed Soviet support for the MPLA and made the first authoritative admission that the Soviet Union was supplying it with military aid. It was on Suslov's suggestion that the article was signed "Observer," presumably to lend greater weight to its message. At the 25th CPSU Congress, Suslov rose to his feet before other Soviet leaders to lead applause for the Angola speaker's call for "down with imperialism."

The Middle East

When Suslov has addressed the subject of policy toward the Middle East, he has generally employed the standard Soviet formulations, including a call for PLO representation at Geneva. He has not, however, been in the forefront on this issue. He has never traveled to the Middle East,

and in his speeches he has devoted scant attention to the area, in contrast to his lengthy treatment of relations with China, Europe, and the United States.

Suslov's reticence suggests that he may have been less enthusiastic than some leaders in support of the Palestinians, possibly because Arafat's ideological laxity offends him. Suslov did not refer to the Palestinians' right to create their own state until April 1975, several months after Podgorny had become the first Soviet leader publicly to take this stand. Earlier, in 1971, he reportedly played a leading role in preparing a critique of the Syrian Communist Party program. According to the critique, the Syrian Communists paid too much attention to the Palestinian issue and not enough to the need to strengthen the "progressive" Syrian Government. It would seem that, at a minimum, Suslov supported the dominant Soviet policy of steering clear of identification with particular extremist factions, while preaching the doctrine of unity of all "democratic" forces.

Conclusions

However subtle Suslov's mind and his approach to foreign policy, his voice in the leadership today is clearly one that urges caution against pushing detente too far, refuses except in extreme circumstances to loosen controls over Eastern Europe or the international Communist movement, and places a high premium on support to "liberation movements" in the Third World. For all his tactical flexibility, the strength of his basic ideological commitment to the expansion of Soviet power necessarily leads him to be more reluctant than most of his colleagues to make foreign policy concessions anywhere in the world, whether to the West or to China.

Suslov's departure from the Soviet leadership, when it comes, will create a vacancy not easily filled. As the upholder of ideological purity, Suslov has held a special place in the leadership. At a time when the Politburo is made up largely of administrators and technicians, men who would not understand much of Marx's *Kapital*

had they read it, Suslov is one of the few who claims to take pleasure in philosophical discourse.

One must, nevertheless, resist the temptation to portray Suslov as the last of a breed. There are several other Politburo leaders who appear to share, at least in part, his basic outlook on the world. The ideological orientation of Belorussian Party head and candidate Politburo member Petr Masherov may be the closest to Suslov's. Like Suslov, Masherov is suspicious of the West and more openly critical of the Chinese Communists and the Eurocommunists than most leaders.

Probably nearer to Suslov personally is another candidate member of the Politburo, Party Secretary Boris Ponomarev. Ponomarev's entire career, much of it under Suslov's guidance, has been spent in directing the international Communist movement. Particularly in recent years, he appears to have worked in complete harmony with Suslov, sharing his views on the West, Eurocommunism, and Eastern Europe.

Party Secretary Mikhail Zimyanin also appears to be a cultural hard-liner and a possible Suslov protege. In a speech on Lenin's birthday in 1977, Zimyanin expressed views on detente, China, and the international Communist movement that were entirely consistent with Suslov's foreign policy views.

Several reports have suggested that an alliance exists between Suslov and Grigoriy Romanov, a Politburo member who appears to aspire to succeed Brezhnev. Suslov presided over Romanov's installation as head of the Leningrad party in 1970, but other evidence indicates that Romanov has more often looked to Kirilenko for support. Whether or not Romanov is personally close to Suslov, he does seem to share Suslov's conservatism on cultural policy and perhaps on some foreign policy matters as well.

What none of these men possesses and what Suslov cannot pass on to them is his authority. The senior member of the Politburo and the Secretariat in terms of tenure, a veteran whose service to the party stretches back to work on a

Poor Peasants' Committee during the Civil War, an "internationalist" who supervised the Baltic purges after World War II and who led the crusades against Tito and Mao, an ideologue whose orthodoxy is tempered with intellectual sophistication, a politician more interested in the substance than the trappings of power, Suslov inspires awe in many party rank and file and commands considerable respect even from his peers.

With Suslov's passing, there will of course continue to be a senior party secretary watching over Soviet ideology. The most visible candidate to replace Suslov is Ponomarev, who has worked under Suslov's supervision for many years. With almost 25 years of experience in directing relations with nonruling Communist parties, Ponomarev could perhaps fill Suslov's shoes but for the fact that at age 73 he, also, will presumably retire in the not too distant future. No like-

minded younger man with the requisite background for the job is available. It is possible that Suslov's departure may thus enable Brezhnev and men personally closer to the General Secretary—such as Leonid Zamyatin, newly appointed head of the revived Central Committee Information Department, or Konstantin Ruskov, head of the Bloc Department—to increase their authority within the CPSU propaganda apparatus that Suslov was largely responsible for creating.

More important, when Suslov is gone from the political scene, other Politburo members who have occasionally betrayed a skeptical view of detente—including Kirilenko, Mazurov, and Romanov—will be deprived of one of their most powerful and articulate champions. If Suslov departs while Brezhnev remains in power, the result could be a perceptible tilt toward the more flexible foreign policies Brezhnev has pursued.

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Comments and queries may be directed to*