

~~TOP SECRET~~//HCS//ORCON/NOFORN

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~~(TS//HCS//OC/NF)~~ **SUBJ: RUSSIAN PRESIDENT PUTIN'S MEDIA POLICY**

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COMMENTS, EVALUATIONS, AND REQUIREMENTS WELCOME.

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~~Warnings: (TS//HCS//OC/NF)~~----- CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY INFORMATION REPORT, NOT FINALLY EVALUATED INTELLIGENCE -----

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[Redacted] ALL PORTIONS CARRY CLASSIFICATION AND CONTROLS OF OVERALL DOCUMENT. END OF MESSAGE ~~TOP SECRET~~.

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~~(TS//HCS//OC/NF)~~ 1. [Redacted]

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[Redacted] PRESIDENT PUTIN AND HIS KEY ADVISERS ON MEDIA ISSUES UNDERSTOOD THAT

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RUSSIA WOULD NEVER BE RECEIVED IN THE DEVELOPED WORLD AS AN EQUAL

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PARTNER NOR PERMITTED TO RISE ABOVE NOMINAL MEMBERSHIP IN THE G-8 UNTIL

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RUSSIA WAS ACCEPTED AS A TRULY DEMOCRATIC STATE. BEING ACCEPTED AS A DEMOCRATIC STATE REQUIRED THE EXISTENCE OF A FREE PRESS WHICH CAN PERFORM THE ROLE OF A "WATCHDOG OF DEMOCRACY." PUTIN UNDERSTOOD THE IMPORTANCE OF LETTING THE PRESS PLAY SUCH A ROLE, BUT HE DID NOT BELIEVE THIS INCLUDED PERMITTING IMPORTANT MEDIA OUTLETS TO BECOME TOOLS OF PARTICULAR OPPOSITION POLITICIANS OR ALLOWING THEM TO CRITICIZE FOR THE SAKE OF CRITICISM.

(TS//HCS//OC/NF) 2. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] THE 12 OCTOBER RESIGNATION OF GAZPROM-MEDIA CEO ALFRED ((KOKH)) WAS FORCED BY PRESIDENT PUTIN AND HIS ADMINISTRATION. THE RESIGNATION WAS NOT DRIVEN BY DIFFERENCES BETWEEN KOKH AND GAZPROM MANAGEMENT AS WAS PORTRAYED IN SOME RUSSIAN MEDIA OUTLETS. KREMLIN OFFICIALS VIEWED KOKH AS HOPELESSLY TAINTED BY SCANDAL AND CRIMINAL ACTIVITY. IN SUPPORT OF THIS, KOKH'S BOOK HONORARIUM SCANDAL AND INVOLVEMENT IN DUBIOUS PRIVATIZATION ACTIVITIES WERE CITED. FURTHERMORE, OFFICIALS IN THE RUSSIAN PRESIDENTIAL ADMINISTRATION RECOGNIZED THAT NTV WOULD NOT BE ACCEPTED AS AN INDEPENDENT STATION AS LONG AS KOKH WAS INVOLVED IN ITS ACTIVITIES. [REDACTED] COMMENT: KOKH WAS A KEY FIGURE IN A 1997 SCANDAL INVOLVING EXCESSIVE PREPUBLICATION ROYALTIES FOR A BOOK ON RUSSIAN PRIVATIZATION.)

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(TS//HCS//OC/NF) 3. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] PRESS MINISTER MIKHAIL ((LESIN)) WOULD BE REMOVED IN THE NEAR FUTURE. KREMLIN OFFICIALS BELIEVED THAT LESIN WAS TOO ETHICALLY COMPROMISED AND THAT THIS HINDERED THE KREMLIN'S GOAL OF ACQUIRING INTERNATIONAL RECOGNITION THAT RUSSIA HAS A FREE PRESS. [REDACTED] COMMENT: [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] LESIN'S OWNERSHIP OF THE ADVERTISING FIRM ((VIDEO INTERNATIONAL)) HAS RESULTED IN SOME ACCUSATIONS OF A CONFLICT OF INTEREST BETWEEN HIS PRIVATE AND PUBLIC SECTOR ACTIVITIES.)

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(TS//HCS//OC/NF) 4. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] THE KREMLIN, NOT GAZPROM, WAS MANAGING THE SALE. AT THE KREMLIN'S DIRECTION, GAZPROM MADE A COMMITMENT TO THE NTV LABOR COLLECTIVE THAT IT WOULD SELL NTV NO LATER THAN 15 JANUARY 2002. GAZPROM CEO ALEKSEY ((MILLER)) PROMISED NTV PERSONNEL THAT GAZPROM'S PREFERENCE WAS TO SEE THAT NTV PERSONNEL OBTAIN A CONTROLLING PERCENTAGE OF SHARES. MILLER ALSO SAID GAZPROM WAS LOOKING FOR A SUITABLE FOREIGN INVESTOR. [REDACTED] COMMENT: GAZPROM REJECTED AN OFFER BY A WESTERN MEDIA COMPANY TO PURCHASE A LARGE SHARE OF NTV STOCK IN THE SPRING OF 2001 BECAUSE THE WESTERN COMPANY DEMANDED A WRITTEN PRESIDENTIAL GUARANTEE THAT NTV WOULD REMAIN FREE FROM KREMLIN INFLUENCE. PRESUMABLY GAZPROM WOULD REJECT ANY SIMILAR DEMANDS BY WESTERN SUITORS FOR EXPLICIT KREMLIN GUARANTEES.)

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(TS//HCS//OC/NF) 5. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] NTV NEWS EXECUTIVES CLAIMED THAT THEY HAD RECEIVED A NUMBER OF COMPLAINTS ABOUT NEWS COVERAGE FROM GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS SINCE GAZPROM'S HOSTILE TAKEOVER OF THE STATION, BUT AS OF OCTOBER THERE HAD NOT BEEN ANY BLATANT ATTEMPTS TO USE GAZPROM'S OWNERSHIP TO INFLUENCE NEWS COVERAGE. [REDACTED] SOVIET ERA GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS HAD "PHONE RIGHTS" IN WHICH THEY COULD TELEPHONE NEWS ORGANIZATIONS TO COMPLAIN ABOUT PERCEIVED SHORTCOMINGS IN COVERAGE. [REDACTED] PRESENT DAY RUSSIAN GOVERNMENT

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OFFICIALS STILL MADE SUCH CALLS. MOST OF THESE GOVERNMENT COMPLAINTS HAD BEEN ABOUT NTV'S COVERAGE OF CHECHNYA AND THE KURSK RAISING. BUT, NTV MANAGEMENT DID NOT ACCEPT ANY OBLIGATION TO ADDRESS THE COMPLAINTS. THE MAIN CRITERIA FOR NTV MANAGEMENT IN DETERMINING WHICH STORIES TO RUN CENTERED AROUND EXPECTED RATINGS, NOT WHETHER THEY PLEASE OR DISPLEASE THE GOVERNMENT.

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RUSSIAN STATE TELEVISION

AND RADIO BROADCASTING COMPANY (VGTRK) CHAIRMAN OLEG ((DOBRODEYEV)) HAD BECOME A KEY PUBLIC IMAGE-MAKER FOR PRESIDENT PUTIN. ALL OF PUTIN'S SPEECHES AND PUBLIC APPEARANCES THAT WERE COVERED BY THE STATE TELEVISION NETWORK RTR, PARTICULARLY THOSE ON "CRISIS TOPICS," SUCH AS THE KURSK RAISING, CHECHNYA, AND THE YAKUTIA FLOODING, WERE STAGE-MANAGED BY DOBRODEYEV. THIS, IN EFFECT, MADE DOBRODEYEV A KEY PUTIN ADVISER ON "CRISIS COMMUNICATIONS." IN A SIMILAR VEIN, KREMLIN MEDIA ADVISER GLEB ((PAVLOVSKIY)) WIELDED ENORMOUS INFLUENCE WITH PRESIDENT PUTIN. HIS INFLUENCE WENT FAR BEYOND MEDIA ISSUES AS HIS ((EFFECTIVE POLICY FOUNDATION)) HAD EVOLVED INTO AN OVERALL POLICY "THINK TANK" WHICH HAD A CONTRACT WITH THE KREMLIN TO PROVIDE INFORMATION AND ASSESSMENTS ON A RANGE OF POLICY-RELEVANT ISSUES. LASTLY, PRESIDENTIAL AIDE SERGEY ((YAZTRZHEMBSKIY)) HAD ALSO EVOLVED INTO MUCH MORE THAN A MERE PRESS SPOKESMAN. YAZTRZHEMBSKIY HAS A LARGE STAFF AND OPERATED MUCH LIKE A NATIONAL SECURITY ADVISER IN THE SENSE THAT HE WAS INVOLVED IN POLICY DELIBERATIONS, NOT MERELY COMMUNICATIONS AFTER-THE-FACT. [Redacted] COMMENT: PUTIN SEEMED TO HAVE GREATER PLANS FOR YAZTRZHEMBSKIY--A POSITION HIGHER THAN THE FOREIGN MINISTER.) -----TEAR LINE-----

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(TS//HCS//OC/NF) -----TEAR LINE-----

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COMMENTS, EVALUATIONS, AND REQUIREMENTS WELCOME.

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