

~~TOP SECRET//ORCON/NOFORN~~

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~~(TS//OC/NF)~~ **SUBJ: RUSSIA'S NEW MASS MEDIA MINISTRY**

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

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

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~~(TS//OC/NF)~~ 2. [Redacted]

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[REDACTED] THE MINISTRY HAS HAD DIFFICULTY GETTING ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT FROM THE RUSSIAN PRESIDENTIAL ADMINISTRATION (PA). MINISTER MIKHAIL ((LESIN)), [REDACTED] HAS COMPLAINED THAT NONE OF HIS SUGGESTED MINISTRY DEPUTIES HAS YET BEEN APPROVED. LESIN ATTRIBUTED THIS TO THE UNSTABLE REGIME OF RUSSIAN PRESIDENT BORIS ((YEL'TSIN)) AND HIS CONSTANTLY CHANGING PREMIERS. [REDACTED] COMMENT: MIKHAIL LESIN, A SPECIALIST IN POLITICAL ADVERTISING WITH EXCELLENT KREMLIN TIES, WAS APPOINTED MINISTER OF THE NEW MASS MEDIA MINISTRY ON 6 JULY 1999.)

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(TS//OC/NF) 3. [REDACTED] [REDACTED] EVEN WITH THE OUSTER OF SERGEY ((STEPASHIN)) AS PREMIER, LESIN WOULD RETAIN HIS JOB AS HEAD OF THE NEW MEDIA MINISTRY AT LEAST UNTIL AFTER THE SUMMER 2000 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION. [REDACTED] LESIN AND HIS MINISTRY'S MAIN ROLE AS INSURING THAT THE PA'S "OPPOSITION" DOES NOT DISRUPT THE TRANSITION OF POWER. [REDACTED] LESIN AND HIS MINISTRY HAVE MANY UNPLEASANT DUTIES TO PERFORM, SUCH AS REVOKING BROADCASTING LICENSES IN ORDER TO PLEASE THE PA. [REDACTED] LESIN WAS A SMART MAN WITH A LOT OF COMMON SENSE WHO SHOULD BE ABLE TO KEEP THE PA HAPPY WITHOUT SACRIFICING HIS POLITICAL FUTURE.

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(TS//OC/NF) 4. [REDACTED] [REDACTED] EVEN IF THE NEW MEDIA MINISTRY IS DISBANDED, LESIN STILL WOULD UNOFFICIALLY DIRECT THE VGTRK AND THEREFORE CONTROL A LARGE PORTION OF THE RUSSIAN MEDIA. [REDACTED] LESIN ALSO OWNS OVER 600 REGIONAL RADIO AND TV STATIONS. [REDACTED] LESIN HAD BOUGHT THESE STATIONS AS A CUSHION SHOULD HIS GOVERNMENT CAREER COME TO A SUDDEN HALT.

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

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(TS//OC/NF) 6. [REDACTED] THE VGTRK AND THE PA'S MEDIA DEPARTMENTS HAVE ALSO SUFFERED UNDER THE UNCERTAIN POLITICAL ATMOSPHERE IN MOSCOW. [REDACTED] BLAMED THE PA FOR ACTING RANDOMLY WITHOUT REGARD FOR PUBLIC OPINION OR THE GOOD OF THE COUNTRY. [REDACTED] THE PA SENDS SUCH MIXED SIGNALS TO ITS MEDIA DIRECTORATES THAT IT IS INEVITABLE THAT YELTSIN GETS SUCH POOR PRESS COVERAGE.

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(TS//OC/NF) 7. GIVEN THE PUBLIC DISLIKE FOR THE CURRENT YEL'TSIN PA, [REDACTED] IT WAS IMPERATIVE THAT THE VGTRK KEEP NEUTRAL IN THE CHANGING ELECTION ENVIRONMENT. [REDACTED] WANTED THE VGTRK TO HAVE GOOD RELATIONS WITH ALL PARTIES ACROSS THE POLITICAL SPECTRUM WITHOUT ISOLATING THE PA. [REDACTED] THE VGTRK SHOULD COOPERATE WITH MOSCOW MAYOR YURIY ((LUZHKOVA)) AND HIS FATHERLAND-ALL RUSSIA PARTY. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] THE PA IS VERY CONCERNED ABOUT THE VGTRK SERVING AS ITS MOUTHPIECE [REDACTED]

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