

NEW YORK TIMES
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MOSCOW, May 27 — If there were any doubts that powerful men in the Kremlin are positioning themselves for the end of the Brezhnev era, it seemed to be dispelled with the announcement on Wednesday that Yuri

Man in the News Vladimirovich Andropov, a career Communist Party official, had been relieved of his duties as head of the K.G.B., the Soviet intelligence and internal security agency.

The transfer of Mr. Andropov had been expected after the disclosure the day before that he would return to his former post of a secretary in the 10-member party secretariat, which under Leonid I. Brezhnev, the general secretary, runs the Soviet Union's affairs. Mr. Andropov was moved from the secretariat to the chairmanship of the K.G.B. in 1967 as part of an effort to affirm party control over the security agency.

The announcement of his return to appeared to confirm rumors that Mr. Andropov wanted to place some distance between himself and the K.G.B. to strengthen his hand in what Sovietologists have dubbed the "presuccession struggle" in the Kremlin. It has long been assumed that the K.G.B. job is a deadweight on anyone aspiring to be the top man in the Kremlin.

Viewed as a Moderate in K.G.B.

Although the glowering look of his official photographs hardly conveyed it, Mr. Andropov was a moderate during his 15-year tenure at K.G.B. headquarters on Dzerzhinsky Square. Dissidents found him an implacable foe, but the party and the population as a whole rested easier.

Placing the K.G.B., including its huge network of agents, under at least a semblance of "socialist legality" was the task set by Mr. Brezhnev when he pulled the aide out of the secretariat and sent him to the K.G.B., a couple of blocks from the party's secretariat offices on Moscow's Old Square.

Over the years, Mr. Andropov succeeded to the point that the ruling Politburo has judged it safe to reassign the post to a career security officer, Vitaly V. Fedorchuk.



Associated Press

Longtime party official is out.

For Mr. Andropov, the move could be a gamble. While remaining at the security agency might have disqualified him from the party leadership, it would still have given him a voice in designating Mr. Brezhnev's successor. By moving back to the secretariat, he has relinquished that power base for a more amorphous position where his skills at political infighting could decide whether he recedes in influence or inherits Mr. Brezhnev's job as general secretary.

So far, the two main contenders seem to be Mr. Andropov and Konstantin U. Chernenko, a longtime Brezhnev confidant. Mr. Andropov staked his claim by giving the annual speech on Lenin's birthday last month, but Mr. Chernenko countered with an ideological speech to a gather-

ing of military commissars two weeks later.

The Brezhnev Politburo has presented an image of lifeless anonymity to the public, but Mr. Andropov's career provides some shadings. At the K.G.B., he established his ideological mettle, and any suspicions of queasiness in the face of popular challenge had been dispelled earlier by his role as Soviet Ambassador to Hungary during the uprising there in 1956.

Last year, rumors reached Western diplomats that he was pressing for tough action in Poland before Mr. Brezhnev was ready for a crackdown. But readers of Soviet intellectual journals have found evidence suggesting that he may be more pragmatic than some of his rivals if his authority were extended to economic issues.

Like most men in the Kremlin hierarchy, he comes from a humble background. He was born June 15, 1914, the son of a railway worker, and took jobs as a telegraph operator and film projectionist before attending college. His first party job, as head of the Young Communist League in what was then the Karelo-Finnish republic, was interrupted for a stint organizing guerrillas in this area behind German lines in World War II.

As a promising young official he was sent to the party's secretariat staff in 1951, and, except for a four-year stint in Hungary, remained there until he moved to the K.G.B. in 1967. While at the security agency, he was elected to the ruling Politburo, first as an alternate member in 1967, and then as a full, voting member in 1973.

Although his travels have been limited to Communist countries, he has impressed diplomats with his command of English, a rare accomplishment among Soviet leaders.

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