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UNMASKING MOSCOW'S "INSTITUTE OF THE U.S.A."

INTRODUCTION

In the months following the death of Soviet ruler Leonid Brezhnev, the United States and the West will be searching for clues that reveal the thinking of the Kremlin's new leadership. A key source of such "insights" into Soviet attitudes surely will be Georgiy Arkadyevich Arbatov who heads a Communist Party-run organization in Moscow called The Institute of the U.S.A. and Canada.

Arbatov has become the darling of the U.S. press in the past decade. He visits America frequently, speaks English, discusses U.S. politics in a native American idiom and has managed to create the impression that he dares speak candidly, even critically, about internal Soviet matters. Is it any wonder that Arbatov is often interviewed by American journalists, meets with American editors in plush executive dining rooms and even has appeared on American television? Is it any wonder that Arbatov is given the kind of access and forums in the U.S. that absolutely are forbidden to any American in the Soviet Union? With the U.S.--particularly American journalists--starved for any contact to Moscow "insiders," Arbatov is able to dish up what looks like a feast. What he really serves, however, is a menu of deception and disinformation.

The real Georgiy Arbatov scarcely resembles the image that he carefully has created for himself. He purports, for example, to have a direct pipeline to high-level Kremlin figures and to be one of the top advisers to the Kremlin on matters relating to the United States. There is absolutely no evidence supporting this. He purports to be, and is widely treated as if he is, the head of a Soviet version of an American independent think tank. He is not. His Institute was created solely to serve Soviet intelligence organizations and needs. He is what is known in the U.S.S.R. as a "faithful soldier" of the Soviet Communist Party. He and his

Institute even have been involved in so-called Active Measures-- activities that include overt and covert propoganda, manipulation of American and Canadian front organizations, forgeries and other means of deliberate deception.

The time has come, in the wake of the Brezhnev death, to view Arbatov and the Institute of the U.S.A. and Canada for what they are--important international arms of Moscow's intelligence and disinformation campaigns. To regard Arbatov and his Institute as anything less dangerous will seriously impair America's ability to evaluate correctly the policies and actions of the post-Brezhnev Soviet Union.

INSTITUTE OF THE U.S.A. AND CANADA -- BACKGROUND

At least seven of the social sciences institutes of the Soviet Academy of Sciences have very specific functions, some of which do not belong to the "conventional" institutes of the Academy of Sciences. These are the Institute of the U.S.A. and Canada, the Institute of World Economics and International Relations (IMEMO), the Institute of the Far East, the Institute of Africa, the Institute of Latin America, the Institute of Oriental Studies and the Institute of International Workers' Movement.

Although some researchers working for these institutes conduct studies in history, economy and cultural life of foreign countries, the research is not the main reason for their existence.

The large army of scientists and researchers, some of whom are full members of the Academy of Sciences, is working on projects designated by the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the USSR (CC CPSU) and, more specifically by the International Department (ID) of the CC CPSU. This department was established in the mid-1950s. Some of its main aims are to maintain relations with and provide guidance to the Communist Parties of the capitalist countries, to promote relations between the CC CPSU and socialist and other opposition parties of the capitalist countries, to establish and maintain contacts with some individuals--members of the ruling parties of developed nations and of the Third World-- and to supervise the activity of the Soviet "front" organizations. Two functions of the International Department CC CPSU are considered by the Soviet leadership as of utmost importance: 1) to work out long range tactical and strategic plans for the Soviet external policy (in cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs); 2) to plan and implement (in cooperation with the KGB and GRU intelligence agencies) Active Measures¹ aimed against the West.

¹ See: John Barron, "The KGB's Magical War for Peace," Reader's Digest, October 1982, p. 211. Also: Soviet Covert Action. Hearings before the Subcommittee on Oversight of the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, House of Representatives, Ninety-Sixth Congress, February 6, 19, 1980, pp. 59-87.

It is the International Department CC CPSU which needed the assistance of Soviet scholars specializing in studies of modern history, economy and military potential of the West. With this the International Department would have the knowledge necessary to implement directives of the Soviet Politburo on foreign policy and on a variety of Active Measures.

Almost as soon as the International Department CC CPSU had been established in the mid-1950s, the Soviet Politburo issued a directive to organize or expand the activities of the Institutes of the Academy of Sciences. Most subsequently were established in the 1950s or 1960s. Since then links between these institutes and the CC CPSU have become closer every year.

The director of any of these institutes gets the post only by approval of the International Department CC CPSU. The International Department with the help of the KGB also supervises the personnel policy of the institutes. Many key positions are filled by retired officers of the International Department or former or present KGB intelligence officers. The annual plans of research projects are approved by the International Department. The Academy of Sciences in this sense plays the role of a funding organization.

The Institute of the U.S.A. and Canada plays an extremely important role in the network established by the CC CPSU. The U.S.A. and Canada Institute was organized in November 1967 as the only Soviet Institute initially designed to concentrate its research on one country. Originally known as the USA Institute, its activities were expanded to include Canada in 1974. Since then, the official name of the institute has been the USA and Canada Institute. Formally it is subordinate to the Economics Department of the USSR Academy of Sciences.² However, it actually functions under the International Department CC CPSU.

The Institute studies every aspect of U.S. and Canadian affairs, including economics, politics, management, scientific and technological developments, and military potential. The institute has a large number of specialized departments. Three of them are generally considered to be the most important. Notes Nora Beloff in an account of a Soviet defector:

The first department, under Vitaly Zhurkin, studies U.S. policies, foreign and domestic. The foreign affairs section is divided regionally into the USSR, the Far East, the Near and Middle East, Europe, Latin America and the Third World. Each specializes in relations between its area and North America. The department also has a group working on immediate issues and another on national minorities, including youth.

² "USSR Institute of the United States of America and Canada." CIA Report, April 1976. Also: Bolshaya Sovetskaya Encyclopedia, 3rd edition, vol. 24(1), 1976, p. 128.

The second, which also has foreign and domestic sections, ... deals with the U.S. economy. The foreign section keeps track, among other things, of American-based multinational corporations. The domestic section deals with industry, management, and agriculture.

The third, officially listed as "ideology," is run by a KGB general, Radomir Bogdanov. It manages the libraries and secret archives. It has a special section looking after foreign visitors.... This department also includes the section on U.S. military affairs, headed by General Mikhail Milshtein, a member of the GRU, the Soviet military intelligence.

The Institute has a scientific secretary, Igor Orlenkov, who works in conjunction with all three departments.³

The Soviet defector, Galina Orionova, a former research fellow at the Institute of the U.S.A. and Canada, in a 1980 interview with Nora Beloff provided rare insight and knowledge of the Institute:

In addition to publishing books and a monthly magazine for general readership, the Institute is expected to furnish information on demand for the Central Committee, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the KGB. Writers are never told for which of the three they are working. Their main source is Western literature: newspapers, periodicals and books. They also receive Tass dispatches, those for general as well as for limited circulation, oral information from visiting American scholars and... diplomatic material when the Ministry of Foreign Affairs chooses to make it available.⁴

When I was a KGB intelligence officer in the 1970s, I had an opportunity to learn details about the Institute through conversations with officers of the 1st (American) Department of the First Chief Directorate (FCD) of the KGB and of the 12th (Intelligence on the territory of the Soviet Union) Department of the same Directorate.

It is true, for instance, that the Institute provides the International Department CC CPSU and the KGB with comprehensive studies on virtually every aspect of life in the US and Canada. These studies are mainly used as background material for preparing the Soviet Union's positions on various issues of bilateral relations. But it not true that the Institute plays a

³ Nora Beloff, "Escape from Boredom: A Defector's Story," Atlantic, November 1980, p. 48.

⁴ Ibid, p. 44.

serious role in the Soviet Politburo's decision making mechanism. It influences Kremlin leaders only indirectly. At the same time it is the only institution outside the KGB which has detailed knowledge of the political, economic and other processes in the modern North American society.

A large number of the Institute's papers are used for purposes having little to do with scientific research. One of the many clients of the Institute is Service "A" (Active Measures) of the First Chief Directorate of the KGB, which plans and implements global and regional active measures with the approval of the Soviet Politburo. Almost every product of the Institute can be utilized for this. For instance, data on the activity of multinational corporations is used by the International Department and the KGB to spread disinformation and forgeries in some of the Third World countries to plant seeds of suspicion towards their activities.

Data on U.S. military contractors are used by the Soviet propaganda inside and outside of the U.S. They are used also by Soviet front organizations (such as the World Peace Council) in their anti-American "peaceful campaigns" staged by Moscow.

I personally was told in Moscow that Radomir Bogdanov, deputy director of the Institute, is a high-ranking FCD KGB officer and a former KGB resident in New Delhi who now specializes in Active Measures. He has several subordinates in the Institute who use its name as a cover for their Active Measures activities.

Other departments of the KGB also are actively utilizing the Institute for their purposes. The officers of the 12th department (intelligence on the territory of the USSR) personally or through their conscripts in the Institute are meticulously collecting information on political backgrounds, personal profiles, and financial situations of visiting American scholars and political figures to be able to use these data in possible recruitment approaches.

The Institute has direct connections with the most active Soviet front organizations, primarily with the Soviet Peace Committee. Institute Director Arbatov is a member of the Presidium of the Soviet Peace Committee (SPC) and a member of the World Peace Council. His deputy, V.V. Shurkin, is Chairman of Disarmament Commission of the SPC, Vice President of the SPC⁵ and a member of the WPC.

Using his credentials as an officer of the Institute, Radomir Bogdanov frequently takes part in disarmament conferences--in Washington, New York and Europe. There he strongly pushes the Soviet line and looks for Americans who can be persuaded to follow it.

⁵ World Peace Council, List of Members, 1908-1983. Published by the Information Centre of the World Peace Council, Helsinki, pp. 144, 150.

The leaders of the Institute are involved in a large scale deception game aimed at the American scholars, journalists and political consultants. They foster the myth that the Institute has access to the formulation of confidential positions of the Soviet leaders toward the US and that they are unofficially "delivering" "objective" opinions of the Kremlin to respectable American counterparts. There is no evidence to support this. In fact, in Moscow it is widely known to be untrue. Nonetheless, some American journalists and specialists in foreign policy fall for this myth. Some points outlined by the Institute's specialists on disinformation are represented to the readers and TV viewers as the position of Kremlin leaders. For instance, in its January 2, 1982, issue, the Washington Post called Arbatov, "director of the Kremlin's think tank on North American affairs." In the December 16, 1980, issue of the New York Times, Arbatov is called "a senior adviser on American affairs in the Russian hierarchy." These nonexistent titles artificially "boost" Arbatov's credibility for the American audience.

WHO IS GEORGIY ARBATOV?

Doctor of Historical Sciences Georgiy Arkadyevich Arbatov became the director of the Institute when it was established in November 1967. He was elected to full membership in the Soviet Academy of Sciences in 1974. The same year he became a Deputy to the USSR Supreme Soviet. In March 1981 he was elected as a member of the CC CPSU. He is also chairman of the Scientific Council on Economic, Political and Ideological Problems of the United States--a joint venture of the International Department CC CPSU and the Academy of Sciences of the USSR.⁶ Arbatov belongs to the World Peace Council⁷ and to the Independent Commission on Disarmament and Security Issues (the chairman is Olof Palme, Prime Minister of Sweden).

Arbatov was born in the Soviet Ukraine on May 19, 1923, and served in the Soviet Army from 1941 to 1944. In 1943 he graduated from the Institute of International Relations (which provides cadres for the Soviet Ministry of Foreign Affairs, International Department CC CPSU and KGB). For several years he worked for the Foreign Literature Publishing House in Moscow. During the 1950s he was associated with the journals Questions of Philosophy (the organ of the CC CPSU), New Times (the organ of the International Department CC CPSU and a cover for KGB operatives) and Kommunist (the organ of the CC CPSU). From 1960 to 1962 Arbatov was a political observer for the magazine Problems of Peace and Socialism which is published in Prague (the organ of the International Department CC CPSU). Then for two years he was chief of the Ideological Section at the Institute of World Economics

⁶ CIA report, op. cit., April 1976.

⁷ World Peace Council. List of members, 1980-1983.

and International Relations. Since November 1967, he has been Director of the Institute of the USA.⁸

Arbatov has no academic background. Before he became the Director of the Institute he was a typical Party journalist, actively cooperating with the International Department CC CPSU. He was what they call in the Soviet Union "a fighter on the ideological front." And, obviously he had very good rapport with the comrades in the Central Committee. He became the Director of the Institute when he was 41 years old--very young for a director by Soviet bureaucratic standards. That he was appointed to this post despite his weak academic background strongly indicates that he was a trusted Party cadre well versed in conducting propaganda and Active Measures operations.

Arbatov proved to his superiors in the Central Committee that he is a "faithful soldier" of the Party. Immediately after the creation of the Institute, he started to provide "cover" jobs to the KGB and GRU officers and started to strictly follow the Party guidelines. He personally began traveling abroad several times a year as a member of scientific groups, delegations or Soviet "public" organizations--all of which are controlled by the CC CPSU--or by himself.

By the early 1970s Arbatov forged contacts and friendly relations with many prominent American and European scholars and political figures. With the help of the KGB's specialists in disinformation he created the myth that he is the "chief spokesman" of the Kremlin on Soviet-American relations, on problems of disarmament and so on. The Soviets also started to spread the rumor that Arbatov was very close to the Leonid Brezhnev and that the latter confided to him his views on prospects for Soviet-American relations.

On some occasions, during private conversations, Arbatov reportedly has expressed "unorthodox" views on political issues and on the situation in the Soviet Politburo. He has helped create the false impression, for instance, that there are "doves" and "hawks" in the Soviet leadership. Some of Arbatov's contacts do not realize that it is practically impossible for any Soviet academician, diplomat or journalist to travel abroad and openly express views which stray from the Party line. Like everyone else, before starting a trip abroad, Arbatov is summoned to the International Department of the CC CPSU for instructions on the political line that he is to express in his conversations and discussions. Arbatov reportedly gets these instructions from International Department chief Boris Ponomarev or from his first deputy, Vadim Zagladin.

⁸ CIA report. A large part of Dr. Arbatov's biography was published in Deputaty Verkhovnogo Soveta SSSR (10 sozyv) (Deputies of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, 10th Session) Moscow, 1979, p. 32.

Soviet leaders take part in planning and implementing the Active Measures pursued by Arbatov and his Institute.

To give Arbatov more credibility, his Party superiors in 1981 arranged his "election" to the CC CPSU. This made him a full member of the Soviet establishment. His credentials now include membership in the Academy of Sciences, Deputy to the USSR Supreme Soviet and member of the CC CPSU. His titles give credibility to the other high ranking officials in the Institute, such as the KGB officer Radomir Bogdanov, or GRU veteran Mikhail Milshtein.

Arbatov has visited the United States more than ten times and has greeted hundreds of American visitors in Moscow. The scope of his "interests" is enormous. On some occasions he will meet with the representatives of such reputable think tanks as Brookings Institution or the Foreign Policy Research Institute in Philadelphia.

On other occasions he will have discussions in his plush office in Moscow with the leaders of the Communist Party of the US. He also has had discussions with prominent American Democratic and Republican politicians. For instance, in 1980 he had a meeting in Moscow with Rep. Stephen J. Solarz, a member of the House Foreign Affairs Committee. Also present at the meeting was the First Deputy Chief of the International Department CC CPSU, Vadim Zagladin. In the same year, a month later, he met with a private American group headed by former Republican Governor of Pennsylvania, William W. Scranton.

Arbatov further has met with controversial American organizations such as the Institute for Policy Studies. In April 1981 a group of Americans visited Moscow under the auspices of the Institute for Policy Studies of Washington. One of the key members of the delegation was Marcus G. Raskin, a senior fellow of the IPS. This group had talks with anonymous "senior Soviet officials" and Arbatov and Zagladin.

Arbatov seems to try to give as many interviews to American TV stations or newspapers as is possible. During the last four years, he was interviewed or quoted by the major American television networks more than 20 times. Every article he writes in the Soviet Party organ Pravda is played and replayed by the American mass media. For instance, one of Arbatov's articles published in Pravda in April 1980 had been published by the Wall Street Journal on April 29, 1980 and by the Chicago Tribune on May 10. Some American newspapers seem to accept these articles at "face value." They forget that every article in Pravda, whoever the author is, must be approved by the International Department and the propaganda department of the CC CPSU.

At times, Arbatov appears at some meetings which have nothing in common with his position. For instance, in March 1981,

he headed the Soviet delegation to the First Congress of International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War.⁸ His presence indicates that that Arbatov's mentors in Moscow consider him to be a multi-purpose asset. It also indicates that he is used to guide leftist and gullible groups, like the physicians organization, to endorse the Soviet line on critical international matters.

During his visit to Moscow in May 1982, Reverend Billy Graham had an unprecedentedly long meeting with Arbatov--3 hours and 15 minutes. Nothing was published on the contents of the meeting, but during a press conference in Moscow, Graham pointed to Arbatov and said "I have met a very wonderful official here...."⁹

For years, the U.S. government seemed blind to Arbatov's disinformation campaign. But in April 1981, the US Department of State finally decided to limit Arbatov's access to US mass media. As a retaliatory measure against Moscow's refusal to allow American representatives to appear on Soviet television, the State Department denied a visa extension to Arbatov to keep him from appearing on the "Bill Moyers' Journal" program on the Public Broadcasting Service. Arbatov apparently had been gearing up for a major propaganda effort and was to appear with his subordinates, retired GRU General Mikhail Milshtein and Vitaliy Kobysh, a journalist who reportedly has close ties with the KGB. In response to the State Department action, Arbatov became furious. He lost his temper and directly attacked the U.S. Government. "Now I will understand a bit more about the policies of the new Administration than I knew before", he stated.¹⁰

CONCLUSION

There is no doubt that Georgiy Arbatov is an eloquent person who knows the United States well. It is possible that his ideas (nobody knows which) are occasionally taken into consideration by the Soviet leaders. It is possible also that some of the points he makes during his meetings with prominent Americans represent real positions of the Kremlin.

But it is absolutely clear that Arbatov is just one of the actors in a large-scale Soviet deception game which the Kremlin leaders wage against the West, primarily against the United

⁸ Summary of Proceedings of the First Congress of International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War, printed by the International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War, 635 Huntington Ave., Boston, Mass.
Also: Washington Post, March 24, 1981. p. A14.

⁹ The New York Times, May 9, 1982, p. 20.

¹⁰ The New York Times, April 2, 1981.

States. Whenever he has had the opportunity, Arbatov has tried to undermine the growing American consensus that Moscow's massive arms buildup endangers world peace. During the Carter Administration, for example, Arbatov "confided" to American journalists that while Carter and his Administration spoke of detente and of ending the arms race, militaristic right-wing forces in the U.S. were doing everything possible to sow mistrust and hostility.¹¹

Arbatov stressed that the U.S. had suffered a long succession of setbacks and thus sensibly concluded that the "positions of strength" and cold war policies were senseless and dangerous.¹²

During the 1980 election campaign and the first years of the Reagan Administration, Arbatov has tried to derail American attempts to restore a U.S.-Soviet military balance. Arbatov told an American reporter, for example, that it would not be easy to increase the Pentagon budget and that Washington cannot cut back severely on social appropriations.¹³ In a Pravda article cited by the New York Times, Arbatov pushed for the Soviet approach to arms limitation and the settlement of the Middle East problem.¹⁴

A Chicago Tribune article cites Arbatov's arguments dismissing the impact that the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan has had on U.S.-Soviet relations. He also criticized the improving U.S. relations with Peking.¹⁵

And when speaking to a nationwide U.S. television audience--something no comparable American has been allowed to do in the Soviet Union--Arbatov with a straight face maintained that Moscow was not involved in the imposition of martial law in Poland. Instead, he stated that what the American government is doing regarding Poland "is very dangerous" because this is a real blow to the fundamentals of the relations of peaceful coexistence. Said Arbatov to the American audience, "I think, the Administration of the United States has used events [in Poland] to create some sort of international crisis to internationalize the events in Poland."¹⁶

That such statements comes from Moscow is hardly surprising. Too often, however, Arbatov and the Institute of the U.S.A. and

¹¹ Georgiy Arbatov, "The Dangers of a New Cold War," Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, March 1978, pp. 33-40.

¹² Chicago Tribune, May 10, 1980, p. 10.

¹³ The New York Times, October 5, 1980. Interview by Craig Whitney with Arbatov in Moscow.

¹⁴ The New York Times, May 5, 1981, review of Arbatov's article in Pravda.

¹⁵ Chicago Tribune, May 10, 1980, p. 10. Wall Street Journal, April 29, 1980.

¹⁶ The CBS television network program "Face the Nation," Sunday, January 17, 1982.

Canada are treated as some sort of independent Soviet analysts whose observations deserve greater weight and credibility than those of Pravda's editorial page. The truth is that Arbatov differs barely at all from any other Soviet employed by the International Department of the Communist Party's Central Committee. He exists to fulfill the propaganda, disinformation and even espionage aims of the Kremlin.

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Stanislav Levchenko was born in Moscow in 1941, the son of a Soviet Army general. After attending special schools, he graduated with advanced degrees in Asian and Japanese affairs from the Institute of Peoples of Asia and Africa, of the USSR's Academy of Science. Between 1957 and 1971, he worked with various "front" organizations affiliated directly with the International Department of the Central Committee of the Soviet Communist Party. In 1971, he joined the KGB Foreign Intelligence Service as a staff operations officer. From 1975 to 1979, he posed as a Soviet journalist in Japan. In fact, he was working for the KGB, helping direct Soviet covert operations in Japan and East Asia and helping influence and recruit Japanese officials and journalists. In 1979, he was promoted to the rank of KGB Major and appointed Acting Chief of the Active Measures (Covert Action) Group of the Tokyo Residency of the KGB. In October of that year, he requested and was granted political asylum in the U.S. so that, he explains, he could "live in peace and freedom."