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# RUSSIAN ACTIVE MEASURES

Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow

With a foreword by Jan Goldman

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## Foreword

We live in perilous times as the information revolution bends its arc to backfire on democratic institutions. European countries that only in the last few decades have recaptured their freedom and independence after several generations either directly or indirectly under the control of the Soviet Union were partially liberated with the rise of fiber optic and digital information technology.

President Mikhail Gorbachev's decision to loosen the Soviet bondage on Eastern Europe's countries created the independence and democratic momentum that led to the collapse of the Berlin Wall in November 1989, and the overthrow of Communist rule throughout Eastern Europe. During this time, the unplanned but powerful interplay of bureaucratic interests and other institutional forces that operated in the Soviet Union made it difficult to foretell the close linkage between the information revolution and their citizens' longing for freedom and democracy. It assumed that the information revolution would whet citizens' appetites to taste self-independence. It was not long ago when the repressive regimes were frightened that "copy machines" would become accessible to ordinary citizens, allowing them to create their independent newspapers. State-sponsored propaganda for the masses was antithetical to the spreading of independent thought from its citizens. The once-powerful Communist-party bureaucrats would later ask at the cusp of the communication and cyber revolution that if Soviet society would produce *samizdat* (self-publication), can it also produce *samoinformatizatsiia* (self-informatization)? The upheaval in wireless communication was led by infrared, satellite, microwave transmissions, resulting in mobile phones and the ability to randomly assemble people using global positioning satellites.

Since then, the communist-led Soviet Union has been replaced with an authoritarian consumer-driven society directed by the corrupt Russian leadership. It was during that transformation that East European countries began their liberation and their conversion to independence. This led to the blossoming of information relying on