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H. EAST-WEST EXCHANGES

East-West exchanges were a special and important area in United States relations with the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe during the period covered by this study. While in some respects they moved with a logic and momentum of their own, the exchanges programs were entirely in harmony with and constituted an important adjunct to other "bridge building" activities discussed in earlier sections. Like these activities, the exchanges programs were not immune to the tensions in US-Soviet relations and, to a lesser extent, in our relations with certain other Eastern European countries. Exchanges with the USSR served to a degree as a barometer of the state of US-Soviet relations, although domestic insecurities affecting the Soviet leadership also had some influence. The US-Soviet exchanges negotiations of 1966 and 1968, described in the pages which follow, offer a good illustration of the extent to which exchanges were affected by larger policy considerations.

A number of agencies of Government participated in the planning and implementation of the exchanges

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programs. Overall responsibility for administering the programs and negotiating the agreements under which they operated rested with the Department of State and, in particular, with its Soviet and Eastern European Exchanges Staff.

Historical Background

As President Johnson took office, the US was preparing to negotiate the fourth Exchanges Agreement with the USSR. Drafts had been exchanged in October 1963. This agreement continued a program which President Eisenhower initially proposed to the Soviets at the Geneva Summit Conference in 1955 and which began that year on an ad hoc basis with exchanges in the fields of agriculture, housing, and automation and the visits of the "Porgy and Bess" company to the USSR and the Soviet musicians Emil Gilels and David Oistrakh to the United States.

Soviet hesitancy in engaging in contacts with Western Europe and the United States was reflected in the fact that although the Heads of Government at Geneva instructed their respective Foreign Ministers

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to study measures for bringing about "such freer contacts and exchanges as are to the mutual advantage of the countries and peoples concerned," at the meeting of the Foreign Ministers in October-November 1955, the Soviets rejected all 17 concrete proposals the Western Foreign Ministers made to eliminate obstacles to East-West contacts. They did, however, suggest that some of the proposals, particularly those on exchanging delegations in the scientific and technical fields and attendance at international conferences, might be worked out on a bilateral basis.

Despite the absence of any formal agreement, exchanges continued to be arranged on an ad hoc basis in 1956 and on June 29 of that year President Eisenhower reiterated his interest in them when he approved a recommendation of the National Security Council that the United States should seek exchanges with Eastern Europe, including the USSR, along the lines of the 17 proposals made by the Western Foreign Ministers.^{1/}

^{1/} NSC 5607, East-West Exchanges, June 29, 1956, CONFIDENTIAL.

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Events in Eastern Europe in the autumn of 1956 and the resulting US indignation temporarily brought to an end the ad hoc exchanges. However, these were resumed early in 1957 and in October negotiations were begun in Washington for the first formal US-USSR Exchanges Agreement which was signed on January 27, 1958.

The formal programs arranged under the early agreements (the second and third were signed in November 1959 and March 1962, respectively) involved a process of probing and experimentation to ascertain the extent to which the Soviets were ready to open various segments of their society to contacts with the United States. As rapidly as possible new areas and organizations for exchanges were introduced and attempts were made to increase the number of exchanges in acceptable fields. Thus the National Academy of Sciences and the Soviet Academy of Sciences signed their first formal agreement in July 1959, the Atomic Energy Commission and the Soviet State Committee for the Utilization of Atomic Energy signed theirs in November 1959, and the informal arrangement for exchanges in the humanities and the social sciences

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reached between the American Council of Learned Societies and the Soviet Academy of Sciences in 1961 was formalized in March 1962.

The 1964-65 Program

The United States postponed the negotiation of the fourth agreement following the arrest in Moscow on October 31, 1963 of Professor Frederick Barghoorn of Yale University, a well-known specialist on the Soviet Union, during a tourist trip. The incident for which he was arrested had been trumped up. After the US protested he was released in mid-November. Following Barghoorn's release Ambassador Kohler expressed the hope that we would move forward "without unnecessary delay" on setting a date for negotiating the new agreement, contending that those who had been responsible for Barghoorn's arrest would be the ones principally interested in curtailing US-USSR exchanges and the resultant increase in contacts between American and Soviet citizens.^{2/}

^{2/} Embassy Moscow's telegram 1738, November 21, 1963, CONFIDENTIAL.

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Early in December, following authorization from the Department, Ambassador Kohler expressed hope to Soviet Foreign Minister Gromyko that negotiations could begin on January 6, 1964,^{3/} and at Soviet request the negotiations actually began on January 7.

Negotiations in Moscow of the fourth agreement covering the 1964-1965 biennium proved long and complex, lasting 46 days.^{4/} In their draft the Soviets had introduced a number of changes from the 1962 agreement which were entirely unacceptable to us. For example, the Soviets deleted any reference to making arrangements for these exchanges "through diplomatic channels," a deletion would have eliminated the Department of State from the process of arranging exchanges.^{5/}

3/ Embassy Moscow's telegram 1823, December 3, 1963, CONFIDENTIAL.

4/ Department of State Press Release 76, February 22, 1964.

5/ Position Paper on Section I of both US and Soviet Drafts (of 1964-1965 Exchanges Agreement), prepared by Frank G. Siscoe.

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The agreement as finally negotiated excluded all Soviet proposals which we found objectionable and provided for an increase in exchanges of about 15 percent over the preceding agreement.^{6/}

Implementation of the new agreement moved forward in a characteristically uneven manner as both sides encountered the continuing problems endemic to the US-USSR exchanges program even in a relatively favorable political atmosphere. In early August 1965 the Soviet Government moved at a political level to interrupt the exchanges program. The Soviet action came in response to the acceleration of the American military role in Vietnam earlier in 1965 and was aimed primarily at those American exchanges activities which would be highly visible inside the Soviet Union, namely, exhibits and performing arts groups.

The initial action was taken by the Soviet State Committee for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries which suddenly informed Embassy Moscow

6/ Report on Exchanges with the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, No. 23, July 1, 1964, prepared by the Soviet and Eastern European Exchanges Staff.

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on August 13 that "in view of the current international situation" it would be impossible to send the Soviet space exhibit to the United States and to receive the American hand tools exhibit in the Soviet Union.^{7/}

Our exhibit had been scheduled to open in Kharkov on November 15. After Ambassador Kohler told Foreign Minister Gromyko on August 21^{8/} that the Soviet action was a violation of the exchanges agreement, Gromyko said he would see what could be done.

Meanwhile, the Soviets also began to stall on arrangements to receive the "Hello, Dolly!" group, which was to be our fifth and final performing arts group under the agreement. In April 1965 the Soviets had agreed in a protocol with the US to receive "Hello, Dolly!" in October-November 1965. Continuing difficulties over terms delayed signature of a contract and then after mid-August the Soviet officials

^{7/} Embassy Moscow's telegram 458, August 13, 1965, LIMITED OFFICIAL USE.

^{8/} Embassy Moscow's telegram 551, August 21, 1965, CONFIDENTIAL.

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became unavailable to sign a contract.

Finally on September 2 the Soviet Foreign Ministry suddenly informed the Embassy that it had decided to postpone arrival of "Hello, Dolly!" and, in reply to Ambassador Kohler's demarche on Gromyko, said that the question of the hand tools exhibit could be taken up "at the end of the year".^{9/}

Since the Soviets had indicated in April that the Roger Wagner Chorale would be acceptable as an alternative to "Hello, Dolly!", our Embassy immediately sought to propose this group, but the appropriate Soviet authorities made themselves unavailable.

Meanwhile on the recommendation of Embassy Moscow^{10/} the Moscow Philharmonic Orchestra -- the fifth performing arts group for the Soviets -- arrived on schedule in the United States on October 13.

The Soviet response to our persistent efforts to open negotiations came on October 28 when the State

^{9/} Embassy Moscow's telegram 668, September 2, 1965, CONFIDENTIAL.

^{10/} Embassy Moscow's telegram 990, September 23, 1965, CONFIDENTIAL.

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Committee for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries told our Embassy that it was not prepared to discuss the appearance of the Wagner Chorale.

We therefore instructed our Charge to protest to the Soviet Foreign Ministry, and on November 2 he left an aide memoire in which the United States expressed the hope that the Soviet Government would reconsider its decision and noted that if the Soviets were unwilling to fulfill their commitments under the agreement, the United States would be compelled to reconsider its obligations. ^{11/} In reply the Soviets repeated their previous position that they had not refused to accept the Wagner Chorale or "Hello, Dolly!", but had only asked that their arrival be delayed. This artificial distinction was an effort to sidestep the charge that the USSR had violated the agreement. In reality, postponement was tantamount to cancellation since these groups must be scheduled well in advance.

^{11/} Deptel 1124 to Moscow, October 30, 1965, LIMITED OFFICIAL USE; Embassy Moscow's telegram 1477, November 2, 1965, LIMITED OFFICIAL USE.

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In a final effort to maintain the integrity and continuity of exchanges in performing arts, Embassy Moscow on November 29 offered the University of Iowa Symphony Band as the American fifth attraction. The Soviets acknowledged they owed us a fifth performing arts group but doubted that a decision could be reached on the Iowa Symphony before the end of the year. Once it became known that the Soviets were planning to send the Bolshoi Ballet to the US in April 1966, we informed the Soviet Government that no Soviet attraction would be accepted until (1) the Soviets had met their commitment for the fifth US attraction and (2) a new agreement had been signed. ^{12/}

The 1966-67 Program

Throughout the second half of 1965 a continuing problem was the question of the negotiation of a new exchanges agreement. The Department had suggested on August 9 to the Soviet Embassy that drafts for a

^{12/} Deptel 1501 to Moscow, December 15, 1965, LIMITED OFFICIAL USE; Embassy Moscow telegram 1960, December 17, 1965, LIMITED OFFICIAL USE.

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new agreement be exchanged at the end of September and consultations begin on setting a mutually convenient date for opening of negotiations.^{13/} On October 1 in New York Gromyko told the Secretary that the Soviets were ready to discuss a new agreement and Ambassador Dobrynin told Ambassador Kohler that this decision had been reached only after considerable debate in Moscow. On November 15 the Soviets in Moscow told our Embassy that the USSR was prepared to exchange drafts but dodged the question of when negotiations would take place. On November 24 the Department gave the Soviet Embassy the US draft and proposed that negotiations be held in January.^{15/} In Moscow the Soviets in what appeared to be a

^{13/} Deptel 427 to Moscow, August 11, 1965, LIMITED OFFICIAL USE.

^{14/} USUN SECTO 27, October 3, 1965, CONFIDENTIAL.

^{15/} Deptel 1346 to Moscow, November 24, 1965, LIMITED OFFICIAL USE.

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stop-gap measure presented our Embassy with simply
a three-page outline instead of a full draft. ^{16/}

In early December our Embassy reported its impression
that the entire question of negotiations on exchanges
would be the subject of a high-level Soviet decision. ^{17/}

Not until February 14, 1966 did Chairman Romanovsky
give Ambassador Kohler a full Soviet draft and agree to
undertake negotiations. ^{18/} On February 18 the Soviets
agreed to begin negotiations in Washington on March 2.

By proceeding to renew the agreement, the Soviet Government
had apparently decided to avoid precipitating a further
deterioration in Soviet-American bilateral relations
which would have resulted from suspension of the

^{16/} Embassy Moscow's telegram 1372, November 24, 1965,
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^{17/} Embassy Moscow's telegram 1873, December 8, 1965,
LIMITED OFFICIAL USE.

^{18/} Embassy Moscow's telegram 2496, LIMDIS, February 14,
1966, CONFIDENTIAL.

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exchanges program.

Comparison of the American and Soviet drafts indicated that the central issues in the negotiations would be the procedural provisions -- crucial for protecting US interests in exchanges and less important to the centralized USSR with its total controls -- and informational exchanges, particularly exhibits and publications. In addition, the Soviet failure to receive the fifth American performing arts group under the previous agreement colored the atmosphere of the negotiations, since the US was determined to correct this inequity and to discourage future ^{19/}violations of this portion of the agreement.

The leader of the Soviet delegation, Sergei K. Romanovsky, Chairman of the State Committee for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries, announced upon his arrival that the Soviets wished to conclude the negotiations within two weeks. This avowed desire to move ahead rapidly did not deter Romanovsky

^{19/} Memorandum for the President from the Secretary, No. 3422, March 2, 1966, CONFIDENTIAL.

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at the opening plenary session on March 2 from introducing a harsh political note, attacking US actions in Vietnam and US performance under the previous exchanges agreement and asserting that the political situation would inevitably affect the exchanges program. ^{20/}

In the three negotiating committees, the pattern of Soviet behavior soon emerged. In Committee I, where the chief negotiators dealt with the contentious sections covering procedures, performing arts, films, information and cultural exchanges, the Soviets held fast to their opening positions, indulged in the polemic which Romanovsky had started, and showed little interest in negotiating differences between the two drafts. In Committee II, which dealt with scientific, technological and agricultural exchanges -- all of considerable interest to the Soviets -- they moved constructively and pressed for a rapid conclusion. The situation in Committee III, which handled education, public health and sports, was similar. Within

20/ Transcript of Proceedings, United States - Russian Negotiations Conference, March 2, 1966, Department of State, Washington, D. C.

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days, we found ourselves obliged to restrict the pace in negotiating those items of greatest interest to the Soviets, in order to avoid reaching a state in which the only unresolved issues were those which concerned us primarily. During this period, Soviet behavior did nothing to give content to their earlier talk of signing an agreement within two weeks. As the first week ended, Romanovsky called for a plenary session to review progress. As the two heads of delegation reviewed progress and identified areas of disagreement, Romanovsky suddenly announced Soviet agreement to major portions of the United States draft.

A number of issues still remained unsolved until the final plenary session on March 12, when again the Soviets consented to most points of primary interest to the US. In contrast to the wide divergencies in the two drafts, the agreed text provided for the retention of the previous procedures, thereby marking a complete Soviet retreat; introduced new language regarding performing arts groups which

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would provide the US with a clear basis for refusing to accept a Soviet group if the Soviets again failed to receive an American group; provided for the exchange of two exhibits to be shown in the number of cities and for the length of time that the US had proposed. However, despite lengthy discussion of the exchange of official publications, the USSR refused to go beyond the language of the previous agreement.^{21/} Meanwhile, while contending that their failure to receive the fifth American attraction in 1965 was an act of "non-fulfillment" rather than a violation of the agreement, the Soviets after insisting no hall space was available in the USSR suddenly concluded a contract for an April tour by the Iowa State Symphony and thus paved the way for the resumption of performing arts exchanges.

The agreement was scheduled to be signed on March 16, but at the direction of the White House

21/ Review of US-USSR Negotiations for 1966-67 Exchanges Agreement, prepared by the Soviet and Eastern European Exchanges Staff, April 28, 1966. LIMITED OFFICIAL USE.

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which wished to review the text, the signing ceremony did not take place until March 19.^{22/} Since Romanovsky had departed, Ambassador Dobrynin signed for the Soviets and Assistant Secretary Leddy for the United States.

Immediately following the agreement, Brezhnev at the 23rd Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (March 29 - April 8) characterized US-Soviet relations as being marked by a "certain freezing." He and other speakers revealed continuing Soviet concern about what they called the infiltration of bourgeois ideology into the Soviet Union through exchanges programs. The day after the Congress closed the University of Iowa Symphony Band arrived in Moscow, and the Soviets thus finally fulfilled their commitments under the previous agreement. Three days later our Embassy approached the Soviet authorities to propose that negotiations begin to receive our exhibit "Hand Tools - USA" to open

22/ Deptel 2158 to Moscow, SECRET, EXDIS, March 17, 1966. Memorandum for the President from the Secretary, No. 4388, March 16, 1966, CONFIDENTIAL.

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in Kharkov on the first of August. For the next three months the Soviets stalled on concluding the necessary contract.

On July 11, nearly two weeks after the first US bombing of the Hanoi-Haiphong area, the Soviets suddenly announced that their track and field team scheduled to compete with the US at Los Angeles on July 23, would not proceed because of American actions in Vietnam and a US basketball team would not be received in the USSR. When Ambassador Kohler discussed the Soviet cancellations with Gromyko, the Soviet Foreign Minister charged that the US creates conditions that disrupt relations in many fields, but added that this disruption does not affect the full line of exchanges.^{23/}

The Soviet cancellations of sports events raised the question of whether the USSR would again block the appearance of the Hand Tools exhibit and led the Department to develop contingency planning. In a memorandum to the President on July 16, the Secretary recommended

^{23/} Embassy Moscow's telegram 171, July 12, 1966, LIMITED OFFICIAL USE.

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that if the Soviets should fail to receive the Hand Tools exhibit, we would regard this action as a failure to comply with the exchanges agreement. In consequence the US would suspend any new exchanges activities until such time as the Soviet Government resumed compliance with the agreement. The President approved this course of action, but instructed that Senators Mansfield and Fulbright first be informed of our plans before Embassy Moscow was instructed to warn the Soviets. The instructing cable had been signed off and was being held for transmission pending Assistant Secretary MacArthur's calls on the two senators when a telegram from Embassy Moscow on July 22 indicated that the Soviets would receive the exhibit.^{24/} The exhibit opened on August 8, one week late.

On July 21 the Soviet authorities suddenly revised the itinerary of the Earl Hines Jazz Band, which had begun its tour of the USSR on July 8,

^{24/} Embassy Moscow's telegram 307, July 22, 1966, LIMITED OFFICIAL USE.

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deleted planned concerts in Moscow, Leningrad and Alma Ata, and substituted five other cities mainly in the Caucasus.

Since the Soviets had informed us that they would be unable to receive any foreign exhibits after June 20, 1967,^{25/} because they would be celebrating the 50th anniversary of their revolution, Embassy Moscow on September 2 sought to open negotiations to arrange for our second exhibit "Industrial Design - USA" to open in Kiev no later than February 3, 1967. Again we encountered continued Soviet stalling for the next three months. Beginning in late November senior Department officials expressed our concern over the continuing Soviet delay in making arrangements for the exhibit and emphasized the need for an early decision. Embassy Moscow continued to press throughout December and into January. Soviet officials in Moscow were noncommittal, but Soviet Embassy personnel in Washington confided that the

^{25/} Embassy Moscow's airgram A-93, July 15, 1966, LIMITED OFFICIAL USE.

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exhibit would be accepted. Ambassador Thompson raised the question of the exhibit on January 14, 1967, with Gromyko and commented that it seemed almost certain that the decision required top-level approval and with Soviet leaders dispersed around the country the decision had been delayed.^{26/}

Gromyko cautioned against shipping anything until an agreement had been reached. The Regional Exhibits Office in Vienna had informed USIA that to maintain the schedule of opening in early February it would be necessary to load the exhibit on freight cars in Vienna between January 6-10. USIA instructed the exhibit to be loaded, and on January 17 the shipment was turned back at the Soviet-Hungarian border by the Soviets.^{27/}

On January 24 the Soviet authorities told Embassy Moscow that due to "a number of circumstances"

^{26/} Embassy Moscow's telegram 3046, January 14, 1967, LIMITED OFFICIAL USE.

^{27/} Embassy Vienna's telegram 2692, January 17, 1967, LIMITED OFFICIAL USE.

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the USSR would be unable to receive the exhibit in the first half of 1967 and that it could be accepted no earlier than December 1967.^{28/} The next day Assistant Secretary Leddy explained to Ambassador Dobrynin the Department's concern at the widening implications of the Soviet refusal to accept the exhibit and said the December date would be unacceptable.^{29/} On January 27 Ambassador Thompson again took up the question with Gromyko who said he believed we should proceed on the basis of the Soviet position of January 24 but offered to look into the matter.^{30/} On the same day at a reception at the White House following the signing of the outer space treaty the President raised the question of the exhibit

^{28/} Embassy Moscow's telegram 3164, January 24, 1967, CONFIDENTIAL, LIMDIS.

^{29/} Deptel 125373 to Moscow, January 25, 1967, CONFIDENTIAL, LIMDIS.

^{30/} Embassy Moscow's telegram 3219, January 27, 1967, CONFIDENTIAL, LIMDIS.

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with Ambassador Dobrynin and stressed the importance of fulfilling the agreement. ^{31/} The next day Secretary Rusk telephoned Dobrynin about the exhibit, and the Ambassador said he had already recommended that it be accepted by his government. ^{32/} On February 4 Dobrynin called the Secretary and Mr. Rostow to say the Soviet Government agreed to accept the exhibit in the first half of 1967, ^{33/} and the Soviet Foreign Office ^{34/} passed the same information to Ambassador Thompson.

^{31/} Information Memorandum by USIA - R. T. Davies, February 9, 1967, CONFIDENTIAL, EXDIS.

^{32/} Deptel 129728 to Moscow, January 28, 1967, CONFIDENTIAL, EXDIS.

^{33/} Davies' memo of February 9, 1967.

^{34/} Embassy Moscow's telegram 3348, February 4, 1967, CONFIDENTIAL.

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The exhibit finally opened in Moscow rather than Kiev on February 26.

While the subject of American exhibits proved to be the most troublesome issue in implementing the 1966 agreement, the other areas of exchanges underwent the usual administrative problems or suffered from Soviet indifference. In 1967, the tenth year of American-Soviet exchanges, the total number of persons who traveled under the program declined about 30 percent below the annual average set during the previous nine years. Fulfillment of agreed goals varied widely. Industrial, technical, agricultural, cultural, informational, and athletic exchanges fared poorly. In contrast, scientific, academic, and medical exchanges were at normal or above-average levels and came close to filling the quotas. Performing arts again felt the restrictive effects of political decisions, when the USSR suddenly cancelled the US tour of its "Festival of Stars" at the time of the Israeli-Arab crisis. Even exhibits encountered additional problems. "Industrial Design-USA" was subjected to a five-day blockade in Leningrad

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in June following the bombing of the Soviet ship "Turkestan." The Soviet exhibit on education, which toured the US in late 1967, encountered picketing and public opposition to its appearance.

The 1968-69 Agreement

Soviet intentions regarding the renewal of the exchanges agreement for 1968-69 remained uncertain for more than a half year. On September 27, 1967, Gromyko told the Secretary that he thought the Soviets would be prepared to negotiate in December.^{35/} Then six months went by before the Soviet Government in late March finally announced its readiness to exchange drafts with the US on April 5.^{36/} And another two months passed before the Soviets set June 3 as the date for negotiations to open in Moscow.^{37/}

^{35/} Deptel 48810 to Moscow, October 4, 1967, SECRET, EXDIS.

^{36/} Embassy Moscow's telegram 3282, March 27, 1968, CONFIDENTIAL; Embassy Moscow's telegram 3358, April 3, 1968, LIMITED OFFICIAL USE.

^{37/} Embassy Moscow's telegram 4004, May 27, 1968, LIMITED OFFICIAL USE.

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This prolonged Soviet delay stemmed from a number of factors. The abolition on December 2, 1967, of the State Committee on Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries and the transfer of its functions to the Foreign Ministry, which had to develop a new staff, caused some delay.^{38/} So too did the North Korean seizure of the "USS Pueblo" in early 1968.^{39/} Yet those impediments were temporary. The main obstacle, Soviet officials confided, was a dispute at the highest levels over whether to renew the agreement. How the Soviet leadership lined up on

^{38/} Embassy Moscow's telegram 2675, February 2, 1968, LIMITED OFFICIAL USE; Embassy Moscow's telegram 2941, February 28, 1968, CONFIDENTIAL; Embassy Moscow's telegram 3052, March 7, 1968, LIMITED OFFICIAL USE.

^{39/} Embassy Moscow's telegram 2671, February 2, 1968, SECRET, LIMDIS; Deptel 121789 to Moscow, February 28, 1968, CONFIDENTIAL

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the question could only be conjectured. To explain the opposition to exchanges with the US, Soviet officials repeated their references to the Viet-Nam situation.^{40/} Yet it seemed clear that a more compelling reason was Soviet concern over more discernible intellectual dissidence at home and unsettling developments in Eastern Europe, especially Czechoslovakia.

There was little pressure we could exert to prod the Soviets into proceeding with the negotiations, but we sought some leverage in avoiding any impression that we were considering alternatives to an agreement. When Soviet officials informally raised the possibility of conducting exchanges without an agreement, we immediately punctured these trial balloons. Without an agreement we would have had no basis for ensuring reciprocal American visits to

40/ Embassy Moscow's telegram 2493, January 18, 1968, LIMITED OFFICIAL USE: Embassy Moscow's telegram 4237, June 13, 1968, CONFIDENTIAL; Embassy Moscow's telegram 4312, June 19, 1968, CONFIDENTIAL; Embassy Moscow's telegram 4406, June 27, 1968, CONFIDENTIAL, LIMDIS; Embassy Moscow's telegram 4441, June 28, 1968, SECRET.

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the USSR in areas of primary interest to us.^{41/}
Similarly, while we regularly reminded Soviet officials that their continued delay was jeopardizing the future implementation of some programs, such as the graduate student exchanges, which required a long lead time, we refrained from proposing special actions to preserve these programs. By seeming to place the entire exchanges program on the block, we hoped to persuade those Soviets who wished various activities to continue to support renewal of the agreement.^{42/}
Meanwhile, in the US, the Department had to persuade the Atomic Energy Commission from initiating talks with its Soviet counterpart for new exchanges before

^{41/} Official-Informal Letter, EUR/SES - BHKlosson to YWRichmond, Embassy Moscow, February 23, 1968, CONFIDENTIAL; Embassy Moscow's telegram 2941, February 28, 1968, CONFIDENTIAL; Deptel 134391 to Moscow, March 21, 1968, CONFIDENTIAL.

^{42/} Embassy Moscow's telegram 2783, February 14, 1968, LIMITED OFFICIAL USE; Deptel 116131 to Moscow, February 15, 1968, CONFIDENTIAL; Deptel 119054 to Moscow, February 21, 1968, LIMITED OFFICIAL USE; Deptel 134391 to Moscow, March 21, 1968, CONFIDENTIAL.

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the USSR had indicated its position on the inter-governmental agreement.^{43/}

At the end of February Soviet diplomats in Washington began to intimate that there would be negotiations,^{44/} and the Soviet Foreign Ministry suddenly informed our Embassy in Moscow on March 27, after Ambassador Thompson had raised the question with Gromyko the day before, that the Soviets would be prepared to exchange drafts the following week.^{45/} The Soviet draft handed to us on April 5 appeared to have been hastily prepared. It followed the format of the previous agreement, preserved all the categories of exchanges, but failed to specify the number of

^{43/} Memorandum of Conversation, US-USSR High Energy Physics Exchanges, January 4, 1968, LIMITED OFFICIAL USE.

^{44/} Deptel 121789 to Moscow, February 28, 1968, CONFIDENTIAL; Deptel 129644 to Moscow, March 13, 1968, CONFIDENTIAL.

^{45/} Embassy Moscow's telegram 3275, March 26, 1968, CONFIDENTIAL; Embassy Moscow's telegram 3282, March 27, 1968, CONFIDENTIAL.

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performing arts groups and exhibits to be exchanged or the topics for proposed exchanges in the technical, agricultural, and medical fields.^{46/} Four days later a group of 35 dancers from the Bolshoi Ballet applied for visas to tour the US beginning on April 22. Mindful of the "Hello, Dolly!" episode, our Embassy was instructed to inform the Soviet Foreign Ministry that we would be prepared to receive the group before conclusion of the new agreement, provided we had assurances that the Soviets were willing to exchange exhibits and performing arts groups under the agreement and provided a contract was signed for a reciprocal American group.^{47/} The Foreign Ministry confirmed that it expected performing arts groups to be exchanged on a reciprocal basis and was not opposed in principle to the exchange of exhibits. Goskontsert moved quickly to conclude a contract with our Embassy for a reciprocal tour in September by the University of Minnesota Band

^{46/} Embassy Moscow's telegram 3383, April 5, 1968, LIMITED OFFICIAL USE.

^{47/} Deptel 143111 to Moscow, April 8, 1968, LIMITED OFFICIAL USE.

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and the visas were authorized for the Bolshoi dancers.^{48/} At the end of May when the Soviets had finally proposed the negotiations begin on June 3, the Under Secretary predicted to the President that sharpened Soviet efforts to guard against "hostile foreign influences" would complicate the talks. Our objectives would be to preserve the 10-year-old framework for reciprocal exchanges, since it provided us a limited license to operate inside the closed Soviet society, and to ensure continuation of some activity in all previous categories of exchanges.^{49/} The negotiations once begun moved ahead in a business-like manner in contrast to Soviet polemics in 1966. For the first time in 10 years the Soviets agreed without argument to the section that defined procedures, which had previously been a major target for them in their effort to whittle down the Department's

^{48/} Embassy Moscow's telegram 3463, April 10, 1968, LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

^{49/} Memorandum to the President from the Under Secretary, May 29, 1968, No. 7967, CONFIDENTIAL.

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role in exchanges.^{50/} The Soviets indicated that they were prepared to continue all previous categories of exchanges, but at a reduced level in most, with the largest cuts from the previous agreement in the number of exhibits (from 2 to 1), performing arts groups (from 5 to 3), and even graduate students (from 40 to 30 annually). It soon became apparent that the Soviets were operating under rigid instructions from a sufficiently high level as to preclude them from requesting any new guidance. Since they were not seeking expansion or innovations, there was initially no leverage within the agreement to induce them to agree to a higher level of activity in the cultural and informational field. After two weeks of meetings with the Soviets steadfastly insisting they could not reconsider their position, our negotiating team recessed the talks, pending new instructions. They saw our ultimate choice as being whether to accept the reduced program and perhaps

^{50/} Embassy Moscow's telegram 4164, June 8, 1968, CONFIDENTIAL.

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add reductions of our own or to suspend all official exchanges for 1968.^{51/} In face of Soviet insistence that only one exhibit be exchanged, our negotiators proposed that if we decided to accept the Soviet position, we should then seek to have the exhibit shown in double the usual number of cities or six instead of three.^{52/} Our Embassy warned that the Soviets seemed prepared to let the talks collapse rather than make concessions.^{53/}

After the Department and Embassy Moscow ironed out differences over the utility of an American demarche to Gromyko,^{54/} the Under Secretary placed the alternative courses of action before the President.^{55/}

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- ^{51/} Embassy Moscow's telegram 4327, June 13, 1968, CONFIDENTIAL; Embassy Moscow's telegram 4309, June 18, 1968, CONFIDENTIAL.
 - ^{52/} Embassy Moscow's telegram 4188, June 11, 1968, CONFIDENTIAL.
 - ^{53/} Embassy Moscow's telegram 4312, June 19, 1968, CONFIDENTIAL.
 - ^{54/} Deptel 189964 to Moscow, June 25, 1968, SECRET, LIMDIS; Deptel 190346 to Moscow, June 25, 1968, CONFIDENTIAL; Embassy Moscow's telegram 4406, June 27, 1968, CONFIDENTIAL, LIMDIS.
 - ^{55/} Memorandum to the President from the Under Secretary, June 29, 1968, No. 9404, CONFIDENTIAL.

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He elected to preserve the program and agreed with the Department's recommendation that we accept the Soviet position on performing arts and exhibits, but reduce the levels of certain exchanges of interest to the Soviets. The Department instructed the negotiators first to seek Soviet acceptance of a double exposure for the single exhibit and, if the Soviets refused, to reduce the number of technical exchanges.^{56/}

After a 13-day hiatus, negotiations were resumed, the new American proposal on exhibits tabled, and the reduced levels for performing arts groups and graduate students accepted. After one additional session, it was the Soviet turn to suspend the talks, presumably to check out our exhibit proposal.^{57/} After three days the Soviets suddenly reconvened

^{56/} Deptel 194144 to Moscow, July 1, 1968, CONFIDENTIAL.

^{57/} Embassy Moscow's telegram 4582, July 10, 1968, CONFIDENTIAL.

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the negotiations, accepted the six-city exposure for the exhibit, and the way was clear for signature of the agreement by Ambassador Thompson and Ambassador Lunkov on July 15 -- 43 days after the negotiations began, but still three days short of the 46 days required in 1964.

The new program preserved activity in all previous categories of exchanges, but at levels generally closer to what had been actually fulfilled in the previous year than what had been specified in the previous agreement.

Implementation of the newly agreed program had hardly begun when Soviet and other Eastern European forces occupied Czechoslovakia on August 20. We immediately suspended negotiations with the Soviets on contracts for the two remaining American performing arts groups. Meanwhile the Department instituted guidelines for the implementation of exchanges in an effort to find a balanced approach that would satisfy immediate objectives without destroying our longer-range goals. Highly visible activities which the USSR could exploit in an attempt to

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demonstrate American indifference to the actions against Czechoslovakia were to be suspended. Less publicized activities, such as the graduate student exchange, were to be maintained.^{58/} Accordingly, Embassy Moscow informed the Soviets that we considered it inappropriate in view of the Soviet action against Czechoslovakia to sponsor scheduled tours of the University of Minnesota Band to the USSR in September.^{59/} When the Soviets threatened to claim damages, our Embassy was instructed to review with Soviet officials the expenses previously suffered by American organizations because of Soviet delays or cancellations.^{60/}

^{58/} Memorandum to the Secretary from Assistant Secretary Leddy, August 29, 1968, No. 11900, CONFIDENTIAL; Ibid., September 5, 1968, No. 12144, CONFIDENTIAL.

^{59/} Deptel 233652 to Moscow, September 6, 1968, LIMITED OFFICIAL USE; Embassy Moscow's telegram 5403, September 6, 1968, LIMITED OFFICIAL USE.

^{60/} Deptel 238732 to Moscow, September 14, 1968, CONFIDENTIAL; Embassy Moscow's telegram 5538, September 16, 1968, LIMITED OFFICIAL USE.

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