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NEWSDAY  
6 January 1977

PAB - 19

# Blood-Test Requests Flood Embassy

By Edmund Stevens  
Newsday Special Correspondent

Moscow—American citizens in Moscow have been flocking to the U.S. Embassy, seeking free blood tests that will determine if they have an abnormal number of white blood cells. The embassy has been forced to stop scheduling tests because of the response and now tells callers that appointments may not be available until February. U.S. officials here have appealed to Washington for assistance. Concern over the blood count of

American citizens began when a medical officer in the embassy noticed that a third of the diplomats and their families tested in recent months showed an abnormally high number of lymphocytes, a type of white blood cell.

Initially, there was fear that the condition was being caused by microwaves being beamed at the embassy by the Soviets, but medical authorities have abandoned that theory. The presence of the extra white cells is said to be temporary, and not alarming. American doctors say the condition does not indicate critical blood disorders, such as leukemia. The condition, authorities

say, is self-reversing and the abnormality recedes approximately two weeks after individuals leave the Moscow environment.

State Department medical specialists say the high level of white cells may be caused either by a low-grade upper respiratory infection or a parasite in Soviet drinking water.

Officials are hopeful that testing a large number of Americans in Moscow—U.S. personnel, correspondents, members of a burgeoning business community—will help determine if the blood condition is one that affects most Americans living here for extended periods or primarily those individuals who have frequent contact with the embassy. There is no indication as to whether Russian citizens living in Moscow have high white cell counts.

Russian authorities thus far have offered no assistance in the matter and have suggested that the current controversy is politically motivated to generate distrust of Soviets in the days before Jimmy Carter's inauguration. The Soviets also denied that they are engaging in microwave bombardment of the embassy, although U.S. authorities say the practice has been going on since the early 1960s.