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CIA HISTORICAL REVIEW PROGRAM
RELEASE AS SANITIZED
1998

29 February 1972

Mr. Nathaniel Samuels
Deputy Under Secretary
for Economic Affairs
Department of State

Dear Mr. Samuels:

The attached memorandum was prepared
for Mr. Edward A. Mainland, EUR/SOV,
Department of State. At Mr. Mainland's
suggestion, we are forwarding a copy to you.

Sincerely,

Director
Economic Research

Attachment:
as stated

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24 February 1972

MEMORANDUM FOR: Edward A. Mainland
EUR/SOV
Room 4219
Department of State

SUBJECT : Background Material and Proposal on
a US/Soviet Exchange of Hydrographic
Charts

The attached memorandum is in response to your request of 17 February for background material on a US/Soviet exchange of hydrographic charts for use in briefing Deputy Under Secretary of State Nathaniel Samuels.

Office of Economic Research

Attachment: a/s

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Policies of the U.S. and Soviet
Governments on the Release of
Hydrographic Charts and
Associated Publications

1. In the USSR, responsibility for publishing hydrographic charts and related navigational materials is concentrated in the Hydrographic Administration of the Ministry of Defense (HAMD). This organization produces charts covering all of the world's oceans and the coastal waters and ports of all countries including the USSR. Since 1954, the HAMD and the U.S. Navy's Oceanographic Office have exchanged Notices to Mariners on each country's coastal waters and ports, including data to be used in updating hydrographic charts. This exchange is apparently based on an agreement entered during World War II. The exchange process lapsed temporarily from some time in the late 1940's until its resumption in the mid-1950's. Unfortunately for the U.S., there is no equivalent arrangement for the exchange of charts and the USSR adheres to a very rigid policy that in most cases precludes the release of even its unclassified charts and navigational data to non-Communist governments and individuals.

2. Despite persisting efforts through diplomatic and commercial channels to obtain unclassified HAMD charts of Soviet coastal waters and ports,

In rare cases, charts had been made available by Soviet authorities to Free World masters for visits to specific Soviet ports. Such charts are not available on the open market in the USSR, however, as they are in most countries and, in addition, the USSR, unlike its Communist neighbors in Eastern Europe and most non-Communist countries, is not a member of the Monaco-based International Hydrographic Office and does not make its hydrographic publications available to the Office as all member countries do.

3. Responsibility for dissemination of government hydrographic publications in the U.S. is divided between the Navy's Oceanographic Office (formerly Hydrographic Office) and the National Ocean Survey (formerly Coast and Geodetic Survey) which is subordinate to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) of the Department of Commerce. The coverage of Oceanographic Office charts and publications is worldwide while the focus of the National Ocean Survey is on U.S. ports and coastal waters.

4. Both of the US organizations publish catalogues of their unclassified publications; the catalogues and the items listed in them are readily available to the general public and to Soviet diplomatic personnel both through government and commercial outlets. As the U.S. is a full participant in the activities of the International Hydrographic Office, all of its unclassified hydrographic publications are also available in Monaco to the USSR's Warsaw Pact allies who belong to the Union.

Possible US Proposal

5. One means for correcting the existing imbalance is the exchange by the Soviet Ministry of Defense's Hydrographic Administration on one hand and the Naval Oceanographic Office and the National Ocean Survey of the U.S. on the other of all current catalogues of unclassified hydrographic and navigational publications on their country's ports and coastal waters and of a complete set of all such publications currently in print within sixty days of the conclusion of a U.S.-Soviet shipping agreement. For the future, a continuing exchange of such catalogues, charts, and related publications on the lines of the existing exchange of Notices to Mariners, as new editions become available, would also have to be negotiated. The following arguments may be used in justifying this proposal:

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a. Under present arrangements, all advantages accrue to the Soviet side. The proposed exchange would restore reciprocity.

b. Until an exchange such as that proposed is implemented the existing agreement to exchange Notices to Mariners will remain almost meaningless.

c. If U.S. ships are to begin trading in the ports of the USSR it is important that the charts U.S. ships obtain for this purpose from the Navy's Oceanographic Office be as current as possible.

CIA/OER
23 Feb 1972

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