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FIRST DRAFT
30 January 1958

AD HOC SUBCOMMITTEE FOR GEOGRAPHY

Review of Intelligence Aspects of a Geographical
Exchange with the USSR

I. Background

Geography in the Soviet Union commands a very high position. Academic and applied work in geography are very closely related and utilized to the maximum by the government in the development of its economic and military programs. Geographers participate in planning at all levels, both urban and rural. The broad expanse of the USSR has enabled Soviet geographers to engage in research and field work ranging from environmental conditions affecting Northern Sea Route operations to desert irrigation in Central Asia and New Lands agriculture. Intensive work in systematic geography has given them a wealth of knowledge in soil science and climatology. Geographers are participating in the large-scale Soviet mapping program both as members of the field mapping teams and in performing high-level cartographic work at the various institutes.

The magnitude and significance of geographic activity in the USSR is reflected in the large number of practicing geographers and the large number of institutions at which intensive training and geographic work is being carried on. Of 34 universities in the Soviet Union, 28 have some program in geography, mostly in separate geographical faculties.

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The largest of these, the Geography Faculty of the University of Moscow, occupies six stories in the new university building and has about a hundred rooms for laboratories, offices, workrooms, and a staff of 300 professors, docents, and assistants. There are 1,000 full-time day students in the five-year geography course, 817 evening students, and 55 graduate students. The Geography Faculty is composed of 14 departments: physical geography of the USSR, economic geography of the USSR, polar geography, soil geography, physical geography of foreign countries, economic geography of the bloc countries, economic geography of capitalist countries, general geography, geomorphology, hydrology of the land, oceanography, climatology and meteorology, biogeography, and geodesy and cartography. Their contract research program includes: (1) Regionalization of the Soviet Union for Gosplan; (2) Evaluation of land resources for the Ministry of Agriculture; and (3) Snow and ice investigations in connection with the International Geophysical Year.

The Institute of Geography of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR has a staff of about 300 engaged in full-time research. The Institute maintains four field stations, one near Moscow, one in the northern Urals, one on Novaya Zemlya, and one in the Tian'-Shan'. It also has a large publications program and conducts most international contacts. In addition, there is the Institute of Scientific Information and the All-Union Geographical Society, both of which have intensive programs.

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Individual Soviet geographers are found in numerous responsible positions of government work. For example, S. A. Striganov, the present Charge of the Soviet Embassy in Washington, is a geographer by training. S. A. Kovalov is a member of the committee formulating plans for the new Soviet Census.

II. Net Intelligence Advantage

The proposed exchange of geographers between the United States and the USSR has the potential of being of net intelligence advantage to the United States. This is obviously dependent upon the freedom to observe areas of intelligence significance.

The importance of field observation bears examination because of the important role it plays in assessing relative intelligence gains of the two participants. Field study or field observation is an essential ingredient of the professional geographer's methodology. Because of his reliance upon this method, he must of necessity develop an acute ability to assess not only what appears in a region, but also the extensive relationships which are inevitably present.

United States geographers participating in the exchange would be able to undertake observation of the most complex of geographic relationships and provide an analysis which would be beneficial to United States intelligence. It so happens that the areas in the USSR of great importance to intelligence are also of great professional

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interest to geographers. The role of observation is of enhanced value to the U.S. participants in this particular exchange because of the relative scarcity of USSR published information. Conversely, USSR geographic observation in the United States would, for the most part, be confirmation of an abundance of published materials already in their possession.

A. Potential U.S. Gains

In examining the essential ingredients of the exchange that would lead to a potential intelligence gain for the United States, the following items seem to have some significance:

1. Because visits to research institutes, academies, and organizations in Moscow and Leningrad would undoubtedly take place, it would be possible for United States geographers to assess the role of geography in its application to government, public works, commerce and industry, and in a purely academic, scientific way. Some insight would be gained concerning the research emphasis by the Soviets in their geographic studies by observation of the kinds of projects being done in support of government activity as opposed to basic scientific development.
2. Our team could probably gain a little more insight into the relationship of the geographic effort to the whole field of cartography, and possibly add bits and pieces of information about this highly controlled related field.

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3. Other items of potentially procurable information would be: the size of the Russian effort; the character of research; the quantity, quality and coverage; and the amount of research devoted to national projects versus international or foreign. Our team would probably become aware of the degree of integration of geography into the governmental process and the acceptance of geography as a contributing discipline in various applied fields of utilization.

4. We could assume that the United States geographers would be able to assess the comparative achievements in techniques, methodology, and substance in all of the fields of geographic work. Certainly their broad contact with a number of earth scientists would enable them to acquire a more thorough understanding of the quantity and quality of the Soviet research effort.

5. Also, discussions with individual geographers would yield information not included in formal literature. Personal contact would undoubtedly yield biographic information on key individuals, leading to our future assessment of the significance of their personnel assignments to areas, projects, or institutions.

6. The more purely scientific character of a large part of the geographic research effort in the United States would be demonstrated and a similarity of interests established, particularly during Soviet attendance at the national meetings of the Association

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of American Geographers, planned for inclusion on their itinerary if timing and scheduling is possible.

7. The value of observation has been described above, and -- when specifically related to areas to be covered by the proposed itinerary -- becomes of significant intelligence value to the United States.

B. Potential Soviet Gains

1. The Soviet geographers, in visiting normally denied areas of interest in the United States which would be considered of commensurate value to those areas being visited by U.S. geographers in the Soviet Union, could conceivably add to the gain realized by the Soviets through the exchange.

2. Even though the Soviet geographers have thus far expressed an interest in TVA, dry-land agriculture, and other public-works projects, their observation of other areas through extended travel could lead to the identification and selection of targets for further exploitation in this country. By and large, we feel that USSR observations would be confirmation of written materials which they have received in great quantities and in wide coverage. They would have the opportunity of close examination of U.S. developments in various fields of applied geographic research.

3. They would have the opportunity to develop professional contact with a great number of American geographers, especially

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if their visit coincides with the national meetings of the Association of American Geographers. Points of contact would thus be established for future exchange of published materials and information.

4. The Soviets would undoubtedly gain a better understanding of the function and relative importance of geography in government, industry, and academic activities. They could make comparisons and recognize the lack of depth of U.S. geographic work in its application to the public interest and the limited extent of basic theoretical work in the earth sciences. The lack of U.S. Government support to the geographic approach by comparison with their own status would become obvious if they were allowed to visit government offices.

5. The geographic profession in the Soviet Union would gain increased recognition of its professional status, and this would materially aid the Soviets in their recent endeavors to establish themselves more firmly in international professional geographic circles.

III. Scope

The proposal -- as defined in general terms by 25X1A9a
25X1A9a in the documents supplied to this subcommittee, subject to more definition and minor refinements -- appears to provide an exchange

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situation of value to U.S. intelligence. The subcommittee feels that the greater the number of participants from the United States, up to a maximum of ten, the greater the value to be derived from our participation. We also favor an itinerary which would not overlook areas of major intelligence interest and to that end our suggested itinerary in the USSR differs slightly from the original proposal. We would not favor a division of the group into smaller units for the purpose of more diversified coverage, because we believe one large group is less subject to evasive, delaying or shunting tactics than several smaller groups. The proposed schedule of time seems restrictive from the point of view of maximum coverage of areas of intelligence interests. We would encourage the negotiation of an itinerary based upon a 50-to-60 day span rather than the 45 days in the original proposal.

IV. Personnel

We would encourage the selection of a delegation best able to accomplish the diversified objectives of such an exchange. The participants should be well known professionally by virtue of their research, publications, or other significant activity. The team should be constituted primarily from academic and research personnel. We should like to see several excellently qualified geographers from the U.S. Government named as participants. They are included in our suggested list which follows:

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Chauncy D. Harris
Professor of Geography and Dean,
Division of the Social Sciences,
University of Chicago.
President, Association of American
Geographers.

Richard J. Russell
Professor of Geography and Dean,
Graduate School, Louisiana State University.
Formerly Chairman, Division of Geology and
Geography, National Research Council.

Charles B. Hitchcock
Director, American Geographical Society.

Richard Hartshorne
Professor of Geography, University
of Wisconsin.

William Horbaly
Geographer, U.S. Government.

John Q. Adams
Geographer, Army Map Service.

Paul Siple
Department of Defense.
U.S. Antarctic expeditions.

Edward L. Ullman
Professor of Geography, University
of Washington.

Gilbert White
Professor of Geography, University
of Chicago.

Arthur Robinson
Professor of Geography, University
of Wisconsin.

Wallace W. Atwood, Jr.
Director, Office of International Relations,
National Academy of Sciences - National
Research Council.

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ALTERNATES:

Etzel Percy,
Geographer, Department of State.

Preston E. James
Professor of Geography,
Syracuse University.

J. Warren Nystrom,
Manager, International Department,
Chamber of Commerce of the United States.

Phillip Kissam
Princeton University.

V. Suggested Itinerary

MOSCOW..... 3 days
Main center of geographic research. Visit to universities, institutes, laboratories.

LENINGRAD and BALTIC..... 4 days
Center of Arctic research, Northern Sea Route Administration, geographic research center. Coastal areas.

MURMANSK and area..... 5 days
Frontier area for agriculture, mining, and industry -- port, naval base.

URALS..... 8 days
Industrial area -- centers of research and industry.

KUZNETSK - ANGARA - IRKUTSK.....15 days
Major center of heavy industry, large hydroelectric projects.

YAKUTSK..... 5 days
Research station of Academy of Sciences. Problems of agriculture in area of permafrost.

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New Lands Area in SIBERIA and KAZAKHSTAN..... 4 days
Large investment in area of recurring droughts.

TASHKENT and SOVIET CENTRAL ASIA..... 6 days
Irrigation, cotton, deserts, mountain and glacial
research stations of the Academy of Sciences.

KIEV - DONEIKS..... 6 days
Ukrainian center of geographic research. Major
industrial area.

MOSCOW..... 4 days
Final visits and departure.

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