

STANFORD UNIVERSITY  
Stanford, California

April 1, 1958

Mr. Frederick Merrill  
Director, East-West Contacts Branch  
Department of State  
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. Merrill,

I have recently received a letter from Mr. P. F. Shvetsov, Director of the Permafrost Institute in Moscow, in which Mr. Shvetsov expressed a desire to arrange a direct exchange of information pertaining to the study of permafrost through exchange of visits between the scientists of our country and the Soviet Union. Copies of the translation of Mr. Shvetsov's letter and my acknowledgment of same are enclosed herewith. As you will observe, my reply to Mr. Shvetsov was in a very general scope, without specific commitments. It has been suggested to me that I contact you for instructions and suggestions regarding the procedure to be followed in making arrangements for such an exchange of personnel and to guide me in my future correspondence with Mr. Shvetsov. It goes without saying that the proposed exchange of visitors will be of great mutual benefit to all concerned.

As I visualize the course of action to bring about a realization of the proposed plan, there are five fundamental points which need to be worked out:

- (1) Selection of personnel from among the scientists engaged in the study of permafrost in the United States.
- (2) Formal action of approval, visas etc., by the State Department.
- (3) Arrangement of itinerary and selection of institutions to which Soviet scientists will be invited during their visit in the United States.
- (4) Preparation of itinerary and institutions in the Soviet Union to be visited by our scientists. This should also include the approval of the Soviet Government of such an itinerary.
- (5) The financing of the exchange.

If I may be permitted to offer suggestions regarding some of these points, I wish to make the following statements:

State Dept. declassification & release instructions on file

(1) U.S.A. personnel. I know of several individuals, members of the US Geological Survey, who are now actively engaged in various phases of permafrost studies. If a formal participation of a Government agency--US Geological Survey--is not permissible, I would like to suggest that these individuals, should they desire to make the trip, be given a leave of absence from the Survey and be allowed to travel to the Soviet Union as private individuals. I would also strongly urge that should some be given an opportunity to avail themselves of an intensive course in the Russian language that is offered at a number of universities in this country. I believe that Dr. John C. Reed of the US Geological Survey would be the most logical person to contact regarding the general policies of the Survey and about the personnel.

Mr. James E. Gillis of the Snow, Ice and Permafrost Research Establishment (SIPRE) is also in a position to suggest other scientists who would be interested in participating in the exchange.

(2) Not being familiar with the current policy of the State Department regarding such matters, I have no comment to make on this point.

(3) If the policies of the Snow, Ice and Permafrost Research Establishment do not prohibit visits of the Soviet scientists, I would suggest that the personnel and facilities of that organization be included in the itinerary for the Soviet visitors. Perhaps John C. Reed of the Geological Survey and James E. Gillis of SIPRE can elaborate on the itinerary by adding other places of visit.

(4) The Institut Merzlotovedeniya (Institute of Permafrost) in Moscow is the main center of scientific work in permafrost in the Soviet Union and should be included in the itinerary for visitors from the U.S.A. In my opinion, the American scientists who will represent the United States should also have an opportunity to visit one or more permafrost experimental stations in the USSR. Perhaps they themselves will wish to make the choice of places to be visited. In passing I will only mention the most active permafrost stations at Vorkuta, Igarka and Yakutak. A visit to the railroad BAM (Baykal-Amur-Magistral') which is still under construction, should give our men a valuable experience in seeing the solution of permafrost problems on a major railroad project.

(5) I hope there will be no difficulty in obtaining the necessary money to finance the trip of our scientists to the Soviet Union and to learn of their progress in the study of permafrost. Perhaps the National Science Foundation could see its way to foot

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the bill. The urging of our representatives to take an intensive course in the Russian language would contribute greatly to the benefit they will derive from the visit. It will be a wise investment on the part of the Government to see that this plan goes through.

I am now in the process of arranging dates with Mr. Leggett in Canada, Mr. Gillis at SIPRE, Colonel DeGoes and General Sibley at Boston to visit them during the latter part of April. After visiting these institutions I intend to stop over at Washington and hope that I will have an opportunity to see you personally and to discuss various phases of the proposal outlined above. In the meantime, if you will be good enough to brief me on the rules and policies which in one way or the other will effect the carrying out of this project, I will be able to discuss this matter within the limits of propriety with the people whom I intend to visit during the forthcoming trip.

Sincerely yours,

/s/

Siemon Wm. Muller  
Professor of Geology

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Enclosures, 2.