

Central Intelligence Agency



Washington, D. C. 20505

17 SEP
1968

Dr. Frank T. Manheim
US Department of the Interior
Geological Survey
Office of Marine Geology
Woods Hole, Ma. 02543

Dear Dr. Manheim:

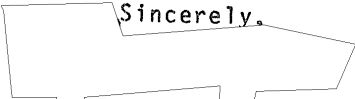
Your letter to Admiral Inman on the subject of the under-utilization of the results of exchange visits by U.S. scientists has been called to my attention. You have described a valid problem which comes up for consideration periodically. However, to date, little has been done about it.

Each agency handles the matter of scientific trip reports in its own way. Some provide wide distribution; others give them little circulation at all. You may wish to raise your idea for an archival and research center with the President of the National Academy of Sciences or the Director of the National Science Foundation, since their organizations are most directly involved. At the very least, it should be possible to maintain indices of such trip reports in the libraries of the individual agencies.

Thank you for your letter and suggestion.

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Sincerely,


Robert M. Gates
Deputy Director for Intelligence

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SUBJECT: Response to Letter from Dr. Frank T. Manheim

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United States Department of the Interior

GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

Office of Marine Geology
Woods Hole, Ma, 02543

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July 9, 1982

Admiral Bobby Inman, Assistant Director
Central Intelligence Agency
Washington D.C. 20505

Dear Admiral Inman:

The letterhead identifies my job with the U.S. Geological Survey, but this correspondence reflects my personal views only.

This letter involves the U.S.'s ability to acquire better and more comprehensive information about scientific and technological activity in the Soviet Union and Communist Bloc countries. I would like to point out the underutilization of exchange visits by U.S. scientists for this purpose, and offer some suggestions for improvement.

I am addressing myself to you in part because of my parallel interests to your testimony before the Hearings on National Security and Economic Growth through Foreign Language Improvement (HR 3231), 1981. A colleague and I recently reported results of a study of world earth science literature and translation. We found that Russian language citations contributed roughly 40% of total indexed items. However, only about 20% of titles cited in the Russian indexing service (Referativnyi Zhurnal) are even listed in the principal English language indexing services (GeoRef and GeoArchive (U.K.)). Less than 2% of English speaking geologists have an ability to handle the Russian language. This is far less than a critical mass needed to even determine what is available. Utilization and availability of translations have further declined in recent years. Though one can criticize aspects of the Soviet science effort in earth sciences, the current situation makes it all too easy to underestimate the resources and capabilities of the Soviet Union.

To get to my main topic, however, I'd like to draw on my numerous exchange and other visits to the Soviet Union and every other Eastern European country except Albania. I was also a member of the National Academy's Advisory Committee on Exchange with the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe in 1977-1979. At that time, it was impossible to draw effectively upon the files of previous exchange visits to compile information on institutions and individuals working in given scientific fields. The reasons for this were twofold. The Committee pleaded poverty in not being able to set up an appropriate cross-indexed filing system for reports on travel. Further, many scientists filed only perfunctory, "I had trouble with hotel accommodations in Novosibirsk" types of reports and did not provide hard, nuts and bolts accounts, or ancillary observations of importance.

DCI
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Of course I don't need to emphasize to you how effective a truly knowledgeable expert can be in taking advantage of an interacademy visit, where the red carpet is out, and the Soviets make a major effort to comply with the wishes of the visitor. In such a visit Soviet scientists and technicians know they have a green light to communicate, and are often extremely eager to do so. Such visits are one of the few avenues they have for two-way communication with the West. Moreover, not infrequently foreign scientists can be extremely helpful for the personal and career advancement of Soviet colleagues, by arranging for Western publication, translation, invitations, sending reprints, recommending personnel for offices in international organizations, and the like.

However, we in the U.S. have failed to take advantage of the opportunities exchange visits offer by the unplanned, serendipitous, laissez faire, approach we take to the whole system. As I mentioned, there has been no serious effort made by the Academy to compile lists, names, subjects, etc. Nor has there been much communication of the results of visits, in spite of the new newsletter. There has been a move to make a formal report part of the obligation of scientists' accepting support, but the nature of the report is still very much up to the scientist/. It's in the tradition of American Academy operation to be very informal and allow maximum freedom of action for individual scientists. I realize that many returning scientists are visited by CIA personnel, -but based on my own experience, I am not convinced that this approach is very effective. In another sense, a certain amount of disinformation enters the system of communications in the U.S. Scientists have no reluctance to talk about favorable aspects of the Soviet Union, or pass along material provided to them by hosts where this is not harmful to their Soviet colleagues. However, many people are reluctant to communicate (or even explore) other aspects either for fear of harming Soviet scientists with whom they have cordial relationships, or jeopardizing their own opportunities to return. An exception has been efforts, particularly by Jewish scientists to make contact with dissidents and others who need help.

I am not suggesting an attempt to recruit more scientists to scout out information for the CIA, because given the heterogeneous nature of our scientists this would inevitably come to public and/or the Soviet's attention. This would be counterproductive and might harm the current and probably well-earned image of American scientists not being involved in political missions.

As an alternative, I suggest forming an open archival and research unit, perhaps as a part of the State Department, which would work in close cooperation with the Academy. By providing modest research support, for example for travel, organization of files, etc. it could acquire close cooperative relationships with the Academy's exchange system. It could encourage appropriate publication by scholars, and in suitable ways point out gaps in information. By providing better documentation and accessibility to previous reports, one could also upgrade the quality and extensiveness of future reports. Being better prepared, scientists could make much more effective use of their time abroad. Others, wishing to make future trips, could direct correspondence or preparation more effectively.

From the CIA side, the existence of the archival unit would offer access to staffers, perhaps by indirection, or in such a way as to minimize any indication that the unit was a part of CIA functions. At the same time, those scientists who would be willing to more directly aid in filling informational gaps would be greatly aided by the existence of a reputable information center, wholly devoted to providing the American scientific and technical community with assistance in acquiring information about Eastern bloc science. The justification for such a center can be readily found in the abysmal linguistic knowledge of American scientists

and our obvious deficiencies in understanding foreign cultures and their scientific, technical and other achievements.

Travel to the Soviet Union is much harsher and more unpleasant, not to mention much more expensive than it used to be. Many Americans are no longer interested in travel. I believe that special efforts need to be made to increase the effectiveness of existing American travel to the Soviet Union, in terms of informational and other yield to the United States. At the same time, more encouragement by our Government and more opportunities to make efficient use of that travel would be in the national interest.

Cordially,



Dr. Frank T. Manheim