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Soviets and IPS link up to 'influence' the summit

By Bill Gertz
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A delegation of high-ranking Soviet officials are expected to attend a "disarmament conference" next month in San Francisco, sponsored by the Institute for Policy Studies, whose scholars pride themselves on their radical-left credentials, State Department officials said yesterday.

Barbara Grob, press coordinator for the San Francisco disarmament conference, said the meetings will be closed to all but the participants.

One U.S. expert on Soviet policy said the visit might be used in a propaganda offensive to influence U.S. public opinion on arms issues before the U.S.-Soviet summit meeting in November.

A previous conference arranged by the Soviets and the institute — which was open to visitors and reporters — aroused the ire of many members of Congress, who demanded to know why visas had been issued to Soviet intelligence officials.

The 10 Soviet officials, scheduled to arrive here Sept. 2 for an unofficial visit, will be led by Georgi Arbatov. He is director of the Soviet Union's Institute on the U.S.A. and Canada and a member of the Soviet Communist Party's Central Committee.

The State Department is trying to determine whether those Soviets applying for 20-day visas have intelligence connections, said Jim Callahan, a State Department official. A ruling on their visa applications is expected early next week.

Among those in this year's entourage is Mikhail Milsteyn, a Soviet military expert who has been identified as a former general in the GRU, the Soviet military intelligence agency.

Mr. Callahan said the delegation was invited by IPS and the Russian Institute of the University of California at Irvine. But Helen Weil, director of the U.C.-Irvine Russian Institute, said the school had given an invitation only to Mikhail Shatrov, a play-

wright, and that no invitations had been extended by her group to Mr. Arbatov's delegation.

Other delegation members include Sergei Churkin, Mr. Arbatov's deputy; Spartak Beglov, a Moscow University professor; Sergei Chetverikov, deputy chief of the U.S.A. section of the Ministry of For-

eign Affairs; and Valeri Chibisenkov, executive secretary of the U.S.S.R.-U.S.A. Friendship Society.

Mr. Arbatov, along with Mr. Milsteyn, was denied a U.S. visa in 1981 because Mr. Arbatov appeared on U.S. television programs while Americans repeatedly had been denied equal access to Soviet television and other media. Officials said they did not know whether Mr. Arbatov has been in the United States since 1981.

Mr. Arbatov has appeared frequently on network television news programs. He has authored an English-language book called "The Soviet Viewpoint."

The four-day conference is the third in a series of such meetings. The Soviets also will make stops in Washington, D.C., New York, Philadelphia and Portland, Ore.

When the Institute for Policy Studies (IPS), whose headquarters are in a building just off Dupont Circle, sponsored the first such disarmament meeting in Minneapolis in 1983, 92 members of Congress wrote the State Department protesting the department's decision to grant visas

to the visiting Soviets.

The congressmen questioned the legitimacy of the Soviets' academic credentials and charged the group was part of a Soviet Communist Party "active measures" operation. Of the 29 Soviets who applied for visas, two were excluded because of intelligence connections.

Some U.S. academics sharply questioned the legitimacy of the conference. "These guys fly high, but they must not be viewed as scholars," said Georgetown University professor Roy Godson. "While some of them are intellectuals and employ intellectuals on their staff, they are controlled by the Central Committee Party Secretariat and should not be viewed as independent scholars."

The conference will include "talks on disarmament and foreign policy" and will "focus on the 'star wars' program and U.S.-Soviet relations in the Pacific Basin."

"Star wars" is a popular term for the Reagan administration's space defense research program. The Soviets have tried to influence pub-

lic opinion against the program.

"We've got the No. 1 Russian guy in American politics coming," Marcus Raskin, a co-founder of IPS, was quoted in a statement drafted for the press, but he could not be reached for amplification of the remark.

An IPS statement said the meetings would be co-sponsored by the Soviet Academy of Sciences. Half the Soviet officials are employed by the Soviets' U.S.A. Canada Institute, which operates under the auspices of the academy.

A 1982 House Intelligence Committee study of Soviet propaganda measures described the institute as an adjunct of the Communist Party International Department, and Mr. Godson of Georgetown University describes the U.S.A.-Canada Institute as a component of the "Soviet active measures and disinformation apparatus."

"While the U.S.A.-Canada Institute also collects information for the Soviet leadership, one of its primary purposes is to influence Western perceptions and behavior," said Mr. Godson, author of a recent book on Soviet "disinformation" operations.

"Active measures" is a term that describes overt and covert tech-

niques used to influence events and behavior abroad to further Soviet interests.

"It's not just propaganda," Mr. Godson said. "Active measures are actually designed to affect behavior which is done by affecting perceptions using true and intentionally false information."

John Rees, a specialist on Soviet intelligence operations, said Soviet defectors from the U.S.A.-Canada Institute estimate that 40 percent of staff is made up of KGB or GRU "cooptees" — Soviets pressed into service by the intelligence services. Information collected by the institute has been supplied to Soviet intelligence, he said.