

# The Intelligence Hand in East-West Exchange Visits

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*A member of the responsible IAC staff makes a comparative evaluation, from the intelligence viewpoint, of mechanisms for the control of East-West exchange visits.*

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Exchange visits with the Soviet Bloc have now become a prominent feature of East-West relationships. Such visits have been lauded by both Eastern and Western statesmen as an ideal method for bringing the peoples into contact and thereby lessening world tensions. Scientists have said that the free interchange which is provided by direct contact is essential if man is to make maximum progress in his battle to conquer nature and the elements. Men of good will have reiterated the necessity for peoples of the world to know each other and to share the gifts they possess with those who are in need of them. Last, and maybe least from any point of view except that of this community, exchanges have been considered as vehicles for the collection of foreign positive intelligence.

It is clear that many different agencies and interests must be involved in the planning of exchanges. While the aims of these different interests are not necessarily incompatible, it sometimes seems that they are, especially to those attempting to reconcile the views of the many participants. In organizing specific exchanges one finds that in addition to group interests each individual involved seems to have his own axe to grind. The US citizen playing host to Soviet citizens may be using Soviet attendance to increase the attractiveness of his conference, may have a

financial profit motive, may be attacking the problem of East-West enmity in his own personal way, or may just wish to show off his plant or university to a Soviet acquaintance he met at a European conference. The US citizen visiting the USSR has an additional motive, the desire to see for himself just how the two countries compare. After we have loaded on all the personal aims and hopes, the exchange must pass through the channels of Government, where it encounters the cross-currents of other purposes. Among these are intelligence collection, technical gain, propaganda objectives, internal security, interagency rivalries, and national policy.

Some semblance of this maze of complications must face those in any nation who are attempting to organize exchanges. This community's professional objective is to derive from them a maximum intelligence yield consistent with national policy objectives. A comparison, from the viewpoint of this objective, of the different methods and mechanisms used by different countries for carrying out exchange programs may be useful to us. This article will review the procedures in use in four countries: the United States, where we who are involved in the program know it at first hand; XXX XX XXX XX XXXX XX XXX XXX XXXXXXXXXXXX XXXXX XXX XXXX XXXXXXXX XXXXXXX X XXX the USSR, where we only guess at the set-up on the basis of our experience with the other three countries.

## **The US Program**

In the United States, the principle of a US-USSR exchange visits program has been indorsed at the highest levels. The President introduced the principle at the 1955 Geneva Conference and has spoken favorably of the program many times since. There is a National Security Council directive, NSC #5607, which instructs the Secretary of State to carry out the program. Pursuant to this administration policy the Department of State has established a Special Assistant to the Secretary for East-West Contacts and an East-West Contacts Staff (EWC) under the Assistant Secretary of State for Public Affairs. EWC uses an informal interagency panel to keep other offices of the Department and other interested Government agencies informed of developments, and the opinions and recommendations of these agencies are in turn funneled back through the panel members.

The intelligence community has established the IAC Ad Hoc Committee on Exchanges as a forum for intelligence views on exchange matters. Because only the intelligence community concerns itself with all scientific, technical, and economic information from the Soviet Bloc, this IAC Committee can be considered the logical place in the US Government to weigh the possibilities of a gain to the United States from a technical and intelligence point of view. The Department of State, of course, must weigh any intelligence consideration together with policy and propaganda considerations and arrive at a final decision concerning a specific exchange.

Administration policy calls for extracting reciprocity from the Soviet Union for any privileges accorded in connection with the exchange program. It is through this reciprocity that we hope to arrange tours to installations and areas of the USSR previously unvisited; and the IAC Ad Hoc Committee on Exchanges endeavors to provide continuing support to EWC in applying this policy during the course of negotiations on exchanges. It is evident that the hard insistence on reciprocity has hampered the Soviets. While it has not forced them to open the door wide, it has revealed their sensitivity regarding certain areas and has given us access to previously unvisited installations. On the other hand, EWC is hampered in its effort to extract the maximum privilege by reciprocity because Government funds are not available to guarantee that a negotiated exchange will be carried out.

Since not only the US and Soviet Governments, but also private US citizens originate exchanges, EWC has some problem with those who, proceeding from newspaper accounts of an open exchange policy, make elaborate arrangements for entertaining Soviet visitors in the United States without considering either the principle of reciprocity or the possibility that other negotiations might be going on for exchange visits in the same field of interest. As the policy of the Government toward reciprocity has become more widely known, however, it has been complemented by a desire on the part of US private bidders for Soviet visits to make visits to the USSR themselves. The Soviets have involuntarily assisted in selling the reciprocity principle to US citizens by their apparent inability to provide return invitations and other social amenities which contribute to a smooth program and friendly visits.

In an added effort to obtain information compensating for the vast store of knowledge about the United States which the USSR has at its disposal because of our freedom of publication, the Department

negotiated an extensive exchange agreement on 27 January 1958. This agreement covered some aspect of all technical, educational, cultural, athletic, scientific, and governmental fields. It provided a working base for developing a successful exchange program, but was not intended as a maximum limit. By suggesting appropriate additions to this agreement, the United States has now developed a schedule of exchanges which promises to give us at least an even break from all viewpoints. Because in a democratic system control over the actions of private citizens cannot be complete, the development of the program has required a good deal of careful handling. The procedure has been to give advice and consultation to the many US citizens involved through EWC, as the designated Government entity, and to make it a focus for the responsible opinions of the Government agencies concerned.

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## Soviet Practices

The USSR approaches the program in the entirely different way made possible by its totalitarian control, which enables it to present a single face to the world and issue a single invitation concerning any subject exchange. It also has a clear aim of technical and propaganda gain for its program. It is hampered in negotiations, however, by some evident internal disagreements over methods and by the complexity of its bureaucracy.

The location of the real focus of the exchange effort in the USSR is not known. The Soviet Academy of Sciences is the front for the scientific exchange effort, and the other special ministries handle cultural exchanges. Most technical exchange proposals are handled by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. There is strong evidence that individual Soviet citizens who have answered or extended invitations without consulting some proper authority have done so to their detriment. There is also ample evidence that delegates participating in official exchanges have been chosen for the usefulness of their abilities without regard to their personal desires to make the trip. One Soviet scientist reported to a friendly US interpreter that he had arrived in Moscow in response to a summons without so much as a toothbrush in hand. He was instructed to acquire the necessary equipment to enable him to spend three weeks in the United States beginning the next morning.

On the minus side, the prolongation of itinerary negotiations for as much as six months in some cases indicates that the conflict in the USSR between those desiring technical gain and those concerned with internal security is more of a problem than it is in any of the Western countries. The continued statements warning Soviet citizens about free interchange of information with Western visitors, coupled with the insistence that Soviet delegations bring their own interpreters, leads one to believe that the USSR is concerned about the amount of information seeping out from under the Curtain. The evidence also suggests that the Soviets, like the Western countries, do not consider their exchange program to be completely successful. Their continued efforts to arrange long-term exchanges in the fields of most interest to them shows that they have not yet harvested the amount of technical knowledge they

desire. These negative features, however, do not indicate that the Soviets have not made technical gains or have provided us with startling amounts of information. There is evidence to show that the visits have brought home to them some Western technical methods which should have been at their disposal from their thorough coverage of Western literature but apparently required personal experience to be accepted and assimilated.

When faced with stiff reciprocal proposals, the Soviets have changed tactics several times in their apparent effort to obtain a net technical gain by getting many Soviet specialists intensively exposed to advanced US installations. Originally they suggested straight exchanges with only loose agreement on itineraries, apparently hoping that they would be able to plan their own visit on the scene while limiting US access to their installations by heavy social schedules and a very well guided tour. When resistance was encountered, they sought attendance at conferences in the United States, attempting to arrange tours following the conferences in exchange for treks down the same worn paths in the USSR. The next tactic was the longterm (three to six months) exchange; this was quietly abandoned, at least for the moment, when fields other than those named by them were counterproposed. The current gimmick seems to be an effort to catch us off balance by partial agreement to one of our counterproposals at the last minute after long amicable negotiations; the concession calls for US agreement to something less than we requested, if elaborate plans are not to be discarded.

These tactical maneuvers are not nearly as clear as they appear in the telling, and perhaps not as deliberate. Their description is distilled from a vatful of experience which leaves unexplained in the residue a number of spurned nonreciprocal requests in key fields, projects abandoned without explanation after frenzied effort, and visits to key places on a free basis refused. But it seems safe to say that the Soviet exchange visits group has not reached its goal and has not so far mustered the assets to do so.

## **Comparative Evaluation**

The process in each of the four countries, with its composite of aims, attitudes, and mechanisms, has some advantages and disadvantages from the standpoint of the intelligence collector. XXXX XXXX XXXXX XXXX

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XXXXX XXXXX XXXXX XXXX XXX XXX XXXXXX XXXXX The Soviet system  
has the advantage of a clear aim and unlimited resources. This  
advantage is offset to a substantial degree by an unwillingness to allow  
visits to trouble spots even to secure desired ends and by the apparent  
fact that internal security forces have the upper hand and can frustrate  
efforts to gain technical knowledge. The wholehearted cooperation  
among agencies in the US program enables the intelligence community  
to plan for penetration of targets in the USSR in the expectation of  
exploiting the full extent of Soviet willingness to pay for technical  
familiarization. The lack of US financial support and the strong influence  
of private aims incongruent with the intelligence plan are offsetting  
factors. Although in our struggle with these problems we sometimes look  
with envy at our opposite numbers in the other countries, our own  
advantages seem on balance just a little greater than theirs.

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