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R 251631Z AUG 83
FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 0088
INFO RUFHMG/AMCONSUL Leningrad 3537
RUEHIA/USIA WASHDC 4964
BT
UNCLAS MOSCOW 10819

E.O. 12356: N/A
TAGS: PGOV, OREP, SCUL, UR
SUBJECT: CODEL PELL: PELL/SARBANES MEETING WITH DEPUTY
MINISTER OF HIGHER AND SPECIALIZED EDUCATION
NIKOLAI SOFINSKY IN MOSCOW

1. WITH A MODEST "WHAT CAN I OFFER YOU, NOW THAT YOU HAVE SPOKEN TO ANDROPOV" NIKOLAI SOFINSKY, DEPUTY MINISTER OF HIGHER AND SPECIALIZED SECONDARY EDUCATION GREETED TO HIS OFFICE SENATOR AND MRS. CLAIBORNE PELL, SENATOR AND MRS. PAUL SARBANES, PATRICK GRIFFIN, SENATE MINORITY SECRETARY, AND DR. JAMES BILLINGTON OF THE CODEL STAFF. FOR A GOOD DISCUSSION OF THE SOVIET EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM AS IT PREPARES STUDENTS FOR THE UNIVERSITY AND FOR SPECIALIZED SCHOOLS, ALSO OF ACADEMIC EXCHANGE PROGRAMS BETWEEN THE U.S. AND THE USSR. THERE WAS GENERAL AGREEMENT ON THE DESIRABILITY OF A NEW BILATERAL US-USSR EXCHANGE AGREEMENT, BUT SOME DIFFERENCE ON HOW IT SHOULD BE IMPLEMENTED.

2. IN ANSWER TO QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR AND MRS. SARBANES, MR. SOFINSKY OUTLINED THE SOVIET SYSTEM OF SECONDARY EDUCATION, WHICH ALLOWS THE STUDENT THREE PATHS OF PASSAGE TO THE UNIVERSITY. HOWEVER, IN FACT THE VAST MAJORITY OF UNIVERSITY STUDENTS GRADUATE FROM REGULAR HIGH SCHOOLS, WHILE ONLY A SMALL PERCENT OF THE GRADUATES FROM THE SPECIAL OR TECHNICAL SCHOOLS SUCCESSFULLY APPLY FOR FURTHER EDUCATION AT A UNIVERSITY. SENATORS PELL AND SARBANES EXPRESSED INTEREST IN THE SYSTEM OF EARLY CONCENTRATION IN FOREIGN LANGUAGES AND IN MATHEMATICS AND THE SCIENCES.

3. THE BULK OF THE DISCUSSION WAS TAKEN UP BY A GIVE AND TAKE ON UNIVERSITY-LEVEL EXCHANGES, AS SOFINSKY FIELDING QUESTIONS BY SENATORS PELL AND SARBANES AND BY PROF. BILLINGTON. REFERRING TO THE FACT THAT THE EXCHANGE AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE U.S. AND THE SOVIET UNION HAD LAPSED IN 1979, SOFINSKY SAID THAT SINCE THEN, THOUGH ALL PROGRAMS WERE STILL IN EFFECT, FEWER PERSONS ARE BEING EXCHANGED. IN THE YOUNG SCHOLARS CATEGORY, HE CONTINUED, THOUGH THE SOVIET SIDE HAD HOPED THAT THE EXCHANGE WOULD AGAIN TREND TOWARD 40, THE US HAD AGREED TO ACCEPT ONLY ABOUT 25. SOFINSKY

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PRaised the language teachers exchange of 30 in each direction and said that his ministry is looking forward to the completion of the jointly produced textbook on the study of Russian as a foreign language on which Professor Dan Davidson of Bryn Mawr is working. Two Soviet students studied at the United World College of the American West (founded by Armand Hammer) this past academic year. There is also the Fulbright program (on which Sofinsky offered no details). Among other exchange programs, Sofinsky stressed the importance of direct university-to-university exchanges, also the need to expand these to include other universities than Moscow State. MSU, he stressed, was the university of choice for all foreign universities wishing an exchange with the Soviet Union but cannot handle the demand. There are sometimes problems caused by unequal partnerships. For example, the Lowell University exchange with Tbilisi U. seems to be floundering because of a lack of funds at Lowell. The SUNY exchange with MSU continues to prosper.

4. Senator Sarbanes asked what disciplines were stressed in the exchanges, in both directions. Sofinsky said that each side sent exchangees according to its own interest. Thus, the US scholars are mostly in the fields of language, literature, history and economics, while the Soviets are mostly in the technical and natural sciences. In justification for the Soviet decision, Sofinsky reasoned that Soviet students could study all aspects of US society in the Lenin Library, "so we send mostly students in the sciences."

5. At this point Senator Sarbanes asked Professor Billington for his views, and Billington recalled his discussions with the late rector of MSU, Rem Khokhlov, an early Fulbright grantee in the USA, who was so impressed by the program that he worked hard to increase the number of Soviet universities which would be willing to accept US Fulbright teachers. As for Mr. Sofinsky's remarks on Soviet students studying the United States, Prof. Billington expressed the wish that they would have the opportunity also to use US libraries, in addition to the Lenin Library. To Prof. Billington's remarks, Sofinsky merely repeated that it is the Soviet position that each side should send

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THE STUDENTS IT WISHES; THE LENIN LIBRARY HAD ALSO THE NECESSARY MATERIALS FOR THE STUDY OF THE UNITED STATES.

7. In conclusion, Mrs. Sarbanes encouraged Mr. Sofinsky to think of the Fulbright program as offering more than the standard grants. For example, Fulbright money could be used to finance an exchange of secondary school teachers.

ZIMMERMANN
END OF MESSAGE

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