

SOVIET-BLOC RESEARCH AND TRAINING FUND

PROBLEM: The United States is running low on a element vital to its national security: expertise on the Soviet Bloc. While the USSR has invested massively in international studies, including closely targeted research on the U.S., we have done the exact opposite. Private and public funding for foreign language and area studies, heavy in the 1960s, has dropped so low over the past decade that in the key area of Soviet Bloc analysis we have fewer than two-thirds of the specialists we need. Although government agencies, with some exceptions, are not feeling an acute, immediate shortage of qualified personnel, they and the broader academic world face the reality that junior scholars are not now entering the field in number sufficient to replace those who are retiring (especially in economics) or to expand research into areas that have received insufficient attention (Soviet activities in Africa and Europe, Soviet conduct in the SALT negotiations, and Soviet minorities in Central Asia). The reservoir of academic expertise is drying up. Seeing a future of diminishing academic opportunities and shrinking funding from private and public sources, younger scholars are turning away from Soviet studies to more promising career fields. As a result, our national capability to analyze our principal adversary--a fundamental ingredient of American strength--is in serious jeopardy. Once the capacity is dismantled, it will take decades at very high cost to recreate. The urgent need is to provide a stable foundation for Soviet studies, a base on which scholars and institutions can rely and rebuild.

PROPOSAL: To meet this national security requirement, this bill would establish an endowment of \$50 million to create a Soviet-Bloc Research and Training Fund. The sum would be invested and reinvested in U.S. Treasury debt instruments, the interest from which will be used to support a national program of (1) advanced research for broad dissemination to the public and to government policy-makers and (2) the training of research specialists under university auspices in the U.S. as well as support for their studies in East European countries and the Soviet Union.

The interest from the Fund would be made available to the existing National Council for Soviet and East European Research, the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, and the International Research and Exchanges Board (IREX) to finance the work of U.S. scholars in Washington-area research facilities and the programs of exchange which take American specialists into the Soviet Bloc. The Council itself would continue and expand its current support for a nationwide program of advanced research on the USSR and Eastern Europe at U.S. research institutions and fund specialized training on a shared-cost basis. There would be an annual report to Congress on these activities.