

file 5.2

A10

. . . R

Tuesday, August 7, 1984

THE WASHINGTON POST

'Harassment' in Leningrad Leads

By John M. Goshko
Washington Post Staff Writer

The State Department, citing "approximately a dozen cases of flagrant harassment" of Americans in Leningrad during the past six months, yesterday issued a "travel advisory" warning U.S. citizens that they face danger of arrest and denial of access to U.S. officials if they visit that Soviet city.

The advisory followed an incident Thursday in which a Marine guard assigned to the U.S. consulate there was beaten by Soviet police.

Department spokesman Alan Romberg also disclosed yesterday that an American professor was

arrested by plainclothes police in Leningrad on July 28 and held for two hours without being allowed to contact the consulate.

"Today's advisory on Leningrad is the first to caution Americans traveling there that the U.S. government cannot guarantee that the Soviet Union will adhere to provisions of the U.S.-U.S.S.R. consular convention, stipulating the right of access to consular officials in the event of arrest or detention," a department statement said.

Department officials said advisories have been issued in the past about Soviet travel. But, they noted, the earlier advisories have involved possible problems in obtain-

ing visas or hotel rooms in some parts of the Soviet Union.

They also said that after a Korean Air Lines jetliner was shot down by a Soviet plane last September, an advisory warned that travelers in the Soviet Union might have trouble obtaining plane tickets.

Leningrad rivals Moscow as the principal center for foreign tourists in the Soviet Union, and the advisory reflected what U.S. officials said was a desire to protect Americans from possible danger and to emphasize to the Soviet government U.S. concern about "unsatisfactory Soviet responses" in dealing with the situation.

to U.S. Warning for Travelers

The officials said Leningrad was singled out because the majority of serious incidents occurred there. Some cases, beginning with an attack on a U.S. consular official last April, have been publicized previously, but yesterday's advisory indicated a widespread pattern of incidents involving private American travelers as well as U.S. officials.

The officials said the frequency of incidents in the Leningrad area could not be ascribed solely to tension between the Reagan administration and the Soviet government.

They gave as one possible explanation the fact that the police and KGB officials in Leningrad have a reputation for being especially

tough in dealing with suspected breaches of state security.

"There have been several cases of unlawful detention of tourists by the Soviet security organs following innocent contacts with Soviet citizens," the advisory said. "During detention, Americans have been denied their rights, under the U.S.-U.S.S.R. consular convention, to communicate with an American consular officer and to be visited by him without delay. American tourists have been subjected to arbitrary and in many cases unjustifiably embarrassing searches of their personal effects"

In describing the July 28 incident, Romberg said an American profes-

sor, whom he would not identify, was arrested on the way to a meeting with a Soviet scholar who specializes in 18th century literature and was held at a police station for two hours. Romberg said the professor was told "that a new Soviet law which took effect on July 1 did not require that foreigners be granted access to their consular representatives unless they were being deported."

Other incidents involved an assault on U.S. vice consul Ronald Harms as he was leaving a restaurant after lunching with a dissident contact in April, and the severe beating in June of Andrew Espinosa, an American exchange student.