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Summary:

Summary of past negotiations with the Soviet Union for cultural exchanges which include the Baltic States. The State Department wants to avoid the Soviets using these exchanges to erode the US policy of not recognizing Soviet control of the Baltics.

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THE BALTIC QUESTION AND U.S.-U.S.S.R. EXCHANGES

The U.S. Government does not recognize the forcible annexation of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania by the U.S.S.R.

It has been a persistent Soviet tactic to use the exchanges program for the purpose of eroding this policy of non-recognition. The Soviets have claimed that the Baltic states are "an integral part of the U.S.S.R." and since the exchanges agreements have been signed by the United States with the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, the agreements cover all the territory of the Soviet Union including the "Baltic Soviet Republics." Soviet representatives have charged that protests and other actions relating to the unacceptability to the United States of exchanges visiting within the Baltic areas are a "clear case of interference in the internal affairs" of another state. The U.S. has countered that it would be fallacious to claim that in signing the exchanges agreement the Department recognized Soviet jurisdiction over the Baltic areas. It has been pointed out that the U.S. recognized the U.S.S.R. in 1933 before the Soviet seizure of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. Consequently, Soviet jurisdiction over the Baltic states by an act subsequent to American recognition cannot be recognized.

In the past the Department has attempted to keep the issue of the Baltic states outside negotiations for an exchanges agreement. It has been intimated to the Soviets that the U.S. would never sign an exchanges agreement, defining the territory such an agreement would cover, which would constitute recognition of Soviet rule in the Baltic states.

During the course of the 1964-1965 exchanges Soviet erosion tactics included the following:

(1) Inclusion of the city of Riga during the concert tours for Miss Mary Costa, soprano; Mr. Eugene Istomin, pianist; and Mr. Isaac Stern, violinist. The first two were protested in Aide-Memoire EX No. 27 dated February 26, 1965, reiterating the Department's views on scheduling individual performing artists or groups in Baltic cities, noting that in the event these tours took place, the Department would be unable "to consider these tours as coming within the framework of Section VII of the U.S.-U.S.S.R. Exchanges Agreement of February 22, 1964." Furthermore, in such cases, the

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Department reserved the right not to provide reciprocal opportunities for Soviet performing artists for tours in the United States.

Isaac Stern's tour was protested in a similar vein in the Department's Aide-Memoire EX No. 51 dated April 16, 1965.

In its reply to the Department's Aide-Memoire EX No. 27 the Soviet side, in Aide-Memoire No. 13/65 GKES dated March 30, 1965, noted that "the itinerary of the tours of foreign artists in the U.S.S.R., as well as the itinerary of the tours of Soviet artists in other countries, is determined by the receiving organizations of these countries..." and expressed "surprise" at the Department's concern.

In its reply to the Department's Aide-Memoire EX No. 51, the Soviets, in Aide-Memoire No. 24/65 GKES dated June 9, 1965, stated that Isaac Stern's tour had been arranged by Goskontsert in accordance with and on the basis of Section VII of the exchanges agreement and that the Department's protest was without basis and contradicted the practice of implementing artistic tours.

2. The July 1965 issue of "Soviet Life" featured articles on Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia. The Department in its Aide-Memoire EX No. 83A noted the unacceptability of employing the exchanges program "as a vehicle for dissemination of the Soviet position with regard to these areas." (In July and August 1962 the Soviets had dedicated entire issues to the "Baltic Republics.")

3. In its reply to U.S. proposals on exchanges of delegations of Fishery experts the Soviet side in Aide-Memoire GK KHIR-33 dated July 6, 1965 proposed that the U.S. delegation visit in or near Riga the (1) main administration of Latvian fishing industry; (2) fishing enterprises; and (3) a fish collective farm and a fish canning factory in Tallin. The Department in its Aide-Memoire EX No. 105 dated July 23, 1965 expressed its surprise concerning these suggestions, noting its views on the subject of delegations under the exchanges agreement visiting the Baltic states were well known to the Soviet side. The Soviets made no rejoinder.

In addition to the above, on August 18, 1964, the Embassy forwarded a list of seventeen visa applications for an eight-day tourist visit to the United States. Among these applications were two from teachers in Estonian schools, one from a reviewer for the Latvian Society for Friendship and Cultural Relations

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with Foreign Countries, and one for a secretary of the Estonian writers' union. The Embassy was informed that entry for the reviewer from the Latvian Society could not be authorized, but a visa could be authorized for the individual from the Estonian writers' union if he could be designated by his affiliation with the All-Union Writers' Union. This was agreeable to the Soviet side and a visa was issued. No issue was raised over the Estonian school teachers.

The Soviets have continued their tactic of sending Baltic items in Soviet exhibits although to a lesser extent than previously (Children's Art Exhibit).

Although not related exclusively to the Baltic question, the problem of exchanges when the Soviets might consider as retaining Soviet citizenship despite their American citizenship needs to be mentioned here. The most flagrant example was that of Frank Silbajoris, born in Ertings, Lithuania on January 6, 1926, who left Lithuania in 1944 with the retreating German army. While in the U.S.S.R. as an exchange graduate student, he was accosted by KGB agents and pressured in an attempt to recruit him to work for the Soviets. His induction into the German army was used to threaten him with trial as a "traitor" to the Soviet Union. This action was protested vigorously by the Embassy to the MFA as well as by the IUCTG in a letter to the Ministry of Higher Education.

Since under Article 4 of the Soviet Citizenship Decree of August 19, 1938, loss of Soviet citizenship can be only by decision of the Presidium of the U.S.S.R., anyone who subsequently left the Soviet Union, or areas later annexed to the U.S.S.R., could be similarly threatened, especially if they engaged in so-called "anti-Soviet" activities, a category open to wide interpretation. For this reason the Embassy has set up a four-point guideline under which exchange candidates, especially those with East European origins, should be closely scrutinized (see Annex A).

It is doubtful that the Soviet side in any negotiations will raise the issue of whether or not their interpretation of the application of the exchanges agreement (i.e., to all territory controlled by the U.S.S.R.) or ours is to prevail. By now they must be aware they cannot force us to recognize Soviet rule in the Baltic states by either explicit or implicit acknowledgment of the territorial area to which an exchanges agreement will apply. Moreover, they know they can continue to subvert our Baltic policy by use of the exchanges program in line with the tactics set forth above.

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