

Central Intelligence Agency



Washington, D. C. 20505

10 July 1985

Ambassador Jack Matlock,

Jack-

I believe you will find paper
on "Soviet Dissent and Its Repression" interesting
reading, particularly in view of your upcoming
Presidential briefings. The memorandum will be
formally published in short order; hopefully you
will find this advance copy useful.

FOIA(b) (3)



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NLRK FOI-114/7 # 9532

BY KNL NARA DATE 5/7/13

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Soviet Dissent and Its Repression Since
The 1975 Helsinki Accords [redacted]

An Intelligence Assessment

FOIA(b) (1)

FOIA(b) (3)

Information available as of 15 June 1985 was used in this report.

DECLASSIFIED IN PART

NLRR E06-114/7 # 9533

BY KML NARA DATE 5/7/13

This assessment was prepared by [redacted] Office of Soviet Analysis.
Comments and questions are welcome and may be directed to Chief, Domestic
Policy Division, SOVA, [redacted]

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Soviet Dissent and Its Repression Since
The 1975 Helsinki Accords [redacted]

Key Judgments

Since signing the 1975 Helsinki Accords, Moscow has intensified its repression of Soviet citizens. The increase in repression occurred in large part in response to the upsurge in dissent that Moscow's signing of the Accords inspired. In addition, it probably was intended as a firm rebuff to what the Soviets perceived as US efforts to intervene directly in their internal affairs by making the easing of Soviet restrictions on human rights a condition for improved bilateral relations.

The Soviet regime was slow to crack down on the post-Helsinki spread of dissent. Shortly after the publication of the Accords in Pravda in August 1975, Moscow dissidents--ignoring KGB warnings to desist--began to organize a group to monitor Soviet adherence to them. By early 1977 dissidents in Lithuania, the Ukraine and Georgia as well as in Moscow had established a network of Helsinki Monitoring groups. The KGB allowed the members of this "human rights movement" to meet freely with Western supporters and even hold press conferences with foreign newsmen. Older, underground dissident groups, for the most part nationalist and religious in focus, also stepped up their activities in anticipation of receiving greater international attention and support. Dissident scientist Andrey Sakharov even appealed in writing to US President Jimmy Carter to champion the cause of Soviet human rights activists--and received a personal letter from the President promising to do so.

In early 1977, the Soviet authorities, increasingly aware of the extent of their dissident problem and Washington's willingness to press the human rights issue, cracked down hard on the Helsinki monitors, arresting such leading dissidents as Aleksandr Ginzburg, Mykola Rudenko, Yuriy Orlov, and Anatoliy Shcharanskiy. Aside from verbal attacks, however, the regime did not move against Sakharov, the most prominent Soviet dissident, and Jewish emigration was allowed to increase in 1978 and 1979. This mixed response may well have been designed to keep Western critics off balance and thereby allow for positive movement in bilateral issues of arms control and trade.

In 1980, in the wake of the Western condemnation of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and the subsequent virtual suspension of superpower dialogue, Moscow dropped any pretense of concern with foreign criticism of its human rights record. Sakharov was exiled from Moscow and placed under house arrest, Jewish emigration was cut by half, and the Soviet security organs were allowed to move even more freely against dissident activists.

Under its chairman, Yuri Andropov, the KGB refined existing techniques of repression and developed new, more sophisticated measures to manage the dissident problem:

- Many of the most prominent dissidents were allowed or forced to emigrate.
- Others were arrested on criminal rather than political charges or confined in psychiatric hospitals.
- Induction of would-be Jewish emigrants into the military enabled the authorities to cite reasons of "state

security" to deny permission to leave the USSR.

- The criminal code was revised to simplify the antidissident effort.
- Intimidation of Western journalists was stepped up in an effort to stop their reporting about the dissidents' lot.

By these and other measures open human rights activity and nationalist dissent have been effectively repressed. Unofficial religious activity is currently the most vigorous form of dissent, but it, too, has been hard hit. Emigration has ceased to be a practical option for Jews and other minority peoples. Despite a recent small increase in the number of Jews permitted to leave the USSR, Soviet officials have indicated that they consider the era of large-scale emigration to be over.

To encourage dialogue with the West on longstanding issues of concern, General Secretary Gorbachev may make some minor concessions on human rights. His past and recent statements suggest, however, that no significant easing of restrictions on dissent is likely. Such actions could give his critics an issue on which to fault his performance and alienate even longtime supporters.

Although the "human rights" movement with its reliance on overt dissent has little prospect of recovery under current conditions, religious and nationalist dissidence, because it is so diffuse and difficult to control, is likely to reemerge. Religious believers have displayed an unusual willingness to take great risks in their efforts to worship according to their conscience. They also have developed an extensive clandestine network of activists and supporters from which to recruit

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replacements for arrested leaders. Nationalist dissidents have displayed similar tenacity, and regime actions on issues such as the regional allocation of resources and educational policy could spark nationalist tensions which, in turn, could stimulate nationalist dissent.

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