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NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20506~~SECRET~~

October 16, 1986

MEMORANDUM FOR NICHOLAS PLATT  
Executive SecretarySUBJECT: Paper on Human Rights Presented to Gorbachev in  
Reykjavik (S)

A copy of the paper which the Department supplied to the President to present to Gorbachev in Reykjavik was received by the NSC staff only after the paper was presented. We realize that preparations for the meetings in Reykjavik proceeded at a rapid pace which may have made difficult full consultation in advance, but -- for future guidance -- believe that the following NSC staff comments on the paper may be useful. (S)

Given the delicacy of the human rights issue in the Soviet political system, it is important that U.S. representations, particularly those in written form, be scrupulously accurate, be edited so as to avoid information and comments the Soviets might consider prejudicial to the individuals, and contain sufficient information about the individuals so that extensive staff research on the Soviet part is not required to identify them. Such lists are most effective if they are prepared in Russian, so that the Soviets do not have to arrange for translations before they can be used. (S)

The paper in question does not fully meet these criteria. Most seriously, it identifies three spouses of American citizens as married to "defectors," a pejorative term in Soviet parlance. While the Soviet authorities certainly know who the spouses are and the circumstances of their departure from the Soviet Union, it is clearly preferable in a document presented to Soviet authorities to avoid such terminology. It should be sufficient to note that the spouse has been resident in the United States (or a citizen of the United States) since a given date. (S)

Aside from the use of the term defector, other information is provided which does not seem designed to induce a favorable Soviet reaction. For example, pointing out that Bogdan Kuzmin "has stopped applying for emigration," provides the Soviet authorities with a convenient pretext for not approving a non-existent application. Nor is it clear what reminding the Soviets that Elena Kaplan was attacked in the Soviet press was designed to achieve. (S)

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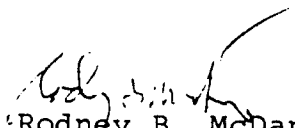
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BY CW NARA DATE 11/29/07

While these possibly prejudicial pieces of information were included, other information which would facilitate bureaucratic handling in the Soviet system was omitted. It would have been helpful, for example, to include the Soviet address of separated spouses and divided families, and also the name of the spouse or family member in the United States. (The latter was included in some instances and not in others.) (S)

Since it is likely that it will be desirable in the future to prepare written presentations for the President and other senior officials to convey to the Soviet authorities on human rights cases, it would be appreciated if the Department would review its procedures and facilities for preparing such presentations, so that Soviet attitudes and bureaucratic procedures are taken into account in making the most effective presentation. (S)

Needless to say, in the future, we would expect to have the opportunity to review in advance material prepared specifically for Presidential use. (S)

  
Rodney B. McDaniel  
Executive Secretary

Attachment:

TAB A Copy of Presentation on Human Rights Presented to the Soviets in Reykjavik October 11, 1986