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THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary  
(Geneva, Switzerland)

AT 10:00 AM Local  
4:00 AM EST

November 21, 1985

U.S. FACT SHEET

THE PRESIDENT'S PEOPLE-TO-PEOPLE INITIATIVES

In his November 14 Address to the Nation, on the eve of his departure for his Geneva meeting with General Secretary Gorbachev, President Reagan called for a series of bold new initiatives to bring the people of the United States and the Soviet Union into direct contact.

In that speech, the President said, "Enduring peace depends on openness, honest communications, and opportunities for our peoples to get to know one another directly." The President also determined to "find as yet undiscovered avenues where American and Soviet citizens can cooperate, fruitfully, for the benefit of mankind."

In this respect the two leaders agreed on the utility of broadening exchanges and contacts in a number of scientific, educational, medical and sports fields.

Background

The U.S. and USSR have had formal cultural and educational exchanges for more than 25 years. We have just concluded a new General Exchanges Agreement for academic, cultural, and performing artist exchanges. This agreement provides for reciprocal exhibits of theater, art, design, and technology to travel throughout the other country accompanied by language qualified guides.

Traditional exchanges such as these are valuable, but more is needed. The President hopes that we can lessen the distrust between us, reduce the levels of secrecy, and bring forth a more open world. His Exchanges Initiatives are new programs to increase day-to-day contacts between our peoples.

What are the Initiatives?

The Exchanges Initiatives on which the U.S. and USSR have agreed to cooperate include:

- The annual exchange of professors to conduct special courses in history, culture, and economics in Soviet and American institutions of higher education;
- The creation of a U.S.-Soviet scholarship program for the best students from each country in the natural sciences, social sciences, humanities, and technology for the period of an academic year;
- Measures to promote Russian language studies in the United States and English language studies in the USSR.

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- A joint program of cancer research;
- A program for cooperation in the development of microcomputer educational software for elementary and secondary school instruction;
- Expansion of contacts in sports, including regular meets in various sports and increased television coverage of sports.

The objective of these initiatives is to build bridges between the peoples of the two countries. These proposals would expand contacts, increase cooperation on one of today's toughest medical problems, and encourage people of both countries and work and study together.

For our part, once the two governments have opened the doors to this kind of exchange, the Administration will look to the people to take the lead. The President, therefore, intends to appoint a high-ranking Administration official to work closely with the private sector to ensure that these exchanges initiatives are realized. The resulting programs will be reviewed by the leaders at their next meeting.

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