

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~
WHITE HOUSE SITUATION ROOM

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SIT045 DATE 02/04/82

DTG: 151310Z JAN 82 PSN: 032629
TOR: 015/1404Z

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MESSAGE ANNOTATIONS:

NO MESSAGE ANNOTATIONS

MESSAGE:

IMMEDIATE
DE RUEHC #0429 0151314
O 151310Z JAN 82 ZFF4
FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW IMMEDIATE 0146

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~ STATE 010429
NODIS

E.O. 12065: RDS 1/14/02 (STOESSEL, WALTER J.)

TAGS: SREF, SHUM, UR, US

SUBJECT: MESSAGE TO BREZHNEV IN SUPPORT OF
PENTECOSTALISTS

REF: MOSCOW 445

1. ~~CONFIDENTIAL~~-ENTIRE TEXT).

2. ON THE SECRETARY'S RECOMMENDATION, THE PRESIDENT HAS APPROVED THE APPROACH INVOLVING A PRESIDENTIAL LETTER AS OUTLINED IN AMBASSADOR HARTMAN'S TELEGRAM (REFTEL). THE LETTER WILL NOT BE PUBLICIZED. THE AMBASSADOR IS REQUESTED TO DELIVER THE TEXT TO GROMYKO OR KORNIYENKO AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

3. TEXT OF LETTER FROM PRESIDENT REAGAN FOLLOWS: BEGIN
TEXT: DEAR MR. PRESIDENT:
I WISH TO DIRECT YOUR ATTENTION ON AN URGENT BASIS TO THE PLIGHT OF SEVEN SOVIET PENTECOSTALISTS WHO HAVE

MESSAGE (CONTINUED):

BEEN LIVING IN OUR EMBASSY IN MOSCOW SINCE SEEKING REFUGE THERE IN JUNE, 1978. THESE PEOPLE SEEK

PERMISSION FROM SOVIET AUTHORITIES FOR THEMSELVES AND THEIR FAMILIES TO EMIGRATE FROM THE SOVIET UNION ACCORDING TO THE PRINCIPLES OF THE FINAL ACT OF THE CONFERENCE ON SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE. WE HAVE REPEATEDLY APPROACHED THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT ON BEHALF OF PETR AND AUGUSTINA VASHCHENKO AND THEIR DAUGHTERS, LIDIYA, LYUBA, AND LILIYA; AND MARIA CHMYKHALOV AND HER SON, TIMOFEY; AND THE OTHER MEMBERS OF THESE TWO FAMILIES, SEEKING A PROMPT AND HUMANITARIAN SOLUTION TO THEIR PLIGHT. YET THREE AND A HALF YEARS LATER, THEY STILL AWAIT PERMISSION TO EMIGRATE.
THE FAMILIES' SITUATION HAS NOW TAKEN ON A NEW AND

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POTENTIALLY TRAGIC ASPECT. AFTER THREE AND A HALF YEARS OF WAITING, IN FRUSTRATION AND NOW IN DESPAIR, TWO OF THE FAMILY MEMBERS, MRS. AUGUSTINA VASHCHENKO AND HER DAUGHTER, LIDIYA, HAVE EMBARKED UPON A HUNGER STRIKE IN SUPPORT OF THEIR GOALS. DESPITE THE EFFORTS OF THE EMBASSY STAFF AND OF THE FAMILIES' OTHER FRIENDS AND SINCERE WELL-WISHERS IN THE UNITED STATES AND IN EUROPE TO DISSUADE THEM FROM THIS LIFE-ENDANGERING COURSE, THE TWO WOMEN HAVE MADE CLEAR THEY ARE DETERMINED TO CONTINUE THEIR FAST. OUR EMBASSY IN MOSCOW HAS DISCUSSED THIS MATTER WITH YOUR MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, INFORMING THE MINISTRY THAT THE TWO FAMILIES HAVE AGREED TO LEAVE THE EMBASSY AND RETURN TO THEIR HOMES IN CHERNOGORSK FOR THE PROCESSING OF THEIR APPLICATIONS FOR EMIGRATION, ACCORDING TO SOVIET LAWS AND PROCEDURES, IF THEIR OTHER FAMILY MEMBERS RESIDING IN CHERNOGORSK ARE FIRST PERMITTED TO EMIGRATE, AND IF THE SEVEN FAMILY MEMBERS ARE GUARANTEED THAT THEY WILL NOT BE PROSECUTED BY THE AUTHORITIES ONCE THEY DEPART THE U. S. EMBASSY AND ARE ASSURED THAT THEIR APPLICATIONS FOR EXIT PERMISSION FOR REUNIFICATION WITH THEIR OTHER FAMILY MEMBERS ABROAD WILL BE GRANTED. OUT OF DEEP CONCERN FOR THEIR LIVES AND HEALTH AND FOR THE PLIGHT OF THEIR FAMILY MEMBERS, I ASK YOU TO INTERVENE PERSONALLY IN THIS MATTER TO ALLOW THESE PEOPLE TO EMIGRATE AND THEREBY BRING ABOUT A HUMANITARIAN SOLUTION BEFORE IT IS TOO LATE. SINCERELY, RONALD REAGAN. END TEXT. STOESSSEL

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END OF MESSAGE FOOTER

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Washington, D.C. 20520

January 14, 1982

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MEMORANDUM FOR WILLIAM P. CLARK
THE WHITE HOUSE

Subject: Presidential Action in Support of Hunger-Striking
Pentecostals in our Embassy in Moscow

The Secretary believes that direct Presidential action, in the form of a message from the President to President Brezhnev (proposed text attached) on behalf of the two Pentecostals on a hunger strike in our Moscow Embassy, may be our only remaining chance to bring the fast to an end. Our fears for the health and ultimately the lives of these two Christian women, Mrs. Augustina Vashchenko and her daughter, Lidiya, have sharpened as it has become clear that neither we nor their many other supporters in this country can persuade them to end their hunger strike.

Mrs. Vashchenko and Lidiya, who have been living in refuge in our Embassy in Moscow for the last three and a half years with five other Pentecostals, continue their hunger strike in hopes of gaining Soviet permission to emigrate. The women commenced fasting on the 27th of December, taking only liquids for sustenance. The Embassy reports that the women have lost some weight, but are not yet in serious condition. The women appear determined to maintain their fast until they and their families are permitted to leave the Soviet Union -- a solution they continue to believe the US Government can "force" the Soviet Union to grant them.

While we have no guarantee that the President's intervention will be responded to favorably by the Soviets, the approach outlined in the draft message offers the Soviets a face-saving way out of this tragic problem if they have any interest in this at all. We, therefore, feel that this last attempt to work through direct diplomatic channels is worth trying and should be done now.

It will be essential that the President's message not be publicized. If the Soviets do not take prompt steps to act on the President's proposal, however, we will want to consider public statements and a media campaign in support of the Pentecostals -- steps which are unlikely to bring positive action from the Soviets but would demonstrate the President's continuing concerns.

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GDS 1/14/88

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FBI - NEW YORK
JAN 14 1982
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7/24/00

We recommend that the letter be delivered to Gromyko by Ambassador Hartman, and plan to cable the text to him as soon as your clearance is obtained.


L. Paul Bremer, III
Executive Secretary

Attachment:

Draft Presidential Message