



DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Washington, D.C. 20520

January 22, 1982 8:22 AM: 13

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~MEMORANDUM FOR WILLIAM P. CLARK
THE WHITE HOUSEWHITE HOUSE
SITUATION ROOMSubject: Brezhnev's Answer to the President's Letter in
Support of the Pentecostalists in Embassy Moscow

On January 22, Soviet Minister-Counselor Bessmertnykh delivered to Acting Assistant Secretary for European Affairs Scanlan Brezhnev's response to the President's letter regarding the Pentecostalists in Embassy Moscow. A translation of the letter is attached.

The position taken by Brezhnev reflects no change in the Soviet position. The one positive note of the letter is Brezhnev's reiteration of the assurance that the families will not be prosecuted should they leave the Embassy and return to Chernogorsk. The letter concludes by criticizing the U.S. position on the Polovchak case (the Ukrainian boy who refused to return to the USSR with his parents). In answer to a question, Bessmertnykh said that the reference to Polovchak represented a "philosophical" rather than a "practical" linkage.

We think that no further initiatives concerning the Pentecostalists should be undertaken until we have the results of the Secretary's meeting with Gromyko in Geneva on Tuesday.

L. Paul Bremer, III
L. Paul Bremer, III
Executive Secretary

Attachment:

Translation of Brezhnev Response

F99-051 #47
C/S 7/24/00

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~
GDS 1/22/88

NLS F99-051 #48

Unofficial translation

and, NARA, DATE 10/4/00
Dear Mr. President,

With regard to your communication of January 15, 1982, I would like to say the following.

The people whom you are petitioning for have really found themselves in a situation not to be envied. After all, this situation was created and has long been maintained in an artificial manner. A way out of it could have been found a long time ago. At the present time, too, it is possible to resolve this question.

The only thing needed is that the US side rather than detain those people within the walls of its Embassy, take measures for them to leave it. Nothing stands in the way of such a step - nobody intended or intends to prosecute that group of pentecostalists.

As to their departure from the USSR, this question can be considered in accordance with the procedure established under our laws and equally applicable to all Soviet citizens, after those persons return to the place of their residence.

However, the group of the sect members that happened to be in the US Embassy is being pushed for some reason or another in a different direction - toward violation of the Soviet laws, setting forth prior conditions and all sorts of demands that can lead only to an impasse. Thus, the entire responsibility for the existing situation rests with the US side, including the responsibility of humanitarian nature.

We are not the ones to be called upon to exercise humaneness. For that matter, the references to humaneness are not convincing, while, in fact, attempts are being made to manipulate the destinies of individuals and not only those of the sect members who are kept in the US Embassy.

What kind of humaneness can one invoke, when the children are forcefully separated from their parents, as is the case with the Soviet citizens Polovchaks? Indeed, when even an American court rules to return Vladimir Polovchak - a minor - to his parents and the US executive authorities are raising obstacles thereto, it is not simply inhumane but immoral.

I would like to believe that on the part of the US side necessary measures will be taken to discontinue the abnormal situation existing around the group of Soviet citizens who find themselves in the US Embassy in Moscow.

Sincerely,

L. Brezhnev

January 21, 1982