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**Carl Beck  
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Number 1703

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The creation of the American Councils for International Education (hereafter referred to as American Councils and originally known as the American Council of Teachers of Russian, or ACTR) in 1974 was not the first effort by the American scholarly community to build enduring professional relations and programs with the Soviet academic community during the Cold War. However, the American Councils' programs have persisted and have even grown dramatically in the post-Cold War period. This study describes how American Councils has become the premier American language training and academic exchange organization with the countries of the former Soviet Union.

## Origins

The American Councils rose from earlier efforts by American scholars of the Russian language to build sustainable professional and programmatic ties with their Soviet/Russian counterparts. From the onset of the Cold War until the late 1960s, there had been virtually no such professional contact. Teachers of Russian in the United States were organized nationally through the American Association of Teachers of Slavic and East European Languages (AATSEEL).

AATSEEL's pedagogical focus was conservative, and its mission was heavily influenced by a generation of Russian language specialists who had emigrated from the Soviet Union. For teaching Russian to American students, these specialists generally held a low professional opinion of the pedagogical value, of literature and culture produced during the Soviet regime other than *samizdat*.<sup>1</sup> They also tended to believe that American-born educators could not teach Russian effectively because they lacked a "cultural instinct" for the language. They viewed such educators with some disdain and condescension. As a result, contacts between Soviet and American language teachers were extremely limited until the late 1960s, confined to small programs of professional and student training involving a few American institutions such as Amherst College, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Middlebury College, and Northwestern University.

Lack of interest in American-Russian scholarly contact was by no means universal among AATSEEL's membership, however, many members, particularly graduate students and junior professors, favored greater contact for several reasons. First, there was a strong conviction that Russian language instruction in the United States, focusing as it did on pre-Bolshevik vernacular and culture, deprived American students of up-to-date knowledge of the language. Textbooks frequently failed to recognize significant changes that had occurred in the speaking of Russian, particularly the influence of popular culture. Second, the lack of systematic and reliable opportunities for merit-based research prevented excellent students (as well as scholars) from traveling abroad and developing an authentic version of the Russian language, steeped in the living experience of ordinary Russians.<sup>2</sup>

The realization of these reforms required significant improvements in the state of U.S.-Soviet relations. As early as 1966, Anatole Alitan, a German specialist in the Russian language, asked Irwin Weil of Northwestern University, then executive director of AATSEEL, to "explore the opinions of Western European and American Slavists about the possibility of an International Organization for teachers of Russian and Russian literature."<sup>3</sup>

Weil found that there was positive interest in this idea on both sides. Vitalii Kostomarov and Viktor Vinogradov, highly influential linguistic scholars within the Soviet academic structure, had originally asked Alitan about the possibility of such an international organization. Weil, working with other colleagues, developed a proposal to use the Scientific-Methodological Center on the Russian Language at Moscow State University (renamed the Pushkin Institute in 1975), headed by Kostomarov, as the lead Soviet organization in a new exchange initiative. By the late 1960s the Center was emerging as the most competent and politically connected Russian language institute in the Soviet Union. In 1967, Alitan sent invitations to a host of Russian language scholars and teachers to attend an organizing meeting in Paris.

At this meeting Russian language teachers from a number of countries agreed upon a charter for an organization that came to be called the International Association of Teachers of Russian Language and Literature (Russian acronym MAPRIAL). Weil returned to the United States confident that AATSEEL would formally approve its membership in MAPRIAL. At the same time, Kostomarov had to pay a political price to get permission to open his institute to American scholars and students. Soviet authorities required that the Center's work on behalf of MAPRIAL be in consonance with Soviet law. Conference participants from countries other than the Soviet Union understood and accepted Kostomarov's compromise.<sup>4</sup>

The enthusiasm of the conference participants was not fully shared by the Russian language profession in the United States. Indeed, the political climate was not yet ripe for this level of change, even within the relatively liberal American scholarly community. The Executive Council of AATSEEL authorized Weil to poll the membership of the organization, with a positive recommendation. According to Weil, over 80 percent of the replies were positive. However, "among the 20 percent negative votes, [there were] some very strong and bitter feelings, particularly among the émigrés."<sup>5</sup> The agreement that the Russian participation in MAPRIAL would be "in consonance with Soviet law" was particularly offensive to some members. Their loud protests, personal denunciations of Weil, and extensive coverage of these protests in the émigré Russian press led Weil to recommend that, so as to avoid bitter disputes within AATSEEL, the organization should not participate in MAPRIAL. Weil was thanked by the Executive Committee and other prominent members, "who were as eager as I was to avoid a debilitating and useless political fight."<sup>6</sup>

The Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia, the bitter division in the United States over the war in Vietnam, and other international events played a role in blocking the effort to expand American-Russian exchanges. Still, Weil and his colleagues,

most notably Claire Walker of the Friends (High) School in Baltimore, persisted in their efforts. They formed the Group of Teachers of Russian (GTR), a small group of language teachers at the high school and university levels, that joined MAPRIAL, attended its annual meetings, and kept in contact with Kostomarov and other Russian colleagues through periodic *ad hoc* events and international visits. By the early 1970s, political relations between the United States and the Soviet Union had dramatically improved. President Richard Nixon's successful arms control negotiations with Soviet General Secretary Leonid Brezhnev and their agreement to initiate a whole new range of bilateral scientific exchanges clearly changed the programmatic environment. These dramatic developments ushered in the period of détente in U.S.-Soviet relations.

These developments were not, of course, lost on the GTR and other reformers. Soviet authorities had designated the Scientific-Methodological Center on the Russian Language in 1973 as one of the principal means by which the Soviet Union would conduct public diplomacy throughout the world.<sup>7</sup> Richard Brecht and another, younger member of GTR, Dan Davidson of Amherst College, visited the Soviet Union in the summers of 1973 and 1974 under the auspices of the International Research and Exchanges Board (IREX), an organization that had supported scholarly exchanges with the Soviet Union and Central and Eastern Europe since 1968. They had been close colleagues for many years, having received their Ph.Ds in Slavic languages and literatures together at Harvard. Both were young, highly accomplished Russian linguists. More senior members of GTR concluded that to achieve the full potential of language and scholarly exchanges between the Soviet Union and the United States it would be prudent to support the energetic efforts of Brecht and Davidson. During their visits to the Soviet Union, they proposed to Kostomarov that a series of conferences be held to establish a new research and teaching agenda for scholars and students of the Russian language. Armed with GTR's support, and with the blessings of Weil and Walker, Kostomarov supported this initiative and placed the considerable influence of the Center behind it. Ten leading Soviet scholars attended the first set of conferences, held in the fall of 1974 at Amherst and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). American participants remarked that it was extremely unusual for so many scholars to visit the United States at the same time and attested to the seriousness with which the Soviet delegation regarded the conference.<sup>8</sup>

Officially named the Soviet-American Conference on the Russian Language (SACRL), it attracted a veritable "who's who" of Russian language experts from both the Soviet Union and the United States, including such giants of the profession as Horace Lunt of Harvard, Morris Halle of MIT, Robert Baker of

Middlebury College, Kostomarov and O.P. Rassudova of the Scientific-Methodological Center, and E.A. Bryzgunova and G.A. Bitextina of Moscow State University. Leading young scholars like Davidson, Brecht, Alan Timberlake, and Michael Flier of the University of California at Los Angeles, and Robert Channon of MIT also participated. Serious advanced research findings were presented on various aspects of the Russian language, including phonology and morphology, accentuation in word usage, verb systems, declarative-interrogative opposition, use of adverbs and verbal prefixes, as well as discussions on how to teach the process of English-Russian and Russian-English translations.<sup>9</sup>

From the U.S. point of view, it became clear that fears about Soviet participation in language conferences as a propaganda exercise were profoundly misplaced. The conference papers convinced participants on both sides that it was possible to develop not only a dialogue on the Russian language but a serious research and teaching agenda.<sup>10</sup> American participants were excited by the prospect of research devoted to the creation of new textbooks, new teaching materials, new avenues for joint language research, and the need for long-term language training of graduate students on both sides.

The success of the conference led to the creation of the American Council of Teachers of Russian (ACTR). GTR was disbanded and folded into the new structure. Conference participants were asked to volunteer for board membership. To show continuity with the trailblazing efforts of GTR, Weil agreed to serve on the board and was also chosen to be vice president; Davidson was elected president. Demonstrating the new organization's commitment to Russian language instruction at the high school as well as college level, Walker became secretary, and George Morris, the director of a high school Russian program in St. Louis, was made its treasurer. Other notable scholars from university-based programs were recruited, most notably Robert Baker, as well as established scholars like Stephen Soudakov of Indiana University.

## **Years of Formation and Programmatic Development: 1974-1988**

### **Early Programmatic Steps**

ACTR was born, and AATSEEL did not object to its creation. In fact, indicative of the new intellectual excitement in the Russian language profession that resulted from the SACRL conference, and through the efforts of Professor Thomas Shaw, the AATSEEL President devoted two full issues of its professional journal to the publication of the papers from the 1974 conference.



The improvement in U.S.-Soviet relations was had a positive effect on the efforts of the reformers in ACTR. The acrimony from conservative AATSEEL members that had marred Weil's early efforts to support U.S. participation in MAPRIAL and systematic scholarly collaboration with Soviet scholars was now muted and ineffective. ACTR joined MAPRIAL again without objection from AATSEEL, and from 1976 to the present both organizations have participated in MAPRIAL's quadrennial meetings and related activities.

The structure of ACTR in its early years was very informal. It had no permanent staff, and its board members held full-time positions at universities or high schools. It was incorporated in January 1976 under U.S. law as a non-profit organization in the state of Maryland. Its official address was 10 Club Road, Baltimore, Maryland, the location of the Friends School where Claire Walker taught as a high school language instructor. Board meetings were usually held at the site of annual meetings of AATSEEL or of the American Association for the Advancement of Slavic Studies (AAASS), the principal professional association for American Slavists in the social sciences and humanities.<sup>11</sup>

In 1981, the headquarters of the organization moved from Baltimore to Bryn Mawr College in suburban Philadelphia, following the career movements of Davidson, who was now director of USSR programs for the organization. In 1987, he was offered a teaching and research position at the University of Maryland. While eventually declining the position, he used a year's leave of absence from Bryn Mawr to move the ACTR office to Washington, operating for the first few years out of his own house, while maintaining the Bryn Mawr office for programs involving American students and scholars traveling to the Soviet Union. Davidson and Bryn Mawr worked out an arrangement that enabled him to administer ACTR programs while continuing as a part-time professor at the college, a relationship that continues to this day.

In the early years of the period, ACTR's programs focused on:

1) multi-year textbook projects, involving a number of American and Russian linguists, to improve the quality of language instruction in Russian;

2) an annual Russian language Olympics (the Olympiada), held in Moscow or other Eastern bloc cities, coordinated by Walker and other board members, and involving groups of college, but particularly high school students from around the United States and other non-Soviet countries;

3) the continuation of SACRL conferences which have now been held in 1981, 1989, 1991, 1996, and 2001 at various universities around the United States, followed, in many cases, by publication of the proceedings; and

4) miscellaneous events such as periodic summer camps for American high school teachers and instructors of Russian, and summer workshops held at American universities on the use of Russian for non-academic careers.

ACTR was created as a membership organization, and initially that was how it supported itself in a fiduciary and programmatic sense. Walker and Morris coordinated the collection of modest dues of \$5 per year. In return, ACTR members received a monthly newsletter (called the *ACTR Lettr*, as it is still called today, although the second e in letter has been restored) and an annual directory of members. The newsletter also contained announcements of language and research programs offered by various American universities and other non-profit organizations, such as the Council for International Educational Exchanges language training exchange with Leningrad State University, and IREX's Summer Language Teachers initiative. ACTR also offered its members various teaching materials under what it called *The Russian Packet*. These materials, priced at \$1.25 each, included cultural materials, language word lists and exercises, games, stories, and a map of the Soviet Union.<sup>12</sup> It also received some donations from high schools and members for the administration of the Olympiada and generated a little revenue through textbook sales. Moreover, modest, but dedicated, scholarship funds named for retiring or deceased ACTR board members were set up and used to support the activities of the Olympiada and the Pushkin Institute Program.<sup>13</sup>

Walker's role in administering the Olympiada and The Russian Packet was critical. Both provided highly useful opportunities for a group of less than two dozen high schools around the United States to improve teaching materials and to expose American high school students to Russians speaking their native language in their native environment. The internationalization of the Russian language was a high priority for Soviet educators, who appreciated Walker's efforts (including funding the travel of high school students from her own personal funds) as well as ACTR's, which provided a small subsidy to keep the Olympiada alive.<sup>14</sup> Walker left her position on the ACTR board in 1978. By then, she had also retired from the Friends School, and was replaced by Zita Dabars of Indiana University, who was also an ACTR board member. In recognition of her work on behalf of Russian language teaching, Walker was the first American to receive

a Pushkin medal from the Soviet government. Now in her nineties, Walker still remains active in the promotion of Russian language training.

As successful as the early fundraising was, it is important to keep in mind that ACTR's initial budget was extremely modest. At the end of its first year, it had a total income of \$1,275.37, and total expenses of \$501.67.<sup>15</sup> Board members were concerned about the cost of incorporating the organization, which was estimated at \$250. Indeed, money was so tight that ACTR members debated and agreed that absent board members should not be supplied return postage to vote on the organization's incorporation, because costs would be too high!<sup>16</sup>

Soon after ACTR's formation, Davidson and Brecht took the lead in developing a wider set of public and private funding sources for the organization. They quickly set about creating new programs for American teachers and graduate students to complement and expand the scholarly exchange programs in the humanities and social sciences administered by IREX. At the top of the agenda was a proposal for a full semester of advanced language training for American graduate students at Kostomarov's Pushkin Institute.

Initially, the new organization was uncertain how much responsibility it wished to assume for the programs it sponsored; the board was wary of becoming too "hands on" in the administration of exchanges. At its first meeting, in April 1975, when it approved the graduate student initiative to begin in the spring semester of 1976, the board agreed that "IREX will be the umbrella organization that will send out initial mailings and receive applications," thus indicating its reluctance to become overly involved in program administration.<sup>17</sup>

The organization also struggled to inform universities around the United States of the existence of the program. Board members interviewed for this study stressed the enormous time and effort required to spread the word to their colleagues. At the same time, they tried to avoid conflicts of interest by advocating for students at their own university. Eventually, ACTR established institutional memberships, which, in addition to raising funds for the organization, created a broad-based policy board for the Pushkin and other programs. The universities provided a deep reservoir from which selection committee members could be drawn, thus ensuring impartiality and the extensive recruitment of students from throughout the United States.<sup>18</sup>

Through painstaking negotiations with Kostomarov and Soviet political authorities, Davidson, Brecht, Weil and other ACTR board members hammered out a series of two-year agreements that set the number for the spring and fall semesters at twenty students each for the remainder of the 1970s and mid-1980s. As a practical matter, enforcing that number of placements involved a triangular struggle among Davidson and Brecht, Kostomarov, and the Soviet government,

including the KGB, who sought to limit American participation in exchanges. Keeping the number of American placements at or near the twenty-person level required some extraordinary negotiating skill by ACTR representatives.<sup>19</sup>

Nevertheless, loyalty to and support for the organization was sustained for many reasons beyond programmatic development. First, Davidson and a number of members of the ACTR board of directors – most notably Brecht, Morris, Walker, and Weil – worked intensely to make ACTR a national organization that could sustain and nurture not just the Russian language programs at a few elite universities, but also at smaller universities and high schools. Davidson could rightly claim in early 1977 that the ACTR/Pushkin program was “the only program in the country aimed at graduate students (specifically those in Russian language, linguistics, literature, or area studies) and the only program in operation with a curriculum jointly developed from inception by American and Soviet scholars and teachers.”<sup>20</sup>

Second, services to the ACTR membership extended to the development of advanced research, training and materials development for both American and Soviet language teachers. Support for schoolteachers and university faculty extended to six areas during this early period and ACTR’s commitment to these activities has endured and grown to the present day.<sup>21</sup>

1) Direct teacher instruction and professional growth through summer language training institutes sponsored by ACTR and its member universities. These institutes focused on language proficiency, skills enhancement, and materials development and methodology and included in later years team teachers and curriculum consultants from both the United States and the Soviet Union.<sup>22</sup>

2) Publication of textbooks for high schools, colleges, and universities and of specialized textbooks and reference materials such as business or political Russian.<sup>23</sup>

3) Development of standards and instrumentation for K-12 Russian instruction, general proficiency tests, as well as specialized proficiency tests in areas of business and scientific Russian; creation of an Advanced Placement (AP) curriculum for high school Russian instruction.

4) Development of learning modules in the Russian language, including history; thematic subjects such as Peter the Great, Stalin, or women in Russia; current events; and Russian culture more generally;

5) Research on cultural attitudes of Americans and Russians toward each other and about social indicators (conceptions of freedom, competition, wealth, homeland, etc.), and statistics on Russian language enrollment in the United States and predictors of student success.<sup>24</sup>

6) Advocacy materials on the advantages of studying Russian for use by ACTR and AATSEEL.

Third, ACTR board members offered their services as outside evaluators of Russian language programs at American institutions so as to strengthen their quality and increase their attractiveness to students and potential sources of financial support.<sup>25</sup> In addition to holding open membership and board meetings at AATSEEL and AAASS annual conferences, ACTR also typically held scholarly panels at those meetings to enable scholars to debate pedagogical and intellectual issues, network among themselves, and establish new criteria for Russian language curricula and research on changes in the language.<sup>26</sup>

Fourth, ACTR's continuing contacts with the Pushkin Institute through various activities organized by Weil, Davidson, and Brecht positioned the organization to present high-quality research and training programs that would attract top-notch Soviet academic participation and approval by the Soviet government. In this way, ACTR's commitment to open national programs in a democratic polity like the United States was complemented by access to the top echelon of human and financial resources in a closed nondemocratic polity like the Soviet Union.

Finally, because of the long-standing commitment of its membership to the value of Soviet-American exchanges, ACTR programs reflected a certain *esprit de corps* within the American academic community aimed at making programs work despite many administrative, political, and financial difficulties. ACTR's experienced board members frequently donated their time and energy to traveling with American students to the Soviet Union. Davidson, Weil, and others also recruited new ACTR members who were university professors, asking them to combine research visits to the Soviet Union with service as resident directors of ACTR programs in order to keep a watchful eye on student participants, and insure that they were receiving high-quality instruction from their Soviet hosts.

Soviet involvement in Angola and Ethiopia; its invasion of Afghanistan in 1979; a strong, broadbased anti-Soviet posture during the early years of the Reagan administration that regarded exchange programs with suspicion; and the Soviet shooting down of a South Korean civilian airliner in 1983 were part of a long downturn in U.S.-Soviet relations that lasted from 1977 to 1984. Nonetheless, the rich intellectual and human assets that ACTR possessed kept

the organization operating and enabled it to position itself for further program diversification.

### **The Challenges of Consolidation and Programmatic Diversification**

Despite these generally negative macropolitical forces, ACTR's programs grew in variety and complexity throughout this period. The organization's membership, only 125 at the end of 1975, its first year of operation, increased to 1,131 ten years later.<sup>27</sup> The Pushkin program expanded in 1979 to include a ten-month program for up to six American dissertation-level graduate students or teachers of Russian at any level to pursue independent research in their areas of specialization under the direct supervision of Pushkin Institute faculty.<sup>28</sup> In 1981, it began to offer a summer language training program involving sixty students per year. In 1984, Soviet teachers for the first time were included in ACTR inbound programs for up to three months.<sup>29</sup>

Thus, despite the downturns in U.S.-Soviet relations that typified the late 1970s and early 1980s, the organization that in 1975 could only claim a little over \$1,000 in revenue increased its budget to \$279,986 in 1984. The budget included grants from the United States Information Agency (USIA), the Department of Education, and financial arrangements with Bryn Mawr for administration of Pell Grants under the Department of Education. A newsletter that once had only a little over 100 subscribers was now, because of its growing importance, accepting advertising, thereby financing the cost of its publication.<sup>30</sup>

There were still many difficulties to be faced. Weil recalls more than one visit to the Department of State, where U.S. foreign affairs officials were less than enthusiastic about ACTR programs and "fearful of any exchange with the gigantic Soviet menace."<sup>31</sup> The end of the détente period in the late 1970s brought new concerns among some American conservatives that Soviet-American exchanges were only legitimizing the Soviet political system and its ideology. This made it more difficult for ACTR to receive federal support. On the Soviet side, despite the academic community's strong support of Kostomarov, rival agencies sought to limit the effectiveness and resources of the Pushkin Institute within the centralized and politicized Soviet educational bureaucracy. Davidson's efforts to develop ties with the Soviet Ministry of Education were frequently frustrated and sidetracked. Kostomarov, in turn, tried to limit ACTR's ability to establish language exchanges with Soviet entities other than the Pushkin Institute.

Textbook projects, could be delayed by ham-handed Soviet efforts to influence their content, insisting for example, that the USSR Supreme Soviet be treated linguistically as equal to the U.S. Congress. Soviet linguists were sometimes forced to insist on these conditions in negotiations over textbook



preparation, while ACTR board members and other American linguists refused to accept them.<sup>32</sup>

Rivalries among American exchange organizations also played a role in making ACTR's mission more difficult. For example, at least some have asserted that IREX occasionally used its own formidable contacts with the Soviet academic community and educational bureaucracy to limit ACTR's freedom of movement and programmatic development.<sup>33</sup> Even ACTR board members who represented certain university programs were becoming concerned about its growing reputation and expansion. At a board meeting in 1978 these members went to extraordinary lengths to remove Davidson from the board, an effort that ultimately failed.<sup>34</sup> According to interviews conducted for this study, representatives from other organizations who were serving on the ACTR Board watched the success of the organization warily for several years.

By 1985, the organization was expanding its activities as tensions in U.S.-Soviet relations began to relax. Its budget doubled from 1984 to 1985, reaching \$501,768.<sup>35</sup> Key new grants included funding under the so-called Title VIII program to expand the relatively small programs of combined research and language training for American graduate students and postdoctoral scholars. A Bryn Mawr College grant from the Social Science Research Council (also under the Title VIII program), for its Summer Language Institute involved some cooperative support for ACTR as well.<sup>36</sup>

### ***Reagan and Gorbachev Usher in a Whole New Ball Game***

Without a doubt, the arrival of Mikhail Gorbachev as Soviet general secretary in 1985 marked a major new direction in U.S.-Soviet relations. His intentions to open up Soviet society and promote economic reform were complemented by a major new impetus to expand Soviet contacts with the United States, including educational and scientific exchanges. President Ronald Reagan reciprocated this interest through a series of summit agreements.

Both leaders, for different reasons, placed greater emphasis on exchange programs for high school students and undergraduates than on the advanced predoctoral and postdoctoral exchanges that had been IREX's principal domain. ACTR's intellectual and programmatic track record in this area, during the long period of downturn discussed above, positioned it well for the new funding proposed by the Reagan Administration and thus for a dramatic growth in programming.

ACTR worked aggressively to develop new programs in this altered political and fundraising environment. Timothy O'Connor of the University of Northern Iowa became resident director of ACTR Programs in the Soviet Union in 1984.

In 1986, he was named senior resident director. For several months each year he supervised the growing number of resident faculty directors needed to administer programs for American graduate students, not just in language study, but also for research. Working closely with Davidson, O'Connor was successful in getting long-sought permission from the Soviet Ministry of Education to place American students at a number of institutions, not just the Pushkin Institute. Over the next several years, the Ministry of Aviation, the Institute of Steel and Steel Alloys, Leningrad State University, Moscow State University, Moscow Pedagogical Institute, the Institute of Power and Energy, the Institute of Linguistics, the Herzen Institute, and others opened their doors to American undergraduate and graduate students. O'Connor remains active in the placement and administration of programs for American students and scholars to this very day.

Perhaps the greatest force behind program growth was the decision by Gorbachev, emulated by many Soviet allies in Eastern Europe, to relax traditional controls on the participation of Soviet citizens in programs of research and language training. While IREX had been successful in negotiating relatively large quotas for American and Soviet postdoctoral scholars, ACTR's programs for Soviet students and younger scholars had been rather limited. The Reagan-Gorbachev focus on exchanges for young students changed this dramatically. Programs that reflected this new emphasis appeared in 1986, and already established programs intensified. In addition, the first bilateral exchange of Soviet and American high school language teachers took place that year, with fifteen teachers participating on each side. In 1987, that number expanded to twenty-five.

ACTR also received funding from USIA to offer American universities ten curriculum consultants from the ranks of Soviet teachers of Russian to assist in the development of language training in the United States.<sup>37</sup> In the summer of 1986, the first advanced-level Soviet graduate students arrived at American institutions, and in 1987 the program was expanded to include visits lasting a semester and even a full academic year. Participants in established programs at the Pushkin Institute for American graduate students and scholars rose from 20 to 45 for the semester programs and from 130 to 160 for the summer program.<sup>38</sup> Grants from the Dodge and Ford Foundations funded a project for a much needed fourth-year Russian language textbook. ACTR initiatives had already upgraded textbooks for beginning and intermediate students, but a fourth-year textbook reflecting new language developments and teaching methods had not yet been published. These grants also provided new electronic resources for sharing teaching methods and research findings.

American participants in the high school teachers' exchange also received unprecedented attention and notoriety from the highest levels of the Soviet gov-



ernment, In August 1987, Gorbachev received the group in the Kremlin. In what was described as a “relaxed atmosphere,” he stressed the extreme importance of contacts between American and Soviet citizens, particularly for language training.<sup>39</sup>

The intensification and expansion of Soviet and Russian partners for ACTR programs, as well as ACTR’s management of new programs was hailed universally by the Russian educational officials and bureaucrats interviewed for this study.<sup>40</sup> From their perspective, ACTR played a key role in internationalizing the language instruction for growing numbers of Soviet and Russian university students as well as their American counterparts. Both could be exposed and opened up to the social organization, cultural norms, and teaching practices of the other, and both sides learned from the process. Officials of the Ministry of Education pointed to the long-standing and effective joint administration of programs, particularly improvements in the teaching of English in Soviet and Russian high schools and universities. These officials implied that ACTR’s work played an indirect role in the social and educational processes of *glasnost*’ that eventually contributed to the collapse of the Soviet Union. They also cited for supporting the activities of MAPRIAL, which itself contributed greatly to the internationalization of standards for Russian language instruction. It began a relationship that was to blossom programmatically and institutionally, and one that thrives to this day. Davidson has received numerous awards from Russian institutions for his work in this regard, including election as a corresponding member of the Academy of Sciences.

University officials stressed the advantage for Soviet graduate students in conducting research in U.S. universities. They received mentoring from American scholars on their dissertation or *kandidat* research through ACTR programs, and ACTR’s pattern of recruitment extended beyond Moscow and then Leningrad to include participants from Russian regional areas heretofore largely blocked off from exposure to American universities and scholarly research.

### **Programmatic Cooperation with George Soros**

The new openness to international exchanges in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe also ushered in the remarkable participation of billionaire investor and philanthropist George Soros. He focused initially on his native Hungary, which in the years following the 1956 anticommunist uprising was in the forefront of experimentation with more liberal forms of state socialism. Soros wanted to promote English language training for Hungarian teachers, which he viewed as critical to the long-term success of Hungarian political, social, and economic development. Hearing of Davidson and ACTR through alumni of ACTR pro-

grams in his own foundation, Soros contacted Davidson to set up such a program. Davidson was keenly interested, particularly since USIA funding for summer language teachers in Eastern Europe was drying up. Davidson met with Soros in 1986. In what became a signature of Soros's desire to make a major impact on communist societies at a grassroots level, he queried Davidson as to how many English language teachers there were in Hungary. Davidson's own research indicated that there were two thousand. Soros then replied, "Then we can train them all in ten years."<sup>41</sup>

Soros provided ACTR with an initial grant to bring 180 Hungarian English language teachers to the United States for summer refresher courses and advanced training through ACTR's network of U.S.-based universities. Eventually several hundred teachers were trained. By 1989, Hungary's communist system had been overthrown, and other donors moved in to assist on the issue of improved English language training. Most important, the program had a significant impact in that alumni were serving in a number of major centers for the teaching of English language in Hungarian universities and other educational institutions.

Additionally, the success of the program set in motion a pattern of positive collaboration between Soros and his foundation, and Davidson and ACTR. In the fall of 1987, Davidson and Brecht proposed a complex cost-sharing arrangement with Soros to increase dramatically the number of American and Soviet undergraduate and graduate students who could receive Russian and English language training. Under the proposed arrangement, ACTR would send American students to its network of Soviet institutions with funds from the U.S. government, private foundations, U.S. universities, or the student's themselves. Soviet participating institutions would waive tuition for U.S. students, in exchange for assistance with the cost of tuition for the English-language training of Soviet students at U.S. universities. As tuition was much more costly at U.S. institutions, Soros would then top off U.S.-based tuition waivers to complete the arrangement.

Working with the emerging networks of ACTR field offices in the Soviet Union, and with the Soros Foundation's own network, Soros was able to finance much of the system in rubles rather than dollars, thereby maximizing Soviet student participation, which was his principal interest in the project.<sup>42</sup> Between 1988 and 1993, approximately 180 Soviet and 150 American students received language training each year. While nominations on the Soviet side were initially controlled by Soviet institutions (with the American administrators reserving the right to reject candidates on grounds of qualifications and eligibility), eventually the program served as another important means to promote open, merit-based selection for participation in international education and training programs.

Gorbachev-Reagan summits in 1986 and 1987 also spurred increased educational exchanges. In preparation for the historic 1988 summit, the National Security Council staff reached out to ACTR to help establish a secondary school exchange involving one thousand students on both sides. The program was drafted by ACTR in consultation with government experts at USIA, and ACTR eventually received their support to administer the program.<sup>43</sup> While the Soviet Ministry of Education sought to fully control Soviet participation, it did permit limited ACTR access to Soviet high schools, which dramatically expanded its already rich network of contacts within the Soviet educational system.

As ACTR programs grew in size and complexity, it became apparent that some full-time staff would be needed to support the organization. Lisa Choate, a former student of Davidson's at Bryn Mawr, was the first full-time ACTR hire in 1987. The conversion of Davidson to a paid ACTR employee occurred in 1988. By the end of that year, the organization had more than ten employees, including five in a permanent facility in Moscow permitted by Soviet authorities, personnel essential to the functional administration of the growing number of American graduate students and teachers participating in ACTR programs.

During the Gorbachev era, as the non-ethnic-Russian peoples and republics of the Soviet Union began to demand autonomy and eventually independence, the growing complexity of programs at ACTR also brought an organizational "branding" problem. In the rapidly decentralizing Soviet and East European system, the ACTR label presented an obstacle to non-Russian polities and institutions where ACTR sought to expand. To deal with this problem, ACTR created in 1987 an affiliated organization with a separate but interlocking board membership: the American Council for Collaboration and Education in Language Study (ACCELS).

Expansion of ACTR/ACCELS' programs was reflected in its budget. In 1987, the budget grew to \$1,285,643. By 1988, it was \$1,439,929. Membership, once numbering a little over one hundred, now totaled over twenty four hundred.<sup>44</sup> Despite this steady growth, no one in the Soviet and East European research and exchanges community fully anticipated the rapid collapse of communist systems in Eastern Europe in 1989 or of the Soviet Union in 1991. These events became the backdrop for an even more remarkable expansion of ACTR/ACCELS, transforming not only the programmatic size of the organization, but its human resources and regional presence.

### **Intensive Programmatic Growth and Diversity: 1988-Present**

## The End of the Soviet Union and Its Programmatic and Organizational Implications

The 1,000-1,000 High School Exchange Program (known as the “Presidential Initiative”) was born at the 1988 Reagan-Gorbachev summit in Moscow. The program, which was administered by ACTR/ACCELS under a contract with USIA, “revolutionized the teaching of Russian in secondary schools . . . making ACTR the most vital exchange organization with the USSR.”<sup>45</sup> Following this success, ACTR/ACCELS obtained a grant for a program of similar size for undergraduate students, an initiative proposed at a summit between President Bush and Gorbachev in 1989 in Malta.

While this was happening, ACTR/ACCELS’ more traditional programs were also growing. The era of “new thinking” in U.S.-Soviet relations produced nearly six hundred participants in the graduate language training and research programs from over 185 universities in the United States. By the end of 1989, Davidson was able to tell his board of directors that “there are virtually no constraints about where we can place Americans in the USSR and that almost all institutions are now open to our institutions.”<sup>46</sup>

In 1990 still more new programs were established. The Educational Testing Service (ETS) contracted with ACTR/ACCELS to administer TOEFL, GRE, and GMAT tests to Soviet participants in all U.S.- bound programs, not merely ACTR/ACCELS’ own programs. Testing centers were established in Moscow, Leningrad, Kiev, and Vilnius, giving ACTR/ACCELS its first field presence outside Moscow. Additional field presence was achieved by a grant from USIA to support foreign student advising in the countries of the former Soviet Union.

By this point, over seventeen hundred American students from 275 U.S. institutions had traveled abroad on ACTR/ACCELS programs, and over thirteen hundred Soviet and East European citizens had been placed in American institutions by ACTR/ACCELS staff. Soviet participants represented 169 Soviet institutions.<sup>47</sup> The number of American participants had effectively increased tenfold in just five years, and Soviet participation grew several thousandfold in percentage terms.

In the process, ACTR/ACCELS’ remarkable budgetary growth continued. Its budget in 1990 nearly tripled from the 1988 level, reaching \$4,208,671. ACTR/ACCELS’ auditors recommended a number of new internal controls to assure appropriate fiscal management.<sup>48</sup> ACTR/ACCELS had begun to take steps in this direction in 1989, creating standing committees for personnel, finance, publications, institutional relations, and research and development that had the authority under the bylaws to meet separately from the annual meetings of the full board of directors. George Morris’s duties as treasurer were buttressed by

the appointment of a full-time comptroller. Today, Morris's distinguished service continues in his role as coordinator of membership dues and other nonprogram activities.<sup>49</sup>

Meanwhile, remarkable political developments were in the offing. The attempted coup by conservative Communist Party elites against Gorbachev in August 1991 set in motion a nearly bloodless revolution that brought the Soviet Union to a crashing halt at the end of that year. This was an earth-trembling political event—the collapse of a state once thought to be the strongest and most resistant to major political change—and one with revolutionary implications for U.S.-Soviet relations. At the most basic level, there was no Soviet Union with whom to have relations. One state became fifteen, and the challenges of diplomacy, including public diplomacy through student and scholarly exchanges, grew exponentially overnight. The U.S. Congress and the first Bush administration responded with efforts to assist new post-Soviet leaders to meet the enormous political, economic, and social challenges they had inherited as the cost of independence. The United States' greatest adversary was to become one of its largest recipients of assistance.

The impact on exchanges was also fundamental. The intellectual, programmatic, and logistical challenges for an American nonprofit organization dealing with the former Soviet Union (FSU) was effectively multiplied by fifteen. The need for separate recruitments, separate numbers of participants, separate agreements of cooperation, and a massive new architecture of field offices were immediate challenges for ACTR/ACCELS and other exchange organizations. Programmatic impact was also immediate. At the end of 1991, on very short notice, USIA asked ACTR/ACCELS and three other organizations (the Institute of International Education, IREX, and the Soros Foundation) to administer a program that would enable graduate students from the new Eastern European and Eurasian countries to pursue masters or other professional degrees in economics, business administration, and public administration at American universities. ACTR/ACCELS received a grant of \$2.3 million to administer the largest part of a \$7 million overall program, named the Benjamin Franklin Program by USIA. Its congressional sponsor, Sen. George Mitchell (D-Me),<sup>50</sup> later renamed it in honor of the late Sen. Edmund Muskie (D-Me), a dedicated proponent of international exchanges.

The Franklin/Muskie program also provided an opportunity for ACTR/ACCELS to strengthen its relationship with Soros and his foundation, which became one of the implementing organizations. The Soros Foundation and ACTR/ACCELS worked closely together on the fields of study to be included in the Franklin/Muskie program and eventually cooperated in 1996 on a joint

proposal that gained the two organizations full administrative responsibility for the program's activities.

The process of U.S. engagement in the former Soviet Union through foreign assistance and international exchange programs deepened in 1992 with congressional passage of the Freedom Support Act (FSA). FSA authorized programs in a number of areas from private sector development to health and the environment. Among these priority areas were so-called democratic initiatives that included a diverse set of research, teaching, and student exchanges with the countries of the former Soviet Union. ACTR/ACCELS' strong reputation positioned it well to administer a number of these initiatives. By 1993, it was placing 3,000 participants in both directions of U.S. exchanged with the New Independent States (NIS) and with Central and Eastern Europe (CEE). Most programs provided for "long-term placement in academic settings for credit-bearing work or research in virtually any academic field."<sup>51</sup> To accommodate the growing requirements of recruitment, selection, and placement of participants, ACTR/ACCELS established twenty-three representational offices throughout the region, including eight in Russia and four in Ukraine. Just five years earlier, ACTR/ACCELS had no permanent employees in the FSU, relying on temporary resident directors and other *ad hoc* arrangements. Now, 140 full-time employees, both Americans and foreign nationals, staffed the regional offices.<sup>52</sup> ACTR/ACCELS had become "the only exchange organization that [works with] the entire spectrum of schools through the post-doctoral level."<sup>53</sup>

ACTR/ACCELS was now involved with NIS-wide and U.S.-wide recruitment, selection, and placement for high school and college students, graduate students, and researchers, as well as faculty and Fulbright scholars. Included in its portfolio were a number of USIA programs including the Muskie Fellowship Program and a multimillion dollar FSA variation of that program.

The Reagan-Gorbachev High School Exchange Program expanded dramatically with the support of Sen. Bill Bradley (D-N.J.) and Rep. Jim Leach (R-IA). ACTR/ACCELS was chosen to administer the lion's share of the recruitment and selection phases of the program. Utilizing a model devised by ACTR/ACCELS senior staffer Lisa Choate, in consultation with USIA officials, the Future Leaders Exchange Program (FLEX), as the Bradley initiative came to be known, reached a funding level of \$50 million in the early 1990s. The Bush-Gorbachev undergraduate exchange also received major new FSA support. ACTR/ACCELS received the largest share of grants under that program; from 1996 to 2002, it was the sole grantee. The major influx of U.S. government monies provided new resources to expand ACTR/ACCELS' network of field offices, thus mak-



ing the organization more competitive for programs that required a field office for success.

Cooperation with the Soros Foundation also intensified in the early 1990s. In March 1992 Soros called Davidson to his Fifth Avenue apartment in New York for a breakfast meeting to discuss what to do about Russian education. He was concerned that the collapse of critical institutions like the Academy of Sciences, and the lack of funding for basic education during the transition to a market economy, would have a profoundly negative effect on the training of the next generation of Russian students in high schools, colleges, and universities. Soros, as usual, was not interested in small steps. He hoped to revolutionize the writing of Russian textbooks and preserve the careers of the Russian technical intelligentsia by paying them small monthly retainers to write new texts. Soros was particularly interested in bridging the wide gulf between scholarly researchers and teachers in Russia. Separation of the two groups had been fundamentally enforced in the Soviet system by putting the teaching profession under the control of the Ministries of Education, and Higher Education, while research was directed by the Academy of Sciences. Soros wanted to use his considerable resources to bring these two groups of educational professionals together to reform the entire system.

Overcoming the broken shards of the Soviet system of education still lingering in Russia was not easy. Davidson convinced Soros that despite his distaste for government bureaucracy (indeed for any obstacle that stood in his way), the Soviet ministries and the academy would have to become active partners in the project, since local and national educational administrators would need to be shareholders in any accomplishments. Davidson assembled a joint Russian-American international advisory group that included a number of highly noted scholars and experts on Russian education. A competition committee was also formed that would receive proposals from Russian scholars and teachers on new textbooks to be supported for publication.

Beginning in late 1992, and culminating at the end of 1995, Soros and his foundation invested \$100 million in this project, referred to as the “Transformation Project,” although the Russian word for the project translates to “renewal” rather than “transformation.” The \$100 million investment also paid for small grants to scholars and teachers for textbooks, as well as teacher training workshops and testing, and grants to local educational administrators to purchase these textbooks and participate in their conceptual design.

Russian educators and educational officials regarded the Transformation Project as “one of the most important educational projects in the history of public education in Russia.” Participants in the effort to overhaul and reform

Russian education singled out for praise the “open encompassing” nature of the competitive process for considering new textbooks; its ongoing nature, which enabled the organizers of the project and local educational administrators to identify needs for further textbook development; and the workshop and testing features of the project.<sup>54</sup> All told, over five hundred textbooks were published for use in the Russian higher and pre-university educational system, and over three hundred fifty have been catalogued in the Library of Congress, indicating their importance as serious international scientific publications. A number of them, particularly in the social sciences, represented the first serious post-Soviet effort to produce usable textbooks for university-level instruction. (Appendix 2 to this study contains a selected bibliography of textbooks published under the Transformation Project.)

Always one to bet on the potential of individuals over institutions, Soros originally sought 100 percent of Davidson’s time for the project. They eventually settled on 80 percent in the last half of 1992, reduced to 50 percent in 1993, with a full-time assistant. Soros took the extraordinary step of even arranging for benefactors of Bryn Mawr College to smooth the way for the approval of a one-year leave for Davidson from his teaching duties in 1993.<sup>55</sup> Grants were provided to ACTR/ACCELS for some parts of the project, and the Russian field offices of both organizations worked closely on payments to participants, publication of textbooks in Russia, and the myriad of other administrative details of this extremely complex project. Organizational cooperation grew as the Transformation Project expanded to Belarus, Kyrgyzstan, and Ukraine.

In 1992, ACTR/ACCELS received the largest share of the USIA-funded Regional Scholar Exchange Program, which brought FSU scholars in the humanities and social sciences to the United States for a semester or academic year of research.<sup>56</sup> Thus, ACTR became responsible for many postdoctoral research opportunities for FSU scholars, a role primarily carried out previously under the auspices of IREX.

The exponential budget growth that had begun in the late 1980s began to look tiny by the end of 1993. The \$4.2 million figure in 1990, which had represented a tripling of the ACTR/ACCELS budget from 1988, more than tripled again by 1993, to \$15.01 million. Furthermore, the overwhelming demands of travel created by exponential growth in U.S. government programs led the organization to establish its own travel agency in 1993. Even as new exchange programs were being added, traditional ACTR/ACCELS support of language research and textbooks was deepening. New textbooks, including another edition of the Russian Face to Face Series, were published at the end of 1993.<sup>57</sup>



In 1994, ACTR/ACCELS expanded its group of funders to include the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). As the principal agency responsible for foreign assistance programs and a major provider of practical short-term training for foreign professionals all around the world, USAID had become a significant force in U.S. policy toward Eurasian countries after passage of the Freedom Support Act. With major new U.S. government funds at its disposal, USAID developed comprehensive programs to meet the needs of various professional sectors, from journalists to accountants to judges. Under a subcontract from the Academy for Educational Development, ACTR/ACCELS became responsible for recruitment of these professionals for this program. While not a fundamental research program, ACTR/ACCELS' strong programmatic reputation and field office resources positioned it well to be part of the winning bid for the NIS Educational and Training Program (NET), administered by USAID, which totaled about \$5-10 million per year throughout the 1990s.<sup>58</sup> The effect of this new relationship with USAID was a near doubling of participants in ACTR/ACCELS programs.

By 1994, not only had the number of ACTR/ACCELS participants in its already established academic and student exchange programs grown from 3,000 to 4,000, but another 3,000 participants from the NET program took part in short-term professional development courses in the United States.<sup>59</sup> Busier still, and again keeping faith with traditional academic constituencies, ACTR also released a new video series for third-year and beyond Russian students, Chto vy ob etom dumaete? (What Do You Think About That?), and began preliminary preparation of a five-volume Kazakh-American collaborative language training series, Kazakh Language through Russian.<sup>60</sup>

At the end of 1995, ACTR's professional membership remained high, with a figure of 1,129. Other activities, such as the language Olympiadas, also continued to thrive. The size of its field office staff expanded dramatically, reaching 250 Americans and foreign nationals in Eurasia in 38 regional support offices, recruitment and testing centers, and educational advising centers. By 1995 ACTR/ACCELS was administering more than twenty-five academic exchange and training programs for Americans and foreign nationals.<sup>61</sup>

### ***Building a Field Office Network***

The expansion of the ACTR/ACCELS field office network was both a delicate and rapidly changing process, with formidable internal management and external relations challenges. Internally, the organization benefited from the three-year experience of the Moscow office, which had been set up in 1988 and remained its only field office until early 1992. Davidson had concluded an

agreement with the Ministry of Higher Education whereby ACTR/ACCELS and the ministry could each operate in each other's country. He was somewhat reluctant to regard this model of tight reciprocity as a precedent, but even in the late Gorbachev period, the ability to operate freely in Russia was still limited by powerful bureaucracies seeking to closely regulate the operation of foreign organizations.

The Moscow office was housed in a new building of the Institute of Steel and Steel Alloys, one of ACTR/ACCELS' institutional partners for its Soviet-American language training and research programs. Located on Leninskii Prospekt, the institute offered easy access to the Moscow Metro's Brown Line that circles the center of the city, and the main American Councils office is still located there today. The ministry sent its own representative to the ACTR/ACCELS office in Washington in handling the personal or emergency requests of Soviet students and teachers studying in the United States. The Washington office also served as a clearinghouse for information on educational policy that previously came from the Soviet Embassy in Washington. When the size of Soviet-American exchanges snowballed following the 1988 Reagan-Gorbachev summit, the Soviet Embassy found itself ill-equipped to handle the volume of requests for assistance, and the ministry presence in tandem with ACTR/ACCELS staff in Washington proved highly useful in meeting the administrative requirements of Soviet teachers and students.

Although the Ministry of Education in Moscow was supposed to meet similar needs for American teachers and students in the Soviet Union, as a practical matter, ACTR staff, working with U.S. Embassy personnel, found themselves doing the crucial logistical work, particularly when the vast political transition underway in the country left ministries bereft of funds and staff. Davidson also used the Moscow ACTR office to develop "best practices" and new programs to assist the developmental objectives of the organization. ACTR/ACCELS quickly established itself as the organization of choice for testing Soviet students for English language competence through an agreement with ETS. It also began to develop Soviet student advising capacity with small grants from USIA. As a result, when the collapse of the Soviet Union enabled it to operate more comprehensively and with autonomy, ACTR/ACCELS had well-established institutional experience with what field offices could and should do. Davidson felt he was strongly positioned to "export" its model of operations to the newly independent countries and other Russian cities in which it would be required to operate in the post-Soviet environment.<sup>62</sup>

Still, as the number of offices and programs proliferated in the early to mid nineties, so did management problems. While program officers in Washington

dealt with field staff assigned to the on-site aspects of their programs, the dangers of “Balkanization” that any multinational organization faces were becoming more problematic. Staff loyalty to programs—rather than to the organization as a whole—was a growing concern. Problems in recruitment, selection, and transportation, and uncertain rules about the freedom of action to make programmatic and logistical choices led to frequent trips by senior management to Eurasia to extinguish managerial fires. The training of staff, the sharing of information on a timely basis, and the implementing of managerial “best practices” needed to be developed more coherently in an amazingly complex political and educational environment. It became clear that the organization’s complexity mandated a senior staff structure on-site that could better clarify chains of command and communication within the organization.

In the spring of 1995, after establishing clear-cut lines of authority and mandates to implement managerial change, David Patton, a resident director for ACTR/ACCELS programs in the Soviet Union from 1986 to 1991 and then a program officer in the Moscow office, accepted the newly created position of director of NIS operations. He quickly developed a coordinated authority structure over all ACTR/ACCELS field offices, and established more predictable lines of authority between the Washington office and field offices, working with long-time ACTR staff member and vice president, Lisa Choate.

Davidson, Patton, and Choate established a pattern of annual field office conferences to discuss problems and practices, and propose managerial solutions, and to build an organization-wide sense of identity for employees that was sometimes difficult to promote among field staff working in remote parts of the FSU. Processes and methods for training, evaluation, and promotion of employees were set in motion. As the organization grew in complexity, it deepened its field structure. Patton joined the staff of the Washington office in the summer of 2002 and in 2003 was supervising both the five regional directors working throughout Eastern Europe and Eurasia and a director of field operations based in Moscow.<sup>63</sup>

While the organization’s leadership worked to resolve the internal administrative challenges of developing and sustaining a field office network, external challenges were even more daunting. The Soviet legacy with regard to participation in educational and scientific exchanges was one in which both competence and political connections mattered, but when the two came into conflict, the latter carried the day. The U.S. government, to its credit, had informed the new post-Soviet governments that their citizens must have the right to compete openly for FSA and other U.S. government exchange programs. Embassy officials stressed to their new government counterparts that open competitions would be

a part of all such programs, and these officials usually remained faithful to this principle. Nonetheless, U.S. embassies themselves were scrambling to set up their operations and lacked both the personnel and the professional capacity to conduct open competitions. Dealing with the detailed implementation of open competitions was left almost entirely to U.S. nonprofit organizations.

The nonprofits could, however, usually count on the consistent support of the U.S. government to back up their decisions. In ACTR/ACCELS' case, this meant explaining to new ministers of education and even loftier government officials why they had a right to be there, why those ministries could not nominate their own people for participation, and why they should cooperate with, rather than hinder, the recruitment and selection work of ACTR/ACCELS in regions, cities, and even villages across the FSU. Each new country had a different political structure, and each had different reactions to the process of open competitions. Moreover, agreements reached with one government in a particular country could collapse overnight in the fluid process of governments establishing themselves and quickly failing during the early instability of the post-Soviet transition.

Like other American nonprofit organizations operating during the rough and tumble post-Soviet period, ACTR/ACCELS had two blunt but important advantages that led to success regarding the principle of open competition. First, the post-Soviet transition had a devastating short-term impact on the economies of the FSU countries, including their national budgets: the new educational ministries and their universities and institutions had very little money to offer in the conduct of reciprocal exchanges. With public and private U.S. funders paying for both sides of the exchanges, the only leverage left to FSU officials would have been to opt out. But they were desperately trying to make their states competitive in the international economic system, and shutting off educational and scientific contacts with the West would have been counterproductive.

Second, even these officials throughout the educational systems of the FSU who accepted open competitions as part of a larger national strategy of involvement in the outside world were in no position to run such competitions themselves. The closed system of nominations from the Soviet past left ministries inexperienced in conducting open processes. Even officials in Russia, which had the most experience in running international educational exchanges, privately admitted that they could not conduct open competitions themselves. "Even if we did," one such official remarked, "no one would believe they were fair and open. So you must do it yourself."<sup>64</sup>

Nonetheless, ACTR/ACCELS was careful not to use its obvious advantages in grant administration in a heavy-handed way. As the field network expanded into the twelve non-Baltic states of the former Soviet Union, the organization utilized

its contacts from the Soviet period and asked U.S. embassies to suggest ways in which open competitions and access to institutions could be accomplished.

ACTR/ACCELS also had the advantage of a strong positive reputation for dealing with teachers, scholars, and administrators in a practical and effective way. As a result, many participants in the Transformation Project were decidedly helpful in establishing a good political and administrative climate for the organization in various parts of the FSU. In other instances, ACTR/ACCELS concluded memoranda of understanding (or agreement), particularly in Russia, on the terms and conditions for their operations. This helped set a precedent since Soviet educational practices had been Russian-dominated. These agreements also provided a measure of respect to the new educational ministries in the FSU, even though Davidson avoided giving them any direct role in the selection of participants in U.S.-government funded programs. Certain programs like the Awards for Excellence in Teaching (TEA) and Partners in Education (PIE)—both described in detail below—provided direct benefits to teachers and schools that gave ministry officials very practical reasons to cooperate with ACTR/ACCELS in the open competition process.

Small joint conferences on teacher standards and institutional accreditation in certain disciplines of the humanities and social sciences enabled ministries of education to demonstrate to their political leaders that there was a practical payoff to letting ACTR/ACCELS operate more or less freely in the administration of exchange programs. As the 1990s unfolded and post-Soviet governments became more stable, Davidson also agreed to administer some exchange programs paid for by Eurasian governments where nominations were made by educational officials at the local level. These programs buttressed the ability of the organization to operate on the basis of fully open competition in other programs. ACTR/ACCELS (and subsequently American Councils) was even allowed to build at least some competitive and fairness safeguards into the programs paid for by other governments.

Finally, as a result of keeping U.S. embassy staff in the loop concerning their work with post-Soviet educational institutions, ACTR/ACCELS could cooperate with the embassies in sending educational officials to the United States under international visitor programs controlled by the U.S. government. When this was not possible, the organization established a discretionary delegation and hosting fund to enable influential educational officials to travel to the United States.<sup>65</sup>

In fact, given the fluid and unstable political environment throughout much of the region in the 1990s, and the uneven commitment of governments and ministries of education to principles of open competition and access to exchange resources, it is a wonder that ACTR/ACCELS did not encounter more

administrative crises than it did. Nonetheless, it was and is nowhere near a problem-free process. More than once, delicate support for ACTR/ACCELS' operational freedom with a particular minister of education has had to be rebuilt from scratch because that minister fell was replaced by another in a matter of months, and again by another. More than once, the political leaders of a country wondered why their "sons and daughters" broadly defined were not selected in the competitive process and pressured U.S. embassies for their inclusion.

Some other, more dramatic examples of the problems encountered by the field office network in the NIS bear mentioning. In 1994, a group of forty-five professionals awaiting an international flight to the United States were held hostage at a Russian hotel in Moscow by gangsters, who knew they each were holding \$200 in stipends for expenditure at their host U.S. institution. The matter was eventually resolved with the help of Russian security officials.<sup>66</sup> In 2000, the government of Turkmenistan denied its citizens permission to travel to the United States on American Councils' FSA exchange programs because not enough ethnic Turkmens had received support through the competitive process; eventually, the government relented.

The most dramatic and heartbreaking incident unfolded in the spring of 2001. The government of Belarus closed down American Councils' operations in that country and arrested Charles Perriello, the country director, on trumped-up illegal drug charges. Belarusian authorities believed that the organization was openly undermining the political leadership of the country through their conduct of FSA programs. Perriello was subjected to a trial that recalled the worst days of the Soviet era and was sentenced to five years in prison. As of this writing, Perriello, an American citizen, remains incarcerated in Minsk, but the organization's rights to operate are being restored.

### **Confidence and Support from the U.S. Government**

A major factor contributing to ACTR's program growth during the post-Soviet period was the considerable confidence of the U.S. government in ACTR/ACCELS as an organization. U.S. officials, particularly at USIA, regard the organization as a "can do" institution that responded very effectively to the need to administer massive new amounts of exchange monies. Its ability to staff its field offices quickly and maintain close, constructive relations with U.S. embassies; as well as its inherent strength as an organization with considerable area studies, language ability and practical administrative skills within its staff, were cited as the major reasons for ACTR/ACCELS growing success in obtaining USIA/ECA funding.



Davidson also demonstrated the seriousness with which he regarded the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA), the successor to USIA, as a funder by frequently traveling to the region to meet with embassy officials himself and thus become directly involved in solving programmatic problems in USIA-funded initiatives. USIA and ECA grew to regard ACTR/ACCELS as an organization they could trust with tens of millions of taxpayer dollars and the advancement of the U.S. government's interests abroad.<sup>67</sup> It was also an organization with a profound understanding of Soviet/Russian educational system, and therefore one that could give the U.S. government access to the Soviet/Russian educational establishment in ways that would otherwise be impossible.

ACTR/ACCELS' reputation also attracted the attention of Ambassador Richard Morningstar, the State Department's coordinator of assistance to the NIS. Davidson and Brecht, who knew Morningstar from past Harvard professional contacts, held periodic meetings with him from 1994-1999. Morningstar was impressed with ACTR's reputation as a developer of innovative programs in a widening field of competence that could also help meet U.S. foreign policy objectives.<sup>68</sup> Davidson and Brecht had proposed a number of new programs to Morningstar (as well as to officials at USIA and other potential funding sources), but requirements for competitive bidding and the availability of funding typically prevented such programs from being implemented through the coordinator's office.

In the spring of 1996, at a public gathering of students and faculty in Moscow during a summit meeting between President Bill Clinton and Russian President Boris Yeltsin, a student from Vladivostok asked Clinton why American assistance programs did not reach ordinary members of the Russian population. After struggling for an answer, the president asked for a full briefing from Morningstar on U.S. assistance programs. He asked if some new initiatives to demonstrate more direct impact could be undertaken. Earlier, in 1995, Davidson and Brecht had offered Morningstar a proposal to develop a "teacher of the year program," whereby awards would be given in nearly every region (*oblast'*) of Russia to a teacher who had undertaken a new educational or community effort that improved directly the lives of the local populace. ACTR/ACCELS would organize competitions to identify such teachers and provide them with a stipend to come to the United States for up to eight weeks to enhance their skills. Selected American teachers would host the Russian teachers and travel to the region on a selection-committee basis to further develop educational or community objectives in a given *oblast'*. Semifinalists from each *oblast'* receive given funding for themselves and their schools, the former being a stipend, and the latter a grant for equipment and upgraded teaching materials.

The program fit President Clinton's demand for a "direct impact" program. It also focused on a long-felt need within the Russian educational system for teacher training and materials upgrades that ACTR/ACCELS had been working on through the Soros Transformation Project. With Morningstar providing discretionary funding and "instructing" USIA to also fund the program on a sole source basis to ACTR/ACCELS, the Awards for Excellence in Teaching (TEA) and Partners in Education (PIE) programs were born. To close the circle that began with a question from the president, the TEA program was formally endorsed by then First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton during her trip to Kyrgyzstan in November 1997.<sup>69</sup>

### **The Mid-1990s Contraction and the Creation of the American Councils**

The 1994 elections in the United States brought new challenges to non-profit organizations like ACTR/ACCELS. Elected on a mandate of reducing government spending, the Republican party gained control of both the House of Representatives and the Senate. While the bipartisan consensus in support of foreign assistance and exchange programs was preserved, they generally received a lower level of funding. Davidson, in his annual report to the ACTR board of directors, expressed his belief that 1995 would represent "a historic high water mark in U.S. government support" of ACTR/ACCELS.<sup>70</sup>

Indeed, the FLEX program budget for fiscal year 1995 was reduced by 10 percent, and the impending retirement of Senator Bradley in 1996 presaged further reductions. The USIA-funded undergraduate exchange was also reduced by 25 percent that year. Title VIII funding for American scholars suffered a similar 25 percent reduction, the second such fiscal year cut. Of further danger was the growing ACTR/ACCELS reliance on U.S. government support for its programmatic activities. In 1976, the federal portion of the then ACTR budget was less than 10 percent; by 1995, it was 85 percent.<sup>71</sup>

The impact of these cuts took a few years to work its way through program and administrative budgets. In fact, by 1995, the ACTR/ACCELS budget had increased by another \$10 million, from \$15 million in 1993 to \$25.7 million in 1995.<sup>72</sup> Nonetheless, in an effort to maximize its ability to find alternative funding in the face of possible diminution of government support, the board of directors recommended changes to the ACTR bylaws to permit the organization to expand its contacts with corporate and non-U.S. government funders, including foreign governments and multinational corporations, as well as to bolster its human resources in organizational advancement and government relations.

As a practical matter, a restructuring of the organization was long overdue. Its original core objectives, centered on the teaching of, and research on, the



Russian language, had long been expanded to include a wide range of programs that varied in their importance to such goals. The collapse of the Soviet Union, the emergence of ACCELS to further the work of ACTR in Eastern Europe and Eurasia, and the perceived need to develop alternative sources of funding should U.S. government funding be sharply reduced, pointed to the need for structural change within the organization. The board considered two models.<sup>73</sup> One would be to leave ACTR unchanged and establish a new nonprofit organization with a broader charter and no interlocking directorate between the new organization and existing ACTR and ACCELS governing boards. A second model would modify the existing organizational structure so that two separate divisions of a new nonprofit corporation would direct the traditional activities of language teaching and research. Completely new bylaws would be written for the umbrella organization while the current bylaws would constitute charters for the new ACTR and ACCELS divisions. For a variety of reasons, not the least of which was sensitivity in the American academic community to the preservation of a discrete set of traditional teaching and research activities for ACTR, the second option was ultimately chosen by the ACTR board at its annual meeting in December 1995.

Debate ensued between the ACTR board and its membership on the proposed changes and the relationship of the new organization to its two established parts with possibly more in the future. Robert Channon, now of Purdue University, was asked to supervise the writing of new bylaws. Much as he had helped with the creation of the organization at the SACRL conference in late 1974, Channon energetically devoted himself to this different organizational challenge.

By the end of 1996, a number of changes were ripe for approval. These included: (1) developing ACTR articles of governance that would define its activities as those related to programs of educational exchanges and language textbook work, and nonprogram activities (Olympiadas, conferences, etc.); (2) transfer of legal control for administering grant income from the treasurer of ACTR to the treasurer of the new corporation, while still enabling the treasurer of ACTR to be responsible for nonprogram activities; (3) giving the ACTR board an equal number of members on the nominating committee of the new corporation as those of any other person or entity in the naming of trustees to govern the new organization; and (4) making it possible for the same person to serve as president of the new organization and as Executive Director of ACTR, responsible and reporting to the ACTR board.

On December 28, 1996, the ACTR board agreed to amend the bylaws to accomplish these purposes and to begin the process of drafting new bylaws for

the as yet unnamed umbrella organization and registering it legally as a nonprofit. An ACTR membership meeting approved the board's actions the next day.

While there was some resistance from those who felt ACTR's program independence and organizational power were being effectively neutered, the membership overwhelmingly approved the changes to its bylaws and the creation of a new nonprofit organization.<sup>74</sup> Little over a year later, on January 9, 1998, the new organization, the American Councils for International Education: ACTR/ACCELS, voted itself into legal existence. Remarkably, the academic members of the ACTR and ACCELS boards had agreed change an organization devoted to pure research and teaching into an academic corporation so as to boost its competitive position and prospects for long-term sustainable growth.

Of course, Davidson and the ACTR/ACCELS staff did not wait for the creation of the American Councils to actively pursue sources of funding other than the U.S. government. They negotiated a number of programs paid for by NIS governments (in particular, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan) to bring students and scholars from those countries to the United States for research and professional training. The successful administration of these programs opened up a new revenue that provided some insulation from the U.S. government budget cuts of the mid-1990s. As a result, the amazing budgetary growth of ACTR/ACCELS could be at least consolidated during a period of reductions in U.S. government programs.

In 1996, the budget of the organization was \$24.76 million, only about a million less than 1995, despite 10-50 percent cuts in the budgets of some U.S. government programs in which ACTR/ACCELS participated.<sup>75</sup> In 1997, the figure for the American Councils was \$23.5 million, and it remained steady at that figure in 1998.<sup>76</sup> Exchangees from FSU countries also were reduced as a result of the budgetary declines, although a figure of about twenty-five hundred instead of three thousand can surely still be characterized as robust and substantial.<sup>77</sup>

### **Programmatic Growth Renewed**

Almost as quickly, by 1999, the American Councils structure and its human resources were able to stimulate another round of remarkable growth. Several factors accounted for this. First, during the period of mid-1990s retrenchment, U.S. government funding agencies, particularly USIA, decided to initiate a series of "winner take all" grant competitions for its large exchange programs with FSU countries. American Councils' strong programmatic reputation, particularly with respect to on-site recruitment of FSU participants, and its preeminent field office infrastructure positioned it well for such competitions. As a result, beginning in 1996, American Councils became the prime contractor with the Soros Foun-

dation for the Muskie Fellowship Program, its FSA graduate variant, the FSA undergraduate program, and in 1998, the Regional Scholars Program. In short, with respect to zero-sum competitiveness during a period of U.S. government budgetary retrenchment, American Councils excelled.

American Councils then benefited from a policy shift within the U.S. government concerning the reduction of foreign assistance and international educational exchanges to FSU countries. Beginning in 1997, FSA programs began to increase again, moving from about \$625 million in fiscal year 1995 to nearly \$900 million in fiscal year 1998, then stabilizing around that level thereafter. However, the “winner take all” policy continued to be a part of USIA administration of many FSU exchanges. In essence, American Councils benefited twice, once from its superior competitive position, and again from the higher funding levels.

Earlier American Councils’ decisions to administer exchange programs with funds obtained directly from FSU governments also contributed to this new growth spurt. In 1995, such programs totaled about \$3 million, but by 1999 the figure was nearly \$11 million. American Councils’ share in the USAID NET (later called the Global Training for Development Program) also increased substantially in 1999.<sup>78</sup>

Additionally, in 1998 American Councils concluded a partnership with the National Council for Eurasian and East European Research (NCEEER) to strengthen the scholarly research programs of both organizations. Its preeminent field office infrastructure and expertise in FSU languages, literatures, and the humanities was paired with NCEEER’s extensive network of grants, largely in the social sciences, to scholars in major research universities in the United States. This partnership was successful in winning the USIA-funded Regional Scholars Program in 1998, grants for humanities research from the National Endowment for the Humanities in 1999, and in 2000, a new program of social science and humanistic research for scholars from regions of Russia funded by the Carnegie Corporation. With the decision in 2002 by ECA to terminate the Regional Scholars Program, the Carnegie Research Fellowship Program became the only source of support for Russian or NIS scholars seeking to conduct advanced research in the United States on humanistic and social science topics.

Finally, there was one other major factor in the “end of the millennium” phase of American Councils’ program diversity and growth. In 1999, it received a major new grant from the Library of Congress to provide substantial administrative support in Russia and the United States for the Russian Leadership Program (RLP). James Billington, the librarian of Congress and noted Russian historian, originally conceived the program with design assistance from Davidson and

American Councils and NCEEER staff. It had the strong support of Senator Ted Stevens (R-Alaska), chairman of the Senate Appropriations Committee.

The program brings 2,000 elected officials and emerging leaders from all levels of the Russian governmental structure for ten-to-fourteen-day visits to U.S. host communities. Participants observe and “shadow” their counterparts, taking part in homestays, press conferences, and meetings with local, state, and national government representatives in virtually all parts of the United States. Representatives from nearly all eighty-nine Russian *oblasts* are typically represented each year. Utilizing its network of field offices in eight Russian cities, and a number of staff in its Moscow office who work only on this program, now renamed Open World, American Councils has been responsible for the recruitment and processing of participants and their orientation in Russia and the United States. Host organizations in the United States are responsible for the content of their programs, although American Councils also prepares the program questionnaires and gathers comprehensive attitudinal data to measure program effectiveness.<sup>79</sup>

By 1999, the expertise of Davidson and his colleagues ushered in still another tranche of impressive programmatic growth, confirming the timeliness of the decision to restructure ACTR/ACCELS into the American Councils. The \$23-25 million plateau of the mid-to-late 1990s was superseded in 1999 by a budget of \$38 million, and about \$47.6 million in 2000. The somewhat dangerous level of 85 percent dependence on federal funding that existed in 1995 had been reduced to 69 percent in the process, through grants from FSU countries and private foundations like the Ford Foundation.<sup>80</sup>

The American Councils’ field office network expanded again, this time reaching 300 personnel in 46 regional field offices in 1999, and 337 by 2002.<sup>81</sup> Even as this new round of programmatic growth ensued, the historic programmatic roots of the organization remained strong within the new organizational structure. American Councils continued, as ACTR had done for twenty-five years, to focus energy, attention, and resources of issues of critical interest to Slavic and particularly Russian language teaching and research.<sup>82</sup> Continuing membership in the organization remained steady at around twelve hundred.

## **Growing Pains, External Criticisms, Organizational Impact, and Future Challenges**

### **Struggles and Brickbats**

Given the American Councils’ exponential growth over nearly three decades, it is not surprising that the organization has suffered some growing pains and

external criticism. With regard to growing pains, of particular note have been two fiscal issues that began to attract attention in the late 1990s. The first concerns the fiscal reconciliation of a growing number of grants from multiple sources. As staff and grants to pay them have grown, the process of charging the time of employees and program costs to the appropriate grants has become increasingly complex. Related to this has been the demand for prompt financial reporting for funders to meet program and administrative needs. These complications have in turn made financial reporting more difficult.

A second problem concerns the relationship of the financial terms of grants to development goals. As federal agencies have come under greater pressure in the 1990s, from both Congress and the Office of Management and Budget, to generate cost-sharing from recipient organizations for the grants they award, corresponding strain has been placed on the nonprofits to provide unrestricted revenue and income from their assets in order to be competitive. In some instances, particularly for smaller grants, the U.S. government may be unable or unwilling to offer subsidies that reflect the actual costs of administration. USIA in particular has limited administrative costs that organizations can claim on nearly all its grants to no more than 20 percent. A smaller grant may in fact generate a loss to the organization that administered it. It may apply for it anyway, because these grants are central to its mission and its constituencies, or because it fears a loss of grant competitiveness across the spectrum of organizational activities, including the more cost-beneficial federal grants.

In 1997, the growing size of the American Councils, accompanied by a greater demand for cost-sharing began to produce deficit spending. In 1999, an audited fiscal year deficit of \$221,000 was incurred.<sup>83</sup> To deal with the problem, the trustees (the functional equivalent of the board of directors) in 1998 and 1999 authorized a number of concrete steps to be taken by American Council's management including:

- 1) the creation of a finance and administration division to oversee all financial and administrative functions including accounting, computing, communications, banking, purchasing, investments, taxation, and the like;

- 2) greater attention to the negotiation and renegotiation of administrative costs, to incorporate where possible salary escalators, cost-of-living increases, and inflation;

- 3) greater integration of program and financial staff to better track program costs and appropriate charges to appropriate grants.<sup>84</sup>

These steps improved the situation considerably. By posting surpluses in fiscal years 2001 and 2002, net assets were turned from negative to positive. Despite the difficulties of net assets balance, the American Councils did not lose the confidence of any of its governmental or nongovernmental funders, and its internal financial accounting structure remained strong and of the highest rating by professional accounting standards.<sup>85</sup>

In a profession with largely nebulous standards about the bounds of competitive propriety, American Councils has also sometimes been regarded as an organization with very sharp elbows. Critics at times point to the difficulty of transferring a positive climate about partnership expressed by Davidson or other members of the staff into concrete, enforceable agreements or cooperation in joint administration of programs. In one controversial case in 1994, a competing organization in the area of undergraduate exchanges, the American Collegiate Consortium (ACC), charged that the American Councils tried to take competitive advantage of the death of Anthony Riccio, one of ACC's sponsored American students in Moscow. Davidson and other officials have denied this charge. USIA officials at the time intervened both in Moscow and Washington to ensure that organizations would work closely together to prevent competitive impulses from undermining program administration.<sup>86</sup>

### **Organizational Impact and Alumni Successes**

Whatever the growing pains of the American Councils, and the criticisms leveled against its activities, no one can deny its spectacular expansion. The organization began with one graduate language exchange, membership dues, a newsletter, periodic conferences, and language Olympiadas. In 2001 it had fifty grants from governmental, nongovernmental, private foundations, and corporations.<sup>87</sup> It has preserved the modest program roots from which it sprang while at the same time becoming the premier academic and student exchange organization among U.S. nonprofits working in the FSU.

The number of Americans and post-Soviet citizens touched by American Councils programs is enormous. With regard to Americans, "more than 2,600 students from 274 colleges and universities have taken part in semester or academic year advanced-level language and regional studies training programs in Russia or other FSU countries under the auspices of American Councils. American Councils is "now the primary American graduate and undergraduate exchange organization with the Russophone world," and budgetary figures confirm this opinion.<sup>88</sup> American alumni of American Councils programs have developed successful careers in fifteen different professions, including academia, business, government, university administration and the nonprofit sector. Survey data



indicate that more than three-quarters of participants believed that their ability to adapt to new situations in life, their professional self-confidence, and their interest in Russia somewhat or greatly increased.<sup>89</sup>

With respect to participants throughout the former Soviet states, the story of impressive impact is very much the same. The massive influx of funds under the Freedom Support Act in the 1990s has produced over twenty-two thousand alumni of American Councils programs.<sup>90</sup> In alumni surveys of FSU academic participants, more than three-quarters of respondents say that their American Councils exchange experience influenced their system of grading, major course requirements, course curricula, library holdings, the process of student admissions, the system of job tenure, and faculty hiring and promotion.<sup>91</sup> Like their American counterparts, Eastern European and Eurasian participants have returned to their countries to be members of central banks, embassies, government ministries (including principal ministers), foreign policy advisors, deans and senior scholars at prestigious universities, businessmen and businesswomen, and executives of nongovernmental organizations. U.S. government officials also give American Councils high marks for its work with alumni and programs to promote interaction among them. They also cite the American Councils' ongoing efforts to keep key constituencies in the FSU and in Washington aware of the success of U.S. government programs. The longstanding ties between American Councils and former Senator Bradley, perhaps the political figure most responsible for the creation of the FLEX program, was given as one clear example of American Councils work in both alumni programming and government relations.<sup>92</sup>

In 2002, the American Councils began a systematic effort to catalog anecdotal success stories among its thousands of alumni. It published highlights of alumni successes in a ten-year anniversary volume commemorating the achievements of the Muskie/FSA graduate program and initiated a bimonthly publication of alumni success stories called *Alumni Discovery* for its many ECA-funded programs. Among the many success stories are the following:

(1) Cornella Cincilei, a Muskie alumna from Moldova, established a program based on American educational principles to encourage critical thinking and problem solving in early childhood. The program runs in 100 kindergartens and 182 elementary schools, serving about 35,000 children nationwide.

(2) Afgan A. Abdullayev, a Muskie FSA alumnus from Azerbaijan and the dean of the School of Humanities at Khazar University, organizes seminars for refugee teachers from the conflict-ridden area of Nagorno-Karabakh.

(3) Shohrat Orazov, a Muskie/FSA alumnus from Turkmenistan, is working with the United Nations Caspian Environment Program to head off ecological disasters facing the Caspian Sea and its coast.

(4) Tatyana Lugovskaya, a Junior Faculty Development Program (JFDP) alumna from Russia, has initiated a program of practical business case studies for her students regarding local economic conditions and business climate in Ekaterinburg.

(5) Four Russian teachers, Olga Vance, Anna Nesvetaylo, Natalia Zalkina, and Galina Ermolina, alumni of the Awards for Excellence in Teaching and Partners in Education programs, have developed year-long civic education seminars for administrators and teachers in Novosibirsk, as well as setting up social partnerships in the city to encourage community participation in local schools.

(6) Oksana Zelenova, a Future Leaders Exchange alumna from Russia, has established, with American and Russian nongovernmental organizations, a three-month summer camp for children from war-torn Chechnya.

(7) Natalia Mironova, a Regional Scholars Exchange Program (RSEP) alumna in Russia, has formed the Movement for Nuclear Safety, an Russian nongovernmental organization that focuses on exposing the environmental and health consequences of nuclear proliferation and lack of adequate safeguards at Russian civilian and military facilities.<sup>93</sup>

The organization, despite its massive growth and diversification, has not lost sight of its roots and original mission. About half of the four hundred or so higher educational institutions with Russian language programs in the United States use textbooks developed by ACTR and the American Councils.<sup>94</sup> If one includes universities where at least one ACTR textbook is used, even if they are not for the foundation of language instruction, the number rises to over three hundred. Twenty new universities adopted ACTR textbooks in 2001-2002 alone. American Councils' track record provides universities and high schools with a measure of confidence to move forward with Russian language instruction, even though enrollment levels are uncertain. It has worked with interested private and public funders, as well as private individuals in the publishing industry, to devise in-kind and cost-shared arrangements to maintain textbook production. In particular, it is not an exaggeration to say that without American Councils'



direct and ongoing involvement, Russian language programs at the K-12 level might collapse altogether<sup>95</sup>

In addition to textbooks, the American Councils has had a major impact in a number of areas related to language policy and pedagogy. In cooperation with the College Board, it has played a central role in the development of a nationally recognized Advanced Placement (AP) course and examination in Russian for high school students. Particularly in the post-Soviet period, the AP course provides a critical link to maintaining the interest of high school students in the Russian language by providing the incentive of college credit. It also improves the preparedness of students for Russian language instruction at the university level.

American Councils has also played a key role in sponsoring research on standards for foreign language learning, how such learning occurs and how and when students excel depending on the nature of instruction. Working with the National Foreign Language Center, headed by Brecht, a major player in the creation and sustenance of the American Councils, it has published extensively on the process of second language acquisition.

In recognition of the growing interest in textbooks adapted to multimedia, American Councils has developed two groundbreaking web sites, RussNet and CenAsiaNet. Initially funded by the Ford Foundation, RussNet provides information, language learning modules, courses, materials, in-service teacher training, databases, discussion fora, and gateways to other Russian language resources. Language learning modules are designed as online components to extant American Councils textbooks, although most can be used as stand-alone learning materials without the textbook or a classroom. Its Virtual Classroom feature allows teachers to create their own “classroom space” and give their own assignments in conjunction with the modules. Supported by the Department of Education, the Department of Defense, and the National Endowment for the Humanities, American Councils offers all RussNet materials free to anyone who wishes to use them. With over ten thousand registered users, many of them are individuals who are not learning through a classroom structure, it is entirely possible that RussNet has proportionally increased the number of Russian language students in the United States. According to American Councils, that figure is now estimated at twenty-five thousand at universities and colleges, as well as 10,000 at high schools and proprietary and religious schools, and about 5,000 in government agencies.

CenAsiaNet provides similar features for learners of the Central Asian languages, including Azeri, Kazakh, Turkmen, and Uzbek. It has rapidly become a critical component of advanced education in the Central Asian languages in the

United States, since they are taught in only a handful of universities, and learning opportunities outside the classroom are almost nonexistent. CenAsiaNet also serves as a portal for the Central Asian studies community in the United States, offering career advice and valuable networking opportunities.

Finally, in a period of diminished interest in Russian language instruction, American Councils continues to support and publicize work on the theory and evolution of the Russian language through the *ACTR Letter* and its sole sponsorship of the *Russian Language Journal*, published since 1947. It is one of the oldest and most authoritative Russian language journals in United States. (Appendix 3 contains an extensive list of publications on the Russian language sponsored by the American Councils.

### **Future Challenges**

The organization will face three central challenges in the years ahead. First, in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks on the United States on September 11, 2001, the direction of U.S. relations with the countries of the former Soviet Union is being fundamentally transformed. New security relations with the countries of Central Asia and closer Russian-American cooperation on economic and security issues may develop as the stability of the Middle East is threatened. Terrorist activity has reached not only major cities in the FSU like Moscow, but the Caucasus and Central Asia as well. All these developments may lead to a declining emphasis on research and exchanges in favor of defense cooperation and new trade privileges.

Already there are some signs that traditional exchange providers like ECA are shifting resources to Islamic countries outside the former Soviet Union, with unclear, but potentially alarming implications for organizations like the American Councils. The second Bush administration has preferred to focus on fighting terrorism primarily through increases in defense spending, military and economic support to friendly countries and allies, and the deployment of U.S. military forces. If this trend continues, federal funding for research and exchange may be reduced, meaning that new Islamic programs might be funded at the expense of those focused on the countries of the former Soviet Union and Central and Eastern Europe.

A second related challenge concerns the recurring issue of donor fatigue. After many decades of exchanges for high school, undergraduate, graduate, and postgraduate research and exchange programs with the countries of the region, private and public donors are beginning to wonder if their investments have saturated the likely target audiences. At least in some countries of the region,

significant progress has been made toward economic reform and stable, liberal democracy. Some government funders have begun to ask fundamental questions: Have the Freedom Support Act and the Support for East European Democracy (SEED) Act met their objectives? Is it time to “declare victory” and downsize, even eliminate a number of exchange programs directed at students, teachers, and other professionals in the region? Even if exchange resources are to be continued at significant levels, should we not move beyond relatively straightforward exchanges of professionals to promoting serious institutional change in the higher educational infrastructure in countries of the region?

Finally, the competitive environment for the American Councils has become more intense. Under new leadership, IREX has expanded its programmatic capacity beyond postdoctoral research and technical assistance programs to exchange areas that were once the American Councils’ principal domain. In late 2001, IREX took control of the FSA undergraduate exchange program, a program American Councils had operated since its inception in the late 1980s. IREX also has strengthened its recognized edge in computer and Internet technical assistance programs through the ECA-funded Internet Access and Training Program. IREX is now implementing programming to bring computer access to high school institutions in the Caucasus, an age group that has always been one of the American Councils’ most important constituencies. Finally, the non-profit organization Project Harmony has also been successful in obtaining ECA and other grants for non-academic professional training once administered to a greater degree by the American Councils (and IREX).

Concerning the first challenge, American Councils has worked hard to establish an effective pattern of government relations to sustain the case for continuing and significant funding levels for research and exchanges with the countries of the region. It has joined with the Alliance for International Educational and Cultural Exchange, an umbrella coalition that promotes support for exchanges of all kinds, not only those with the FSU and CEE. American Councils staff work with the Alliance in building a consensus on a number of issues affecting the exchanges community in the United States, from levels of federal appropriations to regulatory issues and grass-roots awareness of the value of exchanges in local communities. The staff also works closely with other Alliance organizations and the Alliance staff to mobilize support by writing to and visiting offices of members of Congress, particularly committees and subcommittees of the House and Senate Appropriations Committees, the House International Relations Committee, and the Senate Foreign Relations Committee to make the case directly for the value of exchanges. American Councils “public citizenship” in this regard was confirmed by Alliance staff, who also noted that

it play's an often critical role in advising Congressional staff on the preparation of legislation that would create new exchange initiatives.<sup>96</sup> During the time of the creation of the FLEX program, the staff of Senator Bradley noted that the American Councils provided invaluable information about potential opposition to the program from a variety of quarters and advised them on the most effective models of program content. According to Bradley's staff, the senator gave them standing instructions: "When you hear from Davidson or ACTR [as it was called then], let me know immediately."<sup>97</sup>

As another facet of it's political tactics and legislative program building, American Councils devotes considerable time to linking alumni of American Councils programs to key figures in the executive and legislative branches. Gatherings in which program alumni meet U.S. ambassadors to particular countries, senior officials of the State Department, or with legislators in their home districts or states builds the case in a "press the flesh" sense for the value of exchange programs. They represent a direct human means to demonstrate how programs administered by American Councils have impacted positively on students, scholars and other professionals from the region. In turn, such gatherings have built support for the programs both in Congress and within the Department of State.

With respect to the challenge of donor fatigue, this study has demonstrated that trying to anticipate the educational and professional needs of both American students and scholars and their educational counterparts in the region has been a hallmark of American Council programs. The high school and undergraduate initiatives of the late 1980s and early 1990s are two examples of the organization's vision and programmatic expertise. So is the English language training program and the ambitious objectives and substantial achievements of the Transformation Project, both funded by the Soros Foundation.

Today, the organization continues to pursue organic initiatives that move beyond traditional exchanges. American Councils has launched, with support from the Department of State and USAID, a very ambitious program of independent testing of high school seniors in Kyrgyzstan. Testing programs of a less ambitious nature are also underway under American Councils administration in Georgia, Russia, and Ukraine

The Kyrgyz program was designed to establish national merit testing for Kyrgyz universities so as to reduce corruption and improve the quality of entering undergraduates. Admission of students under the Soviet system, and preserved until this program was developed by American Councils, was in the hands of university rectors who had the power to make selections for university entrance on a discretionary basis. Testing methods were also antiquated, relying on memorization of facts to a preassigned essay question for which students would have

six hours to answer. The American Councils testing method stresses problem solving and critical thinking and is modeled in part after the Educational Testing Service's Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT), used to select American students for American universities. The tests are designed, under the direct supervision of American Councils, by experts who have substantial knowledge of the region and of Soviet and post-Soviet educational structures. Test results are administered and graded by American Councils' experts. The test results available for the first time in the summer of 2002, determine the awarding of scholarships to students seeking entrance to Kyrgyz universities. Although there was fierce resistance among university rectors and other parts of the educational bureaucracy, the program has the direct support of President Askar Akaev. The, rectors have now relaxed their resistance and are competing for high-scoring students with incentive packages.

According to Davidson, the Kyrgyz Independent Testing Program has the potential to revolutionize the educational system in the country.<sup>98</sup> The test results will enable educators in Kyrgyzstan to identify weaknesses in the educational structure. This in turn has profound implications for teacher training and curriculum development, drawing more clear-cut links between problems of educational instruction and policy relevant issues such as the distribution of health care or agricultural and industrial organization. Such testing is also an empirical foundation for efforts to adjust educational instruction to meet the school-to-work needs of domestic employers and foreign investors in Kyrgyzstan.

For an organization like American Councils, this new kind of organic, grass-roots educational reform opens the organization to a whole range of funding opportunities through the World Bank and USAID, designed to make former Soviet states more competitive economically through systematic reform of their educational systems. It represents a new level of programmatic development for American Councils, drawn from its experience, but moving beyond exchanges of personnel toward challenging but essential issues of institutional reform of higher education in the former Soviet Union and Central and Eastern Europe.

At the same time, American Councils continues to make the case that while some progress has been made, economic reform and the liberal democratic objectives of U.S. government programs are still far from being fully achieved in many parts of the region. While it is true that there are thousands of regional alumni of such programs, the population of the countries of the former Soviet Union exceeds 300 million, and so the target audience has not been saturated.<sup>99</sup> Undoubtedly, through a pattern of emerging philanthropy, particularly in Russia, and intense engagement of educational institutions and their personnel, a greater share of the costs of exchange programs can be borne by regional sources. This

is only to be expected, but in Davidson's view existing U.S. government-funded exchange programs should not be held to a higher standard of "graduation" or effectiveness than similar exchange programs with developed countries, whose exchange programs continue to receive support from the U.S. government.<sup>100</sup>

Finally, concerning the challenge of more intense competition, American Councils seems to take such a reality in stride. The nonprofit community in the United States, particularly that part that deals with research and exchanges with the countries of the former Soviet Union and Central and Eastern Europe, has learned to cooperate on some programs but compete on most. American Councils is able to take competitive hits, brush themselves off, and design new programs that actually increase the scope and effectiveness of its mission. For example, the loss of the FSA undergraduate program was compensated at least in part by new grants from the World Bank for educational reform in FSU countries and by complementary new support from USAID for the Kyrgyz testing program described above.

At the same time, existing program strengths have been intensified. The scope of the JFDP program, once confined to the countries of the former Soviet Union, has now been extended to Balkan countries, opening up an area where American Councils' programs have not typically been strong. American Councils won the ECA competition for this expansion, even while it was losing the ECA-funded FSA undergraduate program. Similarly, American Councils and NCEEER lost the competition for the Regional Scholar Program in early 2001. Yet they were asked to administer with NCEEER, the Carnegie Research Fellowship Program, which has a similar target audience and is funded by the Carnegie Corporation. When ECA decided to terminate the Regional Scholar Program in late 2001, American Councils and NCEEER effectively gained the upper hand in the administration of postdoctoral scholarly exchanges with Russia.

Sustaining a mission, identifying needs, designing programs to meet them, and an entrepreneurial nimbleness that anticipates the need for new organizational structures while sustaining long-established professional relationships both in the United States and the region have been key elements of ACTR's, ACTR/ACCELS', and now American Councils' success. Once an organization with a little over a \$1,000 in assets, it is now a \$50 million corporation, the largest of its kind, with a well-recognized board of trustees from government, business, academia, and the nonprofit world, and a staff of approximately five-hundred. While quantitative expansion forever into the future would be imprudent to predict, continued, multifaceted programmatic success for the organization is very likely.



## **Appendix I**

### Interviews Conducted for This Study

M.M. Abovyan, Prorector, Russian Linguistic University

Richard Brecht, President of the National Foreign Language Center, and Professor of Russian, University of Maryland

Lisa Choate, Vice-President for Teaching, Learning, and Citizen Exchange Programs, American Councils for International Education

Dan E. Davidson, President of the American Councils for International Education, and Professor of Russian, Bryn Mawr College (five interviews were conducted)

Rosemary DiCarlo, Director, Washington Office of the U.S. Mission to the United Nations and Deputy to the Ambassador, U.S. Mission to the United Nations; formerly Director of Democratic Initiatives, Office of the Coordinator for U.S. Assistance to the NIS, and Cultural Affairs Officer, U.S. Embassy, Moscow

Iu. V. Dubinin, Prorector, Moscow State University, Institute of International Relations

Kristen Gilley, Senior Professional Staff, House International Relations Committee

Frank Y. Gladney, Professor of Slavic Languages and Literatures, University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign

Gregory Guroff, President of the Foundation for International Arts and Education, former Coordinator for USSR Programs, U.S. Information Agency

I.V. Karapetyan, Prorector for International Relations, Russian State University for the Humanities

Maria D. Lekic, Director of Curricular Development and Testing, American Councils for International Education, and Professor of Russian Language and Literature, University of Maryland

Michael McCarry, Executive Director, Alliance for International Educational and Cultural Exchange

Robert McCarthy, Director, Office of Policy and Evaluation, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, U.S. Department of State

John M. Mohan, Professor of Russian, Grinnell College

Richard L. Morningstar, Visiting Scholar and Diplomat in Residence, Stanford University Institute of International Affairs, formerly Special Assistant to the President and Coordinator of U.S. Assistance to the NIS

George W. Morris, Member, ACTR Board of Directors

Timothy O'Connor, Professor, University of Northern Iowa, former Resident Director, American Councils for International Education

David Patton, Vice-President for Field Operations, American Councils for International Education, former Regional Director for NIS Operations, American Councils for International Education

V.N. Petrenko, Director, Main Department for International Exchanges, Ministry of Education, former Minister of Education, Russian Federation

Ralph Posner, Account Director, Ogilvie Public Relations, and former Legislative Assistant, 1993-1997 to Senator Bill Bradley (D-N.J.)

Mark Teeter, Faculty of History, Political Science, and Law, Russian State University for the Humanities

Claire Walker, former Director of the Russian Language Program, Friends School, Baltimore, Maryland

Irwin Weil, Professor of Slavic Languages and Literatures, Northwestern University

G.A. Yagodin, Rector Russian International University, former USSR Minister of Higher Education, 1985-1992

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## Appendix III

### **Textbooks for Schools and Universities in Eastern Europe and Eurasia**

Developed through Open Competitions by the International Programs for the

Transformation of the Humanities and Social Science Education

Sponsored by George Soros in cooperation with the Ministries of Public Education

**the Russian Federation, Belarus, Kyrgyzstan, and Ukraine**

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## ENDNOTES

1 Interview with Richard Brecht, President of the National Foreign Language Center and Professor of Russian, University of Maryland. Brecht was intensely involved in the creation of American Councils.

2 Interview with Maria D. Lekic, Professor of Russian Language and Literature at the University of Maryland, and who was also intensely involved in the creation of American Councils.

3 Irwin Weil, "As We Were – Early Aspirations, The Formation of MAPRIAL and ACTR," *ACTR Lettr: Newsletter of the American Council of Teachers of Russian* (hereafter referred to as *ACTR Lettr*, Volume 25, No. 4, Summer 1999, page 9.

4 For more on this point, see *ibid*.

5 *ibid*.

6 *ibid*.

7 Interview with Brecht. He contends that Soviet political authorities at the highest levels had concluded that study of the Russian language and culture represented the best means of enhancing Soviet foreign policy objectives in the West and in the Third World.

8 Interview with Brecht, first interview with Dan E. Davidson, President, American Councils for International Education. Davidson relates the following story. He had agreed to the participation of Mikhail Khrapchenko, the director of the Division of Language and Literature of the Soviet Academy of Sciences, a Stalinist figure well connected to the Soviet leadership but lacking in serious academic abilities. Davidson was roundly criticized for caving in to Soviet propaganda, and was even regarded as naive since many sceptics believed that Khrapchenko would arrive while the other delegates would be denied entry and access. But Davidson and Brecht won the day; as the Soviet delegation entered through John F. Kennedy International Airport in New York, Kostomarov led the delegation of highly notable Soviet scholars and informed Davidson that Khrapchenko could not come because of "illness". Davidson and Brecht's critics were silenced.

9 Soviet-American Russian Language Contributions, American Association of Teachers of Slavic and East European Languages (AATSEEL of the U.S., Inc), 1975, 1977.

10 First interview with Dan E. Davidson, President, American Councils for International Education and Professor of Slavic Languages and Literatures, Bryn Mawr College.

11 The *ACTR Lettr* for October 1976 describes a meeting of the ACTR Board of Directors held on October 8 at the annual meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Slavic Studies (AAASS). Separate meetings of the ACTR Board outside the annual AATSEEL and AAASS conventions did not occur until the late 1980s.

12 For a complete description see *ACTR Lettr* #5, October 1977. As many will recall, an authentic map of the Soviet Union was a treasured item for American students and scholars of the country, insofar as maps published in the Soviet Union were often deliberately distorted and geographically inaccurate for security reasons.

13 Walker retired from ACTR Board membership in 1978 and a fund for contributions to the Olympiada was established in her honor. In 1980, ACTR member David Chandler of Carleton College passed away and a scholarship to aid students accepted for study in the Soviet Union was established by ACTR in his memory; see *ACTR Lettr*, August 1980, no. 3.

14 Interview with Claire Walker, former director, Friends School, Baltimore, now retired.

15 Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Directors, December 28, 1975, LaSalle Hotel, Chicago, American Councils Corporate Archives.

16 *Ibid.*

17 Minutes of the ACTR Board Meeting, April 19, 1975, Harris Hall, Northwestern University, hosted by Irwin Weil, American Councils Corporate Archives.

18 See letter of Dan Davidson to Elliott Mossman, Chairman of the Slavic Department of the University of Pennsylvania, October 1984, inviting a representative of the University to serve on the Policy Board of the USSR Programs Group of ACTR.

19 Interview with Brecht. Brecht relates an incident in 1984, shortly before a banquet commemorating a new agreement between ACTR and the Pushkin Institute that set graduate placements at the Institute. At the last moment, the Soviet government, through Kostomarov, made an effort to reduce that number. Brecht and Davidson refused to hold the banquet unless the number was restored. After many anxious hours, the Soviets relented just minutes before the banquet was to begin. For more on these kinds of hair-raising negotiations with the Soviet educational bureaucracy, see John M. Mohan, "All Things Flow", *ADFL Bulletin*, Volume 30, no. 2, Winter 1999, p. 34.

20 *ACTR Lettr*, February 1977.

21 For more on these subjects, see Maria Lekic, Betty Lou Leaver, and Peter Merrill, *The Role of Language-Specific Professional Organizations in Teacher Education and Support: The Case of the American Council of Teachers of Russian (ACTR)*, San Diego, LARC Press, 2003.

22 Mohan, p. 35.

23 The need for a four-year Russian textbook, the last of which had been published in the 1960s, was particularly acute. ACTR was able to complete such a textbook in the mid-1980s with the help of grant monies and ACTR member institutions. For more on this project, see Zita D. Dabars, "ADFL Award for Distinguished Service to the Profession: Dan Davidson". *ADFL Bulletin*, Vol., 30, no. 2, Winter 1999, p. 38.

24 See Elizabeth Neatrou, "Thinking Outside and Beyond our Present Circle of Ideas," *ADFL Bulletin*, Vol., 30, no. 2, Winter 1999, p. 32.

25 Interview with John M. Mohan, Professor of Russian at Grinnell College. Occasionally the *ACTR Lettr* surveyed high school teachers about which textbooks they used, the number of contact hours were allotted, and the curricular structures they used in their high school Russian programs. This information proved useful to AATSEEL's efforts to smooth the transition from high school-to-college language instruction in universities throughout the United States. See, for example, a survey by Zita Dabars in the *ACTR Lettr*, November-December 1976.

26 For more on the value of such meetings in increasing contact between Russian language instructors and scholars in the social sciences and humanities who used the Russian language in their research, see *ibid*, p. 38.

27 Minutes of the ACTR Board of Directors Meeting, December 28, 1995, Palmer House, Chicago, American Councils Corporate Archives.

28 *ACTR Lettr*, No. 2, April 1979.

29 Minutes of the ACTR Board of Directors Meeting, December 27, 1984, American Councils Corporate Archives.

30 *Ibid*.

31 Weil, p. 10.

32 Interview with Lekic.

33 Interview with Brecht.

34 Brecht recalls being picked up at a Washington board meeting in 1978 by members opposed to Davidson remaining on the Board. Brecht was then given an extensive impromptu tour of Washington to prevent him from voting against Davidson's removal. Davidson had stepped down as President at the end of 1978 (see *ACTR Lettr* #6, 1977) but was asked to remain on the Board as Director of USSR Programs.

35 American Council of Teachers of Russian Inc., Financial Statements, June 30, 1985. Botz, Goerss, and Company, P.C. Certified Public Accountants, p. 3.

36 See memorandum to the ACTR Board from Dan Davidson on the 1985 activities of the USSR Programs Group, dated November 1, 1985, p. 1; also see Minutes of ACTR Board of Directors Meeting, December 29, 1985.

37 See Minutes of ACTR Board of Directors Meeting, November 21, 1986.

38 *Ibid*.



39 John Schillinger, “American Teacher of Russian Meet Gorbachev,” *ACTR Letter* WHEN, p. 1.

40 Interviews with G.A. Yagodin, Rector, Russian International University and Minister of Higher Education from 1985-1992; V.N. Petrenko, Director, Main Department for International Exchanges, Ministry of Education and former Minister of Education; Iu. V. Dubinin, Prorector, Moscow State University Institute of International Relations; M.M. Abovyan, Prorector, Russian Linguistic University; I.V. Karapetyan, Prorector for International Relations, Russian Humanities University.

41 Second interview with Davidson.

42 To this day, neither the Soros Foundation nor George Soros himself have registered interest concerning support for American students and scholars wishing to receive training or conduct research in Eastern Europe and Eurasia. In this regard, the reciprocal initiative here represented a novel way to promote language training for both Americans and Russians, using Soros funds in part to finance them. Second interview with Davidson.

43 Interview with Gregory Guroff, President of the Foundation for International Arts and Exhibitions. Guroff was working at USIA as the President’s Coordinator for USSR Programs and was contacted by NSC director Bud McFarlane to develop the broad outlines of a high school exchange program that Reagan could propose to Gorbachev at their upcoming summit. Guroff contacted Davidson for help in the program’s design. The White House approved the design, and Gorbachev agreed to the proposal at the summit. USIA then developed an open grant competition for the program, and ACTR won.

44 American Council of Teachers of Russian, Inc., Financial Statements, June 30, 1987, Botz, Deal and Company, P.C., Certified Public Accountants, p. 2; also American Council of Teachers of Russian, Inc., Financial Statements, June 30, 1988, Botz, Deal and Company, P.C., Certified Public Accountants, p. 3.

45 Statement of Gregory Guroff at the ACTR Board of Directors Meeting, December 28, 1989.

46 Davidson’s report on USSR Programs to the ACTR Board of Directors Meeting, December 28, 1989.

47 For more on these new programs, see American Council of Teachers of Russian, Board of Directors Meeting, December 28, 1990, Palmer House Hotel, Chicago, Ill, American Councils Corporate Archive.

48 American Council of Teachers of Russian, Report and Financial Statements, June 30, 1990, Price Waterhouse, American Councils Corporate Archive.

49 See the discussion on this issue at the ACTR Board of Directors Meeting, December 28, 1989, American Councils Corporate Archive.

50 American Council of Teachers of Russian, Board of Directors Meeting, December 28, 1991, San Francisco, American Councils Corporate Archive.

51 American Council of Teachers of Russian, Board of Directors Meeting, December 28, 1993, p. 2, American Councils Corporate Archive.

52 *Ibid*, for more on office locations also see American Councils for International Education: ACTR/ACCELS, Board Records and Corporate Information, 1993, American Councils Corporate Archive.

53 American Council of Teachers of Russian, Membership Meeting, December 29, 1992, Grand Hyatt, New York, p.1, American Councils Corporate Archive.

54 *Ibid*, pp. 133-134

55 Second interview with Davidson.

56 American Council of Teachers of Russian, Membership Meeting, December 29, 1992, Grand Hyatt, New York, p.2, American Councils Corporate Archive.

57 *Ibid*.

58 American Councils for International Education: ACTR/ACCELS, Board Records and Corporate

Information, 1994, American Councils Corporate Archive

59 For more on this point, see *ibid*.

60 *Ibid*.

61 *Ibid*, p, 3.

62 Third interview with Davidson.

63 Interview with David Patton, Vice President for Field Operations, American Councils for International Education

64 Davidson cites several meetings with Russian Ministry of Higher Education officials, including Eduard Dneprov; third interview with Davidson.

65 Third interview with Davidson.

66 Russian security officials held off the gangsters at the hotel while the program participants were ushered out the back door of the hotel on to a waiting bus. Obtaining the cooperation of Russian security officials was itself a negotiation; interview with Patton.

67 Interview with Robert McCarthy, Director, Office of Policy and Evaluation, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, U.S. Department of State. This outlook was shared by Rosemary DiCarlo, currently Director, Washington Office of the United States Mission to the United Nations and Deputy to the Ambassador, United States Mission to the United Nations. DiCarlo in the early and mid-1990s served as the Director of Democratic Initiatives, Office of the Coordinator of U.S. Assistance to the NIS, and as Cultural Affairs Officer, U.S. Embassy, Moscow.

68 Interview with Richard L. Morningstar, Visiting Scholar and Diplomat in Residence, Stanford University Institute of International Affairs, and formerly Special Assistant to the President and Coordinator for U.S. Assistance to the NIS.

69 Speech delivered by Hillary Rodham Clinton, American University in Kyrgyzstan, November 12, 1997. USIA and now subsequently ECA, continues to fund the program and cites positively Davidson's work in creating the program despite some bureaucratic resistance; Interview with DiCarlo.

70 American Council of Teachers of Russian, Board of Directors Meeting, December 28, 1995, Chicago, IL, p. 1, American Councils Corporate Archive.

71 *Ibid.*

72 American Councils for International Education: ACTR/ACCELS, Board Records and Corporate Information, 1995, American Councils Corporate Archive.

73 The discussion that follows is taken from a number of internal Board materials in American Councils files from 1995 and 1996.

74 Opposition came almost exclusively from William Grant, a retired Florida businessman with considerable interest in the Russian language. Grant fought the changes but was unsuccessful in gaining support for his position from the ACTR membership and leadership, despite determined efforts to contact them.

75 American Council of Teachers of Russian: Financial Statements for the Year Ended June 30, 1996 and Report Thereon, Raffa and Associates, P.C., American Councils Corporate Archive.

76 American Councils for International Education: Financial Statements for the Year Ended June 30, 1997 and Report Thereon, Raffa and Associates, P.C., American Councils Corporate Archive, and American Councils for International Education: Financial Statements for the Year Ended June 30, 1998 and Report Thereon, Raffa and Associates, P.C., American Councils Corporate Archive

77 Internal Board files for 1998, American Councils Corporate Archive.

78 Internal American Councils Board files for 1999 contain a detailed description of the NET program and the increased role of American Councils in its administration. American Councils Corporate Archive.

79 For further details, see Report of the Executive Director, ACTR Board Meeting, December 28, 1999. American Councils Corporate Archive.

80 Internal American Councils Board files for 1999; see also Board of Trustees Briefing Book and Corporate Information, American Councils for International Education: ACTR/ACCELS, June 28, 2001, both American Councils Corporate Archive.

81 *Ibid* and Board of Trustees Briefing Book and Corporate Information, American Councils for International Education: ACTR/ACCELS, July 25, 2002, both American Councils Corporate Archive.

82 The *ACTR Letter*, formerly the *ACTR Lettr*, continues to devote most of its content to these issues. See, for example, Beth Dryer, "Faculty Development in a Content-Based and Task-Based Instructional Environment," *ACTR Letter*, Volume 24, Number 1, Fall 1997, pp. 1-2 and 4; Patricia Chaput, "Fifteen Common Errors in Language Teaching Assumptions and Strategies," *ACTR Letter*, Volume 24, Number 4, Summer 1998, pp. 1, 9-19, 27; and John Watzke, "Articulation, Standards, and Learning Frameworks; Linking Russian Language Study in the Next Millenium," *ACTR Letter*, Volume 26, Number 1, Fall 1999, pp. 1, 3-7, 23-25.

83 Internal Board files for 1999, American Councils Corporate Archive.

84 Internal Board files for 1998 and 1999, American Councils Corporate Archive.

85 For more on these points, see American Councils for International Education, Audited Financial Statements, June 30, 1999 and June 30, 2000, Langan Associates, Certified Public Accountants and Consultants, American Councils Corporate Archive.

86 ACC pointed out that ACTR/ACCELS' Resident Director O'Connor had told the Russian press that the ACC practice of "having students live without resident directors in dorms is not one I would pursue." Riccio either jumped or, as most believe, was thrown out of an upper-floor window. The Russian coroner's report stated that Riccio's death was a murder, but the police report claimed it was a suicide. While acknowledging that ACTR/ACCELS specifically avoided the dormitory where Riccio died for safety reasons, Davidson denies that his organization sought to take competitive advantage of ACC.

87 Board of Trustees Briefing Book and Corporate Information, American Councils for International Education: ACTR/ACCELS, June 28, 2001, American Councils Corporate Archive.

88 *Ibid*.

89 American Councils Outbound Alumni Survey, Title VI Study for the Department of Education; also official American Councils documents provided by Lehmann.

90 Board of Trustees Briefing Book and Corporate Information, American Councils for International Education: ACTR/ACCELS, 2000. American Councils Corporate Archive.

91 Junior Faculty Development Program 2000-2001 Post-Program Survey, Official American Councils documents provided by Lehmann.

92 Interview with DiCarlo.

93 See The First Ten Years: The Edmund S. Muskie/Freedom Support Act Graduate Fellowship Program: 1999-2002, American Councils for International Education: ACTR/ACCELS, Washington, DC, 2002, pp. 29-45 and 65; see also American Councils for International Education: ACTR/ACCELS *Alumni Discovery*, Volume 1, Issues 1, 3, and 9.

94 Fourth interview with Davidson.

95 *Ibid.*

96 Interview with Michael McCarry, Executive Director, Alliance for International Educational and Cultural Exchange.

97 Interview with Ralph Posner, currently Account Director, Ogilvie Public Relations, and from 1993-1997, Legislative Assistant to Senator Bill Bradley (D-N.J.). According to Kristen Gilley, Senior Professional Staff, House International Relations Committee, American Councils staff also played a key role in advising the Committee staff in the creation of a new study abroad scholarship program for American undergraduate students, named for then retiring Committee chairman Benjamin Gilman (R-N.Y.).

98 Fifth interview with Davidson.

99 *Ibid.*

100 *Ibid.*

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