

Russ trip off: trial protest

Examiner News Services

(SUNDAY)
7/9/78 p.1

With a strongly worded protest over the Soviet Union's decision to try Jewish dissidents Anatoly Shcharansky and Alexander Ginzburg tomorrow, the United States yesterday canceled a planned visit to Moscow by President Carter's chief science adviser.

However, Secretary of State Vance said in Washington that he still plans to travel to Geneva next week for strategic arms limitation treaty (SALT) talks with Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko.

"We will persist in our efforts to negotiate a sound SALT II agreement because it is in our national interest and in the interest of world peace to do so," the secretary said.

However, Vance said that, "at the president's direction," he had ordered science adviser Frank Press and a U.S. delegation to cancel their mid-July trip.

Vance said Carter's decision to cancel the trip was in direct response to the Soviet announcement of the trials of Shcharansky and Ginzburg.

Shcharansky, accused of spying for the CIA, is charged with high treason; Ginzburg is accused of "anti-Soviet agitation and propaganda."

"They are being tried for asserting fundamental human rights — to speak out and to petition and criticize their government — rights guaranteed in international agreements entered into by their government," Vance said.

"These trials, with their lack of due process, violate fundamental principles of justice," he added. "I reflect the deepest feelings and values of the American people when I deplore these events."

A State Department official said later that information accumulated by the United States points toward "a concerted and major effort ... a surgical strike against the dissidents" by the Soviets.

The official, who asked not to be identified, said that when Vance meets Gromyko next week, he will carry a message from Carter for Soviet President Leonid Brezhnev expressing U.S. concerns over Soviet treatment of dissidents.

According to informed sources, the trials of Shcharansky and Ginzburg were delayed six weeks because of an extended attempt to secure a confession from at least one of the defendants. Both trials were originally scheduled to start in the week beginning May 29.

The number of witnesses called to preliminary

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hearings on the two cases suggests that the chief target in the attempt to get a confession may have been Ginzburg.

A confession would have been one way of drawing the sting from American reactions not only to the present cases but also to the sentencing in May of the dissident physicist, Yuri Orlov, to 12 years' imprisonment.

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The Moscow sources say Western reactions to the Orlov case went far beyond anything the authorities had expected, and that the latter are sensitive to the damage that may have been done to moves towards detente.

But they are trapped by the intensity of the recent campaign to identify the dissident movement with the work of the CIA.

Anxiety for the two dissidents has been increased by the violent tenor of recent Soviet press articles apparently intended to prepare the public for heavy sentences.

The verdict in Shcharansky's trial on charges of being a "traitor to his motherland" is virtually certain. He can expect at least a 10-year prison term and could be shot by a firing squad.

Ginzburg, who already has spent seven years in prison, faces a 10-year sentence.

Shcharansky, 30, a balding computer expert, has been held incommunicado in Moscow's Lefortovo prison since March 1977, when he was forced into a green Volga sedan by eight KGB agents.

The specific charges against Shcharansky have not

been revealed, other than Soviet press claims that he worked for Western intelligence.

The government's chief witness is expected to be Dr. Sanya I. Lipavsky, a former dissident who has

confessed his own role as an agent for the CIA.

The embassy has yet to comment on Lipavsky's confession, but Washington intelligence sources have admitted he was a "walk-in" agent, or volunteer spy.

Lipavsky knew Moscow's dissidents well and was Shcharansky's roommate for about two weeks. He claimed Shcharansky helped him collect information passed on to the West.

The London Sunday Times reported today that Lipavsky was an agent of the KGB who was recruited by the CIA in 1975.

The Times said the prosecution will show "Shcharansky helped the agent (Lipavsky) to collect information on the way the U.S.S.R. used Western equipment to keep tabs on members of the human rights movement."

The Times said its information was based on an

article by Edward Jay Epstein to be published in the August issue of "Commentary."

Shcharansky and Ginzburg are the third and fourth dissidents to face trial this summer.

Orlov, who founded a group monitoring Soviet compliance with the 1975 Helsinki accords on human rights, was sentenced to seven years in prison followed by five years in exile.

Vladimir Slepak, a Jew and dissident who has been waiting since 1970 for permission to emigrate to Israel, was banished from Moscow for five years for "malicious hooliganism." He was arrested during a June demonstration in which he hung a banner from his apartment balcony asking for permission to emigrate.