

More Cold War Chill

An accurate index of the current state of Soviet-American relations was the remark of a United States diplomat in Moscow that "the Russians just don't want to be caught holding hands with us in public." This chilly attitude, born of tensions over Vietnam, has produced Soviet harassment of the American architectural exhibition touring that country, and "postponement" of some other scheduled cultural exchange events, including the planned showing of "Hello, Dolly!" in Moscow and Leningrad.

Happily, these moves—reminiscent of the old cold war atmosphere—do not extend to all Soviet-American relationships. Exchanges of students and professors appear to be proceeding as planned. The flight of Gemini 5 has produced many respectful references in the Soviet press to American space prowess, as well as tributes to the personal courage of astronauts Cooper and Conrad. American tourists, bringing dollars, remain welcome visitors in Moscow.

The Russian leaders who would like still further deterioration in relations have been aided, regrettably, by the Johnson Administration's surrender to J. Edgar Hoover and several insistent pressure groups of right-wing extremists on the Soviet-American consular agreement. The decision not to press for Senate ratification of the treaty now supplies ammunition for peddlers in Moscow of the tired propaganda line that American foreign policy is not determined by President Johnson but by "fascists" and "imperialists."