

**RUSSIAN-AMERICAN LAW ENFORCEMENT EXCHANGES:
What One Program Has Accomplished**

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Background

I began my formal study of the Soviet Union in 1962. One of the first things I learned was the extent to which the Communist Party tried to control every aspect of Soviet society, especially contacts with the outside world. But by the end of the 1980s it was clear that the Soviet Union was in the midst of radical changes. These included new opportunities for relationships in “politically sensitive” areas.

One particularly promising approach involved establishing Sister City ties. Thanks to a dedicated group in the twin cities of Bloomington and Normal, Illinois, in April 1989 a Sister City agreement was signed with the ancient Russian town of Vladimir. As one of the few people in the community at that time who spoke Russian, I was asked to help interpret for the three-person Russian delegation, none of whom spoke English. One of the members of the delegation was the Secretary of the Communist Party organization for Vladimir. At the time, this was the most important political position in the City.

Through this contact I managed to obtain an invitation to observe the first ever competitive local elections under the Communists in March 1990. As I prepared for the trip, I started giving thought to what might be accomplished beyond my learning firsthand about changes in the Russian political system. One possibility involved establishing contacts between Russian law enforcement professionals and their American counterparts. I approached Dr. Frank Morn from Illinois State University’s Criminal Justice Sciences Department about this possibility. One of his areas of interest is comparative law enforcement systems, and he was immediately intrigued by the idea.

While I was in Vladimir I met Major (later Colonel) Vladimir Sergevnin who happened to be the head of the “social studies” program at what was then the Vladimir Special Militia School. At the time, the School provided a two-year program that trained primarily young men who had completed their military service to be “investigators” in the Russian militia. (The School’s program was later expanded to four years and the name changed to the Vladimir Juridical Institute. It is now a five-year program and the name will soon be changed to the Vladimir Juridical Academy. More on this in the “notes” below.)

Major Sergevnin was also very interested in the possibility of arranging exchanges. Ultimately, it was decided to invite Maj. Sergevnin, in part because he spoke English, and a representative from the Vladimir militia, Colonel Ivan Golubev, to visit Illinois. (Col.

Golubev was ultimately promoted to “Colonel General” and was appointed a Deputy Minister in the Russian Ministry of Internal Affairs. Unfortunately, he passed away in December 2003.)

The two Russian officers spent two weeks in Illinois in March-April 1991 visiting various law enforcement organizations and training programs. This was followed by a visit of a delegation to Vladimir in August 1991. The group consisted of Dr. Morn, Dr. Michael Charles, then Chair of the ISU Criminal Justice Department and later Director of the University of Illinois Police Training Institute, and Ronald Swan, Chief of the ISU Police Department. Dr. Charles and Chief Swan played a major role in the subsequent exchange program.

Friendly relations were established—and the search was on for specific projects that could provide concrete results for both sides. Short get acquainted visits are necessary—but, unless they are carefully planned and focus on limited specific achievable goals, they don’t generally result in substantial substantive outcomes.

The first “extended” project was the team teaching of a special course at Illinois State University on Russian law enforcement by Dr. Morn and Vladimir Sergevnin, who by that time had been promoted to Lt. Colonel. This went well. It was followed by the first ISU academic credit trip to Russia led by Dr. Morn. (The fifth of these highly successful trips took place this past May.)

The first major training program for Russian officers was put together for spring 1994. Two staff members at the Vladimir Special Militia School were selected to attend the Police Training Institute (PTI) at the University of Illinois—which by then was headed by Dr. Charles. This is one of the best programs in Illinois for the training of police officers and other state law enforcement personnel.

I personally screened the potential participants and recommended the two officers who I thought had an adequate command of English, were in a position to make good use of what they would be learning, and who had the kind of personality that would enable them to get along well with their American hosts. (All subsequent candidates for this program have also been interviewed. The consensus on this side is that one of the keys to the success of the program has been the screening process.)

The officers selected were Major, now Colonel, Alexei Grigoriev and Lieutenant, now Lt. Colonel, Anna (Korovina) Kulakova. As with all subsequent participants in this exchange program, after their selection both officers attended English classes at the American Home in Vladimir. (For more on the American Home, which is operated by Serendipity-Russia, see: www.serendipity-russia.com.)

PTI provided the training and room and board for the two Russian officers while they were in Champaign and Stanard and Associates, a Chicago-based consulting firm, covered their airfare and other expenses and hosted them when they visited Chicago.

Without the support of the firm's founder and President, Dr. Steven Stanard, the first exchange would not have been possible.

Maj. Grigoriev and Lt. Kulakova went through the complete PTI program, which was ten weeks long at that time. Before returning to Vladimir they spent one week each with four different Illinois law enforcement organizations observing in the "real world" what they had studied at PTI.

As with all the other participants in the exchange program, in each city they visited they stayed with families. This provided them with a much more "personal" perspective on American law enforcement than they could have gotten through classes and official visits alone. The host officers and their families deserve very special thanks for their contribution to this program.

As an interesting side note, while with the police department in Rockford, Illinois, Lt. Kulakova was accompanying an officer on patrol when they spotted a driver who seemed to be lost. It turned out that, by chance, the driver was a recent Russian émigré. When she saw Lt. Kulakova, who was wearing her Russian militia uniform, she was, to say the least, greatly surprised. Because the driver's English was very limited, the Lieutenant was able to be of significant assistance in providing her with directions to her destination.

All the Russian officers participated in various social, cultural, and professional activities in each community they visited. On the professional side, for example, while in Chicago Maj. Grigoriev and Lt. Kulakova were able to spend some time with the marine unit on lake front patrol, and they spent a day with an undercover team observing drug transactions on the streets.

Since the first exchange, to date three more pairs of officers have participated in this program. The rest of this article will focus on some of the information and ideas they were able to bring back to Russia—and put to productive use.

Contributions

One of the first significant outcomes of the exchanges was the creation by Vladimir Sergevnin at the Vladimir Special Militia School of a course on "International Law Enforcement Experience" and the publication of a textbook with the same title. All the officers from the school who have taken part in the exchange program have participated in teaching this class. (Prior to this, the official position was, in general, that "Communism" was so far superior to "Capitalism" that there was little to be learned from the West.)

Among many other topics, the class includes information on "patrol work" in America, including, for example, how to identify and handle drunk drivers. Here it is important to mention that the Russian police system is structured like a military organization with "enlisted" patrol officers who actually patrol the streets and "officers" who are trained in separate programs, such as the Vladimir Juridical Institute (formerly the Special Militia School). As a result, the officers generally do not have extensive "street experience."

Several of the Russian participants in the PTI program have commented on the obvious value of having police officers work their way up through the ranks beginning with street patrol duty.

It's of course unlikely that all Russian militia officers will be required to start with a minimum of several years of patrol duty, but, clearly, the best patrol officers can be encouraged to eventually attend an "officer training" program. More "street experience" in the officer ranks will undoubtedly be of benefit. In addition, including more information on policing work at the street patrol level in the curriculum of the officer training programs is undoubtedly beneficial.

In addition to adding the new course on foreign policing experience to the curriculum, the officers who have participated in the exchange have helped bring about a change in the way some classes are taught. For example, additional exercises have been developed using mock crime scenes. They have also introduced more team teaching, and some limited video has been used to help critique student performance. More video critiquing will be used as resources allow.

Of special value has been the enhancement of psychological screening of prospective students—and faculty. The work done by Stanard and Associates made a special contribution here. One of their areas of expertise is the development of screening exams for public safety positions. In this connection, more emphasis has also been put on the role of psychology in police work, including techniques for dealing with witnesses and suspects under interrogation.

In another area, one of the participants in the exchange, Capt. Anya (Gavrilova) Petrunina, was able to contribute to the revision of the Russian Penal Code thanks to her U.S. experience—and the fact that her father, Maj. Gen. Boris Gavrilov, was one of the participants in the writing of the new code. For example, under the old Russian criminal code, burglary cases involving the theft of less than the official minimum wage were recorded only if the authorities were able to identify the guilty party. Now, as in the U.S., all burglaries are supposed to be treated as criminal cases. The U.S. policy of not allowing criminal cases to be "drug out" by the government influenced the decision to, at least in principle, largely abolish the practice in Russia of referring cases for "further investigation" if at trial there appeared to be insufficient evidence to warrant a conviction. The prosecution now is supposed to present its best case up front. The Russians are also in the process of adopting the American practice of "plea bargaining," in part as a way to unclog their court system and save resources.

A number of publications have been influenced by what the Russian officers learned while they were here. This has included a series of books and articles on the prevention of drug abuse, including a book that was nominated for a national award.

After a hiatus of several years, the new Director of the University of Illinois Police Training Institute, Tom Dempsey, is working with his counterpart at the Juridical Institute, Maj. Gen. Valeri Morozov, to restart the exchange program. They were able to

discuss the program when Mr. Dempsey led a small delegation to Vladimir that participated in the Juridical Institute's 60th anniversary celebration this past November.

Related to this, we have arranged for a June 2003 Juridical Institute honors graduate, Lt. Maria Yumatova, to enroll in Illinois State University's Masters program in Criminal Justice Sciences—and then attend PTI. She has been awarded a full tuition waiver and a graduate assistantship. Lt. Yumatova is currently gaining practical experience as an investigator in the district (or “county”) of Bogolubovo, which includes the town of Bogolubovo and several villages.

This exchange program has not been a one-way street; it has also been a very rewarding experience for the American participants—who, unfortunately, are too numerous to name. I will leave it to those directly involved in the program on this side of the ocean to comment on what they have gained from the exchanges.

NOTES: The author would like to especially thank Lt. Col. Anna Kulakova and Capt. Anya Petrunina for the information they contributed for this article—and for their ongoing efforts to make maximum possible use of what they learned through the exchange program. Lt. Col. Kulakova made two subsequent trips to the U.S. after her pioneering stint at PTI. This included team teaching with Dr. Frank Morn the course on Russian law enforcement in spring 1997. In 1999 she returned to work for several months at PTI. Capt. Petrunina participated in the PTI program in 1999. She is currently on maternity leave, but will soon be returning to the Moscow Institute of the Ministry of Internal Affairs where she is studying and teaching—and where she is making active use of what she learned from her interaction with her American colleagues. Col. Vladimir Sergevnin played an important role in getting the exchanges started and contributed to the "lessons learned" through lectures and publications in Russia before moving to the States where he is now interim director of the Illinois Police Corps Academy and editor of the journal, Law Enforcement Executive Forum. Most important, Gen. Golubev and, especially, Gen. Morozov played a crucial role in supporting and facilitating the exchanges, especially in the beginning when developing contacts with the United States required entering uncharted territory.

Helpful comments on this article were provided by Dr. Steven Stanard and Dr. Donna Vandiver. (Dr. Vandiver led the most recent ISU Criminal Justice study trip to Russia.)

Finally, thanks in part to the experience it gained—and the positive attention it attracted—through its participation in this and related foreign exchange programs, the Vladimir Special Militia School was able to persuade the authorities in Moscow to allow it to expand from a two year to a four year program and, most recently, to a five year program. As noted above, the addition of the fifth year will result in the “Juridical Institute” becoming a “Juridical Academy.” It will also allow them to add extra courses and, as a result, to turn out even better prepared law enforcement and correctional officers.