PS1 for 4/30/87#RENEGOTIATE THE EMBASSY AGREEMENT

Those who are serious about ending the acute U.S. disadvantage in the espionage game will be glad to hear about the Dick Armey (R-TX) amendment to the State Department authorization bill. It is a constructive proposal calling on our government to renegotiate the 15-year-old agreement under which both governments were permitted to build new embassies.

If the State Department is smart, it will not oppose the Armey amendment. Actually, it is a face-saving way for the State Department to recover from its embarrassing responsibility for two bad deals which nobody defends today. The 1969 agreement concerned the plots of land on which the embassies would be built in Moscow and Washington, D.C., and the 1972 agreement concerned the conditions of construction.

Armey concedes that we all expect the Soviets to try to spy on us, but he says we really don't expect our own State Department to help them. But that's apparently what happened when the embassy agreement was made by President Nixon and Henry Kissinger.

Incidentally, Henry Kissinger now claims on national television that he doesn't remember how the new embassy agreement came about, even though it clearly was negotiated and signed when he was in charge of U.S.-U.S.S.R. relations. Here's a good question for the media: Why is it OK for Kissinger not to remember the details of the embassy agreement, but not OK for President Reagan not to remember the details of the Iran arms affair?

Whether Kissinger remembers or not, the facts are that the State Department gave the Soviets a location on a hill in Georgetown, ideal for intelligence gathering, and allowed Russian laborers imported from the U.S.S.R. to do the construction so we would not even know what was going on. Russians can look out of the embassy windows and enjoy a line-of-sight view of the Pentagon, the State Department, the White

House and the Capitol.

The Soviet embassy roof is already cluttered with espionage antennae. The Soviets can eavesdrop on 70 percent of the private telephone conversations in the entire capital area, including your long distance calls to your Congressman.

Meanwhile, the situation about our embassy in Moscow is quite different. We hired Russian construction crews, and now we know that they put listening devices in the floor boards, in the ceiling tiles, in the walls, and in the prefabricated concrete.

U.S. intelligence experts think that the steel structure of the building was designed specifically to help transmit signals from these devices. The leakage of secrets caused by the Marines at our old embassy in Moscow is minor compared to the flood of secrets that will pour out of the new embassy if we ever move in.

This new U.S. Embassy in Moscow, which we haven't yet occupied, will be just an eight-story microphone plugged into the Politburo. If we ever move into it, all important conversations forever into the future will have to take place outside the embassy in a Winnebago.

For several reasons, it's not practical to think we can send in U.S. bug exterminators to debug the new building before we move in. First, in the game of modern eavesdropping technology, the bugs are more sophisticated than extermination techniques.

Secondly, the bug network that the Soviets have installed is so massive, so thorough, and so subtle that the task is hopeless. Even the windowless floor intended for secret operations in the center of the eight-story building has bugs installed in the concrete beams and panels.

While public indignation about Soviet espionage in our Embassy is high, now is the time for the Reagan Administration to declare the old embassy agreement null and void. Armey's bill would then urge the

State Department to negotiate a new, fair and equal agreement with the Soviets which allows both sides to build a new embassy and maintain security about its own construction.

Armey's bill would require the Soviets to replace their partially completed new embassy, which is 350 feet above sea level, with one on another site not more than 150 feet above sea level.

The last 50 years are littered with the mistakes made by our State Department that can never be remedied -- whole nations lost to Communism, friends betrayed, territory given away that can never be recovered. The good news about the new embassy agreement is that, so far, nothing is lost except the $190 million dollars we spent on a now-useless building in Moscow.

There is one other good thing about the whole miserable mess of espionage and embarrassment. The revelations have disposed of (BF)glasnost(end BF). Those who peddled the phony line of Soviet openness have now found out what kind of glasnost the Soviets really want.