

AYEC

EMBASSY OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Belgrade
June 25, 1979

Ambassador Krsto Bulajic
Federal Administration for
International Scientific,
Educational, Cultural and
Technical Cooperation
Kosancicev venac 29
11000 Beograd

Dear Ambassador Bulajic:

I have the honor to refer to our conversation of May 25, 1979, concerning cultural and educational relations between the USA and the SFRY. After consultations with the appropriate authorities in Washington, I would like to propose that both sides begin negotiations at the working level in the Fall of 1979, preferably in Washington, to draw up language for amendments to the Fulbright Agreement agreeable to both sides.

We recognize that certain adjustments should be made in the present Agreement to reflect changes in the Yugoslav constitution, as well as in our own governmental structure. At the same time, there are US statutory limitations on modifications to Agreements concluded under the Fulbright Act. One of the basic principles of the Fulbright Program common to all Fulbright Commissions throughout the world, is the insulation of the program from direct governmental influence -- including that of the US Government -- in order to preserve the academic integrity of the program.

In this connection the Board of Foreign Scholarships, the independent body responsible for exchanges under the Fulbright Act, has recently noted, concerning the Agreement with Yugoslavia, that it ". . . believes . . . that the independence of the grantee selection process and the maintenance of the academic integrity

of the exchanges have been vital to . . . past successes (of the Fulbright Program), and that the existence of the binational commission has been primarily responsible for this result."

So far as the United States Government is concerned, any modification of the selection process would have to take into account this view of the Board of Foreign Scholarships -- a view which my Government shares. With that limitation accepted by both sides, we are confident that a mutually agreeable solution to the issues you have raised can be found which will satisfy the legal requirements of both sides.

In response to your questions about the role and efficiency of the secretariat of the Binational Commission, I have looked into the matter and I am convinced that the staff is well employed in administering our joint program. The numerous tasks involved in selection and placement of Yugoslav scholars in the US include the management of a competition that requires interviewing about two hundred Yugoslav candidates, processing of the seventy applications of successful candidates, maintaining liaison with program agencies in the US during the placement process, advising the grantees before their departure for the US, and making all travel arrangements. At the same time, of course, the staff must also provide support for the American grantees: processing the initial applications of forty candidates, arranging placement with Yugoslav institutions, issuing grant documents, making travel arrangements, and maintaining contact with the US candidates while they are in Yugoslavia. I cannot overemphasize the importance to the US side of this last activity. The staff's assistance in finding housing, arranging lectures at other universities, paying the stipends, and providing the orientation for the US grantees is essential if this exchange program is to continue. In addition, the staff has worked to encourage new forms of exchanges within the Fulbright program. For example, the seminar this year held in cooperation with Pristina University on environmental protection was one of an annual series of seminars organized by the Fulbright Commission.

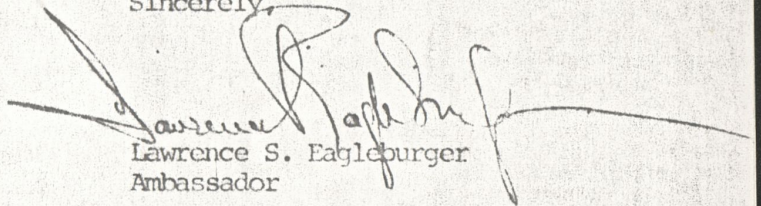
In short, I do not believe that the present level of activity could be continued -- much less expanded -- were the staff of the Commission to be reduced. We are, however, obviously prepared to

listen to any contrary evidence or argumentation the Yugoslav side may wish to present.

Finally, with regard to general cultural relations, we would like to propose that upon completion of the negotiations for amendments to the Fulbright Agreement, delegations of the US and SFRY subsequently meet to sign this document and to discuss overall cultural and educational relations, including the progress made since the last such general talks held in December, 1977. We feel that regular meetings on this level could be instituted, perhaps in a format similar to that used for discussions between our two countries on economic relations.

We look forward to your response, which we hope will contain your suggestions as to dates and place for the working-level discussions to be held, as well as the composition of the delegation to these discussions from the Yugoslav side. The size and rank of the American delegation will depend upon the composition of the Yugoslav delegation.

Sincerely,



Lawrence S. Eagleburger
Ambassador

c.c. to: Ms. Sonja Orescanin, SSIP
Mr. Mirko Zaric, SSIP
Mr. Nikola Milicevic, AVEC ✓
Ms. Avant, ECA/AEE
BFS
Mr. Forner, EU