

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

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October 5, 1968

MEMORANDUM FOR MR. ROSELOW:

SUBJECT: The Soviet-Czech Communiqué

Besides the text of the Communiqué, we have virtually no hard information. It is not clear whether Shub in the Post and Kamm in the Times had any sources other than the Communiqué. Those Czechs who met Dubcek, Cernik and Husak at the airport had read the Communiqué and were unhappy. There were no cheering crowds. Dubcek looked more worn than Cernik, who termed the talks "positive and helpful."

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Analysts at CIA and State agree that the Communiqué does not look good. Whether its language reveals the total capitulation indicated in Shub's article in the Post is not so clear. One view is that Dubcek is broken and has folded--and is not long for power. The other is that the rather general language in the communiqué does not address the "gut" issues that remain, and we must wait and see what secret agreements there may have been.

If the first school of thought proves right, we may expect--perhaps as early as Monday or Tuesday--Cabinet changes, the sacrifice of Smrkovsky (at the least), the Soviets moving in to the Interior Ministry, a widening circle of dismissals and arrests, the closing of the border, etc. Soon Dubcek would follow into oblivion.

The other possibility is that the Czechs have paid the heavy price indicated in the communiqué, but retain the integrity of their leadership and are carrying on their sub-terranean war-of-interpretation with the Soviets.

SANITIZED

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By *iel* NARA, Date *2-25-08*

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The Communique actually says:

--"The Czechs will accentuate the leading role of the Party and intensify the struggle against antisocialist forces." This is a clear enough idea in the Soviet "code." The trouble is that the Czechs have been using their own interpretation of every agreement they have made so far. Have they now been brought to heel, and do they really mean it the way the Soviets mean it?

--"Place all mass media at the service of socialism." It is clear the Soviets will not tolerate the fun and games in the press the Czechs have been engaging in.

--"Reinforce party and state organs with men firmly adhering... to Marxism-Leninism and proletarian internationalism." Some press reporters have been suggesting that this actually means agreement to introduce Russians in large numbers into the Ministries. Without confirming evidence, this seems to be reading a good deal into the language. The Russians probably mean this to be a commitment to take back Indra, Kolder and the other Conservatives--up and down the line. The Russians probably thought they had such a commitment at Cierna, and again at Moscow. Perhaps this time they really have it.

--"Sign a treaty on the temporary stationing of allied troops." It has been clear since Moscow that the "temporary" stationing of troops would last a long time.

--German revanchism, Viet Nam, Middle East, etc. It has also been clear since Moscow--if not Cierna--that relations with Bonn and any other straying-from-the-paddock in foreign policy is not in the cards.

Svoboda, Dubcek, Cernik or somebody will obviously have to address the Czech people pretty soon. So far, the emissaries have been meeting with their senior colleagues. To retain a degree of public confidence they will at least have to reaffirm the Action Program. I expect they will. How they will come out on the key questions of police terror, leadership unity, the open border and the balance between liberals and conservatives I don't know. The signs are ominous, but the evidence is not in.

ND
Nathaniel Davis

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