

INFORMATION

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

Wednesday, August 21, 1968
5:25 p. m.

MR. PRESIDENT:

This cable from Prague is the first official comment on the dilemma the Soviets face. They have the troops in the country, but they still have the problem of dealing with the Czech government and the Czech people. And whatever their plan was, it did not immediately throttle all Czech communications and capacity for political expression.

The critical issue in the days ahead will be how they move from military tourism to the political result they want.

Walt Rostow

CONFIDENTIAL attachment

COPY LIBRARY

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

HCD003

RECEIVED
WHCA

1968 AUG 21 19 50

PAGE 01 PRAGUE 03057 211844Z

48
ACTION EUR 20

INFO IO 13, CIAE 00, DODE 00, NSAE 00, NSCE 00, SSO 00, USIE 00, USUE 00,
SS 25, SCS 04, AID 28, CCO 00, FBO 21, GPM 04, H 02, INR 07, L 03, NIC 01,
NSC 10, O 02, OC 08, OPR 02, P 04, PER 02, RSC 01, SAH 02, SCA 02, SP 02,
SY 03, E 15, SAL 01, SA 01, ACDA 16, SCI 05, RSR 01, /183 W

O 211645Z AUG 68
FM AMEMBASSY PRAGUE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4589
INFO AMEMBASSY BELGRADE IMMEDIATE
USMISSION BERLIN
USMISSION BERLIN
AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST
AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMCONGEN MUNICH
USMISSION NATO
AMEMBASSY SOFIA IMMEDIATE
RUDKRW/AMEMBASSY WARSAW 429
USMISSION USUN NY

DECLASSIFIED
E.O. 12958, Sec. 3.6
NLJ 97-158
By is, NARA Date 11-10-78

Rostow

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~ PRAGUE 3057

1. SOVIET TACTICS IN PRESENT SITUATION DIFFICULT TO FATHOM. SOVIETS HAVE SUFFICIENT MILITARY POWER HERE TO DO AS THEY WISH, PARTICULARLY IN VIEW CZECH POLICY OF NONRESISTANCE. HOWEVER THEY HAVE INEXPLICABLY FAILED AS YET TO KNOCK RADIO OFF AIR AND PERMITTED TELEVISION TO CONTINUE TRANSMITTING FOR SUPPRISINGLY LONG PERIODS. MORE SIGNIFICANTLY, SOVIETS DID NOT SIMPLY INSTALL READYMADE QUISLING GOVERNMENT AND HAVE LET MATTER OF WHO IS IN CHARGE DRAG ON.
2. MIGHT BE SPECULATED THAT SOVIETS IN ATTEMPT TO PUT BEST POSSIBLE FACE ON THEIR INTERVENTION ARE PRESSURING CAPTIVE CZECHOSLOVAK LEADERSHIP TO ACCEPT SOVIET DEMANDS AND REMAIN MORE-OR-LESS INTACT, MINUS THOSE INDIVIDUALS MOST DISTASTEFUL

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

PRESERVATION COPY

OK FROM [unclear] COPY

COPY LIBRARY

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

PAGE 02 PRAGUE 03257 211844Z

TO SOVIETS AND WITH POSSIBLE PROMISE TO WITHDRAW BULK OF
OCCUPYING FORCE. IF SOVIETS DO NOT QUICKLY PRODUCE "THEIR"
REGIME, HOWEVER, THEY MAY FACE STICKY SITUATION AS LEGALLY
CONSTITUTED
ORGANS MEET AND TAKE STANDS AGAINST SOVIET ACTION. THIRTEEN CABINET
MINISTERS
WHO ~~TOFFY~~ ISSUED DECLARATION SUPPORTING DUBCEK REGIME AND WHO
COULD SERVE AS STAND-IN GOVERNMENT ILLUSTRATE DIFFICULTIES
ENGENDERED BY DELAY WHICH LETS CZECHS GET THEMSELVES ORGANIZED.
CENTRAL COMMITTEE PLENUM, WHICH SUMMONED TO MEET YET TODAY ~~FOR~~
TOMORROW,
COULD POSE DIFFICULT PROBLEMS FOR SOVIETS EVEN IF CC IS STRIPPED
OF ITS TOP LEADERSHIP. SOVIETS MAY BE FINDING IT DIFFICULT

COPE WITH NONPROVOCATIVE YET APPARENTLY FIRM ATTITUDE OF
LEADERSHIP AND WITH CLEARLY DEMONSTRATED REJECTION BY POPULATION,
WHICH AT SAME TIME IS HOLDING ITS INDIGNATION WITHIN BOUNDS
(EXCEPT FOR SOME GROUPS OF STUDENTS WHO ARE STRETCHING THEIR LUCK).
BEAM

COPY TO CCO.

COPY LBJ LIBRARY

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

PRESERVATION COPY

FROM QUICK COPY