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[REDACTED]

~~GROUP 1 Excluded from automatic downgrading and declassification~~

THIS IS AN INFORMATION REPORT, NOT FINALLY EVALUATED INTELLIGENCE.

~~SECRET~~

CITE [REDACTED]

DIST 1 OCTOBER 1968

COUNTRY CZECHOSLOVAKIA/USSR

DOI LATE AUGUST 1968

SUBJECT SOVIET TREATMENT OF CZECHOSLOVAK LEADERS IN MOSCOW

GP

ACQ [REDACTED]

FIELD NO.

SOURCE [REDACTED]

1. DURING THE MOSCOW MEETINGS WITH CZECHOSLOVAK LEADERS FROM 23 TO 26 AUGUST 1968, CPSU SECRETARY GENERAL LEONID BREZHNEV, WHO DID MOST OF THE TALKING, TOOK A BLATANTLY RUDE AND HECTORING ATTITUDE TOWARD THE PRAGUE LEADERS, INCLUDING PRESIDENT LUDVIK SVOBODA. AT THE FIRST MEETING, WHICH WAS HELD WITH SVOBODA ALONE, BREZHNEV HANDED HIM A PAPER CONTAINING THE LIST OF A NEW CZECHOSLOVAK GOVERNMENT AS CHOSEN BY MOSCOW. [REDACTED] COMMENT: SOURCE DID NOT LEARN WHICH NAMES

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APPEARED ON THE LIST EXCEPT FOR THAT OF SVOBODA, WHO WOULD REMAIN AS PRESIDENT.) THOUGH TREATED BRUSQUELY AND DISCOURTEOUSLY BY BREZHNEV, SVOBODA IMMEDIATELY TORE THE PAPER IN TWO AND SAID THAT HE WOULD NOT CONFER FURTHER UNLESS HIS CZECHOSLOVAK COLLEAGUES WERE PERMITTED TO ATTEND THE MEETINGS. ONLY AFTER THIS MEETING WAS CZECHOSLOVAK PARTY FIRST SECRETARY ALEXANDER DUBCEK BROUGHT TO MOSCOW FROM MUKACHEVO IN THE SOVIET CARPATHO-UKRAINE, WHERE HE HAD BEEN FLOWN BY SOVIET SECURITY OFFICERS FOR SAFEKEEPING.

2. DURING THE SECOND MEETING, WHICH WAS ATTENDED BY NINE SOVIETS AND ALL ELEVEN CZECHOSLOVAK LEADERS, THE PROCEEDINGS BECAME SO HEATED THAT BREZHNEV SUFFERED TWO SEIZURES AND WAS COMPELLED TO WITHDRAW BRIEFLY FROM THE MEETING, RETURNING EACH TIME AFTER AN INTERVAL.

3. THE SOVIETS WERE ASTOUNDED AT THE SOLIDARITY OF THE CZECHOSLOVAK DELEGATION, WHICH REMAINED COMPLETELY UNANIMOUS IN ITS POSITION THROUGHOUT THE MEETING. THE MOST OUTSPOKEN WAS PREMIER OLDRICH CERNIK, WHO BLASTED THE SOVIETS FOR THROWING AWAY FIFTY YEARS OF SOCIALISM AND CZECHOSLOVAK FRIENDSHIP BY THEIR ACT OF INVADING HIS COUNTRY. SVOBODA AND DUBCEK ALSO SPOKE UP WITH VIGOR.

THE SOVIETS HAD CLEARLY HOPED TO DIVIDE THE DELEGATION ALONG NATIONALITY AND OTHER LINES, BUT WERE COMPLETELY UNSUCCESSFUL.

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4. WHEN THE CZECHOSLOVAK LEADERS RETURNED TO PRAGUE, ALL OF THEM WERE PSYCHOLOGICALLY SHAKEN BY THE MOSCOW ORDEAL. THE WORST OF THE LOT WAS DUBCEK, WHO HAD SUFFERED AN UNIDENTIFIED HEAD INJURY AND WAS VIRTUALLY IN A STATE OF PHYSICAL AND MENTAL COLLAPSE. HE SHRIEKED WILDLY [REDACTED] "GIVE ME A GUN AND LET ME GO OUT AND SHOOT THOSE RUSSIAN BASTARDS." [REDACTED]

1.5(c)
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[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
5. FIELD DISSEM: NONE.

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