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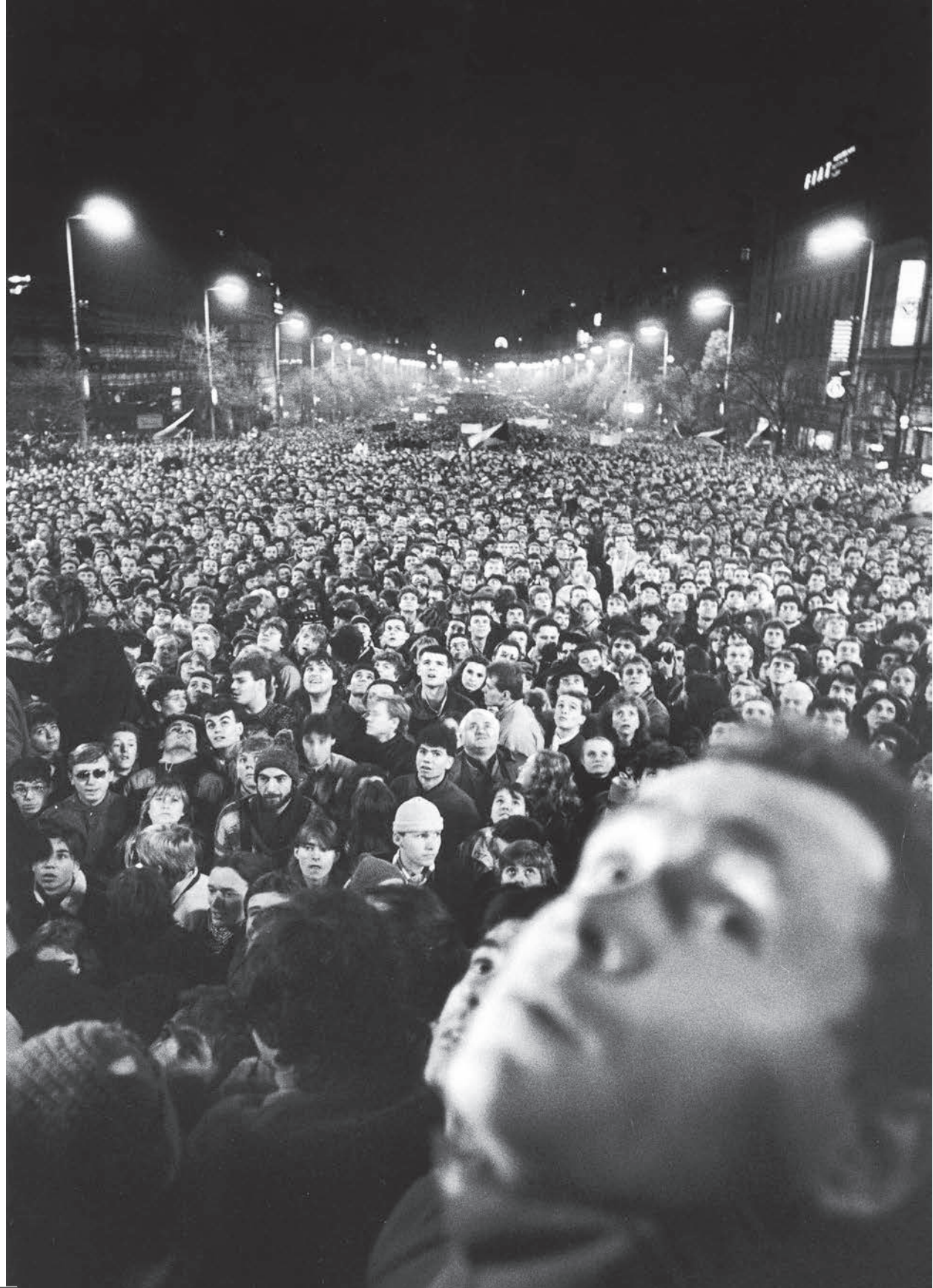


Reports from the United States Embassy
in Czechoslovakia, November-December 1989

Václav Havel

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Edited by Vilém Prečan

Václav Havel Library
Prague 2004

The Vaclav Havel Library is a non-governmental institution located in Prague, the Czech Republic. Its basic goal is to serve as an archive of documents chronicling the complex battle for democracy and freedom in the second half of the twentieth century through the works of Vaclav Havel. At the same time, the Vaclav Havel Library strives to initiate and stimulate research, discussion, and meetings devoted to the study of contemporary problems encountered during the transformation of a post-Communist state into a socially, economically, and culturally developed civil society.

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Preface

Since the 1960s, I remember American ambassadors in Prague having a keen interest in the Czechoslovak opposition movement, free-thinkers, and independent intellectuals. American diplomats were interested in the work of such people and endeavored to help them, for example, by arranging for scholarships to American universities. This interest should in no way be described as patronizing or as having the arrogant character of a superpower overseeing its satellite or protectorate or even as a mere business transaction, whereby the United States sought to buy off the Czechoslovak opposition movement to make it pro-American.

It's understandable that U.S. diplomats were writing about their contacts with us, and indeed we always knew they were; to do so is the duty of all diplomats the world over. I am delighted that the library that bears my name has as its first publication a collection of dispatches sent from Prague to the State Department in 1989, at a time when Shirley Temple Black was the American Ambassador in Prague. I very much look forward to reading these dispatches and am certain that in doing so the actual course of events will come to mind and I'll be able to compare my own memories of the events with how they are described in these reports.

Václav Havel

Introduction

It is unusual for documents related to diplomacy to be published so soon after their having been written. It usually happens only when governments themselves have an interest in publishing such sources, and then they usually publish them either in the form of White Books or Green Books or books of some other color or as *ad hoc* volumes that have a current political aim. That the set of documents published in this volume got into the hands of independent historians so soon after their having originated is thanks to an American nongovernmental institution with a name that will probably mean little to the layman and might even be confusing. That institution is the National Security Archive (NSA). It was established to gather and publish documents that have been declassified on the basis of the U.S. Freedom of Information Act (FOIA).

The NSA has been more than successful in achieving this aim. Among its many projects, of which I should name at least the Cuban Missile Crisis (1962) and the “Irangate” affair (1987), the National Security Archive initiated two related, large international research projects in the 1990s: one encompassed the four major crises in the Soviet bloc (East Germany in 1953, Hungary in 1956, Czechoslovakia in 1968, and Poland in 1980–81); the other was concerned with the democratic revolutions in eastern Europe in the late 1980s. The aim of the projects was to assemble an extensive source base, including testimony from actors in the events, and to present the results of this research to scholars and the general public in a series of international conferences held in 1995–99 and, subsequently, in large volumes of documents, which are gradually being published.

Three of the conferences were held in Czechoslovakia (two of which I had the honor of helping to organize). The topic of the one of these was the international consequences of the Communist takeover in Czechoslovakia in February 1948. Another, held in October 1999, was concerned with the run-up to, and course of, the democratic revolution in Czechoslovakia, 1987–89.

For the 1989 conference the NSA managed, on the basis of the FOIA, to put together a select set of telegrams that had been sent and received by the U.S. Embassy in Prague in November and December 1989. In 1997 the NSA asked the U.S. Department of State for the Prague telegrams bearing the acronyms PGOV (political and governmental), PREL (political relations) and PHUM

(political and human rights). From the great number of telegrams that were sent from Prague in the course of those two months (a total of about 2,500), there emerged, on the basis of the NSA request, a set of 150 telegrams, 132 of which, almost 700 pages in length, were presented to the NSA in September 1998. From the series marked E1–E150 during declassification, eighteen items are missing, that is to say, they were not declassified.

The NSA then gave copies of these 132 telegrams to the Czechoslovak Documentation Center in Prague, which in 1998–99 had been its partner in the international project “Openness in Eastern Europe and the Former Soviet Union.” Twenty-eight of these telegrams were included in the volume of documents, which was compiled for participants in the conference called “The Democratic Revolution in Czechoslovakia: Its Preconditions, Course, and Immediate Repercussions, 1987–89.” That volume, printed in 200 copies, is the *Briefing Book for an International Conference: Prague, 14–16 October 1999. A Chronology of Events and a Compendium of Declassified Documents*, edited by Derek Paton and Vilém Prečan (Prague, 1999). In the present volume it is referred to simply as the *Briefing Book 1999*. The copies of the original telegrams were deposited in the archives of the Czechoslovak Documentation Center. The whole set was later translated into Czech as source material, but until a short while ago nothing else was done with it.

In addition to this “Czechoslovak Cable” record group (in the End of the Cold War Collection, Box 3) the NSA managed to get 12 more telegrams from other countries declassified. Dating from September and October 1989, most of them are concerned with the East Germans who were flooding into Prague in autumn 1989 and rushing to the Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany to seek asylum. Two of these telegrams concerned with East Germans were sent from Prague; a third Prague telegram in this group, however, is a report from Ambassador Shirley Temple Black about her conversation with the Leading Secretary of the Prague City Committee of the Czechoslovak Communist Party, Miroslav Štěpán, in October 1989. The NSA has also made copies of these telegrams available to the Czechoslovak Documentation Center.

In late July 2004 the Board of the recently founded Václav Havel Library decided that its first publication should be a volume of these telegrams from late 1989 and that this volume, entitled *Prague–Washington–Prague*, should be presented when the Library introduced itself to the public on the eve of the 15th anniversary of the democratic revolution of 1989. It asked me to prepare the volume for publication. This was a superb, unexpected opportunity for a historian to publish a valuable set of sources, which had hitherto remained largely unknown to researchers and had little likelihood of being published in its entirety. Moreover, it was an opportunity to publish it in a bilingual edition of the Czech translations together with the English originals. It was a challenge and an incredibly difficult task to get the volume ready for publication in less

than three months while ensuring it met the demanding criteria of a professionally published volume of documents.

Talks with the General Editor of the *Foreign Relations of the United States* (FRUS) series, in the Bureau of Public Affairs at the U.S. Department of State, Washington, in September 2004, confirmed for the Editor of the current volume that no other documents relating to Czechoslovakia in 1989 had yet been declassified apart from those that the NSA had managed to obtain. That information was, on the one hand, disappointing because the Editor hoped that in addition to other telegrams he might at least get records from the Czechoslovak Desk and the pertinent office or bureau of the State Department from that period. That, however, was not the case: the routine declassification of records of the State Department has at present reached the beginning of the years of President Jimmy Carter's term in office (1977–81). Since 1997, when the telegrams in the present volume were declassified, nothing has changed. On the other hand, this limitation has had a positive side – namely, it increased the chances that the task at hand would be accomplished by the deadline of late October 2004. So much for the origin of this volume and the declassification of the documents, almost all of which, except for a small number of the less important ones, are published here. A list of the telegrams not included is provided as an appendix to this volume.

— The value of the Prague-Washington-Prague telegrams

The set of telegrams published here constitutes a primary source of great value in a number of respects. In itself it makes for exciting reading that graphically illustrates how little in history is predictable. It provides an effective antidote to the simplified view of the past. In describing the events of the “*annus mirabilis*” we find, as we would in perceiving any great revolution, that in retrospect (when everyone knows how things turned out) the historical factors and contexts of those days seem to today's observer to form, as if by a natural law, a causal chain of the logically and, allegedly, only possible and universally anticipated, predictable outcome. Nothing is farther from the truth than such an interpretation; nothing is less fair to the people involved at the time, nothing is less just to their risky search for a commensurate reaction to a situation that is in moments of social crisis extraordinarily confusing and fraught with danger.

Not even the U.S. Embassy was spared this searching and groping when asked to explain why nothing in Czechoslovakia seemed to be moving. A good picture of this is provided by several of the dispatches from the first half of November. With a bit of irony one today reads, for example, the appeal made by Ambassador Black in a dispatch of November 7 (Document 12) as she tries to persuade the U.S. Deputy Secretary of State how detrimental it would be to

American interests in Czechoslovakia if the chief Communist ideologue Jan Fojtík's agreed visit to the United States were called off. All the greater is our respect, then, for the insightful judgment reflected in the dispatch of November 18, the first commentary on the fateful day after the brutal police attack against the students demonstrating on Národní třída (Document 32): this report emphasizes that it was a watershed event, which changed the whole picture of the prospects of the Jakeš regime. The same incisiveness of judgment appears in the picture of the quick developments within of the Civic Forum as the vanguard of the "quiet" revolution Czechoslovakia. And it appears also in the assessment of the election of Václav Havel to the office of President as the completion of the first phase of the revolution and the importance of the election as a symbol and message that the changes are irreversible.

Today the reader has (only, unfortunately, if he or she speaks Czech) more complete and precise information about many of the events that the telegrams report on, particularly several of the internal talks. There are two documentary publications: the first is a book of transcriptions of tape-recordings of the talks between Civic Forum representatives and their counterparts on the other side of the imaginary barricades – Prime Minister Adamec, Party General Secretary Urbánek, and representatives of the Army – and about the first round of the Roundtable Talks amongst the "decisive political forces" (on December 8, 1989). (Vladimír Hanzel, *Zrychlený tep dějin. Reálné drama o deseti jednáních* [The accelerated pulse of history: A real drama in ten acts], Prague, 1991.) The second book contains not only additional documents but also transcriptions of tape-recordings of the top-level meetings of the Civic Forum; this book, by Jiří Suk, was published six years ago. (*Občanské fórum, listopad – prosinec 1989, dokumenty* [Civic Form, November–December 1989: Documents], Prague, 1998.) Nevertheless, it is clear from reading the reports of the U.S. Embassy how many references and hints there are here to individual events and contexts, which have yet to be examined – not to mention the internal developments in the center of power and in the *apparat* of the Czechoslovak Communist Party, where it is the American telegrams that remind us that there is a large blank spot on the map of the existing historiography of the democratic revolution in Czechoslovakia.

The great value and charm of the view of events in Czechoslovakia offered by the dispatches lies also in the fact that this is local unchained history seen by foreigners, people who, it is true, were right at the scene of events and had a multitude of ties to them, yet were nevertheless from elsewhere, had a different perspective, and therefore saw many things more penetratingly than Czech and Slovak contemporaries did and also called them by different names.

The value of this source lies also in the fact that it provides us with testimony to everyday life in U.S. foreign policy in the autumn of 1989, written in a country whose political regime was stubbornly ignoring the signs of the times

and remained – completely unlike the regimes in Poland, Hungary, and even East Germany – in positions of confrontation with the opposition and emergent civil society. It is here in particular that one sees the role that the emphasis on meeting the obligations of the Helsinki Agreement in matters of human and civil rights played in American foreign policy towards Eastern Europe.

The telegrams, furthermore, provide insight into the daily workings of the Embassy. They reveal the large extent of the information network and the great potential in preparing comprehensive and extensive intelligence. It would be nice to know a bit more about how the information gathering worked, the monitoring of the daily press and TV, how the dispatches were written, who conceived them, and who gave them their final form. If the present volume provides the impetus for the writing of a testimony of this sort it will be an added benefit and an enrichment of what we know about a sphere we can still only speculate on.

The reporting does, however, contain certain gaps. The most palpable appear in the reports on the days between December 8 and 11, where there is no detailed report on the culminating talks on the composition of the Government that President Husák named shortly before his resignation. Similarly, Husák's televised farewell address on December 9 passes by without, it seems, a single word of comment. It is difficult to explain this because we have only a selection of the dispatches. Moreover, it is in this particular period that one dispatch from the aforementioned E1–E150 set was not declassified – namely telegram E103, which chronologically follows the telegram Prague 08589 from December 7 (Document 80).

It must be said, however, that when faced with the set of telegrams the historian cannot but express admiration for the tremendous work that this must have meant day after day, day and night, to ensure that the State Department in Washington received as quickly as possible the maximum, most complete, and most precise information required for an eventual response to events, and also for the articulation of everyday foreign policy. What we have, however, is far from everything that was reported to Washington from Prague. The historian can only guess what the other, still classified, dispatches contain – they might hold, among other things, information about conversations between American diplomats and their Prague colleagues in the French, British, and German embassies, their impressions, and pieces of information, things the historian will have at hand in ten or fifteen years, once he or she has access to records from the meetings in the branches of the Department of State in Washington. One might be surprised by the amount of new information, but it is also possible that one will be disappointed to discover that the events in Prague did not attract the attention one thinks they deserved or wishes they had received.

Nevertheless it is not only implicit in the set of dispatches in this volume, but it is also clear from them, how quickly, step by step, after December 10, new

Czechoslovak-American relations were born on a completely new basis, and how the previous relations between Czechoslovak dissidents and American diplomats in Prague, beginning with the emergence of Charter 77 more than ten years before, finally bore fruit. This is another dimension of the information provided by this source and it is part of its indisputable value.

— Editing methodology

And now a word about the approach taken in editing the documents in this volume. (The following information concerns mainly the original English-language documents, but also applies in essence to the approach taken towards the translations, which is discussed in detail in the introduction to the Czech version.) In general the Editor has tried as much as possible to apply the editorial treatment used in the *FRUS* series.

As in the samples of the original telegrams, which are reproduced in this volume, the original deciphered print-outs of the telegrams intended for distribution to the addressees and members of the State Department or Embassy are printed in capital letters without any diacritics on the names of Czech and Slovak persons, institutions, and publications. Moreover, the telegrams are full of abbreviations commonly used in the diplomatic service of the United States. In order to be published, this material had to be transcribed into normal text, using both lower and upper case letters; that is true also of the abbreviations, which had first to be deciphered. To avoid this initial, and perhaps greatest, source of difficulty and error, repeated consultations were required. The American usage for writing upper-case letters in the names of institutions, posts, and so forth, is not only completely different from Czech but also from British English; moreover, language usage is always changing. In this part of the editing of the telegrams the Editor was assisted by Derek Paton, and rules were agreed on that seemed to be most logical for the present purpose. Sometimes it was not possible, even in consultation with experts, to reach a definite decision.

The titles of Czech periodicals, theatres, plays, and institutions (for example *Rude Pravo*, *Realisticke Divadlo*) are written as they would be according to English-language usage, with capital letters at the beginning of each word except for prepositions and conjunctions. In order to retain the authenticity of the source, Czech and Slovak names in the dispatches are published as they appear in the originals, without their diacritics: thus “Dubcek,” “Stepan,” “Huscava;” only the index of names provides (in brackets) the correct form with diacritics – for example, Dubcek (Dubček), Stepan (Štěpán), and Havel, Vaclav (Václav). In the editor’s notes Czech and Slovak words appear with their proper diacritics.

The document headings are the work of the Editor. They contain the following information: The sender and the addressee, the date and place of sending,

the exact time of sending, the level of classification, the number of the telegram and the degree of urgency of its distribution, an indication of the subject matter, and references to radio-telegraphic correspondence regarding the same matter, providing it is mentioned. All this information has been precisely derived from the original documents, where, however, they are encoded in an officially prescribed manner. In determining the time of the sending of the telegrams (the hour and minute according to "Zulu Time," that is, Greenwich Mean Time) the Editor has relied on the information in the first row at the top, where the six-digit number indicates the day of the month, the hour, and the minute. In a number of places in the actual text of the telegram another piece of time information is given and often repeated, and this can be seen as the time of receiving or printing out the telegram at the addressee's end. In most cases, that is clear because this time is several minutes later than the time information provided in the heading. Nevertheless, in about one third of the telegrams to which the Editor had access the time of receipt is earlier than the time of sending. This difference is usually less than an hour. The Editor was unable to determine why; perhaps it was for technical reasons related to the automatic recording of time. The Editor has indicated this with an asterisk behind the letter Z (for Zulu Time), which therefore means that the time data in the telegram heading is a bit later than the time data that can be considered the time of receipt.

Three degrees of classification appear in the telegrams: Confidential, Limited Official Use (also as LOU), and Unclassified. The degree of urgency of delivering the telegram is, in the heading of the original, indicated by the letters R (routine), P (priority), and O; P is accompanied by the word Priority and O is accompanied by either the word Immediate or the term Niact Immediate (night action – that is to say, at any time). Verbal information was transferred from both these pieces of information into the heading. If this information is missing, it means that it was of "routine" urgency.

The originals of the telegrams usually list, apart from the principal addressee, a couple of other addressees to whom the telegram had been sent simply for their information ("Info"); they were usually "Eastern European Posts," in other words U.S. diplomatic missions in East European countries, the U.S. Embassy in Brussels, or other institutions, which the content of the telegram relates to in some way. Any telegram that had any relation, even remote, to human rights, includes instructions that the State Department must pass it on to Erika Schlager on the Helsinki Commission of the U.S. Congress. This information about other addressees is not reprinted in the telegrams in the present volume.

The original material also contains abbreviations of key words of the agenda that the telegram related to. Based on these key words the telegrams were put into a database where they could be easily accessed (to this day). These abbreviations of key words ("tags" of the cataloguing system) are not printed here either.

The actual text of each document has been transcribed as precisely as possible according to the originals, including division into paragraphs (and their numbers), punctuation, emphasis (marked in the original by underlining but in this volume by using bold-face type), quotation marks (the use of which is occasionally inconsistent, for example, now “Most,” now Most). Obvious typographical errors have been silently corrected; that was particularly true of occasional punctuation problems. (The technical state of the copies of the telegrams sometimes made it difficult to distinguish full stops, commas, and semicolons, so that at an error may occasionally, though only rarely, have occurred during transcription.) Abbreviations and contractions of all kinds have been left as they appear in the originals; their meaning is explained in the list of abbreviations.

In accordance with the FRUS rules for publishing volumes of documents all information added by the Editor appears in square brackets in roman type. Errors or inaccuracies, providing they do not require a footnote, appear in square brackets but are printed in italics. Places that were “excised” during declassification (in documents stamped “EXCISE” in the heading), in other words made unreadable, are indicated in the transcription by square brackets and italics stating the approximate amount of source text not declassified. (There are four such documents in this volume.)

The footnotes here are the work of the Editor. They are primarily meant to make it easier to follow the connections between the dispatches (references to “septel” – separate telegrams – or to “reftel” – reference telegrams). This is also how reference telegrams are referred to which were not declassified or the Editor did not include, so that the reader need not look for them in vain. A smaller number of the footnotes explain some circumstances, facts, names, and connections where a document has not yet been declassified or where the Editor considered it necessary to point out how the issue was resolved in the near future, which was, however, already outside the timeframe of this volume. In a few cases the Editor has pointed out a factual error committed by the writer of the report. Some footnotes point out that the complete text of the document relevant to understanding the report is available in the aforementioned volume of documents for the 1999 Prague conference, which is cited in the footnotes as *Briefing Book 1999*. That volume is available in several Prague academic libraries, the NSA library, and will, as of February 2005, also be available in full on the website of the Czechoslovak Documentation Center (www.csds.cz).

In principle, however, the Editor did not want to burden the volume and the reader with commentary. The aim of the volume, after all, is to publish a source that should be studied and critically analyzed in the context of a whole complex of sources, which the era has left behind. He has thus resisted the temptation to provide missing information, to provide references to other sources, secondary and primary, which are now available and which discuss a certain event or

connection more precisely or in greater detail than would have been possible in a telegram; to do otherwise the Editor would have changed a volume of unique primary sources into a hybrid, a handbook of questionable worth. Such an approach, the Editor feels, would be methodologically moot and would not correspond to the aim of the volume.

The documents appear in the volume in chronological order according to the date of transmission with regard to the serial number of the telegram, which, where there is doubt, must have priority. That concerns the three telegrams Prague 07753, Prague 07755, and Prague 07756 (Documents 9–11), which although communicated on December 6, 1989, and are thus dated, were conceived, as is clear from their content and number, a month before that, at the latest on November 7. This fact is indicated by the addition of angle brackets containing information in the heading and by a footnote.

For this volume, the documents have been grouped into five chapters, each of which has been given a title and a selected quotation from a telegram in that section. This has been done not to suggest to the reader any particular interpretation of the source, but to facilitate orientation in the texts and provide encouragement when faced with a passage that seems excessively long. (Years of experience editing, among other things, an academic journal, have taught the Editor that a long piece of writing without subtitles is like a long journey without a stop in a pub along the way.)

— **The six weeks of non-violent revolution in Czechoslovakia**

In the past few years the Editor has published in journals and in edited volumes his overall view of the most important factors that played the decisive role in the successful democratic revolution in Czechoslovakia in late 1989. Now, intensely involved once again with these American telegrams and asking himself what the most essential thing is that they tell us, he dares to remark that they support the conclusions he came to when he first read them a few years ago in conjunction with other sources.

1. The Czechoslovak road to democratic revolution was substantially different from the negotiated abdications of the Communist parties in neighboring Poland and Hungary, where the peaceful nature of the revolutions was determined by agreement between the leadership of the Party and the opposition. Characteristic of Czechoslovakia was the unflagging confrontation between the Communist establishment and the nuclei of civil society from which the democratic opposition gradually emerged. The Communists' rejection both of offers of dialogue and of demands for the democratization of the system – their continued policy of enmity towards everyone who was not willing to submit to the dictates of the Party – determined the policy of the Czechoslovak Communist leadership even after the Polish government was headed by a representative

of Solidarity and free elections and the free formation of political parties had been agreed to in Hungary, even, in fact, after the collapse of the Berlin Wall.

2. Back in mid-November 1989 hardly anyone in Czechoslovakia would have dared to predict when the greater part of society would begin to move and thus bring the situation in the country to a breaking point similar to the ones that already existed in Poland, Hungary, and East Germany. The skeptics far outnumber the hopeful – old and young, people within the dissident movement and without it (and at the U.S. Embassy as well), most had the impression that Czechs and Slovaks would never move.

3. Only ten days after November 17 it was clear just how great potential dissatisfaction in society and its will for change were – far greater than the most optimistic would have dared to dream. Czechs and Slovaks were not liberated from the outside, though they regained their liberty in the most favorable international conditions: the miracle of freedom was an act of self-liberation, in which the decisive role was played by the structures of the quickly forming civil society, orienting itself to pluralistic parliamentary democracy. The first decisive factor was the hundreds of thousands of people in streets and on squares throughout the country who openly distanced themselves from a regime that no longer had anyone abroad to turn to or rely on; in addition to these demonstrations, the general strike of November 27 was the watershed event.

4. The second decisive factor that determined the success of the revolution was the ability of the spontaneously forming representatives of the public – the Civic Forum, based in Prague, and the Public Against Violence, based in Bratislava – to take advantage of the favorable situation, to become the decisive political force in the country, and to ensure the irreversible democratic transformation. Within two weeks after its establishment, the Civic Forum became the most important political force here. On December 5–7, 1989, it crossed its Rubicon, when it decided energetically to share in power, to enter into talks on the formation of the Federal Government, to ensure that the Government under Marián Čalfa (to be named on December 10) would be composed primarily as agreed between the Civic Forum and the Public Against Violence, and decisively to influence the talks on who would be elected President of the Republic.

This quick maturing of the willingness and will of the Civic Forum to share in power and, from within the Government, the Federal Assembly, and the Castle, to share in decision-making about the transformation of the system (if not necessarily to influence or be directly in this transformation in a decisive way) was decisive for the quick course of the democratic revolution. This fact cannot be appreciated enough. It stands out particularly in comparison with developments in the German Democratic Republic.

5. The democratic revolution in Czechoslovakia was thus, as everywhere else, a completely open-ended story full of risks. The regime did not suddenly capitulate, did not give up without a struggle. After November 17, however, it did

not dare to use armed force against the demonstrating masses, the striking students, or the Civic Forum. Its erstwhile superpower-protector, the Soviet Union, took up a neutral position, and let internal developments in Czechoslovakia take their own course; indeed, Moscow seems to have made it clear by various internal channels that it did not consider it appropriate for its Czechoslovak comrades to use force to maintain rule.

In the Czechoslovak Communist Party, however, in the course of those weeks new leaderships were formed again and again, which relied on maneuvering and tried to save what could be saved; the concessions and compromises were proportional to the pressure being exerted on it. The members of the Jakeš leadership were thrown overboard, and were soon followed by an increasing number of highly placed functionaries, in an attempt by the Party to salvage what it could of its position. Ladislav Adamec, who understood before any of his comrades that he had no choice but to begin negotiations with the long-declared “enemies,” also retreated from the demands of the Civic Forum only out of necessity, because the Civic Forum had the people on streets and squares behind it. Adamec’s resignation on December 7 was a calculated maneuver. Not even after the naming of the “Government of National Understanding” did the newly formed leadership of the Czechoslovak Communist Party give up without a struggle. Evidence of this is its attempt to ensure that the President would be elected by popular vote and would thus either win the presidency for Adamec or at least use the electoral struggle to prevent the stabilization of the nascent democratic conditions.

6. In certain places the telegrams from the U.S. Embassy talk of a “quiet revolution” and it is with these words that the closing telegram of this volume begins. The Editor does not shy away from the word “revolution,” and believes that the analysts at the U.S. Embassy in the Lesser Town of Prague were precise in their naming of the fundamental historical change and turnaround to which they were eye-witnesses.

If under the term “revolution” we do not primarily see the element of violence as the means to push through systemic changes, but fundamental transformation of the system by substituting democracy for Communist rule, albeit “post-Communist” democracy, then the term “revolution” is entirely fitting. This is, however, a new kind or model of revolution, and those who were participants in it or witnesses to it, as well as later scholars, have sought the most suitable name for this systemic change and given it various adjectives or labels: “refolution” (coined by the English historian Timothy Garton Ash, suggesting a hybrid of reform and revolution), the “velvet” (*sametová*) revolution, the “gentle” (*něžná*) or “peaceful” or “quiet” (*pokojná*) revolution. Instead of force, it employed peaceful demonstrations (including the jangling of thousands of key-chains), negotiations (in which the Polish “roundtable” talks were seen as the model); it aimed in its own way at a restoration, because its program entailed

not the creation of a New Society or a New Man but something like a return to what had once been in Czechoslovakia before the Communist takeover.

The democratic revolution, as the Editor once wrote, is different from earlier historical processes that were in many other ways similar. This difference is in the fact that it occurred during the definitive crisis of Communism, during the gradual decline and intensifying death-throes of both the Communist system and its ideology or, in the words of the distinguished Polish social historian Bronisław Geremek, during the “total crisis of all structures of the system.” The social, political, and moral climate in central Europe in the second half of the 1980s was determined by an elementary desire for liberty as a basic condition of human existence. It also involved something so difficult to grasp and yet so important – human dignity – as people sensed it at the time, though most of them have already forgotten that.

Vilém Prečan

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As Editor I would nonetheless emphasize that responsibility for any possible shortcomings in the content of this volume is mine alone.

Prague, October 2004

Vilém Prečan

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Abbreviations

acc. , accompanied	FBIS , Foreign Broadcast Information Service
ABC , American Broadcasting Corporation	FonMin , Foreign Minister
A/S , Assistant Secretary	FRG , Federal Republic of Germany
AFP , Agence France-Presse	FSN , foreign service nationals
AgAtt , Agricultural Attaché	F-YI/FYL , for your information
AP , Associated Press (Agency)	GATT , General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade
attn. , attention	GDR , German Democratic Republic
BBC , British Broadcasting Corporation	GOC , Government of Czechoslovakia
BFWG , Business Facilitation Working Group	GSO , General Service Officer
C , Confidential	HA , Bureau of Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs, Department of State
CAO , Consular Affairs Officer	HAWG , Humanitarian Affairs Working Group
CC , Central Committee	IMF , International Monetary Fund
CFE , Conventional Forces in Europe	IND , independent
CMEA , Council for Mutual Economic Assistance	IREX , International Research & Exchanges Board
CNN , Cable News Network	ITN , Independent Television Network
COCOM , Coordinating Committee of the Consultative Group, based in Paris, consisting of the nations seeking to control the export of strategic goods to Communist countries	IVP , International Visiting Program
CODEL(s) , Congressional delegation(s)	LA , Los Angeles
CommAtt , Commercial Attaché	LOU , Limited Official Use
Con , Consular	MFA , Ministry of Foreign Affairs
ConOff , Consular Officer	MFN , Most Favored Nation
COOP , Cooperative	NAS , National Academy of Sciences
CP , Communist Party	NATO , North Atlantic Treaty Organization
CPS , Communist Party of Slovakia	NBC , National Broadcasting Company
CPSU , Communist Party of the Soviet Union	Niact , night action, communication indicator requiring attention by the recipient at any hour of the day or night
CPCZ , Communist Party of Czechoslovakia	NIH , National Institute of Health
CSLA , Czechoslovak Army (Československá lidová armáda)	NIV , non-immigrant visa
CSSR , Czechoslovak Socialist Republic	ODA , Office of Defense Attaché
CSCE , Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe	OAS , Organization of American States
DAO , Defense Affairs Officer	P&C Office , Press and Clippings Office
DCM , Deputy Chief of Mission	PAV , Public Against Violence (Slovak counterpart of Civic Forum)
Deptel , Department of State telegram	PEN Club , International Association of Poets, Playwrights, Editors, Essayists and Novelists
dol(s) , dollar(s)	PM , Prime Minister
EconOff , Economic Officer	POLAD , Political Adviser
EmbOff , Embassy Officer	PolEc or Pol/Ec , officer/head of the Political-economic Section of an Embassy
Embtel , Embassy telegram	PolOff , head or officer of the political section of an Embassy
EUR , Bureau of European and Canadian Affairs, Department of State	PRC , People's Republic of China
EUR/EEY , Office of Eastern European and Yugoslav Affairs, Bureau of European and Canadian Affairs, Department of State	reftel , reference telegram
EUR/RPE , Office of Regional Political-Economic Affairs, Bureau of European and Canadian Affairs, Department of State	Rep , representative
	RFE , Radio Free Europe
	RPT , repeat

RSO, Regional Security Officer
SED, Sozialistische Einheitspartei
 Deutschlands (Communist Party in GDR)
septel, separate telegram
SNB, Czechoslovak Police Corps (Sbor
 národní bezpečnosti, with two branches, StB
 and VB)
SSM, (Czechoslovak) Union of Socialist Youth
 (Socialistický svaz mládeže)
StB, State Security (Police) (Státní bezpečnost,
 secret political police in Communist
 Czechoslovakia)
TDY, temporary duty
TFPM, Task Force Political Military
U, Unclassified
UN, United Nations

UNGA, United Nations General Assembly
US, United States
USD, US dollar
USG, United States Government
USIA, United States Information Agency
USIS, United States Information Service
USTR, United States Trade Representative
VB, Public Security (Veřejná bezpečnost,
 uniformed branch of Czechoslovak Police
 Corps)
VOA, Voice of America
VONS, Committee for the Defence of the
 Unjustly Prosecuted (formed in April 1978)
WJC, World Jewish Congress
Z, Zulu time (Greenwich Mean Time)

Annex

List of telegrams from the “Czechoslovak Cables” Collection, which were not included in this volume:

Prague 07638	Nov 1	<i>FRG Embassy Again Hosts East Germans as GDR Border Re-opens</i>
Prague 07641	Nov 1	<i>Latest Czechoslovak Hungarian Talks on Gabčíkovo-Nagymaros Dam Go Nowhere</i>
Prague 07686	Nov 2	<i>1,000 East Germans in Prague FRG Embassy Wait to Head West</i>
Prague 07687	Nov 2	<i>Gabčíkovo-Nagymaros: Hungarians Will Not Give a Dam</i>
Prague 07706	Nov 3	<i>Visit of Former Hungarian Party Leader to Slovakia Purely Personal</i>
Prague 08253	Nov 27	<i>Biographic Sketches of Some Members of the New Czechoslovak Communist Party Presidium</i>
Prague 08336	Nov 29	<i>Biographic Sketches of Additional Members of the New Czechoslovak Communist Party Presidium</i>
Prague 8479	Dec 4	<i>Bio Info for New GOC Ministers</i>
Prague 08555	Dec 7	<i>Biographical Sketches of New Members of the Slovak Communist Party Presidium</i>
Prague 08613	Dec 8	<i>Biographic Sketches on the New Members of New Czech Republic Government</i>
Prague 08683	Dec 11	<i>Biographic Information – New Members of GOC</i>
Prague 08710	Dec 12	<i>Visits of Senior Czechoslovak Officials Abroad and or Foreign Officials to Czechoslovakia in November 1989</i>
Prague 08750	Dec 13	<i>Biographic Information of New Federal Assembly Chairman</i>
Prague 0888	Dec 19	<i>Un Drug Trafficking Convention</i>
Prague 08889	19 Dec	<i>Biographies of New Slovak Government</i>
Prague 08890	19 Dec	<i>CPCZ to Deactivate Basic Party Organizations Existing within Governmental Organizations</i>
Prague 08985	22 Dec	<i>Demarche to Czechoslovaks on Diversion of Panama Funds</i>
State 412611	30 Dec	<i>Leadership and Policy Changes in Czechoslovak Mass Organisations – the Trade Union Dimension</i>

DOCUMENTS

I

BUSINESS AS USUAL?

“Filippov said that the October 28 demonstrations confirmed his opinion that no great change in CPCZ personnel or policies would occur before the May Party congress. The GDR had shown that one could not ignore public opinion, but the pressure from below here was limited. While the Czechoslovak leadership was worried by developments in East Germany, unless a ‘unique set of conditions’ developed here too it would stick to a program of gradual change. At present there were no serious divisions within the Party leadership and CPCZ Chief Jakes was clearly in charge. Prime Minister Adamec spoke out for more decisive economic reforms, but his support was limited to younger members of the Party and Government. [...] Filippov saw pressure for change coming as practical issues were discussed within the CPCZ in connection with the May Party congress. A draft of a new constitution, Party statutes and a Party program would be the convenient hooks on which Party members could hang reform ideas.”

Prague 07670, November 2, 1989

1. Telegram From the Embassy in Czechoslovakia to the Department of State

Prague, September 14, 1989, 1520Z

[Confidential]¹

Prague 06366

Subject: GOC Looks for Conservative Allies; Criticizes its Former Mentor

1. [Confidential] – entire text

2. Summary. Out of step with developments among its liberal neighbors, the GOC is staunchly supporting old conservative friends, like the GDR, while looking for new ones. Last week the GOC announced its interest in normalizing relations with Albania and has stepped up contacts with the PRC and Romania. Perhaps the most striking expression of a felt sense of isolation is the leadership's readiness to criticize its former mentor, the Soviet Union, and claim the right to make its own analysis of regional developments. End summary.

3. Recent, frequent exchanges with Romania and the PRC, such as a military delegation headed by Defense Minister Milan Vaclavik now in Beijing,² has seemed designed to strengthen the GOC's ties with regimes at the most conservative end of the socialist spectrum. That policy took a small step forward last week when the GOC announced its interest in normalizing relations with Albania. A *Rude Pravo* editorial of September 12 appeared to accept most of the blame for the original decision to downgrade bilateral relations in 1961 (after the Soviet-Albania break) for Czechoslovakia itself. The article described Albania "as a state which in many ways avows the same social values and goals we do."

1 | The original classification was blacked out during declassification.

2 | Later, October 31 to November 5, Czechoslovak Foreign Minister Jaromír Johanes was on an official visit to China.

4. Tirana has since agreed to the appointment of Ambassadors in respective capitals. The Albanian chargé has told a British colleague that this initiative came entirely from the Czechoslovak side, though Albania welcomed it in the interest of promoting trade. We understand Czechoslovakia is in fact Albania's main trading partner.

5. Old friends are golden as the song says, and GOC diplomacy and media attention give support to GDR. Prague has staunchly defended its ally in its dispute with Bonn and Hungary over the refugees. Reporting on the decision of some 300 East German sit-ins at the West German Chancery to return home earlier this week was accompanied by an official statement that Prague will stand by its treaty commitments with East Berlin. (I.e., honor GDR's travel controls on its own citizens.) The statement also criticized the FRG for interference in internal GDR affairs.

6. Hungary has been portrayed as the worst villain in the refugee episode, however. As usual, Czechoslovak reporting on Budapest was spiced with an added acerbity, not given even to its reporting on Warsaw developments. (Comment: That may well result from the fact that Hungarian changes are being driven there by a reform wing within the Communist Party, the same enemy the Jakes regime thought it vanquished in 1968. End comment.) Parallels were drawn between Budapest's suspension of travel commitments to the GDR and its unilateral action to stop the Nagymaros project. Prague radio has asked where such a trend could lead: To Hungary's suspension of even more important international undertakings such as CMEA and the Warsaw Pact?

7. Neither have the Soviets been immune from criticism. CPCZ ideology chief Jan Fojtik's speech on September 5 at the Party Higher School may mark a greater readiness to take on *perestroika* and its proponents. Fojtik argued that the Czechoslovak Party had to be readier to analyze developments in neighboring countries for itself, not rely on others (i.e., the Soviets) for that analysis. He said that there was nothing about the Czechoslovak society or economy for Communists to be ashamed about. Czechoslovakia was in many ways in better shape than the Soviet Union. There was no reason, he said, for the CPCZ "to cringe needlessly" before Western critics as, he implied, our Soviet comrades are doing.

Black

2. Telegram From the Embassy in Czechoslovakia to the Department of State

Prague, October 1, 1989, 1529Z

[Confidential]³

Prague 06870; Immediate

Subject: Asylum Situation in FRG's Prague Embassy Continues Despite
Weekend Exodus

1. [Confidential] – entire text.

2. Summary. The dramatic exodus of some 5,000 GDR citizens from Prague for the West has caught media attention but has not resolved the asylum situation at the FRG Embassy here. Despite a Czechoslovak police cordon, some 700 new GDR citizens have managed to enter the Embassy since last weekend's exodus. An FRG Embassy official has told us, in confidence, that there is a possibility that last weekend's exodus will be repeated but that in the longer term the only thing that will stem the flow of East German sit-ins is some form of visa control at the GDR/Czechoslovak border. In the meantime the FRG Embassy is preparing for a new surge of asylum seekers. End summary.⁴

3 | The original classification was blacked out during declassification.

4 | During the last week of September 1989 several thousand East Germans gathered at the West German Embassy in Prague, trying to emigrate to West Germany. On the night of September 30, West German Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher came to Prague to tell them that now, on the basis of an agreement between the two German states, they could legally leave for West Germany. After an agreement with the Czechoslovak authorities a special train set out immediately for West Germany. In early October, however, another 1,000 East Germans gathered in the West German Embassy and nearby, and were then also allowed to go to West Germany. The exodus continued in smaller waves throughout October. According to official statistics, by November 6 approximately 13,000 East Germans had left the country for West Germany by way of Czechoslovakia, by November 7, 33,000, and by November 8, a total of about 42,000 had left.

3. As Western media has fully reported, an exodus via train of some 5,000 GDR asylum seekers took place from Prague over the weekend. Several hundred, possibly as many as 1,000, of this number were late arrivals who had traveled to Prague only after hearing the news of an FRG-GDR deal on the sit-ins. Their abandoned cars line the side streets of the Malostrana [*Malá Strana*] section of Prague where the FRG Embassy is located.

4. After the exodus Saturday evening, Czechoslovak police acted to cordon off the FRG Embassy. The cordon, which the West Germans tell us they have vigorously protested, seems extremely permeable, however. FRG Embassy DCM (Metzger) has told us that some 700 persons have managed to get through it and onto the Embassy grounds since Sunday morning. The FRG Ambassador is under strict orders from Bonn to accept all East Germans who reach the Embassy and request asylum.

5. Metzger fears the situation will soon reach last week's proportions and medical teams are working to improve sanitary conditions in expectation of a new surge of sit-ins. Metzger told us in strictest confidence that a second round of talks with GDR officials are *is* now underway in Bonn. The aim of the talks is for a repeat of last weekend's exodus with a hope the GDR will agree to remove the sit-in story from the headlines before its 40th birthday celebrations.

6. Metzger is not optimistic that even a second exodus will resolve the asylum problem. He accompanied the trainload of sit-ins via Dresden to the FRG and witnessed first-hand the enthusiastic support and reception the train's occupants received along its route through the GDR. Only the institution of some sort of visa control between the East Germany and Czechoslovakia border will stem the flow in his opinion. Prague is unlikely to take such a step unilaterally since it would reduce its substantial income from East German tourism.

7. Metzger told us that it was obvious to him that the Czechoslovaks he was dealing with had been ordered, he believed by the Soviets, to cooperate in the exodus. Officials who had only days earlier resisted proposals on relocating the refugees out of Embassy garden were suddenly helpful. The Czechoslovaks also seemed relieved that the solution worked out involved no concessions on their part. They could still claim, unlike Hungarians, to be honoring their travel commitments with the GDR.

8. Metzger agreed that it was difficult to speculate what impact the episode would have on local Czechoslovak public opinion. Metzger said that the popular reaction along the train route had been much more restrained in Czechoslovakia than in the GDR. While the local press is playing the story as a bilateral German matter, it seems conceivable that watching the GDR's hard line leadership bow to popular pressure, and perhaps Soviet pressure, to resolve the problem, could encourage popular defiance here.

9. The Czechoslovak Television announcer who reported on the FRG Embassy events on Saturday evening seemed honestly shaken as he reported the

news. In part that is explainable by Czechoslovak Television's lack of experience in handling fast-breaking news stories at home. But there was also an element of surprise, even emotion, that such a solution to the sit-in crisis was even possible.⁵

Black

5 | See also Documents 3 and 9.

3. Telegram From the Embassy in Federal Republic of Germany to the Department of State

Bonn, October 3, 1989, 1631Z

[Confidential]⁶

Bonn 32091; Priority

Subject: Ambassador's Conversation with Adam-Schwaetzer

1. [Confidential] – entire text.

2. Summary: The Ambassador made an introductory call on Foreign Office State Minister Adam-Schwaetzer, September 29. Discussion focused largely on the East German refugee problem. Adam-Schwaetzer saw no immediate prospect of resolving the situation of the East German refugees in the FRG Embassy in Prague since the Czechs wanted to avoid offending the GDR and apparently felt little pressure to liberalize their policy; the GDR leadership would probably like to get the problem off the table before the 40th anniversary celebrations, but would probably be unable to take the necessary hard decisions in time. End summary.

3. Frau Adam-Schwaetzer, who had visited the FRG Embassy in Prague the day before, offered some impressions of the current situation of the East German refugees in Prague and Warsaw. Saying that the German Government did not know what would happen next, she told the Ambassador that Foreign Minister Genscher had discussed several “models” for a solution with GDR Foreign Minister Fischer at the UNGA in New York, but Fischer had not responded positively.

4. It was clear to her, she said, on the basis of her personal discussions with some of the refugees in Prague, that they were determined not to return to the GDR, even temporarily. Their distrust of the East German authorities was simply

⁶ | The original classification was blacked out during declassification.

too deep and too well ingrained. Possibly this could change if a large amount of time went by without any improvement in the situation.

5. The situation of the sit-ins was better in Warsaw than in Prague, Adam-Schwaetzer continued, because the Polish Government had permitted use of other buildings besides the Embassy and would not force the refugees to return. The FRG was seeking a similar arrangement with the Czechs, but it was not yet clear whether the Czechs would agree. The living conditions of the refugees in Prague were a serious problem (600 of them being small children), and there was no prospect that the stream of refugees into the Embassy would cease.

6. The Ambassador asked why the Czechs could not be persuaded to honor their Helsinki obligations, like the Hungarians. Adam-Schwaetzer replied that the Czechs argued that their treaty commitments to the GDR took precedence over their Helsinki commitments. When Foreign Office State Secretary Sudhoff had made the opposite case to his Czech counterpart two days earlier, he received a very harsh answer. In general, it appeared that the authorities in Prague did not feel themselves to be under any pressure to introduce political reforms, and the standard of living in Czechoslovakia was comparatively good for Eastern Europe. Therefore, they seemed comfortable with maintaining the status quo and wished to avoid conflict with the GDR.

7. Adam-Schwaetzer continued that there were some indications the GDR would like to resolve the refugee problem before the ceremonies marking the 40th anniversary of the founding of the GDR on October 7. The dilemma the GDR leaders faced, however, was that they would have to give up at least one of their cherished principles to achieve this. She doubted whether they could bring themselves to make the necessary decisions in time.⁷

Walters

7 | See also Document 9.

4. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Czechoslovakia

Washington, October 3, 1989, 0128Z

[Confidential]⁸

State 316170; Immediate

Subject: Human rights, Czechoslovak-style: EEE Meeting with
DCM Michovsky, October 2, 1989

Ref: Prague 6401⁹

1. [Confidential] – entire text.

2. Summary: Czechoslovak DCM Michovsky expressed his country's satisfaction with the recent ministerial bilateral meeting in New York, then invoked the Human Dimension Mechanism [of the CSCE] against the U.S. EUR/EEE Acting Director Hornblow defended Ambassador Black's statements on human rights in Czechoslovakia after welcoming the GOC decision to allow East German refugees to leave the FRG Embassy in Prague. Michovsky mentioned that Religious Affairs Minister Janku¹⁰ would visit the U.S., and said that the GOC plans to present new proposals for improved U.S.–Czechoslovak relations soon. End summary.

3. On October 2, EEE Acting Director Hornblow and Desk Officer Munter met with Czechoslovak DCM Michovsky at the Department. Michovsky, who had requested the meeting, expressed satisfaction with the Baker-Johanes meeting of September 27. Hornblow asked how Michovsky assessed the ministerial, and Michovsky said that despite press reports that the meeting was intended

8 | The original classification was blacked out during declassification.

9 | Not yet declassified.

10 | Vladimír Janku was head of the Secretariat for Church Affairs, Office of the ČSSR Government Presidium.

to criticize the GOC on human rights, it was in fact a positive first step, and could lead to progress in many spheres.¹¹

4. Michovsky emphasized the importance of human rights to the GOC. He then delivered a diplomatic note, dated September 19, asking for human rights information about two incidents in the United States: the August 31 protest of the killing of Yusuf Hawkins in New York, and the September 2 disturbances in Virginia Beach. Hornblow asked whether notes of this sort were being given to other Western countries, and Michovsky said yes. Hornblow then asked if the time might come where the Human Dimension might be invoked against Warsaw Pact allies, and Michovsky said, “why not?” (The full text of the Czechoslovak diplomatic note invoking step one of the Human Dimension Mechanism appears below, para 9.) Hornblow said the Department would respond to the Czechoslovak note as quickly as possible.

5. Hornblow then raised the issue of the East German refugees at the FRG Embassy in Prague. He was pleased, he said, that the GOC had not prevented the refugees’ departure to West Germany and hoped that the GOC would allow GDR citizens access to the FRG Embassy. Michovsky replied that, ultimately, this was a matter for the two Germans to work out between themselves.

6. Hornblow then turned to recent GOC displeasure over a *New York Times* interview with Ambassador Black (reftel). Regarding human rights, he said, the USG has always made its views known, encouraging reform within the context of Czechoslovakia’s international commitments. USG policy was predictable and consistent; Ambassador Black had said nothing new; and the USG will continue this policy. In addition, he said, when DCM Russell was called in to the MFA in Prague, he was not told beforehand the subject of the discussion. Hornblow emphasized that whenever a Czechoslovak diplomat is called in here, every attempt is made to notify him of the subject to be discussed.

7. Michovsky mentioned the visit of Religious Affairs Minister Janku to the U.S. Janku had been invited by Rabbi Arthur Schneier of the Appeal of Conscience Foundation, and would be in Washington around the 20–22 of October. He mentioned that Janku had plans to meet Assistant Secretary Schifter and asked if a meeting with EY Director Swihart could be arranged. Hornblow undertook to arrange such a meeting.

8. Michovsky described the GOC’s satisfaction that the ministerial meeting might lead to a progress in bilateral relations. After the Baker-Johanes meeting, he said, Ambassador Houstecky had prepared a new set of concrete

11 | During the UN General Assembly the Czechoslovak Foreign Minister talked with his American opposite for the first time in 11 years. Secretary of State James Baker told Johannes that better relations between their two countries depended on greater respect for human rights in Czechoslovakia. He also presented Johannes with a partial list of political prisoners, and expressed the view that economic reform would not be successful without commensurate changes in the political sphere.

proposals for improved bilateral relations. Houstecky had given these proposals to Johanes, and Michovsky hoped that Johanes would clear them in time for Houstecky to present these proposals to Assistant Secretary Seitz in their upcoming meeting. (Comment: The Houstecky-Seitz meeting had tentatively been scheduled for mid-October, but has been put off.)

9. The text of the Czechoslovak diplomatic note follows: (Begin text) The Embassy of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic presents its compliments to the Department of State and with reference to the Concluding Document of the Vienna Follow-up Meeting of the representatives of the participating states of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, part Human Dimension of the CSCE, point one, has the honor to request the information about the reasons for the police interference against the participants of the protest march in New York on August 31, 1989, who expressed their indignation over the murder of 16-year-old Yusuf K. Hawkins, as well as about the reasons for measures taken by police and National Guard against the participants, particularly the black ones, in the "Greekfest," which took place in Virginia Beach on September 2-4, 1989. There were a lot of persons injured and detained by police in both cases. The Embassy of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic asks the State Department for more detailed explanation of these regrettable incidents, especially with respect to the articles 11, 12 and 13 of the Concluding Document of the Vienna Follow-up Meeting, which stipulate among others the respect and ensurance of human rights without distinction of any kind such as race and color. (Customary closing) September 19, 1989. (End text)

Baker

5. Telegram From the Embassy in Czechoslovakia to the Department of State

Prague, October 19, 1989, 1541Z

[Confidential]¹²

Prague 07303

Subject: Ambassador Black's First Official Call on CPCZ Presidium Member
Miroslav Stepan

1. [Confidential] – entire text.

2. Summary and comment. In my first meeting with Miroslav Stepan, CPCZ Presidium member and head of a Federal Assembly Foreign Affairs Committee, I found him as direct and tough an interlocutor as I had been warned he would be. He shared with me his vision of Czechoslovakia in the year 2000, saying he did not see the country going the way of either Poland or Hungary and saw few similarities in its situation and that of the GDR. While espousing democratization as necessary, he excluded any persons from a political dialogue who challenged the CPCZ's leading role. Stepan said he was not an opportunist and therefore could never revise his opinion of the 1968 events, though he could imagine a dialogue with persons from that era if it was directed at the future not the past. Stepan said he wanted good bilateral relations, looked forward to another parliamentary visit in Washington next year, and had asked the MFA to work in replacing our WWII liberation memorials in Western Bohemia. On the key issue of human rights, Stepan showed little flexibility and warned that a ban on demonstrations in the city's center, a reference to possible October 28 independent commemorations, would be enforced. End summary and comment.

¹² | The original classification was blacked out during classification.

— Czechoslovakia in the year 2000

3. CPCZ Presidium member Miroslav Stepan began my first official call on him on October 18 with a virtuoso 50-minute performance on what he expected Czechoslovakia to look like in the year 2000. Stepan said he had just discussed this question with Soviet Politburo member Lev Zaykov, in Prague to open a “Moscow Days” festival. Stepan said the changes going on inside and around Czechoslovakia did not make him nervous; he thought the greater political activity a good thing. He was surprised though by people who said they knew what would happen here. Some argued the country would go the way of an Albanian-style closed society; others saw it following a Hungarian or Polish path with a restoration of capitalism. Both in his view were wrong.

4. Stepan’s vision of Czechoslovakia in the year 2000 is one closely linked to developments in the Soviet Union. The regime, said Stepan, had embarked on its own Gorbachev-inspired reforms. But as he told Zaykov, *perestroika* here would be carried out under the country’s own special conditions. The pace of Czechoslovakia’s reform was less important to him than their final results, which, he believed, would be substantial. Our model is the Soviet Union, said Stepan. We do not want what is happening in Poland and Hungary and will do everything to prevent it. The people support us on this, he continued: “They live relatively well and do not want to lose their cottage, car or salami for the chaos in Poland or Hungary.”

5. I managed at this point to ask whether Stepan saw any similarities between recent developments in the GDR and here. He admitted to only one: both countries had stable economies and high living standards. Otherwise, the mentality and character of the peoples were entirely different. The situation of the GDR was unique. The Czech people are not divided by a border, as are the Germans. While he would not give advice to his East German comrades, he thought they realized they had to assume a more open policy soon and would do so.

6. Stepan denied that the East German exodus from Prague had any influence or support locally. Czechs who had waved or give the victory sign to departing refugees were not representative. The average Czechoslovak neither understood nor approved of the danger to which these people had exposed even their small infants in their effort to get to the “promised land.” Besides, the exodus had caused a number of local problems. For its part, he said, the Czechoslovak Government felt it had acted as a good neighbor to both Germanies and had respected its commitments to the GDR.

— The limits of dialogue

7. Returning to Czechoslovak *perestroika*, Stepan said, he did not think economic reform was possible without democratization and dialogue. But while dialogue had a national and international dimension, the national one would

not be made a condition for international cooperation. In the national context, he said, it was not necessary or desirable to have a dialogue with everyone. The CPCZ encourages groups to speak out, but only those who were truly patriotic could participate in an honest dialogue.

8. Asked the question of what a patriot was, Stepan said that he was a person who put the people's welfare ahead of his own ambition. A patriot also accepted that dialogue was based on the assumption that the country would remain socialist (i.e., Communist). "We do not want a dialogue with people who tell us to leave," he said.

9. Stepan rejected comparisons between what Gorbachev was doing now and what occurred in Prague in 1968. This was a false analysis which failed to put developments in their proper historical context, he said. The world looked differently 20 years ago. Stepan (who is 43) said he was old enough then to be politically conscious of the Prague Spring. He had supported the program of the January 1968 CPCZ plenum. The opposition would have it, he said, that Soviet tanks stopped the implementation of that program. In fact, Dubcek remained head of the Party for another 8 months. What prevented that program from being carried out was the incompetence of the then CPCZ leadership.

10. Stepan said he was not an "opportunist" and could not support the people of 1968. He saw a possibility that the Party could initiate a dialogue with some of these people, but it had to be directed to the future, not the past.

— **Bilateral relations**

11. Turning to bilateral relations, Stepan said the Federal Assembly had welcomed Ambassador Houstecky's presentation on U.S.-Czechoslovak affairs earlier this Summer (Prague 6369)¹³. Stepan appreciated that there were obstacles in the way of improved relations, he had heard of them first hand when he visited Washington in June 1988 as a member of a parliamentary delegation. But there were also areas for cooperation. He listed cultural and scientific exchanges and parliamentary visits. Stepan said that he and four other members of his Foreign Relations Committee would be traveling to Canada next summer, possibly in June after the CPCZ congress. He wanted to explore coming to Washington at that time. His first visit had been a "familiarization" trip. He wanted his second to produce some concrete results. I agreed that this sounded a good idea in principle, one we could discuss when his plans were clearer.

12. In the remaining 20 minutes left in our conversations I focused on a few of our own bilateral concerns. I told him that I had raised these already at the MFA in September with First Deputy Foreign Minister Sadovsky. My first point,

¹³ | Not yet declassified.

human rights, had been central to the discussion between Secretary Baker and Foreign Minister Johanes at the U.N. Stepan replied that he knew of my human rights concerns. He had read of them in a *USA Today* interview I gave and which appeared on October 16.

— Human rights

13. Human rights was as much his problem, I said, as mine, since we could not hope for progress in areas like MFN, until solutions were found. My question of his definition of a patriot was apropos to this. I did not understand why freedom of speech could not be exercised in Czechoslovakia. Secretary Baker was particularly concerned over several cases he had raised with Johanes involving free speech. Stepan asked specifically which ones they were. I listed them for him (i.e., Carnogursky, Kusy, Devaty, Starek, Cibulka) and also mentioned the recent detention of *Lidove Noviny's* editors Jiri Ruml and Rudolf Zeman.¹⁴

14. Stepan took note of the names though he said he would not play the naive and act as if he did not recognize them. He responded directly to the case of *Lidove Noviny* remarking that when someone publishes a newspaper that failed to respect Czechoslovak laws it should be closed down. Just, he said, as a journalist should be stopped who libeled someone. On the other hand, he complained that he had been submitted to personal attacks by RFE, but what was his recourse. I told him to let me know anytime RFE said something untrue about him.

15. His point, said Stepan, was that as long as valid Czechoslovak laws were violated, the criminals could expect prosecution. A process was underway to bring the Constitution and legislation into conformity with Vienna. In the meantime, the laws had to be obeyed. In an apparent reference to the upcoming October 28 anniversary, he noted that a law prevents use of Prague's Old Town or Wenceslas Square for demonstrations, except for special cases (i.e., May Day). Such laws will be enforced, he said.

16. Stepan went on to say that "we are aware of what you are saying about human rights, even if we feel there is a need for realism from your side." Opposition groups, he said, were not in tune with the Czechoslovak people. In a public referendum their activities would be rejected. We have become accustomed with foreigners meeting and contacting them. In time, we will be even more relaxed, he said, but we will never permit them to influence the masses to criticize us or deny that our Party had accomplished anything over 40 years.

17. Stepan concluded that our relations could follow one of two roads. One was the way of charges and counter-charges. The other was to cooperate in areas

¹⁴ | See Document 7, para 6.

like parliamentary exchanges and the very valuable IREX Roundtable, which was held in Prague. He noted that among some of the Czechoslovak participants at the Roundtable had been former Communist Party members expelled from the CPCZ in 1969. His point again was that there were changes.

18. I told Stepan I wanted to have the same good access to him at the Federal Assembly as my predecessor had. He agreed that would be useful. I mentioned that our spring wreathlayings in Moravia/Slovakia had received cooperation from the local authorities. I thanked him for any influence he had on this. I also asked if he had given any more thought to his discussion with Ambassador Niemczyk¹⁵ about the replacement of memorials marking the liberation of Western Bohemia by U.S. forces at the end of the war. Stepan said he had sent the material Ambassador Niemczyk had given him to the MFA and “certain work” on this question was in progress. Again, I thanked him for his assistance.

19. In conclusion, I told him that I did not expect to convince him in one meeting of our views on human rights. The cases I had raised, however, were of concern not just to the Administration but to Congress and the American people. I repeated that if we wanted to move our relations forward we had to view human rights as a common problem.

Black

15 | That is, the predecessor of Ambassador Black.

6. Telegram From the Embassy in Czechoslovakia to the Department of State

Prague, November 2, 1989, 1353Z

Confidential

Prague 07670

Subject: Soviet Diplomat on Shevardnadze's Statement on 1968

Ref: (A) FBIS LD 2710185789 DTG 271857Z Oct 89, (B) Prague 6252¹⁶

1. Confidential – entire text.

2. Summary. A Soviet diplomat has explained Foreign Minister Shevardnadze's recent rejection of any re-evaluation of 1968 in terms of an interest in not opening up external complications unless they help to resolve internal Soviet problems, which he implied this would not. This diplomat continues to see the May 1990 Party congress as the watershed for personnel and Party changes and CPCZ leader Jakes secure in his position at the present time. While GDR developments can have an impact here, this Soviet believes it will come through encouraging reform-minded CPCZ members to work for change in drafting new Party statutes and a new Party program for consideration at the May congress. End summary.

3. POLEC Chief met with Soviet Political Counselor Vasiliy Filippov (protect) on October 31 to discuss the local political situation. Filippov was particularly interested in the USG's reaction to the October 28 demonstration which EmbOff reviewed for him, noting our protest at the detention of journalists and the Department's strong human rights statements both before and after the weekend's events. A summary of other points raised follows.

¹⁶ | Neither of the two documents has yet been declassified.

— Shevardnadze on 1968

4. According to Filippov, *Rude Pravo*'s prominent reporting of Shevardnadze's statements on the 1968 Soviet-led invasion was accurate. (Note: A FBIS report of Shevardnadze's interview with a Polish journalist is contained ref A. Essentially he described the official evaluations as "binding" and only changeable by mutual decision with the Czechoslovak leadership. He also rejected any comparison between the Soviet military intervention in Czechoslovakia and in Afghanistan. End note.)¹⁷ Filippov said he had no information on a story circulating in Prague last week that a Soviet history commission had delivered a report favoring a 1968 re-evaluation but that the CPSU Presidium had voted against its release. (Note: Dubcek-era Culture Minister Galuska was the source of this story. End note.)

5. Filippov noted that the last time he and EmbOff had met (ref B) it seemed as if Soviet authorities were moving towards a re-evaluation of its role in the invasion, but "a lot of things had happened since then." An important article, titled "Autumn Harvest," had appeared in *Izvestia* some two weeks earlier. It dealt with the impact of the 1968 invasion on internal Soviet life and had been successful in "clearing the air" on such events as the post-invasion witch hunts which put an end to the Khrushchev thaw of the 1960's. Shevardnadze's statement, he said, had to be seen in connection with the success of such articles in correcting the negative impact of the invasion on Soviet society. (Comment: Filippov's implication was that for the moment the Soviet leadership was not about to open up external complications unless they were essential to resolving domestic problems, which 1968 was not. End comment.)

— Prospects for change in Prague

6. Filippov said that the October 28 demonstrations confirmed his opinion that no great change in CPCZ personnel or policies would occur before the May Party congress. The GDR had shown that one could not ignore public opinion, but the pressure from below here was limited. While the Czechoslovak leadership was worried by developments in East Germany, unless a "unique set of conditions" developed here too it would stick to a program of gradual change. At present there were no serious divisions within the Party leadership and CPCZ chief Jakes was clearly in charge. Prime Minister Adamec spoke out for more decisive economic reforms, but his support was limited to younger members of the Party and Government.

¹⁷ | See the interview with Shevardnadze conducted by Adam Michnik in the Polish daily of Solidarity *Gazeta Wyborcza*, October 27–29, 1989, reprinted in English translation as Document 41 in *Briefing Book 1999*.

7. Filippov saw pressure for change coming as practical issues were discussed within the CPCZ in connection with the May Party congress. A draft of a new constitution, Party statutes and a Party program would be the convenient hooks on which Party members could hang reform ideas. Change in the GDR would encourage this process. Filippov made the following comments on these three documents:

- the draft of the new constitution has run into so many problems it would not repeat not be ready for Central Committee consideration this year;
- a draft set of principles for a new Party program would be the subject of a December CPCZ plenum; and
- the most important aspect of new draft Party statutes, published in *Rude Pravo* on October 31, was the creation of Czech Republic Party on a par with the Slovak Communist Party.

8. On the last point, Filippov mentioned he had just met Karel Urbanek, head of the Committee for Party Work in the Czech Lands, in connection with a visit of Russian Republic Party leaders. While he declined to give an impression of him, he said that one of his most attractive features, like another Presidium member Miroslav Stepan, was that he was young and therefore without a past.

— GOC isolation

9. Asked to comment on Czechoslovakia's recent increased diplomatic activity with more orthodox socialist states (Foreign Minister Johanes, for example, was off on November 1 to the PRC). Filippov said he did not see a clear pattern in this, if GOC relations were strained with some socialist states, like Hungary, many of the visits to orthodox ones, such as Romania, had been planned for some time. The Czechoslovaks had a long term program for such visits and he did not view them as reacting to a sense of isolation. The travel to China by a number of senior Czechoslovaks was different. Much of this was previously unscheduled. In Filippov's view this was explainable by the normalization in Soviet/Chinese relations and a Czechoslovak interest in taking advantage of this to boost trade.

— Comment

11 [10]. Filippov struck us as surprised by the Shevardnadze statements and his choice of a Polish Solidarity newspaper interview to make them. He was also a bit uncomfortable in discussing it and told us that Moscow had still not provided his Embassy with the Russian text of what Shevardnadze had said.

12 [11]. The unambiguity of Shevardnadze's statement, coming coincidentally with the October 28 anniversary demonstrations, has left a strong impression

here. It has pricked a bubble of hope that a Soviet re-evaluation of 1968 would help to start a popular and Party momentum to push the Jakes leadership out of power. Dissidents have been particularly bitter over what they view as Gorbachev's abnegation of Soviet responsibility for the leadership installed here some 20 years ago.¹⁸ Many in commenting on Shevardnadze's statement recalled Gorbachev's failure, when he was here in April 1987, to address 1968.

Black

¹⁸ | See, for example, the open letter from Jiří Dienstbier to Edward Shevardnadze of October 30, 1989, reprinted in English as Document 42 in *Briefing Book 1999*.

7. Telegram From the Embassy in Czechoslovakia to the Department of State

Prague, November 3, 1989, 1736Z

Confidential

Prague 07731

Subject: Human Rights Update – Czechoslovakia

Ref: Prague 7293¹⁹

1. Confidential – entire text.

2. Summary. The Municipal Court in Bratislava has decided that Jan Carnogursky and Miroslav Kusy will be tried separately. The conviction of Stanislav Devaty has been upheld by a Brno Appeals Court. The *Lidove Noviny* editors facing criminal charges have not yet been allowed visits by their wives and attorneys. The “Circle of Independent Intelligentsia” and some 100 journalists from official publication have asked that criminal prosecution of the *Lidove Noviny* editors be stopped. Journalists from the newspapers of the Socialist Party and the Socialist Union of Youth have shown some independence in recent articles. A theatrical presentation in Prague featuring excerpts from the work of Vaclav Havel and some émigré authors was closed after one performance. Cardinal Tomasek will travel to Rome for the canonization of Agnes of Bohemia. Czech members of Pacem in Terris have written the Bishops of the Czech Lands and asked if they may continue their work in the officially sponsored peace group. An official Ministry of Justice report indicates thus far in 1989 65 persons have been prosecuted for “politically motivated criminal activities.” End summary.

¹⁹ | Not yet declassified.

— Trial dates set for Carnogursky and Kusy

3. The Municipal Court of Bratislava has determined that Jan Carnogursky will be tried separately from Miroslav Kusy and the other members of the “Bratislava Five” (Prague 5960)²⁰. Carnogursky’s trial is scheduled for November 6, while the Kusy trial will begin November 13.

4. Carnogursky’s lawyer Tibor Boehm has lodged a complaint arguing no legal grounds exist to separate Carnogursky’s case from the rest. Some members of the independent community now speculate Carnogursky, who during his current imprisonment has been less flexible concerning an accommodation with authorities than Kusy (Prague 7455)²¹, will receive a harsher sentence than Kusy.

— Appeals court upholds Devaty sentence

5. An Appeals Court in Brno on November 1 upheld the 20-month sentence of Stanislav Devaty (Prague 7097)²². The court’s decision was made without the presence of Devaty, who remains underground.

— *Lidove Noviny* editors held “incommunicado”

6. The wives of Jiri Ruml and Rudolf Zeman told EmbOff that they had not been allowed to visit their husbands since the *Lidove Noviny* editors were arrested three weeks ago (Prague 7293)²³, and that police had refused to provide any information concerning them. They also reported that the lawyer of Ruml and Zeman had not been allowed to visit his clients, but that they expect such a visit will be allowed during the coming week.

20 | Not yet declassified. The other three members of the “Bratislava Five” were Hana Ponická (writer), Vladimír Maňák (doctor), and Anton Selecký (journalist). The five were accused of writing a letter (dated August 4, 1989) to the Slovak Prime Minister’s Office in which they called the Soviet-led intervention of August 1968 as “a violation of international law” and announced that they would lay flowers at places in Bratislava and Košice, where Czechoslovak civilians had been killed during the intervention. In addition, Kusý and Čarnogurský were accused of subversion, the former for his commentaries on Radio Free Europe, the latter for publishing the *samizdat* periodicals *Bratislavské listy* (The Bratislava Gazette). For information about the trial see Documents 13 and 21.

21 | Not yet declassified.

22 | Not yet declassified. Stanislav Devátý, a Charter 77 spokesman in 1988, accused of sedition, when temporarily released after a hunger strike, went underground in Poland. He was sentenced *in absentia* on August 29, 1989, to 20 months’ imprisonment. He resurfaced on December 12, 1989. See Document 87, para 7.

23 | Not yet declassified. The Editor-in-Chief of the most widely read *samizdat* monthly *Lidové noviny* (People’s Gazette), Jiří Ruml, and his Assistant Editor Rudolf Zeman were accused of sedition and imprisoned on October 12, 1989. *Lidové noviny* was launched in January 1988.

— Circle of Independent Intelligentsia²⁴ activities

7. The “Circle of Independent Intelligentsia” sent letters to President Husak and the prosecutor in charge of the *Lidove Noviny* case. The letters asked that Ruml and Zeman be released and argued that *Lidove Noviny* is one of the few periodicals with a space left for alternative views.

8. The letter marks a new approach for the Circle, which has heretofore been more cautious in its activities (e.g., research projects to study environmental degradation or dislocations caused by economic reforms). Ivan Gabal, one of the group’s founders, told EmbOff he believes that “higher authorities” had ordered that he be fired, but that the director of the institute where he works had refused to carry out the order.

— Economist Zeman fired

9. Not so fortunate has been Milos Zeman, an economist at the Foreign Trade Institute of the Ministry of Agriculture. Zeman in an article in *Technicky Magazin* sharply criticized planned economic reforms. His critique of reforms was apparently picked up by the Western press, and Zeman has now reportedly been fired for his forthrightness. The regime has generally been relatively tolerant when local economists have published criticism, or even been quoted in Western media. Perhaps the fact that Zeman works for a ministry rather than an “independent” organization such as the Economics or Forecasting Institutes [of the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences] made the difference. Another factor may have been Zeman’s readiness in published articles and a television interview to criticize the limits the Communist Party places on economic and political dialogue.

— Nekolik Vet [Several Sentences]²⁵

10. Some 36,000 persons have now signed the petition. Vaclav Neumann, Director of the Czech Philharmonic, has announced that the Philharmonic will

24 | The Circle of Independent Intelligentsia (Kruh nezávislé inteligence) was a non-dissident informal association founded in September 1989 by researchers in the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences and university teachers.

25 | The “Several Sentences” petition, launched on June 29, 1989, called upon the leadership of the Czechoslovak state to carry out “thorough changes in the system,” and to begin “free and democratic discussion.” Among its initiators and organizers were Václav Havel, Jiří Křížan, Alexandr Vondra, and Stanislav Devátý. It demanded the release of political prisoners, unlimited freedom of assembly, the legalization of the independent initiatives, full, honest and accurate information in the mass media, the respecting of religious freedom, protecting of the natural environment, and the beginning of free discussion on the chief problems facing Czechoslovakia since the end of World War II.

not honor contracts with Czechoslovak Television and Radio. The orchestra's boycott is a protest against "blacklisting" of petition signatories by official media. Ninety-four of 97 members have voiced their support for the boycott. The Paris-based International Committee to [for the] Support [of] Charter 77 [in Czechoslovakia] has also announced it will support people who are blacklisted, prosecuted, or otherwise discriminated against for signing the petition.

11. Petition organizer Jiri Krizan told EmbOff that Prime Minister Adamec has not responded to the letter he and others wrote asking for a dialogue with Nekolik Vet Petition signers (Prague 7042)²⁶, and that he does not now expect a response. Adamec in a recent interview with Austrian journalists indicated the GOC will not engage in any dialogue which "seeks to liquidate the socialist order."

— Realisticke Divadlo presents excerpt from Havel

12. The Prague theater known as Realisticke Divadlo (Realistic Theater) on October 27 premiered a stage montage titled *Res Publica II*, based mainly on Havel's *Garden Party*, but also featuring excerpts from Skvorecky, Kundera, Seifert, Hrabal and others. The production played but one night and future performances were cancelled after authorities asked that a scene depicting the arrest of Marta Kubisova (Charter [77] signatory and "banned" popular singer) be deleted.

— Socialist Party press shows some independence

13. *Svobodne Slovo*, the newspaper of the Czechoslovak Socialist Party, favorably reviewed *Res Publica II*. The article is the latest in a series breaking new ground by the paper. These include an article about the Frankfurt Booksellers Fair mentioning the GOC's refusal to allow Vaclav Havel to travel to the fair to accept the Booksellers Peace Award, as well as an interview with Charter 77 activist Zdenek Urbanek. Over half of the *Svobodne Slovo* staff have signed the Nekolik Vet Petition.

— Journalists urge legalization of *Lidove Noviny*

14. Members of the *Svobodne Slovo* staff were among some 100 journalists to petition Prime Minister Adamec and ask that *Lidove Noviny* be legalized and that prosecution of its editors Ruml and Zeman be halted. Among some of the others signing the petition were staff members from the People's Party publi-

26 | Not yet declassified.

cation [*daily newspaper*] *Lidova Demokracie*, as well as journalists from *Mlada Fronta* and *Novy [Mladý] Svet*. Noticeably absent were signatures from journalists working for official Communist Party publications such as *Rude pravo*.

— ***Mlada Fronta* reports on October 28**

15. *Mlada Fronta*, newspaper of the Socialist Union of Youth, recently carried two adjacent articles concerning the October 28 demonstration. One article was the official portrayal of events, but the second was the account of two *Mlada Fronta* reporters who were caught with demonstrators in a police cordon. The official view described the demonstrators as violent, but the second article described the crowd as basically peaceful and implicitly criticized the white helmeted riot police who broke up the rally.

— **Cardinal Tomasek to attend canonization ceremony**

16. Sources in Cardinal Tomasek's office told us that although a recent medical check-up showed the Cardinal to be as fit as can be expected for a 90-year-old, the Cardinal believed a trip to Rome too arduous and had decided on his own not to attend the November 11 canonization of Agnes of Bohemia in Rome (Prague 5017)²⁷. However, after the Pope's office urged the Cardinal to attend, Tomasek reconsidered and now plans a three-week visit to Rome.

17. Those familiar with the Church say that they expect 10,000 Czechoslovaks to travel to Rome for the canonization, and that for the most part state authorities have cooperated with those wishing to travel. However, Augustin Navratil and a few other religious activists have been denied the opportunity to travel to Rome. Apparently no decision has yet been made by Czechoslovak Television whether to broadcast the canonization ceremonies.

— **More info on Pacem in Terris**

18. A Church activist has provided us with additional details concerning cessation of activities of Pacem in Terris, the officially sponsored organization of Catholic priests (Prague 7042). Slovak members plan to continue their activities, but Czech members have stopped their activities and have written Cardinal Tomasek, as well as the newly appointed Czech Bishops for the Dioceses of Litomerice and Olomouc, asking if it is appropriate for them to work with Pacem in Terris. Most observers expect the Cardinal and Bishops to say membership is inconsistent with priestly obligations.

27 | Not yet declassified.

— **Political prisoners count**

19. Although the GOC denies it has any political prisoners, a Prague Radio feature in October focused on a Ministry of Justice report on prosecution of “politically motivated criminal activities.” In 1988 some 34 such cases were prosecuted, whereas at the time of the report in 1989 some 65 cases had been prosecuted. Eighteen of the 65 persons prosecuted in 1989 had been sentenced to jail. The independent Committee for the Defense of the Unjustly Persecuted [*Prosecuted*] (VONS) estimates that some 30 political prisoners are now imprisoned in Czechoslovakia.

— **VONS head wins civil case against *Rude Pravo***

20. Petr Uhl of VONS in October won an unprecedented civil lawsuit against *Rude Pravo*. The court ruled *Rude Pravo* had erred in an article in June 1988 when it reported Uhl had participated in 1971 in a discussion planning to seize Czechoslovak Radio and broadcast an anti-Government statement. The court ordered *Rude Pravo* to print a correction, but denied Uhl’s request for an apology from *Rude Pravo*.

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8. Telegram From the Embassy in Czechoslovakia to the Department of State

Prague, November 4, 1989, 0916Z

Confidential

Prague 07736

Subject: GOC Press Conference on October 28 Demonstration – A Small
Change of Tone

1. Confidential – entire text.

2. Summary. Official press spokespersons have defended GOC action in breaking up an October 28 demonstration and have rejected as groundless a number of protests by Western nations concerning GOC actions. One spokesperson admitted that an urgent need exists to reform Czechoslovak law so that citizens' right of assembly is better assured, and indicated new legislation concerning freedom of assembly will be introduced. All persons, including foreigners, detained on October 28 have been released. One hundred and forty-eight of the Czechoslovaks detained now face misdemeanor charges, and the Prosecutor's Office has under consideration the cases of another three persons suspected of assault on a public official. End summary.

3. GOC press spokesperson Miroslav Pavel at a Thursday, November 2 press conference defended Czechoslovak police action in breaking up an independent demonstration on October 28 (Prague 7534). Pavel argued that the fact a mass anti-socialist action failed to develop demonstrated that an absolute majority of Czechoslovak citizens support the GOC policy of reform. He also repeated the standard line that the GOC is prepared for a dialogue with anyone so long as the dialogue is on the grounds of the Constitution and socialism.

4. The tone of the press conference nevertheless was different than in the past. Pavel stated one lesson of the demonstration was that serious dialogue concerning social problems cannot be conducted in the streets, but added that intervention by security forces, even if legally justified, cannot permanently

resolve the substance of political problems. He also stated that an urgent need exists to provide a better legal instrument to assure citizens the right of assembly, and that the GOC will as a follow-up to a new constitution undertake the necessary legislative steps (consistent with the Constitution and public order) to improve the situation.

5. The latest official information concerning detentions on October 28 was also presented at the press conference. Pavel said that 359 Czechoslovak citizens were detained during the demonstration. Of these, 148 were held and charged with a misdemeanor (Prague 7612)²⁸. Another three persons are suspected of having assaulted a public official, and their cases are under review by the prosecutor. Eighteen foreigners (from Australia, Italy, Finland, Britain, Hungary, Poland, USSR, and other countries) have also been released (Prague 7564)²⁹.

6. Lubomir Marsik, press spokesperson for the Czechoslovak MFA, stated at the press conference that Canada, France, Italy, Spain and the United States had protested concerning various aspects of the GOC handling of the October 28 demonstration. Marsik indicated all the protests were unfounded and had been rejected. Note: We have not yet received a formal response to our protest concerning harassment of American journalists (Prague 7592)³⁰.

7. Comment. Pavel's statement concerning urgent need to reform the Czechoslovak law governing assemblies marked a change in tone from previous press conferences following demonstrations. It remains to be seen whether any meaningful change will take place. Recent experience with a proposal to reform the federal law governing press operations indicates that what is labeled a reform or an attempt to comply with CSCE commitments can in reality be an action which reduces, rather than expands, human rights.

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28 | Not yet declassified.

29 | Not yet declassified.

30 | Not yet declassified.

9. Telegram From the Embassy in Czechoslovakia to the Department of State

Prague, <December 6,>³¹ 1989, 1617Z

Confidential

Prague 07753

Subject: Free Travel to West for East Germans Empties FRG Prague Embassy³²

1. Confidential – entire text.

2. As Western media has reported over the weekend, thousands of GDR citizens took advantage of a relaxation in travel and border controls to West Germany. Traffic jams are reported at the Czechoslovak-West German border, as the first days of essentially free travel for East German citizens to West Germany via Czechoslovakia get under way. East Germans may freely cross the border at any point simply by presenting their East German citizenship papers. Detlev Runger, West German Consul in Prague, told EmbOff that his Embassy is empty and cleanup efforts have begun there. He said 10,000 people travelled over the weekend on ten special trains to the FRG, the last of which left on Monday morning, November 6. No more special, FRG supplied transportation is planned, and the regular train schedule from Prague to West Germany is posted on the FRG Embassy door. All documentation of refugees is being done in the FRG upon arrival. Runger foresees no limit to the duration of the current arrangement for free passage through Czechoslovakia.

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31 | Drafted on November 6–7, but not communicated, for unknown reasons, until December 6.

32 | See also Documents 2 and 3.

10. Telegram From the Embassy in Czechoslovakia to the Department of State

Prague, <December 6,>³³ 1989, 1619Z

Unclassified

Prague 07755

Subject: Visits of Senior Czechoslovak Officials Abroad and or Foreign
Officials to Czechoslovakia in October 1989

1. The following senior Czechoslovak CP and government officials paid visits abroad in October 1989:

- Miroslav Stepan, CPCZ Presidium member: Yugoslavia, working visit, Oct. 1-2
- Miroslav Stepan, CPCZ Presidium member: Bulgaria, working visit, Oct. 3-4
- Jaromir Johanes, Foreign Minister: Venezuela, official visit, Oct. 5-7
- Pavol Hrivnak, Deputy Prime Minister: Hungary, talks with Deputy Prime Minister Medgyessy, Oct. 5
- Milos Jakes, CPCZ General Secretary: GDR, GDR anniversary celebrations, Oct. 6-7
- Ladislav Adamec, Prime Minister (acc. by Finance Minister Jan Stejskal, Foreign Trade Minister Jan Sterba, Minister/Chairman of People's Control Committee Frantisek Oldrich, and Deputy Foreign Minister Jaromir Nehera): Iraq, official visit, Oct. 14-16
- Milan Kozak, First Deputy Minister of Fuels and Energy: Bulgaria, meeting of CMEA Commission for Electricity and Nuclear Power, Oct. 14
- Ladislav Adamec, Prime Minister (acc. by Finance Minister Stejskal, Foreign Trade Minister Sterba, Minister/Chairman of People's Control Committee Ondrich, and Deputy Foreign Minister Nehera): Egypt, official visit, Oct. 17-19

³³ | Drafted on November 6-7, but not communicated, for unknown reasons, until December 6.

- Miroslav Zajic, CPCZ Central Committee Secretary: Soviet Union, discussed agricultural policy with CPSU Central Committee Secretary Stroyev, Oct. 18
 - Karel Julis, Deputy Premier: Bulgaria, European Ecological Forum, Oct. 16-21
 - Jaromir Obzina, Deputy Premier: Romania, working visit, Oct. 20-23
 - Ladislav Adamec, Prime Minister (acc. by Foreign Minister Jaromir Johanes and Foreign Trade Minister Jan Sterba): Austria, official visit, Oct. 24-25
 - Miroslav Zajic, CPCZ Central Committee Secretary: Korean People's Democratic Republic, agricultural policy talks, Oct. 23
 - Ladislav Vodrazka, Deputy Premier: Bulgaria, session of CMEA Engineering Committee, Oct. 24
 - Jaromir Obzina, Deputy Premier: Soviet Union, session of CMEA Executive Committee, Oct. 28
 - Jaromir Johanes, Foreign Minister (with Foreign Trade Minister Jan Sterba): Poland, meeting of Warsaw Pact Foreign Ministerial Committee, Oct. 26-27
 - Karel Julis, Deputy Premier: Soviet Union, working visit, Oct. 28
 - Jozef Lenart, CPCZ Presidium member/Central Committee Secretary: France, working visit at the invitation of the French CP, Oct. 29 - Nov. 1
 - Jaromir Zak, Deputy Premier: GDR, working visit, Oct. 30-31
2. The following senior foreign government and CP officials visited Czechoslovakia in October 1989:
- Boris Belousov, Soviet Minister of Defense Industry: received by Prime Minister Adamec, Oct. 6
 - Miklos Nemeth, Hungarian Prime Minister: working visit, Oct. 11
 - Rolf Hagel, Chairman of the Labor Party of Communists of Sweden: talks with General Secretary Jakes, Oct. 10³⁴

³⁴ | The available copy of the declassified telegram ends here.

11. Telegram From the Embassy in Czechoslovakia to the Department of State

Prague, <December 6,>³⁵ 1989, 1622Z

Limited Official Use

Prague 07756

Subject: Draft CPCZ Statutes: A New Coat of Paint but Nothing Much
Different under the Hood

1. LOU – entire text.

2. Summary. A draft of new Czechoslovak Communist Party statutes has been described to us by a former adviser to Prime Minister Strougal as an “improvement, but insufficient to democratize internal Party life.” The draft retains intact the principle of democratic centralism and therefore continues to limit an individual Party member’s ability to maintain positions independent of the official line. The statutes, which are to be publicly discussed before their adoption at a May, 1990 CPCZ congress, contain one significant organizational change, the creation of a Czech Republic equivalent to the Slovak Communist Party. In an omission that may have important symbolic value, the new statutes avoid any reference to the “Lesson,” the Party’s official version of the events of the 1968 Prague Spring and their aftermath. The new statutes provide that election of higher Party functionaries should be conducted by secret ballot and “as a rule” on the basis of more than one candidate. Tenure in leading Party positions is now limited to ten years. The new rules also appear to decentralize, though not eliminate, the *nomenklatura* system. The CPCZ’s position as the leading force in society is guaranteed, though that role is to be exercised on the basis of “consultation” with National Front and governmental organizations, not by serving as a substitute for them. End summary.

³⁵ | Drafted on November 6–7, but not communicated, for unknown reasons, until December 6.

3. A new draft set of CPCZ statutes was published in the October 31 edition of *Rude Pravo*. The draft was approved for public discussion at the 15th CPCZ Plenum (October 11–12) and is to be considered, with any proposed amendments, at the Party’s May 1990 congress. The director of the Central Committee’s Political Organizations Department, Vladimir Patek, has said that comments will be welcome even from non-Party members and organizations. Our first impressions of the draft are contained below.

— Preamble

4. The Preamble to the new statutes has been considerably abbreviated. Much Stalinist rhetoric and many long-term ideological objectives have been dropped from it. Gone are references to modeling the CPCZ on a Soviet Leninist Party, discussion of the dictatorship of the proletariat and the transition to true Communism. While these may be concessions to Soviet New Thinking, a more significant omission in the local context is the absence of any reference to the official “Lesson” (or Pouceni in Czech) from 1968. This document has been the foundation of the post-Prague Spring process of normalization and references to it held a prominent position in earlier statutes. Its absence, while without operational significance, marks a symbolic break with the past which may be meant to herald a future, generational change in the Party’s leadership. (Comment. It will be interesting to watch how this omission is treated in the public/Party discussion of the new statutes. It has so far not been commented upon by the official media. End comment.)

— Party membership

5. Chapter I on Party membership lists substantially fewer duties of a Party member. Language on the need for vigilance regarding the Party’s ideological purity and unity has been left out, as have commitments to fight against a list of various sins, such as religious prejudice and petit bourgeois habits, antithetical to Marxism-Leninism. A Party member’s rights have also been extended to include a right to be kept informed about Party policy and a right, for serious reasons, to resign from the Party.

— Party structure and organization³⁶

36 | The available copy of the declassified telegram ends here.

12. Telegram From the Embassy in Czechoslovakia to the Department of State

Prague, November 7, 1989, 1414Z

Confidential

Prague 07786; Immediate

For Deputy Secretary Eagleburger from Ambassador Black

Subject: Fojtik Visit

Ref: (A) Secure call 11/6/89, (B) USIA 63379³⁷

1. Confidential – entire text.

2. Following our conversation Monday, the Central Committee official responsible for U.S. affairs, Skerik, called to ask my DCM and CAO to come over to discuss further details of the November 24 – December 6 visit. Fojtik had readily accepted Director Gelb's personal invitation for an IVP trip to the U.S. and had changed his initial preference for an earlier November timeframe to accommodate Mr. Gelb's schedule.

3. Skerik and Fojtik's personal aide, Kupec, discussed details of Fojtik's program in New York, Washington and Los Angeles and then responded to our side's questions about what Fojtik expected to get out of his trip. Their responses convince me further that cancellation of the Gelb invitation runs counter to U.S. interest in promoting liberalizing change in this country.

4. The Central Committee staffers made clear that Fojtik sees this visit as an important opportunity which could lead to expanded U.S.-Czechoslovak cultural ties and a better dialogue on issues which divide us. They said that Fojtik would like to see an improvement of the U.S.-Czechoslovak cultural agreement to increase the level of cultural exchange. In his talks with academics (e.g., Kissinger, Gati – set up by USIA and Czechoslovak Embassy), U.S. officials,

³⁷ | Not yet declassified.

media and cultural figures, Fojtik wants to hear U.S. views on Czechoslovakia and East/West relations and to respond with his own ideas. He also wishes to get a firsthand impression of U.S. media operations, including the VOA. At VOA he will look forward to a frank discussion, including GOC charges that VOA incites demonstrations in Czechoslovakia.

5. Skerik said Fojtik believes the visit is a unique opportunity for a firsthand look at U.S. society and culture. For that reason he is taking his (married) daughter at his own expense.

6. As I told you on Monday, and as I have discussed at length with [EUR/]EEY, we would simply be damaging our interests here by extending an international visitor invitation to a major Czechoslovak Party leader and then kicking him in the chops by withdrawing it after he and his staff have fully committed to going forward with it. The rationale that we should cancel the visit to show our outrage at the GOC's poor human rights record does not hold water. Their record was bad, is bad and will probably remain bad for some time to come and we have lambasted the GOC and denied MFN as a result. This was clear when Mr. Gelb invited Fojtik. The point is how we can best exert our limited influence to promote change here, and we can only influence events if we have access and a dialogue.

7. I believe that if we cancel the Fojtik visit we will put our relationship into the icebox and perhaps the deep freeze and jeopardize our successful and expanding cultural exchange program. We basically would lose a priceless window of opportunity to establish leverage over the key Party ideological guru. Let's not blow it.

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13. Telegram From the Embassy in Czechoslovakia to the Department of State

Prague, November 7, 1989, 1704Z

Limited Official Use

Prague 07822

Subject: Trial of Slovak dissident Jan Carnogursky postponed

Ref: Prague 7731³⁸

1. LOU – entire text.

2. The Bratislava trial of human rights and political activist Jan Carnogursky was convened on time Monday morning November 6 only to be postponed 15 minutes later by a three-person panel of judges. Carnogursky, in a forceful statement to the court as the trial opened, requested the postponement on three grounds:

- his own lawyer was ill and he objected to the court-appointed attorney selected to represent him;
- he requested trial by a different panel of jurists, complaining that the three chosen for his case were all “nomenklatura” appointments. As this was a clearly political trial, he objected to judges under direct CPCZ influence;
- finally, Carnogursky asked to be tried with the other “Bratislava Five” defendants. (Note. The trial of Miroslav Kusy and the others is set for November 13. End note.)

3. The judges indicated that a response to Carnogursky’s requests would be made later in the week and possibly a new trial date announced at that time.³⁹

4. EmbOff present at the trial said that Carnogursky looked well though he had lost some weight. Some 200 supporters turned up at the Bratislava

38 | Document 7.

39 | See Document 21.

Courthouse and sang and chanted support for him before the proceedings started. Access to the trial was open to foreign diplomats and even dissident figures. Underground Bishop Korec was present as was Rudolf Battěk, a leader of the Movement for Civil Liberty (HOS).⁴⁰

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40 | The politically oriented independent initiative the Movement for Civil Liberty (Hnutí za občanskou svobodu – HOS) was established with the publishing of the “Democracy for All” manifesto on October 15, 1988. Consisting of activists from Bohemia, Moravia, and Slovakia, the Movement for Civil Liberty came out in support of the national democratic tradition, political and economic pluralism, renewal of the legal order, protection of the natural environment, freedom of confession, separation of Church and State, national independence, and the drafting of a new democratic constitution. The manifesto was signed by 126 activists, against whom the StB immediately began an extensive series of repressive measures. The Movement for Civil Liberty, which published two *samizdat* periodicals, *Zpravodaj HOS* (HOS Bulletin) and *Alternativa*, worked closely with other independent initiatives, and spoke out on current political and social affairs. Later in 1989, three streams could be identified within it – Social Democratic, Civil-Democratic and Christian-Democratic. Towards the end of 1988 about 1,000 activists took part in the work of the Movement for Civil Liberty.

14. Telegram From the Embassy in Czechoslovakia to the Department of State

Prague, November 7, 1989, 1710Z

Confidential

Prague 07824

Subject: MFA Foreign Policy Analyst on the Warsaw Pact and a Czechoslovak
Model for Change

1. Confidential – entire text.

2. Summary. The head of the MFA's International Relations Institute, Vladimir Cebis, complains that foreign policy formulation is harder now for Czechoslovakia than in the past since it no longer can rely on direction from Moscow. Even though the Warsaw Pact is more diverse, the Pact, in his view, still has a role to play in coordinating foreign policies of its members. He discounts current Soviet talk of Pact members being free to leave the alliance. In his view, Hungary will certainly remain for a few more years. Poland and Czechoslovakia, bordering a resurgent Germany, see it very much in their interest to retain membership and expand the Pact's political consultative mechanism. Cebis claims change will come to Czechoslovakia through established political structures, with the Party continuing to play a key role and the average Czechoslovak wary of political experimentation that could produce Polish-style economic difficulties. Cebis, and by implication Czechoslovakia, is clearly uncomfortable with the pace of change going on in Eastern Europe and unsure where it will lead. He is not confident that Gorbachev knows where he is taking the Soviet Union, though he suggests that, unlike the Czechoslovaks, some Soviet leaders appreciate solutions to their problems lie outside old socialist models. End summary.

3. Visiting Ambassador Jack Scanlan was joined by POLEC Chief on November 3 for a call with Vladimir Cebis, the Acting Director of the MFA's International Relations Institute. The head of the GOC's principal foreign policy

think tank displayed a curious mixture of pessimism and frankness throughout the discussion. He seemed uncertain where changes going on in Eastern Europe would end or what impact they might have for Czechoslovakia. At several points in the talk Cebis threw up his hands as if to say, "What are we Czechoslovaks to do?"

— Foreign policy and the Warsaw Pact

4. Cebis began by saying that, optically at least, the old political structures for coordinating foreign policy within the Warsaw Pact are still in place. In reality, the differences among the Pact's membership are so great that the old forms are not working. He complained that foreign policy had been easier before when "the instructions all came from one place." And "now," he said, "they don't give us instructions; they tell us to do our own foreign policy." He seemed nostalgic for the old, familiar ways.

5. Despite the changes, however, Cebis argued that the Warsaw Pact still has a role to play. He was aware that CPSU International Policy Commission member Yevgeniy Primakov had recently told reporters in the U.S. that Pact members, specifically Hungary, were free to leave the alliance. (Ambassador Scanlan added that he had been given much the same answer in Moscow: members are free to leave in principle, though the question has not yet come up in practice.) Whatever the Soviets say publicly, Cebis asserted, they want Hungary in the Pact, and he thought this in the U.S. interest. If one Warsaw Pact member breaks ranks it could start a chain reaction which could end with West Germany pulling out of NATO.

6. The Hungarians, he said, appreciate the situation and will remain in the Pact, at least for a few more years. For Poland, Pact membership would remain an imperative, linked to fear of a unified and resurgent Germany. Czechoslovakia was likewise committed and supported wider political consultation within the Pact and reforms, such as creation of a permanent secretariat, that would make it function more effectively.

7. But Cebis recognized the strains that current change would put on the Pact. In the case of some members, French-style solutions (i.e. pulling out of the military structure but staying within the political consultative framework) might be desirable. Other fundamental questions needed to be resolved. Who, for example, would represent Poland at the next Political Consultative Committee: the Polish Communist Party leading secretary, as usual, or the new Government? The bottom line was that the Pact's political structure served the interests of most of its members.

— Change and uncertainty

8. Turning to the German question, Cebis quoted Walter Lippman, who had called support for German reunification the greatest hypocrisy of post-war diplomacy. Nobody wanted to see it happen, Cebis said, not the Poles, not the French, and certainly, he suggested, not the Czechoslovaks. Unfortunately, no one can foresee what changes will come on the European scene. The political situation is fluid and unpredictable. Even Gorbachev's prospects were uncertain.

Gorbachev, he said, had asked his people to be patient and promised in two or three years that *perestroika* would deliver improvements in housing and foodstuffs. Now he is asking people to hold on for another four years. But the Soviets are "inoculated" against such promises, and the winter is coming. Gorbachev tries to solve things by democratic means, but that doesn't always work, said Cebis.

9. When Soviets come here, he continued, they think we Czechoslovaks have reached true Communism. Our working people appreciate what we have achieved and fear developments in Poland, Hungary and the Soviet Union. The regime does not need a propaganda campaign to feed on these fears, it just reports what the Polish media is saying.

10. For this reason, Cebis believes the Czechoslovak regime's social base is much wider than elsewhere in Eastern Europe. Workers are satisfied and the Government can rely on the support of the countryside where an enlightened policy of collectivized agriculture has made farmers relatively affluent and solved the country's food problems. Even in free elections, he argued, the Communists could count on 40–50 percent of the popular vote. (Comment. Cebis is right in pointing out the relative affluence of the countryside and the general political apathy but in our view less than objective in converting that to automatic political support for the CPCZ. End comment.)

— No Czechoslovak model

11. Cebis admitted the Czechoslovak leadership was not serious about reform, whatever its rhetoric. The official approach was that reform could come only on the basis of socialism and the Party will determine what socialism is. Gorbachev was quoted in the official media when he spoke of the primacy of the Party's leading role, but ignored when he placed *perestroika* ahead of the Party.

12. But Czechoslovakia's current situation had some paradoxical elements. While the leadership wants to avoid change and the people fear it, Czechoslovakia will be driven by the pressure and example of foreign developments to open up its existing political structure. This will not lead the country to follow a Polish or Hungarian model. In Cebis's personal view change will come here as the National Front parties and organizations slowly activate themselves.

Personalities (he offered People's Party Chairman Zbynek Zalman as an example) who cannot adapt to the new environment will be removed. The process will culminate with planned multiple candidate elections in 1991. But the CPCZ will retain control each step along the way in this process.

13. Another part of the paradox, said Cebis, is that this gradual loosening up, while it may give vent to political expression, will not produce real alternatives to solving the wide range of economic and political problems facing Czechoslovakia. "We have waited too long," he opined. "Time has made our problems that much more complicated."

14. In a concluding anecdote, which Cebis said was based on a true exchange between Czechoslovak and Soviet academicians, he suggested that the Soviets had come to realize that if there were answers to these problems they were not to be found in socialism. He related how a group of Czechoslovak academics were pressing a Soviet colleague on whether *perestroika* was not really a return to the "Leninist model" of socialism. "What Leninist model," the Soviet responded caustically, "Lenin survived the revolution by only a few years; he had no time to create a model." Then what, the Czechoslovaks demanded, are you using as a guidepost for *perestroika*? The experience of "highly developed, civilized and democratic countries" was the reply. You mean the "capitalist countries?" asked the Czechoslovaks. No, repeated the Soviet, the "highly developed, civilized democratic countries."

— Comment

15. EmbOff's contact with Cebis has been limited in the past. He is an old East-West hand who served in Washington in the 1970's and has participated in Aspen Institute and Salzburg seminars where he was regarded as something of a dogmatic. His candor in this conversation reflects the deep uncertainty of a Czechoslovak establishment that has watched its international assumptions being overturned one by one. It feels that there must be limits to the change now going on in Eastern Europe, and knows that its fate is tied to the maintenance of those limits. It is looking around desperately for someone to impose them.

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15. Telegram From the Embassy in Czechoslovakia to the Department of State

Prague, November 8, 1989, 1411Z

Limited Official Use

Prague 07840

Subject: GOC Reaction to Joint U.S./Soviet Resolution on Peace, Security and
International Cooperation

Ref: (A) State 357011, (B) State 356362⁴¹

1. Limited Official Use – entire text.

2. EmbOff spoke with Stibor Pulz, director of the MFA's UN Section within its International Organizations Department, on the joint U.S./Soviet resolution.⁴² Pulz said the GOC as a matter of principle was in support of the resolution and was considering co-sponsorship.

3. Pulz said that our talking points (ref A) provided valuable background for the GOC's consideration of the resolution. The GOC supports the concept of as broad a number of co-sponsors as possible and believes that presenting the resolution as only a superpower initiative would not be the best approach. Pulz noted the non-aligned movement's discussion of peace and security initiatives at its Belgrade summit and hoped as many developing countries, as well as developed, from all regions would support the resolution.

4. Pulz added that, as he understood it, after presentation and circulation of the resolution there would be a period for co-sponsors to come forward. After further consideration the GOC would likely do so.

⁴¹ | Neither of the two documents has yet been declassified.

⁴² | The U.S.-Soviet resolution on the Consolidation of the International Peace, Security and Cooperation in All its Aspects in Accordance with the UN Charter was adopted by the UN General Assembly on November 15, 1989. It was the first ever initiative submitted by the two nations to the United Nations.

5. Media reporting of the resolution has been brief but positive. Leading Communist Party daily *Rude Pravo* described it as an example and inspiration for other UN members.

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16. Telegram From the Embassy in Czechoslovakia to the Department of State

Prague, November 9, 1989, 1630Z

Confidential

Prague 07892; Priority

Subject: Czechoslovak Rumors of Senior Party Changes

1. Confidential – entire text.

2. Summary and comment. On the surface Czechoslovakia appears the “island of stability” that many CPCZ and state officials portray it as to Western diplomats and visitors. Aside from a widening circle of dissidents within the intellectual community, the population remains apathetic. Rumors are intensifying, however, that the Jakes regime has been more deeply shaken than it is ready to admit by the events occurring in what was its staunchest ideological ally in the region, the GDR. So shaken in fact that Jakes may have offered to resign at a recent Presidium session. The perception among some in the leadership is that, if it can happen in East Berlin, it is possible here, though perhaps with some time lag. This has produced a crisis of self-confidence and a readiness in more reform-minded persons, like Prime Minister Adamec, to push for economic reform. While this could produce leadership changes in the near term, as rumors discussed below suggest, we caution against expecting any real political reform resulting, since widespread popular pressure for it remains muted. End summary and comment.

3. The strongest evidence we have received to date of leadership concern and division over the events in East Germany came out of a November 8 cocktail reception hosted by the DCM for visiting EUR/EEY Deputy Director Hornblow. During the reception a senior GOC foreign policy analyst (the Acting Director of MFA International Relations Institute, Vladimir Cebis) volunteered to EmbOff’s that a secret Presidium session had been held earlier the same day to discuss events in East Germany.

4. At this meeting, according to Cebis, CPCZ General Secretary Jakes tendered his resignation. Jakes complained that he was not up to the job, was not receiving sufficient support from inside the Party and was widely unpopular in the country. He was particularly wounded by the negative reaction to an unauthorized tape of a talk he gave in Western Bohemia earlier in the summer (Prague 6478)⁴³ which has been circulating freely in Prague. In the end, according to Cebis, Jakes's allies in the Presidium prevailed on him to stay on as General Secretary, at least until the May 1990 Party congress. Cebis implied that an additional incentive for doing so was that Jakes could at that time succeed Husak to the honorific position of President. But Cebis said he could not preclude Jakes again seeking to resign before then.

5. The main reason that the Presidium, according to Cebis, had rejected the Jakes resignation was the absence of any agreement on who a successor might be. In fact, the talk of a Jakes transition was a lively discussion topic at this reception as it has been around Prague recently (see Prague 7059). Among the candidates trotted out were Miroslav Stepan, the young Prague Party boss and Presidium member. Cebis, however, discounted Stepan's chances since, he said, he was widely "hated" at senior levels within the Party. Frantisek Pitra, the Czech Prime Minister, was also viewed as a potential compromise candidate who had few enemies. Cebis himself spoke of Bohumil Urban, the first deputy Prime Minister, as a potential dark horse. Urban is a young, new face who has the attraction of a modern, technocratic image. (Comment. His one disadvantage is that he now has no position in the senior Party leadership. End comment.)

6. Cebis and others at the reception repeated the story we had heard earlier of Prime Minister Adamec's offers to resign, apparently over his frustration at being prevented from carrying out real economic reform. (Comment: Adamec may suspect that a resignation "on principle" at this time would be such a blow to the regime's hardliners that the threat may have more of a chance of making them give in on reform than it did for his predecessor, Lubomir Strougal. End comment.)

7. In a separate conversation with a former advisor to Prime Minister Strougal we were told that dates for the next CPCZ plenum had been set for December 9-10. This contact, who did not raise or was not aware of the Jakes resignation, said that he expected the leadership would try and show forward movement, as it had in the past, by "throwing more dead wood overboard" at this plenum. He identified the "very ill" Presidium member and Federal Assembly Chairman Alois Indra as a likely candidate for retirement in December.

43 | Not yet declassified.

— **The paradox**

8. But there is a paradox at work here. While the leadership may feel pressed to react to GDR developments, so far only by personnel changes, the popular Czechoslovak reaction has been different. It is our sense that the average man, distinct from dissident and intellectual circles, has become more, not less, cautious about change in the face of the GDR developments.

9. That reaction is easier to understand if one can appreciate the deeply risk-adverse psychology of the Czech people. In the face of change, they prefer to opt for what they know. Preference for the *status quo* is strengthened, particularly for the older generation, by a fear of German resurgence. More widely felt is a concern that their relative economic wellbeing could be sacrificed if they go the way of Hungary or Poland. Nor is it lost on the average citizen that Moscow is concerned over the pace of change (as evidenced by Shevardnadze's statements on 1968) and that Gorbachev himself may be in trouble. For the time being this may mute any real popular pressure for significant political change within the system. Without such pressure or wider generational change at the top, the CPCZ's present collection of hardliners will not undertake real political reform.

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17. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Czechoslovakia

Washington, November 10, 1989, 1116Z

Confidential

State 362829

Subject: Czech Penal Code Provisions

Ref: Prague 7612⁴⁴

1. Department has noted in para. 5 reftel reference to section 23 of the State Security Law and in para. 6 reference to possible charge of “an offense against public order.”

2. In preparing for December meeting of Humanitarian Affairs Working Group HA Bureau has been studying provisions of Czech Penal Code in order to identify those in conflict with international human rights standards.

3. Request Embassy provide full citation of provisions referred to reftel, which appear to be in laws additional to Penal Code provisions. Also please indicate whether other penal laws are in force which may be in conflict with international human rights standards.

Baker

⁴⁴ | Not yet declassified.

18. Telegram From the Embassy in Czechoslovakia to the Department of State

Prague, November 13, 1989, 1737Z

Confidential

Prague 07941

Subject: Jakes Addresses Socialist Youth – Defends Prague Party Boss Stepan
against Corruption Charges

1. Confidential – entire text.

2. Summary. CPCZ General Secretary Milos Jakes in a weekend speech before the Union of Socialist Youth⁴⁵ (SSM) spoke enthusiastically of the CPCZ's commitment to democratization and reconstruction. Jakes also rebutted rumors that Prague Party boss Miroslav Stepan had accepted a DM 200,000 bribe to smooth the way for construction of hotels in Prague by Western business firms. At least one SSM club in Ostrava may not believe the CPCZ is enthusiastic about economic reconstruction. The club recently featured Milos Zeman, recently fired for his criticism of the reconstruction program, as a speaker.

3. A national conference of the Union of Socialist Youth [*Socialist Union of Youth*] (SSM) over the November 11–12 weekend in Prague was attended by CPCZ General Secretary Milos Jakes, GOC President Gustav Husak, Prime Minister Ladislav Adamec, and Prague Party boss Miroslav Stepan. Jakes in a speech attempted to convince the SSM audience of the CPCZ's enthusiastic commitment to democratization and reconstruction and of its desire for honest dialogue with all those who want to seek solutions on the basis of the Constitution. Jakes added the usual caveat that dialogue cannot be conducted anonymously or by means of street demonstrations inspired by Western news media.

45 | The Socialist Union of Youth (Socialistický svaz mládeže – SSM).

4. Perhaps the most interesting moment of the speech came when Jakes departed from his prepared remarks in an attempt to rebut rumors that Stepan is under investigation for corruption. Jakes called the rumor that Stepan had accepted a DM 200,000 bribe to permit the construction of hotels in Prague by Western business firms a blatant lie. Stepan, who was on the podium during Jakes speech, tugged nervously at his tie while Jakes came to his defense. A related story in the November 13 *Rude Pravo* pronounced the Stepan rumor a slander intentionally given a hearing by the notorious American transmitters. (Note: FRG media has identified a West German construction firm as the source of alleged bribes, but the DCM at the FRG Embassy denied last week to us that his Embassy had any information substantiating the allegations of corruption against Stepan.

5. Apparently not all SSM members are convinced of the CPCZ leadership's commitment to reconstruction. Last week a SSM club in Ostrava held a three-hour session which featured Milos Zeman as an invited speaker. Zeman is the economist who was recently sacked for his criticism of the regime's program of economic reconstruction (Prague 7731)⁴⁶. Some of those present told EmbOff that Zeman's remarks during the meeting were well received by the SSM club audience of two hundred persons.

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46 | Document 7, para 9.

19. Telegram From the Embassy in Czechoslovakia to the Department of State

Prague, November 13, 1989, 1740Z*

Confidential

Prague 07942

Subject: Visit of EUR/EEY Deputy Director to Prague November 8–10

1. Confidential – entire text.

2. Summary. Visiting EUR/EEY Deputy Director Hornblow's official program in Prague November 8–10 included calls at the MFA and a luncheon meeting with dissident representatives of several independent initiatives. Meetings at the MFA focused on GOC concern for developments in East Germany, a GOC interest in wider and more senior bilateral contacts, harassment of EmbOffs and a GOC reply to a South Korean proposal to open diplomatic relations. Septel reports on discussions about the possibility of senior level GOC representation at the next Washington session of the Humanitarian Affairs Working Group. Dissident contacts at lunch praised Secretary Baker's "public" human rights diplomacy in connection with his recent UNGA bilateral with Foreign Minister Johanes and identified key areas for change in GOC human rights practices. A call on the CPCZ Central Committee was notable for the presence of a senior International Relations Department official, Deputy Director Marek Venuta. End Summary.

3. The following message records EUR/EEY Deputy Director Hornblow's official program during his November 8–10 visit to Prague. A report of discussions at the MFA concerning the upcoming meeting of the Humanitarian Affairs Working Group is reported septel.⁴⁷

⁴⁷ | Document 20.

— The MFA

4. On November 10 Hornblow met with MFA Third Department Director Zdenek Vanicek, his Deputy Ivan Rychlik and new U.S. Desk Officer Pavel Wodecki. He was joined by the DCM and POLEC Chief. Among the subjects raised were:

— GDR developments

Vanicek said that the GOC was deeply concerned over developments in the GDR and Czechoslovakia had reason for concern. It had long experience with the Germans, not all of it positive. We do not, said Vanicek, believe Germany – whatever it develops into – to be an automatically peaceful element in Europe. Vanicek, who had just returned from bilateral political consultations in Paris, said the French felt otherwise. The more we discussed the “reactivation” of the German question with them, said Vanicek, however, the more they came around to our position that it would take more than Western Europe to “handle” a united Germany. Eastern Europe would need to cooperate. Vanicek denied that there were any direct parallels between the GDR’s situation and that of Czechoslovakia, saying that the East German leadership had brought some of the problems on itself by its inflexibility in areas such as freedom of travel.

— Bilateral relations with the U.S.

Vanicek agreed with Hornblow’s assessment that bilateral relations were getting busier, though not necessarily better. The Czechoslovak leadership was taking a more active interest in U.S. affairs, particularly in view of the changing geo-political situation and its anxiety over changes in the region of Eastern Europe. He personally thought this a good thing, though it meant more work for him.

Vanicek said he wanted to re-emphasize the proposed bilateral agenda raised by Ambassador Houstecky with A/S Seitz (State 344234)⁴⁸. He saw it as a practical follow-up to the Baker/Johanes meeting. Vanicek particularly stressed the importance of contacts and dialogue in that agenda:

- Vanicek mentioned the GOC’s interest in sending a second Parliamentary delegation to the U.S. in the Summer of 1990. The Foreign Affairs Committees of the National [*Federal*] Assembly would be playing a more important and active role and one of those committees’ chairmen, Miroslav Stepan, whom he described as a politician with broad interests and strong views, would probably head such a delegation.

48 | Not yet declassified.

- He noted that the GOC had established a regular schedule of political consultations at the deputy ministerial level with most of its West European neighbors. It wanted to establish a similar framework with the United States. Foreign Minister Johanes in his earlier capacity as First Deputy Foreign Minister had been to Washington in 1987 for consultations. The GOC would like to see such meetings formalized, perhaps on an annual basis.
- Finally, Vanicek expressed his own interest in visiting the U.S., saying that though he was primarily responsible for out bilateral relations in the MFA, he has never been there. One possible date for a visit was February 1990 when he travels with Foreign Minister Johanes to attend the "Open Skies" conference in Ottawa. He could, he said, tack on a trip to Washington, if that were acceptable, to meet with his counterparts in the Department.

Vanicek then turned to what he said was a negative element in the relationship, allegations of harassment of EmbOffs. Vanicek wanted to assure us that the GOC was not organizing a "hunting party" against U.S. Embassy staff in Prague. MFA Protocol has, he said, been instructed to work with the Embassy's RSO to resolve every case of alleged harassment, though he played these down in terms of Prague's growing cosmopolitan character.

DCM pointed out that some of these incidents did not qualify as common crimes. Two recent cases, one involving a tire punctured by five nails as it sat parked before a police booth and damage, but not theft, of an official visitor's camera in his hotel room, followed a pattern of harassment, not vandalism.

Vanicek replied that the MFA took each incident seriously. He himself had watched First Deputy Foreign Minister Sadovsky raise these cases by telephone with his counterpart in the Ministry of the Interior. He would urge him to do so again over the two new incidents. Vanicek concluded by saying he did not want to see these incidents become point number one on our bilateral agenda.

Vanicek's deputy interjected at this point that the MFA wished to be informed immediately of any incident, even the smallest and would work to clarify the details. In addition to informing local police, as in the case of a recent break-in experienced by the Embassy's Consular Section, the MFA should also be informed.

— Czechoslovak-South Korean relations

Vanicek was also prepared to respond to an inquiry on the GOC's interest in diplomatic relations with South Korea which EEY Deputy Director Hornblow had raised with Czechoslovak DCM Michovsky (State 345544)⁴⁹ before departing Washington. While Vanicek said that the Czechoslovak Embassy in

49 | Not yet declassified.

Washington would give a formal reply to the inquiry, he summarized the GOC position. For the moment, Vanicek said, the GOC did not see it in its interest to enter into diplomatic or open official contacts with South Korea. There had already been numerous contacts in the commercial sphere and there remained a great deal of space for commercial and cultural contacts at a non-governmental level. The GOC did not preclude contacts with representatives of South Korean political life when valid and appropriate from the GOC perspective. As of “today,” Vanicek said, however, there was no room for diplomatic ties, but he clearly implied that this position could change in the near future.

EmbOffs noted that some six months ago a South Korean parliamentary delegation visiting Prague had asked the Embassy to use its good offices to arrange official appointments. The MFA response at that time had been that appointments were not possible. Did, they asked, what Vanicek was saying change the GOC position on such visits? Vanicek replied that such visits in future would be looked at on an “ad hoc” basis.

Hornblow indicated he thought this policy a mistake, but said that if he understood Vanicek correctly the door was not completely closed and there was a potential for change. Vanicek agreed, saying that he thought commercial and other contacts would proceed, though the GOC was not ready to make a dramatic step “now.”

— CZPC Central Committee

5. On November 9 Hornblow and Embassy’s POLEC Chief met the CPCZ Central Committee International Relations Department Deputy Director Marek Venuta and U.S. Desk Officer, Ladislav Skerik. The meeting was more notable for Venuta’s presence (it had originally been scheduled only with Skerik) than for its substance. Venuta’s attendance and the hour and forty minutes he was ready to devote to it seemed meant to signal an interest in improved relations.

Venuta spent much of this time delivering a long lecture on Czechoslovak “prestavba” [restructuring]. His main points were that the pace of Czechoslovak reform, as seen from a distance, might seem slow, but that it was unfolding steadily and would continue. Political change would accompany economic reform, but that change will come only within the existing structures of the National Front.

Venuta rejected any characterization of Czechoslovakia as “ideologically isolated” (and was less than frank about GOC concern over developments in East Germany). He attributed such analysis to the Western media. From his point of view, he said, the country was quite open. On the commercial side it was a sought after trade partner.

In reply to Hornblow’s and EmbOff’s expressions of concern over human rights violations in Czechoslovakia, Venuta said these were matters that could

be discussed but warned against making them a central issue in our bilateral relationship. Venuta did not react directly to a point that Czechoslovakia earned itself much negative public attention when it acted to prevent even relatively small-scale demonstrations as occurred on October 28. He preferred instead to focus his reply on the illegal nature of such demonstrations and their small number, despite RFE and VOA broadcasts to “incite” larger turnouts.

On the question of GDR developments, Venuta said only that these were the concern of the two German states in the first place. Of course, their immediate neighbors had a very direct interest in developments. But whatever occurred in the two Germanies, Venuta said, international agreements could not be set aside. Otherwise, the whole post-WWII settlement and European *status quo* would be overturned.

— Lunch with dissidents

6. On November 10 DCM hosted a lunch for Hornblow and EmbOffs with several prominent dissidents: Father Vaclav Maly (Charter 77), Radim Palous (Charter 77 and Movement for Civil Liberty – HOS), John Bok (Independent Peace Association) and Petr Pithart (Charter 77 and *Lidove Noviny*).

The independent representatives described a two-track strategy being pursued by the regime to isolate the opposition while defusing any popular dissent. Tougher measures were being taken against human rights activists as the regime was relaxing controls on the general population. The recent decision to permit some 8,000 Catholics to attend the November 12 canonization in Rome of Agnes of Bohemia was offered as an example of this strategy as was forward movement on the regime’s agreement to the appointment of new bishops.

The activists praised recent USG interventions on the human rights cases of Jan Carnogursky, Miroslav Kusy and requested that similar human dimension demarches be undertaken in support of jailed *Lidove Noviny* editors Jiri Ruml and Rudolf Zeman and Movement for Civil Liberty (HOS) leaders Pavel Nauman and Ivan Masek. For such actions to be most effective they recommended that protests be made as early as possible before trial and praised the Embassy’s practice of being represented at political trials as important in influencing the judicial proceedings and sentences handed down.

The independent representatives also described Secretary Baker’s strong message on human rights with Foreign Minister Johanes as enormously important. They believe such high level contacts influence GOC human rights behavior and recommend the human rights message in such meetings be reported publicly, with specific human rights cases raised.⁵⁰ They favorably compared

50 | See footnote, Document 4.

Secretary Baker's open handling of his meeting with Johanes to what they termed the "secret" diplomacy of FRG Foreign Minister Genscher who prefers to raise human rights issues privately and then not make them public.

In terms of key human rights issues which could be raised with the GOC, the group identified:

- the failure of the GOC to permit the operation of a Helsinki Monitoring Group⁵¹ inside the country. While such a group exists unofficially, its meetings are regularly disrupted and contacts with foreign Helsinki Committees prevented;
- the retention of paragraphs in the Penal Code, such as articles on "incitement," "subversion," and "actions damaging the interests of the Republic abroad" which are used to punish free expression; new drafts of the Penal Code now being considered will retain these "political" paragraphs;
- the need to guarantee the right to travel; at present the right to travel has been liberalized but is still at the discretion of authorities who can refuse to issue a passport or exit visa or even turn citizens back at the border when they have valid documentation; and
- the need to guarantee free access to information, particularly Western periodicals; even when permission to obtain a subscription of a Western periodical is given, specific issues can be seized in the mail. There is no open sale of a wide range of Western periodicals.

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51 | The independent Czechoslovak Helsinki Committee, founded in November 1988.

20. Telegram From the Embassy in Czechoslovakia to the Department of State

Prague, November 14, 1989, 1541Z

Confidential

Prague 07970; Immediate

Subject: MFA Officials on Possibility of a December Super HAWG

1. Confidential – entire text.
2. This is an action message, see para 11.
3. Summary. In a November 10 meeting at the MFA (septel)⁵² visiting EUR/EEY Deputy Director Hornblow was told that the GOC supported the idea of raising the level of representation at a December meeting of the Humanitarian Affairs Working Group (HAWG) “in principle,” but that it requested two commitments from the U.S. side for doing so. The first is that the USG agree to higher-level Washington representation when the HAWG meets again in Prague. Secondly, the MFA has requested that its representative at the HAWG, likely to be Deputy Foreign Minister Vacek, have an opportunity to consult with Assistant Secretary Seitz on wider political issues while he is in Washington. The GOC also wants to take more advantage of the HAWG’s sister Working Group on Business Facilitation to produce “modest results” in the economic/commercial area. An action request is contained in para 11. End summary.
4. During a November 10 meeting at the MFA visiting EUR/EEY Deputy Director Hornblow, joined by DCM and POLEC Chief, raised the timing of a future HAWG, including the U.S. suggestion that its next session be held at a more senior level.
5. MFA Third Department Director Vanicek, accompanied by his deputy Rychlik, said the GOC wanted to continue the work of the HAWG. He was

⁵² | Document 19.

sorry that the Embassy had received some mixed signals on this point. (Note: Vanicek was apparently referring to the Ambassador's earlier meeting with MFA Consular Affairs Director Kulawiec in which he indicated a "personal" view in favor of doing away with the HAWG. End note.) Vanicek said the GOC definitely remained interested in raising the level of representation. It would likely be represented by Deputy Foreign Minister Vacek he assumed the U.S. side would be headed by A/S Schifter. Vanicek indicated however, that the GOC wanted a commitment from the U.S. side that it would be willing in turn to send similar high-level representation to the next HAWG session to be held in Prague.

6. Rychlik added that, while Vanicek had been away to Paris over the past few days, Deputy Foreign Minister Vacek had confirmed his agreement "in principle" to represent the GOC at a December HAWG, but indicated that he wanted to also use the opportunity to carry on wider political discussions with Assistant Secretary Seitz when he was in Washington.

7. At this point Vanicek said that the GOC has a regularized pattern of political discussions with most of its Western European partners. It would like to establish similar annual political consultations with the USG. This had, in fact, been one of the items raised in Ambassador Houstecky's proposed eight-point bilateral agenda with A/S Seitz. Vanicek noted that Foreign Minister Johanes, then First Deputy Foreign Minister, had travelled in 1987 to Washington for such bilateral consultations, and the GOC would welcome getting such discussions regularized.

8. EGY Deputy Director Hornblow agreed to convey these ideas back to Washington but said that he could make no commitment either on A/S Schifter's availability for a follow-up super-HAWG in Prague or for a meeting between Vacek and A/S Seitz in December as proposed. He noted that one consideration for scheduling a follow-up to the HAWG meeting was the planned June 5-29 CSCE human rights conference to be held in Copenhagen. It would seem to make sense to hold the HAWG prior to the Copenhagen meeting, but again he would have to check on A/S Schifter's availability.

9. Turning the subject to the HAWG's sister Working Group on Business Facilitation (BFWG), Vanicek said the GOC would like to see this group become more than a talking forum and produce some modest results. At the next BFWG meeting, he continued, the GOC hoped to do a better job of canvassing institutions, such as the State Bank, Ministry of Foreign Trade, etc., to prepare practical questions for discussion with our partners in the U.S. He offered the GOC's interest in IMF membership as one such issue.

Note: The implication of what Vanicek said was that the GOC expected the next BFWG session (whatever its timing) to be held in Washington, even though it had opted not to hold a BFWG in parallel with this December's HAWG. End note.

10. Comment. The Czechoslovaks are apparently trying to up the ante for holding a super-HAWG. From the Embassy's point of view we see some merit in agreeing to Washington representation at the next Prague session of the HAWG. If it took place prior to Copenhagen, it would give us a good opportunity to raise our concerns bilaterally before this multilateral forum put Czechoslovakia in the docket for its human rights violations. On Vacek/Seitz meeting we feel less strongly and note that A/S Ridgway had a rather unsatisfactory meeting with Vacek back in October 1988. In the present state of bilateral relations, particularly in view of the GOC's recent human rights record, we should certainly not commit ourselves to any regularized pattern of political consultations as Vanicek suggested.

— **Action request**

11. In view of the short time involved before the proposed early December HAWG dates, we would appreciate Washington's reaction to both GOC "conditions" for a super-HAWG.

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21. Telegram From the Embassy in Czechoslovakia to the Department of State

Prague, November 15, 1989, 1216Z

Limited Official use

Prague 07989; Immediate

Subject: Trial of Miroslav Kusy and Co-defendants: Three Acquittals and One
Suspended Sentence⁵³

1. (U) Summary. Defendants at the Miroslav Kusy trial came off unexpectedly well. Despite prosecution pleas for a prison term for Kusy, the court sentenced him to 14 months probation in lieu of an eight-month jail term, though he could be sent to jail if he does not remain on “good behavior” for the probation period. The prosecution had asked for probation for Kusy’s three co-defendants, but they were acquitted. The court rejected an effort to have Jan Carnogursky included in this case, and he will reportedly go on trial November 22–23. End Summary.

2. (U) The November 13–14 trial of Miroslav Kusy, Hana Ponicka, Anton Selecky and Vladimir Manak for incitement ended with an eight-month suspended sentence (and 14 months probation) for Kusy and acquittals for the other three. If Kusy does not remain on “good behavior” over those 14 months he can be sent to prison. The prosecutor had asked for suspended sentences and probation for the three and one year imprisonment for Kusy (supposedly the most lenient jail term possible).

3. (LOU) EconOff attended second day of trial. Dissident contacts and Helsinki Watch official Gerald Nagler⁵⁴ felt that the court was more willing than

53 | For the background to the trial, see Document 7, para 3, and Document 13.

54 | Gerald Nagler was the Executive Director of the International Helsinki Federation for Human Rights, based in Vienna.

in the past to listen to and record the defendants' arguments, including criticisms of Czechoslovakia's overall human rights record. They believed, however, that the defendants would be found guilty and that the verdict had been reached beforehand.

4. (U) An effort at the beginning of the trial to have Jan Carnogursky included was rejected by the court, as was a request to call Alexander Dubcek as a defense witness. (Dubcek did attend the first day of proceedings.) The prosecution called Carnogursky as a witness for its side, but he refused to answer questions. (When he was brought to court, a guard held each arm and during the period when he was not on the witness stand he was made to face the wall – reportedly standard practice in Czechoslovak prisons.) We understand that Carnogursky's trial is set for November 22–23.⁵⁵

5. (U) A constant theme in the prosecution case was the subversive nature of RFE, and consequently the heinous nature of submitting statements for broadcast by it. The Chief Judge spent an hour and a half the second morning reading excerpts of Kusy's work, particularly writings which had been broadcast on RFE, an action which mystified the audience and incited frequent laughter. In her closing statement, Ponicka argued that RFE could not be that bad since many "official" Czechoslovak writers and artists had been interviewed on it, while Kusy pointed out that more critical statements than his could now be found in the pages of [Moscow daily newspaper] *Pravda*. He also declared that some day this trial would be seen in the same light as the Scopes "Monkey Trial" in the U.S. during the 1920's.

6. (LOU) The small courtroom in Bratislava was packed with about 50–60 people, virtually all supporters of the defendants. A somewhat larger group waited outside the building in freezing weather. No other Western Embassies were represented (both we and the Canadians were fogged out in an effort to fly to Bratislava the first day). The British Ambassador was in town November 13 for other reasons and visited a local dissident to express support for Kusy. The dissident appreciated the visit, but expressed bitterness at the lack of interest shown by other Western nations – particularly neighboring West Germany and Austria.

7. (LOU) Dissident contacts felt great frustration and embarrassment over the trial, particularly in view of the advance in civil rights in other bloc countries, including the Soviet Union. They were also increasingly angry over the unwillingness of most of the Czechoslovak population to actively support human rights concerns. One dissident, before the verdict, noted that he had rejected Government offers in the past to let him emigrate to the West and now was wondering if he had made a mistake.

55 | See Document 49.

8. (LOU) Comment. When the cases against Kusy and his co-defendants were opened last summer, it was widely understood that the regime intended to make examples of the defendants and to use their cases as a warning to others in Slovakia considering dissident activity. We believe the acquittals and suspended sentences are strong evidence that international pressure can be successful in these types of cases. We nonetheless remain concerned about the case of Jan Carnogursky, and fear that Carnogursky may face a stiffer penalty than Kusy because of his unwillingness to make any concessions which would conflict with his strong Catholic convictions.

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22. Telegram From the Embassy in Czechoslovakia to the Department of State

Prague, November 15, 1989, 1653Z

Confidential

Prague 08013; Immediate

Subject: Participation of Deputy FonMin Vacek in December HAWG⁵⁶

1. Confidential – entire text.

2. At a meeting between DCM and head of MFA Consular Department Bronislav Kulawiec, Kulawiec expressed MFA view that the lack of USG Washington representatives attendance at previous meetings of the U.S.-Czechoslovak Humanitarian Affairs Working Group (HAWG) in Prague parallel to attendance of Prague representatives at Washington sessions of the HAWG appeared to show a “lack of interest” in the Working Group on the part of the USG. Kulawiec stated that Deputy FonMin Evzen Vacek is prepared to attend the December meeting of the HAWG in Washington, but only if a comparable level U.S. official is involved in that meeting and at the spring HAWG meeting in Prague. Kulawiec requested confirmation that A/S Schifter will attend December HAWG. He proposed a date of 18th to 20th December for the meeting, to follow Vacek’s attendance at UNGA beginning 13th December. Kulawiec requested assistance in obtaining necessary permission for Vacek to travel from UNGA in New York to Washington. He also asked for assurance that A/S Schifter or comparable level U.S. representative will come to Prague for the spring HAWG meeting.

3. Post requests response from Department regarding suitability of December 18–20 dates for HAWG meeting chaired on U.S. side by A/S Schifter. Confirmation is also requested that A/S Schifter plans to attend Spring HAWG meeting in Prague.

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⁵⁶ | See also Document 20.

23. Telegram From the Embassy in Czechoslovakia to the Department of State

Prague, November 15, 1989, 1655Z

Limited Official Use

Prague 08014; Immediate

Subject: Czechoslovak Prime Minister on Travel Controls and the Linkage
between Political and Economic Reform

Ref: Prague 5179 and earlier⁵⁷

1. Limited Official Use – entire text.

— Summary and comment

2. In the Government's first major statement since last weekend's spectacular GDR developments, Prime Minister Adamec has given a hint of how the Czechoslovak regime intends to respond to the examples of reform going on around it:

- Show flexibility on peripheral areas, such as travel, which do not threaten the CPCZ's political control of society. Adamec's statements on travel were, however, less impressive than reported in the Western media. His offer to eliminate the exit visa requirement to the West,⁵⁸ for example, was a measure already planned. Since the GOC liberalized travel rules some two years ago, it has been a less significant barrier to travel for the average Czechoslovak. Other barriers, such as the need to obtain hard currency and a passport, remain.

⁵⁷ | Not yet declassified.

⁵⁸ | A difficult-to-attain special permit, the so-called *výjezdní doložka*, enabling Czechoslovaks to leave the country temporarily.

Note: Head of MFA Consular Department informed us late today that procedures for elimination of the exit visa might not go into effect before next “travel season” (spring) and that not all the details had been worked out for this measure. He added that certain categories of persons, e.g., persons against whom criminal charges were pending, would still be denied exit permission even after this change. End note.

- Continue to make installments within the Government’s economic means on the social contract which has kept the population politically apathetic. Adamec promised more cars, better housing and a better-stocked domestic market in his speech.
- Raise the rhetoric of political reform. Adamec, though claiming to speak personally, not only linked the success of economic reform directly to political change, but argued political change should now take the lead, though without specifying what he meant.

Adamec has again shown himself in this speech ready to tackle even the most sensitive economic subjects. He raised the prospect of wage controls and an end to agricultural subsidies, which now consume some Kcs 60 billion (4 billion USD at the commercial exchange rate) per annum, or roughly ten percent of the national income. End summary and comment.

3. On November 14 Prime Minister Adamec addressed a Joint Session of the Federal Assembly with his Government’s Annual Program, his second such speech since taking office in 1988. Below we review some of the highlights, including his travel liberalization proposals which, in our view, received exaggerated international media attention. The GOC has promised to clarify Adamec’s travel statements at its weekly press conference on Thursday, November 16.

— Travel proposals

4. Adamec spoke midway in his address about the GOC’s intentions of removing unnecessary bureaucratic regulations and of substantially facilitating foreign travel. His actual proposals were more modest and in almost every case are either in effect or previously announced for 1990:

- speeding up the issuance of travel documents;
- eliminating exit visas now required for travel to the West and Yugoslavia (no date was offered for this measure though a January 1990 implementation date had already been discussed). In fact, implementation is likely to take even longer;
- ending the limit on the number of visits a year which can be made to relatives abroad;
- simplifying the procedures for emigration;
- issuing entry visas to foreigners at selected border crossing points; and

- limiting the size of the restricted no-go border zone and preparing a new statute regulating this zone.

5. Note: The proposed elimination of exit visas has received the most international attention. Simplifying the travel authorization could potentially increase the number of persons travelling. We would note, however, that MFA Consular Department director Kulawiec informed us late November 15 that no date has been set for removing the requirement, in fact, many details remain to be worked out. He hoped the measures would be in effect by spring. Significant barriers to travel remain. On an economic level individuals need to obtain the necessary hard currency. More importantly citizens can still be prevented from traveling if the regime refuses to issue them a passport, as is now the case for dissident and independent figures. Kulawiec stated that certain categories of persons such as those with many state secrets or with criminal charges pending against them would still be barred from leaving the country. End note.⁵⁹

— **The link between politics and economics**

6. More interesting than his travel comments from our perspective were Adamec's closing remarks at the Federal Assembly session in which he linked political and economic change, though he was careful to portray these as his "personal" view. Adamec said that a year ago when he presented his first program to the Assembly the generally-held view was that the Government could proceed to put its economic house in order and then move on the political front. In fact, he confided, no one thought that much really needed to be changed in the political sphere. Now, said Adamec, he was convinced that economic progress could not be successful without political reform. In our special situation, he went on, political change should even take a "certain lead."

7. Adamec stepped back from suggesting what that "lead" might be. At other points in his remarks he warned that no other country offered a model for Czechoslovak economic restructuring, perhaps implying political models existed. He said he favored a dialogue in which both "correct and incorrect" points of view were raised, but he qualified this with a reference to conducting that dialogue within the framework of the Constitution and on the basis of maintaining public order.

— **The social contract and the economy**

8. Adamec indicated that the regime was ready to continue to make installments on the social contract that has kept most Czechoslovaks politically

59 | See also Documents 26 and 72.

acquiescent in exchange for an adequate standard of living. He promised to divert some Kcs 750 million in savings from defense cuts this year into health care, with another billion next year. He promised a speed up in deliveries of the new Skoda Favorit (to reach 100,000 units in 1990) and an increase in imports of South Korean automobiles. He made commitments in terms of housing and cultural facilities, as well as maintaining and improving consumer supplies on the domestic market.

9. But Adamec cautioned that delivery on these promises would be complicated by the economy's slow growth and trade problems. Serious economic policy changes in unspecified socialist countries, he said, were dimming the export prospects of Czechoslovak industry, particularly its engineering sector. There was little the Government could do to correct these problems and he warned enterprises to improve their competitiveness. He complained that the country's socialist trading partners increasingly wanted to trade in convertible currencies and rejected negotiation of long-term trade plans.

10. Comment. Adamec's statements confirm reports that the Soviets, in particular, have chosen to cut their Czechoslovak trade surplus by reducing machinery imports. His remarks also reflect Polish and Hungarian demands that trade be switched to convertible currency terms. It remains to be seen to what degree a cutback in trade with socialist countries (Czechoslovak official statistics admit only a drop of one percent in exports for the first nine months of 1989) will have a multiplier effect on the wider economy. End comment.

11. Adamec also displayed a readiness to raise past taboo subjects, saying the Government might have to apply greater discipline in two areas of the economy. He threatened wage controls if salary growth continued to outstrip productivity. He also noted agricultural subsidies now eat up more than Kcs 60 billion per year. He promised to submit a report to parliament on exactly how this money was being spent, with an implication that he would be looking into ways to cut back on the cost of these subsidies.

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24. Telegram From the Embassy in Czechoslovakia to the Department of State

Prague, November 16, 1989, 1335Z*

Confidential

Prague 08031; Immediate

Subject: November 15 Prague Demonstrations

1. Confidential – entire text.

2. Summary. A crowd of approximately one thousand persons gathered in Prague the evening of November 15 to protest a proposed freeway project through Stromovka Park. The demonstration ended without serious incident, but a portion of the crowd which had hoped to join another protest concerning Romanian human rights abuses were prevented by police from doing so. A crowd of approximately one hundred persons finally approached the Romanian Embassy where they unsuccessfully attempted to deliver a letter. After police confiscated a banner, the crowd dispersed peacefully at the urging of demonstration leaders. Dissident contacts were surprised by the size of the Stromovka demonstration, and now predict a turn-out of at least several thousand for a November 17 student demonstration. End summary.

3. A crowd *Rude Pravo* estimated at 800 gathered in front of the building of Prague's National Committee Wednesday evening, November 15, to protest plans to build a freeway through Prague's Stromovka Park. Individuals we talked to who participated in the demonstration estimated the crowd from 1,000 to 3,000 persons.

4. The gathering lasted about 45 minutes, during which time speeches against the proposed project were delivered. Although uniformed and plainclothes police were present, the demonstrators were left undisturbed by them. Some Western press accounts indicate the gathering was a legal demonstration, but our best information is that demonstrators did not have a permit.

5. Comment. The citizens protests against the freeway project are not new and authorities have been seeking a way to placate the protestors. Officials last week held a public meeting in which citizens were supposedly given the opportunity to express their concerns, but one source tells us that security police kept many persons away from the meeting and one man who strongly spoke out against the project during the meeting stopped his presentation in mid-stream when approached by two plainclothes police. After the incident no one present dared speak out against the project. *Rude Pravo* indicates another open, public meeting to discuss the project is scheduled for November 24.

6. As the Stromovka demonstration broke up, many in the crowd chose to cross Prague's Charles Bridge and headed toward the Romanian Embassy to join a [Transnational] Radical Party demonstration against human rights abuses in Romania (Prague 8011)⁶⁰. Only about 50 persons made it across the bridge before police closed the bridge and turned the demonstrators back. At least two individuals who tried to cross the police line were beaten by police.

7. A crowd of approximately 100 persons finally gathered in front of the Romanian Embassy. Police blocked the entrance of the Embassy and prevented the demonstrators from delivering a letter to the Embassy. Demonstrators unfurled a banner reading "Ceausescu, you make Stalin happy." Police confiscated the banner after 20 minutes, and protest leaders then directed demonstrators to peacefully disperse. None of those who demonstrated were detained by police.

8. Activists we talked to were surprised by the size of the crowd at the Stromovka demonstration and now believe that student demonstrations scheduled for November 17 (Prague 8011) will attract a crowd of at least several thousand.

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60 | Not yet declassified.

25. Telegram From the Embassy in Czechoslovakia to the Department of State

Prague, November 16, 1342Z*

Confidential

Prague 08034

Subject: World Jewish Congress Visit to Prague

1. Confidential – entire text.

2. Summary. World Jewish Congress President Edgar Bronfman has told us that, while his recent visit to Prague produced no immediate results, WJC plans to continue talks with GOC officials about improving conditions of the local Jewish community and Czechoslovakia's possible recognition of Israel. Bronfman noted that some GOC officials had rather crudely linked the latter to Jewish American support for extending MFN to Czechoslovakia. End Summary.

3. A World Jewish Congress delegation, headed by WJC President Edgar Bronfman, was in Prague November 12–14. On the morning before its departure Bronfman gave the Ambassador a readout on the visit and the delegation's official appointments with CPCZ Secretary Jakes, Prime Minister Adamec, Foreign Minister Johanes, First Deputy Prime Minister Urban and Director of the Government Secretariat for Church Affairs Janku. Bronfman was accompanied by the WJC's Secretary General Israel Singer, Executive Vice President Stephen Herbits and other WJC officials.

4. Bronfman explained that the delegation had come to Czechoslovakia, and would be traveling on to other conservative regimes in Eastern Europe, to determine what the winds of change in the region might mean for local Jewish communities and for the prospect of these countries giving diplomatic recognition to Israel.

5. Specifically, Bronfman said that the WJC hoped the visit might give a boost to the small Jewish Community in Prague and perhaps move the Government to remove the community's hardline and pliant leadership. The WJC, he said,

would be looking into ways to provide religious materials, etc., to the Community and to preserve the rare Jewish art and artifacts contained in the State Jewish Museum. WJC was also interested in seeking the local community's full membership in the Congress. Even though it had sat as an observer at all recent Congress sessions, the Government had up until now refused to authorize full membership.

6. On the question of Israeli recognition, the Czechoslovaks, Bronfman said, were unready to go farther than discussing the possibility of reciprocal consular representation in capitals, granting visas at the border and expanding cultural and commercial exchanges. While the Czechoslovaks evinced an interest in expanding trade, officials, including Prime Minister Adamec, had said they were not ready to open full diplomatic relations at this time. Bronfman said he made the point that, if Czechoslovakia was trying to change its image in the West, recognition of Israel would be one way to start and several of its socialist neighbors had already taken the step.

7. In private contacts, however, the GOC had shown more flexibility on Israeli recognition but had demanded a *quid pro quo*, specifically Jewish American support for the extension of MFN to Czechoslovakia. Other GOC interests, such as IMF membership and a reduction in COCOM restrictions, had also been trotted out in private talks, but it was clear, said Bronfman, that MFN was the central Czechoslovak concern. While WJC officials had tried to disabuse the Czechoslovaks of the idea that they could either negotiate or deliver on such a promise, they were insistent. Bronfman said he had pointed out that the WJC, as a human rights organization itself, appreciated the significant barrier to MFN represented by Czechoslovakia's general negative human rights performance. Bronfman said his hosts seemed genuinely surprised by his frank characterization of Czechoslovakia as just half a step ahead of Romania on the East European human rights ladder and now well behind even the GDR.

8. Bronfman indicated discussions with the GOC on these issues would continue. In fact, Deputy Foreign Minister Vacek had been assigned by the GOC to maintain contact with Congress and planned to call there in December when he is in New York to attend the UNGA and before he participates in our bilateral Humanitarian Affairs Working Group in Washington.

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26. Telegram From the Embassy in Czechoslovakia to the Department of State

Prague, November 16, 1989, 1746Z*

Limited Official Use

Prague 08051

Subject: MFA Press Spokesman on Prime Minister's Statements on Travel
Controls

Ref: Prague 8014⁶¹

1. Limited Official Use – entire text.

2. Summary. At a November 16 press conference, the MFA spokesman Marsik played down Prime Minister Adamec's recent statements on relaxing travel controls as nothing new. He said he was surprised at the foreign media attention they had received. He also deflected questions (apparently based on a *New York Times* story and local rumor) of Gorbachev acting to influence the pace of change here by referring reporters to Soviet Foreign Minister Shevardnadze's recent rejection of any re-evaluation of 1968.⁶² Marsik spun out the official line on "reactivating" the non-Communist political parties in the National Front, which to the uninitiated could sound like movement on political reform. He then undercut himself by asserting that, even after planned 1991 multiple-candidate elections, the CPCZ would retain its leading role in political life in the country. The Government's press spokesman also gave a press conference later in the day, offering Adamec's own interpretation of his travel statements. Only permanently accredited journalists were admitted to that conference but we understand it added nothing new to what Marsik said on travel controls. End summary.

61 | Document 23.

62 | See Document 6.

— Travel controls

3. A noon November 16 press conference by the MFA's spokesman, Lubomir Marsik, dealt largely with foreign correspondents' questions on Prime Minister Adamec's recent statements on easing travel controls (reftel). Marsik said that he was surprised by the amount of foreign attention Adamec's remarks in parliament had received. Nothing the Prime Minister had said was new and it had been the GOC's intention for several months to remove the exit visa requirement on travel to the West, the point which attracted the most media attention.

4. Marsik explained the move was still under preparation but that he expected the requirement to be lifted in the first months of the new year. The exit visa would be replaced by a new statistical form which would greatly reduce the complexity of foreign travel. The new form would not, for example, need to be countersigned by the traveller's employer as was the case of the exit visa. In future, the spokesman said, citizens would need only apply at their local police station for their passport which would be issued with a new statistical document to be turned in at the border. Marsik added that most citizens already had a passport and travelled frequently; the new change would merely simplify the process. (Comment. Unofficial estimates place the number of current passport holders at less than half the adult Czechoslovak population. End comment.)

5. Marsik was asked whether this relaxation on travel controls would effect the chances of travel for persons such as dissident Vaclav Havel or his wife Olga, both now denied passports. Marsik replied that unless there are "special circumstances," like criminal activity, travel documents will be issued. In the case of Havel, said Marsik, he was now on probation for charges of incitement and therefore ineligible for a passport. He could not comment, nor had he information, he said, on the situation of Havel's wife.

6. Comment. Marsik's statements do not lead us to change our assessment contained reftel. Specifically, elimination of the exit visa may simplify travel for those already allowed to, but not improve the chances for independent and opposition figures. End comment.

— Soviet influence

7. Reporters also quizzed Marsik on reports that Soviet leader Gorbachev had recently sent a message to Prague's leadership urging it to move ahead on reform. (Note. These questions appeared to be based on a *New York Times* article,⁶³ in turn based on a rumor circulating in Prague's dissident communi-

⁶³ | See R. W. Apple Jr., "A Soviet Warning on Foot-dragging Is Given to Prague," *The New York Times*, November 16, 1989, pp. A1 and A21. The article is dated in Prague, November 15.

ty. According to this rumor both the Czechoslovak and Bulgarian leaderships received a message from Gorbachev last week to pick up the pace of reform. End note.) Marsik said he had no information on Soviet pressure and referred reporters to Soviet Foreign Minister Shevardnadze's recent statements against any 1968 re-evaluation in an apparent attempt to deflect the question.

— **Democracy coming to Czechoslovakia**

8. Marsik received several questions on whether Czechoslovakia could continue to buck the trend in Eastern Europe and avoid serious political reforms, including a multi-party democracy. In response, Marsik offered journalists the official line on re-activating the National Front, the political umbrella which includes four non-Communist parties and the CPCZ, and plans for multiple-candidate elections in 1991. Marsik also pointed to the present constitutional review as evidence of Czechoslovakia's good intentions regarding political reform. Marsik later undercut himself by stating that, even after multiple-candidate elections and a new constitution, the CPCZ intended to retain its leading role in society.

9. Comment. Czechoslovakia's new found media attention as one of East Europe's holdouts from change will make it important for us to separate out the wheat from rhetoric in GOC statements. In the case of Adamec's travel statements in parliament, we do not believe the Prime Minister intentionally meant to mislead the foreign media. The Government seems honestly surprised by the reaction they produced in the West. A sign of this has been that this Western reaction has been virtually ignored in the local official media.

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27. Telegram From the Embassy in Czechoslovakia to the Department of State

Prague, November 16, 1989, 1752Z*

Confidential

Prague 08053; Priority

Subject: Bureaucratic Preparation Will Delay Elimination of Czechoslovak
Exit Visa Requirements

1. Confidential – entire text.

2. Summary. According to the Director of the MFA Consular Department, Kulawiec, travel to the West, particularly the U.S., and demand for visas will probably increase when exit visas are no longer required for travel to the West by Czechoslovaks. However, proper “technical and organizational measures” will first have to be implemented. Even after the change, expected by spring 1990, individuals facing criminal charges, persons owing duties of financial support and persons with state secrets will not be allowed to travel. More consular staff will be requested for the Czechoslovak Embassy in Washington. End summary.

3. November 15, the day after Prime Minister Adamec’s well-publicized speech before the Czechoslovak National [*Federal*] Assembly, DCM and EmbOff met Bronislav Kulawiec, the new chief of the MFA’s Consular Department. Kulawiec acknowledged the worldwide interest generated by Adamec’s statement that exit permits would no longer be required of Czechoslovaks for travel to the West and Yugoslavia. However, in explaining the government’s plans, he revealed that the changes will be slower and less extensive than had been widely hoped.

4. Since September, exit permits have not been required for official, including business, travel sponsored by an individual’s employer (Prague 5179)⁶⁴. Kulawiec was unable to say when such permits would no longer be required for private vis-

64 | Not yet declassified.

its to the West, because, he said, the GOC will not abolish them until the “technical and organizational measures” needed to handle increased demand for travel are in place. The target for implementation is in time for the tourist season next year.

5. Kulawiec said that after implementation Czechoslovaks would be able to leave the country with a passport, and the final decision to allow exit would be made at the border rather than by the police in the traveler’s home town as is currently the case. The traveler would have to fill out prior to travel and present at the border a card which would be used for “statistical purposes,” keeping track of the number of travelers.

6. Pressed by EmbOffs, Kulawiec admitted that some people would still not be allowed to leave. (Comment: Denial of a passport would remain an effective bar to travel by out-of-favor Czechoslovaks.) Kulawiec insisted, however, that refusal of the right to travel would have a rational basis in Czechoslovak law, and be similar to restrictions imposed by “all other Western countries.” Persons barred from travel would include:

- sentenced criminals;
- those facing criminal charges;
- persons owing duties of support such as for alimony or child support;
- persons holding important state secrets.

Kulawiec said the restrictions would not be “rigorous” but refused to estimate how many Czechoslovaks would be prohibited from traveling. He also could not explain how such persons would be prevented from traveling – such procedures would be worked out later. Czechoslovak passports would still not be valid for travel to countries like Chile or Israel.

7. According to Kulawiec, the GOC is expecting a large number of Czechoslovaks traveling abroad. The MFA Consular Department is being granted increased staff and resources. He said the United States was rated by Czechoslovaks as the fourth most popular tourist destination, so the USG should prepare for more Czechoslovak visitors and proportionately increased demand for visas.

8. Kulawiec advised EmbOffs that the GOC would be asking the USG to allow an increase in its consular staff at the Czechoslovak Washington Embassy. He said the GOC wants to cope efficiently with the increased demand for travel from its own and U.S. citizens.

9. Kulawiec’s remarks put into perspective the initially exaggerated press play occasioned by Prime Minister Adamec’s announcement of travel liberalization. The bureaucratic delays in implementing the new policy and the very real travel restrictions, including lack of hard currency, which remain appear to have become a slight embarrassment to Adamec and the Government, given the fanfare with which the policy was initially described by the Western press (septel)⁶⁵.

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65 | Document 26.

28. Telegram From the Embassy in Czechoslovakia to the Department State

Prague, November 16, 1989, 1756Z

Confidential

Prague 08056

Subject: Czechoslovak View on Possible Reciprocal Elimination of Visa Fees

Ref: State 355651⁶⁷

1. Confidential – entire text.

2. On November 15, DCM met head of the Consular Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Bronislav Kulawiec. DCM raised the possibility of reciprocal abolition of visa fees. Kulawiec doubted that total abolition would be possible without other concessions by the USG in the visa area, given the importance of visa fees as a source of hard currency for the Czechoslovak Government. Nevertheless, he suggested a working-level meeting to discuss the question of reducing visa formalities, to be convened in Prague after the December Humanitarian Affairs Working Group meeting in Washington.

3. Given the Department's limitation of discussion to the matter of reciprocal abolition of NIV fees (reftel), there seems to be little point in discussing reducing visa formalities further until a decision is made as to what "streamlining" measures can reasonably be suggested. Post requests early notification of potential changes (e.g., multiple entries, longer period of validity) which might be made in visa procedures for East European countries.

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⁶⁷ | Not yet declassified.

29. Telegram From the Embassy in Czechoslovakia to the Department of State

Prague, November 16, 1989, 1757Z

Confidential

Prague 08057

Subject: Proposed Press Law Would Raise Penalties against *Samizdat*
Publishers

1. Confidential – entire text.

2. Summary. Proposed legislation before the Federal Assembly would substantially raise fines against *samizdat* publishers (to the equivalent of USD 1,000 against individuals and USD 5,000 against organizations) and would make it impossible for private individuals and independent organizations to legally publish a periodical in Czechoslovakia. Concern about the new law has extended beyond the dissident community to the non-Communist representatives in the Federal Assembly. A deputy of the People's Party has told EmbOff that as many as 25 of his colleagues, including two Communists, are prepared to take the unprecedented action of voting against the proposed law should it be put before the Assembly in its present form as scheduled in December. End summary.

3. The Federal Assembly is considering legislation to close a loophole in the existing press law which has made it difficult for authorities to fine *samizdat* publishers. The current law written in the age of Stalin did not anticipate that a private individual or organization might attempt to publish a newspaper or magazine and contains no criminal sanctions against *samizdat* publishers. Czechoslovak authorities wishing to fine *samizdat* publishers have had to resort to an unwieldy process in which local National Committees have fined *samizdat* publishers (such as the *Lidove Noviny* editors) a maximum of 500 crowns (about USD 50) for breach of the public peace (Prague 7293)⁶⁷.

⁶⁷ | Not yet declassified. See Document 7, para 6.

4. The newly-proposed legislation would in effect only allow officially approved organizations to be registered as publishers. Organizations or individuals publishing without approval would be subject to maximum fines of 10,000 crowns for individuals and 50,000 crowns for organizations. Fines would be assessed by the Federal Office for Press and Information (FUTI). The State Prosecutor General recommended that the proposed legislation allow for judicial review of FUTI assessed fines, but the recommendation was rejected.

5. The proposed legislation does not provide for jail sentences for *samizdat* publishers. Authorities would nonetheless continue to have various prosecutorial weapons available to them in cases in which they want to imprison an independent publisher. The recent cases of Brno editor František Stárek (Prague 5960)⁶⁸ and *Lidové Noviny* editors Jiri Ruml and Rudolf Zeman (Prague 7293) suggest that an incitement charge (Section 100 of the Criminal Code) would be the weapon most often employed against independent publishers.

6. In a sign of growing independence within the non-Communist parties in the National Front and the seriousness with which this new press law was viewed, a Federal Assembly deputy and leading secretary of the People's Party of the South Moravian organization (please protect)⁶⁹ told Pol/EC Chief that he and 24 of his colleagues were prepared to vote against the draft press law should it come to a vote in its present form as scheduled in December. This People's Party official noted that he was trying to re-enforce the unprecedented nature of such a vote by getting his party's deputies to oppose it as a bloc but that he expected several Socialist Party deputies and two Communists to join in the vote against the bill as well.

7. Comment. Although the GOC often proclaims it is bringing its laws into compliance with CSCE commitments, and this intention is actually drafted into the preamble of the new press bill, the proposed revision of the law makes independent publishing even more difficult and is a step backward for the Czechoslovak regime.

Black

68 | Not yet declassified. František Stárek (stoker), publisher of the *samizdat* magazine *Vokno* (Window), was arrested for the second time on February 23, 1989, and sentenced in June to two and a half years' imprisonment. The sentence was confirmed on August 28, 1989.

69 | It was Josef Bartončík, see Document 68.

30. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Czechoslovakia

Washington, November 16, 1989, 2123Z

Confidential

State 368495; Immediate

Subject: December Meeting of HAWG – Agenda and New Date

Ref: A) Prague 7970⁷⁰, B) Prague 8013⁷¹

1. Confidential – entire text.

2. Summary. HA A/S Richard Schifter agreed to Czechoslovak proposal for postponing the HAWG until December 18 in order for Czechoslovak Deputy Foreign Minister Vacek to attend. Schifter also agreed to proposal that he head the U.S. side when the HAWG meets again next year in Prague. Czechoslovak EmbOffs were also informed informally of items for U.S. agenda and reminded that the U.S. wanted serious, substantive discussions not an exchange of polemics. End Summary.

2. Czechoslovak DCM Jiri Michovsky and Consul Rudolf Kozusnik visited the Department November 15 in preparation for the December meeting of the Humanitarian Affairs Working Group (HAWG). Responding to Michovsky, HA A/S Schifter agreed to a later date – December 18 instead of December 4 or 6 – for the HAWG (ref B). Michovsky said he had been informed telephonically of the need to change the schedule only a few hours before the meeting. He said Deputy Foreign Minister Vacek would now be traveling to New York December 9. Schifter also agreed to the Czechoslovak's request that he come to Prague for the next HAWG.

3. Responding to an inquiry as to what issues the U.S. would raise in the HAWG, Schifter told Michovsky that the U.S. approach is to consider human

70 | Document 20.

71 | Document 22.

rights practices in light of Helsinki Accords obligations. He said the U.S. would raise individual cases, for example persons imprisoned for exercising their right to freedom of expression. He added that in the past the answer given by the Czechoslovak authorities has been that the persons in question had been prosecuted under existing law. This raises the point, Schifter emphasized, that the laws might be in conflict with the Helsinki Accords. That, too, would be brought up at the HAWG. Schifter added that problems with freedom of religion, association and assembly would be raised in the same context.

4. Michovsky took careful note and stated that the Czechoslovak side would in turn be raising questions about U.S. human rights practices. Schifter told Michovsky all human rights issues can be on the table in the HAWG. He stated, however, that the Secretary had instructed him to establish a serious discussion of real issues. The U.S. is not interested in talking for the sake of talking. He noted the U.S.-Soviet dialogue had progressed from polemics to serious discussions and urged the Czechoslovaks to be guided by seriousness and not raise questions to which they know the answers. When Michovsky sought to interject that the Czechoslovaks have a different perspective on the definition of human rights, Schifter responded that the two countries are culturally similar and the norms the U.S. wished to promote had also existed in the past in Czechoslovakia. Schifter also pointed out that Czechoslovakia had in the past looked to Moscow as a model and might want to do so now.

5. Earlier, EUR/EEY Deputy Director Hornblow received Michovsky and Kozusnik. At this brief meeting, the general structure of the upcoming HAWG was discussed, especially items to be discussed in the consular session. These items included visa denials to American citizens, child custody cases, and citizenship issues.

Department and Czechoslovak Embassy officials agreed to meet one week before the December HAWG to hammer out a specific agenda. Michovsky did not request a meeting for Deputy Foreign Minister Vacek with EUR A/S Seitz (ref A) and EUR/EEY did not press the matter.

Baker

31. Telegram From the Embassy in Czechoslovakia to the Department of State

Prague, November 17, 1989, 1648Z*

[Confidential]

Prague 08075; Immediate

Subject: CPCZ Sets Dates for Next Plenum, Ideology Chief Travels
to Moscow

Ref: A) Prague 8051⁷², B) Prague 7892⁷³

1. Confidential – entire text.

2. In an unusual step the CPCZ Presidium met on Thursday (November 16) this week instead of Friday. According to official reports it agreed on dates of December 14 and 15 for the Party's next Central Committee plenum. The plenum will be devoted to a rather wide ranging agenda:

- a report of the Party's activities since the 15th plenum;
- a discussion of plan fulfillment for 1989 and 1990 as well as the status of the 9th (1991-96) five year plan;
- a report on preparation of the "New Economic Rules" to go into effect as of 1 January 1990; and
- considerations of a draft set of principles for the CPCZ's new Party program.

3. In what may be more than a coincidence, the CPCZ's ideology chief Jan Fojtik left for Moscow Thursday evening after the Presidium session. The trip was described in the media here as a friendly visit with CPSU Central Committee. The visit is being made at Soviet invitation. In view of recent rumors of

72 | Document 26.

73 | Document 16.

Soviet pressure (ref A) on the Czechoslovak leadership and possible leadership changes (ref B), the timing of the visit has attracted much interest.

4. During a call at the Soviet Embassy on November 17, EconOff inquired as to the purpose of the Fojtik visit. He was told that Fojtik's trip had been laid on for some time, though the exact dates had been agreed at the last moment; it was a normal, routine visit. Fojtik, he was told, would be meeting with his ideological counterparts in Moscow.

5. Comment. Fojtik has been the most outspokenly critical member of the Czechoslovak leadership on Soviet and East European reform developments. He can expect a cool reception in Moscow for that and some rough verbal handling by his hosts. Fojtik will almost certainly try to put the best face on the Czechoslovak go-slow approach to reform and plead that as events unfold even more rapidly in the region, it is very much in the Soviet interest to maintain at least one stable, orthodox ally.

Black

II

THE WATERSHED

“This is the first mass specifically student demonstration since 1969 and represents a watershed event for the Jakes regime. It changes our frame of reference on this regime’s longevity. The brutal police treatment of youth will have broad repercussions among the general population as it did last January at the much smaller-scale Palach demonstrations. It should remove what trace of legitimacy the regime retains as far as the general public is concerned. Jakes will not be able to pretend [...] that Czechoslovakia is serious about speeding up the pace of political reform.”

Prague 08082, November 18, 1989

32. Telegram From the Embassy in Czechoslovakia to the Department of State

Prague, November 18, 1989, 1418Z

Confidential

Prague 08082; Niact Immediate

Subject: Brutal Suppression of Czech Students' Demonstration

1. Confidential – entire text.
2. This is an action message. See recommendation para 19.
3. Summary. An officially sanctioned student commemoration [on] the evening of November 17 developed into Czechoslovakia's largest anti-regime demonstration in 20 years. Several tens of thousands (possibly 50,000) students marched through central Prague calling for freedom, an end to Communist rule and the ouster of the present Communist leadership. The peaceful procession was halted by police before it reached its goal, Wenceslas Square. It was then brutally dispersed by truncheon-wielding riot police. Western journalists were particularly targeted by the police for rough treatment. One *Chicago Tribune* reporter required serious medical attention for head wounds. Numerous others were roughed up or had their cameras smashed. No official statistics have been released on the number of injured or detained, though we understand Prague Spring era leader Alexander Dubcek was among them and there is an unconfirmed report that at least one student died as a result of police beatings. The Embassy has already protested verbally to the MFA on the police treatment of American journalists and recommends in para 19 that Ambassador Houstecky in Washington be called in to receive a protest and that the impending visit of CPCZ Presidium member Fojtik be cancelled as inappropriate at this time.
4. Scared and isolated, the Jakes leadership has decided to respond to this first major manifestation of student opposition with brute force. This bloody-mindedness may well produce the sort of divisions so far largely muted in the CPCZ leadership and will undercut what little popular legitimacy the regime

has had as well as its longevity. New opportunities for popular protest will arise on December 8, “John Lennon Day” in Prague; December 10, International Human Rights Day, and January 16, the anniversary of Jan Palach’s death. The example of Prague’s students could encourage demonstrations of even greater scale on those dates. End summary.

— The demonstration

5. A commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the death of a Czech, anti-fascist student leader (Jan Opletal) has sparked Czechoslovakia’s largest anti-regime demonstration in 20 years. A gathering of some 15–20,000 students met the afternoon of November 17 to hear speeches honoring the memory of this Czech martyr, as well as calls for academic freedom, a dialogue between Government and people and for students to become more politically active to change society. The spirit of the students and speakers was very much that of one of the large banners strung out over the assembly: “Who If Not Us, When If Not Now.” Others read “Freedom,” and “The Dinosaurs Out” (a reference to the CPCZ’s aged Presidium).

6. After speeches, the students proceeded, as planned, on a solemn candle-light march to Vysehrad, the hill-top fortress and cemetery where many Czech national heroes are buried. The crowd became increasingly more political along the route. Shouts of “Long live Havel and the Charter” were interspersed with “Jakes out,” “We want a new government” and “Free elections.” At Vysehrad the gathering offered a moment of silence for Opletal and sang the national anthem. The crowd seemed uncertain as to how to proceed at this point, but shortly shouts rose up to march to Wenceslas Square, the traditional site of demonstrations in Prague’s old center.

7. As students streamed down from Vysehrad into the city’s streets they called, as demonstrators have in the past, for other Czechs to join them. This time they did. The crowd marched along the river embankment towards the city’s center and its numbers swelled to several tens of thousands. (Western media estimates speak of 40–50,000, making it the largest independent demonstration here since 1969.) Student slogans became more forceful and nationalistic. In addition to calls for Jakes and the current Party leadership to resign, the crowd chanted “40 years of Communism is enough” and “Warsaw, Berlin and now Prague.”

8. Up to this point the police had not seriously interfered with the demonstration, though they had halted its march at one point to prevent it from turning into side streets and to keep it along the river embankment. As the demonstrators reached Prague’s broad National Avenue and turned toward Wenceslas Square, however, they were confronted by a barricade of riot police blocking their path. The demonstration had now been going on for some three and a half hours.

[9.] Between 19:30 and 20:30 the police and demonstrators were at a stand off. The police refused to permit the students to pass to the square, despite shouts that “after Wenceslas we will go home.” While numbers of the demonstrators began to dwindle, a core of some 10,000 refused to budge or respond to police calls to break up. The students responded by staging a sit-in on the street, singing the national anthem, chanting more anti-Communist, anti-leadership political slogans and shouting for someone in the leadership to come out and discuss their demands with them. Throughout, demonstrators were peaceful and restrained as police announcements became increasingly more threatening and riot police moved in to close the National Avenue from behind the crowd and cut off other points of egress.

— Brutal police response

10. Shortly before 21:00, riot police, newly reinforced with special Red Beret Action Squads and fatigue-clad People’s Militia, carried out a series of truncheon charges into the crowd. Numerous demonstrators, as well as foreign journalists, trapped within the street cordon were badly beaten. The police then began making arrests and using an armored personnel carrier with battering ram to force the people out into now open side streets. Within 30 minutes the street was clear. Busloads of those arrested as well as ambulances carrying injured were noted leaving the scene for several minutes afterwards.

11. According to reports, one student has died of injuries and at least 13 persons were seriously injured and required hospitalization. One of these was *Chicago Tribune* reporter Paula Butturini who suffered several head wounds requiring a total of 16 stitches. The number of injured was certainly much higher than the figure of 13. EmbOffs saw scores of young demonstrators bleeding or limping from the demonstration site. Many were not seeking immediate medical assistance for fear that their names would be taken by the authorities.

12. Western journalists were particularly targeted for brutal police handling. In addition to Ms. Butturini, a BBC journalist, Ed Lucas, was knocked unconscious. AP, *LA Times*, *Boston Globe*, and NBC reporters have all reported being beaten and roughed up. Many had cameras seized or damaged. EmbOffs witnessed a CNN reporter, Bruce Conover, being detained and his camera smashed. We understand that a British ITN reporter was also roughed up and held by the police.

13. There have been no reports on the total number of persons arrested or detained. We understand that former Prague Spring era leader Alexander Dubcek was among them. He was picked up when he was spotted by police during the earlier Vysehrad ceremony.

— Comment

14. This is the first mass specifically student demonstration since 1969 and represents a watershed event for the Jakes regime. It changes our frame of reference on this regime's longevity. The brutal police treatment of youth will have broad repercussions among the general population as it did last January at the much smaller-scale Palach demonstrations. It should remove what trace of legitimacy the regime retains as far as the general public is concerned. Jakes will not be able to pretend, as CPCZ ideology Secretary Fojtik tried to do after returning from talks in Moscow on Friday (just as the police were knocking heads), that Czechoslovakia is serious about speeding up the pace of political reform.

15. Importantly, the police action in its bloody-mindedness could produce divisions which have so far been muted in the Czechoslovak Communist Party leadership. But if this demonstration considerably undercuts the staying power of the Jakes regime, it also shows that the hardliners are not going to leave without a fight. Many of last night's demonstrators were calling on students to return to Wenceslas Square Saturday for a repeat demonstration. Even if this does not develop, there are several protest anniversary opportunities in the weeks ahead and around which demonstrations can coalesce.

16. Two in particular should be the focus of large-scale actions: International Human Rights Day on December 10 and the January 16 anniversary of Czech student Jan Palach's self-immolation in 1969. The December 8 local celebration of "John Lennon Day" has also typically drawn protest demonstrators.

17. How quickly the Jakes regime passes from the scene, however, may depend now on more than leadership divisions and popular pressure. An important factor, and one that could be decisive, is the Soviet reaction to local developments. Television coverage of CPCZ ideology chief Jan Fojtik's return from Moscow last evening showed him a physically shaken man. We have no doubt he heard some tough talk from his Soviet interlocutors and questions about exactly what Jakes and the regime are up to in their talk of reform.

18. There is a final bit of cruel irony to last night's events. Started officially to commemorate a heroic student act of protest against the brutality of Czechoslovakia's Nazi occupiers, they ended yesterday in brutality and apparently at least one student's death at the hands of the Czechoslovak authorities.

— Recommendation

19. Embassy believes that strong and early protests are advisable to the GOC in view of the brutal treatment of its citizens and foreign, including U.S., journalists in such a blatant violation of its CSCE commitments. We further recommend that in view of these events, the impending visit of CPCZ Presidium member Fojtik be cancelled as a sign of our condemnation of the November

17 events. The Embassy has already verbally protested the police incidents involving journalists with the MFA. We are following up with a diplomatic note spelling these out in detail and demanding an explanation. The Ambassador plans, if the Department has no objection, to raise the contents of our note (see septel)¹ with GOC officials in an early demarche. To reinforce our concerns, we recommend that the Department take similar action by calling in Ambassador Houstecky at an early date. At that meeting we recommend that he be told that, in light of the November 17 events, the visit beginning November 24 by CPCZ Presidium member Fojtik, would not be appropriate.

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¹ | Document 33, para 3.

33. Telegram From the Embassy in Czechoslovakia to the Department of State

Prague, November 20, 1989, 1220Z*

Unclassified

Prague 08087; Immediate

Subject: Embassy Protest of Attack on American Journalists During
November 17–19 Demonstrations in Prague

Ref.: Prague 8082²

1. As indicated in reftel, and in conjunction with a demarche by the Ambassador concerning the brutal response by Czechoslovak police to demonstrations which occurred in Prague on November 17, and thereafter, Embassy is submitting a note of protest concerning seven American citizen journalists who were attacked by security officials during the demonstrations. The text of the note follows below in para 3.

2. The Ministry has twice informed the Embassy that it cannot ensure the security of foreigners, neither diplomats, journalists nor casual observers who are “present within the range of unpermitted demonstrations.” An oral warning was presented to us at the Ministry prior to August 21 demonstrations this year. A diplomatic note, similarly disclaiming responsibility, was sent in reply to our protest of the detention of a CNN camera crew during demonstrations on October 28. (A copy of that note is being pouched to the Department, attn: EUR/EEY.) In raising the November 17 and subsequent incidents, the Embassy will strongly point out that these have not been accidental, but in all cases have involved clear identification of the journalists before the detention or attack. Therefore, the GOC cannot disclaim responsibility for the deliberate actions of its police security personnel.

² | Document 32.

3. The text of note follows:

The Embassy of the United States of America presents its compliments to the Federal Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic and has the honor to protest the treatment of the following American citizens who, while performing their normal duties as accredited journalists on the afternoon and evening of November 17 in and around Wenceslas Square, were beaten by officials of the security organs of the Government of Czechoslovakia.

Ms. Paula Butturini of the *Chicago Tribune* was severely beaten by uniformed police, under the direction of a plainclothes official. She required emergency medical attention at the Franciscu Clinic³ for head wounds, and received 16 stitches. With her was Mr. Tyler Marshall, of the *Los Angeles Times*, who was also beaten and treated at the Franciscu Clinic.

Mr. Paul [Bruce] Conover of Cable News Network was accosted by three plainclothes officials. He was shoved and struck repeatedly with nightsticks. The officials demanded that he surrender his videotape, which he did. They then seized his camera which was carried off by uniformed personnel. The Embassy strongly urges the immediate return of the Sony Beta camcorder, valued at thirty thousand dollars (dols 30,000), to the representatives of the Cable News Network. In addition Mr. Conover's Soviet press credentials were destroyed.

Mr. John Kaufman, of *The Boston Globe*, was similarly accosted, both beaten and maced by security officials.

Mr. Andrew Alexander and Mr. Michael Schwarz of Cox Newspapers were also attacked. Mr. Schwarz's photographic equipment was smashed.

Mr. Tim Ortman of the National Broadcasting Company (NBC) was beaten with nightsticks and suffered a concussion and leg injuries and was taken to West Germany for medical treatment. His camera equipment was destroyed.

The above incidents all involved American citizens. The Embassy is aware of numerous other incidents involving accredited journalists of both Czechoslovak and foreign nationalities who were brutally treated during the performance of their duties. With reference to the Ministry's note no. 317.572/89 concerning the Ministry's inability to ensure the security of journalists within the range of unpermitted demonstrations, the Embassy must emphasize that all attacks were made by Czechoslovak police officials. In all cases the journalists identified themselves clearly and were subsequently beaten. In particular cameramen and their equipment appear to have been singled out for attack.

In keeping with the agreements of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, as well as internationally accepted standards of human rights, the Embassy wishes to convey its strongest protest against such deliberate

3 | The Na Františku hospital, Prague.

interference with the legitimate conduct of information media activities and physical abuse of persons engaged in normal press business.

The Embassy would appreciate receiving the Ministry's earliest reply. Complimentary close, end text.

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34. Telegram From the Embassy in Czechoslovakia to the Department of State

Prague, November 20, 1989, 1242Z*

Confidential

Prague 08097; Immediate

Subject: Demonstrations Continue over Weekend in Prague

Ref: Prague 8082⁴

1. Confidential – entire text.

2. Summary. Demonstrations in Prague continued on Saturday and Sunday, but unlike Friday's student demonstration were not marred by violence. Besides demonstrations, the Czechoslovak public has reacted to the brutal suppression of Friday's demonstration and the report (perhaps inaccurate) of the death of a student at the hands of riot police with calls for student and general strikes. Czechoslovak authorities have denied the report of a student death, have accused the VOA of transmitting a false report, and arrested Petr Uhl, who first made the report. The regime has clearly been shaken by the weekend's events, and has asked for the nation to be calm. The likely reaction by the public will be continuing demonstrations which will add to the pressures already faced by the Jakes leadership. End summary.

3. The violent suppression of Friday's demonstration in Prague and the report (perhaps inaccurate) that a student was killed by police during the demonstration spurred Czechoslovaks to return to the streets of Prague for demonstrations on the evenings of both Saturday, November 18 and Sunday, November 19. Saturday's demonstration at its height numbered only 1,000 persons but some 25,000 persons marched through Prague on Sunday.

4 | Document 32.

4. Riot-equipped police confronted demonstrators on both days, but we are aware of no significant violence against demonstrators. On Sunday riot police were only deployed to prevent demonstrators from crossing the Vltava River and marching to Prague Castle, site of the office and residence of the Czechoslovak President. Otherwise, demonstrators were free to march without police harassment or interference so long as they stayed in the area of Prague's so-called Golden Cross (Wenceslas Square and National Avenue). In marked contrast to previous practice, authorities also allowed persons to place candles around the statue of Saint Wenceslas and at the National Avenue site of the Friday night "massacre."

5. Saturday's and Sunday's demonstrations were largely spontaneous and leaderless. Unlike Friday's, when demonstrators were mostly students, demonstrators on Sunday appeared to be from all sectors of Czechoslovak society. Sunday's demonstration broke up peacefully with demonstrators promising to return to the streets Monday evening.

6. Various other reactions to Friday's violence have included calls for a strike by University (and possibly high-school) students during the week of November 20–24, suspension of theatrical performances in Prague, Bratislava and other cities, and calls for a two-hour general strike on November 27. Vaclav Havel in an RFE interview stated he received calls from numerous factories pledging to participate in the general strike. (Havel, incidentally, has received a passport and permission to travel to Sweden to receive the Olof Palme Prize, but will not do so in light of events in Czechoslovakia.)

7. The reaction of the Czechoslovak public to Friday's brutality has been magnified by a report that a student named Martin Smid was killed by police on Friday. Such report was first made by Petr Uhl of the Independent News Agency VIA (East European Information Agency) and was repeated by the VOA, BBC and Reuters. It now appears that, if a student was killed, he was not named Martin Smid. EmbOffs talked with the mother of Martin Smid and she told us that her son had not been killed or even injured. Czechoslovak Television on Sunday denied reports of Smid's death, and loudspeakers on Wenceslas Square on Sunday presented a tape that denied Smid's death and specifically blamed VOA (but not BBC or Reuters) for having maliciously presented the report.

8. For his action of passing along information to Western journalists on the reports of Smid's death, Petr Uhl, a member of VONS (Committee for the Defense of the Unjustly Persecuted [*Prosecuted*]) and of the Independent East European Information Agency, has been arrested by authorities and charged with "damaging the interests of the republic abroad." His wife Anna Sabatova was also detained as she attempted to go to an independent press conference at the home of Charter 77 spokesperson Dana Nemcova on Sunday. Such a press conference was reportedly called to present witnesses who could testify about the alleged death of a student. But police prevented visitors to Nemcova's house

and the press conference did not occur. It thus remains a mystery at this time whether a student was in fact killed.

9. Official Czechoslovak press sources indicate about 100 persons were detained on Friday, but EmbOffs saw two busloads of detainees driven away after Friday's demonstration and believe the official figure is low. In addition to the detention of Petr Uhl and Anna Sabatova, we have learned that John Bok of the [Transnational] Radical Party, Emanuel Mandler of the [Czechoslovak] Democratic Initiative, and David Dusek, a Czechoslovak working with a CNN crew, were detained over the weekend. Mandler's detention was apparently provoked by a [Czechoslovak] Democratic Initiative call for an interim government headed by Dubcek, Havel, and other independent representatives. We understand Mandler has been released from police custody, but have no further information concerning Bok and Dusek.

10. The weekend's events have clearly shaken authorities. Frantisek Pitra, Premier of the Czech Republic, appeared on television on Sunday and asked that the nation remain calm. The response will most likely be more and perhaps even larger demonstrations. Some observers predict that a demonstration scheduled for 4:00 p.m. today on Wenceslas Square will be even larger than that of last Friday. Continuing demonstrations will only add to the pressures already faced by the Jakes leadership, and may accelerate his passing from the Czechoslovak political scene.

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35. Telegram From the Embassy in Czechoslovakia to the Department of State

Prague, November 20, 1989, 1648Z*

Unclassified

Prague 08106; Immediate

Subject: Czechoslovak Press Coverage of Demonstration Aftermath Shows
Contradictory Lines

Ref: Prague 8082⁵

1. Summary. Czechoslovak Communist Party daily *Rude Pravo* has taken the line that the police acted with restraint to put down the student demonstrations in Prague November 17. The paper placed blame for the demonstrations on “self-appointed” leaders subverting the peaceful goals of the commemoration march, abetted by the foreign press which uncritically repeated allegedly false reports of deaths and injuries to substantiate their predictions of bloodshed. (Despite regime protestations, it is not yet certain that no demonstrators have died.) The Socialist Party paper *Svobodne Slovo* and the youth paper *Mlada Fronta*, however, were strongly critical of security forces for overreacting and in general supported student calls for more dialogue and democracy. Though a number of regime leaders have criticized the reports of deaths, as far as we are aware almost none have so far expressed support for suppression of the demonstration. Para 7 includes the official count of those arrested and injured at the November 17 demonstration. End summary.

2. The November 20 edition of *Rude Pravo* took advantage of allegedly inaccurate reports of the deaths of one or more students in the November 17 demonstration to launch an offensive charging that “self-appointed leaders” had subverted the legitimate annual commemoration for anti-Nazi fighter [*sic*]

5 | Document 32.

Opletal. According to the paper, police forces had taken no action against the marchers, even when they began shouting anti-Government and anti-Party slogans, until the crowd tried to move to unapproved routes, where they would have “endangered” the public.

3. It was at that point, according to the paper, that the leaders of the demonstration decided to spread a “false” claim that a student named Martin Smid had been killed, a claim picked up by the foreign press. (AFP, for one, reported that there had been four deaths.) Ignoring denials by Government spokesmen, some students over the weekend set up small memorials to the various students “killed” at the places where they “died.” The Government on Sunday shot down the rumor about Smid by producing him for a television interview. A statement by the Interior Ministry described the death rumors as a deliberate manipulation of people’s minds and an effort to arouse hostile emotions. (This has not stopped speculation that some demonstrator(s) was killed.)

4. *Rude Pravo* stopped slightly short of saying that the foreign press had deliberately reported what they knew as a false story, but did accuse them of at least poor journalism by reporting a story without adequate efforts to confirm it. It ascribed this failure to the Western media’s desire to substantiate predictions of violence and bloodshed. It left little doubt that it believed that some of the foreign press (particularly RFE) had abetted opposition elements in Prague in their efforts to “subvert” the commemoration and to “provoke” a confrontation with authorities.

5. In contrast to *Rude Pravo*’s line, the Czechoslovak Socialist Party paper *Svobodne Slovo* printed a statement by the Party Presidium very critical of security forces. Noting its past calls for an increased dialogue, the Presidium expressed its “fundamental disapproval” of police actions against “defenseless demonstrators” which could only “exacerbate tensions in society” and arouse natural resistance. It demanded that such events never be resolved in this manner again.

6. The youth paper *Mlada Fronta*, also taking a critical view, quoted a statement by two student groups attacking the “inadequate and politically ill-advised” actions by security forces. The groups were “concerned and outraged” at the information about injured participants in the demonstration. As *Svobodne Slovo*, *Mlada Fronta* did not mention the death reports and called for investigations of the actions of the security forces.

7. Finally, the Ministry of Interior has released an official count on the demonstrations: 24 injured (17 demonstrators, 7 police); 143 people detained, nine on possible criminal charges. Of the other detainees, 21 were fined and released, 70 were released after an ID check. The remaining 43 were not accounted for in the Ministry statement, but may have been released.

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36. Telegram From the Embassy in Czechoslovakia to the Department of State

Prague, November 20, 1989, 1652Z*

Limited Official Use

Prague 08108; Immediate

Subject: Czechoslovak Independents Establish New Organization and List
Agenda of Demands

1. (U) Independent elements over the weekend established an organization called the "Civic Forum." The Forum held a press conference November 20 in the apartment of Vaclav Havel (and in Havel's presence). It reportedly announced a four-point agenda, demanding:

- re-evaluation of 1968;
- resignation of all 1968-era figures in the regime;
- a commission to investigate charges of police brutality (not apparently limited to suppression of the November 17 demonstrations);
- freeing of all political prisoners.⁶

2. (U) The Forum called for a general strike for November 27, but took no position on holding threatened demonstrations today (November 20).

3. (LOU) According to our contact, Havel said that the Forum had been established by thirteen signatories, "but politicians all over town are shoving membership cards up their sleeves to be ready when the situation changes." As an example, he reportedly said that Socialist Party head Jan Skoda, though not a signatory, had participated in the founding and given the group his verbal approval. In the same category was Bohumil Svoboda of the reform group within the People's Party. Havel also reportedly indicated that the group was prepared to work with anyone, including members of the regime, except those involved in the post-1968 "normalization."

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6 | For Civic Forum support for the general strike see Document 47, para 6.

37. Telegram From the Embassy in Czechoslovakia to the Department of State

Prague, November 20, 1989, 1654Z*

Confidential

Prague 08109; Immediate

Subject: American Woman's Account of November 17 Demonstration and
the Death of a Czech Student

1. Confidential – entire text.

2. Summary. An American woman resident in Prague trapped [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] in the worst of the police charges during the November 17 student demonstrations has given us an account of her experience and what she knows of stories of the death of a student from police beatings. End summary.

3. [*2 and a half lines of source text not declassified*] She described how on the night of November 17 the police surrounded the demonstrators. Refusing to allow any to leave and then began to beat those trapped methodically with nightsticks. She [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] only protected by a group of students who formed a tight knot around her to shield [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] police blows. When a policeman realized there was a child in the group, he scolded [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] but allowed her to leave without running a gauntlet the police had set up to beat demonstrators as they exited from the scene.

4. [*Less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] first informed us over the weekend of her experiences. She reported that one young student had died in hospital from his injuries after the demonstration. She did not have a name at that time. Her source was a friend who had spent the night at the same hospital waiting for word about a girl who had sustained serious kidney injuries. It was this girl who had given word to a dissident spokesman [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] that her boyfriend, a student

at Charles University's Mathematics Faculty named Martin Smid had died.

5. *[Less than 1 line of source text not declassified]* to the Embassy on Monday November 20, confused by official GOC reports that Smid was alive. Two students by that name had, in fact, been tracked down by the police and appeared on television here Sunday evening. One of these admitted to having been at the November 17 demonstration; though he appeared to be drugged and to have sustained, from what could be seen from the fuzzy black-and-white television print, some injuries. He was evidently alive.

6. *[Less than 1 line of source text not declassified]* EmbOffs had confirmed for themselves, that the mother of the second Martin Smid was now claiming he was not dead. *[Less than 1 line of source text not declassified]* what Embassy officers had also learned that the dissident spokesman Petr Uhl, who was the source for Western media reports was reportedly backing away from the story. But Uhl, the girl who claimed her boyfriend had died *[less than 1 line of source text not declassified]* and David Dusek, Czech student working with CNN News, and who had reportedly interviewed the girl, are all now under detention as part of an investigation into the news story (septel)⁷.

7. The rumor *[less than 1 line of source text not declassified]* persists of a student's death, if not Martin Smid. These continue despite official denials and particularly in light of reports that hospitals have been told not to comment on injuries of any persons admitted from the November 17 demonstration.

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7 | Document 34, para 8.

38. Telegram From the Embassy in Czechoslovakia to the Department of State

Prague, November 20, 1989, 1657Z*

Confidential

Prague 08110; Immediate

Subject: Popular and Soviet Pressure for Reform Converge on the Jakes
Leadership

Ref: (A) Prague 8082⁸, (B) Prague 8075⁹

1. Confidential – entire text.

2. Summary. Two factors have converged to diminish the Czechoslovak regime's chances for delaying deeper reforms and to pose a serious threat to CPCZ leader Jakes's position. One, Prague has continued to experience popular demonstrations since the weekend. These have been encouraged by rumors, despite GOC denials, that a student may have been killed during the police violence on November 17. Second, CPCZ ideology chief Jan Fojtik has just returned from Moscow with the message that Gorbachev expects the time for talking about reconstruction is over and that it is now up to the Czechoslovak leadership to implement it. If this were not enough, the CPCZ leadership has SED Chairman Egon Krenz coming into town on November 21 and is facing student and dissident calls for a general strike on November 27. End summary.

3. The events of the November 17–19 weekend in Prague have shifted the political ground here. They made the Jakes leadership (and Jakes personally) look much more vulnerable than it did even a week ago. Mass demonstrations, by students, first on Friday night (ref A) and then subsequently (septel)¹⁰ to protest

8 | Document 32.

9 | Document 31.

10 | Document 39.

this first demonstration's brutal suppression, have provided a so far missing element in the political equation here: wide spread popular unrest, with students and others calling for continued protest and a general strike on November 27 and scattered, but unconfirmed, reports of industrial and school stoppages.

4. During the weekend CPCZ leader Jakes was particularly targeted by demonstrators who frequently chanted "Jakes out" or "Jakes into the wastebasket." The intensity and single-mindedness of these demands should be psychologically damaging to a leader already rumored to have wanted to resign in crises of self-confidence after developments in the GDR. The police restraint displayed on November 18 and 19 against demonstrations may encourage even larger popular turnouts today (November 20) at Wenceslas Square, where students have again called people to assemble at 16:00.

5. If these developments were not enough, the Soviets have coincidentally chosen this moment to step up their pressure on the CPCZ leadership. CPCZ ideology chief Jan Fojtik returned from Moscow the evening of November 17 (ref B) just as Prague was experiencing its largest demonstration in 20 years. Called to Moscow at Soviet request, he met with CPSU Presidium member Medvedev for talks that focused on 1968, the need for Czechoslovakia to toe the *perestroika* line and for the GOC to speed the pace of reform. Fojtik denied the Soviets had issued any warnings or even given advice, but from official accounts Fojtik gave reporters they clearly laid out the direction they expected the Czechoslovaks to follow.

6. The report of Fojtik's trip in *Rude Pravo* carried what appeared an apparently agreed formulation of Fojtik's discussion on the question of 1968. Both sides, it read, had concerned themselves with historical questions, including the year 1968, and reached "a complete identity of positions and the conclusion that without a thoroughgoing analysis of the past, they cannot chart a clear plan and goal for the future." While subject to interpretation, the Soviet meaning is almost certainly that the Czechoslovaks should quit using 1968 as an excuse for not moving ahead. Behind it may be a threat that a failure to do so could lead the Soviets to re-assess their official evaluation of the 1968 invasion.

7. At one point in responding to a journalist's question, Fojtik quoted Soviet leader Gorbachev as saying that it was necessary to end the stage of reconstruction marked by meetings and endless discussion and to get on with implementing it. Though Fojtik did not give a citation for this quote, and since he did not meet with Gorbachev on this trip, it may well have been contained in a rumored message the Soviet Party chief sent the Czechoslovak (and Bulgarian) leadership last week.

8. The leadership is trying to defuse the popular pressure behind this weekend's and continuing demonstrations by focusing public attention on the allegedly fraudulent report of a student's death. The report was first carried by RFE, VOA and other Western media. The student, first identified as Martin Smid, was

said to have died as a result of police beatings after the November 17 demonstrations. In an indication of the regime's low level of credibility the rumor of a student's death continues despite statements by the Prime Minister and other Government ministers that no Martin Smid has died and the presentation on television of two students by that name, one of whom says he participated in the demonstration.

9. Tomorrow, November 21, the CPCZ will host an official visit by SED Chairman Egon Krenz. While the visit seems to have been planned for several days, Krenz's experience and that of the GDR in recent weeks could prove of extraordinary interest and pertinence to the Jakes leadership now.

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39. Telegram From the Embassy in Czechoslovakia to the Department of State

Prague, November 21, 1989, 1520Z*

Confidential

Prague 08144; Immediate

Subject: Demonstrations in Prague and Other Czechoslovak Cities November 20

1. (C) Summary and comment: The Prague demonstration of November 20, at more than 150,000 people, was the largest yet. Police made no attempt to intervene other than to close bridges to prevent the crowd from marching on Prague Castle. Demonstrations also occurred in several other cities, including Bratislava. Media coverage remained mixed, with *Rude Pravo* hostile, *Svobodne Slovo* favorable and television coverage positive – or at least objective. Whether as a thought-out plan or the result of leadership disagreements, the regime seems to have adopted a carrot-and-stick strategy, with some conciliatory gestures and a promise of at least economic improvements combined with a none-too-veiled warning of suppression if things remain out of hand. It also is continuing its efforts to taint demonstrators with charges of working for foreign interests. It cannot have been pleased, however, by a Soviet press spokesman statement that described the demonstrations as part of the process of democratization in Eastern Europe. In another presumable reaction to the demonstrations, GDR leader Krenz has canceled his visit to Prague. (Note: As this cable goes to press, Czech Republic Government spokesman Kasik announced that an investigation would be opened on the events of November 17 and whether the police used disproportionate force. End note.) End summary and comment.

2. (U) The demonstration during the late afternoon and evening yesterday, November 20, was the largest yet. The Communist Party daily *Rude Pravo* admitted to 150,000 people, but EmbOffs present thought it closer to 200,000. The crowd gathered slowly during the course of the day and dispersed gradually in the evening. A last group of several thousand stood outside Czechoslovak

Radio at about 10:00 p.m. and then went home. Police made no effort to interfere with the crowd as long as it stayed within the “Golden Cross” area of Wenceslas Square and National Avenue. Security forces did close off the bridges going across the river to prevent the demonstrators from trying to march on Prague Castle.

3. (U) The demonstration appeared to be unorganized and leaderless, and while there has been no call for a gathering today one is generally expected. Other demonstrations occurred the same day outside Prague. These included Brno (an estimated 30,000 in the central square), Olomouc (6,000), Teplice (1,000), Liberec and Ostrava. Theaters and schools were closed in Ceske Budejovice, as well as Prague – where performers talked politics with any audience members who showed up. Demonstrations also took place in Bratislava, but we have heard of no others in Slovakia. Demonstrators in many of these places voiced the anti-Government and anti-Communist demands heard in Prague, including such slogans as “Jakes in the wastebasket.” Television news reports said that there were no signs of disturbances in other principal cities such as Plzen and Hradec Kralove, and condemned the November 17 police brutality.

— Regime reaction

4. (C) The only regime figure to address the demonstrators directly in Wenceslas Square was Vasil Mohorita, Chairman of the Socialist Union of Youth (SSM). He made several points that had been included in his organization’s statement published in *Mlada Fronta* the day before (Prague 8106)¹¹, in which he supported the students, and he said that he would oppose any prosecution of students arrested on November 17 and would resign if there were prosecutions. (Comment: We remain suspicious that Mohorita’s comments are more an effort to coopt the students than to support their demands. End comment.)

5. (U) The CPCZ Presidium held a special session during the afternoon of November 20 to try to deal with the situation and with “expressions of intense concern” by various Party and national organizations. It rejected student appeals for a general strike November 27 and called on students to return to class and artists to return to work. It also reportedly discussed practical steps for restoring order, and supported a joint statement released by the Federal, Czech and Slovak Governments.

6. (C) This statement, entitled “Dialogue yes, confrontation no,” insisted that the Government had been striving for social restructuring and democracy as well as improving living standards, going into some detail on the latter point. It expressed concern about the current disturbances since these “only play into

11 | Document 35.

the hands of those who oppose restructuring.” The Government wanted a dialogue and a political solution of existing problems, but such a solution “cannot be found in an atmosphere of emotion and anti-socialist manifestations.” While the Government “did not want to go via a path of confrontation which the anti-socialist elements are trying to force on us,” it could not agree to the violation of the Constitution and the laws of the land or “watch helplessly activities of those groups which act at variance with the Czechoslovak legal order and are incited from abroad.” Thus all three governments supported the measures which had been taken to keep order. (Comment: Presumably a reference to suppression of the November 17 demonstrations and a warning that such action could come again if needed. End comment.)

7. (U) Prague City Party Chairman Miroslav Stepan, meanwhile, met with CPCZ Party workers of the major Prague enterprises November 20 to rally support in a probable effort to head off a November 27 general strike. He stressed the importance of Communists not being neutral in the current events and to oppose those forces who wanted all or nothing (i.e., who were not interested in dialogue or compromise) and stand firm against events now going on in the city.

8. (U) In a reaction from the Soviet Union, Soviet press spokesman Gerasimov was shown on Czechoslovak Television saying that the demonstrations were an internal matter for Czechoslovakia, but that they represented a part of the current process of democratization in Eastern Europe. Presumably in response to events in Prague, GRD leader Krenz cancelled his November 21 visit to Prague after mutual agreement with the GOC.

— **Media reaction**

9. (U) *Rude Pravo* is sticking to a line critical of the demonstrators, publishing interviews with workers and Party members hostile to the demonstrations and suggesting that some of the organizers of the demonstrations are not students. It limited its coverage of the demonstrations to Prague and Brno, without mentioning that any had taken place elsewhere.

10. (U) The Socialist Party paper *Svobodne Slovo*, however, remained generally sympathetic to the demonstrations (Prague 8106). It also reported that 400 journalists had met November 20 and rejected the police actions on November 17, as well as maintenance of the leading role of the Communist Party. The journalists supported the newly established independent Civic Forum (Prague 8108)¹² and called upon the leadership of the Czech Journalists’ Union to do the same or resign. They also created an official group of independent journalists.

12 | Document 36.

11. (U) Czechoslovak Television coverage was generally positive, or at least objective. In addition to coverage of the demonstrations in Prague and other cities, there were interviews with the students and other demonstrators, giving them a chance to present their views to a national audience.

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40. Telegram From the Embassy in Czechoslovakia to the Department of State

Prague, November 21, 1989, 1613Z*

Confidential

Prague 08152

Subject: Soviet Embassy Views on Czechoslovak Economic Reform

1. (C) Summary: Soviet Embassy Economic Counselor Lusnikov believes that the GOC's cautious approach to economic reform is correct and that the Czechoslovaks are prepared to take painful decisions. He rejected a move toward capitalism as a solution to problems stemming from the overcentralization of a command economy; instead, he believed that the correct path was a form of state capitalism in which the State would administratively set up, maintain and control a market mechanism. Private ownership had only an auxiliary role in this conception. Lusnikov also seemed to think that there was some way that such painful steps as consumer price reform could be taken without evoking popular anger as long as it was not done as part of a move toward "original" capitalism. Much of his view appears to us to be contradictory, but it probably dovetails with the thinking of many senior Czechoslovak officials.

2. (U) This cable also reports several other recent incidents or information regarding Czechoslovak economic relations with other socialist countries, including the November 9–10 Prague CMEA meeting, some trade and debt figures, and more restrictions on socialist tourists. Lusnikov had comments on some of these items. End summary.

3. (U) On November 17 EconOff called upon Soviet Embassy Economic Counselor Oleg Lusnikov. First Secretary Sergej Lukin served as translator, though since Lusnikov at one point corrected a translation he presumably understands at least some English. The primary subject of discussion was the Czechoslovak economic reform effort, but Lusnikov frequently indicated his comments also applied to economic reform in the Soviet Union.

4. (LOU) Lusnikov said that he agreed “precisely” with EconOff’s view that the Czechoslovak regime was serious about economic reform, but fearful of the political consequences of taking painful steps to implement it. Nonetheless, he asserted several times that he was convinced that the Government would take these steps, noting the measures already adopted or to be put in place January 1, and asserting that this “preparatory stage” would lead eventually to “more radical” steps. He also felt that Czechoslovakia’s strategy of moving slowly and cautiously was the “optimal” one, in contrast to the precipitate paths chosen by Hungary and Poland.

5. (LOU) Lusnikov acknowledged that the efforts of socialist states to run a command economy with all decision-making at the center had resulted in grave economic failures. The way to turn the situation around, however, was not by trying to transform these economies into “original” capitalist systems, such as existed in the 19th and early 20th centuries. This could only lead to social strife and the kind of extreme economic and social differentiation that marked capitalist societies and that was totally incompatible with the ideals of socialism. Instead, he quoted Lenin in saying that the proper strategy was to move toward a kind of state capitalism in which the State maintained its role of overall managing of the economy, but no longer tried to micromanage it – i.e., left as many decisions as possible to enterprises and other smaller economic units.

6. (LOU) Lusnikov recognized that a market mechanism was necessary to combat the monopolistic tendencies of such a system, but contended that one could be created, maintained and controlled administratively by the State. As an example of this activity, he noted that the number of state enterprises in Czechoslovakia had more than doubled in the past few years, and this increase in numbers would help insure competition even though the enterprises remained state owned. Successfully combining central planning with independence at the enterprise level would be complicated, but could be done. He believed that much could be learned along these lines from the U.S. managerial system given the size of contemporary American corporations. Lusnikov saw no more than an auxiliary role for private enterprise, restricted largely to the services sector and without allowing any “exploitation” of labor.

7. (C) In response to a question, Lusnikov said that he could not comment on whether there were any differences within the Czechoslovak leadership on economic reform, though he added that one could draw conclusions from listening to Prime Minister Adamec’s speeches which seemed to be pushing for more rapid and radical actions. Lusnikov stressed that any differences were not necessarily between the Government and Party, but might be within the Government itself.

8. (C) Comment. Lusnikov appears to be bright and knowledgeable. We think he was expressing his own thoughts at least as much as any Party line.

His comments about the risks of “untying market forces” without any controls on them have at least some validity and dovetail with remarks of respectable local economists (Prague 7880)¹³ and from well-known U.S. economist and Solidarity adviser Jeffrey Sachs (Prague 8123)¹⁴. Nevertheless, there was often an air of unreality about the discussion and one could not help but remember the character in “Alice in Wonderland” who always thought two impossible things before breakfast. Lusnikov’s administratively created and controlled market system seems to us a contradiction in terms. Moreover, he seemed to be saying that such painful steps as consumer-price reform were necessary, while being simultaneously either avoidable or at least doable without creating popular anger or unrest as long as not part of a move toward old-style capitalism. We suspect that these contradictions also mark the thinking of many top level Czechoslovak officials. As Lusnikov argued, however, time will tell whether the Polish and Hungarian strategy of economic reform or the Czechoslovak/Soviet strategy will prove the one best able to meet the criterion of success – the highest living standard for the most people. End comment.

9. (U) There have been several developments in recent days relating to Czechoslovakia’s economic relations with its socialist neighbors, on some of which Lusnikov also commented:

- (U) CMEA: Representatives of the CMEA countries, mostly economic secretaries of the Communist Party Central Committees, met in Prague November 9–10. Little about the meeting appeared in the press, but CPCZ Central Committee Secretary Ivan Knotek gave a brief press interview after the meeting. He said that the purpose of the conference was to prepare the ground for a summit level CMEA meeting to discuss general dissatisfaction with the working of CMEA. He noted that many differences of approach had surfaced at the meeting and particularly pointed to the lack of a CMEA mechanism to compel member states to fulfill commitments to one another.
- (LOU) Lusnikov stressed to EconOff that any differences at the meeting were “technical” ones, and indicated that Knotek’s comments were primarily directed against Hungary over the Gabcikovo-Nagymaros dam dispute (Prague 7687),¹⁵ which is continuing to boil (see Budapest 12615). Lusnikov thought that the Hungarians, in their concern over the environment, had “perhaps forgot” the great investments in the project made by Czechoslovakia and Austria. He added that there had been talk around the edges of the CMEA meeting about setting up an arbitration court within

13 | Not yet declassified.

14 | Not yet declassified.

15 | Not included in this volume.

CMEA to handle such disputes. He rejected speculation that there were any differences between Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union in their view of CMEA, noting that all the members were unhappy with the organization and wanted changes. Lusnikov confirmed that there were plans to hold a Chief-of-Party CMEA meeting, but that there was not a firm date. Given Gorbachev's heavy schedule, he thought it would be at least some months off.

- (U) Czechoslovakia-USSR trade: Answering a question at a press conference November 15, Deputy Prime Minister Jaromir Obzina said that Czechoslovak oil imports from the Soviet Union for the period 1991-1995 will drop by 1.5 million tons, but that this would be balanced by increases in natural gas imports: from 14.9 billion cubic meters in 1991 to 18.4 billion in 1995. Czechoslovakia will also grant the USSR a 2 billion ruble "tide-over" credit. Czechoslovakia was projecting engineering exports worth 14.4 billion rubles (below the 17 billion rubles of the current five-year plan), but this was predicated upon 15 billion rubles in Soviet engineering exports. If all these Soviet exports did not materialize, Czechoslovak exports could fall to only 8 billion rubles. (Lusnikov noted to EconOff that the problem was that, under the self-financing aspects of Soviet economic reform, many enterprises which had ordered Czechoslovak machines had had to cancel because they no longer had the funds to pay for them.)
- (U) Trade with Poland and Hungary: Obzina then noted that, despite internal developments in Hungary and Poland, bilateral trade with both countries was increasing. This is particularly the case with Poland, growing at 8-16 percent a year, and it now may have reached as much as 15-16 billion rubles under the current five-year plan. Poland has passed the GDR as Czechoslovakia's second largest trading partner, behind only the Soviet Union.
[Obzina?] said that Czechoslovakia is now a creditor to all socialist countries. As of September 30 these countries owed Czechoslovakia 18 billion crowns (1.5 billion dollars at the current commercial exchange rate), including 12 billion crowns from the Soviet Union, 2.7 billion from Poland, 488 million from Hungary and 710 million from the GDR.
- (U) Restrictions on socialist tourists: The Government has added to recently increased restrictions on travel by tourists from other socialist countries (Prague 7688)¹⁶ that were designed to prevent these tourists from buying up consumer goods. For the rest of this year and the first half of next year, the Government has banned all short (1-2 day) group visits to Czechoslovakia from the socialist countries. (Lusnikov said that such measures were within

16 | Not yet declassified.

the rights of every country and that the Soviet Union did not plan to retaliate, especially since few Czechoslovak tourists came to the USSR for short trips.)

- (U) Belousov/Baklanov visits: Soviet Minister of Defense Industry Boris Belousov and CPSU Central Committee Secretary Oleg Baklanov made separate visits to Czechoslovakia in October for the purpose of consulting on the transforming of Czechoslovak defense plants into production of non-military goods. Lusnikov acknowledged that much of the production of these plants had been exported to the Soviet Union.

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41. Telegram From the Embassy in Czechoslovakia to the Department of State

Prague, November 21, 1989, 1859Z*

Confidential

Prague 08153; Immediate

Subject: Student Strike Situation Report

1. Confidential – entire text.

2. Summary. Vasil Mohorita, Chairman of the Union of Socialist Youth [*Socialist Union of Youth*] (SSM), has pledged SSM support in the form of strike organizers and sound equipment for an ongoing student strike. Virtually all university and high-school students and faculty in Prague and Brno are on strike. A representative of the Strike Coordinating Committee told EmbOff that Prime Minister Adamec has promised to meet with Strike Committee representatives, but that the Strike Committee does not expect an early resolution of the situation. (According to a late radio report, Adamec did meet this morning with representatives of students and other groups. The report did not indicate the content of the meeting.) End summary.

— Student strike: situation update

3. A member of the Coordinating Committee of the ongoing student strike in Prague told EmbOff that Committee members the evening of November 20 had met with Vasil Mohorita, Chairman of the Czechoslovak Socialist Youth Union [*Socialist Union of Youth*] (SSM), and that Mohorita had pledged the support of the SSM for the strike. Mohorita had spoken earlier in the evening at the base of St. Wenceslas Statue on Wenceslas Square and indicated his support for the student strike and calls for an objective investigation of police brutality.

4. Mohorita promised the Committee that the SSM would provide microphones and loudspeakers for a demonstration today, November 21. (EmbOff

noted that a bull-horn was in use by demonstrators this noon at the square.) He also promised that the SSM would send out representatives throughout Czechoslovakia to get all universities and high schools to participate in the student strike. As of today, we believe virtually all schools in Prague and Brno are closed, but that a general student strike has not spread beyond these two cities, though selected faculties/gymnasias are closed in cities like Bratislava and Ceske Budejovice. Generally, faculty members are supporting students in this strike.

5. A visit to the Faculty of Music and Arts by one EmbOff found admittance to the school limited to students, faculty and "special guests," with a functioning press center and Strike Committee headquarters. Candles commemorating the events of November 17 burned outside, while inside students were writing proclamations and plotting strategy to get workers, farmers and even police to support a general strike on November 27. A Strike Committee member told EmbOff that they had already received several delegations of representatives of factory workers who had pledged support, and that the Strike Committee had also received promises that coal miners in the Ostrava area would participate in the strike.

6. Strike Committee members also stated that Prime Minister Adamec had pledged to meet with representatives of the Strike Coordinating Committee today. Our contact indicated that Committee members would approach the meeting with an open mind, but doubted that Adamec could offer anything which would lead students to cancel their strike or withdraw calls for demonstrations and a November 27 general strike.

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42. Telegram From the Embassy in Czechoslovakia to the Department of State

Prague, November 21, 1989, 1901Z*

Confidential

Prague 08155; Priority

Subject: November 21 Morning Demonstration at Wenceslas Square:
Overheard Conversations

1. Confidential – entire text.

2. Summary. The following records the impressions and a conversation overheard by Embassy spouse who visited Wenceslas Square at about 10:30 on the morning of November 21. This was early enough so that the square was not crowded with demonstrators. End summary.

3. As Embassy spouse stopped by Wenceslas Square this morning around 10:30, there were about 300 people around the statue of Bohemia's patron saint, most of whom were very young – 15–20 years old. The six “leaders” standing on the statue steps looked like children. (Note: Many of these according to local media accounts had spent the night at the foot of the statue.) About two blocks down the square Embassy spouse stopped to listen to a knot of people who were standing in the center of the square. These were older people, 40–80 years old. They were discussing the events of the past few days and the past 50 years. Much of what they said sounded like what Czechs have been saying in whispers for a long time, but it was clear these people were enjoying the chance to say the same things out loud, publicly, among strangers.

4. Here are some of the comments overheard:

- “We all have to get out on the streets.”
- “Young people don't know anything about history. They don't know anything but Communism. Those kids who were out marching in January for Palach – most of them don't know who Palach was.”
- “They don't know who Masaryk was.”

- “That’s right. Ask a high-school sophomore who was the first President of the Republic, and they will tell you Gottwald.”
- “They know more Soviet history than Czech.”
- “No, they hear about the First Republic from their families.”
- “No they don’t. Lots of families are afraid to talk about it.”
- “Everyone has to participate in the general strike next week. That will show them.”
- Woman: “I heard that anyone who participates will lose his job.”
- Dead silence.
- “They can’t fire all of us.” “That’s right.”
- Woman: “They say anyone who participates will lose his job. No job, no money, no nothing, the usual thing.”
- “I remember Benes, what a man, what a gentleman. You could run into him right here on the square, in front of Bata, and say, Good day, Mr. President, and he would say, Why, good day, how are you? Buying shoes? I’d like to run into one of those guys (gesturing towards Federal Assembly building) on the street. They go everywhere in their big cars. They have money, big places, everything.”
- When (name forgotten) went into the government, he got 10,000 a year. Now they get 2.5 million. They build themselves palaces. They have all the (word not understood, but it got a big laugh) and we have nothing. My pension is 1,000 per month. I’m supposed to live on that. Why isn’t Jakes on pension?”
- “The main thing is, there has to be a good turnout for the strike.”
- “Yes, especially transportation workers.”
- “Right. They always used the strike as a weapon before 1948. If we all stop work, if the mines stop, they have to listen and the old men will have to get out.”
- “What if we strike and nothing happens?”
- “We strike again. We keep on striking again and again.”
- “They are going to take pictures. They say the students who are marching will be identified.”
- “If they are worried, let them go to a different city and march there.”

5. Several people spoke about instances with which they were familiar of good people locked up in the [19]50’s for, for example, being involved with Scouting. “The people who locked them up are the ones who have been leading the youth all these years. What do you expect? No wonder the young people don’t know anything.” “But we are here,” replied one young man.

6. A final note. On the Metro this morning this Embassy spouse’s house-keeper saw a young student wearing one of our U.S.-Czechoslovak flag pins. Someone on the subway offered him 500 Kcs for it (USD 50). The offer was refused. End note.

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43. Telegram From the Embassy in Czechoslovakia to the Department of State

Prague, November 21, 1989, 1905Z*

Confidential

Prague 08156; Immediate

Subject: More on the Civic Forum

Ref: Prague 8108¹⁷

1. Confidential – entire text.

2. Summary. The newly formed Civic Forum has issued four demands, including the resignation of Presidium members associated with post-1968 normalization and rule, as a prerequisite to a dialogue between the GOC and independent groups. The Forum's ultimate goals are free elections and a new constitution. The Civic Forum as an organization has of yet no direct contacts with high GOC officials, but has considered approaching Prime Minister Adamec, possibly through an intermediary group known as "Most." End summary.

3. Reftel described the formation of a new organization called the "Civic Forum." The group's founding proclamation lists the following as participants in the activities of the Forum:

Charter 77, Czechoslovak Helsinki Committee, Circle of Independent Intelligentsia, Movement for Civic Freedoms, Artforum, Obroda – Club for Socialist Renewal, Czechoslovak Democratic Initiative, Committee for the Protection of the Unjustly Persecuted [*Prosecuted*] (VONS), Independent Peace Association, Open Dialogue, Czechoslovak PEN Club Center, some members of the Czechoslovak Socialist Party and the Czechoslovak People's Party, Churches, unions of artists, some former and present members of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia and other democratically minded citizens.

¹⁷ | Document 36.

4. The organization seeks to participate in a dialogue with the Czechoslovak Government to resolve the current crisis, but has posited four demands which must be met before negotiations can begin. These are:

(1) the immediate resignation of Presidium members directly connected with the 1968 invasion and post-invasion normalization and rule, specifically Gustav Husak, Milos Jakes, Jan Fojtik, Miroslav Zavadil, Karel Hoffmann and Alois Indra.

(2) The resignation of Prague Party boss Miroslav Stepan and the Federal Minister of the Interior, Frantisek Kincl, who are held responsible by the Forum for police repression against demonstrators.

(3) The creation of a special commission including Civic Forum members to investigate who is guilty for police action against demonstrators and to recommend punishments.

(4) The release of all prisoners of conscience.

5. [2 lines of source text not declassified] told EmbOff that the Forum's ultimate goals are free elections and a new constitution in which no party is designated as having a leading role. The Forum welcomes as members anyone including Communists who seeks in a peaceful manner a transition to a democratic society. The Forum supports a two-hour general strike called for November 27, but has taken no position concerning on-going student strikes and demonstrations.

6. Despite news media reports, the Forum as an organization apparently has not had direct contacts with Government representatives, although individual members of the Forum have previously had prior contacts with Government officials. The Forum has discussed the possibility of contacting GOC Prime Minister Ladislav Adamec directly, but no consensus concerning direct contacts with Adamec exists because some Forum members believe such contacts at this time might undermine Adamec's political position. [less than 1 line of source text not declassified] as support for such view the fact that the Communist Party Presidium met on Sunday, October 20¹⁸ without Adamec being present. A highly unusual occurrence. (Note: We have not been able to confirm from other sources [less than 2 lines of source text not declassified] to be a reliable source of information in the past. End note.)

7. One idea circulating among Civic Forum members would be to contact Adamec and other Government figures believed interested in a dialogue through a group called "Most" (The Bridge) led by musician-composer Michal Kocab and Michal Horacek, a correspondent of *Mlady Svet*, magazine of the Union of

¹⁸ | Clearly an error: first, October 20 was a Friday; second, the period under discussion is November. The Presidium met on Sunday, November 19, and again on Monday, November 20, 1989.

Socialist Youth. “Most” styles itself as a means of bringing official and independent sides together for a dialogue. One contact, however, calls Kocab a “nice guy. But a megalomaniac.”

8. Comment. We believe the Civic Forum’s assessment that a dialogue with those tainted by post-1968 normalization and rule is impossible is correct. Any meaningful dialogue is likely to come about only if and when the “normalizers” have passed from the scene and been replaced by politicians who have a better understanding of the word dialogue.

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44. Telegram From the Embassy in Czechoslovakia to the Department of State

Prague, November 22, 1989, 1256Z*

Confidential

Prague 08171; Immediate

Subject: Reports of Widening Splits in CPCZ Leadership

1. Confidential – entire text.

2. Summary. According to a long term Embassy contact and self-appointed Communist insider, two factions are now squaring off inside the CPCZ Presidium over the questions of dialogue with the opposition and how to handle the continuing demonstrations. The underlying issue is personal power. One faction is led by Prime Minister Adamec and Slovak CPCZ Secretary Knotek. While supporting deeper reform and dialogue, their unofficial agenda is to become CPCZ General Secretary and Federal Prime Minister, respectively. The second faction is composed of hardliners like Prague Party boss Stepan and 1968 holdover Indra. This group wants stiffer actions, including a curfew and possible state of emergency taken against the demonstrations. CPCZ leader Jakes is playing a balancing role. Adamec's action in meeting with representatives of the new "Civic Forum" yesterday (November 21) and announcing an investigation of the November 17 police brutality are without full CPCZ Presidium support. The future and short-term staying power of the hardliners could be determined by the success or failure of the general strike called for November 27. But even if the hardliners hang on to power much longer they will face mounting Soviet pressure for reform according to this contact. End summary.

3. In a conversation on November 21 [*3 lines of source text not declassified*] offered POLEC Chief a view of the current in-fighting in the Czechoslovak leadership. [*Less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] term Embassy contact. But was particularly outspoken at this meeting.

— Leadership divisions widen

4. [*Less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] Czechoslovak leadership divisions had widened, first as a reaction to the November 17 events but now over the questions of dialogue with opposition groups, such as the new “Civic Forum,” and how to manage the expanding demonstrations in Prague and elsewhere around the country. The maneuvering of individuals in the leadership, with the possible exception of Adamec, however, remains motivated by personal ambition or settling old scores. Few are yet listening to the “voices in the street.”

5. The CPCZ Presidium now contains two primary factions. [*Less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] one is led by an alliance of Prime Minister Adamec and CPCZ economics Secretary Ivan Knotek, the latter drawing extra clout from his Party/political base in Bratislava. Both have a shared interest in deeper economic reform, even if some political change is required to achieve it. The alliance is cemented by a broader agenda; Adamec aims to succeed Jakes as CPCZ General Secretary and Knotek to follow Adamec as Prime Minister. CPCZ Secretary for Political Organizational Work, Karel Hoffmann, a disgruntled hardliner, is said to support this faction. And while ideology Secretary Jan Fojtik wants to jump on its bandwagon, Adamec/Knotek are reluctant to accept him because of his high profile hardline image.

6. The hardliners, unified in their opposition to political dialogue with the dissidents and favoring measures to break the current demonstrations, are led by Prague Party boss Miroslav Stepan and old timer Alois Indra. This faction includes Slovak Party leader Ignac Janak who is backed from behind the scenes by retired CPCZ Secretary Vasil Bilak. Lesser, and less committed, players in this faction include Karel Urbanek, head of the Committee for Party Work in the Czech Lands, Miroslav Zavadil and Frantisek Hanus. Stepan [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] may fancy himself in the role of a Czech Egon Krenz (i.e. winning hardline support for succession and then turning on them).

7. Jakes, while leaning toward the hardliners, is still trying to play a balancing role and to keep the Presidium united at least on the surface. [*Less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] earlier stories that Jakes had submitted his resignation, but that acceptance of it by the Presidium had been “postponed” for lack of an agreed successor. In any case Jakes wanted to avoid being dropped from the leadership at this moment when his future prospects for retirement seemed so uncertain. Jakes had even suggested that some of the older 1968’ers consider retirement now to satisfy popular demands, but that had earned him only Indra’s and Husak’s ire.

8. Asked if Jakes could survive much longer – or if the rest of the Presidium would allow him to – in view of the single-minded demand of the demonstrators that he resign [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] yes. Most of the Presidium is just not listening to the people. They believe, incorrectly he thinks,

that the popular unrest can be limited to Prague and the rest of the country will remain relatively quiet. (Note: In fact there have been student demonstrations in a number of major cities. End note.)

9. [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] leadership divisions had been growing over the weekend but came to a peak at a Monday (November 20) Government session. The hardliners had chosen to attack Adamec at this meeting because he is weakest in the Government, where he does not have Knotek's or much Slovak support. Adamec had tabled a draft Government statement at this meeting which included opening an investigation on the November 17 events, offering to reform the laws governing civil rights, including the right of assembly. He was roundly and personally attacked by conservatives such as Deputy Prime Minister Obzina and Lucan who are in turn backed by the hardline faction of the Presidium. After a shouting match, Adamec walked out of the Government session refusing to associate himself with the government statement (dialogue yes – provocation no) which the conservatives finally approved and which was printed in *Rude Pravo* and supported by the CPCZ Presidium. (Note: The revised statement actually includes support for the police action on November 17 and warns demonstrators to stop their actions. It does not mention an investigation. End note.)

10. Despite this, Adamec moved on Tuesday, apparently without full Presidium support, to open an investigation into the police actions of November 17. He also went ahead with plans to meet representatives of the new "Civic Forum," again apparently without full Presidium or Government support.

— Handling the demonstrations

11. [*Less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] hardliners, but particularly Stepan (who he said gave the orders to the police and paramilitary to attack the demonstrators on November 17) and Indra, are pushing for a curfew or possible declaration of a state of emergency. [*Less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] believe that even a majority of the hardliners have the stomach, particularly after the GDR events, for more November-17-style violence. Psychologically, he said, they have collapsed. But the possibility cannot be ruled out should the general strike (called for 12:00–14:00 November 27) fail or be weakly supported, the hardliners could take courage and might push though a curfew or other measures.

— A Soviet role

12. Gorbachev has become more aggressive in recent weeks with the Czechoslovak leadership. [*Less than 2 lines of source text not declassified*] Apple article in *The New York Times* last week reporting on a Gorbachev letter to Jakes which

told the Czechoslovaks to speed up reform. Apple got it wrong, he said. It was not a letter but Fojtik quoted from the message when he returned to Prague from Moscow last Friday: “Stop talking and start implementing reconstruction.”

13. Fojtik went to Moscow expecting to be criticized [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] Medvedev verbally beat him down and then refused to be televised with him at the end of their meeting. In a deeper cut, Gorbachev would not even see him, though this is normally a common courtesy accorded visiting Party Secretaries. In the same day Gorbachev found time to meet briefly with a visiting (no name) member of the Czechoslovak Academy of Science.

14. After the meeting a Gorbachev close aide, Sharnadzov (phonetic spelling), had told this scientist that Gorbachev expected the Czechoslovak Party to move quickly to replace its old leaders, begin real reform and then review the whole question of 1968.¹⁹ According [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] he also let drop that Gorbachev felt GDR leader Egon Krenz was an interim figure but was impressed with the new Bulgarian Chief Mladenov, and thought he would stay in power for some time.

15. However, the Soviet Embassy is not applying the same pressure locally [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] Their [? their] Ambassador, Lomakin, was an apologist for Jakes. He portrayed him to Moscow as a new man who just needed more time. [*Less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] heard that over the last few days the Soviet economic counselor had even been telling conservatives like Obzina in the Government, to take a tougher line on the demonstrations.

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19 | It was actually Georgi Shakhnazarov, and he met the Director of the Institute of State and Law (Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences), Josef Blahož, on November 17, 1989. See Document 48 in *Briefing Book 1999* (memorandum of conversation). There is no evidence of Gorbachev having met Blahož.

45. Telegram From the Embassy in Czechoslovakia to the Department of State

Prague, November 22, 1989, 1512Z*

Confidential

Prague 08183; Immediate

Subject: Text of Letter to President Bush from the “Civic Forum”

Ref: Prague 8156²⁰

1. Confidential – entire text.

2. Embassy officers attending the morning November 22 press conference held by the new “Civic Forum” (see septel)²¹ were presented with the Czech text of a letter signed by the group’s *de facto* leader, Vaclav Havel, and addressed to President Bush and Supreme Soviet Chairman Gorbachev. The Embassy was asked to transmit the text to President Bush. The letter concerns the subject of the two leaders upcoming summit talks, specifically the Soviet role in the 1968 invasion of Czechoslovakia. Our Embassy translation is contained in para 4 [*para 3*]. Information on the “Forum” and its program is contained reftel.

3. Begin text:

“Letter from the Civic Forum to U.S. President G. Bush and Chairman of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR M. Gorbachev:

Dear Sirs:

A Civic Forum was established in Prague on November 19, 1989, which feels capable of acting as a spokesman for the Czechoslovak public. At a Prague

20 | Document 43.

21 | Document 47, paras 3, 5–6.

people's demonstration at Wenceslas Square the Civic Forum gained a popular consensus, and therefore appeals to you also in the name of those people.

The Soviet Government has proclaimed the principle of non-interference in connection with the democratization movement in Eastern Europe. We would like to bring to your attention the fact that in the case of Czechoslovakia this policy actually means support for a political leadership which was installed by an intervening power in 1968 and which has, during its 20-year rule, completely discredited itself. One of the demands of the mass demonstration on November 21 is precisely the departure of these politicians from the political scene.

Dear Sirs, we are of the opinion that the past interference in 1968 into the internal affairs of Czechoslovakia should also be condemned and rejected as an act of lawlessness. The silence over the August 1968 intervention constitutes real interference in the internal affairs of Czechoslovakia. We request that you give attention during your talks to this matter; this is important not only for Czechoslovakia now but for the whole of Europe.

Civic Forum
Prague, November 21, 1989"
(S) "Vaclav Havel"

End text.

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46. Telegram From the Embassy in Czechoslovakia to the Department of State

Prague, November 22, 1989, 1514Z*

Confidential

Prague 08184

Subject: November 21 Events in Prague and Media Reaction

1. Confidential – entire text.

2. Summary and comment. Anti-government demonstrations are expected to continue all week, and today should also see a pro-government counter-demonstration. Cardinal Tomasek has issued a strong statement supporting the demonstrations and criticizing the Government. The Socialist Party and the People's Party continue to be sympathetic to the students, whether from genuine belief or just protecting themselves, and we have a report that Socialist Party head Kucera has met with CP leaders to urge them to resign. Prime Minister Adamec met with various group leaders and reportedly promised that there would be no retaliation or violence used against the demonstrators, as well as confirming that there will be an investigation of police actions November 17. According to our contacts, the meeting was still not satisfactory, more of a "talk" than the start of a dialogue. Overall statements by Adamec, General Secretary Jakes and Prague Party chief Stepan remain hardline: there will be no dialogue with the street, no changes under pressure, and the maintenance of socialism is a non-negotiable issue. End summary and comment.

— The opposition

3. Demonstrations continued yesterday (November 21) in Prague. *Rude Pravo* admitted to 100,000 people in Wenceslas Square, but EmbOffs estimate a crowd at least as big as Monday's 150,000–200,000 people. The demonstrators this time were supplied with loudspeakers, though it is not clear whether these were

the ones promised by the Union of Socialist Youth [*Socialist Union of Youth*] (SSM) or given by the Socialist Party as one of our contacts told us. Among others, Vaclav Havel and actor Jiri Bartoska, both Civic Forum members, addressed the crowd. Bartoska gave a review of his meeting earlier that day with Prime Minister Adamec (see below), noting that Adamec had promised no retaliation, no violence against the demonstrators and no martial law – a promise not mentioned in the *Rude Pravo* report of the meeting. More demonstrations are expected today and the rest of this week, including a pro-government counter-demonstration today in Old Town Square.

4. The demonstration broke up by mid-evening, with speakers warning the crowd to avoid provocations. Similar warnings were posted in subway stations, out of apparent concern that the Government would have *agents provocateurs* at work.

5. Cardinal Tomasek, having just returned from Rome, released a strong anti-regime statement in support of the demonstrations. He declared that after four decades of injustice and denial of the basic rights allowed even in new Third-World countries, it was impossible to have any confidence in a leadership which was unable to tell the truth. He reviewed all the regime's attempts to harass and suppress the Catholic Church over the years, and the efforts of the Church to act as a spokesman for popular complaints – which were “arrogantly ignored” by the regime or received only “insignificant gestures” in return. Tomasek pointed out that neighboring countries had succeeded in breaking the totalitarian system and that “we must not wait, we must act.” His statement was ignored by *Rude Pravo*, but printed in full in the People's Party paper *Lidova Demokracie*.

6. The Socialist Party leadership held a meeting yesterday and issued a statement supporting the demonstrators and calling for a [Socialist] Party Central Committee meeting on Friday. We also have a report that Party leader Kucera has met with the CP leadership and urged it to resign. The People's Party issued a statement condemning police action on November 17, demanding an investigation of the incident and calling for an all-party meeting to establish a dialogue to abet the further development of socialism.

7. In other events, the Czech Education Ministry reported that a student strike had closed most universities yesterday. Students at Comenius University in Bratislava also reportedly held a demonstration yesterday, and 2,000 students of the Bratislava School of Economics had a meeting with First Deputy Slovak Prime Minister Murin to support calls for an investigation of police actions November 17. The Slovak National Theater was also on strike.

— The regime

8. In a television address to the nation, General Secretary Jakes acknowledged the existence of social and economic problems and reiterated the govern-

ment's intention to deal with them. He promised that solutions to these problems would not be at the cost of the working people and would not threaten "social certainties of citizens and their life prospects." Solutions could only be reached in constructive, businesslike deliberations. The Government welcomed dialogue "with all those who are in favor of socialism," even if they expressed criticisms toward malpractices and shortages. While restructuring naturally resulted in differences of views, Jakes stressed that "there is a limit we should not overstep," defined by the Constitution and the law of a socialist state. "Everybody must respect this."

9. Jakes claimed that those in the background of current events in Prague were "ruthlessly manipulating" the country's youth for their own interest, as in "shamefully" circulating false news of a student's death in the demonstrations. Their aim was nothing less than the disruption of the socialist state, he asserted. He also noted that the Central Committee had been receiving numerous telegrams and letters demanding that the Government secure law and order.

10. Prague Party chief Stepan gave a hardline speech to the Prague Party Committee, declaring that it was the aim of those behind the demonstrations to suffocate reforms. They were stirring up emotions in youth by the false claims of a death and through appeals over the "alleged" brutality of the police. They had even managed to manipulate some of the media, Stepan contended. The real aim of these people was to use the current events to seize power for themselves. He concluded that "chaos is not our program. We demand and support order."

11. Prime Minister Adamec met with a number of leaders of various groups. These included Jan Ruml (Forum member and son of *samizdat* editor Jiri Ruml); Martin Mejstrik (student); Milan Hruska (miner); Jiri Bartoska (actor); Michal Kocab (musician-composer); Michal Horacek (correspondent for *Mlady Svet*); Zdenek Vesely (University Faculty) and Pavlina Kupova (SSM). There was no separate meeting with students. We do not know who else attended on the Government side.

12. According to press reports, Adamec made some of the same points as Jakes. He said that the Government was working on reform measures, including a new constitution and freedom of assembly and association, but these cannot be prepared under pressure. It was willing to take advice, but it was determined to protect socialism – and this issue was non-negotiable. He reiterated the promise that the Government would investigate the November 17 actions of security forces and would release the findings to the public. In the meantime, however, the Government had an obligation to maintain public order. He rejected rumors that the Government was preparing to attack students, but reasserted that there could not be a dialogue with the street.

13. Our contact described the meeting as a "talk," but not the start of a real dialogue. Adamec did not exclude the possibility of future meetings, but no

dates were mentioned. The contact said the group was also dissatisfied with the promised commission to investigate the police action since it would contain no independent members. Our contact also had no information on a news story coming out of Vienna that Adamec had also promised to admit non-Communist politicians into the Government and to revise the CPCZ's power monopoly.

14. The split in the media continues, with *Rude Pravo* following a strong pro-government line, ignoring some stories (e.g., the Tomasek letter) and printing letters from workers hostile to the demonstrations. *Svobodne Slovo* and *Lidova Demokracie* are generally pro-demonstrators, with the former printing workers' letters in favor of the students. We have also heard that the press is receiving many pro-student petitions.

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47. Telegram From the Embassy in Czechoslovakia to the Department of State

Prague, November 22, 1989, 1706Z*

Limited Official Use

Prague 08198; Immediate

Subject: Situation Report, November 22, Prague

1. Limited Official Use – entire text.

2. Summary. This cable includes details on today's (November 22) developments in Prague which have come to our attention and which are collectively of interest. They point to continuing demonstrations, support for the idea of a November 27 general strike and a concern, despite denials by Prime Minister Adamec, that some in the CPCZ are considering ways of restoring "public order." End summary.

— Civic Forum developments

3. The Civic Forum has drafted a letter to President Bush and Secretary Gorbachev, asking them to discuss the 1968 invasion at their upcoming summit. The Civic Forum argues that the Soviets cannot ignore responsibility for a regime they installed 20 years ago and that a Soviet condemnation of the invasion would remove what legitimacy the current GOC leadership has. A copy of the letter was presented to EmbOffs and the text is being transmitted septel.²²

4. The Forum's membership has expanded to include a group of independent economists headed by the respected member of the Forecasting Institute, Vaclav Klaus. Klaus said his group was prepared to work for an economic program to be implemented "the day after" which would avoid economic chaos,

²² | Document 45.

inflation or disintegration of the basic economic structures. The Forum has also sent telegrams to independent organizations such as the GDR's New Forum and Polish Solidarity and other groups throughout Eastern Europe and to People's Fronts in various republics of the Soviet Union.

5. At a November 22 morning press conference, the Forum announced its new press spokesman would be Vaclav Maly, a Catholic priest and Charter 77 signatory. Father Maly was joined by these Forum members in answering press questions: Vaclav Havel, Radim Palous (former Charles University professor and Charter 77 signatory), Martin Palous (Charter 77), Rita Klimova (Helsinki Watch Committee), Bohumil Dolezal ([Czechoslovak] Democratic Initiative), Petr Pospichal (Charter 77) and Vaclav Klaus.

6. The press conference also informed journalists that the Forum's earlier proclamation (Prague 8156)²³ had failed to give its support to the general strike on November 27; that had only been an omission. The Forum fully supported the strike and was receiving reports that tens of factories have sworn to participate in it. Forum representatives cited the CKD semiconductor plant in Holesovice, a food canning plant in Mlada Boleslava, and a Tesla plant in the Karlin suburb of Prague as examples. Asked to describe what the impact of Prime Minister Adamec's contact with the Forum was yesterday, spokesman Maly told journalists not to speculate about its potential for dialogue. The meeting was intended only to provide an exchange of information. No dates were set for a follow-up. He and other Forum speakers pointed to recent statements (septel)²⁴ by CPCZ leader Jakes ("there are limits which cannot be exceeded") and Prague Party boss Stepan ("we intend to introduce order") which indicate that not all members of the leadership have given up the idea of resort to force to prevent the demonstrations.

— Other developments

7. There are reports that the CPCZ is sending representatives to factories to rally regime support and discourage strike action. The regime has placed Czechoslovak Television under strict surveillance. Tuesday night's television broadcast was not as freewheeling or informative as that of Monday. Forum representatives had to meet "clandestinely" with television workers to discuss the Monday, November 27 general strike.

8. Activist Petr Uhl remains in custody for having reported what now appears an inaccurate story of the death of student Martin Smid. John Bok and David Dusek (grandson of activist Zdenek Urbanek, now in the U.S. on a USIS

23 | Document 43, para 4.

24 | Document 48, paras 9 and 10.

program) have been released from jail but not charged. It now appears that the story of a young student's death was a fabrication but it was not clear whether this was a deliberate lie by the young woman who told it or a provocation by the regime that backfired.

The Civic Forum and other independent initiatives have asked Czechoslovaks to gather again on Wenceslas Square at 16:00 today, November 22, to continue to press the regime for democratic changes. There are rumors that Alexander Dubcek may try and speak at this gathering from the same balcony that Havel addressed the crowd last night.

Vaclav Havel reportedly met with Socialist Party Secretary Jan Skoda this afternoon, November 22, perhaps to try and bring this legal non-Communist party into closer alliance with the Civic Forum.

9. The walls of subway stations and schools are filled with proclamations of various groups supporting demonstrations and the general strike. Large posters also tell citizens to reject what are called "provocative leaflets" calling for Communist to be hanged or exterminated. Civic Forum leaders claim these leaflets are distributed by the secret police and are an attempt to justify the possible use of force against strikers and demonstrators.

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48. Telegram From the Embassy in Czechoslovakia to the Department of State

Prague, November 23, 1989, 1648Z

Confidential

Prague 08204; Niact Immediate

Subject: Struggle within CPCZ Leadership Continues

1. Confidential – entire text.

2. Summary. Another mass rally is scheduled for Wenceslas Square today (November 23) at which Vaclav Havel may announce a meeting with Prime Minister Adamec to discuss the new Civic Forum's demands. A Forum contact cautions us that this is not necessarily a sign of strength for Adamec or the Forum and that the Prime Minister may be seeking broadbased popular support to counter the numerical advantage of hardliners in the CPCZ Presidium. A second, conflicting story has agreement already reached on Adamec succeeding Jakes as Party chief. What appears clear is that Adamec and Jakes, aligned with the hardliners, are pitted in a succession fight. The CPCZ Presidium resumed its meeting today but the only report to come out of these sessions so far is that a Central Committee plenum will be held on November 24. There are signs of grass-roots dissatisfaction with the CPCZ leadership, but also of the hardliners digging in their heels. Authorities have reportedly acted to seize control of the Czechoslovak Radio and Television stations. End summary.

— CPCZ Presidium meetings continue

3. The November 22 Presidium session ended late in the night. The Presidium resumed sitting at noon on November 23. The only official information to come out of the meetings so far is that an extraordinary Central Committee plenum will be held tomorrow, Friday, November 24. An Obroda contact has told us that former Prime Minister Strougal had been one of those in the Party demanding

an early plenum. In the name of 30 other CC member (out of a total number of roughly 150), he has also called for resignation of the entire Presidium.

— **CC plenum outcome uncertain**

4. We have been unable to determine how the struggle between the factions described in Prague 8171²⁵ are playing themselves out inside the Presidium, though we have heard two diametrically opposed accounts of a possible outcome. One, based on a conversation with Socialist Party General Secretary Jan Skoda, has it that a deal has been struck already and Adamec will replace Jakes as CPCZ General Secretary. The other report comes from a Civic Forum member. This report supports a view that the hardliners have the upper hand for the moment and that Adamec is in trouble. According to this contact, Jan Dus, Adamec had agreed to meet with Vaclav Havel and possibly other representatives of the Civic Forum later today, November 23, but only on the condition that Havel, at today's mass demonstration, announce the meeting and lead a chant of "Long live Adamec!" Without a sign of such broadbased public support, Adamec reportedly said, he was finished. This was his "last chance" before the numerically more powerful hardliners pushed him out of the Presidium.

— **Hardliners give appearance of flexibility**

5. A National Front session headed by Jakes on November 22 produced a statement calling for calm and prudence by the population. The National Front expressed regret over the "damage to health of some citizens" in connection with the November 17 police action against demonstrators. According to this more conciliatory National Front statement, the report of the Czech Republic General Prosecutor on the November 17 events will be published in a few days and no demonstrators are currently in custody. The National Front also stated that new laws on freedom of assembly, association and the press would be speeded up. (Note. This essentially adopts the points Prime Minister Adamec had wanted to include in the November 20 Government statement, but which hardliners had rejected. End note.)

6. Prague Party boss Miroslav Stepan met at his request with Cardinal Tomasek on November 22, in a move that initially met with some optimism. It was read as a sign that the resistance of one of the principal hardliners was weakening and that Stepan, smelling a change in winds, was looking to improve his image. Catholic activist Vaclav Maly and Obroda member Jan Urban have put a different spin on the meeting. (Both are now active in the Civic Forum.)

25 | Document 44.

According to them, the meeting was called at Stepan's request, but the subject of the meeting was a government decision not to admit the public to Prague Castle when the Cardinal celebrates mass at St. Vitus Cathedral November 25. Authorities claim the numbers who may show up for this mass celebrating the canonization of Agnes of Bohemia could present a threat to public order. The Cardinal reportedly responded that if the authorities do not admit Christians into the Castle then they could expect hundreds of thousands of them kneeling around it. Tomasek is quoted in *Svobodne Slovo* as saying upon leaving the meeting with Stepan that he is studying the current situation in the country and will be making a statement shortly.

— **Reports that radio and television have been occupied by security forces**

7. According to sources at Civic Forum, Czechoslovak security forces moved on November 23 to take control of Czechoslovak Television's broadcasting studio. According to one report, the Acting Director of Czechoslovak Television, Libor Batrla, has been removed. The action was apparently made to prevent a live broadcast of today's demonstration at Wenceslas Square at which Havel is to speak. There has also reportedly been a lockout of staff at Czechoslovak Radio. All those who supported a resolution on November 22 for more objective news broadcasting are not being admitted to the radio studios.

— **Soviet role unclear**

8. Reports circulating yesterday that Prime Minister Adamec had flown off to Moscow for a meeting with Soviet leaders have proven false. Adamec appears to have been in Prague throughout the day and to have participated in the Wednesday Presidium session. *Rude Pravo* also gives a short front-page report that Soviet Ambassador Lomakin met with Jakes on November 22 to discuss developments in their respective countries, but the report gave no details.

— **Regime criticism from within the apparatus**

9. What may have led Jakes to reverse course on such questions as an investigation into the November 17 police actions are several signs of dissatisfaction within the Party and state structures. Socialist paper *Svobodne Slovo* reports that the deputy director of the regime's official human rights group has said that any attempt to suppress the new "Civic Forum" would produce wider popular protest and that the law governing the establishment of new political groups needs to be changed. The printing staff of the Party's paper *Rude Pravo* has also passed a resolution criticizing the CPCZ Presidium for failing to act decisively to investigate the November 17 events. *Rude Pravo* editor Zdenek Horeni

is also quoted as criticizing the CPCZ leadership for its one-sided depiction of the November 17 events. More importantly, a public statement by the police of Prague district 9, the district known as the city's working-class heart, has said that the police will not be used "to cover unresolved social and political problems." The police members also demanded cadre changes in the CPCZ's leadership, specifically in the Presidium.

— **Comment**

10. These conflicting reports suggest that a direct clash between Adamec and Jakes is in the offing, with the outcome uncertain. Hardline resistance to change may be encouraged by a Civic Forum demand which has targeted a majority, 7 out of 13, of the current Presidium's members for removal. Socialist Party Chairman Bohuslav Kucera is reported by one source to have found Jakes "unmoved" by the popular demonstrations when he met with him on November 22 to propose his possible resignation. Jakes told Kucera he was prepared to rely on the security forces to defend socialism, and his own position.

11. The calling of the plenum has been optimistically greeted by some as a sign of a positive impending leadership change. The Central Committee, however, is largely composed of aged conservatives with links to 1968 and cannot be depended upon to produce a reformist outcome, unless such a change has been agreed upon in advance by the Presidium.

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49. Telegram From the Embassy in Czechoslovakia to the Department of State

Prague, November 23, 1989, 1706Z*

Unclassified

Prague 08205; Immediate

Subject: Bratislava: Fifty Thousand Demonstrate; Carnogursky Acquitted

1. Summary. Fifty thousand persons demonstrated in Bratislava on Wednesday evening, November 22, and another demonstration has been called for November 23. A municipal court in Bratislava has acquitted religious activist Jan Carnogursky. Alexander Dubcek told trial spectators to remain calm and not give authorities an excuse to intervene against them. Dubcek is expected to speak at Thursday's demonstration in Bratislava and Slovak Prime Minister Hrivnak has also been requested to speak but has not replied. End summary.

2. Fifty thousand persons participated in an anti-regime demonstration in Bratislava Wednesday evening, November 22. According to EmbOff present, the demonstrators' demands emphasized that authorities stop persecution of Christians and the Church. Another demonstration has been called for Thursday in Bratislava, and organizers have invited Alexander Dubcek and Pavel Hrivnak, Premier of the Slovak Republic, to speak. Dubcek has indicated he will speak, but we do not know whether Hrivnak will appear. (Note: Dubcek has also been invited to address demonstrations in Prague, but thus far has not appeared. A statement from Dubcek was, however, read at Wednesday's demonstration in Prague. End note.)

3. Dubcek was among those present for the November 22 trial of religious activist Jan Carnogursky (Prague 5960)²⁶ on Wednesday in Bratislava. The court at 8:30 a.m. today (November 23) announced that it had acquitted Carnogursky

26 | Not yet declassified. For the background of the trial, see Documents 7, 13, and 21.

of charges of subversion. In announcing the verdict the spokesman of the panel of jurists stated that times are changing and the things Carnogursky was being prosecuted for are now being said freely. He added that the court cannot deny a man the right to express himself freely. Despite the acquittal, Carnogursky remains in jail pending appeal of the case by the prosecutor. The appeal is expected to be heard next week.²⁷

4. Alexander Dubcek addressed a crowd of 500 persons who had gathered at the Court House to support Carnogursky. Dubcek asked that people remain calm and not give the Government an excuse to intervene against them.

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²⁷ | Čarnogurský was released on November 25 and he immediately took part in the Bratislava demonstration on November 26. See also Document 54, para 13.

50. Telegram From the Embassy in Czechoslovakia to the Department of State

Prague, November 23, 1989, 1712Z

Limited Official Use

Prague 08206; Immediate

Subject: Situation Report, Prague, November 22–23

1. Limited Official Use – entire text.

2. Summary. A crowd of perhaps one-quarter million people gathered on Wenceslas Square on November 22 for an anti-regime rally. Highlights of the rally included the appearance of Vaclav Havel and the reading of a statement from Alexander Dubcek calling for the resignation of all Presidium members associated with post-1968 normalization and rule. Other developments on November 22 included the formation of a Czechoslovak Social Democratic Party and announcement that students on Saturday, November 25, will attempt to build a human chain from Letna Park to the Prague Castle. Civic Forum representatives are concerned about regime efforts to prevent the dissemination of objective information by Czechoslovak media. Civic Forum and student reps are attempting to convince workers to join a November 27 general strike. Strike organizers are often barred from entering workplaces by authorities, but strike organizers have had some success in winning worker support. End summary.

3. A crowd estimated at between 250 and 300 thousand persons gathered Wednesday evening November 22 on Wenceslas Square in an anti-regime rally. Vaclav Havel and others again spoke to the crowd from the balcony of the building of the Socialist Party newspaper *Svobodne Slovo*. A statement from Alexander Dubcek was read by Dubcek's former adviser Venek Silhan. In the statement Dubcek called for the resignation of all Presidium members associated with post-1968 normalization and rule. The crowd dispersed peacefully after the rally without incident. Another demonstration is scheduled for 1600, Thursday, November 23.

4. At a Wednesday evening press conference organized by the Civic Forum, Havel and other Forum members briefed reporters and diplomats on developments. An individual named Vladimir Klaban was introduced who announced the formation of a Social Democratic Party. The party will seek broad support from workers.

5. Among others present were Ondrej Trojan, of the Coordinating Committee of the student strike, the economist Vaclav Klaus, and “Most” leaders Michal Kocab and Michal Horacek. Trojan announced a press conference by the Committee today and stated students on Saturday will attempt to build a human chain stretching from Letna Park to the Prague Castle. Klaus repeated earlier remarks concerning the state of the Czechoslovak economy. The Most leaders announced the CPCZ Presidium was meeting as they spoke and that a plenum would be held on Friday. Both Kocab and Horacek seemed mildly optimistic that a satisfactory solution to the current crisis could be found.

6. The Civic Forum has recognized that two elements crucial to its success are the dissemination of objective information and winning the support of the Czechoslovak working class, with the November 27 general strike a critical test of that. (Septel describes regime efforts to control the mass media.)²⁸ Civic Forum representatives also described efforts to limit distribution of *Svobodne Slovo* (e.g. People’s Militia members buying all available copies in villages and small towns).

7. The regime is also preventing strike organizers from entering many factories. Josef Kemr, a famous Czech actor, appeared at the news conference and promised that today he would visit the Skoda Works in Plzen and Mlada Boleslav, as well as the Kladno Steel Works, to try to rally worker support for the November 27 general strike. Students present also indicated they will send out student representatives to ask for worker support.

8. Despite regime efforts, the Civic Forum and students have had some success in winning workers to their side. Coal miners in Tachov and workers at the largest construction enterprise in Prague have agreed to join the general strike. EmbOff today also saw signs in Prague’s Metro announcing that Metro workers would strike.

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28 | Document 48, para 7.

51. Telegram From the Embassy in Czechoslovakia to the Department of State

Prague, November 24, 1989, 1307Z*

Confidential

Prague 08208; Immediate

Subject: CPCZ Plenum Opens amid Rumors of Senior Personnel Changes
and New Signs of Political Ferment.

1. Confidential – entire text.

2. Summary. Statements by CPCZ Presidium member Miroslav Stepan indicated major, but unspecified, cadre changes will result from the November 24 Central Committee plenum. Defense Minister Vaclavik has said the Army was not involved in suppressing the November 17 student demonstration and suggested it will not intervene in the current demonstrations, though he has called for calm and support of the CPCZ. Whatever the results of the CPCZ plenum, the first popular reaction to them could be indicated at today's evening Wenceslas Square rally or in a Saturday, November 25, mass celebrated by Cardinal Tomasek and a demonstration organized by the Civic Forum. Student strike representatives and the Civic Forum have said that the general strike called for November 27 should go ahead regardless of cadre changes coming out of the plenum. End summary.

— Pre-plenum statements on cadre changes

3. As an extraordinary session of the CPCZ Central Committee opens the morning of November 24, there are rumors that it will produce major cadre changes. A statement by Prague Party boss Miroslav Stepan lends support to this view. Addressing workers at the CKD factory in Prague, Stepan called for carefully considered cadre changes coming out of this plenum. Stepan was met by boos at CKD and whistled off the podium with cries of "Resign" before he

finished his speech. His Prague City Party Committee, however, issued a similar statement on November 24 which calls for the plenum to produce “principled” cadre changes and to take concrete steps to improve and calm down the political situation in the country and to conduct a dialogue with all. Popular rumors have identified Prime Minister Adamec, Czech Premier Frantisek Pitra, and even retired Prime Minister Lubomir Strougal as candidates, to replace Jakes as the General Secretary. The name of hardliner Miroslav Zavadil has also been mentioned as a possible successor to Jakes. Despite speaking out late for change, Stepan is also rumored to be in trouble.

— **Defense Minister speaks out**

4. A gathering of leading Army officers on November 23 issued a statement defending the honor of the Czechoslovak Army (CSLA) against rumors it had been involved in the November 17 action against students. The statement supported a call for calm and order along the lines of that already made by CPCZ leader Jakes. In presenting this statement over Czechoslovak Television the same evening, Defense Minister Milan Vaclavik was critical of the demonstrations going on in Prague and elsewhere, but his underlying message was that the Army would not intervene in them. The Army has always been for the people, Vaclavik said, and “has never acted against workers, farmers and the intelligentsia.” Vaclavik rejected rumors that CSLA paratroopers had been engaged in suppressing the November 17 student actions. He said the Army supported a full investigation which would show it had not been involved. Vaclavik did warn that the CSLA fully supported the KSC and opposed issuing ultimatums by opposition groups.

5. Comment. Vaclavik appeared to be speaking out to calm popular fears the Army might be used against students and demonstrators. He also wanted to correct the record of November 17. His statements on calm and order, however, as his reference to ultimatums, may be meant to put the population in a frame of mind which will make it settle for whatever changes are produced by today’s plenum. End comment.

— **November 23 demonstrations**

6. For the seventh straight night demonstrators met in Prague’s Wenceslas Square. Estimates put the assemblage at over a quarter million. In an important step forward in the country’s political life, the General Secretary of the Socialist Party, Jan Skoda, addressed the crowd and declared his party now considered itself independent and free. He stopped short of joining the opposition Civic Forum, though he was speaking from the same balcony with Forum leaders. What that independence means in practice may be clear after the Socialist

Party's own Central Committee meets on Friday, November 24. A representative of the "Living Stream" reform wing of the People's Party also declared its independence and claimed it represented a majority of the party's members.

7. Vaclav Havel gave an impressive performance at the demonstration. He reviewed the political situation in the country and called on the Army, People's Militia and police not to intervene. Havel noted mass demonstrations going on elsewhere in the country, including Plzen (50,000), Ostrava, Olomouc, Bratislava and many other cities.

— Dubcek's role

8. Alexander Dubcek spoke to a mass rally of tens of thousands of people in a central Bratislava square. A portion of his speech was even carried by television, though not his call for democracy and the resignation of the present CPCZ Presidium. Dubcek's role in the events of the last few days remains unclear. While he has maintained contacts with the new "Civic Forum" and a Slovak counterpart, the "Association [*Public*] Against Violence," he has not come to Prague to address the public demonstrations despite an open invitation from the Civic Forum to do so. An Obroda source tells us that Dubcek may be in contact with ex-Prime Minister Strougal about his (Dubcek's) future, but that as far as this contact knew he has not, nor had he been, approached by anyone in the current CPCZ leadership. (Comment. There is much speculation that if cadre changes coming out of the current CPCZ plenum fail to satisfy public opinion, the Party might eventually turn to Dubcek to try and shore up its image. Dubcek, himself, may be waiting until the passing of the 1968'ers from the political scene before making any move with a new Party leadership. End comment.)

— Civic Forum

9. A Civic Forum contact tells us that Prime Minister Adamec cancelled a proposed meeting with Vaclav Havel on November 23. Havel made no announcement of such a meeting at the day's Wenceslas Square demonstrations as a Civic Forum contact had predicted. Civic Forum members, including Havel, showed themselves under considerable strain at a 19:30 November 23 press conference. They also angered a number of Western journalists by refusing to speculate on CPCZ leadership changes and Dubcek's future role, if any. At one point Havel lectured the press on what was and was not newsworthy, trying to draw their attention to regime attempts to carry out a whitewash investigation of the November 17 events. While his point may have been valid, Havel showed the Forum has much to learn about press relations. (Note. The Institute of State and Law [of the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences] has essentially criticized

the proposed investigation as a sham since the Public Prosecutor's Office has no authority under the Constitution to investigate the security forces. This can only be done by the Army Prosecutor. End note.) In a frank remark to EmbOff, a Civic Forum member admitted the group really had no program after the November 27 general strike and conceded that the Forum still had not attracted blue-collar representation as distinct from support for the general strike.

— Occupation of Czechoslovak Television and Radio

10. While the GOC has denied a takeover of Czechoslovak Television and Radio facilities, workers there report that entry is controlled by the police and that uniformed security officials are stationed inside the building. Acting Director of Czechoslovak Television Libor Batrla went on television to deny he had been sacked or that the station had been occupied. He said that he had invited in security forces to keep unauthorized persons from the studios. He also said he had asked Matej Lucan, the conservative Minister of Culture and Information, for temporary assistance in managing the studios.

— Comment

11. With the signs that this plenum will produce substantial cadre changes, the question is will they be enough to satisfy the demonstrators and groups like the Civic Forum. The CPCZ most certainly hopes these changes will head off a November 27 general strike. Students and the Civic Forum have indicated that whatever the outcome of the plenum, the strike should go ahead as a sign of popular solidarity and as a way to continue pressure on the regime for change. If the CPCZ plenum concludes today (we understand the CPCZ has reserved the conference room in the Intercontinental Hotel today between 12:00–02:00 Saturday morning for a press conference), the first popular test of its results could come today (November 24), if the plenum breaks up before a scheduled demonstration, if not then Saturday. Cardinal Tomasek will be celebrating a mass at St. Vitus Cathedral (November 25). This could draw thousands of Catholics and produce a demonstration outside his residence at the gates of Prague Castle. Later in the day, at 14:00, the Civic Forum has called for a demonstration, not at Wenceslas Square which is now considered too small to hold the size of the gatherings, but at Letna Park, the traditional site for May Day celebrations. End comment.

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52. Telegram From the Embassy in Czechoslovakia to the Department of State

Prague, November 24, 1989, 1621Z*

Confidential

Prague 08209

Subject: Correction of 29th CSCE Implementation Report

Ref: (A) US NATO 6395, (B) Prague 6936²⁹

1. Confidential – entire text.
2. Paragraph 14 of ref A does not accurately reflect comments made by post in our report (ref B) concerning Czechoslovak implementation of CSCE commitments during the April 1 – September 30, 1989 period. We note that this is our second request that the report be corrected.
3. The first sentence of paragraph 15 should remove the word “no” and in its place substitute “some.” Revised sentence would read as follows: “In Czechoslovakia, some progress is now being made on freedom of movement, family reunification and tolerance of religious worship.”

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²⁹ | Neither of the two documents has yet been declassified.

53. Telegram From the Embassy in Czechoslovakia to the Department of State

Prague, November 25, 1989, 1741Z*

Confidential

Prague 08237; Immediate

Subject: Jakes's Stepchildren Inherit the CPCZ

1. Confidential – entire text.

— Summary

2. An extraordinary session of the CPCZ Central Committee ended in the early morning hours of November 25 and produced a mass resignation of the Party's Presidium and Secretariat. The resignation of virtually all senior Party figures associated with the post-1968 invasion policy of normalization was accepted by the Central Committee. These included General Secretary Milos Jakes, President Gustav Husak, ideology chief Jan Fojtik, Federal Assembly Chairman Alois Indra and Secretary for Political Organization Karel Hoffmann. Reform-minded Prime Minister Ladislav Adamec also was removed, but unlike Husak and Indra, Adamec also lost his Government position.

Leader of the Party in the Czech Republic, Karel Urbanek (48), has been named to head a new Presidium which will be younger, smaller but still highly conservative. Prague Party boss Miroslav Stepan, the man who is widely believed to have sparked the current wave of popular and political protest by authorizing police to attack student demonstrators on November 17, has retained his Presidium seat. The Party has called for a nine-point program to resolve the country's political crises. This program does not appear a serious move toward democratic reform and seems meant to co-opt some in the opposition. Neither this nor the personnel changes will prove satisfactory to the public or opposition groups such as the Civic Forum, which have reiterated the call for a November 27, two-hour general strike.

The opposition success in the weeks ahead will depend on its ability to show cohesion, present an alternative political program and spread its message via the more objective mass media. For this reason, we would expect the CPCZ leadership to attempt to re-exert control over the media in the weeks ahead. The Monday, November 27, general strike will be an important factor for keeping pressure on the Communist leadership and for assessing the strength of worker support for political and economic reforms.

— **Note**

As this cable was about to be transmitted, we have learned that Prague Party Leading Secretary Miroslav Stepan has resigned. His resignation came after a special session of the Prague Party Committee at which he faced almost unanimous pressure to resign. His resignation as Prague Party Leading Secretary will mean his effective removal from the Party Presidium. End note. End summary.

— **The plenum's operation**

3. An extraordinary session of the CPCZ Central Committee met in continual session from 10:00 a.m. Friday, November 24, until the early hours of the next day. Word of the proceedings was dribbled out to the media in a way that seemed designed to produce maximum favorable impact on the public. In the early evening Friday word was released of the resignation of the entire Party Presidium and Secretariat, an announcement which was met with wild enthusiasm by crowds on Wenceslas Square and at the press center of the new Civic Forum. Later in the night, the name of new CPCZ General Secretary Karel Urbanek, relatively unknown to the general public, was released. It was not until 3:00 a.m. Saturday November 25 that complete information of higher Party changes was released at a press conference. The local media has still not announced that Adamec has lost both his position as Prime Minister and as CPCZ Presidium member.

4. Work in the plenum was reportedly conducted in an unusual manner. By one account more than half of the full CC members and many of the candidate members addressed the plenum. Three special committees were established to:

(1) nominate new functionaries for election (Note. This was said to be done by secret ballot though it was not clear whether there were multiple candidates. End note.);

(2) draft proposals for a Party action program to deal with the current crisis situation in the country; and

(3) deal with the press and media.

The election committee was composed of leading Party functionaries of the regional Party organizations, plus the city organizations of Prague and Bratislava.

5. Jakes's opening speech gave an early hint of his own intention of resignation and of what turned out to be a conservative tack by the plenum. In the name of the leadership Jakes assumed responsibilities for a number of failings including blindness to the process taking place elsewhere in the region. Jakes said the situation faced by the Party was serious but not "without a way out." He warned that an open power struggle was on in which Communists even faced "physical liquidation," unless they took bold action. The Party must turn to the Communist workers for support, he said, particularly in the media. And he called on media workers to provide "true" information to the public.

— The new leadership

6. The focus of local media attention has been mass CPCZ resignation by Presidium and Secretariat members and the election of the relatively young (48) Karel Urbanek as General Secretary. Urbanek was formerly Head of the Committee for Party Work in the Czech Republic. The composition of his fellow Presidium members is not, on the face of it, encouraging for reform. The Presidium is a smaller, younger but still very conservative body made up largely of Jakes's stepchildren, mostly men who rose in the party during the post-1968 normalization. Seven of the former Presidium members were removed, and three new members added for a new total of nine.

7. The 1968 generation represented by former General Secretary Jakes, President Husak, Federal Assembly Chairman Alois Indra, ideology chief Jan Fojtik and Party Organization Secretary Karel Hoffmann had their resignations accepted by the plenum. All except for Husak and Indra, who retain their elected government positions for the time being, are removed from the leadership.

8. But key figures identified with reform were also eliminated. Prime Minister Adamec, who according to *Rude Pravo* editor and plenum press spokesman Zdenek Horeni, had asked to resign. This request had been contained in a letter submitted in late October to the Presidium. The plenum decided to accept it at its present session, removing him from his Presidium and prime ministerial duties. Horeni in the press conference defended this action as necessary because Adamec shared the general leadership responsibility for the crises. Horeni denied the resignation was linked to Adamec's recent contacts with such opposition groups as the "Civic Forum." Czech Premier Frantisek Pitra was also removed as a full Presidium member and Slovak Premier Pavel Hrivnak as an alternate member. Both will retain their government posts for the time being. Horeni noted that in the weeks ahead there would be significant "restructuring" of government positions at both federal and republic levels.

9. The other Slovaks in the Presidium (Lenart, Knotek and Janak) were untouched by the changes except for President Husak. Though CPCZ Economics Secretary Ivan Knotek, a rumored Adamec supporter, may have been threatened by the hardliners, we suspect in the end he won the support of his fellow Slovaks.

10. Three new members were added to the Presidium. Miroslav Zajic, formerly a Central Committee Secretary working in the agriculture, food industry and forestry department, was promoted into this body. Zajic comes from the same region in Moravia as the new General Secretary. Two unknowns were also elevated from the Central Committee to the Presidium. Miroslav Huscava and Josef Cizek. The former is a miner with the OKD coal works in Ostrava; the latter chairman of an agricultural cooperative in southern Bohemia. The apparent objective of both moves is to reinforce the Presidium's blue collar image as it faces the potential of industrial unrest represented most immediately by the general strike called for November 27.

11. A hard core of young conservatives makes up the majority of the new Presidium. These include the new General Secretary Karel Urbanek (48), Trade Union Council Chairman Miroslav Zavadil (57), Slovak Party leader Ignac Janak (59) and Prague Party boss Miroslav Stepan (44). Miroslav Zajic also fits well into this group since he shares several of its characteristics, including all formal education in Party schools and much of his professional life spent working in the Party apparatus.

12. New alternate members of the Presidium now include Miroslava Nemcova, Head of the Union of Women, and Ondrej Saling, Leading Secretary of the West Slovak Regional Committee. Nemcova is the only woman in the Presidium.

13. Within the CPCZ Central Committee Secretariat there were several changes. Pitra, Hofmann, Nemcova and Rudolf Rohlicek have been dropped, Karel Urbanek and Otto Liska added. Notably, Vasil Mohorita, Union of Socialist Youth [*Socialist Union of Youth*] Head who had shown a readiness to work with student strikers in their demands, has been retained. Josef Mevald, currently a CPCZ Secretary, has also been appointed to replace Urbanek to head the Committee for Party Work in the Czech Republic.

14. A list of the new Presidium and Secretariat members follows. (Available biographic material on Urbanek and new figures will be provided septel.)³⁰

— **Presidium**

- Karel Urbanek, General Secretary
- Ignac Janak

30 | Prague 08253; not included in this volume.

- Miroslav Zavadil
- Miroslav Stepan
- Ivan Knotek
- Jozef [*Miroslav*] Zajic
- Miroslav Huscava
- Josef Cizek
- Jozef Lenart

— **Alternate members**

- Vladimir Herman
- Miroslava Nemcova
- Ondrej Saling
- Josef Haman

— **Secretaries**

- Karel Urbanek
- Jozef Lenart
- Otto Liska
- Frantisek Hanus
- Ivan Knotek
- Miroslav Zajic

— **Other members of the secretariat**

- Zdenek Horeni
- Vasil Mohorita
- Josef Mevald

15. Comment. While these personnel changes represent some concession to popular pressure for resignations, they leave the hardliners in control of the Party apparatus. Despite Jakes's ouster, the "Jakes leadership" remains entrenched. The 1968 old guard may continue to influence the Party political situation from retirement, much as Slovak leader Vasil Bilak has done.

16. Comment continued. The new General Secretary is an unknown quantity. His advantages are youth and the lack of a past, specifically a role in 1968. The smaller number now in the Presidium should give him an early opportunity to appoint his own men. Horeni, in speaking at the press conference, said Urbanek would be considering early ways of reshuffling responsibilities within the Party. Urbanek has never struck us, however, as a forceful or charismatic character. And he has shied away from the media. The question that

immediately comes to mind is whether he is simply a front man for the old leadership or a compromise figure.

17. Comment continued. The new Presidium has one particularly forceful personality, Prague Party boss Stepan. Drive, ambition and opportunism have enabled him to survive public calls for his resignation, but the retention of this high-profile hardliner has already sparked negative public reactions. The retention of Stepan is one of the clearest signals that the Presidium personnel changes should not be read prematurely as a reform outcome for the plenum. End comment.

— An action program

18. In his conference, Horeni reviewed the nine points adopted by the Presidium for solving the current political crises in the country. Among these is a decision to hold another session of the CPCZ Central Committee by mid-December. This is to adopt an action program. Other points include:

- A statement that the Central Committee has asked respective organs not to use force to solve current social problems unless there occurs “a danger to life and health of people, property, or a violation of the fundamentals of socialism.” (Note. Asked by the press to clarify whether use of force was excluded against demonstrators, Horeni only repeated this formulation. End note.)
- An expression of regret over the November 17 events and a description of them as a “political error” which needed investigation and an assignment of responsibility.
- A call for dialogue between CPCZ and all groups within and outside the National Front which respect the Constitution. (Comment. Asked whether this meant the Party was prepared to meet with such opposition groups as Civic Forum, Horeni said that had not repeat not been discussed at the plenum. This depended, according to Horeni, on whether the Forum respected the Constitution. Since the Forum has already called for the abolition of the Party’s leading role in the Constitution and dismantling of the National Front, Horeni’s response would seem to be no. End comment.)
- A call for broader participation of other political parties and non-party members in the Federal and Republic Governments “within the structure of the National Front” and based on the “equality of participants.” One objective of this is to be the preparation of democratic elections. (Note. This may be meant as a signal for a coalition government with recently reactivated non-Communist parties like the Socialists. Horeni denied that any new dates, however, had been decided for free elections other than those already agreed for May/June 1991. End note.)
- Submission for public discussion of a new constitution and draft laws on freedom of assembly, association, press and petition as well as new laws on

youth education and military service. (Note. Horeni said that the exclusion of the “Party’s leading role” in society would be discussed along with the Constitution. There was a possibility the Constitution’s provision on the Party’s leading role could be dropped. But even without a constitutional provision, he said, the CPCZ will continue to play an important role in public life. End note.)

- A warning that protest demonstrations and strikes are not a suitable way to settle social problems.

19. Horeni, in replying to a reporter’s question, denied that this plenum had reviewed the events of 1968 or considered their re-evaluation. He said the CPCZ stood firmly behind the official evaluation of those events represented in the “Pouceni” (or Lesson) of the 1968 crisis year.

— Comment

20. These CPCZ personnel changes will not satisfy the public or the opposition, particularly since they retain discredited leaders like Stepan and Zavadil. The Civic Forum has already called for further Party resignations and plans to go ahead with a two-hour general strike on November 27. The personnel changes in fact look very much like a speed-up of succession plans scheduled for next May’s Party congress, in an effort to defuse the present crises and popular demands.

21. The new CPCZ leadership may move on two tracks to dissipate massive public protests of recent days (i.e., 300,000 people who heard Dubcek speak in Prague last night) and the support they represent for changes and the opposition. First, they work to co-opt opposition groups. This is probably behind the offer to make government ministries available to non-Communist parties. Second, they may also restrict the increasingly more independent and objective handling of information by the mass media.

22. The opposition success in countering these moves will depend on its ability to remain cohesive and present an alternative political program. The Monday, November 27, general strike will be an important factor for keeping pressure on the Communist leadership and for assessing the strength of worker support for political reform.

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54. Telegram From the Embassy in Czechoslovakia to the Department of State

Prague, November 27, 1989, 1140Z*

Limited Official Use

Prague 08245; Immediate

Subject: Dramatic Weekend Developments Show Rapid Rise in Popular
Support for Change

1. Limited Official Use – entire text.

2. Summary. The November 24–26 weekend in Czechoslovakia was marked by the largest pro-democracy rallies ever, turmoil and cadre changes within the Communist Party, a meeting between Civic Forum and National Front representatives, and the suggestion by Party leader Karel Urbanek of a possible coalition Government as a means of resolving Czechoslovakia's current political crisis. End summary.

3. The November 24–26 weekend in Prague was marked by incredibly rapidly developing events, highlighted by a Sunday meeting between representatives of the current GOC and the opposition umbrella group Civic Forum and by a call for a coalition Government by Communist Party leader Karel Urbanek. The meeting between National Front and Civic Forum Reps was spurred by the largest demonstrations ever seen in Prague and a revolt against the regime by Czechoslovak mass media and lower level structures of the Communist Party.

4. The weekend began Friday evening with another crowd estimated at a quarter million gathering on Prague's Wenceslas Square to hear Vaclav Havel, and for the first time at a Prague demonstration, Alexander Dubcek. Havel and Dubcek both appeared at a press conference following the rally, with Dubcek confirming that he believes socialism is still reformable and Havel expressing preference for an economic system in which economic organizations (whether they be stock companies, cooperatives, or whatever) have autonomy to make their own decisions in response to market signals. During the course of the press

conference those present learned that all members of the Presidium of the Communist Party Central Committee had tendered their resignations. Havel, Dubcek and the others present happily received the news and toasted it with champagne, although the later announcement of actual cadre changes (Prague 8237)³¹ would prove disappointing to them.

5. At 4:30 a.m. Saturday morning the Civic Forum issued a declaration advising that although the cadre changes were a start, all Civic Forum demands had not been met and a general strike called for Monday, November 27, would still be held. Civic Forum Reps were disappointed that two hardline conservatives, Miroslav Stepan and Miroslav Zavadil, remained on the Presidium, and that Prime Minister Ladislav Adamec, the one Government and high Party official who had met with Civic Forum representatives, had apparently been dropped from Presidium membership.

6. Saturday morning a crowd estimated at 100,000 persons gathered in and around St. Vitus Cathedral for a mass celebrating the canonization of Agnes of Bohemia at which Frantisek Cardinal Tomasek officiated. Tomasek's homily was not overtly political, but did hold out St. Agnes as an example for believers in what the Cardinal termed "the current period."

7. A crowd conservatively estimated at one-half million gathered on the parade ground of Letna Park Saturday afternoon for a Civic Forum-sponsored rally. The demonstration proved remarkable in a number of ways: (1) It was the largest demonstration ever in Prague, (2) the demonstration was televised by Czechoslovak Television virtually in its entirety, and without any censorship, (3) Alexander Dubcek spoke and condemned the 1968 Warsaw Pact invasion, the first such criticism on the Czechoslovak media of the invasion in 20 years, and (4) Vaclav Havel publicly urged those present to support Prime Minister Adamec.

8. While Saturday's demonstration was progressing, lower-level units of the Communist Party, most notably the Prague City Party Committee of the Communist Party, were breaking into open revolt against the conservative top Party leadership. Speaker after speaker at the Prague Party enclave³² criticized Miroslav Stepan and demanded his resignation from the Prague Party leadership and the Central Committee Presidium. The coup de grâce came when the new General Secretary of the Party, Karel Urbanek, spoke and announced that Party leaders must have the full confidence and support of the Party's membership. Shortly afterward, Stepan announced his resignation. Later in the day word was released that Miroslav Zavadil was also tendering his resignation.

31 | Document 53.

32 | A two-day meeting of delegates from the basic Party cells in Prague.

9. Although the Prague Party meeting has received most attention, similar meetings occurred in a number of cities over the weekend. Slovak Communists apparently asked Josef Lenart to resign from the CPCZ Presidium, and the Central Committee of the Slovak Communist Party reportedly resigned *en masse* at a Sunday meeting.

10. Following a day of revolts in lower Party structures, Karel Urbanek appeared on television Saturday night. Civic Forum Reps, including Vaclav Havel, had appeared on a talk show earlier in the evening. Urbanek indicated that he wants the Communist Party to take a new path and that he was ready to talk to anyone concerned about the future fate of Czechoslovakia.

11. Sunday dawned with *Rude Pravo* printing a special Sunday edition featuring the Urbanek speech, but also containing a picture showing the immense size of the crowd at Saturday's demonstration. Saturday's events had set the stage for and made possible the first "negotiating" session between GOC (or more precisely, National Front) representatives and Civic Forum.

12. The session, held Sunday morning in Prague's Obecni Dum, lasted about one hour. The Civic Forum delegation was led by Vaclav Havel, and included Catholic priest Vaclav Maly, economist Vaclav Klaus, and human rights activist Rita Klimova. Prime Minister Adamec lead a National Front delegation which included Socialist Party leader Bohuslav Kucera. (Comment: Adamec on Friday night apparently refused a seat on the CPCZ Presidium in an effort to distance himself further from hardline conservatives and remain in a position to lead the Government side in any possible dialogue – a tactic which at least at this moment appears to have been successful. End comment.)

13. At the Sunday meeting the Civic Forum presented what was called by a Government spokesman "a broad list of demands." Details concerning the demands have not been made public, although we know they included demands previously made by the Forum (Prague 8156)³³ as well as calls [for] free elections, freedom of the press, appointment of a special Federal Assembly commission to investigate police violence against demonstrators on November 17, and the release of all political prisoners. In an apparent effort to show its good faith, the GOC released six political prisoners, Rudolf Zeman, Jiri Ruml, Petr Uhl, Ivan Jirous, Frantisek Starek and Jan Carnogursky.³⁴ (Note: Petr Cibulka was released earlier in the week by a Brno court. End note.) The Civic Forum had demanded the release of another 15 individuals (including four convicted of espionage) who are said to be political prisoners.

14. The GOC representatives apparently offered no formal response, and Adamec stated laws cannot be changed overnight, but the GOC delegation did

33 | Document 43.

34 | The President of Czechoslovakia, not the Government, released them.

agree to meet again and provide a response to the Civic Forum on Tuesday, November 28. An emergency session of the Communist Party Central Committee was called for Sunday at which apparently a proposed response was considered as well as cadre changes (septel).³⁵ At a joint GOC – Civic Forum press conference following the negotiating session Michal Horacek of the mediating group Most (Prague 8156) indicated the GOC and Civic Forum representatives had reached a “mutual understanding,” although he did not explain what he meant by such statement. However, Civic Forum press spokesman Vaclav Maly refused to call the Sunday meeting a negotiating session and indicated the National Front representatives only promised a future response to Civic Forum demands.

15. Sunday’s National Front-Civic Forum meeting was followed by another Letna Park rally almost as large as that held on Saturday. Adamec appeared at the rally and received a generally polite response, but was whistled at when he urged that the general strike on Monday be held to just a few minutes duration. Sunday’s rally and television and radio reports on Sunday often carried the tone that the Communist regime has been defeated and that the task ahead is one of ironing out the details for a new democratic society.

16. It remains to be seen how much of struggle hardliners will put up. An emergency meeting of the Communist Party Central Committee convened late Sunday evening and continuing into Monday morning as this cable is being transmitted has resulted in further cadre changes and the announcement of a late January 1990 extraordinary Party congress. The meeting is continuing, with a fierce battle reportedly in progress between conservative and reform elements. Reportedly Party leader Urbanek has told the Central Committee that the Party faces a new reality, that the Civic Forum represents a substantial portion of the population, and a coalition Government of various, unspecified political parties is needed to lead the country out of its current crisis (septel).³⁶

17. Regardless of the outcome of the Central Committee meeting, the general strike called for today will occur. We have reports of demonstrations of 100,000 persons in both Bratislava and Brno over the weekend, and such anti-regime sentiment indicates a successful general strike in those cities. We also saw busloads of people in Prague from all over Bohemia (e.g. Plzen, Hradec Kralove, Liberec) who had come to Prague for the Saturday Civic Forum demonstration. In short, we expect the general strike to have the support of the large majority of Czechoslovak citizens.

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35 | Document 55, para 10–14.

36 | Document 55, para 21.

55. Telegram From the Embassy in Czechoslovakia to the Department of State

Prague, November 27, 1989, 1534Z*

Confidential

Prague 08247; Niact Immediate

Subject: New CPCZ Leadership Tries to Cope with Increasing Opposition
Pressure for Reform

1. Confidential – entire text.

2. Summary. A spontaneous nationwide, massive popular and Party revolt against the results of the CPCZ's Friday (November 24) plenum, particularly the retention of prominent hardliners in the Presidium, has led the Central Committee to meet again in less than two days. A new Presidium has been elected, dropping hardliners such as Prague Party boss Miroslav Stepan and trade-union leader Miroslav Zavadil as well as 1968 holdover Jozef Lenart. A number of new and more reform-minded representatives have been added. The Party's new General Secretary, Karel Urbanek, is trying, so far without success, to take the political initiative by calling for a Party congress on January 26 to adopt an action program and make further cadre changes. He has also admitted the need for a dialogue with the opposition.

Prime Minister Adamec is positioning himself as a conciliator with one foot in the CPCZ but the other among the people. The limits of his credibility were demonstrated on November 26 when his criticism of the length of the two-hour general strike today was met by boos and calls to resign from a mass rally he addressed. Adamec is expected to continue his efforts to draw a distinction between the CPCZ and Government in the hope of winning popular support for the latter.

The Civic Forum, boosted by a widely successful general strike, will press for political reforms. The regime has already responded by releasing some political prisoners and will be replying to a broad list of Forum demands, including

a guarantee of freedom of the press, at a meeting between Adamec and the Forum on Tuesday, November 28. High on the list of other Forum demands are an end to the Party's leading role and a date for free elections. The Government looks likely to offer the Forum and other non-Communist parties a coalition government. The Forum has said this will be unacceptable if it is to be established within the framework of the existing National Front.

CPCZ leader Urbanek and the CPCZ's room for maneuver in response to these massive popular political pressures has been sharply reduced by a grass-roots revolt within the Party, a newly independent, pro-reform media and a Central Committee still packed with inflexible hardliners who fail to appreciate how dramatically the political situation has changed in less than ten days. End summary.

— The reaction to Friday's plenum

3. When an extraordinary CPCZ Central Committee session elected a new Party Presidium late Friday night (November 24), it was not listening to the voice of the people in the street. It seems to have thought that a new, younger face in the person of Karel Urbanek, promises of a police investigation of the November 17 events and removal of 1968 figures from the leadership would be enough to pacify the public and head off a general strike. That proved a major if predictable political miscalculation. It has put the Party's new General Secretary at a disadvantage from the start; one that he now appears to be working against the odds to recover from.

4. The public and CPCZ grass-roots reaction to the new Presidium was both highly negative and spontaneous, particularly against the three remaining figures who most epitomized the former Jakes leadership: Miroslav Stepan, Miroslav Zavadil and, in Slovakia, Jozef Lenart. It was a reaction amplified by a remarkably free and objective media. That objectivity was even more surprising in light of rumors and reports that Czechoslovak Television and Radio had been put under guard by security forces during the preceding week. The media had been growing more open, but a real break in reporting came with Friday evening's election of a new CPCZ leader. That night, Czechoslovak Television aired a demonstrator's video of the police brutality against students on November 17; Saturday and Sunday offered live coverage of mass demonstrations at which Havel and Dubcek spoke, the latter criticizing the 1968 invasion – the first time public media had aired such criticism. This has brought the reality of the scope of the opposition into millions of homes outside of Prague and major cities where demonstrations have been going on.

— Adamec the conciliator

5. Prime Minister Adamec has played a key role in recent days. Whatever the fate of the CPCZ, he seems to be positioning himself to be the conciliator, trying to keep a base in the Party but reaching for popular support. Despite a CPCZ plenum decision to remove him from both his Party Presidium and governmental prime-ministerial position, he seems to have decided to stand on his constitutional rights and not resign as Prime Minister. On Saturday morning, the day after the plenum concluded, he appeared on television with a list of the four conditions for solving the country's political crises: (1) entry of non-Communists into the Government; (2) meeting student demands for an investigation of the November 17 police action; (3) freeing all "illegal" (i.e., political) prisoners; and (4) meeting with opposition groups, including the Civic Forum.

6. Adamec's government spokesman (Miroslav Pavel) met with the press the same day to give his boss's side of the Friday Presidium session. He said that Adamec had not resigned from the Presidium for personal reasons but because of his opposition to the slow pace of political and economic reform. He had made those points in letters to former CPCZ leader Jakes in June and October and threatened then to resign. (Note. The October letter was used by a CPCZ spokesman as the rationale for Adamec's ouster. End note.) Adamec, Pavel said, had been offered a seat in the new Presidium, but refused it. He indicated that Adamec planned to continue in his function of Prime Minister. In what appeared a sign of support from President Husak for the Prime Minister's position, the spokesman read out a list of political prisoners who had received a presidential reprieve or were released from investigation.

— Urbanek acts to correct Friday's debacle

7. While Adamec was maneuvering and the media showing the extent of popular dissatisfaction, grass-roots Party organizations within the CPCZ were conducting an open revolt over the Friday plenum. Much of this was again covered by the media. Prague's Party Committee met in special session on Saturday and roundly criticized its Leading Secretary Miroslav Stepan. He agreed to resign by the end of the day. The Slovak Central Committee met on Sunday. There are rumors its leadership resigned *en masse* before adjourning to Prague to attend a second CPCZ Central Committee plenum. The Slovak Central Committee will be reconvening on Monday, November 27, to elect a new Presidium and Secretariat.

8. CPCZ leader Urbanek, while starting off with the black mark of Friday's new Presidium against him, has shown more aggressiveness and presence than would have been expected from his past colorless reputation. If he has not yet caught the reform winds blowing a gale force around him in Prague, he has quickly recognized the mistake the Central Committee made in foisting

a clearly hardline leadership upon him at the Friday plenum. He participated in the Saturday Prague Party Committee session which removed Stepan, intervening himself at a critical point with a speech which revealed his lack of confidence in the man.

9. Urbanek's first public address carried over television Saturday night was received positively. He said the problem of popular confidence in the Party's authority could not be resolved until new cadres were brought into the CPCZ. He described the Friday Central Committee session as a mistake in this regard, and said he was ready to meet with all who were concerned with the fate of the country, though he made no specific commitments to meet with the Civic Forum.

— A second extraordinary session of the plenum

10. Two days after the first extraordinary session of the CPCZ Central Committee, a second session was called for Sunday, November 26. It continued into Monday morning. The explicit reason given for calling a second session so shortly after the first was the need to review cadre questions. It was also assumed the session would discuss the list of demands presented to Adamec in a meeting Sunday with the Civic Forum (septel).

11. The plenum brought radical change to the Presidium's composition. Hardliners Miroslav Stepan and Miroslav Zavadil were removed from the Presidium, as was 1968 holdover and Slovak Jozef Lenart. Vladimir Herman and Josef Haman were removed as alternate members. That left only six members remaining from the Friday Presidium: Karel Urbanek, as General Secretary, Ignac Janak, Ivan Knotek, Miroslav Zajic, Miroslav Huscava and Josef Cizek.

12. The plenum also promoted seven new members into the Presidium. Of those, only a few are known quantities to the Embassy:

- Vasil Mohorita is the former Secretariat member and Union of Socialist Youth [*Socialist Union of Youth*] head, who showed himself to be more sympathetic to student demands than almost anyone else in the former leadership. He will be a force for moderation, if not reform.
- Miroslav Valek is a former Slovak Culture Minister who was well regarded as a conservative, but not dogmatic, intellectual figure. He has long had links with ex-Prime Minister and reform figure Lubomir Strougal.
- Antonin Maly is a CKD factory worker. While a longtime Central Committee member, he has been described as conservative, but occasionally critical of past government/Party policies.
- Bretislav Benda is an academic who heads the Czechoslovak Technical and Scientific Society.
- Ondrej Saling is a Slovak Party Secretary who was brought into the Presidium on Friday as an alternate member. He has been described as a man put into the Presidium to oversee Slovak interests.

- Miroslav Zajic's background is agriculture and he has links with the innovative Slusovice Cooperative and its director Cuba. He can be expected to be a liberal voice but one narrowly directed, on the basis of past experience, to agriculture.

13. Overall, the new list is remarkable for the absence of any personality, with the possible exception of Ignac Janak, the Slovak Party leader with links to Vasil Bilak, who could be termed a die-hard hardliner. The list is also noteworthy because it shows the real lack of depth of talent that the Party could draw on in the current crisis.

— **The new leadership**

14. A full list of the new CPCZ Presidium and Secretariat members follows:

— **Presidium**

- Karel Urbanek, General Secretary
- Ignac Janak
- Ivan Knotek
- Miroslav Zajic
- Miroslav Huscava
- Josef Cizek
- Bretislav Benda
- Hana Kozesnikova
- Antonin Maly [*Mlady*]
- Vasil Mohorita
- Valeria Petrincova
- Andrej Saling
- Miroslav Valek

— **Alternate member**

- Miroslava Nemcova

— **Secretariat members**

- Karel Urbanek
- Andrej Saling
- Otto Liska
- Frantisek Hanus
- Ivan Knotek
- Miroslav Zajic

- Vasil Mohorita
- Josef Mevald
- Zdenek Horeni.

— Urbanek’s speech to the plenum

15. Urbanek’s speech at the plenum showed that he was ready to take the new political realities into account. He is reported to have said that the earlier Friday plenum had showed how little the former leadership understood the opinion of the Party’s rank and file. In a number of specific recommendations, he

- called for an extraordinary Party congress on January 26. Delegates to the congress will be elected from regional Party Committees. The congress’s stated purpose is to “formulate new supreme Party bodies” and to adopt an “action program.” (Urbanek said this would not replace the 18th congress already scheduled.) One of the main purposes of the extraordinary session will probably be to get rid of the old-timers and deadwood in the 150–person Central Committee, the personalities behind the plenum’s Friday debacle.
- said the Civic Forum was a reality and that meeting with it and other groups was a way out of the crisis. (Note: He did not commit the Party to meet with it and Adamec’s meeting on Sunday was done under the umbrella of the National Front, not the Government or Party. End note.)
- said the National Front should be opened up to a broader political coalition in which all parties, decisive social organizations, and other civic organizations, which support socialism, would be equal. He recommended “restructuring” the Government in a way that other political and non-Party members would be represented.
- called on the CPCZ Central Committee to appoint a press spokesman.
- called on Czechoslovak Prime Minister Adamec and Czech Prime Minister Pitra to submit changes in their respective ministries of the interior. (Note: Federal Minister Kincl’s removal was a Civic Forum condition. End note.)

16. Other cadre changes: A new chairman, Josef Trmala, was appointed to head the Party’s Control and Audit Commission. The replacement of Prague City Party Committee Leading Secretary, Miroslav Stepan, by Viktor Pazler was confirmed. A number of changes were made, but not announced, in the Committee’s membership.

— Where to from here

17. Urbanek and Adamec in these moves are trying to get ahead of the political curve, but events seem to be passing them by. A particularly telling ex-

ample of the regime's low credibility and lack of understanding of the political situation came out during Adamec's speech to a mass rally at Letna Park on Sunday. He had been invited to address the crowd by the Civic Forum. While welcomed relatively warmly as he began to read his prepared text, Adamec quickly received catcalls and jeers of "resign" when he raised the subject of a general strike and suggested that something less than a full-scale two-hour strike manifestation be held today, November 27.

18. We suspect Adamec will continue to try to play the role of honest broker between Party and public which he has carved out for himself, and which Urbanek evidently supports. In fact a CPCZ contact tells that Urbanek intends to draw a sharper line between Government and Party and raise the former's influence. This same contact assured us the Government would take the Forum's program seriously, and in its Tuesday meeting between Havel and Adamec it will inform the Forum that the mass media has been taken out of the hands of the Central Committee and turned over to government officials.

19. The Civic Forum, with massive popular support, seems determined to keep up the pressure for change whatever Adamec offers on Tuesday. After Monday's general strike the Forum has promised to publish a political manifesto or program. This will set a number of early demands which may prove difficult for the CPCZ's leadership to resist or delay delivery on. Three are of immediate importance: an end to the Party's leading role, setting dates for free elections, and maintaining a free press and media. The regime already seems to be acting on a fourth: release of political prisoners; some six well known activists (septel³⁷) were released over the weekend.

20. The Forum has played down its meeting with Adamec on Sunday as not a real dialogue. It presented demands but received no reply. It will be looking to its Tuesday meeting with the Prime Minister as an indicator of regime flexibility. But to insure it keeps the pressure on, it is working with an expanding number of Prague factories to set up "strike alert" committees. These will react with work stoppages as a weapon against the Government and Party in what looks to be the prolonged negotiations ahead. Significantly, the Forum's Sunday press conference included the chairman (Miller) of one of those strike committees at the large Prague enterprise CKD, the same enterprise from which the CPCZ Presidium has drafted a new member (Maly). There has also been a spontaneous movement to set up little "Civic Forums" in factories and local cities. Our CPCZ contact complained the Forum was using the same tactics against the Party as it had used itself in 1948 against the Government.

21. Urbanek's statements at the Sunday plenum imply that the Party is moving in the direction of offering some form of coalition Government, though it

37 | Document 54.

will try to retain the National Front as an umbrella organization. Essentially this will mean offering minister and deputy-minister positions to non-Communist party and independent representatives. The Civic Forum is unlikely to go along with such a proposal within the National Front. It will almost certainly set pre-conditions, including those demands noted above. Our CPCZ contact says the Party will show flexibility on its leading role, agreeing to drop its legal basis, but will delay on a date for free elections.

22. The evaporation of CPCZ authority, as represented by the openness of the media, will continue. Later tonight we understand a reform wing of the CPCZ may announce the establishment of a "Democratic Forum" as a voice for reform within the Party. Faced with this revolt from below and a hardline Central Committee which he will be unable to remove before the end of January, Urbanek will have very little room for maneuver. This will restrict his ability to take the initiative needed to reply to the Civic Forum's demands for change.

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56. Telegram From the Embassy in Czechoslovakia to the Department of State

Prague, November 27, 1989, 1836Z*

Unclassified

Prague 08274; Immediate

Subject: Massive Nationwide Strike Supports Civic Forum's Claim to
Represent the People

1. Summary: Workers throughout Czechoslovakia struck from noon to 2 p.m. on November 27 to support demands for democracy and political freedom. Czechoslovak Television and Radio carried live coverage of the strike from around the country. Strike actions were reported in all 59 districts. In Prague virtually all shops were closed, the Metro shut down the full two hours and other mass transit made symbolic stoppages. To our knowledge all large enterprises and other institutions struck. Huge crowds demonstrated on Wenceslas Square and other locations throughout the city. End summary.

2. Euphoric TV commentators carried live coverage of the nationwide, two-hour strike for political freedom and democracy which had been called by the Civic Forum and student groups. The TV coverage began with scenes of television workers walking off their jobs. A Czechoslovak flag adorned the news room as the commentators read strike message and showed scenes from various towns throughout the country.

3. TV showed mass demonstrations in cities from Kosice in Eastern Slovakia to Plzen in the western Czech Lands. According to the TV reports, only a few large companies did not strike: a few divisions of the Skoda Works in Plzen and an armaments factory in Brno. There were many pictures of workers striking beneath propaganda banners reading "every day counts," a CPCZ slogan introduced to discourage workers from striking.

4. In TV interviews, workers were forcefully critical of the Government. The most common demand was for an end to the leading role of the Party.

Some workers suggested that Valtr Komarek, a liberal economist who heads the Forecasting Institute, become the next Minister of Industry. (Note. Over the weekend a report on Komarek's economic views received prominent coverage and obviously met with worker support.) A TV crew even interviewed a military officer in Brno who supported the strike.

5. In Prague the strike seemed to have universal support. In downtown Prague, EmbOffs saw only two small shops open: a fruit and vegetable stand and a waffle vendor. Other shops and restaurants were shut. The Metro was closed for the full two hours. In a pro-democracy twist, Metro conductors before and after the strike were announcing the "Gottwaldova" Metro stop, named after Czechoslovakia's first Communist leader, as the "Hotel Forum." Buses and trams, by arrangement with the strike organizers, stopped only for five minutes so that essential transportation services could be maintained. Again by agreement with strike organizers, the airport did not shut down.

6. As elsewhere in the country, most large factories reportedly observed the strike. Even the SANOPS Clinic, which is reserved for the Party and Government elite, was closed. (Note. Restricted access to SANOPS for the Party elite has been a popular irritant. The Government announced earlier that, starting in February 1990, the SANOPS Clinic will serve the general public in Prague. End note.)

7. During the strike period, Wenceslas Square quickly filled up with demonstrators as did the streets leading into it. Chants of demonstrators, honking car horns and the tolling of church bells sounded as the strike began at noon. Czechoslovak flags appeared everywhere, even on the tugs plying the Vltava river.

8. Comment: Today's massive strike support gives substance to the Civic Forum's claim that it represents a broad popular base. The strike strengthens the Forum's hand as it moves into an important round of negotiations on Tuesday with government leaders, including Prime Minister Adamec.

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57. Telegram From the Embassy in Czechoslovakia to the Department of State

Prague, November 28, 1989, 1722Z

Confidential

Prague 08311; Immediate

Subject: Local Soviet View of Czechoslovak Developments

1. Confidential – entire text.

2. Summary. In November 28 conversation with Soviet counterpart, DCM was told that use of force or intervention of Czechoslovak military in political situation here is out of the question. Soviet Embassy expected and is relaxed about changes here, but wants to see socialism preserved. They would be concerned about any developments here which suggest “anti-Sovietism.” End summary.

3. In conversation with Soviet DCM, Marat Kuznecov, at Yugoslav National Day reception November 28, DCM was told that Soviet Embassy is convinced that “no more batons” will be used here and that the Czechoslovak military will not rpt not intervene in political developments. Kuznecov served previously in Bratislava and was in Prague in 1968.

4. Kuznecov said that Soviet Embassy was aware that there would be change here and agreed that there should be a more “human” approach to building socialism in Czechoslovakia. He thought it noteworthy and, by implication, positive that Dubcek in a weekend address in Prague had quoted Gorbachev as using the term (which Dubcek himself coined in 1968), “socialism with a human face.” He said there will certainly be a serious dialogue with the opposition, but said he invariably refused to answer any questions about what would happen next in Czechoslovakia.

5. Asked whether the Soviet Embassy is relaxed about developments here, Kuznecov replied that the Embassy is watching closely to see that certain opposition elements do not foster a spirit of anti-Sovietism. The USSR wants socialism

to be maintained in Czechoslovakia. The new Czechoslovak Communist Party leadership has people in it who recognize that the 1968 Party program had many good elements for building socialism. When DCM remarked that there were various definitions of socialism and that Gorbachev's November 26 *Pravda* interview (Moscow 33157)³⁸ confirmed this to be the case, Kuznecov smiled broadly and nodded. However, he simply reiterated that it is in the Soviet interest to keep Czechoslovakia socialist and to avoid anti-Soviet and anti-Communist sentiments.

6. Kuznecov was more relaxed and friendly than usual and joked that the Chinese Ambassador had just been pressing him, unsuccessfully, for his views on what might happen here. He first characterized the situation as reflecting "tension" (*napeti*), but quickly agreed that "difficult" or "complex" might be better terms and that there was no "tension" in the sense of possible use of violence or force. He emphasized that the positive aspect of developments here involved a more "human" approach to socialism. However, he emphasized that the Soviet position is that they will not interfere in the internal affairs of other states.

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38 | Not yet declassified.

III

TOWARDS POLITICAL POLITICS

“Czechoslovakia’s ‘quiet’ revolution, with the Civic Forum in its vanguard, has really only just begun, but it has reached an important milestone in forcing the regime to engage in a dialogue. The Forum’s representatives do not underestimate the long fight ahead before the legal and tactical roadblocks the CPCZ will put in the way of achieving such goals as free elections can be overcome and the present totalitarian system can be gradually transformed into a parliamentary democracy.”

Prague 08343, November 29, 1989

58. Telegram From the Embassy in Czechoslovakia to the Department of State

Prague, November 28, 1989, 1724Z

Confidential

Prague 08312; Immediate

Subject: The Evolving Program and Organization of the Civic Forum

Ref: (A) Prague 8156¹, (B) FBIS London LD2611235589²

1. Confidential – entire text.

2. Summary. The Civic Forum, only eleven days old, has made progress in defining its program and solidifying its organizational structure. The Forum has issued a document outlining seven general “program principles” which will guide the Forum in its pursuit of a democratic and pluralistic Czechoslovakia. Civic Forum representatives continue to say the organization has no intent of becoming a political party and will continue to be an umbrella organization open to all who seek a democratic society. The Civic Forum has for the time being called off further demonstrations, but has urged citizens to stand ready for future demonstrations or strikes if needed. The Civic Forum has also urged strike committees to transform themselves into local committees of the Civic Forum. The Forum is organizing a center to coordinate the activities of its local committees and plans a meeting (sometime before the January 26 CPCZ congress) of representatives of all local units of the Civic Forum. End summary.

3. Civic Forum representatives continue to state that the organization is not a political party and has no intention of becoming one. They say only that the Forum’s goal is a democratic and pluralistic society, and that anyone who shares such goal is welcome to participate in the Forum’s activities.

1 | Document 56.

2 | Not available.

4. The Forum has announced “program principles” by which the Forum, in its pursuit of a democratic and pluralistic society, will be guided. The program principles address seven areas: laws, political system, foreign policy, national economy, social justice, living environment, and culture.³ Ref B presents the full text of the Civic Forum document in which these principles were announced. Civic Forum sources have provided us with some other basic details concerning the Forum’s goals.

5. Sources in the Civic Forum indicate that personnel changes within the existing structures of the GOC would not be enough to satisfy its demands. The Forum seeks a new constitution, but envisions such constitution being written only after the election of a new Federal Assembly. Such a constitution would establish a democratic political system.

6. The Civic Forum also wants “an honorable place in Europe” and “future integration” into a common European home. The Forum at this time does not talk about Czechoslovakia as part of the EC, and in fact in the short run, at least, sees Czechoslovakia continuing as a Warsaw Pact member. Nonetheless, a Civic Forum representative told us that the Forum hopes to see a future Europe in which security is no longer guaranteed by pacts, but rather by some unspecified other system of collective security.

7. The Civic Forum also envisions a mixed economy for Czechoslovakia. The current centralized system of management is termed a failure and Civic Forum representatives are clear in their commitment to a market economy. Nonetheless, those we talk to envision various forms of ownership and economic organization, and would not rule out completely the possibility that some economic units would be state owned.

8. In addition to formulating program principles, the Civic Forum has announced tactics and demands for the short term. The Forum announced that a Wenceslas rally held Monday, November 27, will be its last for a while. Civic Forum representatives indicated that both Civic Forum leaders and common citizens had become exhausted by eleven straight days of demonstrations, and that a rest period, during which further tactics could be developed, was needed. Citizens will be advised to be in a state of readiness for future possible demonstrations and strikes.

9. The Civic Forum is also asking strike committees throughout the country to reconstitute themselves as committees of the Civic Forum. The Forum is also developing a “Coordinating Center” to handle communications with the Forum’s organization in Prague and the local committees which are being formed. The Civic Forum has also announced that it will hold a meeting

³ | For the full text in English of these program principles, entitled “What We Want,” see Document 76, *Briefing Book 1999*.

at which all local committees will be represented. The meeting will attempt to formulate operating procedures as well as discuss goals and tactics. No date is set for the meeting, although it will be held before the January 26 Communist Party congress.

10. Tactically, the Civic Forum is now focusing on its meetings with Prime Minister Adamec and other National Front representatives. The Forum seeks a new government with which to negotiate, but Forum representatives are short on details as to what kind of changes in government would be enough. The Forum is also demanding the immediate release of fifteen additional political prisoners. These are Petr Cibulka, Jakub Dubsky, Stefan Javorsky, Jiri Jelinek, Vladan Koci, Vitezslav Kokor, Jiri Machacek, Renata Panova, Antonin Fernicky, Ota Veverka, Stanislav Vitaz, Victor Dedera, Petr Hausman, Ondrej Hoch and Josef Fremr. (Note. We believe Petr Cibulka has already been released. End note.)

11. The Civic Forum has also taken steps to strengthen its internal organization. At least six committees have been formed, covering among other things, press affairs, operations, and personnel. The committees seem to have had some success. For example, a foreign-press center is functioning and Civic Forum press conferences, although not perfect, now come closer than before in providing the Western press with the type of information it is seeking. The Forum has also tightened security at its headquarters (located at the Laterna Magika Theater) by instituting a badge system. The security system has made it easier for Civic Forum leaders and workers to go about their business and more difficult for journalists and diplomats to have access to them.

12. The Forum at present seems to be governed by consensus, or near consensus. Vaclav Havel obviously plays an important role, but the Catholic priest Vaclav Maly, and economist Valtr Komarek (Director of the Economic Forecasting Institute), are also apparently influential. We also have a report that Jaroslav Sedivy, a former academic purged from the Communist Party in 1968, has become the Forum's foreign-policy adviser, and Zdenek Jicinsky, a former professor of constitutional law, its chief legal adviser.

13. The Civic Forum has not explained how it will coordinate its activities with its Slovak counterpart, the Assoc. for Non-Violence [*Public Against Violence*]. Vaclav Havel has stated that the Civic Forum, in the spirit of a federalized Czechoslovakia, accepts the existence of a separate Slovak organization. Reports are that the Slovak Catholic activist Jan Carnogursky would be part of the Civic Forum delegation which would meet with Prime Minister Adamec today, November 28.

14. Comment: The Civic Forum can be expected to keep its program purposely general. By doing so, the Forum can continue to act as an umbrella organization for those who oppose the monopoly of power of the Communist Party and seek free elections. More specific proposals would only run the risk of alienating its supporters and diluting its influence. End comment.

15. Comment contd. We sense some student leaders feel the Civic Forum hijacked “their revolution,” and students have not immediately accepted the Civic Forum recommendation that the student strike be halted. Some workers, too, may be more militant than the Civic Forum leadership. A representative from the industrial conglomerate CKD indicated at a Monday night press conference that the students had done their part through their strike, and it was now time for the workers to take up the baton. How Civic Forum leaders will deal with students and workers, and whether it can keep these two important groups “in line” with its tactics and programs, will be worth watching during the coming days.

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59. Telegram From the Embassy in Czechoslovakia to the Department of State

Prague, November 28, 1989, 1728Z

Unclassified

Prague 08313; Immediate

Subject: Official Statement on Civic Forum/National Front Talks

1. Unclassified – entire text.

2. The meeting between the Civic Forum and Prime Minister Adamec and other representatives of the National Front ended on Tuesday, November 28. A government spokesman, Minister Marian Calfa, issued a statement on the outcome of the talks, which lasted some two hours. Calfa did not respond to questions and no representative of the Civic Forum was present. The Civic Forum will be making its own statement on the talks later this evening.

3. Calfa read his announcement to the press describing the discussion as “constructive.” He made the following points:

a. The Government had agreed to present a new constitution to the President (no date). (Note: A constitutional-drafting commission has been at work on a new basic law for some time.)

b. A new coalition government would be formed by 12/3/89 which would include “specialists” representing non-partisan groups and political parties.

c. The Federal Government would use its legal authority to propose to the Federal Assembly immediate changes to the Constitution. These would: (1) Remove the “leading role” of the CPCZ (article IV) in the National Front and society; (2) remove the “closed character” of the National Front (i.e., open it up to new political groups); and (3) end education based on Marxism-Leninism. In future, education would be based on scientific knowledge and humanitarian principles.⁴

⁴ | See Document 64, para 3.

d. Prime Minister Adamec agreed to work with the Prague National Committee to provide facilities for the Civic Forum's activities. (Note: The Forum is now working out of a theatre which has been closed as part of the student/actors' strike but which will be re-opening for performances tomorrow. End note.)

4. Comment. As indicated above we have as yet no Civic Forum comment on the meeting.⁵ We would note that the official statement makes no reference to elections and it discusses a coalition government within the framework of the National Front. Up to now the Civic Forum has proposed dismantling the National Front as a mechanism for CPCZ control of other political parties.

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⁵ | For their eventual comment, see Document 61.

60. Telegram From the Embassy in Czechoslovakia to the Department of State

Prague, November 28, 1989, 1735Z

Confidential

Prague 08315

Subject: CPCZ Official on Party's Future

1. Confidential – entire text.

2. Summary. The following message reports on a conversation with a CPCZ contact and his views of how his party is accommodating in its changed political circumstances. He argues the CPCZ will become more open and eventually agree to free elections. End summary.

3. EmbOff had a brief discussion on November 25 with a CPCZ contact, Jaromir Sedlak. While Sedlak admits “his” party has undergone a dramatic loss of authority, he obviously sees his own star rising as a reform-minded figure within it. He has already gained personally from the weekend’s toppling of Party hardliners and says he has been admitted as an adviser to Prime Minister Adamec.

4. Sedlak described the Friday (November 24) CPCZ plenum as the “first round” in a fierce struggle between Party hardliners and more liberal figures, like ex-Prime Minister Strougal and Central Committee Department Director for State Security Hegenbart. These two had teamed up, he said, to put more reform-minded figures in the Presidium. The hardliners had the votes to push through a slate of their own Friday, even though two days later, in the face of massive popular opposition, the Central Committee had to undo what it had done.

5. Sedlak said that new CPCZ General Secretary Urbanek was secure for the time being. (According to one account he received 130 votes for and only seven against in his Central Committee election Friday night.) After the weekend’s Central Committee performance, however, said Sedlak, Urbanek and

the new Presidium had decided to treat it as if it did not exist. By Sedlak's political calculation, however, Urbanek had made a mistake in allowing it to survive until January 26 when a Party congress is scheduled to convene and elect a new Central Committee. Urbanek had now decided, he said, to increase the Government's authority. For example, supervision of the media was to be taken out of Party hands and given to the Government. Sedlak predicted that the television director would be removed the next day, as he was, and replaced by the Government's press spokesman, Miroslav Pavel. Sedlak said Urbanek was aiming to create a Hungarian-style situation in which the Prime Minister was more independent.

6. But the Party and Government were determined to retain influence over the media, particularly television. Pavel's main task would be to make TV broadcasting more "objective." Sedlak complained it had swung 100 percent behind the Civic Forum. He rejected that this was a re-introduction of censorship, just a question, he said, of making the news more accurate. (Note: Pavel may find this task hard to do in view of the radicalization of the TV staff. It has formed its own strike committee to resist the re-imposition of Party or Government influence over broadcasting. End note.)

7. Sedlak said that the Government would be taking the Civic Forum's program seriously when Adamec met with it on November 28. The Party would agree to removing the legal basis for its "leading role" and had agreed that some form of a coalition Government could be worked out. Adamec would try to put off a date for elections as long as possible, but Sedlak thought that in the interest of the Forum itself. Early elections would only benefit the established non-Communist parties of the National Front. The new political initiatives represented in the Forum would need time to organize and produce political programs.

8. Sedlak's vision of Czechoslovakia's future is one in which "his" party will continue to play a significant role, both in crafting a coalition in the lead-up to free elections and afterwards. Sedlak said he and other CPCZ officials were working to make the Party a more open, modern institution and had declared establishment of a "democratic forum," a group which would work to change the CPCZ's Brezhnevite character.

— Personalities to watch

9. In the weeks ahead Sedlak thought the CPCZ might turn to 1968 figures to improve its image and supply the intellectual wherewithall that seemed to be absent from its current cadres. That would mean developing links with Obroda. (Note: Of course, this would necessitate a re-evaluation of 1968, but there are already signs this is underway. One of the most dramatic examples was the call for a reassessment made by Slovak Party chief Ignac Janak prior to convening

the Slovak Central Committee session on Sunday, November 26. End note.) Among Sedlak's short list of 1968'ers who might be recalled were:

- Zdenek Mlynar. This former Dubcek aide and CPCZ Secretariat member has maintained links to the Party from his exile in Vienna. Mlynar, said Sedlak, had never broken totally with the Party as had some Prague Spring figures.
- Ota Sik. Sedlak described him as full of energy and anxious to leave Switzerland to participate in a coalition Government.
- Alexander Dubcek. Sedlak has a generally skeptical view of Dubcek's abilities and sees him as "out of it." (Note: In his Civic Forum press conference on November 26, Dubcek seemed not to have modified his views much in the 20 years intervening since the Prague Spring. He spoke, to the obvious uneasiness of a number of Forum members beside him and young people in the audience, about socialism's renewal. End note.) Sedlak saw Dubcek as a popular figure who could fill an honorific position, such as President. (Note: "Dubcek to the Castle," the seat of the President, has been a popular chant among students. End note.)

10. While not a 1968 figure, Sedlak had strong views about Forecasting Institute Director Valtr Komarek. (Komarek has been touted by some as a candidate to replace Adamec as Prime Minister in a coalition government.) Sedlak said Komarek would be a disaster. He might be a good economic theoretician, but he had never managed anything. (Note: Embassy can confirm from our own Forecasting Institute contacts that Komarek has a reputation as an absent-minded and disorganized professor. End note.)

11. Comment. Sedlak continues to discuss "his" party in terms of a real power broker in the current Czechoslovak situation. It obviously is in terms of its 1.5 million membership and its *nomenklatura* appointments. Massive demonstrations against the Party, however, show its popular authority is extremely limited. Assuming the CPCZ will not resort to force and Sedlak is correct on its readiness to agree eventually to free elections, the chances now look extremely thin that Urbanek, even drawing on 1968 expertise, can retain a major role for it in the country's long-term political future.

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61. Telegram From the Embassy in Czechoslovakia to the Department of State

Prague, November 29, 1989, 1615Z

Confidential

Prague 08342; Immediate

Subject: Civic Forum Reaction to November 28 Talks with GOC

1. Confidential – entire text.

2. Summary. Civic Forum representatives indicate they were not surprised by concessions made by Prime Minister Adamec and other National Front representatives at a November 28 meeting (Prague 8313)⁶. The concessions included promises that: (1) Adamec will form a coalition government made up principally of “experts” no later than December 3; (2) Adamec will propose constitutional changes which would remove the leading role of the Communist Party from the Constitution, open up membership in the National Front, and abolish Marxism-Leninism as the official state ideology; and (3) the Civic Forum will be provided office space and access to the official media, and will also be allowed to print its own newspaper. The Civic Forum has demanded that the program of the new coalition government include details concerning free elections and guarantees of freedom of speech, assembly, association, press, and religion. Civic Forum reps have stated that if the public finds the coalition-government programs or personnel unsatisfactory, the Civic Forum will seek a new government headed by a prime minister “drafted” by the Forum. End summary.

3. Civic Forum representatives have presented their reaction to and details concerning their November 28 meeting with Prime Minister Adamec and other representatives of the National Front. One Civic Forum spokesman indicated the concessions (para 6–8) made by Adamec were “not surprising.”

6 | Document 59.

4. The Civic Forum has identified the individuals who participated in the November 28 meeting. The National Front representatives were Prime Minister Ladislav Adamec; Bohuslav Kucera (Acting Chairman of the Presidium of the Federal Assembly); Marian Calfa (Minister without portfolio); Oskar Krejci (Adamec's adviser); Miroslav Pavel (Director of Czechoslovak Television); and Marcel Jansen (Acting Government Spokesman). Those present as Civic Forum representatives were Vaclav Havel; Petr Miller (CKD worker representative); Vaclav Klaus (economist); Zdenek Jicinsky (legal adviser); Vaclav Maly (Catholic priest and former Civic Forum press spokesman); Martin Klima (student representative); Martin Mejstrik (student representative); Michael Kocab (Most representative); Michael Horacek (Most representative); and Jan Carnogursky (representative of the Slovak group, "Public Against Violence").

5. A Civic Forum source indicated that the two-hour meeting started intensely, with Prime Minister Adamec showing obvious anger at the scope of demands presented by the Civic Forum. Several breaks in the meeting were called, with Adamec consulting with someone (almost certainly Communist Party reps) as to how to respond to the demands. Ultimately, however, Adamec made the immediate concessions sought by the Forum (see para 6-8). Adamec also told Civic Forum reps that the Government in terms of concessions can only do what it is legally capable of doing.

6. Adamec agreed that he will form a new coalition government no later than December 3, 1989. The new government is to be composed primarily of experts, some not affiliated with political parties and others who would be representatives from as yet unspecified political parties, including the CPCZ. Civic Forum representatives tell us no representative of Civic Forum will be in the Government, although it is possible that persons who participate in Civic Forum will be members of the Government in their individual capacities. It appears that Adamec will discuss the members of the new government with the Civic Forum before the new government is announced, but that such discussions will not be publicized as was Tuesday's meeting.

7. Adamec also agreed to submit to the Federal Assembly as quickly as possible proposed changes to three provisions of the existing Constitution. These changes would abolish the leading role of the Communist Party, abolish the closed nature of the National Front, and remove from the Constitution the provision designating Marxism-Leninism as the official state ideology. The National Front representatives also agreed that Adamec will submit the draft of a new constitution to the President.

8. Adamec also agreed to ask the Prague National Committee to provide the Civic Forum with office space. Such space will apparently be in the Palace of Culture. The Civic Forum was also promised access to official media, as well as the right to publish its own newspaper. *Lidove Noviny* Editorial Board Chairman Jiri Dienstbier indicated that the former *samizdat* newspaper would

begin publishing as an independent daily, and that its editorial content would reflect Civic Forum thinking, but it is unclear whether *Lidove Noviny* will become the official Civic Forum newspaper.

9. The Civic Forum has demanded that the new coalition government issue as part of its “program statement” specific information concerning free elections and guarantees of the freedoms of speech, press, association, assembly, and religion. The Civic Forum has also demanded that the program statement include a proposal concerning abolition of the People’s Militia and a new defense law, presumably addressing the topic of compulsory military service and training. The Civic Forum has also asked that Communist Party cells located by law in every workplace be abolished.

10. The Civic Forum has indicated that if the public is not satisfied with the personnel and program of the new government that it will ask Adamec and the new government to resign. The Civic Forum would then expect that another government coalition “drafted” by the Civic Forum would be formed. The Civic Forum has not indicated as to how it might measure public satisfaction with the coalition government being formed.

11. During the meeting with Civic Forum Reps Adamec indicated that he had sent a letter to President Husak asking that Husak grant amnesty to some 15 persons previously identified by the Civic Forum as political prisoners (Prague 8312)⁷. Adamec asked that the amnesty be granted no later than December 10, International Human Rights Day. The Civic Forum has reserved the right to expand its list of political prisoners. There is also a report that the Ministry of Interior has compiled its own list of some 30 political prisoners who were imprisoned before the start of the recent events.

12. Bohuslav Kucera, Acting Chairman of the Presidium of the Federal Assembly (Alois Indra, recently deposed from the CPCZ Presidium, has resigned from his position as Chairman of the Federal Assembly Presidium), also advised Civic Forum Reps that a special Assembly commission will be formed to investigate police brutality on November 17. The special commission will include independent student members.

13. The Civic Forum has also demanded that President Husak resign no later than December 10. The Civic Forum has not suggested a replacement, although the name Alexander Dubcek is often mentioned. Placing Dubcek “in the Castle” would be a way of honoring him for his 1968 reform efforts and at the same time removing him from active policy-making.

14. The Civic Forum has also written to the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, as well as the legislative bodies of the GDR and Bulgaria, asking them to condemn the 1968 Warsaw Pact invasion of Czechoslovakia and to declare such

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invasion a violation of international law. Such request has also been sent to the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. The request to the Supreme Soviet was delivered to the Soviet Embassy in Prague and was apparently well received by Embassy officials.

15. Another Civic Forum demand asks that all current Government representatives at the local and national level who have not lived up to their oath of office resign. The Civic Forum also proposes that the Civic Forum and National Front agree to some method by which replacements could be elected. Again the Civic Forum has not indicated how those who violated their oath might be identified.

16. Jan Carnogursky was the only Slovak member of the team which met with the National Front. Carnogursky was there as a representative of the Public Against Violence, the Slovak counterpart of the Civic Forum. Carnogursky indicated that the Public Against Violence is independent of the Civic Forum, but that the two organizations are in agreement concerning their goals. Carnogursky also confirmed that the Slovak movement had been slower to take off than its Czech counterpart, but that now both were functioning at the same level of intensity. The Slovak activist also indicated that he was not concerned about the percentage of Slovak representation in the new coalition government, and that the achievement of the goals of the Civic Forum and Public Against Violence were more important for the time being.

17. Civic Forum representatives also have told us that they believe the results of Tuesday's meeting were sufficient and that they believe it appropriate for workers and students to return to work. However, they also indicated that it was up to students and artists (the only two groups who have been on strike the past two weeks) to determine for themselves when to return to work. It is expected that students will return to classes on Thursday or Friday.

18. Comment. Adamec and the other National Front representatives have apparently adopted the tactic of trying to paint the Civic Forum as the "opposition." Some Civic Forum leaders seem uneasy with this tactic, but from our perspective it will continue to be easier for the Forum to press its demands if, in fact, it is not represented as any organization in any coalition (and presumably transitional) government.

Russell

62. Telegram From the Embassy in Czechoslovakia to the Department of State

Prague, November 29, 1989, 1623Z

Confidential

Prague 08343; Immediate

Subject: Czechoslovakia's Quiet Revolution and its Prospects

1. Confidential – entire text.

2. Summary. Czechoslovakia's "quiet" revolution, with the Civic Forum in its vanguard, has really only just begun, but it has reached an important milestone in forcing the regime to engage in a dialogue. The Forum's representatives do not underestimate the long fight ahead before the legal and tactical roadblocks the CPCZ will put in the way of achieving such goals as free elections can be overcome and the present totalitarian system can be gradually transformed into a parliamentary democracy. End summary.

— A non-violent revolution

3. What has occurred in Czechoslovakia over the past 12 days is nothing short of a popular revolution, but a non-violent one. It is a revolution sparked by students and artists in reaction to the brutal suppression on November 17 of a student demonstration and then joined by workers and the great mass of the people. Like the Prague Spring of 1968, this revolution has its roots in the gradual loss of fear by the man in the street of regime repression, but differs from 1968 in that it originated from within the younger generation and not so much from reform elements within the CPCZ. It thus is more of a rejection of the 41 years of the country's Communist past.

— The Forum: a loose coalition

4. But if this revolution began spontaneously, its popular focal point quickly became the “Civic Forum,” symbolized by playwright Vaclav Havel. The Forum has articulated popular demands but declined becoming a political party. Its greatest success, so far, has been in mobilizing mass demonstrations and support for a general strike. These toppled the old Communist Party leadership and forced the Government (and the Party standing behind it) reluctantly into a dialogue.

5. The Forum’s representatives are careful not to exaggerate the concessions, specifically an end to the legal basis of the Communist Party’s “leading role,” that this dialogue has produced up to now. The Forum’s objectives are much broader. It wants nothing less than to prepare the groundwork for free elections and conversion of the present totalitarian system to democracy. It is obvious that negotiations with the regime to achieve this have only begun; that they will be complex. Even after the Government produces a new coalition of “experts” on December 3 as Prime Minister Adamec has promised, the Forum expects delaying tactics, provocations and attempts to play on its internal divisions.

6. Those divisions are very real. Represented within the Forum are political groupings that range from reform Communist (the Renewal group) to liberal (the [Czechoslovak] Democratic Initiative). Slovaks are represented by their own separate pro-democracy organization, the Public Against Violence. Student groups which began the strike for change seem irritated that the Forum has taken over the pro-democracy movement from them. Workers, after flexing their muscles in the November 27 general strike, seem readier to support more industrial action than the intellectuals and professionals heading the Forum.

7. The Forum is trying to play these divisions down by emphasizing its transitional, non-political character and by keeping its supporters’ attention on its longer-term goals for society: A mixed economy, a pluralistic political system and Czechoslovakia’s integration into Western Europe. Interestingly, the Forum’s seven-chapter program statement (Prague 8312)⁸ not once mentions the word “socialism.”

— The Communist Party, down but not out

8. In less than two weeks of this revolution, the CPCZ’ authority and control of society has been enormously eroded. Internal splits have developed. A reform-minded Party group has set up the “Democratic Forum,” calling for a re-evaluation of 1968 and re-admission of purged Prague Spring figures. The

8 | Document 58.

elimination of Party control over the media has been dramatic, as television and radio newscasters overnight began to function like their Western counterparts. The Party has foresworn use of force in a Central Committee resolution, though qualifying this commitment by referring to a need to defend life, property and “the fundamentals of socialism.”

9. Although reeling, the Party is not a spent force, however, and it will not willingly commit political suicide by moving to free elections. In a speech on November 28, the new General Secretary Karel Urbanek has called on his cadres to go on the offensive and seek to regain control of the now largely reform-minded media. He has rejected recent calls by the Forum to abolish the People’s Militia, remove Party figures as factory managers and eliminate basic Party organizations in enterprises. Urbanek plans to travel to Moscow in early December and will certainly be seeking some sign of Gorbachev’s support for his Party and its future.

10. Despite its disarray, the CPCZ still holds some strong cards. The Party still dominates important societal institutions, including the security forces, and still is the predominant force in the National Front, and will continue to be so even after its legal basis for that control is eliminated. It is no accident that the regime has chosen the Front as the framework for dialogue with the Civic Forum, thereby trying to present the Forum as the “opposition” to established, Party-controlled institutions.

— Where the revolution is headed

11. Valtr Komarek, an economist touted by some as possible ministerial candidate in a new coalition government, was asked this week how long it would take Czechoslovakia to convert into a Western-style democracy. He responded that the country did not need to receive democracy in dribs and drabs; the people could swallow it whole. If the Communists can be forced to let the country’s laws and institutions conform to the people’s will, he said, Czechoslovakia could resume its reformist, democratic traditions almost overnight. That is an assessment the Embassy shares.

12. The brake on this transition will be the one applied by the present regime’s leadership as it maneuvers to delay the date of reforms, particularly free elections. The regime has a number of roadblocks, political and legal, it can put in the way. As General Secretary of the Socialist Party, Jan Skoda, has pointed out to us, moving up the date of elections will require a two-thirds vote of the Federal Assembly. This is something the Assembly, a majority of whose members are Communist and likely to be voted out, may be unready to agree to. However, the Czech and Slovak tendency towards consensus and loss of legitimacy by the CPCZ hierarchy suggest that parliamentarians as well as other functionaries will move rapidly to show “reformist” colors.

13. Quick elections are not necessarily in the Civic Forum's interest. Many of the political groups it represents are only in an embryonic state and will need more time to organize. In the meantime, as the Forum's list of demands submitted to Adamec on November 28 (septel)⁹ indicates, it will focus on the personnel and legal changes in the system necessary to assure a successful transition towards democracy.

Russell

**63. Telegram From
the Embassy in Czechoslovakia
to the Department of State**

Prague, November 29, 1989, 1634Z

Unclassified

Prague 08346; Priority

Subject: Changes in Slovak CP Presidium

1. The Central Committee of the Slovak Communist Party met in Bratislava November 26–27. The Committee accepted the resignation of Ondrej Saling from its Presidium as a result of his election to the Presidium of the Czechoslovak Communist Party. It also accepted the resignations “at their own request” of Slovak Presidium members Gejza Slapka, Elena Litvajova, Viliam Salgovic and Stefan Rybar. It elected as new Presidium members Anna Abelovicova, Michal Blanar, Vladimir Cirbes, Stefan Juhasz, Beata Kacejova, Milan Pruzinec and Rudolf Schuster.

Russell

64. Telegram From the Embassy in Czechoslovakia to the Department of State

Prague, November 30, 1989, 1235Z

Confidential

Prague 08361; Niact Immediate

Subject: Czechoslovak Political Developments

1. Confidential – entire text.
2. Summary. As political developments move along at dizzying speed in Czechoslovakia, we report on several of the more significant over the last 24 hours:
 - The Federal Assembly, in response to a Civic Forum demand, has voted to eliminate the constitutional basis for the CPCZ's leading role, to end the “closed character” of the National Front and to remove Marxism-Leninism as the official state ideology.
 - Prime Minister Adamec has said that the events of the 1968 Warsaw Pact invasion should be re-examined but that this would be done collectively with the five states that participated in the invasion.
 - Adamec has also called for early talks on the basing of Soviet troops in the country but said that their eventual withdrawal would have to be part of an overall European disarmament process.
 - Speaking about the new coalition Government, a Civic Forum representative has stipulated that a Communist could head the Defense Ministry if he were a civilian and had an uncompromised record. The Forum expects a non-Communist to be Interior Minister.
 - New CPCZ Presidium member Vasil Mohorita in a press conference with foreign journalists has said that he foresaw free elections taking place within 12 months.
 - A new CPCZ reform faction, the Democratic Forum, has been set up and its eight-point program shares many goals with the Civic Forum.

A military spokesman has denied rumors that the Army could be used to reverse the current political trends. End summary.

— **Federal Assembly amends Constitution**

3. In a November 29 joint session, the Federal Assembly amended three articles of the Czechoslovak Constitution, as requested by the Civic Forum in its meeting a day earlier with Prime Minister Adamec.¹⁰ Article IV, providing for the CPCZ's leading role in society, was eliminated. Article VI, providing for the "closed character" of the National Front was modified so that it now reads that "interest groups and political parties can associate" in the National Front. (Note: This admits the possibility of new entrants to this umbrella organization which until now has restricted political and social organizations to those legally formed in 1948. End note.) Article 16 has been modified to eliminate Marxism-Leninism as the official state ideology. The State's cultural policy, teaching and education are now to be conducted in "the spirit of scientific knowledge and in harmony with the principles of humanity and democracy."

4. The Federal Assembly also acted to set up a parliamentary commission to investigate the police and security intervention against the student demonstration of November 17. Prague students, including representatives of the student strike committee, will participate in the commission. The Assembly also reportedly approved a proposal to set up a constitutional court by 1 January of next year. This court will be empowered to review the constitutionality of executive actions and legislative measures.

5. Comment. These Federal Assembly measures have enormous importance, although Civic Forum representatives point out that the CPCZ continues through its *nomenklatura* appointments to have the potential for significant influence over most of the social organizations in the National Front, even if the non-Communist parties in the Front are now displaying greater independence. End comment.

— **Prime Minister addresses 1968 and Soviet troops**

6. In a televised address the evening of November 29, Prime Minister Adamec informed the public of his negotiations with the Civic Forum. He also raised the sensitive subjects of 1968 and the stationing of Soviet troops on Czechoslovak territory.

7. On the question of 1968, Adamec said a new generation had entered the country's political life. This generation could not avoid a re-assessment of the

¹⁰ | Document 61, para 7.

events of 1968. Such an assessment would have to determine whether the five-power Warsaw Pact invasion was justifiable or whether the on-going crisis inside the country at that time was solvable by political means. Adamec seemed to reject a unilateral resolution on 1968 by the Czechoslovak Government. While urging the Federal Government to take a fundamental position on 1968, he argued that any re-analysis be conducted collectively with the five Warsaw Pact states participating in the invasion. This analysis should be based on the judgement of a collective group of historians. Such a step, he concluded, was necessary to reduce social tensions and promote dialogue inside Czechoslovakia.

8. Adamec also called for an early start of bilateral talks with the Soviet Government on the temporary stationing of troops in Czechoslovakia. Adamec said that any removal of these troops would have to be part of an overall European disarmament process. He warned it would be a mistake for any politician to use this matter as a “cheap” campaign issue.

9. Comment. Adamec has touched two foreign policy issues of intense popular interest, but in a way that may help to defuse them from becoming political complications as the internal dialogue on reform continues. Adamec was clear he is not talking about early withdrawal of Soviet troops but early talks. In addition to the eventual withdrawal, such talks might also concern practical questions like the cost of basing the troops here for which Czechoslovakia is reportedly carrying a disproportionate share. End comment.

— Civic Forum conditions on a coalition government

10. Prime Minister Adamec met with party and social organizations to discuss his dialogue with the Civic Forum and the composition of the new coalition government of experts he has promised to form by December 3. We understand from contacts at the Socialist Party that it and the People’s Party expect to be represented in the coalition.

11. The Civic Forum has been quite cautious in its comments on the new coalition government. At a press conference on November 29, however, its spokesman did indicate that it gave Adamec certain guidelines on the candidates it would find acceptable for the defense and interior ministers. The Forum would like the Ministry of Defense headed by an “uncompromised” civilian, but would have no objection if he were Communist. It is demanding, however, that a non-Communist head the interior ministry, and again that his character be “uncompromised” (i.e., have no past record of being manipulated by CPCZ authorities).

— CPCZ press conference

12. New CPCZ Presidium member and former head of the Union of Socialist Youth [*Socialist Union of Youth*], Vasil Mohorita, led a press conference from

his party's new press center in downtown Prague. Mohorita made a favorable impression as he fielded foreign journalists' questions. Mohorita's performance is a break with CPCZ practice since Presidium members rarely in the past submitted themselves to unstructured contacts with the foreign press.

13. Mohorita replied to a range of questions. He said that his party was considering moving up the January 26 date for its next Party congress. He said the Civic Forum's demand for the removal of President Husak was a question to be discussed but that the CPCZ objected to politicizing the position of the President in this way. In line with what Prime Minister Adamec would say later in the same evening, he said the CPCZ was ready to take an "objective" look at the events of 1968.

14. Mohorita was especially forthcoming on the question of elections. He said the Government would propose a new election law. He said that he personally anticipated that free elections could take place within the next 12 months.

— A new faction within the CPCZ

15. In another example of the divisions troubling the CPCZ, a group of some 200 Communist Party members announced the creation of a new "Democratic Forum." They held their first meeting in the institute of Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences on November 28. News of the creation of the group appeared on *Rude Pravo's* front page. The Party's eight-point program, as one Democratic Forum member pointed out to us, closely tracks with the demands of the Civic Forum. These points are: an end to the Party's leading role, creation of new Party statutes and speeding up the date for a special Party congress, a re-analysis of 1968–1969 and the abolishment of the People's Militia. On the latter point the Democratic Forum has said that no party should have its own armed force. We understand the Democratic Forum is seeking links with the Obroda reform Communist group and the Civic Forum.

— Military statement

16. Civic Forum contacts continue to have the jitters of a possible military action to reverse the current political trends. These are encouraged by local rumors of troops being confined to barracks and cut off from press and media reports. The Civic Forum spokesman on November 29, in fact, read a statement calling on the military and security forces to respect the will of the people.

17. The Army's military spokesman appeared on evening television to refute these rumors which he said were being spread by uninformed persons at home and the foreign media. He said the Army was not on any kind of alert and was conducting normal military operations. He said members of the Army "support

endeavors for overcoming accumulated social problems and refuse tendencies to violate the unity of the Army and people.”

18. Comment. In confirmation of what this Army spokesman said, the Embassy DAO is now in the process of reporting that there has been no unusual military activity between 17 and 29 November by the Czechoslovak or Soviet military. End comment.

Russell

65. Telegram From the Embassy in Czechoslovakia to the Department of State

Prague, November 30, 1989, 1725Z

Confidential

Prague 08387; Immediate

Subject: Who's Who in the Civic Forum

1. Confidential – entire text.

2. Summary. While the Civic Forum has promised us an organizational chart in the next few days, we offer the following snapshot of its organization and biographic information on some of its members (see para 10 below) for our Washington readership. We would note that several prominent personalities associated with the Forum, such as Forecasting Institute Director Valtr Komarek and Prague Spring leader Alexander Dubcek, do not actually directly work with it. Because of the Embassy's years of human rights contact work, we have unique access to the Forum and its membership, but with events unfolding as rapidly as they are, our contacts have only limited time to share with us. In the case of figures like Vaclav Havel, they have virtually none. The Forum has appointed former Charter spokesman Martin Palous and Obroda member Jan Urban as contact points for the Embassy. End summary.

3. The Forum is a fast-evolving institution with little formal structure and in which responsibilities and personalities are constantly changing. Vaclav Havel serves as its *de facto* head though he has no title or formal position. Forum workers invariably address him as the boss ("chefe") [šéfe]. Around Havel are grouped a number of persons serving as his advisers, many of these, like scriptwriter Jiri Krizan, are old friends. Another, Sasa Vondra, is a current Charter 77 spokesman and editor of several *samizdat* youth journals. Jaroslav Sedivy advises on foreign policy questions. Havel's most important political adviser at the moment is Zdenek Mlynar, an ex-Dubcek aide and former CPCZ Secretary. Mlynar returned to Prague from exile in Vienna only a few

days ago and has been working, we understand, behind the scenes at the Forum since then.¹¹

4. The Forum has something similar to a secretariat which meets daily to discuss policy. This is composed of from ten to 12 persons appointed by consensus. Membership in this changes, depending on the issues under discussion. The secretariat meetings usually include:

- Rita Klimova, the Forum's main English-language translator at press conferences and a contact point for the English-speaking media;
- Jiri Dienstbier, who succeeded Vaclav Maly as press spokesman;
- Vaclav Klaus, a Forecasting Institute economist, who drafted the Forum's first program statement and is working to elaborate on it;
- Petr Miller, a worker who heads the Prague CKD factory strike committee and is serving as coordinator with other strike committees;
- Radim Palous, a former Charles University professor, who is assuming responsibility for educational questions and has a reputation as a consensus maker;
- Zdenek Jicinsky, a pre-1968 Communist, who is a constitutional lawyer;
- Martin Mejstrik, the head of the student strike committee in Prague; and
- Sasa Vondra, Vaclav Maly and now, we assume, Zdenek Mlynar also attend these strategy sessions.

5. On broader questions of policy the Civic Forum calls a more general membership meeting. Again participation is by consensus but these "central committee" meetings can involve as many as 100 persons representing the various groups - political, social and ethnic (i.e., there is a representative of the Gypsy community) - supporting the Forum.

6. The Forum is a Czech institution. The Slovaks have their own pro-democracy movement, "The Public Against Violence" (PAV), in which long-time dissident figures Jan Carnogursky, Miroslav Kusy and Milan Simecka play a large role. Carnogursky was in Prague to participate as the PAV representative in the dialogue with Prime Minister Adamec on November 28. Havel traveled to Bratislava on November 29 to address the PAV and to coordinate its actions with the Forum.

7. Other key figures in the Civic Forum include:

- Jan Urban, who serves as a sort of *chef de cabinet* of the secretariat, preparing for its meetings and following up on its decisions. Urban also joins Martin Palous and Ivan Gabal, head of the Circle of Independent Intelligentsia, as analysts of the day's media reporting and political events. They brief the secretariat on these on a regular basis.

11 | One of the few factual errors in these reports. Mlynář never took part in the work of the Civic Forum and was never Havel's adviser. See also Document 85, para 8, and Document 90, para 11.

- Ivan Havel, Vaclav's brother, has largely assumed the administrative responsibility for the Forum which is now working out of the "Laterna Magika" theater in downtown Prague.

(Note: The Government has offered the Forum office space in the Palace of Culture, but Civic Forum leaders are hoping to obtain space closer to the city center. End note.)

8. There are also a number of standing committees, among them: a conceptual program committee headed by Klaus; a press committee headed by Dienstbier and a legal committee headed by Jicinsky.

9. The Forum has assigned several individuals to assume responsibility for media contacts. These contacts are coordinated with press spokesman Jiri Dienstbier.

- Petr Pospichal, Charter 77 activist, handles radio;
- Jiri Kanturek, former Czechoslovak Television editor, handles television; and
- Rita Klimova and Martin Palous handle press.

10. Additional biographic sketches on these and other Forum members are contained below.

— **Jan Carnogursky**

- Jan Carnogursky (47) is a lay Catholic activist and lawyer who has worked to support underground Church structures in Slovakia. He is a proponent of Slovak rights within the framework of a Federal Czechoslovak State. He has center-right political views. He is not a Charter 77 signatory since he has not always agreed with the Charter's political positions. He was recently acquitted on a charge of subversion and released by a presidential reprieve from facing an appeal on this charge by the State Prosecutor. Carnogursky speaks some English.

— **Jiri Dienstbier**

- Jiri Dienstbier (51) is a former journalist and Communist who served as Radio Prague's reporter in Washington in the mid-1960's and through 1968. Upon return to Prague he was expelled from the Party. He is a founding Charter 77 signatory and has been sought after by Western journalists for his comments on the domestic political scene. His political views fall within a Euro-Communist/Social Democratic spectrum and he speaks good English.

— **Ivan Havel**

- Ivan Havel (50) is Vaclav Havel's brother. He is a philosopher who spent a year at graduate school in Berkeley. He speaks excellent English but until now

has not been active publicly in opposition activities. He has organized private seminar groups on politics and philosophy.

— **Michal Horacek**

– Michal Horacek (early 40's) is not a Forum member but has been a member of the “Bridge” (or “Most” in Czech) which has served as an intermediary between the Prime Minister's Office and the Forum. “Most” is still looking for ways to be helpful and was used to deliver the Forum's letter to the Soviet Embassy requesting a Supreme Soviet re-evaluation of 1968. Horacek is an editor of the youth publication *Mlady Svet*.

— **Zdenek Jicinsky**

– Zdenek Jicinsky (60) is a law professor and constitution expert who taught at the Prague CPCZ Party College until the Prague Spring. He served as Vice Chairman of the Czech National Council (the Czech Republic Assembly) in 1968. He was expelled from the CPCZ in 1969.

— **Jiri Kanturek**

– Jiri Kanturek (56) is a former Czechoslovak Television editor and moderator who lost his job after the Prague Spring. He is the Civic Forum's contact for the television media. His wife is the authoress and former Charter 77 spokesperson Eva Kanturkova. Neither of them speaks English.

— **Vaclav Klaus**

– Vaclav Klaus (early 50's) is a highly respected economist with the Forecasting Institute. He considers himself a student of Friedman and the Chicago School and has close links with economic reformers in Poland and Hungary, including many new Polish economic and finance ministers. His career was sidelined after the Prague Spring because of his reformist writings. He worked at low-level research positions in the National Bank before taking his current job at the Forecasting Institute. He speaks excellent English and is widely published.

— **Rita Klimova**

– Rita Klimova (55) spent much of her childhood in New York before her family returned to Czechoslovakia after World War II. She is a former Communist and economist who has been active in organizing the local Helsinki Watch

Committee. Her principal job now is as a translator and author. She was the first wife of Zdenek Mlynar, from whom she has been divorced for 20 years. She speaks fluent English.

— **Michael Kocab**

– Michael Kocab (41) is a composer, former rock star, and popular entertainment figure. He is a member of “Most” (or Bridge) which has tried to bring the Civic Forum in contact with the Government. He is married to an American but speaks little English.

— **Valtr Komarek**

– Valtr Komarek has been the head of the Forecasting Institute since 1984. While a supporter, he is not a member of the Civic Forum and is included in this because his name has recently been closely associated with the Forum. Komarek’s economic career ran into troubles in 1969 because of his connection with Prague Spring reforms, on which he worked with Ota Sik. While not expelled from the Party in 1969, he was allowed to hold only lower-level research positions until relatively recently. Komarek’s economic Forecasting Institute issued a controversial and critical “prognosis” of the Czechoslovak economy in 1987, which led him to be attacked personally by CPCZ conservatives. While Komarek supports reducing the role of planning in Czechoslovakia, he argues it cannot be fully eliminated. Komarek has worked in Cuba as an economic adviser and speaks Spanish.

— **Jiri Krizan**

– Jiri Krizan (early 50’s) is a successful playwright in the Czech theater. He was an original signer of the “Few Sentences” petition and an organizer of an earlier petition in 1989 for Vaclav Havel’s release from prison. He was an early promoter of the closure of Prague theaters after the November 17 police attack on student demonstrators.

— **Vaclav Maly**

– Vaclav Maly (42) is a Catholic priest, human rights activist and former Charter 77 spokesman. He is one of the country’s most prominent religious figures. Maly lost his license to practice as a priest because of his human rights activities, though he continues to follow his ministry underground. Maly was the first Civic Forum press spokesman but may have been concerned that the higher political profile this gave him was inconsistent with his priestly duties.

(He was replaced by Jiri Dienstbier.) He speaks English and is a forceful speaker. Maly has spent nearly a year in prison for his human rights work.

— Zdenek Mlynar

– Zdenek Mlynar is a former Dubcek and CPCZ Secretary. He was expelled from the Party in 1969 and since then has been exiled in Austria, where he has worked at the Vienna Institute for International Relations¹². Mlynar has kept open his contacts with the CPCZ and has also written a number of books and articles, including *Night Frost*, about the Prague Spring. He was formerly married to Civic Forum figure Rita Klimova and reportedly roomed with Soviet leader Gorbachev as a Moscow student in the 1950's.

— Martin Palous

– Martin Palous (41) is a former Charter 77 spokesman and philosopher, who is currently working as a computer programmer. He is the son of a Charter 77 founder, Radim Palous. He speaks excellent English and is a practicing Catholic.

— Radim Palous

– Radim Palous (mid-60's) was a philosophy professor at Charles University who was expelled after the Prague Spring. He is a founder of Charter 77 and early Charter spokesman. He represents the religious (Catholic) wing of the Charter.

— Petr Pospichal

– Petr Pospichal (28) is a Charter 77 member, and religious human rights activist, who is from Brno. He was convicted on several occasions for his independent political activities and has spent a total of several years in prison. He began his career as a printer.

— Jaroslav Sedivy

– Jaroslav Sedivy (mid-60's) is a former fellow of Prague's Institute of International Politics and Economics. He was a foreign-policy advisor to Dubcek during the Prague Spring.

¹² | Mlynář was a co-founder of Charter 77. He emigrated to Vienna in summer 1977.

— **Jan Urban**

– Jan Urban (42) is a Charter signatory, and son of a former Czechoslovak diplomat. Urban lost his job as a teacher after 1968. He has worked in various manual labor positions since then, including as a bricklayer. Urban is a member of reform socialist/Communist group known as the Obroda (or Renewal) movement. Urban is highly articulate and speaks fluent English. He is also a member of the independent East European Information Service which functions as a dissident news service in Poland, the Soviet Union and Czechoslovakia.

— **Sasa Vondra**

– Sasa Vondra (26) is a Charter signatory, dissident youth leader and editor of a number of *samizdat* periodicals. Vondra currently works as a computer programmer. He was recently released from prison after serving the two remaining months of an eight-month sentence for incitement. The incitement charge was brought against him for his work in organizing and participating in demonstrations, such as the January Jan Palach Commemoration.

Russell

66. Telegram From the Embassy in Czechoslovakia to the Department of State

Prague, November 30, 1989, 1752Z

Confidential

Prague 08392

Subject: Socialist Party Official on the Civic Forum

1. Confidential – entire text.

2. Summary. Socialist Party General Secretary Jan Skoda tells us that his party, while seeking an independent political role, will remain within the National Front and work from within it to break down the CPCZ' influence over Front organizations. The Socialists take credit for giving early support to the fledgling Civic Forum, but believe their own political interests are best served by not joining the Forum. Skoda says he has no ambitions in the new coalition government but believes the Socialists could hold some portfolios in the government to be formed by December 3. Skoda, while critical of President Husak for playing an "extremely neutral" role in the political crisis of the last two weeks, nonetheless feels the Civic Forum's demand for his resignation is a mistake. It will, in his view, complicate the reform process. Skoda complains that "crowd psychosis" may propel Dubcek into the presidency, but he could offer no other candidates who might have the popular support to replace Husak should he be forced to resign. End summary.

3. Asked to explain the Socialist Party role in the political events of the last two weeks, the party's General Secretary, Jan Skoda, told EmbOff on November 29 that it was extremely proud of the support it had given to the fledgling Civic Forum. The Forum had now been recognized by the Government and been guaranteed office space to operate out of as well as access to the media and its own newspaper. While the Socialists kept in close contact with the Forum, Skoda said they did not consider themselves members of it, though they sympathized with its goals. Unlike the Socialist Party, the Forum claimed to have

no political ambitions. The Socialist Party felt it was in its own best political interests to establish its independence from within the National Front and work from inside it to eliminate the CPCZ's influence on Front organizations.

4. Skoda claimed that Adamec had gained the confidence of the Civic Forum over the past few days, sufficient in fact to make it re-think its demand for his resignation. (Note: Such a demand had never been explicitly stated. End note.) The Forum, he thought, now had a better appreciation of how difficult it would be to accomplish some of the legal and personnel changes they wanted done.

5. Skoda gave as an example changes in the electoral law and the resignation of "compromised" deputies in parliament. An earlier date for elections than that provided by the Constitution (i.e., May 1991) could only be approved by a two-thirds vote of the [Federal] Assembly. Current deputies would resist passing such a measure since it was likely they would be voted out of office next time around. Similarly hardliners in the Assembly, like Miroslav Stepan and Vasil Bilak, while forced from CPCZ positions could, constitutionally at least, hang on to their parliamentary seats until 1991.

6. Skoda described the leadership changes in the People's Party, particularly replacement of party Chairman Zalman by Josef Bartoncik (septel)¹³ as a long time in the making. He expected changes at the top of his own Socialist Party (e.g., current president Kucera) but not before the party held an extraordinary congress, now scheduled for February. Skoda said some members wanted to move that date up. Skoda expected that both Socialist and the People's Parties would be represented in the new coalition government.

7. Skoda described the Civic Forum's demand for President Husak's resignation (Prague 8342)¹⁴ as a mistake which would complicate the process of reform by adding yet another issue to be resolved. Skoda said he was disturbed himself at Husak's "excessively" neutral role in the crisis of the past two weeks, but thought presidential succession could have been addressed later, after a new government coalition had been formed and more progress made on various legislative changes. Skoda confirmed that, should the President resign, his successor would be elected by the National [Federal] Assembly on the basis of nominations put forward by the National Front.

8. Skoda was uncomfortable with a question on Dubcek's chances for the presidency. He said a certain "crowd psychosis [*mass hysteria*] could propel Dubcek to the Castle," but it was an historical anachronism. Asked, however, to suggest someone else who would have the popular support to replace Husak, Skoda was at a loss to offer a name.

13 | Document 68.

14 | Document 61.

9. Comment. Now that the demand for Husak's resignation is on the table, and in view of Federal Assembly Chairman Indra's resignation, it looks likely the President will go. Whether Skoda likes it or not, there are few candidates other than Dubcek who would receive popular support for the job. Skoda did not say this, but he might have had in mind that without a resolution of issues like 1968, including the question of the 1969 CPCZ purges and possible rehabilitation, it will be awkward putting Dubcek up for nomination. Dubcek's election would depend on the vote of a parliament still composed of post-1968 figures like Bilak and Strougal.

Russell

67. Telegram From the Embassy in Czechoslovakia to the Department of State

Prague, November 30, 1989, 1755Z

Unclassified

Prague 08393

Subject: Student Strike Continues

1. Summary: Czechoslovak students have announced that they will continue to strike at least through Sunday, December 3. The strike's end will be announced on Czechoslovak TV by student leader Martin Mejstrik, apparently to preclude any possibility that the Government could falsely announce that the strike is over. (Note: The Government outraged students last week by claiming on TV and radio that students planned to end their strike on Sunday, November 26. End note.) End summary.

2. At a November 27 press conference held by the Civic Forum, student leaders announced that they would continue to strike at least through Tuesday, November 28. Continuation after that date would depend on the results of Tuesday's negotiations between representatives of the Civic Forum and Prime Minister Adamec. The student leaders said they were aware of the Civic Forum's recommendation that strikes and demonstrations be suspended pending the results of negotiations, but had decided to continue their strike anyway.

3. On November 28, immediately after the press conference in which the Government announced the results of its negotiations with Civic Forum, a student spokesman told CommAtt that the strike would continue until all their demands were met. These demands are essentially those contained in the Civic Forum's "What We Want" proclamation. CommAtt pointed out that this might take years since some of the demands are general and far reaching. The student admitted that the students could not strike for so long, but he emphasized that they must have some firm assurance that the demands would be fulfilled. In his personal opinion, the strike could be stopped if the parliament formally

abolished the leading role of the [Communist] Party by repealing Article Four of the Constitution. (Note: This was done at the Federal Assembly session of November 29. End note.)

4. Comment: The prolongation of the student strike may be meant to emphasize the independence of the students vis-à-vis the Civic Forum. Students apparently are not willing to be simply subsumed in the broader movement exemplified by the Civic Forum and they also seem to be chafing at the Forum's moderate tactics. End comment.

Russell

68. Telegram From the Embassy in Czechoslovakia to the Department of State

Prague, November 30, 1989, 1756Z

Unclassified

Prague 08394

Subject: New Leaders for the Czechoslovak People's Party

1. Summary and introduction: On the night of November 28 to 29, the Central Committee and local committee chairmen of the Czechoslovak People's Party (CSL) met to decide on a new party program and to elect a new Central Committee and leadership. (Note: The CSL was historically the Czechoslovak equivalent of Christian Democratic parties in other European countries). The old Presidium and Secretariat had resigned *en masse* on the previous day. The new chairman of the Presidium is Josef Bartoncik; his deputies are Bohumil Svoboda, Frantisek Reichel and Richard Sacher. Other members are Antonin Baudys, Vaclav Cibuzar, Jiri Cerny, Jan Fricar, Stanislav Hanak, Josef Meier, Ludvik Motycka, Bohumil Servus, and Josef Sedivy. The changes represent a takeover of the party's leadership by the reform wing known as the "Living Stream" which was founded within the party earlier this year. End summary.

2. New CSL leader Bartoncik met with Karel Urbanek, General Secretary of the Communist Party, on the 29th and, according to *Rude Pravo*, the two agreed that a solution to the current situation could be found "on the basis of socialism without the errors of the past." *Rude Pravo* also carried an interview with Bartoncik in which he said that the People's Party would remain a part of the National Front and he emphasized that the CSL is an ecumenical party not connected to any Church.

3. More detailed biographies of the newly elected CSL chairman and his deputies follow:

JUDr. Josef Bartoncik was born on March 18, 1943, at Pozlovice in the Gottwaldov District in Moravia as one of seven children in the family of a small

craftsman. He attended secondary school at Uhersky Brod and then worked as a blue-collar worker. He joined the CSL in 1965 and eventually became the leading secretary of the Regional Committee in South Moravia. In 1968–69 he studied theology for three terms as a layman at the Theological Faculty in Olomouc. Since 1982 he has been a member of the Federal Assembly. Bartoncik was an active, but behind the scenes, reformer in the CSL and had many links with members of the “Living Stream” group within the party. He is married with three children.

PhDr. Bohumil Svoboda was born in Brno on September 20, 1924, and studied at a former gymnasium [secondary school] in Prague. He worked as an assistant director first at the Barrandov Film Studio and then at the Dallas Theater Center. For more than 15 years he was a journalist at *Nase Rodina*. Most recently he served as Deputy Chairman of the District Party Committee in Prague 6 and as a spokesman of the “Living Stream” in the CSL. He is married and has two sons.

MVDr. Frantisek Reichel was born January 27, 1938 in Prague and studied at the High Veterinary School in Brno. He has worked as veterinarian in Tachov, from 1967 in general management at SPOFA (a drug manufacturer) and since 1974 has headed the Czechoslovak delegation to the CMEA Standing Commission for Agriculture. He is married with one child.

JUDr. Richard Sacher was born September 1, 1942 at Upice in the Trutnov District. He has worked as a textile worker, miner and driver. In 1968 he joined the CSL and in 1969 became Secretary of the party in Northern Bohemia. In 1988 he was expelled from the party because he has written to CSL leaders criticizing the party’s stagnation. He is a practicing Catholic and a founder of the “Living Stream.” Together with other members he organized a meeting of this reform wing of the party at the Savarin restaurant on October 14, 1989. The meeting was prevented by security officials, at the request of the CSL’s then Chairman Zdenek [Zbyněk] Zalman. Sacher is married and has two children.

Russell

69. Telegram From the Embassy in Czechoslovakia to the Department of State

Prague, December 1, 1989, 1457Z¹⁵

Confidential

Prague 08413; Immediate

Subject: Czechoslovak Update December 1

Ref: Prague 8361¹⁶

1. Confidential – entire text.

2. Summary. The next big political event on the Czechoslovak horizon is the announcement of a coalition government by Prime Minister Adamec by December 3. Horse-trading on new government positions among the CPCZ, non-Communist parties and the Civic Forum seems to be in full swing. The Forum denies it is promoting any specific candidates, or that the Forum as an institution will be represented in the new Government, though individual Forum supporters may receive portfolios. Other developments noted in this message include:

- the CPCZ belatedly jumps on the bandwagon for a re-evaluation of 1968;
- public concern continues over the slow pace of the investigation of the November 17 police action against students;
- GOC authorities eliminate the need for travel exit visas;
- labor unrest in Ostrava seems linked to local Communist efforts to stir up concern that reform only could produce mass unemployment;
- Czechoslovak Television interviews Dubcek-era figure Zdenek Mlynar and airs speeches by ex-Prime Ministers Strougal and Cernik.

¹⁵ | From the time-date code it follows that the telegram was printed out in Washington on December 4, 1989.

¹⁶ | Document 64.

— Coalition to be announced December 3

3. Horse-trading on a new coalition government has been continuing over the last 24 hours. Civic Forum representatives have met with Socialist Party General Secretary Jan Skoda, People's Party Deputy Chairman Rudolf Sacher, and for the first time the Forum has had direct contacts with the CPCZ. Forum representatives Zdenek Jicinsky, Jiri Krizan, Michael Kocab and Petr Pithart met with Presidium member Vasil Mohorita on November 30, though no details were released.

4. In public statements and private contacts, Forum representatives stick to the position that they are not putting forward any specific candidates for the new government. The only conditions the Forum has set (reftel) are that civilians should head the Defense and Interior Ministries, and that the new Interior Minister not be a Communist. The Forum also has called for the new government to be composed of individuals not discredited by their actions over the past 20 years.

5. The Forum has confirmed that Prime Minister Adamec had offered it a position as a political grouping in the new government, but that this was rejected. Behind the scenes, however, it seems certain that the Forum is giving its opinion on the individual candidates Adamec is trying to draw into his new "coalition of experts."

6. Early talk of Valtr Komarek, the Forecasting Institute Director, as a potential candidate to replace Adamec has died down. In a press conference on November 30, Komarek said himself that he had no ambition to be Prime Minister, though he was ready to serve the Government in some advisory capacity.

7. The Forum also appears to be letting the issue of President Husak's resignation drop after calling on him to step down by December 10. A delegation of Communist Federal Assembly deputies visited Husak on November 29 and asked him to stay on. A member of the Socialist Party has portrayed the Forum request to us as a political mistake which would complicate working other reforms through the Federal Assembly.¹⁷

— 1968 re-evaluation on track

8. After Prime Minister Adamec's call for a "collective" re-evaluation of 1968 by Czechoslovakia and the five Warsaw Pact states that invaded it (reftel), the CPCZ Presidium seems to be heading in that direction itself. In its November 30 session, the Presidium set up a study group for the "critical reassessment" of the 1968 invasion and the circumstances surrounding it.

17 | See Document 66, para 7.

9. The Institute of Marxism-Leninism has also issued a resolution about the past “one-sided” assessment of those events. The Institute called for a reopening of the Party’s document, the Lesson (or Pouceni) of the 1968 crisis. Prague School of Economics Rector Antonin Bruzek tells us that the Institute will be changing its name now that Marxism-Leninism is no longer the state ideology. It will in future be known as the Institute for Social and Economic Sciences. Its departments for Party History and Marxist Philosophy will be renamed the World History and Philosophy Departments respectively. Bruzek said one of the Institute’s first problems will be finding replacement textbooks.

— Investigation of November 17 demonstrations

10. Popular and student concern over the investigation of police action on November 17 continues, despite creation of a Federal Assembly Commission. The new CPCZ faction “Democratic Forum” has asked why the General Prosecutor has failed so far to identify the person responsible for giving the police order to attack the students on November 17, despite being requested to do so by the Czech Government by November 27. In a public ceremony on November 30, new CPCZ General Secretary Urbanek turned over a letter to the General Prosecutor which contained “facts” to help clarify the events of November 17. Because of dissatisfaction in the way the investigation is being handled, students, and with them most theater staff, are scheduled to remain on strike through Sunday, December 3.

— Release of political prisoners

11. *Rude Pravo* reports that political prisoners continue to be released. Criminal proceedings have ended against Jiri Jelinek and Stanislav Devaty. The latter has been in hiding and now should resurface as a significant figure in the Civic Forum movement. President Husak has also pardoned a number of other political prisoners and released them from serving the remainder of their prison terms: Vitezslav Kokor, Renata Panova, Stanislav Pitas, Vladan Koci, Stefan Javorsky and Otakar Veverka.

— Travel controls

12. As of December 4, the Ministry of the Interior has announced that Czechoslovaks will no longer require an exit visa to travel from the country. A passport and a new “statistical sheet” will be sufficient. This reform had already been announced but the date of implementation has been moved up.

13. The Ministry has also announced plans to remove its extensive controls along the Austrian border, though not yet along the FRG border.

— **Labor unrest in Ostrava**

14. Reports have been coming out of the mining region of Ostrava about labor unrest. There is little detail on this in the press. Disturbances seem to have been connected with the general strike of November 27 which was widely observed by the miners. Local Party officials had been agitating with workers to prevent the strike and to spread fears that a new coalition government in Prague might produce massive unemployment in this mining region. Civic Forum representatives, including economists from the Forecasting Institute, apparently traveled to Ostrava yesterday to dispel miners' fears and had some success. A report in the Socialist paper *Svobodne Slovo* quotes miners as saying that local Party and mine officials had been trying to restrict the actions of the local strike committees and to prevent these committees from circulating information about the Civic Forum and its program.

— **The media remains objective**

15. Despite fears that Miroslav Pavel's appointment was a step in tightening government control over a newly objective Czechoslovak Television, that has so far not appeared to be the case. Thursday evening's television broadcasting was among the most interesting so far in a very interesting week. It included an interview by Pavel of Prague Spring-era figure Zdenek Mlynar, a former Dubcek aide, who has been until now in exile in Austria. Mlynar's discussion amounted to a civics lesson on what was needed to be done to transform Czechoslovakia into a pluralistic democracy. Asked by Pavel at the interview what political ambitions Mlynar might have, he not very convincingly said he had none.

16. Television coverage also included speeches by former politicians, as well as a statement by a Civic Forum representative. Ex-Prime Minister Lubomir Strougal gave a long speech in which he claimed not to be personally responsible for the past twenty years of stagnation, blaming instead the influence of Party hardliners who frustrated his attempts at reform. Later in the evening, Oldrich Cernik addressed the public on the events of 1968. He described the difficult position he found himself in as the Prime Minister responsible for implementing the Prague-Spring reforms after the Warsaw Pact invasion.

Russell

70. Telegram From the Embassy in Czechoslovakia to the Department of State

Prague, December 1, 1989, 1523Z

Confidential

Prague 08415; Immediate

Subject: Meeting of Civic Forum Representatives and American Senators

1. Confidential – entire text.

2. Summary. A delegation of American senators visited with Civic Forum representatives in Prague on November 30. The Civic Forum representatives briefed the senatorial delegation concerning recent dramatic events, as well as presenting their views concerning future political and economic developments. The Civic Forum believes the most important support the USG can offer the Forum in the immediate future is political, in particular support which would minimize the possibility that force might be used to thwart democratic forces and processes now present. In the longer term, American assistance to developing political parties, and educational exchanges, would be useful. The senatorial delegation also met with Auxiliary Bishop Antonin Liska during its visit. End summary.

3. A delegation of American senators met with representatives of the Civic Forum (CF) in Prague on November 30. The senators present were Claiborne Pell, Paul Sarbanes, John Chafee, and John Warner. Civic Forum participants were Vaclav Maly (Catholic priest and former Charter 77 spokesperson), Ivan Gabal (sociologist and founder of the Circle of Independent Intelligentsia), Martin Palous (philosopher and former Charter 77 spokesperson), Pavel Bratinka (conservative dissident writer and a physicist by training), and Tomas Jezek (economist from the Forecasting Institute, Czechoslovak Academy of Science). During the one-hour session, the Civic Forum representatives reviewed the dramatic events of the past two weeks and gave their views concerning possible political and economic developments.

— CF views concerning the new coalition Government

4. The Civic Forum representatives indicated that Prime Minister Adamec had offered the Forum a place in the coalition government now being formed, but the Adamec offer had been declined. The Civic Forum feels it is too soon to have a minister in the Government and believes Communists might attempt to manipulate such a situation. The Forum representatives confirmed that they had made only two concrete demands concerning personnel in the new coalition government: (1) that the Minister of Interior be an uncompromised civilian who is not a member of the Communist Party; and (2) that the Minister of Defense be an uncompromised civilian who could be a Communist. (Note. The Civic Forum feels that the threat of a "military putsch" has passed. End note.)

5. The Civic Forum has demanded that the government being formed by Adamec reflect a plurality of interests. If the coalition government does not provide a program which guarantees free elections and fundamental freedoms (speech, association, press, religion), the CF will demand resignation of the government. The CF feels that the general strike of November 27 was a success, and that another general strike could be successfully called to pressure the Government again. The CF indicated that it will give the coalition government until the end of 1989 to demonstrate a concrete commitment to implement these reforms. The CF representatives admitted that a call for resignation of the coalition government could provoke a political crisis, but believed such a crisis would lead to political improvements.

— Views on the development of democratic political structures

6. The Civic Forum representatives repeated that the Forum is not a political party. The Forum, however, does want to encourage the growth of political parties and clubs in Czechoslovakia and believes a variety of parties, with their different programs and ideas, is essential to the growth of democratic structures in Czechoslovakia. (Note. The CF representatives specifically ask that the National Endowment for Democracy support the various efforts at political party-building now going on in Czechoslovakia, although no one present could state whether such assistance would be legal. End note.)

7. The Civic Forum representatives present also stated that those participating in Forum activities represent a spectrum of views, but that a goal shared by almost everyone in the Forum is establishment of a Western-style parliamentary system for Czechoslovakia. Although the parliamentary system from the inter-war period could serve as a model for the future, the CF representatives noted that any future parliamentary system would need to take account of the current federalized system of separate Czech and Slovak republics. The CF reps noted that current events were contributing to a rise of national identity,

and that citizens were beginning to think of themselves not only as Czechs or Slovaks but also as Czechoslovaks.

8. Although all the Civic Forum representatives present support free elections and parliamentary democracy, there was a division of opinion as to when elections should be held. Most of the Civic Forum representatives seemed to favor an election no later than May, and view such an “early election” as a means of maintaining the present momentum for reform. Dr. Gabal, however, indicated that he believes an election in the latter half of 1990 would allow more time for the building of political parties and other democratic structures.

9. The broad spectrum of opinion within the CF has made it necessary for the CF to avoid the use of “too strong words.” In particular, the CF has not incorporated a statement into its principles concerning private property because much of the CF membership is of a socialist/leftist bent. Rather, by avoiding controversial statements and concentrating only on the common goal of establishment of a parliamentary democracy, the Civic Forum hopes to maintain a high level of support from the general population and thus maintain pressure on the GOC to undertake basic democratic reforms.

— View on the economy

10. The CF representatives present seemed committed to the concept of a “market economy with good social programs.” However, they indicated that many Czechoslovaks were slow to become disillusioned about socialism and that a consensus about so-called “liberal democratic principles” (such as the private ownership of the means of production), had not yet been achieved.

11. The CF spokespersons stated that the private ownership of the means of production had been abolished in its entirety in Czechoslovakia. (Comment. Exceptions exist, though in practical effect this is correct. End comment.) Many Czechoslovaks continue to associate “private ownership” with the ownership of large enterprises. Any program of restructuring the economy toward private ownership would have to take into account the large size of Czechoslovak industrial enterprises. (Comment. This may have been meant to imply that, at least initially, such enterprises would remain state-owned. End comment.) In addition, any shift to private ownership must be done in a way which does not encourage professionals to move “downward” in the economy. The specific example of Hungary was cited where opportunities in the service and agricultural sections apparently caused many professionals to leave their professions.

12. CF representatives believe that the Czechoslovak economic situation is deteriorating, and this has placed pressure upon the current leadership of the GOC to reach an accommodation with the opposition. Despite this deterioration, the CF does not believe a massive economic package, such as that fashioned for Poland, is necessary here. (Comment. In earlier contacts CF Reps had rejected

the idea of Western “aid” as necessary to help restructure the economy and would prefer a reliance on commercial credits, increased exports, and private investment to assist in the process. End comment.)

— **How the USG can help**

13. Asked what the USG could do to assist those working for democracy in Czechoslovakia, those present stressed that in the short term the most important U.S. contribution would be simply to show political support in a way that would minimize the potential that force might be used to thwart the democratic forces and processes now present in Czechoslovakia.

14. The CF also asked that the USG not prematurely grant the GOC Most Favored Nation (MFN) status. The CF expects the GOC will ask for MFN after some reforms have been undertaken. The CF asked that the USG consult with CF representatives before taking any action on this question.

15. The CF representatives also stated they are in need of an exchange of views with American experts and officials. Civic Forum reps complained they are so busy at present that they have little or no time to read the newspapers. Political and economic perspectives that American experts could offer would be useful for them. The CF asks, however, that the USG realize that the path to democracy in Czechoslovakia will be different from that in Poland and Hungary, and that the USG during any exchanges of opinion be sensitive to and sympathetic with these differences.

16. With regard to longer-term assistance from the U.S., the CF reps believed it would be useful for the U.S. to provide educational opportunities in the U.S. for Czechoslovak students. Another useful program would be for American experts in a variety of fields to come to Czechoslovakia to teach in their fields of expertise.

— **The visit with Bishop Liska**

17. The senatorial delegation also called on Antonin Liska, Auxiliary Bishop of the Diocese of Prague, for his evaluation of the current situation. Liska termed the changes underway in Czechoslovakia a renewal of democracy and an opportunity for the more equal treatment of all Czechoslovak citizens. Liska pointed out that Cardinal Tomasek had supported the efforts of those working for democracy. Liska believes the movement toward democracy is irreversible. With regard to current Church affairs, the Bishop indicated the Church had already seen a loosening of state controls, and expected such process to continue. (One of source has indicated that the CF has demanded that the GOC enact a law guaranteeing separation of Church and State.)

Russell

71. Telegram From the Embassy in Czechoslovakia to the Department of State

Prague, December 4, 1989, 1227Z

Confidential

Prague 08445; Niact Immediate

Subject: Adamec Announces New "Coalition" Government: Civic Forum
Responds with Strike Threat

Ref: Prague 8361¹⁸

1. Confidential – entire text.

2. Summary. The announcement of a new government "coalition" by Prime Minister Adamec has been strongly criticized by the opposition group Civic Forum. As the Forum has said, the appointment, in most cases re-appointment, of Communists to 15 out of 20 government ministries shows that the CPCZ, whatever legal changes it has approved in the Constitution, has no intention yet of abandoning its leading role in the country's political life. The new Government includes one Socialist, one People's Party representative, as well as three figures without party affiliation. None of these has a past record of opposition. The Civic Forum has called for a mass demonstration in Prague at 16:00 on December 4 to mark popular dissatisfaction with the new coalition. At this demonstration it will repeat demands for civilian, non-Communist representation in the Defense and Interior Ministries, as well as the resignation of Foreign Minister Johanes, Energy Minister Krumnikl and President Husak and call for a government commitment for free elections in July 1990. The Forum is threatening a December 11 general strike should these demands not be met.

3. Adamec should have expected this strong Civic Forum reaction. He, and the CPCZ Party leadership behind him, may be banking on the Forum having

¹⁸ | Document 64.

trouble generating mass, popular and worker support now that the more emotion-laden issues (1968 and the removal of the Party and Government leadership associated with it) seem to have been addressed. The future progress of the Forum's pro-democracy movement will rest on its ability to repeat a show of mass support today (December 4) at a demonstration called for Wenceslas Square and at a probable December 11 general strike. End Summary.

— The new “coalition” Government

4. Prime Minister Adamec's newly announced Government is not, on the face of it, a serious effort at power-sharing, nor has it met the minimal demands set by the pro-democracy opposition group, Civic Forum, for a coalition Government of experts. Adamec retained 12 of his previous ministers, including current Foreign Minister Johanes and most of those working on the economy, and admitted only five non-Communists (out of a total of 20 ministers) in the new Government.

5. The non-Communists hold the relatively less powerful portfolios of culture/education; consumer rights (i.e., the People's Control Commission); price controls; and science and technology. One is without portfolio. None of the five non-Communists has previously been identified with opposition groups such as the Civic Forum. Two represent the Socialist (Dvorak) and People's (Reichel) Parties. Three are said to be without-political affiliation; the one attractive new minister among these is Josef Hromadka, a Protestant Church leader who is expected to take the culture/education portfolio, which includes religious affairs.

6. Adamec has removed the hardest of the hardliners in the Government, among them figures who bitterly opposed his initiative at dialogue with the Civic Forum in past weeks. Those removed include Deputy Prime Minister Lucan, formerly responsible for culture and education, Deputy Prime Minister Obzina (science and technology), and Interior Minister Kincl. (Kincl's resignation had been high on the list of striking students' demands.) The Forum had made only two specific demands on Adamec in terms of formation of the new coalition. It had asked that the Defense Ministry be headed by a civilian and the Interior Ministry by a non-Communist. Both demands were ignored. The new Defense Minister is General-Colonel Miroslav Vacek, the former Deputy Minister of Defense. The new Interior Minister, Frantisek Pinc, while an engineer with no apparent past Government experience, is a Communist.

7. A list of new Government ministers is provided below. Biographic information on the new appointments follows septel.¹⁹

19 | Prague 08479; not included in this volume.

— **Name (political affiliation) position**

Ladislav Adamec (CPCZ)	Prime Minister
Marian Calfa (CPCZ)	First Deputy Prime Minister
Bohumil Urban (CPCZ)	First Deputy Prime Minister
Frantisek Pitra (CPCZ)	Deputy Prime Minister of CSSR and Premier of [the] Czech [Socialist] Republic
Pavel Hrivnak (CPCZ)	Deputy Prime Minister of CSSR and Premier of [the] Slovak [Socialist] Republic
Jaromir Zak (CPCZ)	Deputy Prime Minister and Chairman of the State Planning Commission
Josef Hromadka (independent)	Deputy Prime Minister
Ladislav Vodrazka (CPCZ)	Deputy Prime Minister in charge of Metallurgy, Engineering and Electronics
Jaromir Johanes (CPCZ)	Minister for Foreign Affairs
Miroslav Vacek (CPCZ)	Minister of National Defense
Frantisek Pinc (CPCZ)	Minister of the Interior
Jan Stejskal (CPCZ)	Minister of Finance
Kvetoslava Korinkova (independent)	Minister-Chairwoman of the People's Control Commission
Andrej Barcak (CPCZ)	Minister of Foreign Trade
Alfred Sebek (CPCZ)	Minister of Labor and Social Affairs
Ladislav Dvorak (Socialist Party)	Minister in charge of the Federal Price Office
Frantisek Reichel (People's Party)	Minister for Fuels and Energy
Jaromir Algayer (CPCZ)	Minister of Agriculture and Food
Frantisek Podlena (CPCZ)	Minister of Transport and Communications
Viliam Roth (independent)	Minister without portfolio

— **Putting the best face on it**

8. In presenting this new government in a press conference on December 3, First Deputy Prime Minister Urban portrayed it in the best light. His themes have been picked up by the media. Urban said the new coalition represented a 40 percent change in ministerial positions, as well as the entry of the first non-Communists (and woman) into the Federal Government for sometime. The average age of Ministers was now considerably below 50, and they had higher professional qualifications and a better understanding of the contemporary situation in the country than their predecessors. Urban said that in the next days similar government changes would take place at the republic

level²⁰ and that work was beginning through the National Front to expand non-Communist representation at the local and regional level.

9. Urban admitted in response to journalists' questions that the Government had not met all the demands of the Civic Forum. He defended the present coalition as one considered and approved by all the parties and mass organizations in the National Front. The Civic Forum, he said, had been offered representation in the coalition but had refused it. (Note: The Forum rejected representation as an organization but had not opposed its members participating as individuals. End note.) Urban would not predict the Civic Forum's reaction to the new coalition, but said essentially that it could not expect to get everything it had asked for. He said the new Government would remain in office until new elections were agreed upon and held.

10. In what appeared to be an olive branch to the Civic Forum, Urban said the Government was now assuming responsibility for many new spheres (such as the media) which had formerly been directed by other organs (i.e., the CPCZ). The Government was prepared, he said, to expand the number of ministries in these areas and include other non-partisan representatives in the coalition.

11. Urban also read a statement approved by the new coalition Government at its first session on the morning of December 3. This tracked with Prime Minister Adamec's earlier remarks (reftel) on 1968 and the basing of Soviet troops in the country. The message said that Adamec would be raising the re-evaluation of 1968 directly with the Soviets. It assigned new First Deputy Prime Minister Calfa the duty of organizing a group of historians from Czechoslovakia and the five Warsaw Pact states that had invaded in 1968 to reassess the invasion and the circumstances surrounding it. Finally, it directed Foreign Minister Johanes to open bilateral negotiations with the USSR on the temporary basing of Soviet troops in the CSSR, but made clear, as had Adamec earlier, that removal of those troops would have to be part of an overall European disarmament process.

12. In a gesture to conciliate public opinion, and which was probably meant to anticipate a negative popular reaction to the "coalition," Adamec addressed the public from the first Government session. His speech was carried later in the day on television. Adamec promised the new Government would move quickly in the direction of protecting human rights, particularly by drafting new laws on freedom of assembly, speech, association, and religion. He also said a new election law would be a Government priority, but offered no new dates for free elections. In another measure probably designed to show the Government was taking popular concerns into account, the media reported that the Army was disarming the People's Militia after Friday's decision by the CPCZ leadership to transfer the Militia from Party to government control.

20 | That is, in both the Czech and the Slovak republics.

— Civic Forum reaction

3. The Civic Forum's reaction to the "coalition" was quick and negative. Forum representatives, as well as striking student and artist leaders, read out statements on the evening television calling for a mass demonstration on Wenceslas Square at 16:00 on Monday, December 4. At that demonstration the Forum will state the changes it wants made in the present coalition, threatening a general strike on Monday, December 11, should they not be met.

14. The Forum spokesman in the television statement expressed disappointment that neither had a civilian been appointed Defense Minister nor a non-Communist Interior Minister. The spokesman stepped back from calling on these new appointees to resign, however, though he asked that non-Communist civilians be appointed as deputies to each. The Forum specifically called for the resignation of Foreign Minister Johanes, who is accused of misrepresenting Czechoslovakia's human rights record in international fora, and of Energy Minister Krumnikl, who it charged with incompetence. Forum spokesmen repeated a demand that President Husak resign by December 10. (Note: Husak, in a statement at the swearing in of the new Government, said he had every intention of remaining as President through his full term, i.e., May 1990. End note.) The Forum also demanded that the Government agree to free elections by July 1990.

15. Comment. Adamec should have expected this reaction from the Forum and students. It is possible his new coalition appointments are as far as CPCZ hardliners would allow him to go. He, and the CPCZ leadership behind him, may also be banking that the Forum will be unable to recreate the mass protests and strike of only a week ago now that some of the more emotional issues which gave popular momentum to the Civic Forum movement have been defused. The re-evaluation of 1968 seems on track, the Government is opening the question of the Soviet basing of troops and the most hated of the 1968 figures (including Jakes, Indra, etc.) and their allies (Stepan) have left office (though not necessarily power).

16. Adamec has also apparently worked a deal with the Socialist and People's Parties which may keep their leaderships at least neutral in the next round in the power struggle with the Forum. Not only have these two non-Communist Parties accepted portfolios in the new "coalition," but they have both been rewarded with higher standing in the National Front. At a December 3 National Front session, Socialist Party President Kucera was elected to replace former CPCZ leader Milos Jakes as Front Chairman. CPCZ figure Rudolf Rohlicek stood down as Deputy Chairman of the National Front, and his position went to new People's Party leader Josef Bartoncik.

17. The Forum's position from the start has been that it would demand the resignation of Adamec and the new government should it fail to produce a representative coalition and a government program that protected human rights

and led to free elections. It does not seem to be demanding Adamec's resignation at this point, however, just the modifications in the present government as noted above, as well as commitment to free elections by next July. If Husak is to be believed, he will not agree to step down, and constitutionally he cannot be removed before his term of office ends.

18. Some observers are already criticizing the Forum for failing to be more actively involved in promoting its own candidates for ministerial posts. It is clear that the future of Czechoslovakia's pro-democracy movement will rest on its ability to continue to maintain popular pressure on the Government and CPCZ leadership. Its next test will come this afternoon in Wenceslas Square.

19. What is unclear to us is the Forum's position on the Defense and Interior Ministries. Over the past week it seemed to present appointments to these two as a touchstone of Adamec's and the CPCZ's seriousness about reform. From last night's statement the Forum seems to be reducing its demand for civilian Ministers in both and a non-Communist in the Interior Ministry to accepting deputies with these credentials. We will be listening carefully to what the Forum tells demonstrators this afternoon. The Forum may well be trying to gauge the level of popular support it can count on before directly confronting Adamec on this issue.

Black

72. Telegram From the Embassy in Czechoslovakia to the Department of State

Prague, December 4, 1989, 1715Z*

Unclassified

Prague 08478

Subject: Elimination of Exit Permit for Travel Abroad by Czechoslovak
Citizens

Ref: Prague 8361²¹

1. As reported reftel, the Czechoslovak Government announced on December 1, that effective Monday December 4, Czechoslovak citizens no longer require exit permits (*vyjezdni doložka*) to travel abroad. A similar reform had already been scheduled to be enacted January 1, 1990, although the earlier version would still have required travelers to obtain written authorization for their absence from their employer, as well as proof of hard currency transactions up to the equivalent of dols 100 per person from bank officials. Apparently, Czechoslovak travelers will now merely be required to fill out a departure card at the border. Travelers are, however, obliged to account for the origin of funds in excess of dols 100 per person.

2. The Government of Austria quickly responded by announcing that it was, on a trial basis, temporarily suspending the requirement for Czechoslovak citizens to obtain visas to enter Austria until December 17, 1989. Effectively, the Czechoslovak-Austrian border is open at present. Large crowds are reported to be queued up to take advantage of the new travel opportunities.

3. Embassy Prague anticipates that the latest reforms will result in a substantial further increase in non-immigrant visa applications, and in an increase in the proportion of applicants found ineligible as intending immigrants. Earlier

21 | Document 64; see also Document 69, paras 12–13.

reforms in 1988 liberalizing travel controls have already resulted in a near doubling of NIV workload and in a doubling of the percentage of 214B refusals.

4. At least initially, the announcements have created some confusion among applicants about U.S. visa requirements. We have received calls from persons wanting to know if they still need visas to the U.S. and other who object to being asked for letter of invitation or affidavits of support, since these are no longer required by Czechoslovak authorities.

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73. Telegram From the Embassy in Czechoslovakia to the Department of State

Prague, December 5, 1989, 1016Z*

Confidential

Prague 08482

Subject: Civic Forum Active in Eastern Slovakia; Communist Official
Expresses Readiness for Change

1. Confidential – entire text.

2. Summary. Citizens' political activity in the Eastern Slovak Region of Czechoslovakia is increasing just as it has in the capital, Prague. Activists in the region are coordinating their demands with Citizens' [*Civic*] Forum groups in other major cities of the country. At the same time, local Communists are speaking in conciliatory tones, in step with the Prague leadership. Issues in the relatively prosperous Eastern Region will likely focus on the environment and on privilege of the Communist hierarchy, as well as basic human rights. End Summary.

3. Excitement was running high at the headquarters of the Civic Forum in Kosice, seat of the Eastern Slovak Region near the Soviet border, when ConOff visited on November 29. (Note: In Eastern Slovakia, there seemed to be a blurring of distinction between the supposedly Czech Civic Forum and Slovak Public Against Violence. End note.) Prominently located in an art museum on the town square, the hastily-created office is a hub of activity.

4. Scores of citizens stood outside in 20-degree-Fahrenheit temperatures to watch videos of the student march and "massacre" of November 17. Inside, organizers manned tables where people lined up to add their signatures to petitions calling for an investigation of the November 17 events and supporting the demands of Civic Forum. As in Prague, roughly typed lists of demands, accounts of November 17, and hand-lettered placards calling for free elections were posted on most of the shop windows around the square. Czechoslovak flags were much in evidence.

5. Kosice was the first stop on ConOff's threeday field trip to visit Social Security recipients in Eastern Slovakia. The itinerary wound through Michalovce, Svidnik, Bardejov, Poprad, and included an unscheduled stop in Bratislava when the Prague airport was closed due to fog.

6. Organizers in Kosice told ConOff that they had collected 8,000 signatures in their office supporting Civic Forum and that 200 workplaces had presented petitions of support. Up to 80,000 people participated in demonstrations over the last week in Kosice. The organizers seemed optimistic, energetic and confident. Although careful to ask for identification, they said they had experienced no police harassment. Paper and materials for publishing were in short supply. The Kosice Civic Forum is in constant contact with the Prague and Bratislava organizations, and indeed, its demands are virtually the same as in the larger cities: investigation of November 17 and punishment of those responsible, guarantees of basic human rights, an end to Communist domination of all institutions, and free elections, *inter alia*. One additional demand is for an investigation of the violent dispersal of a demonstration in March 1988 in Bratislava. Nowhere in Slovakia did ConOff note any slogans, demands or symbols which revealed any anti-Czech or nationalistic Slovak sentiment.

7. All of the other towns visited by ConOff showed signs of civic political activism as well, with the possible exception of Svidnik, a grim, Soviet-style agglomeration of recently constructed highrise apartment blocks and seedy shopping areas. Flyers and placards were ubiquitous. Demonstrations in Michalovce had drawn 7,000 people. There ConOff heard spontaneous shouts of "free elections" from high spirited young men on the streets. The Archbishop of Slovakia, Jan Sokol, has issued a strong statement in support of human rights and against oppression. The senior citizens whom ConOff visited were aware of the turmoil in the cities, but remained mostly concerned with the usual problems of their daily lives, an attitude which was reflected in the quietness of the villages. None of the senior citizens seemed sorry to see change come, however.

8. In Bardejov and Bratislava, the Communists were beginning to get into the act, with professionally printed window signs saying "Prestavba [*Restructuring*] – Yes, Dialog – Yes, Liquidation of Socialism – No" and "We will talk with anyone who wishes our socialist country well." Such signs were well outnumbered by the opposition. One young, well-educated, hitchhiker whom ConOff gave a short ride also expressed the opinion that he did not want to see the return of capitalism.

9. In the swank (by Czechoslovak standards) ski-resort town of Stary Smokovec, ConOff met an angry young man, the head waiter at his hotel. The waiter was incensed at the privileges held by the Communist elite, and their high-handed manner of treating the people. His father had lost his waitering job when he insisted on charging the local boss for his meals. The waiter resented that a comfortable 300-seat wide-screen theater was included in the

new-party building, while Poprad (the larger town nearby) had only one theater where the seats were broken and the screen narrow. He noted with satisfaction that the Communists had recently decided to allow the public to use their new theater.

10. Upon arrival in Kosice, ConOff interviewed Mr. Sopko, Vice Chairman of the Eastern Slovak Region. Mr. Sopko's views indicated that there was no lack of communication between Prague and Kosice on the Communist side, either. Over a sumptuous lunch in the National Committee's "Hospitality House," located on a hill overlooking Kosice, Sopko stated with unfeigned concern that the Communists had made mistakes which had cost them much of their support among the people. Sopko took pains to present himself and the National Committee as people who are open to dialogue and to change. A first meeting with Civic Forum was scheduled for that very afternoon. Sopko said he had spent four hours the previous day in a public meeting in his local constituency of Strazske, site of a large chemical and vulcanized rubber factory. According to Sopko, the people's questions focused mainly on environmental concerns, and Sopko elaborately explained to ConOff the non-toxic nature of the plant's current activities. He described his region as a poor one, and discussed the possibilities for increased Western tourism in the Tatra Mountains, consistent with preservation of the ecology in the area.

11. The "number one problem" for the Eastern Slovak Region, according to Sopko, is the Gypsies. He said that they had reached as much as 30 percent of the population in some areas. It was difficult to find teachers for all-Gypsy schools in such areas. Sopko's attitude indicated a real distaste and bewilderment at the inability of the Gypsies to assimilate into Czechoslovak society. ConOff noted many Gypsies on the streets in the Slovak towns he visited. He passed at least one Gypsy village which, in stark contrast to the neat, gray bourgeois housing of the Slovaks, reminded him of a Mexican village with its pastel pink and blue, slap-dash stucco houses separated by muddy alleyways.

12. Sopko professed to be unconcerned about the recently proposed abolishment of the constitutional provision of the Communist Party's leading role in society, pointing out that this provision had been in the Constitution only since the early 1960's. He stated that the members of the National Committee were all prepared to vacate their places and to accept the result of elections which replaced them with non-Communists. In fact, there already were non-Communists on the National Committee, he said. Elections are scheduled for May 1991, but he expected them to take place sooner.

13. Despite Sopko's characterization of Eastern Slovakia as a poor area, the standard of living of the people seems reasonably good. Comfortable, well-built, detached single-family houses are common in the rural area. Automobiles are also common. Stocks of quality food and of other consumer goods seem adequate, in that shelves are full and ConOff saw only one or two short lines at

stores. People on the street are well and warmly dressed. Air quality is good. Apparently natural gas has substantially replaced brown coal as fuel, because, despite the bitter cold, ConOff saw few of the plumes of dirty smoke which are common in Bohemia.

14. Eastern Slovakia is not isolated from the winds of change sweeping over Czechoslovakia as a whole. As a rule of thumb, the larger the city, the more civic activity is visible. To ConOff, the area seemed prosperous, and the Communists can point to undeniable improvement in the standard of living over the past 40 years. Discontent in this area focuses on environmental issues and resentment of the Communists' privileges, as well as general repression of human rights.

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74. Telegram From the Embassy in Czechoslovakia to the Department of State

Prague, December 5, 1989, 1647Z

Confidential

Prague 08507; Immediate

Subject: CPCZ in Disarray and Urbanek May Not Be the Man to Put the
Pieces Back Together

1. Confidential – entire text.

2. Summary. CPCZ Urbanek's visit to Moscow December 4 to be briefed with other Warsaw Pact leaders on the superpower summit [in Malta] and his meeting there with Gorbachev may boost his local standing. Urbanek will need all the support he can get, however, if he is to heal the divisions now appearing in the CPCZ and turn around the Party's current disarray. A new draft action program seems not to have gone far enough to re-establish the Party's popular credibility or authority. Conservatives in the Central Committee and in other Party organizations have limited the new CPCZ leadership's ability to respond flexibly to the popular demands of the opposition Civic Forum. An extraordinary Party congress which could be held as early as December 20 may be meant to remove 1968-era hardliners from the Central Committee. Contacts warn us that the congress may not necessarily have a reformist outcome, since many of the regional conferences from which its delegates will be elected are still controlled by conservatives. End summary.

3. Over the past two weeks the CPCZ has appeared in disarray, its new leadership apparently unable to prevent splits in the party as witnessed by the creation of the new "Democratic Forum" movement. Nor has the leadership been able to act quickly to remove the discredited, hardline figures in its Central Committee who have led it to its current low state of popularity and authority. A significantly telling event this weekend was the decision of the state-wide congress of agricultural cooperatives to pass a resolution supporting an agricul-

tural workers party. The congress apparently felt it could no longer rely on the CPCZ to protect its very vested interests. (Note. That decision may also have been sparked as well by a Civic Forum speaker at the congress who, amid boos and hooting, called for the re-privatization of agriculture. End note.)

— A new action program

4. On December 1 the CPCZ attempted to take the initiative by announcing a new draft action program. Interestingly, the program was sent by the Presidium to district and regional Party organizations for discussion but will not be considered by the Central Committee when it meets later this month, but by an extraordinary Party congress. The Soviet political counselor has told us that new CPCZ chief Urbanek would never get a majority of the present Central Committee to support the draft.

5. The draft document is nothing less than an about-face from the policies of “normalization” which have guided the CPCZ for more than twenty years. This late conversion, however, is unlikely to produce any new popular credibility for the Party and the document’s basic points amount to “catch up,” not getting ahead of the current Czechoslovak political curve. The document’s points include:

- 1968. It concedes the inevitable and recognizes the 1968 invasion as a mistake which halted the renewal of socialism going on in Czechoslovakia at that time. The “Pouceni,” the official version of the Prague-Spring events, is to be pitched. The program waffles on the question of rehabilitation of those purged after 1968, suggesting that only those who stayed “honest” to Communism in the intervening twenty years should be readmitted to the Party. (Note. The Soviet Political Counselor tells us, however, that new Party Presidium member Miroslav Zajic has already been discussing with some members of the Obroda (or Socialist Renewal) group about their possible readmission to the Party. End note.)
- The People’s Militia. The Party accepts that the People’s Militia should be subordinated to the Government. (Note. The Government announced as of December 2 that the Militia was to begin being disarmed. Its weapons are being stored in military-controlled armories.)
- Human rights. The Party supports redrafting and strengthening various pieces of human rights legislation including granting every group the right to publish freely and ending the Party’s control of the media.
- Economy. The document rejects any return to capitalism, though it does not clearly address the question of private ownership.
- Elections. The Party talks of being an “equal” partner in the political system, but it makes no commitments on free elections.
- Foreign policy. The document makes predictable statements on adherence to international commitments, including the Warsaw Pact.

— Cadres on the agenda of an extraordinary Party congress

6. Part of the CPCZ's current trouble in responding to events is rooted in its cadre policies of the past twenty years. These focused on admitting conformists more accustomed to working in the formalized structures of the apparatus than in open politics. Of the generation of "young wolves" from which many observers had expected Jakes's successors to come, only one has survived the past few weeks with any credit. That is new Presidium member and former youth leader Vasil Mohorita.

7. Mohorita is the only one in the new leadership who was ready to face students, demonstrators, as well as the press in the current days. In short, he acted like a real politician in the more freewheeling public life which has developed.

8. New CPCZ leader Urbanek has not acquitted himself well in these terms. His performances talking with factory workers have proved wooden and his speeches have included hardline statements on retaining the People's Militia, etc. Only days before the Presidium would be retracting them in its draft action program. Democratic Forum representatives have described him as weak and not operating with a free hand since he lacks the support of the Central Committee.

9. But before the Party can hope to improve its image or bring in new blood from outside sources such as Obroda, it will have to complete the process of cleaning house of its discredited hardliners. The retirement of the 1968-era personalities from the Central Committee is the principal objective of an early Party congress. These figures continue to serve as a brake on the new Presidium's ability to respond flexibly to political events, like the Civic Forum's demands for a new "coalition" government, or rehabilitation of ex-Communists. It is rumored that the date of the congress could be moved up from January 26 (announced by Urbanek after the last plenum) to as early as December 20. Such a proposal may be put before a Central Committee session scheduled for December 14–15.

10. The Presidium has already acted to begin the process of electing congress delegates. This will be done in an accelerated way by cutting basic Party organizations out of the process. District Party Committees will meet December 9 or 10 to vote on representatives to regional conferences. These conferences, to be held December 16 or 17, will in turn elect congress delegates.

11. A CPCZ contact has warned us, however, not to presume reformist results from the congress. It could well elect a younger Central Committee, but one equally as conservative as the present one. The hardline control of positions at the regional level, particularly in places like Slovakia outside Bratislava, and heavy industrial regions like Ostrava in the Czech Lands, makes the outcome uncertain.

— The new Democratic Forum

12. The new Democratic Forum is something of a wild card in the Party's future. The Forum now counts some 40,000 CPCZ members among its supporters. EmbOfs in contact with Democratic Forum figures have found them driven by a fear for their own personal political survival. Democratic Forum members do not underestimate the possibility of Party hardliners hanging on for as long as possible, and dragging the CPCZ into oblivion in the process. Democratic Forum members have reacted, somewhat contradictorily, to the CPCZ's new draft action program with derision, seeing in it an attempt by the current CPCZ leadership to steal their clothes. In fact, it follows the Democratic Forum's eight-point program rather closely.

13. The Democratic Forum is stretching out feelers in all directions. They are themselves trying to develop links with Obroda as well as the Civic Forum, attempting to burnish their reformist image in the process. Our Democratic Forum contacts take comfort from the thought that Czechoslovakia has a long "social democratic" tradition. This, they say, will ensure that one big party of the left, not necessarily the CPCZ, will emerge from the current political maneuverings and provide a safe political harbor for them.

— Comment

14. Gorbachev's reception of Urbanek in Moscow on December 4 for the Warsaw Pact summit briefing may boost his standing locally.²² The Soviet leader's rejection of the 1968 invasion certainly was welcome support of the Party's draft action program. Moreover, local reporting of the Moscow meeting had the Czechoslovak "comrades" informing Gorbachev of developments here, specifically their resolve "to get rid of conservatism" and have the CPCZ "work as a force of renewal with all who support the values of socialism and democracy." That would appear a direct attack on 1968 figures and an outstretched hand to groups like Obroda. But Urbanek faces a tremendous task in trying to pull a disintegrating CPCZ together. There appear many in his own party who doubt he is the man to do it.

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²² | See the Draft Agenda prepared by Georgi Shakhnazarov for Mikhail Gorbachev for December 4 and 5, 1989; Document 82 in *Briefing Book 1999*.

75. Telegram From the Embassy in Czechoslovakia to the Department of State

Prague, December 5, 1989, 1652Z*

Confidential

Prague 08508

Subject: Reform Economist Urges Cautious Approach to Economic
Liberation

1. Confidential – entire text.

2. Summary. On December 1 CommAtt met with Dusan Triska, an economist at the Institute of Economics [of the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences] and a close friend of Vaclav Klaus, one of the leaders in the Civic Forum. They discussed the likely effect of the political changes on the course of economic reform and Triska's own views on what path economic reform should take. Triska described Valtr Komarek, head of the Forecasting Institute, as a "dangerous" man because he (Komarek) is a recent convert to the idea of pluralist democracy and is too willing to tell people what they want to hear. On the other hand, Triska is relieved that Vaclav Klaus has been active in the Forum because it means that the Forum has been getting sound advice from the beginning.

3. The greatest danger that Triska sees is that the new Government will repeat the mistakes of Poland and Hungary by piling up foreign debt and letting inflation get out of hand. The first step in economic reform, in his view, should be to break up state monopolies. He opposes opening up the economy soon and was extremely cautious about other reforms. End summary.

4. CommAtt met for lunch with Dusan Triska, an economist at the Institute of Economics. Triska had been recommended to CommAtt as a free market, reform-minded economist by Vaclav Klaus, an economist at the Forecasting Institute and now active in the Civic Forum. Klaus claimed that Triska was one of the best economists he knew and better than some of his colleagues at the Forecasting Institute.

— Civic Forum

5. CommAtt first asked Triska what he knew about the Civic Forum's attitude towards economic reform. Triska emphasized that all Czechoslovaks are socialists. He and Vaclav Klaus, he claimed, are the only real free-market economists in Czechoslovakia. For that reason, he is glad that Klaus has been so active and prominent in the Forum; it means that the Forum has been getting good economic advice from the beginning. Triska has been urging his fellow economists to rally round and support Klaus to ensure that there is a voice for intelligent economic reform in the new government.

6. On the other hand, Triska had a very poor opinion of Valtr Komarek, the head of the Forecasting Institute, and also active in the Civic Forum. He called Komarek a "dangerous" man. Komarek is, according to Triska, a "just-born" democrat. Only in the past year has Komarek started talking about pluralism and democracy. Triska also fears that Komarek, if in the government, would be too quick to make optimistic promises when he should be warning people to prepare to tighten their belts.

— Slow and cautious

7. Triska's own ideas for economic reform did not sound very different from those already being planned by the Government. He stressed the need for tight monetary policy and avoidance of foreign debt. He was as horrified as any government economist at the economic situation in Poland and Hungary. The most important task of Czechoslovak economists in the next year, according to Triska, is to keep a close watch on the Government so that it does not destroy the economy by bribing Czechoslovak consumers with Western goods and running up foreign debt. He has been urging economists who work for the Government to stay in their jobs to help guide the new leaders, but he fears that those who do may sacrifice their future careers because they will take the blame for the inevitable hardships of reform.

8. Triska strongly opposed opening up the Czechoslovak economy in the short run. He even said he would have favored extending the student activism against those who earn hard currency. If their parents brought home a U.S. dollar or a German DM, the students should brand them as "traitors." To explain why, Triska gave the example of the containers which hold industrial gases essential to many industries. These containers cost only about two-thirds as much in Czechoslovakia as in West Germany. If the economy were opened up, the containers would all be exported for hard currency while Czechoslovak industries would have to shut down for lack of a vital input.

9. The immediate priority of economic reform should be to break up the monopolies in Czechoslovak industries, according to Triska. Many large enterprises could easily and relatively painlessly be broken down into their individual

factories. By this means, the economy could be made more competitive. (Note. This is not a new idea and to some extent the Government already has or plans to implement it. End note.)

10. Comment. For a self-proclaimed “Friedmanite,” Triska shows a surprising fear of the “chaos” of free markets, a preference for administrative controls, and a strong distaste for the idea of individual self-enrichment. As his example of the gas containers shows, even “radical” economists in Czechoslovakia want to continue the complex system of hidden subsidies and taxes through distorted prices while moving to eliminate overt subsidies. However, the hidden subsidies make it impossible to judge which enterprises are really efficient and profitable and so make rational economic policy difficult. Czechoslovak economists have yet to face this issue, even on an intellectual level.

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76. Telegram From the Embassy in Czechoslovakia to the Department of State

Prague, December 5, 1989, 1756Z*

Confidential

Prague 08513; Immediate

Subject: Civic Forum Reverses Policy and Will Participate in Elections

1. Confidential – entire text.

2. Summary. The Civic Forum, reacting with disappointment and anger to the composition of the new Government, has announced that it will endorse candidates in future elections. The announcement marks a reversal of policy for the Forum which before had stated it would not directly participate in elections. The Forum has also announced a general strike for December 11 to pressure changes in the composition of the Czechoslovak Government. Eleven Czech Republic ministers resigned on December 4, and Civic Forum representatives believe the new Czech Government is likely to include a majority of ministers who are not CPCZ members. In other developments, students are continuing their strike, efforts are being made to form an independent Labor Union from existing worker strike committees, and the Civic Forum has called for “compromised” members of the Federal Assembly to resign. End summary.

— The Civic Forum to participate in elections

3. The Civic Forum, disappointed and angered by the composition of the new GOC (Prague 8445)²³, has responded by announcing that it will endorse candidates for as yet uncalled elections. The announcement came during a December 4 rally on Wenceslas Square attended by some 200,000 persons. The

23 | Document 71.

announcement was a joint one with the Forum's Slovak counterpart, the Public Against Violence.

4. The announcement marks a radical change in the nature of the Civic Forum, which until Monday had resolutely claimed it had no intention of becoming a political party or directly engaging in electoral politics. Civic Forum sources told us that although disappointment over the composition of the new Government played a part in the Forum's decision, in fact pressure from the membership of the Forum had been growing for the Forum to present a clearer political profile. In particular, local chapters of the Forum have complained that the Forum was not displaying the type of leadership they believed needed to combat so-called "neo-Stalinist forces."

5. The Forum itself does not know by what process its list of endorsed candidates will be formed. The Forum has stated that it hopes to choose candidates from political structures which are already in existence (e.g., [Czechoslovak] Democratic Initiative) as well as candidates from political structures which might be formed. However, as we understand it, the candidates would be clearly identified as Civic Forum candidates. After the election, however, any candidates elected would be free to form themselves into whatever political factions or blocks they choose, and the Civic Forum would not try to impose any iron-fisted party discipline.

6. The Forum has promised that it will cooperate with local chapters of the Forum and strike committees in choosing candidates. The Forum has stressed the importance of the media in the process and has stated that it is committed to giving everyone who is interested in the selection process an opportunity to express themselves, but Forum leaders frankly admit they do not yet know how they will structure the selection process.

7. The elections for which the Forum will be offering candidates have not been announced. Though individual members of the CPCZ Presidium have indicated free elections are in order, neither the GOC nor the CPCZ have officially committed themselves to free elections. Forum leaders nonetheless believe free elections are a foregone conclusion and that the only issue is when such elections are to be held. Forum leaders are demanding elections no later than July 1990, but also are opposed to "snap elections" for which the Forum and other opposition political forces would be unprepared.

8. Civic Forum sources tell us that Vaclav Havel opposed the Forum's entry into electoral politics. Among those cited as the most prominent advocates of the Forum's new policy are Jiri [Zdeněk] Jicinsky and Petr Pithart. Jicinsky is a constitutional lawyer who lost his position in the post-1968 normalization process, and Pithart is an historian/political scientist who was an influential political adviser during the Prague Spring. (Note. We have also learned that Zdenek Mlynar has returned to Vienna, but do not know if he had any influence concerning the Civic Forum's change of policy. End note.)

— General strike called

9. To underscore its dissatisfaction with the new GOC “coalition” Government and to strengthen its hand in on-going negotiations with representatives of the Federal Government, Czech Government, and the National Front (see paras 10–16), the Civic Forum has called for another general strike on Monday, December 11. The strike will probably last no more than two hours, although exact times for the strike have not been set. Civic Forum sources emphasize that the strike again will be an act of political symbolism and is not intended to cause damage to the Czechoslovak economy.

— Discussions with the GOC

10. Civic Forum representatives met with representatives of Prime Minister Adamec’s Office on December 4 to discuss further “reconstruction” of the GOC. Those representing the Civic Forum included Vaclav Klaus, Michal Kocab, Martin Simecka, Sasa Vondra, Libor Maly, and Simon Panek. The GOC representatives were First Deputy Prime Minister Bohumil Urban, Oskar Krejci, and Marcel Jansen. Civic Forum representatives characterized the meeting as only being “preparatory,” and stated that they were awaiting the return of Prime Minister Adamec from Moscow for the next substantive meeting.

11. The key issue at such a meeting, expected to be held later this week, will be changes in the present coalition Government. The Civic Forum is not pressing for wholesale changes of ministers, but does want changes in the Government’s Presidium or so-called “inner cabinet” made up of Adamec and his First Deputy and Deputy Prime Ministers (seven individuals). The Civic Forum would be satisfied with an inner cabinet in which Communists make up only a minority. Under the Civic Forum proposal, the inner cabinet would be responsible for policy-making, and the remaining ministers would only implement policies adopted by the inner cabinet. The Civic Forum apparently will propose some specific individuals to fill the inner cabinet positions.

12. The Civic Forum has created two new committees (“reconstruction” and “shadow cabinet”) to help it deal organizationally with the Federal Government. The reconstruction committee will suggest names of persons qualified for ministerial positions, while members of the “shadow cabinet” will be responsible for tracking the activities of their GOC counterparts. Vaclav Klaus heads the reconstruction committee and Valtr Komarek is expected to play a major role in the “shadow cabinet.”

13. Other topics to be raised during the meeting with Adamec include problems faced by émigrés wishing to return to Czechoslovakia, the rehabilitation of those unjustly treated during the period of normalization, printing facilities for the newspaper *Lidove Noviny*, and new laws concerning assembly and association. The Forum will again propose abolition of the People’s Militia, rather

than just its transfer from Party to government control as has already reportedly been done.

— **Discussions with the Czech Government**

14. Vaclav Havel and other representatives of the Civic Forum met Czech Government Premier Frantisek Pitra on Monday to discuss the composition of a new government of the Czech Socialist Republic. The meeting followed the announcement that 11 Czech Republic ministers had submitted their resignations to Pitra.

15. The Civic Forum representatives were upbeat concerning their discussions with Pitra. They refused to say whether they had suggested specific names of individuals to fill the now vacant ministerial positions, but did say they expected that probably a majority of the positions would be filled by persons who are not CPCZ members.

— **Discussions with the National Front**

16. A Civic Forum delegation (Vaclav Benda, Petr Pithart, Martin Klima) also met with representatives of the Central Committee of the National Front on December 4. The Forum delegates were disappointed by the meeting. They indicated that the National Front "is without a concept" and that its representatives were not prepared for the meeting, nor did they bring topics to the meeting for discussion.

— **Corruption and responsibility for 1968**

17. The Civic Forum has asked that a commission be formed to examine the role of individual Czechoslovak officials in the 1968 invasion. The Forum would expect that such examination include legal, political, and moral elements. On the broader issue of possible corruption of public officials, the Civic Forum has not yet taken a stand nor made demands, although its press spokesman has said that the Forum expects that any official who violated criminal law during his tenure in office should be prosecuted.

— **Student strikes continue**

18. Students have indicated that they will continue with their strike. They say that although the leading role of the CPCZ has been abolished in law, the composition of the new government indicates that the Party is in fact attempting to maintain its political monopoly, and as a consequence the students will remain on strike.

19. Student representatives have also complained that some striking students outside Prague have been threatened with expulsion for their activities. First Deputy Premier Urban during his meeting with Civic Forum representatives indicated surprise at such developments and stated the GOC would take a position opposing such threats.

— Free trade unions

20. Plans have also been announced for the formation of an independent labor union in Czechoslovakia. Those organizing the union will attempt to use the various strike committees already established as the union's basic building blocks. In a related development, Czechoslovak Television featured an interview with the leader of a Communist Party cell in one factory who indicated that the cell's members had decided to disband and urged other cells in workplaces to do the same.

— Calls for resignations

21. The Civic Forum has called for the resignation from the Federal Assembly of all "compromised" individuals. Among those named by the Forum as compromised are Jan Fojtik, Marie Kabrhelova, Milos Jakes, Vasil Bilak, Zdenek Ceska, Alois Indra, Karel Hoffmann, Miroslav Stepan, Milan Vaclavik, and Jozef Lenart. There are also various campaigns in individual electoral districts to recall Assembly representatives.

22. Comment. The Civic Forum's decision to enter into electoral politics should dramatically change the face of any government which might emerge after free elections. Prior to the Civic Forum announcement a number of new political parties had been formed (e.g., Obroda, Green Party, Social Democratic Party, [Czechoslovak] Democratic Initiative), but none seemed especially capable of capturing the following of a large portion of the population. Many observers were predicting that a coalition-type government would have to be formed in which no one political group would dominate. (A possible parallel to the situation in Czechoslovakia during the First Republic has been drawn.) However, the decision of the Civic Forum to sponsor candidates could mean a future government (assuming future free elections) dominated by Civic Forum representatives.

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77. Telegram from the Embassy in Czechoslovakia to the Department of State

Prague, December 7, 1989, 1610Z

Confidential

Prague 08550; Immediate

Subject: Czechoslovak Civic Forum Official Sees Forum Evolving toward
Political Party

1. Confidential – entire text.

2. Summary. Civic Forum member Vaclav Klaus considers that political developments in Czechoslovakia are now irreversible. He also sees the Forum moving in the direction of a political party despite feelings by some Forum leaders that the organization should remain out of politics. Klaus also sketched out structural changes in the Forum, including the establishment of committees to handle negotiations on revising Federal Government membership, creating a “shadow cabinet”, and on handling foreign contacts. He thought that economic reform would remain on the backburner for the near term, with most economic effort being focused on preventing inflation through use of a tight monetary policy. He had a low opinion of the “Democratic Forum” wing of the CPCZ and of the Greens, whom he thought might be a Communist fifth column. End Summary.

3. DCM hosted lunch December 5 for Forecasting Institute and Civic Forum member Vaclav Klaus. Klaus’s colleagues Valtr Komarek and Vladimir Dlouhy had also accepted the invitation, but had to regret at the last minute. Klaus himself was barely able to come, having just finished one of many media interviews (this one with ABC), and he was clearly very pressed for time. Pol/Ec Counselor and EconOff also attended the luncheon.

4. Klaus said that in his view political developments, which he stressed were constantly evolving, were now irreversible in Czechoslovakia. He cited three factors which he felt supported this position.

- He believed none of the hardline Communists pushed out of the Party Presidium were strong enough personalities to be able to manage affairs from behind the scene.
- He and other Forum members had recently met with the commander (Zacharias) of the Western Bohemian Military Command in Tabor. The commander had expected dissidents or “artsy” types and so were [was] impressed at the serious level of the Forum representation. They made it clear that they had no intention of intervening in the political process, and Klaus came away from the meeting optimistic that this was true.
- He had heard a recent news item on radio to the effect that a local factory Communist Party Committee had decided on its own initiative to dissolve itself. He thought that that would be repeated in great numbers and thus perceived it as a very significant event.

5. On the Forum itself, he saw rapid movement from the view still held by Vaclav Havel and some other members that it should not get directly involved in the political process. Instead, the Forum seemed to be going in the direction of becoming a political party, as was being advocated by such members as Jiri [Zdeněk] Jicinsky, Petr Pithart and Klaus himself. As one example, he noted that the Forum had refused to recommend nominees for the Federal Government created over last weekend, but had become involved in the naming of the Czech Government December 5. (Klaus even said that he had been on Prime Minister Adamec’s list for a cabinet appointment, but so far had turned it down at least in part because of the Forum’s then strategy of being outside politics.) He ascribed this evolution of the Forum at least in part due to pressure from local “Forums” who wished the organization to take a more active and decisive role.

6. Structurally, management of the Forum was now divided between an action committee, whose numbers tended to vary but were usually around 12–15, and a plenary now scaled down to 30–40 people representing various political and social groupings. The plenary was technically the higher body, but most decision-making was done in the Action Committee – of which Klaus was a primary member. In addition, there were now three new working committees: one on reconstruction of a new government; a second, putting together a “shadow” cabinet (in which Valtr Komarek was very active); and a third (headed by Martin Palous) to handle foreign contacts – which would include official U.S. visitors.

7. The reconstruction committee was already negotiating with Adamec and Deputy Prime Minister Urban on revisions to the membership of the Government. Klaus indicated that the Forum might back off on its earlier demand that civilians be appointed as Ministers of Defense and Interior and that the Interior Minister also be a non-Communist. Instead, the Forum had suggested to Urban that it might be satisfactory if the seven Deputy Prime Ministers which make

up the Presidium of the Government (sort of an inner cabinet) were divided between the various parties and independent groups, leaving no more than two or three in the hands of the CPCZ. (Note: Something along these lines seems to have been done in formation of the new Czech Republic Government – see septel.²⁴ End note.) He also felt personally that the demand for President Husak’s resignation was a mistake and might not be continued, though he noted that the Civic Forum had its own hardliners who might still insist on this point.

8. Klaus said that economic reform was clearly now on the back burner, though he thought that the Government could not wait for elections before turning to the issue. Nonetheless, he did not expect any action on such painful questions as price reform in the near future. Instead, the focus would be on preventing economic instability and particularly inflation. Tight monetary and fiscal policies would be the main weapon in this struggle. But he also thought the Government would move to open the economy to more competition by legislatively ending monopoly rights of state enterprises. He saw the economy opening to state, cooperative and private enterprises. But that the role of the latter would remain small in the near future. He noted, however, that in line with the Forum’s economic outlook (which was less free-market than his own), he had drafted the Forum’s initial program without using the word “socialism.”²⁵

9. [17 lines of source text not declassified]

[10.] [9 and a half lines of source text not declassified]

11. On his own plans, Klaus noted that he had become a political strategist for the Forum rather than an economist. He did not rule out eventually holding a senior position in a new government, but in line with his own monetarist economics his preference was head of the State Bank rather than Finance Minister.

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24 | Document 79.

25 | Although it is known that Klaus as part of the “initiative group” presented the Civic Forum’s “Program Principles” (“Co chceme” – “What We Want”, Document 58, para 7) at the plenary session of the Civic Forum, there is no evidence of any significant role he may have played in drafting them.

78. Telegram From the Embassy in Czechoslovakia to the Department of State

Prague, December 7, 1989, 1618Z

Unclassified

Prague 08554

Subject: Civic Forum Proposes Draft of New Constitution for Czechoslovakia
to Federal Assembly

1. Civic Forum (CF) has proposed a draft of a new constitution for Czechoslovakia and submitted it by letter to the Czechoslovak Federal Assembly for general discussion. CF spokesman Jiri Dienstbier says that the draft is the long-term work of independent specialists. Dienstbier described the draft constitution as establishing a parliamentary democracy within European traditions. Under it, the name of the country would become the "Czechoslovak Republic."

2. The draft describes the new Czechoslovak state as a democratic, socially just state which strives for co-operation among all nations on the principle of independence and sovereignty. It asserts the independence and sovereignty of the Czech and Slovak nations and guarantees both the right to voluntarily leave the present federation. While the drafters of the new constitution do not think separation is likely, they have included specific provisions for this.

3. The draft guarantees human, civil, and political rights as set forth in international documents. The Constitution also provides for a constitutional court to which citizens can appeal. Citizens are charged with four obligations:

- to maintain the Constitution and respect the rights of other citizens;
- to protect the environment;
- to protect the nation against foreign invasion; and
- if male, to do military service, or in the case of conscientious objectors, alternative national service.

4. Ownership of property is protected under the draft. All forms of ownership are stated to be equal, and have the same protection. The State is given

exclusive ownership of ores and minerals, water, sources of power, railroads and airlines, and posts [*mail*] and telecommunications.

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79. Telegram From the Embassy in Czechoslovakia to the Department of State

Prague, December 7, 1989, 1622Z

Unclassified

Prague 08556; Immediate

Subject: New Czech Republic Government Announced: Acceptable to Civic
Forum

1. A new Czech Republic Government was announced on December 5. Names, positions and party affiliations are given below. At a press conference, Civic Forum (CF) spokesman Jiri Dienstbier stated that CF fully supported eight of the 17 government members, including one Communist (the Culture Minister who is well liked by theatrical performers). Though Dienstbier implied that the Forum did not support the other government members, he said that it felt that the make-up of the cabinet did reflect the distribution of forces within society. He added that CF would find acceptable a Federal Government along the same lines, noting that it had begun negotiations with Prime Minister Adamec yesterday (December 5) at 3:00 p.m. on cabinet revisions. In response to a question of why the Czechs had come up with a government more acceptable to CF than the one last weekend at the federal level, Dienstbier said that "the revolution had advanced by several days." (Note: We also understand that CF had decided during the period between the naming of the Federal and Czech Governments to take a more active role in pushing specific candidates. End note.)

2. In one moment of drama, People's Party Deputy Chairman Josef Kana reportedly threatened not to support the new Government on the grounds that half its members should be non-party instead of only five. After a short recess and discussions, he apparently withdrew his immediate objections, but noted that the People's Party considered the Czech Government still under "reconstruction," implying that he expected changes in the future that would bring it more in line with its demands.

3. Czech Government as of December 5 (indicates CF support):

Frantisek Pitra – Prime Minister – CPCZ
Miroslav Toman – First Deputy Prime Ministry – CPCZ
Petr Mison – Deputy Prime Minister – Socialist Party
Antonin Baudys – Deputy Prime Minister – People’s Party
Jiri Nikodym – Finance, Prices and Wages – CPCZ
Ludvik Motycka – Construction – People’s Party
Milan Adam – Education, Youth and Sports – Socialist Party
Milan Lukes – Culture, CPCZ
Pavel Klener – Health and Social Affairs – no party
Antonin Hrazdira – Interior and Environment – CPCZ
Petr Hojer – Industry – CPCZ
Jan Vodehnal – Agriculture and Food – CPCZ
Vlasta Stepova – Trade and Tourism – no party
Jaroslav Bocek – Forestry, Water and Timber – CPCZ
Dagmar Buresova – Justice – no party
Bedrich Moldan – (of future Ministry of Environment) – no party
Stanislav Kukral – People’s Control – no party

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80. Telegram From the Embassy in Czechoslovakia to the Department of State

Prague, December 7, 1989, 1631Z

Confidential

Prague 08589; Immediate

Subject: Adamec to Resign if Reconstituted Government Fails to Gain Public Support

Ref: FBIS London LD0612120589²⁶

1. Confidential – entire text.

2. Summary and comment. GOC Prime Minister Adamec has stated that he will resign unless a reconstituted government he will announce on either Thursday, December 7, or Friday, December 8, wins the trust of the Czechoslovak public. In an effort to win such trust Adamec on December 6 met with Civic Forum representatives and received from them the names of individuals they believed competent to fill ministerial positions in a reconstituted Government. It is unclear whether Adamec will accept the suggested individuals or accede to other Civic Forum demands, but we have an unconfirmed report from Civic Forum sources that Adamec will announce a government with an equal number of Communist and non-Communist ministers. Civic Forum representatives believe that regardless of Adamec's decision they have the upper hand in the struggle with the CPCZ, and that the movement to democratic pluralism in Czechoslovakia is irreversible. CPCZ General Secretary Urbanek also met with the Civic Forum on December 6. Urbanek indicated that the Party's new leadership had distanced itself from the policies of its predecessors, that it was ready to engage in a roundtable with opposition forces, and that it was prepared to accept other political forces as equals. Urbanek, however, did not indicate

²⁶ | Not yet declassified.

that the Party was willing to go along with free elections, although Adamec in a December 6 televised speech spoke of the need to do so.

3. Civic Forum representatives believe they have the support of 14 million Czechoslovaks and that the battle with the CPCZ is over for all practical purposes. To some extent their optimism reflects perspectives from the capital and Bratislava, and may not fully mirror feelings in the countryside. Nonetheless, we believe the dismal record of the CPCZ over the past 40 years makes it all but impossible for the Communist Party to gain the confidence of the Czechoslovak public, and that the euphoria of the Civic Forum, though perhaps a bit premature, is not misplaced. End summary and comment.

4. Civic Forum (CF) delegations lead by Vaclav Havel met on Wednesday, December 6, in separate sessions with Prime Minister Ladislav Adamec and CPCZ General Secretary Karel Urbanek. During the meeting with Adamec the CF presented a list of candidates to replace members of the Government announced last Sunday, December 3. Adamec in a 15-minute television speech Wednesday night, December 5 (reftel), indicated he realized the composition of the current GOC is not optimal, and that he would receive further suggested changes in the GOC from the CF today, December 7. (The CF has not revealed its suggested appointments, but told us that it had submitted at least seven names to Adamec.)

5. We also have an unconfirmed report from Civic Forum sources that Adamec will appoint a reconstructed Government of 12 Communists and 12 non-Communists. They also tell us they believe at least two Civic Forum representatives, Petr Miller and Jan Carnogursky, will be appointed to the Government. Miller, a CKD strike committee leader, would serve as Minister of Labor and Social Affairs. The Slovak Catholic activist, Carnogursky, would serve as a Deputy Premier.

6. During his Wednesday speech Adamec declared that he could not yield to every demand made upon him, and then stated he would resign if the reconstituted Government he is forming does not win the confidence of the Czechoslovak public. Adamec said that he was seeking a truly dignified entry for Czechoslovakia into the 1990's: a working economy and state administration, observance of law, regular rhythm of work at enterprises and schools, as well as the trust of the public in the sincerity of his intentions.

7. Adamec understands that to gain public trust he must present a reconstituted government which wins the approval of the Civic Forum. One CF contact has indicated that it would not be necessary for Adamec to meet prior demands concerning the Ministers of Defense and Interior (Prague 8415)²⁷, but that they would have to be satisfied that organizations such as the State

27 | Document 70.

Security (Statni Bezpecnost) forces used to pursue dissidents in the past were somehow neutralized. (Note: Urbanek is quoted in today's *Rude Pravo* as saying that the functions of the State Security forces inside Czechoslovakia "had lost sense." End note.)

8. The Communist Party appears to recognize that the CF has gained an upper hand. Urbanek, in his conversation with Havel, said that roundtable talks must take place as soon as possible. He indicated that the new CPCZ leadership unanimously wants to distance itself from its predecessors and their policies. Urbanek also said that the CPCZ must radically change. He stated that the CPCZ accepts that it must participate as an "equal partner" in the political life of the country, but did not specifically call for free elections as had Adamec during his speech. Urbanek also stated that the CPCZ will not resort to "power play" although some members at the district and regional level favored such a policy.

9. There is speculation that Urbanek wants to call an extraordinary Party congress, perhaps as early as December 19, at which a comeback program for the CPCZ could be developed. Party division makes a comeback highly questionable. For example, conservative forces, especially at the regional level, seem prepared to oppose any serious democratic reform proposals Urbanek might make. Moreover, although the Civic Forum believes 400,000 Communists support the efforts of the Democratic Forum within the CPCZ to convert the Party into one which ascribes to democratic principles, another 400,000 probably reform-minded Party members are reported by Civic Forum sources to have left. This decision will make reform efforts within the Party that much more difficult.

10. In another development, a prosecutor assisting the Federal Assembly in its investigation of November 17 indicated enough evidence had been collected to begin prosecution against as yet unnamed individuals. Milos Jakes issued a press statement denying any responsibility for the events that day.

11. Plans are also underway to establish an independent trade-union structure in Czechoslovakia. A conference will apparently be held in Kladno on December 20 to formally organize such a union. Civic Forum representatives say that the Communist Revolutionary Union Movement (ROH) has all but collapsed. It is unclear whether those organizing the independent union will attempt to step into existing ROH units, or whether other structures already coordinating activities between independent strike committees will be utilized.

Black

81. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Czechoslovakia

Washington, December 7, 1989, 1504Z

Confidential

State 390816; Immediate

Subject: Meeting with Czechoslovak DCM Michovsky on December 5, 1989.

1. Confidential – entire text.

2. Summary: The Czechoslovak DCM requested a meeting to discuss the Humanitarian Affairs Working Group (HAWG) scheduled for mid-December. Department informed Michovsky that the HAWG would be postponed because of the political situation in Czechoslovakia. Michovsky listed the areas which should form the basis of bilateral cooperation, and was informed that the USG would like to cooperate bilaterally on these and other issues once the dust clears in Czechoslovakia. End summary.

3. On December 5, Czechoslovak DCM Jiri Michovsky met with EGY Deputy Director Hornblow, Desk Officer Munter, and Humanitarian Affairs Bureau representative Arias. Michovsky had asked for the meeting.

4. Michovsky raised three points: first, he wished to finalize arrangements for the Humanitarian Affairs Working Group (HAWG) meeting scheduled for mid-December;²⁸ second, he mentioned that the leading GOC representative at the HAWG, Deputy Foreign Minister Vacek, would like to discuss bilateral issues with Assistant Secretary Seitz;²⁹ and third, that the GOC sought to move ahead on the bilateral agenda proposed to Mr. Seitz by Czechoslovak Ambassador Houstecky last Summer.

4 [5]. Hornblow responded that the USG would like to postpone the HAWG because the status of the Government in Czechoslovakia is unclear. He added

28 | See Document 20.

29 | See Document 22.

that many relevant issues in the human rights area (freedom of travel, basic civil liberties, release of political prisoners) were being addressed daily in Czechoslovakia. It was advisable, he went on, to wait and see how these steps toward human rights reforms were implemented, expanded, and made permanent in the near future. Hornblow concluded that human rights are more important than ever, that the USG is still interested in upgraded dialogue, and that the USG seeks only a postponement, not cancellation, of human rights discussions.

5 [6]. Hornblow said that a Vacek-Seitz meeting was also not advisable at this time. The situation in Czechoslovakia must become clearer before such talks would be useful. Hornblow agreed that, in principle, regular high level political consultations were a good idea, and that depending on the course of events in Czechoslovakia, a broad discussion of bilateral issues would be welcome at a later date.

6 [7]. Hornblow then voiced his agreement that bilateral cooperation in the areas Michovsky had mentioned (drug trafficking, terrorism, and ecology) were of interest to the USG. Hornblow said that the USG would like to work with Czechoslovakia in these and other areas, such as arms control, customs, and cultural exchanges.

7 [8]. Michovsky then departed from his script and asked for any information about the Malta Summit. Hornblow said he would look into a briefing on the topic. (Comment: EUR has scheduled a briefing on Malta for Eastern European Ambassadors on December 7.)

8 [9]. Finally, Hornblow stated that the USG welcomes the visit of Deputy Foreign Trade Minister Nemeč. Nemeč will meet with EUR Deputy Assistant Secretary Ralph Johnson on December 7.

9 [10]. Comment: Michovsky, who has lately complained to US that he has trouble getting good information from Prague, tried to bring these three points to our attention last week. He did not seem surprised at our reaction. In general, we get the impression that officials at the Czechoslovak Embassy have withdrawn into a shell and more awaiting news from Prague.

Baker

82. Telegram From the Embassy in Czechoslovakia to the Department of State

Prague, December 8, 1989, 1741Z*

Limited Official Use

Prague 08599; Immediate

Subject: Adamec Resigns and Other Developments

1. Limited Official Use – entire text.

2. Summary. Prime Minister Adamec resigned on December 7 to make way for a younger man. Marian Calfa will be Prime Minister *ad interim*. The Civic Forum accused Adamec of responsibility for the political crisis and said his resignation was an attempt to evade this responsibility. Calfa is not acceptable to the Civic Forum. Plans for a general strike on Monday continue, but it might be called off if an acceptable new government is appointed. Civic Forum representatives were, as of Friday afternoon, discussing possible presidential candidates (including Havel who has said he would accept the position if offered it) with members of Communist, People's and Socialist Parties.

The CPCZ has expelled Jakes and Stepan for their role in the events of November 17, which they deny responsibility for. A meeting between the Defense Minister and a Civic Forum delegation apparently led to a degree of understanding and trust. Foreign Minister Johanes has announced a plan to recall 21 Czechoslovak Ambassadors. End summary.

— Adamec resigns

3. Prime Minister Ladislav Adamec resigned on Thursday, December 7. The ostensible reason Adamec gave for his resignation was the desire to make way for a younger, stronger man, who could form a government which had public confidence. However, Adamec on Wednesday had threatened to resign if he felt unable to put together a reconstructed government which would win public

support (Prague 8589)³⁰. Earlier on Thursday before his resignation, Adamec had also indicated it was impossible to govern in an atmosphere of demands.

— **Marian Calfa “ad interim”**

4. Following constitutional mandate, President Gustav Husak authorized First Deputy Premier Marian Calfa to act as “Prime Minister *ad interim*” until the appointment of a new government. Calfa, a Slovak lawyer, was also instructed to conduct talks about reconstructing the Government or composing a new one. The Czechoslovak Constitution vests authority to nominate a new prime minister and other government ministers in the President. After the appointment, the new government is required to submit a program to the Federal Assembly and to ask for a vote of confidence.

— **Civic Forum reacts to Adamec resignation**

5. Civic Forum (CF) representatives claim they had no advance knowledge of the Adamec resignation and do not know his reasons for resigning. Forum representatives indicated Adamec’s failure to put together an acceptable government last Sunday had led to a political crisis, and that Adamec was attempting to avoid responsibility for the crisis by resigning.

6. Civic Forum representatives also indicated that they do not support Marian Calfa. The CF characterized Calfa as lacking the flexibility and strength needed to deal with the current crisis. As of late Friday afternoon, Calfa had not met with CF representatives to discuss composition of the new government.

7. The CF also reacted sharply to Adamec’s claim that the CF had made demands concerning appointments to specific ministerial positions. CF representatives indicate Adamec had asked them to submit their suggestions concerning ministerial appointments and that they then sent Adamec a letter with a list of seven possible ministers.

8. The seven suggested individuals and their positions are:

Jan Carnogursky	First Deputy Prime Minister
Vladimir Dlouhy	Federal Deputy Prime Minister
Miroslav Kusy	Federal Deputy Prime Minister
Jiri Dienstbier	Foreign Minister
Vaclav Klaus	Minister of Finance
Petr Miller	Minister for Labor and Social Affairs
Gulya Popely	Minister for Nationalities

30 | Document 80.

The Civic Forum has stated that given the resignation of Adamec it would now support the appointment of Jan Carnogursky to the Prime Minister's position.³¹

9. The Civic Forum on Thursday evening stated it planned to go ahead with a general strike on Monday, December 11, regardless of the composition of any government which might be announced before that time. CF spokespersons said the general strike would be considered a "celebration" in the unlikely event a government satisfactory to the CF is formed prior to the strike. On Friday, however, one CF representative stated that the strike would be called off if an acceptable new government were formed and President Husak resigned no later than Sunday.

— National Front opinion on a new GOC

10. Bohuslav Kucera, Chairman of the National Front (NF), stated the NF believes the new government should be created on the basis of the broadest national consensus and should reflect current political conditions. The NF specifically recommended the new premier talk with newly created and rising civic initiatives. Kucera, who is also Chairman of the Czechoslovak Socialist Party, expects his party will have two ministers in the new government.

11. Civic Forum representatives now say they have no plans to talk directly with the NF concerning formation of a new government. The Civic Forum considers the NF too broad (e.g., it includes non-political social organizations and the Civic Forum is only interested in discussions with real political forces).³²

— Civic Forum and Mohorita discuss possible presidential candidates

12. Husak has thus far not said whether he will step down. Nonetheless, Vaclav Havel was to meet with CPCZ Presidium member Vasil Mohorita and representatives of the Socialist and People's Parties Friday afternoon to discuss who should succeed Husak. (Note. It is unclear whether Mohorita was to represent the CPCZ or just some faction within it at the meeting. End note.)

31 | On the evening of December 7, Václav Havel announced on behalf of the Civic Forum that if the President appointed Čalfa federal Prime Minister, the Civic Forum and the Public Against Violence would work with Čalfa only on the condition that Ján Čarnogurský would be appointed Deputy Prime Minister.

32 | This led to the Roundtable Talks (Discussions) of the so-called "decisive political forces." There were four Roundtable Talks in December 1989. See Document 84, para 5, Document 89, paras 6 and 14, and Document 114, para 2.

— **Havel would accept presidency**

13. Reporters at a December 7 news conference pressed Vaclav Havel on whether he wanted or would accept, if offered, the position of President. After some to-ing and fro-ing, Havel conceded that if the situation developed that he can only serve the country by accepting the presidency, he would do it.

— **CPCZ expels Jakes and Stepan**

14. The Presidium of the CPCZ on December 7 expelled Milos Jakes and Miroslav Stepan from the Party. Jakes and Stepan were expelled for gross political mistakes in the resolving of social tensions, especially the Prague events of November 17.

15. Both Jakes and Stepan have issued statements denying responsibility for the police attack against demonstrators on November 17. However, Jozef Stank, Chairman of a special Federal Assembly commission investigating November 17, stated the commission had concluded Jakes and Stepan were politically responsible for November 17.

— **CPCZ Presidium calls for early congress and Central Committee resignations**

16. The Presidium of the Communist Party has called for an extraordinary Party congress to meet on December 20–21. Details concerning how delegates to the congress will be selected were not revealed, although reformers within the Party reportedly hope to devise a scheme of delegate selection which would minimize the influence of regional Party organizations, where conservative influence is still believed to be strong. Also, in another effort to reform the Party, the Presidium asked all Central Committee members of retirement age (60 years) to give up their Central Committee positions.

— **Civic Forum meets with Defense Minister**

17. A Civic Forum delegation led by Vaclav Havel met with Defense Minister Miroslav Vacek on December 6. The CF delegation expressed the concern that conscripts did not have access to sufficient information to properly evaluate the current political situation. CF spokesmen stated that during their meeting they had reached a consensus that people do not need to fear the armed forces.

— **Foreign Minister to recall 21 ambassadors**

18. Foreign Minister Jaromir Johanes has stated he will recall 21 ambassadors. The recalls are said to be part of an effort to raise the level of professionalism of

the Czechoslovak diplomatic corps. Those who are to be recalled are of retirement age. The recall is likely to touch Miroslav Houstecky, the Czechoslovak Ambassador in Washington.

— **Protection of archives**

19. The Civic Forum passed on a proclamation from a group of Czechoslovak archivists who appealed to all their colleagues, particularly those in the Ministry of Interior, to ensure that no documents or other materials are destroyed or spirited away. A representative of the student strike committee offered to provide student guards for all archives. In response to a question, the Civic Forum spokesman admitted that their information that materials were being removed was unverified.

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83. Telegram From the Embassy in Czechoslovakia to the Department of State

Prague, December 8, 1989, 1821Z*

Unclassified

Prague 08616

Subject: GOC Confirms Changes in Travel Regulations, Some Fortifications
along Austrian Border to Be Dismantled

Ref: (A) Prague 8361³³, (B) Prague 8013³⁴

1. Summary. Czechoslovak MFA officials have confirmed details of new travel laws, stating that travelers need not show any particular amount of foreign currency to travel and may remain abroad for an unlimited period of time. The Austrian consul in Prague reports that Czechoslovak border fortifications will be removed along the Austrian border. The Czechoslovak Government has proposed mutual elimination of visas to the Austrian Government. End summary.

2. At Kulawiec's request, Petr Skacel, a lawyer in the Legal Department of the MFA Consular Section, discussed the changes with ConOff on December 5. He confirmed that Czechoslovaks are now free to travel with only a passport, and would be required only to fill out a form (*statisticky list*) and present it at the border. No approval of the form is required. Travelers are not required to show that they have any particular amount of foreign currency in order to leave the country. However, Czechoslovak banks will only provide up to 500 Czechoslovak crowns (US dols 50) of foreign currency to an individual. (Comment: In ConOff's experience, few Czechoslovaks travel with only the money provided by the banks, but have other sources of foreign cur-

33 | Document 64.

34 | Document 22, but should be Prague 08014, Document 23, concerning travel controls.

rency or friends and relatives abroad who support them on their visits. End comment.)

3. The visa and passport authorities are preparing new laws regarding the issuance of passports, based on Czechoslovakia's CSCE obligations. Skacel expressed the opinion that limitations on who can receive Czechoslovak passports, dating from 1965, are invalid under the CSCE. (Comment: Kulawiec has said that certain limitations would remain, such as those preventing issuance of passports to indicted or convicted criminals and persons owing duties of support such as alimony. End comment.)

4. Skacel said that travelers may stay abroad for any length of time and return without criminal sanction, since there is no longer any exit visa which would set a limit on their stay. He added that laws requiring Czechoslovaks to liquidate their property prior to emigration, and vesting property of those who abandon Czechoslovakia in the State, would be eliminated.

5. The Czechoslovak press reported December 6 that Czechoslovak border fortifications along the Austrian border will be dismantled beginning December 11. Clearly, the report relates to those defenses intended to prevent unauthorized exit from Czechoslovakia. The work is expected to be finished by December 31. Necessary military defense installations will be retained. Forst-Battaglia, Consul of the Austrian Embassy in Prague, confirmed the press reports. He added that the work will remove visible barriers at border crossings, beginning in the Bratislava area. Barbed wire will be removed all along the border, but he expects guard towers to remain, as they have along the Austro-Hungarian border.

6. As a goodwill gesture, and to test the feasibility of visa-free travel between Austria and Czechoslovakia, Austria has waived visas for Czechoslovaks for two weeks beginning December 4. Forst-Battaglia said that visas would again be required after December 17. Thereafter, visas would only be abolished on a reciprocal basis, and Czechoslovakia must "take the lead" on this point. A standing commission on easing travel between Austria and Czechoslovakia will meet in February. On December 6, Czechoslovakia delivered a note to the Austrian Embassy proposing bilateral elimination of visas. Forst-Battaglia expected a response from the Austrian Government within a few days.

8 [7]. According to Forst-Battaglia, Czechoslovaks are coming to Austria, but not in such enormous numbers as the Hungarians did when that border was opened. He did not foresee the same demand for travel from Czechoslovakia as from Poland and Hungary, because the opportunities for speculative trading of food and consumer goods were not as great for Czechoslovaks as Poles and Hungarians.

Black.

IV.

THE GOVERNMENT OF NATIONAL UNDERSTANDING

This is the first Government in more than 40 years without a Communist majority. CPCZ members hold ten of 21 ministries, including the important positions of Prime Minister (Marian Calfa) and Defense (Miroslav Vacek). The "Roundtable" of political groups which produced the current Government was unable to agree on an interior minister and responsibility for this ministry is now being shared by the Prime Minister and his two first deputies, Valtr Komarek, in charge of the economy, and former political prisoner Jan Carnogursky, in charge of legislative reforms. The Government is being presented as a transitional team which will prepare for free elections, probably in mid-1990. [...] President Husak resigned after swearing the new Government in. The Federal Assembly has 14 days to elect a successor. Possible candidates include Vaclav Havel, supported by the Civic Forum, former Prime Minister Adamec, reportedly supported by the Soviets, and Alexander Dubcek.

Prague 08627; Niact Immediate, December 11, 1989

84. Telegram From the Embassy in Czechoslovakia to the Department of State

Prague, December 11, 1989, 1446Z*

Confidential

Prague 08627; Niact Immediate

Subject: New Czechoslovak Government Sworn In

1. Confidential – entire text.

— Summary

2. At the end of this message (para 15), we provide a list of the new Czechoslovak Government and our early impressions of it. This is the first government in more than 40 years without a Communist majority. CPCZ members hold ten of 21 ministries, including the important positions of Prime Minister (Marian Calfa) and Defense (Miroslav Vacek). The “Roundtable” of political groups which produced the current Government was unable to agree on an interior minister and responsibility for this ministry is now being shared by the Prime Minister and his two first deputies, Valtr Komarek, in charge of the economy, and former political prisoner Jan Carnogursky, in charge of legislative reforms. The Government is being presented as a transitional team which will prepare for free elections, probably in mid-1990. New faces in the Government include Charter 77 signatory Jiri Dienstbier as Foreign Minister, and Forecasting Institute economists Vladimir Dlouhy and Vaclav Klaus as Chairman of the State Planning Commission and Finance Minister, respectively. President Husak resigned after swearing the new Government in. The Federal Assembly has 14 days to elect a successor. Possible candidates include Vaclav Havel, supported by the Civic Forum, former Prime Minister Adamec, reportedly supported by the Soviets, and Alexander Dubcek. End summary.

3. On December 10 Czechoslovakia’s first Government in 41 years not dominated by the Communists was sworn in. Ten of the 21 ministers appointed,

including Prime Minister Calfa and Defense Minister Vacek, are CPCZ members. Two of those ten (First Deputy Prime Minister Komarek and Deputy Prime Minister Dlouhy), while nominally CPCZ members, have been associated with the Civic Forum and can be expected to act more like independents inside the Government. The Government also contains four (two Socialists and two People's Party) members of the legal non-Communist parties and seven without political affiliation. Only three of the ministers, including Prime Minister Calfa, held government positions before this December.

4. In announcing the new ministers, Calfa described them as a Government of National Consensus. He said the Government would only be in place for the period running up to free elections. His personal target for those elections was sometime in mid-1990 but no firm date had yet been agreed. He presented the main tasks of the Government over this interim period as: (1) taking all the necessary legislative actions to prepare free elections and to protect civic and human rights; (2) managing the economy in way that assures economic equilibrium and no inflation while preparing for radical economic reforms; and (3) placing the Ministry of the Interior, and particularly the security organs, under strict government control.

5. On this last point Calfa confirmed that the various political groups represented in the "Roundtable" Discussions¹ which produced the new government had been unable to agree on a candidate for Interior Minister. The Roundtable had decided as a temporary solution for the Ministry to be placed under the joint supervision of the Prime Minister and his two First Deputies (Komarek and Carnogursky). The new government, he said, would place a priority on re-organizing the Ministry [of Interior] to improve its control of it. This might require separating out elements, such as the security forces, and placing them under different administration.

6. Among the eight Deputy Prime Ministers who along with Calfa make up the inner cabinet or Presidium of the Government, two have been given first deputy status. These are Valtr Komarek, who will have general charge of the economy, and Jan Carnogursky, who will be responsible for legislative affairs (i.e. political reforms). Both come to their jobs with some expertise. Komarek was Director of the Economic Forecasting Institute. Carnogursky is a lawyer and constitutional expert, though his past perspective has been protecting Slovak rights in the federation. We have been told by Civic Forum contacts that Komarek had been angling for the First Deputy Prime Minister slot, but only if given a free hand in the economy under a relatively weak prime minister. He apparently views Calfa in that light. (Former Prime Minister Adamec would have expected more hands-on control of the economy.) Carnogursky's

1 | See Document 82, para 10, footnote.

appointment is particularly ironic since only a few weeks ago he was in jail in Bratislava facing charges of subversion for his human rights activities.

7. Two other Forecasting Institute members have received portfolios in the area of the economy. Vladimir Dlouhy is now head of the State Planning Commission. Dlouhy is a protégé of Komarek's at the Institute and the older man may believe he can continue to exert authority over his 36-year-old former deputy. Vaclav Klaus on the other hand has been at odds with Komarek recently over economics, where he holds more free-market-oriented views, and as a political rival. Klaus probably views himself as the man to apply fiscal and monetary discipline to Komarek's broad macro-economic schemes on restructuring the economy. Depending on how seriously Komarek wants to pursue economic reforms in this interim period, the two could clash, with Dlouhy, personal friend to both, caught in the middle and trying to act as conciliator.

8. Two other new ministers are at first glance unusual candidates for their government offices. Petr Miller, the new Labor and Social Affairs Minister, has no past government experience. He comes to the job straight from his work at organizing the strike committee at the large CKD factory in Prague and then coordinating strike activities for the Civic Forum.

9. The new Foreign Minister, Jiri Dienstbier, has written regularly in *samizdat* on foreign policy as well as in foreign periodicals. This plus his command of several languages, including English, and work in the 1960's as an overseas Czechoslovak radio reporter seem his main credentials. One of Dienstbier's daunting tasks in the days ahead will be removing the many conservative, hardline figures packed into the MFA by former CPCZ Secretary for Foreign Relations Vasil Bilak.

10. At Calfa's press conference on the new Government, he said that Czechoslovakia's future foreign policy would be based on the country's own national interests. It would support the concept of a European Home and honor all its existing commitments. Calfa reiterated that withdrawal of Soviet troops from Czechoslovakia could only take place within the wider European disarmament process.

11. Calfa has also said that Miroslav Kusy, a Slovak dissident, will also be named as head of the Federal Press and Information Office and this could be raised to ministerial rank.

— A new president

12. After swearing in this new Government, President Husak resigned from office. The Federal Assembly has 14 days according to the Constitution to nominate and elect a successor. In the interim the Federal Assembly's Acting Chairman will function as President. Calfa has said that the "Roundtable" represent-

ing various political forces would be meeting this week to discuss presidential candidates.

13. We understand from Civic Forum contacts that Vaclav Havel would accept a nomination for the presidency, but that other candidates are also in the field. Former Prime Minister Adamec is said to be interested in the job himself and the Soviets are reportedly lobbying in his favor. Alexander Dubcek is also spoken of less frequently as a contender. The Assembly could act on replacing the President as early as Tuesday, December 12, when it is next scheduled to meet.

— **Comment**

14. While Calfa and others are speaking of this as a transitional government, it can expect to face a number of early problems not associated with preparing for free elections. The economy, for one, could be in a state of disorganization as the “New Economic Rules” go into effect on January 1. One of the impacts of these new rules should be to encourage enterprises to release non-essential staff, leaving the new Government to face the question of unemployment. It is not a mistake that the Socialist and People’s Parties are not represented by prominent figures in the new Government. A Socialist contact has told us that his party will keep its links with the Government as slow profile as possible in order not to suffer at the polls next Summer for the possible unpopular decisions it may be forced to take.

15. Below is a list of the new Czechoslovak Government:

— **Name, party, nationality, position**

(Note: People’s Party – CSL; Socialist Party – CSS; Communist Party – CPCZ; independent – IND. End note.)

Marian Calfa, CPCZ, Slovak Prime Minister

Valtr Komarek, CPCZ, Czech First Deputy P.M.

Jan Carnogursky, IND, Slovak First Deputy P.M.

Frantisek Pitra, CPCZ, Czech Deputy P.M. and Czech Premier

Miroslav [*Milan*] Cic, CPCZ, Slovak Deputy P.M. and Slovak Premier

Frantisek Reichel, CSL, Czech Deputy P.M. and Chairman of the State Commission for Science and Tech.

Vladimir Dlouhy, CPCZ, Czech Deputy P.M. and Chairman of the State Planning Commission

Josef Hromadka, IND, Czech Deputy P.M. for Culture and Religious Affairs

Oldrich Bursky, CSS, Czech Deputy P.M. and Minister of Agriculture and Food

Jiri Dienstbier, IND, Czech Minister of Foreign Affairs

Miroslav Vacek, CPCZ, Czech Minister of National Defense
Vaclav Klaus, IND, Czech Minister of Finance
Petr Miller, IND, Czech Minister of Labor and Social Affairs
Not yet confirmed

— **Name, party, nationality, position (cont'd)**

Andrej Barcak, CPCZ, Slovak, Minister of Foreign Trade
Frantisek Podlena, CPCZ, Czech, Minister of Transport and Communica-
tions
Robert Martinko, IND, Slovak Minister without portfolio
Richard Sacher, CSL, Czech Minister without portfolio
Ladislav Vodrazka, CPCZ, Slovak Minister in charge of Metallurgy, Engi-
neering and Electronics
Frantisek Pinc, CPCZ, Czech Minister for Fuels and Energy
Kvetoslava Korinkova, IND, Czech Minister-Chairwoman of the People's
Control Commission
Ladislav Dvorak, CSS, Czech Minister in charge of the Federal Price Office

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85. Telegram From the Embassy in Czechoslovakia to the Department of State

Prague, December 11, 1989, 1751Z*

Confidential

Prague 08674; Niact Immediate

Subject: Ambassador's December 10 Dinner for Civic Forum Representatives

Ref: Prague 8480²

1. Confidential – entire text.

2. Summary. Last week I invited a number of Civic Forum contacts to dinner at the residence on Sunday, December 10. At that time I did not know a new government would be announced that day. The dinner turned into something of a victory celebration, though three of those invited were unable to attend (Jiri Dienstbier, Petr Miller and Vaclav Klaus). The three had been appointed ministers and were occupied that evening with their new duties. Those that were able to come gave me and EmbOffs some useful insights into the Civic Forum's plans for the future and what help they want from the U.S. Their requests were quite modest and focused on the area of program exchanges. End summary.

3. Among those at dinner on December 10 were Petr Oslzly, a Brno choreographer whom the Forum has used to "stage" its Wenceslas Square and Letna rallies and Monika Pajerova, a student leader, as well as some of our more regular contacts: Martin Palous, Mr. and Mrs. Ivan Gabal, Mr. and Mrs. Ivan Havel, Mr. and Mrs. Petr Pithart, and Mr. and Mrs. Michael Kocab.

— Where the Forum is headed

4. The mood at dinner was high, as one would expect, but not euphoric. The group appreciated that the Forum had a long road ahead of it. Their thoughts were fixed on Havel's election to the presidency, something which could hap-

pen in a matter of days, and then the preparation and campaigning for elections next summer.

5. Michael Kocab, who had been instrumental in bringing Prime Minister Adamec in first contact with the Civic Forum, was concerned about the Soviet attitude toward Czechoslovak developments. He had heard the Soviets were actively lobbying for Adamec to replace Husak as President and opposed to Havel's candidacy. Reportedly a CPSU Central Committee member is in Prague to hold discussions with CPCZ leaders and offer support to Adamec.

6. Ivan Gabal, a researcher at the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences and head of the Independent Circle of Intellectuals,³ said he had been appointed campaign manager for Havel's election. Gabal will also be organizing the campaigning for the summer elections, a daunting task for a man with no prior campaign experience. (Note: Unless the Constitution is changed, Havel could be elected by the Federal Assembly for a full five-year term sometime over the next two weeks. The way some of the Forum members were talking, however, they may propose that a new constitution provide for direct election of the President. In this case Havel might step down in the summer so that a new presidential election would coincide with general elections to the Assembly. End note.)

7. Petr Pithart is to replace Havel as "coordinator" of the Civic Forum. (Note: Pithart has been an early proponent of a more active political role for the Forum. End note.) He and others seem concerned that the Forum's intellectual and artistic image may not go down well in factories and the countryside in next summer's election and are discussing ways of removing this elitist image. As an example of the problem, one guest pointed to friction developing between Petr Miller, the new Labor and Social Affairs Minister, and some of the "academic" economists in the Forum (and now in the new Government) who want to push reforms faster than Miller thinks the workforce is ready to accept.

8. Pithart retains a healthy suspicion of the CPCZ even though he feels the Communists are weakly led. Havel was to meet CPCZ leader Karel Urbanek a few days ago before the "Roundtable" Discussions which produced the new Government. Urbanek sent émigré Zdenek Mlynar as an emissary instead, fearing, Pithart thought, a direct meeting with Havel. Mlynar, who had been advising Havel earlier, is now apparently *persona non grata* at the Civic Forum and is more closely aligning himself with CPCZ reform elements.⁴

9. Pithart complained that the Communists are encouraging new political movements, such as the Greens and an Agricultural Workers Party, in an effort to fragment the opposition. The guiding force behind the Agricultural Workers

2 | Not yet declassified.

3 | That is, the aforementioned Circle of Independent Intelligentsia; see Document 7, para 7.

4 | See Document 65, para 3, and Document 90, para 11.

is apparently the Communist Director (Cuba) of the Slusovice Cooperative in Moravia.

— **What the Forum wants from the U.S.**

10. When I asked how we as a government might support the Forum's work, the requests I received were surprisingly modest. Several guests asked simply for access to U.S. news. They are now so busy that they are unable to keep up with the media. They were interested to learn what the U.S. media was saying about Havel and the Forum. I offered to have our P&C Office put together a clipping file for them so that they can keep track of the American press.

11. More significantly, others said the Forum wants to learn from us, particularly in three areas: (A) management training, (2) journalism and handling the media and (3) the mechanics of democracy and election campaigning. (On the last point I told them they seemed to be doing fairly well without our assistance.) Civic Forum's staffing is so thin, however, that finding the personnel to free up for such exchange programs is a problem. On the question of election campaigning, Forum representatives told us that they frankly expect to play the campaign by ear and will not have the time or personnel to send out of the country for training. In the new year, however, they would like to take advantage of USIS-sponsored management and media programs. From their point of view it would also be good if U.S. experts could travel here to lecture and not require the Forum to release many critical staff members for travel to the U.S. Forum members like Martin Palous made clear their hope the U.S. would open cultural centers in Prague and Bratislava and offered to help find a building here (see also Prague 8628)⁵.

12. I told my guests that we should be flexible in meeting their needs and that I would direct my P&C staff to look into the possibilities for enhancing US-Czechoslovak cultural exchanges in the weeks ahead.

13. Forum representatives also said they were interested in youth and student exchanges over the longer term. The Forum's leaders appreciate that the Czechoslovak generation since 1968 has been cut off from the West and needs to be informed about the country's historical and cultural connections with Europe and North America.

14. Interestingly, no request was made for financial assistance. Much as the Forum did a few weeks ago with CODEL Pell, my guests made plain that Czechoslovakia does not want aid and is not yet in Poland's or Hungary's tight economic situation. They believe the country can restructure its economy with its own resources. To the extent these need to be supplemented, they are look-

5 | Not yet declassified.

ing for limited commercial bank credits and foreign investment and want to create economic conditions that will attract both.

15. Neither did my guests raise MFN, though they are clearly interested in expanding trade with the U.S. When the Embassy has spoken to Forum representatives about MFN in the past, they have warned us not to rush into a discussion of MFN with the GOC. They feel there will be time enough to discuss MFN once they are fully satisfied that the dramatic political changes going on here are fully irreversible.

16. This very satisfactory dinner broke up shortly before ten. Several of the guests left to participate in a student meeting in which they hoped to convince students to call off their strike this week. (Note: The Forum has decided that, since the Government has met most of its demands, its December 11 general strike should only be symbolic, a honking of horns and factory sirens at noon. The students, who are upset that a Federal Assembly commission has so far failed to produce its report on the police action of November 17, want the strike to continue. End note.) Other Forum members were heading off for a late night strategy session over Havel's election as President.

17. Comment. My impression is that the Civic Forum, even if Vaclav Havel moves up to the presidency, will remain directed by a serious and talented team whose feet are fixed squarely on the ground and their sights on longer-term political objectives. We owe them our support and their modest requests seem clearly within our means. Requests for exchanges fit neatly into our existing USIA program framework. An increase in exchanges may require additional Washington funding, however, and the Embassy's P&C Section is now proposing an expanded program along these lines to USIA. Its approval will probably be contingent on additional congressional funding for the President's East European Initiative. Of particular importance will be an ability to move towards establishment of cultural centers here and in Bratislava. I would also note in this connection that adequate Embassy support for the Civic Forum and pro-democracy developments here will depend on favorable Washington consideration of our submissions (reftel) on Embassy Prague's changing resource requirements.

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86. Telegram From the Embassy in Czechoslovakia to the Department of State

Prague, December 12, 1989, 1337Z

Confidential

Prague 08700; Niact Immediate

Subject: GOC Federal Assembly May Consider Popular Election of New
President

Ref: Prague 8674⁶

1. Confidential – entire text.
2. Summary. A December 12 parliamentary session will elect a new chairman for the Federal Assembly who will act as President until a successor for Husak is chosen. It now appears that election of a new president could be done by some form of direct vote, but this will require a change in the Constitution. The Assembly may consider this at its session today. The Civic Forum seems to be gearing up for a popular election campaign in favor of its candidate, Vaclav Havel, and others are entering the field. End summary.
3. This evening's (December 12) meeting of the Federal Assembly is scheduled to elect a new Assembly chairman to replace Alois Indra, who resigned recently. The new Chairman will also function as Acting President of the Republic until the election of a successor to President Husak, who resigned on December 10.
4. It now appears, as Civic Forum members discussed with the Ambassador on December 10, that a move is afoot to elect the new President by some form of direct election, not by the Federal Assembly as specified in the Constitution. The details of how this will be done are not clear. Civic Forum representatives in their meeting with the Ambassador discussed this in terms of a multi-candi-

6 | Document 85.

date election campaign. CPCZ leader Karel Urbanek in a press statement said the Club of Communist Deputies in the Assembly favored a popular referendum on the presidency. That could mean no more than a confirmation of a candidate elected by the Assembly. The Democratic Forum, the reform wing of the CPCZ, has also talked about a direct general election of the President.

5. As the Constitution is presently written, a new president has to be elected by the Assembly within 14 days of death or resignation of his predecessor. That would allow little time for campaigning. (Note. The Civic Forum has already produced a new poster of Vaclav Havel in a relaxed electioneering pose. The poster, while not referring to elections, has materialized all over Prague with the caption, "Truth and Love Will Succeed over Lies and Hate." End note.) It is possible that the Federal Assembly's session today could amend the Constitution in some way to allow for a general election of the President.

6. The number of potential candidates for the election is growing. Besides Havel, former Prime Minister Adamec's candidacy has been put forward by a group of workers at the large CKD factory in Prague and the Prague City Communist Party Committee has also proposed Adamec. Cestmir Cisar, a Prague Spring-era CPCZ leader and more recently founder of the Obroda group, has also been nominated by the Union of Socialist Youth [*Socialist Union of Youth*]. Alexander Dubcek continues to flirt with the idea of running for the office, if drafted to do so. He has said that he remains a politician who will listen to the will of the people.

7. A popular election of the President might be in the interest of many of those concerned, but for different reasons. The Civic Forum has had doubts that it could push Havel's candidacy through a Federal Assembly still dominated by Communists and discredited political figures. On the other hand, the Communists may think that they stand a better chance of blocking Havel's election if a country-wide vote is held. Their assumption may be that he is not well known outside Prague and Bratislava and the conservative countryside might prefer a known quantity like Adamec. In fact, Embassy officers who met with Civic Forum leaders at the Ambassador's residence on December 10 found them worried about the Forum's and Havel's image. They fear his theater credentials may make him look "elitist" and not the man to represent the working class. The Communists may also be counting on the fact that multiple candidates, including figures like Cisar, will split the opposition votes.

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87. Telegram From the Embassy in Czechoslovakia to the Department of State

Prague, December 12, 1989, 1629Z

Unclassified

Prague 08711

Subject: Human Rights Update

1. Summary. In one of his last acts Gustav Husak issued a sweeping amnesty order which will clear Czechoslovak jails of almost all political prisoners, although questions still remain concerning some individuals convicted of espionage. Stanislav Devaty has reappeared from underground exile. The future role of Charter 77 remains unclear given recent political developments. End summary.

— Husak issues sweeping amnesty

2. Gustav Husak, in one of his last official acts as President, issued a December 8 amnesty which will free virtually all political prisoners who remained in Czechoslovak prisons. Husak ordered prosecutors not to commence or start criminal proceedings under a series of articles of the criminal code previously used to prosecute dissidents. In addition, Husak ordered that all individuals previously convicted of violating these articles of the Penal Code be released.

3. The specific provisions of law under which criminal proceedings were halted and prisoners freed are as follows:⁷

- subversion of the Republic, article 98 of the Penal Law;

⁷ | In the original telegram there was an error in the number of the law 150/69 and omissions of article numbers. These were tacitly corrected by the Editor.

- damaging of a state of the world socialist system, article 99, 98;
- sedition, article 100;
- abuse of religious position, article 101;
- defamation of the Republic and its representatives, article 102, 103;
- defamation of a state of the world socialist system and its representatives, article 104;
- [- leaving the Republic without permission, article 109;]
- damaging of the interests of the Republic abroad, article 112;
- taking an object away from economic use, article 116;
- illegal trading, article 118, section 1;
- assault on a state body or a body of a public organizations, article 154, section 2;
- obstructing a public official, article 156a;
- foiling surveillance over Churches and religious societies, article 178;
- defamation of nation, race and conviction, article 198;
- misdemeanor against the interests of the socialist economy, article 2, Letter c, of Law 150/69;
- misdemeanor against the interests of socialist society in contact with foreign countries, article 5, Letters b, c, and d, of Law 150/69; and
- misdemeanor against public order, article 6, Letters a and c, of Law 150/69.

4. In addition to this blanket amnesty, Husak also asked the Czechoslovak General Prosecutor, the Czech and Slovak Ministers of Justice and the Minister of National Defense to submit to the President for decision the cases of persons prosecuted or convicted on a number of other penal provisions. It was Husak's intent that these cases be reviewed on an individual basis by his successor. The specific provisions of law under which individual reviews will be conducted are:

- illegal entry into the Republic, article 110 of the Penal Law;
- violation of regulations about international flights, article 111;
- illegal trading, article 118, section 2;
- approval of a criminal act, article 165;
- foiling of an official decision, article 171, section 1, letter c;
- abduction abroad, article 233;
- non-fulfillment of the draft duty, article 267;
- avoidance of service in armed forces, articles 269, 270;
- imperiling of political and moral condition of a military unit, article 288; and misdemeanors of:
- foiling the execution of an official decision, article 7, letter d, of law 150/69; and
- abetting, article 12 of law No 150/69.

— **VONS remains concerned about “espionage” cases**

5. Despite Husak’s sweeping amnesty order, the Committee for the Defense of the Unjustly Prosecuted (VONS) remains concerned about the cases of four individuals convicted of espionage. The individuals are Ondrej Hoch, Josef Romer, Petr Hauptmann, and Viktor Dederá. VONS expects to meet with Justice Ministry officials in the coming days to discuss these cases.

— **Stanislav Devaty reappears**

6. Stanislav Devaty, founder of the Society of Friends of the USA (SPUSA) and former Charter 77 spokesperson, reappeared in Prague on December 12. Devaty, who went underground in October 1989 (Prague 7097)⁸, had spent his time “underground” in Poland.

— **Whither Charter 77**

7. Recent events, including the multitude of changes concerning human rights and the creation of the Civic Forum, have left Charter 77 members unclear as to what role Charter 77 should play in the future. The best guess is that new Charter 77 spokespersons will be appointed for 1990, but that Charter 77 will purposely keep a low profile and become active only if the reform process now underway reverses itself.

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⁸ | Not yet declassified; see Document 7, para 5.

88. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Czechoslovakia

Washington, December 12, 1989, 0151Z

Confidential
State 394623; Immediate
Subject: Czechoslovak Gossip

1. Confidential – entire text.
2. Over the last week, EUR/EEY has received some information on Czechoslovak personalities that may be of interest to post.
3. Nemeč on Calfa: EEY Deputy Director Hornblow spoke privately with Deputy Trade Minister Jiri Nemeč on December 7. Nemeč expressed nervousness about the course of events in Czechoslovakia and skepticism over the intellectual and leadership capabilities of Prime Minister Marian Calfa. Nemeč has known Calfa for twenty years, and said the important thing to remember about Calfa is that he is a lawyer. Unfortunately, Nemeč said, Calfa is not an economist and may be the first P.M. with no economic expertise.
4. Nemeč on Adamec: Nemeč told Hornblow that Ladislav Adamec should have stayed on as P.M.; Nemeč hoped that Adamec might at least become President, as Gustav Husak was finished. (Note: Nemeč said this before Husak's announcement that he would resign.)
5. Nemeč on the presidency: Nemeč told Hornblow that except for Tomas Masaryk, no Czechoslovak leader has been as astute as the Czechoslovak people. Husak, Nemeč said, had started out well but had not been a factor after his stroke. Milos Jakes had been an intellectual zero. Alexander Dubcek had emerged as a presidential possibility, but was perceived as a man of the past.
6. Dyba on Klaus. Karel Dyba, Czechoslovak economist winding up a semester at the Wilson Center in Washington, spoke privately on December 6 with Desk Officer Munter. Dyba, who says he has "socialist leanings," is nonetheless very enthused about the possibility that economist Vaclav Klaus is emerging as

a top political figure. Dyba said that Klaus enjoys widespread respect among economists even though Klaus's free-market orientation is not shared by most of them. Dyba was convinced that if Klaus emerged as a Minister that, he (Dyba) would receive a governmental post.

7. Dyba on Dlouhy. Dyba said that he had received a phone call from Communist economist Vladimir Dlouhy, the new State Planning Commission chief, the previous evening. Dyba gave Dlouhy similar rave reviews, stressing Dlouhy's flexibility of thought and youthful energy. Dyba said he was in touch with Dlouhy frequently. Dyba plans to return to Prague December 15.

Kimmitt

89. Telegram From the Embassy in Czechoslovakia to the Department of State

Prague, December 13, 1989, 1641Z

Confidential

Prague 08746; Immediate

Subject: Czechoslovak Developments December 12

Ref: Prague 8700⁹

1. Confidential – entire text.

2. Summary. This cable covers Czechoslovak developments over December 12 including the election of new Federal Assembly officials and the resignation from the Assembly of former CPCZ leader Milos Jakes. Intense Roundtable Discussions between the Civic Forum and other political groupings are continuing on the method of electing a new president. Communist Federal Assembly deputies are now pressing for direct popular elections. The Civic Forum is publicly opposed to this on constitutional grounds but also because it fears a presidential campaign now could prove divisive. The Civic Forum is also concerned that a multiple candidate presidential election could split the opposition vote, limiting Vaclav Havel's chances and improving those of a Communist candidate, such as former Prime Minister Adamec. The Slovaks have formed a new government which does not have a Communist majority and the CPCZ Presidium has reported on results of last weekend's round of Communist Party district conferences. End summary.

— December 12 Federal Assembly session

3. The December 12 session of the Federal Assembly elected Stanislav Kukral, an independent deputy, as its new Chairman. Anton Blazej, a Communist from

⁹ | Document 86.

Bratislava who is a member of the Slovak Academy of Sciences, was elected to head the Chamber of Nations and People's Party Chairman Josef Bartoncik will head the House of People. (Biographic data on these persons follow septel.)¹⁰

4. A large part of the Assembly's debate concerned an interim report by its commission studying the police action against a November 17 student demonstration. The Assembly approved a resolution placing full "political" responsibility for this action on former CPCZ leader Milos Jakes and Prague Party leader Miroslav Stepan. Jakes at the end of the debate announced his intention to resign from the Assembly. The Assembly commission report had called both Jakes and Stepan to resign.

5. The commission's work will continue and try to determine whether a criminal investigation is required. If the action against the students was planned and organized in a manner designed to intimidate or physically punish them, this would amount to a violation of the Czechoslovak Penal Code (article 179) and require criminal prosecution of those responsible.

— The presidential election

6. The other issue debated in the Assembly was the method of electing a new president. We understand from the Civic Forum that "intense" Roundtable Discussions are now going on between various political groups, including the Communists and the Forum, on this issue.

7. Several Communist deputies at last night's Assembly session proposed (reftel) that a national referendum be held to elect the new President. Non-Communist Party deputies (including Josef Bartoncik of the People's Party and Jozef Simuth of the Slovak Revival Party), recommended against direct elections. They proposed instead that discredited politicians in the Assembly resign and special bi-elections be held to make the Assembly more representative and, therefore, a more appropriate body to elect the President as provided in the Constitution. An independent deputy, Stanislav Hanak, charged the Communists proposal was a tactic to put off presidential elections and prevent a man with high morals – he named Vaclav Havel – from obtaining the office. This brought cheers from the gallery.

8. The Civic Forum after mulling over the idea of direct elections has now come out publicly against them. Its reasoning is that constant changes in the Constitution, which direct elections would require, are not in the interest of a stable democracy. It argues that a presidential campaign would divide the nation at a time it should be united in making political reforms and preparing for general elections next summer. It would also presumably delay the elec-

10 | Prague 08750; not included in this volume.

tion since campaigning could not be conducted in the short period (14 days) provided in the Constitution for re-appointment of the President. The Forum has also said it is opposed to mass resignation of the Federal Assembly and an early general election. It favors instead selected resignations by discredited politicians.

9. Behind this argumentation, however, is an appreciation (reftel), that Vaclav Havel may not be a shoe-in a general election, particularly as the number of candidates multiplies. The Slovak National Front has now formally put forward Alexander Dubcek as a presidential candidate and Slovak polls show him well ahead of Havel in voter support, at least in Slovakia. If Dubcek and other candidates can split the opposition vote, the Forum fears a Communist candidate, such as former Prime Minister Adamec, could win a plurality for a five-year term as President, giving the CPCZ's important influence over political events.

10. The Forum now seems to have returned to its original position which was that the Assembly should elect a president who is independent of party affiliation, not discredited and a Czech. This would balance the Slovak, Communist Prime Minister Marian Calfa.

— **CPCZ Presidium**

11. A December 12 meeting of the CPCZ Presidium has reported on the outcome of last weekend's Party district conferences. The districts have called for a Party break with all those former CPCZ leaders responsible for the present crisis. The district conferences also gave a vote of no confidence to the present Central Committee and recommended that it not meet again before the December 20–21 extraordinary Party congress. The districts reportedly supported various elements of the Presidium's proposed action program for the Party, including revoking the "Pouceni" or Lesson of 1968 and rehabilitating ex-Communists purged after the Prague Spring. The districts were critical, however, of the weak wording of the proposed action program and recommended it be re-drafted in more radical terms.

— **A new Slovak government announced**

12. A new Slovak government was announced after considerable delay. Milan Cic, who was asked to form the new Government, will be Republic Prime Minister. Cic, who was born in 1932 in Dolni Kubin, is a lawyer by training and currently Director of the Slovak Institute of State and Law. He is a Communist who worked in the Ministry of the Interior for a short period after 1969. The Government is composed of six Communists and nine persons without party affiliation. Ministers have not yet been named for the posts of Minister of Health

and Chairman of the People's Control Commission. A full list of government members and biographic details follow septel.¹¹ The new Government received a vote of support from the Slovak National Front. The Front is also reportedly discussing changes in its election commission and expanding its membership to include new political parties and independent groups.

— **Comment**

13. Of the above, clearly the most important is the method of presidential election. The idea of a direct election of the President, something new CPCZ Presidium member Vasil Mohorita is said to be promoting, would be an important break with Czechoslovak constitutional tradition. This has always had the President accountable to the Assembly. A direct election would produce a more American-style presidency.

14. While it is within the Federal Assembly's power to make such a change, a Czechoslovak constitutional lawyer has told us that there will be much opposition to it (as confirmed by the Assembly's December 12 debate). He added that this strategy was clearly meant to deny Vaclav Havel the presidency and that it was his guess that the present Roundtable Discussions would probably result in some form of compromise. A candidate acceptable to all sides would be proposed to the National [*Federal*] Assembly for election. His implication was that it would not be Vaclav Havel.

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11 | Prague 08889; not included in this volume.

90. Telegram From the Embassy in Czechoslovakia to the Department of State

Prague, December 13, 1989, 1653Z

Limited Official Use

Prague 08749; Immediate

Subject: Congressman Foglietta Visit to Prague: December 12, 1989

1. Limited Official Use – entire text.

2. Summary. United States Congressman Thomas Foglietta on December 12 met in separate meetings with Foreign Minister Jiri Dienstbier and Civic Forum representatives. Dienstbier specifically asked that the USG restore Most Favored Nation status to Czechoslovakia and provided a general overview of the current situation in the country. Civic Forum representatives presented their views on contemporary economic and political issues. They also stated that Forum experts are preparing a detailed list of the ways in which interested international parties can assist the Civic Forum and Czechoslovakia. End summary.

— Meeting with Foreign Minister Dienstbier

3. Thomas Foglietta, member of the United States House of Representatives, met on December 12 with the new Foreign Minister Jiri Dienstbier. Ambassador Black accompanied representative Foglietta to the meeting with the Foreign Minister.

4. Dienstbier characterized the meeting as one between good friends. He indicated that he had been in office for only two days and could not offer specific details concerning plans and policies of the new Government.

5. Dienstbier especially indicated a reluctance to answer inquiries concerning economics, but then specifically requested that the USG restore Most Favored Nation status to Czechoslovakia. Dienstbier stated that the restoration of MFN would be a “recognition of our results” by the USG. The USG repre-

sentatives told Dienstbier recent improvements in the human rights situation in Czechoslovakia warranted future discussion of the issue.

6. Addressing other economic issues, Dienstbier stated that Czechoslovakia would seek World Bank and International Monetary Fund membership. Dienstbier stated the Czechoslovak economy has problems, but that Czechoslovakia was not in the position of a weak state, and that the country would seek to develop its economy not on the basis of grants, but on economic cooperation. The Foreign Minister also stated that Czechoslovakia would not repeat the economic errors of Poland in the 1970's.

7. Dienstbier also indicated that the transition to a democratic society must be done without violence and in a cooperative spirit. Dienstbier praised the political maturity of the "20-year-old students" who had provided the spark for democratic changes, and stated he hoped that these students would be provided opportunities to study abroad, including the United States. He stated the students deserved such opportunities for their efforts to bring democracy to Czechoslovakia, and that Czechoslovakia needed it because 20 years of stagnation had left the nation without significant opportunities for the exchange of ideas at the international level.

8. Representative Foglietta took the occasion of the meeting with the Foreign Minister to invite him to the United States. Dienstbier indicated he had not had the opportunity to travel for 20 years and that he expected to make a visit to the United States within a year, but that for the foreseeable future he would have to remain in Czechoslovakia to work on the country's problems.

— Meeting with the Civic Forum

9. Jan Urban and Martin Palous were the Civic Forum representatives at the meeting with Congressman Foglietta. They stated the biggest victory of the Civic Forum thus far was to have a Civic Forum representative as the Minister of Finance, although they admitted the Minister of Finance was a "most risky position." The Civic Forum, according to its representatives, seeks an effective economy which would combine ownership by the State, co-operatives, and the private sector. State-owned enterprises would be expected to compete in a market economy. The Forum also foresees a regional approach to economic development, with Hungary and Poland being the natural partners of Czechoslovakia. Although East German economic cooperation would be welcome, the Civic Forum believes East German economic problems will be solved by German means and that East Germany would not be a member of any regional structures which might be formed with Hungary and Poland.

10. Regarding political issues, the Forum representatives stated they are concentrating on building the Forum as a political structure. They are especially concerned about maintaining the enthusiasm which the Czechoslovak public

has thus far shown for the Civic Forum and are looking at the successes and failures of the New Forum in the East Germany for guidance on this point. The Civic Forum representatives expressed interest in obtaining international assistance concerning campaigns and policy formulation. They also stated that a group of experts within the Civic Forum is preparing a detailed list of the type of assistance the Forum and Czechoslovakia need and that the list is expected to be completed within two weeks.

11. The Forum opposes a Communist Party proposal that the next president be elected in a referendum. Ostensibly they fear such a referendum would provoke a virulent anti-Communist political campaign which could interfere with the stable transitional period before free elections the Forum is seeking. The Forum representatives also indicated they do not want the CPCZ to collapse in 24 hours and that the Forum was now helping the CPCZ to survive. They stated that they did not like Zdenek Mlynar. The Civic Forum representatives explained that Mlynar was attempting to convince people that a reformed Communist Party could solve the country's problems, a view not shared by the Civic Forum.¹²

12. The Forum believes Czechoslovakia must remain in the Warsaw Pact and that it is impossible to ask for neutrality at this time. They hope that the Warsaw Pact will evolve into a political grouping rather than a military one. The Civic Forum did state that they believe the presence of Soviet troops in Czechoslovakia on at least two occasions played an important role in convincing those considering a military crackdown not to carry through with such ideas. The Forum representatives believe that such a crackdown is now not possible.

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¹² | See Document 65, para 3, and Document 85, para 8.

91. Telegram From the Embassy in Czechoslovakia to the Department of State

Prague, December 13, 1989, 1702Z

Confidential

Prague 08753; Immediate

From the Ambassador for Deputy Secretary Eagleburger and Under
Secretary for Management Selin

Subject: A proposal to Re-open the Consulate in Bratislava

Ref: (A) 88 Prague 5892, (B) Prague 08480¹³

1. Confidential – entire text.

2. Summary. The dramatic changes going on in Czechoslovakia argue for thinking creatively about initiatives that can influence developments here. Below I outline one way of doing so: by re-opening our Consulate in Bratislava with State and USIA representation. This is a proposal with a relatively modest price tag which can be achieved by using an already-owned USG building in the Slovak capital. End summary.

3. I think it is time for the Department to give active reconsideration to the Embassy's proposal (ref A) to re-open our former Consulate in Bratislava. That proposal was based on the idea of using the USG-owned and recently-refurbished former Consulate building in the Slovak capital. In my opinion, the Embassy gave three good arguments for re-opening Bratislava. Let me reiterate them:

- Humanitarian/Consular. Slovakia is the origin of the largest and most recent wave of Czechoslovak emigration to the U.S. That fact is reflected in the Embassy's consular and humanitarian workload. Slovaks account for a majority of those seeking tourist visas to the U.S. and more than 70 percent of our 1,000 local recipients of U.S. benefits reside there. American

¹³ | Neither of the two documents has yet been declassified.

- tourists in Slovakia, many visiting relatives, often require consular assistance. Some of this workload could be best performed in Bratislava.
- Public diplomacy. Slovaks are highly receptive to American culture and ideas. Our outreach programs in this part of the country have been handicapped by factors of geography and language. Bratislava is a four-hour drive from Prague and the Eastern part of Slovakia more than 12. There is a thirst for information about American society which can only be met by USG presence in the Slovak Republic.
 - A listening post. With its large Hungarian, Polish and Ukrainian minorities, Slovakia and its capital are well placed to serve as a listening post for regional as well as local developments. Slovakia has a distinct cultural and linguistic identity in which the Catholic Church and political institutions, such as the local (Slovak) Communist Party, play a different role than in the Czech-speaking parts of the federation. Developments in this republic cannot be followed adequately from Prague. As recent developments have shown, the sense of Slovak identity, not to mention separateness, is likely to grow. It is not by accident that Slovakia organized its own pro-democracy movement, the Public Against Violence, independent of the Prague-based Civic Forum.

4. The Department's "Beyond Containment" Task Force is helping to focus attention on the need to re-direct resources to Eastern Europe. We think a Consulate in Bratislava should be high on the list of the task force's priorities. As we recommended in our earlier message, a two-person post should be established in Bratislava with a State and USIA position. The State officer would provide limited consular and citizen services, but devote at least half of his/her time to contact work and reporting. The USIA officer would be responsible for establishing a U.S. cultural center/reading room and an outreach program. He/she would backstop USIS programs, such as Fulbright exchanges, in the republic, and build on the network of contacts our current USIA offices have developed but been hard pressed to mine.

5. Our earlier message also provided detailed recommendations on local staffing and an estimated budget for start-up and operating costs. These figures were assembled last year but remain accurate. Because we own the building, which contains living quarters for American staff, and are recommending an "unclassified" work environment, the price tag is quite modest. The costs, as we proposed, would be shared by the Department and USIA.

As stated reftel B (Prague 08480), in which post advised Assistant Secretary Seitz of our anticipated resource requirements in view of recent events, the opening of Bratislava would confirm the need for an additional GSO position in Prague. Our present GSO American staffing is barely adequate to meet present requirements. The anticipated expansion of programs in Prague, plus Bratislava support, will require an additional GSO position.

6. In conclusion:

The new realities in Eastern Europe in general and in Czechoslovakia in particular argue for thinking creatively. The special attraction of this proposal is that the price tag involved is relatively small. A consulate in Bratislava would be a very concrete signal of our interest in improved relations with an emerging Czechoslovak democracy. It would expand our ability to monitor political and economic change in this country and give us a base from which to promote U.S. values in the more remote Eastern regions of the Republic. A consulate would also offer a point of assistance for promoting U.S. trade and investment in Slovakia. As we have already seen, American business interest, including the interest of Americans of Slovak origin, is growing. The likely extension of MFN to Czechoslovakia and the improvement of bilateral relations will foster this trend. We should be represented in Slovakia and ready to take advantage of these developments.

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92. Telegram From the Embassy in Czechoslovakia to the Department of State

Prague, December 14, 1989, 1049Z*

Limited Official Use

Prague 08758

Subject: Ambassador's Lunch with the New Mayor of Prague

1. Summary: In a cordial and productive lunch with the new Mayor of Prague, his first with a foreign Ambassador, I was told that his administration wants a new, improved relationship with the Embassy, leading to intensified U.S. commercial and cultural activities here. He suggested a willingness to be helpful to the Embassy in locating housing and office space and made clear that the city plans to take over some of the functions of the Diplomatic Service Bureau. End summary.

2. I was invited to lunch December 13 by the new Mayor of Prague, Josef Hajek. Hajek is a Communist Party member and was flanked by his Deputy Mayor Milan Horsky (Socialist) and the Chairman of Prague District 6, where my residence is located, Jan Neduchal (Communist). "Lord Mayor" Hajek told me that I was the first foreign Ambassador he had invited and that he would see my Soviet colleague December 14.

3. Hajek said that he was most interested in helping to improve relations between the United States and Czechoslovakia and specifically hoped for better political, economic and sports ties between Prague and the U.S. He said that the present period represented a fresh start in U.S.-Czechoslovak relations.

4. Hajek commented that he had "nothing in common" with his predecessor, Mayor Horcik, and that he instead stands for reform. He expressed an interest in developing sister-city relations with an appropriate U.S. city, and I said that we might suggest a U.S. state capital with a substantial Czech-American population.

5. I told Mayor Hajek that various American hotel chains, like Marriott and Ramada had expressed interest in building in Prague. The Mayor said that was

of interest to him and that Messrs. Klima and Piskac of his office should be our future points of contact for visiting American businessmen.

6. I asked the Mayor about the future role of the Diplomatic Service Bureau¹⁴ to which we must apply for Embassy housing. I told him that the Diplomatic Service Bureau told us that local Prague National Committees controlled housing allocations. Mayor Hajek replied that he intends to “interrupt the monopoly” of the Diplomatic Service Bureau and that the Mayor’s Office would manage housing problems with foreign Embassies without the Diplomatic Service Bureau as intermediary.

7. I followed up by telling Hajek we would be interested in exploring the possibility of taking over the large building adjacent to the Chancery on the east which has been under construction for a number of years and which we understand is for use by the National Gallery of Prague. The Mayor and his Deputy took notes and said they would look into the matter and get back to me.

8. I told the Mayor that the Embassy had previously expressed an interest in renting apartments and office space in the Jansky Hill Development Project near the Embassy. The Mayor took note of this but said allocation of space in the large project will be decided as a “public issue” by the residents of the area.

9. Mayor Hajek said that he hopes that U.S. experts, particularly in the area of environmental pollution and medical care, can visit Prague to help develop appropriate technology. He expressed an interest in purchasing advanced medical equipment including “polyfunctional diagnostic computers,” as well as road construction and maintenance technology and equipment. I told him we would be happy to help in this respect.

10. On a more political note, the Mayor mentioned the brutal police intervention against peaceful demonstrators on November 17, which sparked the massive public demonstrations leading to recent changes in Czechoslovakia. I asked him whether people here will now be able to demonstrate peacefully without fear of interference. The Mayor replied that they would have absolute freedom to do so after a new constitution is decided which he said would guarantee such freedoms. In the meantime he said the police would only intervene against demonstrators if public property were damaged.

11. Comment: The fact that the Mayor chose to invite the American Ambassador first to a working lunch and was so emphatic in underscoring his desire for good relations with this Embassy is very positive. It should set the stage for better cooperation by local authorities on issues of interest to us, including local housing and commercial relations. End comment.

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¹⁴ | That is, the “Správa diplomatických služeb,” which, among other things, assigned staff (chauffeurs, maids, cleaners) to diplomats’ households, who were used as informers. See also Document 113, para 9.

93. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Czechoslovakia

Washington, December 14, 1989, 0040Z

Confidential

State 397249; Immediate

Subject: Ambassador Wendt's Meeting with Czechoslovak Deputy Trade
Minister Nemec, December 8, 1989

1. Confidential – entire text.

2. Summary: Nemec described changes in Czechoslovakia, and asked about U.S. strategic trade controls. Wendt outlined the function and utility of the COCOM regimen, emphasizing its flexibility in dealing with specific cases. Wendt stated that it would be a mistake to assume there will be sweeping changes in control lists. Nemec asked about the list revision process and about exceptions made to the list. End summary.

3. Czechoslovak Deputy Foreign Trade Minister met with senior representative for Strategic Technology Policy Allan Wendt December 8. Nemec was accompanied by Ambassador Houstecky, Ministry official Gedeon, and CommAtt Sticha. Other U.S. participants were T/ST Staffer Saboe, EUR/RPE Officer Windsor, and Czechoslovak Desk Officer Munter (notetaker).

4. At the outset, Nemec commented that he had held useful talks at USTR, Commerce, with Chamber of Commerce chief Leshner, and with the European Bureau at State. He had generally discussed change in Czechoslovakia and prospects for U.S.-Czechoslovak trade, but was also interested in export controls. Specifically, he said he found the size of the export control list excessive, and hoped that Czechoslovakia's drive to modernize – “speaking purely in economic terms” – could be helped by Western technology.

5. Wendt responded by outlining the function and utility of COCOM. He stressed that COCOM is not a political tool to be used to support change in Eastern Europe: COCOM has a limited purpose, that is, to prevent the unlicensed

export of militarily sensitive goods and technology. Wendt explained that COCOM lists are changed under two circumstances: first, if goods are no longer judged militarily critical, or second, if widespread availability from non-COCOM sources can be demonstrated.

6. Thus, Wendt said, there must be no unrealistic expectations of how COCOM might change in the immediate future. It is one thing for the United States to respond constructively to the unfolding political and economic reforms taking place in Eastern Europe; it is quite another to try to use COCOM as an instrument to support such reforms.

7. Exceptions to the COCOM list can be made, Wendt said. If a country on the COCOM proscribed list can demonstrate reasonable (i.e. civilian) end use of a technology and credible guarantees that the technology would not be diverted to military use. Wendt said that if Czechoslovakia wished to pursue cases of this sort, the Western firms interested in exporting such items should bring the cases to COCOM.

8. Turning to the specific situation in Eastern Europe, Wendt said that domestic changes are decidedly a factor in COCOM analysis of the plausibility of assurances that export of technology would not present undue risk to the U.S. However, no sweeping changes in COCOM lists can take place solely as a result of democratization in Eastern Europe. Modernizing the lists is necessary, and is done realistically, in a measured, controlled way. In some countries, Wendt said, such as the Soviet Union, hi-tech answers to essentially low-tech challenges are not useful to the Soviets, and lesser technologies are suggested. All countries should look realistically at their own needs and suggest most reasonably what changes they seek that might be acceptable to all sides.

9. Nemeč then returned to Wendt's point about revisions in the COCOM list, and Wendt confirmed that change was possible: COCOM sought to build "higher fences around fewer items." Nemeč asked whether COCOM approved exports based on the country of destination, or only item by item. Wendt repeated that COCOM looked at items and their use, taking into account what goes on in the country of destination. "Hungary is not Romania," Wendt said, so of course domestic situations are part of the analysis.

10. Houstecky referred to the Hungarian example by asking if governmental guarantees on end-use help in COCOM decisions. Wendt answered yes, all opportunities to gauge end-use, including guarantees, are important.

11. Gideon asked whether legal changes in socialist countries would help revisions of the COCOM regime. Wendt said that anything the countries on the COCOM proscribed list could do to demonstrate the exercise of effective control over technologies could help. Legal measures, and customs measures, would be helpful.

Eagleburger

94. Telegram From the Embassy in Czechoslovakia to the Department of State

Prague, December 15, 1989, 1437Z

Limited Official Use

Prague 08800; Immediate

Subject: Foreign Minister Outlines General Goals of Foreign Policy

1. Limited Official Use – entire text.

2. Summary. Foreign Minister Jiri Dienstbier met with the Czechoslovak and foreign press on December 14. The press conference focused on Czechoslovakia's future relations with the nations which border it. He commented only briefly on relations with Israel and used formulations on the removal of Soviet troops from Czechoslovak territory which implied this could be done earlier than and independent of the wider European disarmament process. Dienstbier has a vision of a future Europe in which security will not be based on military blocs, and in which Czechoslovakia will be a factor of stability and rapprochement. Dienstbier indicated that in the future personnel decisions regarding Czechoslovak diplomats would be made on the basis of competence, but that diplomats who took "too active a stand on repressive policies" could expect to lose their positions. End summary.

3. New Foreign Minister Jiri Dienstbier met with representatives of the foreign and Czechoslovak press on December 14. In the one-hour press conference Dienstbier presented his view of general goals which Czechoslovakia would pursue in its evolving foreign relations, but was unable to provide detailed responses to questions. Dienstbier said a review of Czechoslovak foreign policy was underway, that foreign policy priorities would be set, and that he would be able to provide more detailed information in two or three weeks.

— A changing role for Czechoslovakia

4. Dienstbier stated that during the past 40 years Czechoslovakia had been isolated in the center of Europe and that such isolation had hindered the process of understanding in Europe. Dienstbier is convinced that in the future the country's central location, coupled with what will be a developed economic and political system, will make Czechoslovakia a factor of stability and a center for the promotion of rapprochement in Europe.

— Warsaw Pact and CMEA membership

5. It is Dienstbier's goal to transform a bloc concept of security to the concept of democracy and pluralism. He understands that the abolition of blocs cannot be done unilaterally and that a general consensus must be developed before the blocs can be abolished. Dienstbier sees the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) as the process in which a consensus can be developed.

6. With regard to CMEA membership, Dienstbier feels the organization's future must be discussed by all member countries. Dienstbier sees no reason for Czechoslovakia to leave the CMEA. He does, however, favor transforming the organization from one which facilitated the trade in commodities to one capable of stimulating modern economic development. Dienstbier believes CMEA can collaborate with Western Europe and can be a factor in opening Czechoslovakia to world markets.

— Stationing of Soviet troops

7. Dienstbier described the recent Soviet re-evaluation of 1968 as a recognition that Czechoslovakia is an independent state. He said the "Moscow Protocol," signed shortly after the Warsaw Pact invasion, and the agreement negotiated on the temporary basing of Soviet troops on Czechoslovak territory, were both invalid since they were imposed under pressure. He said he had already discussed these agreements with the Soviets. He believed that in a short time agreement could be reached on the withdrawal of Soviet troops. (Note: This is a less hedged formulation [than] that used by his predecessor or current Prime Minister Calfa. Both spoke of early talks but that withdrawal of Soviet troops needed to be part of the wider European disarmament process. Dienstbier's statements at the press conference implied early withdrawal independent of the CFE and other talks in Vienna. End note.)

— German reunification

8. Dienstbier believes that “in the long run no country should be denied the right of self-determination.” Dienstbier also indicated that the question of the unification of Germany and the question of the unification of Europe are related and must be considered simultaneously. He added that the economic integration of East and West Germany is inevitable, and that soon there will exist at a minimum a *de facto* confederation between the two states.

— Austria, Poland, and Hungary

9. Dienstbier directed much of his discussion to relations to the other states which border Czechoslovakia. Dienstbier stated he had already met with Polish officials and shared common views with them on matters such as the inviolability of Poland’s western border and on the need for future consultation and cooperation regarding environmental problems on the Czechoslovak-Poland border. Dienstbier expected that GOC restrictions on travel by Czechoslovak citizens to Poland would be removed.

10. Dienstbier also announced that he would meet with the Austrian Foreign Minister on the border this coming Sunday, December 17. It is anticipated the two Foreign Ministers will participate in a barbed wire cutting ceremony. Dienstbier also expressed a wish for better relations between Czechoslovakia and Hungary, and indicated that with regard to Hungary and other neighbors there would be a switch in foreign policy from “great words” to “concrete action where realistic results can be achieved.”

— The Middle East

11. Dienstbier stated that consideration thus far had not been given to the resumption of diplomatic relations with Israel. (Note: We understand from the Swedish Embassy that an Israeli delegation from their mission in Warsaw was here earlier in the week for talks at the MFA. These apparently included discussion of interim steps toward full diplomatic relations. End note.) He also stated that Czechoslovakia would subscribe to the principle of “self-determination,” but did not elaborate as to what that meant in the Middle East context. Dienstbier also indicated that Czechoslovakia favored peaceful and non-violent means of resolving Middle East issues, but believes that Czechoslovakia is not a player in the Middle East and cannot offer specific steps to resolve problems there. (Dienstbier perhaps was making an indirect swipe at a model peace conference sponsored by the GOC last year.) With regard to terrorism, Dienstbier could not offer a comment as to Czechoslovakia’s future policy, saying that he needed to consult with other ministries before responding.

— Czechoslovaks abroad

12. Dienstbier stated he had advised all foreign missions of Czechoslovakia that any Czechoslovaks who had emigrated from Czechoslovakia in the past for political reasons were to be granted visas upon application, and that any consular officer discriminating against such visa applications in the future would be fired. (Note: A number of Czechoslovak émigrés have already returned on visits, including industrialist Tomas Bata from Canada, economist Ota Sik from Switzerland and writer Jiri [*Pavel*] Kohout from Paris [*Vienna*]. End note.) Dienstbier stated that it was not within the jurisdiction of the Foreign Ministry to deal with the cases of Czechoslovaks who had been stripped of their citizenship for political reasons, but that these cases would be dealt with by the GOC.

— The Czechoslovak diplomatic corps

13. According to the Foreign Minister, personnel decisions in the future regarding Czechoslovak diplomats will be made on the basis of competence and not on the basis of political view or party affiliation. Dienstbier stated that those who took “too active a stand on repressive policies” could expect to lose their positions, but that the recall of ambassadors by former Foreign Minister Johanes had to a large degree taken care of this problem. Dienstbier also announced that Foreign Ministry officials who had lost their positions in the post 1968 normalization process would be rehired at the Foreign Ministry if they were interested in returning and if they had maintained their professional competence.

14. Comment. Not once during the press conference did Dienstbier mention the United States. The failure to mention the United States was partially a reflection of the nature of the questions posed to the Foreign Minister, but also a reflection of the fact that Dienstbier realizes that the most immediate foreign policy issues Czechoslovakia faces involve nations which border Czechoslovakia.

Russell

95. Telegram From the Embassy in Czechoslovakia to the Department of State

Prague, December 15, 1989, 1443Z*

Unclassified

Prague 08801

Subject: Leadership and Policy Changes in Czechoslovak Mass Organizations

1. The rush of events in Czechoslovakia has not permitted reporting on the following changes in the leadership and policy of Czechoslovak mass organizations. Political changes in Czechoslovakia have resulted in mass resignations of the leadership of such organizations as the Revolutionary Trade Union Movement and the unions of artists, writers and journalists. In most cases, leadership of the organizations is vested in "action committees" which are acting as caretakers until new leadership can be elected in congresses of the complete memberships.

2. After a week of sometimes stormy meetings, the Central Trades Union Council, the leadership group of the mass trade union ROH, resigned. The Council approved formation of an "action committee" to function in its place. Heading the action committee is Karel Henes, who recently replaces Miroslav Zavadil as Council Chairman. Henes described the action committee's task as the preservation of the unity of the ROH in order to protect the interest and social security of workers in the face of coming changes introducing a market economy with its attendant dangers of inflation. Comment: With workers already rallying around permanent strike committees, which can be found in nearly every workplace and have close links to Obcanske Forum [Civic Forum], the ROH's future as a mass labor movement is cloudy. End comment.

3. On December 3, four hundred Czech writers, dramatists, translators and critics founded the Community of Writers, a nonpolitical association which is to have a professional, as opposed to trade unionist, character. Vaclav Havel was elected Chairman of the new organization. On December 5 a special meeting

of the Czech Union of Writers (the existing writers' organization) met to discuss the future of the organization. The writers decided to preserve the current organization but to give it a new name, new content and new outlook. They decided to form a committee to hold discussions with Community of Writers, in order to jointly prepare a congress of all writers.

4. On November 29, the Central Committee of the Czech Society [*Union*] of Journalists accepted the resignation of its leadership. Zdenek Hrabica was selected as new chairman of the organization. The membership of the Committee proposed new regulations which would support the principles of freedom of the press and information, protecting the professional and social interests of journalists, and overseeing journalistic ethics under the new conditions of free dialog. The membership also demanded consideration of the status of journalists who had been prevented from working because of their political convictions.

5. The Slovak Union of Artists also accepted the resignations of its leadership and elected an action committee to prepare for a meeting of its full membership to be held in February. The Union rejected a proposal for the formation of a free union of artists, but demanded that persons elected to leadership positions of the existing union not be "compromised."

Russell

96. Telegram From the Embassy in Czechoslovakia to the Department of State

Prague, December 15, 1989, 1445Z*

Unclassified
Prague 08802
Subject: Human Rights Update

1. Summary. A special parliamentary commission studying the events of November 17 has provided details concerning its work. Pacem in Terris has disbanded. VONS now lists eight political prisoners who remain in jail for “espionage” convictions. End summary.

— November 17 Commission provides details of investigation

2. A special commission of the Federal Assembly investigating police brutality against demonstrators in November 17 has provided some details concerning its work. The Commission revealed that thus far six individuals had been indicted for their role in the incident. Commission members have stated the police attack was politically motivated and prepared beforehand, but have refused to identify the six individuals facing criminal charges. However, Commission members have hinted that former CPCZ General Secretary Milos Jakes and former Prague Party boss Miroslav Stepan are among those who will face criminal charges based on the November 17 police action.

3. The Commission also reported that six high-ranking officers of the National Security Corps [SNB] had been demoted and that another seven individuals were being investigated for possible violations of the Criminal Code. The Commission, which in effect is supervising the military prosecutors conducting the investigation, will also attempt to determine the individual responsibility of officers who wielded truncheons, including those who attacked American and other foreign journalists. Commission members also indicated that they

have thus far identified 143 persons who were injured in the police attack, but believe many others who were injured remain unidentified.

— **Pacem in Terris disbands**

4. The regime-inspired peace organization of Catholic clergy called Pacem in Terris has disbanded. The group advised Cardinal Tomasek of the group's dissolution by letter on December 7.

— **VONS "espionage" list now numbers eight**

5. The Committee for the Defense of the Unjustly Prosecuted (VONS) has added names to its list of persons believed to have been unjustly imprisoned for espionage charges (Prague 8711)¹⁵. Those previously on the VONS list were Ondrej Hoch, Josef Romer, Petr Hauptmann and Viktor Dederá. The new additions to the list have thus far only been identified as M. Hautman, J. Suchy, A. Bernicky, and a Mr. Vojtasek. An East German citizen named Michael Keller who was imprisoned for espionage has been released and repatriated to East Germany.

Russell

15 | Document 87.

97. Telegram From the Embassy in Czechoslovakia to the Department of State

Prague, December 19, 1989, 1621Z*

Confidential

Prague 08882

Subject: New Czechoslovak Prime Minister to Travel to Moscow

Ref: Prague 8800¹⁶

1. Confidential – entire text.

2. The GOC has announced that new Prime Minister Marian Calfa will be traveling to Moscow on December 20 at the invitation of the Soviet Council of Ministers. This should be more than a familiarization trip. Talks may focus on Prague's proposals for a re-negotiation of the agreement for the temporary basing of Soviet troops on Czechoslovak territory.

3. In a recent press conference (reftel) Foreign Minister Jiri Dienstbier stated that Czechoslovakia was interested in an early removal of these Soviet forces. Dienstbier implied that this could take place independent of the CFE and wider disarmament talks in Vienna.

4. Interestingly, Dienstbier is not joining Calfa in Moscow. He is staying behind to host the visit [on] December 19–21 of Australian Foreign Minister Gareth Evans.¹⁷

Black

16 | Document 94.

17 | Dienstbier did in fact join Čalfa and met his Soviet counterpart Shevardnadze on December 20. He informed Ambassador Black about his conversation with the Soviet Foreign Minister on December 23 (Document 113, para 12).

**98. Telegram From
the Embassy in Czechoslovakia
to the Department of State**

Prague, December 19, 1989, 1627Z*

Confidential

Prague 08885

Subject: GOC and Israel Consider Opening Interest Sections in Respective
Capitals

Ref: (A) Prague 8800,¹⁸ (B) Prague 8034¹⁹

1. Confidential – entire text.

2. The Swedish Ambassador here has told us that an Israeli diplomat came to Prague from Warsaw last week. (The Swedes are representing Israeli interests in Czechoslovakia and so helped to coordinate the visit.) The Swede said on the basis of this visit that Czechoslovak and Israeli interest sections could be established in the near future. The Israeli diplomat was shown possible office space for such a section in the former Swiss Embassy building in Prague. This is well-located across from Prague Castle on the Hradcany.

3. Our Swedish contacts had no information on when the resumption of full diplomatic relations might take place. The Czechoslovak Foreign Minister in a press conference last week (ref B) [*ref A*] said that resumption of full relations was not now under consideration.

Black

¹⁸ | Document 94.

¹⁹ | Document 25.

99. Telegram From the Embassy in Czechoslovakia to the Department of State

Prague, December 19, 1989, 1728Z*

Unclassified

Prague 08890

Subject: CPCZ to Deactivate Basic Party Organizations Existing Within
Governmental Organizations

1. Summary: The CPCZ will deactivate Party organizations existing within governmental organizations, but plans to maintain them in workplaces and schools. End summary.

2. The Presidium of the CPCZ Central Committee on Friday, December 15, met to review preparations for the extraordinary CPCZ congress starting December 20. During the meeting the Presidium agreed that it will deactivate CPCZ organizations which now exist in the following: Czechoslovak People's Army, Border Guards, Interior Ministry Forces, National Security Corps, Office of the Prosecutor General, the Judiciary, State Arbitration Office, People's Control Commission, Czechoslovak President's Office, and in central, regional and municipal governments. The CPCZ, however, will continue to maintain Party organizations in workplaces, institutions, schools and central organs.

3. The Presidium at its meeting also accepted the resignation of *Rude Pravo* Editor-in-Chief Zdenek Horeni. Deputy Editor-in-Chief Zdenek Porybny will be responsible for the newspaper's direction until a new editor-in-chief is selected. A new editor is expected to be selected at the extraordinary congress starting December 20.

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**100. Telegram From
the Embassy in Czechoslovakia
to the Department of State**

Prague, December 19, 1989, 1735Z*

Confidential

Prague 08894

Subject: Extraordinary Congress of Slovak Communist Party

1. (C) Summary. An extraordinary congress of the Slovak Communist Party has elected a new Central Committee. The Central Committee's Presidium and Secretariat were abolished and a new Executive Committee created to replace them. A draft action program calling for the expulsion of corrupt Party officials was also adopted and six former Presidium members were suspended from Party membership. The draft action program does not strike us as radical. For example, it warns against any "reprivatization" of the economy. End summary.

2. (U) An extraordinary congress of the Communist Party of Slovakia (CPS) concluded Monday, December 18. The congress elected a 90-member Central Committee and a Central Control and Audit Commission. In addition, the Presidium and Secretariat of the Central Committee were abolished and a new 11-person Executive Committee created to take over their functions. Jan Siroky was named Chairman of the new Executive Committee. Jan Demikat was elected Chairman of the Control and Audit Commission.

3. (U) The CPS congress also suspended a number of former Presidium and Secretariat members. Among those suspended were Ignac Janak, Gejza Slapka, Elena Litvajova, Viliam Salgovic, Ivan Gonko, and Stefan Bachar. Former Central Control and Audit Commission Chairman Eugen Turzo was also suspended. In addition, the congress declared as unfounded and invalid the mass screening and expulsion of Party members in the 1970's. (Presumably, this opens the way for rehabilitation of some of these personalities.)

4. (U) The congress adopted a draft action program which will be submitted for discussion to the Party District Organizations and be considered for adop-

tion at the next congress of the CPS. Such congress is now scheduled for May, but some observers believe the date of the congress will be moved up to allow earlier consideration of the draft action program.

5. (U) The draft states its basic task is to clean up Party ranks of all individuals who abused public office for their personal gain. It promises the CPS will support the free development of business initiatives, but not what it calls “reprivatization and the parceling out of social property.” The action program also protests efforts by some forces “to break up the state unity of Czech and Slovak peoples.” (Note. Some flyers of unknown origin have appeared in Slovakia, saying it is time for Slovaks to rid themselves of their two greatest enemies – Communists and Czechs. End note.) The draft action program also states the CPS will fight against any “national-state rearrangement of Central Europe which threatens to return our fraternal peoples to 1939 or even before to 1918.” (Note. This vague statement may refer to any changes in post-World War II boundaries or the Civic Forum-sponsored idea of eventual Czechoslovak integration into Western Europe. End note.)

6. (C) Comment. The CPS seems to be in at least as much disarray as the CPCZ, and while little information was released on the progress of the congress itself, debates were reportedly stormy. It remains to be seen if the extraordinary Congress of the CPCZ convening on December 20 will produce results as unimaginative and conservative as the draft program now sponsored by the CPS. These results are not promising for a reform outcome from the December 20 congress.

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**101. Telegram From
the Embassy in Czechoslovakia
to the Department of State**

Prague, December 20, 1989, 1739Z*

Confidential

Prague 08920; Immediate

Subject: TFPM02: Demarche on Panama Made to Czechoslovakia

Ref: State 403378²⁰

In the absence of Foreign Minister Dienstbier, who is in Moscow, Ambassador made points in ref tel on Panama to Deputy Foreign Minister Pavel Sadovsky December 20. After noting that in the past the GOC had not reacted to events in Panama, Sadovsky said that he could not give us an immediate response. He will inform the Foreign Minister of our views when he returns to Prague, probably tonight. Sadovsky pointed out that the Government was scheduled to meet tomorrow and hoped that it would be able to take up the question. He asked that we provide the Minister or himself additional new information on the situation, in particular any expression of the views of the OAS.

Black

²⁰ | Not yet declassified.

102. Telegram From the Embassy in Czechoslovakia to the Department of State

Prague, December 20, 1989, 1757Z

Confidential

Prague 08930

Subject: CODEL Edwards Visits Prague

1. Confidential – entire text.

2. Summary. Congressman Don Edwards and his wife, Edith Wilke, visited Prague December 16–19. (Wilke is Staff Director for the House-Senate Caucus on Disarmament and Foreign Policy). The CODEL had an excellent schedule, including meetings with students, “old” and “new” Communists, the Civic Forum and the new Minister of Labor. The “new” Communists, members of the Democratic Forum, stressed the need to purge the Party of hardliners and turn it into an organization on the lines of the Italian Communist Party. The “old” Party members criticized the previous political leadership for warping the “true” democratic character of Communism in order to obtain personal power, and then using that power stupidly. They were not much more favorable to the new Government, however, which they saw as plagued by demagogy and wishful thinking, particularly on the economic side.

3. Edwards, at the Embassy briefing and several other times during the visit, expressed strong support for restoring MFN to Czechoslovakia and for reducing or eliminating COCOM restrictions here. He also appeared favorable to reopening the Consulate in Bratislava and opening a U.S. cultural center in Prague. The one other area in which many of those with whom he spoke asked for U.S. assistance was increased training and exchange programs, including more English language teachers. EconOff attended all meetings, except at the Civic Forum. End summary.

— Students

4. Edwards had a good exchange with about 70 journalism students at Charles University on December 17. A number of subjects were covered, including U.S.-Czechoslovak relations, U.S. society and politics, and the Congressman's views of developments in the Soviet Union. Edwards voiced strong support for restoring MFN to Czechoslovakia and for relaxing or eliminating COCOM restrictions here – noting that this was an important matter to him since he represented “Silicon Valley” in California. The students felt that the most useful way that the USG could help reform efforts in Czechoslovakia was through increased exchange programs. Following the meeting, Edwards and Wilke participated in a 20-kilometer student march.

— New Communists

5. On December 18 Edwards met with three self-described reform Communists: Jaromir Sedlak, an adviser to the Czech Republic Government; Rudolf Hegenbart, the CPCZ Central Committee Department Director in charge of the police and security organs; and Rudolf Reiner, a colleague of Hegenbart, who now heads the Prague Party School. Hegenbart spent the first 15 minutes of the meeting trying to establish his reformist credentials so that Edwards would understand that he was not simply joining the liberal bandwagon in order to accommodate himself to recent political changes. Along these lines, he claimed that as a young local party committee chairman many years ago, he had refused to obey an order to liquidate the Slusovice Agricultural Cooperative – which is famous as the most innovative and entrepreneurial enterprise in Czechoslovakia.

6. Hegenbart and Sedlak believed that the recent political changes in Czechoslovakia were irreversible and that the CP would not be able to reassert itself as it had in China. They credited Gorbachev's initiatives as being a major catalyst for Czechoslovakia's political shift, but added that Czechoslovakia had now surpassed the Soviet Union since it had eliminated the CP's constitutional monopoly of power. They were also critical of the Civic Forum's claims that its members had been the first to push for political reform, contending that they themselves and others in the Party had been doing so for years – though they admitted that these efforts had been too late and too weak.

7. Following up on this criticism, they said that there was no doubt that the Forum's Vaclav Havel would be elected President (though his support was primarily in Prague and Bratislava, not the countryside), and added that they would urge the CP to go along with the Forum's desire to elect the President in the Federal Assembly rather than through a referendum. (Note. Election in the Assembly is set for December 29. End note.) Following up on their criticism of the Forum, however, they argued that it was undemocratic and a mis-

take for the Forum to want only one presidential candidate put forth in the Assembly.

8. Hegenbart also took advantage of the meeting to announce that he had decided to become a member of the Democratic Forum, a reform group within the Communist Party to which Sedlak has belonged for some time. He hoped to be the Democratic Forum representative on a new CP Presidium. The two men said that the prime objective of the Democratic Forum was to take over the whole Party by “getting rid of the ballast,” i.e. purging the hardliners. If this failed, they were also considering splitting off into a new party, but this would be difficult because the DF had no money or other resources of its own. On the other hand, Sedlak said, it did have the support of the CP daily *Rude Pravo*, which might be willing to assist it in starting a new party.

9. Assuming that the Democratic Forum succeeded in taking over the CP, Hegenbart and Sedlak argued that the CP still had a future (perhaps under a new name) in Czechoslovakia. Even if it lost as many as 700,000 members, it would still have a million left – a significant voting bloc. They acknowledged that the CP could never hope to be a majority party, but said they had already been in contact with the Socialist and Social Democratic parties to discuss coalition possibilities. The response had been positive, but only if the CP purged itself of hardliners. They saw the new CP as following in the footsteps of 19th-century socialism and the liberal political views of Tomas Masaryk. They also compared it along the lines of the Italian CP. (Note: Social Democratic Party contacts deny that they would seriously consider any coalition with the CPCZ in the near future, certainly not after next summer’s Federal Assembly elections. End note.)

— Civic Forum

10. CODEL Edwards, accompanied by PolOff Kaska, met Monday afternoon, December 18, with Civic Forum (CF) representatives Martin Palous, Ivan Havel and [his wife] Dasa Havlova. The Forum representatives shied away from a suggestion that the CF in essence is a political party, instead preferring to call themselves a coalition of political streams. Martin Palous repeated the now familiar thought that the CF will likely endorse individuals for election irrespective of their political affiliation, and that once elected, CF-endorsed individuals will be free to “go their own way.”

11. In terms of possible support from sources within the U.S., the Civic Forum representatives asked for (1) “technical support” (meaning, we think, funds to purchase equipment such as word processors, etc.) and (2) funds to support travel by CF representatives abroad. They also repeated the view that it would be useful for the USG to re-open the Bratislava Consulate and to open a cultural center in Prague.

12. The CF representatives cited three areas which will receive priority attention by the Civic Forum. These are: (1) restructuring of the economy, (2) solving Czechoslovak ecological problems, and (3) building a democratic society. No details concerning how the CF plans to deal with economic and ecological problems were given, but the CF representatives did present their views concerning the evolution of a free press and political parties in Czechoslovakia. The CF believes that good progress concerning a free press has been made. Many newspapers which have been controlled and manipulated beforehand are now "almost normal." In addition, former *samizdat* publications, like *Lidove Noviny*, are in the process of beginning regular, above-ground publication.

13. Concerning the development of political parties, the CF representatives acknowledged that various efforts at political party formation are under way, but that the absence of a law regulating their formation and conduct has made for confusion. For example, there are two different groups calling themselves the "Green Party" and another two groups claiming to be "Social Democrats." Congressman Edwards stated he would ask the Library of Congress to provide examples of legalization from the United States concerning political parties.

14. The CF at this time does not foresee abrupt changes in the Warsaw Pact, but does believe the Pact will slowly lose its military importance. The CF representatives also indicated they believed the West should now take the initiative in East-West relations.

— Old Communists

15. Edwards and Wilke had their last appointment of the day with Dusan Spacil, the new head of MFA's Institute of International Relations. He was Ambassador to the U.S. in the first part of the 1970's and spent the last seven years as Ambassador to Bonn. Joining him was an associate, Jiri Sobotka. Spacil said that the Institute had a staff of about 50, including 15 in the administrative area. It was divided into three sections dealing, respectively, with the socialist and Warsaw Pact countries, developing countries, and Western and NATO countries. The Institute produces a bimonthly magazine (with an annual English-language version summarizing the main articles), and a yearbook. It also serves as an educational facility for a limited number of post-graduate students, and does some classified studies for the Ministry. Spacil compared it to the Brookings Institute.

16. Spacil and Sobotka, both in their late 50's or early 60's, described themselves as "old Communists." Nonetheless, they were very critical of the history of the Party since it had taken control of Czechoslovakia in 1948. They insisted that "true" Communists believed in democracy and winning over the opposition by persuasion rather than force. What the Party should have done

in 1948, they declared, was to build on the successful bourgeois democracy of the interwar period. Instead, the Party's leaders had warped the ideals of Communism in order to gain personal power, and then used that power stupidly. Along these lines, they insisted that the events of November 17 had been a "great, great blunder" by these leaders which would have been condemned by the vast majority of Communists.

17. Having attacked the past Party leadership, Spacil was not a great deal more favorable to the new Government. Although he said that he was optimistic that things would work out, the tone of his comments did not match these words. He believed that there was "a lot of demagogy and wishful thinking" among Civic Forum members, particularly on the economic side. Czechoslovakia was a "social" if not socialist country, and the population would not support a free-market economy – they did not want a South Bronx or Appalachia here. Changes in subsidies, industrial orientation and currency exchange rates were certainly needed, but they must be done slowly and only when the Government was prepared to ameliorate the price inflation, wage loss and unemployment they would cause. Spacil asserted that former Prime Minister Adamec had understood this and had a plan worked out, but he thought that Deputy Prime Minister Komarek (the economic czar) meant to ignore these concerns and shift immediately to a free-market system. On the political side, Spacil felt that a multi-party system was not appropriate for Czechoslovakia; there should be many candidates, but no political parties.

— Labor Ministry

18. On December 19, the CODEL, accompanied by the Ambassador, met with the new Minister of Labor, Petr Miller, a political independent. Included in the meeting were Miller's two deputies, Milan Horalek and Igor Tomes, as well as other Ministry officials. Miller, who has not been on the job "a long enough time to have calling cards," frequently turned to his deputies for advice in answering questions.

19. Miller said that he expected to restructure the Ministry to work in a new way, noting that when he had been a plant foreman he had made decisions based on what he thought best, not on plant rules. He supported the development of real trade unions in Czechoslovakia, though he pointed out that the country lacked experience and expertise in creating such unions. Unions under Communist rule had never opposed management, and in fact had always agreed to rules that were in the interests of management and not the workers. New unions were being formed by strike committees in factories, without any advice or permission from the official Council of Trade Unions. The Council now supported these new unions, though "it would not have done so two weeks ago."

20. Miller said that one area which must be changed greatly was apprenticeship programs, which had previously emphasized ideological over practical training. He mentioned the case of a blacksmith who, after three years of training, could not even manufacture a nail. He noted that Western (including U.S.) trade unions had offered to help train workers, but so few workers spoke English that they could not take advantage of the offer. Miller thus thought that we could be most helpful by providing English training, as well as experts on how to set up real trade unions and how to re-qualify workers who had to change professions because of economic shifts.

21. Finally, in answer to a question, Miller said that Czechoslovakia was making good progress in converting factories away from producing military equipment, helped by the great demand for consumer goods in the country. He claimed that 15,000 workers had already been shifted out of defense production, and another 70,000 were slated for transfer.

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103. Telegram From the Embassy in Czechoslovakia to the Department of State

Prague, December 20, 1989, 1807Z*

Limited Official Use

Prague 08931; Immediate

Subject: New GOC Program Statement Endorses Havel for Presidency

1. Limited Official Use – entire text.
2. Summary. Prime Minister Marian Calfa presented the new Czechoslovak Government program to a joint session of the Federal Assembly on December 19. The program is virtually identical to the political and economic reforms demanded by the Civic Forum. It includes the economy's transition to a market economy and political and legislative changes which will guarantee human rights and a Western-style democratic system. The program does not fix a date for free elections.
3. Calfa brought applause from the gallery when he recommended that the Assembly act before the end of this year to elect Vaclav Havel as President for the interim period until new elections can be held. (Tens of thousands of students meanwhile were demonstrating nearby at Wenceslas Square in favor of Havel's candidacy.)
4. The Assembly approved a proposal to extend the deadline for the election for President from 14 to 40 days, but the Assembly's Presidium at the end of the session announced the presidential vote will take place on Friday, December 29. Before ending the session the Assembly passed a resolution condemning the Romanian Government's brutal action against its citizens. End summary.
5. A joint session of the Federal Assembly met on December 19 to hear Prime Minister Marian Calfa deliver the new Government's program. Thousands of students demonstrating nearby at Wenceslas Square for Vaclav Havel as President added to the drama of the event, as did a delegation of student leaders

who greeted each deputy to the Assembly with bread, salt and flowers as well as placards supporting Havel.

6. Calfa's speech, though packed with details on political and economic reforms, took less than 60 minutes to deliver. It tracked closely with reform statements released by the Civic Forum and Civic Forum-supported ministers in the new Government. Calfa identified two main tasks for the Government: carrying out free elections, though he gave no date for these, and speeding up the transition to a more dynamic economy.

7. Calfa said that the Government had set an end-of-February deadline for an overhaul of various Czechoslovak legislation governing human rights. This is to include new laws on freedom of assembly, petition, press and political parties. A new law will guarantee freedom of religion and remove all restrictions on believers. The Penal Code will be reviewed with particular attention to Chapter I provisions concerning "Crimes against the Republic" which have regularly been used in the past to punish dissidents. Capital punishment is to be abolished.

8. Current work on a new constitution is to be suspended until the political situation is "stabilized" and free elections held. Work will resume on the constitution in the second half of 1990.

9. Calfa called on the Assembly to meet the popular demand for information on the police action against student demonstrators on November 17. He asked that the special commission investigating these events produce a report and recommend the actions to be taken against those persons responsible for violating the law.

10. Work to establish public control over the Ministry of Interior is proceeding, said Calfa. Personnel changes were to be made in the security services. All internal intelligence activities against Czechoslovak citizens are to be discontinued. Calfa said the Government supported honest members of the police and Army and assured that they would not be misused again against the people. Calfa asked that all verbal assaults against members of the Army and police force cease.

— **The economy**

11. Calfa warned that because of the transitional nature of the new Government its program would of necessity be short term. This would not prevent it from drafting an accurate picture of the serious plight of the economy and the measures needed to correct it. He offered an extensive outline of reforms for the future which he implied would be the task of a new government formed after free elections. The key to these reforms, he said, was a transition to a "market economy with all its advantages and disadvantages."

12. The economy was to be opened to the world and an end put to internal monopolies. Markets for money and capital were to be created and the legal

basis provided for all forms of ownership. The gradual convertibility to the Czechoslovak crown would be an important goal.

13. At the enterprise level personnel changes would be required so that the only criteria for leading management positions in the economy was merit. The State Enterprise Law would be re-written and monopolies ended in the area of foreign trade. The Government would also support foreign investment in the economy whether on a cooperative, private-ownership or joint-venture basis. The necessary guarantees would be legislated to attract such investment.

14. The Government is to produce its first national budget by March 31. (It is now operating under a supplementary budget until then. Prague 8788.²¹) There would be cuts in national defense expenditures and subsidies as well as a strengthening of social services. On the latter, Calfa spoke of extending workers' annual leave and providing greater maternity leave opportunities. Cuts in consumer subsidies would be balanced by improved health care, and increasing pensions and child support payments. Inflated pensions of retired officials would be reviewed.

15. In the fiscal area the Government proposed a complete revision of the tax system to be carried out by 1993. These changes would concern both enterprises and individuals. The present turnover tax in industry would be simplified, a sales tax introduced as well as more progressive tax rates on income. All laws governing financial credits and support to enterprises would be revised in 1990 as would environmental protection regulations, including penalties for violations. Calfa warned that the Government would retain controls over wage growth and intended to regulate wages to preserve a balance in the market and fight inflationary tendencies.

— Foreign trade

16. The basic laws governing foreign trade would be amended. Czechoslovakia would seek a revision of the CMEA mechanism so that trade within this grouping would be based on "normal" world economic principles. Hard currency exchange rates for the crown would also be "normalized" (i.e., devalued) in 1990. Czechoslovakia would seek to enter the IMF, World Bank and intensify its role in the GATT. The country sought MFN treatment from those trading partners with which it had not yet normalized trade relations. (Note: The U.S. was not specifically mentioned in this regard. End note.)²² Czechoslovakia sought contacts with the European Community. (Note: Calfa has reportedly sent a letter to EC President Jacques Delors asking the Commission

21 | Not yet declassified.

22 | But see Document 90, para 3.

to review ways of expanding its present trade protocol with the Community. End note.)

— **Foreign policy**

17. Calfa said that Czechoslovakia, which had for so long acted as a brake on the Helsinki process of democratization in Europe, now wanted to intensify its role in that process. The country's foreign policy would be based on its own national interests, but it sought good relations with all of its neighbors. The GOC would respect its Warsaw Pact pledges but would continue talks to renegotiate the agreement on the temporary basing of Soviet troops in the country. Calfa added that Czechoslovakia would seek to normalize relations with all those countries with which it did not yet have diplomatic relations.

18. Calfa referred to personnel changes now going on in the diplomatic corps and MFA. These were designed to remove discredited politicians from assignments overseas. This was not an effort at political revenge but at improving the effectiveness of the foreign service. He also said that those forced to resign from the diplomatic service after 1968 would have an opportunity to re-enter it.

— **Havel's candidacy for President**

19. In his closing remarks Calfa called on the Assembly to act to elect Vaclav Havel President before the end of the year. He recommended that Havel continue as President until free elections were held and a new Assembly formed. He described Havel as the leading force behind the country's movement for renewal and the only alternative for President if the Government was to carry out its program with popular support. This statement was met with applause in the Assembly gallery and a short distance away on Wenceslas Square where tens of thousands of students were listening to a live broadcast of Calfa's speech and demonstrating in favor of Havel's candidacy.

20. Later in the session the Assembly approved a proposal to extend the deadline for the election of a new President from 14 to 40 days. The Presidium of the Assembly announced after the session that it was calling a special session of the Assembly for Friday, December 29, at which the President would be elected. One of the Assembly's final acts before ending the session was to approve a resolution condemning the Romanian Government's brutal attack on its own people.

21. Comment. Calfa's endorsement and the early December 29 date make Havel's election almost certain. Western news reports indicate that both Cestmir Cisar and Alexander Dubcek have stood down as candidates for the office.

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104. Telegram From the Embassy in Czechoslovakia to the Department of State

Prague, December 21, 1989, 1706Z

Confidential

Prague 08969

Subject: First Day of CPCZ Extraordinary Congress Elects New Leaders

Ref: (A) Prague 8851²³, (B) Prague 8894²⁴

1. Confidential – entire text.

2. Summary. The first day of the CPCZ's extraordinary congress has produced senior personnel changes with the likelihood of more to come. The Party's structure also looks to be changed. The position of General Secretary has been abolished. Former Prime Minister Adamec has been elected to the new job of Party Chairman and will lead the CPCZ into free elections next year. Youth leader Vasil Mohorita is now First Secretary responsible for managing the Party's internal affairs. The congress's second day must come to grips with other senior appointments and a new program, two issues that could still split the CPCZ. The Adamec and Mohorita elections, however, seem to be a step in a reformist direction. The congress has issued a public "mea culpa" for its past sins. End summary.

3. The first day of the CPCZ extraordinary congress has produced senior personnel changes and a restructuring of Party organs. The function of General Secretary has been abolished. There will now be two senior Party positions: a Chairman, who will be in charge of CPCZ relations with other Czechoslovak political parties and lead the Party into next summer's free elections, and a First Secretary, who will manage internal Party affairs. Former Prime Minister

23 | Not yet declassified.

24 | Document 100.

Ladislav Adamec was elected Chairman and former youth leader Vasil Mohorita as First Secretary. The elections of both were reportedly conducted on the basis of multiple candidates and by secret ballot.

4. CPCZ General Secretary Urbanek gave an opening speech to the congress in which he blamed the Party's present low state of popularity on the abuse of power by its former leadership. He placed the greatest share of blame on former ideology secretaries Bilak and Fojtik as well as Central Committee Department Directors Otto Cmolik (media) and Miroslav Muller (culture). Former President Husak and Party leader Jakes were also mentioned and Prague Party boss Stepan came in for special criticism because of his responsibility for the November 17 events.

5. *Rude Pravo* describes the debate of the first day of the congress as marked by considerable conflicts. The existing Presidium and Secretariat of the Party resigned early in the session. These were replaced by a "working" Presidium which is managing the congress. Only Adamec has been identified as a member of that working group. The theme of congress delegates' remarks quoted in the press are predominately that of reviving the CPCZ as a modern democratic party and removing the last vestiges of Stalinism from its personnel and operation.

6. On the agenda of the congress's second day (December 21) are the election of a new Central Committee and Control Commission, approval of a draft action program and the formation of new Party organs. There are reports that the Party's present structure of a Presidium and Secretariat will be replaced with a single Political Executive Committee, much as the Slovak Communist Party did a few days earlier at its congress (ref B). A new Editor of *Rude Pravo* is to be appointed.

7. There was reportedly a question from the floor of the congress on whether a Communist Party for the Czech Republic should be founded. The questioner was told that this issue would be decided after the extraordinary session.

8. At the conclusion of the congress's first day the delegates approved a declaration to the citizens of Czechoslovakia. This was read over national television the evening of December 20. The declaration amounts to a confession of the CPCZ's past sins. The statement apologizes for the Party's past illegal actions, wrongs inflicted against Party members who opposed the Warsaw Pact invasion of 1968, and its disregard of citizens' rights and the rights of independent groups such as Charter 77. The congress promises a resolute split with those who in the past abused power within the Party. It offers to provide "all the facts without bias" on those persons responsible within the state and Party apparatus over the past four decades for abusing their power.

9. Comment. The Party's first day appears to take it along a reformist path. Adamec and Mohorita are perhaps the only two CPCZ officials with any degree of national credibility. Adamec's election would also appear to take him out of

the running for the presidency and so concede that office to Vaclav Havel. It will take more than these appointments to satisfy the Democratic Forum, the reform wing of the Party. These people will certainly be looking at the specifics of the Party program and other senior-level appointments to be addressed on the second day before deciding whether their political future lies within the CPCZ.

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105. Telegram From the Embassy in Czechoslovakia to the Department of State

Prague, December 21, 1989, 1710Z

Confidential

Prague 08970

Subject: Request for Review of Visa Procedures for Czechoslovak Nationals

Refs: A) State 322930, B) Warsaw 14372, C) Budapest 11701, D) Sofia 5713, E)
Prague 7200, F) Warsaw 16945, G) Prague 7452²⁵

1. (C – entire text)

— Summary

2. Embassy Prague requests a policy-level review of long-standing restrictive procedures for visa processing of citizens of Czechoslovakia and other currently reform-oriented East European governments. Existing procedures are an impediment to the development of co-operative bilateral relations which the new GOC is actively seeking. They impede our support of economic and educational reform through official and private exchanges. Our inability under current regulations to offer reciprocity to facilitate business travel will also disadvantage American businessmen seeking to establish commercial relations. Liberalization of these procedures is a cost-free, indeed cost-savings measure, which will provide meaningful support to GOC efforts to restructure this society and its economy. Specifically, expeditious handling, and possible eventual elimination of, clearance procedures for business (BUSVIS) and technology-transfer (SPLEX) related travel are requested. Post also requests authority to negotiate with the GOC a reciprocal agreement to extend visa validity and issuance of multiple-entry visas. End summary.

²⁵ | These documents have not yet been declassified.

3. Prague urges the Department's expeditious review and action on suggestions submitted in reflets A-E to streamline visa procedures in Eastern Europe. In addition to workload considerations which are well defined in reflets, freer travel and technical, educational, cultural, commercial and official exchanges have rapidly become a key component of our blossoming bilateral relationship. Top officials of the newly formed GOC have emphasized to us and to visiting CODELs that exchanges of experts in a wide variety of technical, managerial and education fields are the primary form of assistance which the GOC will seek from the USG.

— **Splex clearances**

4. As was expressed by the Polish Academy of Physicists in ref F, the time-consuming and uncertain process of obtaining SPLEX clearances is a serious impediment to such exchanges. Moreover, it is acutely embarrassing to the USG to have official invitations by USIA, NAS, NIH, etc. extended to prominent scientists and scholars, only to have travel delayed and scheduled programs disrupted by our failure to approve the visa on a timely basis.

5. Prague, therefore, requests that the Department coordinate with other concerned agencies to alleviate these delays. Apart from reducing processing delays, we believe that it is appropriate at this time to immediately and significantly reduce the fields of endeavor for which clearances are required. Longer term, a reconsideration of COCOM restrictions overall is in order.

— **Reciprocity**

6. Embassy Prague has been pleasantly surprised at the speed with which the GOC has completely overhauled its practices to facilitate freer travel into and out of Czechoslovakia. In the midst of its own staggering workload to accommodate the demands of its own citizens as well as a surge of Western visitors for travel, the MFA has proved extremely cooperative and efficient in responding to our requests for expeditious visa issuance to CODELs, journalists, TDY Embassy personnel, etc. Unfortunately, we have been unable to extend similar courtesy, although we are making every effort to obtain telephonic clearances when necessary.

7. Informally, GOC consular officials have already expressed an interest in facilitating free travel through extending validity and providing multiple-entry visas (see ref G). Although Department responded negatively to such proposals in October, Embassy believes that the revolutionary change in the Government of Czechoslovakia and its policies justifies an immediate reconsideration of this question. The reciprocal agreement to issue multiple-entry visas to journalists, which was concluded in September, proved invaluable to U.S. media

representatives covering fast-breaking events here since November 17. A similar agreement for other visa categories, especially B-1/B-2 and F, would contribute to the warming of our bilateral relations, as well as substantially decrease post's rapidly expanding workload.

8. In hopes of being able to offer concrete indications of our support and desire to cooperate with the present Czechoslovak leadership, Embassy would appreciate any progress the Department can provide to encourage greater freedom of movement between Czechoslovakia and the United States.

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106. Telegram From the Embassy in Czechoslovakia to the Department of State

Prague, December 22, 1989, 1338Z

Unclassified

Prague 08979

Subject: Prague Demonstration against U.S. Intervention in Panama

1. Summary. A small crowd of mostly Latin Americans demonstrated in front of the American Embassy in Prague on December 21 to protest the American military intervention in Panama. The protest was generally peaceful and Czechoslovak police made no attempt to interfere with the demonstration. The demonstration's leaders declined an offer to meet with the Ambassador concerning their views. End summary.

2. A crowd of approximately 100 persons, demonstrated in front of the American Embassy in Prague Thursday afternoon, December 21, to protest the American military intervention in Panama. The protest lasted an hour and a half and was generally peaceful, although as the demonstration broke up one demonstrator scrawled "Yankee go home" on the Embassy's outer wall.

3. The demonstrators refused an offer made through EmbOffs to meet with the Ambassador, and instead chose to spend the hour and half chanting loudly. The chants included "Murderers", "United States out of the Panama Canal", "We will win", and "Yankee go home."

4. The crowd, which numbered approximately 100 persons at its height, was made up mostly of Latin American students studying in Prague. The protestors included students from Cuba, Colombia, Bolivia, Ecuador, Panama, Mexico, Puerto Rico, and Costa Rica.

5. Czechoslovak police made no attempt to interfere with the demonstration. Although a police station is directly across from the Embassy, police personnel serving there kept out of sight during the demonstration.

6. Demonstrators indicated that they would return to the Embassy for another demonstration Friday afternoon, December 22.

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107. Telegram From the Embassy in Czechoslovakia to the Department of State

Prague, December 22, 1989, 1343Z

Limited Official Use

Prague 08982; Immediate

Subject: Czechoslovak Press Reaction to Events in Panama

1. (U) Summary. Czechoslovak newspapers featured basically objective news stories concerning the American military intervention in Panama. Of the major dailies, only *Rude Pravo* chose to editorially criticize the intervention. End summary.

2. (U) *Rude Pravo* and other Czechoslovak dailies (*Mlada Fronta*, *Lidova Demokracie*, *Svobodne Slovo*, and *Prace*) featured front-page news stories concerning General Noriega in Panama. All the stories were basically straightforward accounts of the events and reactions to them, although most of the news stories also included reference to a Soviet MFA spokesman expressing "concern" about the invasion.

3. (U) Of the several newspapers surveyed, only *Rude Pravo* chose to editorialize on the events. *Rude Pravo* in a page 7 commentary asked where the American revulsion to the so-called Brezhnev Doctrine had gone and whether the principles of the Helsinki process apply only to Europe. The editorial also called arguments supporting the invasion "hypocritical" and labeled such arguments as the "American Doctrine."

4. (LOU) Comment. Although *Rude Pravo* strongly criticized the military intervention, the tone of the criticism was less vitriolic than that which might have been found in the paper only a month ago.

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**108. Telegram From
the Embassy in Czechoslovakia
to the Department of State**

Prague, December 22, 1989, 1459Z

Unclassified

Prague 08986; Immediate

Subject: Czechoslovak Government Decides to Apply for IMF Membership
by January 15, among Other Matters

1. In its session on December 21, the Czechoslovak Government:
 - Decided to recall the Czechoslovak Ambassador from Romania and suspend all bilateral negotiations.
 - Created an economic council to coordinate economic policy and reform efforts. First Deputy Prime Minister Komarek will head the council. This council will replace the government committee for problems of planned management of the national economy, which was established in 1976.
 - Decided to apply for membership in the IMF and World Bank NLT January 15, 1990.
 - Approved a draft decree to control the use of profits by enterprises to pay bonuses in order to prevent misuse of these funds and as an anti-inflationary measure.
 - Proposed to split the Federal Ministry of Transportation and Communication into two ministries.
 - Proposed to establish diplomatic ties with South Korea.
 - Limited the size of pensions to be given to former leaders to a maximum of 3,800 crowns (roughly 400 U.S. dollars) a month.
 - Accepted the resignation of First Deputy Interior Minister Alojz Lorenc and Deputy Interior Minister Otto Sedlak, and appointed Ivan Prusa as Lorenc's replacement.
2. In a press conference following the Government session, Komarek reiterated its intention to move toward a market economy "with all its attributes and

logic,” including private enterprise. The Government will redraft the laws on state enterprises and joint ventures before April 1.

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**109. Telegram From
the Embassy in Czechoslovakia
to the Department of State**

Prague, December 22, 1989, 1502Z

Limited Official Use
Prague 08987; Immediate
Subject: Havel on Campaign Trail

— **Summary**

1. (LOU) Vaclav Havel campaigned in Eastern Slovakia on December 20 and in the Central Bohemian town of Kladno on December 21. He was well received on both days of his campaign swing. Havel told workers in Slovakia that he had visited Alexander Dubcek earlier in the day and would do everything he could to ensure Dubcek a dignified position in the future. Havel promised his audiences in Slovakia that if elected President he would cancel the traditional inaugural gala and provide the savings to families of victims of the recent massacre in Romania. Havel also urged workers to form independent labor unions. During his campaign swing in Kladno, Havel assured his listeners that government economists were preparing a program of genuine reform which would lead to prosperity for all. Although Havel is a virtual shoo-in for the Czechoslovak presidency, his campaign visit demonstrates that he also has appeal in Slovakia and that he continues to rapidly learn the nuances of running an effective political campaign. End summary.

2. (U) Vaclav Havel visited Eastern Slovakia on December 20 on his first campaign swing outside Prague. He spoke to workers at an iron works in Kosice and a sports stadium in Presov and was well received at both locations.

3. (U) Havel stated during the speech in Kosice that he had visited Alexander Dubcek at his home in Bratislava the same day. Havel said he would not allow a wedge to be driven between him and Dubcek and that if he (Havel) has any influence on the destiny of Czechoslovakia that Dubcek will have a dignified

position in it. (Note: there are reports that Havel has agreed to have Dubcek appointed as Chairman of the Federal Assembly. End note.)

4. (U) Havel promised that if elected President he would cancel the traditional inaugural gala reception and would order that the 350,000 crowns saved (10 crowns approximately equals one dollar) be used to help victims of the recent massacre in Romania. Havel also promised he would strip President Ceausescu of all state decorations he had received from previous Czechoslovak Presidents.

5. (U) Havel told the iron workers that when he had been in prison he had worked in a foundry and that he would not forget those who had been working in them their entire life. Havel also urged the workers to form independent labor unions.

6. (U) Havel campaigned in the Central Bohemian City of Kladno on December 21. He told his audience that he realizes many people fear economic reforms will lead to social disruptions. Havel expressed confidence in the economists preparing the new economic reform program, and promised the crowd it would lead to genuine economic prosperity.

7. (LOU) Comment. Although Havel appears to be a shoo-in for the presidency, Civic Forum representatives have expressed concern in how Havel is perceived outside Prague and especially in Slovakia. Havel's decision to visit Slovakia as well as his effectiveness on the stump there show that Havel the dramatist continues to quickly master the skills he will need as Havel the politician. Interestingly, at a press conference earlier this week Havel refused to be pinned down on whether, after serving for an interim period as President as he has promised in the run-up to free elections, he would campaign for a full five-year term.

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110. Telegram From the Embassy in Czechoslovakia to the Department of State

Prague, December 22, 1989, 1507Z

Limited Official Use

Prague 08990

Subject: Senator Kerrey's Visit to Prague

1. Limited Official Use – entire text.

2. Summary. During his visit from December 13 to 15, Senator Kerrey of Nebraska met with ministers of the Government and members of the Civic Forum and visited an agricultural cooperative near Prague. In the meeting with the new non-Communist Minister of Agriculture, the Minister stressed old themes, without questioning the basic Czechoslovak policy of promoting self-sufficiency. Civic Forum leaders were much more open and forthcoming. On economic policy, they said that First Deputy Prime Minister Komarek would have the main influence. The main opposition now has become mid-level bureaucrats, not the Communist Party. The biggest problem facing the Forum in the short run is how to turn itself from an *ad hoc* group of volunteers into a professional organization. At the Agricultural Cooperative Zizice, co-op managers said that they supported political reforms and were enthusiastic about the prospects for the new Agriculture Party. On economic reform they were more skeptical. End summary.

— Minister of Agriculture, Oldrich Bursky

3. Senator Kerrey's first official call was on the new Minister of Agriculture, Oldrich Bursky, a member of the Czechoslovak Socialist Party (CSS). The meeting was formal and stiff; the Minister sat on one side of the table flanked by his deputies while the Senator, his two aides, CommAtt and AgAtt sat on the other. After a welcome speech and a toast, the Minister made some substantive points.

Bursky boasted that Czechoslovakia is self-sufficient in basic foodstuffs, but he criticized the lack of quality and production inefficiencies in Czechoslovakian agriculture which he blamed on the “deformations” of the past. He urged the Senator to promote more exchanges of students and of technical information and particularly mentioned biological controls and embryo transplants as areas in which Czechoslovakia would like to cooperate with the U.S. Finally, he hoped that with the new human rights situation Czechoslovakia would be able to get MFN status.

4. The Senator responded that Nebraskans would be very interested in improving ties with Czechoslovakia, particularly since many Nebraskans are of Czechoslovak origin. On MFN, Senator Kerrey pointed out that farmers and small businessmen would be Czechoslovakia’s strongest allies.

5. Comment. The conversation was more interesting for what was not said than for what was. Criticizing inefficiency and pressing for MFN and information exchanges are old themes. It did not occur to Bursky to question whether the agricultural self-sufficiency he boasted of is a desirable goal or whether the subsidies and protectionism used to achieve that goal might have anything to do with the inefficiencies and poor quality he complained about. However, Bursky’s conservatism probably accurately reflects the views of his Ministry’s constituents. Of all the social groups in Czechoslovakia, farmers have probably had the least to complain of under Communism. Their average incomes have exceeded those of urban dwellers for the past five years and their quality of life is probably even higher. End comment.

— Civic Forum

6. The Senator met Civic Forum leaders Martin Palous and Ivan Klima at the Civic Forum’s headquarters. In the noisy, informal setting the group broke up into three or four different discussions. ComAtt found herself sitting next to Ivan Klima.

7. Communist Party: It is difficult to tell who is the opposition now, according to Klima. Even most Communists now realize that they cannot continue as before and they have a program much like the Civic Forum’s. It is the medium-level functionaries who have been “parasites” on society who are the real opposition. They can do great harm by spreading misinformation.

8. Economic policy: There is common agreement in the Civic Forum on the need for a free market, but no agreement on how to realize that goal. CommAtt asked who in the government would have the greatest say in economic policy. “Komarek,” replied Klima. (Note. Komarek, the former head of the Forecasting Institute, is now First Deputy Prime Minister. End note.) The eventual policy will be “half Komarek and half improvisation.” Komarek is very popular, said Klima, although he admitted that some people believe his popularity is due

to his public-speaking ability and that others are better economists. The Civic Forum wants to stay above economics. It will simply formulate different models for politicians to choose between.

9. State Security Police: First Deputy Minister Jan Carnogursky will separate the State Security Police (StB) from the ordinary police and put them directly under the Deputy Minister. CommAtt asked what the functions of the StB would be now that they no longer can suppress dissidents. Why not abolish it? Klima said the StB would still be needed for counter-espionage and anti-terrorism. Note. Newspaper reports, however, have stated that the StB is to be abolished. End note.

10. Institutionalizing the Civic Forum: The first ten days of the revolution were unbelievable, but now they must make the transition to a slower pace, according to Klima. The Forum is struggling to institutionalize itself. So far they have relied on volunteers, which means that everything is done on an *ad hoc*, non-professional basis. Lack of money is one problem, but people are also unwilling to quit their jobs to work full-time for the Forum since the situation is still unclear and there is no job security. The forum lacks managerial experience; this is a problem throughout the country.

— JZD Zizice

11. On the morning of his departure from Prague, Senator Kerrey visited an agricultural cooperative farm, JZD Zizice, near Kladno, about 30 kilometers from Prague. Zizice specializes in meat and dairy production. It has a new sideline of supplying Japanese quail to hotels in Prague. The village of Zizice in which the cooperative headquarters is located showed fewer signs of the political ferment than Prague; CommAtt noticed one poster of Havel.

12. Political reforms: At first, the meeting with cooperative officials seemed to be a repetition of the earlier stiff and formal meeting with the Minister of Agriculture, but after a while the officials relaxed and spoke frankly about the new changes in Czechoslovakia. They all claimed to be pleased by the political reforms sweeping the country. Zizice has its own local branch of the Civic Forum which is very active. People in the country, according to these officials, are cautious, but although the process of change will be slower than in the cities, the end will be the same.

13. Agricultural Party: An organizer for the new Agricultural Party, who was among the co-op managers, boasted that the party would eventually have 1 million members. Note. A contact in the Ministry of Agriculture told CommAtt that he estimated there would eventually be 300,000 to 500,000 members. End note. Most of those present agreed that a separate party was necessary to represent agricultural interests. They were skeptical about the controversial head of the famous Slusovice Cooperative, Frantisek Cuba, who has taken a lead-

ing role in establishing the party. One manager claimed that Cuba would not play an important role even though he is a “sponsor” of the party. One of the problems with Cuba, according to the manager, is that he participated in persecuting Stanislav Devaty, a well-known dissident. Other managers indicated to the Senator that Cuba is detested for his autocratic style. Comment. Slusovice is known for its effective and innovative, if authoritarian, management, but there has always been a question whether Slusovice’s success was due more to its effective management or to its political connections. The founding of the Agricultural Party looks like Cuba’s attempt to retain political influence under new conditions, but if the movement takes hold, it may outgrow its founder, not necessarily to his benefit. End comment.

14. Economic reforms: The cooperative managers were cautious about the market reforms. They dismissed the idea of re-privatizing agriculture; nobody would want to take back their farms and shoulder the risks of private farming. But they admitted that there was a need to motivate people to work harder. Contradictorily, they also insisted that agriculture would not have as much trouble adjusting to reforms as the rest of the economy because farmers are used to working hard. The Senator discussed with them the possibility of technical and educational exchanges and invited the JZD managers to visit Nebraska, especially during its Czech Festival.

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111. Telegram From the Embassy in Czechoslovakia to the Department of State

Prague, December 22, 1989, 1643Z

Unclassified

Prague 08993

Subject: Investigation Units of Secret Police Disbanded

1. Summary. The GOC has ordered the disbanding of investigation units of state security (secret police). It has also ordered that some wiretapping equipment be transferred from control of the Ministry of Interior to the Ministry of Transportation and Communications. End summary.

2. *Rude Pravo* on December 22 carried a story saying Prime Minister Marian Calfa and First Deputy Premiers Valtr Komarek and Jan Carnogursky had ordered the cessation of operations of the state security (StB) investigations department of the Ministry of Interior. Calfa, Komarek, and Carnogursky have joint control of the Ministry of Interior in the current government, but Carnogursky will be the official responsible for overseeing implementation of the order.

3. Units will be disbanded at both the central and regional level. Those cases deemed worthy of continued investigation will be under the responsibility of small groups of investigators directly under the control of the Deputy Minister of the Interior.

4. It was also decided that all wiretapping equipment located in communications facilities would be transferred to the control of the Ministry of Transportation and Communications.

5. Comment. These are the first examples of the restructuring of the SNB promised by the new government. There are also plans for significant personnel changes but these have not yet been announced.

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112. Telegram From the Embassy in Czechoslovakia to the Department of State

Prague, December 22, 1989, 1649Z

Confidential

Prague 08996; Priority

Subject: CPCZ Extraordinary Congress Ends December 21

Ref: Prague 8969²⁶

1. Confidential – entire text.

2. Summary. The CPCZ's extraordinary congress concluded on December 21 after electing a new Central Committee and adopting a new draft program designed to give the Party a modern, democratic image and try to put its totalitarian past behind it. Only three senior appointments were made at the congress: Ladislav Adamec as Party Chairman, Vasil Mohorita as First Secretary and Karel Urbanek as head of the Party Control Commission. Names of new Central Committee members have not been released and a Soviet Embassy contact tells us that other members of the leadership, including a new Political Executive Committee to replace the old Presidium, may not be elected until a Central Committee plenum in January.

3. A congress resolution has expelled former CPCZ leader Vasil Bilak and assigned personal responsibility to him for the "dogmatic conservatism" which produced the present crisis in the society. Another 32 former Party leaders have been suspended for "gross political mistakes." A commission has been established to study further suspensions and expulsions of members. It is too early to tell whether the new Party program and personnel actions have gone far enough to satisfy reform elements within the CPCZ, such as the Democratic Forum. End summary.

²⁶ | Document 104.

4. A two-day extraordinary session of the CPCZ concluded late on December 22 with it declaring that conditions had been created for converting the Party into a modern, democratic and leftist political force. Other than the announcement a day earlier (reftel) of Ladislav Adamec and Vasil Mohorita to the new positions of Party Chairman and leading Secretary, respectively, only one other appointment has been released, that of Karel Urbanek to head the Central Control and Audit Commission.

5. The Soviet Political Counselor (Filippov) tells us that the other senior appointments, including members of a new Political Executive Committee to replace the old Presidium, may not take place before a January Central Committee plenum. The congress elected a new Central Committee and Control Commission but none of the names of their members have been released.

— A new Party program

6. The congress adopted an action program which gives the new leadership a wide mandate to change the Party's image, structure and personnel. The goal of this program is to create a "socialist, [*socially*-] just and human society." Among the elements of that program are:

- the rehabilitation of all Party members expelled in connection with 1968-69 who are interested in returning to the CPCZ;
- the abolition of the Party's existing statutes and new draft statutes. In the interim period to the 18th Party congress, the Party will operate under a new set of rules, "the Provisional Organizational Order;"
- the abolition of the People's Militia as of December 21;
- a new re-evaluation of the Party's history since its founding in 1921;
- rejection of the official "Lesson" of the crisis years 1968-69;
- a radical reduction in the size of the Party apparatus (though unspecified);
- a suggestion that Party organizations be abolished at work places and that they be given legal status so that they can engage in profit-making activities;
- a commitment to the rule of law, and democratic elections in 1990 based on a system of proportional representation;
- a commitment to respect human rights, draft new constitutions at the republic and federal level, create a constitutional court and put the State Security Services (SNB) under government control;
- a call for the country's military doctrine to have a defensive character and for cuts in military expenditures;
- an acceptance of various forms of ownership but a rejection of any policy which would re-privatize socialist property;
- an insistence that the country fulfill its Warsaw Pact commitments and cooperate with the Soviet Union on the basis of equality; and
- a call for the removal of foreign forces from the country.

— A political accounting of the past leadership

7. Perhaps the most remarkable document to come out of the session was a resolution on the “evaluation of the political responsibility of former leading functionaries of the CPCZ.” The resolution singles out former Party ideology and foreign affairs chief Vasil Bilak as a representative of the forces which inspired the Warsaw Pact invasion of 1968. It terms him an oppressive exponent of Brezhnevism who imposed a dogmatic conservatism on the Party and prevented any fundamental reform. Bilak was expelled from the CPCZ. Another 32 senior Party figures of the past, including former Presidium, Secretariat and Central Committee members, have had their memberships suspended for “gross political mistakes.” The list includes hardliners (i.e., Fojtik, Hoffmann, Indra and Husak) as well as members of the former regime with some claim to reformist credentials (i.e., Lubomir Strougal).

8. The resolution acknowledges that this list is not complete and directs the new Central Committee to establish a special commission to judge cases of past abuse of power. The commission is to be composed of Party members who are not or were not members of the apparatus and will represent all regions of the country. The resolution calls on the commission to turn any evidence of criminal wrongdoing discovered in these investigations over to the General Prosecutor’s Office for legal proceedings.

— The concluding resolution

9. A concluding resolution assigned a number of other tasks to the Central Committee before the next regularly scheduled (18th) CPCZ Party congress. New commissions are to be established to: study the 1968–69 events, evaluate the present political crisis in the country, draft new Party statutes, and prepare for new elections in 1990. A report is also to be made by the new Control Commission on the management and disposition of Party property.

10. The congress took several actions to underscore the Party’s new democratic nature. It announced the editorial board of Party daily *Rude Pravo* would no longer be subordinated to the Central Committee but be a newspaper representing the whole Party, though what that means in organizational and personnel terms is unclear. The Party suspended all contacts with the Romanian Communist Party after a day earlier condemning the Romanian Government’s actions against its citizens. The congress recommended that Communist deputies in the Federal Assembly accept the will of the people in the election of a new president, an apparent concession to Vaclav Havel’s inevitable election when the Assembly meets on December 29.

14 [11]. The congress did not resolve the issue of a separate Czech Republic Communist Party. The Committee [*for Party*] Work in the Czech Lands was disbanded, as was the Control Commission of the Committee. New Party

Chairman Adamec is quoted as saying that it was premature to take a position on a Czech Party organization, but that a proposal on this could be ready for the next Central Committee plenum.

15 [12]. Comment. The Soviet Political Counselor tells us that he shares the view that it is too early to tell whether this personnel housecleaning and new program can preserve the CPCZ's unity. A large number of Democratic Forum (DF) members remain unsatisfied with the congress's outcome. While DF members held only 36 of the 1,530 delegates at the congress, their concentration in Prague can give them a disproportionate influence over Party opinion. DF has already begun to establish an independent political structure. Whether it actually follows through on a declaration of independence will depend on whether the process of "purifying" the Party begun at this congress continues under the new Central Committee Commission. It will also depend on how DF is represented in a new Political Executive Committee. Its chief supporter in the higher apparatus, Rudolf Hegenbart, received virtually no attention in reporting on the congress. End comment.

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113. Telegram From the Embassy in Czechoslovakia to the Department of State

Prague, December 27, 1989, 1356Z

Confidential

Prague 09010

Subject: Ambassador's December 23 Call on GOC Foreign Minister
Dienstbier

Refs: A) USIA 74301, B) Prague 9002, C) Prague 9004²⁷

1. Confidential – entire text.

— Summary

2. The Ambassador met with new Foreign Minister Dienstbier for some 30 minutes on December 23. They discussed the prospects for high-level visits. Dienstbier welcomed the proposal of a U.S. cultural center in Prague but asked that the U.S. actively consider reopening our Consulate and a cultural center in Bratislava as a recognition of the Slovak nation. The Ambassador suggested some areas for deepening bilateral cooperation, including antiterrorism. She told Dienstbier there could be no GATT short cut around meeting the Jackson-Vanik conditions for extending MFN,²⁸ though the mood on MFN, was positive in Washington. As in his meeting with CFE Ambassador Woolsey, Dienstbier asked for some unspecified USG support to improve the prospects of an early withdrawal of Soviet troops from Czechoslovakia. End summary.

²⁷ | These documents have not yet been declassified.

²⁸ | The Jackson-Vanik Amendment of the 1974 Trade Act made American trade concession – eligibility to receive Most-Favored-Nation status – contingent on a country's human right record.

3. While the Ambassador and Foreign Minister Dienstbier have met several times since his appointment to the new government on December 10, these contacts have usually been in connection with visiting CODELs. This was their first opportunity to have a substantive conversation between themselves. Dienstbier was joined by Ambassador Designate to Washington, Rita Klimova, the Deputy Director of the MFA's Third Department, Ivan Rychlik, and U.S. Desk Officer, Pavel Wodecki. Embassy Pol/Ec Chief also attended. The meeting lasted 30 minutes, after which the Ambassador joined Dienstbier and visiting U.S. CFE negotiator Ambassador Woolsey for a discussion of Vienna Disarmament Talks (ref A).

— High level visits

4. As Dienstbier had been able to allow only a short time for the meeting, he invited the Ambassador to begin. She mentioned she had just returned from a Chiefs of Missions meeting in Brussels where Secretary Baker had said he was excited over Czechoslovak developments. The Secretary sent his best wishes to Dienstbier and hoped to make a visit early in the new year to meet Dienstbier and other GOC leaders. Before she had left Washington in August, President Bush had also told her of his interest in a visit when conditions were right in Czechoslovakia. They now certainly were; she anticipated a presidential visit in the new year. Finally, House Majority Leader Gephardt when recently in Prague had extended an invitation to Vaclav Havel to address a joint session of Congress after his election as President. Dienstbier replied with a broad smile that all of these visits sounded very fine and he agreed that we would have to work closely together on timing and arrangements if they were to go off right.²⁹

— A new cultural center

5. The Ambassador said she had more good news. The Civic Forum had recently urged the Embassy and congressional visitors to open a cultural center in Prague. She was pleased to tell Dienstbier that USIA had now approved the idea (ref A). The Embassy wanted to work out the details on this as quickly as possible. The Civic Forum had in the past offered to assist us to find a suitable building in central Prague and if Dienstbier and the Ministry had no objection we would like to approach the Forum on this. Dienstbier said he supported the idea and added that the Civic Forum had access to a number of free buildings which could serve our purpose.

29 | President Havel's state visit to the United States took place in February 1990.

6. The Ambassador noted one issue which could be usefully resolved before the center was opened. That was the status of USIS in Czechoslovakia. Since the early 1950's, USIS had been banned as an organization from the country. While our cultural, press and exchange programs were funded and staffed by USIS personnel, we had to avoid the name because of the earlier Czechoslovak action. It would, the Ambassador said, be of symbolic importance if USIS's official status could be reinstated in Czechoslovakia, hopefully in time for the cultural center's opening. Dienstbier was positive on this point.

— **A consulate in Bratislava**

7. Dienstbier thought quick progress could be made on establishing the cultural center, but asked whether we were giving thought as well to a consulate and cultural representation in Bratislava. He had just spoken with Slovak Premier Milan Cic, who like other Slovak leaders was interested in the U.S. reopening its former Consulate building. The Slovaks objected, he said, to traveling to Prague for their visas and believed that Americans visiting relatives in Slovakia should not have to turn to Prague if they needed assistance. The Slovaks also resented being unable to have more direct and frequent contact with American diplomats. Dienstbier concluded that a U.S. diplomatic presence in Bratislava would be useful for all of us and urged the USG to act on this proposal. The Ambassador said she was aware of Czechoslovakia's interest on this point. We had passed Civic Forum's message to Washington and the idea was under consideration. She hoped she would have an answer for him in the not too distant future.

— **Bilateral issues**

8. The Ambassador said that there were a whole series of issues we wanted to discuss and on which we could deepen bilateral cooperation. There was not enough time to go over these issues in detail in this meeting but disarmament, environment, drug control and anti-terrorism were among them. The latter was particularly important, and is an issue we have raised before at the MFA. We are interested, she said, in seeing Czechoslovakia deny access to or transit of its territory by known terrorists such as Abu Nidal.

9. The Ambassador hoped to be able to look to MFA assistance on a number of practical matters. The Office of Diplomatic Services (Sprava)³⁰ had in the past set restrictions and obstacles in the way of the Embassy leasing property and hiring staff. We also wanted to improve access to GOC officials and asked that the procedure of requiring diplomatic notes for official calls be ended.

30 | Správa diplomatických služeb, see Document 92, para 6.

Dienstbier expressed a willingness to work with us on these problems. The new government, he said, wanted to create more normal conditions for everyone in Czechoslovakia, including diplomats.

10. At an early point the Ambassador suggested that both sit down and discuss the operation of our bilateral working groups on humanitarian affairs (HAWG) and business facilitation (BFWG). The latter might be a good place to discuss what conditions needed to be met to extend MFN to Czechoslovakia. Dienstbier, as he had to recent congressional visitors, asked whether MFN could not be extended by simply resuming the GATT rights we mutually abrogated in 1951. It was not all that easy the Ambassador replied. Jackson-Vanik had intervened in the meantime and certain legal requirements had to be met now. The mood in Washington was very sympathetic on the question of MFN, however. In her personal opinion the problems could all be resolved, but it would take time.

— Dienstbier's Moscow visit

11. Turning from bilateral issues, the Ambassador asked how Dienstbier's December 20 visit to Moscow had gone. He said the talks, while only preliminary, had been quite open. He and Prime Minister Calfa had spent an hour with Soviet Prime Minister Ryzhkov and then Calfa had met separately with Gorbachev and Dienstbier with Shevardnadze.

12. Dienstbier's conversation with the Soviet Foreign Minister had been informal. Shevardnadze, he said, had essentially accepted the Czechoslovak position that Soviet forces should be removed from the country. It was Dienstbier's impression that the bilateral talks which the two sides had agreed to hold the first half of January on this issue would go well. The talks would consider the political, military and psychological effects of the Soviet troop presence.³¹

13. But on the troop negotiations Dienstbier added, we could use some American support. (Dienstbier at this point raised the same request as in his later meeting with Ambassador Woolsey (ref B). Essentially he asked the U.S. to consider some means outside of the CFE talks in Vienna to compensate the Soviets for a withdrawal of their troops. He argued this could improve the prospects for early Soviet withdrawal as well as the general climate for arms negotiations. The Ambassador agreed to convey this request do Washington.

³¹ | For a full transcript of the Czechoslovak minutes of these talks in English translation, see Document 107 in *Briefing Book 1999*.

— **Panama**

14. Dienstbier said that he regretted that his presence in Moscow had made it impossible for him to personally receive the Ambassador on her demarche on the U.S. action in Panama. He turned over a copy of the MFA's official statement on the U.S. intervention, which the Embassy has reported ref C. Dienstbier explained the GOC criticism of the U.S. action was based on a strict adherence to the principle of non-intervention. We understood that said the Ambassador, but we hoped that as more facts come to light the GOC could reassess its position.

— **Comment**

15. Dienstbier was obviously tired but, despite a chest cough, looked healthy. He has moved slowly to put a few trusted advisers, such as Rita Klimova, in key MFA and overseas positions. He is expected, but has not yet acted, to replace former regime holdovers in senior MFA positions, particularly First Deputy Minister Sadovsky and Deputy Minister Vacek. (In a side conversation at this meeting, Klimova said she did not expect to be in Washington before early February and that, while her designation had been officially approved by the GOC the day before, she was not certain when agreement would be sought.)

16. Having only returned from Moscow a few days earlier, Dienstbier obviously had the Soviet troop issue on his mind. Success in solving this question to the satisfaction of the Czechoslovak public is probably a high foreign policy priority for the new government. We would welcome an early Department reaction to Dienstbier's request on this since it will almost certainly come up in future meetings.

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114. Telegram From the Embassy in Czechoslovakia to the Department of State

Prague, December 27, 1989, 1614Z

Unclassified

Prague 09016; Priority

Subject: Czechoslovak Presidential Elections and Relations with the FRG
and Romania

1. Summary. Over the Christmas weekend, the CPCZ daily *Rude Pravo* carried several stories of interest involving the upcoming presidential election, the founding of a Christian Democratic Party, and relations with West Germany and Romania. End summary.

— Internal developments

2. Representatives of most of Czechoslovakia's political parties and organizations held a Roundtable [Discussions] which focused primarily on election of the President, scheduled for December 29. All parties agreed that they would support Vaclav Havel for the presidency as the "recognized representative of the Czech and Slovak peoples." They would also back Alexander Dubcek for the post of Federal Assembly Chairman. In addition, there was agreement on replacing deputies in 23 vacated Federal Assembly seats previously held by CPCZ members. Sixteen would be given to candidates endorsed by the Civic Forum, five to deputies supported by the Slovak "Public Against Violence" and two to the CPCZ. The decision to allow the CPCZ to name two of the new deputies was an unanticipated concession made by the Civic Forum out of "broad-mindedness and a sense of political realism." (A 24th vacant seat had been held by the People's Party and would stay in that party's possession.)

3. Participants in the Roundtable included representatives of: the National Front, Czech [*Bohemian*]-Moravian Civic Forum, Public Against Violence, CPCZ,

CPS, CZ Socialist Party, CZ People's Party, Democratic Party, Party of Freedom, Christian Democratic Party, Social Democratic Party of Slovakia, National [Statewide] Coordination Committee of Striking Students, Slovak University Coordination Committee, and Socialist Youth Union [*Socialist Union of Youth*].³²

4. In a related story, the Federal Assembly Chancery announced that the newly-elected President would deliver a speech at Prague Castle on December 29 at 12:45 and also attend a ceremonial mass in St. Vitus Cathedral, together with the Federal Assembly members.

5. *Rude Pravo* also reported the official founding of a Christian Democratic Party December 26. A 500-participant conference elected an 11-member executive committee headed by Vaclav Benda. According to Benda, the CD Party will be right of center and "consistently non-socialist."

— External relations

6. Czechoslovak Foreign Minister Dienstbier met with FRG Foreign Minister Genscher at the Rozvadov border crossing December 23 to symbolically cut the wire fence separating the two countries. Genscher invited Dienstbier to visit Bonn early next year, and agreed with him to open cultural institutes and consulates in one another's countries. They will also conclude investment agreements to widen economic cooperation and discuss the possibility of eliminating visas and opening more border crossing points. Genscher also said that West Germany would support Czechoslovakia's application for membership in international financial institutions and increased contacts with the EEC. Dienstbier noted that a joint Czechoslovak-FRG commission of historians would review past relations between the two countries, including treatment of innocent ethnic German citizens of Czechoslovakia who were expelled after World War II.

7. Labor Minister Petr Miller, heading the Romanian assistance coordination center, announced that Czechoslovakia had sent two planes to Bucharest containing emergency medical supplies. The supplies were financed by 10 million crowns from the National Front and 3 million crowns from Czechoslovakia's Red Cross. In the meantime, First Deputy Foreign Minister Pavel Sadovsky flew to Bucharest December 26 to establish contact with the Front of National Salvation, as a follow-up to the GOC's recognition of the Front as the sole Government of Romania.

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32 | The fourth Roundtable Talks (Discussions) of the "decisive political forces" took place on December 22, 1989.

**115. Telegram From
the Embassy in Czechoslovakia
to the Department of State**

Prague, December 27, 1989, 1621Z

Confidential

Prague 09020; Immediate

Subject: Demarche on Special Session on Panama Made to Czechoslovaks

Ref: State 408890³³

Embassy made demarche December 27 on special session on Panama (ref-tel) to MFA U.S. Desk Officer Wodecki, highest official available at short notice. Wodecki promised to pass on our talking points to appropriate GOC authorities.

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³³ | Not yet declassified.

116. Telegram From the Embassy in Czechoslovakia to the Department of State

Prague, December 27, 1989, 1623Z

Confidential

Prague 09023

Subject: Soviet Diplomat on January Talks on the Stationing of Soviet Troops
in Czechoslovakia

Refs: A) Prague 9010³⁴, B) Prague 9002³⁵

1. (C – entire text.)

— Summary

2. In a brief meeting on December 23 requested by a Soviet contact, EmbOff discussed upcoming January talks between GOC and Soviet officials on the basing of Soviet troops here. Our Soviet contact indicated that, despite Foreign Minister Dienstbier's statement to us to the contrary, a complete Soviet removal of forces was not on the agenda in these talks. While the Soviet replied to our questions on this subject, he seemed more interested to discuss the large number of recent congressional visitors to Prague and the possible reopening of our consulate in Bratislava. End summary.

3. The Soviet Political Counselor (Filippov) does not share the bullish view for an early Soviet troop withdrawal from Czechoslovakia implied by GOC Foreign Minister Dienstbier in his meeting with the Ambassador on December 23 (ref A). This Soviet Embassy contact told POLEC Chief that "as far as he knew" the recent visit to Moscow (December 20) by Prime Minister Calfa and

34 | Document 113.

35 | Not yet declassified.

Foreign Minister Dienstbier had not changed the “political” understanding that Soviet troops remain here as part of a general European balance of forces. Of course, Filippov continued, some segments of Czechoslovak society do not see it that way and want a complete withdrawal. The point of bilateral negotiations to be held in the first half of January would be to find a middle ground between these political and popular views. The new Czechoslovak leaders in Moscow, he added, had praised the conduct of Soviet forces during the recent political developments and stressed that the Soviet troops do not interfere in internal affairs. While Filippov did not preclude that the January talks might produce a new legal basis for the stationing of Soviet troops and even some reduction, the object of these talks was not their total withdrawal.³⁶

4. Filippov offered the above in reply to EmbOff’s questions. For his part he seemed more interested in learning what plans the USG had for reopening its consulate in Bratislava and what the large numbers of Congressmen visiting Prague were up to. Filippov remarked that he had seen a local report that Foreign Minister Dienstbier and Slovak Premier Cic had discussed the issue of the opening of an American (and Canadian) consulate in the Slovak capital. EmbOff replied that the Czechoslovaks had in fact broached the question of our reopening a Bratislava consulate themselves. We were still considering the proposal. Apparently there was strong interest in this on the Slovak side and that was the background to the news report. The number of Congressional visitors, we told him, was linked to the dramatic local political developments and the opportunity, offered by the Congress’s Christmas recess, for their parliamentarians to come out and see these events first hand.

— Comment

5. There is a basic difference in approach to the January talks between Dienstbier and the Soviets, if Filippov accurately reflects their position. For Dienstbier complete removal is on the agenda, not so for the Soviets. Dienstbier’s request for some form of USG support (reftels) in these talks is an apparent attempt to bridge that difference and reply to the Soviet argument that a removal of their troops would be a unilateral change in the East-West balance, one requiring a compensatory move by the West.

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36 | Nevertheless, Czechoslovak diplomacy was successful in this. During the Havel-Gorbachev summit in Moscow on February 26, 1990, an agreement between the Governments of the ČSSR and USSR on the complete “departure” of the Soviet troops from Czechoslovakia by June 30, 1991, was signed. For the full text in English of the agreement, see Document 119 in *Briefing Book 1999*.

117. Telegram From the Embassy in Czechoslovakia to the Department of State

Prague, December 27, 1989, 1628Z

Unclassified

Prague 09025

Subject: Second Demonstration at the Embassy in Prague against
U.S. Intervention in Panama (22 Dec 89)

Ref: Prague 08979³⁷

1. Summary. A sequel demonstration to that of 21 December at the Embassy in Prague (reported in reference above) occurred on Friday afternoon 22 December 1989. The theme of the demonstration was to again protest the U.S. intervention in Panama. There was no violence or damage perpetrated. End summary.

2. The size of the crowd on the 22 Dec demonstration was visually smaller than that of the previous day. It is estimated to have been about one half of that which participated on the 21st or about 60 persons. The crowd composition was almost entirely Latin American and the majority were probably students at the university. The individuals who were approached on the 22nd Dec were somewhat more hostile and less forthcoming as to their identities and nationalities than they had been on the previous day.

3. The protest got off to a small disorganized start at about 2:15 p.m. but gathered participants until it got down to business about 3:00 p.m. and lasted about one hour. There were the organized chants about Yankee go home, Hands off of Panama and some uncomplimentary shouts about President Bush. All chants and shouts were in Spanish, a language not widely understood in Czechoslovakia.

³⁷ | Document 106.

4. The crowd was carrying a full line of banners from cloth streamers to paper placards, some with skull and cross bones, others with slogans of Yankee go home and Out of Panama. A few signs were in English and a few obscene.

5. Demonstrators declined suggestions to meet a delegation of Embassy officers or present a petition or written demand. They stated that if Embassy officers wished to speak with them they could come out into the street; they were not going to select leaders to come into the Embassy.

6. Czech police (VB) were far to the rear of the crowd and occasionally strolled over to help keep the vehicular traffic lane open. Fortunately for the most part, it was sufficient to keep the lane open and provide a 30-foot separation between the front Embassy entrance and the body of demonstrators. A few drivers of Czech vehicles refused to slow down for demonstrators who strayed into the roadway. The VB could have been more helpful by just showing their uniforms but were apparently under orders to keep a low profile.

7. Czech pedestrian passers-by and vehicular traffic either ignored the protestors or smiled at the Embassy guards at the gates. Before leaving the demonstration site near the Embassy entrance, a participant glued a paper placard to the side of the Embassy building; a large number of paper placards were glued to the barrier wall of the construction site across the street from the Embassy.

8. After the demonstration, the students said they were going to the British Embassy to protest the pro-American stance taken by the British government. As they departed they promised to return but did not designate a time or date.

9. Five minutes after departure, paper signs were taken down from the Embassy wall and construction sites. Fortunately there was no spray paint used during this demonstration.

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118. Telegram From the Embassy in Czechoslovakia to the Department of State

Prague, December 28, 1989, 1445Z

Limited Official Use

Prague 09048

Subject: Senator Levin and Congressman Lukens's Meeting with Civic
Forum Representatives

1. Limited Official Use – entire text.

2. Summary. Civic Forum representatives on December 22 briefed Senator Carl Levin and Congressman Donald Lukens about contemporary economic and political conditions in Czechoslovakia. The Civic Forum spokespersons also discussed the current status of Civic Forum organizational efforts and ways in which the USG might assist the Forum and Czechoslovakia. End summary.

3. United States Senator Carl Levin and House of Representatives Member Donald (Buz) Lukens visited with Civic Forum representatives in Prague on December 22. The Civic Forum spokespersons present for the meeting were Jan Urban, Martin Palous, Tomas Vrba, and Michal Dymacek. The Civic Forum representatives repeated analysis of the contemporary Czechoslovak political and economic scene made in earlier conversations with visiting congressional delegations (Prague 8852³⁸, 8749³⁹, and 8415⁴⁰).

4. The Civic Forum representatives also briefly described current organizational efforts of the Civic Forum. The Forum now has some 1,200 local organizations. A Coordinating Committee of the Prague organization of the Civic Forum is attempting to create a “horizontal structure” to coordinate the activities

38 | Not yet declassified.

39 | Document 90.

40 | Document 70.

of the various local Civic Forum organizations. (Note. It was clear from the comments made that the lines of authority within the Civic Forum are still not clearly defined. One Civic Forum source told EmbOff that Michal Dymacek, who represents the Civic Forum in Brno, had been specifically invited to the meeting with Senator Levin and Congressman Lukens as part of an effort to give the Brno organization a sense that it is an integral part of Civic Forum work. End note.)

5. The Civic Forum representatives also described the most immediate ways in which the USG or the American private sector can be of assistance to the Forum. In particular, the Civic Forum is seeking technical and educational assistance. By technical assistance, the Forum means things such as copy machines, fax equipment, word processors, and computers. The specific educational assistance needed involves information about the democratic political process, especially elections and political campaigns. The Civic Forum representatives also stated that they were interested in developing broader contacts with non-governmental organizations.

6. With regard to the needs of Czechoslovakia as a whole, the Civic Forum spokespersons also emphasized "education." The Civic Forum believes it important that Czechoslovak students have the opportunity to study abroad and that American experts should visit and lecture in Czechoslovakia. The Civic Forum also believes English language instruction is important. Finally, the Civic Forum representatives again emphasized the importance of the USG opening a cultural center in Prague and re-opening the Consulate in Bratislava.

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119. Telegram From the Embassy in Czechoslovakia to the Department of State

Prague, December 29, 1989, 1542Z

Limited Official Use

Prague 09090; Immediate

Subject: Prague Demonstration against U.S. Intervention in Panama

Ref: A) Prague 08979,⁴¹ B) Prague 09025⁴²

1. Summary: A small group of what appeared to be, and sounded like, Latin Americans presented themselves in front of the American Embassy in Prague on 27 December 1989. This was a follow-up of their previous demonstrations on the 21st and 22nd of December. See reference telegrams. End of summary.

2. At about 15:00 on the 27th of December 1989, about 10 Latin American type persons appeared on the street in front of the Embassy. It was assumed that this was a portion of the ongoing protest by the Latin Americans against the U.S. intervention in Panama. These persons mulled about for approximately a half hour in a disorganized fashion. They were joined from time to time by small groups of five or six additional persons. At one time, a VB officer on the street made about one half of those present produce identification.

3. As the hour progressed on this cold and damp day, it was clear that the effort was stunted by the weather. The group of 18 or 19 was joined by additional bodies until the count went up to 30 participants. Then as four o'clock drew near, about a dozen of the group departed, obviously turned off by the weather and small attendance. Finally, someone attempted to take charge and after 5 minutes of chanting and yelling slogans, left the roadway.

41 | Document 106.

42 | Document 117.

4. This demonstration had no obvious leadership, nor organization. They had no banners or placards. They did not approach the entrance to the Chancery. All in all it was a sad display.

5. Since the group came without any advance information, official Embassy vehicles were parked on the street and American staff had private vehicles parked in designated reserved parking spaces. All Embassy personnel were given the option of moving their private vehicles and at the outset official vehicles were left in the street under the observation of the Marine Guard Post 1 TV camera-pan and tilt and telescopic capability. There was no attempt by the protestors to mess around with either official or private vehicles. As the group grew towards 30, both official and private cars were moved off the street. There was no jeering or any type of harassments as FSN drivers, American and locals, removed the vehicles.

6. One encouraging situation was the more active involvement of the VB on this occasion, a cursory review of some identification of the demonstrators and an obvious show of VB uniforms – this is helpful. Moreover, when the RSO went out to the street, VB smiled and waved a friendly gesture that was not lost on the demonstrators.

7. Future. Embassy is of the opinion that there may well be further demonstrations; the frequency and size will depend on two variables; the weather and events in Panama.

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V

THE FINAL ACT OF THE NON-VIOLENT REVOLUTION

“Vaclav Havel’s election as President on December 29 caps the first phase of the Czechoslovak ‘quiet’ revolution. [...] Havel’s election symbolically confirms in the minds of average Czechs and Slovaks that the democratic process here is irreversible and free elections guaranteed. The next phase of this revolution will be to institutionalize political reforms.”

Prague 09083, December 29, 1989

120. Telegram From the Embassy in Czechoslovakia to the Department of State

Prague, December 29, 1989, 1200Z

Confidential

Prague 09083

Subject: Havel's Election as President Concludes the First Phase of
Czechoslovakia's Quiet Revolution

Ref: Prague 8931⁴³

1. (C – entire text.)

— Summary

2. Vaclav Havel's election as President on December 29 caps the first phase of the Czechoslovak "quiet" revolution. His election was sealed by a Civic Forum-crafted political deal which gave his main competitor, Alexander Dubcek, the position of Federal Assembly Chairman as a consolation prize. Havel's election symbolically confirms in the minds of average Czechs and Slovaks that the democratic process here is irreversible and free elections guaranteed. The next phase of this revolution will be to institutionalize political reforms. An important issue in this process will be drafting a new electoral law, likely to be based on proportional representation. This is an electoral approach consistent with Czechoslovak political traditions and one likely to keep both the Communists, and the many new smaller parties now sprouting up, "in" the system. After elections in the summer or fall of 1990, the future of the Civic Forum and of Havel are unclear. While the Forum says it wants to "wither away" after these elections, it may have a part to play in building future political coalitions. Havel has committed himself to step down from the presidency once free elections

43 | Document 103.

are held. From today's perspective, however, it seems probable that should he choose to ask the new Assembly for a full five-year presidential mandate, it would be hard to deny it to him. End summary.

3. Vaclav Havel, playwright, human rights activist and now politician, was elected President of Czechoslovakia on December 29 by a special session of the Federal Assembly held in Prague Castle. Havel's election had been a certainty for more than a week, but today's action, including a commemorative mass in St. Vitus Cathedral and a speech by the new President from the Castle balcony, will have an important psychological impact. It should confirm in the minds of average Czechoslovaks that the democratic process here is now irreversible.

4. Havel's election caps the first phase of Czechoslovakia's six-week-old "quiet" revolution. In this phase the system has gradually been purged of its discredited, hardline Communist leadership. That house-cleaning has been going on at all levels of society. Last week, for example it reached the small Czech Jewish Community, where for the first time in decades, the Community freely elected its own leadership, making their respected former President, Desider Galsky, once again head of the Community.

5. Havel's victory has practical as well as symbolic significance. The post of President is not an honorific position under the Czechoslovak system. The new President is Commander in Chief; he calls on the Federal Assembly to form a new Government; and he has extensive powers over appointments and amnesties. Havel as President is seen as a guarantee that democratic reforms will continue and that next year's elections will be free.

6. While some had criticized the presidential campaigning as a distraction of Civic Forum's energies from more basic reforms, it has proven a successful test of the Forum and Havel's skill in the political arena. The new President has made the shift from a purely moral figure to a politician without any apparent loss of popularity. The Civic Forum has shown that despite Communist delaying tactics, including a proposal to transform the Czechoslovak presidency into a directly elected office, it could bring public opinion around to its way of thinking. It crafted a compromise which met Slovak sensibilities by conceding to presidential candidate Alexander Dubcek the office of Chairman of the Federal Assembly (Dubcek was appointed on December 28) and swung other political forces behind Havel's campaign.

7. With Havel as President, the Civic Forum can now concentrate on the revolution's second stage: institutionalizing democracy. Essentially this involves putting a legal framework in place to protect human rights and permit free elections and later to draft a new constitution. As the Government's new program has outlined (reftel) these political reforms will be the priority over the next six months. The role of the Forum in this process will be to shape a popular consensus on the big political issues to be decided in this program, particularly the new election law.

8. The Government and the Civic Forum have taken a pragmatic, non-ideological approach to this task. They have shown a readiness to compromise even when popular opinion might have supported a less conciliatory line. A good example is the recent decision to concede to the Communists two of the 24 seats left vacant when discredited deputies were expelled from the Assembly. Civic Forum representatives have told us that they want to keep the Communists “in the system”. This consensus approach and the multiplication of new parties (at last count there were 14 and the number is rising) argues for retaining the Czechoslovak political tradition of proportional representation in the new election law.

9. A date for Federal Assembly elections has not yet been set. Early thinking had been to hold these in a mid-1990 (June/July) timeframe but Civic Forum representatives now tell us they are reconsidering. The Summer months, when most Czechoslovaks retreat to their country cottages, is not the best time to conduct an election campaign. The thought now is to delay the vote until the early Fall.⁴⁴

10. Most local observers are ready to discuss the post-electoral political landscape only in the broadest of terms. Too many factors are uncertain, including what the Civic Forum itself wants to become. Forum representatives now reject the idea of converting into a political party. Though the Forum has agreed to run a common slate of candidates or the 1990 elections, its official goal remains to “wither away” sometime after elections. Many fear the Forum could otherwise become a democratic counterpart to the past CPCZ, playing such a “leading role” in society that independent political initiatives are smothered.

11. Such a self-dismantling of the Forum presumes that the embryonic political parties now forming can fill the political void left behind. That seems unlikely to happen smoothly. Despite the protestations of its members, the Forum should survive the elections and could have an important role to play in coalition building among the many small parties forming to the left and right of the political center. The Forum has yet to come to terms with exactly what that should be.

12. Havel himself continues to dispute that his political role after his election today is anything but temporary. He has promised to resign after free elections are held. His eventual aim, he says, is to return to writing and the theater. But the smooth transition he has made to political life makes us suspect he may find the presidency appealing and hard to leave. From today’s perspective it seems likely that if he asked to succeed himself after the elections with a full five-year mandate as President, it would be hard for the new Federal Assembly to deny it to him.

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44 | The general elections were in fact held on 8-9 June 1990.

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