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CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 PRAGUE 08110 01 OF 02 201608Z
ACTION EUR-00

INFO LOG-00 ADS-00 INR-07 SS-00 CIAE-00 EB-00 DODE-00
H-01 NSCE-00 NSAE-00 COME-00 SSO-00 HA-09 L-03
LAB-04 TRSE-00 PM-10 PA-01 OMB-01 STR-18 SIL-01
INRE-00 OPM-01 USIE-00 SP-02 SNP-01 PRS-01 P-02
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CONFIDENTIAL SECTION 01 OF 02 PRAGUE 08110

BRUSSELS FOR USEC - AMBASSADOR NILES

DEPT PASS TO ERIKA SCHLAGER CSCE COMMISSION

E.O. 12356: DECL: OADR

TAGS: PGOV, PREL, CZ

SUBJECT: POPULAR AND SOVIET PRESSURE FOR REFORM
CONVERGE ON THE JAKES LEADERSHIP

REF: (A) PRAGUE 8082 (B) PRAGUE 8075

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' 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
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PAGE 02 PRAGUE 08110 01 OF 02 201608Z

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 (SEPTTEL) TO PROTEST 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

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 PRAGUE 08110 01 OF 02 201608Z

WANTED TO RESIGN IN A 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 1600.

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 PRESIDUM 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."

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PAGE 01 PRAGUE 08110 02 OF 02 201608Z
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AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 PRAGUE 08110

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SUBJECT: POPULAR AND SOVIET PRESSURE FOR REFORM

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.
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PAGE 02 PRAGUE 08110 02 OF 02 201608Z

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' 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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PAGE 03 PRAGUE 08110 02 OF 02 201608Z

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