

INCOMING TELEGRAM *Department of State*

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RUFUCR/AMLEGATION SOFIA

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RANKOVIC'S FALL - PART I.

CHRONOLOGY

1. TITO SAID AT FOURTH CC CLCY PLENUM JULY 1 THAT MARCH 1962 SESSION OF EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF CC LCY CONSIDERED DEVIATIONS WHICH HE IMPLIED WERE RELATED TO THOSE DISCUSSED JULY 1 PLENUM. AT EIGHTH LCY CONGRESS DECEMBER 1964 HE DESCRIBED LACK OF UNANIMITY AMONG COMMUNISTS AND BLAMED "LEADING COMMUNISTS AND THOSE OCCUPYING HIGHEST POSITIONS". SERBIAN LC EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBERS INDICATED AT FOURTH PLENUM THAT HAD HAD GROUBLE WITH RANKOVIC IN MID-1965.

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EVIDENTLY RANKOVIC'S FALL HAS HISTORY STRETCHING FAR BACK. THIS CHRONOLOGY COVERS ONLY MORE RECENT EVENTS.

2. ATTACKS WERE MADE IN SERBIAN LC PLENUM JANUARY 7 AGAINST CHAUVINISM NATIONALISM, GROUPS OPERATING OUTSIDE OFFICIAL STRUCTURE, AND POLITICA INFLUENCE IN SELECTION OF LOCAL OFFICIALS. IT NOW SEEMS PROBABLE THAT TARGET THESE ATTACKS WAS RANKOVIC OR PEOPLE HE SUPPORTED, SINCE MANY OF SAME CHARGES, IN FACT USING SAME LANGUAGE, WERE MADE BY SERBIAN LC EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBERS VESELINOV AND RADOSAVLJEVIC IN THEIR DENUMCIATIONS OF RANKOVIC AT JULY 1 CC LCY PLENUM.

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SANITIZED

E.O. 12958, Sec. 3.6

NLJ/RAC 01-191

By cbm, NARA, Date 5-30-02

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3. AT THIRD CC LCY PLENUM, IN SPEECH FEBRUARY 25, TITO CHARGED THAT ONE OF MAIN OBSTACLES TO ECONOMIC REFORM LAY IN TOP CIRCLES LCY AND DESCRIBED PREVIOUS CRITICISM AS TOO GENERAL. RANKOVIC, IN WHAT NOW SEEMS ATTEMPT TO CUT GROUND FROM UNDER OPPONENTS, ATTACKED "CHAUVINIST" TENDENCIES IN SERBIA. IN ODD MOVE, PLENUM RECESSED FOR TWO WEEKS. CONCLUDING SESSION MARCH 9 PAPERED OVER CRACKS IN DISSENSION, INDICATING

TO US THAT CONSERVATIVE FORCES, EITHER LED BY OR AT LEAST INCLUDING RANKOVIC, HAD BEEN SUCCESSFUL IN HOLDING OFF OPPONENTS.

4. ONE WEEK AFTER PLENUM ENDED EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF LC SERBIA MET MARCH 19, WITH RANKOVIC ATTENDING (THOUGH HE IS NOT MEMBER). AGAIN SHARP ATTACKS MADE ON CLOSED CIRCLES AND INFORMAL GROUPS, WITH BROAD HINT THAT PROBLEM LAY WITHIN LEADERSHIP ITSELF.

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5. ALSO DURING MARCH, [REDACTED] STEP-UP IN UDBA [REDACTED] ATTEMPTS TO DISCREDIT HIGHLY-PLACED INDIVIDUALS. POSSIBILITY EXISTS THAT RANKOVIC GROUP, HAVING ENDURED RECENT ATTACKS, WAS COUNTERATTACKING IN ITS OWN WAY.

6. MARCH 26 TO APRIL 12 RANKOVIC WAS OUTSIDE YUGOSLAVIA AT HEAD YUGOSLAV DELEGATION TWENTY-THIRD CPSU CONGRESS. FACT THAT HE TRUSTED FOR THIS MISSION PROBABLY INDICATES THAT HE NOT YET IN SERIOUS TROUBLE.

7. APRIL 28 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF CC LCY MET IN WHAT LOOKS LIKE HASTILY-ARRANGED SESSION, SINCE TITO HAD RETURNED FROM ROMANIA ONLY FIVE DAYS BEFORE AND LEFT FOR UAR DAY AFTER. RANKOVIC WAS IN BELGRADE AND PRESUMABLY ATTENDED. PRESS ANNOUNCED APRIL 30 THAT MEETING HAD CONSIDERED CADRE POLICY AND CC LCY PLENUM WOULD BE HELD ON SAME SUBJECT IN MID-JUNE. THIS REPRESENTS CHANGES, FOR TITO HAD SAID MARCH 15 IN KRALJEVO THAT NEXT PLENUM WOULD CONSIDER NATIONALITY RELATIONS (NOT CADRE POLICY). SINCE RANKOVIC IS PARTY SECRETARY IN CHARGE OF CADRE POLICY, PLENUM WOULD CLEARLY AFFECT AREA OF HIS RESPONSIBILITY. IMPENDING ROTATION VERY MUCH IN AIR AND IT OF COURSE POSSIBLE, AS WE THOUGHT THEN, THAT THIS WAS WHAT PLENUM WAS TO BE ABOUT. BUT IT NOW SEEMS PROBABLY THAT ACTIVITIES MORE CLOSELY AFFECTING RANKOVIC'S POSITION WERE TO BE ON AGENDA.

8. RANKOVIC VERY MUCH IN PUBLIC VIEW APRIL 29 TO JUNE 9, MEETING FOREIGN DIGNITARIES AND AMBASSADORS, GIVING NEWSPAPER INTERVIEW, EVEN

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KEADUBG PARTY DELEGATION TO POLAND. HIS PUBLIC ACTIVITY LEADS US TO BELIEVE THAT GRAVEST EVIDENCE AGAINST HIM NOT YET UNEARTHED, SINCE

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HIS BEHAVIOR SHOWED NO INDICATION THAT HE FELT HIS POSITION MORTALLY THREATENED.

9. MAY 16 SECOND SERBIAN CC LC PLENUM IN FOUR MONTHS AGAIN RAISED PROBLEM OF INTERFERENCE AND INFLUENCE-WIELDING, AND AGAIN ATTRIBUTED IT TO UNNAMED PERSONS IN HIGH PLACES.

10. RANKOVIC DISAPPEARED FROM PRESS MENTION AFTER JUNE 9 (NOT JUNE 17, AS PREVIOUSLY REPORTED) MEETING WITH FOREIGN DELEGATES TO SOCIALIST ALLIANCE (SAWPY) CONGRESS. LAST MENTION IN PRESS OF STEFANOVIC BEFORE JULY 1 PLENUM APPEARED JUNE 11, IN ARTICLE RECORDING HIS ELECTION TO SAWPY EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE.

11. SOMETIME BEFORE JUNE 16 MEETING OF EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF C LCY, TECHNICAL COMMISSION APPOINTED BY FEDERAL SECRETARY FOR INTERNAL AFFAIRS MISKOVIC -- A FOE OF STEFANOVIC -- TO ESTABLISH "DEFORMATIONS IN STATE SECURITY" (TITO'S WORDS JULY 1).

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12. WE NOW KNOW [REDACTED] THAT CC MEMBERS WERE TOLD AT JULY 1 PLENUM THAT TITO'S HOUSE WAS BUGGED. THIS BUGGING PROBABLY DISCOVERED DURING FIRST TWO WEEKS OF JUNE, EITHER BY TECHNICAL COMMISSION OR, AS ONE [REDACTED] BY MILITARY. MEETING OF EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF CC

THEN CALLED FOR JUNE 16, AT WHICH EVIDENCE OF BUGGING NO DOUBT PRESENTED AND CRVENKOSKI COMMISSION APPOINTED. WHATEVER HAPPENED AT JUNE 16 MEETING, RANKOVIC, ACCORDING TO HIS JULY 1 TESTIMONY, OFFERED RESIGNATION THEN.

13. BETWEEN JUNE 16 AND JUNE 22 QUESTION MAY NOT HAVE BEEN CONCLUSIVELY SETTLED AS TO WHO PLANTED BUG. AT ANY RATE MOVEMENTS OF RANKOVIC AND STEFANOVIC NOT CONTROLLED DURING THAT WEEK, SINCE RANKOVIC WENT DIRECTLY TO TITO (ACCORDING TO RADOSAVLJEVIC), AND STEFANOVIC TRIED TO FRUSTRATE WORK OF CRVENKOSKI COMMISSION (ACCORDING TO COMMISSION). MOREOVER, RANKOVIC AND STEFANOVIC BOTH ARGUED AT PLENUM THAT BUGGING WAS WORK OF SOMEBODY ELSE; THIS POSSIBLY BEING EXPLORED BY CRVENKOSKI COMMISSION JUNE 16-22. BY JUNE 22, HOWEVER, COMMISSION APPARENTLY SATISFIED THAT RANKOVIC AND STEFANOVIC INDEED GUILTY, OR AT LEAST THAT THEY SHOULD BE BLAMED. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF CC LCY MET AGAIN ON THAT DATE AND PRESS NEXT DAY ANNOUNCED PLENUM ON UNDISCLOSED SUBJECT FOR JULY 1. PLACE NOT ANNOUNCED, BUT IT TURNED OUT TO BE BRIONI (WHERE TITO'S SECURITY COMPLETE) NOT BELGRADE (WHICH CENTER RANKOVIC'S POWER). FRIDAY BEFORE LONG HOLIDAY WEEKEND UNDOUBTEDLY SELECTED FOR MEETING TO MAKE ANY ORGANIZED RESISTANCE TO CC DECISIONS MORE DIFFICULT DUE ABSENCE OF KEY FIGURES FROM THEIR BASES OF POWER.

14. BETWEEN JUNE 22 AND JULY 1 SCRIPT FOR PLENUM PRESUMABLY WORKED OUT, AND WE CAN ASSUME MOVEMENTS RANKOVIC AND STEFANOVIC CLOSELY WATCHED OR EVEN CONTROLLED. ELBRICK

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