

CONFIDENTIAL

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FROM WALT ROSTOW
TO THE PRESIDENT
CITE CAP81679

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JULY 21, 1968

HEREWITH MOSCOW EMBASSY'S FIRST COMMENT ON
EFFECT OF CZECH DEVELOPMENTS ON SOVIET INTERNAL SITUATION.

QUOTE

1. ALTHOUGH REGIME'S CONCERN OVER STATE OF MIND INTELLIGENTSIA
AND YOUTH IS, OF COURSE, A LONG-STANDING ONE, IT HAS -- AS
EVIDENT FROM APRIL PLENUM AND SUBSEQUENT IDEOLOGICAL VIGILANCE
CAMPAIGN -- GREATLY INCREASED IN VIEW CZECH DEVELOPMENTS.
WHILE SOVIET MEDIA INITIALLY ATTEMPTED CONCEAL FROM POTULATION
NATURE AND EXTENT THOSE DEVELOPMENTS, THEXIR RECENT ATTACKS
AGIANST "DEMOCRATIZATION" CONTAIN ENOUGH INFORMATION TO GIVE
GOOD IDEA OF WHAT IS OOOING ON, EVEN TO THOSE NOT LISTENING
TTFOREIGN BROADCASTS.

DECLASSIFIED
E.O. 12958, Sec. 3.6
NLJ/RAC 99-209
By SJ, NARA, Date 12-5-02

2. UNLIKE CHINESE "CULTURAL REVOLUTION", CZECH EXAMPLE MUST BE APPEALING TO LIBERAL INTELLECTUALS, WITNESS SAKHAROV'S LETTER, AS WELL AS TO THOUGHTFUL YOUTH TIRED OF STERILITY PARTY LINE. REGIME'S PROBLEM IN COMBATING INFECTION COMPLICATED BY FACT "DISEASE" RESULT ACTIONS BY A FRATERNAL PARTY PROFESSING ITS CONTINUED LOYALTY TO, AND ALLIANCE WITH, SOVIET CAMP. SOVIETS CANNOT ADMIT EMERGENNE ATTRACTIVE, AND THEREFORE ESPECIALLY DANGEROUS, HERETIC IN THEIR IMMEDIATE FAMILY. EFFORTS REPRESENT CZECH DEVELOPMENTS AS IMPERIALIST SUBVERSION CAN HARDLY BE CONVINCING TO SOVIET CITIZEN WHO HAS FOLLOWED CZECH HISTORY SINCE JANUARY. THIS REMAINS TRUE DESPITE WHAT WILL PROBABLY BE INCREASED EFFORT TO SUPPLY "PROOF" OF SUCH CHARGES, AS EXEMPLIFIED BY TWO PRAVDA ARTICLES JULY 19.

3. EVERY INCREASE IN SOVIET AND BLOC PRESSURE ON CZECHS MUST BE BAD NEWS TO RESTIVE YOUTH AND INTELLECTUALS BECAUSE SUCH PRESSURE SIGNALS GREATER DETERMINATION BY SOVIET REGIME TO SUPPRESS LIBERAL TRENDS HERE. DISCONTENT OF SOME FROM THESE GROUPS SEEMS ALSO BE DUE THEIR CONCERN LEST REGIME'S INFLEXIBILITY AND HEAVY-HANDEDNESS IN DEALING WITH SUCH SITUATIONS AS THAT IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA RESULT IN EVENTUAL ISOLATION USSR FROM EASTERN EUROPE AND THUS DESTROY WHAT THEY REGARD AS RELATIONSHIP IMPORTANT FOR THEIR COUNTRY'S NATIONAL SECURITY.

4. SHELEST'S COMMENTS IN HIS JULY SPEECH AND BOTVIN ARTICLE SEEM BE PART GENERAL VIGILANCE CAMPAIGN LAUNCHED BY BREZHNEV IN APRIL, ALTHOUGH REGIME'S PROBLEMS IN UKRAINE MAY BE FURTHER COMPLICATED BY NATIONALIST SENTIMENTS SOME UKRAINIAN ELEMENTS, PRIMARILY IN WESTERN PART OF REPUBLIC. HOWEVER, WHILE THOSE ELEMENTS PROBABLY ENCOURAGED BY SITUATION ACROSS BORDER, THEY TRADITIONALLY HAVE HAD LITTLE LOVE FOR THEIR NEIGHBORS, INCLUDING SLOVAKS. AS IN REST OF USSR, IN UKRAINE CZECH EXPERIMENT LIKELY TO HAVE DISRUPTIVE EFFECT BUT WE SEE LITTLE CHANCE OF GRAVITATIONAL PULL. EVEN IN MOLDAVIA, WHERE ETHNIC AND CULTURAL TIES WITH ROMANIA MUCH GREATER THAN THOSE BETWEEN UKRAINE AND CZECHOSLOVAKIA, THERE IS NO EVIDENCE DESIRE FOR ASSOCIATION WITH ROMANIA. ALTHOUGH MOLDAVIAN NATIONAL SENTIMENT DOES EXIST, POPULATION SEEMS HAVE RATHER UNPLEASANT MEMORIES ROMANIAN RULE. END QUOTE

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