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Bromley Smith
S 38

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August 16, 1968

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Luncheon Conversation with Jaroslav Zantovsky, Minister Counselor of the Czechoslovak Embassy

I had lunch today with Jaroslav Zantovsky, Minister Counselor of the Czechoslovak Embassy, at his invitation.

The conversation proceeded along expected lines. Zantovsky described his trip to Miami for the Republican Convention -- which he greatly enjoyed. As a Czech, he seems to have been lionized by newsmen, local TV people and quite a few citizens. He is impressed by the hold on the public of "law and order in the streets" as an issue -- particularly as his taxi driver, a life-long Democrat, said he was going to vote for Nixon if the Democrats didn't select Wallace.

Zantovsky was keenly interested in the gold issue, and the Department's inquiry about Ambassador Duda's prospective return to Washington. I said he should not be surprised if Mr. Leddy had something to say on the subject to the Ambassador when he came back. I expressed the hope that the Czechoslovak Government would not assume a rigid attitude, as there was a great deal to be said for a serious effort to get this long-standing issue out of the way. I also said the Czechs should understand we couldn't be in the position of settling our claims for something less than 20¢ on a dollar. Zantovsky's response was to say that we should understand, on our side, how important it was for the Czechs to have some way of earning dollars if we wanted them to pay us large sums in a claims agreement. I said I thought the Department understood this.

A discussion of MFN ensued. Zantovsky said the Czechs were doing their best in their contacts with Senators and Congressmen to create a better atmosphere for Mondale's prospective amendment. He thought passage in the Senate would be a lot easier than in the House. I told Zantovsky that our private and unofficial attitude was sympathetic, but we could not be in the position of sponsoring the bill.

Zantovsky, echoing Ambassador Trhlik, remarked that the American Government had not done very much to improve our relations in the economic sphere. I reminded him that American action on Treasury Circular 655 was taken unilaterally, and did represent progress.

Zantovsky mentioned the Jorden case in connection with the fact that he had been on duty in Prague when the body was found. I remarked that today was the first anniversary of Jorden's disappearance, and asked when we might expect to get the Czechoslovak Government's final report on the investigation. Zantovsky said he did not know exactly where it stood.

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The rest of the luncheon was spent in pleasantries.

Nathaniel Davis

cc: Mr. Rostow/Mr. Smith
Mr. Ash
Mr. Lisle, EUR/EE
S/S - State

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