

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

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reid 6:40P
Friday, Sept. 6, 1968
6:25 p. m.
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MR. PRESIDENT:

The following item from Agence France Presse as of this afternoon is, perhaps, the most hopeful thing I have seen about Czechoslovakia. Kuznetsov is the professional Soviet peacemaker, rather than a party hatchet man. For example, they sent him to New York to mop up the mess after the Cuba missile crisis.

We could, of course, be wrong.

Here is the item:

"Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister Reported in Prague: AFP reports that Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister Vasiliy Kuznetsov arrived this afternoon in Prague. At the time of the report he was said to be conferring with President Svoboda. AFP had reported earlier today that Moscow would send an emissary to Prague 'with full powers to negotiate with the Czechoslovak leaders.' It is not clear what Kuznetsov's functions could, in fact, be. His position suggests that he may become Soviet proconsul although presumably the military aspects of the occupation are under the control of General Pavlovsky, the commander of the occupation forces."

Walt
W. W. Rostow

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