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ACTION EUR 20

INFO SS 25, GPM 04, NSC 10, SP 02, RSC 01, L 03, H 02, IO 13, P 04, INR 07,
ACDA 16, E 15, RSR 01, CIAE 00, DODE 00, NSAE 00, NSCE 00, SSO 00,
USIA 12, CCO 00, /135 W

P R 211700Z AUG 68
FM AMEMBASSY BONN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9596
INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
AMEMBASSY ROME
AMEMBASSY VIENNA
USBER BERLIN 3187
USMISSION NATO
USUN 310
EUCOM UNN
USARUEUR UNN
USNMR SHAPE UNN
USAFE UNN

UNCLAS BONN 15868

SUBJ: AHLERS PRESS CONFERENCE-CZECHOSLOVAKIA

JOINT EMBASSY/USIS MESSAGE

1. THE TEXT OF AHLERS' OPENING STATEMENT AT THIS AFTERNOON'S PRESS CONFERENCE IN BONN HAS BEEN TRANSMITTED BY SEPTEL IMMEDIATE. THE FOLLOWING POINTS AROSE IN THE QUESTION AND ANSWER PERIOD.
2. THE FEDGOV HAD HAD INDICATIONS OF A POSSIBLE INTERVENTION BUT THIS INFORMATION COULD NOT BE DESCRIBED AS ABSOLUTELY RELIABLE. IT WAS, OF COURSE, OBVIOUS TO ALL THAT PRESSURE ON THE CSSR HAD MOUNTED IN THE PAST FEW DAYS.
3. NO DETAILS WOULD BE MADE PUBLIC CONCERNING THE RESPECTIVE CONVERSATIONS OF AMB. LODGE AND ZARAPKIN WITH CHANCELLOR KIESINGER. BOTH THE US AND SOV AMB HAD CALLED ON THE CHANCELLOR AT THEIR OWN REQUEST. AMB LODGE HAD INFORMED THE CHANCELLOR OF WASHINGTON'S

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POSITION.

4. THE FEDGOV HAS ALL ALONG REGARDED THE ULBRICHT PROPOSAL FOR HIGH-LEVEL TALKS AS "TACTICAL" IN CHARACTER. IT NEVERTHELESS INTENDED TO FIND OUT WHETHER THIS TACTIC CONCEALED A SERIOUS INTEREST IN EXPENDING CONTACTS BETWEEN EAST AND WEST GERMANY. THE FEDGOV CONTINUED TO BE INTERESTED IN THE PROSPECT OF HIGH-LEVEL TALKS BUT (AS ALREADY NOTED IN AHLERS' OPENING STATEMENT) NO DECISION HAD BEEN TAKEN AS YET ON THIS.
5. THE FEDGOV CONTINUOUS TO BELIEVE THAT ITS ATTITUDE OF CAREFUL RESERVE ON RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA WAS JUSTIFIED. IT IS THE MORE OF THIS OPINION IN THE LIGHT OF THE CURRENT CIRCUMSTANCES.
6. BONN IS STILL IN TELEPHONE TOUCH WITH ITS TRADE MISSION IN PRAGUE; THE CZECH MISSION IN FRANKFURT ALSO CONTINUES TO OPERATE. NO PREDICTION CONCERNING THE EFFECT OF THE CURRENT CRISIS ON THE FURTHER DEVELOPMENTS OF CZECH-WEST GERMAN TRADE BE USEFUL AT THIS STAGE.
7. THE IMPACT OF THE SOV INTERVENTION ON DISARMAMENT DISCUSSIONS IN GENERAL COULD NOT BE FORESEEN AT THIS POINT. SO FAR AS NPT WAS CONCERNED THE CABINET HAD NOT YET SET SPECIFIC GUIDELINES FOR THE FRG DELEGATION AT THE NNC, NOR HAS THE GOV'T YET DECIDED ON THE QUESTION OF NPT SIGNATURE. LODGE

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