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FM AMEMBASSY CARACAS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5197
INFO AMEMBASSY BOGOTA
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SUBJECT: SOVIET INTERVENTION IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA

REF: STATE 224690 224692

1. ILLUSTRATIVE OF HIGH LEVEL GOV INTEREST IN CZECHOSLOVAK PROBLEM AND ESPECIALLY IN US REACTION, MININT LEANDRO MORA TELEPHONED EMBASSY OFFICER MIDNIGHT LAST NIGHT REQUESTING CONFIRMATION OF SOVIET MOVE AND INFORMATION ON US POSITION. WE INFORMED HIM OF INFORMATION BEING PRESENTED OVER VOA AND THAT NSC MEETING WAS TAKING PLACE. LEANDRO TELEPHONED AGAIN EARLY THIS MORNING REITERATING REQUEST FOR MORE INFORMATION ON US POSITION. HE SAID HE PLANS MEET WITH FONFIM LATER THIS MORNING TO COME UP WITH GOV STATEMENT ON SITUATION (PRESIDENT LEONI DEPARTING CARACAS ON VACATION TODAY; LEANDRO WILL BE PERFORMING MOST EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONS IN HIS ABSENCE.

2. EMPHASIZING THAT HIS WAS NOT OFFICIAL GOV POSITION, LEANDRO SAID HE BELIEVES ACTION WILL COST SOVIETS DEARLY INTERNATIONALLY AS WELL AS DAMAGE LOCAL COMMUNIST PRESTIGE SEVERELY. HE ADDED THAT HE WONDERED IF THIS WOULD NOT BE "EXCELLENT TIME TO MOVE IN ON CUBA."

3. TV PANEL SHOW FEATURING FDP SECRETARY GENERAL JORGE DAGER

DECLASSIFIED
E.O. 13292, Sec. 3.4
State Dept. Guidelines
By SL/DEM NARA, Date 5-19-06

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INTERRRUPTED LAST NIGHT OA NEWS BULLETIN ANNOUNCING SOVIET ACTION. DAGER TOOK MICROPHONE AFTERWARD TO STATE THAT IF SOVIET UNION AND ITS PUPPETS EVER HAD ANY MORAL AUTHORITY IN LATIN AMERICAN, THIS LATEST ACTION HAD DESTROYED IT.

4. ALL CARACAS MORNING NEWSPAPERS CARRY BANNER, FRONT-PAGE HEADLINES ANNOUNCING "SOVIET INVASION OF CZECHOSLOVAKIA." STORY BROKE TOO LATE YESTERDAY FOR EDITORIAL REACTION TO DEVELOP, BUT DIRECTOR OF ULTIMAS NOTICIAS TELEPHONED EMBASSY OFFICER AT 8:00 THIS MORNING TO EXPRESS INDIGNATION ON BEHALF CAPRILES PRESS CHAIN OVER SOVIET ACTION. EDITORIAL ARTICLE IN TODAY'S EL UNIVERSAL, WRITTEN BEFORE SOVIET INVASION, STATES THAT RECENT VENEZUELAN OFFICIAL VISITORS TO PRAGUE CAN REFUTE SOVIET CHARGES THAT "IMPERIALISTIC INFLUENCES" AT WORK IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA. ARTICLE STATES THAT ALL CZECH LEADERS ARE TRYING TO DO IS TO DIRECT NATION IN ACCORDANCE WITH NATIONAL INTERESTS RATHER THAT "NEO-IMPERIALISTIC SOVIET APPETITES." IT CONCLUDES THAT THIS TIME SOVIETS WILL NOT DARE ACT AGAINST CZECHOSLOVAKIA AS KRUSHCHEV DID AGAINST HUNGARY BECAUSE NOT ONLY WEST BUT OTHER COMMUNIST GROUPS IN WORLD SYMPATHIZE WITH CZECH POSITION.

5. EMBASSY HOPES IT MAY BE AUTHORIZED TO BRIEF FONOFF ON US POSITION AND DEVELOPMENTS CZECHOSLOVAK SITUATION SHORTLY.

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