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FROM WALT ROSTOW
TO THE PRESIDENT
CITE CAP82201

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THIS FURTHER REPORT FROM PRAGUE WILL INTEREST YOU.

PRAGUE 3227

SUBJ: DUBCEK SETS GRIM TONE

1. CZECH LEADERSHIP, BEHIND WHICH PEOPLE HAD RALLIED IMPRESSIVELY IN PAST WEEK, HAS SUCCEEDED IN RE-ESTABLISHING ITSELF, PROBABLY NOT BECAUSE IT HAS ACHIEVED SOVIET CONFIDENCE BUT BECAUSE IT HAS BEEN DEMONSTRATED THAT NO OTHER VIABLE DOMESTIC COMMUNIST LEADERSHIP AVAILABLE.
2. ON OTHER HAND, IT HAS ACCEPTED SOVIET TERMS FOR MOST PART EVEN THOUGH PRESIDENT SVOBODA AND PARTY LEADER DUBCEK HAVE MADE IT CLEAR THAT THEY HAVE DONE SO RELUCTANTLY AND, HOPEFULLY, TEMPORARILY.
3. IN SPEECH THIS AFTERNOON MARKED BY OBVIOUS EMOTIONAL AND PHYSICAL EXHAUSTION, DUBCEK GAVE SOMBER AND REALISTIC ASSESSMENT OF CZECHOSLOVAKIA'S PLIGHT. HE OFFERED CZECHS LITTLE HOPE FOR QUICKLY GETTING RUSSIANS OFF THEIR BACKS AND COULD ONLY HOLD OUT THE SLENDER PROMISE THAT SITUATION WOULD ONLY BE TEMPORARY.

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4. MOST EXPLICITLY OMINOUS WAS HIS WARNING THAT LIMITATIONS ON DEMOCRACY WOULD HAVE TO BE ACCEPTED "FOR THE TIME BEING", PARTICULARLY IN AREA OF FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION. (WE UNDERSTAND LEADERS ARE MEETING WITH EDITORS TONIGHT, PRESUMABLY TO LAY DOWN NEW LINE.)

5. COURSE OF ACTION SPELLED OUT FOR PARTY--
PLENUM OF CC (PRESUMABLY OLD CC) AUGMENTED BY CONGRESS DELEGATES
--SEEMS TO CONFIRM THAT ACTIONS OF 14TH PARTY CONGRESS WILL BE ANNULLED.

6. DUBCEK CLEARLY UNDERLINED PRIORITY WHICH MUST BE ATTACHED TO GETTING SOVIET TROOPS OUT AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE. HE ADDED INFORMATION THAT TROOPS WHILE HERE ARE SUPPOSED TO BE RESTRICTED TO CAMPS OUTSIDE URBAN AREAS.

7. DUBCEK'S GREATEST EMOTIONAL DIFFICULTIES DURING SPEECH SEEMED TO COME WHEN HE REFERRED TO HIS ENFORCED PRESENCE IN USSR EUPHEMISTICALLY AS PERIOD WHEN "I AND OTHER COMRADES COULD NOT PARTICIPATE IN PARTY WORK."

8. AS CONVEYED BY RADIO, MUCH OF REACTION FOLLOWING DUBCEK SPEECH TURNED TOWARD BLEAKLY REALISTIC VIEW THAT OUTCOME ABOUT BEST THAT COULD REASONABLY HAVE BEEN HOPED. MOST COMMENTS VOICED BITTERNESS AT TERMS AND DURESS OF SETTLEMENT BUT UNDERSTANDING, AND IN MOST CASES ADMIRATION, FOR DUBCEK HIMSELF. HOWEVER, SOME ORGANIZATIONS, AS WELL AS MILITANT YOUTH WEEKLY STUDENT, HAVE ASSERTED VIEW THAT AGREEMENT BETRAYS HEROIC WEEK-LONG RESISTANCE WHICH THUS IN VAIN. MANY RESOLUTIONS, AND RADIO ITSELF REPEATEDLY, HAVE URGED THE CZECHOSLOVAK PEOPLE REMAIN CALM, "ESPECIALLY TONIGHT," TO AVOID WORSE CALAMITIES. WE WERE TOLD HOWEVER, BY US JOURNALIST SOURCE THAT LARGE CROWD HOSTILE TO AGREEMENT FORMED IN WENCESLAS SQUARE EARLY THIS EVENING TO MARCH ON NATIONAL ASSEMBLY DEMANDING ITS REJECTION. RADIO EARLIER HAD ADVISED PEOPLE ASSEMBLING BEFORE CASTLE TO DESPERSE; THIS APPARENTLY EFFECTIVE.

9. SEVERAL COMMENTATORS ADVISE THINKING THINGS OVER BEFORE REACTING; ONE QUOTED CZECH PROVERB "MORNING IS WISER THAN EVENING." IN LBIS VIEN, NEWSPAPERS REPORTEDLY AGREED VOLUNTARILY NOT TO PUBLISH TOMORROW TO ALLOW MORE TIME TO EVALUATE SITUATION. SOME DID NOT WAIT OVERNIGHT; RADIO NOW CARRYING REPORTS OF ORGANIZATIONS MODIFYING VEHEMENT RESOLUTIONS PASSED IN HEAT OF THE AFTERNOON'S INDIGNATION WHEN COMMUNIQUE FIRST PUBLISHED.
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