



## **November 20, 1989**

### **Cable from US Embassy in Prague on Czech Demonstrations**

#### **Citation:**

"Cable from US Embassy in Prague on Czech Demonstrations", November 20, 1989, Wilson Center Digital Archive, FOIA request release  
<https://digitalarchive.umd.edu/document/116237>

#### **Summary:**

Cable from the US embassy in Prague reports on an American woman's account of the November 17 demonstrations and the death of a Czech student.

#### **Credits:**

This document was made possible with support from Leon Levy Foundation

#### **Original Language:**

English

#### **Contents:**

Original Scan

EXCISE

(E41)

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE IM/IPS/CR/IR/1773 Date: 12/23/92  
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 EXCISE  DECLASSIFY EO Citations \_\_\_\_\_  
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 DOWNGRADE TS to  S or  C

E.O. 12356: DECL: OADR  
TAGS: PHUM, PREL, PGOV, CZ  
SUBJECT: AMERICAN WOMAN'S ACCOUNT OF NOVEMBER 17  
DEMONSTRATION AND THE DEATH OF A CZECH  
STUDENT

1. CONFIDENTIAL - ENTIRE TEXT.
2. SUMMARY. AN AMERICAN WOMAN RESIDENT IN PRAGUE TRAPPED [ ] IN THE WORST OF THE POLICE CHARGES DURING THE NOVEMBER 17 STUDENT DEMONSTRATIONS HAS GIVEN US AN ACCOUNT OF HER EXPERIENCE AND WHAT SHE KNOWS OF STORIES OF THE DEATH OF A STUDENT FROM POLICE BEATINGS. END SUMMARY.

3. [ ] SHE DESCRIBED HOW ON THE NIGHT OF NOVEMBER 17 THE POLICE SURROUNDED THE DEMONSTRATORS, REFUSING TO ALLOW ANY TO LEAVE, AND THEN BEGAN TO BEAT THOSE TRAPPED METHODICALLY

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WITH NIGHTSTICKS. SHE [ ] ONLY PROTECTED BY A GROUP OF STUDENTS WHO FORMED A TIGHT KNOT AROUND HER TO SHIELD [ ] POLICE BLOWS. WHEN A POLICEMAN REALIZED THERE



WAS A CHILD IN THE GROUP. HE SCOLDED [ ] BUT ALLOWED HER TO LEAVE WITHOUT RUNNING A GAUNTLET THE POLICE HAD SET UP TO BEAT DEMONSTRATORS AS THEY EXITED FROM THE SCENE.

4. [ ] FIRST INFORMED US OVER THE WEEKEND OF HER EXPERIENCES. SHE REPORTED THAT ONE YOUNG STUDENT HAD DIED IN HOSPITAL FROM HIS INJURIES AFTER THE DEMONSTRATION. SHE DID NOT HAVE A NAME AT THAT TIME. HER SOURCE WAS A FRIEND WHO HAD SPENT THE NIGHT AT THE SAME HOSPITAL WAITING FOR WORD ABOUT A GIRL WHO HAD SUSTAINED SERIOUS KIDNEY INJURIES. IT WAS THIS GIRL WHO HAD GIVEN WORD TO A DISSIDENT SPOKESMAN [ ] THAT HER BOYFRIEND, A STUDENT AT CHARLES UNIVERSITY'S MATHEMATICS FACULTY NAMED MARTIN SMID, HAD DIED.

5. [ ] TO THE EMBASSY ON MONDAY, NOVEMBER 20, CONFUSED BY OFFICIAL GOC REPORTS THAT SMID WAS ALIVE. TWO STUDENTS BY THAT NAME HAD, IN FACT, BEEN TRACKED DOWN BY THE POLICE AND APPEARED ON TELEVISION HERE SUNDAY EVENING. ONE OF THESE ADMITTED TO HAVING BEEN AT THE NOVEMBER 17 DEMONSTRATION, THOUGH HE APPEARED TO BE DRUGGED AND TO HAVE SUSTAINED, FROM WHAT COULD BE SEEN FROM THE FUZZY BLACK AND WHITE TELEVISION PRINT, SOME INJURIES. HE WAS EVIDENTLY ALIVE.

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6. [ ] EMBOFFS HAD CONFIRMED FOR THEMSELVES, THAT THE MOTHER OF THE SECOND MARTIN SMID WAS NOW CLAIMING HE WAS NOT DEAD. [ ] WHAT EMBASSY OFFICERS HAD ALSO LEARNED THAT THE DISSIDENT SPOKESMAN, PETR UHL, WHO WAS THE SOURCE FOR WESTERN MEDIA REPORTS WAS REPORTEDLY BACKING AWAY FROM THE STORY. BUT UHL, THE GIRL WHO CLAIMED HER BOYFRIEND HAD DIED, [ ] AND DAVID DUSEK, CZECH STUDENT WORKING WITH CNN NEWS AND WHO HAD REPORTEDLY INTERVIEWED THE GIRL, ARE ALL NOW UNDER DETENTION AS PART OF AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE NEWS STORY (SEPTTEL).

7. THE RUMOR [ ] PERSISTS OF A



STUDENT'S DEATH, IF NOT MARTIN SMID. THESE  
CONTINUE DESPITE OFFICIAL DENIALS AND PARTICULARLY  
IN LIGHT OF REPORTS THAT HOSPITALS HAVE BEEN TOLD  
NOT TO COMMENT ON INJURIES OF ANY PERSONS ADMITTED  
FROM THE NOVEMBER 17 DEMONSTRATION.

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\*\*\* Current Handling Restrictions \*\*\* n/a  
\*\*\* Current Classification \*\*\* CONFIDENTIAL

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