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November 21, 1989

Cable from US Embassy in Prague on Czech Demonstrations

Citation:

"Cable from US Embassy in Prague on Czech Demonstrations", November 21, 1989, Wilson Center Digital Archive, FOIA request release.
<https://digitalarchive.umd.edu/document/116245>

Summary:

Cable from the US embassy in Prague reporting on the student strike situation.

Credits:

This document was made possible with support from Leon Levy Foundation

Original Language:

English

Contents:

Original Scan

E45
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FM AMEMBASSY PRAGUE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1806
INFO EASTERN EUROPEAN POSTS
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

DEPARTMENT OF STATE IM/IPS/CR/IR/LLK Date: 12/23/97
 RELEASE DECLASSIFY
 EXCISE DECLASSIFY EO Citations _____
 DENY IN PART

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FOIA Exemptions _____ TS authority to
PA Exemptions _____ CLASSIFY as S or C Sec. _____
 DOWNGRADE TS to S or C

BRUSSELS FOR USEC - AMBASSADOR NILES
DEPARTMENT PASS TO ERIKA SCHLAGER CSCE COMMISSION

E.O. 12356: N/A
TAGS: PGOV, PHUM, CSCE, CZ
SUBJECT: STUDENT STRIKE SITUATION REPORT

1. CONFIDENTIAL - ENTIRE TEXT.
2. SUMMARY. VASIL MOHORITA, CHAIRMAN OF THE UNION OF SOCIALIST YOUTH (SSM), HAS PLEDGED SSM SUPPORT IN THE FORM OF STRIKE ORGANIZERS AND SOUND EQUIPMENT FOR AN ONGOING STUDENT STRIKE. VIRTUALLY ALL UNIVERSITY AND HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS AND FACULTY IN PRAGUE AND BRNO ARE ON STRIKE. A REPRESENTATIVE OF THE STRIKE COORDINATING COMMITTEE TOLD EMBOFF THAT PRIME MINISTER ADAMEC HAS PROMISED TO MEET WITH STRIKE COMMITTEE REPRESENTATIVES, BUT THAT THE STRIKE COMMITTEE DOES NOT EXPECT AN EARLY RESOLUTION OF THE SITUATION. (ACCORDING TO A LATE RADIO REPORT, ADAMEC DID MEET THIS MORNING WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF STUDENTS AND OTHER GROUPS. THE REPORT DID NOT INDICATE THE CONTENT OF THE CONFIDENTIAL

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MEETING.) END SUMMARY.
STUDENT STRIKE: SITUATION UPDATE

3. A MEMBER OF THE COORDINATING COMMITTEE OF THE ON-GOING STUDENT STRIKE IN PRAGUE TOLD EMBOFF THAT COMMITTEE MEMBERS THE EVENING OF NOVEMBER 20 HAD MET WITH VASIL MOHORITA, CHAIRMAN OF THE CZECHOSLOVAK SOCIALIST YOUTH UNION (SSM), AND THAT MOHORITA HAD PLEDGED THE SUPPORT OF THE SSM FOR THE STRIKE. MOHORITA HAD SPOKEN EARLIER IN THE EVENING AT THE BASE OF ST. WENCESLAS STATUE ON WENCESLAS SQUARE AND INDICATED HIS SUPPORT FOR THE STUDENT STRIKE AND CALLS FOR AN OBJECTIVE INVESTIGATION OF POLICE BRUTALITY.

4. MOHORITA PROMISED THE COMMITTEE THAT THE SSM WOULD PROVIDE MICROPHONES AND LOUDSPEAKERS FOR A DEMONSTRATION TODAY, NOVEMBER 21. (EMBOFF NOTED THAT A BULL HORN WAS IN USE BY DEMONSTRATORS THIS NOON AT THE SQUARE). HE ALSO PROMISED THAT THE SSM WOULD SEND OUT REPRESENTATIVES THROUGHOUT CZECHOSLOVAKIA TO GET ALL UNIVERSITIES AND HIGH SCHOOLS TO PARTICIPATE IN THE STUDENT STRIKE. AS OF TODAY, WE BELIEVE VIRTUALLY ALL SCHOOLS IN PRAGUE AND BRNO ARE CLOSED, BUT THAT A GENERAL STUDENT STRIKE HAS NOT SPREAD BEYOND THESE TWO CITIES, THOUGH SELECTED FACULTIES/GYMNASIA ARE CLOSED IN CITIES LIKE BRATISLAVA AND CESKE BUDEJOVICE. GENERALLY, FACULTY MEMBERS ARE SUPPORTING STUDENTS IN THIS STRIKE.

5. A VISIT TO THE FACULTY OF MUSIC AND ARTS BY ONE EMBOFF FOUND ADMITTANCE TO THE SCHOOL LIMITED TO CONFIDENTIAL

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STUDENTS, FACULTY AND "SPECIAL GUESTS," WITH A FUNCTIONING PRESS CENTER AND STRIKE COMMITTEE HEADQUARTERS. CANDLES COMMEMORATING THE EVENTS OF NOVEMBER 17 BURNED OUTSIDE, WHILE INSIDE STUDENTS WERE WRITING PROCLAMATIONS AND PLOTTING STRATEGY TO GET WORKERS, FARMERS AND EVEN POLICE TO SUPPORT A GENERAL STRIKE ON NOVEMBER 27. A STRIKE COMMITTEE MEMBER TOLD EMBOFF THAT THEY HAD ALREADY RECEIVED SEVERAL DELEGATIONS OF REPRESENTATIVES OF FACTORY WORKERS WHO HAD PLEDGED SUPPORT, AND THAT THE STRIKE COMMITTEE HAD ALSO RECEIVED PROMISES THAT COAL MINERS IN THE OSTRAVA AREA WOULD PARTICIPATE IN THE STRIKE.

6. STRIKE COMMITTEE MEMBERS ALSO STATED THAT PRIME MINISTER ADAMEC HAD PLEDGED TO MEET WITH

REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STRIKE COORDINATING
COMMITTEE TODAY. OUR CONTACT INDICATED THAT COMMITTEE
MEMBERS WOULD APPROACH THE MEETING WITH AN OPEN MIND, BUT
DOUBTED THAT ADAMEC COULD OFFER ANYTHING WHICH WOULD LEAD
STUDENTS TO CANCEL THEIR STRIKE OR WITHDRAW CALLS FOR
DEMONSTRATIONS AND A NOVEMBER 27 GENERAL STRIKE.
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NOTE: NOT PASSED TO CSCE COMMISSION.

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*** Current Classification *** CONFIDENTIAL

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