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FM PRAGUE 081537Z FEB

TO PRIORITY FCO

TELEGRAM NUMBER 40 OF 8 FEB 84

INFO TO ROUTINE MOSCOW, WASHINGTON, UKDEL NATO, PARIS, BONN,
BUDAPEST, BUCHAREST, SOFIA, WARSAW, BELGRADE, EAST BERLIN

CZECHOSLOVAK PRESS COMMENT ON PRIME MINISTER'S VISIT TO HUNGARY

1. HITHERTO THE CZECHOSLOVAK PRESS HAS CONTAINED MINIMAL REFERENCES TO THE VISIT BUT RUDE PRAVO OF 2 FEBRUARY CARRIED A COMMENTARY SIGNED BY ONE OF ITS SENIOR WRITERS, MIROSLAV KUBIN, CRITICISING THE CLAIMS MADE ABOUT MRS THATCHER'S VISIT TO HUNGARY. KUBIN QUOTED FROM THE MORNING STAR AND HELLA PICK IN THE GUARDIAN TO BACK UP HIS CLAIM THAT MRS THATCHER'S VISIT DID NOT CONTRIBUTE TO EAST-WEST RELATIONS. IDLE RHETORIC WAS NO CONTRIBUTION TO AGREEMENT, KUBIN CLAIMED. THE AMERICAN ATTITUDE AT GENEVA HAD SHOWN THIS.

2. SOCIALIST COUNTRIES WERE AWARE OF THE VALUE OF DIALOGUE, KUBIN CONTINUED QUOTING ANDROPOV, BUT DIALOGUE MUST BE HONESTLY DIRECTED TO ACHIEVING CONCRETE AGREEMENTS AND NOT EXPLOITED FOR OPPORTUNISTIC AIMS. MRS THATCHER ' ' PURSUED AN OPPORTUNIST LINE ' ' IN ' 'SEEKING TO CREATE THE IDEA THAT NOTHING HAD BEEN CHANGED IN EUROPE BY THE DEPLOYMENT OF NEW AMERICAN NUCLEAR WEAPONS ' '. ACCORDING TO KUBIN MRS THATCHER PRETENDED THAT HER GOVERNMENT CARRIED NO DIRECT RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE DEPLOYMENTS IN BRITAIN (SIC), WHICH WERE AGAINST THE WILL OF THE BRITISH PEOPLE. IN FACT SHE BORE A HEAVY RESPONSIBILITY.

3. KUBIN'S COMMENTARY CONCLUDED THAT A DIALOGUE WITH SOCIALIST COUNTRIES COULD NOT BE CONDUCTED IN THE SHADOW OF MENACING NUCLEAR WEAPONS. MRS THATCHER WOULD ACHIEVE NOTHING BY SUBSCRIBING TO PRESIDENT REAGAN'S PROPOSITION THAT STRENGTH AND DIALOGUE GO HAND IN HAND.

4. FULL TRANSLATION FOLLOWS BY BAG.

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5. THERE IS NO DIRECT CRITICISM OF HUNGARY IN THIS COMMENTARY. THE CRITICISMS OF MRS THATCHER AND THE VISIT ARE RELATED TO SELECTED BRITISH PRESS COMMENT AND, WHILE DISOBLIGING, DO NOT REACH THE LEVEL OF ABUSE DIRECTED AT AMERICAN LEADERS. THEY ALIGN WITH THE SOVIET THESIS, ECHOED MOST RECENTLY HERE, BY FOREIGN MINISTER CHOUPEK IN HIS RECENT ANNUAL ADDRESS TO THE DIPLOMATIC CORPS, THAT PROGRESS IN EAST-WEST RELATIONS DEPENDS UPON A REVERSAL ON PERSHING AND CRUISE STATIONING. UNCERTAINTY ABOUT FUTURE LEADERSHIP IN MOSCOW MAKES THE CZECHOSLOVAK MEDIA PARTICULARLY CAREFUL ABOUT GETTING AHEAD OF THE FIELD IN COMMENTING IN THIS WAY (IF INDEED THE TUNE HAS NOT ALREADY BEEN ORCHESTRATED THROUGHOUT THE WARSAW PACT). ONE ASSUMES EITHER SPECIFIC AGREEMENT FROM MOSCOW OR FULL CONFIDENCE THAT THE LINE BEING TAKEN WOULD BE COMMENDED THERE.
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NEWS D
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DEF D
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PS/MR RIFKIND
PS/MR WHITNEY
PS/MR LUCE
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SIR J BULLARD
SIR C TICKELL
MR WRIGHT
MR JENKINS

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[THIS TELEGRAM WAS NOT ADVANCED]

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