

The Democratic Revolution in Czechoslovakia: Its Precondition, Course, and Immediate Repercussions, 1987–89

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Briefing Book



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The Democratic Revolution in Czechoslovakia: Its Precondition, Course, and Immediate Repercussions, 1987–89

A Chronology of Events and a Compendium of Declassified Documents

Briefing Book for an International Conference, Prague, 14–16 October 1999

Edited by Vilém Prečan with Derek Paton

Chronology

Compiled by Jiří Suk

Translated and edited by Derek Paton

Contributions to the Chronology were made by

Jaroslav Cuhra, Milena Janišová, František Koudelka, Vilém Prečan, Zdeněk Sládek

Documents

Compiled by Vilém Prečan with František Koudelka, Catherine Nielsen, Alena Nosková, Zdeněk Sládek, Jiří Suk, Oldřich Tůma

Documents translated by

A. G. Brain (Alice and Gerald Turner), Todd Hammond, Malcolm Leighton, Derek Paton, Svetlana Savranskaya, Jana Váchová, Vladislav Zubok

Translations edited by

Derek Paton

Assistance

Marie Lisová, Radek Schovánek, Kateřina Volková

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Dear Conference Participants,

This Briefing Book for the Prague Conference 1999 aims to mirror the particular nature of the Czechoslovak approach to democratic revolution. Its basic feature was the confrontation between the Czechoslovak Communist establishment and the centres of nascent civil society. From little grouplets of independent persons emerged the loose structure of the opposition before the behaviour of the broader public turned round after November 17, 1989. The confrontation here lasted a particularly long time, well after dialogue and negotiations were taking place between the régimes and the oppositions in Hungary and Poland.

A marked feature of the Czechoslovak situation was the "1968 syndrome", that is to say the results of the policy of "normalization", which led the Communist Party into a cul-de-sac and the whole country into a profound political and moral crisis. For reasons related to its very future existence, the Czechoslovak Communist Party leadership fought tooth and nail to ensure that there would be no revision of the official Brezhnevite view of the 1968 reforms and the Soviet-led intervention. This was true even fifteen years later, when it became clear that they should be undertaking the glasnost and perestroika being pushed for in the Soviet Union. Similarly to the leadership of the German Democratic Republic, the leadership of Czechoslovakia could not openly refuse the ideas of Gorbachev, yet nor could they allow themselves to begin the democratization – within the limits of perestroika and glasnost – which those reforms entailed.

The régime-opposition confrontation, the omnipresence of the year of 1968, and the unwillingness of the régime to budge when faced with a society that was slowly awakening and freeing itself of fear can clearly be seen in the first fifty-one Documents selected for the Briefing Book. Similarly, one can readily discern how, the moment the turnaround in the broader public arrived (from apathy to open activity), the Civil Forum and the Public Against Violence quickly emerged out of the loose structures of

the opposition, went on to become the representatives of an increasingly confident public, and soon afterwards constituted the decisive political factor in Czechoslovakia. We have tried to provide a selection of documents that illustrate the day-by-day developments (see Documents 52–100).

Within three weeks Czech and Slovak democrats were capable of providing the core of a new Government, which soon led the country to its first free elections in 44 years. With the election of Václav Havel to the Presidency the first stage of the democratic revolution was concluded. The systemic changes were irreversible, and were considered such by the vast majority of the public (and also by the US Embassy in Prague – see Document 113).

The last group of documents illustrates the important role that undoing the effects of 1968 played in the foreign policy of the new Czechoslovak Government. For this reason the selection of documents goes slightly beyond the boundary of the presidential elections.

We have tried to present the full range of kinds of primary sources. The Briefing Book includes documents related to dissident activity from Czechoslovak samizdat collections, from the CPCz Central Committee records, SED memoranda of conversations with their Czechoslovak counterparts, CPSU-CPCz negotiations, the available relevant documents on Soviet foreign policy towards Eastern Europe, including Czechoslovakia. To complete the picture of the Soviet context of the democratic revolution in Czechoslovakia, we have included excerpts from the memoirs of Vadim Medvedev, Valeri Musatov, and Georgi Shakhnazarov (none of which have yet appeared in English), and from the other side, Robert M. Gates, Robert L. Hutchings, and Jack F. Matlock (bearing in mind especially the non-American scholars for whom these works are frequently unavailable).

The Briefing Book also provides a representative selection of official statements by the Civic Forum and the Public Against Violence sessions, from the first three weeks of their existence, as well as select transcriptions of audio-recordings made during closed sessions of the Civic Forum and the Public Against Violence. The transcription documents make clear the importance of this source when researching the Czechoslovak 1989 revolution, which is so far only available in Czech (see, for example, Document 104).

We have also drawn extensively on the National Security Archive Soviet Flashpoints set, by selecting telegrams from the Embassy in

Prague, sent in November and December 1989. They were made available through a Freedom of Information Request by the National Security Archive, and were kindly provided to us by Catherine Nielsen. They constitute an exceptionally important primary source. They offer not only an opportunity to observe events in Prague through the eyes of American diplomats but in addition yield a lot of insider information; the telegrams concerning talks with Soviet diplomats, for instance, present first-rate new testimony.

In preparing the Prague Briefing Book it has been our good fortune to have had at our disposal the work of other scholars in the Project on Openness in Eastern Europe and the Former Soviet Union. Apart from the Budapest conference on Political Transition in Hungary, 1989–1990, the Musgrove Briefing Book (May, 1998), compiled by the National Security Archive, was especially useful; from it we have selected six important documents.

Work on the Prague Briefing Book reminded us of the importance of ensuring that far more Czech and Slovak language sources become accessible to readers without those languages, in order to enrich the debate and enable more informed comparative study on the East European emancipation from Communist rule and Soviet domination.

Vilém Prečan
Czechoslovak Documentation Centre
Prague (Dobřichovice)

Oldřich Tůma
Institute of Contemporary History
Academy of Sciences, Prague

**The Czechoslovak Road to Democratic Revolution:
A Chronology of the Main Political Events,
March 1985-December 1989**

11 March 1985

Charter 77 issued the document *Pražská výzva* [Prague Appeal], which sought to bring attention to the causes of the division of Europe after World War II and to the possibilities of overcoming that division as part of European unification based on respect for human and civil rights. The Prague Appeal evoked a considerable response throughout democratic Europe.

4 April 1985

In a speech marking the 40th anniversary of the Government Programme in Košice the Federal Premier Lubomír Štrougal demanded boldness and courage in the search for new ways of running the economy and a reevaluation of 'some of today's opinions and concepts'. He remained isolated among the leaders of the Communist Party and the state.

23-24 May 1985

French diplomats who accompanied French Foreign Minister Roland Dumas on his state visit to Czechoslovakia met at their own initiative with Charter 77 signatories Anna Šabatová, Petr Uhl, and Jiří Hájek. Further meetings between French diplomats and independent Czechoslovak activists were prevented by the StB.

29 May 1985

The Federal Assembly of the ČSSR elected Gustáv Husák President of the Republic for his third consecutive five-year term.

30-31 May 1985

Moscow. Secretary General of the CPCz CC, Gustáv Husák, and the top Soviet leader, Mikhail Gorbachev, signed the 'Soviet-Czechoslovak Programme for Long-term Economic and Scientific Cooperation for the period 1985-2000'.

7 July 1985

About 100,000 Christians went on a traditional pilgrimage to Velehrad to mark the 1100th anniversary of the death of St Methodius. With booing, hissing and whistling during the speech by Czech Minister of Culture Milan Klusák, some of them expressed their dissatisfaction with the situation of the Roman Catholic Church in Czechoslovakia.

20 August 1985

Charter 77 issued a statement marking the 17th anniversary of the Warsaw Pact intervention in Czechoslovakia. The statement came out in support of continuing the political reforms that had been interrupted by the occupation and for the gradual withdrawal of Soviet troops from Czechoslovakia as part of the European process of détente. In the days just prior to the August anniversary the StB stepped up acts of repression against Charter 77 signatories.

2 September 1985

The StB carried out searches at the independent arts association the Jazz Section and in the homes of its members Vladimír Kouřil, Joska Skalník, Karel Šrnp, and Vlastimil Drda.

The house searches were part of a series of repressive acts carried out by the police and the courts, whose intent was to suppress all signs of existence of an independent cultural sphere.

22-23 October 1985

Sofia. At meeting of the Political Advisory Committee of the Warsaw Pact, the top Czechoslovak leader, Gustáv Husák, supported the 'new impulses' outlined by Mikhail Gorbachev in his address there, calling them 'extraordinarily inspirational' for the CPCz.

28 October 1985

In an interview for the West German weekly *Der Spiegel*, CPCz CC member Vasil Biľak commented on international problems, relations in the Soviet bloc, the events of 1968, and economic and political problems in Czechoslovakia. The interview was given in the old spirit, and Biľak gave no indication of the 'change in thinking' that he would, two months later, begin to push for.

The CPCz weekly *Rudé právo* ran an editorial devoted to the CPSU programme. The authors stated that the Soviets' 'creative approach to problems and tasks is beneficial and inspirational' also for the CPCz, because the Czechoslovak Communist Party was also working on the same tasks, namely intensive development of the economy, together with greater efficiency and quality of production. Official Party documents and speeches by Party leaders remained on the level of generalities till December 1986.

21 November 1985

At a Prague meeting of General Secretaries of the Central Committees of Communist parties of the Warsaw Pact member countries, Mikhail Gorbachev informed his partners about the results of his meeting with US President Ronald Reagan in Geneva, on 19-21 November.

8 December 1985

Prague. At Grand Prior Square (Velkopřevorské náměstí) several hundred people, mostly young, met to commemorate the fifth anniversary of the death of singer-songwriter John Lennon. After a solemn memorial ceremony, those attending the demonstration set out on a march through Prague, where they chanted slogans for peace. The march was dispersed by police units that evening.

14 December 1985

The Moscow paper *Pravda* published the article 'An Important Political Legacy', to mark the fifteenth anniversary of the publication of the essay 'Lessons of the Crisis', which had become the ideological canon in Czechoslovakia for interpreting the events of 1968 and the post-occupation policy of the CPCz.

7 January 1986

Charter 77 spokesmen Jiří Dienstbier, Eva Kantůrková, Petruška Šustrová were succeeded by Martin Palouš, Anna Šabatová, and Jan Štern.

22 January 1986

Václav Havel was awarded the distinguished Erasmus Prize from the Netherlands for his contribution to the preservation of European culture.

9 February 1986

In Prague American Senator Daniel P. Moynihan (Democratic Party) met at his own initiative with Charter 77 spokesmen Martin Palouš and Anna Šabatová as well as with two other signatories, Miloš Rejchrt and Petr Uhl.

25 February to 6 March 1986

In Moscow the 27th Congress of the CPSU was held. Among the guests was CPCz General Secretary and Czechoslovak President Gustáv Husák, who had been invited for private talks by top Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev.

6 March 1986

Charter 77 issued the document 'Room for the Young Generation', which was inspired by the December demonstration at the symbolic grave of John Lennon in Prague's Malá Strana quarter. Shortly after the document had been sent out, the Charter 77 spokesmen were detained and interrogated by the police.

24-28 March 1986

In Prague the 17th Congress of the CPCz took place, and approved new Party statutes and the document 'Main Trends in Economic and Social Development in the CSSR, 1986-90, and the Prospects to the Year 2000'. General Secretary Gustáv Husák noted that a developed socialist society in Czechoslovakia now faced the task of 'accelerating the strategy of economic and social development based above all on the application of scientific and technological progress'. While the Congress was being held, the StB stepped up its surveillance of some Charter 77 activists.

27 March 1986

At its first session the CPCz CC elected a Presidium, Secretariat, and Secretaries. The Presidium membership remained unchanged from the previous: Gustáv Husák, Vasil Biľak, Peter Colotka, Karel Hoffmann, Alois Indra, Miloš Jakeš, Antonín Kapek, Josef Kempný, Josef Korčák, Jozef Lenárt, and Lubomír Štrougal. Gustáv Husák was elected General Secretary. The composition of the Secretariat also remained unchanged.

10 April 1986

In Prague a joint session of the Central Committees of the Czechoslovak, Czech, and Slovak National Fronts was held, and unanimously approved the nominations of candidates in the general elections for the Federal, Czech, and Slovak legislatures.

29 April 1986

In the evening radio and television broadcasts the Czechoslovak public first heard officially of the accident of the Chernobyl atomic energy plant in the Ukraine, which had taken place 26 April. The amount of information and recommended measures for the public

were far less than was provided in the neighbouring states. According to subsequent sociological research, almost half of the population gave preference to information and instructions from foreign mass media. Charter 77 sent a letter to the Federal Assembly and the Czechoslovak Government, appealing to state organs to provide the public with full and frank information on the nuclear disaster.

9 May 1986

A four-member delegation of four People's Party deputies of the Austrian parliament visited Charter 77 signatory Václav Benda in Prague to discuss religious life in Czechoslovakia and the activity of independent initiatives here.

13 May 1986

Charter 77 had issued the document 'The Right to Vote', recommending that there be a choice of several candidates and that voters be allowed to fill in the lists themselves.

23-24 May 1986

Elections took place to the three legislatures (the Federal Assembly, the Slovak and the Czech National Councils) and the National Committees (local organs). The run-up to the elections, the elections themselves, and their results followed a scenario by then typical of Communist dictatorship: 99.39 per cent of the electorate turned out to vote; 99.94 per cent of them cast their ballots for the carefully selected candidates of the National Front.

4 June 1986

The third session of the CPCz CC debated nominations for top-level positions in the Federal Assembly, the two national legislatures, and the governments. Three new ministers appeared in the Federal Government, seven in the Czech, and five in the Slovak.

1 July 1986

Chairman of the US Senate's Subcommittee on European Affairs Larry Pressler, on an official visit to Czechoslovakia, met with the spokesmen and some signatories of Charter 77 to discuss human rights and freedoms in Czechoslovakia. The StB prevented further meetings between the Senator and Czechoslovak dissidents.

20 August 1986

Charter 77 issued a statement marking the 18th anniversary of the Warsaw Pact occupation of Czechoslovakia, in which it pointed out that the occupation and the presence of Soviet troops in Czechoslovakia was the chief obstacle to the enjoyment of the 'right to national self-determination'.

2 September 1986

Following house searches, seven members of the independent arts and culture organization the Jazz Section were taken into custody and accused of the crime of doing business without a licence. This repression was met with a wave of protests abroad, and many institutions and persons concerned with politics and the arts expressed their solidarity with the unjust arrests.

12-13 September 1986

The StB organized an extensive operation of repression against Charter 77 activists, which was based on repeated house searches and being called in for interrogations lasting several hours. In recent months the number of various acts of police and judicial persecution aimed against independent Roman Catholic activists, as well as against supporters and members of the Jazz Section, had also markedly increased.

10-11 November 1986

Moscow. After a working meeting of leading representatives of the COMECON states Mikhail Gorbachev invited CPCz CC General Secretary Gustáv Husák for private talks.

20 November 1986

VONS (the Committee in Defence of the Unjustly Prosecuted) published information on its members and a survey of almost 600 cases that it had registered since its establishment in 1978, and about which it had informed the public at home and abroad.

5-6 December 1986

At its Fourth Session the CC CPCz debated a bill on the Eighth Five-Year Plan. In a speech General Secretary Gustáv Husák expressed his support and sympathy for the 'revolutionary restructuring [i.e., perestroika] of all aspects of the life and work of the Soviet people'.

6 January 1987

Charter 77 introduced its new spokesmen, Jan Litomiský, Libuše Šilhánová, and Josef Vohryzek, and, to mark the tenth anniversary of its founding, organized a press conference that was attended by seventeen correspondents from the foreign media.

In its document 'A Word to Our Fellow Citizens', Charter 77 expressed the view that throughout the Soviet bloc, including Czechoslovakia, the social and political climate was gradually moving towards 'greater democracy', and it called upon Czechs and Slovaks to be conscientiously involved in public affairs and to call problems and their causes by their real names in every day life. It also issued the 'Letter to Signatories of Charter 77', proposing careful consideration and discussion of several basic principles of Charter organization. The responses to the 'Letter' highlight some of the burning problems of the Charter, above all the problem of different generations and the question of relations between the Charter in Prague and outside the city. Both documents were prepared by the six spokesmen of Charter 77 from the years 1986 and 1987, together with Václav Havel and Jiří Hájek, who had stood at the head of the Charter when it was founded.

To mark the tenth anniversary of its establishment, greetings were sent to Charter 77 by US President Ronald Reagan, West German Social Democratic Party Chairman Willy Brandt, the International Committee of the Labour Party of Great Britain, and other persons and organizations.

2-3 February 1987

As part of his official visit to Czechoslovakia British Undersecretary of State Timothy Renton met with Charter 77 spokesman Libuše Šilhánová and representatives of VONS Václav Malý and Anna Šabatová. The next day American Deputy Secretary of State John C. Whitehead met with Charter 77 representatives Libuše Šilhánová, Jan Litomiský, Radim Palouš, and Anna Šabatová. The StB detained eleven active signatories of Charter 77, and some of them were thus unable to attend the meetings with foreign diplomats to which they had been invited. (A meeting of Charter 77 representatives, US Congressmen, and representatives of the Helsinki Watch Committee took place in Prague, on 17 February, under similar circumstances.)

4 February 1987

The Presidium of the CPCz CC discussed the conclusions of the January session of the CPSU CC. The discussion, which continued on 18 and 26 February, constituted in essence the first basic talks on changes in CPCz policy since Gorbachev's accession to power. The conclusions of the January session of the CPSU CC were on the whole positively received, though with certain reservations: the CPCz was not willing to reevaluate the events of 1968 or to submit to criticism its policies in the 1970s and 1980s. The Presidium assigned its members and CC Secretaries twenty tasks inspired by perestroika.

2 March 1987

At Prague meeting of functionaries and leading economists, which focused on the tasks of 'restructuring of the economic mechanism', Czechoslovak Premier Lubomír Štrougal delivered a reform-oriented speech.

10-11 March 1987

The District Court for Prague 4 sentenced representatives of the independent arts organization the Jazz Section: Vladimír Kouřil was given a sentence of ten months in jail and Karel Srp one year and four months; Joska Skalník, Čestmír Huňát, and Tomáš Křivánek were given suspended sentences.

18-19 March 1987

The fifth session of the CPCz CC was devoted to the 'acceleration of scientific and technical development'. In a report of the Presidium of the CPCz CC Miloš Jakeš came out in favour of perestroika as the 'revolutionary programme of social restructuring'. The CC elected Ladislav Adamec to the Presidium and Karel Hoffmann Secretary of the CC.

The Central Council of Trade Unions elected Miroslav Zavadil the new Chairman of the Revolutionary Trade-Union Movement (ROH).

20 March 1987

The Presidium of the Czech National Council called for the resignation of Czech Premier Josef Korčák, and replaced him with First Deputy Premier Ladislav Adamec.

23 March 1987

In a letter, Charter 77 appealed to Mikhail Gorbachev to withdraw Soviet troops and remove nuclear weapons from Czechoslovakia. Charter 77 also wrote to representatives of the Czechoslovak state, asking them to initiate talks with Gorbachev to find a solution to these issues.

24 March 1987

Charter 77 issued a statement entitled 'Stop the Political Trials!', reacting to the intensified judicial repression in recent months.

8-11 April 1987

Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev visited Czechoslovakia, where he was welcomed by thousands of Czechoslovaks who saw his visit as a sign of hope for dynamic changes in policy and politicians. In his speeches here, however, Gorbachev talked about Czechoslovakia as a country with a high standard of living, and supported the current CPCz leadership and its post-occupation policies.

14 April 1987

At the US Embassy in Prague, representatives of Charter 77 met with US Senator Sam Nunn.

30 April 1987

Charter 77 issued the document 'So That We Can Breathe Here', drawing attention to the catastrophic state of the natural environment in Czechoslovakia and to possible ways to improve it.

4-5 May 1987

At the Fourth Congress of the Czech Dramatic Arts the popular actor Miloš Kopecký made a speech expressing doubts about whether the CPCz leadership intended to push through genuine perestroika and the democratization of society; he called for the resignation of those who espoused change but embodied immobility and stagnation.

17 May 1987

Nine representatives of Charter 77 met in Prague with members of the delegation of the Australian Foreign Minister William G. Hayden, who informed them about human rights in Czechoslovakia and other social issues.

10 June 1987

In the Prague flat of Dana Němcová the first Charter 77 forum on a single topic took place, attended by about fifty people, to discuss current environmental issues. One of the results of the forum was the activation of an independent environmental conservation movement, which led to the establishment of the Environmental Conservation Society (Ekologická společnost) headed by Charter 77 signatory Ivan Dejmal. The Society issued a *samizdat* journal, *Ekologický bulletin*.

2 July 1987

The spokesman of Charter 77 and some signatories met in Prague with a delegation of the Bundestag led by Philippe Jenninger (of the Christian Democratic Union). They discussed the task of defending human rights in the process of international cooperation.

17 July 1987

During an official visit to Czechoslovakia the Austrian Vice Chancellor and Foreign Minister, Alois Mock, met with Václav Havel for a short discussion in the residence of the Austrian Ambassador. It was the first time since 1977 that a visiting minister of foreign affairs publicly received a Charter 77 signatory.

18 July 1987

The CPCz daily, *Rudé právo*, published a bill on state-owned enterprises, which was intended for "public discussion".

1 August 1987

Charter 77 issued a statement on the nineteenth anniversary of the occupation of Czechoslovakia by the troops of five Warsaw Pact states. The statement expressed four basic demands: the release of political prisoners, the possibility for all, according to ability, to work in the occupation of one's choice and to study; a solution to the problem of exile; and the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Czechoslovakia.

13 September 1987

Charter 77 spokesmen held a memorial service at the cemetery in Lány to mark the fiftieth anniversary of the death of the first President of Czechoslovakia, Tomáš G. Masaryk.

17 September 1987

French Secretary of Foreign Affairs Didier Bariani received Charter 77 spokesmen Jiří Hájek and Petr Uhl for an hour-long talk in the French Embassy, Prague.

18 September 1987

Founders of the independent citizens group Democratic Initiative, in the name of fifty Czechoslovak citizens, sent a letter to deputies of the Federal Assembly of Czechoslovakia, calling for the beginning of democratization of public and political life. The Democratic Initiative proclaimed itself the bearer of the Czech democratic and liberal traditions that went back to the mid-nineteenth century, and of the thousand-year-old Christian tradition. In several statements it formulated proposals for political reform, including a proposal for the creation of a transitional period of liberalization, in which basic civil and human rights would be realized and lead to the organization of free elections. The Democratic Initiative published the *samizdat* periodical *Pohled spotřebitele* [The View of the Consumer]. (On 11 November 1989 the Democratic Initiative, which by then had about 2,000 supporters, proclaimed itself an independent political party, and demanded the Czechoslovak authorities allow it to register. In 1988-89 it worked closely with other independent civil associations.)

25 September 1987

The US Ambassador to Prague, Julian M. Niemczyk, organized a gala evening to mark the 200th anniversary of the declaration of the American Constitution, and invited Charter 77 spokesmen signatories Václav Havel, Jiří Dienstbier, Václav Malý, Anna Šabatová, Petr Uhl, and Zdeněk Urbánek to attend.

2-4 October 1987

At its Fourth Congress, the Union of Socialist Youth elected Vasil Mohorita Chairman.

22 October 1987

In the evening and night, members of the StB raided the homes and work places of several Charter 77 signatories and confiscated a large number of items including documents, books, typewriters, video cassettes, and tape-recorders.

2-3 November 1987

A Czechoslovak delegation led by CPCz CC General Secretary Gustáv Husák attended a commemorative session to mark the seventieth anniversary of the October Revolution. Husák informed Mikhail Gorbachev of his intention to open the way for 'promising' young Communists to the leadership of the Party, and expressed his support for the current Federal Premier, Lubomír Štrougal.

Early November 1987

Mikhail Gorbachev's *Perestroika and New Thinking* was published in Czech translation in Czechoslovakia.

15 November 1987

During his stay in Prague, Martin Wenick of the US State Department invited Charter 77 spokesmen and signatories Libuše Šilhánová, Josef Vohryzek, Václav Benda, and Jan Štern to a meeting.

15-16 November 1987

At the invitation of Soviet Premier Nikolai Ryzhkov Czechoslovak Premier Lubomír Štrougal visited Moscow, where he was received by Mikhail Gorbachev for talks about the situation in the CPCz leadership and the future approach to perestroika in Czechoslovakia.

19 November 1987

At the impetus of Vasil Biľak, the Presidium of the CPCz CC discussed a proposal for the division of the office of General Secretary of the Communist Party from the office of President of the Republic. The separation of these two offices was proposed by Ladislav Adamec, arguing that Gustáv Husák could not stand at the head of the new political orientation, because Husák was body and soul connected with the past. Adamec proposed that Miloš Jakeš replace him. Husák called the proposal a plot and an attempt to thwart his intention to get younger functionaries into the top echelons of the Party leadership. In a long discussion, those present agreed that the division of functions must be initiated by Husák himself, and that his potential departure would not be linked with

a re-evaluation of the recent past, or with blaming him for past failures. Members of the Presidium agreed that the proposal would not be presented to the Central Committee and that the discussion should be kept secret.

22 November 1987

Members of the StB broke up a meeting of Charter 77 spokesmen, which was attended by 27 people, in the flat of a current Charter 77 spokesman, Libuše Šilhánová.

28 November 1987

The second forum of Charter 77 took place in Prague, attended by seventy signatories; it discussed the activity of Charter 77, its internal problems, and the organization of a peaceful demonstration to mark International Human Rights Day, on 10 December.

29 November 1987

The Joint Pastoral Letter of Bishops and Elders of Bohemian and Moravian Dioceses was read in Czech churches to mark the year of the Blessed Agnes of Bohemia. The Decade of Spiritual Renewal was declared, prepared by the Roman Catholic Church together with Roman Catholic underground organizations.

The same day saw the Moravian petition 'Impetuses from Roman Catholics for a Solution to the Situation of Christians in the CSSR', which addressed 31 issues, including a demand for the full recognition of religious freedoms and the separation of Church and state; it was initiated by the Roman Catholic layman, Augustin Navrátil. (The petition, which received the support of František Cardinal Tomášek on 4 January 1988, was signed by more than 600,000 Czech and Slovak believers during the coming months. The initiator of the petition was systematically persecuted and harassed by the police.)

November 1987

Lidové noviny, which had been publishing once a month since January 1988, issued its second preliminary edition. It soon became one of the most widely read *samizdat* periodicals.

8 December 1987

Prague. On Grand Prior Square (Velkopřevorské náměstí) a commemorative gathering took place to mark the seventh anniversary of the murder of the singer-songwriter John Lennon. In the presence of police, up to 500 people, predominantly young, attended. Some of them were taken into custody for several hours by the regular police and the StB.

9 December 1987

At a meeting of the Presidium of the CPCz CC, Gustáv Husák announced that at a session of the CPCz CC he would resign the office of General Secretary and would recommend Miloš Jakeš to take his place.

10 December 1987

Prague. In response to an appeal by Charter 77, about 2,000 people demonstrated on Old Town Square to mark International Human Rights Day. Several hundred police, in uniform

and undercover, were present, and selectively arrested demonstrators and took them in for questioning.

17-18 December 1987

In Prague the seventh session of the CPCz CC took place. At the meeting, Gustáv Husák resigned from the office of General Secretary, and upon his proposal, Miloš Jakeš was elected to the head of the Party. In his inaugural address, Jakeš came out in favour of 'complex restructuring and the intensification of socialist democracy.'

December 1987— January 1988

More than 100 members and supporters of the Bratislava-based Slovak Union of Environmental Protection published *Bratislava nahlas* [Bratislava aloud], in which they sought to bring attention to environmental, urban-planning, social, and arts problems facing the Slovak capital. The publication later met with a considerable response among the Slovak public and in the mass media abroad. The official press of the Czechoslovak régime called the environmental initiative an attempt to destabilize the political situation, and soon subjected its organizers to persecution by the police and courts. (Among the authors and organizers of *Bratislava nahlas* were activists who, after 17 November 1989, founded the Public Against Violence movement (including Ján Budaj, Juraj Flamík, Fedor Gál, Eugen Gindl, Marián Huba, Gabriela Kaliská, Peter Kresánek, and Peter Tatár.)

2 January 1988

Stanislav Devátý, Miloš Hájek, and Bohumír Janát became the new Charter 77 spokesmen.

11 January 1988

General Secretary of the CPCz CC Miloš Jakeš visited the Soviet Union. At a meeting with the foremost Soviet representative, Mikhail Gorbachev, he voiced in the name of the CPCz full support for Soviet policy, and reported on the situation in the leadership of the CPCz. Another subject of discussion was the attitude towards 1968. Gorbachev told Jakeš that Italian Communists were demanding a constructive re-evaluation of the role of Alexander Dubček, but agreed with Jakeš's view that such a re-evaluation would destabilize the CPCz, and should therefore be avoided; he also rejected the frequently expressed view that the Prague Spring of 1968 was the precursor to the current Soviet policy of perestroika.

17 January 1988

On the agenda of the third Charter 77 forum was discussion of the current political situation, the possibilities of improving it, and the role of the Charter and other independent initiatives in this process. The forum was meant to be attended by nearly sixty Charter signatories, but was disrupted by an extensive StB operation launched two days earlier.

18 January 1988

During an official visit to Czechoslovakia, several members of a delegation from the US Congress met with Charter 77 signatories Zdeněk Urbánek, Jiří Ruml, Rudolf Zeman, Jan Štern, Petr Uhl, Miklós Duray, and Václav Malý.

26-27 January 1988

Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany Helmut Kohl, on an official visit to Czechoslovakia, met with Czechoslovak Premier Lubomír Štrougal, CPCz CC General Secretary Miloš Jakeš, and Czechoslovak President Gustáv Husák. During talks it was agreed that, among other things, Czechoslovak would cease to jam Czech broadcasts of the Deutschlandfunk radio station (this was implemented 4 February 1988). The StB prevented Charter 77 spokesmen and other signatories from attending a meeting to which they had been invited with members of the Kohl delegation in the Embassy of the Federal Republic.

7 February 1988

While in Prague, American Deputy Secretary of State John C. Whitehead met with Charter 77 representatives Václav Benda, Václav Havel, Václav Malý, and Jan Štern.

8 February 1988

The General Secretary of the CPCz CC, Miloš Jakeš, attended talks in Warsaw with the First Secretary of the Polish United Workers' Party, Wojciech Jaruzelski, where they discussed the situations in their countries and mutual cooperation. (Jakeš then visited East Germany on 10 March, Hungary on 7 April, and Rumania on 22 April, for the same purpose.)

13 February 1988

The Society of Friends of the USA, which the Czechoslovak authorities had refused to register as a lawful organization, renamed itself the Community of Friends of the USA, and declared itself an informal citizens' initiative.

19 February 1988

The Academic Board of the Faculty of Natural Sciences, at the University of Bologna, conferred an honorary doctorate on Alexander Dubček.

5 March 1988

The British authorities sent stern protests to the Czechoslovak Government after the StB prevented some Charter 77 signatories from participating in talks with representatives of the Czechoslovak public who had been invited to meet with Permanent Undersecretary of State at the British Embassy, Prague.

The StB prevented members of the steering committee of the Tomáš G. Masaryk Society from organizing a meeting of members of this new, independent initiative.

6 March 1988

In St Vitus's Cathedral, Prague, a special mass for people on a pilgrimage was held in honour of the Blessed Agnes of Bohemia. (Agnes, or Anežka Přemyslovna [d. 1282], was the sister of Václav I, king of the Bohemian lands; she devoted her life to charitable work, introduced two European orders, the Franciscans and the Clares into Bohemia, and founded the only originally Bohemian order, the Knights of the Cross with the Red Star.)

Despite feverish attempts by the StB to prevent them from attending the mass, about 8,000 people managed to make their way into the Cathedral. Some representatives of Charter 77 and other independent initiatives were taken into custody or kept under house arrest. People attending the mass then demonstrated for about an hour in front of the Archbishop's Palace for genuine recognition of religious freedoms.

16 March 1988

The Soviet armed forces, as part of Soviet-American agreements, completed its withdrawal of SS-12 strategic missiles from Czechoslovak territory.

25 March 1988

On Hviezdoslav Square, Bratislava, several thousand Roman Catholics (mostly Slovak but also many from Bohemia and Moravia) with lighted candles met to demonstrate their desire for religious freedom, the respecting of human rights in Czechoslovakia, and the filling of vacant bishoprics. The demonstration was organized by representatives of the independent Roman Catholic groups in Slovakia. Police used batons and water cannons to break up the demonstrations. Several high-level representatives of the state and the Party in Slovakia watched from the windows of the Carlton Hotel. The police opened investigations to discover who the organizers of the demonstration were.

5 April 1988

Six US Senators, led by John Glenn, met in Prague with Charter 77 signatories and former spokesmen Ladislav Lis, Eva Kantůrková, and Václav Malý.

8-9 April 1988

The CPCz CC, at its ninth session, debated personnel questions. It resolved to replace Ján Feješ with Ján Pješčák in the function of Prosecutor General of the CSSR, and to coopt ten young Party members into the CC (Jan Gajdošík, Rudolf Hegenbart, Ivan Knotek, Vladimír Kunovjáneek, Otto Liška, Václav Pátek, Štefan Rybák, Ondrej Šaling, Miroslav Štěpán, and Miroslav Zajíc). It relieved Antonín Kapek of his position in the Presidium and Josef Haman, Josef Havlín, and Jindřich Poledník of their functions as secretaries of the CPCz CC. It elected Jan Fojtík and Ignác Janák to the Presidium, and Vasil Mohorita and Miroslav Štěpán (who also replaced Antonín Kapek in the function of Head Secretary of the Municipal Committee of the CPCz in Prague) to the Secretariat.

10 April 1988

The StB broke up a meeting of Charter 77 spokesmen, which was being held in a private Prague flat and attended by 29 Charter 77 representatives.

12 April 1988

While on an official visit to Czechoslovakia, a delegation of the Standing Committee for Foreign Relations of the Lower House of the Estates General of the Netherlands, led by J. P. de Boer, met with Charter 77 signatories Miloš Hájek, Václav Havel, Martin Palouš, Petr Uhl, and Alexandr Vondra.

14 April 1988

Jozef Lenárt was relieved of his function as First Secretary of the CC of the Communist Party of Slovakia, and Ignác Janák was named in his place. The new Secretary of Ideology of the CPS CC was Gejza Šlapka, replacing Ľubomír Pezlár.

16 April 1988

The Independent Peace Association–Initiative for the Demilitarization of Society (Nezávislé mírové sdružení–Iniciativa za demilitarizaci společnosti or NMS-IDS) issued its first statement, introducing itself as an informal community of people, not associated with any political party, ideology or religion, and trying to bring about open discussion on all questions in society, particularly those related to arms and the military. The *samizdat* periodical *Bulletin NMS-IDS* became its organ. The movement took part in public discussions, and called upon citizens to participate in demonstrations against the régime.

20 April 1988

As part of the changes in the structure and content of the work of the central authorities (carried out according to the 42nd Amendment to the Constitution, ratified 19 April 1988) a number of changes were effected in the Federal Government. Seven ministers left the Government; Marián Čalfa was named Minister for Legislative Affairs; the number of members of the Government was reduced from 26 to 20. (Later, on 3 May, the Federal Assembly approved the Government's Programme Statement.)

21 April 1988

The Presidiums of the Czech National Council and the Slovak National Councils (the Czech and Slovak legislatures) accepted the resignation of five members of the Czech Government and five members of the Slovak Government. Two new members of the Czech Government and two new members of the Slovak Government were named in their place, thus reducing the number of members of the Czech Government from 20 to 17, and of the Slovak Government from 18 to 15.

22 April 1988

The Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands, Hans van den Broek, met in Prague with Charter 77 signatories (including former spokesmen), Jiří Hájek, Václav Havel, Ladislav Hejdránek, Václav Malý, Jan Dus, and Petr Uhl, and Jazz Section representative Karel Šrp.

23 April 1988

Cardinal Tomášek sent Czechoslovak Premier Lubomír Štrougal a letter in which he protested against how public officials and the state-controlled mass media were reporting on the activities of Christians in the country. He also demanded a change in the authorities' attitude towards the Church. About 3,000 people gathered in front of the Archiepiscopal Palace in Prague, after the pontifical mass to commemorate St Adalbert (Vojtěch), to pay homage to Cardinal Tomášek and his guest, Secretary of the Polish Episcopate Jerzy Dąbrowski.

29 April 1988

The Presidium of the CPCz CC approved the draft of a letter that was intended for the basic organizations of the CPCz and warned against the 'activization of the forces of the internal and external adversary.' After the Presidium's session, these basic organizations were 'to decide on the approach to be taken within the sphere of their jurisdiction.' (The letter was sent out by teletype on 10 May 1988.)

3 May 1988

Charter 77 issued an obituary, several letters of protest, and a statement on the death of human-rights activist Pavel Wonka, who died in the Hradec Králové prison on 26 April 1988, at the age of 35, a 'victim of unlawful judicial and prison practices.' (Wonka's death was later to become the impulse for the establishment in February 1989 of the Club of Legal Support, whose aim was to ensure legal awareness among the public, to seek justice, and to provide legal aid in cases of state organs breaking the law.)

14 May 1988

Charter 77's fourth forum on the political situation in the country, the establishment of new independent initiatives (including political ones), and the means of their working together with Charter 77, was attended by about fifty signatories. Shortly after it began, the meeting was broken up by a large number of police, both in uniform and plainclothes. The Chartists issued a communiqué advocating the creation of a 'community for democracy' as an open political movement that would consider an alternative political programme and create the basis for the free political association of citizens.

23-31 May 1988

General Secretary of the CPCz CC Miloš Jakeš visited China, North Korea, and Mongolia.

28 May 1988

The newly established independent initiative Bohemian Children published its manifesto in support of royalist and Christian values and the traditions of the Kingdom of Bohemia. The Bohemian Children, similarly to the Independent Peace Initiative and the John Lennon Peace Club (whose predominantly young members became active opponents of the régime), organized public discussions in the streets and squares, and from August 1988 appealed regularly to citizens to join in demonstrations against the régime. The Bohemian Children issued the *samizdat* journal *Koruna*.

14 June 1988

The Federal Assembly passed the State Enterprises Act (which was to come into force on 1 August 1988). In the first stage of its drafting, the Bill was radically worded and resembled a proposal by CPCz reformist leaders in 1969. It was, however, gradually redrafted, and the inclusion of the clause on the leading role of the Communist Party in particular limited the originally broader competencies of any enterprise doing business. (The next day, legislation was enacted on agricultural cooperatives, housing, and producers' and consumers' cooperatives. These three Acts were intended to form the legislative basis of the 'restructuring of the economic mechanism'.)

17—19 June 1988

Charter 77 and the Independent Peace Association convened an international seminar on peace, 'Praha 88', which was to discuss the function of human rights in the securing of democratic peace, in the surmounting of the influence of military and police ideology and its machinery, the rights of soldiers, and the possibilities of alternative national service. 40 peace activists from 17 countries of Western and Eastern Europe came to Prague for the seminar. Both the arrival of participants and the seminar itself were repeatedly disrupted by the StB.

23 June 1988

While in Czechoslovakia, D. Mallor of the British Foreign Office met with Charter 77 representatives Pavel Bratinka, Jiří Dienstbier, Stanislav Devátý, Miloš Hájek, Václav Havel, Bohumír Janát, Martin Palouš, Anna Šabatová, and Petr Uhl, and with Chairman of the Jazz Section Karel Srp.

28 June 1988

During an official visit to Czechoslovakia by Austrian Chancellor Franz Vranitzky, members of his delegation met in Prague with Charter 77 signatories Václav Benda, Jiří Hájek, Václav Havel, Petr Uhl, Roman Catholic activist Marie Kaplanová, and Chairman of the Jazz Section Karel Srp.

30 June 1988

Two apparatchiks, appointed by the CPCz CC, met in Bratislava with former First Secretary Alexander Dubček. According to their report, which they sent to the Presidium of the CPCz, Dubček was insisting on a constructive evaluation of the politics of the reforms being carried out under his leadership in 1968. The apparatchiks rejected both Dubček's complaint about systematic StB interference in his personal freedom and his demand that he be allowed to express himself openly in the state-controlled mass media. They recommended also that no more talks be held with Dubček.

4 and 8-9 July 1988

Soviet Premier Nikolai Ryzhkov, on a state visit to Czechoslovakia, was received by Czechoslovak Premier Lubomír Štrougal, General Secretary of the CPCz CC Miloš Jakeš, and Czechoslovak President Gustáv Husák.

14 July 1988

In its statement marking the 20th anniversary of the Soviet intervention in Czechoslovakia, Charter 77 called upon Czechoslovaks not to be afraid and to express freely their views on the military operation and the destructive policies that had followed in its wake.

15-16 July 1988

Warsaw. At a meeting of the Political Council of the Warsaw Pact, General Secretary of the CPCz CC Miloš Jakeš expressed his unconditional support for the proposals of Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev, and also praised the resolutions of the recent Nineteenth All-union Conference of Soviet Communists.

21 August 1988

Prague. On Wenceslas Square a demonstration took place to mark the twentieth anniversary of the Soviet military intervention in Czechoslovakia. In response to an appeal by the independent initiatives the Bohemian Children and the Independent Peace Association several thousand people assembled in the centre of town, demanding the withdrawal of Soviet troops from the country, as well as the lifting of censorship, free elections, the release of political prisoners, the observance of human rights, the legalization of independent initiatives, and access for these groups to the mass media. Police units dispersed the demonstrators, and brutally beat some activists. More than 100 people were taken into custody for short periods of time, and criminal charges were brought against 13 of them. The demonstrations had been preceded by extensive persecution (including house searches and even physical torture) particularly of younger activists from the Independent Peace Association and the Bohemian Children.

28-30 August 1988

Czechoslovak Minister of Foreign Affairs Bohuslav Chřoupek visited the Federal Republic of Germany.

5-9 September 1988

In the Soviet Union, CPCz CC Presidium member Jozef Lenárt talked with Soviet Politburo member Nikolai Slyunkov, Gosplan Chairman Iurii Masliukov, and others.

17 September 1988

As part of his official visit to Czechoslovakia French Foreign Minister Roland Dumas met with Charter 77 spokesman Miloš Hájek and signatories Jiří Hájek, Václav Malý, and Petr Uhl at the French Embassy in Prague. They discussed the respecting of human rights, the status of Christians in Czechoslovak society, and the changes that had been taking place in Eastern Europe in recent years.

20 September 1988

The StB moved against eleven representatives of four independent citizens' initiatives (the Democratic Initiative, the Independent Peace Association, Charter 77, and the Community of Friends of the USA), which had met to take part in preparations for the 'Czechoslovakia '88' symposium planned for 11-13 November 1988.

24-25 September 1988

A state-wide trade-union conference took place in Prague, which approved proposals for, among others things, changes in the Labour Code and the statutes of the state-controlled Revolutionary Trade-Union Movement.

8 October 1988

The independent, non-political Initiative for Social Defence (Iniciativa sociální obrany, ISO) was established in Prague. This organization was formed to protect Czechoslovaks against political, religious, and other discrimination in employment. The Initiative

publicized individual cases of discrimination, and intervened on their behalf at state offices, organizations, and institutions.

10-11 October 1988

At its tenth session the CPCz CC debated matters of ideology and personnel, and, in secret ballot, passed resolutions on changes in the composition of the Government and some Party organizations. Lubomír Štrougal and Peter Colotka were dismissed from the Presidium of the CPCz CC, and František Pitra, Miroslav Štěpán, Ivan Knotek, Karel Urbánek, and Miroslav Zavadil were elected to replace them. The CPCz set up the Committee for the Direction of Party Work in Bohemia and Moravia (which was to be led by Karel Urbánek), and also elected chairmen for the standing committees of the CPCz CC.

10 October 1988

The Federal Government under Premier Lubomír Štrougal resigned. (Later, on 12 October the President of the Republic named a new Government under Ladislav Adamec. Pavol Hrivnák became First Deputy Premier, Bohumil Urban Deputy Minister, and Karel Juliš Minister of Mines, Machine-Tool Industry, and Electrical Engineering. The cabinet shuffle also affected the ministries of foreign affairs, the interior, finance, agriculture, fuel and energy, transportation and communication.)

The independent initiatives Charter 77, the Bohemian Children, the Democratic Initiative, the Independent Peace Movement, and the Community of Friends of the USA announced that to mark the seventieth anniversary of the creation of Czechoslovakia, on 28 October, they would be organizing a peaceful demonstration on Wenceslas Square, Prague. (The local National Committee in Prague 1, however, did not grant their request and placed an explicit ban on the demonstration.)

12 October 1988

The Presidium of the Czech National Council (the Czech legislature) accepted the resignation of Premier Ladislav Adamec and four ministers, and named František Pitra Czech Premier and Miroslav Toman First Deputy Premier. The Presidium of the Slovak National Council appointed Ivan Knotek Premier and also named two new ministers.

15 October 1988

With the publishing of the 'Democracy for All' manifesto the politically oriented independent initiative the Movement for Civil Liberty (Hnutí za občanskou svobodu, HOS) was established. Consisting of activists from Bohemia, Moravia, and Slovakia, the Movement for Civil Liberty came out in support of the national democratic tradition, political and economic pluralism, renewal of the legal order, protection of the natural environment, freedom of confession, separation of Church and State, national independence, and the drafting of a new, democratic Constitution. The manifesto was signed by 126 activists, against whom the StB immediately began an extensive series of repressive measures. The Movement for Civil Liberty, which published two *samizdat* periodicals, *Zpravodaj HOS* [The Movement for Civil Liberty bulletin] and *Alternativa*,

worked closely with other independent initiatives, and spoke out on current political and social affairs. (Later, in 1989, three streams could be identified within it — social democratic, civil-democratic, and Christian democratic. Towards the end of 1988, about 1,000 activists took part in the work of the Movement for Civil Liberty.)

On an official visit to Czechoslovakia, American Deputy Secretary of State John C. Whitehead met in Prague with representatives of the independent civil initiatives Charter 77, the Democratic Initiative, the Initiative for Social Defence, the Independent Peace Association, the Community of Friends of the USA, and the Committee for the Defence of the Unjustly Prosecuted.

27 October 1988

Czechoslovak President Gustáv Husák declared an amnesty to mark the 70th anniversary of the founding of Czechoslovakia. On the basis of the amnesty 4,665 prisoners were released, 630 had the unserved part of their sentences pardoned but were not released from prison, and criminal proceedings were dropped or suspended against 15,339 persons at home and 50,000 émigrés. About 50 activists of independent initiatives were amnestied.

28 October 1988

In response to an appeal by the independent initiatives and in some cases simply on their own incentive, several thousand people gathered on Wenceslas Square, Prague, in the afternoon, for a peaceful demonstration to mark the 70th anniversary of the establishment of Czechoslovakia. The day before the StB had launched an operation of repression, which led to dozens of democratic activists being detained for several days. A campaign of intimidation was launched in the state-controlled mass media. Shortly after the demonstration began, police attacked, using batons, water cannons, armoured transport vehicles, and dogs to disperse demonstrators. The police arrested more than 100 people; most were released later that day, but charges were filed against others.

29 October 1988

The Czechoslovak Premier was in Moscow for talks with Soviet Premier Nikolai Ryzhkov and Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev.

October 1988

The independent initiative Open Dialogue was founded in a university club in Brno, as an informal association of various kinds of artists. It had no rules of organization, and was concerned predominantly with organizing forums to discuss various topics. Its introductory statement was written by Petr Oslzlý, Joska Skalník, Jaroslav Kořán, Petr Rezek, Karel Steigerwald, Petr Kofroň, Jan Šimek, and Pavel Váša. (Beginning in May 1989 it organized events in Prague. The irregularly published *Dopisy* [Letters] became its bulletin.)

5 November 1988

The Czechoslovak Helsinki Committee was established in Prague in support of the principles and resolutions of the Helsinki Final Act of the Conference on Security and

Cooperation in Europe (signed on 1 August 1975) and of the follow-up meetings of the CSCE related to human rights and civil liberties. One of the first three Charter 77 spokesmen, Jiří Hájek, became head of the Prague Committee. The Czechoslovak Helsinki Committee issued a *samizdat* publication, *Informační zpravodaj* [Information Bulletin].

9-20 November 1988

At the invitation of the Italian Communist Party, Alexander Dubček visited Italy. In Rome he met with its General Secretary, Achille Occhetto, and with the Chairman of the Socialist Party, Bettino Craxi, and was invited to a private audience with Pope John Paul II. At the University of Bologna, on 13 November, Dubček was awarded an honorary doctorate of political science.

11-12 November 1988

Czechoslovak Foreign Minister Jaromír Johanes was in Moscow for talks with his opposite, Edward Shevardnadze, and with Soviet Premier Nikolai Ryzhkov.

11-13 November 1988

In a series of repressive operations the StB caused considerable disruption to the international symposium 'Czechoslovakia 88', which had been organized to discuss the four watershed years in Czechoslovak history—1918, 1938, 1948, and 1968. Despite extensive repression the symposium continued with impromptu debates in private homes and the cells of Ruzyně Prison. For the participants from abroad, who had been unable to attend the event, a parallel conference was organized in Vienna. The actions of the Czechoslovak authorities elicited a considerable response in the mass media abroad, and the Czechoslovak Government was sent protests by the governments of several European countries.

12-16 November 1988

CPSU Politburo member Alexander Yakovlev was on a working visit to Czechoslovakia.

8 December 1988

The John Lennon Peace Club was established as a non-state organization that aimed 'to achieve peace by using all accessible humanitarian means'. The Club decided to act as an informal association unbound by rules of organization. Among its founding members were Ota Veverka, Stanislav Penc and Heřman Chromý.

8-9 December 1988

French President François Mitterrand paid an official visit to Czechoslovakia, and met with Czechoslovak President Gustáv Husák, Czechoslovak Premier Ladislav Adamec, General Secretary of the CPCz CC Miloš Jakeš, and others. To the displeasure of Czechoslovak representatives of the Party and the state, Mitterrand expressed his admiration for the Prague Spring of 1968 and criticized the violation of human rights in Czechoslovakia. At the French Embassy on the morning of 9 December he received representatives of Charter 77 and other independent initiatives, headed here by Václav Havel, and talked to them about changes in Eastern Europe (particularly the danger of

the creation of a conservative Berlin-Prague-Bucharest axis aimed against genuine perestroika and glasnost), and about the state of human rights in Czechoslovakia.

9 December 1988

The Presidium of the CPCz CC expressed its agreement with the termination of the jamming of broadcasts of Radio Free Europe. CPCz CC Secretary Jan Fojtík confirmed this viewpoint in an interview for the UPI press agency. (On 16 December 1988 the jamming of broadcasts did in fact end.)

10 December 1988

The Czechoslovak authorities granted the request of five independent initiatives (the Bohemian Children, the Movement for Civil Liberty, the Independent Peace Association, and the Committee for the Defence of the Unjustly Prosecuted) to organize a demonstration on International Human Rights Day. Consequently, at Škroup Square in the Prague district of Žižkov, several thousand people gathered and heard speeches by representatives of the independent initiatives, whom they supported with loud expressions of agreement. At the end of the demonstration a petition was signed, demanding the release of political prisoners, an end to the persecution of activists in independent initiatives, the introduction in Czechoslovakia of a legal order that comported with international treaties on human rights, the commencement of dialogue between the state and the churches, and a public discussion on a new constitution. (In the days to come, the state-controlled mass media condemned the demonstration, saying it was aimed against the state and against socialism. On 22 December the authorities informed representatives of the independent initiatives that similar events were undesirable and would not be allowed.)

To mark International Human Rights Day the state-organized Forum of the Czechoslovak Public was held, and elected the Committee of the Czechoslovak Public for Human Rights and Humanitarian Questions, which had 68 members and was led by Zdeněk Dienstbier.

15-16 December 1988

At its twelfth session the CPCz CC discussed the report by General Secretary Miloš Jakeš on the activity of the CPCz Presidium, as well as the report by Czechoslovak Premier Ladislav Adamec on meeting the targets of the 1988 economic and social development plan. The CPCz CC resolved that the 18th Congress of the CPCz would take place in May 1990, and dismissed Vasil Biľak and Josef Kempný from the Presidium and Mikolaš Beňo from the function of Secretary.

December 1988

After several months of cooperation with independent journalists from the countries of the Soviet bloc, the East European Information Agency (Východoevropská informační agentura - VIA) was established independent of the state. VIA operated in the Soviet Union, Hungary, and Poland, and was represented in Czechoslovakia by Petr Uhl, Jan Urban, and Petr Pospíchal.

15 January 1989

Vienna. As part of the Helsinki process, a document was approved, which bound signatory states once again, but more concretely than before, to respect human rights and civil liberties.

15-21 January ('Palach Week') 1989

In response to an appeal by independent Czechoslovak initiatives a memorial assembly was organized to be held on Wenceslas Square in Prague to mark the twentieth anniversary of the self-immolation of Jan Palach, the student who died after setting himself alight to protest the Soviet occupation of Czechoslovakia. The authorities did not grant permission for the event, and before the memorial assembly commenced the square was completely sealed off by police cordons. Although a number of representatives of independent civil initiatives were detained on their way to the square and the event could not take place at the intended location, spontaneous anti-régime demonstrations were held on the square and in nearby streets, but were soon brutally broken up by the police. In the days that followed, spontaneous meetings repeatedly took place on the square, coming to a head with a pilgrimage to Palach's grave in the town of Všetaty. Each, with the exception of the gathering on 18 January, was brutally dispersed by the police and the People's Militia. Similarly, a memorial gathering at Palach's grave was blocked by police. The police action was accompanied by a disinformation campaign in the state-controlled mass media. As early as 16 January a number of representatives of independent organizations, including Václav Havel, were held for questioning. Various acts of police and judicial persecution affected hundreds of other Czechoslovaks. (Havel was arrested and put on trial on 21 February 1989)

The brutal police action against demonstrators on Wenceslas Square and the subsequent arrests of representatives of independent initiatives were immediately commented on in the international mass media and by a number of important persons in the arts and politics, as well as by international organizations, governments, parliaments, and political parties. Protests were heard also in countries of the Soviet bloc, particularly Poland and Hungary, but in the Soviet Union as well.

20 January 1989

The supreme representative of the Church in the Bohemian Lands, Cardinal Tomášek, sent Czechoslovak Premier Ladislav Adamec a letter in which he expressed disagreement over the régime's attitude to the demonstrations held in the period 15-21 January. Their participants, he wrote, were expressing the 'thinking of our people and its desire for freedom.' Premier Adamec wrote a negative reply, which was then approved by the Presidium of the CPCz CC, and published the next day (27 January 1989) in the Party's daily newspaper, *Rudé právo*. The state-controlled mass media, however, did not make public the Cardinal's letter.

24 January 1989

The Presidium of the CC of the Czechoslovak National Front debated a proposal for 'perfecting the system of general elections'. It recommended 'multi-seat electoral districts'

(in which more than one candidate could be elected), 'expanding the democratic nature of the selection of candidates', but elections would remain limited to the legitimate political parties and organizations in the National Front. (The Presidium of the CPCz CC debated the same proposal on 3 April).

26 January 1989

The Initiative of People Working in Culture (Iniciativa kulturních pracovníků) was established, and sent Czechoslovak Premier Ladislav Adamec a statement signed by 692 important persons active in Czechoslovakia's state-run arts and culture. The statement protested the arrest of Václav Havel, and called on the régime to begin a dialogue with the public. (In the days and weeks that followed hundreds of other artists, scholars, and scientists signed the statement, raising the number of signatories to more than several thousand.

Early February 1989

With the same intensity as before, protests continued throughout February (and March) by persons in the arts and politics in Western Europe, calling for the release of Václav Havel and other political prisoners in Czechoslovakia. On 3 February US Congressmen Dennis De Concini and Steny H. Hoyer nominated Václav Havel for this year's Nobel Peace Prize. On 15 February Czechoslovak independent initiatives established a committee to lobby for the Nobel Peace Prize for Václav Havel. By 15 July, it had gathered 4,377 signatures. Numerous theatres in Western and Eastern Europe made Havel's plays part of their repertoires.

A group of former members of the CPCz, including leading representatives, founded the Klub pro socialistickou přestavbu, Obroda [Rebirth—the Club for Socialist Restructuring]. Its steering committee, chaired by Vojtěch Mencl, applied to register at the Ministry of the Interior, and sent out its programme statement, in which it voiced its support for "humane, ethical, and social values of a socialistically organized society". The statement was also sent to European Socialist and Communist parties. (In issue No. 4/89 [June 1989] Rebirth published a samizdat journal, *Dialog*.)

2 February 1989

The new independent initiative Petition of Czechoslovaks on the Events of 15-21 January informed the Federal Assembly, the Czechoslovak President, the Czechoslovak Premier, and other state institutions, that by 31 January their petition had been signed by more than 2,100 persons. (By 16 February it had another 1,266 signatures.)

7-9 February 1989

CPCz CC Secretary Jozef Lenárt visited the Soviet Union, and held talks with Politburo member and CPSU CC Secretary Nikolai Slyunkov on mutual economic relations and the forthcoming meeting of economics secretaries.

12 February 1989

In a letter to Czechoslovak Premier Ladislav Adamec 670 experts from 70 scholarly institutions, in particular the Academy of Sciences, in Prague, Brno, and Bratislava, condemned police measures against the demonstrations in January and the repression that followed. In response to the petition the StB began a search for its authors and organizers.

14 February 1989

"In the interest of maintaining public order" the Presidium of the Federal Assembly of Czechoslovakia passed a resolution on legal measures that substantially increased the possibilities of police and judicial repression against manifestations of political non-conformity. (Three days later the Presidia of the Czech and Slovak National Councils passed similar legislation.)

16-18 February 1989

The General Secretary of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party, Károly Grósz, was on an official visit to Czechoslovakia.

Czechoslovak Premier Ladislav Adamec was on an official visit to the Soviet Union, where he met with Soviet Premier Nikolai Ryzhkov to discuss economic cooperation; he was also received by General Secretary of the CPSU CC Mikhail Gorbachev.

21 February 1989

The District Municipal Court for the Third District of Prague sentenced Václav Havel to nine months in prison. (The next day another show trial sentenced Jana Petrová, an activist in the Independent Peace Association, to nine months in prison and Ota Veverka of the John Lennon Peace Club to twelve months in prison; charges against a small number of activists were dropped. During February and March a number of other repressive measures were taken, including house searches, arrests, interrogations, and politically motivated trials.)

8-11 March 1989

CPSU Politburo member and CC Secretary Yegor Ligachov visited Czechoslovakia, where he met with CPCz CC General Secretary Miloš Jakeš and CPCz CC Secretary for Agriculture František Hanus.

13 March 1989

Police arrested a worker on the factory floor of the TOS lathe company in the Prague district of Hostivař for having put his name to a petition protesting police brutality. The petition, signed by 38 members of the state-controlled Revolutionary Trade-Union Movement, had emerged in reaction to an appeal by the state authorities to workers, asking them to sign a document condemning the activity of independent groups. Incidents of this sort were occurring at other Prague factories; a similar petition, for instance, was signed by 272 workers in the industrial and mining region round Ostrava.

20 March 1989

Eight independent initiatives sent a letter to the Federal Assembly of Czechoslovakia, appealing to deputies not to vote for legislative measures that had been proposed by the Presidium of the Federal Assembly on 14 February, and thereby cause them to be null and void.

21 March 1989

The Municipal Court of Prague deliberated in the trial of appeal of Václav Havel, and mitigated the sentence to eight months in prison. The trial was attended by correspondents of several press agencies and television companies from abroad. Several hundred Czechoslovaks demonstrated their solidarity with Havel by making their presence in the courthouse clearly heard.

22 March 1989

The newspaper of the Italian Communist Party, *L'Unita*, published a letter of greeting from Alexander Dubček to the Congress of the Italian Communist Party.

30-31 March 1989

The thirteenth session of the CPCz CC took place in Prague, and devoted itself to questions of the Czechoslovak school system. In his report on the activity of the Party Presidium, General Secretary Miloš Jakeš condemned the activity of 'opposition groups' and praised the work of the security forces. He mentioned that in the CPCz CC Presidium's statements to mark the 41st anniversary of the 'Victorious February' takeover of power 'broad sectors of the population' had expressed their support for the policy of the Communist Party.

5 April 1989

The Committee for the Defence of Václav Havel was established; its members consisted mostly of people involved in the state-controlled arts and culture. The Committee was formed on the basis of the extensive 'Initiative of Cultural Workers' petition, which received widespread support from people in the arts and sciences.

11 April 1989

The Czechoslovak mass media broadcast the press conference called by Czechoslovak Interior Minister František Kincl, at which the Minister accused the independent civil initiatives that were forming round the 'core of Charter 77' of terrorist acts.

14 April 1989

After a thirty-day hunger-strike the Charter 77 signatory and co-founder of the Friends of the USA Society, Stanislav Devátý, was released from custody.

17 April 1989

Hungarian television broadcast the first part of a long interview with former CPCz CC First Secretary Alexander Dubček. (Part II was broadcast on 26 April.) In the interview Dubček defended the Czechoslovak reforms of 1968 and Gorbachev's perestroika. The Czechoslovak mass media immediately launched a campaign against Dubček with an

article in *Rudé právo* titled 'He let us down then, he's letting us down now', and condemned Hungary of 'unacceptable meddling in the internal affairs of Czechoslovakia'.

CPCz CC General Secretary Miloš Jakeš flew to Moscow for a short visit. At a press conference there he rejected the idea of rehabilitating Alexander Dubček, whom he called a 'private individual' who could not hope 'to return to politics'. Jakeš also rejected any similarity between the Czechoslovak reforms of 1968 and today's perestroika, stating that the CPCz was not counting on introducing a pluralist political system.

17-18 April 1989

Czechoslovak Premier Ladislav Adamec visited East Germany, where he met with West German Premier Willy Stoph and top SED leader Erich Honecker.

20 April 1989

The Federal Government passed a resolution on 'measures to ensure the realization of the conclusions of the Vienna follow-up meeting of the CSCE'. The resolution contained 68 suggestions for measures in a wide variety of areas, by which Czechoslovak legislation should be brought to conform with the international documents it had signed.

24 April 1989

At the instigation of the International Charter 77 Committee, the 24th of April 1989 became 'Václav Havel Solidarity Day'.

1 May 1989

Fearing that it might otherwise become the site of anti-régime demonstrations, the authorities untraditionally organized May Day celebrations on Wenceslas Square. Nevertheless a large group of supporters of independent initiatives gathered in the upper part of the square (at the monument), and unfurled banners mostly demanding that political prisoners be released. The police brutally squeezed this group out of the square, and loaded those remaining into a bus and took them to the outskirts of town. In the middle of the square police brutally moved against people holding banners with the words 'Let the Young Have Their Say'. Among those detained were five foreigners: a BBC correspondent, two Finns, and two West Germans.

4 May 1989

The International Society for Human Rights published a report in Frankfurt on Main, which discussed the systematic and extensive violation of human rights in Czechoslovakia.

13 May 1989

Hungarian Foreign Minister Gyula Horn invited the Czechoslovak Ambassador to Hungary to a special audience, where he told him that the Hungarian Government had decided immediately to stop construction on the hydro-electric plant in Nagymaros, which had hitherto been part of the Czechoslovak-Hungarian energy project known as 'Gabčíkovo-Nagymaros'. The Czechoslovak Government announced that this step was in contravention of the bilateral agreement between the two countries. (Later, on 31

October, the National Assembly of Hungary voted to cease, once and for all, construction of the dam on its territory.)

17 May 1989

The District Court for Prague 4 ruled for the conditional discharge of Václav Havel after he had served half his sentence. The impulse to the court's decision was provided by Havel's family and 3,385 people who had signed a petition demanding his conditional discharge. (In the months that followed his release Havel gave many interviews to television and radio stations, newspapers and magazines, in which he stated his views on the current situation in Eastern Europe and on the possibilities of political change in Czechoslovakia. He and other leading dissidents repeatedly emphasized that they were possibly the last generation of opposition that was willing to engage in dialogue with the compromised régime.)

The leader of Rumania, Nicolae Ceaușescu, flew to Prague for an official visit.

30-31 May 1989

At the initiative of the Czechoslovak Government a conference took place in Prague to discuss problems of the natural environment in central Europe. It was attended by ministers of the environment from neighbouring countries, who jointly issued a seven-point memorandum at the end of the conference.

30 May-23 June 1989

The CSCE Conference on the Human Dimension of the Helsinki Process was held in Paris, attended by delegates from the USA, Canada, and all the European countries except Albania. The governments of Czechoslovakia, Rumania, and Bulgaria were criticized there for not meeting their international obligations in the area of human rights and civil liberties. The Czechoslovak Foreign Minister assured the Conference that his Government was endeavouring to bring about the 'profound restructuring and democratization of all areas of life in society'. Several representatives of Czechoslovak independent initiatives had also been invited to the conference, but the Czechoslovak authorities made it impossible for them to leave the country.

1 June 1989

Czechoslovak police dispersed a meeting of seventy activists of the Movement for Civil Liberty, which was being held in a Prague restaurant.

The Christian Union for Human Rights, which called itself a community of all Christians endeavouring to rectify the human-rights situation, issued its main statement.

4 June 1989

In a five-minute time slot on state-run Polish television, Polish Solidarity broadcast a short interview with Václav Havel. (A little more than three weeks later, on 28 June, Hungarian Television broadcast a longer interview with Havel.)

6-7 June 1989

Member of the Presidium of the CPCz CC Karel Urbánek was in Havana to take part in a meeting of secretaries of Communist parties, which was being held to discuss political and organizational work.

9 June 1989

Cardinal Tomášek sent a letter to Czechoslovak President Gustáv Husák, which contained the position of the Roman Catholic Church on the framing of a new Czechoslovak Constitution. The Cardinal came out in favour of abandoning the article on Marxism-Leninism as official state ideology.

14-15 June 1989

The fourteenth session of the CPCz CC took place in Prague. It was concerned with the situation in the mining, machine-tool, and electrical-engineering industries. At the session, Slovak Premier Ivan Knotek was elected CPCz CC Secretary for Economic Affairs, and Pavol Hrivnák was elected Slovak Premier and also became a candidate for the CPCz CC Presidium. Miroslav Zajíc was elected a Secretary of the CPCz CC, and Miloslav Hruškovič was relieved from his position as Candidate of the CPCz CC Presidium

15 June 1989

In a Radio Free Europe commentary, Pavel Tigrid, the leading figure of Czechoslovak democrats in exile, appealed to Václav Havel to accept the political role that the times were calling upon him to assume, and to place himself unequivocally behind the political programme of the opposition, the core of which comprised 'freedom, democracy, and independence'.

19 June 1989

Prague. After 4.00 p.m., the 'Promenade for Human Rights' took place in Na Příkopě street (a pedestrian zone), organized by six independent initiatives. About 2,000 Czechoslovaks, accompanied by both regular police and the StB, walked, several abreast, in a large circle, to express their dissatisfaction with the state of human rights in Czechoslovakia.

20-22 June 1989

Stockholm. Charter 77 signatory Jiří Hájek and a representative of the Czechoslovak émigré periodical *Listy*, Zdeněk Hejzlar, attended the Congress of the Socialist International.

21 June 1989

Prague. In Stromovka Park a demonstration of environmentalists was held to demand the park's protection. The 250 or so people attending, most of them young, were brutally dispersed by the police. One of the organizers of the demonstration, Petr Placák (of the Bohemian Children initiative), was taken by the police to the woods outside Prague, where he was brutally beaten and then left alone to fend for himself.

22 June 1989

Pavol Hrivnák became the new Slovak Premier.

23 June 1989

Alexander Dubček sent an open letter to the CPCz CC and the Presidium, in which he defended the reformist policies of the CPCz in 1968 and called upon the Party to commence a dialogue with its former members and 'other democrats from the independent groups'.

24 June 1989

In Prague, the StB moved against a meeting of the spokesmen of Charter 77 held that afternoon. Sixteen of the people attending, including Václav Havel, were then detained for several hours. In conjunction with this, police searched the homes of the detainees.

29 June 1989

In Radio Free Europe and other mass media abroad the petition 'Several Sentences' (Několik vět) was made public. The petition called upon the leadership of the Czechoslovak state to carry out 'thorough changes in the system', and to begin 'free and democratic discussion'. Among the initiators and organizers of the petition were Václav Havel, Jiří Křížan, Alexandr Vondra, and Stanislav Devátý. The 1,800 people who had signed so far it were demanding the release of political prisoners, unlimited freedom of assembly, the legalization of the independent initiatives, full, honest and accurate information in the mass media, the respecting of religious freedom, protection of the natural environment, and the beginning of free discussion on the chief problems facing Czechoslovakia since the end of W.W. II. The petition was open to anybody who agreed with its content, and all the independent initiatives supported it. An article in *Rudé právo* titled 'He who sows the wind shall reap the whirlwind' called the initiators of the petition 'disrupters of perestroika, who strive for a return to capitalism'. Many signatories of the petition were subjected to searches of their homes, penalties related to employment, fines, and other forms of police and judicial persecution. (By the end of the month more than 10,000 people signed the petition, and by the end of August the number grew to about 20,000. By the end of September another 10,000 signed, so that by the time of great changes beginning in mid-November 'Several Sentences' bore about 40,000 signatures.)

1 July 1989

Celebrations of the 90th birthday of Cardinal Tomášek culminated in a special mass in St Vitus's Cathedral, Prague. The celebrations were attended by many important people from abroad, and Václav Havel and Alexander Dubček personally wished the Cardinal a happy birthday. The mass was followed by a short demonstration in front of the Archiepiscopal Palace.

3 July 1989

Representatives of independent civil initiatives (Charter 77, the Democratic Initiative, the Independent Peace Association, the Club for Legal Support, the John Lennon Peace Club, the Czechoslovak Helsinki Committee, the Movement for Civil Liberty, the Friends of the

USA Society, the Bohemian Children, and the Christian Union for Human Rights) sent a letter to the premiers and houses of deputies of Bulgaria, Hungary, East Germany, Poland, and the Soviet Union, demanding that they officially distance themselves from the military intervention in Czechoslovakia in 1968. (The next day Rebirth—the Club for Socialist Restructuring sent a similar letter to the same addressees.)

7-8 July 1989

Bucharest. The Political Advisory Board of the Warsaw Treaty Organization held a session. During the meeting of 'leading delegations only' an intense debate over the current political situation in the Soviet bloc took place between supporters and opponents of reform.

13 July 1989

On an official visit to Czechoslovakia, West German Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher met also with Charter 77 signatories Václav Havel and Jiří Hájek, and with Cardinal Tomášek.

20 July 1989

On a working visit to Hungary, Czechoslovak Premier Ladislav Adamec held talks with Hungarian Premier Miklós Németh chiefly about the completion of the Gabčíkovo-Nagyymaros hydro-electric dam. He also met with Chairman of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party Rezső Nyers.

25 July 1989

In his message to the congregation Cardinal Tomášek mentioned the steps he had recently taken in defence of the rights of the Church and the public.

1 August 1989

A city-wide assembly of leading functionaries of the People's Militia and the State Police (SNB) was convened in Prague. At the assembly, First Secretary of the Municipal Committee of the CPCz Miroslav Štěpán called the 'Several Sentences' petition a 'pamphlet and an anti-perestroika, counter-revolutionary programme', and said that units of the People's Militia, the State Police, and if necessary the Armed Forces would be deployed to maintain public order. In connection with the up-coming anniversary of the occupation of Czechoslovakia by five countries of the Warsaw Pact, on 21 August 1968, the StB had the month before stepped up its persecution of representatives of independent civil initiatives. The state-controlled mass media sought to give the impression that the independent initiatives were trying to bring about a violent confrontation with the state authorities.

6-9 August 1989

On an official visit to Rumania, Secretary of the CPCz CC Jozef Lenárt held talks with Secretary of the Rumanian Communist Party CC Ion Stoian and General Secretary Nicolae Ceauşescu.

9 August 1989

Three independent initiatives (the Movement for Civil Liberty, the Democratic Initiative, and the T. G. Masaryk Association) issued a statement in which they called upon Czechoslovaks to join an hour-long promenade of protest on the pedestrian zone in Prague and on town squares throughout Czechoslovakia on 21 August. The promenade began with two minutes of silence.

10 August 1989

Charter 77, the Independent Peace Association, the Bohemian Children, the John Lennon Peace Club, the Friends of the USA Society, and Polish-Czechoslovak Solidarity issued their statement 'A Word about the August Anniversary', in which they expressed fears about a potential brutal police action against people taking part in the protest in the centre of Prague on 21 August 1989. Consequently, they recommended that people express dissatisfaction by going on a peaceful walk in the centre of their own town and by boycotting public transport during that period.

15 August 1989

In a broadcast on Radio Free Europe Václav Havel discussed the different positions held by two groups of independent initiatives regarding the demonstrations planned for 21 August. He stated that many feared the authorities would high-handedly provoke a confrontation and try once and for all to settle accounts with the independent initiatives and the emerging civil consciousness. He called street demonstrations an extreme form of resistance, and said the time was not yet ripe for great risks and great sacrifices.

17 August 1989

The Movement for Civil Liberty and the Democratic Initiative reacted negatively to the statement by the other independent initiatives and to the private statement of Václav Havel concerning the anniversary of the August occupation of Czechoslovakia. They said that to emphasize the danger of potential confrontations between the state authorities and demonstrating members of the public — which the independent initiatives were in fact not calling for — was to run against current public opinion.

In Poland, one week after the Upper House of the Sejm had condemned the intervention by five countries of the Warsaw Treaty Organization in Czechoslovakia in August 1968, the Lower House followed suit. The Czechoslovak régime rejected this as 'undisguised meddling in the internal affairs of Czechoslovakia'.

Following house searches of four Slovak democrats, the Chief Inspector of the District Department of the State Police in Bratislava initiated proceedings against Ján Čarnogurský, Miroslav Kusý, Anton Selecký, and Hana Ponická (later, charges were also brought against another Slovak activist, Vladimír Maňák) for sedition, because they had called upon Slovaks to take part in peaceful demonstrations to mark the anniversary of the Soviet intervention in August 1968. Čarnogurský and Kusý were taken into custody. The persecution of the 'Bratislava Five' evoked another great wave of protests and manifestations of solidarity in Slovakia, Bohemia and Moravia, and abroad.

21 August 1989

Prague. On Wenceslas Square and the adjacent pedestrian zone several thousand people gathered in the late afternoon to commemorate the Soviet intervention of August 1968. Political activists from Hungary, Poland, East and West Germany, and Italy took part in the demonstration. Police brutally attacked the demonstrators, then arrested more than 300 Czechoslovaks and about 50 demonstrators from abroad including nine members of the Hungarian Union of Young Democrats, FIDESZ.

25 August 1989

A Rumanian proposal to the Warsaw Treaty Organization countries that they not adopt a position allowing for Solidarity representatives at the head of the Polish Government was rejected by the Presidium of the CPCz. The Presidium added that who ever stood at the head of the Polish Government was a matter 'within the sovereign competence of the Polish people'.

27 August 1989

The Movement for Civil Liberty, the Democratic Initiative, and the T. G. Masaryk Association issued a statement in which they claimed that their appeals for Czechoslovaks to take part in the August demonstrations were in accord with the opinions of much of civil society. In their view, all independent initiatives were now entering a new phase in the struggle for the creation of a democratic, pluralist society, in which their united approach would be the decisive factor.

28-31 August 1989

Top-level employees of the Czechoslovak Ministry of the Interior, under František Kincl, were in the Soviet Union for talks with leading representatives of the KGB and the Interior Ministry of the Soviet Union.

31 August 1989

CPCz CC Secretary for Economic Affairs Ivan Knotek visited Rumania (and then East Germany on 4 September, and the Soviet Union on 6 September) to discuss economic cooperation in connection with the forthcoming Prague meeting of economic committees of Communist parties and the COMECON talks in Sofia in December.

5-6 September 1989

On an official visit to Rumania Czechoslovak Premier Ladislav Adamec met with Rumanian Deputy Premier Ion Dinca and General Secretary of the Rumanian Communist Party Nicolae Ceaușescu.

9 September 1989

Czechoslovakia normalized diplomatic relations with Albania.

12 September 1989

Czechoslovak Minister of National Defence Milán Václavík began an official visit to China.

16 September 1989

Radio Free Europe broadcast comments by CPCz CC General Secretary Miloš Jakeš at an action-group meeting of Party functionaries of the west Bohemian region held at Červený Hrádek. They had been secretly taped by someone at the meeting and then sent abroad. Jakeš's incoherent and fragmentary statements consisting of Communist functionary clichés and outmoded ideological phrases immediately became the subject of numerous jokes and innuendos in Czechoslovakia. The General Secretary's speech thus became an unintended but welcome political cabaret. The form of his impromptu remarks provided a prime example of the dismal intellectual and political qualifications of the supreme representative of the Communist Party; its content demonstrated the continued isolation that the Czechoslovak state and Party leadership were ever more clearly falling into.

20 September 1989

Twenty-two organizers of the 'Several Sentences' petition sent Czechoslovak Premier Ladislav Adamec a letter in which they wished to bring attention to the fact that the many tens of thousands of people who had so far signed the petition formed a considerable social force, and that the authorities should begin discussion on the demands formulated therein. The signatories pointed out that Cardinal Tomášek, the supreme representative of the Roman Catholic Church in Czechoslovak, had offered to mediate in this matter. The Premier did not react to the letter.

25 September 1989

First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party Mieczysław Rakowski was in Prague on a working visit.

Late September-early October 1989

During the last week of September several thousand East Germans gathered at the West German Embassy in Prague, trying to emigrate to West Germany. On the night of 30 September West German Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher came to Prague to tell them that now, on the basis of an agreement between the two German states, they could legally leave for West Germany. After an agreement with the Czechoslovak authorities a special train set out immediately for West Germany. In early October, however, another 1,000 East Germans gathered in the West German Embassy and nearby, and were then also allowed to go to West Germany. The exodus continued in smaller waves throughout October. (According to official statistics, by 6 November approximately 13,000 East Germans had left the country for West Germany by way of Czechoslovakia, by 7 November 33,000, and by 8 November a total of about 42,000.)

1 October 1989

New York City. In the UN General Assembly the Czechoslovak Foreign Minister was able to talk with his American opposite for the first time in 11 years. US Secretary of State James Baker told Jaromír Johanes that better relations between their two countries depended on greater respect for human rights in Czechoslovakia. Baker also presented Johanes with a partial list of political prisoners, and expressed the view that economic reform would not be successful without commensurate changes in the political sphere.

11 October 1989

Hungarian Premier Miklós Németh met in Prague with Czechoslovak Premier Ladislav Adamec to discuss economic, scientific, and technological cooperation.

11-12 October 1989

The 15th session of the CPCz CC took place in Prague, and discussed environmental issues. In the CPCz CC Presidium report, General Secretary Miloš Jakeš called the political situation in the country stabilized, and added that Party policy enjoyed the support of the people.

12 October 1989

The Editor-in-Chief of the popular *samizdat* monthly *Lidové noviny*, Jiří Ruml, and his Assistant Editor, Rudolf Zeman, were imprisoned and accused of sedition. (Throughout the rest of October and the first half of November more than 200 journalists, mostly those from the state-controlled mass media, signed the petition demanding the release of the two detained men and the respecting of human rights.)

In the Černý pivovar restaurant in Prague a meeting took place of representatives of four politically-oriented initiatives (Rebirth, the Independent Peace Association, the Movement for Civil Liberty, and the Democratic Initiative). About twenty minutes after it started, however, the meeting was broken up by the StB, and its participants were detained, searched, interrogated; several hours later they were released. (Later, on 19 October, the StB similarly prevented activists of the Czechoslovak Helsinki Committee from meeting with representatives of the International Helsinki Federation.)

14 October 1989

In Prague a meeting was held by 73 representatives of the 'revival stream' of the Czechoslovak People's Party. It elected six spokesmen, who, in the name of the 12,000 members of the People's Party, demanded that a congress be convened in June 1990.

15 October 1989

In Frankfurt on Main, with West German President Richard von Weizsäcker and Chancellor Helmut Kohl in attendance, Václav Havel was awarded the 1989 Peace Prize of the German Booksellers. As the Czechoslovak régime had made it impossible for him to leave the country, Havel was unable to accept the award personally.

20 October 1989

The CPCz CC Presidium, which since February 1989 had convened eight meetings to debate the draft of a new constitution, decided to publish the draft in March 1990, and, following a public discussion, to send it to the Federal Assembly for approval in October or November 1990.

25 October 1989

At a press conference during his official visit to Austria Czechoslovak Premier Ladislav Adamec stated that Charter 77 signatories, in particular the two spokesmen Václav Havel and Jiří Hájek (Czechoslovak Foreign Minister in 1968), were 'political nobodies'.

28 October 1989

In a joint statement dated 23 October the independent initiatives Charter 77, the Movement for Civil Liberty, the Democratic Initiative, Rebirth, and Independent Peace Association called upon Czechoslovaks to take part in the peaceful demonstrations in Prague and other towns to mark the 71st anniversary of the establishment of Czechoslovakia. On the afternoon of the 28th a spontaneous demonstration took place on Wenceslas Square, Prague, with about 10,000 people expressing their dislike of the Czechoslovak Communist régime. The demonstration was brutally broken up by armed units of the Interior Ministry and the People's Militia.

The October edition of the *samizdat* monthly *Lidové noviny* ran an article by Václav Havel, which was titled 'Between Bankrupt and Politician' ('Hodina mezi zkrachovancem a politikem'). In the article Havel expressed the conviction that Czechoslovak independent initiatives had a long way to go before they transformed themselves into a genuine political opposition. He also appealed for political realism: these initiatives, he said, should not become euphoric simply because people attended demonstrations they organized or perceived the initiatives as a political alternative. Havel cautioned against overestimating the importance of the anti-régime demonstrations and underestimating the everyday small-scale political work that the independent initiatives were calling for.

31 October 1989

The Slovak National Council debated a bill by a group of Federal Assembly deputies to legislate the means of adopting new constitutions for the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic, the Czech Republic and the Slovak Republic. The bill presumed the constitutional amendment of all basic relations between the Federation and the two republics in the form of a single document (a three-in-one constitution). Some deputies of the Slovak National Council expressed their disagreement with the bill, and called for greater autonomy for the national republics, which would be guaranteed in their own separate constitutions.

Late October 1989

On the anniversary of the founding of the Czechoslovak state, the Independent Student Association, Ribbon [Nezávislé studentské združení Stuha], was established. Its founders called for the active participation of students in the democratization of society, the renewal of independent academic life, an end to the criminal prosecution of students for activity in independent initiatives, the creation of a student organization independent of the Socialist Youth Organization, and an end to discrimination against students when being considered for acceptance to institutions of higher learning.

31 October to 5 November 1989

Czechoslovak Foreign Minister Jaromír Johanes was on an official visit to China.

3-5 November 1989

The Polish-Czechoslovak Solidarity association held an international conference on the arts and culture of central Europe in Wrocław, Poland, in conjunction with a festival where

Czechoslovaks active in independent arts and cultural activity at home and exile met. The festival was attended by about 4,000 people from Czechoslovakia, despite the Czechoslovak authorities having taken measures at the Polish-Czechoslovak frontier to make it difficult or impossible for them to attend.

6 November 1989

Hungarian television broadcast a short interview with Václav Havel.

12 November 1989

Rome. The Blessed Agnes of Bohemia was canonized, with representatives of the Roman Catholic Church in Czechoslovakia, the Czechoslovak state, and several thousand Czechs and Slovaks from home and abroad in attendance.

11-17 November 1989

In the north Bohemian towns of Teplice, Litvínov, Most, and Děčín, spontaneous demonstrations took place at which people protested against the catastrophic state of the natural environment in this region. Local Communist functionaries promised demonstrators they would commence public and open discussions on these problems.

17 November 1989

In the afternoon a demonstration, with the permission of the authorities, was held in Prague to mark the 50th anniversary of the death of the Czechoslovak student Jan Opletal, a victim of Nazi persecution during the German occupation of Bohemia and Moravia. About 25,000 people met at the Albertov street campus of the university, and made clear their dissatisfaction with the current régime and their desire for freedom and democracy. Shortly after the official part of the demonstration within the walls at Vyšehrad, a procession spontaneously formed and headed back towards Wenceslas Square in the centre of town. The procession was joined by other people, and their numbers grew to about 50,000. At Národní třída (minutes from Wenceslas Square), the procession was blocked by a police cordon. Many of the demonstrators fled before the crowd was hemmed in, and others were allowed to leave. Then the police moved in and, using large batons, severely beat many of the 2,000 or so peaceful demonstrators who had remained. The police action provoked an immediate reaction. Some students escaped to various theatres in the city to inform the actors of the situation and to demand support for a protest strike in the near future.

18 November 1989

Prague. Post-secondary school students, actors, and other people active in the arts agreed this afternoon on a week-long strike of protest, and proposed a general strike to take place from 2 to 4.00 p.m. on Monday, 27 November 1989. In the course of the day other theatres outside Prague (including ones in Slovakia) joined them, cancelled all performances for the week, and made their theatres available for public meetings. In the centre of Prague several thousand people joined in a spontaneous demonstration. Meanwhile, the news soon spread that at Friday's demonstration a student named Martin Šmíd had been killed. (By Sunday evening the Czechoslovak mass media were denying these reports.)

19 November 1989

In the Prague theatre Činoherní klub, in the late evening, Civic Forum was established, which united all independent initiatives, as well as representatives of the Churches, artists' unions, and other Czechoslovaks who desired a change of régime. In its statement the Civic Forum supported the appeal for a two-hour general strike, which had been called by the students and actors for Monday, 27 November 1989, and demanded the resignation of the eight main representatives of the state leadership, the release of political prisoners, and the setting up of a parliamentary commission to investigate the police action at last Friday's student demonstration. The statement was signed by the 18 activists who formed the first Coordinating Committee of the Civic Forum. In Bratislava, at a public gathering of artists' unions, cultural and arts institutions, and post-secondary schools, the Public Against Violence movement was established; the following day it joined in solidarity with the Civic Forum, announced similar demands, and called for dialogue with the state authorities.

20 November 1989

Prague. More than 100,000 people spontaneously gathered on Wenceslas Square to demonstrate their dissatisfaction with the régime. At the same time, large demonstrations took place in Brno, Ostrava, and Bratislava.

21-27 November 1989

Every afternoon in Prague, Bratislava and other towns throughout the country hundreds of thousands of people took part in peaceful demonstrations organized by Civic Forum in Bohemia and Moravia and by the Public Against Violence in Slovakia. On Saturday, 25 November, a pilgrimage took place in honour of St Agnes of Bohemia, who had been canonized in Rome slightly more than a fortnight ago. About one million people gathered at Letenská pláň park and parade grounds, Prague, for a demonstration organized by the Civic Forum. After the general strike on Monday, 27 November, the Civic Forum announced the end of the large daily popular demonstrations and the beginning of dialogue with the state authorities, which it had been calling for throughout the week. During their first week of existence the Civic Forum and the Public Against Violence were joined by various organizations, interest groups, industrial enterprises, and institutions in the arts and culture.

22 November 1989

Evening. The CPCz leadership called back units of the People's Militia, which had, by order of the General Secretary, been sent into Prague during the past few days from various parts of the country.

23 November 1989

In the General Staff of the Czechoslovak People's Army preparations were completed for a military strike against centres of opposition and demonstrators. (At a session of the CPCz CC the next day, Czechoslovak Minister of National Defence Milán Václavík offered to provide special forces. The CPCz leadership, however, decided not to use the armed forces and chose to solve the situation by 'political means'.)

24 November 1989

At an extraordinary session of the CPCz CC, General Secretary Miloš Jakeš and the whole CPCz Presidium resigned. Karel Urbánek, hitherto Head of Party Work in the Czech Republic, was elected General Secretary. The composition of the newly elected Presidium and Secretariat precipitated a storm of resistance among the public, because compromised people, including Miroslav Štěpán, Miroslav Zavadil, and Jozef Lenárt, remained in positions of power. (Consequently, other personnel changes were implemented at another extraordinary session of the CPCz CC on 26 November.)

26 November 1989

Political talks began between a delegation of the Civic Forum, led by Václav Havel, and Czechoslovak Premier Ladislav Adamec. At the talks the Civic Forum insisted on the basic demands of 19 November (see above) and invited Adamec to attend the afternoon demonstration at Letenská pláň. Adamec's speech there was interrupted by demonstrators' whistling and chants of disapproval.

27 November 1989

A general strike took place throughout the country from 2.00 to 4.00 p.m., with the participation of the vast majority of Czechoslovaks either individually or as part of a larger body, such as an enterprise or organization. The Civic Forum and the Public Against Violence indicated that the general strike is tantamount to an 'informal referendum on the Communist Party's leading role in society'. The slogans most heard during the general strike were 'The end of one-party rule!' and 'Free elections!'

28 November 1989

In the second round of talks between Czechoslovak Premier Ladislav Adamec and the joint delegation of the Civic Forum and the Public Against Violence, led by Václav Havel, the joint delegation increased its demands to the Communists, presenting five: the immediate resignation of the Federal Government and the creation of a temporary caretaker government of experts; the immediate dropping of three articles of the Constitution, namely those on the Communist Party's leading role in society and the political system of the National Front, and on Marxism-Leninism as the state ideology; the resignation of Czechoslovak President Gustáv Husák by 10 December 1989; the release of political prisoners; and, lastly, the legalization of the Civic Forum, the assignment to it of buildings for its work, and space in the mass media. The Civic Forum and the Public Against Violence also stated they would not take part in the formation of a new Government. Premier Adamec rejected the demand that the Government resign, but promised a fundamental cabinet shuffle by Sunday, 3 December.

29 November 1989

The Federal Assembly of Czechoslovakia voted to amend the Constitution by dropping the articles on the Communist Party's leading role in society and in the National Front, and the article on Marxism-Leninism as the state ideology. A parliamentary commission was set up to oversee the investigation into the events of 17 November 1989, and it was

to include representatives of the striking students. Leader of the Federal Assembly Alois Indra resigned his post.

30 November 1989

The Slovak National Council accepted the resignation of its Chairman, Viliam Šalgovič, and in secret voting elected Communist Party member Rudolf Schuster to take his place.

3 December 1989

The reshuffled Federal Government was presented to the public. Its composition (15 Communists, 1 Socialist, 1 member of the People's Party, and 3 men without party affiliation) immediately brought about a wave of resistance and disapproval. The public began to organize a protest petition and meetings. The Civic Forum and the Public Against Violence also rejected the reshuffled Government and called upon Premier Ladislav Adamec to rearrange it again, but this time more thoroughly, by 10 December.

4 December 1989

Czechoslovak Premier Ladislav Adamec and General Secretary Karel Urbánek left for Moscow to meet with representatives of the Warsaw Treaty countries.

Gatherings of hundreds of thousands of people took place in Prague, Bratislava and other towns throughout the country, at which the public, led by the Civic Forum and the Public Against Violence, protested against the composition of the Federal Government. The representatives of the five states that had taken part in it, declared the intervention of August 1968 a contemptible interference in the internal affairs of a sovereign state. The Soviet Government called this act unjustifiable and mistaken.

5 December 1989

The Presidium of the Czech National Council named a new Government of the Czech Socialist Republic, which was composed of eight Communists, two Socialists, two members of the People's Party, and five men without party affiliation. The Civic Forum accepted the challenge of the Chairman of the Czech National Council, František Pitra, nominated several representatives without party affiliation, and then with certain reservations supported the new Government.

The Civic Forum decided to designate six persons to lead key ministries of the Federal Government. The Ministers from the Civic Forum and the Public Against Violence were to monitor economic reform, legislation and the security apparatus, state finance, foreign policy, labour and social affairs, and minority affairs. The Civic Forum presented its proposal for the composition of the Federal Government to Premier Ladislav Adamec in the third round of talks. Adamec rejected the proposal, saying he intended to resign, and demanded support from the Civic Forum and the Public Against Violence in his candidacy for the office of Czechoslovak President.

Representatives of the Civic Forum and the Public Against Violence agreed on the candidacy of Václav Havel for the office of Czechoslovak President and also agreed to inform the public about this at the appropriate moment.

6 December 1989

After the fourth round of talks with Czechoslovak Premier Ladislav Adamec the delegation of the Civic Forum and the Public Against Violence, led by Václav Havel, presented its proposals for the composition of the Federal Government. The delegation proposed Vladimír Dlouhý (of the CPCz) as Deputy Premier entrusted with economic affairs, Ján Čarnogurský as Deputy Premier entrusted with legislation and home affairs, Václav Klaus as Minister of Finance, Petr Miller as Minister of Work and Social Affairs, and Gyula Popely as Minister of Minority Affairs. The delegation also pointed out that it would not support Adamec's candidacy for the office of Czechoslovak President.

7 December 1989

Premier Adamec resigned. The Civic Forum and the Public Against Violence accepted his proposal that the current Deputy Premier, Marián Čalfa, a Slovak Communist, should become Czechoslovak Premier, providing he accepted the proposals of the Civic Forum and the Public Against Violence concerning the composition of the Czechoslovak Government, and that the Czechoslovak President be a Czech without any party affiliation.

8 December 1989

Prague. The first 'roundtable' talks with the 'decisive political forces' was held to discuss the Federal Government. Representatives of the Civic Forum and the Public Against Violence, the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, the Socialist Youth Organization, the Czechoslovak Socialist Party, the Czechoslovak People's Party, the Party of Slovak Rebirth, and the Party of Freedom (also Slovak), agreed on the composition of the new Federal Government. The delegation of the Civic Forum and the Public Against Violence, led by Václav Havel, successfully pushed through all its demands without meeting any resistance.

9 December 1989

Premier designate Marián Čalfa led talks with representatives of the Communist Party, the Socialist Party, the People's Party, Rebirth—the Club for Socialist Restructuring, the Civic Forum, and the Public Against Violence. The outcome of the talks was an agreement on the formation of a Federal Government, known as the 'Government of National Understanding'. The total of 21 ministerial posts were now held as follows: The Civic Forum and the Public Against Violence sent six representatives (Valtr Komárek [still a member of the Communist Party] and Ján Čarnogurský took the posts of the two First Deputy Premiers; Vladimír Dlouhý [still a member of the Communist Party] became Deputy Premier and Chairman of the State Planning Committee; Jiří Dienstbier became Foreign Minister, Václav Klaus became Minister of Finance, and Petr Miller became Minister of Work and Social Affairs). The composition of the Federal Government was now as follows: the CPCz now held nine ministerial posts and the premiership; the People's Party and the Socialists each received two ministerial posts; and independents received seven.

10 December 1989

At Prague Castle, Czechoslovak President Gustáv Husák named the new Government and resigned. At a demonstration on Wenceslas Square, the Civic Forum and the Public Against

Violence announced the candidacy of Václav Havel for the office of Czechoslovak President.

11 December 1989

Civic Forum representatives Václav Havel and Petr Pithart appointed a sixteen-member 'council of the Coordinating Centre of the Civic Forum' led by Pithart. The Civic Forum defined itself as a civil political movement that would go into the elections with its own list of candidates and enable non-party members to be involved in politics even after the elections.

Additional candidates were announced for the office of Czechoslovak President — Alexander Dubček (supported by Slovak state institutions), Ladislav Adamec (supported by the Communist Party), and Čestmír Císař (supported by the Socialist Youth Organization).

During the second 'roundtable' talks among the 'decisive political forces' the CPCz proposed the popular election of the President. The Civic Forum (led by Petr Pithart) rejected the proposal, and came out in favour of the election of the President in accordance with the Constitution, that is to say, by the Federal Assembly and within a fortnight. Also taking parts in the talks were representatives of the People's Party, the Socialist Party, the Socialist Youth Organization.

12 December 1989

The Presidium of the Slovak National Council named the Government of the Slovak Socialist Republic at the proposal of Premier designate and current Slovak Minister of Justice Milan Čič (a CPCz member). The Slovak Government was composed of six Communists and nine people without party affiliation. The Public Against Violence sent only Deputy Premier Vladimír Ondruš as an 'observer, who will provide information on the situation in the Slovak Government'.

13 December 1989

Disputes in the Federal Assembly over the way in which the President would be elected came to a head. The Communist deputies, who had an absolute majority in the Federal Assembly, presented a Bill on a referendum, part of which included the election of the Head of State by popular vote.

In the third session at the 'roundtable' the 'decisive political forces' did not reach an agreement on the means of electing the President. Participating in the talks were representatives of the CPCz, the Socialist Party, the People's Party, the Socialist Youth Movement, the Civic Forum, and the Public Against Violence.

15 December 1989

Czechoslovak Premier Marián Čalfa initiated a secret meeting with Václav Havel, at which he offered to help Havel in his candidacy for the presidency. Čalfa promised to see to it that the Federal Assembly would accept Havel as the only presidential candidate while

voting for Alexander Dubček (in view of Slovak public opinion) as Leader of the Federal Assembly. Both elections were to take place in 1989.

16 December 1989

Václav Havel in a speech broadcast on Czechoslovak Television gave a concise assessment of the changes that had been achieved since 17 November 1989, and, referring to the forthcoming election of the President, stated that if he were elected President, Alexander Dubček must stand at his side in some other top-level state office.

18 December 1989

The Czech National Council elected Jaroslav Šafařík (of the Czechoslovak Socialist Party) Chairman. A new Presidium was also elected, in which the Communists did not have a majority.

19 December 1989

Czechoslovak Premier Marián Čalfa, at a meeting of the Federal Assembly, presented the programme of the 'Government of National Understanding', and, in the name of the Government, nominated Václav Havel for the office of Czechoslovak President. The Assembly approved the programme.

20 December 1989

Moscow. Czechoslovak Premier Marián Čalfa and Foreign Minister Jiří Dienstbier took part in talks on relevant questions of economic cooperation. Čalfa met with Mikhail Gorbachev.

Prague. A two-day extraordinary congress of the CPCz opened. It elected Ladislav Adamec Party Chairman and Vasil Mohorita Secretary. General Secretary Karel Urbánek became Chairman of the Central Auditing Board.

22 December 1989

In the fourth 'roundtable' talks, the 'decisive political forces' reached an agreement on the filling of the offices of President of the Republic and Leader of the Federal Assembly, whereby the only candidates for these offices would be Václav Havel and Alexander Dubček. The ratio of Czechs to Slovaks in occupying the vacant seats in the Federal Assembly and the principles for further reshuffling of the legislative committees were also decided.

23 December 1989

Prague. The first Conference of the Civic Forum was held, attended by representatives of the regional Civic Forums. Its agenda included the question of the internal structure and programme orientation of the movement. At the proposal of Václav Havel the Conference, by large majority, approved the definition of the Civic Forum. Havel proposed that the Civic Forum should not become a political party or a coalition of several parties, but a political movement that would represent the large part of the public that was without party affiliation, and be a guarantor of reform.

28 December 1989

At a meeting of the Czechoslovak Federal Assembly the first round of cooptation was carried out to fill the seats from which the most compromised deputies had resigned. Among the 23 coopted members was Alexander Dubček, whom the plenum quickly elected Leader of the Federal Assembly. The Presidium of the Federal Assembly was also reshuffled so that the CPCz lost its majority there. The passage in the Presidential Oath of Office which declared loyalty to socialism was dropped.

29 December 1989

Prague Castle. At a special, ceremonial session of the Federal Assembly of Czechoslovakia Václav Havel was unanimously elected President of Czechoslovakia.

30 December 1989

After consulting with Czechoslovak Premier Marián Čalfa, President Václav Havel appointed Minister without Portfolio Richard Sacher (of the Czechoslovak People's Party) to the position of Federal Minister of the Interior.

A List of Abbreviations

BBC	= British Broadcasting Corporation
BFWG	= Business Facilitation Working Group
BPR	= Bulgarian People's Republic
CC	= Central Committee
CC VPN	= Coordinating Committee of the Public Against Violence
CF	= Civic Forum
CF CC	= Civic Forum Coordinating Committee
CFE	= Conventional Forces in Europe
CIA	= Central Intelligence Agency
CKD	= ČKD = Českomoravská Kolben-Daněk factory in Prague
CMEA	= Council for Mutual Economic Assistance
CODELS	= Congressional Delegations
COMECON	= CMEA
CONOFF	= Consular Officer
CP	= Communist Party
CPCz	= Communist Party of Czechoslovakia
CPS	= Communist Party of Slovakia
CPSU	= Communist Party of the Soviet Union
CSL	= ČSL = Czechoslovak People's Party
CSS	= Czechoslovak Socialist Party
CSSR	= ČSSR = Czechoslovak Socialist Republic
CSR	= ČSR = Czech Socialist Republic
CTK	= ČTK = Czechoslovak Press Agency
ČNR	= Czech National Council (i.e., Parliament of the Czech Republic)
ČSAV	= Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences
DCM	= Deputy Chief of Mission
DF	= Democratic Forum
ECONOFF	= Economic Officer
EMBOFF	= Embassy Officer
FA	= Federal Assembly
FIDESZ	= Hungarian Federation of Young Democrats
FIDH	= International Federation for Human Rights
FMZV	= Czechoslovak Ministry of Foreign Affairs
FRG	= Federal Republic of Germany
FS	= FA

GATT	= General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade
GDR	= German Democratic Republic
GOC	= Government of Czechoslovakia
HAWG	= Humanitarian Affairs Working Group
HOS	= Movement for Civil Liberty
HPR	= Hungarian People's Republic
HSWP	= Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party
ICP	= Italian Communist Party
IMF	= International Monetary Fund
ITN	= Independent Television Network
KC OF	= Coordinating Centre of the Civic Forum
KC VPN	= Coordinating Committee of the Public Against Violence
KCS	= Czechoslovak crown (currency)
KGB	= Soviet secret police
KSC	= KSČ = CPCz
MFA	= Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MFN	= Most Favored Nation
MSDS	= HSWP
NATO	= North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NBC	= National Broadcasting Corporation
NF	= National Front (Czechoslovak)
OKD	= Ostravsko-karvinské doly (North Moravian coal mines)
PAV	= VPN
POLEC	= POL/EC = Political-Economic officer
PPR	= Polish People's Republic
PRC	= People's Republic of China
PUWP	= Polish United Workers' Party
RCP	= Rumanian Communist Party
REF	= Reference
REFTELS	= Reference telegrams
RFE	= Radio Free Europe

SED	= United Socialist Party (East German Communist Party)
SEPTTEL	= Separate telegram
SNP	= Slovak National Uprising (1944)
StB	= Czechoslovak secret police
UN	= U.N. = United Nations
US	= U.S. = United States
USA	= United States of America
USD	= American dollar
USG	= Government of the United States
USIA	= United States Information Agency
USIS	= United States Information Service
USSR	= Soviet Union
VB	= regular Czechoslovak police
VIA	= East European Information Agency
VONS	= Committee for the Defence of the Unjustly Prosecuted
VPN	= Public Against Violence
WP	= Warsaw Pact
WTO	= World Trade Organization

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Document 1
Prague, January 6, 1987
Statement by Charter 77
on civil courage

A Word to Fellow Citizens

When Charter 77 was founded ten years ago and entered public life, it appeared to many as a band of dreamers. Although its ideals enjoyed general sympathy and respect, only a very few believed in the possibility of effective engagement for those ideals amidst a fragmented and apathetic society, in the face of a power that suppresses any meaningful criticism.

The ten years since the birth of Charter 77 have brought many changes. Society has been changing, and one can sense gradual changes in the political atmosphere of our country; things are changing on the international level as well. Although these are not fundamental changes, they are perceptible, and often for the better. Against this backdrop, the values the Charter has proclaimed and struggled for assume a new significance. They are becoming topical; the struggle for them no longer appears so unrealistic. Life itself again raises its voice, making ever clearer what it needs in order to develop, and to face what threatens it.

Aware of this shift, we appeal to our fellow citizens on this, the tenth anniversary of the founding of our association, to seize this historical opportunity, and use it for the good of our nations.

Even the representatives of power in our country sometimes speak in the name of democracy, justice, and public control of their performance. These are, however, only empty words, behind which hides a dictatorial arbitrariness, and so our society has ceased to take them seriously. Of late, however, it seems that at least some of these statements reflect a realization that changes are inevitable. The sterile rigidity of our present political and economic system, lagging behind the more advanced nations, the insufficient satisfaction of many needs and demands - all this is becoming more and more apparent, placing an increasing burden upon the daily life of our people, and awakening a desire for change. Even the direction of the desired change, after such experience, is clear: more democracy. There are understandably great differences in people's notions of what this means in practice, that is, how to move in that direction, how fast, and how far.

Whatever opinion one holds on this, one thing is clear: steps toward greater democracy would not be a step in the dark for our country. We have things to lean on; we have our own democratic tradition. The first President of Czechoslovakia linked our modern state with the ideas of democratic self-government and social justice. These ideas were revived on a different basis after World War II. Under radically different domestic and international conditions, significant democratizing impulses and projects resurfaced in the 1960s.

We do not offer nor impose on anyone any definitive or unequivocal appraisal of one historical event or another. We only suggest an unbiased discussion of these events, and a search for the true lessons to be drawn from them today. But above all

we believe that disputes about the past should not divert society's attention from the burning problems of the present. The best way to follow our democratic traditions is to try and make real innovative use of the positive concepts our nations created in their consciousness. This means without prejudice, unburdened by ideology and questions of prestige, with an understanding for today's situation, an intelligent regard for the good and the bad experience that today's world offers, with imagination, courage, and above all a determination to move ahead.

Naturally, we do not know when or how a turning in that direction will occur in our country. Yet we know that sooner or later a change must come. We also know that the fate of this country does not depend on political might alone, and that this political power is not always master of its own actions. Far more depends on what we all do, what society does. Governments do not make history alone, and no government can completely ignore what its citizens do. Democracy is not a thing given to some by others; it is a task for everyone. Everyone must relearn it over and over again. It is up to all of us when and how energetically political power itself will move in the right direction.

The task that follows from this is clear: let us finally free ourselves from comfortable resignation to our fate! Let us stop waiting for what others will do, and do something ourselves! Let us shake off our apathy, rid ourselves of hopelessness, overcome our fears! The more citizens attempt to do this, the less reason for fear there will be, as it will become increasingly difficult to punish a justified opinion. Each one of us, with the courage we find in ourselves, can help others to fear less. A meaningful life is not allocated to the public by the government; citizens themselves must strive for it today and tomorrow, must seek it within themselves, and create it through all they do, including their orientation towards public affairs.

What we call for in this document is nothing more than the courage to become citizens in the true, creative, and strongest sense of the word. There is not and can never be democracy without citizens. Citizenship, however, is not merely statutory; it is primarily and above all an attitude. Whether we are dignified, self-governing citizens with full rights, aware of our share of responsibility for the community, and acting in harmony with it depends to a large degree upon ourselves.

The Constitution, the General Declaration of Human Rights, the UN Charter, international covenants on human rights, the Helsinki Final Act - all these can be either worthless pieces of paper, or a very real and binding yardstick, a guide for life. Which one it is to be does not depend on governments alone. It is up to all of us how seriously these norms will be taken, how they will be implemented and realized, and how deeply they are transformed into a living reality.

We believe that the time is ripe for Czechoslovakia to remind itself of these truths, again, and urgently and with new energy try once again to act in their spirit.

If we were merely to wait until social conflicts deepen so far that catastrophic events force some change, we would be working against ourselves: we would all pay for their intensification, and for the unforeseen consequences of an explosion.

The question is often heard: what is one to do? This is a real question: what, specifically, can a simple citizen do, effectively and realistically, to improve the general condition?

In our view, a serious attempt to recognize and fulfil one's duties as a citizen opens up a number of specific opportunities.

We can all start right away tomorrow by speaking the truth. Not only at home, but also at work, social gatherings, and various meetings. The truth should be told not only about the usual shoddiness we see around us, whether in production, trade, and services, but also about its causes. About bad managers who – buttressed by their absolute political loyalty – may do any amount of damage with impunity. About the rigid methods of economic management and decision-making. About the illusion and formality of plans, and the uselessness of fulfilling never-ending, often contradictory guidelines: the incomprehensible but still tolerated inefficiency of our largest industrial enterprises, and waste of energy on ineffective branches of production. And, naturally, about the horrible monster bureaucracy that irreversibly swallows up a large part of the results of human labour, while hindering and complicating that labour in every possible way.

We can all take our membership in the trade unions seriously, insist on the rights that have been formally proclaimed but not respected, elect to union functions those who unflinchingly communicate the true wishes of the workers, representatives freely chosen in open discussion, and not brought in from somewhere else, bureaucrats well rewarded for their docility. We can all demand a change in disputed labour practices and rules. Unions need not be the mere distributors of recreational vouchers and social fringe benefits. They need not be the mere obedient lackeys of their employers, but can insist upon real and independent participation in economic decision-making and social policy. In extreme situations they can use the traditional weapon of the workers: the strike. The right to strike is codified in the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights.

We can all create informal political forums within our own various surroundings, open to the free exchange of opinions, use the existing opportunities to do this, or create new ones. Such forums could be free of political taboo, and nothing should prevent the criticism even of such phenomena as the omnipotence of the Party secretariat.

We can demand truthful information from the media, write the truth in the existing news media, and perhaps create new impulses, new means for the free exchange of opinion. Every enterprise or factory could publish a newsletter, in which one could freely write, if the workers actually, seriously demanded it.

We all know how catastrophic the condition of the natural environment in our country is. Why, though, do we discuss it only in private? Why are not one-tenth of these problems discussed in public, and why does practically no one anywhere speak of their real causes? To open up everywhere, by all available means, and on all levels a fundamental discussion of the environmental situation, can immediately be done, and without any great risk. Responsibility to future generations should be the moral axis of such a discussion.

In a situation in which one is sure of the justice of one's cause, each person can overcome their fear of their superiors, the police, or the state bureaucracy; each person can provide moral support to those who try, and even protect them against arbitrary attack.

There are many rights, from the right of assembly to the right of free speech, conviction, religion, and exchange of information, which, although they are formally guaranteed, people refrain from using for fear of the possible consequences. Why not take advantage of them?

It is supposedly the working class that rules in our country. This official assertion has never stood in such blatant conflict with reality as it does today. High and low political officials ride about the country surrounded by police guards in cars with bulletproof glass, and with an immoral, absolute right of way. In the interests of their safety, threatened by God knows whom, even the seriously injured being taken to hospital in an ambulance must yield. They have their consumer advantages, special distributors, special services, special health care, and special and mysterious incomes. Their power equips them with countless privileges, and under conditions where so many things are difficult for normal people to arrange or get, for them anything is just a matter of one telephone call; even for their less diligent children to pass all their university entrance exams with no problem.

We do not want to provoke hatred or envy; these are not good impulses for the journey to democracy. We are speaking about it to emphasize how profoundly many leaders have alienated themselves from the ordinary citizens. As long as this alienation persists, all attempts at democratization will meet with resistance by those who fear for their privileges. Society, therefore, should ceaselessly call attention to these undeserved privileges, and demand their abolition. The powerful, in the interest of a more healthy community life, are going to have to give up a lot of their comforts. This will be in their interest as well: the more they are detached from society, the worse they will govern, and the deeper the crisis of society must be, before which they will one day helplessly stand.

Teachers should teach the truth; they should teach according to their consciences. They should behave as civically courageous educators, who do not obediently make their views on any matter conform to those ordered from above. It is possible to respect the basic curriculum while preserving before pupils and students one's own unshaken judgement. Basic human solidarity can protect a teacher from possible persecution.

People should not be afraid to go to church, and should not hide their faith. Clergymen should pursue their mission in keeping with their conscience and conviction. They should defend themselves whenever government officials responsible for religious affairs unlawfully interfere in the carrying out of their spiritual duties, even when some corrupt Church officials provide them cover in doing so.

How free culture will be depends on culture itself. No one can prohibit anyone from free creative work. Artists, scholars, and scientists who fear losing their position and opportunities censor themselves. They, too, can significantly improve the general situation: they can overcome their fears, and create freely. The greatest spiritual leaders of modern Czech and Slovak culture have blazed a trail that can be followed.

We are convinced that if our society began with increasing invention to use even the small opportunities we have mentioned here, the overall political and social climate would change significantly.

And a better climate is the main, and maybe the only, way to a better economic and political system.

We are opposed to hate campaigns, witch hunts, new divisions, revanchism, and vengeance. We are for a democratic discussion in an atmosphere of shared cooperation of all citizens and societal forces. We know that complete agreement between everybody is never possible, and in fact we do not think it would even be desirable. We believe, however, that even opponents can respect one another as people and as citizens in a peaceful search for common ground in a calm discussion, dispassionately, and without bitter recriminations. After all the tragic events and upheavals of recent decades, we see the only possibility in true national reconciliation on a democratic foundation. By this we do not mean a cautious silence on anything and everything. We mean a constructive and creative search for solutions for all of society.

We believe that tolerance, decency, openness to the truth and to other opinions, patient persistence, and nonviolent resistance to all evil are the best tools society can use in the approaching struggle for its emancipation, social revival, and democratic order.

Charter 77 has never pursued some private political interest of its own. Its cause is the cause of society as a whole. Therefore we do not ask, even today, to enlarge or publicly support our association. Charter 77 is not and never intended to be the only hope for this society. We call on citizens for something different and more important: to become aware again of its freedom, and to become aware of the hopeful contents of the motto placed over the cradle of the modern Czechoslovak state:

"Truth Will Prevail"

Jan Litomiský, Libuše Šilhanová, Josef Vohryzek,

Charter 77 spokesmen

Martin Palouš, Anna Šabatová, Jan Štern, Jiří Hájek, Václav Havel

Source: *Informace o Chartě 77* [samizdat], Vol. 10, No. 1 (January 1987), pp. 5–9.

Translated from the Czech by Todd Hammond.

Document 2

[Moscow, November-December 1987]

Excerpt from memoirs (1994) of Vadim A. Medvedev,
on the situation within the Czechoslovak leadership

In mid-December [1987], Štrougal came to Moscow. Ryzhkov met with him on economic problems, but the main thing was naturally the political side of this visit, a meeting between Štrougal and Gorbachev, who rated highly the activity of Štrougal as Premier and his efforts in matters of economic reform. An opinion was also expressed that at the plenum in December, the first plenary meeting after the announcement of the policy of restructuring, there must be an absolute certainty that the conclusions adopted would be serious, and the leadership would be able to implement them.

Štrougal went home encouraged. He felt that Moscow understood the situation, and would not blindly take the advice of some die-hard friends of the Czechoslovak leadership.

A Power Struggle

These conversations took place at the right time, for by November 18 a proposal for the division of the offices of President and First Secretary of the Party Central Committee had been submitted to the Presidium of the CC CPCz on the initiative of Biřák and his supporters. These people were evidently suspicious that, behind their backs, all the questions had been taken up by Husák and Štrougal in Moscow, and decided to act.

Indra asked Husák straight out: wasn't the topic of dividing the functions brought up in Moscow? Husák, of course, answered no, then underscored that in Moscow he had obtained full support for the policy of restructuring. Biřák "squeezed" Štrougal again: hadn't he said in Moscow that there were opponents of restructuring in Prague, and hadn't he mentioned particular names in that connection? Naturally, Štrougal categorically denied that supposition. They also recalled, of course, Smirnov's speech on the events of 1968. Everyone except Štrougal and Kapek expressed their negative opinion of that affair. They assigned Biřák with the task of trying to get confirmation of earlier appraisals and "Lessons of the Crisis Developments".

The meeting of the Presidium continued the next day, and Biřák openly posed the question of dividing the functions. Husák, who apparently did not want to solve this problem under pressure, kept his cards hidden. The balance of forces in the Presidium was seven to three in favour of the conservatives, although, among the overall leadership including candidates for membership in the Presidium and members of the Secretariat, it was more like ten to ten.

All this information was passed on to Moscow by the Soviet Ambassador in Prague, V. P. Lomakin. On November 23 he asked me in a conversation over a special telephone line to try and convince Mikhail Sergeyevich to telephone Husák. I said that I was not going to approach Gorbachev with such an idea, because I was convinced he'd answer in the negative. At the same time, however, I advised the Ambassador to

call the General Secretary himself and inform him of the situation that had arisen. The reaction was as I expected: Gorbachev would not turn to Husák and encourage him to engage in any kind of negotiations. He did not consider it at all necessary to add anything to what had been talked over with the leading Czechoslovak executives during the last meeting.

The day before the next meeting of the Presidium, Husák invited Lomakin to his flat, where they had a confidential talk. Husák informed him of the ins and outs of the discussion in the Presidium, and on the current situation. He told him that Jakeš had rejected Biľak's proposal to set up an office of Deputy General Secretary, and Jakeš's election to that office. Husák admitted that separating the offices was inevitable, but expressed fears that pressure might be placed on some members of the Presidium that didn't agree with the "Seven".

According to the Ambassador, the subsequent discussion went something like this:

Husák: Doesn't Mikhail Sergeevich think that the moment has come that had been talked about at our meeting, when I should adopt some responsible solution in respect to myself in the interest of the Party?

Lomakin: That wasn't talked about and it's not being talked about. But concerns are naturally rising in the Politburo of the CC CPSU about how events in Czechoslovakia are going to continue to develop.

Husák: I can't leave Štrougal and Kapek in the lurch.

Lomakin: Didn't the problem come up of agreeing to some kind of period after which the question of dividing the offices can be settled?

Husák: If such a problem came up, two or three months would be necessary during which it would be possible to elect new people, among them some young ones, to the leadership.

Lomakin: To what extent is that realistic under present conditions?

Husák: Not too realistic. The matter is deadlocked. But even that kind of solution would not change the balance of forces rapidly. What's the way out of this? If it's left to Biľak, heads are going to roll.

Lomakin: And don't you see some other way to settle the Biľak question?

Husák: For example, if somebody helped us to solve that question.

Lomakin: But only you can solve it.

The Ambassador said that Husák's frame of mind was calm and certain, but Biľak had not softened in his resolve.

In all it can be said that the November session of the Presidium resembled the warm-up before a decisive fight. The situation in the Czechoslovak leadership was extremely tense. At the end of the month I wrote a short memorandum with an evaluation of the situation in the leadership of the CPCz and delivered it personally to Gorbachev. Here is its text:

On the Situation in the Czechoslovak Leadership

The peculiarity of the situation lies in the fact that the power struggle between factions that have formed within the Czechoslovak leadership have pushed into the background the issue of the restructuring programme, the necessity of which is strongly felt among the Party functionaries and the people.

How could events unfold under these conditions? If the faction led by Biřak takes over the leadership and virtually ousts řtrougal and his followers, it will be seen by society as a victory for conservative forces who do not intend to retreat an inch from the positions forcibly adopted by the Party after 1968. Not only the disposition of Biřak, who plays a key role, and apparently will continue to play a key role, even if Jakeř becomes the General Secretary, but also the logic of the struggle against řtrougal's supporters (of whom there are more and more, in the economic apparatus and among the intelligentsia, who see in him an advocate for change) will inspire the new leadership to stand on previous positions, and if anything moves forward, then only in small and unwilling steps.

Given that maintaining Husák in the function of General Secretary is hardly possible, and would be received within the Party and society with extreme irritation, the most suitable scenario (at least for a certain time) remains cooperation between Jakeř and řtrougal in the offices of General Secretary and Premier. In principle it is possible; řtrougal himself has already suggested to Jakeř something like a political alliance. Biřak is not going to want to accept that, however; he understands only one thing – if řtrougal comes to an agreement with Jakeř, there won't be any place left for him in the leadership, and Biřak will have to go.

In reality the situation is such that from every angle it appears best to neutralize Biřak. Without doing that, it will not even be possible to strengthen the unity of the Czechoslovak leadership (even gradually), nor to begin the reforms that the country badly needs.

It is obvious that the only way to continue down that road is to convince Jakeř that it is necessary to find common ground with řtrougal. He has not yet exhausted his possibilities as Premier, and has great experience in economic organization. Besides that, his continuing in the function of Premier (for at least a time) would help to prevent the deepening of disunity in the Party and state functionaries, and to preserve the unity that is so important for the Party and the whole country.

It would be good to let Jakeř know of these opinions, through the Soviet Ambassador or in some other way, in order to prevent an undesirable turn of events (which is possible especially because, according to what řtrougal said, in the case of Husák's departure from the function of General Secretary, řtrougal would also be forced to ask to be relieved from the office of Premier).

At the same time, I turned over to Gorbachev material for possible talks with Husák, for I had realized that Husák could initiate such talks at any time.

For possible talks with Gustáv Husák

The situation which has come to pass within the Czechoslovak leadership means that the question of succession in the Party leadership is being settled not by mutual agreement, not on the principle of unity, but by confrontation.

If this is already happening, it is necessary to find a dignified way out of the situation. At the present time, it is most important not to allow conflicts within the Presidium of the CC CPCz to spread to broader circles. It would be dangerous if the existing differences of opinion were to be passed on to the Party functionaries and throughout society. It is not permissible to furnish political space to personal ambitions and factional interests. It would be especially dangerous to allow the conflicts to assume the form of nationalistic quarrels.

It is obviously not possible to call a plenum of the CC CPCz under conditions in which there is no unity in the leadership. Today the main task is to search for a solution within the Presidium of the CC CPCz.

Our position remains as we expressed it in talks in Moscow and Prague. We do not believe that we would have the right to interfere in the cadre composition of a fraternal Party. Our relationship

to the leading Czechoslovak functionaries was clearly expressed in the meetings we recently had with them. In talks with Husák, Jakeš, and Štrougal, full agreement was emphasized with plans for the restructuring that the country so badly needs. In our opinion it is this very problem that should be resolved by the plenary session of the CC CPCz, at which a unified position in the leadership must be reached, along with a detailed programme of restructuring.

We continue to have great respect for Comrade Husák. His great contribution to socialism is undisputed. There is no doubt he will be able, along with other members of the leadership, to assure the normal continuity of the basic line of the CPCz, as well as orientation towards the renewal of socialism.

This material was, however, unnecessary. In the afternoon hours of December 4, first Biřak and then Ambassador Lomakin telephoned my office while I was out. At 7 p.m. I rang them. Biřak told me that at the meeting of the Presidium, Husák's proposal for the division of offices was adopted, along with the nomination of Miloš Jakeš to the office of General Secretary. It would be submitted to the Plenary Session of the CC CPCz on December 17–18, which has been called to discuss the situation in the country and questions of economic reform. Before the plenary session, the secretaries of the Party regional committees as well as other members of the Central Committee would be informed of the Presidium's proposals. Lomakin added that the meeting of the Presidium went smoothly, and that the long-sought compromise had apparently been found. [...]

Source: Vadim A. Medvedev, *Raspad: Kak on nazreval v 'mirovoi sisteme sotsializma'*, Moscow, 1994, pp. 147–51. Excerpt published in Czech in *Soudobé dějiny* 5.4 (1998): 541–5.

Translated from the Czech by Todd Hammond.

Document 3

Prague, November 19, 1987

Address by Ladislav Adamec at CC CPCz Presidium meeting,
on the separation of the functions of General Secretary of the CPCz and President
of the CSSR

We find ourselves in a complicated situation both economically and politically. We have a lot of responsible work ahead of us. This view of the present situation is prevalent in the Party and among the broader public. During these times people's attention is understandably focused on the Party leadership, on our ability not to disappoint, but to handle demanding tasks. We cannot hide the fact from ourselves that fears have arisen, a certain anxiety is spreading, and rumours and speculation are cropping up. Sometimes justified, sometimes exaggerated. But the demand for a unified, solid, and capable leadership is unarguably correct.

We have problems fulfilling the plans, and there are serious problems in other sectors as well. In the past few months, we have been criticizing the shortages and snafus more openly and sharply than before. But things have hardly budged. Why? We often follow the path of least resistance – we struggle with the symptoms, rather than removing the causes. This is understandably of very little effect. And in more than one case the negative phenomena continue to worsen and spread. All this didn't spring into existence today or yesterday either, but has more deeper roots. It is true that problems in the Party and society have been considered in the meetings of the Presidium and at sessions of the Central Committee. But we achieved only partial results, and sometimes the correct intentions never became a reality. There are likely many reasons for this. We probably didn't always apply an effective working method, didn't start with a deep enough understanding of things, didn't move forward collectively enough, and did not take advantage of criticism in time, regardless of personalities.

Of course it's not a matter of just one person, all of us have a certain share in it. But the higher the function, the larger the responsibility. I am one of those comrades who admire the life's work of Comrade Husák. He did a great deal of work, especially after April 1969. In a short time he managed the job, which few could have expected. For this, lasting thanks and recognition are his. But in later years, excessive highlighting of successes weakened the attention paid to growing problems. We were unable to manage the transition promptly, in its full breadth and depth, from extraordinary circumstances and work methods to normal ones, especially in the practice of taking advantage of criticism and self-criticism. In many cases there has been a return to stereotypes from the previous era, for example, in the planning and control of the economy (the directive method of management, and the neglect of structural changes). The state and economic apparatus has grown, management in the centre and below has become ever more cumbersome, costly, and less effective. Although the standard of living has grown, along with it have spread egalitarianism, lack of discipline, and poor-quality work. Bureaucratism, formalism, violation of socialist law and morality, graft, and abuse of office have increased. Criticism of these negative phenomena has become stronger, in the Party as well as in society, but it has been reacted to inconsistently, late, and often angrily. We have not drawn the correct conclusions in

time from the signals of undesirable stagnation in the distribution and quality of work of many of our cadres. We have neglected the preparation of young people to take over responsible functions.

All this was especially negatively reflected in the activities of the Party from the top down and from the bottom up. It has taken root in the damaging practice of fulfilling functions in state, economy, and social organs and organizations. The position of management workers was accepted uncritically, while actual political practice was neglected, which led to the deadening of people's activity. The results are very serious: the authority of the Party is falling, the weight of our resolutions is small, the attractiveness of membership in the Party is insufficient, and responsibility and initiative are at a low level.

We have approved significant changes: we are on the road to restructuring and acceleration. To stay this course will demand not a few things diverging from the present system of work. These efforts can hardly be headed by someone whose activities have been wholly connected with the past. It is plain that long years in one office can bind a person in content as well as method of work. They become a brake on critical views of the results attained, and on one's coworkers. It has been shown that too long a time in one function, and practically the same collective, is not a benefit either for the Party, or for the official himself. I am therefore convinced that the election of a new comrade to head the Party is a prerequisite for resolving all the problems we have before us.

I have briefly characterized some negative tendencies. Of course it is not the same everywhere. Thanks to the efforts of some people, we have many good results. But exactly so that we not weaken them, but continue to improve and expand, we must consider the present situation with all seriousness. If we make no fundamental turnaround in realizing our intentions, crisis phenomena threaten to grow over our heads, with all the risks that entails. We must not allow this. Because of our consciences, as well as from the viewpoint of responsibility to the Party that entrusted us with our offices.

Embarkation on a new path places extraordinary demands on the execution of the highest Party functions. Life demands everyday management of the Party, regular taking of positions on various matters, permanent contact with the Party machine, and visits to the regions, districts, and factories as frequently as possible.

In my opinion, under present conditions it is not possible to continue with the Party and state functions joined. I recommend their division, and the election of a new General Secretary, Comrade Jakeš. In doing so, I am not only considering the practical viewpoint of the difficulties of fulfilling such a number of responsibilities. I recommend this approach for reasons of principle as well, because the merger of Party and state direction is not justified. And it is not only our experience, but more and more an international one. I am convinced that in the Party and in society, such a decision will gain support. It will contribute to the growth of Party authority and faith in its policies. For personal reasons, this solution would not be easy for any of us. But the sooner we do it, the better for the cause of the Party and socialism. And in the end, for individuals as well.

The opinion may crop up that it would be more suitable again to postpone the decision on this serious question in order to leave more space for consideration and

preparation. I take the position that there is no time to lose. Any hesitation and indecision would further complicate the situation. We can in no way afford this. The Party would never forgive us.

Source: Adamec's own addendum to stenographer's notes, State Central Archive, Prague, CC CPCz record group, Presidium, November 18-19, 1989 session, P 49/87.

Translated from the Czech by Todd Hammond.

Document 4

Moscow, January 11, 1988

Memorandum of conversation between Mikhail Gorbachev and Miloš Jakeš,
excerpt concerning the rejection of a possible re-evaluation of 1968

Gorbachev: [...] I know that several of the authors of the "Prague Spring" have reactivated themselves in your country. Dubček has printed an interview in *Unità*. Now they are evidently trying to profit from the restructuring being carried out by the CPSU. They want to show that in 1968 they were doing the same thing that the Soviet Communists are doing today. For example, my old acquaintance Zdeněk Mlynář claims that he is now in Vienna because of his actions, while Gorbachev with the same policies heads the CPSU.

Our approach to these questions is a matter of principle. We recognize the January (1968) plenum of the CPCz. If that resolution had been realized, things would have probably gone in another direction. But what happened was that the new leadership of the CPCz started issuing one position after another. The opponents of socialism were already wringing their hands in hopes of victory. But nothing worked out for them.

Natta, the General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Italian Communist Party, contacted me. He requested that I communicate to you in our conversation the position of the ICP on Dubček and some other questions. In the opinion of the Italian comrades, the moment has come for us to reevaluate Dubček positively. They are also of the opinion that the Czechoslovak leadership should say: Dubček made a mistake for which he was punished, but he was not an enemy of the Communist Party and the Soviet Union; he remained a Communist. This, in the opinion of the Italian Communists, would be within the spirit of national reconciliation in Czechoslovakia. They also propose granting of wide rights to Communists who were expelled in the past.

Jakeš: At this time we have no reason to reappraise the events and actors of the "Prague Spring". Some of the Communists who were expelled from the Party were not only taken back into the ranks, but even work in their previous functions. But we don't reaccept those who actively came out against the Party, against socialism. We can't return such people to participation in political life. They say, of course, that they just wanted twenty years ago to do what is now going on in the Soviet Union. But that's not true. These people communicate with the people of Czechoslovakia with the help of the bourgeois mass media.

The "Chartists" have recently become active. I received a letter signed by forty former active representatives of the "Prague Spring". They criticize the conclusions of the CPCz on the lessons of these events, and ask that we recognize them as a political force.

Gorbachev: I agree with you that we have no reason to reappraise these events, even in the matter of the international operation.

The attempt of some activists of the "Prague Spring" to draw attention to themselves as the logical predecessors of Soviet restructuring means nothing other than a blow to our restructuring. We have been carrying out restructuring within socialism in order to strengthen socialism. But they were trying to cripple socialism in Czechoslovakia.

Jakeš: We want to react openly to the displays of the defenders of the "Prague Spring". We published a good article on the January plenum of the CC CPCz. We stated what was good and what was bad. We'll say exactly the same thing at the May plenum, about the time when "2000 Words" appeared. We'll say it about the meeting in Bratislava. We will openly say that they wanted to strike a blow against the Communist Party, that they were for soviets [national committees] without Communists, and for Czechoslovakia leaving the Warsaw Pact.

Gorbachev: I think this kind of public statement will be beneficial. It wouldn't be bad if in support of this we could get some famous scientists and scholars, workers in the arts and culture, and also some rank-and-file workers.

Jakeš: We are going to give a lot of attention to the fortieth anniversary of the February events that opened the road to socialism. We will use the anniversary celebrations to show that the events of 1968 were by nature aimed against the February 1948 revolution, that they took place on the basis of the propagation of anti-Sovietism, and their goal was a split with the Soviet Union, that state which is the guarantee of building socialism in Czechoslovakia.

We will also take advantage of the fiftieth anniversary of Munich to consider the historical experience of Czechoslovakia.

Dubček and Čisář wrote me some letters. Dubček defended his stance, writes that he wanted only the best for Czechoslovakia. He complains that the leadership doesn't want to have anything to do with him, and that State Security has been following him for twenty years. And only after the visit of Gorbachev to Czechoslovakia has this surveillance stopped. He also maintains that he acted correctly, but the international operation gave him no chance to see the whole thing to the end.

Before, Dubček did not take his opinions abroad. He evidently hoped you would not support our interpretation in the matter of the January plenum. But when he found out that Pravda printed our materials, he understood he was wrong. So he apparently decided to try and use *Unità* for his purposes.

Gorbachev: As you remember, I said during my visit to Czechoslovakia, especially to the workers of your country, that in the twenty years since 1968 Czechoslovakia has come a long way in its development, and is now among the world's most developed countries. You have a good base upon which to develop your working efforts and solidify the gains of socialism.

[...]

Gorbachev: Who among the former organizers of the "Prague Spring" is now showing the greatest activity?

Jakeš: Černík is behaving quietly. Slavík and some other former members of the Presidium are behaving quite actively. But Šik is coming out as the fieriest opponent. He claims he was forced to write his older books on socialism in Czechoslovakia under duress. He's railing for a third way, for the liquidation of planning, and for complete market relations. [...]

Source: Archive of the Gorbachev Foundation, Moscow, f. 1, op. 1, 88jan11.doc. Published in Czech in *Soudobé dějiny* 5.4 (1998): 552-4.

Translated from the Czech version by Todd Hammond.

Document 5
Moscow, April 12, 1988
Memorandum of conversation between Mikhail Gorbachev
and Gustáv Husák,
excerpt concerning rejection of possible re-evaluation of 1968

[...]

Husák: I read the interview conducted with Natta after returning from the Soviet Union, where he criticized the CPCz again.

Gorbachev: The Italian comrades wanted us to change our position on the events of 1968, but of course we refused. During the meeting we got the impression that Natta's position had significantly changed for the better, and the conversations with him went well. He warned us, though, that after returning to Italy he would have to manoeuvre. That's what happened, too. After his return from Moscow he was attacked by his press organ, *Unità*; they levelled the accusation at him, that supposedly the Italian Communist Party had again become dependent on the CPSU.

Husák: We would like to normalize relations with the Italian Communist Party, but they published interviews with Dubček, Medvedev, and Pelikán, and they expect us to change our evaluation of the events of that time.

Gorbachev: Let's maintain the previous appraisal of the events of 1968. The path that Czechoslovakia followed after the crisis confirmed the correctness of the policy chosen. [...]

Source: Archive of the Gorbachev Foundation, Moscow, f.1, op. 1, 88apr12.doc. Published in Czech by in *Soudobé dějiny*, 5.4 (1998): 554.

Translated from the Czech by Todd Hammond.

Document 6
Prague, Brno, and Bratislava, October 15, 1988
Manifesto of the Movement for Civil Liberty

Democracy for All

The time has come to get involved in politics.

Let us engage in an activity which people treat with universal suspicion because of the dictatorial and incompetent way it has been pursued over the past decades by those who have monopolized it.

Politics must be rehabilitated as a sphere of activity. It must once more become the focal point for the expression and advancement of society's authentic interests.

What the Czechoslovak state has to show for its seventy years' existence gives no cause for rejoicing. Our entire society is experiencing a period of grave moral decline. Undemocratic conditions prevail. Our national and state sovereignty are both curtailed. Our economy and the level of our technology are going from bad to worse. Because of manipulation from the centre, our society's creative potential is permanently stifled. Our natural environment is in an increasingly appalling state. Generation after generation of our citizens have abandoned their homeland in disgust. Our country, which was once one of the most advanced in Europe, is sinking so rapidly that we will soon be numbered among the most backward.

The present régime is aware of this crisis and has declared its intention to institute certain piecemeal reforms. It is incapable, however, of changing its nature and abandoning its totalitarian way of government, which is the root cause of the crisis.

That is why the time is ripe for society itself – in other words, all of us – to enter the political arena.

Taking this demand of the times as our starting point, and basing ourselves on Charter 77's years of effort to provide a truthful picture of conditions in our country, as well as drawing encouragement from the work of other independent initiatives, both in Czechoslovakia and elsewhere in the Soviet bloc, we have decided to establish the Movement for Civil Liberty. We intend it as a loose association of political groups and clubs, which are being created freely and autonomously in different parts of our Republic as meeting points for people who are not indifferent to our country's future and are prepared to engage in open debate about political issues of every kind, while respecting the principle of pluralism and being ready to engage in direct political action. This could mean setting up discussion forums at their place of work or in their neighbourhood, advancing various demands, both general and local, putting up independent candidates in elections, or other initiatives. In this way, the Movement for Civil Liberty should provide scope for citizens freely to express their political aspirations, and help crystallize various more specifically political or sectional endeavours.

We herewith submit to all our fellow citizens – in other words, all potential supporters of the Movement for Civil Liberty – some of the main ideas and goals we have so far agreed on, as a starting point for debate, as proposals requiring further attention, or as shared principles in the broadest sense.

1. Ours is a tradition of democracy

After all the lamentable events of our most recent past, many Czechs and Slovaks have wondered whether it was wise to have dismembered the Austrian empire in order to set up an independent Czechoslovak state, which, as a small country in the middle of Europe, has been ill-equipped to resist the pressures of its more powerful neighbours. Such people forget that Masaryk and his supporters – both Czech and Slovak – envisaged the creation of our Republic as part of an epoch-making democratic revolution, and the movement towards a gradually created community of democratic states. Their conception was based on the demands of a modern world in which all sections of society aspired to equality of opportunity and in which boundaries between nations and countries would inevitably become less important. In other words, their plans were neither provincial nor chauvinistic. However painful the past decades of this century have been, the wisdom of Masaryk's long-term vision is now being confirmed. As evidence one can cite among other things the process of growing unification in diversity which has been going ahead in Western Europe for many years already. However, the direst perils confronting both Europe and the world, whether in terms of war and peace or environmental damage, will not be held off indefinitely if the ideal of democratic unity is only fulfilled in one part of our continent. That is why more and more people both West and East are coming to realize that the only way forward, for all of us, is to work for complete democracy throughout Europe, including, therefore, the part we inhabit. We are convinced that it is the only possible path for Czechoslovakia as well. So far we cannot tell how our country will go about achieving democracy, nor what form that democracy eventually will assume. A simple return to the past is out of the question. None the less we do believe that the ideals and values out of which our state was born, and the experiences – both good and bad – which it underwent during its first two decades, represent an enormous legacy and inspiration on which we can draw.

Our principal concern, therefore, should be to achieve genuine democracy, that is, democracy for all, by which we understand a system based on intellectual, political and economic pluralism and mutual tolerance.

Democracy will come about only through a complete moral renewal of society and a revival of its creative capacity, not on the basis of some bureaucratic decree. Until democratic structures have been established, however, society's moral and creative energy cannot fully evolve and be put to good use. The one must go hand in hand with the other: the civic courage of individuals with the creation of new social conditions and structures.

2. Political pluralism

As proponents of intellectual freedom we want to make it impossible for the state to impose one particular outlook or doctrine to the detriment of all others. This situation must no longer be enshrined in the Constitution or other legislation as it is at present. The only instance in which the equality of ideas, or their expression should be restricted is in respect of those who demonstrably deny and restrict such equality themselves. As proponents of democracy we are opposed to any clause in the

Constitution confirming the leading role of the Czechoslovak Communist Party or any other political party, or of any broader alliance of organizations which might arrogate the right to speak on behalf of everyone else. The country should be run by those who win the confidence of the people. If they lose that confidence let them hand over the reigns of government to those who acquire it. We are opposed on principle to the elevation of one social group above another. There must be no division of citizens into higher and lower categories. The system of privileges for Party members and career discrimination against others must be abolished. There must be no regulations making adherence to a particular political viewpoint a criterion for public office.

3. A new democratic constitution

These principles should form the basis for a new Czechoslovak Constitution which would positively guarantee citizens equality before the law and all basic civil rights, including the rights to freedom of thought, expression, assembly, association and fulfilment of political aspirations.

No clause of such a Constitution must call in question Czechoslovak state sovereignty.

Citizens must all be guaranteed the right to travel freely, including the right to leave their homeland and return to it. As a result, exile as a phenomenon would cease to exist. Any cases where it would be necessary to limit this right must be clearly laid down in the Constitution and any abuse of such limitations by means of any other law, decree or arbitrary interpretation must be expressly prohibited. No citizens may lose Czechoslovak citizenship without their own consent.

The Constitution should introduce the institution of the referendum on certain matters of major concern to society as a whole. It should strengthen the authority of the President of the country and institute presidential elections by universal suffrage. It must establish an administrative judiciary. It is vital that a Constitutional Court be set up as the final arbiter on constitutionality.

While the future Constitution should be quite clear and unequivocal in its basic principles, it should also be concise and avoid any extraneous detail (concerning, for instance, the structure of the national administration) that might limit scope for subsequent evolution.

Specific legislation on elections and political organizations should be enacted in conjunction with the new Constitution. In the democratic spirit of the latter it would authorize free political activity and specify the ways in which various representative bodies of citizens may campaign for electoral support and participate in public administration.

Clubs and associations have always been a natural expression of a multifarious cultured society and the bedrock of its political life. A new law on clubs and associations must therefore be enacted in conjunction with the new Constitution so as to revive this sector which is stifled under present legislation.

We are fully aware, of course, that even the most perfect Constitution cannot of itself automatically guarantee genuine democracy. In the prevailing conditions, however, the implementation of a democratic Constitution would undoubtedly mean a great stride towards that goal.

4. Overhaul of the legal system

Judicial practices, knowledge of legal rights and judicial security are all declining in our country. As a first step towards remedying this situation, the entire legal system should be gradually overhauled. It must be made simpler and more accessible, and divested of all totalitarian features.

First and foremost, it is vital that our entire legal system should be brought unconditionally in line with the principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which have been subsequently enshrined in the international human rights covenants and other international legal norms to which this country has formally subscribed; this must be done in such a way as to forestall any evasive manoeuvres.

The penal code must be revised, eliminating all politically abusive elements inconsistent with a democratic Constitution, and there must be a similar revision of civil, economic and administrative law in order to ensure a proper balance between the rights of the individual and society.

The total independence of the judiciary must be reintroduced, with a guaranteed right to legal defence and public supervision of judicial practice. The legal profession should be administered autonomously and defence counsel should enjoy the same rights in court as the prosecution. By establishing an administrative judiciary the role of the prosecutor can be limited to representing the state's case in criminal trials.

A new scheme for the prison system needs to be drawn up, reflecting the latest knowledge and experience, and transferring prisons to civilian administration. Prisons must be humanized. Convicted citizens must not suffer physical or mental humiliation in the guise of re-education, nor must their labour be exploited. Suspects should be held on remand only where this is shown to be absolutely necessary, and the principle of presumption of innocence should prevail.

There must be a revision of police legislation whereby all officers of the National Security Corps (SNB) would be trained to act as protectors of their fellow-citizens, instead of dominating them. The police should be subject to supervision by representative assemblies and the general public.

State Security, that immense, awe-inspiring, omnipresent and all-powerful instrument, used by the régime to manipulate citizens, whose actual field of operations far and away exceeds even its present jurisdiction, should be overhauled so as to perform only essential counter-espionage and anti-terrorist functions. As a result its ranks could be radically reduced in number. The reform of the economic system will require a thorough transformation of economic law. The present incoherent tangle of laws, including constant amendments, decrees and regulations, needs replacing by the simplest, most accessible and stable legal code possible, which would enable enterprises and individuals to be reliably informed of the regulations governing the various kinds of economic activity.

Other areas that needs simplifying and humanizing are social, housing and, above all, administrative legislation. Citizens must lose their fear of officialdom as some sort of latter-day gentry, and officials must be answerable to representative assemblies and the general public. It is inadmissible, for instance, that members of local National Committees should be no more than trappings or adornments of the administration. National Committees will make a mockery of their name if their members fail to act with greater authority than the old imperial district administration.

5. Saving the environment

Our countryside and our health are gravely imperilled. The air is poisoned with industrial emissions, rivers and streams are polluted with effluent, our soil and food products are contaminated with chemical fertilizers. Our forests are on the losing side in the chemical war being waged against them, and they are being barbarously destroyed as an easy source of raw materials for the timber industry of countries which take steps to protect their own forests. More and more people are being obliged to live in dreary barrack-like housing-estates which are almost exclusively constructed using obsolete prefabricated-panel technology. Life on such high-rise housing-estates goes from bad to worse and creates new social problems. Our country is building gigantic power stations and in the process it is destroying extensive tracts of our territory along with their ecosystems, at a time when our backward industry is one of the worst squanderers of energy in Europe. While we welcome every purification plant, we realize that purification plants alone will not solve the problem. Our entire economy must overhaul its style of thinking and operation and finally realize that ecologically-harmful operations make the least economic sense in the long term. We cannot go on exploiting our own future and paying for short-term economic gains by leaving a wasteland for our grandchildren to live in. We are convinced that a pluralist economy - one capable of reacting flexibly to people's experience and scientific discoveries - will facilitate that change. It will not guarantee it, however. It will require courageous, organized pressure by all those who realize the harmfulness of current practices. Any projects that might disturb the natural environment should take into account the views of the local population and respect their opinions.

6. Paths to economic prosperity

Experience has shown that there can be no economic pluralism without political pluralism. Likewise, without economic pluralism a country's economy stagnates and goes into decline. It will therefore require the sort of changes which we are advocating in the political system if there is to be any hope of a truly radical economic reform freeing enterprises from the tyranny of the central bureaucracy. The enterprise sector can be effectively influenced by means of financial instruments and conscious support for promising sectors of the economy, but above all by restoring the principles of supply and demand, competition and monetary/market relations.

We believe that a natural component of a radical economic reform on these lines should be the pursuit of new forms of social ownership, including self-management. We are in favour of extensive support to the co-operative movement. We want to see pluralism of different types of ownership and decision-making, and the creation of such conditions as enable the various economic sectors and industries to seek forms of organization which are most appropriate to their particular needs and make optimal use of people's enterprise as the best way of achieving their prosperity.

There must be the complete revival of private enterprise in the field of self-employment, crafts, and small and medium-sized firms, as well as in one section of agriculture and in the field of culture. Scope should be created for farmers to run family farms or lease land on a long-term basis from co-operatives, on the grounds that

the success of their personal endeavours is likely to benefit society as a whole. Without the contribution and initiative of the self-employed, small co-operatives and small independent firms it is impossible to provide the population with adequate services, ensure a wide range of consumer goods or encourage innovation. It is a sector that will require generous support in the form of long-term credits and tax relief, as well as material assistance in the early stages of trading. This could also create new employment opportunities for those who will lose their jobs as a result of necessary staff cuts in the overgrown civil service and the suppression of unprofitable operations. Proper legislation must be enacted for the small business sector, protecting those involved in it from being deprived of the fruits of their work.

Large industry will have to be reconstructed in order to ensure that considerations of economic profitability are not subordinated to political considerations, such as artificial employment or priorities geared to unnatural international economic relations. The Czechoslovak economy should naturally be integrated into the global economy on the basis of a generally advantageous international division of labour.

7. Free intellectual activity

None of our country's problems will be solved without the freedom to speak and write about them publicly. There is a sense in which intellectual and cultural activity, as well as the mass media, act as society's brain or nervous system, in other words, as the means whereby society can become conscious of itself. They represent for society a source of knowledge and self-knowledge, and provide scope for it to reveal and define its own ethical consistency and identity. Hence the basic precondition for any change for the better is freedom of culture in the broadest sense of the world.

First and foremost, therefore, there must be the abolition of all overt and covert forms of censorship, as well as of every kind of central manipulation of this sphere. There must be freedom for independent communications media, publishing houses, literary agencies, theatres and other cultural facilities to be created and operate, irrespective of whether they are run as state enterprises or on a co-operative or private basis. No central authority or state-manipulated unions shall be allowed to restrict intellectual activity or evaluate its worth. The public must decide. The authorities should do no more than provide material and organizational conditions for cultural activity. The role of the unions in this sector should solely be to represent their members' occupational, professional or social interests. No unions should be allowed to enjoy monopoly status nor prevent the creation of others.

A thorough transformation of the educational system is also vital, in view of its present alarming state of decline. Education means far more than just training young people for occupations required by the national economy, and it certainly does not mean ideological indoctrination of any kind or fashioning a submissive population incapable of independent thought. The aim should be to provide students with an all-round education while fostering intellectual freedom, opening young people's horizons and providing them with moral guidance. Education should be run according to the principle of pluralism of institutions and ideas. The inviolability of academia should be guaranteed and political considerations must no longer play a role in the selection of teachers, pupils and students, nor in the bestowal of academic titles. In all

instances, the only criteria should be a candidate's talent, professional suitability and personal qualities.

Space must also be created within the field of science for the setting up of independent work-places, research institutes and development workshops funded either by the state or individual enterprises, co-operative organizations or foundations. The free movement of people and ideas always used to be taken for granted within academia. Unless it is restored we shall be the first to suffer.

8. Freedom of belief

Spiritual pluralism does not only mean equality and mutual respect among people with different beliefs, but also mutual respect for their right to express their beliefs within relevant institutions and in public. We therefore fully support the demand for the separation of Church and State, as well as the demand that believers in our country should enjoy the same rights as in all civilized countries. Religious orders, both of men and women, must enjoy the guaranteed freedom to pursue their activity in accordance with their centuries-old traditions. Religious freedom is not merely the concern of individual communities but the concern of us all. So long as Christians are unable truly to live as Christians, then no citizens, including atheists, can live fully according to their beliefs. State supervision of churches is amoral because it creates inequality within society, with a given section of society subject to one more restriction than the rest of the population because of their faith, and it is a restriction enshrined in law. We believe the recent actions by Roman Catholics in support of the rights of believers and of civil liberties to be enormously significant in historical terms.

9. Independent trade unions

Workers must have the right to establish their own trade unions at the grassroots level, as well as to organize within them in whatever way they judge acceptable and use them to defend their own authentic occupational and social interests. Experience clearly shows that the right to pluralism is as important in the trade-union movement as anywhere else. The state-run monopoly unions cannot be anything but another instrument of totalitarian power, however much they try to do their best. If the State is not to be the sole employer of all working people in this country, nor the one and only representative of their interests, then it is inconceivable that it should be both at once. Trade unions must be independent of the state and the employers if they are to fulfil their proper function, if we are to have a sound economy, and if we are to halt the growth of latent social problems.

10. Stop the militarization of society

For many different reasons, ranging from ethical and social considerations to international political and economic factors, we believe that the following demands are particularly relevant at the present time: a shortening of the period of national service and the institution of alternative service for the benefit of those citizens with

a conscientious objection to the bearing of arms; a reduction of military budgets and their publication; the humanization of military service; the disbanding of all paramilitary organizations and unlawful armed units, and the demilitarization of children's education and of civilian life in general. The existing situation in this sphere is a relic of Stalinism. We also demand the opening of talks on the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Czechoslovakia. We reject the argument that they have to be here in order to maintain a strategic balance, since it was these very units whose arrival destroyed the strategic balance and their presence here helps maintain the current asymmetry in conventional forces in Europe - which is even acknowledged by the Warsaw Pact.

11. National sovereignty

Czechoslovakia was created as the first ever joint state of two kindred nations, the Czechs and Slovaks – the first time in history they had combined in one independent state. It was also a state with considerable national minorities. Twenty years ago it rightly became a federation. Our view, however, is that this federation will lose all relevance if it continues to be no more than an administrative expression of undemocratic centralized power. Totalitarian federalization must be replaced by a democratic federation, as the unalterable expression of the desire of our two nations for a common state. It must allow them to evolve in a truly sovereign way, in accordance with their authentic aspirations. Efforts in favour of democratic pluralism will have to go hand in hand with heightened understanding for the natural differences in social structures that will manifest themselves in the two national republics, and in the lives of the minorities.

A democratic relationship between the majority and the national minorities living in Czechoslovakia, that is to say, Hungarians, Poles, Germans and Ruthenians should display a profounder respect for the rights being claimed by those minorities themselves, and the manner in which they themselves implement them. It is necessary to recognize the ethnic individuality of citizens of Jewish or Romany ethnicity and the rights that flow from that.

Our modern state already has had quite a number of bitter experiences connected with lack of respect for national differences, whether on the part of our own state or neighbouring countries. For that reason alone it should have greater understanding for national issues than it does on account of the system which currently dominates it.

12. Czechoslovakia as part of Europe

We regard Czechoslovakia's path to democracy as part and parcel of the wider process currently under way in various forms in most countries of the Soviet bloc. Citizens are beginning to claim their freedoms while governments are beginning to realize that the totalitarian system is in a cul-de-sac.

For us, however, this process does not imply any attempt to break the historical links that have been created between our countries. On the contrary, our hope is that these ties will also undergo a democratic transformation, so that they are based on

equal rights and full respect for the wishes of all the countries involved. Our aim is therefore not to cause destabilization, insecurity, and conflict, but instead to transcend the vestiges of Stalinist imperial policies. We are also concerned to break with the legacy of the Cold War and traditional policies of trying to balance superpower interests in Europe, as well as with the mistaken conviction that the only way to achieve peace is to maintain the status quo. True and lasting peace can only be based on the mutual confidence of sovereign nations and democratic states. Such confidence is not built, however, by diplomats in negotiating rooms. It is there that confidence can be transformed into practical measures, but first it must come into existence and grow within the European community as a whole. And that can only happen when people begin to convince themselves every day in specific and practical ways that respect for the rights of citizens and nations is growing – above all in the half of Europe where this has so far been least the case. This crucial condition must be fulfilled if the democratic integration of Europe is to become a reality.

As can be seen, our efforts in favour of democracy are not aimed against any one state or nation. On the contrary we consider them part of the lengthy struggle for genuine understanding, sincere trust and increasingly authentic co-operation among all. It is a struggle that should culminate in what T. G. Masaryk once called "humanity as an all-embracing community of friendship".

We are neither utopian nor impatient. We are fully aware that Czechoslovakia will not be transformed into a prospering democratic state overnight. We all still have a lot of hard work ahead of us. It is, however, work that cannot be delayed any longer; we have to get on with the job without waiting for anything else. There are too many threatening clouds gathering above contemporary civilization, and the crisis in which our country finds itself is too deep for us to permit ourselves such a luxury.

We appeal to all our fellow-citizens to take the path we suggest in the manner they see fit. They can do so not only by signing this Manifesto but also through practical activity in favour of democracy in our country.

The undersigned endorse this Manifesto and support its aims:

František Adamík, Milan Balabán, Pavel Barša, Rudolf Battěk, Jarmila Bělíková, Tomáš Bělka, Antonín Bělohoubek, Václav Benda, Rudolf Bereza, Karel Biňovec, Irena Borůvková, Pavel Bratinka, Marcela Brunclíková, Jana Bucharová, Ján Čarnogurský, Jiřina Čechová, Albert Černý, Josef Danisz, Ivan Dejmal, Stanislav Devátý, Jiří Dienstbier, Viktor Dobal, Blanka Dobešová, Jan Dobrovský, Martin Dohnal, Přemysl Fialka, Markéta Fialková, Karel Freund, Eduard Geissler Jr., Jaromír Glac, Štefan Gürtler, Vladimír Hajný, Václav Havel, Ladislav Hejránek, Ivan Hoffman, Marie Holubcová, Jiřina Hrábková, Ludvík Hradílek, Tomáš Hradílek, Jana Hradílková, Simona Hradílková, Lenka Hrachová, Jozef Jablonický, Bohumír Janát, Drahoslava Janderová, Milan Jelínek, Miroslav Jodl, Jarmila Johnová, Milan Jungmann, Petr Kabeš, Jiří Kantůrek, Eva Kantůrková, Božena Komárková, Jan Kozlík, Daniel Kroupa, Jiří Křivský, Marie Rút Křížková, Bohumír Kuba, Marie Kubová, Miroslav Kusý, Ivan Lamper, Ján Langoš, Aleš Lederer, Ladislav Lis, Jan Litomiský, Sergej Machonin, Jiří Machovský, Vladimír Maňák, Anna Marvanová, Jaroslav Mezník, Vladimír Mlynář, Dana Mrtvá, Michal Mrtvý, Pavel Nauman, Jaroslav Opat, Martin Palouš, Radim Palouš, Jan Payne, Lenka Payneová, Karel Pecka, Petr Placák, Drahuše Proboštová, Lenka Procházková, Tomáš Pštross, Miloš

Rejchrt, Zdeněk Rotrekl, Jan Ruml, Jiří Ruml, Jan Schneider, Anton Selecký, Jiří Skalický, Dušan Slávik, Karel Srp, Andrej Stankovič, Jan Šabata, Jaroslav Šabata, František Šamalík, Dolores Šavrdová, Jaroslav Šebesta, Jiřina Šiklová, Milan Šimečka, Jan Šimsa, Jan Štern, Olga Šulcová, Petruška Šustrová, Jáchym Topol, Jan Trefulka, Jakub Trojan, Vladimír Turek, Miroslav Tyl, Milan Uhde, Jitka Uhdeová, Václav Umlauf, Zdeněk Urbánek, Eduard Vacek, Ludvík Vaculík, Eva Vidlářová, Tomáš Vlasák, Josef Vohryzek, Alexandr Vondra, Josef Vydrář, Pavel Vydrář, Tomáš Zelenka, Rudolf Zeman, Vít Zukał, Kateřina Zukałová

The Movement for Civic Liberty can be reached at, and signatures sent to, the following addresses:

Rudolf Battěk, Křižíkova 78, Praha 8, 186 00
Václav Benda, Karlovo nám. 18, Praha 2, 120 00
Ján Čarnogurský, Adlerova 10, Bratislava-Dúbravka, 841 02
Tomáš Hradílek, Zahradní 892, Lipník nad Bečvou, 751 31
Jiří Kantůrek, Xaveriova 13, Praha 5, 150 00
Jan Kozlík, Pionýrů 69, Praha 6, 169 00
Ladislav Lis, Šišková 1228, Praha 8, 182 00
Anna Marvanová, Jeronýmova 2, Praha 3, 130 00
Jaroslav Šabata, Chorázova 3, Brno, 602 00
Jan Štern, Bělčická 2846, Praha 4, 141 00
Alexandr Vondra, Trojanova 1, Praha 2, 120 00

Source: Photocopy of samizdat document, Archives of the Institute of Contemporary History, Prague, HOS collection; reprinted in Ružena Hlušíčková and Blanka Císařovská, *Hnutí za občanskou svobodu* (Prague, 1994), pp. 25–31.

Translated from the Czech by A. G. Brain [Alice and Gerald Turner].

Document 7

Berlin, November 29, 1988

Memorandum of conversation between Erich Honecker and Vasil Biľak, which took place on November 24, 1988 (excerpts)

[...]

Both participants in the talks emphasized the high levels attained in every area of bilateral cooperation. Comrade Honecker stressed that these truly fraternal relations have deep roots in the struggle of the working movements of both countries. Under conditions of socialism both parties and states have succeeded in deepening these relations. One recalls the words of Comrade Husák, that the CSSR is glad it has such a fraternal socialist country as the GDR for a northern neighbour. Communists and all the people of the GDR harbour the same feelings towards the CSSR. The close, reliable cooperation between the two parties, countries, and their representatives, is a historical achievement, and a sign of changes in the world.

Comrade Biľak agreed with the high appraisal of mutual relations, and declared that Czechoslovak Communists would not be able to imagine the world without the friendship of the SED and the GDR. Now more than ever they are very glad that to have such a stable and dynamically developing neighbour state in the GDR. Everything is being done to expand this friendship from the side of the CPCz. This is all the more necessary, as there are so many questions, difficult problems, and so much confusion all around us. [...]

At present we are undergoing hard times. Comrade Biľak has been working professionally in politics for 38 years, but has never experienced such a complicated period. Everybody who struggles must know that he or she has a home base. Now one sometimes has the impression that one is losing that base of support. The CPCz survived what was certainly a difficult crisis in 1968, and consolidated socialism in the CSSR. A huge task was accomplished. Now a time has come which demands even more strength and unity. Unfortunately there are so many diverse theories which diffuse that strength. The forces that were supposedly committed to restructuring back in 1968 are trying to come to the forefront. They declare all undaunted Communists to be conservatives. This causes confusion even among honourable people.

The approach of the Soviet comrades, continued Comrade Biľak, also creates many problems. If they think that the past must be revised, then let them do it, just don't drag other parties into it. The CPCz cannot copy this; it has totally different conditions. The departure point for socialist development in the CSSR was an industrially developed state with a defined bourgeois democracy. In the Soviet Union it was obsolete czarist Russia. The CPSU officially sees these differences as well, but many economists, historians, and social scientists will criticize the CSSR. And this plays into the hands of those forces that wish to see the CSSR flat on its back. These forces consider Poland weakened, and they already have Hungary practically in their hands. The GDR and the CSSR are the only remaining barriers, while the CSSR blocks the corridor between the HPR and the PPR.

Unfortunately, the Soviet comrades would not admit that things could evolve in a bad direction. Comrade Biľak, made it clear to them: "If someone bashes a rabbit on

the head, the rabbit is dead; if the bear gets bashed, nothing happens. We are the rabbit." A huge amount of pressure is building up for destabilization of the socialist countries. This is why Comrade Biřak also asked the Soviet comrades if they were aware that the attacks on Stalin – as in the CSSR in 1968 – are ultimately aimed at the Party. They are meant to question the legitimacy of the Party of the Bolsheviks. [...]

[...] Unfortunately, the situation on the Soviet market has not improved. This is because two percent of the 4.5 per cent growth in the national product stems from rising prices.

Now Soviet citizens can also travel more frequently abroad. Thus, Soviet tourists to the CSSR are no longer rewarded workers as before, but speculators. These have formed private associations, and form whole groups of hoarders who buy up everything. The Czechoslovak people are becoming nervous and asking questions. The CSSR has never had such a disrupted internal market as it does today.

The government temporarily used foreign currency to improve the pre-Christmas availability of goods for workers. What has happened, however, is that everything has disappeared into the Soviet Union, the HPR, and the PPR. The CSSR could not close the customs border only against the Soviet Union. Thus it also happened to the GDR, which is very embarrassing and regrettable. Spot-checks have shown that citizens of the GDR took out of the country an average of 205 crowns a day in goods, while Soviet citizens took out 1500 crowns. All this is a very unhappy story, because it also provides arguments to anti-Communist propaganda.

Comrade Biřak went on to say that restructuring in the CSSR has many complicated points. Some add pressure by saying that the CPCz is moving ahead too slowly. Even some Soviet representatives have demanded reappraisal of 1968. The First Secretary of the Communist Party of Estonia let it be known internally that Comrade Gorbachev said that these events must be reevaluated, but that the Czechoslovak comrades are unwilling to do that. To Czechoslovak inquiries came the reply that this was a lie. The question remains, however, how the First Secretary of the Communist Party of Estonia is allowed to make such a statement? Politburo member of the Hungarian Communist Party Pozsgay also requests reappraisal. The CPCz rejects this interference, as this is exclusively its own matter.

The editor-in-chief of *Problems of Peace and Socialism* told Comrade Biřak that they wanted to publish a critical article on Stalin, but the SED came out against it. He told him not to force his own opinion on others.

When the Soviet comrades publish distorted articles in Czech or Slovak, the CPCz must prevent this. Comrades Gorbachev, Medvedev, and others evidently understand this. But then new tracts come out which question the values of socialism. [...]

Comrade Honecker heartily thanked him for these observations, while expressing respect for the serious approach to issues which so deeply concern the entire international Communist movement. The parties in the socialist states are in particular confronted with entirely new questions. None of these are unknown questions for our Party.

During his last working visit to the USSR for the exhibition "The GDR in Moscow", which was conducted at a very high level, he encountered in a personal discussion with Comrade Gorbachev and later in a wider circle basically the same questions which Comrade Biřak mentioned. He told Comrade Gorbachev that it was a matter for the

Soviet side how to approach issues in the Soviet Union, but that one must not overlook the fact that, behind the slogans of "perestroika" and "glasnost", the forces of reaction are leading the main attack against real existing socialism.

In the context of discussing several theoretical, political, and practical issues, he also pointed out problems. He openly said that some magazines published in German, such as *Sputnik*, *Nová doba* and *Moskovskije novosti*, engage in the same propaganda against Communism as could be experienced under the Nazi dictatorship. Hence it's no wonder that in the so-called better circles in the West they are saying that Marxism is dead, or has been shown to be an historical mistake. [...]

Source: Stiftungarchiv der Parteien und Massenorganisationen der DDR im Bundesarchiv, Berlin, DY 30 J IV/953.

Full text of the memorandum published in Czech in *Soudobé dějiny* 2.2/3 (1995): 365–8.

Translated from the Czech by Todd Hammond.

Document 8
Prague, December 1, 1988
Samizdat article by Václav Havel,
on the crystallization of régime-dissident relations
and the "Democracy for All" manifesto

Cards on the Table

For Czechoslovakia, 1988 was not just a year of several notable round anniversaries. It was also a year of great political importance for our country – as we have come to expect of years ending in an eight. Admittedly there has been no dramatic turn of events, either for the better or the worse, but something did happen, nevertheless: the cards were put on the table, so to speak.

At long last, people started to assert openly that they no longer intend to put up passively with the imposed status quo and that they have the capacity to do something more for freedom than just sympathizing tacitly with Charter 77 when listening to foreign broadcasts at home, swapping samizdat literature secretly with their workmates, or occasionally applauding some less inhibited theatrical production within the darkness of the auditorium. This was proved by the many thousands of citizens who had the courage to take part in independent demonstrations. But there are other signs as well: everywhere people are talking far more openly than before, even within highly official structures. More and more "licensed" artists, academics and journalists are beginning to call a spade a spade regardless of possible consequences. It looks as if the barrier which has been laboriously constructed between society and those citizens ready to speak their minds is beginning to crumble and fall away. People would seem to have had their fill of the government's inability to solve the problems which it has heaped upon itself, and they are growing tired of their own cautiousness.

But the régime has put its cards on the table too. Not only has it restructured itself in such a way that absolutely nothing is now left to chance – whereby it has destroyed any remaining illusion that society might have – it has even gone so far as to demonstrate quite unambiguously – either through the use of water-cannon, further arrests, bans of every kind, or hopelessly half-hearted reforms – that what really lies behind all its talk of "restructuring" and "democratization" is the preservation of the existing totalitarian structures at all costs. "There will be no dialogue", declared Mr. Štěpán breezily from the platform on Wenceslas Square and he went on to show what he meant in eloquent fashion the following day when he took personal charge of the (happily erratic) water-cannon. There is only one possible interpretation of his words: abandon all hopes you may have of any real shift or change of direction.

The cards are on the table. How the game will proceed from here on is anyone's guess. While it is true that the water-cannon is not particularly functional, it is equally true that civic awareness will not suddenly start to function trouble-free after twenty years of neglect. So the game is not going to be an easy one – for any of the players. What is most important is that the "game" has started at all: or more precisely, that it has entered a new phase – one in which it is impossible to pretend that there is nothing to play for.

And as happens at such moments of truth, something has surfaced, as it always does when a totalitarian system of the Communist kind gets itself into a crisis (or alternatively, when it tries to reform itself). Its corner-stone and formal self-justification – the notorious dogma of the leading role of the Communist Party, a dogma that is incompatible with the democratic functioning of any constitution – has been called into question. In other words, the idea of pluralism has emerged, the idea that no ideology, doctrine or political force should a priori and for all time (that is, through constitutional legislation) dominate all others, but that everyone has an equal right to seek political power.

There is nothing new about this, of course. As a result of the political ferment that we are witnessing almost everywhere in the Soviet bloc, the idea of pluralism is emerging all around us. The way the Communist leadership reacts to it varies from country to country. Gorbachev speaks of "socialist pluralism" by which he most likely means a plurality of views both within the Communist Party as the leading force, and outside it. When Rakowski talks about political pluralism, he probably has in mind giving opposition forces a few seats in the government and parliament as a safety-valve for social discontent and a way of diverting attention away from his worst nightmare: trade-union pluralism. So far, it is the Hungarian Party leader Imre Pozsgay who has gone furthest in this direction, particularly in his unambiguous declaration that there would be no place at all in the new Hungarian constitution for a clause stipulating the leading role of the Party.

In Czechoslovakia, this idea was proclaimed openly in October in the manifesto of the recently-created Movement for Civil Liberty (HOS), significantly entitled "Democracy for All". It is no coincidence that it happened this year in particular: if the time has come for putting cards on the table, then this card – the last, but in its way the most important of all – had to be played too.

The value of the "Democracy for All" manifesto does not reside in the originality of its thinking. Most of what it says has long been taken more or less for granted by all sensible people here (which is not to say that certain details of the manifesto might not prove controversial).

Its value lies in the fact that it sets out all these different self-evident truths in a single document, and does so publicly, as a basis for political activity, and not as someone's private viewpoint.

What HOS will develop into only time will tell. Maybe it will quickly become an integral feature of our country's life, albeit one not particularly beloved of the régime (rather like Charter 77). Perhaps it will remain for the time being merely the seed of something that will bear fruit in the dim and distant future. It is equally possible that the entire "matter" will be stamped down on hard (although criminal investigation has so far been initiated solely into the "matter", and no one has yet been charged or arrested in connection with it). But whatever happens, one thing is now clear: the logic behind the constitutional enshrining of the leading role of one particular party has been openly called into question and these misgivings have been voiced and disseminated along with other fundamental concerns. This is of enormous significance. What has been done in this way can no longer be undone. This public declaration of the emperor's nakedness will go on sounding in the ears of all onlookers for so long as

he remains without clothes, or at least until such a time as fear will have stopped up the last receptive ears (which is by now a most unlikely alternative).

Of course, many other hopeful things happened in 1988 apart from that manifesto. But even if nothing else had happened it would have been a great deal. Whatever turn the game takes now, one thing is certain: it will be impossible to ignore this new card. Besides there is no telling whether this particular card could ever have been played without the others.

The fact that 1988 saw an end to the taboo about the leading role of the Party (among other things) as well as a call for the rehabilitation of politics may well be important in the long term. There is, however, an issue that seems to me even more important for us in the here and now. I refer to a "leading role" of rather a different kind, namely, the question of what is to gain the upper hand in the immediate future: the awakening spirit of freedom, common sense and civic awareness, or the water-cannon?

It could well be the water-cannon, of course. But its domination will certainly not last for ever. Soaking people to the skin and scaring them is one thing, eliminating civil discontent is another. Water-cannons are more likely to intensify the latter, rather than eliminate it. Above all, there is no way now they will avert the logical consequences of the present political and economic events.

So we should enter the new year without any illusions, but also with the assurance that the prison warder who talked to me in my cell on October 28 was not wrong when he said: You've got truth on your side!

Source: samizdat *Lidové noviny*, No. 12, December 1988, p. 3. Reprinted in *Lidové noviny 1988*, (Prague, 1990).

Translated from the Czech by A. G. Brain [Alice and Gerald Turner].

Document 9

Prague, December 8, 1988

Memorandum of conversation between President François Mitterrand and President Gustáv Husák (excerpts)

[...]

Husák: [...] Now I will turn to an area much talked about in your country, the area of human rights and democratization. We are making progress in these spheres. We are increasing and want to increase socialist democracy and the whole political system. We are striving to increase the activity of social organizations and institutions. But this has to do with a certain process. We are looking for solutions that cannot be implemented overnight.

The West was astonished that Dubček travelled to Italy and now Hájek to Austria. But Dubček never applied to travel to the West. When he was invited by the University of Bologna, it was approved. Also Hájek of the Chartists went to Austria. And that is not insignificant.

More than a month ago, at the 70th anniversary of the birth of our state, a wide amnesty was declared. For example: from the political sphere people were amnestied who had emigrated from Czechoslovakia, and had then been convicted, persecuted. That means a huge number of people who live beyond our borders. With the exception, naturally, of people who actively work against Czechoslovakia. Big changes are also taking place in this area, but unfortunately are not noticed everywhere in the West.

In the *Le Monde* article that I mentioned, they write that you were going to a country that is not going with Gorbachev, which is lagging behind in reform. As good examples the newspaper lists Poland and Hungary, countries which are undergoing certain moments of crisis in their economies.

We are not imitating what Gorbachev is doing and what the Soviet Union is doing, but for several years we have been pursuing reforms in the economy. At the last CPCZ Congress, in particular, economic reform was openly discussed. If there is some caution here, it is because we do not want to get into an inflationary or crisis situation in the economy, as we observe in some socialist countries. And in politics we do not want to end up in chaos. In short, every step must be considered.

In the West many people support Gorbachev and strongly sympathize with him. In our country, too, we support his efforts. As far as reforms go, we have first to consider the situation in our country. We are in a very complicated period. In the economy it is necessary to switch from centrally controlled management to real economic management of enterprises. People must be readied for this, taught to think and act independently. And that is a new phase. Over the coming year we want to embark on these reforms throughout industry, throughout the economy. There are certain anxieties associated with this, especially in thought processes and the repetition of old habits created here over forty years.

We are used to the opinions of the West concerning our country. But it is not, I would say, an objective point of view.

We want to learn from the whole world, and from France. That great country has an enormous tradition: political, cultural, economic. It has great influence in the world. We want to learn from it, as we want to take good examples from the entire world.

You are right when you say that the Japanese and Americans are flooding the European market. But the influence of the Japanese is also great in the USA, the FRG, and other countries. That is why we would only welcome Europe finding the strength in itself, which could mutually be taken advantage of. After all, wasn't Europe the cradle of human civilization? It should stay that way. We should strive for that.

Mitterrand: I have one more question concerning human rights. There are differences between individual countries, but principles are the same everywhere. Each person should have the chance to express himself as he pleases. The limits to this right are few. These have to do with morality and so on. But apart from that, the strength of every state tends to be that it can also stand up to the challenges that face it.

Of course I do not want to give anyone instructions. We have cooperated in the past. But I really think it would be possible to speak, write, travel, in the way allowed by a democratic system. I would repeat: it is mostly an absolute source of strength. Of course there are various stages of development.

Tomorrow morning I have an opportunity to meet with some people who are in opposition to you, and I should be interested to hear their views. I have no intention of intervening in any way in these problems. I am in your country; I am your guest. But I think that rapprochement could move forward more rapidly in the sphere of civil law that is roughly the same [in the two countries]. You yourself suffered for the right to disagree.

Husák: I agreed, but they attributed opinions to me other than the ones I had.

Mitterrand: Perhaps that is even worse.

Husák: Mr. President, I agree with you, that it is necessary to go further in that direction. It is up to you whom you meet with in your free time, we can't influence that. We have only asked that you do not meet with Dubček.

Mitterrand: Is Dubček here?

Husák: He is in Bratislava, where he lives. He lived there before he became First Secretary, and after a few months he moved back there. He has a house, and a pension.

Mitterrand: Because he took part in the events of 1968, he has an enormous reputation in our country. But here he represents no political reality.

Husák: Mr. President, I am not trying to influence you, but there is a difference whether something is done by the First Secretary of the French Socialist Party, or by one of its members. For a certain period Dubček was the First Secretary of the CC CPCz. What happened need not have happened. Therein lies the delicate nature of that name. You need not agree with me, but I'm telling you our opinion. My request is, that the good words we have spoken here be gradually brought to life, that our colleagues in the area of foreign policy, in the areas of economics and politics, meet today or tomorrow and agree to concrete things, to set a future course for our cooperation. [...]

Source: Official transcript from Czechoslovak Foreign Ministry, December 1988, published in *Tři snidaně s François Mitterrandem/Trois petits-déjeuners avec François Mitterrand*, Prague, 1998, pp. 43–8.

Translated from the Czech and French by Todd Hammond.

Document 10

Prague, January 21, 1989

Letter from Cardinal Tomášek to Czechoslovak Premier Adamec,
on the state-organized violence against peaceful demonstrators

Dear Mr. Prime Minister,

In connection with the public demonstrations on Wenceslas Square over recent days and their repression by the police I have been approached by Czechoslovak Christians to express my point of view on these events and try from my side to calm the troubled waters of among the citizenry and the authorities alike. I regard it my duty as a citizen of this state and a representative of the Roman Catholic Church to submit the following statement and request to you: It is not true that the demonstrations on Wenceslas Square in recent days were provoked by foreign media and that the demonstrators were unruly citizens who had been led astray. On the contrary, the causes of those events must be sought in the shortcomings of the state leadership over the past decades. There is no need to repeat all the events of the recent past which have shown that Czechoslovak citizens do not enjoy complete freedom and that they are deliberately manipulated by the régime into doing – blindly and contrary to human dignity – only what is explicitly permitted or ordered and not demanding those things pertaining to the fundamental purpose of human life. The desire of our citizens over these past days to pay peaceful tribute to Jan Palach on the anniversary of his death – to a young man who loved and defended freedom and sacrificed his life in the hope that his fellow citizens would realize the price of freedom – is a true reflection of the views of our country and its longing for complete freedom. In using violence against demonstrations by freedom-loving citizens the police not only contravened our existing legislation, they also acted contrary to human decency. The police thereby exceeded their authority and damaged the reputation of our country at home and abroad.

Mr Prime Minister, I am writing to you, the supreme representative of our state and state executive, with the urgent request that you use your authority to direct the security forces to end their violent interference with the freedom of expression of ordinary citizens and give greater heed to the people's just demands. The elimination of our country's economic shortcomings requires a high level of commitment on the part of our citizens and that is unthinkable without social and legal security and an improvement in the moral climate. As a representative of the Church, which has experience of such questions, which goes back almost two millennia, and which has a deep awareness of the mentality of the nation and the individual human being, I believe that I am qualified to express an objective standpoint.

František Cardinal Tomášek
Archbishop of Prague

Source: Samizdat, Czechoslovak Documentation Centre, Scheinfeld, Palach Week collection.

Translated from the Czech by A. G. Brain [Alice and Gerald Turner].

Document 11
Prague, January 22, 1989
Statement by Charter 77
on violent police action against demonstrators during 'Palach Week'

On January 15, 1989, representatives of Czechoslovakia signed the Concluding Document in Vienna. In doing so, they pledged, among other things, "to respect the right of their citizens to contribute actively, individually or in association with others, to the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms" (principle 13e) and "to facilitate direct contacts and communication among those persons, organizations and institutions, within and between participating States, and remove, where they exist, legal and administrative impediments inconsistent with the provisions of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe" (principle 26).

Over the past week, police units, assisted by the People's Militia, have been brutally dispersing peaceful gatherings of citizens at Wenceslas Square in Prague. Even before that, certain representatives of the régime and a section of the press had initiated a campaign of lies and slander against the independent citizens' initiatives. They have been insinuating, and even openly asserting, that the leaders of the citizens' movement are seeking to drive young people to suicide. They write about "telephone threats" to place bombs in "a cinema", "a department store" and elsewhere. Someone is alleged even to have threatened to use firearms. The January 21 issue of *Rudé právo* claims that they are "unquestionably threats from the organizers and instigators of the events at Wenceslas Square". The paper does not divulge the names of the real organizers of those provocations, but instead accuses the independent initiatives, and chiefly, Charter 77. Then, in a manner reminiscent of the 1950s, the paper goes on to allege that the citizens' initiatives are directed from "hostile centres" abroad – thereby voicing its rejection of better international relations and showing disrespect to Czechoslovakia's partners in the Helsinki process.

A second, more moderate, propaganda ploy takes the line that "provocative actions impede the process of restructuring", that demonstrations solve nothing, that "we will accept discussions, but will not tolerate the unconstructive fomenting of hysteria".

Let us first of all summarize the facts.

Neither Charter 77 nor any of the other citizens' initiatives organized any demonstrations. Representatives of five initiatives agreed that on January 15, at 2 p.m., they would lay flowers on the spot where, twenty years ago, Jan Palach sacrificed his life as a warning against creeping capitulation and the progressive demoralization of Czechoslovak society, which is actually the very situation that came about and with which we are still saddled. There was to be a short ceremony of remembrance at Wenceslas Square attended by a few dozen friends. In addition, the independent initiatives invited their fellow-citizens to commemorate Palach by laying flowers on his grave in Všetaty on January 21, 1989, individually, and at a time of their own choosing. In other words they did not organize any mass demonstrations at the cemetery either.

It would seem that those elements of the régime who feel threatened by the positive developments in several countries of Eastern Europe, and by the improvement in

international relations – reflected also in a revival of civic awareness in Czechoslovakia – apparently decided to take this opportunity to launch an offensive against the independent initiatives. They rejected all further talks on alternative ways of honouring Palach's memory. The situation was aggravated by the letter announcing that another human torch would be lit on January 15. One option would have been to treat it as provocation. But the possibility could not be ruled out that someone had really decided to commit that desperate act. It had to be prevented. And since Czechoslovak Television turned down Václav Havel's offer of an appeal, he made use of foreign radio stations.

Accordingly, on January 15, the régime had a pretext for closing off Wenceslas Square. This was not the case on the subsequent days, however. On the Monday, it exploited the fact that some representatives of the citizens' initiatives – who had been held in custody the previous day – laid wreaths by the statue of St Wenceslas. Since the citizens in question had not made their individual intentions public they can hardly be accused of organizing a demonstration. Photographs of their arrest prove that the only other people present were passers-by. Immediately afterwards, hundreds of policemen, supported by armoured personnel carriers and water-cannon, burst on to the square, which was being used by thousands of pedestrians as is usual at that time of day. On Tuesday, January 17, following yet another invasion of Wenceslas Square by police units, the public, and particularly young people, were justifiably incensed by the authorities' behaviour. As a result, slogans were shouted condemning violence, and demanding freedom, democracy, and the release of those arrested. The slogans included: "Write the truth!", "Stop your lies!", "Long live Charter 77!", "Long live Havel!", "Human rights!", "A new government now!", "Bring back Dubček!", "Gorbachev is watching!", "Palach lives!", etc. On Wednesday and Thursday, thousands of people assembled quite spontaneously to discuss the situation. Let us emphasize that in spite of the brutal police intervention, especially on Thursday, January 19, when many people were injured, the demonstrators behaved calmly and with dignity. They did not attack the special strong-arm units, did not throw stones, did not damage any public property. On the contrary, when those fleeing the water-cannon knocked over litter bins, they stood them up again and put back the litter. Can such behaviour truly be described as "unconstructive fomenting of hysteria"?

In the circumstances, the brutality employed by the forces of order was not only unjustified, it was deliberately targeted at passers-by on Wenceslas Square. It would seem to have been an attempt not only to intimidate all expressions of independent thinking but also to foster the feeling in ordinary people that the régime can do what it likes with them. The régime's actions are tantamount to an open attack on society and on the evolution towards democracy within the systems based on the crumbling Stalinist model. They are also a blow to international rapprochement. The latter can only be achieved if human rights are accepted as commonly shared civilized values.

None of the independent citizens' initiatives in Czechoslovakia advocates violence. On the contrary, they all seek dialogue. We do not want the régime's leaders to goad society to an explosion that would not only sweep them away, like Gomulka or Gierek, but also harm society as a whole in the long run. Ever since it came into being twelve years ago, Charter 77 has been proposing to the powers-that-be just such a peaceful dialogue about how to bring our country's political practice in line with the

international human rights covenants. Their reaction, however, has been nothing but slander, persecution, police harassment and imprisonment. The independent initiatives' readiness to compromise was proved just a few weeks ago when they agreed to transfer a demonstration to mark the fortieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights from the city centre to Škroup Square, and by the calm and dignified way it was conducted. Similarly, the Independent Peace Association asked the Mayor of Prague to allocate them a hall to which they might transfer the discussion sessions which they hold on Wenceslas Square, the last Saturday afternoon of each month. Their request was refused.

Violence in place of dialogue is therefore the monopoly of the régime, or rather, those of its leaders who are responsible for the lamentable state of Czechoslovak society. We therefore demand that they resign at long last and make way for politicians capable of initiating a society-wide dialogue.

We demand the dismissal of all those officials responsible for the unjustified and brutal behaviour of the police and People's Militia towards peaceful gatherings of citizens. Chiefly this means the Federal Minister of the Interior and the chief of police for Prague and Central Bohemia.

In the absence of dialogue, not only is a democratic transformation of society unthinkable, it is equally impossible to solve today's most pressing economic and social problems. But if there is to be dialogue, all those arrested must be released forthwith and all charges against them dropped. There must be an end to the campaign of lies in the media. It means the opening up of the press to genuine debate as well as the registration and legalization of independent groups and journals. We are ready to put forward the names of people to take part in a constructive television debate with representatives of the authorities. With a view to allaying tension and paving the way for dialogue, we request the city authorities of Prague and the municipalities of all places where citizens so wish, to make available premises or halls where everybody may freely express their views and discuss the way forward for Czechoslovak society.

Charter 77 is not a political organization capable of proposing political blueprints. What it can offer is the experience of plurality in action and of dialogue between different political convictions, social attitudes and spiritual outlooks. It can offer this experience as a modest contribution towards the society-wide dialogue which is sorely needed.

Tomáš Hradílek – Charter 77 spokesperson

Charter 77 spokespersons Dana Němcová and Saša Vondra are being held in custody.

Source: Samizdat, Czechoslovak Documentation Centre, Scheinfeld, Palach Week collection.

Translated from the Czech by A. G. Brain [Alice and Gerald Turner].

Document 12

Moscow, January 29, 1989

Message from Yelena Bonner, Andrei Sakharov, Larisa Bogoraz, and Lev Timofeyev
to the heads of state attending the CSCE,
on the violent police action against Prague demonstrators during 'Palach Week'

We have learnt from the Western media and private sources that a campaign has recently been unleashed in Czechoslovakia against activists of the movement for democratization of that country. Peaceful demonstrations have been broken up and their participants beaten up and arrested. Many of those arrested face possible trial and imprisonment. In the same period, official spokesmen have been speaking cynically about the inadequacy of the measures taken and the government is threatening a further escalation of violence. One would think that such a blatant violation of the human rights agreements just concluded in Vienna would arouse protests from official figures in all the countries involved in the talks on European security and co-operation. So far, however, not only does the government-controlled media in the Soviet Union fail to condemn the actions of the Czechoslovak authorities, but its reporting of them supports the violence and slanders that society's democratic movement.

In this connection, we feel it necessary to voice our concern about such a blatant violation of the Vienna accords. We believe the events in Czechoslovakia and the manner in which they are reported in the Soviet press merit specific attention at the Paris meeting in May on the human dimension of the CSCE.

Yelena Bonner, Andrei Sakharov, Larisa Bogoraz, Lev Timofeyev

Source: samizdat, Czechoslovak Documentation Centre, Scheinfeld, Palach Week collection.

Translated from the Czech by A. G. Brain [Alice and Gerald Turner].

Document 13

Prague, February 2, 1989

Covering letter to a petition by Czechoslovak citizens,
on events in Prague, January 15-21, 1989 (excerpt)

The Federal Assembly of the CSSR, the President of the CSSR, Dr Gustáv Husák, the Federal Prime Minister, Ladislav Adamec, the Committee of the Czechoslovak Public for Human Rights and Humanitarian Co-operation, ČTK, the editors of *Rudé právo*

In mid-January, officers of the Interior Ministry and other armed units committed repeated assaults on the peaceful civilian population. A number of citizens have felt impelled to express their feelings on public issues, particularly in view of the fact that they are confronted every day with the Czechoslovak media's insulting campaign of disinformation about the aforementioned events which were of late the most blatant – albeit not isolated – example of how the observance of law in our country has deteriorated. A large number of complaints about the behaviour of police officers and People's Militia have been sent to the editorial boards of newspapers, radio and television, as well as to higher inspection authorities of the Government, the Communist Party and the trade unions, along with requests for explanation and redress. The authors of those communications, however, have neither had their views published nor received any truthful replies.

As a result, a petition has spontaneously originated setting out how a considerable section of the public views the situation and requesting certain measures to solve it. Once received, some of the sheets of signatures are being forwarded to the highest Czechoslovak authorities or to the Committee of the Czechoslovak Public for Human Rights; some are being held by a number of volunteers who are making a list of the signatories to be sent to these authorities and acting as guarantors of their authenticity. The wording of the petition varies in minor details, due evidently to different individual reactions to the events. The following is the most frequent version of the text:

In accordance with our right of petition enshrined in the Constitution of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic,

– we protest against the brutal assaults committed in the recent period by police (VB) and security police (StB) officers against innocent citizens;

– we demand the immediate release and exoneration of all persons unlawfully arrested in connection with the events in Prague during the period January 15–20, 1989;

– we emphatically repudiate the campaign of lies conducted by the Czechoslovak media concerning those events;

– we call for an immediate investigation of all unlawful actions and criminal offenses committed by officers of the Interior Ministry on those and other occasions, as well as a factual public account of the results of those investigations and the just punishment both of the culprits and those officials responsible for the police violence;

– we resolutely demand the initiation forthwith of an open nation-wide dialogue on the causes of the state of economic and social decline into which Czechoslovak society has sunk in recent decades and on ways to halt and overcome it.

Only then might we be able to take seriously the official slogans about "restructuring", "new thinking" and "the process of democratization". Only then might it be possible to believe that the signature of the CSSR's representative on the Concluding Document of the Vienna CSCE Meeting is not merely an attempt to deceive world public opinion.

[...]

Note: Attached to this document were the petition pages with the names, occupations, addresses, and signatures of signatories. By January 21, 1989, the petition had been signed by at least 2,101 people. See also Document 14, of February 16, 1989, which contains the latest number of signatories.

Source: samizdat, Czechoslovak Documentation Centre, Scheinfeld, Palach Week collection.

Translated from the Czech by A. G. Brain [Alice and Gerald Turner].

Document 14

Prague, February 16, 1989

Letter from petition organizers to the Czechoslovak Press Agency and editors
of *Rudé právo*,
on the latest number of signatories protesting police violence, January 15-21, 1989
(excerpt)

[...]

We wish to draw your attention to the fact that as of February 15, 1989, at least a further 1,266 persons, had appended their signatures, bringing the total of signatories to at least 3,367.

In terms of social stratification, the increase has mainly been in the manufacturing sector, that is to say, among technicians and manual workers, as well as among scientists and scholars. The proportion of artists has dropped markedly, because, from all reports, it was chiefly they who were responsible for this particular citizens' initiative. The present composition is therefore as follows:

Manual workers	23 %	774
Artists	12 %	404
Technical professions	10 %	337
Technicians	10 %	337
Students and apprentices	8 %	269
Civil servants	6 %	202
Pensioners and housewives	5 %	168
Persons in the arts & journalists	5 %	168
Scientists and scholars	5 %	168
Doctors and health workers	4.5 %	152
Teachers and social workers	4 %	135
Service employees	4 %	135
Liberal professions	2.5 %	84
Others	1 %	34

In terms of demographic stratification the representation of Prague inhabitants has fallen markedly in favour of citizens of other towns:

Prague	64 %
Provincial capitals and urban districts	23 %
Small towns	9 %
Rural	4 %

According to reliable sources, more and more citizens are signing the petition. Should there be any substantial change in the numbers or the social stratification of the signatories we will once more endeavour to make these known. We believe that in view of the scope of this initiative and the content of the petition, the latter may be

regarded as a "citizens' suggestion", and for this reason we are also forwarding a copy of our communication to the Prosecutor General of the CSSR.

We vouch for the authenticity of the signatures entered on the attached list. We ask you to acknowledge receipt of this communication and take the necessary steps to publish it, along with our previous letter.

Jiří Exner, Nad Kajetánkou 1, Prague 6
Markéta Fialková, Leninova 660/93, Prague 6
Vladimír Šebek, Pražská 4, Neveklov
[...]

Source: samizdat, Czechoslovak Documentation Centre, Scheinfeld, Palach Week collection.

Translated from the Czech by A. G. Brain [Alice and Gerald Turner].

Moscow, February 1989

Memorandum from the International Department of the Central Committee CPSU to
Alexander Yakovlev,
on the strategy of relations with European socialist countries

ON THE STRATEGY OF RELATIONS WITH EUROPEAN SOCIALIST COUNTRIES

1. Our relations with socialist countries, including the allies of the Warsaw Treaty Organization, entered a difficult, critical, stage. The transition to the principle of equality and mutual responsibility, which began in April 1985, and was affirmed during the Working Meeting in Moscow in 1986, gave us an opportunity to remove many old layers, and to strike out the perceptions of our conservatism. *Perestroika*, the development of democratization, of openness, confirmed the role of the Soviet Union as the leader in the process of Socialist renewal. More and more, we are influencing our friends by our own example, by the political means.

However, having broken the former type of relations, we have not established a new type yet. And the problem is not only that the process of restructuring the interactions between the socialist countries on the basis of "balance of interests," which we proclaimed, is objectively difficult, and, subjectively, it creates an impression in the eyes of our friends, that we are abandoning them, leaving behind the priority character of relations with socialist countries. The problem is that the transition to the "balance of interests" is seriously aggravated by the prolonged crisis of the model of socialism which was developed in its main features in the Soviet Union in Stalin's time, and then transferred to the countries that were liberated by us, or with our decisive participation. Their political system still suffers from a lack of legitimacy, and the stability-oriented socio-economic system is incapable of giving an adequate response to the challenge of the scientific and technological revolution.

The relaxation of tensions, the diminishing of the threat of war, to which the socialist countries contributed in a decisive way, caused deep changes in their national security priorities. The economic factor, the ability of a country to join and to assimilate into the world economy, moved to the top of their priorities, because not a single country can overcome the growing gap on its own, individually, and because the socialist economic integration is clearly in a stalemate, so that if the countries stay with it, they would risk being left out of the world development. This constitutes the main national interest of the majority of the socialist countries right now, and it should be primarily taken into account in our relations with them.

The European socialist countries found themselves in a powerful magnetic field of the economic growth and social well-being of West European states. Against this background, on the one hand, their own achievements grew dim, and on the other hand, the real problems and difficulties that exist in the West, are practically imperceptible. The constant comparing and contrasting of the two worlds, of their ways of life, production, cultures, entered our life thanks to the means of mass communication, and there is no way around it. And we are speaking about the countries in which they still remember the times when they were close or on the same level of development with the West European states.

The influence of this magnetic field will probably grow even stronger with the beginning of functioning of the common European market [in 1992].

As a consequence, in a number of socialist countries, the process of rejection of the existing political institutions, and of the ideological values by the societies, is already underway now. Nonconformism is spreading more and more widely among the youth, and it is moving from a passive, kitchen level, toward a civil and political one.

2. The difficult and transitional character of this stage comes from the situation where the ruling parties cannot rule in the old way any more, and the new "rules of the game" – of managing the group interests that are pouring out, of finding a social consensus – have not been worked out yet. And to the extent that this process is postponed and prolonged, the parties could find themselves in more and more difficult situation.

In the context of general tendencies that are observable in all socialist countries, there are specific features of specific countries, [a fact] which requires a differentiated response from us.

In Poland and Hungary the events develop in the direction of pluralism, toward a creation of coalition, parliamentary forms of governing. In these circumstances, the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party (HSWP), and the Polish United Workers' Party (PUWP) can count on preserving their positions only in a framework of political alliances. A lot will depend on whether they are able to involve a part of the opposition in a constructive cooperation. Taking into account the fact that a considerable part of the population of Poland is tired of crises, the probability of an evolutionary development here is higher. In Hungary, at the same time, notwithstanding their seemingly better living standards, the situation might unfold in most unexpected ways.

A part of the party activists in both the HSWP, and the PUWP, expressed their willingness to use force in the case of a rapid deterioration of the situation. There is no unity of opinion on all of these issues in the leadership of the HSWP, and the PUWP, therefore, we should expect the rise in factional fighting there.

In Czechoslovakia the tension is rising considerably in the recent times. Here the 1968 syndrome is still present, which interferes with the party's ability to define its position toward *perestroika*, especially in the sphere of democratization and openness.

A significant part of the leadership leans toward employing administrative measures in the struggle against the opposition moods. In general, there is a tendency to begin changes in the economy, and to postpone the reform in the sphere of democratization, and openness until a later stage.

The stabilizing factor is that so far they managed to preserve a relatively high standard of living in the country, although they achieve it with more and more effort now.

In Bulgaria, there is, in essence, a simulation of *perestroika*, which is, to a large extent, a consequence of T. Zhivkov's personal ambitions. The loud declarations about a comprehensive reconsideration of the Marxist-Leninist theory, and about creation of a new model of socialism in principle, lead in practice to endless reorganization, shuffling of personnel, and to the further tightening of the screws. All this discredits the party, socialism, and casts a shadow on our *perestroika*. Nonetheless, T. Zhivkov still controls the situation rather well by employing methods of political manipulation, and by relying on a well-developed administrative apparatus, even though discontent is growing in the party and in the country.

In the GDR a particularly complex situation is developing against the background of seeming well-being. Even though the GDR can be distinguished from other socialist countries by the better state of the economy, and the standard of living, the economic

situation of the country is deteriorating. There is the pressure of debt, and the growing dependence on the FRG. The party leadership, to a large extent under the influence of personal ambitions, is striving to avoid the problems of renewal. In giving critical assessments of the conservatism of the GDR leadership, one has to keep in mind that it has some objective basis. The GDR was founded not on the national, but on the ideological, on the class, basis, and therefore, a rapid transition to democratization, openness, free speech, might be accompanied by special problems in this country.

In Romania, there is still the oppressive atmosphere of the personality cult and of Ceausescu's authoritarian rule. Striving to isolate the country from our influence, he is now trying to dress in the robes of a "fighter for the purity of socialism," and makes indirect arguments against us. Some eruptions of discontent are possible in the country, but it is unlikely that they would become widespread now. The situation will, most likely, change only with Ceausescu's departure, which could bring along quite painful developments.

Yugoslavia entered a phase of political crisis in the context of very deep economic problems; this could lead to a substantial weakening of the positions of the UJY [Union of Yugoslav Communists], and even to a split of the federation.

3. Several possible scenarios of further development of socialist countries are distinguishable now. One of them is a smooth movement toward democratization and the new form of socialism under the leadership of the ruling parties. Under this scenario, some concessions regarding the issue of governing, significant growth in self-governing, strengthening of the role of representative organs in the political life, bringing the constructive opposition in to governing the society, and even possibly its turning into one of the forces contesting the power, cannot be excluded. This road toward a parliamentary, or a presidential, socialist republic in some countries (PPR, HPR, CSSR) would be preferable for us. If the initiative for democratic changes originates with the ruling party, the chances of preserving internal stability, and obligations to the allies are very high.

Another scenario – is a way of leaps and bounds, which would be a direct continuation of the preceding development, when the ruling party makes concessions after a new mini-crisis. This scenario lets us avoid the worst – a political eruption – but it moves the party away, to the sidewalks of the political life, and strengthens the pessimism, the disbelief in socialism, stimulates the demands of the opposition, and gradually prepares the society for a leaving the framework of socialism. The transition of a country to the traditional mixed economy and free play of political forces would not, in all cases, lead it to abandon its obligations to the allies, but in such a case the foreign policy orientation of that country would become a subject of intense political struggle.

In the end, a third way is possible too – preservation of the existing system of governing in the society along with suppression of the social and political activity of the masses. Under this scenario, it would be characteristic to undertake an openly conservative course, limited reforms, mostly in the management of the economy, and to actively reject the Soviet *perestroika*. In the future, such a course does not exclude a violent resolution of the crisis situation via a social explosion with unpredictable consequences for the country's internal and foreign policy. The main catalyst of such a crisis could be an increase in the dissatisfaction of the population as a result of economic deterioration, and worsening living standards.

4. In this critical, transitional period, our relations with socialist countries continue to remain our priority. But not in the sense, which we implied before, when the Soviet Union and its allies were, in essence, in international isolation, and so the relations with

each other considerably outweighed our ties with the rest of the world. Since then, the new political thinking, the energetic efforts undertaken by the USSR and its allies in the recent years have rapidly changed the international situation. It is natural that the relative weight of our relations with the socialist countries in our foreign policy became different.

However, that does not change the fundamental fact that the degree of our interdependence with the socialist countries remains higher than that with the rest of the world, and that the internal stability and the influence of socialism in world affairs depend on that.

From a geopolitical point of view, the importance of European socialist countries for the Soviet Union was determined by the fact that from the very beginning they played a role of a certain security belt, which created a strategic cover for the center of socialism. Today, notwithstanding all the changes in the international situation, this role of Eastern Europe, and especially of the GDR, Poland and Czechoslovakia, remains unchanged to some extent.

It is a complicated question – what could and should be the forms of our influence on the socialist countries in the new conditions?

Authoritarian methods, direct pressure have clearly outlived itself. In the political sphere, even in the case of a sharp deterioration of situation in one of the countries – and we cannot exclude such a possibility today – it is very unlikely that we would be able to employ the methods of 1956 and 1968, both as a matter of principle, but also because of unacceptable consequences. Use of force would be admissible only in one case – if there were a direct and clear armed interference of external forces in the internal developments of a socialist country. Therefore, essentially, our only methods of leverage could be our political and economic ties.

5. The state of economic relations assumes a growing political importance. Their role is evident for the majority of socialist countries. And for us they have a great importance also. We should decisively discard the stereotype that those countries are our dependents. In contradistinction to the routine perceptions, the economic effects of our trade with European CMEA countries is rather favorable for us. It can be seen from the following examples.

Share of goods imported from the CMEA countries in the overall volume of goods consumed in the USSR:

Metal rolling machinery – 40-50%; food technologies – 40%, textile technology – 50%, chemical industry technologies – 35%; lumber and woodwork equipment – about 30%; polygraphic equipment – more than 40%; meat, meat products, vegetables and other produce – up to 10%; non-food consumer products – 10-15%.

According to our calculations, we get up to 4 rubles of profit for each ruble of value of oil sold in the CMEA countries (the effectiveness of oil exports to these countries in 1987 was 493%). Apart from that, by buying food products and consumer goods in those countries, we have a substantial budgetary profit when we sell them in the USSR at our retail prices. Thus in 1987, for each ruble of expenses on the import of meat and meat products we had the following profit from the domestic sales – 96 kopecks, cotton textiles – 1.76 rubles, coats and dresses – 2.24 rubles, leather shoes – 2 rubles, personal care items – 2.92 rubles, china – 2.81 rubles, furniture – 89 kopecks, and so on.

The conditions for grain purchases, in particular, in the countries of CMEA (Hungary, Bulgaria) are more favorable for us than on the world market. For example, we need to sell approximately 1.45-1.5 tons of oil to buy a ton of wheat on the world market for convertible currency; to buy it in the CMEA countries mentioned above, we would need to sell approximately one ton of oil.

At the same time, the old forms of economic cooperation have been to a large extent exhausted. The volume of commodity turnover is decreasing. The USSR is already unable to satisfy the demand of the CMEA countries for increases of deliveries of fuel and raw materials; and on a number of vitally important resources—oil, for example—we are actually planning to decrease the deliveries in the coming five-year period. We are also unable to provide these countries with modern technology. As a result of drop in prices for energy resources (mostly oil), by the end of the next five-year period, the Soviet Union could end up with a negative trade balance with European CMEA countries of more than 7 billion rubles.

The issue of transition to integration has been already raised. It is especially sharp for our CMEA partners. Without actively joining the processes of international economic integration they would be simply incapable of ensuring a radical renewal of their economies.

It appears that the strategic goals established for this sphere earlier – the course for creating a CMEA common market and appropriate instruments (convertibility of currencies, wholesale trade, and others) [–] continue to be fully relevant. However, their realization has been unsatisfactory. Many joint decisions notwithstanding, industrial cooperation is clearly stagnant. The comprehensive program of scientific and technological cooperation of the CMEA countries, which raised such hopes, has been practically foiled.

After the Working Summit in 1986 the joint work of CMEA countries somewhat picked up. Direct ties between enterprises were developed, and joint enterprises were established. However, the new forms of interaction have not had any significant impact on the volume and structure of exchange (direct ties represent less than 1% of the turnover volume).

The temptation to reorient the economies of the socialist countries toward the West grows stronger. Export of products of best quality to the West has become a norm. Often CMEA countries compete with each other on the capital markets.

Experience shows that it is impossible to solve the problem of economic integration with the help of general, even the best, programs. It is necessary to accumulate relevant material, organizational, legal, and other types of prerequisites in all the countries. Success here will depend, first of all, on cardinal changes in the Soviet economy, in its structure, in the economic mechanism, and in expansion of its export potential, which would take at least several years.

What could we do in the existing situation? First of all, we should not allow our prestige as a reliable economic partner to weaken. Each breach of contract – and such cases are becoming more frequent – puts socialist countries in a difficult, sometimes even hopeless, situation. Accumulation of similar facts in the economic sphere leads to unfavorable for us political consequences. We should overcome this illness, up to the point where we should reconsider the proposals of our Ministries on such a complicated issue as the volume of our oil deliveries for the next five-year period. This should be done in the spirit of our former agreements.

Coordination of efforts for the conversion of the military economy could become one of the new channels of economic influence on the socialist countries, especially because the military-industrial complex of the socialist countries is integrated to a higher degree than their civilian economies. One more opportunity would be to develop a common concept of alleviating foreign debt, which is extremely large in a number of socialist countries.

Lastly, when we intensify our economic ties with the West, it is important to actively try to bring our socialist partners into those contacts, in order to overcome the impression, which some of them have, that we are losing our attention to the fraternal countries. We probably should hold a specific discussion with them to talk about a possibility of their joining in the realization of projects that are carried out with the help of Western credits, to finally work out a coordinated strategy of integrating the socialist commonwealth into the global economic relations.

6. A number of new tasks have emerged in the sphere of political cooperation. Just several years ago we would have considered many of the developments that are underway now in the socialist countries as absolutely unacceptable for us. Today we need a deeper, more flexible, and differentiated approach to what is useful for us, what is admissible, and what is unacceptable. At the same time, it is important that we realistically assess our opportunities, find out exactly where we can realistically have an influence, and where our interference could only aggravate the situation.

The measure of socialism in the transformations that are underway now in the socialist countries is a difficult question. Some of them are allowing not only the extensive development of market relations, but also forms of private property, and widespread inflow of foreign capital. And still, it appears that we should not exaggerate the danger of one of the countries simply switching to the capitalist way of development. The roots developed by socialism are very deep. Such a transition would mean a fast breakup of all the economy [and] its structures, development of crises, rapid deterioration of living standards for the majority of the population. And it is very unlikely that the West would be inclined to take the countries whose economy was marked by crisis elements, and large foreign debts on its balance.

It is characteristic that the ideas that are presented from time to time about the "marshallization" [i.e., a new "Marshall Plan"—ed.] of certain socialist countries (in particular, of Hungary and Poland, for example in the form of a conversion of their debt into foreign investment) so far have not enjoyed any noticeable support in the West — due to the volume of expenses, and to unpredictability of economic and political consequences. Although we should not completely discard this possibility in the [future], we should be more concerned about the possibility of an economic collapse or anarchic explosions in the context of social tensions and lack of [future] prospects. This concerns the countries where the regimes continue to stay in power by further tightening the screws (Romania, KPDR [North Korea]).

We need to give special comprehensive consideration to the processes of formation of the structures of political pluralism, of the coalition and parliamentary type, of legalization of the opposition, that are unfolding in a number of countries. Of course, this is an uncharted road, which requires that the parties possess both the strength of principles, and tactical flexibility; the ability to lead the process, and not to leave it up to the opposition forces.

The lessons of several crises have shown that the main danger posed by an opposition is not the fact of its existence in itself, but that it could unite all kinds of forces and movements in the society which are dissatisfied by the existing situation on a negative, destructive platform. Therefore, pulling a part of the opposition into the official structure, assigning to it the responsibility for constructive solutions for the problems that have accumulated, could play a stabilizing role.

In the existing difficult circumstances the processes of our perestroika have a special influence on the internal processes in the socialist countries. In some sense, there

also, it created a new situation. Whereas before, any mass expressions of dissatisfaction with the existing situation, which flared up from time to time in the socialist countries, assumed an anti-Soviet character almost automatically, now such a direct relationship has disappeared. A serious blow was dealt to the idea of impossibility to reform the unidimensional socialism that finds its basis in the experience and example of the Soviet Union.

Perestroika has brought us objectively closer to the countries which are trying to reform their economic and political system (China, Yugoslavia, Poland, Hungary), but at the same time has created certain problems in the relations with some of our traditionally close allies, whose leadership continues to rely on the administrative and command methods.

In this situation we have to face the question of how to build our relations with the parties and the countries, leadership of which exhibits a reserved attitude toward our perestroika (the GDR, Romania, Cuba, KPDR). Here, clearly, we need patience and tolerance, we need to understand the positions of such parties as the [SED], the Communist Party of Cuba, which, due to their specific, and sometimes even front-like circumstances of development, experience particular problems in accepting and implementing the processes of economic restructuring, and the democratization of the society.

7. The general development of world politics and the increased differentiation of the national interests of socialist countries require that we make corrections to the approach to coordination of our joint steps in the international arena.

Most importantly, the process of deconfrontation in the world, the decreasing weight of the military-strategic and the increasing weight of political factors of security, objectively increase the role of our friends. And it is not only because the reductions of conventional weapons in Europe moved to the forefront of the all-European process in all its dimensions, taking into account the new quality that was conferred on it by the Vienna meeting. Without the active and positive participation of our allies progress on those issues is simply impossible. Therefore, we can speak about not just mutual information, about informing sometimes in the last minute, but about preliminary coordination of our actions.

However, the problem is much bigger. Essentially, the period when the reduction of military threat was achieved primarily within the framework of Soviet-American relations is not that far from its logical conclusion. Internationalization of major international issues is growing. And if that is so, then friends' advice, [and] consultations with them should involve not only concrete topics under consideration, but also the entire complex of the issues of world economy and politics. Only in this case they can have a real, not just ostentatious, feeling of belonging to the development and implementation of the common socialist foreign policy. At the same time, our initiatives would assume a more respectable, and in some ways, considering the experience of our friends, more substantive, character.

However, there is also another side of this. The pluralism of interests of different socialist countries is more and more noticeable. Reduction of military budgets in some of them takes on a rate that is ahead of our own, whereas, in others it creates anxiety for the future of their own rather developed and integrated with us military industry. In a similar fashion, the humanization of international relations, introduction of human rights in international relations, is perceived by some of the governments as a threat to socialism; for others it serves as an additional impulse to enter the road to "openness" in their own

countries.

The difference of opinions sometimes leads to flashes of nationalist feelings, that aggravate relations between the countries (Romania-Hungary). It could be anticipated that internal socio-economic and political difficulties would strengthen the desire to play on the sensitive strings of nationalism in leaderships of certain countries.

Taking into account all these different interests, it is not at all necessary to try to achieve consensus as a goal in itself at any price during our discussions and consultations with our friends. We should not allow a situation where one of the countries would tie our hands as a matter of their national ambitions. Each country should have a right to preserve its freedom of action, of course, along with explaining its position to the allies and substantiating it. Also, it is not in our interest to transfer any kind of aggravated nationalist tensions between our friends to the multilateral basis, especially if such an “argument” involves us directly. Of course, it is a different matter, if we are faced with an opposition of many, or even the majority of the socialist countries to our action – in such a case it would be a signal for us to have another look if that step was the right one.

8. In spite of the fact that we have repeatedly stressed that we had discarded our command-administrative approach to socialist countries, the syndrome of such an approach persists in the thinking of our friends. At the same time, the conservative part of the leadership would like, in essence, for the Soviet Union, to continue its role as some kind of “protector” of socialist countries. However, a significant portion of the public expresses its anxiety concerning the existing situation in which they see vestiges of such a paternalism. This finds its expression in different attitudes toward the presence of the contingents of our troops in the socialist countries, and it is linked with the influence on the internal processes, not with external threats to their security. There is continuing anxiety about how the Soviet Union would react in the situation of a political crisis in one of the countries, in which the ruling party’s control of the situation would be threatened. There is dissatisfaction with the still-present inequality in the military mechanism of the Warsaw Treaty, leadership of which practically represents a Soviet military headquarters with purely formal presence of representatives of other countries.

Here lies a significant reservoir of our possible steps for removing the above mentioned “irritants”, including ensuring a real participation of our friends in the military mechanism of the Warsaw Treaty, eliminating the negative internal political aspect of the presence of our troops, possibly through “internationalization.” It would be advisable to direct our efforts to achieve a situation where in some countries, where it is necessary, they would have joint formations of troops of those countries of the Warsaw Treaty which agree to do it, instead of the Soviet troops.

It is most important to work out a balanced approach to the problem of the possibility of our interference in the event of a political crisis in one of the countries. It presupposes our affirmation of the principle of freedom of choice as a universal basis of the world order. But at the same time, it should leave a certain vagueness as far as our concrete actions are concerned under various possible turns of events, so that we do not stimulate the anti-socialist forces to try to “test” the fundamentals of socialism in a given country.

Finally, it is necessary to take into account the growing attention of our friends to the still remaining “white spots” in our relations; this interest will most probably become even more pronounced this year [1989] in connection with the 50th anniversary of the beginning of World War II, and the signing of the Soviet-German pact. It would be expedient to work on our interpretation of the nature and the origins of World War II,

employing the newly defined approaches to the assessment of our policy in the 1930-40s, and to discuss it with our friends ahead of time.

9. In the present circumstance we could formulate the following “minimum program” for our relations with socialist countries in the transitional period:

First of all, we should have a balanced and unprejudiced analysis of the development of socialist countries, of their relations, and we should prepare scenarios of our reaction to possible complications or sharp turns in their policies ahead of time, at the same time decisively rejecting the old stereotypes, and avoiding willful improvisations, which did us a lot of harm in the past. We should step up our joint study of and efforts to find ways out of the existing crisis situation, of the new vision of socialism and of modern capitalism, and of the possibilities and the limits of their interaction, mutual influence, and mutual assimilation.

Second, we should keep in mind that the significance of our contacts with the party and state leadership of the socialist countries is preserved and even increases in significance, especially because in the existing situation our friends could develop a “complex of being abandoned,” a suspicion that the priority of relations with friends proclaimed by us is not filled with real meaning. Inter-party contacts, if they are accompanied by an open analysis of problems, discussion, exchange of information about intentions, would allow us to directly feel the pulse of the fraternal parties, to give them moral support.

Third, in explaining the essence of *perestroika* policy, we should carefully try to avoid any artificial transfer of our experience to the context of other countries, which could be perceived by them as a relapse to the administrative-command methods, restriction of their independence, and could eventually lead to undesirable circumstances.

Fourth, by strictly adhering to our obligations we should preserve the existing ties that link the socialist countries to the USSR, and try to ensure that the inevitable and to a certain extent beneficial for common interests process of integrating the socialist economies with the West develops in a balanced, coordinated way, is not accompanied by unacceptable economic and political costs, and would strengthen integration processes among socialist countries.

Fifth, taking into account the key role of the armed forces in the case of a possible deterioration of the situation, it is important to keep up the genuine partnership between the armies of the socialist countries both on a bilateral basis and in the framework of the Warsaw Treaty, by eliminating all the elements of inequality.

Sixth. We should continue our line for decreasing our military presence in the socialist countries, including in the future, the possibility of a complete withdrawal of our troops from Hungary and Czechoslovakia. We should consider the scenario of “internationalization” of the remaining troops, of creation of joint formations.

Seventh. It is certainly in our interest that the changes that are ready to happen in the socialist countries, with all the possible variation, develop, as much as possible, without extra shocks and crises, in the framework of socialist solutions. But we have to account for a possibility of a different turn of events. In such a situation, it would be important that the ideological differences on the issues of the renewal of socialism, and finding ways out of the crisis situations that have manifested themselves in the socialist world, did not assume a character of conflict, and did not have negative influence on the relations between our states, did not lead to antagonism toward the Soviet Union.

This presupposes making a distinction between the interest of preserving the ruling communist parties at the wheel of power by all means, and the interest of preserving

alliance relations with those countries.

Eighth. By making use of the favorable opportunities created by *perestroika*, which overturned the stereotypes of “Moscow conservatism,” we should actively seek channels for contacts with all the forces that make claims for participation in the realization of power in the socialist countries. Contacts [with] churches are becoming more important because the church influence is on the rise in the socialist countries.

* * *

In general, at this stage, it is particularly important to reject the old stereotypes in our approaches, which outlived themselves. If a country disagrees with us, and sometimes even seriously – this does not necessarily mean that it is turning to the West; if the role of the party in one of the countries is questioned – this does not yet determine that it would definitely distance itself from us. The dialectics of the real processes, as our experience has shown, is much more complex. Yugoslavia and China “distanced” themselves from us some time ago, but they have not turned into capitalist states. In Poland, the party can realistically become just one, and maybe not even the main, [part] of the power structures; however, the geopolitical situation of the country is such that even the opposition understand the necessity of preserving some form of alliance with our country.

All this presupposes studying and trying to predict concrete scenarios of development of the situation in every country, including the most extreme ones, making decisions as to what those scenarios could mean for our relations – and implementing them in practical action on this basis.

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Memorandum from the Bogomolov Institute to Alexander Yakovlev,
on changes in Eastern Europe and their impact on the USSR

CHANGES IN EASTERN EUROPE AND THEIR IMPACT ON THE USSR

Societies in Eastern European countries are beginning to change their character. Attempts to build socialism with Stalinist and neo-Stalinist methods, not without an active involvement of the Soviet side, ended up in a deadlock. This situation brings about an aggravation of contradictions and crisis developments. The degree and scale of conflicts vary: from the more or less hidden social-political tension, pregnant with sudden explosions, to the chronic crisis without any visible ways out – the crisis that signals the beginning of disintegration of the social-political system and that does not exclude cataclysms as well. Such processes are irreversible, they result from the long-term evolution of the regime and in a majority of countries they favor the transition to a new model of socialism but also can possibly lead to a collapse of the socialist idea. In the last year or year and a half there has been a rapid acceleration of developments in Eastern Europe, and there are more elements of unpredictability there.

General characterization of social-political processes in the countries of Eastern Europe

Crisis symptoms are visible in all spheres of public life inside those countries as well as in relations among them.

In the people's economy the intensity of these symptoms vary from the slow-down of economic growth, a widening social and technological gap with the West, a gradual proliferation of deficit on domestic markets and the growth of external debts (GDR, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria) all the way to the real threat of economic collapse (Yugoslavia, Poland). Particularly dangerous is open and hidden inflation that has become a common phenomenon and only varies by degree: creeping and galloping inflation is predominant, but one cannot exclude its escalation into hyper-inflation (Poland, Yugoslavia). A "black market economy" and corruption is gaining in strength everywhere, and periodically bursts out in scandals and "affairs" that carry political connotations.

In the political sphere the crisis manifests itself first of all in the dramatic decline of positions of the ruling communist parties, in some cases so dramatic that one can speak about a crisis of confidence in them. Some of these parties undergo an internal crisis: their membership is decreasing, since rank-and-file members do not want to share responsibility for decisions which had nothing to do with them. The old social base is eroding. Infighting in the leadership is pregnant with split-ups (most probably in Yugoslavia, also there are obvious symptoms in Hungary, low-tone signals are in Poland and Czechoslovakia). Under pressure from multiplying and growing alternative political structures (embryos of new parties, clubs, and movements) [the Socialist Worker Party of Hungary] and PUWP [Polish United Workers' Party] have become so weak that they have to share power and accept coalition forms of government, to agree to a transition to a genuine multi-party system and to the legalization of dissenting opposition forces. In somewhat other forms this occurs in the UJC [Union of Yugoslav Communists]. Alternative forces develop an international character. Conservatives acquire international contacts (for instance, in GDR

– CSSR [Czechoslovakia] – SRR [Socialist Republic of Romania]).

Very much crisis-ridden is the sphere of ideology. Its old forms block the renewal of the socialist order and provide the rationale for counter-reformism (GDR, Romania, Czechoslovakia). Dogmatic social sciences are incapable of working out a convincing ideological rationale for long-needed reforms. In public opinion – particularly among the youth – spreads apathy, a sense of doom, nostalgia for pre-Revolutionary (i.e. pre-World War 2 or even earlier) times, a lack of faith in the potential of socialism. Extreme manifestations of these sentiments can be seen in increasing emigration (Poland, Yugoslavia, Hungary, GDR, Czechoslovakia, Romania). Positions of some social groups are getting dangerously radical; there is a growing trend towards anarchy and violence (Poland, Hungary, GDR, Czechoslovakia, the Yugoslav Confederation). The spread of video equipment, satellite broadcasting, and personal computers with printers brings about the explosion of an independent culture (Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia).

Degradation of common ties take place in various forms. Visibly lower is the interest in present-day forms of integration and also the hopes to increase substantially its effectiveness through direct ties and cooperation in technology. Due to profound structural problems and flaws in the mechanism of trade cooperation, the bilateral trade exchange with the USSR is going down, which produces very negative consequences for the national economies of our partners and forms additional obstacles in the way of economic reforms (underutilized capacities in most countries, inflation of mutual in-kind [*klivingovoie*] indebtedness). In some cases inter-ethnic relations have grown worse: the Hungarian-Romanian conflict became open; mutual antipathy between Germans and Poles, Poles and Czechs, Czechs, Slovaks and Hungarians has increased.

Two groups of countries stand out by the degree of crisis tendencies.

In Poland, Hungary, and Yugoslavia crisis processes are developing intensely and openly: having broken to the surface once, they have acquired a certain inertia. The acuteness of the social-political situation in these countries stems first of all from the mass scale of workers' protests. "A new working movement" is being born. Its scope is such that it is impossible any longer to treat the strikes as sporadic excesses or, as was the case of Poland, to attribute them to the influence of anti-socialist forces inside and from abroad. The strikes obviously escalate into the ongoing social conflict between the working strata's and the party and government techno-bureaucracy. Rank-and-file communists often actively take the side of strikers. Trade union movements are getting rapidly politicized (some symptoms of it can also be observed in Bulgaria and Czechoslovakia). Official trade unions are beginning to play the role of the legal opposition; independent trade unions are proliferating; trade union pluralism is taking root.

In all three countries living standards of very substantial parts of the population are sinking, their revenues are shrinking to the social minimum and further down. Simultaneously differentiation in income is becoming more pronounced, and a speculative strata is emerging.

Public opinion comes to the realization of the process heretofore hidden from it, such as the fact of the continuing exploitation of the employed labor. Some leaders of the UJC have publicly admitted the existence of the struggle for redistribution of added value produced by workers, and the fact of their exploitation (for instance, through inflation). Discussion about specific forms of exploitation has begun in Poland.

The public consciousness of the working class and other working people is increasingly being formed [by forces and factors] outside of the ruling communist parties. The pressure from "below" plays an ambiguous role: by pushing the leadership to reforms,

it simultaneously curbs and even sometimes blocks attempts to revitalize the economy, to modernize structures of public production at the expense of income growth and living standards. When an ongoing crisis erupts from time to time (“crisis inside crisis”) without getting a peaceful and constructive resolution, problematic and even deadlock-type situations emerge as a result. The probability of social explosions is getting higher.

The social-class nature of the ruling parties that are undertaking the turn toward radical reforms is in question now, since it is very problematic that they will be able to rely on the entire working class, particularly on its largest groups employed in the coal industry, metallurgy, ship-building industry, and other traditional industries which go under in the whole world. Besides, it is well known that Marxist-Leninist parties traditionally saw their historic mission first of all in expressing the interests of workers as the most progressive class whose interests objectively coincide with the interests of the working people. Under present conditions this understanding has been increasingly complicating practical steps towards the revitalization and modernization of the economy, since short-time material interests of the working class (at least its substantial part – employed in physical labor) clash with longer-term interests of society at large... The governments of Poland and Hungary are seeking to accelerate the changes in the structures of public production, by carrying out the policy of “socialist Thatcherism.” Since such a policy hurts substantial segments of the working class and lacks ideological justification, the workers, among them the rank-and-file party members, rise in protest while referring to old ideological formulas.

The ruling parties fail chronically and badly in their reaction to the course of social-political developments. None of them has so far proved to be capable of seizing the initiative. Apparently this owes to the lack of clear prospects for renewal, the lack of a contemporary socialist vision. So far this problem has been alleviated because of the absence of alternative constructive platforms. But today the opposition has most obviously been attracting the intellectual potential (Poland, Hungary) and has been developing its own ideology and political program.

The developing situations in Yugoslavia, Hungary, and Poland touch on geopolitical and geo-strategic interests of the Soviet Union to a varying degree. Whatever would be the outcome of the Yugoslav crisis, it would only marginally affect our society, without any serious direct ideological effect. On the contrary, the course of events in Hungary and especially in Poland will affect us directly and very painfully by buttressing the position of [our] conservative forces and breeding doubts on the chances of the survival of *perestroika*.

In Czechoslovakia, GDR, Bulgaria and Romania (all the differences in economic position notwithstanding) analogous internal social-political conflicts are still implicit, hidden, even though they are clearly detectable. They tend, however, to exacerbate, and there are the telling symptoms that demonstrate (to political scientists) real harbingers of tension:

- Under-fulfillment of excessively optimistic plans and programs (particularly regarding consumption), unexpected growth of inflation, declining indicators of living standards, proliferation of uncontrollable spontaneous processes in economic life.
- Growing dissatisfaction with the existing situation in the sphere of distribution of material goods and with equality of opportunities, aggravation of the problem of social justice.
- Intensifying discussions at party congresses, more frequent resignations of politicians, cadre cadrille [*chekharda*].

- Fermentation in the intelligentsia, particularly in its creative components.
- Exacerbation of the generational conflict.
- Crisis of morale, proliferation of social pathologies (crime, drug-addiction, etc.).
- Accumulating feelings of social frustration (deprivation) in large social groups, spilling over into “witch hunts,” sometimes into aggressive ethnic conflicts, anti-worker and anti-intellectual sentiments.

These symptoms are manifesting themselves in various combinations and at different volumes. Social-political conflicts remain hidden largely due to harsh controls exercised by repressive structures over public life and to strict limitations on the mass media. But in some cases these factors are no longer sufficient to prevent acts of protest (in Czechoslovakia, GDR, and even Romania). Further tightening of the controls and more persecutions can either trigger an uncontrollable chain reaction – all the way to an explosion (it is quite possible in Czechoslovakia) or encounter a negative reaction of the world public opinion and the introduction of very painful economic and political sanctions. For instance, the repressive totalitarian regime in Romania is increasingly finding itself in international isolation, and amicable contacts with N. Ceausescu, while promising no preferential treatment on the part of the SRR today, even less in the longer term, could only compromise politicians [who engage in such contacts] in the eyes of world public opinion.

Political forecast

In the countries of the first group the crisis has acquired visible forms and the sides in the conflict are lined up, but the prospect of further developments is not clear; there are several alternatives. There are none among them that would presuppose the preservation of traditional forms of governance by the ruling parties and their full control over the society. Despite all assurances and words, real chances to keep developments in the framework of socialist renewal are shrinking. The existing model of socialism only with enormous difficulty can be transformed into a more effective and modern social setup. There are serious obstacles to a less-than-costly resolution of the crisis situation. Furthermore, scenarios of deadlock and catastrophe are coming to the fore.

Poland

1. Most favorable scenario: The conclusion of a so-called anti-crisis pact at “roundtable” talks, which could mean an unstable compromise between the PUWP (and its allied parties), Solidarity (and the forces of the opposition intelligentsia) and the [GCTU? – the General Council of Industrial Trade Unions]. The gradual transition to a mixed economy, de-centralization and privatization of “the giants of post-war industrialization” through share-holding. Transition to one or another variant of a market economy. Advancement towards genuine party-political pluralism (free elections, redistribution of seats in the Parliament, co-optation of representatives of the present opposition into the government, access of the opposition to mass media) could increase the support on the part of the population of the country and the West. The latter could ameliorate the situation with payments on the external debt, to open channels for new credits, which could somewhat reduce the internal economic tension. However, even in this case popular protests would hardly be neutralized, and political instability would continue for a long time, producing micro-crisis periodically. This would complicate the decisive and energetic program of reforms. The weakening of the

PUWP would inevitably continue, as a result of the ideological crisis and internal struggle, but it would take a more gradual course, in a form which could allow an explosion to escape. Relations with the USSR would remain ideologized while Poland would remain a member of the WTO.

Terms of realization: preservation and consolidation of the authority of the present-day party-political leadership (W. Jaruzelski); containment of the pressure from "below" in a framework that would preclude radicalization of both trade union confederations.

2. Pessimistic scenario: Failure of the anti-crisis pact resulting from a clash between the conservative forces in the PUWP, radicalized GCTU and the extremist wing of the Solidarity, while minimal political contacts between the party-government leadership and the opposition survive. A protracted "deadlock" situation. Slow and ineffective changes in the economy, de facto pluralism in the society without effective mechanisms of taking and implementing decisions. Growing elements of anarchy. Transformation of Poland into the chronically "sick man of Europe."

3. Deadlock scenario: Failure of the anti-crisis pact, followed by an aggravation of relations with the opposition. Rapid escalation of the conflict until an explosion (the most probable timing in this case – the spring of 1989). Renewal of martial law or the situation approximating a civil war – "Afghanistan in the middle of Europe."

4. Recently, the first weak symptoms of yet another scenario have emerged. It is close to the first but is related to the formation of the Christian Democratic Party of Labor which, hypothetically, may grow into a big political force if supported by Solidarity (in a role of a Catholic trade union) and the oppositionist Catholic intelligentsia. The PUWP may probably welcome such a scenario since it could promise a cooperation with the Church which seeks to avoid an explosion. Yet the existing information provides no clues as to the change of the position of the Church which has so far preferred to stay in the role of mediator [*treteiskogo sudii*].

This last month produced good chances for development according to the first scenario. There is no absolute guarantee that it will be realized, since there are no assurances that the traditionalist forces would not defy the course of the 10th Plenum of the CC PUWP at the forthcoming party conference, and that the Solidarity would and could contain the rising mass protest and observe the two-year armistice. Specific conditions of Poland may turn the first and especially the second scenarios into the sliding-scale to a deadlock. The chance for an explosion in the PPR [Polish People's Republic] is far bigger than in other countries of Eastern Europe.

In a longer-term perspective even the most favorable scenario does not ensure preservation of the socialist choice. Evolution towards a classic bourgeois society of the type of Italy or Greece is highly likely.

Hungary

1. Most Probable Scenario: Radical reforms in the state sector of the economy, partial re-privatization of industries and agriculture, transformation of the economy into a mixed one, functioning on the basis of market relations. Further strengthening of organizational ties with the European Union and perhaps with EAST [?], growing cooperation with Austria. Step-by-step rebuilding of the parliamentary system on the foundations of party pluralism. Along with the inevitable decline of cooperation with the COMECON and formal continuation of membership in the WTO, there will come a tendency towards neutralism and possibly a movement towards some kind of

Danube federation if this idea takes shape and gains support among Hungary's neighbors.

Terms of realization: the Hungarian Socialist Workers Party, as a result of considerable strengthening of positions of its reformist wing in its leadership and in the party as a whole seizes the initiative in transformation of the social-economic and political structures; gradual formation of a coalition with the Social Democratic movement (not excluding the transition of a considerable number of the party members to the Social Democrats or the peaceful split into two parties). Even if the influence of other parties increases in the short run, the course of events will probably become a modicum of the first scenario, since none of the movements cannot compete in strength and influence with the reformist circles of the HSWP and the forces of Social Democratic orientation.

2. Pessimistic scenario: Concessions to the conservative wing of the party which retains strong positions in the medium and lower ranks. Attempts to minimize deviations from the traditionalist schema. Inconsistency and compromises in carrying out reforms. The growth of economic and political tension. Further decline of living standards, the growth of a strike movement, politicization of trade unions. Possible declaration of bankruptcy on the external debt, aggravated relations with the creditors, including international monetary-financial institutions. Building obstacles on the way to the legal construction of some oppositionist parties and movements. Postponement of parliamentary elections. Further fall of authority of the reformist wing in the present-day leadership of the HSWP and of the supporting forces in the party and state apparatus. Weakening electoral chances of the HSWP (including an electoral defeat). Transition of initiative to alternative political forces. As a result, a return to the necessity of radical reforms, but under new, economically and politically less propitious circumstances.

[...] The first scenario's implementation is not yet out of the question, but the most probable seems to be some kind of middle way between the first and the second scenarios. Inevitable aggravation of the internal situation in this case may propel events towards the first scenario or raise the chances of complete slide-back towards the second scenario. [...]

In a longer term the present-day situation in the countries of the second group appears to be more dangerous for the future of socialism and crisis phenomena there will inevitably take an open form. Czechoslovakia is the first candidate. In Bulgaria and Romania (possibly, also in the GDR) changes will come with a change of leader which will occur from natural causes. The character and tempo of subsequent events will depend on the degree to which the new generation of leadership, willing to defuse the accumulated tension and raise personal prestige, comes to decrease the grip of the repressive apparatus over society. The available data provides no evidence for a substantial forecast of alternatives, but it seems to be obvious that the more the tension is driven inside, the higher the chances for an explosion in one of these countries, with all the consequences that flow out of this.

Czechoslovakia

With high degree of probability one can expect rapid escalation as soon as this coming spring or in the fall. Causes: combination of strong public discontent with unjustifiably harsh crack-down on the last demonstration [in the anniversary of the February events and the day of the death of T. Masarik this crack-down will probably

take place again], with the first unpopular results of economic reforms (absence of bonuses in many unprofitable plants, etc.). Preventing such a course of events is possible by undertaking, at M. Jakes's initiative, a resolute change of a considerable part of the current party-state leadership, removal of the publicly compromised people, joint efforts together with L. Adamec and a beginning of practical steps towards socialist renewal and broad democratization. However, since, first, the General Secretary of the CC CCP has already twice failed to live up to public expectations and to declare himself an advocate of a new course, and, second, there is too little time left for preparation of such a step, the chances for such a favorable outcome are minimal. Extrapolation of the current situation points to a crisis, when order would be restored by force and all problems would again be driven inside.

In the course of events, one may expect an appearance in the political arena of the country of a new political force – the Club of socialist *perestroika*, headed by well-known leaders of the Prague Spring C. Cisarz and Cernik who adhere to socialist positions. This group has a solid constructive platform and can expect an influx of a large number of supporters: possibly up to 500-750 thousand. In a struggle with this political adversary, the leadership of the CCP has minimal chances for a victory. However, the struggle against the politicians and ideas of 1968 will be acute and will lead to a quick and rapid escalation of the crisis.

Romania.

1. Favorable scenario: Changes take place in the leadership of the country. As a result, N. Ceausescu is replaced by reasonable politicians capable of carrying out radical reforms and the ideas of renewal of socialism. There are good preconditions in Romania for the use of market-type relations, for a relatively dynamic restructuring and modernization of the people's economy with real unfettering of economic initiative and the creation of a multi-sector competitive economy.

2. Middle-dead end scenario: The present leadership of the country stays and so too the policy. If the resources that are freed as the external debt gets paid off are used for reducing social tension, then it is possible to maintain general political stability for quite a while, while conserving political problems of the country and ensuring the slowdown in its technical-scientific progress. If, however, the leadership chooses to ignore the task of improving the living standards of the population and deroutes the obtained resources for realization of new ambitious projects, then one cannot exclude a social explosion. In the case where the processes of renewal in other socialist countries by that moment have not proven the feasibility of the policy of reform, there could be the danger of a decisive turn of the country [i.e. Romania], whose population gets disenchanted in socialist values and traditionally brought up in the spirit of common destiny with the Latin [romanskii] world – in the direction of the West (including its exit from the WTO). Financial and material support from the West, highly probable under conditions of real changes, may prove to be very effective for the country possessing of a good deal of natural and economic resources.

Since the regime still has not exhausted its resources and has recently been accumulating the experience of combined repressive measures and social maneuvering to maintain social stability, the second scenario seems to be more likely. It is favor speaks also a relatively low level of national self-consciousness and the absence of organized opposition in Romania. At the same time, an obvious irrationality of the policy of the current leadership produces growing dissatisfaction not only on the grass-

roots level, but even among the ruling elite [verkhushki]. Therefore, a possibility of some kind of changes “from the top” cannot be excluded.

German Democratic Republic.

The conservative nature of the party leadership, the sectarian and dogmatic character of its positions on ideological questions, authoritarianism and harsh control of the repressive apparatus over the society are weakening the prestige of the party and heightening tensions in the country, as well as negativist sentiments among the population. Nevertheless the current line may survive for some time the change of the leadership.

There is no formal center of opposition in the GDR, although non-conformist movements with more or less formalized platforms do exist. So far they do not represent any force capable of applying a palpable pressure from below and of destabilizing the situation. With a degree of probability one can surmise that there are forces in the current ruling apparatus who not only can evaluate the situation soberly and analyze critically, but who can work out a constructive program of changes. Reformist sentiments do not come to the surface most likely, because potential advocates of a new course do not have sufficient assurances that the process of renewal in the USSR is inevitable. Besides they understand that far-going reforms in the GDR will hardly remain an internal affair and may trigger a change in the status quo in the center of Europe.

With this in mind, a *perestroika* in the GDR, if it occurs, will require from the USSR and other socialist countries a reevaluation of a number of established assumptions and perhaps a reappraisal of its interests in the center of Europe. Under conditions of democratization and *glasnost* this question will probably become the central one and on the mode of its resolution will depend [angle from which we should evaluate] the determination of the [GDR] leadership in carrying out reforms. In the long run one can foresee the proclamation of such goals as the creation of a unified neutral German state on the basis of confederation. A mid-term slogan “one state – two systems” may be also advanced.

Bulgaria

Underground fermentation and differentiation of social-political forces become the fact. So far they manifest themselves in local, impulsive flashpoints of resistance to the official ideology and the concept of social development, without growing into any significant movements. Further dynamic and directions of social-political shifts will be determined primarily by economic trends.

The leadership of the country worked out a concept of economic reform, but practical measures of its realization have not yet been sufficiently prepared, so in the nearest future real results can be hardly expected. More likely is a deterioration of the economic situation, particularly because of the growing debt to the West and the threat of bankruptcy, which will inevitably bring about unwanted social, and then political consequences. Against this background hotbeds of tensions might proliferate – including strikes, particularly among non-qualified and low-qualified workers.

Ideological influence of the party in the society is declining. Sentiments of opposition among the intellectuals who resent the use of force against the ecologists and the persecution of a number of scientists for critical speeches. There are seeds of alternative movements, and extremist elements are getting to the fore. Alternative political forces are still weak and not organized, but they can broaden their social base.

Withdrawal from the political scene of the present number one in the party may

provide an impetus for intra-party differentiation between the supporters of the old leadership and those who seek a genuine renewal. Forces capable of carrying out more balanced and reasonable policy do exist in the party, they enjoy enough authority, but they will face a difficult legacy.

Overall trend of social-economic and political development of the country tend to repeat the Hungarian scenario – with certain deviations, time gap and national specificity and eclectic emulation of experience of other countries. The fate of the Hungarian experiment may exercise a serious influence on future developments in the PRB.

Possible consequences for the USSR

The prospect of the weakening of the positions of the ruling parties including their removal from power, its transfer into the hands of other political forces, decline of Soviet influence in the countries of Eastern Europe, its involvement into the orbit of economic and political interests of the West require the formulation of a more rational and purposeful reaction of the Soviet Union. We face a dilemma: to thwart the evolution described above or take it in stride and develop the policy accepting a probability and even inevitability of this process.

Attempts to thwart the emerging trends would be tantamount to fighting time itself, the objective course of history. In the long term these kind of steps would be doomed and in the short run would mean wasting means and resources for an obviously hopeless cause. Attempts to preserve in Poland, Hungary and Yugoslavia the status quo that lost its objective foundations, as well as the support of conservative forces in the GDR, CSSR, Romania and Bulgaria will weigh as an excessive burden on our economy, for the price of maintaining existing relations will increase in time. A use of forceful pressure from our side will inevitably reinforce the conservative wing in the upper echelons of power, breaking reforms where they have begun, worsening the crisis. Social-political tension in the societies will increase, anti-Soviet sentiments will grow stronger, which might spill over into the balancing on a brink of most acute social-political conflict with an unfathomable outcome. The direct use of force of the USSR, its intervention into the course of events on behalf of the conservative forces that are alienated from the people will most evidently signify the end of *perestroika*, the crumbling of trust of the world community in [our reforms], but will not prevent a disintegration of the social-economic and social-political systems in these countries, will not exclude mass outbreaks of protest, including armed clashes. Besides, not only nationally isolated events, but mutually interacting, chain-reacting “fuse-type” explosions can be expected.

In the framework of possibilities opened by new thinking and cooperation between the USSR and the United States, East and West, “architects” of American foreign policy can be seen as changing their priorities. They prefer the support of *perestroika* in the USSR and the creation of an external environment favorable to its success. Serious Western politicians warn against playing on problems of the socialist community, on its disintegration which, in their opinion, can bring about unexpected consequences for the Western world. Western circles of authority are coming to the conclusion that, by cooperating with reformist forces, they can achieve more than by attempting to pull socialist countries from the sphere of influence of the USSR one by one.

Working through the options for a future Western strategy towards Eastern Europe, bourgeois political scientists and some think-tanks consider a scenario of "Finlandization" of a number of countries of the region.¹

What could be the possible consequences of such a scenario for the USSR? The following aspects should be considered: military, international politics, internal politics, economic and ideological.

1. Poland will certainly not leave the WTO, since this is against its national, state, and geopolitical interests. Hungary will also hardly raise this issue in the foreseeable future. The forthcoming withdrawal of a part of the Soviet troops stationed on the territories of both countries will significantly reduce the political acuteness of this problem. The GDR will also not raise the question of leaving the WTO, since its party and state cadres consider this organization as one of its props. Only in a longer term, if the détente and the construction of a "common European house" will progress sufficiently far, the issue of a unified German confederate state might be put on the agenda. From the international angle this will most likely end up in the neutralization of both parts of Germany and the establishment of special relations of the GDR with NATO and the GDR with the WTO. Positions of Bulgaria and Czechoslovakia depend on many uncertain factors, but they will hardly leave the WTO in the foreseeable future. If relations with us worsen, the Romanian leadership may take up this issue, but with skillful ideological orchestration of this step will not lose anything, since geopolitical location will force the self-isolated Romania consider our interests. In the case of Yugoslavia, as it is well known, the question of the WTO does not figure at all.

So it is not necessary that the WTO – at least in the foreseeable future – will sustain significant losses, and the countries of Eastern Europe which are undergoing today serious transformations will stay in alliance with us.

2. As long as new foreign policy trends emerge in these countries of Eastern Europe which became the objects of special hopes for the US and the West as they conducted their policy of differentiation, the USSR can consciously take over the initiative from the West, as well as from the oppositionist, social-reformist forces inside those countries (Poland, Hungary), by adopting consciously a certain degree of "Finlandization" of these countries. Such a policy will demonstrate the seriousness of our global aims to get involved into world economic, political and cultural ties. Renunciation of the *diktat* with regard to socialist countries of Eastern Europe will nurture a more benevolent image of the USSR in the public opinion of these countries and around the world, and it will make the US seriously correct its foreign policy towards Eastern Europe.

The very chance that European socialist countries may take a mid-way position on the continent will intensify the interest of Western Europe in the maintenance of economic and political stability of Eastern Europe, as well as in the stimulation of the

¹ In the political dictionary this term mostly signifies the return of our neighboring states to the mode of capitalist development while preserving special, friendly relations with the Soviet Union that guarantee the security of its borders. Such understanding of the notion "Finlandization" overlooks two significant moments in the relations between the USSR and Finland. First, they are built on neutrality of our northern neighbor who does not join any military bloc; second, Finnish communist party by definition cannot come to power and to carry out a revolutionary coup which guarantees stability of [Finnish] social-political regime. Since the countries of Eastern Europe will hardly raise the issue of leaving the WTO in the near future and the ruling parties, even provided their rapid weakening, will retain for a while some social base, the term of "Finlandization" can be used here only with very significant qualifications.

process of disarmament and détente on the continent and around the world. Inevitable consequences of this will be the growth in significance of the European factor in world politics and economy, which will favor the efforts of the Soviet Union aimed at containing an anti-Soviet consolidation of the Western world and at developing a “common European house.” The economic burden of the USSR will be alleviated. Anti-Soviet and nationalist influences will operate on the shrunken ground, and the prestige of the Soviet Union and its ideological-political influence on the broad strata of the population will grow – of course, if the political shift will be viewed as a result of our conscious decision, and not a result of the pressure of hostile forces. This will be a “revolution from above” in foreign policy which will prevent a “revolution from below.”

3. It cannot be excluded that in some countries of Eastern Europe the crisis has gone so far and reforms have come so late that the ruling parties will not be able to retain power or will have to share it in a coalition with other political forces. By itself the fact of a transfer of power to alternative forces does not mean an external and military threat to our country. On the contrary, history gives examples, when the Soviet Union developed relations with non-communist leaders of Eastern European countries that were not too bad. Normal political activity of communist parties (along with other political parties) should not instill fear in non-communist governments that, under the disguise of international aid there will be a violation of popular sovereignty with a possible violation of its will expressed through free elections. Guarantees of non-interference into internal affairs of neighboring countries, respect for their political stability should be seen under present circumstances differently than in 1950s-1970's, for we have recognized ourselves the need for a different understanding of socialism in principle, have stopped trying to expand over the entire world the model that was in existence in our country, we have begun to realize the need for accounting in the socialist model for some basic characteristics of the Western mode of development (market, competition, civil society, civil liberties, etc.)

There is no question, of course, of renouncing the support of communist and workers' parties, but an obligatory precondition for such a support should be voluntary recognition of their leadership by their people, their legitimation. For the loss of trust they should pay as any other party in the normal democratic society. Similar logic dictates to us the need for support of business, civilized contacts not only with those political parties in the countries of Eastern Europe which are currently at the tiller, but also with the internal opposition, constructive opposition in the society – equally to our practice toward non-socialist states. Unwillingness to accept contacts with alternative forces in these countries could be interpreted as a form of interference into internal affairs, i.e. something which we have rejected as a matter of principle.

4. The objective outcome of the natural development of the trends towards “Finlandization” could be a new, middle-of-the road position of East European countries, since they, according to their internal order, the nature of economic ties and real international position would pass from the sphere of monopolistic influence of the USSR into the sphere of mutual and joint influence of the Soviet Union and European “Common Market.” It is not excluded that in some future the European Economic Union will provide to some countries of Eastern Europe the status of an associate member. They could in this case become the first trappers [pervoprokhodtsami] in the process of integration between East and West. This process not only poses no threat to the interests of the USSR, but, on the contrary, will allow to multiply the benefits we

receive today from our cooperation with Finland and Austria, by linking to Western markets, achievements of Western science, know how and technology. When in 1992 a common market will start functioning in Western Europe, East European countries involved in the orbit of the EU may facilitate for us an access to this sphere.

5. In a new situation we will have to liberate ourselves from some persistent ideological stereotypes, for instance from the assumption that only a communist party in power can prove guarantees for the security of Soviet borders. We will have to rethink the notion of a "world socialist system." But the utility of these [notions] was purely fictional; it existed only in the realm alienated from life, in the didactic ideology which we have been striving to overcome. Consequently, the rejection of such categories and dogmas may only promote a new system of ideological coordinates that are emerging in the process of *perestroika* and the formation of new political thinking.

An optimal reaction of the USSR to the evolutionary processes taking place in Eastern Europe would be, as it turns out, an active involvement which would put them [processes] under control and would make them predictable. Even if some decline of Soviet influence in Eastern European affairs takes place, this would not cause us a fatal damage, but, perhaps on the contrary, as resulting from self-limitation, would put our means in a rational harmony with our capabilities. For we speak about a voluntary abandonment of only those levers of influence that are not in accordance with the principles of international relations proclaimed by the Soviet Union in the spirit of "new thinking."

Of course, such turn may produce collisions and conflicts, for instance if openly anti-Soviet, nationalistic groupings get legalized in this or that country. But their persecution, their underground existence will only help them gain in popularity, and their legalization, against the backdrop of our reserved policy and with the thoughtful criticism of them on the part of the friends of the USSR will lay bare the lack of perspective and short-sightedness of anti-Soviet assumptions.

Favorable international conditions for the progress of reforms in the socialist countries of Eastern Europe will give a powerful side-effect to the process of internal *perestroika* in the USSR. Structural modernization of their economies, development of market relations will help to overcome the elements of a beggar-thy-neighbor [izhdivenchestva] philosophy in their economic relations with the USSR and to transfer them onto the healthy ground of mutual profitability.

Possible practical steps of the USSR

In the light of the aforementioned, the following measures seem to be justified:

- Working on a strategic program to develop our relations with East European socialist countries in the framework of the new model of socialism and a calibrated reflection of this program in official documents and speeches.
- Advancement of our proposals to reform the Warsaw Treaty Organization, presupposing a bigger role of the fraternal countries in the management of the WTO, the creation of regional commands (taking the example of NATO) under the leadership of representatives of hosting countries. This would help to "tie" them into the WTO, which in practice is still regarded as a predominantly Soviet construct.
- A further gradual reduction of our military presence in Eastern Europe taken at our own initiative and upon agreement with the hosting countries, working on a schedule

of withdrawal of troops, the creation of the most propitious conditions for demilitarization of Central Europe (with its possible neutralization), reduction of American presence on European continent.

- Working through bilateral consultations on mutually beneficial measures allowing to alleviate consequences of restructuring in the countries of Eastern Europe, particularly where strong tension might end up in explosion.
- In case certain proposals are made, we should agree to some form of continuous and periodic consultations with West European countries and the US on the issues of prevention of explosions in this or that country of Central and Eastern Europe.
- Developing a practice of genuine consultations on the issues of foreign policy with our allies instead of informing them about the decisions that are already taken.
- Carrying out a serious analysis of activities of Soviet embassies in Eastern European socialist countries, in some cases leading to replacement of Ambassadors and leading officials of the Embassies who act against the interests of our foreign policy in its new phase. Special attention should be paid to our cadres in the countries where potential escalation of tension and even explosion is possible. During the change of cadres we should send to these countries those officials whose appointment will be a sign of attention, high priority the USSR holds for relations with socialist countries.
- While arranging summits in socialist countries, one should borrow the methods utilized in the leading capitalist countries (organization of “air-born” appearance [desantov] of leading Soviet scientists, figures of culture, etc.)
- It is necessary to work out without delay an integral line of behavior on the issues of “blank pages” in relations with each East European country (We should not ignore the accumulating negative fallout that resulted from our postponement of the resolution of these problems with regard to the PPR and HPR).
- It is highly important to change radically our informational policy with regard to events in socialist countries of Eastern Europe, to cover in an objective light and to explain and justify the processes that are taking place there, since it is equal to the explanation and justification of the measures that lay ahead for us in carrying out our economic and political reforms.
- While covering events in the fraternal countries, responding to the speeches of their leaders, we should express a manifest support to those pronouncements which signal their acceptance of reformist ideas (particularly with regard to the leaders of the GDR, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria and Romania), thereby showing on the side of what forces and trends the sympathies of the Soviet Union lie.
- Popularization of Soviet publications merits all kind of support. Proposals of our embassies in some countries to eschew such support are clearly in contradiction with our interests.

Some conclusions

Overcoming the crisis process in the countries of Eastern Europe presupposes the outright de-Stalinization. This should encompass their internal life as well as their relations with the Soviet Union. The model of economic and political development imposed on these countries after 1948 has clearly exhausted itself. The search for more fruitful ways and means of development is leading to the rethinking of the socialist ideal, including the revival of those assumptions about it that had formed in communist and workers parties of East European countries in 1945-1948 (mixed economy parliamentary

democracy, etc.). This means a return to a natural historical, instead of deformed by the external pressure, social progress that stems from national specifics of each country. To a certain degree one can speak about the end [preodolenii] of the Yalta legacy and the split of the world into the two enemy camps, about the gradual formation of the more varied and simultaneously more united Europe.

From the viewpoint of the world socialist perspective any attempt to stop this evolution by force could have the gravest consequences: the inevitable sliding back of Eastern European countries to the rank of poorly developed countries (so called "fourth world"), the undercutting of the socialist idea in all its versions, and providing to the neo-conservatism in the West with new cards to use in its offensive on the social achievements of working masses. Besides, Eastern Europe will inevitably get "flashpoints" and quasi-dictatorial regimes which would continuously detract material resources of the Soviet Union and would practically exclude the prospect of renewal of the socialist society in our country. However, the peaceful (without serious explosions) evolution of East European states would improve to a great extent the situation in the world and enhance international relations. Thereby chances would grow for an accelerated development in Eastern Europe, for the use of some socialist elements that can be found in the practice of highly-developed capitalist countries and, overallly, the prospect of the formation of humanistic and democratic post-capitalist societies in accordance with the socialist ideals would be preserved.

Source: Document on file at the National Security Archive. Donation of Professor Jacques Levesque. Reprinted from *The End of the Cold War in Europe, 1989: "New Thinking" and New Evidence* (Musgrove, 1998), Doc. 24.

Translated from the Russian by Vladislav Zubok.

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Document 17
Bonn, March 16, 1989
Resolution adopted by the Bundestag,
on recent human rights violations in Czechoslovakia

The Bundestag has noted with astonishment that a number of human rights activists have been convicted in Czechoslovakia in the recent period – the world-renowned writer Václav Havel to nine month's rigorous imprisonment, Ota Veverka and Jana Petrová of the independent peace and human rights movements to twelve and nine months' imprisonment respectively, and David Němec, Stanislav Penc, Petr Placák, and Alexandr Vondra to fines and suspended prison sentences of several months each. They were indicted for attempting to commemorate, at Wenceslas Square on January 16, the twentieth anniversary of Jan Palach's self-immolation in protest against the occupation of Czechoslovakia. Under the terms of recently toughened legislation, this was deemed to be riotous behaviour, even though the defendants did not engage in any violence.

The Bundestag welcomes the swift reaction of the Federal Government in reacting to the verdicts and its expression of shock and amazement, as well its appeal to the Czechoslovak Government to annul them, and the appropriate initiatives it undertook as part of European Political Co-operation.

The Bundestag notes with grave misgivings that Czechoslovakia has thereby flagrantly violated the Vienna Concluding Document of the CSCE, which requires respect for fundamental human rights and freedoms.

In the view of the Bundestag, improved co-operation in Europe can only be ensured if all states work to strengthen peace at home and abroad and if they respect all civil and human rights. The Bundestag supports the Federal Government initiatives and calls on it to continue to use every opportunity within the framework of the CSCE process, European Political Co-operation, and the Council of Europe to induce the Czechoslovak Government to respect human rights as it pledged to when it signed the Final Act of the Helsinki Conference, the Vienna Concluding Document of the CSCE, and the UN Human Rights Covenants.

Source: Czechoslovak Documentation Centre, Scheinfeld, Palach Week collection.

Translated from the German by A. G. Brain [Alice and Gerald Turner].

Document 18

Moscow, April 1, 1989

Report by Vadim Zagladin,

on his conversation with Chairman of the Czechoslovak Association for the UN, Deputy Chairman of the Committee for European Security, Jan Pudlák, on the current situation in Czechoslovakia

[Pudlák] is now also Director of the Institute of International Policy at the Foreign Ministry of the CSSR. He participates in the work of the CC CPC Commission on International Affairs. I have known him for a long time.

[According to him Czechoslovakia] is in a "deep moral and political crisis". This crisis can be compared with the one that preceded 1968. One difference today is that the living standards of masses are considerably higher than in 1967. This means a lot for the Czechs [...]. These positive factors are, however, about to disappear [...]. On the mass level, in all groups of the society, but mainly in the working class, among intellectuals and in the youth, there is a time-bomb of discontent.

Gradually a broad opposition is being formed. But it is a diverse phenomenon. It would not be so bad if there only hostile groups like "Charter 77" or "Renewal". But along with them there is a considerable group of former Party members (up to half a million) who, without joining the opposition [...], voice their active dissatisfaction, both with their own position and the situation in the country. The mood of discontent has also spread among a great number of Party members, members of the Communist Youth. Nor are non-Party members calm [...]. The youth is comparing the activities of the authorities to the actions of "fascists".

[Václav] Havel's arrest [and] imprisonment has converted this mediocre writer into a martyr, and for the discontented people he has become a national hero. This is a priceless gift for the West. In all truth, he could have been gagged up [*spravitsia*] with softer, political means... The leadership failed to demonstrate the skill "to think several moves ahead". Today it is most important to operate by political means, to "cage" discontent into discussions [...].

[It is necessary to reassess 1968 and the role of Alexander Dubček.] That, however, is difficult so far to do; one part of the leadership was totally involved in those events, another fears by inertia a repetition of 1968 (although if the party became a true political leader of *perestroika*, this would not happen). Cautiously, gradually we must approach it [...]

Source: Archive of the Gorbachev Foundation Reprinted from *The End of the Cold War in Europe, 1989: "New Thinking" and New Evidence* (Musgrove, 1998), Doc. 31.

Translated by Vladislav Zubok, the National Security Archive.

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Document 19

Prague, May 3, 1989

Memorandum of conversation between Miloš Jakeš and Erich Honecker,
excerpts of Jakeš outlining current Czechoslovak problems

[...] During his recent visit to Moscow [Miloš Jakeš] outlined specific points concerning the CSSR as follows:

– The CPCz has had experience of bourgeois democracy on Czechoslovak soil. While its antifascist stance and resistance to the unleashing of the Second World War were to be viewed as positive, its effect on the lives of the workers and farmers prior to 1938 had been mainly negative.

– In 1948 the workers had been victorious, that is to say, socialism did not come about in the CSSR "by order" but arose from the sovereign decision of the Czechoslovak people, of course under the favourable international auspices of the USSR which at that time had enjoyed great authority.

– In 1968/69 the CPCz had discovered the nature of oppositional and anti-socialist forces' behaviour towards socialism.

– The CPCz also had to pay tribute to the high cultural level, degree of education, and qualifications of the working population, as well as the standard which had been achieved in the economy and in social politics.

Unless these points were borne in mind, the CPCz would not be in a position to make any correct decisions. At the same time the CPCz was also aware that developments in the People's Republic of Hungary and in the People's Republic of Poland, as well as the "dirty scum" on the wave of reorganization in the USSR, were not without effects on the CSSR. Oppositional forces and opponents beyond the borders would misuse the developments in socialism and label the CPCz leadership as "conservative" or accuse them of reorganizing in a Švejkian way.

For this reason, in the communiqué of the meeting with Mikhail S. Gorbachev in April the varying speeds of the reorganization processes in the two countries had been connected with the aim of strengthening socialist values in the two countries and it had thus been made clear that the reorganization could not be allowed to lead to the disintegration of socialist values.

The talks with Mikhail Gorbachev had also provided an opportunity to clarify the attitude towards 1968.

As it was stressed in Moscow, there was as yet no reason to make any change in the "Lessons from the Crisis Developments". It was not possible to equate "January 1968", that is to say the aspirations of the CPCz to make improvements, with the developments in the middle of January 1968 when the Party had already lost control over events. Miloš Jakeš considered it very important that the leadership of the CPSU supported and endorsed this attitude despite enormous pressure from the Italian Communist Party and other forces. It was known that such forces wished to put pressure on the CPSU to declare its decisions concerning the CSSR in 1968 as an historical "error".

In the face of Western blackmail attempts the CSSR orientated itself towards those circles in the West which were interested in economic co-operation and a peaceful European house.

Regarding the situation in the CSSR, Miloš Jakeš estimated that while it was stable on the whole, more and more attempts at destabilization were being made by Western forces, above all by means of massive broadcasting over imperialist media.

[...]

The opposition forces in the CSSR, believed Miloš Jakeš, could only act in close co-operation with western media such as Radio Free Europe, the Voice of America, BBC, and Deutsche Welle. These radio stations were active daily giving operative advice and programmatic support.

Between 60 and 70 per cent of the Czechoslovak population heard these programmes which were broadcast in either Czech or Slovak. The main attack was upon the leading role of the Party in general and, more concretely, upon the current leadership of the CPCz. Pluralism such as that in the People's Republic of Hungary was being propagated.

All 45 existing "informal groups" had their roots more or less in "Charter 77" and consisted of the known small circle of people, differentiated according to their general outlook and aggressiveness. One of these groupings had decided to use the May 1, 1989, to provoke, whatever the circumstances, "even if it means 200 people being trampled underfoot", as such forces expressed themselves. The illegal organizations issued about 75 periodicals containing numerous defamations of functionaries of the CPCz. Such attacks, according to Miloš Jakeš, were often connected with terrorist threats. In recent months there had been almost 400 bomb threats against upstanding Communists as well as against public institutions, even against hospitals and the underground train system.

The Party was confronted daily with numerous attacks. From the West there were protests on account of the supposed "violation of the Vienna Document", some of which were accompanied by the threat of an "economic blockade". 2,000 Czechoslovaks from the arts and culture had petitioned for the release of Václav Havel. Although opposition pressure had been put on numerous citizens engaged in the arts and culture, persons of rank and reputation in Czechoslovak culture had not taken part.

The CPCz, emphasized Miloš Jakeš, opposed such activities not only with help from the security forces but also with increased political work among the masses. Many Party members would have to appear as such outside their base organization, support the behaviour of the Central Committee not only "within their own circle", and overcome passive behaviour which at times verged on "illegality". It was now necessary to take up a fighting position, the offensive of the whole Party. In order to "show colours", the wearing of the Party badge had been reintroduced on a voluntary basis.

The Party would overcome the great challenges. Not all members, however, had so far understood the necessity of distancing themselves from a certain lightheartedness and ease. This was an important task for current ideological work in the CPCz. In a sense, it was a question of a counter-attack which would also be supported by all members at the grass roots.

Miloš Jakeš emphasized that this situation was further aggravated by the problems brought in by other fraternal states. The attacks on the CPCz on Hungarian television

in connection with the Dubček interview were without precedent in the relationships between socialist countries. Károly Grósz had to explain to Miloš Jakeš that, with the exception of *Népszabadság*, he no longer had a single mass medium. The other media were controlled by Pozsgay. Also Wojciech Jaruzelski had spoken of critical matters to the "round table", that is to say, the Polish People's Workers Party was no longer able to adhere to the limits it had set for compromise. The CPCz, said Miloš Jakeš, had learnt in 1968 that it is difficult to control a society once caught in rapid movement.

Added to this was the fact that enormous effort had gone into painting the gloomiest possible picture of one's own past. The state funeral of Nagy on June 18, 1989, could provoke the question of whether socialism in Hungary should also not be carried to the grave. It would be wrong to underestimate those forces which had "hibernated" for forty years on other ideological positions and which were still hostile to socialism.

The CPCz, therefore, also in the light of its own bitter experience, saw its task in strengthening the unity and fighting power of the Party and, above all, in keeping the mass media under control. Otherwise, one might as well go straight "into the opposition".

The SED and the CPCz, Miloš Jakeš emphasised, agreed on many points relating to the situation which had arisen but mainly on the need to display clearly the advantages and values of socialism in their countries and to jointly resist attacks on these values.

Miloš Jakeš emphasized that following his recent talks with Mikhail Gorbachev he was in agreement with Erich Honecker's assessment that the latest plenum of the Central Committee of the USSR showed that the USSR would take more decisive action against forces which wished to put the Party itself on trial and which exploited the nationality problems and the democratization process in order to bring the "dirty scum" to the surface. Mikhail Gorbachev had told him that establishment of the new Supreme Soviet would reinforce the socialist structures in the Soviet Union. We all, said Miloš Jakeš in conclusion, want a strong Soviet Union, not a weak one.

Erich Honecker thanked Miloš Jakeš cordially for his contribution. He was firmly convinced that history would validate the path we had chosen. We do not share the view that one should go into opposition in order to re-seize power later. We took power in order to keep it for ever.

Source: Stiftungarchiv der Parteien und Massenorganisationen der DDR im Bundesarchiv, Berlin, DY 30 J IV/958

Translated from the German by Malcolm Leighton.

Document 20

Prague, May 3, 1989

Memorandum of conversation between Gustáv Husák and Erich Honecker,
on good Czechoslovak-East German relations

Gustáv Husák greeted Erich Honecker very cordially and was happy to report the harmony he'd been informed of in the talks between Erich Honecker and Miloš Jakeš. He expressed his thanks for the positive atmosphere which had prevailed while the two representatives had exchanged opinions.

Erich Honecker stressed the shared point of view concerning the current questions of securing peace, in particular with regard to the necessity of continuing the process of disarmament without any pause. There had also been close agreement concerning the bilateral relations in all fields. The friendship and co-operation between the two nations were manifested in their mutual interest in further strengthening socialism in the future. With the contract on youth work the two socialist youth associations had provided the younger generation with new possibilities for co-operation.

Gustáv Husák said that claims were being made these days that the GDR and the CSSR belonged to the "conservative camp". If Marxism-Leninism is conservative, then "we admit to being that way".

Erich Honecker fully agreed. This was a mark of real distinction. The SED and CPCz were solving the problems from a Marxist-Leninist position. History had placed the two parties together in a one common position.

Gustáv Husák recalled the words of August Bebel: "If my enemies praise me, I have made a mistake." This had recently been heard at the last plenum of the Central Committee of the CPSU; one of the first secretaries had used this idea in his speech. It should not be forgotten that there were still enemies.

Erich Honecker brought to attention Wörner's declaration that NATO's task was to make sure that the socialist countries went over to the Western side. The West was trying to drive a wedge between the socialist countries. This, however, would not succeed. His talks in Moscow with Mikhail Gorbachev on the occasion of the GDR exhibition had borne fruit and had been harmonious. In the GDR we are constructing a developed socialist society on the basis of our own experiences and learning from those of other socialist countries, he said.

Gustáv Husák noted that the communiqué of the day's visit by Erich Honecker to Prague was also an answer to the West's hopes of being able to drive a wedge between the socialist countries.

Erich Honecker and Gustáv Husák praised this year's May Day demonstrations in the GDR and the CSSR as significant manifestations of the will of our people to strengthen socialism and to secure peace.

Source: Stiftungarchiv der Parteien und Massenorganisationen der DDR im Bundesarchiv, Berlin, DY 30 J IV/958

Translated from the German by Malcolm Leighton.

Document 21
Moscow, May 5, 1989
Report by Vadim Zagladin
on his conversation with former Czechoslovak Minister of Foreign Affairs
Bohuslav Chňoupek

On May 5 [1989], I met with member of the Central Committee of the CPCz, former Minister of Foreign Affairs Bohuslav Chňoupek, whom I have known well for more than twenty years. As he told me, the CC CPCz leadership followed the progress of the Plenary Session of the CC CPCz with intense interest. The proposals and prognoses were, as Chňoupek described it, "very extreme". Some functionaries (including Adamec) awaited the results of the plenum hopefully, others (such as Fojtík) with malicious joy, spoke of "possible changes". The latter group of comrades maintains close contact with Comrade Biřák, and wish aloud that "this doesn't take long", that it is now up to Czechoslovakia and the GDR to "protect true socialism". Reactions to the visit of Comrade Jakeš in Moscow are also varied. He himself, when he described his talks with you, spoke of progress that had been made in the coordination of economic cooperation. But the interpretation of these matters is not clear. A certain (and not minor) part of the Party cadres has indicated their disappointment. They say, "This means there will be no change for the better in Czechoslovakia, again". They ask if it is known in Moscow how bad it is in our country. In quite a few cases they have at lower levels started to "limit" distribution of our publications, especially the bulletin of the APN (publishing in Czech since 1968), but some of our Russian publications as well.

In the opinion of Comrade Chňoupek, sharp confrontations are inevitable within the next few months (especially in the context of the Plenary Session of the CC CPCz planned for June, where personnel issues will be discussed).

Source: Archive of the Gorbachev Foundation, f. 3, op. 1, 34. Published in Czech in *Soudobé dějiny* 5.4 (1998): 527.

Translated from the Czech by Todd Hammond.

Document 22

Prague, May 5 1989

Information from the CC CPCz Secretariat to Party and state functionaries
and lower-level Party organizations,
on activities of the "internal and external enemy" (excerpts)

Information on the Activities of the Internal and External Enemy

The present work of internal and external enemies is marked by a growth in their activities. It is aimed at:

- the establishment of new so-called "independent initiatives", which are oriented towards various aspects of public life with the purpose of forming a mass base, and such a system of activities by which the "Charter" and other groups could influence young people in particular, and also expand enemy activity beyond the large towns (Prague, Brno, and Bratislava);
- achieving changes in the orientation and status of non-Communist political parties of the National Front as an opposition partner of the CPCz;
- influencing the activities of social organizations and official structures in the areas of science, technology, the arts, and elsewhere, by way of infiltrating their ranks with the goal of isolating the leadership from the membership base, and achieving the replacement of "compromised" leading officials;
- the efforts of opposition groups to infiltrate the working-class milieu, gradually to break up the Revolutionary Trade-Union Movement (ROH), and create parallel, so-called independent unions for the achievement of trade-union pluralism.

The internal enemy, with all-around foreign support, continues on the course of confrontation it began in the middle of last year. Whereas at the end of 1988 there were about 22 various groups, 23 more were added this year (apart from Church structures). New groups began to function, for example Revival: Club for Socialist Restructuring, the Society for the Study of Democratic Socialism, the Legal Support Club, the Friends of Jan Palach, Friends of Charles, the Havlíček Youth, Ekomonitor, the Blue-Greens, and others.

Also noted have been the efforts of the representatives of the internal enemy to gain information from within Party and state organs, which concern planned measures, so that they may, in advance, form their own position and submit opposition proposals. They then publish these in the illegal press.

The activities of the inner enemy show disunity, and two basic tendencies are gradually forming.

The first tendency - radical - is made up of signatories of the "Charter" and members of satellite groups (for example, the Independent Peace Association, Community of Friends of the USA, Czech Children, Democratic Initiative, Movement for Civic Freedom), which promote a confrontational line towards the CPCz and state organs, with an orientation towards mass anti-societal activity. They aim their efforts at intellectuals and youth, especially in the post-secondary schools, where efforts have appeared to organize structures to replace the Association of Socialist Youth.

The second tendency - reform - is largely made up of former CPCz functionaries expelled for their rightist positions, and former right-leaning members of the Social Democratic Party. These persons, who are associated especially in the so-called Revival/Club for Socialist Restructuring and in the Society for the Study of Democratic Socialism, are meant to form the desired "left-wing opposition bloc", capable under certain circumstances of influencing not only former and present members of the CPCz, but also part of the working class.

Experience confirms that the broad and determined propaganda campaign of the Western news media is capable, with the active participation of the "Charter" and its allies in the CSSR to excite part of the population, especially young, inexperienced people, to participate in anti-socialist demonstrations. Similarly, attacks carried out recently against the Czechoslovak security forces, prosecutors' offices, and the organs of justice, are intended to give rise to the conviction that these organs do not serve the people, and do not protect their interests.

A dangerous element in the activities of the internal enemy are ever increasing tendencies to influence the non-Communist political parties of the National Front (especially the Czechoslovak People's Party), with the aim of taking advantage of its position and possibilities for the legalization of opposition activity, and of creating a counterweight to the policies of the CPCz. [...]

Source: State Central Archive, Prague, CC CPCz record group, telexes and letters, ÚV-043/89.

Translated from the Czech by Todd Hammond.

Document 23

Prague, June 1989

Petition statement "Several Sentences" by Devátý, Havel, Křížan, Vondra et al,
calling upon the state leadership to implement fundamental changes

Several Sentences

The first months of 1989 provided further clear evidence of the fact that although the present Czechoslovak leadership pays frequent lip-service to the words "perestroika" and "democratization", in practice it is resisting in an almost desperate way everything that helps to create democracy or is vaguely reminiscent of it. It dismisses as "coercion" any citizens' petitions and initiatives that have not been officially organized. It condemns alternative political views as "anti-socialist" or "hostile". It breaks up peaceful rallies. It refuses to let the public have any say in the drafting of new legislation.

These same months, however, have also shown that the citizenry is breaking free of its lethargy and increasing numbers are finding the courage to express their yearning for social changes.

Thus the movement within society is coming into increasing conflict with the inertia of the régime, social tension is rising and the threat of open crisis looms large.

None of us wants such a crisis.

We therefore call on our country's leadership to realize that the time has come for genuine, thoroughgoing changes in the system, and that such changes will only be possible or viable if they are preceded by truly free and democratic discussion. However, the first step towards any meaningful change - whether it be a new constitution or economic reform - must therefore be a fundamental change in the social climate of this country, restoring to it the spirit of freedom, trust, tolerance and plurality.

In our view this requires:

1. The immediate release of all political prisoners;
2. The lifting of restrictions on freedom of assembly;
3. An end to the outlawing and persecution of various independent initiatives which should finally be recognized by the government as they have long been by the public, that is to say, as a natural component of public life and a legitimate expression of its heterogeneity. At the same time, no restrictions should be placed on the creation of new civic movements, including independent trade unions, associations, and clubs.
4. An end to all forms of political manipulation of the mass media and cultural activity of all kinds, including the abolition of covert censorship, whether preliminary or subsequent, and their opening up to free debate; the legalization of media autonomous of the official structures;
5. Respect for the just demands of all religious believers;
6. That all impending and existing projects permanently altering our country's natural environment, and thereby affecting the life of future generations, be submitted forthwith to experts and the general public for thorough discussion.
7. The initiation of a free discussion not only about the 1950s but also about the Prague Spring, the invasion by the five Warsaw Pact states and the subsequent

"normalisation". It is regrettable that whereas in certain countries whose armies intervened at that time in Czechoslovak developments real discussions are beginning to take place, in our country it is still a major taboo, solely in order to protect the positions of those people in the political and state leadership who are responsible for the twenty-year decline in all spheres of life in this country.

All those who agree with this statement may express their support by adding their signatures.

We call on the Government not to treat this statement in the way it has been accustomed to treat uncongenial views in the past. Otherwise they will inflict a fatal blow to the hopes that motivate us: the hopes of genuine social dialogue as the only possible way out of the blind alley in which Czechoslovakia now finds itself.

Stanislav Devátý, Revoluční 312/1285, 760 01 Gottwaldov

Václav Havel, Engelsovo nábřeží 78, 120 00 Prague 2

Jiří Křížan, Navrátilova 16, 110 00 Prague 1

Saša Vondra, Trojanova 1, 120 00 Prague 2

Note: The statement "Several Sentences" was made public simultaneously in Czechoslovakia and abroad on June 29, 1989. It originated in Prague and was permanently open to further signing by all Czechoslovak citizens irrespective of occupation, and had been signed as of June 29, 1989, by almost 1,800 Czechoslovak citizens. By November 1989, the petition had been signed by about 40,000 Czechoslovaks.

Source: *Informace o Chartě 77* (samizdat) vol. 12, no. 14 (July 1989), pp. 14–15.

Translated from the Czech by A. G. Brain [Alice and Gerald Turner].

Document 24

Prague, July 7, 1989

Internal information for lower-level Party organizations, with cover letter by CC CPCz
Secretary Jan Fojtík,
on the petition statement "Several Sentences" (excerpts)

Comrades,

In recent days, the Western media has disseminated a statement by the opposition forces in the CSSR under the title "Several Sentences". Regional and district Party committees have been acquainted with its contents through internal Party channels.

This is a dangerous attempt by enemy forces at confrontation with the socialist state. These attempts must be met with unified and resolute Party measures. We must reveal to the public the real intentions of the authors, refute their demagoguery with factual argument, and decisively confront efforts to obtain more signatures under the statement.

To ensure a united Party approach towards the public, we send you material from the Propaganda Department of the CC CPCz. It answers individual demands contained in the appeal "Several Sentences". Advantage must also be taken of material published in *Rudé právo* and other mass media.

Jan Fojtík

Internal Party Information on the "Several Sentences"
Appeal Made by Opposition Groups

Recently, anti-socialist forces in the CSSR have organized a new campaign of provocation. The appeal by the opposition groups entitled "Several Sentences" is formally presented as a contribution to dialogue, but is actually designed for confrontation with the socialist state and with our social establishment. The authors attribute an extraordinary significance to it. It cannot be considered separately from other actions and documents of the opposition groups, in which their signatories express a more far-reaching goal aimed at the overthrow of the socialist order in the CSSR.

The opposition groups are trying to overcome the state of affairs in which they form isolated movements. In the statement they stake out their programme of demands, especially those that require time and money. Their point of view is simplified. They completely ignore the fact that many of these serious problems are part of our programme, and that we are solving them.

In the statement they speak of the "need for systemic changes", of the "necessity for fundamental changes in the social climate in our country, to which the spirit of freedom, tolerance, and plurality" must return. The question of the need for a "real political dialogue as the only possible escape from the blind alley in which Czechoslovakia finds itself today" is their attempt to legalize opposition groups, to attain the status of official opposition. The "Several Sentences" statement is meant to be an important point in creating a platform for their united front, directed at the dismantling of socialism, its liquidation and substitution for a sociopolitical system on the Western model.

With their new campaign the opposition groups wish to create a crisis and put increasing pressure on the leadership of the Party and state. They attempt to manipulate the public at large. In this context, the statement is to assume the role of a "referendum" on their programme of demands. The authors of the statement would like to gather one million signatures.

The public is also meant to be influenced by the fact that some representatives of our arts and academic communities have joined the signature campaign. The opposition groups invest their hopes in influencing the opinions of a broad spectrum of our citizens, especially young people, who in recent times have not been interested in social processes, but today want actively to participate in them.

The range of problems contained in the statement is to be instrumental, along with the abstraction and generality of some of the targets dealing with key questions (the natural environment, for example). The authors of the statement rely on the fact that individual points on their list of demands will strike a chord with various groups in our society, and that some people will take it as a new, more effective variant of societal restructuring. They are counting on being heard most by those who so far have no clear political position.

Past experience also shows that the opposition groups are successful where societal problems (which have been placed there by life itself) have not been solved or have been only partially solved. They thus feed on the existing problems of our society, which stem from our economy lagging behind the world in scientific-technical development, from the low growth in work productivity, an insufficiency in distribution-demand relations, the unsatisfactory pace of development of socialist economic integration in view of the needs of our society. They also feed on environmental problems, on shortages in the area of services and supply of internal markets, in our health care, education, and so on. The methods of resolving these problems contained in the programme and approach to societal restructuring they depict as unacceptable and insufficient. They try to undermine faith in the ability of the Party to solve problems, and to create the perception of a stagnating society in moral, political, and economic crisis. With their "competence, legitimacy, and ability" to formulate and put forth demands in the name of the entire public, they rely for support on provocations they themselves have created, upon petition campaigns, on isolated cases of public dissatisfaction, and the purposefully stimulated activity of other so-called "informal" movements, encouraged by the Western media.

A unified front in our society, the joining of all strata of society in harmony with the goals of restructuring, is the fundamental prerequisite for the realization of our program. For this reason the authors of the appeal try to divide our society. They want to undermine the faith of our public in the correctness of the path we have set out on; each step we take they try to cast doubt on. Our propaganda offensive applied against the efforts of the independent groups must therefore be accompanied by practical steps towards the realization of restructuring. In the media it is necessary to present positive examples and concrete ways of solving its tasks. Criticism of our own insufficiencies must not be levelled in a way that enemy forces can misuse it against us.

The new petition drive has a clearly determined strategy, in which an important task is assigned to foreign radio stations such as Radio Free Europe and Voice of America. The authors of the statement count on further internationalization of the

problems of opposition group activities in the CSSR, and will attempt to apply the experience from the work of the anti-socialist forces in other socialist countries (especially the PPR and the HPR).

The new petition drive ties into previous attempts of the opposition groups, and is conceived as an extensive, long-term campaign. Its goal is to destabilize our society, and to call forth an atmosphere of tension and confrontation, which they want to escalate. The culmination is meant to be August 21, 1989. The Presidium of the CC CPCz, at its meeting of June 20, 1989, emphasized in relation to the petition drive, that it is a "dangerous attempt, which must be resisted everywhere with all possible determination". This requires from Party organs and organizations aggressive and deliberate measures. The essence of this campaign, and the true aims of the authors of this statement, must be explained to our public.

It is especially necessary to show that opposition groups are emerging with their declarations at a time when we are carrying out economic and social restructuring, and in harmony with the process of democratization changing the content, style, and methods of Party work. The initiator of this process, which has the support of our public, is the Party, which gave an answer to these important questions in the conclusions of the 7th session of the CC CPCz and the sessions that followed.

The statement "Several Sentences" contains demands for democratic discussion of economic reforms and the formulation of a new constitution. It attempts to spread the impression that the Party makes decisions behind the people's back. This is a deliberate lie. All important measures connected with the restructuring of our economy and other areas of our social life are prepared with broad public participation. This was so with the proposed Law on State Enterprises, the Law on Housing, Consumer, and Production Collectives, the Law on Agricultural Collectives, the proposed amendment of the Labour Code, and others. Hundreds of thousands of comments by organizations, work-place collectives, and individuals as well, were carefully evaluated and used in finalizing the proposals.

It has been no different in working out the proposed legal-political principles of the new Constitution of the CSSR. In conformity with the conclusions of the Commission of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia and the National Front in January of this year, whose members included 150 representatives of our political, academic, and cultural life, individual parts of proposed legal-political principles of the new Constitution of the CSSR have been drawn up over the last few months.

In the upcoming months the complete proposal for the legal-political principles of the new Constitution of the CSSR is to be finalized and, after discussion in the CPCz and NF commission and in the Central Committee of the National Front, it will be submitted for broad national discussion. The entire public will have the opportunity to examine the proposal in detail, take it up in the basic membership units of the political parties, the Revolutionary Trade Union Movement, the Czechoslovak Union of Collective Farmers, the Socialist Youth Union, the Czechoslovak Union of Women, and other organizations, at public gatherings, in work-place collectives, and in co-ops, and express their opinions and suggestions.

The statement "Several Sentences" contains seven basic demands: [...]

The statement "Several Sentences" is a very serious anti-Party and anti-society document. Its authors do not even conceal the fact that they pursue the same goals as they did twenty-one years ago with the declaration "2,000 Words". This interpretation was also adopted by Radio Free Europe and the Voice of America.

The Party must take the offensive to unite all of its members in a dynamic and determined front, to avoid sectarian methods and liberalism, to respond factually and constructively to any kind of criticism, and to react calmly and with prudence. Indecisiveness or scepticism is impermissible: it is necessary to concentrate on the thorough realization of the programme of restructuring and democratization, on carrying out the conclusions of the 7th Session of the CC CPCz and subsequent meetings of the Central Committee.

We must expect that other destructive activities of various kinds of so-called "informal" organizations will take place, including acts of provocation (especially on August 21). We can confront them effectively only if we engage in mass political work and raise it to a higher level, complete ideological activity in the spirit of the 10th Session of the CC CPCz and the speech of General Secretary Miloš Jakeš at the 13th and 14th Sessions of the CC CPCz.

Our response must be the thorough realization of measures dealing with the restructuring of the economic mechanism, the fulfilment of national economic tasks, and the activation of the parties and the entire National Front.

Source: State Central Archives, Prague, CC CPCz record group, telexes and letters, 478/1989.

Translated from the Czech by Todd Hammond.

Document 25

Bucharest, July 8, 1989

Speech by Miloš Jakeš to top-level members of the Political Advisory Council
of the Warsaw Pact,
containing CPCz views on perestroika and Czechoslovak opposition groups (excerpts)

[...] In the interest of strengthening the prestige of socialism, which has entered a new phase, we have in an internal and external sense embarked on a path of thorough economic and social restructuring together with extensive democratization. We intend it as a renewal of the Leninist concept of socialism, a necessary reaction to the demands of a new era of its development, as a decisive victory over everything that is foreign to socialist values and prevents the development of our society from acquiring the dynamism so desirable in every direction. We start with our own conditions, and look to the experience of other countries. Let us not equate a critical view of the past with negativism, with rejection of the achievements that socialism has made. This would contradict the truth, and could lead to the loss of legitimacy of the CPCz and the socialist system and its hopes.

The great majority of citizens in our country are for socialism, and support the internal and foreign policy of the state. People connect socialism not only with basic securities and stability in society, but the overall order and stability within society, which are necessary for honest and active work, for a rich, all-around life in the material and intellectual areas alike.

[...] In implementing the policy of restructuring, various opposition groups are becoming active, and try to misuse reform for the expansion of their influence and the destabilization of society. This applies even to some former leading Party functionaries who, as a result of their former anti-Party activities in the period of crisis at the end of the 1960s, lost their membership in the Party. They founded Revival. They pursue a reappraisal of 1968, a return to pre-1948, and want to reenter public life. You have probably obtained a letter from Alexander Dubček and Oldřich Černík, in which they ask the leadership of the fraternal parties and states and other Communist parties, to reappraise the international assistance to our country in 1968. I believe this letter deserves no reply. It would lead to nothing good; on the contrary, it would cause several difficulties. It would not be understood within our Party. It must be remembered that Alexander Dubček still stood at the head of the Party eight months after the international assistance had been provided, and he was removed from the function of First Secretary by democratic means, on the basis of a decision by the Central Committee, owing to his inability to solve the problems and lead the country out of crisis. It was no different with Černík. Difficulties connected with the discharging of new tasks and the solution of existing problems, as well as a critical view of the past, are misused by various opposition groups whose centre is the so-called "Charter 77" for defaming and discrediting the socialist system of society and its ideological foundation. They disseminate various appeals whose contents are destabilizing, whose basic goal is to break the forces loyal to the Party, establish a system of bourgeois political pluralism, and the reprivatization of the means of production. To this end they use intimidation of people, terror, and their interpretation

of the final document of the Vienna follow-up talks. This takes place with active and coordinated participation from abroad.

We want to resist this pressure mainly through the development of ideological work with the masses, an increase in Party activity, a political offensive, seizing the initiative in setting the agenda, and finding the right solution in the interest of the citizens. Our main political task is to gain all honest people, all Czechoslovak patriots for improving the economic situation, securing the standard of living, for the full application of human rights and responsibilities, and for the cause of social progress in our country.

The difficulties and contradictions of the times become apparent in the waning activity of some members of the Party, in the slowdown in the acceptance of new members, and increased departures from the Party. Today the CPCz has 1,720,000 members and candidates. Its social composition reflects its stable working-class character. Most members of the Party joined after 1970; in industrial factories these members may make up more than 80 per cent. [...]

Source: State Central Archives, Prague, CC CPCz record group, Presidium, 8234, 12 July 1989.

Translated from the Czech by Todd Hammond.

Document 26

Prague, July 13, 1989

VIA (an independent news agency) report on meetings between
Hans-Dietrich Genscher, Václav Havel, and Jiří Hájek

Genscher Visits Prague

On July 12 and 13, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Federal Republic of Germany, Hans-Dietrich Genscher, visited Czechoslovakia. During his short visit to Prague he met not only with officials, but also with dramatist Václav Havel and former Minister of Foreign Affairs Jiří Hájek. Originally, the West German Embassy had invited at least eight activists of various independent initiatives to a meeting, but this meeting was later cancelled, because Herr Genscher expressed the wish to meet only with Václav Havel and Professor Hájek, and with each separately. During the first day of his stay in Czechoslovakia, Herr Genscher, after meeting with Czechoslovak Minister of Foreign Affairs Johannes and Premier Adamec, visited Cardinal Tomášek, with whom he had a short conversation. Later he received Václav Havel at the West German Embassy.

This meeting took place in the presence of an interpreter only; no members of the Minister's entourage or Embassy employees were present. Mr. Havel indicated to Minister Genscher that he interpreted the invitation as being addressed to the recipient of the German Booksellers' Peace Prize, which was awarded him this year in Frankfurt. Mr Havel regarded the prize as an appreciation not only for his literary work, but also for his activities in the area of human rights. For this reason he mainly wanted at the meeting to discuss that topic. He also said he regretted Minister Genscher had not found time in his schedule for meeting with the representatives of various independent initiatives. Václav Havel then spoke about the general situation in Czechoslovakia, about the growing tension in the country, and about the dangers of the confrontation which the authorities were attempting to bring about. The independent initiatives, according to Mr Havel, want to go the way of peaceful dialogue. Instead, people like Petr Cibulka, Ivan Jirous, and František Stárek were being sentenced to prison merely for their activities in the arts. Further proof of the unwillingness of the authorities to carry on a dialogue with society is the campaign directed in recent days in the official media against the independent initiatives, among others in connection with the statement "Several Sentences". Václav Havel also pointed out that there are other political prisoners, that their cases are often tragic, and that the publicity and support of governments and parliaments abroad would assist in the positive conclusion of their cases. The West German Embassy in Prague has documentation pertaining to their cases. In answer to the query of Herr Genscher as to what type of economic assistance the Federal Republic of Germany could furnish, Václav Havel expressed the fear that loans might be misused, and that he would not be happy if Czechoslovak children were forced in fifteen years to pay back a many billion-crown debt, as was now the case in Poland. Loans should be furnished only for specific investments, while the purposefulness of these investments should be under parallel public control. Mr Havel spoke of Czechoslovakia as the crossroads of European historical processes. Consequently, the country remains especially sensitive to the events of 1968 and their

consequences, and the independent initiatives had recently sent open letters to the parliaments and governments of five countries of the Warsaw Pact whose troops had participated in the occupation. In this area as well, any kind of support from the parliaments and governments of the European countries would mean a significant boost for Czechoslovakia. At this very moment the situation in Czechoslovakia is becoming acute, and it is now important how the authorities will react to the anniversary of the occupation on August 21. Mr. Havel called Minister Genscher's attention to the fact that within the circles of state power there are forces that would like to make Wenceslas Square into a Tienanmen Square on August 21. Václav Havel has asked Minister Genscher to appeal to Mr. Jakeš to the effect that the authorities not follow the path of confrontation.

Foreign Minister Genscher assured Václav Havel that the West German government is carefully observing the situation in Czechoslovakia, and that it regards the events here as very important. He had also decided to discuss the issue of independent initiatives and political prisoners during his meetings with Government representatives. He would also discuss the possibilities of Havel's attendance at the presentation of the German Bookseller's Peace Prize this autumn. Václav Havel, however, practically ruled out the possibility of participating in the awards ceremony, as he had no guarantee of re-admission to Czechoslovakia. According to Mr. Havel, reform of the economic system is impossible without simultaneous reforms of the political system. The current experiences of Hungary, Poland, and the Soviet Union demonstrate that this is the only possible way of carrying out reforms. We are currently not in a situation, however, in which we would be fighting for a new political system; we are struggling for the right to discuss it, said Mr. Havel. The independent initiatives are striving for the free discussion of urgent problems, and do not desire tensions or confrontation. The meeting between Hans-Dietrich Genscher and Václav Havel lasted an hour. At the meeting's conclusion, Mr. Genscher again expressed his support for the independent initiatives, and asked Mr. Havel to relay this expression of support to his friends, and also to say that he looked upon his conversation with Václav Havel as if other representatives of independent initiatives had been present as well.

On the morning of July 13, Minister Genscher also received Professor Jiří Hájek. During the one-hour interview between only the two men, they mainly discussed relations between their two countries as concerned the Helsinki process. Jiří Hájek concentrated chiefly on the area of human rights, at specific as well as general levels. He emphasized that questions of peace and cooperation between individual states cannot be separated from questions of human rights. Professor Hájek also mentioned the benefit of the recently adopted Vienna document for the entire Helsinki process, because it strengthens the independent groups that observe human rights, while calling on governments to assist these groups. Jiří Hájek pointed out that at the recent summit conference of the Warsaw Pact in Bucharest, the Czechoslovak representatives renewed their acceptance of these principles; the closing document of the Bucharest meeting, Professor Hájek emphasized, contained the formulation that no one has a monopoly on truth.

Minister Genscher expressed support for the position of Jiří Hájek, while stating his sympathy with the independent movements and initiatives. He assured him that the

West German Government would promote a similar concept to that laid out by Jiří Hájek in their contacts with the official Czechoslovak representatives.

At this time talks are under way between the West German Foreign Minister and Miloš Jakeš along with Gustáv Husák. He will then conclude his visit to Czechoslovakia.

Václav Havel gave a short telephone interview to the West German television station ARD, concerning his conversation with Minister Genscher.

Minister Genscher also received former Czechoslovak Minister of Foreign Affairs Bohuslav Chňoupek for an interview. At the short meeting, which was held at the airport prior to the Minister's departure exclusively with journalists from West Germany, Genscher said that, among other things, discussions with former Czechoslovak Foreign Ministers Hájek and Chňoupek and with dramatist Václav Havel had given him the opportunity to gain a more complete picture of the situation in Czechoslovakia.

Source: VIA (East European Independent News Agency) report, samizdat, Czechoslovak Documentation Centre, Scheinfeld, VIA collection, VIA PRAHA CS 042/89, July, 13 1989.

Translated from the Czech by Todd Hammond.

Document 27
Prague, July 24, 1989
VIA (an independent news agency) report
on Polish-Czechoslovak Solidarity activists' meetings

Poles Visit Václav Havel and Alexander Dubček

On July 23, a group of five activists of Polish-Czechoslovak Solidarity, who are visiting Czechoslovakia, left Prague for Václav Havel's cottage in Hrádeček near Vlčice in the foothills of the Giant Mountains. The Polish guests spent the entire day there, accompanied by Charter 77 spokesman Saša Vondra. Also present were persons from the Czechoslovak Independent Video Journal and independent journalists from Poland and Czechoslovakia. The discussions between Solidarity activists and Václav Havel lasted 15 hours. The subjects of their talks are reflected in two interviews recorded by VIA journalist Petr Pospíchal.

In an interview with Václav Havel, Adam Michnik clarified his point of view, which had been published in the daily *Gazeta Wyborcza*, according to which Solidarity should now form a coalition government with reform-minded members of the PUWP. Citing the example of the transfer of power in Spain in the mid-1970s, Michnik refuted Havel's doubts on the possibility of forming a Solidarity government at this time. The people who elected us, Michnik stated, do not expect that in the Sejm we will reveal how bad Communism is; they know that very well themselves. They expect us to contribute to remedying the catastrophic state Poland finds itself in.

Another discussion between Havel and Michnik dealt with the possibility of revision of the official position of the five of the Warsaw Pact parliaments and governments on the 1968 military intervention in Czechoslovakia. In this context, Havel mentioned the recent appeal of the independent initiatives, which was addressed to the parliaments and governments of the intervening countries. According to Adam Michnik, insistence on the original position on that military intervention means a great deal for all reactionary forces not only in Czechoslovakia, but also in Poland and the USSR. Until the position is revised, these forces will feel safe. He mentioned the clear position of Solidarity and Lech Wałęsa personally, and informed Václav Havel of the discussions on this topic he engaged in not long ago in Moscow. With the Inter-area Group of the Congress of People's Representatives, he met with a clearly negative attitude towards the intervention of 1968. The Soviet representatives warned Adam Michnik, however, that the main reason the USSR still cannot publicly admit the erroneousness of the military occupation of Czechoslovakia in 1968 is the position of the Czechoslovak leadership, particularly Comrade Jakeš, who fears the negative influence of such a statement in the ranks of the CPCz. Adam Michnik, in Moscow and now in the discussion with Václav Havel, called Miloš Jakeš a person who guards his caste interests, and not the interests of Czechoslovak society; he called the position "caste egotism".

In a discussion with Jan Lityński, which touched on, among other things, the need to defend political prisoners and all those who are persecuted and cannot defend themselves. The Sejm representative expressed the opinion that in Poland a new type

of thinking on national and international questions is slowly winning out. The previous orientation towards purely Polish problems and interests, limited to negotiations with Moscow and the West, is gradually being replaced by the conviction that when an empire is disintegrating, it is necessary to act together and search for a common solution to similar problems. Thus the idea of common cooperation among the nations of Eastern and Central Europe is developing, including Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Hungary, but more and more often also the nations of the Soviet Union, including Russia.

After spending the night at the house of Václav Havel, the five activists of Polish-Czechoslovak Solidarity left for Prague, from where Zbigniew Bujak travelled by air to Warsaw, and Zbigniew Janas, Jan Lityński, and Adam Michnik, accompanied by Jan Urban (a Charter 77 signatory, member of the socialist Revival Club, and a VIA journalist), travelled to Bratislava, where they were received at 2.00 p.m. by Alexander Dubček in his home. The intense conversation between the Sejm representatives and the former CC CPCz First Secretary lasted more than three hours. In it, Dubček answered the representatives' numerous questions about developments in Czechoslovakia over the past 25 years. They also spoke about the current situation in Czechoslovakia and other East European countries. Special attention was devoted to developments in the USSR. They discussed the approaching anniversary of the military intervention of August 21, 1968. Both sides consider the intervention to have been a completely unacceptable and illegal act, which must be labelled as invalid from the very beginning.

Adam Michnik informed Alexander Dubček of his recent meetings in Moscow, including those which concerned the situation in Czechoslovakia. He also related his impressions of developments in the USSR. Afterwards, Dubček provided a short interview to the Polish daily *Gazeta Wyborcza*. Several members of the National Security Corps (SNB) were out front of the villa of Dubček during the visit of the Polish representatives; they did not intervene in any way, however. It was the second time the Polish guests had noted the presence of Czechoslovak police. In the first case, on July 22, the SNB kept watch in front of the home of Jan Urban, and with a videocamera filmed those who went into the house to take part in the meeting with the Polish guests. The Poles were filmed as well. In Bratislava the police were not filming.

After the visit to Dubček, the Polish representatives went with Urban to the flat of Pavol Čarnogurský, who lives in Bratislava. Mr Čarnogurský is a former official of the prewar and wartime People's Party, and as a participant in the anti-Fascist resistance is holder of the Honorary Cross of the Polish Territorial Army (*Armija Krajowa*). The Polish guests were to spend the night in Bratislava, and are to depart for Warsaw on the morning of July 25, 1989.

Source: VIA (East European Independent News Agency) report, samizdat, Czechoslovak Documentation Centre, Scheinfeld, VIA collection, VIA PRAHA CS 045/89, July, 24, 1989.

Translated from the Czech by Todd Hammond.

Document 28
Prague, July 27, 1989
VIA (an independent news agency) report
on talks between Polish activists of Polish-Czechoslovak Solidarity
and the Czechoslovak group Democratic Initiative

Further Talks with Polish Activists of Polish-Czechoslovak Solidarity visiting Prague

On July 22, during their stay in Prague, two members of the delegation of Polish activists from Polish-Czechoslovak Solidarity, Representative to the Sejm Zbigniew Janas, and Zbigniew Bujak, Chairman of the Mazowsze Independent and Self-Governing Union Organization Solidarity, met with participants of the Czechoslovak independent group Democratic Initiative, of which about 60 participants were gathered in one Prague flat. The discussion with Janas and Bujak dealt with, among other things, the possibilities for independent movements in the process of the democratization of society, and the overcoming of the undemocratic political system. On July 24, Mirosław Jasiński, spokesman for Polish-Czechoslovak Solidarity, met with activists of the Independent Peace Association. The discussion concerned, among other things, future joint activities.

Source: VIA (East European Independent News Agency) report, samizdat, Czechoslovak Documentation Centre, Scheinfeld, VIA collection, VIA PRAHA CS 046/89, July, 27, 1989.

Translated from the Czech by Todd Hammond.

Document 29
Prague, August 1989
Information on Charter 77 report
on the arrest of Polish-Czechoslovak Solidarity spokesman by Czechoslovak Police

Mirosław Jasiński Detained Again

On August 1, the spokesman for Polish-Czechoslovak Solidarity Mirosław Jasiński, who had travelled to Czechoslovakia with a group of Solidarity members of Sejm on July 21, was detained at the railway station in Lichkov-Mezilesí, Bohemia. He was subjected to a thorough personal search, during which several items of printed matter were taken from him, including materials from the Democratic Initiative, a copy of the samizdat journal *Sport*, and a brochure he had received from Cardinal Tomášek at the reception of the group of Polish activists and Sejm deputies held at the Archiepiscopal Palace on July 22.

Also confiscated were a videocassette with a BBC film on Czechoslovakia and an audiocassette with the songs of Jaromír Nohavica issued by the state-owned record company Supraphon. After six hours, Jasiński was released, and allowed to continue on to Poland. Jasiński was similarly detained, on June 15, during his previous visit to Czechoslovakia, and told that he was suspected of acts contrary to the interests of socialist society in the area of contact with a foreign country.

Source: *Informace o Chartě 77* (samizdat), vol. 12, no. 15 (1989), p. 16.

Translated from the Czech by Todd Hammond.

Document 30

Prague, August 19, 1989

Statement by presidia of both chambers of the Czechoslovak Federal Assembly, protesting the Polish legislature's condemnation of the August 1968 intervention

Our Representatives Protest!

Statement of the Presidia of the Chamber of the People and the Chamber of the Nations of the Federal Assembly of the CSSR, on the declaration of the Senate and Sejm of the Polish People's Republic

According to information issued by some Polish media, the Senate and soon after the Sejm of the Polish People's Republic have within the last few days approved a declaration in which they express themselves, outside their mandate, on the events in Czechoslovakia in 1968, and distort the meaning these events have had for the further development of Czechoslovakia.

The Presidium of the Chamber of the People and Chamber of the Nations of the Federal Assembly of the CSSR express their astonishment at, and categorical rejection of, this declaration, whose contents constitute blatant interference into the internal affairs of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic. They also reject the description of democracy in Czechoslovakia from the position of the Polish anti-socialist forces. The declaration runs contrary to the traditionally friendly relations and broad cooperation between our nations and states.

The form and timing of the declaration assists illegal groups in the CSSR in their subversive efforts concerning the events of August 1968. Interpretation of Czechoslovak history is the exclusive right of the nations of the CSSR, and the Czechoslovak deputies of the Federal Assembly insist that this right be fully respected.

The Czechoslovak state and its people have their representatives and other organizations, which guard the sovereignty of the socialist state and attend to the happiness of its inhabitants. Our people will not be turned away from the path of socialism, development, and the perfection of socialist democracy through restructuring.

Note: No original copy of this protest has yet been found after extensive searches of Czech archives. It therefore appears that it was written at the instigation of the CPCz leadership, without the two presidia ever having debated the matter.

Source: *Rudé právo*, August 19, 1989, p. 1.

Translated from the Czech by Todd Hammond.

Document 31

Prague, August 19, 1989

Charter 77 address to the International Conference on the Rights of Nations
to Self-determination and Equality, Riga, August 21 and 22, 1989

Ladies and Gentlemen,

You are meeting to attempt to evaluate objectively a sensitive period of your modern history, which until recently was burdened with one-sided interpretations, namely the period connected with the beginning of the Second World War.

To draw out the truths of history is no easy task. We, along with you, are aware that without a deep knowledge of the past, one that has not been deformed by ideology, it is impossible to demand justice, impossible to perceive and reflect truthfully on the needs and requirements of the present, and difficult to wage a struggle for democracy and the right of nations to decide their own fate.

We understand fully the responsibility of this task. We understand it all the more because during the days of your meeting we are commemorating the 21st anniversary of the illegal intervention by the armies of five countries of the Warsaw Pact, which was against the inviolable rights of our nation. The consequences of this aggressive act burden our country to this day, and are the main cause of the fact that our society has so far not embarked on the path of fundamental, overall renewal. To achieve a fundamental reevaluation of these historical facts is a task of the first order for our country. The ideas and conclusions of your conference, devoted to the analysis of the historic events of 1939, can be a source of inspiration and strength for us in these efforts.

We hope that your meeting has a constructive and creative atmosphere.

Tomáš Hradílek, Dana Němcová, Saša Vondra
Spokespersons, Charter 77

Note: These greetings were read to guests at the conference August 21, 1989 by František Janouch on behalf of Charter 77.

Source: *Informace o Chartě 77*, vol. 12, no. 16, (1989), p. 4.

Translated from the Czech by Todd Hammond.

Document 32

Prague, August 26, 1989

Letter from Charter 77 to Federation of Young Democrats, Budapest,
thanking them for their presence at the Prague demonstration, August 21, 1989

Dear Friends,

We wish to thank you, and at the same time express our deep respect, that many of you recently came to Prague in the name of all young and free-thinking Hungarians to protest publicly and with unusual personal dedication against the military intervention in Czechoslovakia twenty-one years ago, and against the Hungarian participation in that invasion. On August 21, many of us were in prison or somehow detained, hence it was not in our power to thank you personally. Please accept our belated thanks.

We interpret your presence in Prague as an expression of the interest of both our nations in the creation of good neighbourly relations and a common European home. All the more resolutely, then, do we protest against the illegal and violent detaining of many Hungarian, Polish, Italian, German (from both the Federal Republic and the German Democratic Republic), Dutch, Yugoslav, and Czechoslovak citizens as well, who in the streets of Prague, on August 21, did nothing more than express their opinion in a peaceful manner. Let us demand the immediate release of György Kerényi and Tamás Deutsch, who are still being held in detention in Prague.

We wish also to express our solidarity with those Hungarian citizens who, in protest against the measures of the Czechoslovak bureaucracy, are holding a hunger strike in front of the Czechoslovak Embassy in Budapest.

Tomáš Hradílek, Dana Němcová, Saša Vondra
Spokespersons, Charter 77

Source: *Informace o Chartě 77* (samizdat), vol. 12, no. 16, (1989), p. 4.

Translated by Todd Hammond.

Document 33

Bratislava, September 7, 1989

Open letter from Milan Šimečka to Chairman of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR Mikhail Gorbachev,
appealing to him to condemn the Soviet intervention of 1968

Dear Mr. Chairman,

This letter is an expression of deep moral distress. I should never have believed that I should be driven to such an act in a country where letters to the representatives of the Soviet Union have such an unhappy tradition. What had led me to it was the alarming discovery that the persecution of important representatives of the Czechoslovak intelligentsia, and a large number of young people, especially workers, has dangerously increased in our country. A whole series of political trials have been held since January of this year; in them independently thinking people of all generations have been convicted, including people with great moral authority in the nation and among the international community: Havel, Jirous, Marvanová, Vondra, Chramostová, Šilhánová, Stárek, and many, many more.

A few weeks ago, Dr. Ján Čarnogurský, Prof. Miroslav Kusý, Dr. Vladimír Maňák, Hana Ponická, and Anton Selecký were indicted for alleged disturbance and subversion. The first two persons were imprisoned, and threatened with up to ten years in prison. All of these people are my closest friends. There is no kind of protest that we, and our friends from the independent movements inside this country, have not made. The leadership of our country, however, has quietly ignored them, although the protests were signed by thousands: writers, musicians, actors, workers, and citizens of all occupations.

Frustrated by the arrogance of power here, and my own helplessness, I turn to you. In our country free thought is still criminalized. Also criminal is criticism motivated by the moral responsibility of the intellectual, which you praised so highly in your speech in New York. Miroslav Kusý and Ján Čarnogurský are in prison solely for having written critical ideas and analyses which they spoke or issued in print. The ideas the indictment cites as subversive have been countless times confirmed by history and the logic of developments. According to the yardstick employed in this case, your Supreme Soviet would be incapable of forming a quorum, as most of your members of parliament would be serving their sentences in prison. I am afraid that you would be among them.

I do not ask that you interfere in our internal affairs. I only wish to remind you that Czechoslovakia's stumbling along the path to restructuring and the sad things of which I am writing you are still the results of the shameful decision of your predecessors in 1968. For twenty years now it has affected the lives of millions of our people, which were tragically changed in the course of one August night. The specific case of my friends is related to this subject: they were accused of "disrespect for international assistance". If the leadership of your country took a clear negative position towards the military intervention and the forceful interruption of our "revolutionary restructuring", all persecution would have to stop, as the artificial framework of legitimacy, built on

the old thinking, would collapse. Czechoslovakia cannot go into the future with the unhealed wound of 1968; it will not fit into the European home, and will continue to lie here like an immobile boulder in everyone's way.

I only ask that you intervene in your own internal affairs and, by condemning the intervention, rid your own country of a moral burden and an old guilt that casts doubt even on the hopeful deeds of the present. The decision that back then destroyed our faith and dashed our hopes was the work of persons who for the most part have now passed away; but historical responsibility exceeds the bounds of one human life. By remaining silent about these things you prolong the effects of the old injustice on a national scale, at the same time prolonging the prison days and nights of many of respectable and courageous citizens, among them my friends. To remedy these things, complex diplomatic negotiations are unnecessary: just a few sentences, spoken publicly, would suffice.

I thank you, and remain

Yours faithfully

Milan Šimečka

Note: This letter from a foremost independent political philosopher and samizdat author was distributed in Russian by the Charta 77 Foundation, Stockholm, to thirty-five leading figures in the Soviet Union, and broadcast in Czech by Radio Free Europe.

Source: signed carbon copy, Czechoslovak Documentation Centre, Scheinfeld, Milan Šimečka collection, 1989.

Translated from the Czech by Todd Hammond.

Document 34
Prague, September 14, 1989,
Statement by Charter 77,
on East German refugees at the Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany

On the Question of East German Refugees

Since the end of July of this year, East German citizens have begun to take refuge on the grounds of the embassies of the Federal Republic of Germany in the GDR, Hungary, and Czechoslovakia. In this way they had hoped to secure their departure to the West. From a legal standpoint a deadlock has occurred, as these countries do not under their law accept this route, but at the same time they respect the extraterritoriality of the embassy of a sovereign country. These citizens of the GDR may be threatened with up to two years imprisonment after leaving the embassy offices. They are therefore remaining in makeshift conditions, and are consequently obstructing the normal functioning of the embassy. It is precisely for these two reasons, humanitarian and practical, that steps have been taken towards finding a generally acceptable solution in neighbouring countries.

At the beginning of September there were 350 citizens of the GDR, including 90 children, at the Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany in Prague. After agreement with an East German lawyer, who promised that the refugees would not be prosecuted, some of them left the Embassy grounds on Tuesday, September 9, 1989; nevertheless, at least 150 citizens decided to remain at the Embassy. They are sheltered in tents, and although the Czechoslovak side provides energy, water, and provisions, it should be obvious that specialized medical care and school lessons are lacking and hygienic conditions are unsatisfactory. The Government of the Federal Republic of Germany, therefore, recently called on the Czechoslovak Government to negotiate conditions under which this problem could be solved, but has not received a constructive reply. Since it is no longer justifiable to prolong this abnormal situation, we call on the Government of the CSSR to adopt concrete measures that would assist in finding a solution.

In our opinion, there exist only two ways out of the current situation: either, as specified in documents of the Council on Security and Cooperation in Europe, to allow promptly all East German citizens currently at the Embassy to depart for the Federal Republic of Germany, as the Hungarian Government recently did; or at least temporarily to resolve the situation in accordance with humanitarian principles, as is the custom in the world. Such measures could be overseen by the International Red Cross; this would, however, require providing the necessary space in which to take refuge for the East German citizens still remaining at the Embassy. This conciliatory step on the part of the Czechoslovak side would provide medical care and schooling for the children and, on the other hand, free up the grounds of the Embassy for its normal function.

We consider it necessary to emphasize that this anomaly is caused mainly by the present political situation in the GDR. Disappointed hopes for the development of reform, together with uncertain possibilities for further travel, cause a spontaneous

and often ill-considered reaction on the part these citizens. We think the best prevention of such problematic forms of protest, and an assertion of inalienable rights, would in this case be the introduction of truly democratic conditions in the GDR. In our opinion, the current situation of the GDR citizens at the Embassy of the FRG in Prague must, however, be speedily resolved here, above all for humanitarian reasons.

Tomáš Hradílek, Dana Němcová, Saša Vondra
Spokespersons, Charter 77

Addressed to the Government of the CSSR, forwarded to the media.

Source: *Informace o Chartě 77* (samizdat), vol. 12, no. 17 (1989), p. 2.

Translated from the Czech by Todd Hammond.

Document 35

Prague, September 21, 1989

Memorandum of a conversation between CPCz General Secretary Miloš Jakeš and SED Politburo member and CC Secretary Günter Shabowski, on East German refugees at the FRG Embassy in Prague, the situation in Hungary and Poland, and losing ground to the opposition in Czechoslovakia

[...] [Jakeš] would like to make some points in connection with matters regarding GDR citizens illegally leaving their country: the CSSR had reacted to pressure from the FRG by indicating that the problem had to be solved by the GDR and the FRG. It was also made clear that the CSSR would respect agreement made with the GDR. Yesterday the FRG Ambassador Huber had delivered a spoken message from Genscher for Premier Adamec to Foreign Minister Johanes. It consisted of the proposal that the CSSR should act as the People's Republic of Hungary had acted. Foreign Minister Johanes confirmed to Huber the stance of the CSSR as already stated. It was also made plain to the FRG that it could not now play up affairs whose very existence was the fault of the FRG. Ultimately, it was the FRG which had issued passports to persons who were not citizens of the FRG but "citizens of the GDR who happened to speak the same language".

One wondered where international law would be if every state adopted such practice. The FRG partners were very disheartened by this response. Now they had problems with the 527 GDR citizens currently residing in the FRG Embassy in Prague. The Czechoslovak organs made it clear to their FRG partners that they themselves had to solve the problems in this connection and demanded that they desist from blaming the CSSR. It was suggested that the Embassy staff should give clear information to the GDR citizens concerning the guarantees made by the GDR and the corresponding agreements between the GDR and the FRG. The CSSR could also offer protection and secure access to the Embassy by means of identity checks and so on.

It was of course clear in the CSSR that all of this was not mere coincidence. It was a case of a planned, organized attack on the GDR on its 40th anniversary aimed at demeaning its success in constructing socialism on German soil. The opponent, however, would not rest after October 7. He would perhaps step up his attacks on the CSSR: October 28, the anniversary of the founding of bourgeois Czechoslovakia, was already marked red in the calendars of all opposition groups. These people are very angry that there is still order in the GDR and in the CSSR, which could not be said so categorically for the People's Republic of Poland or for the People's Republic of Hungary. The opposition groups, therefore, had made international contacts, even with some groups operating within the Soviet Union. Their actions were co-ordinated. It was necessary, according to Comrade Jakeš, to take into consideration that the opponent was represented at a higher level in the Polish Parliament and Government, apparently had access to some deputies in the Supreme Soviet and would also have positions in Hungary after the elections there. Moreover, everything indicated that the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party would split into Communist and Social-Democratic parties.

The CPCz was aware of this development in the fraternal states and informed the Czechoslovak public. This contributed to citizens recently being "frightened off" by events such as those taking place elsewhere and wished to avoid insecurity. On the other hand, the situation in other socialist countries was an incentive for militant opposition groups. Attempts were made in the CSSR to copy such developments. The CPCz saw the situation thus: although it was unpleasant that the opposition was raising its head, it would not reach the broad masses of Czechoslovak society with its policies. Certain familiar forces were amongst those supporting the opponent. It was very popular in some intellectual circles and in sections of the youth. In the eyes of the youth, demonstrations and riots were often connected with "action" and adventure.

If, however, the future brought economic stability, increased productivity and secured supplies, the opposition would not meet with success among the workers, farmers and technical intelligentsia. Things looked different in circles of intellectuals who had achieved everything – material well-being and success – in socialism. They wanted power and refused to recognize the Communists' right to it. That was the basic question. Their striving for power remained unreal as long as the economy remained stable. This, on the other hand, depended on co-operation with the fraternal states and on the way in which the Polish and Hungarian governments' position on co-operation developed. He was convinced that these countries would fail to find any adequate replacement for socialist co-operation.

One must, however, be prepared for everything. Fortunately, the CSSR did not have to transport raw materials from the USSR via transit countries. Great problems would, however, arise in the case of strikes. A one-week standstill in the Soviet transport system due to strikes would place the CSSR in a complicated position. In talks with Comrade Miodowicz from the Polish official trade unions, Mikhail Gorbachev said that if strikes in the transport system occurred it would be necessary to declare a state of emergency. This would mean the breakdown of the restructuring. Of course a state of emergency could also lead to success if the fraternal party were able to use it to solve the actual problems. In Poland everything had appeared to be running well after 1981, but it was precisely these problems that had not been solved. Thus it had been possible for the opponent to exploit the situation, as had now become clear, in spite of arrests and prohibitions.

In this context it was clearly of extreme importance for all fraternal parties to elaborate programmes not only on paper. This was naturally always very important for selected sections of the intelligentsia. They welcomed discussions of the broadest democracy. The working people, however, would remain dissatisfied if in their everyday life they could not buy anything with these papers and discussions. They would also have the feeling that their interests were being neglected when political decisions were made.

One had to assume from that, then, that a small minority could manipulate the whole society by manipulating democracy. The CPCz, in preparing their Party elections, had decided that more candidates were nominated than could be elected. They had considered how the electoral system ought to look. The best cadres could only be protected if the order of candidates on the ballot was what was decisive. If one went according to the number of votes, then those who do nothing, who had never harmed anyone, would get the best results. The comrades who struggled and who had

many adversaries in this struggle would lose. In the CPCz and also in the CSSR, lessons had also been learned from recent experience in the Soviet Union.

The CPCz opposed a formal treatment of democracy which undermined the political system of socialism and would condemn the Party to inactivity. 80 per cent of the deputies elected up to now to the Party Conference of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party were intellectuals. One also had to ask oneself how many workers held seats in the Supreme Soviet. Such results were inevitable if the question of democracy were approached in such a formal manner.

The situation was further exacerbated if the ruling Party wore sackcloth and ashes under such conditions. Who would vote for the candidates of a party which had made nothing but mistakes? The answer had been seen clearly in Poland. The election law negotiated at the Polish United Workers' Party Round-Table talks had created the possibility for the Party to disempower itself. By contrast, the conditions in which working people lived in such countries were catastrophic. The result of this was that trust in the fraternal parties would decrease even more and that polarization into rich and poor would increase.

We are therefore dealing with a very difficult time. In this respect an attitude of 'wait and see' was also creeping into the CSSR. This was good for the opposition. This was another reason why oppositional groups must not be tolerated. Unless it acted with self-confidence and resolution the Party would lose the support of the masses. The opponent kept a careful watch on the relationship between people and Party. Unfortunately, many members of the CPCz were too passive in this situation. The opponent took full advantage of the fact that in the Soviet Union everyone did as he wished.

It was for these reasons that the questions of co-operation between our two countries were of such importance. We could continue such reliable co-operation in the field of olefine as well as machine construction. New investments should be more closely co-ordinated. Comrade Helmut Ziebart was very committed to matters of co-operation between our two countries and would help to solve problems. [...]

Source: Stiftungarchiv der Parteien und Massenorganisationen der DDR im Bundesarchiv, Berlin, DY 30/IV 2.2.040/27.

Translated from the German by Malcolm Leighton.

Document 36
Prague, September 21, 1989
Statement by Charter 77 and by the Committee for the Defence
of the Unjustly Prosecuted,
expressing solidarity with imprisoned activists in Leipzig

In Leipzig, GDR, eleven citizens are in custody; accused of illegal assembly, they face up to two years imprisonment. They were detained, on September 11, during peaceful prayer in front of the Church of St Nicholas, Leipzig, which has been taking place there regularly each Monday since 1982. This time an unusually large number of people took part in the prayer assembly, perhaps one 1,300. Contributing to this was the tense social atmosphere brought on by the exodus of tens of thousands of citizens of the GDR, and the previous police intervention against a demonstration held in Leipzig, on September 4, in support of the right to emigrate. The People's Police declared the religious services to be dissolved, and about 700 of the participants left the area in front of the church. The police moved against the rest, taking 104 of them to the police station, and dispersing the others. Most of the detained were released with fines of between DM 1,000 and 5,000. Carola Bornschlegel, Udo Hartmann, Katrin Hattenahauer, Axel Gebthabt, Jutta Getzel, Mirko Ketzler, Jörg Müller, Günther Müller, Gundula Walter, and Ramona Ziegner remained in custody. Meanwhile, in a separate trial, Udo Hartmann and Jörg Müller were sentenced – so far without due process – to four months imprisonment. On Monday, September 18, more repression occurred: the People's Police detained about 50 people who were going to the church for peaceful worship, or who were coming out of the church. So far it is not known whether any of the detained have been arrested. Information on this case is being given during business hours from 6.00 pm to 8.00 pm, and on Saturday and Sunday from 4.00 pm to 8.00 pm, at the parish office, telephone 37-41-60428.

We believe that we cannot remain silent if people are locked up simply for advocating the non-violent changing of societal conditions, especially if they express these aspirations through common prayer. If such people are imprisoned, persecuted, and harassed, we must join our forces and do everything we can to see that the GDR, Czechoslovakia, Rumania, and Albania do not become the "sick men" of Europe, and thus a threat not only to the people of those countries, but the entire international community. If we assume that the citizens of the GDR have the right to leave for the Federal Republic of Germany, then it is all the more our moral duty to try and see that those who wish to live in the GDR, and who with their critical stance contribute to the remedy of societal conditions, may live there freely and without obstruction.

We therefore turn to all democrats in Poland, Hungary, and the Soviet Union, regardless of whether they work within government and official structures or independently, regardless of their political orientation or religious convictions, to express publicly their solidarity with our friends in Leipzig. In this way they will help not only eleven people suffering in prison for a righteous cause, but also the

developing independent movements in Germany, all of whom live in our part of Europe, and ultimately Europe as a whole.

Václav Havel, Tomáš Hradílek, Dana Němcová

Spokespersons, Charter 77

Committee for the Protection of the Unjustly Prosecuted, Czechoslovak League for Human Rights, and member of International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH) (Charter 77 spokesman Saša Vondra is currently being held in custody.)

Source: *Informace o Chartě 77* (samizdat), vol. 12, no. 18 (1989), p. 2.

Translated from the Czech by Todd Hammond.

Document 37

London, September 23, 1989

Record of conversation between Mikhail Gorbachev and Margaret Thatcher,
on perestroika, Eastern European, and German Re-unification

Thatcher: [...] I know that it is not easy to carry out a political reform. You began to implement the reform from above, and it would be impossible otherwise. Here, as I understand, you are in full control of the situation. But to carry out an economic reform is even more difficult, I know this from my own experience. [...]

You have now reached the stage where every new step is more difficult than the previous one. It is important for people to see results, even though it is a politically ungratifying task. For instance, I had to wait for two years for the first results. All the while, I was criticized, and when the success came, it was received as something natural, and nobody thanked me. How much time would you need to get the first results? Two years or less?

[...]

Thatcher: But you need to teach the people to live day by day, not on future credits.

Gorbachev: We are teaching, teaching with life.

If add to what we have just said the fact that these processes are unfolding in a country with 120 nationalities and ethnicities, you can imagine what a tight knot all the problems present together. As you know, the Plenum of the CC CPSU that has just ended, analyzed the issues of inter-ethnic relations in depth. The Plenum's resolutions are very important. Their essence is to balance the nationalities policy, to rejuvenate the Soviet federation and to fill it with a real meaning. I will tell you honestly, so far our state was considered federal only formally, and in reality everything worked as it does in a typical unitary state – from the top to the bottom. The decisions of this Plenum are meant to change that, to create mechanisms which in practice would help to remove the tensions from the inter-ethnic relations without interfering with basic interests of individuals, of the nationalities, and of the society in the economic, cultural, and other spheres. Otherwise, the inter-ethnic tensions could bury *perestroika*. This is how the issue stands now.

I would also like to state openly the following thought. Sometimes I hear, even here in the West: why do we have to open up so many fronts simultaneously? But how can you reform the economy without a reform of the political system? It will not work. And we already have the sad experiences with Khrushchev, and Kosygin with Brezhnev. How can you reform both the economy and the politics without democratization of the society, without *glasnost*, which incorporate individuals into an active socio-political life? It will not work either. How can you make prognoses and form healthy inter-ethnic relations separately from the economic, political, and democratic reforms in the society as a whole? How can you carry out *perestroika* itself without rejuvenating the party?

All these issues are inseparably linked, and that is why we are saying that *perestroika* is not just a reform, it is a genuine revolution, our second socialist revolution. And we are making great efforts to carry it out.

Thatcher: I would like to raise the issue of the situation in the countries of Eastern Europe. I was very impressed by the courage and patriotism of General Jaruzelski in Poland. Of course, for you, the future of Poland and its alliance with you have a big

significance. I noted that you calmly accepted the results of the elections in Poland, and, in general, the processes in that country and in other East European countries. I understand your position in the following way: you are in favor of each country choosing its own road of development so long as the Warsaw Treaty is intact. I perfectly understand this position.

Now I would like to say something in a very confidential manner, and I would ask you not to record this part of the conversation.

Gorbachev: As you would like.

(The following part of the conversation is recorded from recollections)

Thatcher: We are very concerned with the processes that are underway in East Germany. It is on the verge of big changes, which are caused by the situation in the society and to some extent by Erich Honecker's illness. The thousands of people who escape from the GDR to the FRG are the primary example. All that is the external side of things, and it is important for us, but another issue is even more important.

Britain and Western Europe are not interested in the unification of Germany. The words written in the NATO communiqué may sound different, but disregard them. We do not want the unification of Germany. It would lead to changes in the post-war borders, and we cannot allow that because such a development would undermine the stability of the entire international situation, and could lead to threats to our security.

We are not interested in the destabilization of Eastern Europe or the dissolution of the Warsaw Treaty either. Of course, the internal changes are ripe in all the countries of Eastern Europe, but in some countries they are more pronounced, in some countries not yet. However, we are in favor of those processes remaining strictly internal, we will not interfere in them and spur the de-communization of Eastern Europe. I can tell you that this is also the position of the U.S. President. He sent a telegram to me in Tokyo, in which he asked me to tell you that the United States would not undertake anything that could threaten the security interests of the Soviet Union, or that could be perceived by the Soviet society as a threat. I am fulfilling his request.

Gorbachev: Thank you for the information. In general, you formulated our position correctly. We think that the socialist countries should make their own decisions about their internal affairs, they should be able to choose which road and which tempo to take in the implementation of their socialist choice. We do not want to, and we will not, interfere in these processes, but, of course, we were helping, and we will be helping our friends and allies.

As far as Erich Honecker's health is concerned, he is planning to participate in all the events commemorating the 40th anniversary of the GDR. I can inform you that I am planning to visit the GDR on the 6th and 7th October for the celebration of the anniversary.

Thatcher: Thank you.

The confidential part of my talk is over, now you can resume recording.

[...]

Source: Archive of the Gorbachev Foundation, Notes of A. S. Chernyaev. Reprinted from *The End of the Cold War in Europe, 1989: "New Thinking" and New Evidence* (Musgrove, 1998), Doc. 53.

Translated by Svetlana Savranskaya for the National Security Archive.

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Document 38
Prague, October 7, 1989
Article by Václav Havel
on the new phase in independent activity

The Witching Hour: Between the Outcast and the Politician

It looks as if we've come to the end of a period which, for the sake of argument and brevity, might be described as "classic dissidence", [...].

[...] the independent initiatives are far more than what they used to be until just recently, at the same time they are not (nor can they be) what so many people would like them to be, and what many people already take them to be – an authentic political opposition with all that it entails from charismatic professional leaders to concrete, realistic political programmes. [...]

Nobody has any comprehensive recipe for a solution and neither have I, of course. I merely have a few personal hunches and suggestions touching on the tasks facing us:

1. The independent initiatives ought not get too carried away with the fact that people take part in their demonstrations, that they are not afraid to join them in signing petitions offensive to the régime, and that a section of society is beginning to view them as a real political alternative, pinning their hopes on them (often to an almost unhealthy degree) and counting on them to solve on their own, on behalf of society, those things that must and can only be solved by society as a whole. It is more than understandable that they should get carried away with the sudden revelation of their own importance (after many distressful years of parallel existence). The new situation offers us a marvellous sense of satisfaction and fills us with the heartwarming feeling that all those apparently pointless things we did for so many years were not so entirely pointless after all. But however psychologically understandable such enchantment may be it is absolutely essential that we should not fall prey to it and lose our level-headedness or circumspection. The first thing I propose, therefore, is realism.

2. The independent initiatives ought never succumb to the rather conceited notion – one which is both difficult to prove in practical terms and is totally devoid of political prospects – that they alone – who, as the only right-minded members of the population, managed to say fifteen years ago what all and sundry are saying these days – are automatically called to assume some "leading role"; that everything they do is automatically better than what others do, and that in fact, after all they have been through, there is no real need to waste time with someone who has come awake at the last minute, on the ground that it is they who have the moral credit and not such latecomers. In short, they ought not to forget what they themselves always emphasised: that they are not in it for their own sake but for the sake of society as a whole. [...]

3. The new situation, marked by increased interest in the independent initiatives and greater publicity for them, might tempt one to demonstrate their existence and their importance to themselves, the government, and the public, by means of not especially concise declaration, which willy nilly shifts the emphasis from what they are actually doing to the publicity they can gain from it (and this is, in fact, sometimes

happening). On the odd occasion one even gets the impression that for some people it is more important to announce a project as loudly as possible rather than to implement it. There is also, in my view, another extremely alluring – though rather dangerous – temptation. It is the temptation to start – in the heat of the moment – to get too involved in certain activities which – albeit useful – are one-offs in the final analysis and at the expense, moreover, of work which in immediate terms is less visible and less attractive, but is possibly more important in the long term. I refer to the patient, everyday work of planning, consciousness-raising and organizing, as well as fostering in all areas the spirit of discussion, as a sort of Masarykian basis for any democracy, with a view to cultivating civic awareness. Obviously we shall never be 100 per cent prepared for an eventual unpredictably better future and improvisation will be inevitable. All the more, therefore, should we strive to prepare ourselves to the maximum not only in respect of specific projects, but also as regards the promotion of civic awareness, without which even the worthiest of projects stands no hope of success.

4. Finally I should like to stress something that I regard as by far the most important aspect of all. Now that we are starting to enter the arena of real politics in a more visible fashion we ought to keep in mind more than ever before the initial and underlying moral motives of our activity, and we should be more wary than ever lest our responsibility start imperceptibly to split in two: personal responsibility, on the one hand, and political responsibility, on the other. We have only one responsibility; whether as the most degraded of prisoners and social outcasts, or as possible mouthpieces of the national will, we must be bound by the same single conscience. To do otherwise would not only be to dishonour our own past; it would also put paid to our prospects. It has always been my conviction, and one I still hold to, that the origin of all the symptoms of crisis surrounding us lies in society's moral crisis and that none of our crises – from the economic and political to the ecological – can be solved unless we solve that moral crisis. In other words we must defeat the diabolical ideology of "I'm all right Jack" and human and civic apathy that have so long and so thoroughly infected our society. For that reason I regard phenomena such as the impromptu humanitarian aid given by the residents of Prague's Malá Strana district to the East German refugees, the spontaneous collections of aid for Armenia, or the nascent signs of solidarity and fellowship manifested at various popular gatherings (whether demonstrations, religious services, concerts or others) as extremely important. In fact they might be what is most important. As acts of human goodness such phenomena are the best social underpinning or breeding ground for better policies. The fact is that here are to be found the true seeds of the kind of autonomous citizenship which alone is capable of supporting future political activity and without which such activity would remain suspended in the air – like the proverbial fence-post that Miloš Jakeš referred to recently.

Source: *Lidové noviny*, Vol. II, No. 10, October 1989, p. 1–2.

Translated from the Czech by A. G. Brain [Alice and Gerald Turner].

Document 39

Prague, October 18, 1989

Telex from General Secretary Jakeš to leading secretaries of the municipal, district and regional committees CPCz and CPS, on the political situation in the country and the activities of the "internal adversary"

Comrades,

On Friday, October 13, the Presidium of the CC CPCz took up, among other things, the political situation in the country and the activities of the internal adversary in the context of the upcoming celebration of the national holiday of the CSSR, October 28, this year. It was resolved that you would be informed, in basic outline, of some current instances of enemy activity.

You have already been informed of the formation of a series of so-called illegal groups and structures in our republic, and of their intention to stir up unrest and discredit the policies of the Communist Party and our socialist state. At this time their activities are increasing sharply. So-called "independent groups" and their exponents, headed by Charter 77, are now attempting to join forces for the creation of a "unified opposition party". They are trying to gain more followers among our population, mainly among the youth, and wish to involve them in anti-societal activities. They are seeking ways to infiltrate legal structures as well, into organizations and parties associated with the National Front.

As you have already been cautioned, the Club for Socialist Restructuring, "Revival" (formed partly of former CPCz officials expelled for their rightist positions, and of former members of the Social Democratic Party) is also increasing its activity. With its appraisal of past developments and its slanders, it is attempting to influence negatively the course of anniversary member meetings and conferences, and disrupt preparations for the XVIII Congress of the CPCz.

For this purpose they have prepared a letter, which they did not manage to issue before August 21 of this year, and now, at the end of this week, they want to send it to the basic organizations and to individual Communists. In the letter, they exaggerate some of our shortcomings in realizing the policies of the CPCz, and belittle the results achieved in building socialism. They say in the letter that we find ourselves in a crisis caused by the Communist Party, which bears the main responsibility for the existing problems and insufficiencies. From this it is evident that they are continuing in an effort to disrupt and weaken Party unity, and provoke mistrust in leading officials of the CPCz. In spite of the measures that have been taken, it is possible that this material will get to some of the basic Party organizations in your area of operations. It is therefore necessary to adopt the necessary measures, so that Party members, and especially the committees of the CPCz basic organizations, are prepared to confront these attempts.

From the available information it follows that the illegal structures, with the active support of foreign propaganda, are intensively preparing to misuse the state holiday of the CSSR, October 28, this year, to organize unlawful demonstrations in Prague, and elsewhere in the Republic. It is possible that, after their failure in August, they will try

for an open confrontation with state power. They wish to show they have influence on some of society. For their main support they look especially to young people.

This situation requires that measures similar to those of August be taken in all regions and districts. Mass political work must be undertaken among Party members in the basic organizations and among persons who are not Party members in the workplace. The task is effectively to influence peoples' thinking, attentively to monitor their opinions within the activity of Party organizations, to know the mood, and quickly to react to enemy activity, incorrect attitudes, and slander. In cases where Party members support various illegal activities, consequences according to Party statutes must follow. Measures must be adopted by state organs to use lawful means energetically against the attempts of enemy forces to destabilize society and cause unrest.

The Presidium of the CC CPCz expresses the conviction that heightened activity of Party organs, organizations, and individual Communists, with the active participation of state organs and the National Front, will succeed in thwarting the goals of enemy groups, and in continuing the successful building of socialism in our homeland by means of restructuring and democratization.

With comradely greetings,

Miloš Jakeš
General Secretary, CC CPCz

Source: State Central Archive, Prague, CC CPCz record group, telexes and letters, ÚV 0113/89.

Translated from the Czech by Todd Hammond.

Document 40

Prague, October 19, 1989

Leaflet from the independent student group STUHA,
calling upon students to attend a gathering to mark the 50th anniversary of the Nazi
German measures against Czech universities

Bring a Flower and a Candle!

On November 17 we shall commemorate the well-known and tragic events that occurred in connection with the funeral of the Prague medical student Jan Opletal, who was mortally wounded during demonstrations against the occupying forces on October 28, 1939.

Brutal persecution seemed to indicate the end of anti-Nazi demonstrations: nine students were executed, about 1,500 students were dragged off to concentration camps, and Czech institutions of higher learning were closed down. At the same time, however, a wave of indignation was felt throughout the world, which soon led to the establishment of the International Students' Day, on November 17.

Today, we want not only to commemorate those tragic events with reverence, but also to come out actively in support of the ideals of truth and freedom for which those demonstrators sacrificed their lives. These ideals are again especially threatened today, and we do not want to be shamed by our colleagues who fifty years ago courageously came out in support of them.

That is why, on November 17, 1989, we shall meet at the Institute of Pathology, Albertov, Prague, where the funeral of Jan Opletal began. From there we shall go by way of Charles Square and Štěpánská street to Opletalova street, where in the park in front of the Main Railway Station we shall conclude this commemorative event.

Independent students

Note: The leaflet was approved on October 19, 1989, at a meeting of the independent student group STUHA, and distributed in 1,000 copies. After negotiations at the Municipal Council for Post-Secondary Schools, of the Union of Socialist Youth in late October or early November, the route of the march was changed from Albertov to Vyšehrad; this change was approved by a close majority at a meeting of representatives of independent students from Prague, on November 9, 1989.

Source: *Studenti psali revoluci*, Prague, 1990, p. 39.

Translated from the Czech by Derek Paton.

Warsaw, October 25, 1989

Interview with Edward Shevardnadze conducted by Adam Michnik in *Gazeta Wyborcza*, on Soviet Foreign Policy and Czechoslovakia 1968 (excerpt)

[...]

Michnik: You are considered to be one of the architects of the new foreign policy of the USSR. I should like to ask about the context of internal and foreign policy. If the Brezhnev Doctrine represented stagnation, then "perestroika" corresponds to the "new thinking" in foreign policy. You spoke about this recently at a meeting of the Supreme Soviet. You have clearly condemned the intervention in Afghanistan. Could you repeat that interpretation in the context of the intervention in Czechoslovakia in 1968?

Shevardnadze: I wish to make one comment. I don't like the label "architect of the new policy". Foreign policy is always a continuation of internal policy. Why have our relations with other nations changed? Because our relationship to our own nation has changed. Why has our attitude changed towards international legal acts? Because we have started to work out new norms for our nation and its citizens.

I do not think that there was some kind of terrible despotism during the Brezhnev era. One could work. Some things worked out, others didn't. Those who wanted to work found their place. I was working, for example. People who came to the forefront of restructuring – Gorbachev among them – did not appear out of thin air. During the Brezhnev era we already knew what our goals were. We spoke the truth on Afghanistan. But I must say that the people who made the decision to send troops did not plan a long-term presence in Afghanistan, did not plan to create a sixteenth or seventeenth republic. Like the previous generation, they were guided by the vision of revolutionary solidarity and internationalism. The threat of foreign intervention was real, and some are intervening in Afghanistan even now. I don't know this merely from second hand. That was certainly the cause of such a decision – we send troops there, help out, and then let Afghanistan decide for itself.

I think this was an ill-considered, incorrect decision that didn't take into account the entire situation. It was very difficult for us to make the decision on withdrawal of troops from Afghanistan. The decisive part of society supported us, but there were also those who had a different opinion. I think we acted correctly. Now Afghans are solving their own problems. Czechoslovakia is a completely different matter. The decision to send troops to Czechoslovakia was adopted collectively. I count myself among those politicians who take a collective decision very seriously. This particular one was adopted in 1968 by the leaders of the Warsaw Pact countries: then-serving general secretaries of the Communist parties and chairmen of defence councils. There were also calls from the Czechoslovak side. The interpretation of these events from today's perspective can be changed only by collective decision. This is a very complicated, delicate, and difficult question.

Comparison with the entry of Soviet troops into Afghanistan is not pertinent. It occurred under different historical conditions; besides, we made that decision on our own. We were the sole authors, and we carried it out by ourselves.

Czechoslovakia is something different. I consider it intolerable to force one's own viewpoint on this problem onto anyone else. I consider the interpretation of the leadership of the Communist Party and Government of Czechoslovakia to be binding.

Any other position would be a bad mistake. We have rejected the policy of forcing our own evaluation once and for all. It is incompatible with relations customary between civilized countries. If we were to express any kind of dissatisfaction with your new government, it would be difficult to consider it compatible with the norms of contemporary political culture. Czechoslovakia is a sovereign state, and has an indisputable right to interpret its history independently.

Michnik: One of my Russian friends said in relation to Czechoslovakia: "In the American army in Vietnam there were also Australian units – a whole battalion." I think that with the collective decision it was a little different in Brezhnev's time from what it would be today.

I was in Czechoslovakia and spoke with various people, including Dubček. He put a rhetorical question to me: "What the Russian comrades are doing today is much more radical than what we did in 1968. But why can't it be said openly?" At home in Poland and in Hungary the parliaments recognized that this was a mistake we regret. I think a lot of people in Czechoslovakia are expecting such a statement. Czechs and Slovaks are saying: now is a time of hope in the USSR, but in our country a time of stagnation.

Shevardnadze: The appraisal of the Czechoslovak leaders back then is no different from today's. We honour that. Because today, after what happened in Poland – new people came into the Sejm, and new people also came into the government –, if I made a statement in Moscow, saying that I would not go to Warsaw because the Polish Premier is not a Communist, such behaviour would not be compatible with the elementary norms of political culture. We do not want to behave that way. Czechoslovakia is a sovereign state, in which existing Party and state structures decide on the policies of their country. We respect their opinions, as we respect the choice made by the Polish nation. We may not even like it that Poland is not led by Communists, but we respect the will of the Polish nation. Everything that disrupts the sovereign rights of the Party, state, and government, is exclusively the internal affair of that country, and you should not be criticizing such an attitude, you should be supporting it.

Michnik: Of course we support it.

Shevardnadze: Let's forget Czechoslovakia for now. We can move on to Polish-Soviet affairs.

Source: *Gazeta Wyborcza*, no. 123, October 28-29, 1989.

Translated from the Czech version by Todd Hammond.

Document 42

Prague, October 30, 1989

Open letter from Jiří Dienstbier to Edward Shevardnadze,
concerning the *Gazeta Wyborcza* interview conducted by Adam Michnik

Dear Mr. Minister,

In an interview for the Polish daily *Gazeta Wyborcza*, you refused to condemn the invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968, and noted that the decision was made collectively by the General Secretaries of the Warsaw Pact countries and that therefore the interpretation can only be changed collectively. For you it is impermissible that anybody impose his personal viewpoint on anybody else. You consider the interpretation of the leadership of the CPCz and the Czechoslovak Government to be binding.

In the Supreme Soviet on October 23, you said that in sending troops to Afghanistan there occurred the grossest violation of Soviet law and of Party and civic norms and ethics. You added that the decision, which had heavy consequences for your country, had been "adopted behind the back of the Party and people". You also said that "universal human values are not abstract; they truly exist, and cannot be interpreted arbitrarily or selectively".

You are certainly right when you say that Czechoslovakia is not Afghanistan. However, as in the decision on Afghanistan, the decision on Czechoslovakia violated every law, norm, and ethical principle, again behind the back of the people of the five intervening countries and Czechoslovakia itself.

You insist on a collective change in appraisal. I believe this will not be difficult to arrive at, if Soviet policy promotes it. Polish and Hungarian official institutions have already condemned their part in this crime against the Czechoslovak people. The part of Bulgaria was minimal, and in this situation it can only aid the governing circles in the GDR to distance themselves from the only German military invasion of foreign territory since the Second World War. To your comment that "there were also calls from the Czechoslovak side", I have only this question: how would the Soviet Union deal with people who, without the knowledge and against the will of constitutional and Party organs, invited the troops of foreign states to invade your country?

You told the Polish newspaper that the "appraisal of Czechoslovak leaders back then is no different from today's". It is justified on your part to point out that Czechoslovak citizens must themselves decide the fate of their country, and that they have not yet found the strength to assert their opinions against the people placed in power by Brezhnev's invasion.

I understand, after the long years when Soviet policy imposed its position even by military means on allied countries, that you wish to avoid anything reminiscent of pressure. "It is incompatible with relations customary between civilized countries," you said in *Gazeta Wyborcza*. This new Soviet approach is rightfully appreciated throughout the world. We also gladly accept your assurances that Czechoslovakia is a sovereign state.

However, this in no way diminishes the responsibility of Soviet policy for its own present and past actions. Today's Czechoslovak crisis is the result of an intervention that disrupted the entire society, and created structures during the years of normalization that, until 1985, relied on the regressive policy of the Soviet leadership. These power structures are responsible for the tragic decline of one of the world's most developed countries, and are attempting, [partly] because of this to postpone their departure from the political scene. Their current buttress is the unwillingness of the Soviet Union to speak the truth about its share in this situation. Speaking of truth about the intervention can be considered in Czechoslovakia to be interference in internal affairs only by those who came to power at the hands of the invaders.

I was captivated by your thought, expressed in the Supreme Soviet, that political decisions can seem to be politically advantageous, but if they are immoral, they can never be justified and cannot be in the interests of the people and the state. "It is not enough to express an opinion," you even said. "One must do all that one's Party, civic, and professional conscience requires, what human morality requires."

You yourself know best what the truth about Afghanistan and other past errors of Soviet policy do for the prestige of your country. In Czechoslovakia as well, the fund of belief in the truthfulness of Soviet policy is at stake. In a country where Stalinism and Brezhnev's policies caused the beginning of unfavourable feelings toward your country, there is a great deal of positive willingness to remove both the blank and the blackened pages in our mutual relations, and cultivate friendship between our nations.

In the case of Czechoslovakia, practicality and morality are strikingly congruent – assuming, of course, that the new Soviet policy sees fit to renew good relations with the Czechoslovak people. I am convinced that this is the goal of the policy for which you are such an impressive and active advocate. Please, draw [the proper] consequences from this.

With friendly greetings

Jiří Dienstbier

Source: *Informace o Chartě 77* (samizdat), vol. 12, no. 21 (November 1989), pp. 10–11.

Translated from the Czech by Todd Hammond.

Document 43

Prague, November 2, 1989

Telegram from the US Embassy in Prague to the US Department of State,
concerning Soviet diplomat's comments on Shevardnadze's statement on 1968

Confidential

Prague 07670

Subject: Soviet diplomat on Shevardnadze's statement on 1968

Ref: (A) FBIS LD 2710185789 DTG 271857Z OCT 89

(B) Prague 6252

1. Confidential – entire text.
2. Summary. A Soviet diplomat has explained Foreign Minister Shevardnadze's recent rejection of any re-evaluation of 1968 in terms of an interest in not opening up external complications unless they help to resolve internal Soviet problems, which he implied this would not. This diplomat continues to see the May 1990 Party congress as the watershed for personnel and Party changes and CPCz leader Jakes secure in his position at the present time. While GDR developments can have an impact here, this Soviet believes it will come through encouraging reform-minded CPCz members to work for change in drafting new Party statutes and a new Party program for consideration at the May congress. End summary.
3. POLEC Chief met with Soviet political counselor Vasiliy Filippov (protect) on October 31 to discuss the local political situation. Filippov was particularly interested in the USG's reaction to the October 28 demonstration which EMBOFF reviewed for him, noting our protest at the detention of journalists and the Department's strong human rights statements both before and after the weekend's events. A summary of other points raised follows.

Shevardnadze on 1968

4. According to Filippov, "Rude pravo's" prominent reporting of Shevardnadze's statements on the 1968 Soviet-led invasion was accurate. (Note: A FBIS report of Shevardnadze's interview with a Polish journalist is contained REF A. Essentially he described the official evaluations as "binding" and only changeable by mutual decision with the Czechoslovak leadership. He also rejected any comparison between the Soviet military intervention in Czechoslovakia and in Afghanistan. End note.) Filippov said he had no information on a story circulating in Prague last week that a Soviet history commission had delivered a report favoring a 1968 re-evaluation but that the CPSU Presidium had voted against its release. (Note: Dubcek-era Culture Minister Galuska was the source of this story. End note.)
5. Filippov noted that the last time he and EMBOFF had met (REF B) it seemed as if Soviet authorities were moving toward a re-evaluation of its role in the invasion, but "a lot of things had happened since then". An important article, titled "Autumn Harvest", had appeared in "Izvestia" some two weeks earlier. It dealt with the impact of the 1968

invasion on internal Soviet life and had been successful in "clearing the air" on such events as the post-invasion witch hunts which put an end to the Khrushchev thaw of the 1960's. Shevardnadze's statement, he said, had to be seen in connection with the success of such articles in correcting the negative impact of the invasion on Soviet society. (Comment: Filippov's implication was that for the moment the Soviet leadership was not about to open up external complications unless they were essential to resolving domestic problems, which 1968 was not. End comment.)

Prospects for change in Prague

6. Filippov said that the October 28 demonstrations confirmed his opinion that no great change in CPCz personnel or policies would occur before the May Party congress. The GDR had shown that one could not ignore public opinion, but the pressure from below here was limited. While the Czechoslovak leadership was worried by developments in East Germany, unless an "unique set of conditions" developed here too it would stick to a program of gradual change. At present there were no serious divisions within the Party leadership and CPCz Chief Jakes was clearly in charge. Prime Minister Adamec spoke out for more decisive economic reforms, but his support was limited to younger members of the Party and Government.

7. Filippov saw pressure for change coming as practical issues were discussed within the CPCz in connection with the May Party congress. A draft of a new Constitution, Party statutes and a Party program would be the convenient hooks on which Party members could hang reform ideas. Change in the GDR would encourage this process. Filippov made the following comments on these three documents:

- the draft of the new constitution has run into so many problems it would not repeat not be ready for Central Committee consideration this year;
- a draft set of principles for a new Party program would be the subject of a December CPCz plenum; and
- the most important aspect of new draft Party statutes, published in "Rudé právo" on October 31, was the creation of Czech Republic Party on a par with the Slovak Communist Party.

8. On the last point, Filippov mentioned he had just met Karel Urbánek, Head of the Committee for Party work in the Czech Lands, in connection with a visit of Russian Republic Party leaders. While he declined to give an impression of him, he said that one of his most attractive features, like another Presidium member Miroslav Stepan, was that he was young and therefore without a past.

GOC isolation

9. Asked to comment on Czechoslovakia's recent increased diplomatic activity with more orthodox socialist states (Foreign Minister Johanes, for example, was off on November 1 to the PRC). Filippov said he did not see a clear pattern in this, if GOC relations were strained with some socialist states, like Hungary, many of the visits to orthodox ones, such as Rumania, had been planned for some time. The Czechoslovaks had a long term program for such visits and he did not view them as reacting to a sense of isolation. The travel to China by a number of senior Czechoslovaks was

different. Much of this was previously unscheduled. In Filippov's view this was explainable by the normalization in Soviet/Chinese relations and a Czechoslovak interest in taking advantage of this to boost trade.

Comment

11. Filippov struck us as surprised by the Shevardnadze statements and his choice of a Polish Solidarity newspaper interview to make them. He was also a bit uncomfortable in discussing it and told us that Moscow had still not provided his Embassy with the Russian text of what Shevardnadze had said.

12. The unambiguity of Shevardnadze's statement, coming coincidentally with the October 28 anniversary demonstrations, has left a strong impression here. It has pricked a bubble of hope that a Soviet re-evaluation of 1968 would help to start a popular and Party momentum to push the Jakes leadership out of power. Dissidents have been particularly bitter over what they view as Gorbachev's abnegation of Soviet responsibility for the leadership installed here some 20 years ago.

Many in commenting on Shevardnadze's statement recalled Gorbachev's failure, when he was here in April 1987, to address 1968.

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Source: National Security Archive, Soviet Flashpoints set.

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Document 44

Prague, November 3, 1989

Telegram from the US Embassy in Prague to the US Department of State,
on growing independent activities and judicial persecution of dissidents in
Czechoslovakia

Confidential

Prague 07731

Subject: Human rights update – Czechoslovakia

Ref: Prague 7293

1. Confidential – entire text.

2. Summary. The Municipal Court in Bratislava has decided that Jan Carnogursky and Miroslav Kusy will be tried separately. The conviction of Stanislav Devaty has been upheld by a Brno Appeals Court. The "Lidove noviny" editors facing criminal charges have not yet been allowed visits by their wives and attorneys. The "Circle of Independent Intelligentsia" and some 100 journalists from official publication have asked that criminal prosecution of the "Lidové noviny" editors be stopped. Journalists from the newspapers of the Socialist Party and the Socialist Union of Youth have shown some independence in recent articles. A theatrical presentation in Prague featuring excerpts from the work of Vaclav Havel and some emigre authors was closed after one performance. Cardinal Tomasek will travel to Rome for the canonization of Agnes of Bohemia. Czech members of Pacem In Terris have written the bishops of the Czech Lands and asked if they may continue their work in the officially sponsored peace group. An Official Ministry of Justice report indicates thus far in 1989 65 persons have been prosecuted for "politically motivated criminal activities". End summary.

Trial dates set for Carnogursky and Kusy

3. The Municipal Court of Bratislava has determined that Jan Carnogursky will be tried separately from Miroslav Kusy and the other members of the "Bratislava Five" (Prague 5960). Carnogursky's trial is scheduled for November 6, while the Kusy trial will begin November 13.

4. Carnogursky's lawyer Tibor Boehm [Bém ?] has lodged a complaint arguing no legal grounds exist to separate Carnogursky's case from the rest some members of the independent community now speculate Carnogursky, who during his current imprisonment has been less flexible concerning an accommodation with authorities than Kusy (Prague 7455), will receive a harsher sentence than Kusy.

Appeals court upholds Devaty sentence

5. An Appeals Court in Brno on November 1 upheld the 20-month sentence of Stanislav Devaty (Prague 7097). The court's decision was made without the presence of Devaty, who remains underground.

"Lidove noviny" editors held "incommunicado"

6. The wives of Jiri Ruml and Rudolf Zeman told EMBOFF that they had not been allowed to visit their husbands since the "Lidove noviny" editors were arrested three weeks ago (Prague 7293), and that police had refused to provide any information concerning them. They also reported that the lawyer of Ruml and Zeman had not been allowed to visit his clients, but that they expect such a visit will be allowed during the coming week.

Circle of Independent Intelligentsia activities

7. The "Circle of Independent Intelligentsia" sent letters to president Husak and the prosecutor in charge of the "Lidove noviny" case. The letters asked that Ruml and Zeman be released and argued that "Lidove noviny" is one of the few periodicals with a space left for alternative views.

8. The letter marks a new approach for the Circle, which has heretofore been more cautious in its activities (e.g., research projects to study environmental degradation or dislocations caused by economic reforms). Ivan Gabal, one of the group's founders, told EMBOFF he believes that "higher authorities" had ordered that he be fired, but that the director of the institute where he works had refused to carry out the order.

Economist Zeman fired

9. Not so fortunate has been Milos Zeman, an economist at the Foreign Trade Institute of the Ministry of Agriculture. Zeman in an article in Technicky Magazin sharply criticized planned economic reforms. His critique of reforms was apparently picked up by the Western press, and Zeman has now reportedly been fired for his forthrightness. The regime has generally been relatively tolerant when local economists have published criticism, or even been quoted in western media. Perhaps the fact that Zeman works for a ministry rather than an "independent" organization such as the Economics or Forecasting Institutes made the difference. Another factor may have been Zeman's readiness in published articles and a television interview to criticize the limits the Communist Party places on economic and political dialogue.

Nekolik vet

10. Some 36,000 persons have now signed the petition. Vaclav Neumann, Director of the Czech Philharmonic, has announced that the Philharmonic will not honour contracts with Czechoslovak Television and Radio. The orchestra's boycott is a protest against "blacklisting" of petition signatories by official media. Ninety-four of 97 members have voiced their support for the boycott. The Paris-based International Committee to Support Charter 77 has also announced it will support people who are blacklisted, prosecuted, or otherwise discriminated against for signing the petition.

11. Petition organizer Jiri Krizan told EMBOFF that Prime Minister Adamec has not responded to the letter he and others wrote asking for a dialogue with Nekolik vet petition signers (Prague 7042), and that he does not now expect a response. Adamec in a recent interview with Austrian journalists indicated the GOC will not engage in any dialogue which "seeks to liquidate the socialist order".

Realisticke divadlo presents excerpt from Havel

12. The Prague theater known as Realisticke divadlo (Realistic Theater) on October 27 premiered a stage montage titled "Res publica II", based mainly on Havel's "Garden Party", but also featuring excerpts from Skvorecky, Kundera, Seifert, Hrabal and others. The production played but one night and future performances were cancelled after authorities asked that a scene depicting the arrest of Marta Kubisova (Charter signatory nad "banned" popular singer) be deleted.

Socialist Party press shows some independence

13. "Svobodne slovo", the newspaper of the Czechoslovak Socialist Party, favorably reviewed "Res publica II". The article is the latest in a series breaking new ground by the paper. These include an article about the Frankfurt Booksellers Fair mentioning the GOC's refusal to allow Vaclav Havel to travel to the fair to accept the Booksellers Peace Award, as well as an interview with Charter 77 activist Zdenek Urbanek. Over half of the "Svobodne slovo" staff have signed the Nekolik vet petition.

Journalists urge legalization of "Lidove noviny"

14. Members of the "Svobodne slovo" staff were among some 100 journalists to petition Prime Minister Adamec and ask that "Lidove noviny" be legalized and that prosecution of its editors Ruml and Zeman be halted. Among some of the others signing the petition were staff members from the People's Party publication "Lidova demokracie", as well as journalists from "Mlada fronta" and "Novy svet". Noticeably absent were signatures from journalists working for official Communist Party publications such as "Rudé pravo".

"Mlada fronta" reports on October 28

15. "Mlada fronta", newspaper of the Socialist Union of Youth, recently carried two adjacent articles concerning the October 28 demonstration. One article was the official portrayal of events, but the second was the account of two "Mlada fronta" reporters who were caught with demonstrators in a police cordon. The official view described the demonstrators as violent, but the second article described the crowd as basically peaceful and implicitly criticized the white helmeted riot police who broke up the rally.

Cardinal Tomasek to attend canonization ceremony

16. Sources in Cardinal Tomasek's office told us that although a recent medical check-up showed the Cardinal to be as fit as can be expected for a 90-year-old, the Cardinal believed a trip to Rome too arduous and had decided on his own not to attend the November 11 canonization of Agnes of Bohemia in Rome (Prague 5017). However, after the Pope's office urged the Cardinal to attend, Tomasek reconsidered and now plans a three-week visit to Rome.

17. Those familiar with the Church say that they expect 10,000 Czechoslovaks to travel to Rome for the canonization, and that for the most part state authorities have cooperated with those wishing to travel. However, Augustin Navratil and a few other religious activists have been denied the opportunity to travel to Rome. Apparently no

decision has yet been made by Czechoslovak Television whether to broadcast the canonization ceremonies.

More info on Pacem In Terris

18. A Church activist has provided us with additional details concerning cessation of activities of Pacem In Terris, the officially sponsored organization of Catholic priests (Prague 7042). Slovak members plan to continue their activities, but Czech members have stopped their activities and have written Cardinal Tomasek, as well as the newly appointed Czech bishops for the dioceses of Litomerice and Olomouc, asking if it is appropriate for them to work with Pacem In Terris. Most observers expect the Cardinal and bishops to say membership is inconsistent with priestly obligations.

Political prisoners count

19. Although the GOC denies it has any political prisoners, a Prague Radio feature in October focused on a Ministry of Justice report on prosecution of "politically motivated criminal activities". In 1988 some 34 such cases were prosecuted, whereas at the time of the report in 1989 some 65 cases had been prosecuted. Eighteen of the 65 persons prosecuted in 1989 had been sentenced to jail. The independent Committee for the Defense of the Unjustly Persecuted (VONS) estimates that some 30 political prisoners are now imprisoned in Czechoslovakia.

VONS head wins civil case against "Rude pravo"

20. Petr Uhl of VONS in October won an unprecedented civil lawsuit against "Rude pravo". The court ruled "Rude pravo" had erred in an article in June 1988 when it reported Uhl had participated in 1971 in a discussion planning to seize Czechoslovak Radio and broadcast an anti-Government statement. The court ordered "Rude pravo" to print a correction, but denied Uhl's request for an apology from "Rude pravo".

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Source: National Security Archive, Soviet Flashpoints set.

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Document 45
Moscow, November 10, 1989
From the diary of Anatoly Chernyaev,
on the end of an era and praise for Gorbachev

The Berlin Wall has collapsed. This entire era in the history of the socialist system is over. After the PUWP and the HSWP went Honecker. Today we received messages about "retirement" of Deng Xiaopeng and [Bulgarian leader Todor] Zhivkov. Only our "best friends" Castro, Ceaucescu, [and] Kim Il Sung are still around – people who hate our guts.

But the main thing is the GDR, the Berlin Wall. For it has to do not only with "socialism" but with the shift in world balance of forces. This is the end of Yalta [...], the Stalinist legacy and "the defeat of Hitlerite Germany".

That is what Gorbachev has done. And he has indeed turned out to be a great leader. He has sensed the pace of history and helped history to find a natural channel.

Source: Notes of Anatoly Chernyaev. The Archive of the Gorbachev Foundation, f. 2, op. 2. Reprinted from *The End of the Cold War in Europe, 1989: "New Thinking" and New Evidence* (Musgrove, 1998), Doc. 64.

Translated by Vladislav Zubok, the National Security Archive.

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Document 46
Prague, November 15, 1989
Telegram from the US Embassy in Prague to the US Department of State,
on the trial of the "Bratislava Pětka" and its verdicts

Limited Official Use

Prague 07989

Subject: Trial of Miroslav Kusy and co-defendants: three acquittals and one suspended sentence

1. (U) Summary. Defendants at the Miroslav Kusy trial came off unexpectedly well. Despite prosecution pleas for a prison term for Kusy, the court sentenced him to 14 months probation in lieu of an eight month jail term, though he could be sent to jail if he does not remain on "good behaviour" for the probation period. The prosecution had asked for probation for Kusy's three co-defendants, but they were acquitted. The court rejected an effort to have Jan Carnogursky included in this case, and he will reportedly go on trial November 22–23. End Summary.

2. (U) The November 13–14 trial of Miroslav Kusy, Hana Ponicka, Anton Selecky and Vladimir Manak for incitement ended with an eight month suspended sentence (and 14 months probation) for Kusy and acquittals for the other three. If Kusy does not remain on "good behaviour" over those 14 months he can be sent to prison. The prosecutor had asked for suspended sentences and probation for the three and one year imprisonment for Kusy (supposedly the most lenient jail term possible).

3. (LOU) ECONOFF attended second day of trial. Dissident contacts and Helsinki Watch official Gerald Nagler felt that the court was more willing than in the past to listen to and record the defendants' arguments, including criticisms of Czechoslovakia's overall human rights record. They believed, however, that the defendants would be found guilty and that the verdict had been reached beforehand.

4. (U) An effort at the beginning of the trial to have Jan Carnogursky included was rejected by the court, as was a request to call Alexander Dubcek as a defense witness. (Dubcek did attend the first day of proceedings.) The prosecution called Carnogursky as a witness for its side, but he refused to answer questions. (When he was brought to court, a guard held each arm and during the period when he was not on the witness stand he was made to face the wall – reportedly standard practice in Czechoslovak prisons.) We understand that Carnogursky's trial is set for November 22–23.

5. (U) A constant theme in the prosecution case was the subversive nature of RFE, and consequently the heinous nature of submitting statements for broadcast by it. The Chief Judge spent an hour and a half the second morning reading excerpts of Kusy's work, particularly writings which had been broadcast on RFE, an action which mystified the audience and incited frequent laughter. In her closing statement, Ponicka argued that RFE could not be that bad since many "official" Czechoslovak writers and artists had been interviewed on it, while Kusy pointed out that more critical statements

than his could now be found in the pages of "Pravda". He also declared that some day this trial would be seen in the same light as the Scopes-monkey trial in the U.S. during the 1920's.

6. (LOU) The small courtroom in Bratislava was packed with about 50–60 people, virtually all supporters of the defendants. A somewhat larger group waited outside the building in freezing weather. No other Western embassies were represented (both we and the Canadians were fogged out in an effort to fly to Bratislava the first day). The British Ambassador was in town November 13 for other reasons and visited a local dissident to express support for Kusy. The dissident appreciated the visit, but expressed bitterness at the lack of interest shown by other Western nations – particularly neighbouring West Germany and Austria.

7. (LOU) Dissident contacts felt great frustration and embarrassment over the trial, particularly in view of the advance in civil rights in other bloc countries, including the Soviet Union. They were also increasingly angry over the unwillingness of most of the Czechoslovak population to actively support human rights concerns. One dissident, before the verdict, noted that he had rejected Government offers in the past to let him emigrate to the West and now was wondering if he had made a mistake.

8. (LOU) Comment. When the cases against Kusy and his co-defendants were opened last summer, it was widely understood that the regime intended to make examples of the defendants and to use their cases as a warning to others in Slovakia considering dissident activity. We believe the acquittals and suspended sentences are strong evidence that international pressure can be successful in these types of cases. We nonetheless remain concerned about the case of Jan Carnogursky, and fear that Carnogursky may face a stiffer penalty than Kusy because of his unwillingness to make any concessions which would conflict with his strong Catholic convictions.

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Source: National Security Archive, Soviet Flashpoints set.

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Document 47

Prague, November 15, 1989

Telegram from the US Embassy in Prague to the US Department of State,
on the Czechoslovak régime's attempts to react to changes in the East bloc,
with a focus on the economy

Limited official use

Prague 08014

Subject: Czechoslovak Prime Minister on travel controls and the linkage between
political and economic reform

REF: Prague 5179 and earlier

1. Limited Official Use – entire text.

Summary and comment

2. In the Government's first major statement since last weekend's spectacular GDR developments, Prime Minister Adamec has given a hint of how the Czechoslovak régime intends to respond to the examples of reform going on around it:

– Show flexibility on peripheral areas, such as travel, which do not threaten the CPCz's political control of society. Adamec's statements on travel were however less impressive than reported in the Western media. His offer to eliminate the exit visa requirement to the West, for example, was a measure already planned. Since the GOC liberalized travel rules some two years ago, it has been a less significant barrier to travel for the average Czechoslovak. Other barriers, such as the need to obtain hard currency and a passport, remain.

Note: Head of MFA consular department informed us late today that procedures for elimination of the exit visa might not go into effect before next "travel season" (spring) and that not all the details had been worked out for this measure. He added that certain categories of persons, e.g., persons against whom criminal charges were pending, would still be denied exit permission even after this change. End note.

– Continue to make installments within the government's economic means on the social contract which has kept the population politically apathetic. Adamec promised more cars, better housing and a better stocked domestic market in his speech.

– Raise the rhetoric of political reform. Adamec, though claiming to speak personally, not only linked the success of economic reform directly to political change, but argued political change should now take the lead, though without specifying what he meant.

Adamec has again shown himself in this speech ready to tackle even the most sensitive economic subjects. He raised the prospect of wage controls and an end to agricultural subsidies, which now consume some KCS 60 billion (4 billion USD at the commercial exchange rate) per annum, or roughly ten percent of the national income. End summary and comment.

3. On November 14 Prime Minister Adamec addressed a Joint Session of the Federal Assembly with his Government's annual program, his second such speech since taking

office in 1988. Below we review some of the highlights, including his travel liberalization proposals which, in our view, received exaggerated international media attention. The GOC has promised to clarify Adamec's travel statements at its weekly press conference on Thursday, November 16.

Travel proposals

4. Adamec spoke midway in his address about the GOC's intentions of removing unnecessary bureaucratic regulations and of substantially facilitating foreign travel. His actual proposals were more modest and in almost every case are either in effect or previously announced for 1990:

- speeding up the issuance of travel documents;
- eliminating exit visas now required for travel to the West and Yugoslavia (no date was offered for this measure though a January 1990 implementation date had already been discussed). In fact, implementation is likely to take even longer;
- ending the limit on the number of visits a year which can be made to relatives abroad;
- simplifying the procedures for emigration;
- issuing entry visas to foreigners at selected border crossing points; and
- limiting the size of the restricted no-go border zone and preparing a new statute regulating this zone.

5. Note: The proposed elimination of exit visas has received the most international attention. Simplifying the travel authorization could potentially increase the number of persons travelling. We would note, however, that MFA consular department director Kulawiec informed us late November 15 that no date has been set for removing the requirement, in fact, many details remain to be worked out. He hoped the measures would be in effect by spring. Significant barriers to travel remain. On a economic level individuals need to obtain the necessary hard currency. More importantly citizens can still be prevented from traveling if the regime refuses to issue them a passport, as is now the case for dissident and independent figures. Kulawiec stated that certain categories of persons such as those with many state secrets or with criminal charges pending against them would still be barred from leaving the country. End note.

The link between politics and economics

6. More interesting than his travel comments from our perspective were Adamec's closing remarks at the Federal Assembly session in which he linked political and economic change, though he was careful to portray these as his "personal" view. Adamec said that a year ago when he presented his first program to the Assembly the generally-held view was that the Government could proceed to put its economic house in order and then move on the political front. In fact, he confided, no one thought that much really needed to be changed in the political sphere. Now, said Adamec, he was convinced that economic progress could not be successful without political reform. In our special situation, he went on, political change should even take a "certain lead".

7. Adamec stepped back from suggesting what that "lead" might be. At other points in his remarks he warned that no other country offered a model for Czechoslovak

economic restructuring, perhaps implying political models existed. He said he favored a dialogue in which both "correct and incorrect" points of view were raised, but he qualified this with a reference to conducting that dialogue within the framework of the Constitution and on the basis of maintaining public order.

The social contract and the economy

8. Adamec indicated that the regime was ready to continue to make installments on the social contract that has kept most Czechoslovaks politically acquiescent in exchange for an adequate standard of living. He promised to divert some KCS 750 million in savings from defense cuts this year into health care, with another billion next year. He promised a speed up in deliveries of the new Skoda Favorit (to reach 100,000 units in 1990) and an increase in imports of South Korean automobiles. He made commitments in terms of housing and cultural facilities, as well as maintaining and improving consumer supplies on the domestic market.

9. But Adamec cautioned that delivery on these promises would be complicated by the economy's slow growth and trade problems. Serious economic policy changes in unspecified socialist countries, he said, were dimming the export prospects of Czechoslovak industry, particularly its engineering sector. There was little the Government could do to correct these problems and he warned enterprises to improve their competitiveness. He complained that the country's socialist trading partners increasingly wanted to trade in convertible currencies and rejected negotiation of long term trade plans.

10. Comment. Adamec's statements confirm reports that the Soviets, in particular, have chosen to cut their Czechoslovak trade surplus by reducing machinery imports. His remarks also reflect Polish and Hungarian demands that trade be switched to convertible currency terms. It remains to be seen to what degree a cutback in trade with socialist countries (Czechoslovak official statistics admit only a drop of one percent in exports for the first nine months of 1989) will have a multiplier effect on the wider economy. End comment.

11. Adamec also displayed a readiness to raise past taboo subjects, saying the Government might have to apply greater discipline in two areas of the economy. He threatened wage controls if salary growth continued to outstrip productivity. He also noted agricultural subsidies now eat up more than KCS 60 billion per year. He promised to submit a report to parliament on exactly how this money was being spent, with an implication that he would be looking into ways to cut back on the cost of these subsidies.

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Source: National Security Archive, Soviet Flashpoints set.

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Document 48

Moscow, November 17, 1989

Memorandum of conversation between Gorbachev adviser Georgi Shakhnazarov and the Director of the Institute for State and Law, CSAS, Josef Blahož, on, among other things, the growing threat facing the Czechoslovak socialist régime

To Comrade M. S. Gorbachev

I received the Director of the Institute for State and Law of the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences at his request. He expressed serious concern in relation to the situation in the CSSR. Among the creative intelligentsia who joined their fortunes to the Party are growing fears that attempts by the leadership of the CPCz to delay necessary reforms may lead to events as in the GDR, and spark a spontaneous process that will lead to the separation of the Party from the government.

The determined unwillingness of the leadership to take decisive measures raises the danger of an explosion. It is especially shameful that no steps are being taken to rehabilitate tens of thousands of those expelled or written off from the CPCz, who, regardless of what position they took in 1968, are among the defenders of socialism. If the CPCz discards these people from political life, it weakens its own position and pushes them into the rightist camp. And in view of the strongly bourgeois democratic tradition in Czechoslovakia, this camp will soon speak up loudly.

To my remark that the resolution of Party problems depends entirely on the Czechoslovak comrades, Blahož said that in his country no one expects the CPSU to encourage the Czechoslovak leadership to reform. But if it became known that in Moscow they had started to think about reappraising the events of 1968, "it would stimulate the process of reevaluating the policy of the CPCz, and speed the adoption of necessary measures".

Blahož also said that the directors of creative and other organizations are not encouraged to come out with initiatives for making contact with the Soviet Embassy and the House of Soviet Science and Culture in Prague. They can make contact only if the initiative comes from the Soviet side. In this context it would be desirable to advise the Soviet representatives to act more energetically. We very badly need meetings and contacts with your people, declared Blahož.

Source: Georgi Shakhnazarov, *Tsena svobody. Reformatsia Gorbacheva glazami yego pomoshchnika*, Moscow, 1993, p. 434

Translated from the Czech version by Todd Hammond.

Document 49

Prague, November 17, 1989

Telegram from Ambassador of the German Democratic Republic in Prague to General Secretary Egon Krenz in Berlin,
on Krenz's upcoming visit to Prague

Regarding your upcoming visit to Prague, I should like to inform you of the following:

1. The schedule of your visit remains the same as you were briefed on November 17. At the airport you will be welcomed by Comrades Jakeš, Husák, Lenárt, Štěpán, and Fojtík. Your interview with Comrade Jakeš will take place in the Central Committee building; then lunch, followed by a visit to the President, and after that a final meeting with Comrade Jakeš at the Castle. [...]

2. Comrade Jakeš will ask you to begin your discussion with current information about the situation in the GDR. Then he will speak about some CPCz policy issues concerning restructuring. [...] Comrade Jakeš will speak about further development of bilateral cooperation on a general level. Attention will be directed to the wish that the General Secretaries and the comrades from the Party leadership of both countries regularly exchange opinions on current questions of internal policy of the GDR and the CSSR and on questions of international development.

The leading comrades of the CSSR assume that the GDR, despite the problems of our national economy, will honour their agreed commitments on economic cooperation.

They hope that some questions of direct relations will be able to develop more favorably under the influence of economic reforms. Comrade Lenárt brought up the question with me whether it wouldn't be useful to consider intensified cooperation in production of personal automobiles, in order to satisfy more quickly the respective needs of the GDR and the CSSR.

3. Comrade Jakeš and the other comrades from the Party leadership, as well as the functionaries of the Party and state apparatus, and broad groups of residents of the CSSR, are following the present developments in the GDR very attentively.

They are surprised at the speed and extent of the developments and changes in the last month, and it concerns them more and more what results the processes underway in our country will have on the CSSR. The media reported in great detail your speeches at the 10th Plenum, in the People's Chamber, and on television. The directives of the action program of the 10th Plenum, and the government statement of 17 November, are being met more or less with acceptance.

One of the first practical conclusions for the CSSR is that the stance towards student youth demonstrations, expected this weekend and next, will be similar to ours.

As a result of evaluations of our measures on these issues, the security units have received an order not to use water cannons and truncheons next time. This directive is not supported by all functionaries in the districts because of fears that representatives of Charter 77 and other opposition groups will thus be encouraged to act against the CPCz. The course of the SED towards renewal of socialism in the GDR launched at the 9th Plenum is largely welcomed. Besides the principal results, this policy for the

strengthening of socialism promises a better atmosphere for cooperation between the SED and the CPCz and between the GDR and the CSSR. This policy is also credited, as I was told by leading comrades, with ending "the former policy of constant condescension and arrogant mentoring". Many comrades in the CSSR are disturbed that the new leadership of the GDR is forced to resolve many of its policy issues within a very short time, and under "pressure from within and without".

Above all, they are concerned about what the political and economic results will be of travel to the Federal Republic, the expected changes in the presentation of Marxism-Leninism in schools and universities, and agreement with general secret-ballot elections. There are fears that the SED will not get the desired majority on either the local or national level.

Comrade Jakeš and comrades of the leadership are glad you are making your visit now, thus letting it be known the importance the SED places on cooperation with the CSSR.

Note: Krenz's visit, planned for November 21, 1989, was cancelled.

Source: Stiftungarchiv der Parteien und Massenorganisationen der DDR im Bundesarchiv, Berlin, DY 3/IV 2/2.039/285. Published in Czech in *Soudobé dějiny* 3.2-3 (1996): 377-8.

Translated from the Czech version by Todd Hammond.

Document 50

Prague, November 18, 1989

Telegram from the US Embassy in Prague to the US Department of State,
on the large student demonstration in Prague, November 17, and its brutal suppression

[...]

Confidential

Prague 08082

Subject: Brutal suppression of Czech students' demonstration

1. Confidential – entire text.
2. This is an action message. See recommendation para 19.
3. Summary. An officially sanctioned student commemoration the evening of November 17 developed into Czechoslovakia's largest anti-regime demonstration in 20 years. Several tens of thousands (possibly 50,000) students marched through central Prague calling for freedom, an end to Communist rule and the ouster of the present Communist leadership. The peaceful procession was halted by police before it reached its goal, Wenceslas Square. It was then brutally dispersed by truncheon-wielding riot police. Western journalists were particularly targeted by the police for rough treatment. One Chicago Tribune reporter required serious medical attention for head wounds. Numerous others were roughed up or had their cameras smashed. No official statistics have been released on the number of injured or detained, though we understand Prague Spring era leader Alexander Dubcek was among them and there is an unconfirmed report that at least one student died as a result of police beatings. The Embassy has already protested verbally to the MFA on the police treatment of American journalists and recommends in para 19 that Ambassador Houstecky in Washington be called in to receive a protest and that the impending visit of CPCz Presidium member Fojtik be cancelled as inappropriate at this time.
4. Scared and isolated, the Jakes leadership has decided to respond to this first major manifestation of student opposition with brute force. This bloody-mindedness may well produce the sort of divisions so far largely muted in the CPCz leadership and will undercut what little popular legitimacy the regime has had as well as its longevity. New opportunities for popular protest will arise on December 8, "John Lennon" day in Prague; December 10, International Human Rights Day, and January 16, the anniversary of Jan Palach's death. The example of Prague's students could encourage demonstrations of even greater scale on those dates. End summary.

The demonstration

5. A commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the death of a Czech, anti-fascist student leader (Jan Opletal) has sparked Czechoslovakia's largest anti-regime demonstration in 20 years. A gathering of some 15–20,000 students met the afternoon of November 17 to hear speeches honoring the memory of this Czech martyr, as well

as calls for academic freedom, a dialogue between Government and people and for students to become more politically active to change society. The spirit of the students and speakers was very much that of one of the large banners strung out over the assembly: "Who if not us, when if not now." Others read "Freedom", and "The dinosaurs out" (a reference to the CPCz's aged presidium).

6. After speeches, the students proceeded, as planned, on a solemn candle-light march to Vysehrad, the hill-top fortress and cemetery where many Czech national heroes are buried. The crowd became increasingly more political along the route. Shouts of "Long live Havel and the Charter" were interspersed with "Jakes out", "We want a new Government" and "Free elections". At Vysehrad the gathering offered a moment of silence for Opletal and sang the national anthem. The crowd seemed uncertain as to how to proceed at this point, but shortly shouts rose up to march to Wenceslas Square, the traditional site of demonstrations in Prague's old center.

7. As students streamed down from Vysehrad into the city's streets they called, as demonstrators have in the past, for other Czechs to join them. This time they did. The crowd marched along the river embankment towards the city's center and its numbers swelled to several tens of thousands. (Western media estimates speak of 40–50,000, making it the largest independent demonstration here since 1969.) Student slogans became more forceful and nationalistic. In addition to calls for Jakes and the current Party leadership to resign, the crowd chanted "40 years of Communism is enough" and "Warsaw, Berlin and now Prague".

8. Up to this point the police had not seriously interfered with the demonstration, though they had halted its march at one point to prevent it from turning into side streets and to keep it along the river embankment. As the demonstrators reached Prague's broad National Avenue and turned toward Wenceslas Square, however, they were confronted by a barricade of riot police blocking their path. The demonstration had now been going on for some three and a half hours.

Between 1930 and 2030 the police and demonstrators were at a stand off. The police refused to permit the students to pass to the square, despite shouts that "after Wenceslas we will go home". While numbers of the demonstrators began to dwindle, a core of some 10,000 refused to budge or respond to police calls to break up. The students responded by staging a sit-in on the street, singing the national anthem, chanting more anti-Communist, anti-leadership political slogans and shouting for someone in the leadership to come out and discuss their demands with them.

Throughout, demonstrators were peaceful and restrained as police announcements became increasingly more threatening and riot police moved in to close the National Avenue from behind the crowd and cut off other points of egress.

Brutal police response

10. Shortly before 2100, riot police, newly reinforced with special Red Beret Action Squads and fatigue-clad People's Militia, carried out a series of truncheon charges into the crowd. Numerous demonstrators, as well as foreign journalists, trapped within the street cordon were badly beaten. The police then began making arrests and using an armored personnel carrier with battering ram to force the people out into now open

side streets. Within 30 minutes the street was clear. Busloads of those arrested as well as ambulances carrying injured were noted leaving the scene for several minutes afterwards.

11. According to reports, one student has died of injuries and at least 13 persons were seriously injured and required hospitalization. One of these was Chicago Tribune reporter Paula Butturini who suffered several head wounds requiring a total of 16 stitches. The number of injured was certainly much higher than the figure of 13. EMBOFFS saw scores of young demonstrators bleeding or limping from the demonstration site. Many were not seeking immediate medical assistance for fear that their names would be taken by the authorities.

12. Western journalists were particularly targeted for brutal police handling. In addition to Ms. Butturini, a BBC journalist, Ed Lucas, was knocked unconscious. AP, LA Times, Boston Globe, and NBC reporters have all reported being beaten and roughed up. Many had cameras seized or damaged. EMBOFFS witnessed a CNN reporter, Bruce Conover, being detained and his camera smashed. We understand that a British ITN reporter was also roughed up and held by the police.

13. There have been no reports on the total number of persons arrested or detained. We understand that former Prague Spring era leader Alexander Dubček was among them. He was picked up when he was spotted by police during the earlier Vysehrad ceremony.

Comment

14. This is the first mass specifically student demonstration since 1969 and represents a watershed event for the Jakes regime. It changes our frame of reference on this regime's longevity. The brutal police treatment of youth will have broad repercussions among the general population as it did last January at the much smaller-scale Palach demonstrations. It should remove what trace of legitimacy the regime retains as far as the general public is concerned. Jakes will not be able to pretend, as CPCz ideology secretary Fojtik tried to do after returning from talks in Moscow on Friday (just as the police were knocking heads), that Czechoslovakia is serious about speeding up the pace of political reform.

15. Importantly, the police action in its bloody-mindedness could produce divisions which have so far been muted in the Czechoslovak Communist Party leadership. But if this demonstration considerably undercuts the staying power of the Jakes regime, it also shows that the hardliners are not going to leave without a fight. Many of last night's demonstrators were calling on students to return to Wenceslas Square Saturday for a repeat demonstration. Even if this does not develop, there are several protest anniversary opportunities in the weeks ahead and around which demonstrations can coalesce.

16. Two in particular should be the focus of large-scale actions: International Human Rights Day on December 10 and the January 16 anniversary of Czech student Jan

Palach's self-immolation in 1969. The December 8 local celebration of "John Lennon Day" has also typically drawn protest demonstrators.

17. How quickly the Jakes regime passes from the scene, however, may depend now on more than leadership divisions and popular pressure. An important factor, and one that could be decisive, is the Soviet reaction to local developments. Television coverage of CPCz ideology chief Jan Fojtik's return from Moscow last evening showed him a physically shaken man. We have no doubt he heard some tough talk from his Soviet interlocutors and questions about exactly what Jakes and the regime are up to in their talk of reform.

18. There is a final bit of cruel irony to last night's events. Started officially to commemorate a heroic student act of protest against the brutality of Czechoslovakia's Nazi occupiers, they ended yesterday in brutality and apparently at least one student's death at the hands of the Czechoslovak authorities.

Recommendation

19. Embassy believes that strong and early protests are advisable to the GOC in view of the brutal treatment of its citizens and foreign, including U.S. journalists in such a blatant violation of its CSCE commitments. We further recommend that in view of these events, the impending visit of CPCz presidium member Fojtik be cancelled as a sign of our condemnation of the November 17 events. The Embassy has already verbally protested the police incidents involving journalists with the MFA. We are following up with a diplomatic note spelling these out in detail and demanding an explanation. The ambassador plans, if the department has no objection, to raise the contents of our note (see SEPTTEL) with GOC officials in an early demarche. To reinforce our concerns, we recommend that the Department take similar action by calling in Ambassador Houstecky at an early date. At that meeting we recommend that he be told that, in light of the November 17 events, the visit beginning November 24 by CPCz Presidium member Fojtik, would not be appropriate.

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Source: National Security Archive, Soviet Flashpoints set.

Not for citation or publication without permission.

Document 51

Prague, November 19, 1989

Telex from General Secretary Miloš Jakeš to First Secretary of the Slovak Communist Party and secretaries of regional and district CPCz committees, on the situation in the country and tasks facing the Party

As you have been informed, after the memorial march in Prague on the 50th anniversary of November 17, anti-state declarations were made by some of the participants. In view of the character of the events, intervention by security forces was necessary. Due to the spreading of false information as to the death of one student participant, Martin Šmíd, a hostile psychosis was created, especially among students and theatre actors in Prague and some of the regions, who declared a week-long strike, and want to misuse theatre buildings to influence the population with their opinions, which are in conflict with the interests of the majority of citizens and the state.

Their purpose is to call a general strike in the CSSR for November 27. It must be assumed that they will attempt to influence cultural workplaces and schools throughout the republic. They want to infiltrate factories and collective farms as well, in order to gain the support of all levels of society for their destabilizing plans.

Anti-socialist groups led by the Charter can be proven to be behind these activities. Their program is coordinated by the Western media.

The Presidium of the CC CPCz took up these questions this evening, November 19, and adopted measures necessary to face these plots.

The Presidium calls on regional and district committees to do all that is necessary to ensure, in the regions, districts, in factories, on farms, in the schools, and in other workplaces, that these hostile efforts be repudiated, and that uninterrupted work, peace, and order be secured.

It is desirable that work collectives publicly express their decisive position against attempts at a political coup in our country.

As part of the adopted measures, it is necessary to secure the readiness of the People's Militia in protecting workplaces against the efforts by enemy forces to infiltrate their opinions into the workers' collectives.

The Presidium has called on responsible staff to step up in this context the offensive in their ideological efforts, especially in the media, with the aim of politically isolating the forces seeking an overthrow. Take the same approach in the regions and districts.

With comradely greetings,

General Secretary Jakeš

Note: The telex was sent at 9.15 pm that evening.

Source: State Central Archive, CC CPCz record group, telexes and letters, ÚV-134/89.

Translated from the Czech by Todd Hammond.

Document 52

Prague, November 19, 1989

Statement announcing the founding of the Civic Forum in Prague and its demands

Statement

Today, November 19, 1989, at 8.00 p.m., at a meeting in the auditorium of the Prague Theatre Club, the Civic Forum was founded to speak for that part of the Czechoslovak public that is becoming more and more critical of the policies of the current Czechoslovak leadership, and which has been deeply shaken in recent days by the brutal attack on peaceful student demonstrators. Participating in the work of this forum is Charter 77, the Czechoslovak Helsinki Committee, the Circle of the Independent Intelligentsia, the Movement for Civic Liberty, Artforum, Revival, independent students, the Czechoslovak Democratic Initiative, Committee for the Defense of the Unjustly Prosecuted, the Independent Peace Association, Open Dialogue, the Czechoslovak PEN Club centre, some members of the Czechoslovak Socialist Party, the Czechoslovak People's Party, churches, artists' and other unions, some former and present members of the CPCz, and other democratically-minded citizens. The Civic Forum considers itself competent to negotiate with the state leadership on the critical situation in our country, express current public demands, and negotiate on their resolution.

With these meetings, which should be the beginning of a society-wide discussion on the future of Czechoslovakia, Civic Forum wishes to begin negotiations on these urgent demands, which are becoming more and more openly formulated by the broader public:

1) The immediate resignation from their function of those members of the Presidium of the CC CPCz immediately connected with organizing the intervention of five states of the Warsaw Pact in 1968, and who are responsible for the long years of devastation of all sectors of community life in our country – namely, Gustáv Husák, Miloš Jakeš, Jan Fojtík, Miroslav Zavadil, Karel Hofmann, and Alois Indra. The malignant policies of those people, who for years rejected any kind of democratic dialogue with society, quite logically resulted in the horrific events of recent days.

2) The immediate resignation of First Secretary of the Prague Municipal Council of the CPCz Miloš Štěpán, and Federal Minister of the Interior František Kincl, who are responsible for each of the attacks carried out by the police against peacefully demonstrating citizens.

3) That a commission be established to investigate these attacks in detail, find their perpetrators, and recommend punishment. Representatives of Civic Forum must be on this commission.

4) The immediate release of all prisoners of conscience, including those who have been detained in connection with the recent demonstrations.

Civic Forum demands that this proclamation be made public in the official Czechoslovak media.

Civic Forum places its entire authority behind the idea of a general strike on November 27, 1989 from 12.00 noon to 2.00 pm, which was called for by Prague

university students, and interprets it as an expression of support for the demands we intend to negotiate with the state leadership.

Civic Forum believes that its establishment and its work reflect the will of the 40,000 signatories of the petition "Several Sentences", and is open to all sectors and forces in Czechoslovak society who wish to see our country, in a peaceful manner, seek a path to a democratic social arrangement, and thus to economic prosperity.

For Civic Forum:

Ing. Rudolf Battěk, Petr Čepek, Václav Havel, Milan Hruška, Prof. Dr. Milan Jelínek, Milan Kňážko, Dr. Lubomír Kopecký, CSc, Jiří Křižan, Václav Malý, Martin Mejstřík, Petr Oslzlý, Doc. Dr. Libor Pátý, CSc, Jana Petrová, Jan Ruml, Dr. Věnek Šilhán, Ondřej Trojan, Ing. Josef Vavroušek, CSc, Saša Vondra.

Source: Institute of Contemporary History Archive, Prague, KC OF record group, Civic Forum documents. Published in Jiří Suk (ed.), *Občanské fórum*, vol. 2, (Prague, 1998), pp. 13–14.

Translated from the Czech by Todd Hammond.

Document 53

Prague, November 20, 1989

Telegram from the US Embassy in Prague to the US Department of State,
on the apparently increased vulnerability of the Jakeš régime after the first November
demonstrations

Confidential

Prague 08110

Subject: Popular and Soviet pressure for reform converge on the Jakes leadership

REF: (A) Prague 8082, (B) Prague 8075

1. Confidential – entire text.
2. Summary. Two factors have converged to diminish the Czechoslovak regime's chances for delaying deeper reforms and to pose a serious threat to CPCz leader Jakes' position. One, Prague has continued to experience popular demonstrations since the weekend. These have been encouraged by rumors, despite GOC denials, that a student may have been killed during the police violence on November 17. Second, CPCz ideology chief Jan Fojtik has just returned from Moscow with the message that Gorbachev expects the time for talking about reconstruction is over and that it is now up to the Czechoslovak leadership to implement it. If this were not enough, the CPCz leadership has SED Chairman Egon Krenz coming into town on November 21 and is facing student and dissident calls for a general strike on November 27. End summary.
3. The events of the November 17–19 weekend in Prague have shifted the political ground here. They made the Jakes leadership (and Jakes personally) look much more vulnerable than it did even a week ago. Mass demonstrations, by students, first on Friday night (REF A) and then subsequently (SEPTTEL) to protest this first demonstration's brutal suppression, have provided a so far missing element in the political equation here; wide spread popular unrest, with students and others calling for continued protest and a general strike on November 27 and scattered. But unconfirmed, reports of industrial and school stoppages.
4. During the weekend CPCz leader Jakes was particularly targeted by demonstrators who frequently chanted "Jakes out" or "Jakes into the wastebasket". The intensity and singlemindedness of these demands should be psychologically damaging to a leader already rumored to have wanted to resign in crises of self-confidence after developments in the GDR. The police restraint displayed on November 18 and 19 against demonstrations may encourage even larger popular turnouts today (November 20) at Wenceslas Square, where students have again called people to assemble at 1600.
5. If these developments were not enough, the Soviets have coincidentally chosen this moment to step up their pressure on the CPCz leadership. CPCz ideology chief Jan Fojtik returned from Moscow the evening of November 17 (REF B) just as Prague was experiencing its largest demonstration in 20 years. Called to Moscow at Soviet request, he met with CPSU presidium member Medvedev for talks that focused on 1968, the

need for Czechoslovakia to toe the perestroika line and for the GOC to speed the pace of reform. Fojtik denied the Soviets had issued any warnings or even given advice, but from official accounts Fojtik gave reporters they clearly laid out the direction they expected the Czechoslovaks to follow.

6. The report of Fojtik's trip in "Rude pravo" carried what appeared an apparently agreed formulation of Fojtik's discussion on the question of 1968. Both sides, it read, had concerned themselves with historical questions, including the year 1968, and reached "a complete identity of positions and the conclusion that without a thoroughgoing analysis of the past, they cannot chart a clear plan and goal for the future". While subject to interpretation, the Soviet meaning is almost certainly that the Czechoslovaks should quit using 1968 as an excuse for not moving ahead. Behind it may be a threat that a failure to do so could lead the Soviets to re-assess their official evaluation of the 1968 invasion.

7. At one point in responding to a journalist's question, Fojtik quoted Soviet leader Gorbachev as saying that it was necessary to end the stage of reconstruction marked by meetings and endless discussion and to get on with implementing it. Though Fojtik did not give a citation for this quote, and since he did not meet with Gorbachev on this trip, it may well have been contained in a rumored message the Soviet Party chief sent the Czechoslovak (and Bulgarian) leadership last week.

8. The leadership is trying to defuse the popular pressure behind this weekend's and continuing demonstrations by focusing public attention on the allegedly fraudulent report of a student's death. The report was first carried by RFE, VOA and other western media. The student, first identified as Martin Smid, was said to have died as a result of police beatings after the November 17 demonstrations. In an indication of the regime's low level of credibility the rumor of a student's death continues despite statements by the Prime Minister and other Government ministers that no Martin Smid has died and the presentation on television of two students by that name, one of whom says he participated in the demonstration.

9. Tomorrow, November 21, the CPCz will host an official visit by SED Chairman Egon Krenz. While the visit seems to have been planned for several days, Krenz' experience and that of the GDR in recent weeks could prove of extraordinary interest and pertinence to the Jakes leadership now.

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Source: National Security Archive, Soviet Flashpoints set.

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Document 54
Bratislava, November 20, 1989
Statement of the Public Against Violence, Bratislava,
announcing the establishment of the movement and its basic aims

Disturbed by the violent attacks against the recent peaceful student demonstrations in Prague, representatives of the cultural and academic communities have met and agreed to form the association called

Public Against Violence

Our goal is to contribute to the end of the violence and to the unavoidable changes in society.

The present state of Czechoslovak society deeply concerns us. We have long been witnesses to the deformation of social and political life, the chronic illness of the economy, a falling level of social and health care, education, and culture, various manifestations of social injustice, the failure to observe existing laws, the devastation of the environment, growing tension between individual groups of citizens, generations, between nations and ethnic groups of the CSSR, and the deepening moral crisis. Work is rewarded unfairly, there exist many unreasonable privileges, and truthful information for the public is lacking.

The existing methods of problem resolution are failing. The discontent of the people is rising, along with apathy and a feeling of disappointment.

Miscalculation of the situation leads eventually to violence in the streets. We are convinced that we cannot rise above this situation without the activity of us all.

Together let us strive for an open community dialogue and a real, not merely feigned, democracy. Let us take the initiative for better conditions for all, at home, at work, at school, in public. We appeal in this spirit to the social and political organizations of which we are members. Let us all demand that honest people, who have our trust, represent us and our interests on every level.

Today, at the beginning of the last decade of this millennium, real space has also opened in our country for democracy and a way to a dignified life, upon which neighbouring countries have already set out.

For us it is unacceptable that our country, with its democratic traditions and millions of creative people, remain an island of stagnation and decline.

Let us take our affairs, as citizens, into our own hands!

Source: Czechoslovak Documentation Centre, Scheinfeld, November 1989 collection. Published in Ingrid Antalová (ed.), *Verejnosc' proti násiliju 1989–1991. Svedectvá a dokumenty*, Bratislava, 1998, p. 306.

Translated from the Slovak by Todd Hammond.

Document 55

Prague, November 20, 1989

Statement from the Civic Forum,

describing its position and role and appealing for non-violence, tolerance, and dialogue

Civic Forum is not a political party, not some kind of organization with enrolled membership. It is a completely open collective of those who feel responsible for the positive resolution of an intolerable political situation, that want to join the forces of all honest and democratically-minded citizens: artists, students, workers, and all people of good will. It was established spontaneously in the presence of all the groups that demonstrated independent social activity on Sunday, November 19. We regard these representatives of the people as competent to negotiate with the responsible political centres. What we want is a constructive approach, not violence. We do not want vulgarity. We appeal to members of the police, army, and militias to reject brutality and repression of the people's will. If no one was actually killed in the crackdown by the uniformed personnel, all of us are glad, but that doesn't mean there weren't beatings, wounds, blood. Various wild rumors are multiplying, and deliberate misinformation is being spread. Don't be fooled! We ask all citizens to behave soberly, humanly, tolerantly, democratically. Let us take the matter, if it is in our power, to a good conclusion. Let us persevere, and not give up!

Source: *Informační servis*, no. 2, November 21, 1989, p. 1. Published in Jiří Suk (ed.), *Občanské fórum*, vol. 2, (Prague, 1998), p. 14.

Translated from the Czech by Todd Hammond.

Document 56

Berlin, November 21, 1989

Circular from SED General Secretary Egon Krenz to the First Secretaries of the County and District Councils of the SED,
concerning the current situation in Czechoslovakia

Dear Comrades,

Within the SED as well as in all groups of the population there are many questions concerning current developments in our friend state, the CSSR.

A comprehensive assessment of the circumstances and ways of developing socialism in the CSSR is above all, of course, the task of our Czechoslovak fraternal Party. It would mean a return to the old way of thinking if the SED and its mass media were now to replace a misguided policy of effective disassociation from restructuring in other socialist countries with a new form of pedantry. In our answers to all questions concerning the CSSR we are confident that the CPCz will effectively use its own experience as well as lessons recently learned from other socialist countries in order to solve the problems which have arisen.

What is our opinion of the recent demonstrations in Prague?

In the light of our Party's own recent experience, the enormous increase in expressions of dissatisfaction on the streets of other socialist countries naturally gives us cause for concern. It is difficult to imagine that mainly extreme opponents of socialism are at work in mass activities of very young people. It is known that we in the SED were very late in recognizing many expressions of revolutionary impatience as the chance for socialist renewal.

With the course of reorganization proclaimed by the plenum in December 1987, however, the CPCz did not disassociate itself from radical revolutionary restructuring. According to information coming out of Prague many demonstrators are interested in seeing this stance put into practice both quickly and consistently. This creates space to tackle many of the problems with the strength of a Party experienced in struggle.

2. What is our opinion of the CPCz's behaviour towards dissidents?

In recent months the CPCz has stressed, just as the SED has done since the change of course, that political problems are to be solved using political means within political dialogue. At the same time, the organization of constitutionality, as we point out in our program of action, demands that we intervene consistently against those who use violence and also against neo-Fascist phenomena. The comprehensive implementation of this attitude was and is only possible, in our Party too, as the result of a cleansing process. Such a cleansing process is apparently also underway in the CPCz, which can be concluded from the varying public expressions of opinion made by members of their leadership in recent days.

3. The developments in the CSSR will again raise the questions of our opinion about August 21, 1968 (the date on which troops of the five Warsaw Pact states were sent into the CSSR) and of the necessity of apologizing to the population of the CSSR, as is being demanded by some forces in the GDR.

We are in full agreement with Edward Shevardnadze who, in an interview at the end of October 1989, states that the decision to deploy troops in the CSSR was made jointly by the leaders of the Warsaw Pact states and can therefore only be amended by a joint resolution. We are also in full agreement with the USSR foreign minister that this is an extremely complicated matter. We respect the sovereign judgement of the CPCz. With hindsight and with the necessary historical distance one is of course always wiser: "The soldier after the battle is wiser than the general before it." This is especially true when approaching historical processes in general and not only in reference to August 21, 1968.

4. A question often asked is that of the influence which the recent developments in the GDR and the CSSR, in the SED and in the CPCz, will have on mutual co-operation. The opponents of socialism, of course, seek to misuse whatever happens in the GDR against socialism, both here as well as in the CSSR. We would not be Communists if we did not struggle inside the broadest possible union for a socialist solution to the crisis in the GDR and to retain the SED's claim to leadership in the revolutionary people's movement. In doing so, we also accept great responsibility for a new system of defending socialist positions at the frontiers with NATO. It is a task which leaves no room for dreams of reunification and frontier revisions to become reality. We are therefore convinced that socialist renewal in the GDR also serves the development of socialism in the CSSR and its national sovereignty.

This present priority of mastering urgent domestic political tasks was also reflected in the short-term agreement with our Czechoslovak comrades to postpone the working talks between the general secretaries planned for November 21 in Prague until a more suitable date.

We emphasize our goal of making even more use than ever before of the great chances offered by the restructuring in our two countries in order to intensify effective co-operation on all levels with our Czechoslovak friends.

Source: Stiftungarchiv der Parteien und Massenorganisationen der DDR im Bundesarchiv, Berlin, DY IV 2/2.039/314.

Translated from the German by Malcolm Leighton.

Document 57
Prague, 21 November 1989
Statement by Cardinal Tomášek,
stating the urgent need for freedom and democratic government in Czechoslovakia

To all the people of Czechoslovakia

Dear Fellow Citizens,

I turn to you a few hours after returning from Rome, where I took part in the canonization of Blessed Agnes of Bohemia. The daughter of a king, she retired to a cloister for the love of God and neighbour, but never stopped being with her people, in their glory and their misery.

Neither can the fate of my nation and all the people of the country be foreign to me. I must not fail to speak at a time when you have united in an enormous protest against the injustices committed against us for over forty years. It is not possible to trust the government leadership, which is not willing to speak the truth, and denies a country with a thousand years of state tradition the rights and freedoms considered normal even in very young states of the Third World.

I should like to throw some light on our common situation through the experience of the Roman Catholic Church in our country. Complaints and requests submitted in its name have been contemptuously ignored. Only when the Catholic people in their hundreds of thousands raised their voices in Velehrad in 1985 and with the petition of 1988 was there some insignificant progress. The President did not react until six months ago to my offer for dialogue of last year, but in fact only a meaningless gesture was made. The Church continues to be in the thrall of state power, according to forced changes in law dating from the Stalinist era. A bishop is completely dependent on the state bureaucracy in the administration of his diocese, and the StB has the last word. Meetings of the bishops and priests are stifled by the presence of state functionaries. The adult faithful, their children, and especially young Christians find it difficult to breathe in an atmosphere without freedom. They promise us that the new legal changes in Church status will be in harmony with international norms on civic freedoms – but not a word that the governing Party will give up its programme of the gradual liquidation of faith. These people cannot be trusted.

Other spheres of our community life are in the same unhappy situation – in science, the arts and culture, information, and in social, civic, and political affairs. From the west and the east we are surrounded by countries where they have, in the past or the present era, broken through the bars of the totalitarian system. We should wait no longer; we must act. We need a democratic government, otherwise we will not be able to prevent the impending environmental catastrophe and other evils. All who have something to say to us must freely speak out, so that from among them we can elect a government for us, not against us. At this very moment we are all called to responsibility, for the present and future of our children and ourselves.

We are with you, friends, who call for justice for everyone. With thanks and pride I turn especially to the victims of raw violence; for you were meant the words of Christ,

"Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness; for they shall be filled". The demand for punishment of the guilty is altogether just. I only ask that you continue along the path of nonviolence. Let us fight for the good through means that are good. We can see in our oppressors how short-lived are the victories of evil, hate, vengeance, ruthlessness, and insolence.

I should also like to address you, my Catholic brothers and sisters, together with your priests. In this fateful hour of our history not one of you may stand aside. Raise your voice again, this time in unity with other citizens: Czechs, Slovaks, and members of other nationalities, believers and nonbelievers. The right to faith cannot be separated from other democratic rights. Freedom is indivisible.

I end with words that rang long ago in our history: "With the help of God, our fate is in our own hands."

Source: *Lidová demokracie*, November 22, 1989. Reprinted in *Deset pražských dnů. 17.–27. listopad*, Prague, 1990, pp. 194–5.

Translated from the Czech by Todd Hammond.

Document 58
Prague, November 21, 1989, afternoon
Statement of Civic Forum
on talks between its representatives and Premier Ladislav Adamec

One part of today's statement by the Government of the CSSR was also the information on the meeting of Premier Ladislav Adamec with representatives of the Civic Forum.

The Government interpreted the talks as the beginning of a dialogue, and presented it as more evidence of the efforts of the organs of government to fundamentally resolve the existing crisis situation. According to the Government, this obviated the need for organizing strikes and demonstrations.

Statement: The meeting of the Civic Forum representatives with Ladislav Adamec was of an informational character only, and therefore could in no way influence our positions. The Civic Forum unequivocally supports the strikes by students, and theatre and creative artists, and also supports the calling of a general strike for November 27.

We wish to assist in any possible dialogue by taking part in the establishment of a committee that would represent the broadest possible public and would begin discussions on the four demands in the Civic Forum charter.

Source: Institute of Contemporary History Archive, Prague, KC OF record group, Civic Forum documents. Published in Jiří Suk (ed.), *Občanské fórum*, vol. 2, (Prague, 1998), pp. 14–15.

Translated from the Czech by Todd Hammond.

Document 59
Bratislava, November 21, 1989
Statement of the Public Against Violence,
on the declaration of the governments of the CSSR, CSR, and SSR,
concerning events of November 17, 1989 in Prague

The Public Against Violence demands a change in the Government position concerning the evaluation of the events of November 17, 1989. We demand that the governments distance themselves from the brutal violence, and that the guilty be punished in accordance with the law, as this attack calls forth an atmosphere of confrontation and violence.

The violence of the security forces contradicts the proclaimed Government position on a "clear political settlement of the problem". It is absurd that the Government has retroactively pardoned it. We demand a change in the Government position on the Prague violence; we demand the resignation of all Party and Government representatives directly responsible for the escalation of violence and the internal political crisis. We demand the creation of an independent parliamentary committee augmented by representatives of independent initiatives, social movements, and the public at large.

Furthermore:

We want to carry on a dialogue, but not in an atmosphere of repression. Therefore, release political prisoners.

We demand that representatives of the Public Against Violence, students, and other community groups be able to meet with the Premier of the Slovak Socialist Republic.

We demand immediate space in the mass media. All of them operate owing to our work and our taxes. They must serve the citizens.

We appreciate the fact that the security forces in Slovakia are not provoking disturbances. We request, however, the creation of the technical conditions allowing a peaceful course for the meetings (for instance, traffic halts, suitable covered areas, amplifiers).

If the Government of the Slovak Socialist Republic does not clearly express itself, if it remains during these days in a wait-and-see position, it will morally disqualify itself.

We turn to all editors-in-chief in the mass media: allow only true information to be spread; by spreading lies and half-truths, you put yourself on the side of violence.

We call on all members of the Czechoslovak Communist Party promptly to take a clear stance within their organization on the present political situation.

We fully identify ourselves with the position of the Civic Forum adopted in Prague.

Source: Czechoslovak Documentation Centre, Scheinfeld, November 1989 collection. Published in Ingrid Antalová (ed.), *Verejnosť proti násiliu 1989–1991. Svedectvá a dokumenty*, Bratislava, 1998, p. 307.

Translated from the Slovak by Todd Hammond.

Document 60

Prague, November 21, 1989, evening

Letter from the Civic Forum to US President George Bush and the President of the Supreme Soviet Mikhail S. Gorbachev, announcing the establishment of the Civic Forum and asking them to consider the 1968 Soviet-led intervention in Czechoslovakia at the coming summit meeting

Dear Sirs,

On November 19, 1989 the Civic Forum was established in Prague, which feels itself competent to speak for the Czechoslovak public. At the demonstration of the Prague population on November 21, in which hundreds of thousands of people took part on Wenceslas Square, the Civic Forum was given a mandate, and thus turns to you in the name of these people.

The Soviet Government declares the principle of non-intervention in relation to the democratic movement in Eastern Europe. We must caution you that in the case of Czechoslovakia, this policy actually means support for the political leadership installed in 1968 by the intervening powers, which after twenty years of governing is completely discredited. In fact, one of the demands of the mass demonstration of November 21, is the departure of these politicians from the political scene.

Sirs, it is our opinion that the past intervention of 1968 in internal Czechoslovak events should be condemned, and revoked as an illegal act. Silence on the intervention of August 1968 actually means intervention in internal Czechoslovak affairs. We request you to consider this question at your talks; it is important not only for Czechoslovakia, but for all of Europe.

Source: *Informační servis*, no. 2, November 21, 1989, p. 1. Reprinted in Jiří Suk (ed.), *Občanské fórum*, vol. 2, (Prague, 1998), p. 15.

Translated from the Czech by Todd Hammond.

Document 61

Prague, November 21, 1989, evening

Telegram from the Civic Forum to all democratic movements in Eastern Europe,
expressing solidarity with them

To the New Forum, GDR; Solidarity, Poland; Democratic Forum, FIDESZ SDS
Hungary; Ekoglasnost, Bulgaria; Rumania Libera; to people's fronts of all republics of
the USSR where they have been established.

Civic Forum, which has been spontaneously established in Prague within the last
few days as a temporary spokesman for the democratically-minded Czechoslovak
public, sends all of you fraternal greetings, for we are aware that the values that guide
our common efforts are identical. We thank you for all previous expressions of support
and solidarity, and ask you for more, because we truly need them, and badly!

Civic Forum

Source: photocopy, Czechoslovak Documentation Centre, Scheinfeld, November 1989
collection.

Translated from the Czech by Todd Hammond.

Document 62
Trnava, November 22, 1989
Statement by Archbishop Ján Sokol, the Slovak Metropolitan,
against violence and in support of human rights

To people of good will in Slovakia

It is now high time to solve the problems that have accumulated over the last forty years in our public life.

I myself am witness to many assurances from the governing organs, that the situation, and the so-distorted laws of the 1950s, would be resolved in a short time; but they always remained weak promises, delaying tactics, or mere incremental modifications.

Believe me that it was with great pain that I learned of the brutal violence of our security units against peace-loving Christians on March 25, 1988 in Bratislava, and on our country's young citizens on November 17, 1989, in Prague.

I join the protest of the Czechoslovak people and many high executives here and throughout the world against such raw violence, trampling of human dignity, and violation of basic human rights. I should be happy if at the head of our state and at all levels of the state apparatus stood such people as would not allow such arbitrariness on the part of the security organs and their supervisors. If only our state were led by people who had truly been freely and democratically elected, who would reinstate personal freedom, freedom of speech, conviction, both political, and religious, and abolish the cult of violence, fear, and injustice, of which we have recently been witnesses. I ask our faithful to pray with me that the developments in our country proceed peacefully, and that there finally be an end to violence, injustice, and lies.

Ján Sokol
Archbishop Metropolitan of Slovakia

Source: *Informace o cirkvi* (samizdat), no. 12, 1989, p. 10.

Translated from the Slovak by Todd Hammond.

Document 63
Prague, November 22, 1989
Statement of the Civic Forum,
with instructions for the general strike called for November 27

The general strike, called for November 27, is a political protest strike, and has no other aim.

In order that the strike not cause any material or other damage, we recommend the following measures:

1) The strike will be called and led by the local strike committee of the enterprise, bureau, or other institution.

2) The beginning of the general strike is the same everywhere: November 27, at 12.00 noon.

3) The length of the strike will be determined by the local strike committee according to the nature of production in industrial enterprises, or the nature of activity in bureaus and institutions. At most the strike will last until 2.00 pm.

4) The strike committee will announce the beginning of the strike in an appropriate manner.

5) In health care, in public transport, and in services which assure the vital needs of communities, towns, and enterprises, we recommend declaring the general strike; depending on conditions work should not cease, but the strike should be manifested through appropriate means.

6) Local strike committees should inform the national coordinating committee of the Civic Forum on preparations, commencement, and course of the strike.

7) In factories that have not established a strike committee, workers may join the strike in a manner of their own choosing.

Source: Institute of Contemporary History Archive, Prague, KC OF record group, Civic Forum documents. Published in Jiří Suk (ed.), *Občanské fórum*, vol. 2, (Prague, 1998), p. 16.

Translated from the Czech by Todd Hammond.

Document 64
Bratislava, November 22, 1989
Resolution of a public gathering on SNP Square to the Slovak Premier,
containing seven demands

Guided by a desire to express a definitive "no" to any kind of violence and to prevent the appearance of crisis in all areas of our lives, we join the movement of the Czech civic initiatives, and adopt this resolution, with which we demand:

1. A change in your position towards the brutality of November 17, 1989, in Prague.
2. The immediate resignation of those politicians who are closely tied to Stalinism and neo-Stalinism, and are responsible for the stagnation and decline of our society.
3. A thorough reconsideration of the attempt to reform our society, the results of which were the events of 1968-9. The inauguration of a discussion on the entry of Soviet troops into Czechoslovakia in August 1968.
4. The political and legal exoneration all persons unjustly prosecuted and allow them entry into public and political life. The release all those convicted and on trial for political reasons.
5. The adoption the long-postponed law on assembly and association based on democratic principles, thus allowing free differentiation of our citizens in politics, opinions, and interests.
6. The carrying out of a thorough reform of the electoral system, through which people will be able to elect their representatives with the real possibility of their recall. A legal guarantee for the participation of citizens and their organizations in nominating candidates and in monitoring the course of the elections.
7. A guarantee for the representatives of the initiative Public Against Violence that they will have immediate access to the press, radio, and television, so that they can address all our citizens.

Source: Published in Ingrid Antalová (ed.), *Verejnosť proti násiliu 1989–1991. Svedectvá a dokumenty*, Bratislava, 1998, p. 309.

Translated from the Slovak by Todd Hammond.

Document 65

Prague, November 23, 1989

Telegram from the US Embassy in Prague to the US Department of State,
on the continuing struggle in the CPCz leadership, the possible occupation of radio and
television, and the question of a Soviet role

Confidential

Prague 08204

Subject: Struggle within CPCz leadership continues

1. Confidential – entire text.

2. Summary. Another mass rally is scheduled for Wenceslas Square today (November 23) at which Vaclav Havel may announce a meeting with Prime Minister Adamec to discuss the new Civic Forum's demands. A Forum contact cautions us that this is not necessarily a sign of strength for Adamec or the Forum and that the Prime Minister may be seeking broad-based popular support to counter the numerical advantage of hardliners in the CPCz Presidium. A second, conflicting story has agreement already reached on Adamec succeeding Jakes as Party Chief. What appears clear is that Adamec and Jakes, aligned with the hardliners, are pitted in a succession fight. The CPCz Presidium resumed its meeting today but the only report to come out of these sessions so far is that a Central Committee plenum will be held on November 24. There are signs of grass roots dissatisfaction with the CPCz leadership, but also of the hardliners digging in their heels. Authorities have reportedly acted to seize control of the Czechoslovak Radio and Television stations. End summary.

CPCz Presidium meetings continue

3. The November 22 Presidium session ended late in the night. The Presidium resumed sitting at noon on November 23. The only official information to come out of the meeting so far is that an extraordinary Central Committee plenum will be held tomorrow, Friday, November 24. An Obroda contact has told us that former Prime Minister Strougal had been one of those in the Party demanding an early plenum. In the name of 30 other CC member (out of a total number of roughly 150). He has also called for resignation of the entire Presidium.

CC plenum outcome uncertain

4. We have been unable to determine how the struggle between the factions described in Prague 8171 are playing themselves out inside the Presidium, though we have heard two diametrically opposed accounts of a possible outcome. One, based on a conversation with Socialist Party General Secretary Jan Skoda, has it that a deal has been struck already and Adamec will replace Jakes as CPCz General Secretary. The other report comes from a Civic Forum member. This report supports a view that the hardliners have the upper hand for the moment and that Adamec is in trouble.

According to this contact, Jan Dus, Adamec had agreed to meet with Vaclav Havel and possibly other representatives of the Civic Forum later today, November 23, but only on the condition that Havel, at today's mass demonstration, announce the meeting and lead a chant of "long live Adamec". Without a sign of such broadbased public support, Adamec reportedly said, he was finished. This was his "last chance" before the numerically more powerful hardliners pushed him out of the Presidium.

Hardliners give appearance of flexibility

5. A National Front session headed by Jakes on November 22 produced a statement calling for calm and prudence by the population. The National Front expressed regret over the "damage to health of some citizens" in connection with the November 17 police action against demonstrators. According to this more conciliatory National Front statement, the report of the Czech Republic General Prosecutor on the November 17 events will be published in a few days and no demonstrators are currently in custody. The National Front also stated that new laws on freedom of assembly, association and the press would be speeded up. (Note. This essentially adopts the points Prime Minister Adamec had wanted to include in the November 20 Government statement, but which hardliners had rejected. End note.)

6. Prague Party boss Miroslav Stepan met at his request with Cardinal Tomasek on November 22, in a move that initially met with some optimism. It was read as a sign that the resistance of one of the principal hardliners was weakening and that Stepan, smelling a change in winds, was looking to improve his image. Catholic activist Vaclav Maly and Obroda member Jan Urban have put a different spin on the meeting. (Both are now active in the Civic Forum.) According to them, the meeting was called at Stepan's request, but the subject of the meeting was a government decision not to admit the public to Prague Castle when the Cardinal celebrates mass at St. Vitus Cathedral November 25. Authorities claim the numbers who may show up for this mass celebrating the canonization of Agnes of Bohemia could present a threat to public order. The Cardinal reportedly responded that if the authorities do not admit Christians into the Castle then they could expect hundreds of thousands of them kneeling around it. Tomasek is quoted in Svobodne slovo as saying upon leaving the meeting with Stepan that he is studying the current situation in the country and will be making a statement shortly.

Reports that radio and television have been occupied by security forces

7. According to sources at Civic Forum, Czechoslovak security forces moved on November 23 to take control of Czechoslovak Television's broadcasting studio. According to one report, the acting director of Czechoslovak Television, Libor Batrla, has been removed. The action was apparently made to prevent a live broadcast of today's demonstration at Wenceslas Square at which Havel is to speak. There has also reportedly been a lockout of staff at Czechoslovak Radio. All those who supported a resolution on November 22 for more objective news broadcasting are not being admitted to the radio studios.

Soviet role unclear

8. Reports circulating yesterday that Prime Minister Adamec had flown off to Moscow for a meeting with Soviet leaders have proven false. Adamec appears to have been in Prague throughout the day and to have participated in the Wednesday Presidium session. "Rude pravo" also gives a short front page report that Soviet Ambassador Lomakin met with Jakes on November 22 to discuss developments in their respective countries, but the report gave no details.

Regime criticism from within the apparatus

9. What may have led Jakes to reverse course on such questions as an investigation into the November 17 police actions are several signs of dissatisfaction within the Party and state structures. Socialist paper "Svobodne slovo" reports that the deputy director of the regime's official human rights group has said that any attempt to suppress the new "Civic Forum" would produce wider popular protest and that the law governing the establishment of new political groups needs to be changed. The printing staff of the Party's paper "Rude pravo" has also passed a resolution criticizing the CPCz Presidium for failing to act decisively to investigate the November 17 events. Rude pravo editor Zdenek Horeni is also quoted as criticizing the CPCz leadership for its one-sided depiction of the November 17 events. More importantly, a public statement by the police of Prague district 9, the district known as the city's working class heart, has said that the police will not be used "to cover unresolved social and political problems". The police members also demanded cadre changes in the CPCz's leadership, specifically in the Presidium.

Comment

10. These conflicting reports suggest that a direct clash between Adamec and Jakes is in the offing, with the outcome uncertain. Hardline resistance to change may be encouraged by a Civic Forum demand which has targeted a majority, 7 out of 13, of the current Presidium's members for removal. Socialist Party Chairman Bohuslav Kucera is reported by one source to have found Jakes "unmoved" by the popular demonstrations when he met with him on November 22 to propose his possible resignation. Jakes told Kucera he was prepared to rely on the security forces to defend socialism, and his own position.

11. The calling of the plenum has been optimistically greeted by some as a sign of a positive impending leadership change. The Central Committee, however, is largely composed of aged conservatives with links to 1968 and cannot be depended upon to produce a reformist outcome, unless such a change has been agreed upon in advance by the Presidium

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Source: National Security Archive, Soviet Flashpoints set.

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Document 66

Prague November 23, 1989, 4.00 p.m.

Statement read by Civic Forum representative Václav Havel at a demonstration on Wenceslas Square, containing a declaration of the movement's aims

Statement of Civic Forum

After twenty years, Czechoslovakia once again finds itself at a historical crossroads thanks to the people's movement, which is quickly being joined by all generations and strata of the population, and most previously-existing social organizations. This movement is a movement of both our nationalities. Civic Forum has spontaneously become its spokesman, and is today the only actual representative of the people's will. One natural part of it is a well-organized student movement has become a natural part of it, giving impetus with its protests to the dramatic societal change in our country. Working within its framework are all previously existing independent initiatives; artists' groups headed by the theatre, the first to show solidarity with the students; and currents of renewal within the parties of the National Front, including many former and current members of the CPCz. The Roman Catholic Church, through the words of the Cardinal, as well as other churches in Czechoslovakia, have supported the Civic Forum. The Civic Forum has been and may be joined by anyone who agrees with its demands.

Civic Forum is prepared to immediately secure a dialogue with today's powers, and disposes of qualified forces from every aspect of social life, capable of carrying on a free and constructive discussion on realistic ways to change the political and economic conditions in our country.

At this moment the situation is open; there are many possibilities before us, and we have only two certainties.

The first certainty is that there is no return to the previous totalitarian way of government, which took our country to the edge of absolute spiritual, moral, political, economic, and environmental crisis.

Our second certainty is that we want to live in a free, democratic, and prosperous Czechoslovakia, which must return to Europe, and that we will never give up this ideal, no matter what happens in the following days.

Civic Forum calls on all citizens of Czechoslovakia to support its basic demands by a general protest strike set for Monday, November 27, 1989 at noon. It may depend on the success of this strike whether our country sets out in a peaceful way on the road to a democratic social order, or whether victory will go to a lone group of Stalinists, who want to hold on to their power and privileges at any price, camouflaged behind empty phrases about restructuring.

We call on the leadership of this country to realize the seriousness of the situation, disassociate itself from compromised persons, and prevent any possible attempts at a violent coup.

We call on all members of the ruling Party to join with the civil population and respect its will.

We call on all members of the People's Militia not to act violently against their comrade workers, not to spit on all the traditions of workers' solidarity.

We call on all members of Security to realize that they are above all people and citizens of this country, and only secondly the subordinates of their superiors.

We call on the Czechoslovak People's Army to stand on the side of the people, and if necessary come for the first time to their defence.

We call on the people and governments of all countries to realize that our country has been from time out of mind a place where European and world confrontation begin and end, and that it's never just a matter of the fate of our country, but of the perspectives for all of Europe. We therefore ask that they support the people's movement and the Civic Forum by all means.

We are opponents of violence, we do not want revenge; we want to live like dignified and free people who have the right to a say in the destiny of their country, and who think also of the destiny of future generations.

Source: Institute of Contemporary History Archive, Prague, KC OF record group, Civic Forum documents. Published in Jiří Suk (ed.), *Občanské fórum*, vol. 2, (Prague, 1998), pp. 19–20.

Translated from the Czech by Todd Hammond.

Prague, November 24, 1989

Telegram from the US Embassy in Prague to the US Department of State,
on the political situation in Czechoslovakia on the eve of the extraordinary session of
CPCz CC

Confidential

Prague 08208

Subject: CPCz plenum opens amid rumors of senior personnel changes and new signs
of political ferment.

1. Confidential – entire text.

2. Summary. Statements by CPCz Presidium member Miroslav Stepan indicated major, but unspecified, cadre changes will result from the November 24 Central Committee plenum. Defense Minister Vaclavik has said the army was not involved in suppressing the November 17 student demonstration and suggested it will not intervene in the current demonstrations, though he has called for calm and support of the CPCz. Whatever the results of the CPCz plenum, the first popular reaction to them could be indicated at today's evening Wenceslas Square rally or in a Saturday, November 25, mass celebrated by Cardinal Tomasek and a demonstration organized by the Civic Forum. Student strike representatives and the Civic Forum have said that the general strike called for November 27 should go ahead regardless of cadre changes coming out of the plenum. End summary.

Pre-plenum statements on cadre changes

3. As an extraordinary session of the CPCz Central Committee opens the morning of November 24, there are rumors that it will produce major cadre changes. A statement by Prague Party boss Miroslav Stepan lends support to this view. Addressing workers at the CKD factory in Prague, Stepan called for carefully considered cadre changes coming out of this plenum. Stepan was met by boos at CKD and whistled off the podium with cries of "resign" before he finished his speech. His Prague City Party Committee, however, issued a similar statement on November 24 which calls for the plenum to produce "principled" cadre changes and to take concrete steps to improve and calm down the political situation in the country and to conduct a dialogue with all. Popular rumors have identified Prime Minister Adamec, Czech Premier Frantisek Pitra, and even retired Prime Minister Lubomir Strougal as candidates, to replace Jakes as the General Secretary. The name of hardliner Miroslav Zavadil has also been mentioned as a possible successor to Jakes. Despite speaking out late for change, Stepan is also rumored to be in trouble.

Defense Minister speaks out

4. A gathering of leading army officers on November 23 issued a statement defending the honour of the Czechoslovak Army (CSLA) against rumors it had been involved in

the November 17 action against students. The statement supported a call for calm and order along the lines of that already made by CPCz leader Jakes. In presenting this statement over Czechoslovak Television the same evening, Defense Minister Milan Vaclavik was critical of the demonstrations going on in Prague and elsewhere, but his underlying message was that the army would not intervene in them. The army has always been for the people, Vaclavik said, and "has never acted against workers, farmers and the intelligentsia". Vaclavik rejected rumors that CSLA paratroopers had been engaged in suppressing the November 17 student actions. He said the army supported a full investigation which would show it had not been involved. Vaclavik did warn that the CSLA fully supported the KSC and opposed issuing ultimatums by opposition groups.

5. Comment. Vaclavik appeared to be speaking out to calm popular fears the army might be used against students and demonstrators. He also wanted to correct the record of November 17. His statements on calm and order, however, as his reference to ultimatums, may be meant to put the population in a frame of mind which will make it settle for whatever changes are produced by today's plenum. End comment.

November 23 demonstrations

6. For the seventh straight night demonstrators met in Prague's Wenceslas Square. Estimates put the assemblage at over a quarter million. In an important step forward in the country's political life, the General Secretary of the Socialist Party, Jan Skoda, addressed the crowd and declared his party now considered itself independent and free. He stopped short of joining the opposition Civic Forum, though he was speaking from the same balcony with Forum leaders. What that independence means in practice may be clear after the Socialist Party's own Central Committee meets on Friday, November 24. A representative of the "Living Stream" reform wing of the People's Party also declared its independence and claimed it represented a majority of the party's members.

7. Václav Havel gave an impressive performance at the demonstration. He reviewed the political situation in the country and called on the army, People's Militia and police not to intervene. Havel noted mass demonstrations going on elsewhere in the country, including Plzen (50,000), Ostrava, Olomouc, Bratislava and many other cities.

Dubcek's role

8. Alexander Dubcek spoke to a mass rally of tens of thousands of people in a central Bratislava square. A portion of his speech was even carried by television, though not his call for democracy and the resignation of the present CPCz Presidium. Dubcek's role in the events of the last few days remains unclear. While he has maintained contacts with the new "Civic Forum" and a Slovak counterpart, the "Association Against Violence", he has not come to Prague to address the public demonstrations despite an open invitation from the Civic Forum to do so. An Obroda source tells us that Dubcek may be in contact with ex-Prime Minister Strougal about his (Dubcek's) future, but that as far as this contact knew he has not, nor had he been, approached by anyone in the current CPCz leadership. (Comment. There is much speculation that if cadre

changes coming out of the current CPCz plenum fail to satisfy public opinion, the Party might eventually turn to Dubcek to try and shore up its image. Dubcek, himself, may be waiting until the passing of the 1968'ers from the political scena before making any move with a new Party leadership. End comment.)

Civic Forum

9. A Civic Forum contact tells us that Prime Minister Adamec cancelled a proposed meeting with Vaclav Havel on November 23. Havel made no announcement of such a meeting at the day's Wenceslas Square demonstrations as a Civic Forum contact had predicted. Civic Forum members, including Havel, showed themselves under considerable strain at a 1930 November 23 press conference. They also angered a number of Western journalists by refusing to speculate on CPCz leadership changes and Dubcek's future role, if any. At one point Havel lectured the press on what was and was not newsworthy, trying to draw their attention to regime attempts to carry out a whitewash investigation of the November 17 events. While his point may have been valid, Havel showed the Forum has much to learn about press relations. (Note. The Institute of State and Law has essentially criticized the proposed investigation as a sham since the Public Prosecutor's Office has no authority under the Constitution to investigate the security forces. This can only be done by the army prosecutor. End note.) In a frank remark to EMBOFF, a Civic Forum member admitted the group really had no program after the November 27 general strike and conceded that the Forum still had not attracted blue-collar representation as distinct from support for the general strike.

Occupation of Czechoslovak Television and Radio

10. While the GOC has denied a takeover of Czechoslovak Television and Radio facilities, workers there report that entry is controlled by the police and that uniformed security officials are stationed inside the building. Acting Director of Czechoslovak Television Libor Batrla went on television to deny he had been sacked or that the station had been occupied. He said that he had invited in security forces to keep unauthorized persons from the studios. He also said he had asked Matej Lucan, the conservative Minister of Culture and Information, for temporary assistance in managing the studios.

Comment

11. With the signs that this plenum will produce substantial cadre changes, the question is will they be enough to satisfy the demonstrators and groups like the Civic Forum. The CPCz most certainly hopes these changes will head off a November 27 general strike. Students and the Civic Forum have indicated that whatever the outcome of the plenum, the strike should go ahead as a sign of popular solidarity and as a way to continue pressure on the regime for change. If the CPCz plenum concludes today (we understand the CPCz has reserved the conference room in the Intercontinental Hotel today between 1200–0200 Saturday morning for a press conference), the first popular test of its results could come today (November 24), if the plenum breaks up before a scheduled demonstration, if not then Saturday. Cardinal Tomasek will be

celebrating a mass at St. Vitus Cathedral (November 25). This could draw thousands of Catholics and produce a demonstration outside his residence at the gates of Prague Castle. Later in the day, at 1400, the Civic Forum has called for a demonstration, not at Wenceslas Square which is now considered too small to hold the size of the gatherings, but at Letná Park, the traditional site for May Day celebrations. End comment.

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Source: National Security Archive, Soviet Flashpoints set.

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Document 68

Prague, November 24, 1989

Speech by Premier Ladislav Adamec at an extraordinary session of the CPCz CC, stating his preference for a political solution to the crisis (excerpts)

[...] Making decisions is not simple. Events are developing rapidly, and aren't the same everywhere. I therefore regard it as my duty to express my opinion of the situation and its resolution. I am aware we don't have much choice. The pressure of circumstances is rising day by day and possibly hour by hour. We have to deal with it. I am considering the alternatives along with everybody else. There are basically two ways to go – both have their advantages and drawbacks, merits, and risks. None of them are guaranteed to fully succeed. With these thoughts, following on from what Comrade Jakeš has said, I would like to contribute to finding the internationally and internally optimum political variant. To explain the first alternative, let us assume that mass demonstrations and the spreading strike movements constitute a direct attack on the socialist establishment, and that therefore there is no other way but to immediately halt all protest actions. On the basis of this evaluation, we may decide that a general strike must be prevented even at the cost of extensive use of extraordinary means, including force. This operation could be complemented by a large number of protest letters from Party collectives in industrial and agricultural factories and other workplaces. One cannot passively watch the law being violated. To allow anarchy would be the direct opposite of democracy, whereas taking extraordinary measures could, if only temporarily, return calm to the streets. But experience with administrative measures has shown a significant risk. After a certain period the situation could explode again, bringing on another crisis, with still more unpredictable results.

For all these reasons, I would clearly prefer the second alternative: a political solution. We must count on making certain acceptable concessions. I believe that we have not nearly exhausted these possibilities. I also rely on the fact that most of our people, including young people, have no reason to be against socialism. They are unsatisfied with many things, even stirred up by all kinds of disinformation, but are able and willing to repay trust with trust. To drive the young generation into the arms of the enemies of socialism would be an unforgivable mistake. This must be prevented under any circumstances. I also advocate political methods because the recent intervention of the forces of order has led to the radicalization of youth, allowed the unification of various groups behind its condemnation, and has not contributed to the authority of either the Party or the state. Next time we have to avoid things like this. It would also be a mistake to underestimate the international risks of a broad application of force. We mustn't labour under the illusion that various democratization, environmental, and other movements end at our borders. Also, signed international treaties dealing with human rights cannot be taken lightly. When selecting methods of managing internal political problems, the international support of the socialist countries can no longer be counted on. From the capitalist states, one must take into account the results of a political and economic boycott. This warning should not be

understand as a call for concessions at any price, without regard to the loss of socialist values.

To look truth in the eye means to realize that the loss of political trust as a result of mistakes in leadership must be paid for. And there have been many in the last twenty years, and not small ones. I am convinced, however, that we need not pay too high a price, if we can manage to mobilize the Party. No one else has such a numerous membership, such an experienced cadre of functionaries, and close connections with each collective. [...] Today it has come down to the very status of the Party in society. If our meeting helps to energize all its members, it will fulfil its historic mission. If not, we shall pay dearly, and only very slowly repair the damage. I consider it especially important and sensitive to take a position on the basic demands, especially those most often proclaimed. They are extremely varied, correct and incorrect, feasible either now or only later. This must be clear. Those that we are unable to answer immediately, at least let us say when we will address them. Under no circumstances should there arise the impression that we are avoiding something, using delaying tactics, and somehow manoeuvring. Let us choose our course so as not to give impetus to further waves of still-more-radical demands. I consider it crucial to announce the summoning of another meeting of the Central Committee within a fortnight to evaluate political questions, especially the program of accelerated restructuring and expanded dialogue. We would gain time, mobilize the Party, and improve its level of information on the chosen strategy. The Party needs a short-term action programme, a plan for the unification of the greatest possible number of Communists towards a concrete goal in the upcoming weeks. It would then even be possible to organize a broad public discussion centred on the positions and proposal of the CC CPCz. We could also, for example, quickly submit proposals on the constitution for public discussion, publicize proposed laws on the association and assembly for citizen comment. This would provide a certain framework and solid content to a so far less than constructive exchange of views. We could take the wind out of the sails of the daily proclamations, various calls, and petitions. I am convinced that only an active approach can put our side on the initiative, and with this we shall also gain the majority of our citizens in favour of Party policy. This is the best reply to the demands of Party organizations for more assistance from the CPCz Central Committee. [...]

Source: Stenographic minutes of the Extraordinary Session of the CC CPCz, November 24, 1989, pp. 21–3, State Central Archive, Prague, CC CPCz record group, ÚV-0154/89.

Translated from the Czech by Todd Hammond.

Document 69

Prague, November 24, 1989

Speech by Vasil Biřák to the extraordinary session of the Central Committee
of the CPCz,
stating the CPCz should not voluntarily relinquish power (excerpts)

Comrades,

I only want to make a couple of short comments. All of us are agreed that much is expected from today's plenary session of the Central Committee. The situation required that we summon the Central Committee as early as Monday at the latest. It's too bad; the Party has lost a great deal this way. At stake is the fate of the Party and with it socialism in Czechoslovakia [...]. The threat to the Party and socialism calls on us to maintain our balance, but also courage. To look truth in the eye and answer the question, what must we do to renew fractured Party unity and the faith of the people in Party policy. So we don't end up like in Granada, where the leadership of the Party and the state were settling personal scores, and meanwhile the United States occupied them. We shouldn't ignore the situation around us, either. The question also arises whether this is or isn't some kind of counterrevolutionary attempt. The question can be put another way: Is there an anti-socialist opposition in our country? Does it come out and proclaim itself? Are those who make speeches from the balcony of Melantrich Publishers on Wenceslas Square really for socialism? And if they're not for socialism, then they're against socialism. And what is against socialism can't be revolutionary, but can only be counterrevolutionary. It wouldn't hurt to learn from the GDR, either. They did something there, too, that shocked even the West. But demonstrations continue. What was adopted by the Central Committee of the German Party and the parliament and Government of the GDR is no longer enough for the opposition, and they're demanding more.

[...] The times require us to put forth a clear position in the mass media, so that there is discipline. Not even *Rudé právo* can afford to be some kind of wavering organ. It is the organ of the Central Committee. I think that in the Central Committee it is also necessary to take a stance on the so-called Civic Forum, which claims to be representing the entire Czechoslovak people. Whom does the parliament represent, whom do the other organs represent, whom does the National Front represent, whom does the Central Committee represent? A position should be taken on that as well. Start dialogue with every group which accepts the socialist existence of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic, but put forth clearly that those who enter into confrontation with the socialist state will be made to face the law. People don't want just words anymore; they want decisive actions. Communists, workers, peasants, progressive intelligentsia, youth, and women – everyone knows what those down there are calling for – they want to fight for socialism, and to strive for a better society, but they want and must have a judicious, courageous, and unified leadership. One member of parliament said in a parliamentary committee: "I'll go to the barricades anytime, but I have to know that someone is in charge, and that someone is standing behind me." This is our task of today. If we don't do it, we bear an enormous responsibility before

history. We should also all be agreed that the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia should not give up power voluntarily.

(Applause)

Source: Stenographic minutes of the Extraordinary Session of the CC CPCz, November 24, 1989, pp. 98–100, State Central Archive, Prague, CC CPCz record group, ÚV-0154/89.

Translated from the Czech by Todd Hammond.

Document 70
November 24, 1989
Resolution of CPCz Central Committee adopted at an extraordinary session
of the CC CPCz,
on urgent measures to cope with the current crisis

The Central Committee of the CPCz, at its extraordinary session of 24 November 1989, discussed the present situation in the country. Society is in crisis. Further escalation of tensions in society jeopardizes socialism in our country. The leadership of the Party and the state has failed to control the situation.

The central committee, aware of its responsibility before the Party and the people, has accepted the resignation of all members and candidates of the Presidium and Secretariat of the CC CPCz, and has elected a new Party leadership, expanded to include leading workers, and consisting of the following: members of the Presidium of the CC CPCz Karel Urbánek, Josef Čížek, Miroslav Huščava, Ignác Janák, Ivan Knotek, Jozef Lenárt, Miroslav Štěpán, Miroslav Zajíc, Miroslav Zavadil; candidates to the Presidium of the CC CPCz Josef Haman, Vladimír Herman, Miroslava Němcová, Ondřej Šalíng; secretaries and members of the Secretariat of the CC CPCz Karel Urbánek, Ivan Knotek, Jozef Lenárt, František Hanus, Otto Liška, Miroslav Zajíc; members of the Secretariat of the CC CPCz Zdeněk Hoření, Josef Mevald, Vasil Mohorita.

The following positions and urgent measures were also approved:

1. By no later than mid-December 1989, to call a meeting of the CC CPCz to approve an action programme for the Party going into the XVIII Congress of the CPCz. The programme must provide concrete answers to the urgent problems of the renewal of socialism, and restructuring in politics, economics, and all other aspects of social life.

2. It requests the competent organs to refrain from the use of forceful methods in resolving the present societal problems, as long as lives, health, and property are not threatened, and the foundations of socialism are not damaged. At the same time it expresses support for state organs protecting socialist law, order, and the security of citizens.

3. It expresses regret for the events of November 17, 1989, in Prague. The intervention must be regarded as a political error. It demands a thorough investigation and determination of accountability.

4. The CPCz will begin dialogue with everybody who respects the Constitution of the CSSR. In this way it wishes to contribute to the renewal of trust in the Party and its policies.

5. It calls on everybody regardless of his or her convictions or beliefs, who are not indifferent to the fate of the country: citizens, political party members, community and social organizations of the National Front, youth, women, and all others, for full cooperation and shared responsibility.

6. It recommends a reshuffling of the governments of the CSSR, CSR, and SSR, with the wider cooperation of representatives of other political parties and non-partisans; to create within the National Front a set of political parties and important social

organizations with equal rights, and entrust them with preparing democratic elections to national committees and local representative offices.

7. It recommends without delay to submit for nationwide discussion a proposed new constitution, laws on assembly, association, and the right to petition, law on youth and family, law on higher education, and a new press law; and to adopt an amended law on military service.

8. It does not regard protest demonstrations and strikes as an appropriate means of resolving social problems. It relies on public calm, wisdom, and the experience of the working class, collective farmers, the intelligentsia, and all citizens, as well on a judicious approach on the part of working and student youth.

9. We consider friendship, alliance, and cooperation with the Soviet Union to continue to be the basic international guarantee of socialist development, security, and the sovereignty of our country. The CSSR remains a firm and active member of the Warsaw Pact and CMEA.

The Central Committee of the CPCz urgently calls on all Communists, organs, and Party organizations, to unite and support the Central Committee and the newly elected Party leadership, and to take decisive measures within the spirit of this resolution.

The CC CPCz turns to the whole of society with the conviction that it will accept the conclusions of this extraordinary session with understanding, and support them completely.

Source: Stenographic minutes of the Extraordinary Session of the CC CPCz, November 24, 1989, pp. 176–7, State Central Archive, Prague, CC CPCz record group, ÚV-0154/89.

Translated from the Czech by Todd Hammond.

Document 71
Prague, November 24, 1989
Resolution of the Extraordinary Session of the CC CPCz,
on implementation of the session's conclusions

The Political-Organizational Implementation of the Conclusions
of the Extraordinary Session of the CC CPCz

The Central Committee of the CPCz realizes the seriousness of the present internal political situation, which has resulted in an open struggle for political power in the state, and for our further socialist development. Several times we have given serious warnings that the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, as the leading political force, wishes to resolve the situation that has arisen by political methods and procedures, while adhering to the Constitution of the CSSR and existing law. It emphasizes, however, that if these legal norms are disrupted, then to protect the interests of socialist society, security, and the property of citizens, lawful measures will be applied.

In the present period, after the meeting of the CC CPCz, Party organs and organizations must activate all Communists, gain the honest-thinking workers and other citizens for the support of restructuring and the democratization of our society, which are the determining conditions for the further development of socialism in our country. For the upcoming period, the Central Committee of the CPCz outlines the following tasks:

- the prevention of general strikes and efforts to see that strikes do not occur at all;
- the resumption of instruction in schools and the activities of cultural and sporting facilities.
- the employment of the media to inform the public convincingly, quickly, and truthfully;
- the smooth functioning of the national economy, shops, services, health care, and transportation.

To implement these tasks:

1. Call meetings of the Regional Committees of the CPCz, the Communist Party of Slovakia, the Municipal Committees of the CPCz and CPS in Prague and Bratislava, with the participation of leading secretaries of the District Committees of the CPCz and the CPS, expanded to include leading Communist managers, representatives of social organizations of the National Front, state organs, and employees of the apparat. The meetings of the Regional Committees of the CPCz and the CPS will be attended by delegated members of the Central Advisory Committee of the CPCz or the secretaries of the CC CPCz.

Deadline: November 24, 1989, immediately after the CC CPCz meeting.

2. Call a meeting of the District Committees of the CPCz and CPS with the participation of the chairmen of the Preparatory Committee, Factory Committees, the Municipal Councils, and the Local Councils and key basic organizations of the CPCz and CPS, and the employees of these apparats. Delegated members of the Preparatory

Committees of the CPCz, CPS, or secretaries of the Regional Committees of the CPCz and CPS will take part in the meetings of the District Committees of the CPCz and CPS.

Deadline: November 25, 1989, morning hours

3. Call extraordinary member meetings of the CPCz or and activist meetings, with the participation of representatives of higher Party organs, economic leadership of individual firms, factories, institutions, and the representatives of social organizations.

Deadline: November 25, 1989, in the morning, at the latest, November 27, 1989, in the morning.

The tasks of extraordinary meetings, Party members, and Party functionaries:

- to notify Party members of conclusions of the CC CPCz meeting;
- to establish procedures for the securing of uninterrupted work in all workplaces on November 27, 1989;

- to create groups of agitators consisting of Communists, managers, and other functionaries to explain Party policies, and conduct dialogues in the workplace and various communities;

- to organize gatherings of workers in Prague, Bratislava, regions, and districts in support of the policies and conclusions of the CC CPCz extraordinary session.

4. Call meetings of the apparat of the CC CPCz, the CC CP of Slovakia, the Committee for Party Work in the CSR, and assign it concrete tasks for the implementation of the conclusions CC CPCz session.

Deadline: immediately after the CC CPCz meeting.

5. Delegate employees of the Party apparat according to the needs of key sectors.

6. Send political groups headed by the secretary in charge, or a department head of the CC CPCz or CPS to the important mass media, especially in Prague and Bratislava, and to Czechoslovak Television, Czechoslovak Radio, *Rudé právo*, *Práce*, *Mladá fronta*, the Czechoslovak Press Agency, *Zemědělské noviny*, and the printers of *Rudé právo*. Proceed likewise in individual regions, districts, and other important centres.

7. Communist ministers and directors of central organs and institutions will assure the fulfilment of tasks resulting from the meeting of the CC CPCz in areas for which they are responsible. They will oversee the sending of groups of Communists, management, and central organ apparats to key firms and organizations.

8. Set up political groups under the leadership of members of the Preparatory Central Committee of the CPCz and secretaries of the CC CPCz and CC CPS, and the Committee for Party Work in the Czechoslovak Republic, and send them to assist Party organs and organizations in crucial economic and political centres.

9. Organize a meeting of central organs of crucial organizations connected within the National Front (especially Revolutionary Trade Unions, the Union of Socialist Youth, and the Czechoslovak Union of Women) to discuss the conclusions of the CC CPCz meeting, and the adoption of their own measures. Before the discussions Party cells will meet.

Deadline: November 30, 1989

10. As required, call meetings of the National Committees, to discuss the smooth functioning of shops, services, and health care, with emphasis on the meeting the requirements of the pre-Christmas period.

11. As required, call meetings in the regions and districts of the organs of the National Front, to find common measures for securing a unified front for implementation of the conclusions of the CC CPCz meeting.

Source: Stenographic minutes of the Extraordinary Session of the CC CPCz, November 24, 1989, pp. 181–3, State Central Archive, Prague, CC CPCz record group, ÚV-0154/89.

Translated from the Czech by Todd Hammond.

Document 72

Prague November 25, 1989, 4:30 a.m.

Statement of Civic Forum,

reacting negatively to the CPCz leadership changes and again calling for participation
in the general strike

We have just learned from the official Czechoslovak media the names of the new members of the Presidium and Secretariat of the CC CPCz.

Although some of the most discredited persons whose unconditional departure we demanded have been removed, we are deeply disturbed by the new personal composition of the highest Party organs. Some of those who have newly been elected cause us to doubt that they are capable of understanding the crisis in our country, and are able quickly and thoroughly to resolve it.

These facts strengthen our resolve to express our will in a large demonstration on Saturday at 14.00 on Letná Plain.

At the same time we appeal to all citizens to manifest in the most emphatic way their desire for democracy through a general strike declared for Monday, November 27 from 12.00 to 14.00.

We also ask them to organize in the best way possible a state of permanent strike readiness to follow the strike. Students and artists will themselves determine whether or not they should react by continuing their current strikes.

The general strike on November 27 should become a real nationwide informal referendum on whether or not we want to be further humiliated, and the country further destroyed by the members of one political party which has arrogated to itself the leading role.

We have been defrauded by personnel changes so often, that such a thing should never be repeated.

Let us persist, let us be cautious, let us intensify our pressure on the ruling circles! This is the only possible way to open the cracked door wide. We believe that the social movement in our country is irreversible, and that the desire of our citizens to live in dignity and freedom will prevail.

Source: Institute of Contemporary History Archive, Prague, KC OF record group, CF documents. Published in Jiří Suk (ed.), *Občanské fórum*, vol. 2, (Prague, 1998), p. 25.

Translated from the Czech by Todd Hammond.

Document 73

Prague, November 25, 1989

Telegram from the US Embassy in Prague to the US Department of State,
evaluating the outcome of the Extraordinary Session of the CC CPCz,
November 24, 1989

Confidential

Prague 08237

Subject: Jakes' stepchildren inherit the CPCz

1. Confidential – entire text.

Summary

2. An extraordinary session of the CPCz Central Committee ended in the early morning hours of November 25 and produced a mass resignation of the Party's Presidium and Secretariat. The resignation of virtually all senior Party figures associated with the post-1968 invasion policy of normalization was accepted by the Central Committee. These included General Secretary Milos Jakes, President Gustav Husak, ideology chief Jan Fojtik, Federal Assembly Chairman Alois Indra and Secretary for Political Organization Karel Hoffmann. Reform-minded Prime Minister Ladislav Adamec also was removed, but unlike Husak and Indra, Adamec also lost his government position.

Leader of the Party in the Czech Republic, Karel Urbanek (48), has been named to head a new Presidium which will be younger, smaller but still highly conservative. Prague Party boss Miroslav Stepan, the man who is widely believed to have sparked the current wave of popular and political protest by authorizing police to attack student demonstrators on November 17, has retained his Presidium seat. The Party has called for a nine-point¹ program to resolve the country's political crises. This program does not appear a serious move toward democratic reform and seems meant to coopt some in the opposition. Neither this nor the personnel changes will prove satisfactory to the public or opposition groups such as the Civic Forum, which have reiterated the call for a November 27, two-hour general strike.

The opposition success in the weeks ahead will depend on its ability to show cohesion, present an alternative political program and spread its message via the more objective mass media. For this reason, we would expect the CPCz leadership to attempt to re-exert control over the media in the weeks ahead. The Monday, November 27, general strike will be an important factor for keeping pressure on the Communist leadership and for assessing the strength of worker support for political and economic reforms.

Note

As this cable was about to be transmitted, we have learned that Prague Party leading Secretary Miroslav Stepan has resigned. His resignation came after a special session of the Prague Party Committee at which he faced almost unanimous pressure to resign.

His resignation as Prague Party leading Secretary will mean his effective removal from the Party Presidium. End note. End summary.

The plenum's operation

3. An extraordinary session of the CPCz Central Committee met in continual session from 10:00 a.m. Friday, November 24, until the early hours of the next day. Word of the proceedings was dribbled out to the media in a way that seemed designed to produce maximum favorable impact on the public. In the early evening Friday word was released of the resignation of the entire Party Presidium and Secretariat, an announcement which was met with wild enthusiasm by crowds on Wenceslas Square and at the press center of the new Civic Forum. Later in the night, the name of new CPCz General Secretary Karel Urbanek, relatively unknown to the general public, was released. It was not until 3:00 a.m. Saturday November 25 that complete information of higher Party changes was released at a press conference. The local media has still not announced that Adamec has lost both his position as Prime Minister and as CPCz Presidium member.

4. Work in the plenum was reportedly conducted in an unusual manner. By one account more than half of the full CC members and many of the candidate members addressed the plenum. Three special committees were established to:

(1) nominate new functionaries for election (Note. This was said to be done by secret ballot though it was not clear whether there were multiple candidates. End note.);

(2) draft proposals for a Party action program to deal with the current crisis situation in the country; and

(3) deal with the press and media.

The election committee was composed of leading Party functionaries of the regional Party organizations, plus the city organizations of Prague and Bratislava.

5. Jakes' opening speech gave an early hint of his own intention of resignation and of what turned out to be a conservative tack by the plenum. In the name of the leadership Jakes assumed responsibilities for a number of failings including blindness to the process taking place elsewhere in the region. Jakes said the situation faced by the Party was serious but not "without a way out". He warned that an open power struggle was on in which Communists even faced "physical liquidation", unless they took bold action. The Party must turn to the Communist workers for support, he said, particularly in the media. And he called on media workers to provide "true" information to the public.

The new leadership

6. The focus of local media attention has been mass CPCz resignation by Presidium and Secretariat members and the election of the relatively young (48) Karel Urbanek as General Secretary. Urbanek was formerly Head of the Committee for Party Work in the Czech Republic. The composition of his fellow Presidium members is not, on the face of it, encouraging for reform. The presidium is a smaller, younger but still very conservative body made up largely of Jakes' stepchildren, mostly men who rose in the

Party during the post-1968 normalization. Seven of the former Presidium members were removed, and three new members added for a new total of nine.

7. The 1968 generation represented by former General Secretary Jakes, President Husak, Federal Assembly Chairman Alois Indra, ideology chief Jan Fojtik and Party Organization Secretary Karel Hoffmann had their resignations accepted by the plenum. All except for Husak and Indra, who retain their elected Government positions for the time being, are removed from the leadership.

8. But key figures identified with reform were also eliminated. Prime Minister Adamec, who according to "Rude pravo" editor and plenum press spokesman Zdenek Horeni, had asked to resign. This request had been contained in a letter submitted in late October to the Presidium. The plenum decided to accept it at its present session, removing him from his Presidium and prime ministerial duties. Horeni in the press conference defended this action as necessary because Adamec shared the general leadership responsibility for the crises. Horeni denied the resignation was linked to Adamec's recent contacts with such opposition groups as the "Civic Forum". Czech Premier Frantisek Pitra was also removed as a full Presidium member and Slovak Premier Pavel Hrivnak as an alternate member. Both will retain their Government posts for the time being. Horeni noted that in the weeks ahead there would be significant "restructuring" of government positions at both federal and republic levels.

9. The other Slovaks in the Presidium (Lenart, Knotek and Janak) were untouched by the changes except for President Husak. Though CPCz Economics Secretary Ivan Knotek, a rumored Adamec supporter, may have been threatened by the hardliners, we suspect in the end he won the support of his fellow Slovaks.

10. Three new members were added to the Presidium. Miroslav Zajic, formerly a Central Committee secretary working in the agriculture, food industry and forestry department, was promoted into this body. Zajic comes from the same region in Moravia as the new General Secretary. Two unknowns were also elevated from the Central Committee to the Presidium. Miroslav Huscava and Jozef Cizek. The former is a miner with the OKD coal works in Ostrava; the latter Chairman of an agricultural cooperative in southern Bohemia. The apparent objective of both moves is to reinforce the Presidium's blue collar image as it faces the potential of industrial unrest represented most immediately by the general strike called for November 27.

11. A hard core of young conservatives makes up the majority of the new Presidium. These include the new General Secretary Karel Urbanek (48), Trade Union Council Chairman Miroslav Zavadil (57), Slovak Party leader Ignac Janak (59) and Prague Party boss Miroslav Stepan (44). Miroslav Zajic also fits well into this group since he shares several of its characteristics, including all formal education in Party schools and much of his professional life spent working in the Party apparatus.

12. New alternate members of the Presidium now include Miroslava Nemcova, Head of the Union of Women, and Ondrej Saling, Leading Secretary of the West Slovak Regional Committee. Nemcova is the only woman in the Presidium.

13. Within the CPCz Central Committee Secretariat there were several changes. Pitra, Hofmann, Nemcova and Rudolf Rohlicek have been dropped, Karel Urbanek and Otto Liska added. Notably, Vasil Mohorita, Union of Socialist Youth Head who had shown a readiness to work with student strikers in their demands, has been retained. Josef Mevald, currently a CPCz secretary, has also been appointed to replace Urbanek to Head the Committee for Party Work in the Czech Republic.

14. A list of the new Presidium and Secretariat members follows. (Available biographic material on Urbanek and new figures will be provided SEPTTEL.)

Presidium

Karel Urbanek, General Secretary, Ignac Janak, Miroslav Zavadil, Miroslav Stepan, Ivan Knotek, Jozef Zajic, Miroslav Huscava, Josef Cizek, Jozef Lenart.

Alternate members

Vladimir Herman, Miroslava Nemcova, Ondrej Saling, Josef Haman

Secretaries

Karel Urbanek, Jozef Lenart, Otto Liska, Frantisek Hanus, Ivan Knotek, Miroslav Zajic

Other members of the secretariat

Zdenek Horeni, Vasil Mohorita, Josef Mevald

15. Comment. While these personnel changes represent some concession to popular pressure for resignations, they leave the hardliners in control of the Party apparatus. Despite Jakes' ouster, the "Jakes leadership" remains entrenched. The 1968 old guard may continue to influence the Party political situation from retirement, much as Slovak leader Vasil Bilak has done.

16. Comment continued. The new General Secretary is an unknown quantity. His advantages are youth and the lack of a past, specifically a role in 1968. The smaller number now in the Presidium should give him an early opportunity to appoint his own men. Horeni, in speaking at the press conference, said Urbanek would be considering early ways of reshuffling responsibilities within the Party. Urbanek has never struck us, however, as a forceful or charismatic character. And he has shied away from the media. The question that immediately comes to mind is whether he is simply a front man for the old leadership or a compromise figure.

17. Comment continued. The new Presidium has one particularly forceful personality, Prague Party boss Stepan. Drive, ambition and opportunism have enabled him to survive public calls for his resignation, but the retention of this high profile hardliner has already sparked negative public reactions. The retention of Stepan is one of the clearest signals that the Presidium personnel changes should not be read prematurely as a reform outcome for the plenum. End comment.

An action program

18. In his conference, Horeni reviewed the nine points adopted by the Presidium for solving the current political crises in the country. Among these is a decision to hold another session of the CPCz Central Committee by mid-December. This is to adopt an action program. Other points include:

– A statement that the Central Committee has asked respective organs not to use force to solve current social problems unless there occurs "a danger to life and health of people, property, or a violation of the fundamentals of socialism". (Note. Asked by the press to clarify whether use of force was excluded against demonstrators, Horeni only repeated this formulation. End note.)

– An expression of regret over the November 17 events and a description of them as a "political error" which needed investigation and an assignment of responsibility.

– A call for dialogue between CPCz and all groups within and outside the National Front which respect the Constitution. (Comment. Asked whether this meant the Party was prepared to meet with such opposition groups as Civic Forum, Horeni said that had not repeat not been discussed at the plenum. This depended, according to Horeni, on whether the Forum respected the Constitution. Since the Forum has already called for the abolition of the Party's leading role in the Constitution and dismantling of the National Front, Horeni's response would seem to be no. End comment.)

– A call for broader participation of other political parties and non-Party members in the Federal and Republic Governments "within the structure of the National Front" and based on the "equality of participants". One objective of this is to be the preparation of democratic elections. (Note. This may be meant as a signal for a coalition Government with recently reactivated non-Communist parties like the Socialists. Horeni denied that any new dates, however, had been decided for free elections other than those already agreed for May/June 1991. End note.)

– Submission for public discussion of a new constitution and draft laws on freedom of assembly, association, Press and petition as well as new laws on youth education and military service. (Note. Horeni said that the exclusion of the "Party's leading role" in society would be discussed along with the Constitution. There was a possibility the Constitution's provision on the Party's leading role could be dropped. But even without a constitutional provision, he said, the CPCz will continue to play an important role in public life. End note.)

– A warning that protest demonstrations and strikes are not a suitable way to settle social problems.

19. Horeni, in replying to a reporter's question, denied that this plenum had reviewed the events of 1968 or considered their re-evaluation. He said the CPCz stood firmly behind the official evaluation of those events represented in the "Pouceni" (or lesson) of the 1968 crisis year.

Comment

20. These CPCz personnel changes will not satisfy the public or the opposition, particularly since they retain discredited leaders like Stepan and Zavadil. The Civic Forum has already called for further Party resignations and plans to go ahead with a two-hour general strike on November 27. The personnel changes in fact look very

much like a speed-up of succession plans scheduled for next May's Party congress, in an effort to defuse the present crises and popular demands.

21. The new CPCz leadership may move on two tracks to dissipate massive public protests of recent days (i.e., 300,000 people who heard Dubcek speak in Prague last night) and the support they represent for changes and the opposition. First, they work to coopt opposition groups. This is probably behind the offer to make Government ministries available to non-Communist parties. Second, they may also restrict the increasingly more independent and objective handling of information by the mass media.

22. The opposition success in countering these moves will depend on its ability to remain cohesive and present an alternative political program. The Monday, November 27, general strike will be an important factor for keeping pressure on the Communist leadership and for assessing the strength of worker support for political reform.

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Source: National Security Archive, Soviet Flashpoints set.

Not for citation or publication without permission.

Document 74

Bratislava, November 25, 1989

Platform statement of the civic initiative Public Against Violence and the coordinating committee of Slovak university students

1. We demand that the Slovak National Council be made into a true parliament of the Slovak nation, in which all sectors of our society will be represented.
2. We demand guarantees of complete freedom of the press. Journalists, elect today the editorial directors that will guarantee that freedom!
3. We demand guarantees of freedom of enterprise, assembly, association, movement, conscience, and other civic rights and freedoms.
4. We demand the revocation of the leading role of the CPCz contained in the constitution, and that the constitution be changed in that sense.
5. We demand that education and culture be de-ideologized, and that culture be removed from state control.
6. We demand guarantees of the impartiality of judges and attorneys, and the creation of true rule of law.
7. We demand the thorough separation of Church and state.
8. We demand free labour unions and independent student organizations.
9. We demand the equality of all forms of property.
10. We demand a thoroughly democratic federation of Czechs and Slovaks, and legal reforms of the rights and status of nationalities on the principle of full and factual equality.
11. We demand real guarantees of the right to a clean natural environment.
12. We demand guarantees of an equal chance for all in choice of career and personal affairs.

Source: Czechoslovak Documentation Centre, Scheinfeld, November 1989 collection. Published in Ingrid Antalová (ed.), *Verejnost' proti násiliu 1989–1991. Svedectvá a dokumenty*, Bratislava, 1998, p. 311.

Translated from the Slovak by Todd Hammond.

Document 75
November 26, 1989, 1.00 p.m.
Statement of the Public Against Violence,
stressing two demands and full support for the Civic Forum

In today's critical political situation, the Public Against Violence has adopted this position:

- the Public Against Violence has expressed its program of demands in a twelve-point position paper which was released 25 November 1989;
 - the Public Against Violence regards two demands as most important:
 - a) revocation of the constitutional clause on the leading role of the Party;
 - b) prompt calling of free elections;
 - the Public Against Violence demands that the political leadership of the country, Party, and state organs of the CSSR and SSR immediately address these demands, and not prolong the present political crisis;
 - the Public Against Violence fully supports the initiative of the Civic Forum.
- A member of the Public Against Violence Coordinating Committee, Milan Kňažko, is currently a member of the Coordinating Centre of the Civic Forum;
- the Public Against Violence calls on all citizens in the towns and villages of the regions of Western Slovakia, Central Slovakia, and Eastern Slovakia freely to express their will, and take their affairs into their own hands. Be free! Be with us!
 - Support our general strike on 27 November 1989 from 12.00 noon to 2.00 p.m.

Source: Czechoslovak Documentation Centre, Scheinfeld, November 1989 collection. Published in Ingrid Antalová (ed.), *Verejnosť proti násiliu 1989–1991. Svedectvá a dokumenty*, Bratislava, 1998, p. 311.

Translated from the Slovak by Todd Hammond.

What We Want: Programme Aims of the Civic Forum

Our country finds itself in a deep moral, spiritual, ecological, social, economic, and political crisis. This crisis is a testimony to the ineffectiveness of the existing political and economic system. Almost every mechanism necessary for society to properly react to changing internal and external conditions has been discarded. For long decades, a self-evident principle has been disrespected; namely, that those who have power must also bear responsibility. All three bases of power in the state – the legislative, executive, and judicial – have come together in the hands of a narrow ruling group made up almost exclusively of members of the CPCz. Thus the foundations of a legal state were turned upside down.

The monopoly of the CPCz in filling all-important posts creates an unfair system of vassalage that paralyses the entire society. People are thus condemned to the role of mere executors of the orders of the powerful. Many basic human, civic, and political rights are denied them.

The directive system of central control of national economics has obviously failed. The promised restructuring of the economic mechanism is slow, inconsistent, and is not accompanied by necessary political changes.

These problems will not be solved by personnel changes in positions of power, or the departure of some politicians from public life.

Therefore, the Civic Forum will strive for these policy goals:

1. Law

The Czechoslovak Republic must be a democratic country of laws in the spirit of the traditions of Czechoslovak statehood and in the spirit of internationally-accepted principles, especially as expressed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and in the International Pact on Civic and Political Principles.

In this spirit, a new constitution must be drawn up in which relations between citizen and state are exactly formulated. This constitution, of course, can only be approved by a newly elected legislative assembly. The application of civil rights and freedoms shall be reliably secured by a developed system of legal guarantees. An independent judiciary must include both constitutional and administrative courts.

It is necessary to bring the entire Czechoslovak code of laws into conformity with these principles, and assure that it will apply not only to citizens, but to the organs and functionaries of the state.

We insist that the injustices done in the past as a result of politically motivated persecution be righted.

2. The Political System

We demand a fundamental, thorough, and lasting change of our society's political system. We must recreate or renew democratic institutions and mechanisms that allow

real participation of all citizens in the management of public affairs, while becoming an effective barrier against the abuse of political and economic power. All existing and newly-forming political parties and other political and social associations must therefore have equal conditions for participation in free elections to all representative bodies. This assumes, however, that the CPCz abandon its constitutionally-guaranteed leading role in our society, and the monopolistic control of the media. Nothing is preventing it from doing this tomorrow.

Czechoslovakia, maintaining the principles of a federal state, shall be a union, based on equal rights, of the two nations, Czech and Slovaks, and all other nationalities.

3. Foreign Policy

We will work to see our country regain a dignified place in Europe and the world. We are part of Central Europe; we wish therefore to maintain good relations with all our neighbours.

We intend to participate in European integration. The idea of a European home will also direct our policies towards partners in the Warsaw Pact and the CMEA. We will respect our international commitments, while fully maintaining state sovereignty. We wish, however, to reevaluate agreements that were motivated by the inappropriate ambitions of leading state representatives.

4. The Economy

We must abandon the existing economic system path. It discourages work and squanders its results, plunders natural resources, destroys the environment, and increases the overall lagging of Czechoslovakia behind the world. We are convinced that this economic system cannot be improved by incremental reforms.

We wish to create a developed market not deformed by bureaucratic intervention. Its successful functioning is conditional on breaking the monopoly position of today's big enterprises, and creating real competition. This can arise only on the basis of concurrent existence of various types of property ownership enjoying equal rights, and the gradual opening of our economy to the world.

Many irreplaceable functions shall of course continue to fall to the state. It shall guarantee equal general economic conditions for all, and carry out macroeconomic regulatory policy with the goal of limiting inflation, the growth of international debt, and the threat of unemployment. Only the state can guarantee the necessary minimum of public and social services, and the protection of the environment.

5. Social Justice

For us it is fundamental that conditions be created in society for development and utilization of each person's abilities. Each person should receive the same conditions and the same chance.

Czechoslovakia must be a socially just country in which people get help in their old age, in sickness, and in difficult life situations. An important prerequisite for such a society, however, is a prospering national economy.

The Church, community, workplace, and a wide range of state and volunteer organizations may contribute to the emergence of a broad net of social services. This expands possibilities for making use of this rare sense for human solidarity, responsibility, and love for one's neighbour. Today, these humanist principles are necessary in order to bond our society together.

6. *The Natural Environment*

We must all look for a way to renew the harmony between man and his environment. We shall work for the gradual repair of the damage we have done to nature over the last decades. We will try to return our countryside and human settlements to their original beauty, and assure more thorough protection of nature and natural resources. We commit ourselves to significant improvements to basic human conditions in as short a time as possible, to assure quality drinking water, clean air, and uncontaminated foods. We shall push for a fundamentally-improved system of care for the environment, which will be aimed not only at the liquidation of existing sources of pollution, but above all on the prevention of further damage.

At the same time we shall have to change the composition and orientation of our national economy, and in this way especially, decrease the consumption of energy and resources. We are aware that this will entail sacrifices that effect every one of us. All in all, it requires a change in the hierarchy of values and lifestyles.

7. *The Arts and Culture*

The arts and culture must not be a matter for artists, scholars, and teachers, but a way of life for all of civil society. They must slip the bonds of any ideology, and bridge the artificial separation from world culture.

Art and literature must not be limited, and should be provided with broad possibilities for publication and public contact.

Let us place science and academic work where they rightfully belong in society. Let us preclude their naive and demagogic overestimation, as well as the humiliating position that makes them servants of the ruling Party.

Let democratic schools be organized upon humanitarian principles, without a state monopoly on education. Society must respect teachers from all types of schools, and allow them room for their individual personalities. To schools of higher learning must be returned historic rights, which assured academic freedom and independence, both for educators and for students.

We regard the education of society as the most valuable national treasure. Upbringing and education must lead to independent thought, and morally responsible behaviour.

This is what we want. Our programme today is brief, but we are working to make it more specific. The Civic Forum is an open association of citizens. We therefore call on everybody who can contribute to this work to do so.

Source: Institute of Contemporary History Archive, Prague, KC OF record group, CF documents. Published in Jiří Suk (ed.), *Občanské fórum*, vol. 2, (Prague, 1998), pp. 28–30.

Translated from the Czech by Todd Hammond.

Document 77

Prague, November 27, 1989

Telegram from the US Embassy in Prague to the US Department of State,
on the CPCz's attempts to cope with the rapidly changing political situation

Confidential

Prague 08247

Subject: New CPCz leadership tries to cope with increasing opposition pressure for
reform

1. Confidential – entire text.

2. Summary. A spontaneous nationwide, massive popular and Party revolt against the results of the CPCz' Friday (November 24) plenum, particularly the retention of prominent hardliners in the Presidium, has led the Central Committee to meet again in less than two days. A new Presidium has been elected, dropping hardliners such as Prague Party boss Miroslav Stepan and Trade Union Leader Miroslav Zavadil as well as 1968 holdover Jozef Lenart. A number of new and more reform-minded representatives have been added. The Party's new General Secretary, Karel Urbanek, is trying, so far without success, to take the political initiative by calling for a Party congress on January 26 to adopt an action program and make further cadre changes. He has also admitted the need for a dialogue with the opposition.

Prime Minister Adamec is positioning himself as a conciliator with one foot in the CPCz but the other among the people. The limits of his credibility were demonstrated on November 26 when his criticism of the length of the two-hour general strike today was met by boos and calls to resign from a mass rally he addressed. Adamec is expected to continue his efforts to draw a distinction between the CPCz and Government in the hope of winning popular support for the latter.

The Civic Forum, boosted by a widely successful general strike, will press for political reforms. The regime has already responded by releasing some political prisoners and will be replying to a broad list of Forum demands, including a guarantee of freedom of the press, at a meeting between Adamec and the Forum on Tuesday, November 28. High on the list of other Forum demands are an end to the Party's leading role and a date for free elections. The Government looks likely to offer the Forum and other non-Communist parties a coalition Government. The Forum has said this will be unacceptable if it is to be established within the framework of the existing National Front.

CPCz leader Urbanek and the CPCz' room for maneuver in response to these massive popular political pressures has been sharply reduced by a grassroots revolt within the Party, a newly independent, pro-reform media and a Central Committee still packed with inflexible hardliners who fail to appreciate how dramatically the political situation has changed in less than ten days. End summary.

The reaction to Friday's plenum

3. When an extraordinary CPCz Central Committee session elected a new Party Presidium late Friday night (November 24), it was not listening to the voice of the

people in the street. It seems to have thought that a new, younger face in the person of Karel Urbanek, promises of a police investigation of the November 17 events and removal of 1968 figures from the leadership would be enough to pacify the public and head off a general strike. That proved a major if predictable political miscalculation. It has put the Party's new General Secretary at a disadvantage from the start; one that he now appears to be working against the odds to recover from.

4. The public and CPCz grass roots reaction to the new Presidium was both highly negative and spontaneous, particularly against the three remaining figures who most epitomized the former Jakes leadership: Miroslav Stepan, Miroslav Zavadil and, in Slovakia, Jozef Lenart. It was a reaction amplified by a remarkably free and objective media. That objectivity was even more surprising in light of rumors and reports that Czechoslovak Television and Radio had been put under guard by security forces during the preceding week. The media had been growing more open, but a real break in reporting came with Friday evening's election of a new CPCz leader. That night, Czechoslovak Television aired a demonstrator's video of the police brutality against students on November 17; Saturday and Sunday offered live coverage of mass demonstrations at which Havel and Dubcek spoke, the latter criticizing the 1968 invasion – the first time public media had aired such criticism. This has brought the reality of the scope of the opposition into millions of homes outside of Prague and major cities where demonstrations have been going on.

Adamec the conciliator

5. Prime Minister Adamec has played a key role in recent days. Whatever the fate of the CPCz, he seems to be positioning himself to be the conciliator, trying to keep a base in the Party but reaching for popular support. Despite a CPCz plenum decision to remove him from both his Party presidium and governmental prime ministerial position, he seems to have decided to stand on his constitutional rights and not resign as Prime Minister. On Saturday morning, the day after the plenum concluded, he appeared on television with a list of the four conditions for solving the country's political crises: (1) Entry of non-Communists into the Government; (2) meeting student demands for an investigation of the November 17 police action; (3) freeing all "illegal" (i.e., political) prisoners; and (4) meeting with opposition groups, including the Civic Forum.

6. Adamec's government spokesman (Miroslav Pavel met with the press the same day to give his boss' side of the Friday Presidium session. He said that Adamec had not resigned from the Presidium for personal reasons but because of his opposition to the slow pace of political and economic reform. He had made those points in letters to former CPCz leader Jakes in June and October and threatened then to resign. (Note. The October letter was used by a CPCz spokesman as the rationale for Adamec' ouster. End note.) Adamec, Pavel said, had been offered a seat in the new Presidium, but refused it. He indicated that Adamec planned to continue in his function of Prime Minister. In what appeared a sign of support from President Husak for the Prime Minister's position, the spokesman read out a list of political prisoners who had received a presidential reprieve or were released from investigation.

Urbanek acts to correct Friday's debacle

7. While Adamec was maneuvering and the media showing the extent of popular dissatisfaction, grass roots Party organizations within the CPCz were conducting an open revolt over the Friday plenum. Much of this was again covered by the media. Prague's Party Committee met in special session on Saturday and roundly criticized its Leading Secretary Miroslav Stepan. He agreed to resign by the end of the day. The Slovak Central Committee met on Sunday. There are rumors its leadership resigned en masse before adjourning to Prague to attend a second CPCz Central Committee plenum. The Slovak Central Committee will be reconvening on Monday, November 27, to elect a new Presidium and Secretariat.

8. CPCz leader Urbanek, while starting off with the black mark of Friday's new Presidium against him, has shown more aggressiveness and presence than would have been expected from his past colorless reputation. If he has not yet caught the reform winds blowing a gale force around him in Prague, he has quickly recognized the mistake the Central Committee made in foisting a clearly hardline leadership upon him at the Friday plenum. He participated in the Saturday Prague Party Committee session which removed Stepan, intervening himself at a critical point with a speech which revealed his lack of confidence in the man.

9. Urbanek's first public address carried over television Saturday night was received positively. He said the problem of popular confidence in the Party's authority could not be resolved until new cadres were brought into the CPCz. He described the Friday Central Committee session as a mistake in this regard, and said he was ready to meet with all who were concerned with the fate of the country, though he made no specific commitments to meet with the Civic Forum.

A second extraordinary session of the plenum

10. Two days after the first extraordinary session of the CPCz Central Committee, a second session was called for Sunday, November 26. It continued into Monday morning. The explicit reason given for calling a second session so shortly after the first was the need to review cadre questions. It was also assumed the session would discuss the list of demands presented to Adamec in a meeting Sunday with the Civic Forum (SEPTTEL).

11. The plenum brought radical change to the Presidium's composition. Hardliners Miroslav Stepan and Miroslav Zavadil were removed from the Presidium, as was 1968 holdover and Slovak Jozef Lenart. Vladimir Herman and Josef Haman were removed as alternate members. That left only six members remaining from the Friday Presidium: Karel Urbanek, as General Secretary, Ignac Janak, Ivan Knotek, Miroslav Zajic, Miroslav Huscava and Josef Cizek.

12. The plenum also promoted seven new members into the Presidium. Of those, only a few are known quantities to the Embassy:

– Vasil Mohorita is the former Secretariat member and Union of Socialist Youth Head, who showed himself to be more sympathetic to student demands than almost anyone else in the former leadership. He will be a force for moderation, if not reform.

– Miroslav Valek is a former Slovak Culture Minister who was well regarded as a conservative, but not dogmatic, intellectual figure. He has long had links with ex-Prime Minister and reform figure Lubomir Strougal.

– Antonin Maly is a CKD factory worker. While a longtime Central Committee member, he has been described as conservative, but occasionally critical of past Government/Party policies.

– Bretislav Benda is an academic who heads the Czechoslovak Technical and Scientific Society.

– Ondrej Saling is a Slovak Party Secretary who was brought into the Presidium on Friday as an alternate member. He has been described as a man put into the Presidium to oversee Slovak interests.

– Miroslav Zajic' background is agriculture and he has links with the innovative Slusovice Cooperative and its director Cuba. He can be expected to be a liberal voice but one narrowly directed, on the basis of past experience, to agriculture.

13. Overall, the new list is remarkable for the absence of any personality, with the possible exception of Ignac Janak, the Slovak Party leader with links to Vasil Bilak, who could be termed a die-hard hardliner. The list is also noteworthy because it shows the real lack of depth of talent that the Party could draw on in the current crisis.

The new leadership

14. A full list of the new CPCz Presidium and Secretariat members follows:

[...]

Urbanek's speech to the plenum

15. Urbanek's speech at the plenum showed that he was ready to take the new political realities into account. He is reported to have said that the Earlier Friday plenum had showed how little the former leadership understood the opinion of the Party's rank and file. In a number of specific recommendations, he

– called for an extraordinary Party congress on January 26. Delegates to the congress will be elected from regional Party Committees. The congress' stated purpose is to "formulate new supreme Party bodies" and to adopt an "action program".

(Urbanek said this would not replace the 18th congress already scheduled.) One of the main purposes of the extraordinary session will probably be to get rid of the old timers and deadwood in the 150-person Central Committee, the personalities behind the plenum's Friday debacle.

– Said the Civic Forum was a reality and that meeting with it and other groups was a way out of the crisis. (Note: He did not commit the Party to meet with it and Adamec' meeting on Sunday was done under the umbrella of the National Front, not the Government or Party. End note.)

– Said the National Front should be opened up to a broader political coalition in which all parties, decisive social organizations, and other civic organizations, which support socialism, would be equal. He recommended "restructuring" the Government in a way that other political and non-Party members would be represented.

– Called on the CPCz Central Committee to appoint a press spokesman.

– Called on Czechoslovak Prime Minister Adamec and Czech Prime Minister Pitra to submit changes in their respective ministries of the interior. (Note: Federal Minister Kincl's removal was a Civic Forum condition. End note.)

16. Other cadre changes: [...]

Where to from here

17. Urbanek and Adamec in these moves are trying to get ahead of the political curve, but events seem to be passing them by. A particularly telling example of the regime's low credibility and lack of understanding of the political situation came out during Adamec's speech to a mass rally at Letná Park on Sunday. He had been invited to address the crowd by the Civic Forum. While welcomed relatively warmly as he began to read his prepared text, Adamec quickly received catcalls and jeers of "resign" when he raised the subject of a general strike and suggested that something less than a full scale two-hour strike manifestation be held today, November 27.

18. We suspect Adamec will continue to try to play the role of honest broker between Party and public which he has carved out for himself, and which Urbanek evidently supports. In fact a CPCz contact tells that Urbanek intends to draw a sharper line between Government and Party and raise the former's influence. This same contact assured us the Government would take the Forum's program seriously, and in its Tuesday meeting between Havel and Adamec it will inform the Forum that the mass media has been taken out of the hands of the Central Committee and turned over to Government officials.

19. The Civic Forum, with massive popular support, seems determined to keep up the pressure for change whatever Adamec offers on Tuesday. After Monday's general strike the Forum has promised to publish a political manifesto or program. This will set a number of early demands which may prove difficult for the CPCz' leadership to resist or delay delivery on. Three are of immediate importance: an end to the Party's leading role, setting dates for free elections, and maintaining a free press and media. The regime already seems to be acting on a fourth, release of political prisoners; some six well known activists (SEPTEL) were released over the weekend.

20. The Forum has played down its meeting with Adamec on Sunday as not a real dialogue. It presented demands but received no reply. It will be looking to its Tuesday meeting with the Prime Minister as an indicator of regime flexibility. But to insure it keeps the pressure on, it is working with an expanding number of Prague factories to set up "strike alert" committees. These will react with work stoppages as a weapon against the Government and Party in what looks to be the prolonged negotiations ahead significantly, the Forum's Sunday press conference included the chairman (Miller) of one of those strike committees at the large Prague enterprise CKD, the same enterprise from which the CPCz Presidium has drafted a new member (Maly). There has also been a spontaneous movement to set up little "Civic Forums" in factories and local cities. Our CPCz contact complained the Forum was using the same tactics against the Party as it had used itself in 1948 against the Government.

21. Urbanek's statements at the Sunday plenum imply that the Party is moving in the direction of offering some form of coalition Government, though it will try to retain the National Front as an umbrella organization. Essentially this will mean offering minister and deputy minister positions to non-Communist party and independent representatives. The Civic Forum is unlikely to go along with such a proposal within the National Front. It will almost certainly set pre-conditions, including those demands noted above. Our CPCz contact says the Party will show flexibility on its leading role, agreeing to drop its legal basis, but will delay on a date for free elections.

22. The evaporation of CPCz authority, as represented by the openness of the media, will continue. Later tonight we understand a reform wing of the CPCz may announce the establishment of a "democratic forum" as a voice for reform within the Party. Faced with this revolt from below and a hardline Central Committee which he will be unable to remove before the end of January, Urbanek will have very little room for maneuver. This will restrict his ability to take the initiative needed to reply to the Civic Forum's demands for change.

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Source: National Security Archive, Soviet Flashpoints set.

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Document 78

Prague, November 27, 1989

Report by GDR Ambassador in Prague to SED General Secretary Egon Krenz,
on two extraordinary CC CPCz sessions

On the basis of information from the head of the Department for International Policy of the CC CPCz Comrade M. Štefaňák on the extraordinary plenum of November 24–5 and 26–7, and later follow-up conversations with another member of the Central Committee, I should like to submit to you the following information on individual issues discussed at the meetings:

1. Election of the Presidium and the Secretariat of the CC

[...]

2. Election of new President

The Party leadership tends towards the opinion, in keeping with former traditions of the CSSR, that this function should be occupied by a person unconnected with any Party. It is expected that both present large opposition groups (the Civic Forum and Revival) will nominate Václav Havel or Alexander Dubček. Under these conditions a majority of members of the CC prefer to elect Alexander Dubček. The Communist Party of Slovakia can be expected to rehabilitate him politically, but without taking him back into the Party.

3. Premier of CSSR

Comrade Adamec requested of the Presidium, first in June of this year, and again in October, that he be relieved of office after the criticism of his activities as Premier by Comrades Zavadil and Jakeš. In both cases, the Presidium denied his request. At yesterday's session Adamec was asked to resume the office of Premier in the new Government that will have to be elected. He refused. Mentioned as possible candidates for the new head of Government is Josef [sic] Komárek (Director of Economic Forecast Institute, Academy of Sciences). K[omárek] is the author of two concepts for development of the national economy of the CSSR in the 1990s, which the CC CPCz in the summer and early autumn considered and rejected. In them he spoke in favour of socialist market economy and sweeping changes in the structure of the Czechoslovak national economy. (Lowering steel production from 12m to 7m tons, grain production from 12m to 8m tons, ending production of black coal.)

4. Conceptual and personnel measures for the extraordinary Party Congress

At the session of the [Prague meeting of regional functionaries] on December 28, the principles of the proposed action programme to be approved at the extraordinary Congress are to be unveiled. Contrary to many proposals, yesterday's plenum approved the resolution that the delegates to the extraordinary Congress be elected by a conference of district delegates, and not by the rank-and-file organizations.

5. Policy of dialogue

Yesterday's session of the CC approved the proposal of Comrade Urbánek that separate discussions be held with representatives of the Civic Forum and Revival. The dialogue with representatives of the Civic Forum is to be held on the level of the National Front, and will fall under the competence of the Premier, with participation by important representatives from the other parties. The dialogue with Revival (former

CPCz members who were expelled from the Party after 1968) will be headed by members of the Party leadership. It began over the weekend. Meeting were CC Secretary Zajíc; on the other side Císař and Mencl. (Mencl was the Director of the Military Academy until 1968.) The talks will continue this week. The centre of attention is an exchange of opinions on the political system, a new constitution, future elections, press law, laws on association and assembly, and the appraisal of the events of 1968. C[ísař] and M[encl] showed willingness to cooperate with the CPCz on a "socialist platform". It is expected that Mlynář will soon return to the CSSR to take part in the dialogue.

At both plenary sessions, the situation in the CSSR and the CPCz was characterized as very difficult and full of contradictions. The situation in the GDR is said to be similar. The strategy and demands of opposition groups also strongly resembles the analogous situation in our country. After a long and controversial discussion, yesterday's plenary session declared that the new political situation should be resolved by political means; however, many present spoke out in favour of an "administrative solution". Most of these come from Slovakia, North Moravia, and North Bohemia. The Plenum noted with relief that the television appearance of Comrade Urbánek on November 25 was well accepted as a "guarantee" of the future policies of the CPCz. All members of the CC and the leading comrades from the ministries were called upon to go immediately to the regional and district Party organizations to help them put forward this position.

The task of the CPCz is to see that students, who after today's general strike call for an end to strikes, increasingly distance themselves from the Civic Forum; and in this way limit the mass character of these demonstrations. The central organ of the Civic Forum has called for a strike alert to be maintained. Its ideals are being popularized mainly by central Czechoslovak Television, where a Civic Forum branch has been organized, which took all transmission entirely under its control. Comrade Adamec was asked in the name of the Presidium to change the situation in Television on the basis of the law on state enterprises. (The naming of a new director and other members of management, asserting material and financial measures, and so on.) Within the Party leadership it is expected that the relatively calm situation in the regions and districts, and the entire agricultural countryside, will gradually calm the emotionally charged situation in Prague and Bratislava.

Source: Stiftungarchiv der Parteien und Massenorganisationen der DDR im Bundesarchiv, Berlin, DY 3/IV 2/2.039/285. Published in Czech in *Soudobé dějiny* 3.2-3 (1996): 379-80.

Translated from the Czech version by Todd Hammond.

Document 79
Prague, November 27, 1989, 12.00 noon
Statement of Civic Forum,
declaring its main aims are pluralism and free elections

1. The Civic Forum is a spontaneously established citizens' movement, bound together by their efforts to search for a positive solution to today's crisis situation. No one is excluded from this movement who rejects the further persistence of the political system of one ruling party, and who feels himself addressed by the policy principles of the Civic Forum (of November 26, 1989).

We consider the basic goals of the Civic Forum to be the creation of space for the establishment of political pluralism and for the ensuring of free elections in our country.

2. During recent days Civic Forums have arisen all over our country. This process is not and cannot be organized from one place, and will therefore take place in many variations. We have no hierarchical organizational structure, and no professional or technical apparatus. Even so, we place great importance on mutual interconnection and easy communication with all newly-established local centres of the Civic Forum. We are not political professionals, we are constantly pressed for time, and this explains why we have not always been able to react quickly to thousands of suggestions and demands from the Czechoslovak public.

The Coordinating Centre of the Civic Forum will operate within today's political reality; will create and maintain constant contact with all local centres, in order to be able to act together, quickly and effectively. We can already promise that all of your suggestions are being recorded and considered.

We consider it desirable to carry out a national meeting of representatives of all centres of the Civic Forum in the period before the Extraordinary Congress of the CPCz.

3. The Coordinating Centre of the Civic Forum recommends that the national strike movement end November 27. We have come to the conclusion that the original demands of the Civic Forum have been or are being basically fulfilled. The Coordinating Centre of the Civic Forum will monitor their definitive fulfilment. We presume to submit this proposal because we shall be relying on the permanent readiness of us all to strike. Just as we are able to end the strike today, so we shall be able to begin it again.

We recommend therefore that the strike committees find a way to transform themselves into Civic Forums.

4. We have begun negotiations with the Premier of the Federal Government, whom we regard as the current representative of state power. The still-applicable policy statements of the Government, and its composition, do not correspond to today's political situation. Tomorrow we will ask the Premier of the Federal Government whether he himself is determined to fundamentally change the programme and composition of the Government, and accept the demands of the Civic Forum. We have these demands ready. In the event of an affirmative answer, we shall meet with him, and submit our demands and suggestions. His answer will decide on our further

course. If the Premier does not decide favourably, we shall demand the resignation of the Government.

We assume that the President of the Republic will consider the situation realistically, and entrust another candidate with formation of a Government, a person who will be acceptable to the Czechoslovak public, and who will be willing from the first moment to negotiate with representatives of the Civic Forum. The decisive condition in our view is his determination to assure the calling of free elections.

(Responsible for accuracy: V. Klaus)

Source: Institute of Contemporary History Archive, Prague, KC OF record group, CF documents. Published in Jiří Suk (ed.), *Občanské fórum*, vol. 2, (Prague, 1998), pp. 32–3.

Translated from the Czech by Todd Hammond.

Document 80
Prague, November 28, 1989
Telegram from the US Embassy in Prague to the US Department of State,
on Soviet Embassy officer's view of Czechoslovak developments

Confidential

Prague 08311

Subject: Local Soviet view of Czechoslovak developments

1. Confidential – entire text.
2. Summary. In November 28 conversation with Soviet counterpart, DCM was told that use of force or intervention of Czechoslovak military in political situation here is out of the question. Soviet Embassy expected and is relaxed about changes here, but wants to see socialism preserved. They would be concerned about any developments here which suggest anti-Sovietism". End summary.
3. In conversation with Soviet DCM, Marat Kuznecov, at Yugoslav National Day reception November 28, DCM was told that Soviet Embassy is convinced that "no more batons" will be used here and that the Czechoslovak military will not RPT not intervene in political developments. Kuznecov served previously in Bratislava and was in Prague in 1968.
4. Kuznecov said that Soviet Embassy was aware that there would be change here and agreed that there should be a more "human" approach to building socialism in Czechoslovakia. He thought it noteworthy and, by implication, positive that Dubcek in a weekend address in Prague had quoted Gorbachev as using the term (which Dubcek himself coined in 1968), "socialism with a human face". He said there will certainly be a serious dialogue with the opposition, but said he invariably refused to answer any questions about what would happen next in Czechoslovakia.
5. Asked whether the Soviet Embassy is relaxed about developments here, Kuznecov replied that the Embassy is watching closely to see that certain opposition elements do not foster a spirit of anti-Sovietism. The USSR wants socialism to be maintained in Czechoslovakia. The new Czechoslovak Communist Party leadership has people in it who recognize that the 1968 Party program had many good elements for building socialism. When DCM remarked that there were various definitions of socialism and that Gorbachev's November 26 Pravda interview (Moscow 33157) confirmed this to be the case, Kuznecov smiled broadly and nodded. However, he simply reiterated that it is in the Soviet interest to keep Czechoslovakia socialist and to avoid anti-Soviet and anti-Communist sentiments.
6. Kuznecov was more relaxed and friendly than usual and joked that the Chinese Ambassador had just been pressing him, unsuccessfully, for his views on what might happen here. He first characterized the situation as reflecting "tension" (napeti), but quickly agreed that "difficult" or "complex" might be better terms and that there was no

"tension" in the sense of possible use of violence or force. He emphasized that the positive aspect of developments here involved a more "human" approach to socialism. However, he emphasized that the Soviet position is that they will not interfere in the internal affairs of other states.

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Source: National Security Archive, Soviet Flashpoints set.

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Document 81
Prague, November 28, 1989, 4.00 p.m.
Joint-position of the Civic Forum and the Public Against Violence,
on talks with Premier Ladislav Adamec

The Civic Forum believes that talks with Premier Ladislav Adamec and his colleagues entitle it to present the following information and proposals to the public:

1. The Premier promised the Civic Forum and Public Against Violence delegation that by Sunday he would form a Government with a new composition.
2. The Premier informed the Civic Forum and Public Against Violence delegation that the Government of the CSSR would tomorrow present to the Federal Assembly a proposed new constitutional law which would remove from the Constitution of the CSSR the articles legally establishing the leading role of the CPCz and Marxism-Leninism as the state ideology.
3. The Premier promised the Civic Forum and Public Against Violence delegation that he would promptly arrange with the Municipal Council of the City of Prague to allocate space for Civic Forum, and will discuss with other institutions media access for the Civic Forum and the Public Against Violence, including the creation of conditions for the publication of their own daily newspaper.
4. The Premier informed the Civic Forum and Public Against Violence delegation that he had already handed the President of the Republic a proposal for the pardoning of political prisoners, a list of whom was given the Premier by Civic Forum at their last meeting. The Civic Forum calls on the President of the Republic to satisfy this proposal by no later than December 10, 1989, which is Human Rights Day. The Civic Forum is receiving information that this list was not complete, and the Civic Forum and Public Against Violence therefore reserve the right to supplement it.
5. The Civic Forum has received with thanks the report of Deputy Chairman of the Federal Assembly Dr. Kučera that the Presidium of the Federal Assembly has decided that at tomorrow's meeting of the Federal Assembly it will propose forming a special commission to investigate the brutal intervention against the peaceful demonstration of Prague students on November 17, 1989. Representatives of Civic Forum, especially students, will be invited to sit on this commission.
6. The Civic Forum and Public Against Violence delegation requested of the Premier that the reshuffled Government as soon as possible announce its policy principles, from which it should be evident that the Government is prepared to create the legal preconditions for ensuring free elections, freedom of assembly and association, freedom of speech and press, removal of state supervision of religion, for the amendment of the law on military service, and other legislation. It is also necessary to ensure the disbanding of the People's Militia, and consider the question of the further presence of organized political parties in every workplace. The Civic Forum and Public Against Violence delegation also requested of the Premier that the Government as soon as possible transform its policy statement into visible actions. The delegation made clear to the Premier that if the public is not satisfied with the policy statement of the Government and its translation into concrete actions, the Civic Forum and the Public

Against Violence will demand the Premier's resignation at the end of the year, and ask the President of the Republic to name a new Premier, whom the Civic Forum and the Public Against Violence would nominate, if the President considered it necessary.

7. On November 29, 1989, the Civic Forum and the Public Against Violence will in writing call on the President of the Republic, Dr. Gustáv Husák, to step down by December 10, 1989.

8. The Civic Forum and Public Against Violence delegation suggested to the Premier that the Government of the CSSR submit to the Federal Assembly a proposed constitutional law under which members of the Federal Assembly, Czech National Council, Slovak National Council, and municipal councils at all levels, who have betrayed their oath as representatives and neglected the will and the interests of the people, shall be removed from office. A plan for by-elections will be proposed by the Civic Forum and the Public Against Violence in the near future.

9. The Civic Forum calls on the Government and the Federal Assembly immediately to condemn the entry of Warsaw Pact troops into Czechoslovakia in 1968, and the Federal Assembly to deliver a request to the Supreme Soviet of the USSR and the representative organs of the BPR and the GDR to declare the intervention of the armies of five Warsaw Pact countries in the CSSR a violation of the norms of international law and of the Warsaw Pact itself, as the intervention was carried out without the knowledge and agreement of the highest state organs of Czechoslovakia.

10. The Civic Forum believes that these results entitle it to call on all citizens to remain calm and continue working while maintaining a state of strike readiness. Strike committees may transform themselves into Civic Forums, or even function side by side. Students and people who work in theatre will decide themselves whether to end their strike today or tomorrow, or to continue with it. However they decide, the Civic Forum will support their position. The Civic Forum and the Public Against Violence call on the public to evaluate for themselves the results attained from these talks, and make clear their opinion to the Civic Forum and the Public Against Violence by all available means.

Source: Institute of Contemporary History Archive, Prague, KC OF record group, Civic Forum documents. Published in Jiří Suk (ed.), *Občanské fórum*, vol. 2, (Prague, 1998), pp. 33–5.

Translated from the Czech by Todd Hammond.

Document 82

Moscow, November 28, 1989

Draft agenda prepared by Georgi Shakhnazarov for Mikhail Gorbachev for December 4 and 5, 1989

Mikhail Sergejevich!

Seeing that 4 and 5 December are starting to be quite booked up, we wish to submit a certain scenario or schedule for your approval.

We have asked our partners to come to Moscow on December 4 in the morning, and they would meet to be briefed on the results of Malta at 15.00.

It will probably have to be assumed that the meeting will last at least two or two and half hours. After you have given your information, someone may ask for the floor to say how they view the Soviet-American meeting, and to support our policies.

Various questions may even crop up.

In that case it would be possible to set the meeting with N[icolae] Ceausescu for 18.00. Let's assume it will last an hour and a half at most.

On the following day, 5 December, there would be a meeting with P. Mladenov in the morning (at 10.00 or 11.00), and in the afternoon you would receive [Hans] D[ietrich] Genscher.

That leaves K[arel] Urbánek. He will most probably request at least a short interview to get publicity. If there is at least one hint expressed that we understand the necessity to reappraise the events of 1968, it could be very important for the survival of the new CPCz leadership.

In that case it would be enough to give him 30 to 40 minutes. E[gon] Krenz, R[ezso] Nyersz, and W[ojciech] Jaruzelski will surely try to get in to see you for at least a couple of minutes.

But these comrades are probably going to have to be satisfied with short, one-minute conversations before everyone sits down to the table, or right after the meeting, on the run.

They will of course understand that you must leave for Kiev on the 6th for a meeting with veterans. It can't be ruled out that the comrades will want to speak with someone from the leadership anyway. It looks like we'll have to expect that.

Because the nature of the situation does not require protocol procedures, the following schedule could be possible:

4 December

15.00 Meeting with delegations of Warsaw Pact member states.

18.00 (tentatively) - Interview with N[icolae] Ceaușescu.

5 December

11.00: Meeting with P. Mladenov

13.30: Short interview with K. Urbánek

16.00: Reception of D. [sic] Genscher

We need your general agreement in order to begin preparing the necessary materials (proposed publications, reports, etc.).

Source: Georgi Shakhnazarov, *Tsená svobody. Reformatsia Gorbacheva glazami yego pomoshchnika*, Moscow, 1993, p. 439–40.

Translated from the Czech version by Todd Hammond.

Document 83

Prague, November 29, 1989

Telegram from the US Embassy in Prague to the US Department of State,
summarizing political developments after tens days of the Velvet Revolution

Confidential

Prague 08343

Subject: Czechoslovakia's quiet revolution and its prospects

1. Confidential – entire text.

2. Summary. Czechoslovakia's "quiet" revolution, with the Civic Forum in its vanguard, has really only just begun, but it has reached an important milestone in forcing the regime to engage in a dialogue. The Forum's representatives do not underestimate the long fight ahead before the legal and tactical roadblocks the CPCz will put in the way of achieving such goals as free elections can be overcome and the present totalitarian system can be gradually transformed into a parliamentary democracy. End summary.

A non-violent revolution

3. What has occurred in Czechoslovakia over the past 12 days is nothing short of a popular revolution, but a non-violent one. It is a revolution sparked by students and artists in reaction to the brutal suppression on November 17 of a student demonstration and then joined by workers and the great mass of the people. Like the Prague Spring of 1968, this revolution has its roots in the gradual loss of fear by the man in the street of regime repression, but differs from 1968 in that it originated from within the younger generation and not so much from reform elements within the CPCz. It thus is more of a rejection of the 41 years of the country's Communist past.

The Forum: a loose coalition

4. But if this revolution began spontaneously, its popular focal point quickly became the "Civic Forum", symbolized by playwright Vaclav Havel. The Forum has articulated popular demands but declined becoming a political party. Its greatest success, so far, has been in mobilizing mass demonstrations and support for a general strike. These toppled the old Communist Party leadership and forced the Government (and the Party standing behind it) reluctantly into a dialogue.

5. The Forum's representatives are careful not to exaggerate the concessions, specifically an end to the legal basis of the Communist Party's "leading role", that this dialogue has produced up to now. The Forum's objectives are much broader. It wants nothing less than to prepare the groundwork for free elections and conversion of the present totalitarian system to democracy. It is obvious that negotiations with the regime to achieve this have only begun; that they will be complex. Even after the Government produces a new coalition of "experts" on December 3 as Prime Minister Adamec has promised, the Forum expects delaying tactics, provocations and attempts to play on its internal divisions.

6. Those divisions are very real. Represented within the Forum are political groupings that range from reform Communist (the Renewal group) to liberal (the Democratic Initiative). Slovaks are represented by their own separate pro-democracy organization, the Public Against Violence. Student groups which began the strike for change seem irritated that the Forum has taken over the pro-democracy movement from them. Workers, after flexing their muscles in the November 27 general strike, seem readier to support more industrial action than the intellectuals and professionals heading the Forum.

7. The Forum is trying to play these divisions down by emphasizing its transitional, non-political character and by keeping its supporters' attention on its longer term goals for society: A mixed economy, a pluralistic political system and Czechoslovakia's integration into Western Europe. Interestingly, the Forum's seven chapter program statement (Prague 8312) not once mentions the word "socialism".

The Communist Party, down but not out

8. In less than two weeks of this revolution, the CPCz' authority and control of society has been enormously eroded. Internal splits have developed. A reform-minded Party group has set up the "Democratic Forum", calling for a re-evaluation of 1968 and re-admission of purged Prague Spring figures. The elimination of Party control over the media has been dramatic, as television and radio newscasters overnight began to function like their Western counterparts. The Party has foresworn use of force in a Central Committee resolution, though qualifying this commitment by referring to a need to defend life, property and "the fundamentals of socialism".

9. Although reeling, the Party is not a spent force, however, and it will not willingly commit political suicide by moving to free elections. In a speech on November 28, the new General Secretary Karel Urbanek has called on his cadres to go on the offensive and seek to regain control of the now largely reform-minded media. He has rejected recent calls by the Forum to abolish the People's Militia, remove Party figures as factory managers and eliminate basic Party organizations in enterprises. Urbanek plans to travel to Moscow in early December and will certainly be seeking some sign of Gorbachev's support for his party and its future.

10. Despite its disarray, the CPCz still holds some strong cards. The Party still dominates important societal institutions, including the security forces, and still is the predominant force in the National Front, and will continue to be so even after its legal basis for that control is eliminated. It is no accident that the regime has chosen the front as the framework for dialogue with the Civic Forum, thereby trying to present the Forum as the "opposition" to established, Party-controlled institutions.

Where the revolution is headed

11. Valtr Komarek, an economist touted by some as possible ministerial candidate in a new coalition Government, was asked this week how long it would take Czechoslovakia to convert into a Western-style democracy. He responded that the country did not need to receive democracy in dribs and drabs; the people could

swallow it whole. If the Communists can be forced to let the country's laws and institutions conform to the people's will, he said, Czechoslovakia could resume its reformist, democratic traditions almost overnight. That is an assessment the Embassy shares.

12. The brake on this transition will be the one applied by the present regime's leadership as it maneuvers to delay the date of reforms, particularly free elections. The regime has a number of roadblocks, political and legal, it can put in the way. As General Secretary of the Socialist Party, Jan Skoda, has pointed out to us, moving up the date of elections will require a two-thirds vote of the Federal Assembly. This is something the Assembly, a majority of whose members are Communist and likely to be voted out, may be unready to agree to. However, the Czech and Slovak tendency towards consensus and loss of legitimacy by the CPCz hierarchy suggest that parliamentarians as well as other functionaries will move rapidly to show "reformist" colors.

13. Quick elections are not necessarily in the Civic Forum's interest. Many of the political groups it represents are only in an embryonic state and will need more time to organize. In the meantime, as the Forum's list of demands submitted to Adamec on November 28 (SEPTTEL) indicates, it will focus on the personnel and legal changes in the system necessary to assure a successful transition towards democracy.

Russell

Source: National Security Archive, Soviet Flashpoints set.

Not for citation or publication without permission.

Document 84

Prague, November 29, 1989, 5.00 p.m.

Joint statement by the Civic Forum and the Public Against Violence,
on the political situation

Representatives of the civic initiative the Public Against Violence from Bratislava, Mr. Milan Kňažko, Ján Budaj, Vladimír Ondruš, Miroslav Kusý, Peter Zajac, and Martin Bútora, have visited Prague; from their talks with Civic Forum the following report has been issued:

"This afternoon, representatives from Civic Forum (CF) and the Public Against Violence (PAV) met together. They assessed the current situation and stressed the demand that further developments in Czechoslovakia in the direction of a democratic society take place without violence.

CF and PAV recognize one another as the sovereign representatives of the Czech and Slovak civic movements. They work together on the basis of mutual partnership stemming from similar platforms and goals. They will continue this partnership through all negotiations with government organs. The common goal of CF and PAV is the transformation of Czechoslovakia into a democratic federation in which Czechs and Slovaks, together with other nationalities, will live in mutual friendship and understanding."

In the evening, the PAV delegation flew back to Bratislava, accompanied by Václav Havel, Marta Kubišová, Petr Oslzlý, Šimon Pánek, and Josef Vavroušek, who will speak at the Slovak National Theatre this evening.

We shall closely monitor the debate in the Federal Assembly, and make a statement as soon as the results become known.

In yesterday's negotiations with the Civic Forum, the Premier said that he wished to discuss with us the composition of the Government. The CF does not aspire to any ministerial post, but wishes to propose to the Premier that the Minister of National Defense be an uncompromised civilian and a member of the CPCz, while the Interior Minister should be an uncompromised citizen, a civilian who is not a member of the CPCz. This proposal was submitted to the Premier during the morning.

The Proclamation of Civic Forum to members of the Czechoslovak People's Army and the National Security Corps:

"We who belong to Civic Forum are aware of the importance of the army and security in any country. We therefore wish to say to you: You are of us, from the people of this country. Respect their will and defend their interests.

Do not let yourselves be misused by any group of people against the democratic renewal of our country. No one needs violence or revenge; this would be fatal for us all.

We ask you to help protect the lives and rights of your fellow citizens and the security of the Republic. Aid all citizens who turn to you, and give them protection.

Our country needs real professionals in the struggle with general criminality, and to defend us against organized crime.

Let our army defend the sovereignty of the Czechoslovak state. It must never be misused to further the interests of one political group.

The Civic Forum is against disruption and anarchy, and is striving to renew domestic peace in our country."

In yesterday's statement, Civic Forum also appealed to all citizens to continue in their jobs, in production, in services, in transportation, and everywhere economic losses might be incurred. We would like to very clearly stress that, in the interest of the common goal toward which we have taken only the first steps, we cannot afford a deterioration of the economic situation.

Although we have had some successes, let us not decrease our vigilance. A week of mass assemblies and general strikes has ended. Let us carefully monitor the development of the political situation. We now give priority to a constructive exchange of views in the atmosphere which the students have created. Today and tomorrow we want above all to develop contacts with all CF's in the localities and workplaces; we want to show in practice that we are open to all who feel addressed by our programme principles. Citizens who are active in the Civic Forum, do not wait for our instructions! We assume that we have essential unity on fundamental questions. We are not your superior body. You yourselves know best what is needed where you are today, and what will be needed tomorrow. Only self-assured and independently acting people in this country can lead it towards democracy and prosperity.

Source: Institute of Contemporary History Archive, Prague, KC OF record group, CF documents. Published in Jiří Suk (ed.), *Občanské fórum*, vol. 2, (Prague, 1998), pp. 39–40.

Translated from the Czech by Todd Hammond.

Document 85

Prague, December 1, 1989

Telegram from the US Embassy in Prague to the US Department of State,
on inside views of Civic Forum as expressed to visiting US Senators

Confidential

Prague 08415

Subject: Meeting of Civic Forum representatives and American senators

1. Confidential – entire text.

2. Summary. A delegation of American senators visited with Civic Forum representatives in Prague on November 30. The Civic Forum representatives briefed the senatorial delegation concerning recent dramatic events, as well as presenting their views concerning future political and economic developments. The Civic Forum believes the most important support the USG can offer the Forum in the immediate future is political, in particular support which would minimize the possibility that force might be used to thwart democratic forces and processes now present. In the longer term, American assistance to developing political parties, and educational exchanges, would be useful. The senatorial delegation also met with Auxiliary Bishop Antonin Liska during its visit. End summary.

3. A delegation of American senators met with representatives of the Civic Forum (CF) in Prague on November 30. The senators present were Claiborne Pell, Paul Sarbanes, John Chafee, and John Warner. Civic Forum participants were Vaclav Maly (Catholic priest and former Charter 77 spokesperson), Ivan Gabal (sociologist and founder of the Circle of Independent Intelligentsia), Martin Palous (philosopher and former Charter 77 spokesperson), Pavel Bratinka (conservative dissident writer and a physicist by training), and Tomas Jezek (economist from the Forecasting Institute, Czechoslovak Academy of Science). During the one-hour session, the Civic Forum representatives reviewed the dramatic events of the past two weeks and gave their views concerning possible political and economic developments.

CF views concerning the new coalition Government

4. The Civic Forum representatives indicated that Prime Minister Adamec had offered the Forum a place in the coalition Government now being formed, but the Adamec offer had been declined. The Civic Forum feels it is too soon to have a minister in the Government and believes Communists might attempt to manipulate such a situation. The Forum representatives confirmed that they had made only two concrete demands concerning personnel in the new coalition Government: (1) that the Minister of Interior be an uncompromised civilian who is not a member of the Communist Party; and (2) that the Minister of Defense be an uncompromised civilian who could be a Communist. (Note. The Civic Forum feels that the threat of a "military putsch" has passed. End note.)

5. The Civic Forum has demanded that the Government being formed by Adamec reflect a plurality of interests. If the coalition Government does not provide a program which guarantees free elections and fundamental freedoms (speech, association, press, religion), the CF will demand resignation of the Government. The CF feels that the general strike of November 27 was a success, and that another general strike could be successfully called to pressure the Government again. The CF indicated that it will give the coalition Government until the end of 1989 to demonstrate a concrete commitment to implement these reforms. The CF representatives admitted that a call for resignation of the coalition Government could provoke a political crisis, but believed such a crisis would lead to political improvements.

Views on the development of democratic political structures

6. The Civic Forum representatives repeated that the Forum is not a political party. The Forum, however, does want to encourage the growth of political parties and clubs in Czechoslovakia and believes a variety of parties, with their different programs and ideas, is essential to the growth of democratic structures in Czechoslovakia. (Note. The CF representatives specifically ask that the National Endowment for Democracy support the various efforts at political party-building now going on in Czechoslovakia, although no one present could state whether such assistance would be legal. End note.)

7. The Civic Forum representatives present also stated that those participating in Forum activities represent a spectrum of views, but that a goal shared by almost everyone in the Forum is establishment of a western-style parliamentary system for Czechoslovakia. Although the parliamentary system from the inter-war period could serve as a model for the future, the CF representatives noted that any future parliamentary system would need to take account of the current federalized system of separate Czech and Slovak Republics. The CF reps noted that current events were contributing to a rise of national identity, and that citizens were beginning to think of themselves not only as Czechs or Slovaks but also as Czechoslovaks.

8. Although all the Civic Forum representatives present support free elections and parliamentary democracy, there was a division of opinion as to when elections should be held. Most of the Civic Forum representatives seemed to favor an election no later than May, and view such an "early election" as a means of maintaining the present momentum for reform. Dr. Galal, however, indicated that he believes an election in the latter half of 1990 would allow more time for the building of political parties and other democratic structures.

9. The broad spectrum of opinion within the CF has made it necessary for the CF to avoid the use of "too strong words". In particular, the CF has not incorporated a statement into its principles concerning private property because much of the CF membership is of a socialist/leftist bent. Rather, by avoiding controversial statements and concentrating only on the common goal of establishment of a parliamentary democracy, the Civic Forum hopes to maintain a high level of support from the general population and thus maintain pressure on the GOC to undertake basic democratic reforms.

View on the economy

10. The CF representatives present seemed committed to the concept of a "market economy with good social programs". However, they indicated that many Czechoslovaks were slow to become disillusioned about socialism and that a consensus about so-called "liberal democratic principles" (such as the private ownership of the means of production), had not yet been achieved.

11. The CF spokespersons stated that the private ownership of the means of production had been abolished in its entirety in Czechoslovakia. (Comment. Exceptions exist, though in practical effect this is correct. End comment.) Many Czechoslovaks continue to associate "private ownership" with the ownership of large enterprises. Any program of restructuring the economy toward private ownership would have to take into account the large size of Czechoslovak industrial enterprises. (Comment. This may have been meant to imply that, at least initially, such enterprises would remain state-owned. End comment.) In addition, any shift to private ownership must be done in a way which does not encourage professionals to move "downward" in the economy. The specific example of Hungary was cited where opportunities in the service and agricultural sections apparently caused many professionals to leave their professions.

12. CF representatives believe that the Czechoslovak economic situation is deteriorating, and this has placed pressure upon the current leadership of the GOC to reach an accommodation with the opposition. Despite this deterioration, the CF does not believe a massive economic package, such as that fashioned for Poland, is necessary here. (Comment. In earlier contacts CF reps had rejected the idea of western "aid" as necessary to help restructure the economy and would prefer a reliance on commercial credits, increased exports, and private investment to assist in the process. End comment.)

How the USG can help

13. Asked what the USG could do to assist those working for democracy in Czechoslovakia, those present stressed that in the short term the most important U.S. contribution would be simply to show political support in a way that would minimize the potential that force might be used to thwart the democratic forces and processes now present in Czechoslovakia.

14. The CF also asked that the USG not prematurely grant the GOC Most Favored Nation (MFN) status. The CF expects the GOC will ask for MFN after some reforms have been undertaken. The CF asked that the USG consult with CF representatives before taking any action on this question.

15. The CF representatives also stated they are in need of an exchange of views with American experts and officials. Civic Forum reps complained they are so busy at present that they have little or no time to read the newspapers. Political and economic perspectives that American experts could offer would be useful for them. The CF asks, however, that the USG realize that the path to democracy in Czechoslovakia will be different from that in Poland and Hungary, and that the USG during any exchanges of opinion be sensitive to and sympathetic with these differences.

16. With regard to longer term assistance from the U.S., the CF reps believed it would be useful for the U.S. to provide educational opportunities in the U.S. for Czechoslovak students. Another useful program would be for American experts in a variety of fields to come to Czechoslovakia to teach in their fields of expertise.

The visit with Bishop Liska

17. The senatorial delegation also called on Antonin Liska, Auxiliary Bishop of the diocese of Prague, for his evaluation of the current situation. Liska termed the changes underway in Czechoslovakia a renewal of democracy and an opportunity for the more equal treatment of all Czechoslovak citizens. Liska pointed out that Cardinal Tomasek had supported the efforts of those working for democracy. Liska believes the movement toward democracy is irreversible. With regard to current church affairs, the Bishop indicated the Church had already seen a loosening of state controls, and expected such process to continue. (One of source has indicated that the CF has demanded that the GOC enact a law guaranteeing separation of Church and state.)

Russell

Source: National Security Archive, Soviet Flashpoints set.

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Document 86
Prague, November–December 1989
Recollections (1996) of Valeri Musatov
on his visit to Prague

[...]

In November 1989 I spent several exciting days in Prague as Deputy Head of the International Department of the CC CPSU. Immediately after the police had dispersed and beat participants in a student demonstration, after the creative intelligentsia began to strike and the situation came to a boil, Valentin Falin called me and gave me the order of Politburo member and Secretary of the CC CPSU Alexander Yakovlev to immediately fly to Prague. I was to investigate the situation, collect information, but not to intervene. I was told not to rely on our Embassy, as its circle of contacts was limited. Valentin Falin expressed it even more bluntly: Ambassador Lomakin has traditionally dealt with "healthy forces", he can't even stand Gorbachev, and he's still waiting for military circles to overthrow the General Secretary.*

Thus I got to Prague without any kind of plenary powers, on a purely informational mission. I was assisted by a young employee of the Institute for the Economy of Socialist Countries of the USSR Academy of Sciences who knew the Prague political élite very well. At the same time a small group of employees of the informational-analytical department of the KGB was sent to Prague.

During the massive assembly on the Letenská Plain I again saw Alexander Dubček, aged, but hale. He was greeting with wild enthusiasm, although his speech was quite banal. Already voices came out of the crowd: "Dubček to the Castle!" But overall the assembly was dominated by Civic Forum and its leader Havel.

At that time the old CC CPCz was still in existence. Miloš Jakeš had to resign, but the new General Secretary Karel Urbánek was politically inexperienced and little known. No one had any great hopes for his administration. I had come to the same conclusion myself, and not without regret, after my friends had arranged for me a meeting with the new General Secretary. At the beginning it had seemed to me that the CPCz had a chance to reform and renew itself.

I met with Party functionaries known for their pro-Soviet attitudes. But I also spoke with academics, especially at Valtr Komárek's Economic Forecasting Institute, and with intellectuals in the humanities. All were interested in the same questions: what the Soviet reaction to changes in Czechoslovakia would be (while behind this question was the palpable fear that the aggression would be repeated); when would the CPSU announce a reappraisal of the 1968 events, calling them anti-socialist, and recognize that the military action was a mistake; and when would Soviet troops leave Czechoslovakia.

As for Civic Forum (CF), Public Against Violence, and other movements, these questions were their main political demands. Sometime about the middle of my stay in Prague a meeting took place with representatives of the Civic Forum. I had a chance to meet with Havel, but cautious Moscow advised me not to hurry with it.

The meeting with the CF took place at the Czechoslovak Government offices. Actually, during my entire visit I received much help from colleagues of Premier

Adamec. I spoke with him several times. He was engaged in difficult negotiations with the Civic Forum on the composition of the Government and the election of a new President. Adamec asked for a hand from Moscow, but got no answer from there. I felt very embarrassed. There was a lot to explain after Malta, too. I was glad when my mission had ended, because a meeting of the highest representatives of the Warsaw Pact countries had been planned for 3–4 December in Moscow. A meeting between Gorbachev, and Adamec and Urbánek, was to take place. At this meeting they also spoke about the situation concerning the new Presidential election. Havel and Dubček had the best chance, but Adamec had a good chance as well. "Fine, I'll support you", said Gorbachev. That ended it. Adamec couldn't call through to him for three or four days. The situation in Prague was becoming increasingly complicated. Very strong pressure was brought to bear on Adamec and the Communists. Finally Havel became President; even Dubček had to give way. This all happened later.

But let us return to the meeting with Havel's spokesmen. There were three of them: a professor and lawyer, later secretary to the Chairman of the Federal Assembly; then a young composer who later headed the commission for the departure of Soviet troops; and a man who later became Havel's advisor for military affairs. The conversation was calm and collected. I briefly outlined the essence of Soviet policy in Eastern Europe, and emphasized that the Soviet leadership did not intend to resort to violent methods and interfere in the internal affairs of sovereign countries. The Soviet Union would respect the choice of those nations. I emphasized our interest in maintaining and developing co-operation with Czechoslovakia.

Their answer expressed satisfaction with the Soviet position, and words of praise for the policy of perestroika. The goal of the Civic Forum was to create a democratic society in harmony with the traditions of the nations of the Bohemian Lands and Slovakia. No one could prevent this. If the Communists were to try it, they would be crushed. Their politics, and the results of their rule, were rejected by most of the nation.

For myself, I emphasized, far be it from me to interfere in events in Czechoslovakia, and I said that of course a general interest exists that events in Czechoslovakia flow peacefully. As regards the Communist Party, I expressed the opinion that the gentlemen from Civic Forum were surely mistaken, that after all Communists have a certain influence in society. (But on this question the gentlemen from Civic Forum were right. The Communist Party of Czechoslovakia soon broke up into several smaller parties. In the following elections they received about ten percent of the vote. Their representatives made it into Parliament, but had no visible weight there.) During this and other meetings I expressed the opinion that the events of 1968 should be evaluated calmly and objectively. It may not be best to expect the first step from us, even though such voices were being heard in Moscow. The action of 1968 was a collective one, and therefore its participants should spell out their opinion together. I knew that Gorbachev had promised Jakeš he would not rush to a new appraisal.

A meeting took place at the CC CPCz with the participation of the Secretary of the Central Committee, the Foreign Minister, and the Minister of Justice on the question of the departure of Soviet troops from the CSSR. Together with the Soviet chargé d'affaires in Prague [M. Kuznetsov], we defended the official position, similar to that which Gorbachev had explained to Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party representatives

Rezso Nyers and Károlyi Grósz: the departure would proceed gradually, in harmony with the course of the Vienna talks on arms reductions in Europe. Once when I used the expression "lowering the numbers of Soviet troops", Minister of Justice Marián Čalfa, then still a member of the CPCz, who later headed the Government of National Understanding, said that this was out of the question. The Civic Forum insisted on the complete departure of Soviet troops, and in the shortest possible time.

[...]

Sometime during my stay in Prague it became known that Alexander Dubček had been invited by a group of Soviet film-makers to the premiere of a film about the "Prague Spring" being made in Leningrad. Official Moscow did not plan then to invite Dubček; it did not suit them; on the contrary, it was apparent that his potential visit could be used against Gorbachev. We had to explain this to Dubček's friends. They convinced him not to go to Moscow, and not to cause Gorbachev problems. It was a relief when we got word of this. The truth is that General V., a representative of the KGB, assured me he had the list of travellers on the air routes to Moscow under surveillance, and Dubček's name did not even appear in the reservations. Hard to say how it really was, but Dubček did not go to Moscow. [...]

* In a conversation with Vilém Prečan in Moscow, in September 1998, Valeri Musatov clarified that the order to travel to Prague came on the day that Jakeš and company submitted their resignations, which was the evening of November 24. Musatov apparently reached Prague on the morning of Saturday, November 25, 1989. He also said that in the days immediately following November 17, several telephone calls had come in from Prague to Moscow with information about the People's Militia in the streets of Prague, and that there was a danger of bloodshed. From the International Department of the CC CPSU calls came back to Prague (probably to Jakeš) by telephone, communicating roughly: "We are receiving reports that disturb us." Musatov told Prečan that in that context it must have been clear that Moscow regarded any kind of "hard-line measures" as undesirable.

Source: Valeri Musatov, *Predvestniki buri*, Moscow, 1996, pp. 165–9.

Translated from the Czech version by Todd Hammond.

Document 87

Prague and Bratislava, December 3, 1989

Statement of the Civic Forum Coordinating Centre and the Coordinating Committee of the Public Against Violence, evaluating achievements to date and calling for the abolishment of the 'leading role' of the CPCz

Today, Sunday, December 3, the great social movement in which we are all participants has reached an important point. We now face the task of appraising what has happened, and deciding what will be next.

A lot of important things have happened. The Communist Party, through the publicly manifested will of us all, has been legally divested of its leading role. A parliamentary commission has begun to work, with the participation of students. Freedom of speech has been significantly expanded.

Even so, impatience is growing in our society. The feeling is rising that words are not being changed into actions with the rapidity demanded by the times.

We know we can't have everything at once. But why has the formal elimination of the leading role of the Party not been reflected in the composition of the Federal Government? Why must fifteen of twenty Government seats again go to CPCz members? Why are other parties of the National Front each represented by only one seat? Why is there only one woman in the Government? After all, in our country there are far more non-Party members than Party members! And among members of the CPCz there are many people who are more capable than those in the Government!

In the 1950s the leading role of the Communist Party was not guaranteed in the Constitution, and what happened, happened. It clearly follows that proclamations and even constitutional changes by themselves guarantee nothing.

The Civic Forum Coordinating Centre and the Coordinating Committee of Public against Violence believe that more has to happen by next Sunday. We do not regard the changes in the Federal Government as final, and therefore we cannot give the new Government our support at this time. We expect its thorough transformation to be concluded by next Sunday, and that its personal composition will correspond to the general interests and requirements. We want the Government to be dominated by people young, honest, uncompromised, and professionally capable.

We await their programme statement with anticipation. We expect that in it the Government will wholeheartedly accept the tasks that stand before it, such as guarantees of full freedom of speech, legal assurance of the right to assemble and associate, disbanding of the People's Militia and Party organizations in the workplace. The nomenclature must be abolished, on all levels and in all departments. The Government should immediately prepare a bill by which the entire existing system of state administration would be rebuilt. In today's system, not even the most educated and smartest ministers can be put to good use.

Unless all these things happen, we shall have reason to fear that the leading role of the Party was revoked only on paper.

The Civic Forum Coordinating Centre demands that the Premier of the CSR, František Pitra, form a new Czech Government by the end of the week. He knows what

kind of people the public wants, and the Civic Forum is able to recommend various persons. The five ministers of the Czech Government who are the most compromised cannot be in the new Government. Mr. Pitra knows why people don't trust them.

The Civic Forum and the Public Against Violence have asked the President to release by next Sunday – Human Rights Day – all political prisoners, and to step down from his function. We firmly believe that he understands the urgency of these measures.

We call on all citizens in the towns and the countryside to express their yearning for real change and for guarantees that it will be permanent by an intensified strike alert. Quickly solidify the structure and mutual interconnectedness of strike committees, civic forums, action committees of the Public Against Violence, and other independent initiatives! The students and arts and culture community have called off their strike, and gone on heightened strike alert, for reasons they have explained for themselves.

If the current powers fail to grasp the message of the moment, we call for another general protest strike for Monday, December 11. None of us want strikes, but it is unfortunately the only way citizens can demonstrate what they want, and they will no longer let themselves be deceived by cosmetic changes.

The delegation of the Coordinating Centre of the Civic Forum and the Coordinating Committee of the Public Against Violence have engaged in intensive discussions with the prime ministers of all three governments and with other political figures. They related what people had been shouting in the demonstrations, signing in countless resolutions, and writing on their banners. We can make public authentic recordings of those meetings, if the public thinks that we have been deciding about them without them, and that we have started in with the usual form of behind-closed-doors politics. These recordings would clearly show that we were only seeking concrete means by which to turn the will of the community into reality. Civic Forums and action committees of the Public Against Violence are being founded all over the country; their support is growing, and they have greater and greater influence. This influence obligates us also during negotiations with the Government.

We want societal change to take effect peacefully. We know that the current Government is temporary, and will have a limited mandate. Our goal is free elections no later than July 1990. We want the way to them to be peaceful. But it must be a way forward, and not just marking time.

The Civic Forum Coordinating Centre and the Coordinating Committee of the Public Against Violence can responsibly say that the November movement that was inspired by the students is today, in its ideals and its ability to act, more unified than in previous days. Let this unity be a bridge over which we come to real plurality and democracy.

This proclamation will be read by a representative of the Civic Forum tomorrow at 4 p.m. on Wenceslas Square, so that residents of Prague can support it with their presence.

Source: Institute of Contemporary History Archive, Prague, KC OF record group, Civic Forum documents. Published in Jiří Suk (ed.), *Občanské fórum*, vol. 2, (Prague, 1998), pp. 47–9.

Translated from the Czech by Todd Hammond.

Document 88
Prague, December 4, 1989, 2.00 p.m.
Draft position of the Civic Forum,
pushing for the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Czechoslovakia

Draft position of Civic Forum at negotiations on the temporary stationing
of Soviet troops in the CSSR

The new Federal Government in its statement of December 3, 1989, states correctly that the entry of troops into the CSSR in August 1968 was in contravention of international law, but the Government has not drawn from this the correct conclusions; on the contrary, it is mistaken. This lies in the fact that the Government, while assuming that further negotiations will be held on the Treaty for the Temporary Stationing of Soviet Troops, of October 1969, has included in its statement the formulation that "the question of the departure of Soviet troops must also be settled in harmony with the European disarmament process". The negotiations were entrusted to Foreign Minister Johanes.

1. If the entry of the troops was a violation of international law, then the resulting treaties following the entry were negotiated under duress, and are therefore void. (This includes the so-called 'Moscow Protocol'.)

2. The Treaty on the Temporary Stationing of Soviet Troops on the Territory of the CSSR is therefore void, and nothing more can be negotiated on its basis. The Soviet troops on our territory are occupation troops, and not a contingent designated to protect the borders of the socialist community.

3. The only logical result of these facts must be the immediate withdrawal of these troops, as soon as the Soviet side declares the illegality of the entry of troops into the CSSR in 1968.

4. The comment that the stationing of Soviet troops on our territory must be considered in harmony with the progress of the European disarmament process, is an admission that this contingent is included in the overall count of Soviet troops in Europe, whose decrease is being negotiated in Vienna, and that the USSR has no interest in weakening its negotiating position by excluding Soviet units in the CSSR from the calculations. It can therefore be expected that the negotiations of Minister Johanes on these matters will lead to an attempt to negotiate a new treaty that would provide the presence of Soviet troops in the CSSR with another legal basis.

This is clearly unacceptable for the Czechoslovak people and the Civic Forum, because negotiation of similar international treaty, in the situation where on the territory of one party are deployed the occupation troops of the other party, places in doubt the equality of the two parties at the negotiating table. Besides the possible negotiation of a new treaty on the stationing of Soviet troops on the territory of the CSSR, without the original contingent which is of an occupational character having left our territory, this would devalue the original condemnation of the entry of troops in 1968 as an act in contravention of international law.

For the Civic Forum only one solution is acceptable:

1. The troops, who managed to occupy the CSSR within one day, will leave the CSSR within one week from the day the Soviet government condemns the entry of troops in 1968.

2. Only after Soviet units leave Czechoslovak territory and hand over to the Czechoslovak state all buildings in their use, can negotiations possibly begin on the stationing of a limited contingent of Soviet troops on the territory of the CSSR, under the express condition that the Czechoslovak army is not able to protect Czechoslovak borders by itself. Of course this would have to be justified in detail.

In the event that these demands of the Civic Forum are not met, the Civic Forum will take the appropriate measures so that the participating states at the Vienna negotiations on the reduction of troop levels and arms in Central Europe will not take into account the Soviet troops deployed on Czechoslovak territory. Any treaty or agreement including these units into negotiated treaty relationships would be an implicit recognition of the Brezhnev Doctrine, and sanction the entry of Soviet troops into the CSSR in August 1968.

For the Civic Forum this is a fundamental question. It leads to the further demand by the Civic Forum, which will be presented to the Federal Government:

1. The Civic Forum requests that the Federal Government not negotiate any bilateral or international treaties or agreements that must be ratified by Parliament, until Parliament is elected in upcoming free elections.

2. The Civic Forum reiterates its demand for the replacement of Foreign Minister Johanes, for whom there is no guarantee that he is willing and able to defend the interests of our state in foreign policy.

Source: Institute of Contemporary History Archive, Prague, KC OF record group, Civic Forum documents. Published in Jiří Suk (ed.), *Občanské fórum*, vol. 2, (Prague, 1998), pp. 49–50.

Translated from the Czech by Todd Hammond.

Prague, December 5, 1989

Telegram from the US Embassy in Prague to the US Department of State,
containing observations of a US Embassy official in Eastern Slovakia

Confidential

Prague 08482

Subject: Civic Forum active in Eastern Slovakia; Communist official expresses
readiness for change

1. Confidential – entire text.

2. Summary. Citizens' political activity in the Eastern Slovak Region of Czechoslovakia is increasing just as it has in the capital, Prague. Activists in the region are coordinating their demands with Citizens' Forum groups in other major cities of the country. At the same time, local Communists are speaking in conciliatory tones, in step with the Prague leadership. Issues in the relatively prosperous Eastern Region will likely focus on the environment and on privilege of the Communist hierarchy, as well as basic human rights. End Summary.

3. Excitement was running high at the headquarters of the Civic Forum in Kosice, seat of the Eastern Slovak Region near the Soviet border, when CONOFF visited on November 29. (Note: In Eastern Slovakia, there seemed to be a blurring of distinction between the supposedly Czech Civic Forum and Slovak Public Against Violence. End note.) Prominently located in an art museum on the town square, the hastily-created office is a hub of activity.

4. Scores of citizens stood outside in 20 degree fahrenheit temperatures to watch videos of the student march and "massacre" of November 17. Inside, organizers manned tables where people lined up to add their signatures to petitions calling for an investigation of the November 17 events and supporting the demands of Civic Forum. As in Prague, roughly typed lists of demands, accounts of November 17, and hand-lettered placards calling for free elections were posted on most of the shop windows around the square. Czechoslovak flags were much in evidence.

5. Kosice was the first stop on CONOFF's threeday field trip to visit Social Security recipients in Eastern Slovakia. The itinerary wound through Michalovce, Svidnik, Bardejov, Poprad, and included an unscheduled stop in Bratislava when the Prague airport was closed due to fog.

6. Organizers in Kosice told CONOFF that they had collected 8,000 signatures in their office supporting Civic Forum and that 200 workplaces had presented petitions of support. Up to 80,000 people participated in demonstrations over the last week in Kosice. The organizers seemed optimistic, energetic and confident. Although careful to ask for identification, they said they had experienced no police harassment. Paper and materials for publishing were in short supply. The Kosice Civic Forum in constant

contact with the Prague and Bratislava organizations, and indeed, its demands are virtually the same as in the larger cities: investigation of November 17 and punishment of those responsible, guarantees of basic human rights, an end to Communist domination of all institutions, and free elections, inter alia. One additional demand is for an investigation of the violent dispersal of a demonstration in March 1988 in Bratislava. Nowhere in Slovakia did CONOFF note any slogans, demands or symbols which revealed any anti-Czech or nationalistic Slovak sentiment.

7. All of the other towns visited by CONOFF showed signs of civic political activism as well, with the possible exception of Svidnik, a grim, Soviet-style agglomeration of recently constructed highrise apartment blocks and seedy shopping areas. Flyers and placards were ubiquitous. Demonstrations in Michalovce had drawn 7,000 people. There CONOFF heard spontaneous shouts of "free elections" from high spirited young men on the streets. The Archbishop of Slovakia, Jan Sokol, has issued a strong statement in support of human rights and against oppression. The senior citizens whom CONOFF visited were aware of the turmoil in the cities, but remained mostly concerned with the usual problems of their daily lives, an attitude which was reflected in the quietness of the villages. None of the senior citizens seemed sorry to see change come, however.

8. In Bardejov and Bratislava, the Communists were beginning to get into the act, with professionally printed window signs saying "Prestavba-yes, Dialog-yes, Liquidation of Socialism-no" and "We will talk with anyone who wishes our socialist country well." Such signs were well outnumbered by the opposition. One young, well-educated, hitchhiker whom CONOFF gave a short ride also expressed the opinion that he did not want to see the return of capitalism.

9. In the swank (by Czechoslovak standards) ski resort town of Stary Smokovec, CONOFF met an angry young man, the head waiter at his hotel. The waiter was incensed at the privileges held by the Communist elite, and their high-handed manner of treating the people. His father had lost his waitering job when he insisted on charging the local boss for his meals. The waiter resented that a comfortable 300-seat wide-screen theater was included in the new Party building, while Poprad (the larger town nearby) had only one theater where the seats were broken and the screen narrow. He noted with satisfaction that the Communists had recently decided to allow the public to use their new theater.

10. Upon arrival in Kosice, CONOFF interviewed Mr. Sopko, Vice Chairman of the Eastern Slovak Region. Mr. Sopko's views indicated that there was no lack of communication between Prague and Kosice on the Communist side, either. Over a sumptuous lunch in the National Committee's "Hospitality House", located on a hill overlooking Kosice, Sopko stated with unfeigned concern that the Communists had made mistakes which had cost them much of their support among the people. Sopko took pains to present himself and the National Committee as people who are open to dialogue and to change. A first meeting with Civic Forum was scheduled for that very afternoon. Sopko said he had spent four hours the previous day in a public meeting in his local constituency of Strazske, site of a large chemical and vulcanized rubber

factory. According to Sopko, the people's questions focused mainly on environmental concerns, and Sopko elaborately explained to CONOFF the non-toxic nature of the plant's current activities. He described his region as a poor one, and discussed the possibilities for increased Western tourism in the Tatra Mountains, consistent with preservation of the ecology in the area.

11. The "number one problem" for the Eastern Slovak Region, according to Sopko, is the Gypsies. He said that they had reached as much as 30 percent of the population in some areas. It was difficult to find teachers for all-Gypsy schools in such areas. Sopko's attitude indicated a real distaste and bewilderment at the inability of the Gypsies to assimilate into Czechoslovak society. CONOFF noted many Gypsies on the streets in the Slovak towns he visited. He passed at least one Gypsy village which, in stark contrast to the neat, gray bourgeois housing of the Slovaks, reminded him of a Mexican village with its pastel pink and blue, slapdash stucco houses separated by muddy alleyways.

12. Sopko professed to be unconcerned about the recently proposed abolishment of the constitutional provision of the Communist Party's leading role in society, pointing out that this provision had been in the Constitution only since the early 1960's. He stated that the members of the National Committee were all prepared to vacate their places and to accept the result of elections which replaced them with non-Communists. In fact, there already were non-Communists on the National Committee, he said. Elections are scheduled for May 1991, but he expected them to take place sooner.

13. Despite Sopko's characterization of Eastern Slovakia as a poor area, the standard of living of the people seems reasonably good. Comfortable, well-built, detached single-family houses are common in the rural area. Automobiles are also common. Stocks of quality food and of other consumer goods seem adequate, in that shelves are full and CONOFF saw only one or two short lines at stores. People on the street are well and warmly dressed. Air quality is good. Apparently natural gas has substantially replaced brown coal as fuel, because, despite the bitter cold, CONOFF saw few of the plumes of dirty smoke which are common in Bohemia.

14. Eastern Slovakia is not isolated from the winds of change sweeping over Czechoslovakia as a whole. As a rule of thumb, the larger the city, the more civic activity is visible. To CONOFF, the area seemed prosperous, and the Communists can point to undeniable improvement in the standard of living over the past 40 years. Discontent in this area focuses on environmental issues and resentment of the Communists' privileges, as well as general repression of human rights.

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Source: National Security Archive, Soviet Flashpoints set.

Not for citation or publication without permission.

Document 90

Prague, December 5, 1989

Telegram from the US Embassy in Prague to the US Department of State,
expressing doubts about the CPCz's ability to cope with the political situation in
Czechoslovakia

Confidential

Prague 08507

Subject: CPCz in disarray and Urbanek may not be the man to put the pieces back
together

1. Confidential – entire text.

2. Summary. CPCz Urbanek's visit to Moscow December 4 to be briefed with other Warsaw Pact leaders on the superpower summit and his meeting there with Gorbachev may boost his local standing. Urbanek will need all the support he can get, however, if he is to heal the divisions now appearing in the CPCz and turn around the Party's current disarray. A new draft action program seems not to have gone far enough to re-establish the Party's popular credibility or authority. Conservatives in the Central Committee and in other Party organizations have limited the new CPCz leadership's ability to respond flexibly to the popular demands of the opposition Civic Forum. An extraordinary Party congress which could be held as early as December 20 may be meant to remove 1968-era hardliners from the Central Committee. Contacts warn us that the congress may not necessarily have a reformist outcome, since many of the regional conferences from which its delegates will be elected are still controlled by conservatives. End summary.

3. Over the past two weeks the CPCz has appeared in disarray, its new leadership apparently unable to prevent splits in the Party as witnessed by the creation of the new "Democratic Forum" movement. Nor has the leadership been able to act quickly to remove the discredited, hardline figures in its Central Committee who have led it to its current low state of popularity and authority. A significantly telling event this weekend was the decision of the state-wide congress of agricultural cooperatives to pass a resolution supporting an agricultural workers Party. The congress apparently felt it could no longer rely on the CPCz to protect its very vested interests. (Note. That decision may also have been sparked as well by a Civic Forum speaker at the congress who, amid boos and hooting, called for the re-privatization of agriculture. End note.)

A new action program

4. On December 1 the CPCz attempted to take the initiative by announcing a new draft action program. Interestingly, the program was sent by the Presidium to district and regional Party organizations for discussion but will not be considered by the Central Committee when it meets later this month, but by an extraordinary Party congress. The Soviet political counselor has told us that new CPCz chief Urbanek would never get a majority of the present Central Committee to support the draft.

5. The draft document is nothing less than an aboutface from the policies of "normalization" which have guided the CPCz for more than twenty years. This late conversion, however, is unlikely to produce any new popular credibility for the Party and the document's basic points amount to "catch up", not getting ahead of the current Czechoslovak political curve. The document's points include:

– 1968. It concedes the inevitable and recognizes the 1968 invasion as a mistake which halted the renewal of socialism going on in Czechoslovakia at that time. The "Pouceni", the official version of the Prague-Spring events, is to be pitched. The program waffles on the question of rehabilitation of those purged after 1968, suggesting that only those who stayed "honest" to Communism in the intervening twenty years should be readmitted to the Party. (Note. The Soviet political counselor tells us, however, that new Party Presidium member Miroslav Zajic has already been discussing with some members of the Obroda (or Socialist Renewal) group about their possible readmission to the Party. End note.)

– The People's Militia. The Party accepts that the People's Militia should be subordinated to the Government. (Note. The Government announced as of December 2 that the Militia was to begin being disarmed. Its weapons are being stored in military-controlled armories.)

– Human rights. The Party supports redrafting and strengthening various pieces of human rights legislation including granting every group the right to publish freely and ending the Party's control of the media.

– Economy. The document rejects any return to capitalism, though it does not clearly address the question of private ownership.

– Elections. The Party talks of being an "equal" partner in the political system, but it makes no commitments on free elections.

– Foreign policy. The document makes predictable statements on adherence to international commitments, including the Warsaw Pact.

Cadres on the agenda of an extraordinary Party congress

6. Part of the CPCz's current trouble in responding to events is rooted in its cadre policies of the past twenty years. These focused on admitting conformists more accustomed to working in the formalized structures of the apparatus than in open politics. Of the generation of "young wolves" from which many observers had expected Jakes' successors to come, only one has survived the past few weeks with any credit. That is new Presidium member and former youth leader Vasil Mohorita.

7. Mohorita is the only one in the new leadership who was ready to face students, demonstrators, as well as the press in the current days. In short, he acted like a real politician in the more freewheeling public life which has developed.

8. New CPCz leader Urbanek has not acquitted himself well in these terms. His performances talking with factory workers have proved wooden and his speeches have included hardline statements on retaining the People's Militia, etc. Only days before the Presidium would be retracting them in its draft action program. Democratic Forum representatives have described him as weak and not operating with a free hand since he lacks the support of the Central Committee.

9. But before the Party can hope to improve its image or bring in new blood from outside sources such as Obroda, it will have to complete the process of cleaning house of its discredited hardliners. The retirement of the 1968-era personalities from the Central Committee is the principal objective of an early Party congress. These figures continue to serve as a brake on the new Presidium's ability to respond flexibly to political events, like the Civic Forum's demands for a new "coalition" Government, or rehabilitation of ex-Communists. It is rumored that the date of the congress could be moved up from January 26 (announced by Urbanek after the last plenum) to as early as December 20. Such a proposal may be put before a Central Committee session scheduled for December 14-15.

10. The Presidium has already acted to begin the process of electing congress delegates. This will be done in an accelerated way by cutting basic Party organizations out of the process. District Party Committees will meet December 9 or 10 to vote on representatives to regional conferences. These conferences, to be held December 16 or 17, will in turn elect congress delegates.

11. A CPCz contact has warned us, however, not to presume reformist results from the congress. It could well elect a younger Central Committee, but one equally as conservative as the present one. The hardline control of positions at the regional level, particularly in places like Slovakia outside Bratislava, and heavy industrial regions like Ostrava in the Czech Lands, makes the outcome uncertain.

The new Democratic Forum

12. The new Democratic Forum is something of a wild card in the Party's future. The Forum now counts some 40,000 CPCz members among its supporters. EMBOFFS in contact with Democratic Forum figures have found them driven by a fear for their own personal political survival. Democratic Forum members do not underestimate the possibility of Party hardliners hanging on for as long as possible, and dragging the CPCz into oblivion in the process. Democratic Forum members have reacted, somewhat contradictorily, to the CPCz's new draft action program with derision, seeing in it an attempt by the current CPCz leadership to steal their clothes. In fact, it follows the Democratic Forum's eight-point program rather closely.

13. The Democratic Forum is stretching out feelers in all directions. They are themselves trying to develop links with Obroda as well as the Civic Forum, attempting to burnish their reformist image in the process. Our Democratic Forum contacts take comfort from the thought that Czechoslovakia has a long "social democratic" tradition. This, they say, will ensure that one big party of the left, not necessarily the CPCz, will emerge from the current political maneuverings and provide a safe political harbor for them.

Comment

14. Gorbachev's reception of Urbanek in Moscow on December 4 for the Warsaw Pact summit briefing may boost his standing locally. The Soviet leader's rejection of the 1968 invasion certainly was welcome support of the Party's draft action program.

Moreover, local reporting of the Moscow meeting had the Czechoslovak "comrades" informing Gorbachev of developments here, specifically their resolve "to get rid of conservatism" and have the CPCz "work as a force of renewal with all who support the values of socialism and democracy". That would appear a direct attack on 1968 figures and an outstretched hand to groups like Obroda. But Urbanek faces a tremendous task in trying to pull a disintegrating CPCz together. There appear many in his own party who doubt he is the man to do it.

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Source: National Security Archive, Soviet Flashpoints set.

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Document 91

Prague, December 5, 1989

Proposal from the Coordinating Centre of the Civic Forum
to the President of the Republic,

for an extensive amnesty for political opponents of the régime who had been subjected
to judicial persecution

The Coordinating Centre of the Civic Forum, at the suggestion of the Committee for the Defense of the Unjustly Prosecuted, submits the following demands:

The President of the CSSR must promptly, by December 10, 1989, at the latest, declare amnesty for all persons whose alleged criminal act falls exclusively under the following articles of criminal law. These articles serve solely for political repression or are such that, although meant by lawmakers to prosecute a certain serious criminal act, they have been misused in recent years by judicial practice solely for political repression.

We therefore propose a declaration of amnesty with the following and extent:

Art. I

I hereby order that prosecution not begin, and if begun, to halt it, of the criminal acts of subversion of the Republic (sec. 98 of Criminal Law), likewise in relation to damaging a state of the international socialist system (sec. 99), incitement (sec. 100), misuse of religious function (sec. 101), defamation of the Republic and its representatives (sec. 102 and sec.103), defamation of a state of the international socialist system and its representatives (sec. 104), illegally leaving the Republic (sec. 109), illegal entry into the territory of the Republic (sec. 110), violation of regulations on international flights (sec. 111), harming the interests of the Republic abroad (sec. 112), removal of objects of economic purpose (sec. 116), illegal business activity (sec. 118), attack on a state organ (sec. 152/2), attack on a public official (sec. 156/2), obstructing the exercise of the powers of a public official (sec. 156a), condoning of a criminal act (sec. 165), hindering the execution of an official decision (sec. 171, subsection 1c), preventing the supervision of Church and religious societies (sec. 176), defamation on the basis of race, nationality, and conviction (sec. 198 b), non-fulfilment of military duty (sec. 267), failure to serve in the armed forces (sections 269 and 270), and threatening the political and moral state of a military unit (sec. 288), committed before the day of this decision.

Art. II

I hereby order that hearings on misdemeanours according to sec. 6a) and c), Law no. 150/69 of the Legal Code, not be held, and if already begun, that they be halted.

Art. III

I commute unconditional sentences of imprisonment or their remainders, if they were applied before the date of this decision, for criminal acts set forth in Art. I and misdemeanours set forth in Art. II of this decision, with the effect that from the day of this decision henceforward the offender is considered never to have been convicted.

Art. IV

I commute sentences of imprisonment conditionally postponed, unserved sentences of correctional measures, executed and unexecuted financial penalties, sentences of deportation and forbidden entry into the country, assessed, even independently, before the day of this decision for criminal acts set forth in Art. I and misdemeanours set forth in Art. II of this decision, with the effect that the offender is considered never to have been convicted.

For the Coordinating Centre of the Civic Forum:
Ladislav Lis, Petr Pospíchal

Source: Institute of Contemporary History Archive, Prague, KC OF record group, Civic Forum documents. Published in Jiří Suk (ed.), *Občanské fórum*, vol. 2, (Prague, 1998), pp. 90–1.

Translated from the Czech by Todd Hammond.

Document 92

Prague, December 5, 1989

Telegram from the US Embassy in Prague to the US Department of State, with, among other things, a mistaken interpretation of the Civic Forum decision to delegate its representatives directly to the Federal Government, and the possibility of another general strike

Confidential

Prague 08513

Subject: Civic Forum reverses policy and will participate in elections

1. Confidential – entire text.
2. Summary. The Civic Forum, reacting with disappointment and anger to the composition of the new Government, has announced that it will endorse candidates in future elections. The announcement marks a reversal of policy for the Forum which before had stated it would not directly participate in elections. The Forum has also announced a general strike for December 11 to pressure changes in the composition of the Czechoslovak Government. Eleven Czech Republic Ministers resigned on December 4, and Civic Forum representatives believe the new Czech Government is likely to include a majority of Ministers who are not CPCz members. In other developments, students are continuing their strike, efforts are being made to form an independent Labour Union from existing worker strike committees, and the Civic Forum has called for "compromised" members of the Federal Assembly to resign. End summary.

The Civic Forum to participate in elections

3. The Civic Forum, disappointed and angered by the composition of the new GOC (Prague 845), has responded by announcing that it will endorse candidates for as yet uncalled elections. The announcement came during a December 4 rally on Wenceslas Square attended by some 200,000 persons. The announcement was a joint one with the Forum's Slovak counterpart, the Public Against Violence.
4. The announcement marks a radical change in the nature of the Civic Forum, which until Monday had resolutely claimed it had no intention of becoming a political party or directly engaging in electoral politics. Civic Forum sources told us that although disappointment over the composition of the new Government played a part in the Forum's decision, in fact pressure from the membership of the Forum had been growing for the Forum to present a clearer political profile. In particular, local chapters of the Forum have complained that the Forum was not displaying the type of leadership they believed needed to combat so-called "neo-Stalinist forces".
5. The Forum itself does not know by what process its list of endorsed candidates will be formed. The Forum has stated that it hopes to choose candidates from political structures which are already in existence (e.g., Democratic Initiative) as well as candidates from political structures which might be formed. However, as we understand it, the candidates would be clearly identified as Civic Forum candidates.

After the election, however, any candidates elected would be free to form themselves into whatever political factions or blocks they choose, and the Civic Forum would not try to impose any ironfisted Party discipline.

6. The Forum has promised that it will cooperate with local chapters of the Forum and strike committees in choosing candidates. The Forum has stressed the importance of the media in the process and has stated that it is committed to giving everyone who is interested in the selection process an opportunity to express themselves, but Forum leaders frankly admit they do not yet know how they will structure the selection process.

7. The elections for which the Forum will be offering candidates have not been announced. Though individual members of the CPCz Presidium have indicated free elections are in order, neither the GOC nor the CPCz have officially committed themselves to free elections. Forum leaders nonetheless believe free elections are a foregone conclusion and that the only issue is when such elections are to be held. Forum leaders are demanding elections no later than July 1990, but also are opposed to "snap elections" for which the Forum and other opposition political forces would be unprepared.

8. Civic Forum sources tell us that Vaclav Havel opposed the Forum's entry into electoral politics. Among those cited as the most prominent advocates of the Forum's new policy are Jiri [sic] Jicinsky and Petr Pithart. Jicinsky is a constitutional lawyer who lost his position in the post-1968 normalization process, and Pithart is an historian/political scientist who was an influential political adviser during the Prague Spring. (Note. We have also learned that Zdenek Mlynar has returned to Vienna, but do not know if he had any influence concerning the Civic Forum's change of policy. End note.)

General strike called

9. To underscore its dissatisfaction with the new GOC "coalition" Government and to strengthen its hand in on-going negotiations with representatives of the Federal Government, Czech Government, and the National Front (see paras 10–16), the Civic Forum has called for another general strike on Monday, December 11. The strike will probably last no more than two hours, although exact times for the strike have not been set. Civic Forum sources emphasize that the strike again will be an act of political symbolism and is not intended to cause damage to the Czechoslovak economy.

Discussions with the GOC

10. Civic Forum representatives met with representatives of Prime Minister Adamec's Office on December 4 to discuss further "reconstruction" of the GOC. Those representing the Civic Forum included Vaclav Klaus, Michal Kocab, Martin Simecka, Sasa Vondra, Libor Maly, and Simon Panek. The GOC representatives were First Deputy Prime Minister Bohumil Urban, Oscar Krejci, and Marcel Janes. Civic Forum representatives characterized the meeting as only being "preparatory", and stated that they were awaiting the return of Prime Minister Adamec from Moscow for the next substantive meeting.

11. The key issue at such a meeting, expected to be held later this week, will be changes in the present coalition Government. The Civic Forum is not pressing for wholesale changes of Ministers, but does want changes in the Government's Presidium or so-called "Inner Cabinet" made up of Adamec and his First Deputy and Deputy Prime Ministers (seven individuals). The Civic Forum would be satisfied with an inner cabinet in which Communists make up only a minority. Under the Civic Forum proposal, the Inner Cabinet would be responsible for policymaking, and the remaining Ministers would only implement policies adopted by the Inner Cabinet. The Civic Forum apparently will propose some specific individuals to fill the Inner Cabinet positions.

12. The Civic Forum has created two new committees ("reconstruction" and "shadow cabinet") to help it deal organizationally with the Federal Government. The reconstruction committee will suggest names of persons qualified for ministerial positions, while members of the "shadow cabinet" will be responsible for tracking the activities of their GOC counterparts. Vaclav Klaus heads the reconstruction committee and Valtr Komarek is expected to play a major role in the "shadow cabinet".

13. Other topics to be raised during the meeting with Adamec include problems faced by emigres wishing to return to Czechoslovakia, the rehabilitation of those unjustly treated during the period of normalization, printing facilities for the newspaper Lidove Noviny, and new laws concerning assembly and association. The Forum will again propose abolition of the People's Militia, rather than just its transfer from Party to Government control as has already reportedly been done.

Discussions with the Czech Government

14. Vaclav Havel and other representatives of the Civic Forum met Czech Government Premier Frantisek Pitra on Monday to discuss the composition of a new Government of the Czech Socialist Republic. The meeting followed the announcement that 11 Czech Republic Ministers had submitted their resignations to Pitra.

15. The Civic Forum representatives were upbeat concerning their discussions with Pitra. They refused to say whether they had suggested specific names of individuals to fill the now vacant ministerial positions, but did say they expected that probably a majority of the positions would be filled by persons who are not CPCz members.

Discussions with the National Front

16. A Civic Forum delegation (Vaclav Benda, Petr Pithart, Martin Klima) also met with representatives of the Central Committee of the National Front on December 4. The Forum delegates were disappointed by the meeting. They indicated that the National Front "is without a concept" and that its representatives were not prepared for the meeting, nor did they bring topics to the meeting for discussion.

Corruption and responsibility for 1968

17. The Civic Forum has asked that a commission be formed to examine the role of individual Czechoslovak officials in the 1968 invasion. The Forum would expect that such examination include legal, political, and moral elements. On the broader issue of

possible corruption of public officials, the Civic Forum has not yet taken a stand nor made demands, although its press spokesman has said that the Forum expects that any official who violated criminal law during his tenure in office should be prosecuted.

Student strikes continue

18. Students have indicated that they will continue with their strike. They say that although the leading role of the CPCz has been abolished in law, the composition of the new Government indicates that the Party is in fact attempting to maintain its political monopoly, and as a consequence the students will remain on strike.

19. Student representatives have also complained that some striking students outside Prague have been threatened with expulsion for their activities. First Deputy Premier Urban during his meeting with Civic Forum representatives indicated surprise at such developments and stated the GOC would take a position opposing such threats.

Free trade unions

20. Plans have also been announced for the formation of an independent Labor Union in Czechoslovakia. Those organizing the union will attempt to use the various strike committees already established as the union's basic building blocks. In a related development, Czechoslovak Television featured an interview with the leader of a Communist Party cell in one factory who indicated that the cell's members had decided to disband and urged other cells in workplaces to do the same.

Calls for resignations

21. The Civic Forum has called for the resignation from the Federal Assembly of all "compromised" individuals. Among those named by the Forum as compromised are Jan Fojtik, Marie Kabrhelova, Milos Jakes, Vasil Bilak, Zdenek Ceska, Alois Indra, Karel Hoffmann, Miroslav Stepan, Milan Vaclavik, and Jozef Lenart. There are also various campaigns in individual electoral districts to recall Assembly representatives.

22. Comment. The Civic Forum's decision to enter into electoral politics should dramatically change the face of any Government which might emerge after free elections. Prior to the Civic Forum announcement a number of new political parties had been formed (e.g., Obroda, Green Party, Social Democratic Party, Democratic Initiative), but none seemed especially capable of capturing the following of a large portion of the population. Many observers were predicting that a coalition-type Government would have to be formed in which no one political group would dominate. (A possible parallel to the situation in Czechoslovakia during the first republic has been drawn.) However, the decision of the Civic Forum to sponsor candidates could mean a future Government (assuming future free elections) dominated by Civic Forum representatives.

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Source: National Security Archive, Soviet Flashpoints set.

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Document 93

Prague, December 6, 1989, early morning

Record from session of the coordinating bodies of the Civic Forum
and Public Against Violence,

in which, among other things, Havel and Kocáb explain why Civic Forum has been
negotiating with Premier Adamec (excerpt)

[After both sides had informed each other of the situations in their republics, the
discussion was opened]

Ján Čarnogurský: May I ask a question? Why have you been so oriented towards
Adamec in particular?

Ján Budaj: That's a frequently asked question in Slovakia.

Václav Havel: Adamec has been the only guy who talked with us, who has been
dealing with us at all, for the last ten days or so. We have had three or four meetings.
And it seemed that Adamec could guarantee some kind of continuity of power from
one interim government to another. Then somebody else would be Premier, and there
would be an interim government again until free elections, and what's more [...] the
revocation of the leading role of the Party, which we, of course, told him must happen,
and he said, "How am I supposed to do that? I'm not even a representative!" And we
said, "The Government has a right to initiate constitutional proposals." And he said,
"How should I formulate that?" Zdeněk [Jičínský] gave it to him written out, and sure
enough, the Federal Assembly did it the next day. They started releasing political
prisoners. In this kind of hectic, dramatic confusion, where we were yelling and
screaming at each other in all kinds of ways, it just happened that he started meeting
some of our demands.

We never told him that he had any kind of direct support from us, but we felt that if
he meets them, there's no reason not to continue dealing with him as a partner. And he
started meeting them. And then he formed his idiotic Government, which made the
entire population in Bohemia and Moravia angry, and, I suppose, in Slovakia as well.
And then he went to Moscow, came back, and realized that he won't make it with this
Government, and so he invited us again. And we started from the assumption that,
before we draw up and write down a proper government, there will be a transition
period in which Adamec will be some sort of link between the totalitarian system and
the future democracy. We said that free elections should be in July. And probably in
the main period of the transition up to these free elections there would be
a government other than Adamec's. But, so that a total constitutional crisis doesn't
occur – because we are demanding the resignation of the President and because the
Chairman of the Federal Assembly has resigned – it seemed to us, that during this crisis
period before the other government takes over, it should continue in the form of
Adamec. Is that right? Or am I getting confused at this late hour?

Michael Kocáb: I would add from another point of view that at the beginning,
when we were first making these demands, and [Miroslav] Štěpán was still in office,
we had precise information that they were weighing the possibility of a military
intervention. And a few times they were really operating on that basis. And so the

separation of the Government from the Politburo (who were, I think, acting very aggressively) also seemed good from that point of view. And Adamec, by gaining some kind of independence and starting to play his own hand, was definitely keeping his finger on the armed forces button, but in the positive sense, so that here it wouldn't happen that –

Havel: He confirmed that to me directly in the private conversation. I asked what was going on with these coups which they – the StB and the Armed Forces – keep getting ready to hold. And he said, "As long as I have a say in the matter, there won't be anything like that, but [...]".

Source: audiotape, archive of Vladimír Hanzel, published in Jiří Suk (ed.), *Občanské fórum*, vol. 2, (Prague, 1998), p. 93.

Translated from the Czech by Todd Hammond.

Document 94

Prague, December 6, 1989

Statement of the coordinating bodies of the Civic Forum and the Public Against
Violence,
urging the removal of the Prosecutors General of the CSSR and CSR

In recent days, we, along with the political parties, have been trying to find a way out of this general crisis, which is threatening to turn into a constitutional crisis. We do not wish to allow such a situation to come about, and therefore are ever more intensively meeting with the Premier of the Federal Government on forming a new government which will correspond to the needs and interests of the public, not only in composition, but with a programme and a determined effort to save our statehood, national economy, environment, and the moral foundations of society. Representatives of the non-partisan majority of Czechoslovak citizens must have seats in this Government, alongside members of existing political parties.

In this context we regard it especially urgent that the appropriate organs immediately remove Dr. [Ján] Pješčak from the office of Procurator General of the CSSR, and Prosecutor General of the CSR Dr. [Jaroslav] Krupauer. These persons are utterly compromised, not only by their unacceptable handling of the investigation into the intervention of the SNB [National Security Corps] forces on 17 November 1989, but especially by the fact that as procurators they created repressive institutions, regardless of once elementary moral and legal principles. Under their leadership the Office of the Procurator served the power interests of the ruling Party rather than upholding the law. With all our resolve we state, that if at least minimal room for vital change in the area of the Prosecutor's Office is to be created, the newly-named Procurators General of the CSSR and CSR must not be members of any political party!

Václav Havel

Milan Kňažko

The Civic ForumThe Public Against Violence

Addressed to:

1. Dr. Gustáv Husák, President, CSSR, Prague Castle
2. Presidium of the Federal Assembly, Prague
3. Presidium of the Czech National Council, Sněmovní 2, Prague 1

Source: Institute of Contemporary History Archive, Prague, KC OF record group, CF documents. Published in Jiří Suk (ed.), *Občanské fórum*, vol. 2, (Prague, 1998), p 103

Translated from the Czech by Todd Hammond.

Document 95

Prague, December 7, 1989

Telegram from the US Embassy in Prague to the US Department of State,
containing Vaclav Klaus's views on Civic Forum and his own position both in it
and in the next Government

Confidential

Prague 08550

Subject: Czechoslovak Civic Forum official sees Forum evolving toward political party

1. Confidential – entire text.

2. Summary. Civic Forum member Vaclav Klaus considers that political developments in Czechoslovakia are now irreversible. He also sees the Forum moving in the direction of a political party despite feelings by some Forum leaders that the organization should remain out of politics. Klaus also sketched out structural changes in the Forum, including the establishment of committees to handle negotiations on revising Federal Government membership, creating a "shadow cabinet", and on handling foreign contacts. He thought that economic reform would remain on the back-burner for the near term. With most economic effort being focused on preventing inflation through use of a tight monetary policy. He had a low opinion of the "Democratic Forum" wing of the CPCz and of the Greens, whom he thought might be a Communist fifth column. End Summary.

3. DCM hosted lunch December 5 for Forecasting Institute and Civic Forum member Vaclav Klaus. Klaus' colleagues Valtr Komarek and Vladimir Dlouhy had also accepted invitation, but had to regret at the last minute. Klaus himself was barely able to come, having just finished one of many media interviews (this one with ABC), and he was clearly very pressed for time. POLEC Counselor and ECONOFF also attended the luncheon.

4. Klaus said that in his view political developments, which he stressed were constantly evolving, were now irreversible in Czechoslovakia. He cited three factors which he felt supported this position.

– He believed none of the hardline Communists pushed out of the Party Presidium were strong enough personalities to be able to manage affairs from behind the scene.

– He and other Forum members had recently met with the commander (Zacharias) of the Western Bohemian Military Command in Tabor. The commander had expected dissidents or "artsy" types and so were impressed at the serious level of the Forum representation. They made it clear that they had no intention of intervening in the political process, and Klaus came away from the meeting optimistic that this was true.

– He had heard a recent news item on radio to the effect that a local factory Communist Party Committee had decided on its own initiative to dissolve itself. He thought that that would be repeated in great numbers and thus perceived it as a very significant event.

5. On the Forum itself, he saw rapid movement from the view still held by Vaclav Havel and some other members that it should not get directly involved in the political process. Instead, the forum seemed to be going in the direction of becoming a political party, as was being advocated by such members as Jiri [sic] Jicinsky, Petr Pithart and Klaus himself. As one example, he noted that the Forum had refused to recommend nominees for the Federal Government created over last weekend, but had become involved in the naming of the Czech Government December 5. (Klaus even said that he had been on Prime Minister Adamec's list for a cabinet appointment, but so far had turned it down at least in part because of the Forum's then strategy of being outside politics.) He ascribed this evolution of the Forum at least in part due to pressure from local "Forums" who wished the organization to take a more active and decisive role.

6. Structurally, management of the Forum was now divided between an Action Committee, whose numbers tended to vary but were usually around 12–15, and a plenary now scaled down to 30–40 people representing various political and social groupings. The plenary was technically the higher body, but most decision-making was done in the Action Committee – of which Klaus was a primary member. In addition, there were now three new working committees: one on reconstruction of a new Government; a second, putting together a "shadow" cabinet (in which Valtr Komarek was very active); and a third (headed by Martin Palous) to handle foreign contacts – which would include official U.S. visitors.

7. The reconstruction committee was already negotiating with Adamec and Deputy Prime Minister Urban on revisions to the membership of the Government. Klaus indicated that the Forum might back off on its earlier demand that civilians be appointed as Ministers of defense and interior and that the Interior Minister also be a non-Communist. Instead, the Forum had suggested to Urban that it might be satisfactory if the seven Deputy Prime Ministers which make up the Presidium of the Government (sort of an inner cabinet) were divided between the various parties and independent groups, leaving no more than two or three in the hands of the CPCz. (Note: Something along these lines seems to have been done in formation of the new Czech Republic Government – see SEPTTEL. End note.) He also felt personally that the demand for President Husak's resignation was a mistake and might not be continued, though he noted that the Civic Forum had its own hardliners who might still insist on this point.

8. Klaus said that economic reform was clearly now on the back-burner, though he thought that the Government could not wait for elections before turning to the issue. Nonetheless, he did not expect any action on such painful questions as price reform in the near future. Instead, the focus would be on preventing economic instability and particularly inflation. Tight monetary and fiscal policies would be the main weapon in the struggle, but he also thought the Government would move to open the economy to more competition by legislatively ending monopoly rights of state enterprises. He saw the economy opening to state, cooperative and private enterprises. But that the role of the latter would remain small in the near future. He noted, however, that in line with the Forum's economic outlook (which was less free-market than his own), he had drafted the Forum's initial program without using the word "socialism".

9. [excised]

10. [excised]

11. On his own plans, Klaus noted that he had become a political strategist for the Forum rather than an economist. He did not rule out eventually holding a senior position in a new Government, but in line with his own monetarist economics his preference was head of the State Bank rather than Finance Minister.

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Source: National Security Archive, Soviet Flashpoints set.

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Document 96

Prague, December 7, 1989, 12.00 noon

Statement of the Civic Forum Coordinating Centre and the Coordinating Committee of
Public Against Violence,
defending its position in the debate on solving the Government crisis

Yesterday Premier Adamec appeared on radio and television. He indicated that Civic Forum and Public Against Violence are making demands and ultimatums for putting together a government, and are resorting to threats.

This is not true. The Civic Forum and the Public Against Violence are exercising much restraint in negotiating with the Premier. Before the forming of the Government that was declared last Sunday, we had not put forth any particular demands, even though called upon to do so. We suggested only that the composition of the new government reflect the fact that the CPCz has lost not only a constitutionally guaranteed leading role in society, but above all the trust of the public. We also recommended that the new government be a government of experts.

Only afterward, that is to say when the Premier discovered that his new government had not gained the support of the public, and invited us to new talks, did we submit to him – at his express wish – a proposal for the possible reconstruction of the government. We further specified our proposals after agreement with him, and submitted them in writing this morning. We recommend names for filling only seven of twenty-one ministerial posts.

The Premier was the first to begin to talk with us; it is he who wants to reconstruct the Government, and who is responsible for these changes in the eyes of the public. If he submits his resignation, he will still lead the Government until such time as his successor takes his oath as President of the Republic. One way or the other, he is responsible for the work of this Government today.

It is clear that the crisis was brought about by a poorly assembled government, not by us. We are not pushing our proposals, not forcing anyone to hurriedly accept them; we are simply trying, in the interest of the entire society, to help the Premier. Since the way out of the economic crisis is not the halfhearted restructuring conceived by the former leadership, we offer the Premier the efforts of our best economists, who have been working for years on a better alternative. We are not after eternal improvisation and uncertainty, we do not want a constitutional crisis; we want to go the peaceful way of democracy and prosperity. We want the future government to be a government of national salvation, and not catastrophe. We are prepared immediately to turn over to the public our previous proposals, as well as sound recordings of all negotiations.

This evening we will speak on television and radio and explain what we want and why. We will not allow ourselves to be discredited, because we regard the discrediting of our efforts as overlooking the will of the people.

Václav Havel

Source: Institute of Contemporary History Archive, Prague, KC OF record group, Civic Forum documents. Published in Jiří Suk (ed.), *Občanské fórum*, vol. 2, (Prague, 1998), pp. 128–9.

Translated from the Czech by Todd Hammond.

Document 97

Prague, December 7, 1989

Statement of the Civic Forum Coordinating Centre and Coordinating Committee of the
Public Against Violence,
turning directly to the public with a proposal for the composition of the Federal
Government

Fellow Citizens,

We feel the responsibility in today's grave situation to react to yesterday's speech by Premier Adamec. His speech must have given the impression that we are constantly raising our demands, obstructing the necessary reconstruction of the Federal Government, and that we are determined to exacerbate a situation already very tense and long intolerable. This is not so! This morning we issued a joint statement with the Public Against Violence in which we explained all our previous positions. Their purpose was the same: to help the Premier in his difficult task, while assuring that the desires of the public be respected in the overall composition of the Government. Proof of this is the letter that we had written to the Premier before we had the chance to learn the contents of his television appearance. Allow my colleague Peter Miller to acquaint you with the contents of this letter, which was handed to the Premier today at 10.30 a.m.:

Mr. Premier,

As we promised you on Wednesday, December 6, at 10.45, we send you a new and clarified proposal for further changes in the Federal Government. These proposals are different from the previous ones: they are not only more exact, and supported by more thorough consultations, but they are also more extensive. This is because our morning meeting of December 6 with General Secretary of the CPCz Karel Urbánek solidified our impression that the more suggestions we give you, the more we are helping you. This is not a quick, capricious, and unreasonable raising of demands, as it might seem, but an attempt to keep pace with the development of events and public opinion.

For the office of one of the First Deputy Premiers of the Federal Government we recommend Dr. Ján Čarnogurský, whom you have already had the opportunity to meet personally. He is a young Slovak democrat, capable of quick and constructive action, an experienced lawyer whose authority is based mainly on his Christian background.

We believe that besides the First Deputy Premiers you should have, as previously, several other Deputy Premiers whose spectrum of personalities would better represent the distribution of political forces in our society.

Besides the two Premiers of the national governments, you should have in our opinion the following Deputy Premiers:

- 1. A representative of the Czechoslovak People's Party.*
- 2. A representative of the Czechoslovak Socialist Party.*

(The existence of these two Deputy Premiers would demonstrate the continuity of the new structures with the existing concept of the National Front.

3. We further recommend to you the Deputy Director of the Economic Forecast Institute (of the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences) Ing. Vladimír Dlouhý, CSc., member of the CPCz, to the office of Deputy Premier oriented towards the economic sphere and its future. This is the person you and Mr. Urbánek have been calling for, namely, a young, dynamic, and educated professional.

4. Finally, we recommend political scientist Prof. PhDr. Miroslav Kusý for the office of Deputy Premier oriented for issues concerning the political system and the state legislative and executive machinery. This Slovak represents reform-minded Communists.

This assembled "cabinet" (or government in the narrow sense of the term) would understandably indicate that the structure of government is adapted to today's reality.

Concerning ministers, we recommend the following to you:

1. For the office of Foreign Minister, Jiří Dienstbier, a former member of the CPCz, a veteran foreign correspondent from various countries, and a commentator on world events.

2. Although we originally made clear that elimination of Article 4 of the Constitution of the CSSR should in practice mean that at least the Minister of the Interior would not be a member of the CPCz, which was not taken into account either on the federal or national level, we are ready of abandoning this demand in the interest of agreement. We do so of course in the hope that the proposal we have communicated to Mr. Urbánek will be positively received, that State Security would henceforth be under the control of the newly-created government committee, and subordinated to the Deputy Premier for legislation and to the state organs of power. In case you have in mind naming a non-member of the CPCz for post of Interior Minister after all, we are ready to recommend you a very suitable lawyer from the state administration.

3. For the office of Finance Minister, we recommend Ing. Václav Klaus, CSc., an economist knowledgeable of financial issues.

4. For the office of Minister of Labour and Social Affairs we recommend Petr Miller, a leading metalworker from ČKD Prague, who is acquainted with contemporary social issues.

5. For the function of Minister of Minority Affairs we recommend Gyula Popely, who has been concerned with ethnic issues.

We recommend, then, seven persons out of a total of twenty government offices. Yesterday you said that you personally would like to have a government in which roughly half the seats would be held by non-members of the CPCz. We welcome and support your idea. Of the present ministers of your government, Czechoslovak People's Party member Mr. [František] Reichel enjoys our support. In conclusion, we would like to assure you of something we have assured you before: our intention is not to complicate your forming a government, but assist in it. You yourself have more than once called on us to assist in such a way. We would be happy if we could, through our proposal, contribute to your new government being better accepted by the people than the present one.

For the Civic Forum CC
Václav Havel

For the Public Against Violence CC
Milan Křažko

Accountable for accuracy: Michael Kocáb

Fellow Citizens,

I assure you that all of us understand the gravity of the situation, and especially that it is highly urgent to reconstruct the Federal Government in such a way as to not only reflect the composition and interests of the population, but above all to guarantee that there are no social upheavals, no uncertainty or no "economic disruption", as the Premier put it.

We do not wish to allow any segment of the population, including CPCz members, to be unjustly discriminated against! We are aware of the urgent imperatives of the times, which guide us to a responsible, and above all common, course. We have not pressed for any haste in the reconstruction of the Government. If seven days does not seem enough to form a government competent and capable of taking up its assignment, we are willing to carry on further discussions with whoever will be entrusted with the reconstruction of the Federal Government.

In these times of renewed hope for the full revival of the whole of our national community, we cannot merely protest and condemn the barriers from the past; we need to find dignified and effective means that would lead to the fulfilment of efforts to form a prospering and culturally-dignified society, without unnecessary and human and material losses. Of course, for this it is necessary that the state be led by such people as would be able to quickly gain the real trust and respect of the majority. People who would also be a guarantee that today's process of change on the basis of dialogue will never again be interrupted by anyone. We propose that the mission of the Government, which we continue to believe can be formed by us together, be the maintenance and expansion of social and legal security for all strata of society. That it will succeed in leading our crippled national economy in the direction of becoming a functioning and prospering economy.

We do not call for strikes as a tool of political pressure; we wish to prevent needless losses in production, transportation, services, or any of the other areas of our lives. We will not hesitate, however, to declare a protest strike if someone wants to rob people again of their dignity, and deceive them.

We have a great chance to regain a respectable place among the ranks of European countries, and assist the new development towards rapprochement and understanding in the European countries and the world. We have the possibility and the duty to connect to the traditions of democracy, tolerance, social conscience, and creativity of the Czechoslovak people.

Source: Institute of Contemporary History Archive, Prague, KC OF record group, Civic Forum documents. Published in Jiří Suk (ed.), *Občanské fórum*, vol. 2, (Prague, 1998), pp. 132–5.

Translated from the Czech by Todd Hammond.

Document 98
Prague, December 8, 1989
Telegram from the US Embassy in Prague to the US Department of State,
on the resignation of Premier Adamec and its consequences

Limited Official Use

Prague 08599

Subject: Adamec resigns and other developments

1. Limited Official Use – entire text.

2. Summary. Prime Minister Adamec resigned on December 7 to make way for a younger man. Marian Calfa will be Prime Minister ad interim. The Civic Forum accused Adamec of responsibility for the political crisis and said his resignation was an attempt to evade this responsibility. Calfa is not acceptable to the Civic Forum. Plans for a general strike on Monday continue, but it might be called off if an acceptable new Government is appointed. Civic Forum representatives were, as of Friday afternoon, discussing possible presidential candidates (including Havel who has said he would accept the position if offered it) with members of Communist, People's and Socialist Parties.

The CPCz has expelled Jakes and Stepan for their role in the events of November 17, which they deny responsibility for. A meeting between the Defense Minister and a Civic Forum delegation apparently led to a degree of understanding and trust. Foreign Minister Johanes has announced a plan to recall 21 Czechoslovak ambassadors. End summary.

Adamec resigns

3. Prime Minister Ladislav Adamec resigned on Thursday, December 7. The ostensible reason Adamec gave for his resignation was the desire to make way for a younger, stronger man, who could form a Government which had public confidence. However, Adamec on Wednesday had threatened to resign if he felt unable to put together a reconstructed Government which would win public support (Prague 8589). Earlier on Thursday before his resignation, Adamec had also indicated it was impossible to govern in an atmosphere of demands.

Marian Calfa "ad interim"

4. Following constitutional mandate, President Gustav Husak authorized First Deputy Premier Marian Calfa to act as "Prime Minister ad interim" until the appointment of a new Government. Calfa, a Slovak lawyer, was also instructed to conduct talks about reconstructing the Government or composing a new one. The Czechoslovak Constitution vests authority to nominate a new Prime Minister and other Government Ministers in the President. After the appointment, the new Government is required to submit a program to the Federal Assembly and to ask for a vote of confidence.

Civic Forum reacts to Adamec resignation

5. Civic Forum (CF) representatives claim they had no advance knowledge of the Adamec resignation and do not know his reasons for resigning. Forum representatives indicated Adamec failure to put together an acceptable Government last Sunday had led to a political crisis, and that Adamec was attempting to avoid responsibility for the crisis by resigning.

6. Civic Forum representatives also indicated that they do not support Marian Calfa. The CF characterized Calfa as lacking the flexibility and strength needed to deal with the current crisis. As of late Friday afternoon, Calfa had not met with CF representatives to discuss composition of the new Government.

7. The CF also reacted sharply to Adamec' claim that the CF had made demands concerning appointments to specific ministerial positions. CF representatives indicate Adamec had asked them to submit their suggestions concerning ministerial appointments and that they then sent Adamec a letter with a list of seven possible ministers.

8. The seven suggested individuals persons and their positions are:

Jan Carnogursky	First Deputy Prime Minister
Vladimir Dlouhy	Federal Deputy Prime Minister
Miroslav Kusy	Federal Deputy Prime Minister
Jiri Dienstbier	Foreign Minister
Vaclav Klaus	Minister of Finance
Petr Miller	Minister for Labor and Social Affairs
Gulya Popeli [sic]	Minister for Nationalities

The Civic Forum has stated that given the resignation of Adamec it would now support the appointment of Jan Carnogursky to the Prime Minister's position.

9. The Civic Forum on Thursday evening stated it planned to go ahead with a general strike on Monday, December 11, regardless of the composition of any Government which might be announced before that time. CF spokespersons said the general strike would be considered a "celebration" in the unlikely event a Government satisfactory to the CF is formed prior to the strike. On Friday, however, one CF representatives stated that the strike would be called off if an acceptable new Government were formed and President Husak resigned no later than Sunday.

National Front opinion on a new GOC

10. Bohuslav Kucera, Chairman of the National Front (NF), stated the NF believes the new Government should be created on the basis of the broadest national consensus and should reflect current political conditions. The NF specifically recommended the new Premier talk with newly created and rising civic initiatives. Kucera, who is also chairman of the Czechoslovak Socialist Party, expects his Party will have two Ministers in the new Government.

11. Civic Forum representatives now say they have no plans to talk directly with the NF concerning formation of a new Government. The Civic Forum considers the NF too

broad (e.g., it includes non-political social organizations and the Civic Forum is only interested in discussions with real political forces).

Civic Forum and Mohorita discuss possible presidential candidates

12. Husak has thus far not said whether he will step down. Nonetheless, Vaclav Havel was to meet with CPCz Presidium member Vasil Mohorita and representatives of the Socialist and People's Parties Friday afternoon to discuss who should succeed Husak. (Note. It is unclear whether Mohorita was to represent the CPCz or just some faction within it at the meeting. End note.)

Havel would accept Presidency

13. Reporters at a December 7 news conference pressed Vaclav Havel on whether he wanted or would accept, if offered, the position of President. After some to-ing and fro-ing, Havel conceded that if the situation developed that he can only serve the country by accepting the Presidency, he would do it.

CPCz expels Jakes and Stepan

14. The Presidium of the CPCz on December 7 expelled Milos Jakes and Miroslav Stepan from the Party. Jakes and Stepan were expelled for gross political mistakes in the resolving of social tensions, especially the Prague events of November 17.

15. Both Jakes and Stepan have issued statements denying responsibility for the police attack against demonstrators on November 17. However, Jozef Stank, Chairman of a Special Federal Assembly Commission investigating November 17, stated the commission had concluded Jakes and Stepan were politically responsible for November 17.

CPCz Presidium calls for early Congress and Central Committee resignations

16. The Presidium of the Communist Party has called for an Extraordinary Party Congress to meet on December 20–21. Details concerning how delegates to the Congress will be selected were not revealed, although reformers within the Party reportedly hope to devise a scheme of delegate selection which would minimize the influence of regional Party organizations, where conservative influence is still believed to be strong. Also, in another effort to reform the Party, the Presidium asked all Central Committee members of retirement age (60 years) to give up their Central Committee positions.

Civic Forum meets with Defense Minister

17. A Civic Forum delegation led by Vaclav Havel met with Defense Minister Miroslav Vacek on December 6. The CF delegation expressed the concern that conscripts did not have access to sufficient information to properly evaluate the current political situation. CF spokesman stated that during their meeting they had reached a consensus that people do not need to fear the armed forces.

Foreign Minister to recall 21 Ambassadors

18. Foreign Minister Jaromir Johanes has stated he will recall 21 Ambassadors. The recalls are said to be part of an effort to raise the level of professionalism of the Czechoslovak diplomatic corps. Those who are to be recalled are of retirement age. The recall is likely to touch Miroslav Houstecky, the Czechoslovak Ambassador in Washington.

Protection of archives

19. The Civic Forum passed on a proclamation from a group of Czechoslovak archivists who appealed to all their colleagues, particularly those in the Ministry of Interior, to ensure that no documents or other materials are destroyed or spirited away. A representative of the student strike committee offered to provide student guards for all archives. In response to a question, the Civic Forum spokesman admitted that their information that materials were being removed was unverified.

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Source: National Security Archive, Soviet Flashpoints set.

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Document 99

Prague, December 10, 1989, 2.00 p.m.

Speech by Václav Havel on Wenceslas Square,

summarizing the achievements of the citizens' movements, from November 17 till the formation of the Government of National Understanding

Friends,

The great social upheaval which we are living through in our country was called for by the students, who were joined immediately by the artists and the whole cultural community. Exactly three weeks ago, on Sunday 19 November, in the Činoherní klub theatre, Prague, the Civic Forum was formed as an attempt to unify and coordinate all citizens and all social forces which have had enough of the totalitarian system and want at last to behave freely. Since then, many things have happened. The deadly silence of humiliated, suppressed people has been broken by a polyphony of human voices. Many people have called this exciting and dramatic period the "peaceful revolution". History, which was artificially stopped, has suddenly started up with dizzying speed, a speed which surprises us again and again. Historians will one day analyse this period and will tell us what actually took place.

I have been authorized to speak for Civic Forum. This forum took up the original demands of the students and decided to ask that certain important changes be made by International Human Rights Day, which is today. Throughout the country, Civic Forums quickly came into being; a network of strike committees was quickly formed, independent organizations arose, and the mass media worked their way towards freedom of speech. The word "forum" means "town square". Our country has become one big town square where everyone has the opportunity to speak his mind. In Slovakia, at the same time as Civic Forum, a sister initiative the Public Against Violence, began to function and quickly became the real spokesman of the Slovak nation. The Public Against Violence works in close connection with Civic Forum and has the same demands. Under pressure from this great popular upsurge, the political and state leadership have taken some important steps.

Let me try to sum these up:

1. The article concerning the leading role of the Communist Party and Marxism-Leninism as the state ideology was deleted from the Constitution.
2. The most compromised representatives of the old régime led by Miloš Jakeš have resigned from their positions.
3. After many extremely complicated negotiations full of suspenseful twists and turns, the new Government of National Understanding was formed. A short while ago, they took the oath of office before the President of the Republic, and now it is possible to acquaint you with its members. Nine of them enjoy the direct support of Civic Forum and the Public Against Violence. Among them are two members of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, whom we have recommended as members of the Government. There are also two members of the Czechoslovak People's Party who enjoy our full support. We are happy that the first two Deputy Prime Ministers of the Government are Dr. Ján Čarnogurský, one of the genuine political spokesmen of the

Slovak nation, and Valtr Komárek. Along with Deputy Prime Ministers Vladimír Dlouhý and Václav Klaus (also Minister of Finance), they form an economic team which will guarantee genuine economic reform. The half-hearted perestroika of our economy as it has so far been undertaken would mean disaster for our economy. It must quickly, peacefully, and without any social upheavals transform itself into true economic reform. We are happy that the Minister of Foreign Affairs is a signatory of Charter 77 and present spokesman of Civic Forum, Jiří Dienstbier. We are happy that the Minister of Labour and Social Affairs is a worker from the ČKD factory of Prague, Petr Miller. Among the others whom Civic Forum and the Public Against Violence support, we are happy to see our friend Richard Sacher from the Czechoslovak People's Party. The Ministry of the Interior will for the time being be run by the Premier and his two First Deputy Premiers, Ján Čarnogurský and Valtr Komárek. State Security will be incorporated into this ministry and subordinated to a special committee responsible to First Deputy Premier Ján Čarnogurský. The head of the Federal Institute for the Press and Information is Charter 77 signatory Miroslav Kusý. This office will probably be made a ministry of the Government. The Government will be restructured according to the law, several ministries will be merged, several dissolved, and several established for the first time, for example the Ministry of the Environment.

We believe that this Government is rightfully called the Government of National Understanding. It is obviously a provisional government which should lead our country to free elections in which our nations, for the first time after many decades, will freely vote their representatives into all representative bodies.

The Communist Party of Czechoslovakia bears responsibility for the widespread spiritual, moral, political, and economic decline of our country. We therefore call upon it to put its best people forward so that they can help us all lead this country from totalitarianism to democracy.

4. And one final important piece of news: the President of the Republic, Dr. Gustáv Husák, will resign from his office today.

We haven't won yet. But the successes have been great, and they give great hope to us all.

These successes belong to all of us, to both of our nations. Without the spontaneous awakening of our nations, these successes would not have been achieved.

Our peaceful revolution arose from the students', and ultimately the entire nation's, resistance to violence, lies and corruption, intrigues, injustice, mafias, privileges, and persecution. Let us preserve its purity, its peacefulness, its graciousness, and its cheerful and friendly atmosphere!

Let us take care that these values continue to flourish! Let us not permit anyone to sully in any way the beautiful face of our peaceful revolution!

Truth and love must prevail over lies and hatred!

Source: Inforum: *Informační bulletin KC OF*, no. 1, December 12, 1989. Reprinted in Jiří Suk, (ed.), *Občanské fórum*, vol. 2, (Prague, 1998), pp. 202–3.

Translated from the Czech by Todd Hammond.

Document 100

Prague, December 11, 1989

Telegram from the US Embassy in Prague to the US Department of State,
on the new Federal Government under Premier Marián Čalfa, and on the resignation
of President Gustáv Husák

Confidential

Prague 08627

Subject: New Czechoslovak Government sworn in

1. Confidential – entire text.
2. Summary. At the end of this message (para 15), we provide a list of the new Czechoslovak Government and our early impressions of it. This is the first Government in more than 40 years without a Communist majority. CPCz members hold ten of 21 ministries, including the important positions of Prime Minister (Marian Calfa) and Defense (Miroslav Vacek). The "Roundtable" of political groups which produced the current Government was unable to agree on an Interior Minister and responsibility for this ministry is now being shared by the Prime Minister and his two first deputies, Valtr Komarek, in charge of the economy, and former political prisoner Jan Carnogursky, in charge of legislative reforms. The Government is being presented as a transitional team which will prepare for free elections, probably in mid-1990. New faces in the Government include Charter 77 signatory Jiri Dienstbier as Foreign Minister, and Forecasting Institute economists Vladimir Dlouhy and Vaclav Klaus as Chairman of the State Planning Commission and Finance Minister, respectively. President Husak resigned after swearing the new Government in. The Federal Assembly has 14 days to elect a successor. Possible candidates include Vaclav Havel, supported by the Civic Forum, former Prime Minister Adamec, reportedly supported by the Soviets, and Alexander Dubcek. End summary.
3. On December 10 Czechoslovakia's first Government in 41 years not dominated by the Communists was sworn in. Ten of the 21 ministers appointed, including Prime Minister Calfa and Defense Minister Vacek, are CPCz members. Two of those ten (First Deputy Prime Minister Komarek and Deputy Prime Minister Dlouhy), while nominally CPCz members, have been associated with the Civic Forum and can be expected to act more like independents inside the Government. The Government also contains four (two Socialists and two People's Party) members of the legal non-Communist parties and seven without political affiliation. Only three of the ministers, including Prime Minister Calfa, held government positions before this December.
4. In announcing the new ministers, Calfa described them as a Government of National Consensus. He said the Government would only be in place for the period running up to free elections. His personal target for those elections was sometime in mid-1990 but no firm date had yet been agreed. He presented the main tasks of the Government over this interim period as: (1) Taking all the necessary legislative actions to prepare free

elections and to protect civic and human rights; (2) managing the economy in way that assures economic equilibrium and no inflation while preparing for radical economic reforms; and (3) placing the Ministry of the Interior, and particularly the security organs, under strict government control.

5. On this last point Calfa confirmed that the various political groups represented in the "Roundtable" Discussions which produced the new Government had been unable to agree on a candidate for Interior Minister. The Roundtable had decided as a temporary solution for the Ministry to be placed under the joint supervision of the Prime Minister and his two First Deputies (Komarek and Carnogursky). The new Government, he said, would place a priority on re-organizing the Ministry to improve its control of it. This might require separating out elements, such as the security forces, and placing them under different administration.

6. Among the eight Deputy Prime Ministers who along with Calfa make up the inner cabinet or Presidium of the Government, two have been given First Deputy status. These are Valtr Komarek, who will have general charge of the economy, and Jan Carnogursky, who will be responsible for legislative affairs (i.e. political reforms). Both come to their jobs with some expertise. Komarek was director of the Economic Forecasting Institute. Carnogursky is a lawyer and constitutional expert, though his past perspective has been protecting Slovak rights in the federation. We have been told by Civic Forum contacts that Komarek had been angling for the First Deputy Prime Minister slot, but only if given a free hand in the economy under a relatively weak Prime Minister. He apparently views Calfa in that light. (Former Prime Minister Adamec would have expected more hands-on control of the economy.) Carnogursky's appointment is particularly ironic since only a few weeks ago he was in jail in Bratislava facing charges of subversion for his human rights activities.

7. Two other Forecasting Institute members have received portfolios in the area of the economy. Vladimir Dlouhy is now head of the State Planning Commission. Dlouhy is a protege of Komarek's at the Institute and the older man may believe he can continue to exert authority over his 36-year-old former deputy. Vaclav Klaus on the other hand has been at odds with Komarek recently over economics, where he holds more free-market oriented views, and as a political rival. Klaus probably views himself as the man to apply fiscal and monetary discipline to Komarek's broad macro-economic schemes on restructuring the economy. Depending on how seriously Komarek wants to pursue economic reforms in this interim period, the two could clash, with Dlouhy, personal friend to both, caught in the middle and trying to act as conciliator.

8. Two other new ministers are at first glance unusual candidates for their government offices. Petr Miller, the new Labor and Social Affairs Minister, has no past government experience. He comes to the job straight from his work at organizing the strike committee at the large CKD factory in Prague and then coordinating strike activities for the Civic Forum.

9. The new Foreign Minister, Jiri Dienstbier, has written regularly in samizdat on foreign policy as well as in foreign periodicals. This plus his command of several

languages, including English, and work in the 1960's as an overseas Czechoslovak radio reporter seem his main credentials. One of Dienstbier's daunting tasks in the days ahead will be removing the many conservative, hardline figures packed into the MFA by former CPCz Secretary for Foreign Relations Vasil Bilak.

10. At Calfa's press conference on the new Government, he said that Czechoslovakia's future foreign policy would be based on the country's own national interests. It would support the concept of a European Home and honor all its existing commitments. Calfa reiterated that could only take place within the wider European disarmament process.

11. Calfa has also said that Miroslav Kusy, a Slovak dissident, will also be named as head of the Federal Press and Information Office and this could be raised to ministerial rank.

A new President

12. After swearing in this new Government, President Husak resigned from office. The Federal Assembly has 14 days according to the Constitution to nominate and elect a successor. In the interim the Federal Assembly's Acting Chairman will function as President. Calfa has said that the "Roundtable" representing various political forces would be meeting this week to discuss presidential candidates.

13. We understand from Civic Forum contacts that Vaclav Havel would accept a nomination for the presidency, but that other candidates are also in the field. Former Prime Minister Adamec is said to be interested in the job himself and the Soviets are reportedly lobbying in his favor. Alexander Dubcek is also spoken of less frequently as a contender. The Assembly could act on replacing the President as early as Tuesday, December 12, when it is next scheduled to meet.

Comment

14. While Calfa and others are speaking of this as a transitional Government, it can expect to face a number of early problems not associated with preparing for free elections. The economy, for one, could be in a state of disorganization as the "New Economic Rules" go into effect on January 1. One of the impacts of these new rules should be to encourage enterprises to release non-essential staff, leaving the new Government to face the question of unemployment. It is not a mistake that the Socialist and People's Parties are not represented by prominent figures in the new Government. A Socialist contact has told us that his party will keep its links with the Government as slow profile as possible in order not to suffer at the polls next Summer for the possible unpopular decisions it may be forced to take.

15. Below is a list of the new Czechoslovak Government:

Name, party, nationality, position

(Note: People's Party – CSL; Socialist Party – CSS; Communist Party – CPCz; independent – IND. End note.)

Marian Calfa, CPCz, Slovak, Prime Minister

Valtr Komarek, CPCz, Czech, First Deputy P.M.

Jan Carnogursky, IND, Slovak, First Deputy P.M.

Frantisek Pitra, CPCz, Czech, Deputy P.M. and Czech Premier
Miroslav Cic, CPCz, Slovak, Deputy P.M. and Slovak Premier
Frantisek Reichel, CSL, Czech, Deputy P.M. and Chairman of the State Commission for
Science and Tech.
Vladimir Dlouhy, CPCz, Czech, Deputy P.M. and Chairman of the State Planning
Commission
Josef Hromadka, IND, Czech, Deputy P.M. for Culture and Religious Affairs
Oldřich Bursky, CSS, Czech, Deputy P.M. and Minister of Agriculture and Food
Jiri Dienstbier, IND, Czech, Minister of Foreign Affairs
Miroslav Vacek, CPCz, Czech, Minister of National Defense
Vaclav Klaus, IND, Czech, Minister of Finance
Petr Miller, IND, Czech, Minister of Labor and Social Affairs

Not yet confirmed

Name, party, nationality, position (cont'd)

Andrej Barcak, CPCz, Slovak, Minister of Foreign Trade
Frantisek Podlena, CPCz, Czech, Minister of Transport and Communications
Robert Martinko, IND, Slovak, Minister Without Portfolio
Richard Sacher, CSL, Czech, Minister Without Portfolio
Ladislav Vodrazka, CPCz, Slovak, Minister in charge of Metallurgy, Engineering and
Electronics
Frantisek Pinc, CPCz, Czech, Minister for Fuels and Energy
Kvetoslava Korinkova, IND, Czech, Minister-Chairwoman of the People's Control
Commission
Ladislav Dvorak, CSS, Czech, Minister in charge of the Federal Price Office

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Source: National Security Archive, Soviet Flashpoints set.

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Document 101

Prague, December 11, 1989

Telegram from the US Embassy in Prague to the US Department of State, containing inside views of Civic Forum gained at an Embassy dinner party

Confidential

Prague 08674

Subject: Ambassador's December 10 dinner for Civic Forum representatives

Ref: Prague 8480

1. Confidential – entire text.

2. Summary. Last week I invited a number of Civic Forum contacts to dinner at the residence on Sunday, December 10. At that time I did not know a new Government would be announced that day. The dinner turned into something of a victory celebration, though three of those invited were unable to attend (Jiri Dienstbier, Petr Miller and Vaclav Klaus). The three had been appointed Ministers and were occupied that evening with their new duties. Those that were able to come gave me and EMBOFFS some useful insights into the Civic Forum's plans for the future and what help they want from the U.S. Their requests were quite modest and focused on the area of program exchanges. End summary.

3. Among those at dinner on December 10 were Petr Oslzly, a Brno choreographer whom the Forum has used to "stage" its Wenceslas Square and Letna rallies and Monika Pajerova, a student leader, as well as some of our more regular contacts: Martin Palous, Mr. and Mrs. Ivan Gabal, Mr. and Mrs. Ivan Havel, Mr. and Mrs. Petr Pithart, and Mr. and Mrs. Michael Kocab.

Where the Forum is headed

4. The mood at dinner was high, as one would expect, but not euphoric. The group appreciated that the Forum had a long road ahead of it. Their thoughts were fixed on Havel's election to the Presidency, something which could happen in a matter of days, and then the preparation and campaigning for elections next summer.

5. Michael Kocab, who had been instrumental in bringing Prime Minister Adamec in first contact with the Civic Forum, was concerned about the Soviet attitude toward Czechoslovak developments. He had heard the Soviets were actively lobbying for Adamec to replace Husak as President and opposed to Havel's candidacy. Reportedly a CPSU Central Committee member is in Prague to hold discussions with CPCz leaders and offer support to Adamec.

6. Ivan Gabal, a researcher at the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences and Head of the Independent Circle Intellectuals, said he had been appointed campaign manager for Havel's election. Gabal will also be organizing the campaigning for the summer elections, a daunting task for a man with no prior campaign experience. (Note: Unless

the Constitution is changed, Havel could be elected by the Federal Assembly for a full five-year term sometime over the next two weeks. The way some of the Forum members were talking, however, they may propose that a new constitution provide for direct election of the President. In this case Havel might step down in the summer so that a new presidential election would coincide with general elections to the Assembly. End note.)

7. Petr Pithart is to replace Havel as "coordinator" of the Civic Forum. (Note: Pithart has been an early proponent of a more active political role for the Forum. End note.) He and others seem concerned that the Forum's intellectual and artistic image may not go down well in factories and the countryside in next summer's election and are discussing ways of removing this elitist image. As an example of the problem, one guest pointed to friction developing between Petr Miller, the new Labor and Social Affairs Minister, and some of the "academic" economists in the Forum (and now in the new Government) who want to push reforms faster than Miller thinks the workforce is ready to accept.

8. Pithart retains a healthy suspicion of the CPCz even though he feels the Communists are weakly led. Havel was to meet CPCz leader Karel Urbanek a few days ago before the "roundtable" discussions which produced the new Government. Urbanek sent emigre Zdenek Mlynar as an emissary instead, fearing, Pithart thought, a direct meeting with Havel. Mlynar, who had been advising Havel earlier, is now apparently persona non grata at the Civic Forum and is more closely alligning himself with CPCz reform elements.

9. Pithart complained that the Communists are encouraging new political movements, such as the Greens and an Agricultural Workers Party, in an effort to fragment the opposition. The guiding force behind the Agricultural Workers is apparently the Communist director (Cuba) of the Slusovice Cooperative in Moravia.

What the Forum wants from the U.S.

10. When I asked how we as a Government might support the Forum's work, the requests I received were surprisingly modest. Several guests asked simply for access to U.S. news. They are now so busy that they are unable to keep up with the media. They were interested to learn what the U.S. media was saying about Havel and the Forum. I offered to have our P&C Office put together a clipping file for them so that they can keep track of the American press.

11. More significantly, others said the Forum wants to learn from us, particularly in three areas: (A) Management training, (2) journalism and handling the media and (3) the mechanics of democracy and election campaigning. (On the last point I told them they seemed to be doing fairly well without our assistance.) Civic Forum's staffing is so thin, however, that finding the personnel to free up for such exchange programs is a problem. On the question of election campaigning, Forum representatives told us that they frankly expect to play the campaign by ear and will not have the time or personnel to send out of the country for training. In the new year, however, they would like to take advantage of USIS-sponsored management and media programs.

From their point of view it would also be good if U.S. experts could travel here to lecture and not require the Forum to release many critical staff members for travel to the U.S. Forum members like Martin Palous made clear their hope the U.S. would open cultural centers in Prague and Bratislava and offered to help find a building here (see also Prague 8628).

12. I told my guests that we could be flexible in meeting their needs and that I would direct my P&C staff to look into the possibilities for enhancing US-Czechoslovak cultural exchanges in the weeks ahead.

13. Forum representatives also said they were interested in youth and student exchanges over the longer term. The Forum's leaders appreciate that the Czechoslovak generation since 1968 has been cut off from the West and needs to be informed about the country's historical and cultural connections with Europe and North America.

14. Interestingly, no request was made for financial assistance. Much as the Forum did a few weeks ago with Codel Pell, my guess made plain that Czechoslovakia does not want aid and is not yet in Poland's or Hungary's tight economic situation. They believe the country can restructure its economy with its own resources. To the extent these need to be supplemented, they are looking for limited commercial bank credits and foreign investment and want to create economic conditions that will attract both.

15. Neither did my guests raise MFN, though they are clearly interested in expanding trade with the U.S. when the Embassy has spoken to Forum representatives about MFN in the past, they have warned us not to rush into a discussion of MFN with the GOC. They feel there will be time enough to discuss MFN once they are fully satisfied that the dramatic political changes going on here are fully irreversible.

16. This very satisfactory dinner broke up shortly before ten. Several of the guests left to participate in a student meeting in which they hoped to convince students to call off their strike this week. (Note: The Forum has decided that, since the Government has met most of its demands, its December 11 general strike should only be symbolic, a honking of horns and factory sirens at noon. The students, who are upset that a Federal Assembly Commission has so far failed to produce its report on the police action of November 17, want the strike to continue. End note.) Other Forum members were heading off for a late night strategy session over Havel's election as President.

17. Comment. My impression is that the Civic Forum, even if Vaclav Havel moves up to the Presidency, will remain directed by a serious and talented team whose feet are fixed squarely on the ground and their sights on longer term political objectives. We owe them our support and their modest requests seem clearly within our means. Requests for exchanges fit neatly into our existing USIA program framework. An increase in exchanges may require additional Washington funding, however, and the Embassy's P&C Section is now proposing an expanded program along these lines to USIA. Its approval will probably be contingent on additional congressional funding for the President's East European Initiative. Of particular importance will be an ability to move towards establishment of cultural centers here and in Bratislava. I would also note in this connection that adequate Embassy support for the Civic Forum and

pro-democracy developments here will depend on favorable Washington consideration of our submissions (REFTEL) on Embassy Prague's changing resource requirements.

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Source: National Security Archive, Soviet Flashpoints set.

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Document 102
Prague, December 12, 1989
Telegram from the US Embassy in Prague to the US Department of State,
on the issue of the Czechoslovak Presidency

Confidential
Prague 08700

Subject: GOC Federal Assembly may consider popular election of new President
Ref: Prague 8674

1. Confidential – entire text.
2. Summary. A December 12 parliamentary session will elect a new Chairman for the Federal Assembly who will act as President until a successor for Husak is chosen. It now appears that election of a new President could be done by some form of direct vote, but this will require a change in the Constitution. The Assembly may consider this at its session today. The Civic Forum seems to be gearing up for a popular election campaign in favor of its candidate, Vaclav Havel, and others are entering the field. End summary.
3. This evening's (December 12) meeting of the Federal Assembly is scheduled to elect a new Assembly Chairman to replace Alois Indra, who resigned recently. The new Chairman will also function as Acting President of the Republic until the election of a successor to President Husak, who resigned on December 10.
4. It now appears, as Civic Forum members discussed with the Ambassador on December 10, that a move is afoot to elect the new President by some form of direct election, not by the Federal Assembly as specified in the Constitution. The details of how this will be done are not clear. Civic Forum representatives in their meeting with the Ambassador discussed this in terms of a multi-candidate election campaign. CPCz leader Karel Urbanek in a press statement said the Club of Communist Deputies in the Assembly favored a popular referendum on the Presidency. That could mean no more than a confirmation of a candidate elected by the Assembly. The Democratic Forum, the reform wing of the CPCz, has also talked about a direct general election of the President.
5. As the Constitution is presently written, a new President has to be elected by the Assembly within 14 days of death or resignation of his predecessor. That would allow little time for campaigning. (Note. The Civic Forum has already produced a new poster of Vaclav Havel in a relaxed electioneering pose. The poster, while not referring to elections, has materialized all over Prague with the caption, "Truth and Love will Succeed Over Lies and Hate". End note.) It is possible that the Federal Assembly's session today could amend the Constitution in some way to allow for a general election of the President.

6. The number of potential candidates for the election is growing. Besides Havel, former Prime Minister Adamec's candidacy has been put forward by a group of workers at the large CTK [sic] factory in Prague and the Prague City Communist Party Committee has also proposed Adamec. Cestmir Cisar, a Prague Spring-era CPCz leader and more recently founder of the Obroda group, has also been nominated by the Union of Socialist Youth. Alexander Dubcek continues to flirt with the idea of running for the office, if drafted to do so. He has said that he remains a politician who will listen to the will of the people.

7. A popular election of the President might be in the interest of many of those concerned, but for different reasons. The Civic Forum has had doubts that it could push Havel's candidacy through a Federal Assembly still dominated by Communists and discredited political figures. On the other hand, the Communists may think that they stand a better chance of blocking Havel's election if a countrywide vote is held. Their assumption may be that he is not well known outside Prague and Bratislava and the conservative countryside might prefer a known quantity like Adamec. In fact, Embassy officers who met with Civic Forum leaders at the Ambassador's residence on December 10 found them worried about the Forum's and Havel's image. They fear his theater credentials may make him look "elitist" and not the man to represent the working class. The Communists may also be counting on the fact that multiple candidates, including figures like Cisar, will split the opposition votes.

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Source: National Security Archive, Soviet Flashpoints set.

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Document 103

Prague, December 15, 1989

Telegram from the US Embassy in Prague to the US Department of State,
on the new Czechoslovak Foreign Policy as outlined by new Foreign Minister Jiri
Dienstbier

Limited official use

Prague 08800

Subject: Foreign Minister outlines general goals of foreign policy

1. Limited official use – entire text.
2. Summary. Foreign Minister Jiri Dienstbier met with the Czechoslovak and foreign press on December 14. The press conference focused on Czechoslovakia's future relations with the nations which border it. He commented only briefly on relations with Israel and used formulations on the removal of Soviet troops from Czechoslovak territory which implied this could be done earlier than and independent of the wider European disarmament process. Dienstbier has a vision of a future Europe in which security will not be based on military blocs, and in which Czechoslovakia will be a factor of stability and rapprochement. Dienstbier indicated that in the future personnel decisions regarding Czechoslovak diplomats would be made on the basis of competence, but that diplomats who took "too active a stand on repressive policies" could expect to lose their positions. End summary.
3. New Foreign Minister Jiri Dienstbier met with representatives of the foreign and Czechoslovak press on December 14. in the one hour press conference Dienstbier presented his view of general goals which Czechoslovakia would pursue in its evolving foreign relations, but was unable to provide detailed responses to questions. Dienstbier said a review of Czechoslovak foreign policy was underway, that foreign policy priorities would be set, and that he would be able to provide more detailed information in two or three weeks.

A changing role for Czechoslovakia

4. Dienstbier stated that during the past 40 years Czechoslovakia had been isolated in the center of Europe and that such isolation had hindered the process of understanding in Europe. Dienstbier is convinced that in the future the country's central location, coupled with what will be a developed economic and political system, will make Czechoslovakia a factor of stability and a center for the promotion of rapprochement in Europe.

Warsaw Pact and CMEA membership

5. It is Dienstbier's goal to transform a bloc concept of security to the concept of democracy and pluralism. He understands that the abolition of blocs cannot be done unilaterally and that a general consensus must be developed before the blocs can be abolished. Dienstbier sees the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) as the process in which a consensus can be developed.

6. With regard to CMEA membership, Dienstbier feels the organization's future must be discussed by all member countries. Dienstbier sees no reason for Czechoslovakia to leave the CMEA. He does, however, favor transforming the organization from one which facilitated the trade in commodities to one capable of stimulating modern economic development. Dienstbier believes CMEA can collaborate with Western Europe and can be a factor in opening Czechoslovakia to world markets.

Stationing of Soviet troops

7. Dienstbier described the recent Soviet re-evaluation of 1968 as a recognition that Czechoslovakia is an independent state. He said the "Moscow Protocol", signed shortly after the Warsaw Pact invasion, and the agreement negotiated on the temporary basing of Soviet troops on Czechoslovak territory, were both invalid since they were imposed under pressure. He said he had already discussed these agreements with the Soviets. He believed that in a short time agreement could be reached on the withdrawal of Soviet troops. (Note: This is a less hedged formulation that used by his predecessor or current Prime Minister Calfa. Both spoke of early talks but that withdrawal of Soviet troops needed to be part of the wider European disarmament process. Dienstbier's statements at the press conference implied early withdrawal independent of the CFE and other talks in Vienna. End note.)

German reunification

8. Dienstbier believes that "in the long run no country should be denied the right of selfdetermination". Dienstbier also indicated that the question of the unification of Germany and the question of the unification of Europe are related and must be considered simultaneously. He added that the economic intergration of East and West Germany is inevitable, and that soon there will exist at a minimum a de facto confederation between the two states.

Austria, Poland, and Hungary

9. Dienstbier directed much of his discussion to relations to the other states which border Czechoslovakia. Dienstbier stated he had already met with Polish officials and shared common views with them on matters such as the inviolability of Poland's western border and on the need for future consultation and cooperation regarding environmental problems on the Czechoslovak-Poland border. Dienstbier expected that GOC restrictions on travel by Czechoslovak citizens to Poland would be removed.

10. Dienstbier also announced that he would meet with the Austrian Foreign Minister on the border this coming Sunday, December 17. It is anticipated the two Foreign Ministers will participate in a barbed wire cutting ceremony. Dienstbier also expressed a wish for better relations between Czechoslovakia and Hungary, and indicated that with regard to Hungary and other neighbors there would be a switch in foreign policy from "great words" to "concrete action where realistic results can be achieved".

The Middle East

11. Dienstbier stated that consideration thus far had not been given to the resumption of diplomatic relations with Israel. (Note: We understand from the Swedish Embassy that an Israeli delegation from their mission in Warsaw was here earlier in the week

for talks at the MFA. These apparently included discussion of interim steps toward full diplomatic relations. End note.) He also stated that Czechoslovakia would subscribe to the principle of "self-determination", but did not elaborate as to what that meant in the Middle East context. Dienstbier also indicated that Czechoslovakia favored peaceful and non-violent means of resolving Middle East issues, but believes that Czechoslovakia is not a player in the Middle East and cannot offer specific steps to resolve problems there. (Dienstbier perhaps was making an indirect swipe at a model peace conference sponsored by the GOC last year.) With regard to terrorism, Dienstbier could not offer a comment as to Czechoslovakia's future policy, saying that he needed to consult with other Ministries before responding.

Czechoslovaks abroad

12. Dienstbier stated he had advised all foreign missions of Czechoslovakia that any Czechoslovaks who had emigrated from Czechoslovakia in the past for political reasons were to be granted visas upon application, and that any consular officer discriminating against such visa applications in the future would be fired. (Note: A number of Czechoslovak emigres have already returned on visits, including industrialist Tomas Bata from Canada, economist Ota Sik from Switzerland and writer Jiri Kohout [sic] from Paris. End note.) Dienstbier stated that it was not within the jurisdiction of the Foreign Ministry to deal with the cases of Czechoslovaks who had been stripped of their citizenship for political reasons, but that these cases would be dealt with by the GOC.

The Czechoslovak diplomatic corps

13. According to the Foreign Minister, personnel decisions in the future regarding Czechoslovak diplomats will be made on the basis of competence and not on the basis of political view or party affiliation. Dienstbier stated that those who took "too active a stand on repressive policies" could expect to lose their positions, but that the recall of Ambassadors by former Foreign Minister Johanes had to a large degree taken care of this problem. Dienstbier also announced that Foreign Ministry officials who had lost their positions in the post 1968 normalization process would be rehired at the Foreign Ministry if they were interested in returning and if they had maintained their professional competence.

14. Comment. Not once during the press conference did Dienstbier mention the United States. The failure to mention the United States was partially a reflection of the nature of the questions posed to the Foreign Minister, but also a reflection of the fact that Dienstbier realizes that the most immediate foreign policy issues Czechoslovakia faces involve nations which border Czechoslovakia.

Russell

Source: National Security Archive, Soviet Flashpoints set.

Not for citation or publication without permission.

Prague, December 15, 1989

Record of a meeting between Václav Havel and his closest colleagues of the Civic Forum Coordinating Centre, where Havel reported on his talk with Federal Premier Marián Čalfa, on how to ensure Havel's election to the Presidency by the end of 1989

[Attending the meeting in the flat of Joska Skalník were Jiří Bartoška, Vladimír Hanzel, Eda Kriseová, Jiří Křížan, Miroslav Kvašňák, Stanislav Milota, and Alexandr Vondra.]

Václav Havel: I'm in an absurd situation, because I engaged in private talks one-on-one with Čalfa. And I feel, maybe I'm being dim, but I feel, this was the most important discussion that's been held so far. And I'm bringing terribly good news from Čalfa. And the paradox of my situation is that we are opponents of closed-door politics and this has to be kept a total secret, not from the StB and the hidden microphones – to hell with that – but from our people and the public, or that part of the public that suspects us of closed-door politics. We'll talk about how to do it. For now I ask you to keep everything I tell you strictly to yourself, not to tell anybody. At least until we agree on what to do next. [...]

[*Passage in which those present discuss who also might know about the Čalfa-Havel talks.*]

Havel: Now I'm going to tell you what Čalfa and I talked about. First I've got to say that at the Government Presidium building, there's a person in charge of the Interior, Security, and so on. Čalfa and [Jiří] Stadler [Head of the Premier's Office] put their man in that post, and he removed all the bugging devices from that room. He's allegedly their man. The talks were in the same room, the only room in the Presidium from which all bugging devices have been removed. The bugging devices don't bother me so much, but they bother Čalfa. So it's his job. Anyway, the talks went like this: Mr. Čalfa said, we have to be absolutely concretely agreed about what it is we want and how to go about it. It was a completely constructive meeting, and we both drew up a schedule. I'll show it to you ... where's my "dissident bag"? The talks lasted about an hour, or how long?

Jiří Bartoška: Exactly one hour. We arrived at quarter to, and left at quarter to.

Havel: Yes. Our project, which we discussed with Čalfa behind closed doors, which goes as follows, and about which nobody except us is allowed to know about till we agree on how we are going to do it. Why can't I find it? I know it off by heart, but ... O. K., here it is. And my glasses.

Bartoška: I can lend you mine.

Havel: Our project goes like this. Our project!? It's absurd that I have a project with Čalfa, but everything is absurd. I'll take it chronologically, the way it's going to go:

Saturday, December 16 – Havel speech on television, after the news, prime-time television. A twenty-minute speech, which you and I have already more or less talked to each other about, but with a new element. We don't have to talk about the speech yet; in it I appear not as a presidential candidate, but as a citizen who cares about this country, who is speaking on television because a lot has been said about him lately.

This is not a campaign. The speech will be as we have worked it out, and as we continue to work it out. The only new element is that Čalfa has to read the speech first, before I record it for television. You'll understand why in a minute. That ought to be sometime in the afternoon, so that at 8.00 p.m. they can broadcast it sometime after the evening news.

Alexandr Vondra: Will it be broadcast live?

Havel: No, I will read a speech, in which every word is important.

Vladimír Hanzel: That way you can record it with several takes.

Bartoška: That's right. You stop in the middle, erase it, and begin again.

Havel: And we have to take a look at the recording, and if it's all right, then we don't have to worry about it any more. Čalfa will tell [Miroslav] Pavel [Director of Czechoslovak TV] to make the time slot available for the broadcast.

Tuesday, December 19, is the next plenary session of the Federal Assembly. The first item on the agenda is the programme statement of the Čalfa Government of National Understanding. In his statement Čalfa will include a passage about how the constitutional law on extending the period without a president has not yet been approved by the plenary session of the Federal Assembly, and that this is still to be voted on. Čalfa will propose that this period be extended to December 28.¹ A small change in date. At the same time, Čalfa, in a certain way, which has been planned, will nominate me interim President until free elections.

Petr Pithart: Will nominate you on behalf of the Government.

Havel: On behalf of the Government. Regardless of what the Party thinks. He couldn't care less about the Party. And he won't speak about Dubček yet, but will, in some clever way, address the Slovaks. Meanwhile Janko [Čarnogurský - First Deputy Premier], who is going to Slovakia tomorrow, has to set it up so that Dubček is immediately elected to the Federal Assembly, on Monday [December 18] at the latest, in place of some resigning Slovak representative. It must not be said that he was elected because he'll soon be elected Leader of the Federal Assembly. It must be said in Slovakia that he has been elected to the Federal Assembly because Havel, the presidential candidate, doesn't want to do anything without Dubček, and that he wants to have him near by in Prague, and that the first move to get Dubček officially closer to Havel is that he'll be a deputy in the Federal Assembly. Over the weekend, by Tuesday, Dubček must be in the Federal Assembly. He has to be sitting there on Tuesday [December 19] when Čalfa reads the Government's programme statement. Janko has to take care of this in Slovakia – he's going there tomorrow. As soon as Dubček is a deputy in the Federal Assembly, a campaign has to begin throughout the whole country to make him Leader of the Federal Assembly.

Alexandr Vondra: And would he be ... would he be elected [Leader] of the Federal Assembly on December 19?

Bartoška: No, no, no – only as a deputy.

Hanzel: It's clear that in Slovakia they'll elect him.

Havel: On December 19 he'll be a deputy.

Vondra: He will already be elected deputy?

¹ Under the existing Czechoslovak Constitution, a new President had, in the event of the resignation of the incumbent President, to be elected within 14 days. Gustáv Husák resigned on December 10, 1989.

Havel: By Tuesday some district, where some Slovak has resigned, must elect him deputy. That is normal procedure; it doesn't require any constitutional law or anything. When a deputy resigns from some electoral district, the people of that district can immediately elect another. And that person is automatically a member of the Federal Assembly, and no one can say anything about it. And Čalfa will find some Slovak deputy who has resigned, legally and above-board, who is no longer a member of the Federal Assembly, if possible a Slovak, find out his electoral district, and tell Janko [Čarnogurský] that the Public Against Violence must arrange to have [Dubček] elected in that district by Monday.

Vondra: Look, I hate to interrupt you, but can this be done? After all, we've -

Havel: It can.

Hanzel: When a deputy leaves, there is a by-election in that electoral district.

Jiří Bartoška: Except that it normally takes two months, and now it's going to take a couple of hours. It's a technical matter.

Havel: Constitutionally, that is the only way and the most convenient. So, on the 19th, at the Federal Assembly plenary session, the first item will be the Government programme statement, which Janko and Valter [Komárek - First Deputy Premier] are writing for Čalfa, he'll also say, in the name of the Government, that it is necessary in these dramatic days that there be somebody at the Castle. That we can't afford to be without a President, and that he therefore nominates Havel. And that he's glad that Mr. Dubček is here in the Federal Assembly, because in this way he's closer to Havel, and Havel doesn't want to do anything without Dubček. An interim president until elections. And at the same time he proposes a constitutional law on extending the fourteen-day period, to be changed to the effect that it's not about forty days, but until December 28.

Jiří Křížan: In other words, for twenty days.

Havel: Yes. On December 28 the Federal Assembly will elect Dubček its Leader and me President. And the New Year's speech - my presidential speech - will be [much laughter all round] ... the slogan "We want a President under the Christmas tree" has to be changed; now it will be "We want a President for the New Year". And if this schedule, made in a back-room deal with Čalfa works, we will have Dubček as Leader of the Federal Assembly as a present for the nation ... providing Dubček doesn't begin waffling again! On the 28th we have Dubček as Leader of the Federal Assembly and me as President. And on New Year's day I will have a speech. I hope there won't be the clock there like Husák always had.

Bartoška: And lilies of the valley.

Havel: So, the students will be able . . . Till then they can do whatever they want. When they get that present, they'll be able to go to school as usual in the New Year

Hanzel: They haven't got lectures at the moment. They are sitting exams.

Havel: That doesn't matter. There is only one problem. This is a back-room deal between Čalfa and me, and the deal requires that we do a million things, but at the same time we mustn't tell anybody. I don't how we are supposed to do it. The agreement has a chance -

Bartoška: So present it as if it were your idea, that it would be good for the Slovaks to have Dubček -

Havel: Only one thing is important at the moment. Everything seems to be arranged. Only one thing is important: how to make all the campaigns, demonstrations, proclamations, and so on conform to this timetable while not letting anyone find out. Or, not reveal its individual phases before the timetable requires them to be revealed. Understand?

Milota: Change the programme from day to day.

Havel: What will we tell the ..., what's it called, the Assembly of the Civic Forum Coordinating Centre, which is meeting in the Špalíček building and is going to scream something about back-room politics? What are we going to tell them? We can't even tell them I spoke with Čalfa.

Petr Pithart: You won't be there, so it's all the same to you. [Eda Kriseová laughs]

Milota: Petr will be there. He's going to catch the flak.

Havel: Čalfa also told me, I might add [turns to Pithart], what you and I both know, what I got from you and Čalfa got from me, namely, that the Party is "indecipherable and incomprehensible". And he said, "As for the Party, indecipherable and incomprehensible, I don't take it into consideration, I'm not interested in it. Mohorita can say whatever he wants, Urbánek can say whatever he wants. However the congress turns out, I feel the Party is finished. And if it wants to save itself, then at the congress they'll turn it into some kind of Nyers-like socialist party that will either join the pluralist system, or will completely write itself off and vanish from the stage of history." And he says: "That doesn't interest me; now I'm speaking for myself and for the Government, let the Party stew in its own juices."

If they revive themselves at the congress, then they can discipline the faction of [Communist] deputies that's making trouble in Parliament, remove them, order them to do something, or whatever. If they don't revive themselves, Čalfa will say to hell with them. Čalfa's job is to discipline the Federal Assembly to accept the whole scenario. He's going to do it by letting [the deputies] know that this is the only way not to get wiped out, not to get written off, so people don't start kicking them in the behind, so they can hang on till elections as a body that will pass one law after another. And that in that way they will survive and won't have to be afraid.

Milota: I think we ought to act as surprised as everybody else about what Mr. Čalfa says in the Federal Assembly on Tuesday.

Havel: And now it's also clear, why Čalfa should be see my Saturday speech beforehand. Because for understandable reasons it wouldn't be too good if Čalfa said in the Federal Assembly the same thing I had said two days before. That would not make a good impression. [Laughter all round] Čalfa simply thinks a referendum is stupid.² He even thinks this 40-day postponement [extension of the period for electing a new president from 14 to 40 days] is stupid, and asks how we could have agreed to that. I said, "We, we, we ... the Federal Assembly isn't entirely our plaything." This is a kind of compromise agreement; that was all that could be done. And he said, "What are they up to?" And he means the other side; he's already talking about "them" and means the Party. [Laughter all round] And I say to him, "It's not the Party, it's the mafia within the Party." And he says, "Yeah, you're right." But he's already calling it the

² At the time, the CPCz was carrying out an extensive campaign for the direct election of the President by means of a referendum throughout the country.

"Party". But what are they getting up to with this postponement? And I said, "They're playing for time; they're about to take a risk, and trying to get a referendum through on the 10th. [Havel probably meant December 19, the next session of the Federal Assembly.] And he said, "That's madness! That's absurd!" He's actually telling us how little we got out of the talks [Havel and Kriseová laugh], or rather, what you got out of the talks, while you argued for seven hours with Mohorita. How little you obtained. It's simply absurd, like everything. And now tell me how to deal with this.

Pithart: Now questions. You've sketched it out for us in very broad strokes. How is he going to discipline the Parliament to make sure it elects whom it's supposed to? Because removing deputies is usually up to the voters, for instance, in Slovakia The Party in particular is quickly going to remove a lot of its deputies, especially after the Congress [of the CPCz on December 20-21, 1989]. And by the 28th, if the constitutional law on putting new people in [to the legislative bodies] is not issued, that parliament is going to be empty, half-empty. There won't be even the two-thirds [needed for the election of the President]! The Party is going to do this because it's clear that Čalfa is playing one game, and they're going to play another. Right after the congress they're going to put pressure on their people. They're probably going to blackmail them, because they've got something on half of them, and they'll tell them: "Look, if you want to live out your life in peace, get off the pot". And in early January we'll elect the ones that have come out victorious at the new congress. The parliament won't have a quorum!

Havel: Čalfa is also going to blackmail them, and for them Čalfa has more dangerous reasons than the decaying CPCz. Čalfa is going to be speaking with society and the nation behind him. What stands behind the CPCz? It's falling apart, each one of them is saying something else, Mohorita, Urbánek, and so on. It's a decaying structure, and those people, unless they're completely dim, will understand that of these two blackmailers, it is the one who blackmails in the name of the nation is more influential than the one who blackmails in the name of a decaying structure. How he's going to blackmail them is up to him, but Janko [Čarnogurský] has to help him out with it. [...]

[Passage in which participants argue about the technical details of removing a deputy, about the possibilities for survival until the end of 1989 of a Federal Assembly capable of having a quorum, and how many Communist representatives might behave during the presidential election, providing it is held by secret ballot.]

Havel: Čalfa asked me, "Do you think that during the time up until the election, the question will not come up of Čarnogurský versus myself? My fall and Čarnogurský's rise?" And I told him, "Your stock is rising in our eyes; if it keeps growing, there's a chance you will hold out alongside Čarnogurský until the elections, and after the elections Joe Blow will be Premier." [...]

[Final passage, in which those present argue over the timing and technical details of carrying out the next steps in the Čalfa-Havel agreement. The recording is cut off immediately after the beginning of this part of the debate.]

Source: Audiocassette, private archive of Vladimír Hanzel, transcribed by Jiří Suk.

Translated from the Czech by Todd Hammond.

Document 105

Prague, December 16, 1989

Speech by Václav Havel on Czechoslovak Television,
giving an account of the programmes and achievements of the Civic Forum
and the Public Against Violence,
and explaining under what conditions he would be willing to accept the Office
of President of the Republic

Good evening friends,

Above all, I'd like to thank Czechoslovak Television for allowing me to say a few things to you. I wrote them down this morning, and I am going to read them from the paper, because I don't like frauds, and I don't like it when politicians read their speeches from a teleprompter and pretend they are speaking without notes. We have already had enough fraud in this country.

First I should say something about myself. For twenty years official propaganda has said that I am an enemy of socialism, that I want to restore capitalism in our country, that I am in the service of world imperialism, from which I accept hefty benefits, that I want to be the owner of various enterprises and exploit the people in them and so on and so forth. These are all lies, as you will soon discover, because soon my books will start coming out, from which it will be obvious who I am and what I think. The first of these is coming out any day now. I don't speak of this because I want to waste anybody's time with my personal defence, but because a lot is being said about me, and from the viewpoint of our country it is not entirely meaningless who I am and what I think. I should also say about myself that I have always tried to say and write the truth, regardless of whether the Government liked it or not; and that I have been several years in prison for it.

Tomorrow it will have been one month since security units brutally massacred a peaceful demonstration. The students wanted to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of a similar massacre committed by the Nazis on their grandfathers, who were students at the time. The strike that the students started a month ago was the start of something that will only later be given a name. Our working name for it is the 'Peaceful Revolution'. We are all grateful to the students that they gave this revolution its beautifully peace-loving, dignified, calm, and, I would even say, loving face, today admired by all the world. It was a revolt of truth against lies, and us to get where we are today. There is no time for us to argue about who contributed more, whether the so-called 'dissident' or the exile, the actor or the worker, the student or the farmer.

On Tuesday it will have been one month since Civic Forum was founded. It was a step into the unknown. Sometimes you have to take such a step. If a person follows his conscience, his feel for the situation, and his reason, and if he has the courage and ability to decide quickly, he need not fear. It might yield results or it might not, but it won't hurt. Masaryk knew this when he decided for an independent Czechoslovak state; those that founded Charter 77 back then knew it too.

I think we can now say for sure, the founding of the Civic Forum was a good step. It is an attempt intellectually and actively to join free-thinking people, to create room for

independent civic behaviour and thus for the creation of interest, labour, and political plurality. This is no National Front. That was born during the war, and was set up after the war – hence the war-like name – as an association of some to exclude others - only later to become the manipulating tool of the Communist Party, and finally several dictators Stalin placed at the head of the Party. Civic Forum is not here to manipulate people, but to give them a chance to be themselves. It is also here, so that there is somebody with public support to negotiate with those presently in power. It is terribly important, and beautiful, that simultaneously with Civic Forum, Public Against Violence was created in Slovakia, a sister initiative, grass-roots, exactly like Civic Forum. The close cooperation of these two initiatives is assurance that totalitarian federalism will be replaced by authentic federalism. It will protect the identity of our two nations, as well as all national minorities and ethnic groups. Neither Civic Forum nor Public Against Violence are in it for themselves, for glory, or power, or their own advantage. They are in it for the good of the country. Even so, it wouldn't hurt to say that in a constitutional way thanks to these two initiatives the clause on the leading role of the Communist Party was dropped from the constitution, the President of the Republic resigned, and Government of National Reconciliation was formed. All this happened by December 10, that is, Human Rights Day. The negotiations through which these successes were attained were extremely difficult, I would say even dramatic. You were not there, but when the time comes, and if it still interests you, you can listen to many hours of these meetings, which we recorded on tape. You may not have been there, but actually you were, morally, that is. Without your courage, without your huge demonstrations and assemblies, without your strikes, without the civilized way in which you did all these things, no one would have negotiated with us about anything. Civic Forum and Public Against Violence are not a conspiracy of non-Communists against Communists; not only because it is no conspiracy, but because more important than today's party affiliation is whether someone is a supporter of democracy, and a peaceful way to it, or a supporter of the old order. Civic Forum and Public Against Violence recommended some Communists for the government, such as Mr. Komárek, and did not recommend some compromised non-partisans. One million seven hundred thousand Communists do not make up some different sort of biological or moral species than we are. Most of them had to keep quiet for twenty years like the rest of us, and many of them have done – although with difficulty – many good things. A considered program of thorough economic reform which will not bring upheaval, unemployment, inflation, and other problems, as many of you may fear, has been worked out by scores of good people, among which were many Communists, many former Communists, and non-partisans. The truth is, though, that the totalitarian system was headed by the Communist Party, and thus all Communists without exception carry a heightened responsibility for the morass in which this country finds itself. This obligates them to draw the appropriate conclusions from this responsibility and even more than others work for a future of freedom for us all. This also applies to the members of today's Federal Parliament. If they do not want to risk wildcat strikes, chaos, and international embarrassment, I ask them not to complicate the situation and run the danger of public condemnation, but to comprehend the challenge of these times. Next, I ask all Communists to revive their Party – if they wish – as soon as possible, to put at its head the best people; that is,

such people as can be worked with and at all talked to. Mr. Adamec has done a great service: he was the first who began to speak with us. Our trust in Mr. Čalfa, the new Premier, grows from hour to hour. If other Communists behave as he has, it will be good for both our nations, and we needn't fear anyone. We need not fear the police, either, and it is the duty of us all to prevent attempts to persecute those who direct traffic, keep order, and protect us against criminals, murderers, and violent persons.

As you know, at this moment Czechoslovakia has no President. Meanwhile, we have a difficult month before us until free elections. I find it difficult to imagine that we could afford the luxury of waiting and postponements. Many new laws must be adopted, and a climate created for rapid formation and positioning of various political forces. These will then take part in free elections, whether with the support of Civic Forum and Public Against Violence or independently, and form the foundation for democratic plurality. Economic reform must be quickly carried out, free labour organizations and interest groups built, and freedom of speech guaranteed. A lot of work is needed. Therefore we should have someone appropriate at the Castle soon, by the end of the year at the latest. We are not against direct election of the President, we are not against referenda as such; on the contrary, we are proposing it as a constitutional principle for the first time in this country's history. We are not afraid of direct elections; today our civic culture is already large enough that a bad President cannot be elected in direct elections. We fear something else: that our country will lose many months to an presidential campaign, the legal and organizational implementation of direct elections, and last but not least the several billion crowns that a direct election would cost. But what we fear most is that the enormous moral credit that our country has gained could be lost by suddenly trying to play America without being America, and looking ridiculous by electing in hurry and confusion a president for five years, then finding out that he was not bad, but by far not the best. Therefore we want to elect a President, constitutionally, and in harmony with the Czechoslovak parliamentary tradition, for one basic task; that is, to lead this country to free elections, and ensure their fairness. Let the new Federal Assembly that comes out of these free elections elect, after emotions have cooled a little, a President for five years: a man who, with his dignity, broad inner horizons, and humanity, will be worthy of the high standing given the Presidential office by our first President, Thomas Garrigue Masaryk. If it will for some reason be necessary, even this President may be elected by a direct vote. A direct election before free elections to representative organs would disrupt the entire logic of the constitution, and would be exactly that risky step into the unknown that my conscience, my reason, and my knowledge of the situation tell me would do more harm than good.

I speak to you as one of you, as a citizen of this country who feels shared responsibility for its future, and besides not used to cameras, lights, and newspapers, and doesn't always speak like those who can do all that. Civic Forum and Public Against Violence, as you know, however, have proposed me for the office of President, and I cannot avoid this topic. I am not running any campaign; I'm not trying to persuade anyone to elect me. It's up to you who will be President, or up to the Federal Assembly, to whom you will make your will known in a suitable manner. I am a writer who could not keep quiet, and was always involved as a citizen. I never yearned for any political office. At the same time I am a person who has always place the public

interest above my own. If I had not, I would not have had to spend so many years in prison, and could have gone abroad with the theatre instead. If it is in the public interest that I accept the office of President, then I will. But under two conditions: that I would be that temporary President that we need now, and that the one who sits in Masaryk's chair five years from now come out of a freely-elected Federal Assembly. The second condition is that Alexander Dubček be by my side, in whatever function. He is probably the most important man, after Milan Rastislav Štefánek, that Slovakia has given our country and the world. I will not allow any kind of dark forces to drive a wedge between him and me, and between our two nationalities.

We have been through enough long speeches, so I will finish. Remember the most important thing: now it's no longer a matter of the future of Czechoslovakia alone. It will be better; I have no fear of that now. It is something more: that the path we take toward a better future lead to a better future for all of Europe and the whole world. That our country, which lies in the very heart of Europe, no longer be a laughing stock, but becomes a country others will look upon with interest, and respect.

Thank you.

Source: Source: Institute of Contemporary History Archive, Prague, KC OF record group, CF documents. Published in Jiří Suk (ed.), *Občanské fórum*, vol. 2, (Prague, 1998), pp. 243–6.

Translated from the Czech by Todd Hammond.

Document 106
Prague, December 20, 1989
Telegram from the US Embassy in Prague to the US Department of State,
on the Czechoslovak Government Programme
and its endorsement for Havel as President

Limited Official Use

Prague 089

Subject: New GOC Program Statement endorses Havel for Presidency

1. Limited Official Use – entire text.
2. Summary. Prime Minister Marian Calfa presented the new Czechoslovak Government Program to a joint session of the Federal Assembly on December 19. The program is virtually identical to the political and economic reforms demanded by the Civic Forum. It includes the economy's transition to a market economy and political and legislative changes which will guarantee human rights and a Western-style democratic system. The program does not fix a date for free elections.
3. Calfa brought applause from the gallery when he recommended that the Assembly act before the end of this year to elect Vaclav Havel as President for the interim period until new elections can be held. (Tens of thousands of students meanwhile were demonstrating nearby at Wenceslas Square in favor of Havel's candidacy.)
4. The Assembly approved a proposal to extend the deadline for the election of President from 14 to 40 days, but the Assembly's Presidium at the end of the session announced the presidential vote will take place on Friday, December 29. Before ending the session the Assembly passed a resolution condemning the Romanian Government's brutal action against its citizens. End summary.
5. A joint session of the Federal Assembly met on December 19 to hear Prime Minister Marian Calfa deliver the new Government's Program. Thousands of students demonstrating nearby at Wenceslas Square for Vaclav Havel as President added to the drama of the event, as did a delegation of student leaders who greeted each deputy to the Assembly with bread, salt and flowers as well as placards supporting Havel.
6. Calfa's speech, though packed with details on political and economic reforms, took less than 60 minutes to deliver. It tracked closely with reform statements released by the Civic Forum and Civic Forum-supported Ministers in the new Government. Calfa identified two main tasks for the Government: carrying out free elections, though he gave no date for these, and speeding up the transition to a more dynamic economy.
7. Calfa said that the Government had set an end-of-February deadline for an overhaul of various Czechoslovak legislation governing human rights. This is to include new laws on freedom of assembly, petition, press and political parties. A new law will guarantee freedom of religion and remove all restrictions on believers. The Penal Code

will be reviewed with particular attention to chapter I provisions concerning "Crimes Against the Republic" which have regularly been used in the past to punish dissidents. Capital punishment is to be abolished.

8. Current work on a new constitution is to be suspended until the political situation is "stabilized" and free elections held. Work will resume on the constitution in the second half of 1990.

9. Calfa called on the Assembly to meet the popular demand for information on the police action against student demonstrators on November 17. He asked that the special commission investigating these events produce a report and recommend the actions to be taken against those persons responsible for violating the law.

10. Work to establish public control over the Ministry of Interior is proceeding, said Calfa. Personnel changes were to be made in the Security Services. All internal intelligence activities against Czechoslovak citizens are to be discontinued. Calfa said the Government supported honest members of the Police and Army and assured that they would not be misused again against the people. Calfa asked that all verbal assaults against members of the army and police force cease.

The economy

11. Calfa warned that because of the transitional nature of the new Government its program would of necessity be short term. This would not prevent it from drafting an accurate picture of the serious plight of the economy and the measures needed to correct it. He offered an extensive outline of reforms for the future which he implied would be the task of a new Government formed after free elections. The key to these reforms, he said, was a transition to a "market economy with all its advantages and disadvantages".

12. The economy was to be opened to the world and an end put to internal monopolies. Markets for money and capital were to be created and the legal basis provided for all forms of ownership. The gradual convertibility to the Czechoslovak crown would be an important goal.

13. At the enterprise level personnel changes would be required so that the only criteria for leading management positions in the economy was merit. The State Enterprise Law would be re-written and monopolies ended in the area of foreign trade. The Government would also support foreign investment in the economy whether on a cooperative, private ownership or joint venture basis. The necessary guarantees would be legislated to attract such investment.

14. The Government is to produce its first national budget by March 31. (It is now operating under a supplementary budget until then. Prague 8788.) There would be cuts in national defense expenditures and subsidies as well as a strengthening of social services. On the latter, Calfa spoke of extending workers' annual leave and providing greater maternity leave opportunities. Cuts in consumer subsidies would be balanced by improved health care, and increasing pensions and child support payments. Inflated pensions of retired officials would be reviewed.

15. In the fiscal area the Government proposed a complete revision of the tax system to be carried out by 1993. These changes would concern both enterprises and individuals. The present turnover tax in industry would be simplified; a sales tax introduced as well as more progressive tax rates on income. All laws governing financial credits and support to enterprises would be revised in 1990 as would environmental protection regulations, including penalties for violations. Calfa warned that the Government would retain controls over wage growth and intended to regulate wages to preserve a balance in the market and fight inflationary tendencies.

Foreign trade

16. The basic laws governing foreign trade would be amended. Czechoslovakia would seek a revision of the CMEA mechanism so that trade within this grouping would be based on "normal" world economic principles. Hard currency exchange rates for the crown would also be "normalized" (i.e., devalued) in 1990. Czechoslovakia would seek to enter the IMF, World Bank and intensify its role in the GATT. The country sought MFN treatment from those trading partners with which it had not yet normalized trade relations. (Note: The U.S. was not specifically mentioned in this regard. End note.) Czechoslovakia sought contacts with the European Community. (Note: Calfa has reportedly sent a letter to EC President Jacques Delors asking the Commission to review ways of expanding its present trade protocol with the Community. End note.)

Foreign policy

17. Calfa said that Czechoslovakia, which had for so long acted as a brake on the Helsinki Process of democratization in Europe, now wanted to intensify its role in that process. The country's foreign policy would be based on its own national interests, but it sought good relations with all of its neighbors. The GOC would respect its Warsaw Pact pledges but would continue talks to renegotiate the agreement on the temporary basing of Soviet troops in the country. Calfa added that Czechoslovakia would seek to normalize relations with all those countries with which it did not yet have diplomatic relations.

18. Calfa referred to personnel changes now going on in the diplomatic corps and MFA. These were designed to remove discredited politicians from assignments overseas. This was not an effort at political revenge but at improving the effectiveness of the foreign service. He also said that those forced to resign from the diplomatic service after 1968 would have an opportunity to re-enter it.

Havel's candidacy for President

19. In his closing remarks Calfa called on the Assembly to act to elect Vaclav Havel President before the end of the year. He recommended that Havel continue as President until free elections were held and a new Assembly formed. He described Havel as the leading force behind the country's movement for renewal and the only alternative for President if the Government was to carry out its program with popular support. This statement was met with applause in the Assembly gallery and a short distance away on Wenceslas Square where tens of thousands of students were listening to a live broadcast of Calfa's speech and demonstrating in favor of Havel's candidacy.

20. Later in the session the Assembly approved a proposal to extend the deadline for the election of a new President from 14 to 40 days. The Presidium of the Assembly announced after the session that it was calling a special session of the Assembly for Friday, December 29, at which the President would be elected. One of the Assembly's final acts before ending the session was to approve a resolution condemning the Romanian Government's brutal attack on its own people.

21. Comment. Calfa's endorsement and the early December 29 date make Havel's election almost certain. Western news reports indicate that both Cestmir Cisar and Alexander Dubcek have stood down as candidates for the office.

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Source: National Security Archive, Soviet Flashpoints set.

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Moscow, December 20, 1989

Minutes from a meeting of the Foreign Ministers of the CSSR and USSR, Jiří Dienstbier and Edward Shevardnadze, on Czechoslovak-Soviet relations and Soviet troops in Czechoslovakia

Shevardnadze: I congratulate you on your appointment to this important office, which has come during such an important period of transition. Over the era of Czechoslovak-Soviet relations I have gained a great deal of experience. At the present time great changes are taking place in the world and in our countries. In all matters we should calmly analyze the situation and evaluate. All positive things, which are compatible with the interests of Europe and the entire world, should be preserved and enriched. There are elements, however, of which we must rid ourselves. We want to solve all problems efficiently. This would be better for us and for Europe. We are ready to consider them on the basis of mutual benefit and equality. You may count on our full understanding. We understand the difficulties you are meeting with.

Yesterday I spoke of the developments in Czechoslovakia with journalists. I said that much of this could have been avoided. When the process of perestroika began in the USSR, we also looked again at the past of our foreign policy. We objectively reevaluated Afghanistan. If our Czechoslovak friends had shown courage, the recent events could have been avoided. I also indicated this to the Polish journalist Michnik, who conducted an interview with me during the meeting of ministers of the Warsaw Pact in Warsaw at the end of October this year. He asked about our evaluation of 1968 in Czechoslovakia. I could not give him any other answer.

Dienstbier: I wrote a letter to you then, did you get it?

Shevardnadze: Yes. We were waiting for our Czechoslovak friends. The reevaluation was not carried out in time, same as in the German Democratic Republic [GDR]. When we seriously undertook the process of renewal two years ago, it was possible to begin in Czechoslovakia also. Events would not have taken such a dramatic course.

Dienstbier: In Czechoslovak-Soviet relations come out of a tradition of not just a few decades, but of centuries. This good tradition was damaged during the last 20 years, but not destroyed. This has emerged during recent years, when our nations rejected certain politicians. When Gorbachev came to Prague in April 1987, he was welcomed for the first time spontaneously, without rehearsing, with enthusiasm, with real friendship. This shows that the resistance was against the Brezhnev, Stalinist policies, but not against the nations of the USSR.

We would have welcomed if Soviet policy after 1985 had immediately taken a logical approach towards its own part in 1968. People were asking, why is the evaluation a matter for the Czechoslovak comrades, who are these comrades, are they representatives of Brezhnevite reaction, or the Czechoslovak nation? But that period is behind us.

Czechoslovak foreign policy, which was a brake on the Soviet policy of building a common European home, can today be better attuned than it could just a few months ago. Our cooperation can be good. The position of our country is not

comparable with the position of the USSR, but as a smaller country in Central Europe it can play a certain role in the development of the Helsinki process.

I would like to comment on the presence of Soviet troops in Czechoslovakia, and emphasize that for us it is not only a political but also a psychological question. In view of the law, the treaty on their presence is void, because it was signed under duress. Hence the Soviet troops are in Czechoslovakia with no legal basis. It will be necessary to negotiate the kind of treaty to sign. We would be glad if the USSR withdrew its troops, as this would be an excellent gesture that would not only demonstrate the new relationship of Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union, but would be favourably received by the Czechoslovak population and favourably influence the situation in Europe.

The very deployment of Soviet troops in Czechoslovakia meant a certain disruption of stability on both sides in Europe. The Czechoslovak army, which before was battleworthy, was placed in a secondary role. From every angle we would consider it best if the Soviet troops could withdraw whatever the result of negotiations on lowering conventional forces in Vienna. The military contingent is deployed in our country so as to fulfil the original goals of the occupation. It has no fundamental strategic meaning for the balance in Europe, and its withdrawal would bring such a positive gain, that it would lead to the positive development of Czechoslovak-Soviet relations and to the development of the pan-European process.

We have a possibility in this context also to affect American foreign policy. On Friday I will meet with the leader of the American delegation to the Vienna negotiations on conventional forces. An advisor to the American President, E. Rowny, told me a year ago that after Soviet troops entered Czechoslovakia in 1968, the Americans modernized their forces. We can therefore now demand, in the event of the withdrawal of Soviet troops from our country, that they would make some concessions in this sense.

This is our principal position, which would be the best for everybody. We are of course willing to negotiate on all questions. A commission of experts will consider all aspects.

I wish to assure you that in our foreign policy we will strive for the best relations with all countries, especially neighbours. Traditional relations with Russia and the Soviet Union are a guarantee that our relations will develop to general satisfaction. We are counting on a wider amount of what we call popular diplomacy; with openness (to the world) contact between peoples will evolve, and not only on a governmental level.

Shevardnadze: I do not wish to speak today about the legal basis for the stationing of Soviet troops in Czechoslovakia. That will be a subject for negotiation. As far as their entry is concerned, we have clearly admitted that we made a mistake. Agreements on their staying were made with the previous government. We feel that the main thing is what we said about the entry. We were prepared to declare it as early as in 1985, but we had to consider the position of the Czechoslovak leadership. If we had proceeded otherwise, it would have been a bad mistake. It would have been comparable to not respecting your position of today.

We have no interest in having our troops abroad. Two years ago Mikhail Gorbachev expressed the willingness to bring back all our units to our territory. We are working on this very intensively. From Mongolia, for example, two thirds of the Soviet troops have already left. Meanwhile it's interesting that they didn't want it, they were even for

their remaining. We had to convince them that the situation in the Far East is different today, that for example Soviet-Chinese relations have been normalized.

In short, we have no interest in leaving our troops in Czechoslovakia. But we have to consider everything carefully, especially the overall situation in Europe. We have to answer the question: What about tomorrow? In Brussels and in London, where I have been in the last few days, many foreign ministers and other representatives of Western countries expressed uneasiness over the developments in Eastern Europe. They pointed out the possibility of destabilizing the situation. We paid great attention to the German question. You know the ten-point programme of Kohl, especially the third point. We spoke about it in great detail. We also spoke about these questions with journalists in journal interviews. The thing is, we have no guarantee of stability in Europe. We have to take into consideration not only the situation at the Vienna talks on conventional weapons, but analyze and discuss other various aspects of balance and stability in Europe. I think we should begin with consultations.

I know Rowny very well. He is not a very big supporter of arms reductions. It would be possible to ask him why it was necessary to form NATO first. It wasn't until after the FRG joined NATO that the Warsaw Pact was signed. Until that time we were for a neutral, demilitarized, and democratic Germany. By the way, that position remains in effect. But the West brought the FRG into NATO, thereby causing the division of Europe. Now much in Europe is changing. The Cold War has ended. We are entering a time of peace, but just entering, we're not there yet.

I consider it important to inform you that Thatcher said it was necessary to preserve the Warsaw Pact along with NATO to maintain stability in Europe. We are for the dissolution of blocs, but the question is, when? It's a fact that besides higher expenses you don't get much use out of them. But when making the decision about the timing of their dissolution, we have to take all factors into account.

Dienstbier: I should like to reiterate that we are against any type of destabilization. The Soviet side, however, should take into account in negotiations on the departure of Soviet troops from Czechoslovakia, that this is a serious political question in our country, where there exists a traditional warmth towards Russia.

The "gentle" revolution of the last few weeks in Czechoslovakia was brought on by the brutality of the special police units, and took place without one drop of blood, without attacks on police stations, without broken shop windows. The behaviour of all sectors of our domestic political life has shown the will and intention of all to achieve a political solution. No voice has been heard that would place in doubt relations with the Soviet Union, or demand an exit from the Warsaw Pact. The dissolution of blocs is also our goal, the evolution of the bipolar conception of security into a democratic system within the Helsinki process. During the last few weeks, all the decisive forces in our country have acted to avoid destabilization in Europe. The departure of Soviet troops would further strengthen these existing positive elements.

Shevardnadze: Our negotiations pose a very delicate question. Much will depend on their atmosphere. It would not help things if you were to insist on departure and we on the preservation of the existing state. It would not be good to bring pressure from outside before the beginning of negotiations or during them. It would appear that the Soviet position is against the opinion of the Czechoslovak people and Government. I am convinced that we will find a solution that will be compatible with the interest of

both our countries. I would like to emphasize that our relationship is special, dating back to the pre-war era. We should burden neither these negotiations nor our relationship with public statements. If we were to take our positions and demands to the public, the negotiations of our experts would be superfluous.

Dienstbier: You must, of course, take into consideration the simple fact that the Czechoslovak public, including the press, is discussing these matters. The general opinion expressed is that, since the USSR has condemned the intervention in Czechoslovakia in 1968, it logically follows that it would withdraw its forces. We get questions on this topic everywhere, every step of the way. This morning two journalists asked me about nothing other than how we are going to negotiate their withdrawal. Until now they have accepted the answer that we are going to negotiate. Tomorrow is not good enough for them. I am pointing this out to you because it's a current domestic political problem. In my opinion it would be good if I could at least indicate that the negotiations will lead to certain positive results.

Shevardnadze: That's correct, I agree. We can say that the negotiations are leading to positive results. Concrete considerations will be the subject of the negotiations themselves, and must be thorough. A whole series of details arises. One of them is the deployment of rockets on the territory of the FRG, which are capable of reaching targets in your country, in the GDR, Poland, Hungary, and the USSR also. We must consider the alternative, what will happen to the balance of forces when we withdraw all troops from your territory. After the destruction of intermediate and shorter-range rockets, there are many other short-range rockets in the FRG that are constantly being modernized.

Dienstbier: We should at least consider whether it wouldn't be proper to make a certain gesture in relation to the negotiations, for example, withdraw a smaller Soviet unit.

Shevardnadze: The most important thing is to assure a calm atmosphere and not drag out the negotiations. I should still like to mention the necessity of improving the structure of the Warsaw Pact, and perfecting the mechanism of cooperation. You know that consultations are taking place on this question. Within the Warsaw Pact we are increasingly emphasizing the political aspects of its activities. We are interested in forming a permanent mechanism, a permanent political working body, in creating the office of a General Secretary of the Warsaw Pact, and improving the work of the Committee of Foreign Ministers. We have lagged 20 years behind NATO in our mechanism of cooperation. I saw this on a recent visit to their headquarters. I had no idea they would receive me so heartily. A long hallway – maybe half a kilometre – in the main building was lined on each side with a huge number of people working in the building. I would call it an explosion of emotion. So at the press conference I said that I had literally felt the end of the Cold War.

Dienstbier: I recommend we instruct our delegations to have the committee of experts meet as soon as possible and begin work. We should set some concrete date, say the beginning of January.

The Secretary to the Foreign Minister of the USSR Ivan Pavlovich Aboimov recommended giving a joint press conference in the first half of January. Both ministers expressed agreement with this.

Further discussions dealt with an exact title of the negotiations. The Soviet proposal for the press release contained the term "negotiations on the temporary stationing of Soviet troops in Czechoslovakia"; the Czechoslovak side recommended adding "and departure". Shevardnadze was decidedly against this. He argued that the main thrust of the negotiations was contained in the word "temporary". Dienstbier pointed out that this term is totally compromised in Czechoslovakia. To leave the word "stationing" without "departure" would not express the subject matter of the negotiations. The Soviet side also did not accept the suggestion to use the term "withdrawal" instead of "departure".

Jiří Dienstbier pointed out that the purpose of the negotiations is indisputably the departure of Soviet troops. It is only a matter of how long this process would take.

Finally the formulation was agreed on: "negotiations on Soviet units stationed in Czechoslovakia".

The ministers further agreed that a paragraph would be inserted into the joint press release on the creation of a committee of historians to evaluate the events in 1968. Its text would be formulated by members of the entourage.

Prepared by Zdeněk Matějka

Source: photocopy of typewritten draft, archive of the Institute of Contemporary History, Prague, GB/87, 7. Published in Jindřich Pecka, *Odsun sovětských vojsk z Československa 1989–1991*, Prague, 1996, p. 40–4.

Translated from the Czech by Todd Hammond.

Prague, December 21, 1989

Statement of the delegates to the Extraordinary Congress of the CPCz to Czechoslovak,
apologizing for all wrongs committed during Communist rule

Statement to the Citizens of the CSSR

On Wednesday, delegates to the Extraordinary Congress of the CPCz approved the following Statement to the Citizens of the CSSR:

"Fellow citizens,

In these fateful and hopeful times for our nation, for our entire homeland, the Extraordinary Congress of the CPCz turns to you. Our words are also an acknowledgement. The dearly learned lesson is that all political and economic success is passing, because eternal are only humanity and its moral values, its fate, its joys and troubles, hopes and disappointments, its faith and doubts – in short, everything that expresses the substance of life.

This is how we interpret the public lesson that we, Communists, have been taught in recent weeks. Our admission of all mistakes and errors, all deformations against humanity and democracy, is not just an empty gesture.

Because our former leadership did not find in itself enough honor and courage to publicly apologize, the delegates of the Extraordinary Congress of the CPCz will. We apologize to our youth, and to all citizens who were injured by unjustified repression; we apologize to their children, who suffered persecution in the next generation. We also apologize for all wrongs done to Party members who had to leave the CPCz for their stance on reform, or for disagreement with the illegal entry of troops of the five allied countries in 1968, thus losing the status of citizens with equal rights.

At the same time we feel the duty to express regret that the former Party leadership in recent years blatantly and illegally disregarded the right of independent civic initiatives, including Charter 77, to express their opinion. We are also aware of the responsibility of our entire membership base, which did not prevent this.

For these reasons, the Party has decided to break with all who consciously acted with arbitrary license, abused power, became corrupt and corrupted others; with all who issued lies as truth, devalued the ideals of socialism, honor, and justice, the importance of work and its moral values, faith in home and patriotism, the unity of word and deed; and who misused the forces of order against the citizens. We give free rein to similar assessment of all facts which will without prejudice evaluate the degree of responsibility of persons and the institutions of the state and Party in the past forty years, with full respect for everything indisputable and permanent that was achieved during the national democratic revolution and in the building of socialism in our homeland. In doing so we will always take great care to treat history with respect, for otherwise we would commit further errors, at the expense of our mothers and fathers, and of ourselves. Therefore we refuse to diminish the working and civic accomplishments of those Party members who for decades conscientiously and unselfishly fulfilled their political and work assignments for the benefit of our society.

The lawlessness committed by irresponsible executives of the state and Party against young people on November 17 of this year must never be repeated."

Source: *Rudé právo*, December 21, 1989, p. 1.

Translated from the Czech by Todd Hammond.

Document 109
Prague, December 22, 1989
Telegram from the US Embassy in Prague to the US Department State,
devoted to Václav Havel's cross-country presidential campaign

Limited Official Use

Prague 08987

Subject: Havel on campaign trail

Summary

1. (LOU) Vaclav Havel campaigned in Eastern Slovakia on December 20 and in the Central Bohemian town of Kladno on December 21. He was well received on both days of his campaign swing. Havel told workers in Slovakia that he had visited Alexander Dubcek earlier in the day and would do everything he could to ensure Dubcek a dignified position in the future. Havel promised his audiences in Slovakia that if elected President he would cancel the traditional inaugural gala and provide the savings to families of victims of the recent massacre in Romania. Havel also urged workers to form independent labor unions. During his campaign swing in Kladno, Havel assured his listeners that government economists were preparing a program of genuine reform which would lead to prosperity for all. Although Havel is a virtual shoo-in for the Czechoslovak Presidency, his campaign visit demonstrates that he also has appeal in Slovakia and that he continues to rapidly learn the nuances of running an effective political campaign. End summary.

2. (U) Vaclav Havel visited Eastern Slovakia on December 20 on his first campaign swing outside Prague. He spoke to workers at an iron works in Kosice and a sports stadium in Presov and was well received at both locations.

3. (U) Havel stated during the speech in Kosice that he had visited Alexander Dubcek at his home in Bratislava the same day. Havel said he would not allow a wedge to be driven between him and Dubcek and that if he (Havel) has any influence on the destiny of Czechoslovakia that Dubcek will have a dignified position in it. (Note: there are reports that Havel has agreed to have Dubcek appointed as Chairman of the Federal Assembly. End note.)

4. (U) Havel promised that if elected President he would cancel the traditional inaugural gala reception and would order that the 350,000 crowns saved (10 crowns approximately equals one dollar) be used to help victims of the recent massacre in Romania. Havel also promised he would strip President Ceausescu of all state decorations he had received from previous Czechoslovak Presidents.

5. (U) Havel told the iron workers that when he had been in prison he had worked in a foundry and that he would not forget those who had been working in them their entire life. Havel also urged the workers to form independent labor unions.

6. (U) Havel campaigned in the Central Bohemian City of Kladno on December 31. [perhaps December 21] He told his audience that he realizes many people fear economic reforms will lead to social disruptions. Havel expressed confidence in the economists preparing the new economic reform program, and promised the crowd it would lead to genuine economic prosperity.

7. (LOU) comment. Although Havel appears to be a shoo-in for the Presidency, Civic Forum representatives have expressed concern in how Havel is perceived outside Prague and especially in Slovakia. Havel's decision to visit Slovakia as well as his effectiveness on the stump there show that Havel the dramatist continues to quickly master the skills he will need as Havel the politician. Interestingly, at a press conference earlier this week Havel refused to be pinned down on whether, after serving for an interim period as President as he has promised in the run-up to free elections, he would campaign for a full five-year term.

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Source: National Security Archive, Soviet Flashpoints set.

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Document 110
Prague, December 22, 1989
Telegram from the US Embassy in Prague to the US Department of State,
on the results of the Extraordinary CPCz Congress

Confidential
Prague 08996

Subject: CPCz Extraordinary Congress ends December 21
Ref: Prague 8969

1. Confidential – entire text.
2. Summary. The CPCz' Extraordinary Congress concluded on December 21 after electing a new Central Committee and adopting a new Draft Program designed to give the Party a modern, democratic image and try to put its totalitarian past behind it. Only three senior appointments were made at the congress: Ladislav Adamec as Party Chairman, Vasil Mohorita as First Secretary and Karel Urbanek as Head of the Party Control Commission. Names of new Central Committee members have not been released and a Soviet Embassy contact tells us that other members of the leadership, including a new Political Executive Committee to replace the old Presidium, may not be elected until a Central Committee Plenum in January.
3. A Congress resolution has expelled former CPCz leader Vasil Bilak and assigned personal responsibility to him for the "dogmatic conservatism" which produced the present crisis in the society. Another 32 former Party leaders have been suspended for "gross political mistakes". A commission has been established to study further suspensions and expulsions of members. It is too early to tell whether the new Party program and personnel actions have gone far enough to satisfy reform elements within the CPCz, such as the Democratic Forum. End summary.
4. A two-day extraordinary session of the CPCz concluded late on December 22 with it declaring that conditions had been created for converting the Party into a modern, democratic and leftist political force. Other than the announcement a day earlier (REFTEL) of Ladislav Adamec and Vasil Mohorita to the new positions of Party Chairman and Leading Secretary, respectively, only one other appointment has been released, that of Karel Urbanek to head the Central Control and Audit Commission.
5. The Soviet Political Counselor (Filippov) tells us that the other senior appointments, including members of a new Political Executive Committee to replace the old Presidium, may not take place before a January Central Committee Plenum. The Congress elected a new Central Committee and Control Commission but none of the names of their members have been released.

A new Party program

6. The Congress adopted an Action Program which gives the new leadership a wide mandate to change the Party's image, structure and personnel. The goal of this

program is to create a "socialist, just and human society". Among the elements of that program are:

- The rehabilitation of all Party members expelled in connection with 1968–69 who are interested in returning to the CPCz;
- the abolition of the Party's existing statutes and new draft statutes. In the interim period to the 18th Party Congress, the Party will operate under a new set of rules, "the Provisional Organizational Order";
- the abolition of the People's Militia as of December 21;
- a new re-evaluation of the Party's history since its founding in 1921;
- rejection of the official "Lesson" of the crisis years 1968–69;
- a radical reduction in the size of the Party apparatus (though unspecified);
- a suggestion that Party organizations be abolished at work places and that they be given legal status so that they can engage in profitmaking activities;
- a commitment to the rule of law, and democratic elections in 1990 based on a system of proportional representation;
- a commitment to respect human rights, draft new constitutions at the republic and federal level, create a constitutional court and put the State Security Services (SNB) under Government control;
- a call for the country's military doctrine to have a defensive character and for cuts in military expenditures;
- an acceptance of various forms of ownership but a rejection of any policy which would re-privatize socialist property;
- an insistence that the country fulfill its Warsaw Pact commitments and cooperate with the Soviet Union on the basis of equality; and
- a call for the removal of foreign forces from the country.

A political accounting of the past leadership

7. Perhaps the most remarkable document to come out of the session was a resolution on the "evaluation of the political responsibility of former leading functionaries of the CPCz". The resolution singles out former Party ideology and foreign affairs chief Vasil Bilak as a representative of the forces which inspired the Warsaw Pact invasion of 1968. It terms him an oppressive exponent of Brezhnevism who imposed a dogmatic conservatism on the Party and prevented any fundamental reform. Bilak was expelled from the CPCz. Another 32 senior Party figures of the past, including former Presidium, Secretariat and Central Committee members, have had their memberships suspended for "gross political mistakes". The list includes hardliners (i.e., Fojtik, Hoffmann, Indra and Husak) as well as members of the former regime with some claim to reformist credentials (i.e., Lubomir Strougal).

8. The resolution acknowledges that this list is not complete and directs the new Central Committee to establish a special commission to judge cases of past abuse of power. The commission is to be composed of Party members who are not or were not members of the apparatus and will represent all regions of the country. The resolution calls on the commission to turn any evidence of criminal wrong doing discovered in these investigations over to the general prosecutor's office for legal proceedings.

The concluding resolution

9. A concluding resolution assigned a number of other tasks to the Central Committee before the next regularly scheduled (18th) CPCz Party Congress. New commissions are to be established to: study the 1968–69 events, evaluate the present political crisis in the country, draft new Party statutes, and prepare for new elections in 1990. A report is also to be made by the new Control Commission on the management and disposition of Party property.

10. The Congress took several actions to underscore the Party's new democratic nature. It announced the editorial board of Party daily "Rude pravo" would no longer be subordinated to the Central Committee but be a newspaper representing the whole Party, though what that means in organizational and personnel terms is unclear. The Party suspended all contacts with the Romanian Communist Party after a day earlier condemning the Romanian Government's actions against its citizens. The Congress recommended that Communist deputies in the Federal Assembly accept the will of the people in the election of a new President, an apparent concession to Vaclav Havel's inevitable election when the Assembly meets on December 29.

[Points 11–13 do not appear in the original.]

14. The Congress did not resolve the issue of a separate Czech Republic Communist Party. The committee work in the Czech Lands was disbanded, as was the Control Commission of the Committee. New Party Chairman Adamec is quoted as saying that it was premature to take a position on a Czech Party organization, but that a proposal on this could be ready for the next Central Committee Plenum.

15. Comment. The Soviet Political Counselor tells us that he shares the view that it is too early to tell whether this personnel housecleaning and new program can preserve the CPCz's unity. A large number of Democratic Forum (DF) members remain unsatisfied with the Congress' outcome. While DF members held only 36 of the 1530 delegates at the Congress, their concentration in Prague can give them a disproportionate influence over Party opinion. DF has already begun to establish an independent political structure. Whether it actually follows through on a declaration of independence will depend on whether the process of "purifying" the Party begun at this Congress continues under the new Central Committee Commission. It will also depend on how DF is represented in a new Political Executive Committee. Its chief supporter in the higher apparatus, Rudolf Hegenbart, received virtually no attention in reporting on the Congress. End comment.

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Source: National Security Archive, Soviet Flashpoints set.

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Document 111

Prague, December 27, 1989

Telegram from the US Embassy in Prague to the US Department of State
on the US Ambassador's meeting with new Czechoslovak Foreign Minister
Jiří Dienstbier

Confidential

Prague 09010

Subject: Ambassador's December 23 call on GOC Foreign Minister Dienstbier

Refs: A) USIA 74301, B) Prague 9002, C) Prague 9004

1. Confidential – entire text.

Summary

2. The Ambassador met with new Foreign Minister Dienstbier for some 30 minutes on December 23. They discussed the prospects for high level visits. Dienstbier welcomed the proposal of a U.S. Cultural Center in Prague but asked that the U.S. actively consider reopening our Consulate and a cultural center in Bratislava as a recognition of the Slovak nation. The Ambassador suggested some areas for deepening bilateral cooperation, including antiterrorism. She told Dienstbier there could be no GATT short cut around meeting the Jackson-Vanik conditions for extending MFN, though the mood on MFN, was positive in Washington. As in his meeting with CFE Ambassador Woolsey, Dienstbier asked for some unspecified USG support to improve the prospects of an early withdrawal of Soviet troops from Czechoslovakia. End summary.

3. While the Ambassador and Foreign Minister Dienstbier have met several times since his appointment to the new government on December 10, these contacts have usually been in connection with visiting CODELS. This was their first opportunity to have a substantive conversation between themselves. Dienstbier was joined by Ambassador-designate to Washington, Rita Klimova, the Deputy Director of the MFA's Third Department, Ivan Rychlik, and U.S. Desk Officer, Pavel Wodecki. Embassy POL/EC Chief also attended. The meeting lasted 30 minutes, after which the Ambassador joined Dienstbier and visiting U.S. CFE negotiator Ambassador Woolsey for a discussion of Vienna Disarmament Talks (Ref A).

High level visits

4. As Dienstbier had been able to allow only a short time for the meeting, he invited the Ambassador to begin. She mentioned she had just returned from a Chiefs of Missions meeting in Brussels where Secretary Baker had said he was excited over Czechoslovak developments. The Secretary sent his best wishes to Dienstbier and hoped to make a visit early in the new year to meet Dienstbier and other GOC leaders. Before she had left Washington in August, President Bush had also told her of his interest in a visit when conditions were right in Czechoslovakia. They now certainly were; she anticipated a presidential visit in the new year. Finally, House Majority

Leader Gephardt when recently in Prague had extended an invitation to Vaclav Havel to address a joint session of Congress after his election as President. Dienstbier replied with a broad smile that all of these visits sounded very fine and he agreed that we would have to work closely together on timing and arrangements if they were to go off right.

A new cultural center

5. The Ambassador said she had more good news. The Civic Forum had recently urged the Embassy and congressional visitors to open a cultural center in Prague. She was pleased to tell Dienstbier that USIA had now approved the idea (Ref A). The Embassy wanted to work out the details on this as quickly as possible. The Civic Forum had in the past offered to assist us to find a suitable building in central Prague and if Dienstbier and the ministry had no objection we would like to approach the Forum on this. Dienstbier said he supported the idea and added that the Civic Forum had access to a number of free buildings which could serve our purpose.

6. The Ambassador noted one issue which could be usefully resolved before the center was opened. That was the status of USIS in Czechoslovakia. Since the early 1950's, USIS had been banned as an organization from the country. While our cultural, press and exchange programs were funded and staffed by USIS personnel, we had to avoid the name because of the earlier Czechoslovak action. It would, the Ambassador said, be of symbolic importance if USIS' official status could be reinstated in Czechoslovakia, hopefully in time for the cultural center's opening. Dienstbier was positive on this point.

A consulate in Bratislava

7. Dienstbier thought quick progress could be made on establishing the cultural center, but asked whether we were giving thought as well to a Consulate and cultural representation in Bratislava. He had just spoken with Slovak Premier Milan Cic, who like other Slovak leaders was interested in the U.S. reopening its former Consulate building. The Slovaks objected, he said, to traveling to Prague for their visas and believed that Americans visiting relatives in Slovakia should not have to turn to Prague if they needed assistance. The Slovaks also resented being unable to have more direct and frequent contact with American diplomats. Dienstbier concluded that a U.S. diplomatic presence in Bratislava would be useful for all of us and urged the USG to act on this proposal. The Ambassador said she was aware of Czechoslovakia's interest on this point. We had passed Civic Forum's message to Washington and the idea was under consideration. She hoped she would have an answer for him in the not too distant future.

Bilateral issues

8. The Ambassador said that there were a whole series of issues we wanted to discuss and on which we could deepen bilateral cooperation. There was not enough time to go over these issues in detail in this meeting but disarmament, environment, drug control and anti-terrorism were among them. The latter was particularly important, and is an issue we have raised before at the MFA. We are interested, she said, in seeing

Czechoslovakia deny access to or transit of its territory by known terrorists such as Abu Nidal.

9. The Ambassador hoped to be able to look to MFA assistance on a number of practical matters. The Office of Diplomatic Services (SPRAVA) had in the past set restrictions and obstacles in the way of the Embassy leasing property and hiring staff. We also wanted to improve access to GOC officials and asked that the procedure of requiring diplomatic notes for official calls be ended. Dienstbier expressed a willingness to work with us on these problems. The new government, he said, wanted to create more normal conditions for everyone in Czechoslovakia, including diplomats.

10. At an early point the Ambassador suggested that both sit down and discuss the operation of our bilateral working groups on humanitarian affairs (HAWG) and business facilitation (BFWG). The latter might be a good place to discuss what conditions needed to be met to extend MFN to Czechoslovakia. Dienstbier, as he had to recent congressional visitors, asked whether MFN could not be extended by simply resuming the GATT rights we mutually abrogated in 1951. It was not all that easy the ambassador replied. Jackson-Vanik had intervened in the meantime and certain legal requirements had to be met now. The mood in Washington was very sympathetic on the question of MFN, however. In her personal opinion the problems could all be resolved, but it would take time.

Dienstbier's Moscow visit

11. Turning from bilateral issues, the ambassador asked how Dienstbier's December 20 visit to Moscow had gone. He said the talks, while only preliminary, had been quite open. He and Prime Minister Calfa had spent an hour with Soviet Prime Minister Ryzhkov and then Calfa had met separately with Gorbachev and Dienstbier with Shevardnadze.

12. Dienstbier's conversation with the Soviet Foreign Minister had been informal. Shevardnadze, he said, had essentially accepted the Czechoslovak position that Soviet forces should be removed from the country. It was Dienstbier's impression that the bilateral talks which the two sides had agreed to hold the first half of January on this issue would go well. The talks would consider, the political, military and psychological effects of the Soviet troop presence.

13. But on the troop negotiations Dienstbier added, we could use some American support. (Dienstbier at this point raised the same request as in his later meeting with Ambassador Woolsey (Ref B). Essentially he asked the U.S. to consider some means outside of the CFE talks in Vienna to compensate the Soviets for a withdrawal of their troops. He argued this could improve the prospects for early Soviet withdrawal as well as the general climate for arms negotiations. The Ambassador agreed to convey this request do Washington.

Panama

14. Dienstbier said that he regretted that his presence in Moscow had made it impossible for him to personally receive the Ambassador on her demarche on the U.S. action in Panama. He turned over a copy of the MFA's official statement on the U.S. intervention, which the Embassy has reported Ref C. Dienstbier explained the GOC criticism of the U.S. action was based on a strict adherence to the principle of non-intervention. We understood that said the ambassador, but we hoped that as more facts come to light the GOC could reassess its position.

Comment

15. Dienstbier was obviously tired but, despite a chest cough, looked healthy. He has moved slowly to put a few trusted advisors, such as Rita Klimova, in key MFA and overseas positions. He is expected, but has not yet acted, to replace former regime holdovers in senior MFA positions, particularly First Deputy Minister Sadovsky and Deputy Minister Vacek. (In a side conversation at this meeting, Klimova said she did not expect to be in Washington before early February and that, while her designation had been officially approved by the GOC the day before, she was not certain when agreement would be sought.)

16. Having only returned from Moscow a few days earlier, Dienstbier obviously had the Soviet troop issue on his mind. Success in solving this question to the satisfaction of the Czechoslovak public is probably a high foreign policy priority for the new government. We would welcome an early Department reaction to Dienstbier's request on this since it will almost certainly come up in future meetings.

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Source: National Security Archive, Soviet Flashpoints set.

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Document 112

Prague, December 27, 1989

Telegram from the US Embassy in Prague to the US Department of State, concerning talks between a Soviet diplomat and a US political counselor, revealing differences between the views of the Soviets and the new Czechoslovak Government on withdrawal of Soviet troops from Czechoslovakia

Confidential

Prague 09023

Subject: Soviet diplomat on January talks on the stationing of Soviet troops in Czechoslovakia

REFS: A) Prague 9010, B) Prague 9002

1. (C – entire text.)

Summary

2. In a brief meeting on December 23 requested by a Soviet contact, EMBOFF discussed upcoming January talks between GOC and Soviet officials on the basing of Soviet troops here. Our Soviet contact indicated that, despite Foreign Minister Dienstbier's statement to us to the contrary, a complete Soviet removal of forces was not on the agenda in these talks. While the Soviet replied to our questions on this subject, he seemed more interested to discuss the large number of recent Congressional visitors to Prague and the possible reopening of our Consulate in Bratislava. End summary.

3. The Soviet political counselor (Filippov) does not share the bullish view for an early Soviet troop withdrawal from Czechoslovakia implied by GOC Foreign Minister Dienstbier in his meeting with the Ambassador on December 23 (REF A). This Soviet Embassy contact told POLEC Chief that "as far as he knew" the recent visit to Moscow (December 20) by Prime Minister Calfa and Foreign Minister Dienstbier had not changed the "political" understanding that Soviet troops remain here as part of a general European balance of forces. Of course, Filippov continued, some segments of Czechoslovak society do not see it that way and want a complete withdrawal. The point of bilateral negotiations to be held in the first half of January would be to find a middle ground between these political and popular views. The new Czechoslovak leaders in Moscow, he added, had praised the conduct of Soviet forces during the recent political developments and stressed that the Soviet troops do not interfere in internal affairs. While Filippov did not preclude that the January talks might produce a new legal basis for the stationing of Soviet troops and even some reduction, the object of these talks was not their total withdrawal.

4. Filippov offered the above in reply to EMBOFF's questions. For his part he seemed more interested in learning what plans the USG had for reopening its Consulate in Bratislava and what the large numbers of Congressmen visiting Prague were up to. Filippov remarked that he had seen a local report that Foreign Minister Dienstbier and

Slovak Premier Cic had discussed the issue of the opening of an American (and Canadian) Consulate in the Slovak capital. EMBOFF replied that the Czechoslovaks had in fact broached the question of our reopening a Bratislava Consulate themselves. We were still considering the proposal. Apparently there was strong interest in this on the Slovak side and that was the background to the news report. The number of Congressional visitors, we told him, was linked to the dramatic local political developments and the opportunity, offered by the Congress' Christmas recess, for their parliamentarians to come out and see these events first hand.

Comment

5. There is a basic difference in approach to the January talks between Dienstbier and the Soviets, if Filippov accurately reflects their position. For Dienstbier complete removal is on the agenda, not so for the Soviets. Dienstbier's request for some form of USG support (REFTELS) in these talks is an apparent attempt to bridge that difference and reply to the Soviet argument that a removal of their troops would be a unilateral change in the East-West balance, one requiring a compensatory move by the West.

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Source: National Security Archive, Soviet Flashpoints set.

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Prague, December 29, 1989

Telegram from the US Embassy in Prague to the US Department of State,
on the consequences of Václav Havel's election to the Czechoslovak Presidency

Confidential

Prague 09083

Subject: Havel's election as President concludes the first phase of Czechoslovakia's
Quiet revolution

REF: Prague 8931

1. (C – entire text.)

Summary

Vaclav Havel's election as President on December 29 caps the first phase of the Czechoslovak "quiet" revolution. His election was sealed by a Civic Forum-crafted political deal which gave his main competitor, Alexander Dubcek, the position of Federal Assembly Chairman as a consolation prize. Havel's election symbolically confirms in the minds of average Czechs and Slovaks that the democratic process here is irreversible and free elections guaranteed. The next phase of this revolution will be to institutionalize political reforms. An important issue in this process will be drafting a new electoral law, likely to be based on proportional representation. This is an electoral approach consistent with Czechoslovak political traditions and one likely to keep both the Communists, and the many new smaller parties now sprouting up, "in" system. After elections in the Summer or Fall of 1990, the future of the Civic Forum and of Havel are unclear. While the Forum says it wants to "wither away" after these elections, it may have a part to play in building future political coalitions. Havel has committed himself to step down from the Presidency once free elections are held. From today's perspective, however, it seems probable that should he choose to ask the new assembly for a full five-year presidential mandate, it would be hard to deny it to him. End summary.

3. Vaclav Havel, playwright, human rights activist and now politician, was elected President of Czechoslovakia on December 29 by a special session of the Federal Assembly held in Prague Castle. Havel's election had been a certainty for more than a week, but today's action, including a commemorative mass in St. Vitus Cathedral and a speech by the new President from the Castle balcony, will have an important psychological impact. It should confirm in the minds of average Czechoslovaks that the democratic process here is now irreversible.

4. Havel's election caps the first phase of Czechoslovakia's six-week old "quiet" revolution. In this phase the system has gradually been purged of its discredited, hardline Communist leadership. That house cleaning has been going on at all levels of society. Last week, for example it reached the small Czech Jewish Community, where

for the first time in decades, the community freely elected its own leadership, making their respected former President, Desider Galsky, once again head of the Community.

5. Havel's victory has practical as well as symbolic significance. The post of President is not an honorific position under the Czechoslovak system. The new President is Commander in Chief; he calls on the Federal Assembly to form a new Government; and he has extensive powers over appointments and amnesties. Havel as President is seen as a guarantee that democratic reforms will continue and that next year's elections will be free.

6. While some had criticized the presidential campaigning as a distraction of Civic Forum's energies from more basic reforms, it has proven a successful test of the Forum and Havel's skill in the political arena. The new President has made the shift from a purely moral figure to a politician without any apparent loss of popularity. The Civic Forum has shown that despite Communist delaying tactics, including a proposal to transform the Czechoslovak Presidency into a directly elected office, it could bring public opinion around to its way of thinking. It crafted a compromise which met Slovak sensibilities by conceding to presidential candidate Alexander Dubcek the office of Chairman of the Federal Assembly (Dubcek was appointed on December 28) and swung other political forces behind Havel's campaign.

7. With Havel as President, the Civic Forum can now concentrate on the revolution's second stage: institutionalizing democracy. Essentially this involves putting a legal framework in place to protect human rights and permit free elections and later to draft a new constitution. As the Government's new program has outlined (REFTEL) these political reforms will be the priority over the next six months. The role of the Forum in this process will be to shape a popular consensus on the big political issues to be decided in this program, particularly the new election law.

8. The Government and the Civic Forum have taken a pragmatic, non-ideological approach to this task. They have shown a readiness to compromise even when popular opinion might have supported a less conciliatory line. A good example is the recent decision to concede to the Communists two of the 24 seats left vacant when discredited deputies were expelled from the Assembly. Civic Forum representatives have told us that they want to keep the Communists "in the system". This consensus approach and the multiplication of new parties (at last count there were 14 and the number is rising) argues for retaining the Czechoslovak political tradition of proportional representation in the new election law.

9. A date for Federal Assembly elections has not yet been set. Early thinking had been to hold these in a mid-1990 (June/July) timeframe but Civic Forum representatives now tell us they are reconsidering. The Summer months, when most Czechoslovaks retreat to their country cottages, is not the best time to conduct an election campaign. The thought now is to delay the vote until the early fall.

10. Most local observers are ready to discuss the post-electoral political landscape only in the broadest of terms. Too many factors are uncertain, including what the Civic Forum itself wants to become. Forum representatives now reject the idea of converting

into a political party. Though the Forum has agreed to run a common slate of candidates or the 1990 elections, its official goal remains to "wither away" sometime after elections. Many fear the Forum could otherwise become a democratic counterpart to the past CPCz, playing such a "leading role" in society that independent political initiatives are smothered.

11. Such a self-dismantling of the Forum presumes that the embryonic political parties now forming can fill the political void left behind. That seems unlikely to happen smoothly. Despite the protestations of its members, the Forum should survive the elections and could have an important role to play in coalition building among the many small parties forming to the left and right of the political center. The Forum has yet to come to terms with exactly what that should be.

12. Havel himself continues to dispute that his political role after his election today is anything but temporary. He has promised to resign after free elections are held. His eventual aim, he says, is to return to writing and the theater. But the smooth transition he has made to political life makes us suspect he may find the Presidency appealing and hard to leave. From today's perspective it seems likely that if he asked to succeed himself after the elections with a full five-year mandate as President, it would be hard for the new Federal Assembly to deny it to him.

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Source: National Security Archive, Soviet Flashpoints set.

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Moscow, January 5, 1990

Memorandum from the International Department of the CC CPSU,
on relations between the USSR and the countries of Central and Eastern Europe
(excerpts)

Towards a New Concept of Relations between the USSR
and the States of Central and Eastern Europe

1. Assessment of the situation in the region

At the end of the 1980s the crisis of the neo-Stalinist model of socialism in Central and Eastern Europe has become a general crisis and broke into the open phase. During 1989 in all the states of the Warsaw Treaty Organizations the accumulated contradictions came to be realized which led to a change of the social order, while in three countries the changes took the nature of a chain-reaction (in the GDR and Czechoslovakia they were peaceful, in Romania it was bloody). A palace coup in Bulgaria, although it prevented an open conflict, still came too late.

The most significant element in the new situation, in the political sphere, is the end of the era of one-party states in Eastern and Central Europe. Real power is gradually passing into the hands of the leaders of states, governments, and parliaments.

Communist Parties have lost the leading role in society, both de jure and de facto, and are continuing to lose their positions. [...]

2. Assessment of the old concept of relations between the USSR
and the states of Central and Eastern Europe

Until the middle of the 1980s the relations of the USSR with these countries were based on the tacit international acceptance that this region was a sphere of Soviet influence. Although in a matter of fact this situation was "sanctioned" theoretically only in 1968 in the so-called doctrine of limited sovereignty, during the entire post-war period the USSR systematically interfered in the internal affairs of its neighbors, including the use of military force.

Until 1985 the priority principle of Soviet foreign policy was to maintain the status quo, and the nature of political relations was determined mostly by the special role of Communist parties in life of Eastern European countries. The CPSU built channels through which it could influence the formation of Party-Government elites, and used those possibilities on a large scale until the mid-1980s. Against this backdrop there was an established tradition of strict observance of unquestionable loyalty to those groups of Party leaders who were in power at the moment, and also the tradition of keeping in secrecy from its own and the international public any contradictions in the WTO and COMECON. This unwritten rule covered, in particular, N. Ceaușescu who as early as the end of the 1950's [sic] broke out of the direct Soviet control; limited autonomy [*fronda*] was tolerated, since Romanian domestic policy remained neo-Stalinist. Loyalty was no longer observed only in those cases when Eastern European leaders set

themselves upon the path of reforms which were regarded by the CPSU leadership as a departure from fundamental assumptions and basic laws of socialist construction.

After the beginning of *perestroika* the CPSU leadership, in accordance with the proclaimed principles of new political thinking, renounced the Brezhnev doctrine, thereby creating an international climate that favored far-reaching shifts in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe. However, party-to-party relations were not de-coupled from inter-state relations in due time. The nature of relations inside the WTO and COMECON remained un-democratic (the absence of rotation of the posts of the commander and chief of staff of the Unified Armed Forces, secretary of the COMECON, etc.). Other mechanisms of political cooperation, its traditions, its protocol remained generally the same. Strict controls on the coverage of relations with East European countries in mass media did not diminish. These problems lay outside of the policy of *glasnost*. In other words, there were many relics from the past in the system of relations.

Despite profound shifts that have taken place in East European states priority interests of Soviet foreign policy in this region have not yet been clarified, main directions of this policy have not been formulated and a new adequate set of policy instruments has not been created. Multiple Soviet representatives in the states of Eastern Europe failed to forecast events even in the short run and failed to direct the actions of Soviet diplomacy into the correct channel: our policy in Romania gives a most stunning example of this.

The information that came from the embassies, the central apparatus of the Foreign Ministry, services of the KGB abroad and other Soviet representations gave ground for distorted assessments of internal processes that had been brewing in Eastern Europe. Changes in Poland and Hungary evoked excessive alarm, although as the subsequent turn of events sowed, those countries managed to carry out a smooth transitions to a new social order, and the national-state interests of the USSR have not been impaired in any significant way. As to the leaders of the GDR, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria and Romania, Soviet services abroad criticized them more for their criticism of *perestroika* in the USSR rather than for their reluctance to undertake much-needed radical transformations. As a result, an unprecedented vacuum of power emerged in those countries, and processes were set in motion which caught both Soviet and international diplomacy unprepared (for instance, a rapid rapprochement of the two German states).

A series of erroneous foreign policy actions took place, in the outdated spirit of loyalty towards a narrow group of party leaders. The most serious errors: a visit of M.S. Gorbachev to Romania, awarding N. Ceaușescu with the order of Lenin and sending a very high-ranking party delegation to the last Congress of the RCP [Romanian Communist Party]. Then we should mention a visit [of Gorbachev] to Czechoslovakia (1987) which led to the most serious disenchantment of the population of this country who expected that this visit would bring about changes. During the visit [of Gorbachev] to Poland (1988) a chance was missed to reinforce friendly relations with Poles and to enhance the prestige of the Soviet leadership by giving a clear answer to the question about the perpetrators of the Katyn crime. Another missed opportunity was the delay in acknowledging that the intervention [of 1968] in Czechoslovakia was a mistake.

Demonstration of loyalty with regard to the leaders who had long lost public support and who were simply hated by the people, steeped in corruption and obscenely violated the same principles of communism which they publicly advocated, hurt the interests of the USSR and the CPSU, compromised their policy and *perestroika*, increased anti-Soviet sentiments that had remained hidden until a certain moment and that only now are being blurted out openly. All these errors can be compensated for only to a certain extent through successes of Soviet foreign policy on other issues and in other regions of the world.

Other causes of the aforementioned weaknesses and errors should be named:

– Foreign policy of the Soviet state has been paralyzed by the sense of moral responsibility of the CPSU for the present complications of the Communist parties in the countries of Eastern Europe.

– On all stages [the process] of preparations and implementation foreign policy was in the hands of people personally responsible for Soviet actions in the spirit of Brezhnev doctrine. Many of them still adhere to old political assessments and preserve personal ties with national governing cadres with conservative neo-Stalinist orientation. They become the source of not quite objective information about events in the country [of their location].

– Principles of staffing and formation of Soviet diplomatic services in the countries of Eastern Europe and traditions alive in the activity of all representations do not correspond to the present complex situation in the region. People who were sent there are, as a rule, non-professional ambassadors who lord over the personnel of Soviet services abroad in their customary commanding style and stick to conservative tenets aimed at preservation of the status quo. Messages they send to Moscow get filtered through strict ideological filters. Their contacts in the country are almost exclusively with the state-government establishment. All this significantly devalues the information they obtain and distort the real picture about the country. Obtaining this sort of information does not require keeping so many services in the field; similar conclusions can be drawn in Moscow from the analysis of the official media of these countries.

– East European departments of the Foreign Ministry are staffed with the cadres who have been schooled in corresponding embassies and who rely in their practical work on the "battle experience" [zakalka] they have obtained there.

The analogous picture is in the area of trade cooperation.

After the war instead of the traditional for Central and Eastern Europe division of labor oriented towards the Western part of the continent, under our strong pressure emerged a relatively self-isolated economic system under the domination of the USSR. Following the Soviet example, the countries adhere to the principle of autarkic development of their economies. The line towards integration was taken only in the 1970's, however it did not bring expected fruits, because the proposed measures were largely voluntarist by nature, hardly reflected interests of the countries and immediate subjects of economic activity. Cooperation therefore boiled down to the centralized barter, and commercial and financial relations, as well as the concerns for efficiency played a subservient role. Problems of scientific-technical progress had not been resolved, the quality of goods on the COMECON market remained shoddy. For these reasons centrifugal tendencies in economic relations grew stronger, and the COMECON lost its prestige and now is on the brink of total collapse.

In the first half of the 1980s attempts were made to revive its activity through formalistic bureaucratic programs and skin-lifting changes in the mechanisms of cooperation. However, all these measures came to naught because of lack of coordination between internal mechanisms and different directions in foreign economic policies of various countries.

After the beginning of *perestroika* the USSR proposed a course aimed at fundamental renewal of forms and methods of economic cooperation. Rigid definition of main parameters of integrationist mechanisms characteristic for the administrative-commanding type of management, was declared unworkable. A new concept of an integrated socialist market reflected the goal proclaimed in the majority of East European countries: to move to market economy. However, realization of this strategic goal proceeds in a halting way, since in reality market mechanisms do not function still in any of the countries – members of the COMECON. Rather on the contrary, there is an increasing trend for the barter in economic relations, even stricter measures to protect the market trade from the citizens of neighboring states. Under such conditions the integrated market remains merely a far-away guideline of restructuring in the sphere of integrationist interaction. [...]

Source: Document, the National Security Archive. Donation of Professor Jacques Levesque. Reprinted from *The End of the Cold War in Europe, 1989: "New Thinking" and New Evidence* (Musgrove, 1998), Doc. 74.

Translated by Vladislav Zubok, the National Security Archive.

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Document 115

Prague, January 16, 1990

Minutes on the reception of Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the USSR Ivan Pavlovich Aboimov by Minister of Foreign Affairs of the CSSR Jiří Dienstbier, concerning the "departure" Soviet troops from Czechoslovakia

Aboimov: The meeting of the delegates has been useful. I should like at the very outset to pass along the greetings of Minister Shevardnadze. Our delegation has come with a mandate that draws on our knowledge of the Czechoslovak position, expressed during our meeting with Minister Shevardnadze in Moscow, and what we have had the opportunity to read about the Czechoslovak position in the newspapers. I should like to repeat the words of our minister, who emphasized in Moscow that we have no interest in leaving our forces in Czechoslovakia, but would like you to take into account some other circumstances, especially the Vienna talks on conventional forces, and the interest of Western countries in maintaining both military blocs. We also take note of your comment that it would be good for the Soviet Union to make some kind of gesture.

The position of the Czechoslovak delegation is in many ways different from what was said in Moscow. The greatest difficulty is that it demands the full and rapid departure of our troops. This exceeds the bounds of our mandate, so we have decided to ask for new instructions. In the negotiations which will resume this morning we shall bring some new questions to the table, and hear the arguments of the Czechoslovak side. Then we want to propose a break for the clarification of positions, after which the delegations should meet again without delay.

Dienstbier: I do not think that our delegation would submit something which was not already basically agreed to in Moscow. There we agreed that the negotiations in the communiqué would be called "negotiations on Soviet units stationed in Czechoslovakia", but from the meetings in Moscow it was evident that we would discuss how the Soviet troops would leave. Mr. Shevardnadze himself confirmed that the Soviet Union was interested in the departure of its troops. If such intent exists, and if it is identical on both sides, then from the point of view of the internal political situation in Czechoslovakia, and evidently in the USSR as well (I can't very well judge that), such intent must be realized. In order to make our intentions more convincing, and positively influence the international scene, it would be well for us to realize this mutual goal quickly and completely.

The Czechoslovak proposal is not in conflict with the mandate that we gave at the talks in Moscow. After the USSR renounced the intervention of 21 August 1968, and in a situation where the existing agreement on temporary stationing is legally void, I think a new agreement should be arrived at quickly, not only in our own, but in the Soviet interest as well, especially as concerns the building of a common European house.

Aboimov: At yesterday's meetings of our delegations we confirmed that we do not wish to leave our troops for long. The question of a timetable comes up, a very acute one, especially in view of those factors which Minister Shevardnadze spoke about in Moscow. It especially concerns the Vienna negotiations, where we expect agreement

this year. The question of army personnel is very acute. The Soviet Union and other countries of the Warsaw Pact have taken unilateral measures, and so we are wondering what the Americans will do when we leave Czechoslovakia. They may do nothing.

Another serious problem is the German question. We don't want to scare anyone, but some things that are taking place in the FRG, and in the GDR as well, disturb us. But not only us. Our historical experience shows that we have always been able to defend ourselves. We are concerned rather for other nations. This does not mean that we should dramatize the situation.

We understand the urgency of the departure of our troops for the Czechoslovak side. We do not want to make problems for your new leadership, but we want good will to be shown by both sides, considering the reality in Europe. We are conducting negotiations not only for the withdrawal of our troops, but on economic questions as well. We must also resolve internal problems in the USSR. We shall, it seems, be forced to decrease deliveries of oil abroad. Strikes have an influence on our production, too. In all of these areas we want to search for solutions which will not harm either you or us.

We have decided to leave Prague tomorrow; we will inform our leadership of the new position of your delegation, and prepare a new solution. The stance of the Czechoslovak side is difficult for us, but not politically. President Havel himself seems to have new ideas, of which he spoke in Brno, and intends to raise them at the meeting with Mr. Gorbachev. I should like to emphasize that we have no interest in dragging this out. The difficulties are created by unexpected moments in the schedule.

Dienstbier: I am not a diplomat; I shall speak absolutely openly. If it is a matter of technical and transport problems, these can be easily solved. According to our calculations it is possible to accomplish the departure within a half a year. The Vienna talks can only speed the departure of your troops. I said in Moscow, and repeated to the leader of the American delegation at the Vienna conference and to Senator Lewin, that we would be happy if the Americans would take some step of their own regarding the departure of Soviet troops from Czechoslovakia. As you may have read in the papers, the Americans would be willing to make some concessions. Pressure could be brought on the Americans. This is not a matter of strategic balance in Europe. As for the German question, everyone is interested. Concerns exist in our country as well as in several small western countries, mainly of a too-powerful Germany. Acceleration of the Helsinki process and the creation of a pluralistic Europe will enable us to face these concerns, for in a united Europe Germany would not have such weight. There is no need to fear the growth of revanchist feelings as long as the democratic process continues. For them the fertile ground is tension and the survival of old structures. The growth of extreme right-wing forces is based on immigrants from Poland, the USSR, and other countries. From opposition to Stalinism they go to the other extreme. The transformation to democratic conditions takes away this fertile ground from the extremists. All these factors are of course less important when we speak of the departure of Soviet troops. Even before 1968 the Czechoslovak army was considered a good one within the WP. The transition to a defensive doctrine and disarmament reduces or eliminates the danger from Germany.

The troops' departure is an extraordinarily important political question for us. It concerns the relationship of our people to the USSR. Over 40 years relations toward the USSR have cooled for many of our citizens, but there is no anti-Sovietism at all in our country, much less an organized kind. When Mr. Gorbachev came to visit, he was for the first time welcomed spontaneously and in an unrehearsed way. People were only disappointed that he did not replace our government, and did not condemn the intervention before our revolution. If he had done it, he would have gained a great deal of sympathy. These sympathies remain. Our people are capable of understanding the enormous problems growing out of your history and the Stalinist era. There was never such an atmosphere here as in some other countries. Now there exist no bureaucratic barriers to the departure of Soviet troops; therefore it would be important if you would take the initiative yourselves in speeding the departure. We would not be happy to see such phenomena as in Western Europe, for example demonstrations around Soviet bases. People have not done that so far, but they no longer see any reason for your soldiers to remain. To this point they have seen the troops as insurance for the leadership installed by Brezhnev. Leaving the troops in our country would seem to them to be the conflict between words and deeds that was normal for the Stalinist era, but not for the new Soviet leadership. Our interests are that Czechoslovak-Soviet relations be as good as possible, and have the support of our citizens. The sooner your troops leave, the better for our relations. It would be ideal if the agreement were prepared so that Gorbachev and Havel could sign it in Moscow. It would be symbolic if Havel, who enjoys a great authority, could sign: our nation would take this as a symbol of renewed Czechoslovak-Soviet friendship. We should move very quickly, and if you want to leave for Moscow tomorrow, it would be good if you returned the day after, or if the Czechoslovak delegation went to Moscow. This is not pressure; we can hardly pressure such a superpower as the USSR. Of course, we didn't send any troops into Red Square. So I think it would be good if you were the ones to show initiative.

I consider it important if you could immediately cease all exercises on Czechoslovak territory. This is what people notice the most. Environmental factors bother them above all.

Aboimov: All the ideas you have mentioned I shall submit to our leadership. We do not want to create difficulties; we want to find a mutually acceptable solution. We should like you to take into account not only bilateral, but multilateral factors as well. We don't bring up the Vienna conference for tactical reasons alone. We are committed to the development of the Helsinki process. The entire world knows of our disarmament initiatives. I only have doubts whether the Americans will make some gesture in regards to the departure of our troops from Czechoslovakia, because so far they have not replied to our unilateral measures.

We must find a solution that will satisfy both our countries, while not damaging the collective position in Vienna. Today we shall continue to work during the meeting of delegations. We should approve a joint press release. It should contain a passage on the conclusion of the first round and that we shall continue to work. I don't know if we shall manage to prepare the agreement before Havel's visit to Moscow. I see the main problem not only on the technical side; some of the troops may leave on their own plan. Much more serious is the infrastructure at home, which was not and still is not prepared.

Dienstbier: For our further cooperation it would be good if the departure of your troops were resolved as quickly as possible, and disappeared from the table. We have much in common, not only economically. The departure of troops would be proof of a new politics for both sides. Strategically it will not be painful. Your troops were not on Czechoslovak territory during the worst times of the Cold War. Our defence was well enough assured. We wish for you and ourselves that we come as soon as possible to a mutually acceptable resolution.

Aboimov: I don't think that the Soviet leadership has any need to prove the sincerity of its efforts. Today the whole world trusts it. This is neither propaganda nor ideology.

Source: photocopy of PC print-out; archive of the Institute of Contemporary History, Prague, GB/90, 22.L/5. Published in Jindřich Pecka (ed.), *Odsun sovětských vojsk z Československa 1989–1991*, Prague, 1996, p. 71–4.

Translated from the Czech by Todd Hammond.

Document 116

Moscow, February 26, 1990

Minutes from talks between the Foreign Ministers of the CSSR and USSR,
on an agreement for the "departure" of Soviet troops from Czechoslovakia

In the informal introductory debate Edward Shevardnadze opened the issue of the formalities of signing the agreement on the departure of Soviet forces from Czechoslovakia. Jiří Dienstbier suggested that the document be signed in the presence of Václav Havel and Mikhail Gorbachev, which would emphasize the importance of that document. He introduced the possibility of modifications to the prepared tentative agreement according to the results of negotiations between Havel and Gorbachev on this issue (the departure of military units) within one year of the signature of the agreement, that is, by February 26, 1991.

Mr Dienstbier further informed the Soviet side on the Czechoslovakia proposal for a declaration on mutual relations, whose signature on the presidential level will be negotiated between Mr. Havel and Mr. Gorbachev. This declaration would be the basis for other treaties, among others a document negotiated by CSSR Minister of the Interior Richard Sacher and Chairman of the USSR Committee on State Security J. Kriuchkov. This declaration would replace the existing Treaty on Friendship, Association, and Cooperation, which expires in May of this year. (It was signed during an unfavourable period, and contains many principles of the Brezhnev Doctrine).

Shevardnadze agreed with Dienstbier's opinions and proposal.

To continue, Shevardnadze began the official part of the meeting. He called the visit a historic event in Czechoslovak-Soviet relations, which will determine its character in future years. Our task, he continued, is to take the positive from the past, that which our nations agreed on, but on the contrary to get rid of all remaining clutter which has prevented their normal development. The visit of President Havel is the first serious step on that path. He emphasized that both countries have all the prerequisites for the formation of new relations, free of mistrust and suspicion, and based on mutual advantage. The possibilities in this direction are unlimited, both in bilateral cooperation, and in the international arena. Our interests are identical, and we want to contribute together to the solution of problems in Europe. Important areas are economic, scientific-technical, and cultural cooperation.

We understand the natural interest of Czechoslovakia in actively engaging in European processes, continued Shevardnadze. Both sides are equally interested in the building of a new Europe, the establishment of a new order, and the creation of new structures, in the maintenance of security and the elimination of conflict. Great possibilities are emerging for Czechoslovakia and for the Soviet Union.

Czechoslovakia is undergoing the process of democratization, which may also be accompanied by some problems. The Soviet Union is also experiencing deep changes in its governmental, political, and economic system. They are accompanied by significant problems and difficulties. The common interest of both countries is to assure that the process of democratization becomes irreversible. The Soviet Union is very committed to this. Our interests, emphasized Shevardnadze, lie in a democratic Czechoslovakia

and Poland, as well as other countries. Czechoslovakia also has an interest in the solidification of the democratic foundations of the Soviet system.

Mutual cooperation under the new conditions is beginning well, and good relations are being formed between Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union. All questions of mutual interest must be considered openly, without unnecessary diplomacy. Cooperation between the Ministries of Foreign Affairs of both countries can also assist in this.

Mr. Dienstbier pointed out that he had already spoken in Ottawa on matters relating to the formation of new relations between the two countries. He also spoke of them during a conversation with the new Czechoslovak Ambassador to the Soviet Union, Rudolf Slánský. They affirmed that today nothing prevents their normal development. The Czechoslovak delegation came to the Soviet Union to sign the declaration on mutual relations in order to normalize them, so that both sides could concentrate on their future development. All necessary prerequisites have been created for serious discussions on mutual relations, economic, cultural, and otherwise. We are also taking note of the important questions arising out of the new thinking and new approaches to European problems.

The basic direction of our thinking is the same, emphasized Dienstbier. It is natural and normal that disagreements may arise in which, instead of grand phrases of "eternal cooperation", more attention will be devoted to particular problems of present and future relations. We need not always have the same opinion; we need not always "come to agreement". The centuries-long tradition of our relations, however, forms a good foundation for useful dialogue.

In view of the fact that a tentative agreement on the departure of the forces has already been prepared, Minister Dienstbier suggested taking up the point of a declaration on mutual relations, if of course the Soviet side wants to express its opinion on this document (considering that this is the object of the meeting of Presidents of the two states).

Shevardnadze made comments mainly to the effect that a declaration is usually of a broader content. He introduced the examples of the Soviet-Yugoslavia, Soviet-India, and Soviet-Indonesia declarations. But he did not reject the possibility of adopting a brief document/declaration.

Dienstbier pointed out that, in spite of the brevity of the Czechoslovak-proposed declaration, it contains all the necessary basic ideas, and is formulated in clear language. Its adoption would make it possible to avoid tense discussions on certain particular problems, for example a formulation dealing with 1968 (Shevardnadze added the comment that such an approach would suit the Soviet side as well).

In discussions on this question Luboš Dobrovský pointed out that some of the formulations in the proposed Soviet version of the communiqué on the entry of forces into Czechoslovakia (for example, that it was a "mistaken and unjustifiable act") are for us insufficient. On the other hand, the Czechoslovak formulations were perhaps unacceptable for the Soviet side. Adoption of a declaration containing more general principles on the building of mutual relations would allow them to avoid complicated discussions. In view of the fact that these principles create new possibilities for the formation of normal relations between the two states, the introductory statement could be entitled "Declaration".

Dienstbier in this context added that TASS and other media report insufficient and often distorted information on the situation in Czechoslovakia. This creates the impression that this is some abrupt return to capitalism or "wild" anti-Communism. This also disrupts normal relations.

As far as 1968 is concerned, continued Dienstbier, it must be understood that this was a serious intervention into the evolution of Czechoslovak society, which influenced the lives of hundreds of thousands of people, and halted the development of the republic for a full 20 years. Under these conditions, people's emotions will understandably show through. We do not want to exacerbate them. It would be best if the Soviet Union itself showed initiative, and publicly stated that it actually was an intervention. It is obvious that the statement "mistakes were made" cannot assuage people's feelings (Shevardnadze replied that he would welcome a statement compatible with Czechoslovak interests).

If we do not come to agreement now, continued Dienstbier, we can leave the question of adopting a declaration to the judgement of our presidents. Then we could put in the communiqué what occurred during their conversations, what they talked about. You could, emphasized Dienstbier, express the fact of intervention in your own language. The Czechoslovak nation should be told that the Soviet Union clearly condemns this act; that it was an intervention against restructuring, which helped enable the Brezhnev Doctrine for so long to devastate not only the USSR, but other nations as well. Thus the possibility was postponed for solving the crisis of Stalinism, and the Soviet Union is today in a much worse situation than it would have been if perestroika had begun sooner. This view would not be in conflict with the present policy of the USSR, which has condemned many things in domestic and foreign policy much more sharply. Since you are stripping Brezhnev of all his decorations, observed Dienstbier, you might as well take the "Order of Czechoslovakia" as well.

Shevardnadze emphasized that there is no doubt of the condemnation of the entry of Soviet forces into Czechoslovakia. He cited the example of Afghanistan, through which went maybe a million people. They understood it as international assistance. Sharp formulations provoked sharp resistance from them. They believed the leadership of the state, and the change in the evaluation of this action placed in doubt the opposite decision ("what are we supposed to believe now?"). There is a certain analogy in the case of the invasion of Czechoslovakia, which hundreds of thousands of soldiers also went through.

Shevardnadze expressed agreement with sharper language. He cautioned, however, that they are disturbed by the mood in the army. This is why they are approaching the entire matter so cautiously (mentioning the case of military intervention in Georgia). He emphasized in this context that the steering committee itself had come up with a stronger formulation, but the other delegations did not accept it.

Dienstbier disagreed with the comparison to Afghanistan. He stated that in Czechoslovakia not one Soviet soldier had been killed, and so it would be possible to rule out any criticism of the army. The entire act can be condemned as an illegal act by the leadership under Brezhnev. It is not necessary to speak of the army. In Czechoslovakia today there are many children whose fathers came there 20 years ago. We do not want this to be turned against them. They received orders, and obeyed. We understood this situation even then. It is possible to condemn only the political

leadership for the illegal decision on the entry of forces into Czechoslovakia, and not the army.

Shevardnadze returned to the text of the declaration, which seemed to him to be relatively acceptable. In his opinion, it may not please the Czechoslovak side, but posed no problems for the Soviet delegation.

Dienstbier observed that it is better to have a short and good declaration than a bad communiqué. Given that the declaration would be considered by the highest representatives, he recommended that the possibility be considered of adopting a communiqué. The variant "mistaken decision" (referring to 1968) did not suit the Czechoslovak side, however. He proposed to include in the communiqué that the Soviet side condemns the illegal decision of the Brezhnev leadership to intervene in Czechoslovakia.

Shevardnadze pointed out another problem, which is the German question. The unification of Germany stands before us. We have come up with a proposed formulation for the mechanism of the work of "the six". However, he continued, we do not know how to approach practical tasks such as the interests of neighbouring countries in regard to the borders, and how to resolve procedural questions. Yesterday Genscher proposed organizing meetings of experts from both countries. The Soviet Union agrees with this, but prior to these negotiations it would like to consult on these questions within the Warsaw Pact (the interests of Poland, Czechoslovakia, etc.). The USSR would like to have the mandate of its allies during negotiations with the West, their agreement in principle on the question of the military status of a united Germany, and others. Opinions are varied. Poland regards consultations as useful, and proposes they be held in Moscow.

The Soviet side suggests holding the meetings before elections in the GDR, because the present leadership has a prepared concept deserving of attention. Bulgaria and Romania will agree with the meeting. Hungary is changing its stance (membership in NATO). If we decide for such negotiations, it should not degenerate into a confrontation with the West. The idea has come up to discuss these matters at the highest level, but in the opinion of Shevardnadze this would be difficult and unrealistic.

Dienstbier stated that Czechoslovakia regards the 4+2 negotiations as preliminary. The final result should be agreed to by 35 countries (the Helsinki process). Germany will be reunified, whether we like it or not. Thus, it would be good to use the reunification of Germany as a motor to accelerate the European process, and call Helsinki II as soon as possible (in 1991, or even before), then do at Helsinki II what was not accomplished after the Second World War. This would be the creation of a security structure within the framework of the Helsinki process, which would supersede existing structures and differences between NATO and the Warsaw Pact. To create new conditions within economic and other agreements, and realize the idea of a European home. This is of course a long and complex process, but the reunification of Germany could be used to accelerate it.

For Czechoslovakia this concept is acceptable partly because no one is demanding a change of Czechoslovak borders. If voices to the contrary have been heard, it was propaganda, and bad propaganda at that. We understand, emphasized Dienstbier, the border of more than a thousand kilometres with Poland is a fundamental matter for them. It is a fact that to this day Kohl has not recognized and guaranteed the Polish

border. It is not believable that Germany would want to occupy Poland. If they were not just before elections, they would probably issue a statement recognizing the borders. It is not a primary question for them. Michnik has passed on Mazowiecki's message rejecting the attempt to "talk about us without us". Munich is invoked, and the participation of Poland is required at the 4+2 meetings in matters of Polish interest (the border question, or the possible withdrawal of Soviet forces through Poland). You have said that you support the Polish demands. If no connection with Czechoslovakia arises, we need not participate in these negotiations.

In my opinion, continued Dienstbier, a meeting of the foreign ministers should take place after elections in the GDR. The present government may have a concept for the solution of these questions, but we do not know if they will remain in present form after the elections. Therefore talks should be held with the new government, the old has only several weeks to go, and for this reason it makes no sense to discuss the reunification of Germany.

In the opinion of Shevardnadze, this problem is more complex than appears at first glance. Neither Kohl nor Genscher nor anyone else has distanced himself from the decision of the Constitutional Court that the German Empire exists within its 1937 borders. In the constitution [*Grundgesetz*] of the FRG there is also Article 23, which allows for the possibility of the entry of individual federal states into the FRG (here they mean the borders of the greater empire). No one has distanced himself from this.

Another problem, continued Shevardnadze, is the question of the character of a reunified Germany, whether it will be neutral (Social Democrats and Greens have another opinion); the questions of reparations is open (brought up by Poland); what position the Soviet Union should take in the name of its allies; the question of military status; the meaning of the term "neutrality" (there are different kinds of neutrality – for instance, well-armed Switzerland); the meaning of the term "disarmed state" (to what level of disarmament, what is given up, which types of weapon). All of this will be discussed by "the Six". These are not only purely external aspects, but are connected to internal questions. All of these aspects have to be considered. Is the mechanism of the Warsaw Pact functioning, or has it been dissolved?

Dienstbier confirmed that there are many problems worthy of discussion. The main question is how to incorporate Germany into the security system, how to prevent any country from attacking another country, no matter who comes to power.

Shevardnadze agreed that it is necessary to synchronize the process of rapprochement and the reunification of Germany with the European process. Today the process of German reunification is overtaking the European process. Meanwhile, in Vienna no agreement has been reached on force level reductions. Germany may be reunified in a few months, while the rest is going slower. Kohl and Genscher have said that there is no danger from a reunified Germany, but where are the guarantees that it is they who will stay in power. What if Neo-Fascists or Republicans come to power within 2-3 years? This question must therefore be carefully considered. Politicians must meanwhile take into account the worst-case scenario. Ideals about a "Common European Home" are quite fine, but how will we build it?

We proceed from the fact, said Dienstbier, that Germany will be reunified no matter what we think. So I do not want to speak of general ideals, but of concrete steps to use the reunification of Germany to advance the European process as much as possible. It

is a different understanding of European security from the point of view of political philosophy. The reunification of Germany should not take place in a situation where everyone is afraid of that process (for instance, the Versailles complex, where all the Germans think no one likes them).

Today, continued Dienstbier, we are in a good situation, which is created by the ongoing democratization processes. We must pressure the West, argue for these processes, which in no way justify the existence of NATO, which has nothing to defend or protect. They should be and are under the pressure of the new situation, and should abandon their previous positions and agree to the new structures. It is a complicated problem; if it is necessary to meet, so we shall meet. A certain problem arises with setting the date, but we must resolve it (Shevardnadze comments that all of this must be thoroughly thought out).

In conclusion the working group of Dobrovský and Aboimov submitted the revised proposed communiqué. Both ministers agreed with the revisions and approved the final version of the communiqué.

Minutes taken by Petr Kubášek

Source: photocopy of typescript; archive of the Institute of Contemporary History, Prague, GB/90, 8.K/16. Published in Jindřich Pecka (ed.), *Odsun sovětských vojsk z Československa 1989–1991*, Prague, 1996, p. 102–8.

Translated from the Czech by Todd Hammond.

Document 117

Moscow, February 26, 1989

Memorandum of conversation between Gorbachev and Havel,
excerpt in which Gorbachev reacted to Havel's insistence that a declaration on the
withdrawal of Soviet troops from Czechoslovakia be signed because the people regard
them as occupation troops

[Gorbachev:] I should like once again to underscore that we have already reappraised in principle the issue of sending troops in 1968. For us it is a closed chapter. We have got through it, and must go forward. And concerning the fact that you regard the troops in Czechoslovakia as occupation troops, I recall the statement of one Western correspondent who wrote in mid-September 1968 that he had witnessed Czechoslovak girls kissing with Soviet tank crews. Of course, what happened cannot be simplified. It is a very serious question. We have made a fundamental turnaround in relations with our allies. The starting point of our new approach is based on the fact that each nation has the right freely to choose the order that suits it. That is the sovereign right of every nation. [...]

Source: Archive of the Gorbachev Foundation, Moscow, f. 1, op. 1, 90fev26a.doc. Published in Czech in *Soubodé dějiny* 5.4 (1998): 530.

Translated from the Czech version by Todd Hammond.

Document 118

Moscow, February 26, 1990

Declaration of the President of the CSSR Václav Havel and Chairman of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR Mikhail Gorbachev,
on Czechoslovakia-Soviet Relations

President of the CSSR Václav Havel and Chairman of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR Mikhail Gorbachev, who met in Moscow on February 26, 1990, declare that relations between Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union shall be conducted on the basis of equality and full mutual respect for state sovereignty. On this basis alone can a free and mutually advantageous cooperation take place in all aspects of social life.

Both leaders are of the opinion that this declaration can be a good starting point for the negotiation of various treaties – political, economic, scientific, and cultural – and open new perspectives for the strengthening of friendship between the nations of Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union.

Václav Havel and Mikhail Gorbachev have declared themselves in favour of Czechoslovak-Soviet cooperation in the interest of assuring the security of both states, and peace in Europe. They are committed to the further development of the European process.

Václav Havel

M. S. Gorbachev

Moscow, February 26, 1990

Source: *Práce*, February 22, 1990, p. 1; reprinted in Jindřich Pecka, *Odsun sovětských vojsk z Československa 1989–1991*, Prague, 1996, p. 109–10.

Translated from the Czech by Todd Hammond.

Document 119
Moscow, February 26, 1990
Agreement between the governments of the CSSR and USSR,
on the "departure" of Soviet troops from Czechoslovakia

The Government of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic and the Government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, taking into consideration the statement of the Czechoslovak Government of December 3, 1989, and the statement of the Soviet Government of December 4, 1989, including their legal aspects, guided by an effort to cultivate the traditional friendship and cooperation between Czechoslovakia and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, and adhering to the principles of international law set down in the UN Charter, including the principles of respect for sovereignty and non-interference in internal affairs,

Restating their firm resolution by every means to assist in the strengthening of peace, stability, and security in Europe and the entire world,

Expressing their will to honour commitments arising from the Warsaw Pact on Friendship, Cooperation, and Mutual Assistance of May 14, 1955, have agreed to the following:

Article 1

The complete departure of Soviet troops from the territory of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic will take place in stages, with the first stage to be completed by May 31, 1990, the second stage by December 31, 1990, and the third stage by June 30, 1991.

During the first stage the departure of a significant portion of the Soviet troops will be effected, in keeping with a timetable that the two sides will prepare together.

Article 2

The Government of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic will provide the Soviet side with the necessary cooperation during the departure of Soviet troops.

Article 3

During the period before the complete departure of Soviet troops from the territory of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic, these troops will operate under the same regime existing *de facto* at the time this agreement was concluded, including property, financial, and other questions, keeping in view possible changes in the conditions of accounting and payment relations.

Article 4

The parties will name plenipotentiaries for affairs pertaining to the departure of Soviet forces, who will resolve practical matters pertaining to implementation of the articles contained in this agreement.

Article 5

Property and financial questions arising within the context of the departure of Soviet troops will be considered by the plenipotentiaries for affairs pertaining to the departure of Soviet troops, and will be settled by agreement between the appropriate ministries of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

Article 6

Property and financial questions relating to the Soviet troops in the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic, which are not settled by the time of their complete departure, will be resolved by a special agreement of both parties, which is to be negotiated within two years of this agreement taking effect.

Article 7

This agreement takes effect on the day of its signing.

Done in Moscow, February 26, 1990, in two copies, each in the Czech and Russian languages, with both versions having equal validity.

For the Government
of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic
J. Dienstbier (in his own hand)

For the Government of the Union
of Soviet Socialist Republics
E. Shevardnadze (in his own hand)

Source: *Sdělení FMZV*, no. 71 (1990); Published in Jindřich Pecka (ed.), *Odsun sovětských vojsk z Československa 1989–1991*, Prague, 1996, p. 110–11.

Translated from the Czech by Todd Hammond.

Robert M. Gates, *From the Shadows: The Ultimate Insider's Story of Five Presidents and How They Won the Cold War*, (New York, 1996), pp. 450–1, 469–71.

CIA and Eastern Europe

Casey's original reluctance to involve CIA more aggressively in Eastern Europe and especially in Poland over time diminished and we became more active in supporting the underground resistance movement in Poland and dissidents in other East European countries. Our covert programs focused on sending in printing presses, copiers, and other materials for the underground to publish newsletters and papers and to otherwise publicize their cause, as well as spiriting out speeches and articles by underground leaders and either publishing them and smuggling them back into Eastern Europe or transmitting them over radios. The other main thread of our effort was a worldwide propaganda effort to publicize the repression of these groups and of human rights in Eastern Europe by the regimes – and to make known the work of the resistance. As Gorbachev's reforms began to open cracks in Eastern Europe, thus making communication of our message easier, we intensified our efforts.

We were most active in Poland. We slowly increased our clandestine support of Solidarity, mainly by providing printing equipment and other means of communication to the underground. They were not told that CIA was the source of the assistance, although there must have been suspicions. As Solidarity's activities increased, so, too, did the aggressiveness of the Jaruzelski regime in cracking down on underground publishing and opposition activities. Several of our shipments were seized early in 1986.

As traditional avenues of communication became more heavily watched, we tried new approaches. One such was to use a technique for clandestine television broadcasting that we had developed earlier for use in Iran. We provided a good deal of money and equipment to the Polish underground for this – actually to take over the airwaves for a brief time. The effort was effective, and in June 1987 included the underground overriding Warsaw's evening television news on the eve of the Pope's visit with a message urging Solidarity activists to participate in public demonstrations.

We learned in the spring of 1987 that books we were sending into Poland clandestinely were reaching their target audiences. In May, Radio Solidarity, which we sponsored, broke the regime's monopoly on the media and began making announcements of future opposition events and reporting news items.

By late spring, 1988, we were taking advantage of less stringent border controls to infiltrate equipment and material through Hungary to Poland and to Czechoslovakia. We also were making use of the growing network of cooperation among the East European opposition groups.

In October 1988, CIA arranged the first satellite telecast into Poland from Western Europe, a ten-minute program covering recent labor unrest in Poland. We got a strong, positive reaction from Solidarity leaders. By November we were advised that nearly every factory committee in Poland had the capability to publish a newsletter and that recent labor unrest had led to increased publishing requirements that were pushing the equipment to the limit (pp. 450–1).

[...]

Now it was Czechoslovakia's turn. A student rally on November 17 was attacked by police. On the 19th, 10,000 attended a protest in Prague. On the 20th, the marchers numbered 200,000. On the 22nd, 250,000. On November 24th, 350,000. The message was clear, and that night Czech General Secretary Miloš Jakeš and his entire Politburo resigned.

On December 3, the East German Politburo resigned. Thus, when the Warsaw Pact leaders met on the 4th, all of them were new except Gorbachev and Ceausescu of Romania. They condemned the 1968 invasion of Czechoslovakia and declared the Brezhnev doctrine dead.

In Czechoslovakia, Husák resigned as president on December 10. And, at long last, the Romanian people had enough of Nicolae Ceausescu. There was an uprising on December 19 and considerable violence. As the tide turned against the government, Ceausescu and his wife were captured trying to escape Bucharest. They were tried by a military court and executed by firing squad on Christmas Day.

CIA moved quickly in late 1989 and early 1990 to establish contact with the security services of the new, democratic governments in Eastern Europe. The object was partly to obtain information on Soviet espionage operations run in concert with the spy organizations of the old Warsaw Pact organizations, partly to provide assistance as the new services tried to establish their independence of the KGB, partly to gain access to military and KGB communications equipment, partly to get access to Soviet military equipment, and partly to lay the foundations for future cooperation.

If anything, Scowcroft and I tried to slow the Agency down a little. We wanted to know if those services with whom they were establishing a relationship were still spying on the United States or still acquiring American technology. We also wanted to know more about their relationship with their own new governments. We also didn't want to have the Agency so far out in front in Eastern Europe that it might create an embarrassment for Gorbachev – or for Bush. By the same token, CIA's ability to help some of the new East European leaders develop communications networks and personal security forces was an important asset for us and a real help to those leaders. Another historic milestone was passed when the director of CIA, Bill Webster, visited, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, and Poland in November 1990. (pp. 469–70.)

Bush, Gorbachev, and Eastern Europe

Over the space of nine months, with the sole exception of Romania, a bloodless revolution – a "Velvet Revolution", as Czechoslovakia's Václav Havel called it – swept Eastern Europe. Denied resort to the Soviet army to sustain illegitimate and hated regimes, every communist government save Albania was forced from power by the anger of its own citizenry. And the Soviet empire in the West collapsed in the twinkling of an eye. The Cold War that began in Eastern Europe was over, and now Europe, the Soviet Union, and the United States would turn to the last piece of unfinished European business, the unification of Germany.

How had all this happened? Clearly, there were historical and economic forces at work. The Soviets had done everything possible to avoid military intervention in Poland in 1956, 1970, and 1980, each time turning to a Polish communist who

promised to restore order and each time ceding more autonomy to Warsaw. But 1980 had been different. This was a revolt by an organized opposition of workers, encouraged and morally sanctioned by the new Polish Pope. They would be suppressed in December 1981, but the price to the Soviets and to the Polish government was high. And, while the workers' movement might be suppressed for a time, the government proved incapable of dealing with an economic crisis that day after day sapped its power. Elsewhere in Eastern Europe, groups spawned by the Helsinki process became increasingly vocal, and communist governments, as in Poland, were equally incapable of managing the homegrown political and economic crises. These were rotten governments, kept in power solely by the image of Soviet tanks – by fear.

And, in Eastern Europe as in the Soviet Union, it was Mikhail Gorbachev who stripped away that fear. He thought the result would be more democratic, more effective communist governments. Governments with legitimacy. In Eastern Europe, as in the USSR, he was wrong. With the fear gone, the utter moral and political bankruptcy of the regimes – and their weakness – were exposed.

Why did Gorbachev act as he did? Because he knew that military action would destroy his relationship with the West and any chance of help for economic revival in the USSR. Because Moscow had never faced trouble in most of the East European states simultaneously, and repression in Eastern Europe would destroy perestroika in the Soviet Union. Because he had no grasp of the deeply held nationalist passion of the East Europeans and their resentment of Russian domination. And, I think, because he had no stomach for the bloodletting that would be required. Forced either to fight or let Eastern Europe go, he let it go. Finally, I believe he did not act decisively because the speed and magnitude of events, the rush of history, overwhelmed him.

George Bush's contribution to the success of the "Velvet Revolutions" in 1989 was in what he did not do as well as in what he did. He did not gloat. He did not make grandiose pronouncements. He did not declare victory. He did not try to accelerate events in any of the East European countries. He did not join the dancers atop the Berlin Wall. He did not immediately invite new East European leaders to Washington. He did not threaten or glower at tense moments. He did not condemn those who were under pressure to let go the levers of power.

What he did was play it cool. In extensive and continuing personal contacts with different factions, and through promises of support and assistance, he helped grease the skids on which the communists were slid from power. There was little Bush might have done to promote or speed the revolutions of 1989. There is much an American President could have done to derail or at least complicate those revolutions. Bush played it just right, as virtually all of the leaders of the new democracies in Eastern Europe would later attest. But, even considering all of the many historical factors at work in 1989, Bush also grasped that many of the changes in Eastern Europe and, above all, the lack of bloodshed during these revolutions were due to the leader of the Soviet Union, Mikhail Gorbachev. It was, at the end of the day, a Soviet leader who let an empire slide away peacefully. (pp. 470–1.)

Robert L. Hutchings, *American Diplomacy and the End of the Cold War: An Insider's Account of U.S. Policy in Europe, 1989–1992*, (Washington, D. C., Baltimore, and London, 1997), pp. 72 and 82–4.

It was around this time [early September, 1989] that I wrote a memorandum for the president predicting that Czechoslovakia, where three thousand protesters defied the regime's prohibition to commemorate the August 21 anniversary of the 1968 invasion, could not resist the pressures for change much longer. It would be the next to go, and we should begin stepping up our engagement so as to be in a position to influence events as they unfolded. I recall writing that communist rule would be toppled within a year, then hedging my bet in the final draft to "within two years". It took about three months. And Bulgaria "went" even sooner: its veteran communist leader Todor Zhivkov was removed from power on November 10, the day after the night the Berlin Wall fell. (Thereafter my predictive capacities improved. When Alan "Punch" Green, our ambassador-designate to Romania, met with me in late October, shortly before leaving for Bucharest, I told him the Ceaușescu regime had no more than three months. Even then, I was too cautious by a month. The Ceaușescus were executed on Christmas Day.) (p. 72)

[...]

The "Velvet Revolution" After the fall of the Wall, nearly everyone expected Czechoslovakia to be the next to experience a democratic breakthrough. Yet, there had been no movement toward reform from its dogmatic communist regime. In 1988, I was in Prague with a congressional delegation led by Senator John Glenn. When Glenn asked his regime interlocutor, the hard-liner Vasil Biľak, why Czechoslovakia did not emulate Soviet reforms, Biľak replied, "You Americans used to accuse us of being Soviet puppets, of slavishly following the Soviet model. Now you accuse of us not following the Soviet model closely enough!" It was a good line, but Biľak was still a thug.

The Czechoslovak regime nonetheless had been obliged to make some modest concessions to pressures for reform. In December 1987, Gustáv Husák, who had been installed as party leader after the 1968 Soviet invasion, was replaced by Miloš Jakeš; a year later Biľak was dropped from the party leadership. Jakeš was a long way from being a reformer, but he and his regime began to adopt the vocabulary of *glasnost* and *perestroika* (or *přestavba*, the Czech version of economic "restructuring"). None of these measures produced real reform, but they had the effect of further weakening the regime's authority. It would not reform, but neither could it continue the ruthless repression which alone could secure its continuation in power. The regime's hesitancy, in turn, prompted dissident and religious activists to begin probing the limits of the possible.

Yet even after the Zhivkov's ouster in Bulgaria, eerily little was happening in Czechoslovakia. On November 13, foreign correspondents contrasted the faint signs of protest in Prague with the vast demonstrations held the month before in Leipzig, only 160 miles away. Jiří Dienstbier, one of the founders of the human rights group Charter 77 (and soon to become, improbably, his country's foreign minister), spoke plaintively to an interviewer a week after the breach of the Berlin Wall: "What surprised

everybody was the quick unraveling of things in East Germany.... The next step? I hope it's Czechoslovakia...." By the time the interview was published on November 18, Dienstbier's hope was turning into reality.

On November 17, a small, officially sanctioned student demonstration grew spontaneously to an estimated thirty thousand protestors, several thousand of whom broke off from the authorized route and headed for Wenceslas Square, where they were stopped and brutally beaten by riot police. This, as Garton Ash put it in his vivid firsthand account from the revolution's chaotic command center in the Magic Lantern theater, was "the spark that set Czechoslovakia alight". The next day, a gathering of opposition groups convened by Václav Havel formed a "Civic Forum" to serve as spokesman for the democratic aspirations of society at large; the day after, Slovak intellectuals led by the artist Ján Budaj and the prominent movie actor Milan Kňažko met in a Bratislava art gallery to create a similarly inspired organization called "Public Against Violence". Armed with videotapes of the November 17 assault, student supporters went to factories and farms across the country to widen the base of support. An alliance of intellectuals and workers began to form, of the kind that had long existed in Poland but never in Czechoslovakia, not even during the Prague Spring.

On November 20, another demonstration took place on Wenceslas Square, this time gathering hundreds of thousands of ordinary citizens. As demonstrations continued, Havel was joined in Wenceslas Square for a dramatic joint appearance with Alexander Dubček, prime minister during the Prague Spring, providing a powerful symbol of historical continuity and (Dubček being Slovak) national solidarity.

The resignation of Jakeš and the rest of the party leadership on November 24 did nothing to slow the momentum of protest. When virtually the entire country joined in a two-hour general strike on November 27, just ten days after protests had begun, the tide had shifted decisively to the democratic opposition, who correspondingly escalated their demands to include a voice in the composition of a new coalition government. The proposal by new prime minister Ladislav Adamec for a sham "coalition" government with almost no opposition figures was rejected out of hand by Civic Forum. Adamec himself resigned almost as soon as he had been appointed, replaced by Marián Čalfa, an obscure Slovak communist who left the party in early 1990.

As with Bulgaria, the direct American role in these events was negligible. We did, however, exert considerable indirect influence where it counted most – with the Soviet leaders. On December 1–3, during the most delicate phase of negotiations between Civic Forum and the communist regime, Presidents Bush and Gorbachev met off Malta for their first summit. The success of the summit, covered extensively by Czechoslovak television, served to embolden opposition leaders and the populace at large, just as Gorbachev's subsequent meeting with Warsaw Pact leaders in Moscow served to persuade Czechoslovakia's communist regime that its time was up.

The new Czechoslovak government, with noncommunists in the majority, was sworn in on December 10. At month's end, Dubček was named chairman of the Federal Assembly, which then elected Václav Havel president of Czechoslovakia. *Havel na Hrad!* – Havel to the Castle! – had gone from daring chant to improbable reality in a matter of a few thrilling weeks. (pp. 82–4)

Jack F. Matlock, Jr., *Autopsy on an Empire: The American Ambassador's Account of the Collapse of the Soviet Union*, (New York, 1995), pp. 190–2 and 193–5.

Eastern Europe

While I was working on my recommendations for the new administration, I was informed by colleagues in the State Department that Secretary Baker was seriously considering proposing negotiations with Moscow on the future of Eastern Europe. This was an idea attributed to former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, who, I was told, thought that in Eastern Europe rebellions could soon break out that would lead to chaos or Soviet intervention unless there was a U.S.-Soviet understanding.

Kissinger had recently visited Moscow and had met with Gorbachev [January 18, 1989]. Although he had not discussed his idea with me, I assumed he had presented it to Gorbachev. If he had, he would likely have received encouragement. If Gorbachev could draw the United States into a discussion of the future of Eastern Europe, the talks could have a dampening effect on Eastern European "nationalists", whatever position the United States took.

For that reason, I was shocked when I learned of the proposal. Although I was sure that Kissinger's intent was not to legitimate the Soviet hold on Eastern Europe, the talks he had proposed would seem to do just that. They would be seen, at best, as a superpower effort to limit the freedom of the Eastern Europeans and, at worst, as an attempt to divide Europe anew.

I was aware of the arguments in favor of discussing the future of Eastern Europe with Moscow. The situation in the Warsaw Pact countries, particularly the "northern tier" of Hungary, Czechoslovakia, East Germany, and Poland, was becoming explosive under the surface of continued Communist rule. Should there be disorders in one or more of these countries that led to the same sort of Soviet intervention as we had seen in East Berlin in 1953, Hungary in 1956, and Czechoslovakia in 1968 or to Soviet-backed martial law declared by national Communist authorities, as had happened in Poland in 1981, the whole course of perestroika and eased East-West relations would be interrupted. There could be extensive loss of life, and international tensions would rise dangerously. Everything possible should be done to avoid this.

Nevertheless, I rejected negotiations with Moscow for two reasons. First, I thought it was obvious that there could be no repetition of the sort of Soviet-sponsored repression we had seen in the past. Although the Soviet Union still possessed enormous military power, it no longer had the political will to apply it in Eastern Europe. The experience in Afghanistan had proved costly in terms of public opinion, and Gorbachev had just managed to extricate the country from that failed adventure. He could not precipitate a military confrontation in the heart of Europe without abandoning his entire reform program and probably losing his job as well.

Second, I saw clear signs that Gorbachev would encourage the Communist leaders of Eastern Europe to reform along the lines he was attempting in the Soviet Union. If he did so, the forces unleashed would probably sweep the Communist regimes from power, but by the time the Soviet leaders understood this, they would have no choice but to accept the outcome. To do otherwise would undermine their rule at home.

Under these conditions, a proposal by the United States to negotiate the future status of Eastern Europe would lead inexorably to U.S. complicity in an attempt to limit the freedom of the Eastern Europeans. Such an effort would be doomed to failure, since the Eastern Europeans would not tolerate limits on their freedom of action once they gained control over their own countries. Even more important, I felt we had no moral right to do this and – in view of the position we had taken during most of the cold war – that we would be betraying the democratic forces in Eastern Europe if we tried.

This did not mean we should refuse any mention of Eastern Europe in our discussions with Soviet leaders. We needed to make it clear that we had no designs on the area and would not attempt to move NATO eastward if the Warsaw Pact countries sought independence. We also needed to make sure Gorbachev understood that the improvements in East-West relations would disappear overnight if he should attempt to apply Soviet force in order to block democracy in the area. But we did not need to propose specific negotiations on the future of Eastern Europe to do this: these were points that could be made during our normal contacts.

For these reasons, I joined my colleagues on the Eastern European and Soviet desks in the State Department in arguing against what had been dubbed the "Kissinger initiative". After I returned to Moscow in late April I was relieved to hear that Secretary Baker had decided against proposing negotiations with the Soviet Union on Eastern Europe. [...] (pp. 190–2.)

Eastern Europe on the Threshold of Freedom

During meetings in the spring with Communist leaders from Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Poland, and East Germany, Gorbachev made it clear that he expected them to emulate the reforms taking place in the Soviet Union. Many wondered at the time if he grasped the implications of what he was doing.

My guess then, and now, is that he did not appreciate the fragility of the Soviet position in Eastern Europe. He knew, of course, that the Communist regimes there were as flawed as Moscow's. He regretted that the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968 had ended that country's attempt to establish "socialism with a human face" and had blocked any meaningful reform in the Soviet Union for two decades. But he still felt that communism could be reformed and that the result would be something like Alexander Dubček's version during the Prague Spring of 1968. This he was willing not only to tolerate but to welcome.

What he did not understand was that Communist regimes throughout Eastern Europe had lost all hope of winning the support of the majority, not only because they were Communist but because they were tools of Soviet imperialism. In fact, in the "northern tier" from Hungary to the Baltic Sea, they had been able to stay in power only because they were backed by Soviet tanks: withdraw or immobilize the tanks, and they would fall.

Gorbachev and the rest of the Soviet leadership failed to understand their vulnerability in Eastern Europe not only because they were psychologically unprepared

to accept hostility toward the Communist Party as an objective fact but because they were woefully misinformed about actual conditions there.

Rarely have intelligence organizations had resources to gauge opinion abroad to match those available to Soviet analysts in regard to the Warsaw Pact countries. Each Communist regime had its carbon copy of the KGB, trained by Soviet officers and obedient to requests from colleagues in Moscow. Networks of paid and unpaid informers blanketed each country. Yet the system did not produce accurate information for the political leadership, either in the countries themselves or for their Soviet masters.

Why? Because the leaders asked the wrong questions and would have penalized anyone who told them the truth. They assumed that anyone who questioned their policies was disloyal – and were usually right to do so – but they also assumed that their opponents were few, and in that they were profoundly mistaken.

Self-serving assessments by puppet rulers were seldom corrected by Soviet representatives in Eastern Europe because they were themselves part of the same system. Soviet embassies in Warsaw Pact countries were usually staffed not by professional diplomats but by Communist Party functionaries – the equivalent of political appointees in U.S. diplomacy. They had bought their jobs not with campaign contributions but with political services. Some had been sent into comfortable exile when the Politburo found their presence at home awkward. Although many were able in their own sphere, they were not equipped to understand other societies. They had access to the top, and for them this was enough.

Alexander Bessmertnykh, the brilliant, hardworking professional diplomat who followed Shevardnadze as Soviet foreign minister, only told me what a shock the 1989 events in Eastern Europe had been for Moscow because of the failure of Soviet embassies to convey an accurate picture of the situation there. When the Foreign Ministry got news of public discontent and inquired, he explained, the Soviet ambassador had always come back with something like "I just saw Honecker (or Husák or Jaruzelski) yesterday, and he says everything is fine. We mustn't fall for Western propaganda."

It took some months for the people in Eastern Europe, scarred as they were by the Soviet interventions in 1956 and 1968 and the threats that had forced Poland to declare martial law in 1981, to realize they could now take their future into their own hands. But when Gorbachev began to press their Communist leaders to reform, as he did during visits in the spring of 1989, the people in the area saw their opportunity.

The first non-Communist government in the Warsaw Pact was formed in Poland in August 1989. The Soviet press reacted with remarkable objectivity, and some commentators actually welcomed the development. Shevardnadze soon traveled to Warsaw, and Tadeusz Mazowiecki, the new prime minister, was invited to Moscow, making it clear that the Kremlin no longer insisted that only Communist governments were acceptable in what had been the Soviet bloc. The Brezhnev Doctrine, which held that it was the duty of the USSR to preserve "socialism" in other countries, implicitly passed into history. (pp. 193–5.)

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BRUSSELS FOR USEC - AMBASSADOR NILES

E.O. 12356: DECL:OADR
TAGS: PGOV, CZ

SUBJECT: HAVEL'S ELECTION AS PRESIDENT CONCLUDES THE
- FIRST PHASE OF CZECHOSLOVAKIA'S QUIET
- REVOLUTION

REF: PRAGUE 8931

1. (C - ENTIRE TEXT.)

SUMMARY

2. VACLAV HAVEL'S ELECTION AS PRESIDENT ON DECEMBER 29
CAPS THE FIRST PHASE OF THE CZECHOSLOVAK "QUIET"
REVOLUTION. HIS ELECTION WAS SEALED BY A CIVIC
FORUM-CRAFTED POLITICAL DEAL WHICH GAVE HIS MAIN
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COMPETITOR, ALEXANDER DUBCEK, THE POSITION OF FEDERAL
ASSEMBLY CHAIRMAN AS A CONSOLATION PRIZE. HAVEL'S

ELECTION SYMBOLICALLY CONFIRMS IN THE MINDS OF AVERAGE CZECHS AND SLOVAKS THAT THE DEMOCRATIC PROCESS HERE IS IRREVERSIBLE AND FREE ELECTIONS GUARANTEED. THE NEXT PHASE OF THIS REVOLUTION WILL BE TO INSTITUTIONALIZE POLITICAL REFORMS. AN IMPORTANT ISSUE IN THIS PROCESS WILL BE DRAFTING A NEW ELECTORAL LAW, LIKELY TO BE BASED ON PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION. THIS IS AN ELECTORAL APPROACH CONSISTENT WITH CZECHOSLOVAK POLITICAL TRADITIONS AND ONE LIKELY TO KEEP BOTH THE COMMUNISTS, AND THE MANY NEW SMALLER PARTIES NOW SPROUTING UP, "IN" THE SYSTEM. AFTER ELECTIONS IN THE SUMMER OR FALL OF 1990, THE FUTURE OF THE CIVIC FORUM AND OF HAVEL ARE UNCLEAR. WHILE THE FORUM SAYS IT WANTS TO "WITHER AWAY" AFTER THESE ELECTIONS, IT MAY HAVE A PART TO PLAY IN BUILDING FUTURE POLITICAL COALITIONS. HAVEL HAS COMMITTED HIMSELF TO STEP DOWN FROM THE PRESIDENCY ONCE FREE ELECTIONS ARE HELD. FROM TODAY'S PERSPECTIVE, HOWEVER, IT SEEMS PROBABLE THAT SHOULD HE CHOOSE TO ASK THE NEW ASSEMBLY FOR A FULL FIVE-YEAR PRESIDENTIAL MANDATE, IT WOULD BE HARD TO DENY IT TO HIM.

END SUMMARY

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3. VACLAV HAVEL, PLAYWRIGHT, HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVIST AND NOW POLITICIAN, WAS ELECTED PRESIDENT OF CZECHOSLOVAKIA ON DECEMBER 29 BY A SPECIAL SESSION OF THE FEDERAL ASSEMBLY HELD IN PRAGUE CASTLE. HAVEL'S ELECTION HAD BEEN A CERTAINTY FOR MORE CONFIDENTIAL

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THAN A WEEK, BUT TODAY'S ACTION, INCLUDING A COMMEMORATIVE MASS IN ST. VITUS CATHEDRAL AND A SPEECH BY THE NEW PRESIDENT FROM THE CASTLE BALCONY, WILL HAVE AN IMPORTANT PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPACT. IT SHOULD CONFIRM IN THE MINDS OF AVERAGE CZECHOSLOVAKS THAT THE DEMOCRATIC PROCESS HERE IS NOW IRREVERSIBLE.

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4. HAVEL'S ELECTION CAPS THE FIRST PHASE OF CZECHOSLOVAKIA'S SIX-WEEK OLD "QUIET" REVOLUTION. IN THIS PHASE THE SYSTEM HAS GRADUALLY BEEN PURGED OF ITS DISCREDITED, HARDLINE COMMUNIST LEADERSHIP. THAT HOUSE CLEANING HAS BEEN GOING ON AT ALL LEVELS OF SOCIETY. LAST WEEK, FOR EXAMPLE IT

REACHED THE SMALL CZECH JEWISH COMMUNITY, WHERE FOR THE FIRST TIME IN DECADES, THE COMMUNITY FREELY ELECTED ITS OWN LEADERSHIP, MAKING THEIR RESPECTED FORMER PRESIDENT, DESIDER GALSKY, ONCE AGAIN HEAD OF THE COMMUNITY.

5. HAVEL'S VICTORY HAS PRACTICAL AS WELL AS SYMBOLIC SIGNIFICANCE. THE POST OF PRESIDENT IS NOT AN HONORIFIC POSITION UNDER THE CZECHOSLOVAK SYSTEM. THE NEW PRESIDENT IS COMMANDER IN CHIEF; HE CALLS ON THE FEDERAL ASSEMBLY TO FORM A NEW GOVERNMENT; AND HE HAS EXTENSIVE POWERS OVER APPOINTMENTS AND AMNESTIES. HAVEL AS PRESIDENT IS SEEN AS A GUARANTEE THAT DEMOCRATIC REFORMS WILL CONTINUE AND THAT NEXT YEAR'S ELECTIONS WILL BE FREE.

6. WHILE SOME HAD CRITICIZED THE PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGNING AS A DISTRACTION OF CIVIC FORUM'S ENERGIES FROM MORE BASIC REFORMS, IT HAS PROVEN A SUCCESSFUL TEST OF THE FORUM AND HAVEL'S SKILL

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IN THE POLITICAL ARENA. THE NEW PRESIDENT HAS MADE THE SHIFT FROM A PURELY MORAL FIGURE TO A POLITICIAN WITHOUT ANY APPARENT LOSS OF POPULARITY. THE CIVIC FORUM HAS SHOWN THAT DESPITE COMMUNIST DELAYING TACTICS, INCLUDING A PROPOSAL TO TRANSFORM THE CZECHOSLOVAK PRESIDENCY INTO A DIRECTLY ELECTED OFFICE, IT COULD BRING PUBLIC OPINION AROUND TO ITS WAY OF THINKING. IT CRAFTED A COMPROMISE WHICH MET SLOVAK SENSIBILITIES BY CONCEDING TO PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE ALEXANDER DUBCEK THE OFFICE OF CHAIRMAN OF THE FEDERAL ASSEMBLY (DUBCEK WAS APPOINTED ON DECEMBER 28) AND SWUNG OTHER POLITICAL FORCES BEHIND HAVEL'S CAMPAIGN.

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7. WITH HAVEL AS PRESIDENT, THE CIVIC FORUM CAN NOW CONCENTRATE ON THE REVOLUTION'S SECOND STAGE: INSTITUTIONALIZING DEMOCRACY. ESSENTIALLY THIS INVOLVES PUTTING A LEGAL FRAMEWORK IN PLACE TO PROTECT HUMAN RIGHTS AND PERMIT FREE ELECTIONS AND LATER TO DRAFT A NEW CONSTITUTION. AS THE GOVERNMENT'S NEW PROGRAM HAS OUTLINED (REFTEL) THESE POLITICAL REFORMS WILL BE THE PRIORITY OVER THE NEXT SIX MONTHS. THE ROLE OF THE FORUM IN THIS PROCESS WILL BE TO SHAPE A POPULAR CONSENSUS ON THE BIG POLITICAL ISSUES TO BE DECIDED IN THIS PROGRAM, PARTICULARLY THE NEW ELECTION LAW.

8. THE GOVERNMENT AND THE CIVIC FORUM HAVE TAKEN A PRAGMATIC, NON-IDEOLOGICAL APPROACH TO THIS TASK. THEY HAVE SHOWN A READINESS TO COMPROMISE EVEN WHEN POPULAR OPINION MIGHT HAVE SUPPORTED A LESS CONCILIATORY LINE. A GOOD EXAMPLE IS THE RECENT DECISION TO CONCEDE TO THE COMMUNISTS TWO

OF THE 24 SEATS LEFT VACANT WHEN DISCREDITED DEPUTIES WERE EXPELLED FROM THE ASSEMBLY. CIVIC FORUM REPRESENTATIVES HAVE TOLD US THAT THEY WANT TO KEEP THE COMMUNISTS "IN THE SYSTEM." THIS CONSENSUS APPROACH AND THE MULTIPLICATION OF NEW PARTIES (AT LAST COUNT THERE WERE 14 AND THE NUMBER IS RISING) ARGUES FOR RETAINING THE CZECHOSLOVAK POLITICAL TRADITION OF PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION IN THE NEW ELECTION LAW.

9. A DATE FOR FEDERAL ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS HAS NOT YET BEEN SET. EARLY THINKING HAD BEEN TO HOLD THESE IN A MID-1990 (JUNE/JULY) TIMEFRAME BUT CIVIC CONFIDENTIAL

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FORUM REPRESENTATIVES NOW TELL US THEY ARE RECONSIDERING. THE SUMMER MONTHS, WHEN MOST CZECHOSLOVAKS RETREAT TO THEIR COUNTRY COTTAGES, IS NOT THE BEST TIME TO CONDUCT AN ELECTION CAMPAIGN. THE THOUGHT NOW IS TO DELAY THE VOTE UNTIL THE EARLY FALL.

10. MOST LOCAL OBSERVERS ARE READY TO DISCUSS THE POST-ELECTORAL POLITICAL LANDSCAPE ONLY IN THE BROADEST OF TERMS. TOO MANY FACTORS ARE UNCERTAIN, INCLUDING WHAT THE CIVIC FORUM ITSELF WANTS TO BECOME. FORUM REPRESENTATIVES NOW REJECT THE IDEA OF CONVERTING INTO A POLITICAL PARTY. THOUGH THE FORUM HAS AGREED TO RUN A COMMON SLATE OF CANDIDATES FOR THE 1990 ELECTIONS, ITS OFFICIAL GOAL REMAINS TO "WITHER AWAY" SOMETIME AFTER ELECTIONS. MANY FEAR THE FORUM COULD OTHERWISE BECOME A DEMOCRATIC COUNTERPART TO THE PAST CPCZ, PLAYING SUCH A "LEADING ROLE" IN SOCIETY THAT INDEPENDENT POLITICAL INITIATIVES ARE SMOTHERED.

11. SUCH A SELF-DISMANTLING OF THE FORUM PRESUMES THAT THE EMBRYONIC POLITICAL PARTIES NOW FORMING CAN FILL THE POLITICAL VOID LEFT BEHIND. THAT SEEMS UNLIKELY TO HAPPEN SMOOTHLY. DESPITE THE PROTESTATIONS OF ITS MEMBERS, THE FORUM SHOULD SURVIVE THE ELECTIONS AND COULD HAVE AN IMPORTANT ROLE TO PLAY IN COALITION BUILDING AMONG THE MANY SMALL PARTIES FORMING TO THE LEFT AND RIGHT OF THE POLITICAL CENTER. THE FORUM HAS YET TO COME TO TERMS WITH EXACTLY WHAT THAT SHOULD BE.

12. HAVEL HIMSELF CONTINUES TO DISPUTE THAT HIS POLITICAL ROLE AFTER HIS ELECTION TODAY IS

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INFO EASTERN EUROPEAN POSTS
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 03 OF 03 PRAGUE 09083

DEPT PASS ERIKA SCHLAGER CSCE COMMISSION

BRUSSELS FOR USEC - AMBASSADOR NILES

E.O. 12356: DECL: OADR

TAGS: PGOV, CZ

SUBJECT: HAVEL'S ELECTION AS PRESIDENT CONCLUDES THE

ANYTHING BUT TEMPORARY. HE HAS PROMISED TO RESIGN
AFTER FREE ELECTIONS ARE HELD. HIS EVENTUAL AIM,
HE SAYS, IS TO RETURN TO WRITING AND THE THEATER.
BUT THE SMOOTH TRANSITION HE HAS MADE TO POLITICAL
LIFE MAKES US SUSPECT HE MAY FIND THE PRESIDENCY
APPEALING AND HARD TO LEAVE. FROM TODAY'S

PERSPECTIVE IT SEEMS LIKELY THAT IF HE ASKED TO SUCCEED HIMSELF AFTER THE ELECTIONS WITH A FULL FIVE-YEAR MANDATE AS PRESIDENT, IT WOULD BE HARD FOR THE NEW FEDERAL ASSEMBLY TO DENY IT TO HIM.

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