

May 14, 1968

**Report by KGB Lt. Col Demochko on a Meeting with
"Czechoslovak Friends"**

Citation:

"Report by KGB Lt. Col Demochko on a Meeting with "Czechoslovak Friends"", May 14, 1968, Wilson Center Digital Archive, TsDAHOU, F. 1, Op. 25, Spr. 28, Ll. 70-73.
<https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/113032>

Original Language:

Russian

Contents:

Translation - English

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R E P O R T

on a Meeting with Czechoslovak Friends

On 13 May 1968 at the "Bohemia" border-control checkpoint, a meeting was held with Czechoslovak friends. Taking part from their side were the head of the State Security division at the Cierna station, Captain A. ?iroký, his deputy, Senior Lieutenant J. Katan, and the operations official in that same department, Senior Lieutenant J. Cernický.

Taking part on behalf of the UkrKGB of the UkrSSR Council of Ministers were Lieutenant-Colonel Oleinik and Lieutenant-Colonel Demochko from the Transcarpathian Oblast.

The meeting took place at the initiative of the Czechoslovak friends and was intended as an exchange of views and an opportunity for the Czechoslovak friends to report on the situation in their country.

The friends declared that, above all, the situation in the country remains tense, especially in Prague, Bratislava, and other cities in the Czech lands. However, no one is taking radical measures to restore order.

As in the past, no one is in control of the press, radio, and television, which are waging a slanderous campaign against the party, against the State Security organs, and in some cases against the Soviet Union.

The CSSR Interior Ministry, including the Státní bezpečnost (State Security) of Czechoslovakia, are not addressing issues required for a struggle against anti-socialist elements and their activities. Agent work on these matters is not being carried out at all.

Recently, according to the friends, State Security formations have been sponsoring conferences and meetings where the situation in the country has been discussed and a free exchange of views on the matter has been taking place.

In this regard, the friends held their own party meeting on 12 May. Their party organization consists of Communists from the State Security division at Cierna station and from border guards at the Cierna border-control checkpoint.

The friends affirmed that there is no unity in their ranks. Many Communists (especially the border guards) do not embrace correct, Marxist positions on questions pertaining to democracy and the internal and external policies of socialist Czechoslovakia. 116

A significant part of the discussion at this meeting was devoted to criticism of party organs for their failure to defend the State Security organs against the slanderers and hooligan elements.

To this end, some of the Communists in the party organization staged protests by

refusing to pay their party dues for the month of May. One of the operational agents in this division, Captain Poustranský, who formerly had worked as a supervisor and who had been subject to slander and threats stemming from the actions of the organs during the 1950s, fell seriously ill as a result and, taking account of his family circumstances, expressed thoughts about committing suicide.

After the party meeting, Cde. Šírokový reported, the friends decided at their own risk to renew work with agents.

The same sort of party conference took place in Prague, at the Ministry, where the Chairman of the National Assembly, Smrkovský, took part and spoke. In his remarks, as the friends could see, he gave what was supposed to be an objective assessment of the emerging situation in the country and called for a struggle against anti-socialist elements. 118 However, everything he said remained just empty words. The categorical prohibition on the organs' work in internal matters is still in force.

Recounting articles published in "Rudé právo" that criticized the situation in the CSSR and the leaders and press organs of other socialist states-Poland, Hungary, the GDR, and the Soviet Union-the friends at the same time expressed bewilderment and anxiety about the failure of CSSR leaders to take part in the 8 May meeting in Moscow among delegations from the socialist countries.

The press in the CSSR published an article reportedly entitled ". . . for the first time without the CSSR . . ."

In this connection, the friends reported that from operational sources and - even more - from the press they had learned that almost all the socialist countries disapproved of the situation in the CSSR and the steps taken by the leaders of Czechoslovakia. However, the leaders had still done nothing to restore order in the country.

The GDR, the friends declared, supposedly expressed open dismay at the presence in the government of Smrkovský, as a former agent of the Gestapo.

With regard to the positions of the working class and peasantry, the friends again emphasized that these sorts of workers stand solidly behind the positions of the KSCC headed by A. Dubcek. However, because of weak Marxist-Leninist preparation, they are not participating at all in the democratization process. As the friends put it, workers and peasants are unable to discuss philosophical matters with writers and other representatives of the so-called creative intelligentsia.

The friends expressed disquiet at L. Svoboda's decision to release a new large party of amnestied individuals from prison to mark Victory Day.

Their activities are not yet firmly set, but in these circumstances this category of people might be exploited by elements hostile to the CSSR.

The friends confirmed the information we received about the dissemination of leaflets calling for the removal of A. Dubcek and L. Svoboda from their posts and the restoration of a government under Novotný. However, they said that this took place only in Moravia and Bohemia. There were no such incidents on the territory of Slovakia.

They also confirmed our information about the indecisiveness of the party organs in bringing the so-called People's Militia up to a combat ready state. In Cierna, there are no weapons ready for them to use. Worse still, the friends said, some people (though they didn't specify who) are speaking about the need to abolish this armed detachment of the party.

Referring to public statements, the friends mentioned a case a week or so earlier when a rebellion broke out among prisoners in one of the camps in the Czech lands. A discussion focusing on democratization ended when the prisoners ravaged the premises-the living quarters and official areas-and tried physically to destroy the guards and administration. Order was not restored until troops from the Interior Ministry intervened.

As a result of this incident, the first during the tenure of Pavel as Interior Minister, he issued a directive on events in the camp. However, his directive did not specify any sort of concrete measures to prevent similar incidents in other camps. Even so, it was widely publicized in the press.

At the end of the discussion, the friends asked us whether reports in the Western press and radio were accurate about a concentration of Soviet tank forces along the border with the CSSR for an invasion of Czechoslovakia and about a partial mobilization in the USSR to flesh out these units.

When told that all of this was merely connected with exercises that were under way, the friends noted that if our troops were actually deployed along the state border with the CSSR, they would be reassured and, possibly, could act more quickly to restore order in the CSSR.

The friends also noted that the Czechoslovak people are certain that if a threat to socialism in their country were ever to arise, the Soviet people and their army would provide them with necessary military assistance.

DEPUTY CHIEF OF DEPARTMENT OF THE
UkrKGB UNDER THE UkrSSR COUNCIL OF MINISTERS
FOR TRANSCARP. OBL.
AT THE STA. AND CITY OF CHOP
LIEUTENANT-COLONEL

DEMOCHKO

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No. 3231