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Collection Name MATLOCK, JACK: FILES

Withdrawer

JET 4/21/2005

File Folder MATLOCK CHRON DECEMBER 1986 (4/4)

FOIA

F06-114/5

Box Number 19

YARHI-MILO

1907

ID	Doc Type	Document Description	No of Pages	Doc Date	Restrictions
8703	MEMO	FROM SCOTT RE CZECH AIRMAN'S ACCOUNT OF 1968 SOVIET INVASION OF CZECHOSLOVAKIA <i>R 3/14/2011 F2006-114/5</i>	1	12/18/1986	B1
8704	PAPER	MILITARY ASPECTS OF THE OCCUPATION OF CZECHOSLOVAKIA AUGUST 1968 <i>R 3/14/2011 F2006-114/5</i>	42	ND	B1

Freedom of Information Act - [5 U.S.C. 552(b)]

- B-1 National security classified information [(b)(1) of the FOIA]
- B-2 Release would disclose internal personnel rules and practices of an agency [(b)(2) of the FOIA]
- B-3 Release would violate a Federal statute [(b)(3) of the FOIA]
- B-4 Release would disclose trade secrets or confidential or financial information [(b)(4) of the FOIA]
- B-6 Release would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy [(b)(6) of the FOIA]
- B-7 Release would disclose information compiled for law enforcement purposes [(b)(7) of the FOIA]
- B-8 Release would disclose information concerning the regulation of financial institutions [(b)(8) of the FOIA]
- B-9 Release would disclose geological or geophysical information concerning wells [(b)(9) of the FOIA]

C. Closed in accordance with restrictions contained in donor's deed of gift.

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20506

8702

December 12, 1986

MATL 621

MEMORANDUM FOR DAVID CHEW .

FROM: RODNEY B. McDANIEL *RL*
SUBJECT: Presidential Statement

Attached at Tab A is a recommended draft Presidential state
ment which marks the imposition of martial law in Poland on
December 13. This statement should be released on Friday,
December 12.

Attachment

Tab A Statement

cc: Larry Speakes

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A

STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT

Five years ago, on December 13, 1981, the people of Poland were subjected to martial law. Once again, as so often in their proud history, Polish patriots faced a cruel setback in their quest for human rights. That day will be remembered as a dark day in the heroic but tragic history of Poland. It is a day of painful memories for the families of Solidarity members who suffered much these past five years -- many lost their lives, were jailed, or had to live in hiding, separated from their wives, husbands, and children. My heartfelt thoughts remain with them.

America will never be indifferent to the future of Poland. Special ties of kinship, worship, and love of liberty, and the contributions of Poles to American independence and progress, remind us forever that our peoples share a faith in freedom, spiritual strength, and human dignity.

After the imposition of martial law in 1981, the United States sought ways to express our "solidarity" with the Polish people. We welcome the recent amnesty of most political prisoners. This important step, however, does not solve all problems facing Poland today; they can be overcome only with the participation and support of the Polish people. We hope, therefore, that the amnesty will be an important first step toward a meaningful dialogue between the Polish people and their government. To encourage this process, we decided upon entering into dialogue with the Polish Government. We truly hope that future developments will allow improvement in the relationship between both governments.

On this anniversary, we commemorate the sacrifices and the great spiritual strength of the courageous Polish people and we look to a future in which their heritage can breathe freely for the good of Poland.

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20506

December 10, 1986

ACTION

SIGNED

MEMORANDUM FOR RODNEY B. McDANIEL

FROM: PAULA DOBRIANSKY ^{TD}

SUBJECT: Presidential Statement

Attached at Tab I for your signature is a memorandum for David Chew forwarding a draft Presidential Statement which marks the imposition of martial law in Poland on December 13. This statement should be released on Friday, December 12.

State and the Office of Presidential Correspondence have cleared the text

Jack Matlock ^{LSW} and Peter Rodman ^{PR} concur.

RECOMMENDATION

That you sign the memorandum at Tab I.

Approve _____ Disapprove _____

Attachments

Tab I McDaniel/Chew
Tab A Draft Statement

cc: Anne Higgins
Dan Howard

8867

~~Matlock~~
Carson
5
✓

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20508

December 29, 1986

MEMORANDUM FOR SALLY KELLEY

FROM: RODNEY B. MCDANIEL *Bob for*
SUBJECT: Congressional Letter on Soviet Dissident Igor
Ogurtsov

At Tab A is a draft reply to a Congressional letter advocating the release of Soviet religious dissident Igor Ogurtsov.

Attachment

Tab A Draft Reply
Tab B Congressional Incoming Letter

6

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

SUGGESTED REPLY

Dear Mr. Wortley:

I am responding to your September 30 letter to the President regarding Soviet religious prisoner Igor Ogurtsov. Mr. Ogurtsov was sentenced in 1967 to 15 years in prison and labor camp to be followed by five years internal exile. We are deeply concerned by this exceptionally severe sentence.

We are well aware of Mr. Ogurtsov's case and are closely following it. We have consistently condemned Soviet persecution of Christians such as Igor Ogurtsov and other religious believers. Such measures are contrary to the human rights provisions of the Helsinki Final Act, and we have strongly called for Soviet compliance with their own undertakings in that agreement. In bilateral exchanges with the Soviets we have made it unequivocally clear that their abuses of individual rights have a serious detrimental effect on U.S./USSR relations. In his address to the nation after his meeting with General Secretary Gorbachev in Reykjavik, the President stated that he had once again made it plain that "an improvement of the human condition within the Soviet Union is indispensable for an improvement in bilateral relations with the United States." Our representatives at the CSCE Review Conference in Vienna have also raised Mr. Ogurtsov's case with the Soviets.

The Honorable

George C. Wortley,

House of Representatives.

You may be assured that we will continue to press the Soviet authorities to live up to their commitments to respect basic human rights. If we can be of further assistance to you in this or any other matter, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,

GEORGE C. WORTLEY
17th DISTRICT, NEW YORK

229 CANNON HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515
(202) 225-3701

COMMITTEES:
✓ BANKING, FINANCE AND
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INSURANCE

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HOUSING AND COMMUNITY
DEVELOPMENT

OVERSIGHT AND RENEGOTIATION

SELECT COMMITTEE ON AGING
TASK FORCE ON WOMEN AND
SOCIAL SECURITY

STANDARDS OF OFFICIAL CONDUCT

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

DISTRICT OFFICES:
1269 FEDERAL BUILDING
SYRACUSE, NY 13260
(315) 423-5657

243 GENESEE STREET
CHITTENANGO, NY 13037
(315) 687-5027

3631641

September 30, 1986

The President
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

I would like to express the relief of my constituents and myself at the release of Nicholas Daniloff. Press reports indicate that the agreement that resulted in his release includes the future release of several Soviet dissidents. If this is in fact true, I urge you to ask the Soviets to include Igor Ogurtsov and his family among those released.

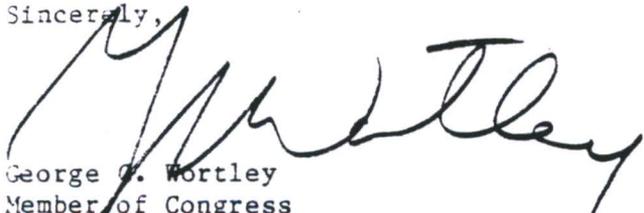
Igor Ogurtsov is a Christian dissident who founded the "All Russian Social Christian Union for the Liberation of People," a religious-political opposition group, in 1964. Twenty-one members of the group were arrested and sentenced to long prison terms, but Ogurtsov received the harshest treatment — 15 years in prison and 5 in internal exile. He is due to be released this year.

The case of Igor Ogurtsov is one that some of my colleagues and I have been working on for several years. On December 16, 1985, the House passed a resolution sponsored by Congressman Bill Broomfield and myself that expresses the sense of the House that the Soviet Union should release Igor Ogurtsov from internal exile and allow him to emigrate to the West without renouncing his views.

I realize that there are a great number of Soviet dissidents who want to emigrate from the Soviet Union and who are deserving of our support. However, Igor Ogurtsov, because the length of his imprisonment and his frail health, should rank among those whose release is most urgently sought. I strongly urge special efforts on his behalf.

I appreciate your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,


George C. Wortley
Member of Congress

GCW:ejf

213

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20506

December 19, 1986

ACTION

MEMORANDUM FOR RODNEY B. McDANIEL

FROM: JACK F. MATLOCK *JFM*
SCOTT DEAN

SUBJECT: Congressional Letter on Soviet Dissident Igor
Ogurtsov

At Tab I is a memo from you to Sally Kelley forwarding a draft reply to a Congressional letter advocating the release of Soviet religious dissident Igor Ogurtsov. The draft reply is at Tab A.

RECOMMENDATION

That you sign the memo at Tab I forwarding to Sally Kelley the draft reply.

Approve Wd Pfor

Disapprove _____

Judyt Mandel and Ron ^{RS}Sable concur. (Sestanovich unavailable)

Attachments:

Tab I Memo to Sally Kelley
Tab A Draft Reply
Tab B Congressional Incoming Letter



United States Department of State

Washington, D.C. 20520

UNCLASSIFIED

December 10, 1986

MEMORANDUM FOR DR. ALTON G. KEEL, JR.
THE WHITE HOUSE

SUBJECT: Freeing of a Soviet dissident

Congressman Wortley wrote a letter to the President requesting that special efforts be made to secure the release of Soviet dissident Igor Ogurtsov from imprisonment.

A draft reply is attached.

Nicholas Platt
Nicholas Platt
Executive Secretary

UNCLASSIFIED

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

October 9, 1986

3631641

MEMORANDUM FOR:

CATHY THIBODEAU
Congressional Correspondence
Department of State

FROM:

KATHY RATTE JAFFKE *Ky*
Director, Congressional
Correspondence

SUBJECT:

Freeing of a Soviet Dissident

When I sent over the letters from Congressmen Waxman and Gilman the other day, I failed to include one that we received from Congressman George Wortley, also on the issue of freeing a Soviet dissident.

I would appreciate State's guidance in a draft response to Mr. Wortley's request that we press the Soviets to release Igor Ogurtsov. |

Thanks so much for your help.

cc: Records Management - FYI (ID# 428451)

8866

~~Matloody~~¹²
Chron

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20508

December 29, 1986

MEMORANDUM FOR SALLY KELLEY

FROM: RODNEY B. McDANIEL *Push for*

SUBJECT: Letter on Soviet Defectors from Afghanistan

At Tab A is a State Department draft reply to the New Jersey Division of the Congress of Russian Americans. The Division wrote on behalf of five Soviet soldiers with the Afghan freedom fighters, asking that they be admitted to the U.S. as political refugees. The soldiers have since been resettled in Canada.

The NSC has reviewed and concurs in the draft reply.

Attachments:

Tab A Draft Reply
Tab B Incoming Letter

Mr. Herman Ermolaev, Chairman
The Congress of Russian-Americans, Inc.
New Jersey State Committee
30 N. Stanworth Drive
Princeton, N.J. 08540

Dear Mr. Ermolaev:

I have been asked to respond to your letter to the President regarding five Soviet military defectors in Afghanistan. The soldiers had written to Canadian Prime Minister Mulroney as well as to President Reagan. As you may have heard, the Canadian Government granted that request and the five have been resettled in Canada.

We are delighted by the action taken by the Canadian Government. In 1984, the United States received four Soviet military defectors from Afghanistan. The United Kingdom has also granted asylum to Soviet soldiers from Afghanistan. We are pleased that friends of democracy in other Western countries share our belief that the right of asylum should be provided to those seeking freedom and a chance to start a new life in our Western democratic countries.

We appreciate your interest and concern about these men, and trust they will now be able to live in freedom and dignity in the West.

Sincerely yours,

Linas Kojelis

THE CONGRESS
OF
RUSSIAN-AMERICANS, INC.

221432
14

8633666

NEW JERSEY STATE COMMITTEE
30 N. STANWORTH DRIVE
PRINCETON, N.J. 08540

K. Kopylov

October 17, 1986

The President
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

Mr. President:

On behalf of the New Jersey Division of the Congress of Russian Americans, I am hereby asking you to give a most serious consideration to the appeals for political asylum sent to you by five former Soviet soldiers who are now in the custody of the Afghan freedom fighters.

No United States president of our times understood the nature of the "evil empire" better than you do. This gives us hope that you will do your best to open the U.S. doors to all Soviet prisoners in Afghanistan who wish to come to this country. Abandoned by the entire world, these young men still believe in our humaneness, and their last hope should not be crushed.

Respectfully yours,

Herman Ermolaev

Herman Ermolaev
Chairman

Enclosure

15

8866

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20506

December 19, 1986

ACTION

MEMORANDUM FOR RODNEY B. McDANIEL

FROM: JACK F. MATLOCK *JFM*
SCOTT DEAN

SUBJECT: Letter on Soviet Defectors from Afghanistan

At Tab I is a memo from you to Sally Kelley forwarding a draft reply to a letter from the New Jersey Division of the Congress of Russian Americans.

RECOMMENDATION

That you sign the memo at Tab I to Sally Kelley.

Approve *WMPF* Disapprove _____

Steve ^{SS}Sestanovich, Walt ^{WR}Raymond, Dennis ^{DR}Ross, Peter ^{awr}Rodman, Jim ^{JS}Stark, Judy ^{JM}Mandel, Shirin ^{SR}Tahir-Kheli, Howard ^{HT}Teicher and Ty ^{TC}Cobb concur.

Attachments:

- Tab I Memo to Sally Kelley
- Tab A Draft Reply
- Tab B Incoming Letter

5 Soviet Defectors in Afghanistan Write to Reagan for Asylum

By ROBERT D. McFADDEN

Five Soviet soldiers who defected to the guerrilla forces in Afghanistan have sent appeals to President Reagan asking for political asylum in the United States, according to an American writer and official of Freedom House.

In a series of letters smuggled out of Afghanistan, the defectors tell of disaffection with Soviet policy, dismay after years of running with the Afghan guerrillas and dreams of escape from a land tormented by war. They refer to Mr. Reagan as "my only hope" and "our last hope."

The appeals were sent to the White House in May by Ludmilla Thorne, director of Freedom House's Center of Appeals for Freedom, who said she had made four clandestine trips inside Afghanistan since early 1983 to interview two dozen Soviet prisoners and report on the guerrillas fighting Soviet forces. Freedom House is a New York-based group that monitors freedom globally.

Ms. Thorne, whose native language is Russian, said she was convinced that the five young men who appealed to Mr. Reagan were genuine defectors because she had talked privately with them and learned intimate details of their earlier lives in the Soviet Union. She said she had befriended them in her trips into Afghanistan. Her research on their plight includes 20 hours of taped interviews, she said.

Letters Are Received

A State Department official confirmed yesterday that the White House had received the letters from the defectors.

He said that the Administration "was working on the case," but that the problem was that the soldiers were in the custody of the Afghan guerrillas and that it was difficult for American officials to meet with them.

Nevertheless, the official said, "we

are proud of our record as a place of asylum, and we hope a way can be found to bring the soldiers out."

All five defectors are regarded as prisoners of war by the Afghan guerrillas, but only two are kept under guard, while the others have been fighting alongside the Afghans, Ms. Thorne said. She said the guerrilla leaders had told her they would release all five if they were granted asylum.

Cites Judgment of God

"I, Igor Leonidovich Kovalchuk, did not want to kill children and women," one defector wrote Mr. Reagan. "I did not want God to judge me for having spilled blood. I have been in Afghanistan for six years. America is a freedom-loving country which defends human rights. I ask you to give me political asylum."

"It is now the third year that I'm with the Afghan partisans," Sergei Busov said in his letter. "All of this time my friends and I have been trying to make our way to the free world, but so far it has all been without any results. We are rejected. Western countries are turning away from us. But why? What are we guilty of?"

"We share with the partisans our water and our bread, and together we feed the lice," Vladislav Naumov wrote. "The mujahedeen believe us because our personal friendships were formed in battle, under the whiz of flying bullets. And for this reason our Afghan friends are not against our desire to gain freedom in the free world."

"I want to be a free person and to live in a free country," Vadim Plotnikov wrote. "It is precisely for this reason that I deserted from the Red Army. I turn to you as the President of America and as a very good person and ask you to grant me and my friends political asylum."

"I am a former Soviet soldier who voluntarily crossed over to the Afghans," Nikolay Golovin wrote. "I am

currently in my sixth year as a prisoner of war, and now you are my only hope. I ask you to give me political asylum in the free country of America."

White House Hasn't Responded

Ms. Thorne said Freedom House had not previously made the letters of the defectors public in the hope that Mr. Reagan might take a personal interest in their case. But because the White House has not responded in five months, she wrote a 40-page booklet for Freedom House about them and appended their letters to the President.

In the booklet, "Soviet P.O.W.'s in Afghanistan," Ms. Thorne said that since 1983 she had conveyed numerous requests for asylum from Soviet defectors in Afghanistan to the United States Government, with "disheartening results."

While there are several hundred Soviet prisoners of war in Afghanistan — an unknown number of them defectors — only six defectors have been admitted to this country, she said.

Citing "humanitarian reasons" and "ideological considerations," she urged the United States to set up a "systematic method for screening, processing and transporting Soviet Army deserters out of Afghanistan."

Hopes for Other Nations

In a separate interview, Ms. Thorne said she also hoped that other Western nations would take part in such an asylum program. She noted that the Allies had a similar program for Soviet defectors and prisoners at the end of World War II.

"If a steady flow of Red Army deserters from Afghanistan were to make its way to the West," she said, "it just could act as yet another possible lever on the Kremlin leadership to force them to reconsider their policy in that country."

"But changes are very slow in coming both in Moscow and in Washing-

ton," she added. "In the meantime, the five Soviet Army deserters whom I visited this spring and many others continue to be men without a country and without a future."

The five defectors, all men in their 20's, had served in the Soviet Army as riflemen, reconnaissance or demolition experts, guards, tank mechanics and other jobs, Ms. Thorne said. All were draftees who came to believe that Soviet fighting in Afghanistan was unjust, she said.

Some recalled their lives in the Soviet Union, their participation in military operations against Afghans, the circumstances of their defections and their experiences with the guerrillas: hiding in desert strongholds and striking from time to time at former comrades.

Guerrilla Treatment Varies

There are seven major guerrilla groups in Afghanistan, according to Ms. Thorne. "Although most of the Soviet prisoners that I interviewed are treated well by the mujahedeen, the treatment can vary, depending on the group holding them," she said.

For Mr. Kovalchuk and Mr. Golovin, the defector's life has been a prisoner's life. Constantly under guard, they have suffered hepatitis, malaria and other diseases. Their days have been spent idly, chasing snakes and lizards or reading old magazines, and until last year both smoked hashish with captors to dull their hardships, she said.

For Mr. Naumov, Mr. Busov and Mr. Plotnikov, defection has been a different experience, Ms. Thorne said. They have lived with the Afghans like comrades, sharing a diet of tea, peas and pita bread; have helped plan and execute 20 military operations against Soviet troops, and have worked as paramedics and even written propaganda pamphlets in Russian to be

R I1111) LZOTZYRZYR
AM-AFGHAN-CANADA

CANADA SEEKS TO PLAY DOWN RESCUE OF SOVIET ARMY DEFECTORS

By Doug Long

OTTAWA, Nov 24, REUTER - CANADA HAS TOLD THE SOVIET UNION THAT FIVE SOVIET ARMY SOLDIERS WHO DESERTED DURING THE WAR IN AFGHANISTAN WERE SPIRITED OUT OF THAT COUNTRY TO FREEDOM IN CANADA SOLELY FOR HUMANITARIAN REASONS; GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS SAID TODAY.

THE FIVE MEN, ALL IN THEIR 20s, HAVE BEEN RESTING UNDER FEDERAL GOVERNMENT SUPERVISION SINCE ARRIVING FROM PAKISTAN LATE LAST WEEK FOLLOWING A CLANDESTINE RESCUE MISSION PLANNED FOR MONTHS.

BUT THE OFFICIALS, SPEAKING ON CONDITION THEY NOT BE IDENTIFIED, REFUSED TO DISCLOSE DETAILS OF THE OPERATION FOR SECURITY REASONS OR EXPLAIN HOW THE DEFECTORS WERE SHUGGLED OUT OF AFGHANISTAN.

THE SOLDIERS, KEPT AT AN UNDISCLOSED LOCATION NEAR OTTAWA SINCE THEIR ARRIVAL, HAVE BEEN GRANTED PERMANENT RESIDENT STATUS AND WILL BE TURNED OVER TO THEIR SPONSORS, THE CANADIAN-UKRAINIAN IMMIGRANT AID SOCIETY.

THE FIVE ARE IN GOOD HEALTH AND GOOD SPIRITS THE OFFICIALS SAID, AND ARE EXPECTED TO ATTEND A NEWS CONFERENCE TUESDAY IN TORONTO.

THE CANADIAN AUTHORITIES, SENSITIVE TO OFFICIAL SOVIET REACTION TO THE INCIDENT, SAID THERE IS NO INTENTION ON THE PART OF THE GOVERNMENT OR THE SPONSORS TO EMBARRASS MOSCOW OR SCORE PROPOGANDA POINTS FROM THE AFFAIR.

CANADIAN OFFICIALS CONTACTED THE SOVIET EMBASSY IN OTTAWA SATURDAY TO EXPLAIN THE DEVELOPMENTS. THE INFORMATION WAS RELAYED TO MOSCOW AND THERE HAS BEEN NO RESPONSE TO DATE.

SOVIET EMBASSY SPOKESMAN IGOR LOBANOV SAID REACTION WILL HINGE ON HOW THE INCIDENT IS HANDLED IN CANADA.

"MUCH DEPENDS ON HOW THIS CASE WILL BE PRESENTED IN THE CONTEXT OF RELATIONS," LOBANOV SAID, SUGGESTING CANADA-SOVIET RELATIONS COULD WORSEN IF THE DEFECTORS ARE USED TO GENERATE ANTI-SOVIET SENTIMENT.

CANADIAN OFFICIALS, COMMENTING ON REPORTS THAT SOME OF THE SOLDIERS HAD DRUG PROBLEMS WHILE IN AFGHANISTAN, SAID THEY HAVE BEEN UNDERGOING MEDICAL TESTS AND NO PROBLEMS HAVE BEEN REPORTED. NONE COMMITTED ACTS WHICH CANADA WOULD CONSIDER ATROCITIES, THE OFFICIALS SAID.

OFFICIALS SAID THE FIVE WILL BE FREE TO LIVE ANYWHERE IN CANADA WITH NO RESTRICTIONS WHILE THEY ADJUST TO THEIR NEW LIVES.

THE SOLDIERS HAVE BEEN THE OBJECT OF A CANADIAN RESCUE EFFORT SINCE JULY, 1984, WHEN THEY WERE PROMISED POLITICAL ASYLUM AFTER BEING CONTACTED THROUGH A GOVERNMENT INTERMEDIARY.

THEY HAD BEEN HELD PRISONER BY AFGHAN RESISTANCE FIGHTERS FOR MORE THAN THREE YEARS. THE AFFAIR BECAME PUBLIC LAST APRIL WHEN CANADIAN NEWSPAPER REPORTERS ENTERED AFGHANISTAN AND INTERVIEWED THEM WITH THE HELP OF AFGHAN REBELS.

THE UNITED STATES AND BRITAIN ARE THE ONLY OTHER WESTERN COUNTRIES THAT HAVE TAKEN SOVIET ARMY DEFECTORS OUT OF AFGHANISTAN.

REUTER 1750

OPERATIONS CENTER

<NEWS TICKER>

Analyst: Date: 11/24/86 Time: 19:57:03

Distributed to:
SWO EUR HA NEA CA S/S IN

Z2471YATTI
D I AM-DESERTERS 11-24 0444

^CANADA WOULD CONSIDER ASYLUM FOR SIXTH SOVIET DESERTER@<

OTTAWA (UPI) _ THE CANADIAN GOVERNMENT SAID MONDAY IT WOULD CONSIDER GRANTING ASYLUM TO A SOVIET ARMY DESERTER WHO REMAINED IN AFGHANISTAN WHEN FIVE FELLOW SOLDIERS SECRETLY LEFT LAST WEEK FOR CANADA.

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS MINISTRY OFFICIALS SAID IF THE SIXTH SOLDIER, IHOR TADZIK, WERE ABLE TO LEAVE AFGHANISTAN, THE GOVERNMENT WOULD CONSIDER LETTING HIM INTO CANADA.

BUT OFFICIALS SAID TADZIK APPEARED TO BE @@UNREACHABLE AT THIS TIME'' BECAUSE HE WAS BEING HELD BY A GUERRILLA GROUP DEEP INSIDE AFGHANISTAN, NEAR THE SOVIET BORDER, AND COULD NOT BE FREED SAFELY.

THE FIVE SOVIET DESERTERS HELD CAPTIVE FOR YEARS BY RESISTANCE FIGHTERS IN AFGHANISTAN WERE SPIRITED TO CANADA LAST WEEK IN A CLANDESTINE OPERATION RUN BY THE CANADIAN GOVERNMENT.

THE DESERTERS WERE TURNED OVER TO CANADIAN AUTHORITIES IN PAKISTAN NEAR THE AFGHANISTAN BORDER AND ARRIVED IN CANADA LAST WEDNESDAY OR THURSDAY. AT LEAST ONE OF THE DESERTERS WAS HELD AT A REBEL BASE FOR ABOUT FIVE YEARS. THE OTHERS WERE HELD FOR MORE THAN THREE YEARS.

EFFORTS TO FREE THE MEN BEGAN IN JULY 1984 WHEN TORONTO LAWYER SERGE JUSYP MET WITH AFGHANISTAN RESISTANCE FIGHTERS AND RECEIVED ASSURANCES THAT SIX SOVIETS WOULD BE RELEASED AS SOON AS THE CANADIAN GOVERNMENT OFFERED ASYLUM.

TWO ATTEMPTS TO GAIN THEIR RELEASE IN 1984 FAILED WHEN EXTERNAL AFFAIRS OFFICIALS DEMANDED URINE SAMPLES FROM THE MEN BECAUSE OF FEARS THEY HAD BECOME DRUG ADDICTS DURING THEIR IMPRISONMENT.

OFFICIALS SAID MONDAY THE FIVE WERE GIVEN STANDARD MEDICAL EXAMINATIONS IN CANADA BUT NO TRACE OF DRUGS WAS FOUND.

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS OFFICIALS SAID THE FIVE SOVIET DESERTERS WILL APPEAR AT A NEWS CONFERENCE IN TORONTO TUESDAY. THEY ALSO SAID THE CANADIAN GOVERNMENT ACCEPTED THE FIVE PRISONERS FOR HUMANITARIAN REASONS. THE SOVIETS ARE NOW LAWFUL RESIDENTS OF CANADA ABLE TO MOVE FREELY THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY.

MEANWHILE, A SOVIET OFFICIAL SAID RELATIONS WITH CANADA WOULD SUFFER IF THE CANADIAN GOVERNMENT SEEKS POLITICAL GAINS BY PARADING THE FIVE DESERTERS BEFORE THE WESTERN MEDIA.

18

NEWS TICKER

OPERATIONS CENTER

<NEWS TICKER>

Analyst: Date: 11/24/86 Time: 19:57:03

Distributed to:
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Z2471YATTI
D I AM-DESERTERS 11-24 0444

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EFFORTS TO FREE THE MEN BEGAN IN JULY 1984 WHEN TORONTO LAWYER SERGE JUSYP MET WITH AFGHANISTAN RESISTANCE FIGHTERS AND RECEIVED ASSURANCES THAT SIX SOVIETS WOULD BE RELEASED AS SOON AS THE CANADIAN GOVERNMENT OFFERED ASYLUM.

TWO ATTEMPTS TO GAIN THEIR RELEASE IN 1984 FAILED WHEN EXTERNAL AFFAIRS OFFICIALS DEMANDED URINE SAMPLES FROM THE MEN BECAUSE OF FEARS THEY HAD BECOME DRUG ADDICTS DURING THEIR IMPRISONMENT.

OFFICIALS SAID MONDAY THE FIVE WERE GIVEN STANDARD MEDICAL EXAMINATIONS IN CANADA BUT NO TRACE OF DRUGS WAS FOUND.

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS OFFICIALS SAID THE FIVE SOVIET DESERTERS WILL APPEAR AT A NEWS CONFERENCE IN TORONTO TUESDAY. THEY ALSO SAID THE CANADIAN GOVERNMENT ACCEPTED THE FIVE PRISONERS FOR HUMANITARIAN REASONS. THE SOVIETS ARE NOW LAWFUL RESIDENTS OF CANADA ABLE TO MOVE FREELY THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY.

MEANWHILE, A SOVIET OFFICIAL SAID RELATIONS WITH CANADA WOULD SUFFER IF THE CANADIAN GOVERNMENT SEEKS POLITICAL GAINS BY PARADING THE FIVE DESERTERS BEFORE THE WESTERN MEDIA.

NEWS TICKER NEWS TICKER NEWS TICKER

20

OPERATIONS CENTER

@@IF OFFICIALLY CANADA WILL PARTICIPATE IN THE PARADING OF PRESS CONFERENCES OR MAKING STATEMENTS OF BIASED POLITICAL CONTENT, IT WOULD PUT NEGATIVE ELEMENTS AND NEGATIVE SENTIMENTS ON RELATIONS WITH THE SOVIET UNION, '' SAID IGOR LOBANOV, PRESS ATTACHE AT THE SOVIET EMBASSY IN OTTAWA. @@IT WOULD BE CONSIDERED AN UNFRIENDLY ACTION BY THE SOVIET UNION. ''

^
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UNCLASSIFIED
(CLASSIFICATION)

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
EXECUTIVE SECRETARIAT
TRANSMITTAL FORM

S/S 8633666

Date December 9, 1986

For: Dr. Alton G. Keel, Jr.
National Security Council
The White House

Reference:

To: PRESIDENT REAGAN From: MR. HERMAN ERMOLAEV

Date: 10/17/86 Subject: CONSIDERATION OF POLITICAL ASYLUM FOR 4
FORMER SOVIET SOLDIERS NOW IN CUSTODY

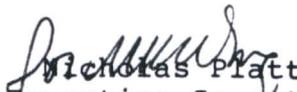
WH Referral Dated: 10/28/86 NSC ID# 441482

 The attached item was sent directly to the
Department of State.

Action Taken:

- XX A draft reply is attached.
- A draft reply will be forwarded.
- A translation is attached.
- An information copy of a direct reply is attached.
- We believe no response is necessary for the reason
cited below.
- The Department of State has no objection to the
proposed travel.
- Other.

Remarks:


Nicholas Platt
Executive Secretary

8633666

T H E W H I T E H O U S E O F F I C E

REFERRAL

OCTOBER 28, 1986

TO: DEPARTMENT OF STATE

ACTION REQUESTED:

DRAFT REPLY FOR SIGNATURE OF:
LINAS KOJELIS

DESCRIPTION OF INCOMING:

ID: 441482

MEDIA: LETTER, DATED OCTOBER 17, 1986

TO: PRESIDENT REAGAN

FROM: MR. HERMAN ERMOLAEV
CHAIRMAN
THE CONGRESS OF RUSSIAN-AMERICANS,
INC.
NEW JERSEY STATE COMMITTEE
30 NORTH STANWORTH DRIVE
PRINCETON NJ 08540

SUBJECT: REQUESTS THAT SERIOUS CONSIDERATION BE GIVEN
TO THE APPEALS FOR POLITICAL ASYLUM SFMT TO
WHITE HOUSE BY 4 FORMER SOVIET SOLDIERS NOT
IN CUSTODY OF THE AFGHAN FREEDOM FIGHTERS

PROMPT ACTION IS ESSENTIAL -- IF REQUIRED ACTION HAS NOT BEEN
TAKEN WITHIN 9 WORKING DAYS OF RECEIPT, PLEASE TELEPHONE THE
UNDERSIGNED AT 456-7486.

RETURN CORRESPONDENCE, WORKSHEET AND COPY OF RESPONSE
(OR DRAFT) TO:

AGENCY LIAISON, ROOM 91, THE WHITE HOUSE, 20500

SALLY KELLEY
DIRECTOR OF AGENCY LIAISON
PRESIDENTIAL CORRESPONDENCE

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

December 30, 1986

Dear Mr. Cerovsky:

Thank you for your account of experiences during the 1968 Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia.

It is most interesting, and I am sending copies to interested specialists in the U.S. Government.

With personal regards and best wishes for the New Year,

Sincerely,



Jack F. Matlock
Special Assistant to the President
for National Security Affairs

Mr. Zbynek Cerovsky
Adenauerring 10/V
8000 Munich 83
Federal Republic of Germany

25

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

Dec. 18, 1986

MEMO TO: Intelligence Programs
FROM: Scott Dean x6959
SUBJECT: Czech Airman's
Account of Soviet '68
Invasion of
Czechoslovakia

Attached is a statement we recently received from a Czech living in Germany. He was a Lt. Col. in the Czech Air Force during the '68 invasion and details the invasion at his base, incidents between the invaders and local people, hostility between Soviet and Polish troops etc.

Could you please forward this to the appropriate office in CIA? Thanks.

DECLASSIFIED
NLRR F06-114/5 #8703
BY RW NARA DATE 3/14/4

24

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

Dec. 18, 1986

MEMO TO: INR/OD William Jordan

FROM: NSC Scott Dean

SUBJECT: Czech Airman's
Account of Soviet '68
Invasion of
Czechoslovakia

Attached is a statement we recently received from a Czech living in Germany. He was a Lt. Col. in the Czech Air Force during the '68 invasion and details the invasion at his base, incidents between the invaders and local people, hostility between Soviet and Polish troops etc.

PMA or SEE may be interested.

27
Dipl.-Ing. Zbynek CEROVSKY
Adenauerring 10/V
8000 München 83
Bundesrepublik Deutschland
Tel.: 49-89-6 70 60 75

München, December 9, 1986

Dear Mr. Matlock,

with compliments,

yours sincerely,


Zbynek Cerovsky
Engineer

28

Z. Čerovský : Military aspects of the occupation of Czechoslovakia - August 1968.

(Excerpts translated from the Czech by Otto Pick)

(General introduction - speculation about Soviet motives - role of armed forces in totalitarian societies - review of Czechoslovak armed forces since 1945 - description of morale problems)

(Translation starts on p.9 of typescript; chronologically in the fall of 1967)

The political development of the state as a whole was reflected in the Army, its internal tensions and disordered condition, and led to events, which shook the entire Army and its political system. After the January plenum and Dubcek's appointment to lead the Party, the CP almost lost control over political developments in the Army. There were several reasons for this :

- The leadership of the Party and the state was changed and this also affected the Army. The Minister of National Defence and a number of senior officers and generals in command and administrative positions were replaced;
- pressure from below within the Army began to be exerted upon higher military and Party organs, and discontent with the existing state of affairs was expressed openly at an increasing rate. Political officials were exposed to considerable criticism and they had no influence over the new Party Committees and organizations which began to spring up. These led to a loss of effectiveness on the part of these Party activists in the Army and the CP began to lose influence over political events;
- new Party organizations, elected by secret ballot, emerged and the pursued policies independent of the political representatives. As a result, a kind of liberalism began to be expressed in the Army, for its members realized that they could say or write anything, without fear of the consequences;
- Efforts were made to make conditions in the Army more democratic, to reduce Soviet influence and dependence on the USSR. Shortening the draft and the neutralization of Czechoslovakia were frequently discussed;

DECLASSIFIED

NLRR FDG-114/5 #8704

BY RW NARA DATE 3/14/11

- two events in the Army exercised great influence : the attempt to keep the flight of General Šejna, one of the highest Party representatives in the Army, secret and the affair of Col.Gen.Janko in connection with the so-called coup of the generals.

There were other factors which influenced the course of events in the Army, which may appear subsidiary and unimportant, but which at the time were of great significance. In the past it would have been a crime even to think about some of the problems, which were now being dealt with. The Army began to slip out of the Party's hands and desperate attempts to put things right failed to achieve the expected results. The development of political life in the country made itself fully felt in the Army; not only problems and shortcomings which had previously been taboo, but past events, discussion of which had been expressly prohibited, were now being debated. Public opinion began to influence the Army command and thus in a relatively short time some of the questions, which had been a thorn in the flesh to many members of the military, were resolved : the introduction of uniforms which corresponded more closely to prewar traditions, the removal of all badges and insignia reminiscent of Soviet practice, legislation to secure pension rights, and reducing the draft. In practice, however, this did not materialize.

Political events gathered momentum. In July, the Warsaw Treaty Organization planned to hold a staff exercise in Czechoslovakia, with the participation of Soviet tank units, but surprisingly without the staffs of the Czechoslovak ground and air forces. I took part in several coordination conferences during the preparations for this exercise. The newly appointed Minister of National Defence, General Džúr and the commanders of the Air Force and the Air Defence Command were present. The Minister said that the Czechoslovak Army would not take part in the exercise because of other tasks, which he did not specify, were being planned for this time. As became evident later, the Minister was deliberately lying and preparing to betray his so-called friend Dubček.

I was present at Džúr's inaugural statement, which he made shortly after his appointment at a meeting of senior officers of the staff of the 10th Air Army, and the majority of us were shocked by the standard and contents of his speech. Its text, which was circulated to all units, was quickly withdrawn and destroyed. There were rumours at the time that Džúr was Dubček's personal friend and that his appointment represented a safe guarantee that all the Army's problems would be solved. And later people began to say that Džúr was really a KGB agent, who had been sent as a driver to General Svoboda to keep an eye on him and to report on him. Regardless of whether these rumours were true or not, it is obvious that Džúr proved himself and he remains Minister of National Defence to this day.

To return to the staff exercise. The Czechoslovak Army was allocated the function of the rear echelon. All units at divisional, regimental and battalion level in the areas where the staffs of the Soviet, Hungarian, Polish, Bulgarian and East German armies were to exercise, were instructed to assist them materially and technically in every possible way. This then was the first serious warning. First : the exercise was carried out by the staffs of the states which later undertook the invasion. Second : these allied staffs operated in areas covered by equivalent staffs of the Czechoslovak Army. Third : these Czechoslovak staffs had to acquaint their friends with all the details of their troop deployments, and above all training plans for the future and their command and communications systems, including codes. This information was later fully utilized. This was the beginning of the betrayal which culminated on 21 August, 1968.

The arrival of a group of Soviet officers and generals, accompanied by the commanders of the Czechoslovak Air Force and the Air Defence Command, at the Hradec Králové base in May, 1968 was no mere courtesy visit. The staff and command sections of the 10th Air Army - the so-called frontline force - are deployed in Hradec Králové. After the usual small talk and refreshments, I soon learned the purpose of this high-level visit. The Soviet air traffic control specialists had simply come to collect all the information about the systems of command and control, as well as codes for communications between the airforce command and its

subordinate units. Also new, updated and corrected information about airfields, navigational and radar equipment and its location, signalling codes, security of the rear, including the purpose, location and state of fuel stores - aircraft as well as automotive fuel, the condition and quantities of rockets and ammunition in the stores and the manner of supplementing them. In short, essential and necessary information for the commencement and conduct of military operations.

(Followed by further speculation about Soviet motives and options and the Čierna meeting. Translation resumes on p.16 of Cerovsky's typescript.)

I remember 20 August very precisely. Flying training had ended at the Wing. We carried out a brief analysis, and for reasons quite unknown to us, we did not feel like going home. We met in my office - the senior staff officers and squadron commanders. The discussion moved from flying training to political themes. We were still suffering from the trauma of a flying accident in the middle of June, which killed Major Samoel - a first class pilot, and the newly elected, not nominated, Chairman of the Wing CP organization. Previous political events had contributed to his death, but that is another matter. The Wing felt this tragedy were deeply, for it was the first for many years and Major Samoel had been a popular and honourable officer. He firmly supported the renewal of democracy and trust in the Party organization, and he took a firm stand against the Wing's Deputy Commander for Political Affairs, Lt. Col. Černilov, who was ultimately removed from his post for theft and misuse of public funds. Later, after I myself had been thrown out of the Army, he became a Colonel and again held an important political post in the airforce. But that was quite usual.

After discussing several political questions, we got to the problem when the Soviets would intervene. Noone doubted that they would do so. The longest time prophesied was within two weeks. On that occasion I made the memorable remark which came to me without any particular reason. I maintained that the intervention would take place that very day. To be more exact, I said I would not be surprised if the Russians were to wake us up in the morning.

It was chance, but from my experience and study of military history I knew that it would and could not take long, because the Soviets could not postpone their intervention for several reasons, especially as the summer was drawing to its end, and the fall and winter are not suitable for starting military operations. And the political situation developing after the Čierna meeting must be getting to them. It was for the first and last time that I managed to make a successful guess of this kind. All my other predictions, arising from my evaluation of the situation based on developments after the 1956 occupation of Hungary, were wrong. I also misjudged the anticipated timing of the departure of the Soviet troops. I was right, however, in my assessment of my own posture and its consequences. I expected to go to prison sooner than actually happened, for shortly after the occupation it was anticipated in military circles that cruelly repressive measures would be introduced, if Bilak and his clique were to come to power. In this context, the question arises how it was possible that we, at the level of the Wing, were able to judge the situation correctly and exactly, while the leading representatives of the Party and state, and especially President Svoboda who was a soldier and experienced officer and a former professor at the Military Academy, failed to do so. I am convinced that they knew and expected it, but could not believe that the USSR was capable of it. A rumour circulated in Czechoslovakia that Dubček, when warned of a possible intervention, replied that he did not believe in it, for he knew the Soviet Union, had grown up and studied there, had always been regarded as a friend there. I can neither confirm nor deny this version, as I have no hard evidence.

On the other hand, developments after the occupation convinced me that the command of the Czechoslovak Army, including Minister Džúr and the Chief of Staff, General Rusov, not only had advance knowledge of the invasion, but also collaborated actively in paralysing the army, preparing confusing orders and helping the occupying units.

(Paragraph of general remarks about Brezhnev's contingency plans omitted)

As to the occupation itself, it must be said right away that it really began in the evening of 20 August. I do not want to go over again the course of events in Prague, at Ruzyně airport and the CP Central Committee. All this is generally known, has been described elsewhere and I was not a direct participant. I only want to describe what I experienced and heard, and what I know to be true, without hypotheses and speculation. I was a direct witness of the tragic events at the point of the greatest concentration of Soviet and Polish airforce units - at the airbase and in the town of Hradec Králové, the location of the command of the 10th Air Army, i.e. practically of the whole battle component of the Czechoslovak Air Force.

I was woken up by telephone at about 2.30 in the morning. When I stepped outside the house in Pardubice, where I then lived, the beautiful summer night was full of stars. An uninterrupted stream of aircraft, with positional lights ablaze, was moving across the clear sky from East to West. The deep roar from the skies confirmed what I already knew. Before I had gone out to wait for transport to take me to the base, I switched on the radio, but that remained completely silent. Nothing, no music, not a word. All Czechoslovak radio stations were off the air. When I arrived at the base and the Wing duty officer repeated what he had already told me over the telephone, I went to the tower. I gave orders for the airfield radars to be switched on and by listening to the air traffic control channel and observing the radar screens, I realized that the whole stream of aircraft was going to Prague. By the intensity of the traffic and the radar pictures, there were tens and perhaps hundreds of aircraft, for they could not be identified individually, but appeared as an uninterrupted stream of light.

I should add that the airforce has its own independent telephone and radio network on several channels so that it is possible to call any airfield from any other airfield in Czechoslovakia. And because this airfield net is connected to garrison switchboards, which are linked to the civilian system, it is possible to use this network, as long as it functions, to call anywhere in the country quickly and easily, as well as to reach the airfields of the Warsaw Pact countries

provided the caller knows the relevant codes. To the credit of the airforce communications personnel it must be said that this network functioned reliably throughout the occupation, and that despite the orders of the Minister of Communications, Hoffman, who later was rewarded with a top job in the labour unions, to block all telephone exchanges, we managed to reach all the places we needed.

I established contact with the divisional staff and the other Wings. The divisional staff was then in Přeřov; one Wing was there, with another in Náměstí nad Oslavou. Nobody knew anything, and apart from local information which each of us had, we learned nothing new. I asked the divisional commander what to do, if he had any orders for me. He did not know. He himself had received no orders, and he asked me to call the Air Army staff and to keep him informed. I wanted to do what he wanted, for at that time we had received no orders. There was no one in command. I returned from the tower to the Wing staff and command post, from where I had direct and audible communications with all points. I called the Army commander or his chief of staff. The chief of the command post tried to connect me, but in vain. They were not available. I asked him to transmit the wishes of my superior, Col. Vtelenský, the divisional commander, and to call me back. He promised to do so, but could give no guarantees, for as he told me :

" It is like a terrible madhouse here and no one knows what to do." I reported all I had done to the divisional staff and then called the bases at Čáslav, Kbely and Mimoň, but the situation was the same everywhere. They were watching the air traffic in the direction of Prague, no foreign units had appeared and no one had received any orders, so that no one knew what to do. This then was the situation in the Czechoslovak Air Force before 4 o'clock in the morning on 21 August, 1968. I gave orders to wake the draftees and to maintain a state of battle readiness. Messengers were sent

off into the town and surroundings to bring in the regulars - a state of alert.

To explain the situation, I must add that an order of the Ministry of National Defense had previously been posted at our 30th Wing, abolishing the Wing and ordering the surrender of weapons. The guards and duty personnel therefore had to hand on their weapons when they exchanged duties; each one of us (though by no means all) had only their personal handgun. Years later I still asked myself whether this had been intentional, for subsequently this order was cancelled and instead the 17th Bomber-Fighter Wing was disbanded.

It began to dawn.

No news. None of the commanders called; we received no orders, neither by telephone, radio, coded signal nor teleprinter, although all these means of communication continued to function permanently, reliably and without interruption. Only the radio announced that it would broadcast a speech by the President of the Republic, which would be in the nature of an order and which we later received by teleprinter. Otherwise nothing.

I returned to the tower. In the meantime it had become light. Suddenly a Soviet military aircraft - a Yak 25, a type we knew from photographs, - appeared over the airfield. He was obviously on reconnaissance. He then flew off in the direction of Pardubice. On 21 August, this field was not in use because of repairs to the runways, and the 4th Fighter Wing which was deployed there, had been temporarily moved to Mnichovo Hradiště. I called the traffic controller there, who had been my subordinate and whom I knew well. He confirmed the arrival of this aircraft and that it was engaged in similar activity there. And almost immediately he returned, but at a greater height and his figure of eight now

covered both airfields. It was obvious that the aircraft was not only engaged in reconnaissance, but that it was blocking both airfields. I could not understand, that the Soviet airforce command had overlooked the fact that the Pardubice airfield was closed, and that this general repair had been planned for a long time and had been mentioned in the 10th Air Army orders. Nevertheless, that is how it was. It was half past six. Another target appeared on our radar screens. A single aircraft, flying towards us at a height of about 500 metres from the NW at a speed of 700 km p.h. It came over the airfield, tried to establish contact on the air traffic control channel and then made preparations for landing. I immediately ordered all the radar and navigational equipment turned off, instructed their personnel to lock them and to return to base. The Soviet plane landed. It was a Mig - 15 UTI, i.e. the same type with which our Wing was equipped - a two-seater used for pilot training. An aircraft well known to us for more than 16 years. The pilot stepped out from the front seat, jumped down from the wing and made for the tower. I went down and we met at the entrance. It was an acquaintance, a Lieutenant-Colonel of the Soviet airforce, Deputy Commander of a Soviet Wing deployed in Poland at the Žagaň base, whom I had met in May when he came with a group of senior Soviet officers and generals. He pretended not to know me, as if he was seeing me for the first time. And in a tone of voice, which conveyed a command rather than a request, he asked me to turn on all the radio, radar and navigational equipment. I told him that they were out of operation, and even if they were not, I would not issue an order to activate them. And I went away. He returned to his aircraft, started it up and rolled to the edge of the runway, from where he used his on-board radio to direct the arrival of the other aircraft of his Wing which were already airborne.

Here it must be realised that the distances are relatively short and that a modern military aircraft can cover them in a few minutes. Thus the distance as the crow flies between the airfields at Pardubice and Hradec Králové is not even 20 km and both can be seen clearly from a height of 1000 metres, especially in summer.

The occupation began. The chief of the Air Army command post called me. He asked me to confirm what they had seen on their radar screens and he also told me that Soviet Migs had landed, or were landing, at the airfields in Mimoň, Žatec, Bechyně, České Budějovice, Líně - near Plzeň, and Ostrava-Mošnov. The airfields at Přerov, Čáslav and Kbely had not yet been occupied and in Slovakia, Piešťany, but Sliac and Košice were under occupation. The situation in Brno was unclear, and at the time we did not know what was happening at the reserve airfields with strengthened runways. In the meantime, the airfield at Námestí nad Oslavou was occupied by SU-7 aircraft, and landings elsewhere were only a question of time. As I learned later, when we were transferring Mig-15s from Mimoň, one of the Soviet Wings, equipped with Mig-21s, was moved from a base on the Sino-Soviet frontier at the beginning of May, 1968.
(follows short passage on Soviet timing related to the state of world public opinion.)

The Soviet Wing had landed. The aircraft rolled to the stands, the pilots remained on board. Nothing else happened. I followed the situation on the other airfields with tension. East German armored units were already at Mimoň, securing the activities of a Soviet Wing. Kbely reported being occupied, as the 50th Liaison Wing, which was stationed there, was on exercise in Mladá Boleslav. Again, one of the minor mysteries of the Soviet system of operations. From the reports received it was clear that the Soviet command was

covering the Czechoslovak airforce organization exactly with its own air units. It was to be expected, that the staffs and units securing the air component would follow. Least of all did we expect a Polish helicopter Wing and a Polish armored regiment. This was still to come. The planes stood on their stands - otherwise nothing was happening. In the meantime, I had received an order from Minister Džur which, in substance, told us what we already knew from the orders issued by the President of the Republic. But there was one substantive variation. While the President's order instructed us not to afford any material or technical assistance to the invading troops, the Minister of National Defense duly ordered us to do so. Did the right hand know what the left hand was doing ? But the Minister of National Defense stated clearly in the introduction to his order that he was in touch with the Supreme Commander. Whose orders were we to follow ?

I decided to obey the Supreme Commander, i.e. the President of the Republic. And we gave them no assistance, for the entire time. It was too late to resist, and there was nothing to resist with. In Přerov they solved the situation by driving cars on to the runways. This only delayed the landings by a single day. Nothing more. The time to organize armed resistance was when the heavy Soviet air transports, without fighter cover, were landing at Ruzyně to disembark armored equipment. That was the time for action and armed resistance. But who was to issue the orders, when the betrayal had been prepared in advance. It was later maintained that noone, neither Dubček nor General Svoboda, had been informed of the situation. The Minister of National Defense reportedly learned of the exact timing of the invasion a day in advance. But these are only guesses, not facts. Perhaps the future will one day provide the answers. Without doubt, however, treason was planned and prepared in advance. (Follows text of Džur's and Svoboda's orders).

I received these orders on 21 August, before five o'clock in the morning, and later they were delivered in the usual way, properly printed. That means that they were either prepared in advance or that everything worked like clockwork, having been well planned. But I can't believe this even after all these years.

I returned to the control tower. Nothing was happening on the airfield, except for the appearance of another Soviet aircraft - a Yak 25 or Yak 27, and he joined the first in blocking the airfields at Pardubice and Hradec Králové by flying figures of eight. It might be asked why I could not determine the type of Soviet aircraft exactly. There is a simple explanation. We received no information at all about Soviet aircraft technology. Tactical and technical information about our own battle equipment and weapons, including aircraft, which had been in use in other armies for a long time, was kept strictly secret. For example, the MiG 21 was still top secret as an aircraft in service in the Czechoslovak Air Force, while it was already in serial production in India.

A vehicle approached the tower, bringing Col. Remek, now the Commanding Officer of the Air Force and the Air Defense Command, Deputy Minister of National Defense and the father of the first Czechoslovak cosmonaut. He came to the control tower. I greeted him. Col. Remek at that time held the insignificant post of chief of the Combat readiness Section on the staff of the 10th Air Army. He asked for my fieldglasses. I handed them over without a word and he looked at the Soviet aircraft on their stands. There were more than fifty. Remek returned the fieldglasses, and I shall never forget what followed. I report it to show how certain people thought and behaved during the occupation and how they later adopted attitudes which carried them to the highest positions in

"consolidated" Czechoslovakia.

(Follows short paragraph describing Remek's character failings and his bad behavior towards his wife and children.)

Col. Remek tore his hat off his head, threw it on the ground and began to jump on it like a madman, shouting : "I am ashamed for having studied in the Soviet Union. Ashamed, ashamed ! " Then he picked up his dirty hat, brushed it and went. We subsequently met several times. By then he was commander of the 10th Air Army, and later of the entire Air Force and Air Defense Command. He had been promoted to general. And he was no longer ashamed.

I received a report from the Wing headquarters that more aircraft had appeared on their radar screens. Soon afterwards the radars were blotted out by radiolocational jamming. I had all the radio equipment switched off, recalled the orderlies and gave orders to strengthen the guards at the headquarters, hangars and other locations. As far as possible in view of the availability of weapons and ammunition, of which we did not have much. I also closed down the control tower, as well as the meteorological and traffic control services.

Czechoslovak military air traffic at Hradec Králové ceased for some considerable time.

I returned to the Wing staff and again phoned several other airfields and the divisional staff. The news was by no means good. The Soviets were overlaying the Czechoslovak organizational structure with their own and according to preliminary reports about a thousand planes and helicopters of various types had landed on our airfields, and there were also some 6000 tanks. We later found out that these estimates had been remarkably exact. We were, however, surprised that except for the armor they used obsolescent types of weapons and aircraft. This was most marked in the case of motor vehicles, which were not very different from those used by the

Soviets in 1945. The most modern aircraft were MiG 21s, but these were then already ten years old.

For a long time it was a puzzle to me how the Russians thought the occupation would work out. The aircraft had landed, but they were without fuel, protection or ground support. The pilots sat in their planes and waited. What for ? Were they so certain that nothing would happen to them ? And where was the ground support, needed by every Wing, and without which the planes could not take off ? I received my answer later on, but their modus operandi reduced my opinion of the Soviet command to a minimum. That Wing had in effect been sacrificed. The Russians had backed a card, which failed to materialize. They needed fuel, but at the Hradec Králové base we were not allowed to use underground fuel stores, because fuel seepage had poisoned all the ground water and wells in the entire area. We brought the fuel in by rail and the reserve tanks were at Jičín. There, however, someone forced open the valves and the fuel ran out. Additional supplies were the village of Eš, near Pacov, but that was a very long way away.

The Chairman of the Regional National Committee telephoned - he later became Minister of the Interior in the Czech government. He announced that he would come out to the airfield. We made arrangements to meet, but these were overtaken by the arrival of a Polish helicopter Wing. The number of aircraft on the field rose to more than a hundred. And suddenly there appeared several armored combat vehicles with Polish airborne troops. They are looking for the commanding officer. I step out of the building and find myself facing several machine guns mounted on the vehicles. From the headquarters building comes the sound of a siren, switched on by the duty officer. A Polish armored or mechanized regiment and air force ground support units roll on to the runway. No Russians, but more

more Russian IL-14s and IL-18s are landing. Escorted by the Polish combat vehicles, I got into the duty Moskvich and together with the chief of staff and the commander of the base ground support units we drove on to the field to look for the Polish commander. There were aircraft everywhere. Our 56 MiG-15s, 50 Soviet MiG-17s, 60 Polish Mi-1, Mi-2 and Mi-4 helicopters, 8 planes of the 10th Air Army staff flight, and more and more transports were landing, disgorging people who were being met by cars. Polish combat vehicles and tanks were milling around in the middle of all this. Complete confusion. I have never seen so many planes in one place, except perhaps in the movies. I have never seen such complete lack of organization and coordination; no one appeared to be in command and it was a miracle that there were no collisions in the air or on the ground. There were planes everywhere - about 200 of them.

We drove towards a group of command vehicles, where we expected the staff to be, either Russian or Polish. Polish tanks had dug in the grassed reserve runway which had been firmed up at great cost earlier in the year. The reserve runway had been destroyed and made useless for a long time to come. In the circumstances that was insignificant. One of the armored combat vehicles came straight for us. Polish airborne troops jumped out and with their machine guns eloquently indicated that we should get out. They pushed us towards the hangar doors and some noncom roared at us to put our hands up. We do so very reluctantly, but have no choice. Machine guns and automatics point at our backs, and further behind them stand our Czechoslovak soldiers. We look at each other and wait. I can't say I felt like laughing, but I had the thought that if they were to shoot us, it would be before witnesses. And I can add that the rumor that we had been shot spread all over the base. This then was the reality of fraternal aid.

Someone grabbed me by the shoulder. I turned round and saw a Polish major, who indicated that we should follow him. Suddenly everything changed. The danger of death, which had threatened us only a few minutes ago, disappeared at once. Years later I asked myself if I had been afraid. I don't know, but I was not aware of it. I was totally confused and my head was full of fantastic ideas. I only know that I thought that I would never see my wife and children again. I think that if they had shot us there and then, it would have been quite ordinary - simply the end.

Eight hours had passed since I had learned of the start of the occupation on the telephone and much had happened. Much more was to come.

So we go to the commander of the Polish regiment. Two tanks move forward and close in on either side. Our driver shoots forward like a racing driver. We go past one of the tanks; the other we miss by whisker. Once again, we manage and I ask myself the sense of it. The guard takes us and the Polish major to one of the command vehicles and we enter. I had difficulties in orientating myself, because the interior was filled with smoke. A Polish Colonel got up and held out his hand. I did not respond, but made my complaints and demands. The Polish major acted as interpreter. The Colonel promised to put things right, but afterwards it became obvious that he had done nothing. Only the prearranged meeting at 1500 hours that afternoon remained unchanged. The Chairman of the Regional National Committee arrived in the afternoon. Together we set out to look for the Polish Colonel, who commanded the Polish mechanized regiment and whose name I have forgotten. We were again escorted by Polish airborne troops. He did not negotiate on matters

of substance, but simply presented his demands. They wanted drinking water and bread. The Chairman promised water, but refused to provide bread of which there was not enough for the local population as noone was working that day. I demand that they should leave the airfield. I know that this is a senseless demand, that I am powerless, but at least I try to preserve some kind of dignity. It may well have seemed ridiculous to them. We achieved nothing and drove away.

I realised that it was afternoon and that I had not eaten. But instead of food there was another surprise: the arrival of the Russian ground support - the Wing ground staff, the support and communications squadrons. As far as the eye could see, there were trucks, aircraft, tanks and armored personnel carriers. A concentration as I had never seen before and have never seen since. Whoever planned this must have been a military idiot. Such a concentration of men and equipment would have been a feast for strike aircraft, as I was able to see for myself from film of the Arab-Israeli war. A few attacks could have caused a huge massacre of men and equipment. I could not understand it. Over 200 planes. Three Wings with their staffs. Six ground squadrons, a Polish mechanized regiment and a company of Polish airborne troops with armored personnel carriers. And more cars and soldiers and civilians, probably the Russian staff. Unimaginable chaos. And what was most important - the Russians did not bring any fuel, no shelter for their pilots, not even enough food. Only now did the pilots leave their planes, where they had spent at least ten hours. They must have been terribly tired and quite useless for any further action. And their planes were still without fuel. Later I asked myself whether I should have blocked the airfield. It would have led to the destruction of the Soviet Wing. They could not have landed anywhere (the airfield

Pardubice was not in operation because of repairs) and they could not have managed to fly back. The pilots would have had to abandon their planes. I also realise what would have followed.

Despite all I went through, I have been able to record these events. In other circumstances, this would have been impossible. It was therefore not a lack of courage. When I regard these events with the benefit of hindsight, I realise that the army never taught me to make independent decisions. Everything had always to be done in response to orders. Initiative was suspect and very dangerous. One's superiors took the credit, when things worked out, but when they went wrong, the consequences were usually serious. No one was prepared to do anything for anyone else. Everyone protected his own skin, and all these considerations had to be heeded when decisions were being made or orders were being issued. I am convinced that this system has been consolidated and strengthened.

Towards evening it began to drizzle and it got colder. August was giving way to autumn. I felt terribly tired. I had been on my feet for almost 18 stressful hours, without drink or food, had smoked far too much and my nerves were exhausted. But the day was not yet over. I had to take care of all my subordinates of whom there were about 2000, to inform people and to gather information for myself. I used all my staff, ordering them to follow the situation and to keep a written record. This was later taken away by the police when I was interrogated.

(Follows paragraph describing this record in general terms; then passage detailing the broadcast message of the CP Central Committee in support of Dubček and the message from the governments of the "fraternal" invading states).

The same day I had a stroke of genius. I moved the Soviet-made FTAK receiving equipment from the control tower to the headquarters

and tuned it to receive UPI. Thus we receive instead of the weather reports from Frankfurt much more important information - an uninterrupted flow of news and pictures of world-wide events, reactions to the Soviet invasion, and about the situation in other towns. Together with information from other airfields and places, these news give us a complete picture of the situation in the country on 21 August, the first day of the treacherous occupation of Czechoslovakia. Later we passed on these relatively good pictures to the local office of the regional daily Pochodeň, which printed them and thus had material from all over the world. At the time, they were grateful, but not for long.

The occupation of Czechoslovakia was completed on that day. The invading ground forces occupied the areas and commands of the Czechoslovak ground forces, the air force units covered the organisation of the Czechoslovak air force. Two airfields - Přerov and Pardubice - were still unoccupied, but this was only a question of time. Later that night I lay down, after checking personally everything that required attention. I also visited the draftees and tried to explain the situation to them. That was not a simple task. Young men in Czechoslovakia had and still have a very negative attitude towards military service and on 31. August some of them were due to leave for the reserves. Their departure was postponed indefinitely - a repetition of 1953.

It seemed that I had been sleeping for only a short time, when I was woken by the orderly officer. They were broadcasting President Svoboda's second address and I had given orders to be woken as soon as anything of importance happened. We were taping all the radio and TV news a necessary step.

I listened to the speech on tape. It was full of despair and hopelessness. President Svoboda repeated only what was generally known, he condemned the occupation as illegal and maintained that

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he would do everything necessary to secure the departure of foreign troops. He appealed especially to the young. He also confirmed that the government headed by its Chairman, Černík, had been interned. This speech did not augur well.

I had visitors. A Soviet military delegation came to see me. They wanted to speak with me. I tried to call the divisional commander to get his consent. He could not be found. So I called the Air Army headquarters and asked for the commander there, Lieutenant-General Jozef Kúkel. He replied in person. He approved my decision and added that should any of the Polish or Soviet officers ask for him, or his chief of staff, Col. Rotrekl, that they should be told that he was unavailable and could not be found. But that I should report to him regularly about the state of affairs and about the demands these people might be putting forward. I felt like Alice in Wonderland, and could not understand the games they were playing at Air Army headquarters.

Three perfumed Soviet officers were waiting for me in the office of the second-in-command. They were the Wing commander, Col. Temnikov, his deputy, Lt. Col. Chepurenko and chief of staff, major Dubovik. I introduced myself, we shook hands and I asked them what they wanted. The Colonel started without delay. They lacked food, fuel and accommodation, because their entire ground support had not yet arrived. And our soldiers were making difficulties. If they could not get what they needed by peaceful means, they would use force. I interrupted him and told him that they had come give us aid, that they were therefore our guests, but that in fact he was threatening me. This did not make sense to me. He began to speak about counter-revolution, and in that moment I realised that we could never agree or find a common language.

They spoke of counter-revolution and I asked them to show me some of these counter-revolutionaries. That was of course impossible, because there were none. I don't know whether they knew this, or whether they were stupefied by Soviet propaganda. We came to no agreement, I gave them nothing and promised nothing, but later they got everything they wanted anyway. I did not care that their pilots had not eaten or slept and that they were getting wet. I had not invited them to Czechoslovakia.

In the morning of 22 August I called a conference of all commanders. I prepared a comprehensive situation report, which also had to be sent to the headquarters of the division and of the Air Army.

Something was happening all the time on the field. I learned that two Volga automobiles, with Czechoslovak plates, had been unloaded from one of the Soviet planes. I arranged for a concealed observation post to be set up in the tower to enable us to know what was going on. We are informed that the 14th CP Congress will be held. I ordered that the reserve command post should be activated, but the crew sent there came back to report that it was occupied by Polish airborne troops. When I got there later, the place had been completely demolished and stripped down to the bare walls without windows. All the equipment, including radio equipment had been stolen by the Polish airborne troops. What they could not carry, they destroyed. Class brothers ! The damage was estimated at over 1.5 million crowns and I therefore had the whole place liquidated as useless. This, too, was one of the consequences of the occupation.

In the afternoon they called from the local radio station that they needed help. I sent two of our armored personnel carriers, which we had at the base as part of our anti-aircraft support. I followed them later. I was asked in and for the first time in

my life recorded a radio interview, which was later also held against me. The town was full of slogans and Czechoslovak flags. People were everywhere, especially young ones.

When I returned to the base, I learned that the staff of a Polish division had moved in. I wondered where they were, for I thought that we had run out of space. I had the honor to meet the divisional commander in somewhat dramatic circumstances in due course. The divisional staff came from Wroclaw. I was also handed two new orders from the President and from the Minister of Defense, dated 22 August, 1968. They were almost identical. The President maintains that all that goes on in the army is with his consent, and the Minister says that all instruction have been agreed with the President. But there were no instructions - only political proclamations.

I learned that the general strike had been postponed until noon on 23 August.

A public meeting of Party members on the base met towards evening and representatives of the Political Administration of the 10th Air Army were invited to attend. The cinema was completely full as for the showing of a sex-film. We voted a resolution condemning the occupation and we voted to refuse to wear badges originating in the Soviet army. And we asked all other members of the air force to follow suit. This appeal was enthusiastically received, but changed nothing. After the meeting I met with the chief of the Political Administration, Col. Bohumil Musil. It was obvious that he was uncertain and nervous. He asked me a question, which disconcerted me and I therefore want to report as exactly as possible.

"What do you think, what will happen to us when all this is over?" he asked.

"What do you mean, when all this is over ?", I replied.

"Well, after the occupation of Czechoslovakia, what will happen to us ?", he said.

"But Comrade Colonel, surely you don't believe that this occupation will ever come to an end. It can't. Perhaps only as a result of pressure from abroad. Brezhnev is correcting the error Stalin made in 1945", I told him.

"And what will happen to us ? You lived through Hungary, so you can arrive at the right conclusions", he said.

I was surprised that he knew. He had obviously looked at my cadre files. At the time of the Hungarian revolt I served on the staff of the Intelligence section of the air force command and also worked as liaison officer with the General Staff Intelligence Service. The reports which I received, evaluated and submitted to the Chief of Air Force Staff and to the Commander, Col.Gen.Vosáhla, gave me a very clear picture of the Hungarian events. I had also recently returned from a visit to Hungary.

I therefore gave him my opinion. I was convinced that personal scores would be settled. Within the Party, there would be big purges and trials of people who did not fit. And of many politicians. I was not far wrong, and I think I gave him little joy. It was not very comforting to lose a job, which carried a monthly salary of 6,000, a car for one's personal use, a rent-free apartment and the chance to be promoted to general. Col.Musil was later dismissed from his post, but he got a comfortable job in the Main Political Administration in Prague. So he did not do too badly.

The occupying troops began to settle in. Toward evening, a Polish armored regiment arrived and began to surround the town and to close off access to the airfield. Things were getting to be tough. It continued to rain without interruption. East German units begin to arrive from the north. Late in the evening a message from the

Chief of the Main Political Administration in the Ministry of Defense landed on my desk. This is worth quoting, for it created confusion and reversed the meaning of previous orders.

From the Chief of the Main Political Administration :

Prague, 22 August, 1968 - by teleprinter.

The Minister of National Defense and the Military Council have been released from isolation with the condition that the army will do nothing against the occupying units. An order from the Minister of National Defense will be issued shortly. Possibly, this could be a tactical move to enable the army, by releasing its leadership, to begin to organise and to create thus conditions for disarming it. This must be prevented. The staff of the MPA are in telephone contact with Comrade Dubček, who asks us to proceed tactically to prevent the disarming of the army.

Make sure that this news reaches every soldier.

A radio station calling itself "Free military youth" is active on the territory of the Republic. Its location is unknown, but it calls for action against the occupying units. This creates the danger of an armed clash.

Should it be located, you must explain that its activity is illegal and a report must be sent to your superior command.

Maj.Gen.Bedřich,
Chief of the MPA.

So we learned that the Minister of National Defense had been feeding us with lies. How could he exercise his command and be in touch with the President from isolation? If not the Minister, who was in command ? Where was the Chief of Staff, Col.Gen.Rusov ?

There were many unclear and unexplained questions which required an answer. It was clear that we should not repose too much trust in orders coming from the Minister of Defense.

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What if they came from someone else ? What was the truth ? I never found out and I also never heard anything more about a radio station. We consult, discuss, telephone and inform ourselves. But noone really knows anything, and everyone confirms that their situation is similar to ours. The airfield occupied, ground support organised by Polish, German, Hungarian or Bulgarian units, which incidentally had reached the airfield at Čáslav.

The second day of the occupation passed without clarifying the situation.

The third day of the occupation, 23 August, began for me at two in the morning. We received a great number of important news. Two reports seemed to be most important for the future. The start of the 14th Party Congress, which, we expected, would form a resistance movement and which would lead to differences of opinion. The second report told of the President's planned visit to Moscow. The present reader might consider this whole period as rather oversimplified, but one must be aware of the situation which then prevailed. The entire Wing existed in an exceptional situation, i.e. in a proclaimed state of military readiness. All the members of Wing, and of the two squadrons, plus eleven further units stationed at the Hradec Králové airfield, were in position. They had to be fed and housed. We also had to place our aircraft apart from those belonging to the occupiers, and all the equipment had to be secured. The men had to be kept busy throughout the day, because it was impossible to allow about a thousand soldiers to remain inactive. At the same time, we were as if in a state of siege, our movements were restricted and the supply situation in the civilian sector, which supplied us with food, began to be difficult. There was no meat or bread. There was no store of potatoes on the base, for by agreement the agricultural cooperative supplied them already peeled according to need. These were serious problems. Furthermore, we received no

concrete orders regarding further activities, and there also were clashes between our soldiers and the occupying troops, but with the difference that they were armed while our soldiers had no weapons at all. The occupying units, especially the Poles, began to behave aggressively, they searched and controlled vehicles and confiscated fuel and other loads, particularly food.

I should add that in the case of a battle alert, the Wing and its support units was scheduled to leave the Hradec Králové base and to move to Northwest Bohemia. Therefore all the rations were planned for one and a half days with the proviso that at the operational base they would be topped up to cover three days of operational activity. And as I have already reported, we had no fuel at all because the underground fuel stores could not be used. Everything had to be brought in. There was no other way, but it shows the difficulties which we had to face in peace-time, that the Wing was not materially or technically in a satisfactory state of readiness and that the slightest disturbance within the civilian economy was bound to affect us. Now we were being asked to support an additional roughly 5000 occupation troops. This was a demand which could not be met. It seems that they had come as for a visit in the belief that they would get all they needed here, or that they would obtain it by force. But the problem was that there was nothing to be had. There was not even enough grain for milling flour. This then was the position on the third day, and I became apprehensive about the future. In addition, the Polish units were closing the circle around the town and thus keeping us from our sources of supply.

The protest strike lasted from 12 to 13 hours. For 14 hours I had been invited to attend a Regional conference at the Regional National Committee in Hradec Králové. The entire Wroclaw mechanized

appeared. The circle around the town had been closed and we were outside it. Polish units broke into the garrison administration building and occupied it. The Army commander called me and told me to go there, to put things right and to inform him of the situation. A platoon of Polish airborne troops had in fact forced its way into the courtyard. Angry people stood all around them and shouted insults at them. And threw everything they could put their hands on at them. The Poles aimed their weapons at these people and slowly drove towards them. There was a panic and an armed clash seemed to threaten. I tried to calm the people, but they called me a collaborator and someone threw an apple at me, which knocked off my hat. I grew angry, but there was nothing to be done. I found the commander of the airborne troops and tried to explain things to him. I was lucky to have found a sensible officer. They withdrew and the tension relaxed.

I went to the headquarters of the 10th Air Army, which was hiding in the "castle". It was really located in a place called the "castle" where there may have been castle some time in the past. I thought it ridiculous that they were hiding in barracks, which could be forced at any time by troops assisted by combat vehicles.

The staff had no weapons for its own defence, apart from a few automatics and the officers' side-arms. To this day I have never understood why the entire staff of the Air Army, including its commander and his deputies, were hiding. They were paralyzed with fear. I found it unpleasant to see my commanders in this situation. The thought struck me how they would behave in case of a real war. I thought that now the danger had passed. Now everyone would play for time according to the Russian system. A long time ago, when I was in the GDR, I spoke with many people and asked them about

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their feelings when they were face to face with the detested Soviet soldiers. They replied to my naive question that in a similar situation in our country, we would get used to it like they had done. Today I know that they were right.

The meeting started late. The entire Polish elite, led by General Paczuk, was there. It was not an easy meeting, but it was open. It was interesting that not a single Soviet general or officer, of whom there were many on the airfield, attended. I emphasize that the whole staff of the Air Army, together with the staffs of some subordinate units, was present. It must be added that that there was considerable dislike between Russian and Polish officers and the insult "Polish dog" was relatively mild in this context. The Chairman of the Regional National Committee was the first to speak. He asked General Paczuk for the withdrawal of the Polish units from the town and for a relaxation of the encirclement. He protested against the violent acts perpetrated by Polish soldiers which had caused the deaths of Czechoslovak citizens, as for example in Jičín, where they had shot three inhabitants. General Kúkel, the commander of the 10th Air Army, complained that installations under his command had been occupied by Polish units without his knowledge or consent.

Uproar ensued. Everyone wanted to tell the Polish general something, angry voices and insults could be heard. Emotions prevailed. Then a sudden silence. General Paczuk got up and quietly delivered the usual phrases, already known to us from the media. That they had come as friends and comrades, that the Hradec Region had a twinning arrangement with Wroclaw, but that instead of regarding them as brothers, we insult them, throw rotten fruit at them, people lie down in front of their tanks

and attack the Polish soldiers. Then he raised his voice and told us that he would not put up with this, and if things did not improve, that he would fire at the town and occupy all of it. He had his orders and would fulfil them without hesitation. The Chairman of the National Committee, who later became Minister of the Interior in the Czech government, told him : "General (not Comrade) we do not think it useful to deal with you any longer under these conditions. I must inform you that your actions are contrary to international law, and that by coming here without the agreement of our legal government, you have violated the sovereignty and integrity of this state. You must realise that your words and deeds will not be forgotten and that they come close to committing an international crime. In these circumstances, with you threatening violence and the use of your power, we refuse to deal with you any further and we resolutely protest against your presence and your statements. I must tell you that I will inform the government of our Republic of your statements and threats."

General Paczuk changed color. He stood up, tall and erect, and it was obvious that he was trying to control his rage. He left, without a greeting and without looking at anyone.

All the participants at this meeting were deeply depressed. We all agreed with the statement made by the Chairman of the Regional National Committee, but were apprehensive of the future. Noone could responsibly say how the Polish units would behave. They have tanks, combat vehicles and guns. We only have light arms and a paralysed air force. Active resistance was impossible. Nothing remained except to keep calm and to prevent any confrontation with the occupying troops. The Chairman asked me to go to the local radio station to explain the situation and the demands of the

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representatives of the executive power to the population. This was my second broadcast.

I must digress. The attitude of all, and perhaps to be more exact, most of the participants of that historic meeting was clearly against the occupation, anti-Polish and anti-Soviet, for everyone knew that the Soviet Union stood behind all of this. It is interesting that, for example, the Chairman of the Regional National Committee and former Secretary of the District Party Committee in Semily, Grössl, later became Minister of the Interior in the Czech government and that his attitude then did not interfere with his career, while all the others were finished. The Commander of the 10th Air Army, Col.Gen.Kúkel, his political deputy Col. Musil, the leading secretary of the Town Party Committee Nĕmec and others, including myself, were dismissed. Only the Secretary of the Regional Party Committee, Pecha, survived, but he was not present at the meeting and he died soon afterwards.

(Follows passage about the concealment of the notes which the author made of this meeting, then quoting the announcement of Svoboda's planned journey to Moscow and remarks about the group of "traitors" who were to accompany him.)

The fourth day of the occupation, 24 August, began.

I went to bed late at night, but got no sleep. Early in the morning, a delegation of the Soviet Wing called with an ultimatum. No requests, but only demands; they had their orders :

1. to disarm our aircraft, to let out the fuel and to disconnect their electrical installations
2. to activate the radio and radar installations and to clear the runway to enable them to start flying.
3. to find accommodation for the Wing staff and pilots,
4. to set up a telephone connection between ourselves and the

Soviet staff, and a number of less significant demands.

We refused to disarm the aircraft without orders from a superior commander. We promised to reactivate the communications systems (we had no choice) but with our own personnel. We agreed with setting up a telephone link, but only using Soviet personnel and equipment.

In the evening they come back. The telephone line has been cut in a number of places and our soldiers are attacking the Soviet signalmen. Late in the evening the situation grows more tense, for Soviet troops tried to occupy our long-distance service line installation by force. Our soldiers withdrew from it, but began to fire at it from a distance. An exchange of fire followed, which could have had tragic consequences, but it was stopped before it became unmanageable. Our soldiers ran out of ammunition and there was no more. We withdrew our service crews, and nothing happened.

Throughout the day I did not receive any orders from the Division or from the Air Army. For a time, even our communications were interrupted.

With our meteorological "bird" we were getting the UPI news and we distributed fly-sheets around the base and also tried to give some to the occupying troops, but with few results. The political workers stood aside during this activity and were only pleased to see how well it went. They only supplied the flyers. Later of course they all said that it was my own initiative.

Toward evening we received an appeal from the 6th fighter-bomber Wing in Prerov to fly to Yugoslavia. As I have reported above, the support squadron there had blocked the runway with all available vehicles and technical equipment to prevent the Russians from landing. But on 22 August Russian and Hungarian tanks arrived

and the base commander was given an ultimatum : to clear the runway without delay, or the tanks would roll over it. And so even this short-lived rebellion ended.

The preconditions for a flight did not exist. The field was blocked and Yugoslavia was too far for our MiG-15 bis. Perhaps West Germany, Hungary or neutral Austria, but no further.

Sunday, the fifth day of the occupation began with a down-pour. We have been stuck at the base for five days. The radio broadcast the news of President Svoboda's message from Moscow and so we learned that this delegation of traitors and collaborators had been joined by Dubček, Černík and Smrkovský at the President's request.....

We had food problems. On the airfield there were about 2000 troops, who had to eat three times a day. There was a problem what to cook. It was Sunday, no work had been done for several days, there were no supplies, and the Polish units stole everything from the vehicles during their controls. Above all, they stole food, because they had none themselves. They had come to render short-term fraternal aid, which was lasting longer than they had reckoned. The soldiers were hungry. And we had similar problems and in addition we worried how to employ our men. It all seems simple, but I must emphasize again that we had neither the resources nor the means to cope with such a development and our freedom of movement was also restricted.

Our lives were brightened by broadcasts of the new occupiers' station Vltava with the announcer Kateřina Macháčková. We recorded everything and replayed the interesting passages. And so this active comrade gave us the idea to run non-stop film shows for the bored soldiers.

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The exchange of information went on throughout the day by telephone, radio and teleprinter. We had a complete picture of the situation and at the conclusion of the fifth day in the report which I signed before sending it to Division, it looked as follows : About 500,000 to 600,000 troops (the exact numbers are not at my disposal and this is only an estimate on the basis of available information) took part in the occupation of Czechoslovakia - predominantly Soviet and then Polish troops, while the GDR, Hungary and Bulgaria sent token units; further about 6000 tanks and armored transports and roughly 1500 aircraft and helicopters. The occupation force was commanded by Col.Gen.Pavlovsky, who eleven years later became again notorious in Afghanistan.

The delegation returned from Moscow on the sixth day. Many will remember Dubček's interrupted and emotional speech. It was obvious that the negotiations and their result were nothing but a Moscow diktat. The consequences were felt immediately. The pressure from the Kremlin was unambiguous and their demands absolutely clear. 21 August must be forgotten as quickly as possible. The command was : to consolidate conditions immediately - to remove all slogans and posters, to move from passive resistance to active cooperation no longer with the "occupying" but with the "allied" troops, to establish working and social contacts and to bring about economic and political conditions in the context of the new situation. In other words - to move from passive resistance to active collaboration. This was to be the basic condition for the withdrawal of the troops. Noone said which troops were meant. Only a naive or foolish person could believe that the Russians would leave.

(Follows brief passage of speculation in general terms about the possibility of a Soviet withdrawal and the use made by the Soviets of Czechoslovak "collaborators" including Svoboda)

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On 26 August, the sixth day of the occupation, we were given definite orders:

- to release the draftees in their second year of service to the reserves,
- to remove all slogans and graffiti,
- to establish close contact with the friendly armies,
- to cancel all alerts and to transfer to normal styles of operation,
- to prepare to receive the new draftees, who were to commence service on Monday, 2 September,
- to cease all flying training until further notice.

This was the beginning of a slow and gradual consolidation in accordance with the Soviet scenario. Time would heal everything, and it did. We therefore sent all the regulars to live in their homes again, prepared to release the soldiers in their second year and to receive the new draft. The soldiers who were to be released from service were of course overjoyed. And the army command was glad to be rid of half the witnesses of the occupation. They would be dispersed in civilian life and in time no one would believe their accounts anyway. This, too, was in the scenario.

We had to release one hangar to the Russian Wing, house their pilots and their technicians and girl mechanics. We had to supply fuel and create conditions which would enable them to start their flying training. These were our orders. I went to look at the work of their technical personnel. It was unusual to see, instead of soldiers, half-naked, young and busty girl-mechanics at work servicing the planes. They did very well, and did not appear to be hindered at work by their large breasts. Our soldiers began to like them, and no wonder.

Draftees in the Czechoslovak Army, who are in a state of permanent battle alert, do not lead very jolly lives. They therefore envied the Russian soldiers, who were surrounded by so many young and handsome women. I should add, that these girls were not serving in the forces, but were civilian employees.

At this time I received another interesting order to vacate immediately the command flight hangar and to put a thousand chairs there, which had to be collected all over the place. We learned the reason soon afterward, when another 500 chairs had to be found. The hangar was surrounded by Polish tanks and combat vehicles. Hundreds of cars, carrying Polish generals and officers, began to arrive. A great show was being prepared. The newly appointed Minister of Defense, Jaruzelski, flew in to decorate personally hundreds of Polish soldiers for their courage in fighting the counter-revolution. They may have included the murderers of Czech men and women, whose graves were still fresh. I saw him for the first time on that occasion and I must say that his appearance has not changed much. He has grown older, but his stony face, without a smile or any expression of humanity, has remained the same.

(Follows brief speculation about what might have been if developments in Czechoslovakia had been paralleled by similar trends in Poland and elsewhere in Eastern Europe.)

30 August, 1968

The commander of the 10th Air Army called a meeting of all commanders and important officials of the entire Air Army. We are prepared for the worst. The curtain was about to go up, and we would perhaps learn more. For every totalitarian regime, the army represents a powerful support. It is an instrument of power. Its internal task is often more important than its external mission.

The start of the meeting was a surprise. At other times we had always been expected to take notes, but this time were strictly instructed not to do so.

The Military Council of the 10th Air Army took up position at the head table - Lt.Gen-Jozef Kúkel, the Army commander; Col. Hajek, his deputy; Col. Musil, the chief of the political administration; Col. Rotrekl, the Chief of Staff; Col. Huml, the commander of the rear echelon; Col. Cvačka, the deputy commander of engineering services. It was unusual to see among those invited Lt.Col. Ženíšek, the head of the counter-espionage section of the 10th Air Army, who was not subordinate to the commander of the Air Army. Among the group he held the lowest rank. A man who rarely appeared in uniform and who kept in the background. That did not mean that he held an insignificant appointment or that he had no power. Military counter-intelligence in the Army was in a way extraterritorial, for its members were and are members of the Ministry of the Interior, i.e. of the state security services. That says all that needs to be said.

The report was presented by Col. Huml, the commander of the rear. It was not clear why it was he, but that's how it was. It should be interesting to read the views of the army command nine days after the start of the occupation, as Col. Huml's report had been brought back from high, i.e. the Collegium of the Ministry of Defense, by the commander of the 10th Air Army.

According to my notes, this was the content of the message :

According to the information at its disposal, the army command did not think that intervention was likely +), although there were some pointers in that direction. There was little room to pursue

+) (Lengthy footnote by the author, dismissing this as a lie and advancing the hypothesis that the army command deliberately withheld its knowledge of an imminent invasion from Dubček. Proof of this that some of those in high command before 21 August were allowed to hold senior posts afterwards in reward for their "treason".)

the post-January policy, but was an important fact that the army had managed to preserve its command, unity and firmness and by doing so had helped to create conditions for negotiations in Moscow and here. The President and Comrade Dubček appreciate the firm attitude of commanding officers and their patriotism. The orders which were issued had been obeyed.

What were the army's tasks in the immediate future ?

- to strengthen the political morale and unity of the army
- to start the process of consolidation
- to establish contact with the Warsaw Pact troops (note : no longer described as occupation troops)
- to carry out measures to safeguard the servicing of aircraft
- to prepare a major aid action in support of agriculture,
- to act severely against anyone calling the commanders who would cooperate with the fraternal armies "collaborators".

These were the orders of the Military Council. It added :

The intervention was due to the failure to fulfil the agreements made in Čierna and Bratislava. The consolidation of the situation would create conditions for the withdrawal of the troops in four stages as follows :

1st stage - to begin on 2 September,

2nd stage - to begin on 28 October,

3rd and 4th stages - no date fixed (and as was shown later, there never was a date and no one counted on it)

The army commander then allowed questions. Here they are, with the replies.

Q. When did the Ministry of Defense learn of the start of the occupation ?

A. at about 22 hours on 20 August; the Ministry of Foreign Affairs between 19 and 20 hours.

Q. What did the Ministry do, and who was informed ?

A. We regret, but we do not know.

Q. Why did you not do anything, why did you not bring the army to a state of battle alert, why did you not tell us the truth about Čierna and Bratislava ? Why did the army command fail to tell us everything it knew about preparations for the occupation ? Why? and again why?

They shrug their shoulders, embarrassment, no replies. The end of the discussion. Everyone knows what to think. And a final surprise : Greetings from Col.Gen.Dzur, the Minister of National Defense, the man who so eagerly criticised the shortcomings in the technical and material state of the army, i.e. an area for which he had been previously responsible as Commander of the Rear. And he sent us a message to say that he had prevented the liquidation of a number of people.

(Follows lengthy passage of speculation about the lies alleging counter-revolution, Dzur's motives and the meaning of "liquidation." leading to the conclusion that "all was over.")

On Saturday, 31 August, I called a conference of all commanders at the base in Hradec Králové. They all came, and in the majority shared my feelings.

In the afternoon I wrote a lengthy article and sent it to Pochodeň- the Regional Party daily. It appeared on 1 September, the last time anything objective and true could be published. (Follows passage of speculation about the Brezhnev Doctrine and Soviet motives for the occupation, concluding with the view that judgment must be left to the historians of the future.) Before I conclude, I would like to record the fates of the members of the Military Council of the 10th Air Army.

The commander, Col.Gen.Kúkel - dismissed the service in 1970.
No account was taken of his achievements in the struggle against the German army or in building up the army.

Col.Hájek, deputy commander - dismissed in 1970

Col.Musil, chief of the Political Administration - recalled from his post and transferred to the Main Political Administration,

Col. Rotrekl, chief of staff - appointed commander of the 3rd Air Defense Corps in Žatec and promoted to general,

Col. Huml, commander of the rear echelon - recalled from his post and later dismissed from the army.

Col.Cvačka, deputy commander of engineering services - left in his post, later promoted to general and now technical director of the Czechoslovak Airlines.,

Lt. Col. Ženíšek, head of military counter-intelligence - recalled and later transferred to the reserve.

And others. The commander of the 6th Fighter Air Division - dismissed; his chief of staff - dismissed.

The Commander of the 1st Fighter Division - dismissed. The commander of the 47th Independent Reconnaissance Wing - dismissed.

The commander of the 45th Reconnaissance Wing- dismissed. And many others. Wing commanders, their deputies, chiefs of staff, squadron and flight commanders, pilots and technicians, the young, the old and the middle-aged.

Some could not bear the psychological strain and committed suicide. Some died in mysterious circumstances. Others were killed. ...

And others pushed to take their places. You recall Col.Remek, who chased his wife, the mother of the first Czechoslovak cosmonaut ? He became a general and commander of the 10th Air Army at the beginning of 1969, later a member of the Federal Assembly, Commander of the Air Force and Air Defense and a Col.Gen. Or his predecessor, Col.Gen.Jozef Činčár, who was divorced twice and married three times,

each of whose wives ran away from him and whose daughter lives in the West ? He personally helped Gen.Prchlík to a three-year prison sentence in Bory, but did not mind holding the highest posts in the air force and he later became the Czechoslovak representative at Warsaw Pact headquarters. And others. This is not envy, but fact. Career-seekers and ruthless individuals, capable of any baseness replaced experienced and educated officers. They concealed their character failings and their indiscreet attitudes during August 1968 to achieve their goal. As for example Maj.Gen.Ladislav Sochor. For money, for their careers, for women, apartments, cars and power. This is the army today - these are its representatives.

As for example Col. now perhaps general, Miroslav Koudela. This man used to be head of the air force political administration. He preached about communist morale, political consciousness and devotion to the Party. That was before they discovered his frauds - theft of Party and official funds to maintain two apartments, one for his family, for his mistresses; the falsification of documents and payments for non-existing duty journeys. And many other things. It took a long time before they decided what do with him. A political worker was after all the Party's representative in the army. And the Party was incapable of doing anything dishonest. But when things had gone too far, something was done, but his wings were only clipped to enable him to take off again. He was recalled from his post, demoted by one grade in rank. As a Lt.Col. he was chief of the political administration in a Division and when the so-called period of consolidation began after August, he proceeded to settle his personal grudges.

He was restored to his post, again promoted to Colonel and described as a victim of right-wing forces in the army. (Follows about 400 words of speculation in general political terms about Soviet motives, the overall line of Soviet foreign policy and Brezhnev's personal position in the USSR, followed by a repetition of the view that Dzur, Rusov and other commanding officers in Czechoslovakia must have known about the Soviet intention to invade, as proved by the fact that they were kept in their posts after August 1968)

Perhaps I should in conclusion record how things developed later. The Polish helicopter Wing left at the beginning of September. We had never been able to form a view of its tasks. It came, it landed and it left. No more than that. The Polish units relaxed the encirclement of the town and withdrew to three areas of concentration. General Bedřich, the Head of the Main Political Administration, appeared like a comet to lecture to us. He originated from somewhere near Ostrava, no one really knew anything about him, he took up one of the highest posts in the army, sent out several teleprinter messages and meaningless proclamations, at the meeting we had with him he uttered a number of threats, which as was seen later were by no means idle, he left and was later removed from his post to disappear from sight.

There was still no flying. The airforce was reorganised and relocated. One fighter-bomber Air Division and two Wings were abolished. Divisional staffs and whole Wings were moved to new stations to free the airfields/temporarily for the Soviet Wings, which however still remain in Czechoslovakia. The 17th fighter-bomber Wing in Mimoň was abolished. The 47th Reconnaissance Wing was moved from Mladá to Pardubice. The Photo/Air Group was moved from Mimoň to Hradec Králové, the 34th fighter-bomber Air Division was given a

fourth Wing. The staff of the Air Technical Division was abolished and the helicopter Wing was relocated.

In October we took over the aircraft and some of the personnel of the 17th fighter-bomber Wing. In dramatic circumstances we flew the aircraft from Mimoň to Hradec Králové. These were the first Czechoslovak aircraft to fly since 21 August. During October the Polish ground troops left gradually and the airfield became less crowded. The Soviet fighter Wing was to leave on 28 October. We were invited to a farewell lunch on 27 October. Until then we had managed to avoid any meetings. This time we were convinced that nothing could be done. But the Wing had flying training in the morning, and one of the pilots, a major, did not return and the search was fruitless. On 28 October, Czechoslovak Independence Day which was later to become "Federation Day", the Soviets took off without any farewells. The dead pilot they left for us. Three days later we found his plane and body in the Orlické mountains. After this, the remaining two battalions and Polish divisional staff left. Not a single occupying soldier was left. It seemed like a dream, but it was true. However, they remained in other places. Flying was again permitted, but it did not go well. The pilots were not in training, two planes collided and one of the pilots was killed. Another tragedy caused by the occupation. New cadre orders arrived and there were many changes, for the time being in the lower posts. Before they could create conditions for total cadre changes.

These occurred during 1969. In May 1970, the air force displayed its consolidation under the new Party and state leadership at a great review.

Munich, 1984.

Ing. Zbyněk Čerovský,
formerly Lt. Col. Czechoslovak
Air Force, Dept. Commander
Hradec Králové and Deputy
Chief of the Operational

Section, 34. fighter-bomber
air division Čáslav- ČSSR

Dipl.-Ing. Zbynek CEROVSKY
Adenauerring 10/V
8000 München 83
Bundesrepublik Deutschland

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Mr.
Jack F. Hatlock
Special Assistant to the President
for National Security Affairs
The White House - Washington
U. S. A.

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