

SENSITIVE

OFFICE OF THE VICE PRESIDENT
WASHINGTON

April 18, 1974

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Meeting with Mr. Milan Svec, Third Secretary of
the Czechoslovakian Embassy on April 18th

I met with Mr. Milan Svec of the Czechoslovakian Embassy at the Jockey Club at 12:00 noon, where he had invited me to meet him for lunch.

He moved quickly into subjects I felt were of interest to him, and he was quite candid.

He had a great interest in the status of the impeachment proceedings and did not hesitate to ask questions about the same, as well as express certain views, the most significant of which was his observation that in the diplomatic community in just recent days there was a developing attitude that the President was likely to be impeached and removed from office. This was coupled with indications that consequently there was a need to adjust to that fact, because heretofore all of this discussion about the President's situation was viewed with greater detachment and less involvement and less likelihood by the foreign community in Washington. In all matters related to impeachment, I sought to either parry his questions, or respond in a manner so as to downgrade the view his question reflected while seeking to minimize the imminency he attached to this matter.

He was quite aware of the Michigan election and tried to talk at some length of the meaning of that election insofar as the President was concerned. I am of the view, and so stated, that he placed too much emphasis on the political results of this insofar as the President is concerned and its impact on impeachment.

He was quite aware of the Osborne article and the observations attributed to the Vice President as to his assessment of Secretary Schlesinger. Svec concentrated on this point and evidenced a keen

SENSITIVE

SENSITIVE

interest as to whether this accurately reflected the Vice President's views on Schlesinger. I am inclined to think this was the major purpose of the meeting. The views I gave him I think will cause him to discount substantially the thrust of the New Republic article on this sensitive point.

He is watching the Congress with considerable interest, and he admitted confusion. He said traditionally he and others had a different view of the American Congress with the idea that it was more formal and organized in its operation; therefore, there was less attention to the role of the Congress. He indicated bewilderment about the obvious power that is being demonstrated in many different fields by the U.S. Congress, and consequently he sees this as a governmental force that attacks certain preconceived conceptions of American government.

He came back to the question of relations between Kissinger and Schlesinger and whether their views were mutually supporting. Were there substantial differences between these men on basic concepts? Were they supporting each other in their views and positions, or were they embarked on different courses? He also wanted to know to what extent I had been involved in SALT and MBFR. He wanted to explore Schlesinger's views and obviously the Schlesinger proposals on retargeting are of tremendous interest to him. I made an effort to persuade him that there were no real differences in the Schlesinger/Kissinger views, and they were mutually supporting insofar as the President's policy is concerned.

He is puzzled by Schlesinger and described him as a high government official who has suddenly emerged on the scene. It is this sudden exposure and the lack of prior observation, together with strong positions, that have contributed to this puzzlement.

He wanted to know about our attitude on Ford becoming President, and I explained clearly this was something that was not discussed on the Vice President's staff, with principal attention in supporting him in his duties as Vice President. Svec pointed out several times he expected Ford to become President, and it became rather obvious that he was trying to establish his own arrangements with those on his staff. Every time Svec brought this up I endeavored to dissuade him from this attitude.

Twice during the conversation he inquired whether the Vice President had any definite plans to make an overseas trip. From his questions, I gathered he hoped the Vice President would visit Czechoslovakia on such a trip. I indicated there was no trip presently scheduled.

SENSITIVE

SENSITIVE

He said that the Ambassador was planning a big event in May on their national holiday, and that I should expect an invitation. He also wanted to know if I could have dinner with him some evening. As a matter of interest, he mentioned he was the chief official at the Embassy during this period when the Ambassador was out of the country.

Personality Notes: Svec indicated his two favorite restaurants were Paul Young's and The Jockey Club. He drank scotch and water, and at the end of the meal urged that we each drink a goblet of wine. He paid for the lunch in cash and appeared to leave only a 10% tip. He was well-dressed in a business suit, and his English was quite good. He mentioned he had traveled to Harpers Ferry and to Gettysburg. His wife is a former journalist of some standing in Prague, and they are expecting their first child in September.


Jack Marsh

SENSITIVE