

OUTGOING TELEGRAM

INDICATE: COLLECT
 CHARGE TO

Department of State

SECRET - SECURITY INFORMATION
Classification

161

03451

1953 APR 10 PM 6 03

DC/T

SENT TO: Amembassy PRAGUE PRIORITY 245

RPTD INFO: HICOG BONN PRIORITY 4875

249.1111 Oatis, William N. / 4-953
FR 749.00

Origin

Info

If Siroky fails follow through in arranging further meeting and less formal means prodding unavailing or inadvisable you authorized proceed as suggested paragraph 1 URTEL 465.

Re paragraph 2 you may indicate to Czechs if HICOG agrees, accordance previous arrangements such cases, Czech crew will be permitted enter US Zone to return plane. Department not (RPT not) feel US crew should fly plane Prague. Concur you should endeavor obtain agreement Czechs to round

sum payment expenses for our locking after repatriates and plane. They may ask for breakdown and refuse payment lodging and feeding repatriates since in previous similar instances we never billed them for such expenses. We refused pay these costs for our fliers Czech 1951. In any event costs storage and normal minimum maintenance aircraft, payable before its departure from Germany, are to be charged Czechs pursuant previous practice (Bonn's 4525). Re inquiry 3 Bonn's REFTEL upon assumption early transfer plane mail and cargo may be left for return with it.

Believe you should not volunteer comment extradition request. If

Siroky raises matter, you may take position as may be necessary basically along following lines.

REVIEWED BY: ROM LINE DATE Nov. 24, 1982

FR 749.00

RDSEXT XDS EXT. DATE
TS AUTH. (M/S)
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THIS DOCUMENT MUST BE RETURNED TO
DC/R
Central
249.1111 OATIS, WILLIAM N.

249.1111 Oatis, William N. / 4-953

SECRET

Drafted by: EUR:EE:HCvedeler:mf1 4/10/53

Telegraphic transmission and classification approved by: Walworth Barbour

Clearances: L/ARA - Mr. Dixon
S/S - CR

EUR / GMB - GEN
SECRET - SECURITY INFORMATION
Classification

Cleared in substance with Mr. Blumberg
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APR 10 1953 P.M.

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Persons from plane who remained in Germany expressed of their own free will desire for political asylum and their request has been granted in accordance with established procedure. No legal obligation exists to return to countries of origin political refugees. Extradition Treaty 1925 which any case not (RPT not) applicable to US Zone Germany specifically excludes application to any crime or offense of political character and recognizes right of state receiving extradition requests to decide whether case of political character. US, as many other countries, has never recognized obligation to extradite in absence treaty.

For HICOG. If Czechs refuse pay costs other than storage and maintenance, remaining costs appear to be contingency expenses for US incurred as result our having military installations in Germany for which Department has no funds (URTEL 4525).

Smith Acting
(UB)

SMITH

SECRET - SECURITY INFORMATION

Classification

Air Pouch

SECRET-SECURITY INFO

DO NOT TYPE IN THIS SPACE

FOREIGN SERVICE DESPATCH

249.1111 Oatis, William
N. 4-1553

FROM: American Embassy, Prague

317
DESP. NO.

OFFICE INDEX

TO: THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON

April 15, 1953

REF: Embtel 469, April 14, 1953

249.1111 OATIS, WILLIAM N. / 4-1553
cut 5/8-62 APR 21 PM 12:20

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13	EUR	N L S/S G
For Dept.	REC'D	F OTHER
Use Only	APR 25	O
373		DEPARTMENT OF STATE

SUBJECT: Embassy's demarche of April 14, 1953 with respect to William OATIS, Jan HVASTA, and Otilie VOSKA.

With respect to the above the following are transmitted herewith:

1. First Person Note dated April 13, 1953 from the Ambassador to the Acting Minister for Foreign Affairs with respect to William Oatis, Jan Hvasta and Otilie Voska, and the two memoranda referred to therein.
2. Memorandum dated April 14, 1953 from Counselor of Embassy to the Ambassador with respect to the delivery of the foregoing to Mr. Jan Padlak, Chief of American Department, Czechoslovak Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE /DCS/MR
For the Ambassador:
REVIEWED BY ROMINE DATE Dec 28, 1982

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 RELEASE DEFERRED
 ENCLOSURES
 EXCEPTIONS

Nat B. King
Counselor of Embassy

1. First Person Note from the Ambassador to Acting Minister for Foreign Affairs, with attached memoranda.
2. Memorandum from Counselor of Embassy to the Ambassador

NatBKing/sn
REPORTER

SECRET-SECURITY INFO

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The action office must return this permanent record copy to DC/R files with an endorsement of action taken.

*Hvasta family
inform of
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mail
encl. 1
Hav*

249.1111 OATIS, WILLIAM N.
/4-1553

1953 APR 25 PM 3 08
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UNCLASSIFIED
(Classification)

No. 5

American Embassy
Prague, April 13, 1953

Excellency,

I have the honor to refer to our conversation of February 23, 1953 and to my conversation of March 30, 1953 with His Excellency, the Prime Minister. In the course of the latter, Mr. Siroky was good enough to assure me that he would ask the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for papers pertinent to discussing with me, on a concrete basis, the matter of William OATIS and related issues.

With that assurance in mind, I believe that both you and the Prime Minister will find helpful the enclosed Memorandum of even date. It sets forth, in terms specifically approved by my government, the assurances I gave you orally as to the actions my government is prepared to take simultaneously with or as soon as practically possible immediately after commutation of Mr. Oatis' sentence to expulsion and/or his release and departure from Czechoslovakia.

Accompanying this Memorandum and with particular reference to paragraph (f) thereof is a brief Supplementary Memorandum relative to the case of Jan HVASTA, which I mentioned in the course of our conversation of February 23, and to the case of Otilie VOSKA, which was in 1951 the subject of an exchange of notes between the Embassy and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

In the circumstances and so soon as Mr. Siroky has taken cognizance of the substance of the enclosed memoranda, I trust that he will be able to set an early date for the continuance of our discussion. I should appreciate highly your courtesy in informing me of his wishes.

I am happy to add to the above that I am now also in possession of my government's answer to His Excellency's further query with respect to the return of the Czechoslovak transport airplane that recently landed at Rhine-Main.

Accept, Excellency, the renewed assurances of my consideration.

Enclosures:

Memorandum and Supplementary
Memorandum of even date.

Her Excellency

Dr. Gertrude Sekaninova-Cakrtova,
Acting Minister for Foreign Affairs
Prague.

GWadsworth/NatBKing/vw

UNCLASSIFIED

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(Classification)

f) Prompt action will be taken by competent United States military authorities in Western Germany to release such Czechoslovak citizens held by them as the Czechoslovak Government may desire to have them release, the Czechoslovak Foreign Office to communicate the names of such citizens to the United States Embassy in Prague.

g) Immediate action will be taken by competent United States authorities to arrange promptly for resumption of flights of Czechoslovak civil aircraft over Western Germany in substantial accord with the procedures existing in July 1951.

The United States Ambassador takes satisfaction, too, in adding that he holds himself at the disposal of the Czechoslovak Government for any further discussion which may be desired regarding these assurances.

Prague, April 13, 1953.

NatBKing/vw

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(Classification)

MEMORANDUM

The American Ambassador refers to the demarche which he made on February 23, 1953 to Her Excellency the Acting Minister of Foreign Affairs with regard to the case of William Oatis and during the course of which he left with Her Excellency a rough outline of assurances his Government had authorized him to give as to actions which, in event of favorable Czechoslovak action on Mrs. Oatis' pending petition, it would take simultaneously with, or so soon as possible immediately after, commutation of Mr. Oatis' sentence to expulsion.

The Ambassador now takes satisfaction in informing the Czechoslovak Government that he is directed by his Government formally to communicate such assurances in the following terms:

a) Consular invoices for Czechoslovak exports to the United States will again be certified by the United States Embassy in Prague and United States Consulates in third countries, without delay, in accordance with the procedure prevailing in July 1951. Similarly, Czechoslovak meat inspection certificates will be authenticated by the United States Embassy in Prague.

b) All United States restrictions on the export of United States products to Czechoslovakia, except those of general applicability imposed pursuant to United States law, will be immediately removed.

c) Subject to United States laws of general applicability, Czechoslovak trade with the United States may be carried on free of restraint or obstacle by United States authorities.

d) Within the terms of the United States Immigration and Nationality Act of 1952 and associated regulations, the United States Embassy in Prague will issue, without delay, visas to Czechoslovak citizens applying to it, with the appropriate Czechoslovak documents, for permission to visit the United States.

e) Immediate action will be taken by the competent United States authorities to arrange for lifting the ban against Czechoslovak citizens visiting Western Germany.

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SUPPLEMENTARY MEMORANDUM

Supplementing paragraph (f) of his memorandum of even date, the American Ambassador is authorized to say:

(i) The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has informed the American Embassy that the whereabouts of Mr. Jan Hvasta, an American citizen lately imprisoned in Czechoslovakia, are unknown to the Czechoslovak authorities. In view of the continuing deep interest of the United States Government in Hvasta, it would welcome the assurance of the Czechoslovak Government that, in the event Hvasta is again apprehended by the Czechoslovak authorities, he will be deported forthwith.

(ii) The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has also informed the Embassy that Miss Otilie Martha Voska, an American citizen, was detained by the Czechoslovak authorities and that her case was under investigation. In this connection, the United States Government expresses the hope that, if Miss Voska is still so detained, she will be released and permitted to leave Czechoslovakia simultaneously with the release of Czechoslovak citizens by United States military authorities in Western Germany.

Prague, April 13, 1953.

GWadsworth/NatBKing/vw

UNCLASSIFIED

April 14, 1953

TO: The Ambassador
FROM: Counselor
SUBJECT: Call on Mr. Pudlak today with respect to Mr. Oatis.

I handed your note of April 13 to Pudlak at 3:30 today and substantially covered all of the points made in the attached memorandum from you to me.

With respect to paragraph 1, Mr. Pudlak said he would personally deliver the note immediately to Madame Sekaninova and convey my oral remarks made on your behalf to her.

His only other comment on this paragraph was with respect to Jan Hvasta. He said in this connection that his government still had no further information with regard to Hvasta's whereabouts.

With regard to paragraph 2, the following transpired:

He had been informed of your conversation with the Prime Minister with respect to my visit to Oatis; the matter had been referred to the competent authorities and he would keep after them.

NBK

Enclosure:

Memorandum.

NBK/sn

SECRET-SECURITY INFO

(Classification)

April 13, 1953

OFFICE MEMORANDUM

NBK:

1) When handing my note of April 13 to Pudlak, please say in substance:

a) That I have asked you to hand it to him with the request that, because of its high importance (in my view), he be good enough to see personally to it that it is delivered to Mme. Sekaninova with my compliments.

b) That it has seemed to me not only that this present note is of high importance but also that it may well be of high timeliness; for I have read of the recent amnesties proclaimed in the USSR and in Rumania and have conceived it not improbable that, with establishment of the new Zapotocky regime, similar action would be taken here and, if so, that the moment (Oatis was arrested two years ago this month) would be a most propitious one for favorable action on Mrs. Oatis' petition.

c) That, with these same considerations in mind, I have mentioned in the Supplementary Memorandum enclosed with my note two other cases of American citizens, i.e., Jan Hvasta and Otilie Voska, the latter of whom may still be held by the Czechoslovak authorities. I would not, however, wish either of these cases to delay consideration of the Oatis case per se.

2) Please also inquire, on my behalf, regarding the status of our request for authorization for you to visit Oatis; in which connection you may add that, in the course of my conversation of March 30 with the Prime Minister, he was good enough to assure me that appropriate arrangements for such visit would be made.

GW

SECRET-SECURITY INFO

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR

SECRET - SECURITY INFORMATION

164

REVIEWED BY ROMINE DATE DEC 22, 1982

May 1, 1953

RDS or XDS EXT. DATE _____
TS AUTH. _____ REASON(S) _____
ENDORSE EXISTING MARKINGS
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RELEASE DENIED
PA or FOI EXEMPTIONS _____

To : H - Mr. Morton

Through: S/S

From : EUR - Mr. Merchant *HW*

Subject: Discussion of the Oatis Case with Congressman Beamer.

Speech, Party and no action case for same

Congressman John V. Beamer, in a letter to the Secretary dated April 21, 1953, requested information on recent activity or developments in the Oatis case, and asked whether he could be of assistance. The Secretary's reply, dated May 1, 1953, a copy of which is attached, states that he has asked you to inform Mr. Beamer of recent developments in the case. It is hoped that you may discuss this matter with the Congressman on a strictly confidential basis along the lines indicated below.

In pressing for the release of Oatis, the Department has sought to take advantage of recent developments in Czechoslovakia, especially the accession to office of a new Czechoslovak President, Zapotocky, on March 21 following the death of President Gottwald. President Eisenhower sent a message to Zapotocky expressing the hope that the latter would give consideration to the release of Mr. Oatis and thus remove one cause of friction between the two countries. The message indicated that if the Czechoslovak Government would release him we were prepared to negotiate the issues arising from his arrest. The new Prime Minister, to whom Ambassador Wadsworth presented the President's message on March 30, stated that he would discuss it with his President and ask his Foreign Office to report to him the status of the case. He also stated that the Czechs would initiate further negotiations. It was agreed that the existence of President Eisenhower's message would not be publicized.

In previous discussions with high officials of the Czechoslovak Government, Ambassador Wadsworth had indicated orally that the measures imposed by the US Government as a result of the Oatis case, particularly the trade restrictions, would be lifted in the event of the release of Oatis. In order to expedite further discussions, therefore, Ambassador Wadsworth subsequently sent a memorandum stating this Government's position formally in detail.

249.1111 OATIS, WILLIAM N. /5-153

SECRET FILE 5-153

MAY 25 1953

4/5/53/H

DC/R
Anal *5*
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177366

SECRET - SECURITY INFORMATION

The Czechoslovak President has now acknowledged the message from President Eisenhower, stating that the proposals contained in the message have been referred to the Czechoslovak Government. In view of the circumstances it is considered very important that there should be no publicity which might only prejudice our efforts.

Attachment:

Copy of letter to
Congressman Beamer.

mj
EUR:EE:MJerabek:mf1

HCU

*Cleared with Mr. Barlow
in initial draft*

REVIEWED BY ROMINE DATE DEC 28, 1982

1221

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

RDS [] or XDS [] EXT. DATE _____

TS AUTH. _____ REASON(S) _____

ASSISTANT SECRETARY

165

ENDORSE EXISTING MARKINGS []

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RELEASE DENIED []

PA or FOI EXEMPTIONS _____

May 11, 1953

To : H - Mr. Morton

Through : S/S *WM*

From : EUR - Mr. Merchant

Subject : Discussion of the Oatis Case with Congressman Beamer

With reference to your memorandum of May 7 and your telephone conversation of May 9 with Mr. Barbour of EE concerning the possibility of Congressman Beamer making a statement regarding negotiations in the Oatis case, I feel it might well be very damaging to prospects of obtaining Mr. Oatis' release for Congressman Beamer to make any statement in this connection at this time.

For your information, in supplement to my memorandum of May 1st, the position at the moment is as follows: In Prague Ambassador Wadsworth is endeavoring to obtain an opportunity to discuss the case further with the Czech Prime Minister. President Eisenhower's message to the Czech President of March 30 has been acknowledged with the statement that it has been referred to the Czechoslovak Government. In Moscow Ambassador Bohlen has been instructed to raise the Oatis case, among others, with Molotov in the course of a conversation which should take place within the next few days.

It may be noted that the fact of President Eisenhower's message having been sent to the Czechoslovak President is not public knowledge. I believe that Congressman Beamer's misunderstanding probably stems from confusion with a previous message sent by President Eisenhower on the occasion of the death of the current Czech President's predecessor Gottwald.

DC:R
 5
 [Handwritten initials]

EUR:EE:WBarbour:ahw

MAY 9 5 1953

MAY 25 1953

FILED

SECRET FILE

FM 249.1111 OATIS, WILLIAM N. /5-153

OUTGOING TELEGRAM

Department of State

166

INDICATE: COLLECT
 CHARGE TO

SECRET - SECURITY INFORMATION
Classification

1937
May 7, 12:13 p.m.

For DC/T only

SENT TO: Amembassy MOSCOW 820

see file 1563 for present

Origin
Info
Dist. Desired (Offices Only)

Following are texts referred to in immediately preceding telegram:
1. QUOTE. On the occasion of your assumption of the Presidency of the Czechoslovak Republic, I wish to avail myself of the opportunity to express the hope that you will give consideration to the release of William Oatis and thus remove one cause of friction between our two countries. If your Government will release Mr. Oatis, removing the obstacle which his continued imprisonment places in the way of their solution, the United States Government on its part is prepared to negotiate on the basis of full mutual understanding the issues arising from the arrest of Mr. Oatis and now outstanding between us. UNQUOTE.

2. QUOTE. I have received your message, which you addressed to me at occasion my election to function of President of Czechoslovak Republic. I have referred your proposals, contained in this message, to government of the Republic. UNQUOTE.

DC/S
249.1111
OATIS, WILLIAM N.
/5-753

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR
REVIEWED BY ROMINE DATE DEC 28, 1982
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TS AUTH. _____ REASON(S) _____
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PA or FOI EXEMPTIONS _____

Drafted by: EUR:EC:WBarbour:AMR 5/7/53
Telegraphic transmission and classification approved by: Walworth Barbour

Clearances:

EUR
W/B

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MAY 7 1953 A.M.

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CS/H
5-753

INCOMING TELEGRAM

Department of State

167

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16-13

Action

EUR

Info

SS

G

FROM: Praha
TO: Secretary of State
NO: 519, May 15, 2 p.m.

Control/ Rec'd:

4828

May 15, 1953

9:47 a.m.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

PRIORITY

MYTEL 514, May 12.

Foreign Office phoned last evening Prime Minister would see me 6 p.m. today.

King saw Oatis this morning.

Reports follow.

WADSWORTH

LMS:RLG/7

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/GDC/MR

REVIEWED BY ROMINE DATE Nov 26, 1982

RDS or XDS EXT. DATE _____

TS AUTH. _____ REASON(S) _____

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MAY 20 1953

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INCOMING TELEGRAM

47 Department of State

168

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29 Action
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SECRET SECURITY INFORMATION
DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR

REVIEWED BY ROMINE DATE Nov 26, 1952 Control: 4975
Rec'd: May 15, 1953 2:15 p.m.

FROM: Praha [unclear] or XDS [unclear] EXT. DATE Nov 26, 1952

TO: Secretary of State REASON(S) [unclear]

NO: 520, [unclear] REASONS FOR EXTENSION [unclear]

DECLASSIFIED [unclear] RELEASABLE [unclear]

PA or FOI EXEMPTIONS [unclear]

Office of
General Affairs
MAY 15 1953
2:15 p.m.

PRIORITY

1. Counselor King and Vice Consul Squire saw Oatis for 25 minutes at Prague police headquarters this morning in presence one police officer, one interpreter and Dr. Pavel Winkler (Foreign Office section chief and Czechoslovakian delegate seventh General Assembly UN October 1952).
2. Oatis' attitude in answering questions was same as last visit (EMBTTEL 210, October 7, 1952) he being most scrupulous not to do so without prior acquiescence police officer.
3. Oatis was dressed as on King's last visit. His hair had not (repeat not) been recently cut. His hands showed no (repeat no) indication manual labor and there was some tremor when lighting cigarettes.
4. Oatis said his general health had been good and adequate medical and dental care was available. He mentioned he had recently had a false tooth put in to replace a broken front tooth. When King suggested he might need calcium tablets he replied he was already receiving six daily. Oatis said he had lost weight but had recently regained it, his present weight being about 56 kilos. (According his appearance this seems about four kilos too much). He said he had suffered chronically from rhinitis for years but was receiving medicine therefor. His exercise according to him amounts to one or two hours a day when the sun shines.
5. Oatis reiterated his statements on previous visits that he had ample opportunity read and write; that he was regularly receiving letters from his wife and writes her about once a month.
6. The letters, sox and books sent by his wife for personal delivery were handed him directly by King. He was obviously genuinely grateful to receive them.
7. Oatis said he had received the books requested at October meeting and was informed they had been sent by Monce of Associated Press. He also said he was receiving some books sent him directly by his wife but had not (repeat not) received Hemingway's

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SECRET SECURITY INFORMATION

-2- 520, May 15, 4 p.m., from Praha

THE OLD MAN AND THE SEA. (The police officer interrupted here to say all books sent Oatis were delivered to him). Oatis asked that he be supplied with the following books: An advanced text or reference on harmony; SOMETHING TO GIVE, CHORDS OF THE NINTH, English-Czechoslovakian dictionary, (we will supply this) pocket edition of PLUTARCH'S LIVES and of good fiction classics and non-fiction. He specifically requested they be "non-political". His particular interests are art and music. He said he had written his wife for a pitch pipe but would just as soon have a tuning fork if marked whether "C" or "A". He has been "trying to write popular music" but no (repeat no) plays or operettas.

8. Oatis said he had no (repeat no) need for more money. Police officer interjected at this point saying we could supply all the money we thought he needed. King then asked Oatis amount of his balance from original 5,000 crowns deposit. He understood it was some 3,000 crowns but said he was only using 70 crowns per week which was less than he was authorized to use; however, he would probably use more in future as he had not (repeat not) been smoking much. King then inquired if he would like Embassy send him American cigarettes. He quickly replied in affirmative. (Our conclusion is that he is probably not being permitted use as much of deposit as he would like and we are today sending him through Foreign Office six cartons of American cigarettes and 5,000 crowns) he said he had no (repeat no) need of supplemental clothing or food.

9. Oatis was informed of messages from his wife i.e., all members of his family are in good health; she has paid rent on safety deposit box and she would like see him "sooner the better" to which said to tell her "keep her chin up". King assured him she was doing this as best as possible under the circumstances.

10. Oatis was asked whether he was receiving newspapers to which he did not (repeat not) reply; the police officer saying that no (repeat no) prisoners are allowed to receive newspapers.

11. He was asked whether there was anything specific he would like to tell Embassy representatives. He said he had nothing particular other than to hope our efforts for his release would be successful. King had opened interview by assuring Oatis that efforts to obtain his release were continuing undiminished and that matter was receiving consideration at highest level.

12. Oatis' passport which he had requested last November was delivered to him by Vice Consul Squire after Oatis had signed application and taken oath. He said he was very glad to receive it.

13. When

SECRET SECURITY INFORMATION

SECRET SECURITY INFORMATION

-3- 520, May 15, 4 p.m., from Praha.

13. When the meeting closed King told Oatis that if had any particular request he hoped he would transmit it to Embassy through Foreign Office as he had done in passport matter. This he agreed to do. Oatis then shook hands with the two Embassy officers and he was escorted from room clutching passport in one hand and carrying articles from his wife in the other.

WADSWORTH

DU:MP/14

NOTE: Mr. Jerabek (EE) notified 3:20 p.m. 5/15/53 CWO(FED)

SECRET FILE

SECRET SECURITY INFORMATION

INCOMING TELEGRAM

47 Department of State 169

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7-B

Action

EUR ✓

Info

SS

G

FROM: Praha

TO: Secretary of State

NO: 524, May 16, 2 a.m.

NIACT

SENT DEPARTMENT 524, REPEATED BONN 63.

1. Arrangements for Oatis release and departure as included in course my conversation with Prime Minister (EMBTEL 523, May 15) were as follows: Oatis will be brought to Embassy Chancery ten a.m., May 16 by Foreign Office official. From there he will be brought by Embassy Counselor King to my residence.

Immediately following Oatis arrival at Chancery, Vice Consul Squire will present passports (Oatis, King and Squire) to Foreign Office for exit visas which will be given immediately upon presentation passports.

Squire with visaed passports will then join us at residence, and immediately thereafter all three will leave by auto for Nurnberg.

2. If, as seems possible, they leave Praha by noon they should be in Nurnberg (Grand Hotel) five to six p.m. I propose advise Oatis he had best play suite by saying as little as possible pending receipt instructions from AP headquarters New York. Consequently, I hope Department will be able facilitate prompt transmission AP instructions and that HICOG Bonn will immediately send appropriate instructions its representatives at frontier and Nurnberg.

3. I have of course deferred my departure for Budapest until after their departure and am making arrangements return Praha by air Monday or Tuesday a.m. Consequently, I should appreciate Department repeating to Budapest any instructions it may wish send me. Following telegram reports other details my conversation with Prime Minister.

WADSWORTH

SMD:ARL/1

NOTE: Mr. Jerabek (EE) notified 5/16/53, 12:45 a.m., EMB (CWO)

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16-57288-1 GPO

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

RECEIVED BY *ROM* DATE *Nov. 26, 1982*

REASON(S)

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HW

VR 711

STATE - ZCDC/MB

May 16, 1953

12:22 a.m.

1-11

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MAY 20 1953
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OFFICE
OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS
SECRET SECURITY INFORMATION

FROM: Praha
TO: Secretary of State
NO: 525, May 16, 4 a.m.

Control VR-712
 DEPARTMENT OF STATE
 MAY 16, 1953
 1:21 a.m.
 REVIEWED BY ROMINE DATE Dec 28, 1982
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NIACT

Supplementing my telegrams 523, May 15 and 524, May 16.

1. Prime Minister Siroky received me six p.m. with Foreign Minister David. Prime Minister opened conversation by recalling I had given him March 30 two messages from President Eisenhower to President Zapotocky, i.e. oral congratulations on latter's election to presidency and written personal message re Oatis case and related issues; he had delivered both at once; I had since been informed latter message had been returned to Czechoslovak Government he would now hand me President Zapotocky's reply duly made on advice his government.

After reading reply (my telegram 521), I expressed appreciation and confidence Czechoslovak-US relations could now be placed anew on sound basis mutual benefit. I asked if my memorandum April 14 was to him agreeable basis for proceeding that end.

Prime Minister replied in affirmative; fact was basic objective President Zapotocky's decision; Czechoslovak foreign policy sought always peaceful constructive relations with all countries

We then discussed arrangements for Oatis release and departure (my telegram 524) and publicity (my telegram 521).

2. We also discussed Rhine-Main airplane which I shall report in following telegram.

WADSWORTH

SMD:MDG-11

NOTE: Mr. Jerabek (EE) notified 1:25 a.m., 5/16/53, EMB (CWO).

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 OATIS, WILLIAM N.
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INCOMING TELEGRAM

Department of State

171

ACTION COPY

10-D

SECRET SECURITY INFORMATION

Action

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FROM: Praha

TO: Secretary of State

NO: 529, May 16, 3 p.m.

PRIORITY

SENT DEPARTMENT 529; REPEATED INFORMATION. BONN 65.

My telegram 524 May 16.

Oatis released per plan, breakfasted my residence and left 11:30 a.m., for frontier (Wainhaus) with King, Squire and Foreign Office representative. He appeared to me to be surprisingly well, talked freely, smiled readily, is immensely keen learn what has gone on in outside world last two years, e.g., he learned only last week of President Eisenhower's election.

His first wish is to talk with his wife by phone from Germany. He said that on arrival there he will be guided by his home office instructions: he wishes make only briefest possible non-contentious press statement. HICOG Bonn phoned me this morning that AP there already informed of Oatis plans proceed Nurnberg today and that HICOG and AP representatives would meet him.

King will return Prague and I will fly Budapest tomorrow morning returning May 20 with Ravndal unless Department instructs me otherwise.

WADSWORTH

DU:KC/6

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR	
REVIEWED BY <u>ROMINE</u>	DATE <u>Nov. 26, 1982</u>
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Department of State

05222

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 CHARGE TO

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1972 MAY 16 AM 3 46

DC/T

SENT TO: Amembassy PRAHA NIACT 279
RPTD: Hicog BONN NIACT 5217

Origin
Info
Dist. Desired (Offices Only)

FOR AMBASSADOR.

URTEL 524 repeated Bonn 63.

Whole AP organization extremely happy about Oatis return freedom and grateful for what you and staff have done obtain release and arrange safe departure.

AP's first concern is for Oatis health, wellbeing and it knows you will do what is necessary that respect. Thereafter, if Oatis desires, AP expects he would meet reporters and photographers in ~~open~~ conference open everybody and hopes he will conduct himself that way. AP sending instructions its people Germany meet him at first point they can arrange do so. Man or men who meet him will be able consult with him and advise on handling situation as it develops.

DC/R
Central
BAMM
249.1111 OATIS, WILLIAM N.
/5-1653

Smith acting (CMB)

SMITH

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR	
REVIEWED BY <u>ROMINE</u>	DATE <u>Nov. 26/1982</u>
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Drafted by: EUR:EE:MWJerabek:rvw

Telegraphic transmission and classification approved by: E. M. Browne

Clearances:

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INCOMING TELEGRAM

71

Department of State

173

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SECRET SECURITY INFORMATION

10-D

Action

EUR
Info

FROM: Pusan

TO: Secretary of State

SS

NO: Unnumbered, May 16

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DEPARTMENT PASS PRAHA

FOR HAROLD VEDELER

My unnumbered telegram May 16.

On being informed Oatis' safe arrival in Germany, I made following additional statement, responsive to correspondent's requests:

"There is no gratitude due to the Communist masters of Czechoslovakia for releasing an innocent man after over two years of wrongful imprisonment. The free world should never forget that Bill Oatis was falsely accused, shamefully exhibited in a public spectacle in Praha and on July 4, our American Independence Day, deliberately sentenced to ten years of imprisonment. Oatis' crime was that he conscientiously carried out his duties as a newspaper correspondent, seeking behind the facade of fatuous Communist self-praise to ascertain the facts prevailing in Czechoslovakia."

In its releases on subject, I hope Department will make clear to Communists what it cost Czechoslovakia to hold Oatis--far from paying one cent in ransom. Czechoslovakia has been penalized millions of dollars for unlawful detention of one American citizen.

BRIGGS

SMD:SJM 15

Passed Praha, 5/17/53, 7:30 a.m., RRC

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDQ/MR

REVIEWED BY ROMINE DATE NOV 26 1982

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MAY 20 1953

H-4

OUTGOING TELEGRAM

Department of State

05494

INDICATE: COLLECT
 CHARGE TO

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/GDC/MR
SECRET - SECURITY INFORMATION

1953 MAY 13 PM 5 23

REVIEWED BY ROMINE DATE Dec 28, 1952 Classification

174

RDS or XDS EXT. DATE
SENT TO: Amembassy PRAGUE PRIORITY 281
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CC/T

Origin

Info

Re question publicity on exchange of messages between the President and Zapotocky (URTEL 523) we had suggested when President's message presented that publication be withheld while Oatis case under consideration by two Governments in order facilitate efficacious settlement problem (DETEL 230 URTEL 450). (FYI Siroky's reference to our suggestion as basis for his request Zapotocky's reply not receive publicity is not strictly accurate.) It was not our plan to keep President's message from press for indefinite period.

Request you take up immediately matter with FONOFF informing Czechs considering publishing we now ~~propose to publish~~ President's message and see whether they will agree to our simultaneous publication Zapotocky's reply. You may indicate that some intimation of exchange has already gotten to press and it is believed desirable to provide full and accurate texts in order to avoid possibly misleading and inaccurate account of what was said.

749-11

RS 5-15

249.1111 Oatis, William N. 33053

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Rev _____
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Smith ACTING (UB)

SMITH

Drafted by HW
EUR:ME:HG:Vedeler:mfl 5/18/53

Telegraphic transmission and classification approved by

Walworth Barbour

Clearance:

Cleared with: P - Mr. Phillips

S/S-CR

SECRET - SECURITY INFORMATION

Classification

MAY 18 1953 PM

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INCOMING TELEGRAM

(47) Department of State (175)

ACTION COPY

18

SECRET SECURITY INFORMATION

Action:

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G
P

FROM: Praha

TO: Secretary of State

NO: 531, May 19, 5 p.m.

Control:
Rec'd:

6101
May 19, 1953
12:44 p.m.

Re DEPTTEL 281, May 18.

I have just taken up with Pudlak publicity messages between President and Zapotocky along lines second paragraph reference telegram.

After expressing surprise about how press could have had intimation of messages he agreed refer matter to competent authorities within Foreign Office. As agreement concerning publicity had been made by Ambassador Wadsworth and Prime Minister Siroky, he said Foreign Office would have to consult latter.

He promised act promptly and let me know result.

KING

SW:KC/6

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR

REVIEWED BY: ROMINE DATE DEC. 28, 1982

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

MAY 19 1953

OFFICE OF
SUBSISTENCE AFFAIRS

SECRET FILE
WILLIAM N. OATIS,
HH

MAY 25 1953

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THE FOREIGN SERVICE
OF THE

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
DEPARTMENT OF STATE R/CDC/MR

REVIEWED BY ROMIWE DATE Nov. 26, 1982 HCV

RDS or XDS EXT. DATE American Embassy, Seoul

CONFIDENTIAL TS AUTH, _____ REASON(S) May 23, 1953

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Dear Harold:

Now that Bill Oatis has finally been sprung I hope you are able to look forward to a well-merited vacation. When I think of the sixteen months that I was in Czechoslovakia after his arrest, and recognize that not a single day went by without thinking of Bill and wondering if there wasn't some additional thing we could do to free him, it makes me realize that your own ordeal of 25 months must have been that much more wearing.

The reports of Bill's release reaching this part of the world have been tantalizingly brief and correspondingly inadequate so that I should appreciate receiving any information that you can spare the time to send along. The correspondents here rallied around at once as soon as the news reached Seoul a week ago today, and I hope my statement, repeated to the Department, was helpful. I was also invited to do a television piece and would have been glad to oblige except that the operator disappeared last Sunday afternoon, and the following day I had to go aboard ship at Inchon for some urgent dentistry, which left the television folks chasing a helicopter but unable to borrow one from the Navy. Hence no telecast, which I somewhat regret inasmuch as I had various things on my mind that I thought it would be useful to say such as the two million dollars per month penalty we had levied on Czechoslovakia on lost trade alone—equal to about \$70,000 per day or fifty dollars a minute. I should likewise have enjoyed making some reference to the stupidity of the Communists in not releasing Oatis immediately after the trial in July 1951, at which time they might have pocketed all the dividends without having incurred any penalty; but no, they had to outsmart themselves.

Harold C. Vedeler, Esquire,
Office of Eastern European Affairs,
The Department of State,
Washington 25, D. C.

CONFIDENTIAL

177

Reply

7-24-53

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Cattis, Bill/11/11
5-2353

CONFIDENTIAL

-2-

How is Bill himself? There again, judging from the brief reports trickling to the Far East, he seems to have been in pretty good shape.

If you see John Hightower or Frank Starzel give them my best. They, along with Mrs. Oatis and you and I, Dick Johnson and Mary Kidd, are probably the ones most concerned, and the ones now most relieved at Bill's release.

My congratulations to you, along with best wishes always.

Sincerely yours,



Ellis O. Briggs

EXCISED
DOCUMENTS

FOREIGN SERVICE OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

SECURITY : CONFIDENTIAL

TO : Department of State

FROM : PRAGUE 359 June 28, 1951
1951 JUL 5 PM 2 21

REF : Embassy despatch 347, June 20, 1950

SUBJECT : AMERICAN CITIZENS UNDER DETENTION IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA

OFFICE OF EUROPEAN AFFAIRS
MESSAGE CENTER

249.1111/6-2851

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Transmitted herewith is a memorandum relating to the cases of ten American citizens under detention in Czechoslovakia. The memorandum contains more extensive information than was included in the despatch under reference above. It is intended to record information supplementary to that which has already been transmitted to the Department regarding individual protection cases, and to draw together in one report, for convenient reference, developments to date in the cases of each of the American citizens who are still held in Czechoslovak prisons.

For the Ambassador:

Richard G. Johnson

Richard G. Johnson
Vice Consul of the United States

Enclosure: *act*
Memorandum.

RGJohnson: bcr

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CPG/MR
 REVIEWED BY ROMINE DATE NOV 26, 1982
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PRAGUE 359 June 28, 1951

MEMORANDUM

A summary of the current Embassy protection cases is given below. Where reviews have recently been submitted to the Department in despatch form, references are given.

(1) William N. OATIS. Mr. Oatis, 37-year-old chief of the Associated Press bureau in Prague, was arrested during the night of April 23-24, 1951, probably in the garage Mototechna in Jana Opletala Street, in the center of Prague, as he was putting his car away for the night. This garage is adjacent to the offices of the official Czechoslovak News Agency (CETEKA). Prior to the arrest of Mr. Oatis, three of the six Czechoslovak employees of the Associated Press office, Tomas SVOBODA, Pavel WODNLIJK and Peter MUENZ disappeared, almost certainly under arrest. A fourth employee, Vaclav PRECLIK, also disappeared, but was later seen on the streets of Prague, apparently having remained away from his employment without having been taken into custody. Preclik was formerly employed by the American Embassy in the office of the press attache, Joseph Kolarek. The fifth AP employee is a mechanic who tends the office machines during the night. The sixth employee, a Miss TORNAVA, continues to work, sending out material from the official government press bulletin.

On April 25, 1951 the Embassy addressed note no. 609 to the Czechoslovak Ministry of Foreign Affairs urgently requesting an investigation as to the whereabouts and welfare of Mr. Oatis. The following day the Embassy received the Ministry's note 117.943/51 dated April 25, 1951 in which it was stated that Mr. Oatis had been detained by the "Czechoslovak Security Organs" for having "carried out anti-State activity", and for having "entrusted the former employees of the Prague office of the (AP) agency with the task of securing and verifying certain secret reports". It was further stated that Mr. Oatis "gained and diffused illegal press material insulting the Czechoslovak Republic and its order".

On April 26, the Embassy sent note no. 612 to the Ministry requesting that permission be granted for an Embassy officer to see Mr. Oatis, that the Embassy be furnished a formal statement of the charges against him, and that Mr. Oatis be permitted to avail himself of the services of an American lawyer.

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CONFIDENTIAL

-2- ENCLOSURE TO PRAGUE 359 June 28,
1951

The Ministry responded to this note on April 30, in its note no. 118.649/51. Regarding permission to visit Mr. Oatis, the note stated that "according to existing law permission cannot be granted for this visit at the present stage".

Apparently in response to the Embassy's request for a formal statement of the charges against Mr. Oatis, the Ministry stated only that "The reasons for the detention of Mr. Oatis have already been communicated to the Embassy in the Ministry's note no. 117.943/51 of April 26 (sic) 1951".

The Ministry further stated that Mr. Oatis could only have the services of a lawyer of Czechoslovak nationality, "one who is qualified to act as defense attorney before the Czechoslovak tribunals".

Previously, on April 27, the Embassy sent a kit bag of toilet articles and extra clothing to Mr. Oatis through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which returned the articles with a note stating that "Mr. Oatis fully equipped with all articles of personal need".

The Embassy Vice Consul took possession of Mr. Oatis' personal effects on the morning of April 25, and transferred them from Mr. Oatis' room at the Hotel Ambassador on Vaclavske Namesti to the Embassy chancery for safe-keeping. The Citroen automobile, with license plate C 47010 issued by the American authorities in Western Germany, property of the Associated Press, was taken by the police at the time of Mr. Oatis' arrest. On May 23, 1951 the automobile was returned to the garage from which it was taken and is at the disposition of the AP agency.

On May 16, 1951 the Czechoslovak Minister of Foreign Affairs, in a discussion of the Oatis case with the American Ambassador, stated that Oatis had "confessed" to anti-state activities, and that it was unfortunate that the case occurred while the "atmosphere was unfavorable", due to recent violations of the Czechoslovak border which he attributed to United States Constabulary forces, and to what he described as hostile US-sponsored radio broadcasts to Czechoslovakia from Western Germany.

CONFIDENTIAL

In its note no. 121.683/51-A/V-1 dated May 21, 1951 the Czechoslovak Ministry of Foreign Affairs stated that recent American radio broadcasts had asserted that "the Prague Government is willing to release the American correspondent of the Associated Press, Oatis, from prison if the broadcasts of the station "Free Europe" will be stopped".

The note further alleged that this was a malevolent, untruthful interpretation, and that accordingly the Czechoslovak Government saw no reason to make the Oatis case the subject of further discussions. On the same day the Ministry addressed a second note to the Embassy (no. 121.583/51-A/V-1) containing a long and bitter denunciation of Radio Free Europe, as well as charging that United States soldiers had violated the Czechoslovak border.

It is possible that press speculation regarding a connection between the liberation of Oatis and Radio Free Europe was planted by the Czechoslovak Government itself.

The Embassy replied regarding the Czechoslovak note concerning speculation on the Oatis and Radio Free Europe cases in its note 631 dated May 23, 1951. Also on May 23 the Embassy sent note 632 requesting advance notice regarding the date of the Oatis trial, as well as permission for an Embassy officer and interpreter to attend the trial.

On May 24 the Czechoslovak Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs Sekaninova sent the Embassy a photostatic copy of a letter of confession in the handwriting of Mr. Oatis, addressed to his wife in the United States. The letter was couched in the familiar terms in which prisoners of Communist governments confess to espionage charges, and contained a number of phrases unnatural to the English language but readily identifiable as literal translations of Czechoslovak phraseology.

Although the Czechoslovak Foreign Minister stated on May 16 that the trial was expected within ten days, to date it has still not been announced. No word of the case had yet appeared in the Czechoslovak press. On June 15 the Foreign Minister stated the trial would take place "within a few days".

SIX PAGES EXCISED

PER EXEMPTION B-6

OUTGOING TELEGRAM

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Department of State

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9 P.M.

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8958

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SENT TO: Amembassy PRAHA 47

249.1111 *William^N 7-1751*

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Origin

Info

Some sections US press and number of Members of Congress, like EMB (UR 47 July 17), strongly urging retaliatory action in Oatis case. breaking

Some of suggestions, for instance Monroney res ~~that~~ ~~breaking~~ ~~economic~~ relations to be followed by breaking DIPL relations in 90 days if Oatis is not released, WLD almost certainly have repercussions on our NATL interests which DEPT is not, at least for ~~the~~ present, willing to risk.

Other measures suggested involve multilateral action, either very complex and time-consuming in initiating or unfeasible. Many proposing various counter-measures do so in apparent misapprehension measures they propose are simple to institute, WLD be effective and ~~DEPT~~ ^{that} not fully disposed in principle to be tough to obtain Oatis release when toughness offers such good prospects of success.

EYI DEPT endeavoring institute available retaliatory actions deemed appropriate and offering reasonable prospects being effective. Meanwhile, DEPT wishes ~~to~~ sound out possibility of exchanging a CZECH in GER jail for Oatis and regrets Siroky's reaction to your note was so violent

(UR 40, July 16) unfortunately not feasible for you to explore this possibility at that time. (Our 18 July 8) We hope/atmosphere will be such you can sound out possibility of exchange. ~~that~~

249.1111 OATIS, WILLIAM N. 7-1751

REVIEWED BY *COMING* DATE *Nov. 26 1952*

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/R

RDS or XDS EXT. DATE

TS AUTH. *RI (AIGONIS)*

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Drafted by: RI Higgs
EUR:EE:HV Vedeler/ml 7/20/51

Telegraphic transmission and classification approved by: H. C. Vedeler

Classification:

RA GEA YPA EUR P P-018

Mr. Williams
W. Williams
Clear with Mr. W. ref

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1951 JUL 20 AM 02
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1951

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In addition this step DEPT arranging for follow up:

1. Denial MIL permits with exception DIPLO and consular personnel, DIPLO couriers, emigrants and bargees. While this will affect comparatively limited NR. it SHLD exclude Czech business REPS from W. GER. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] (S) (S)
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

2. Vigorous demarche with new CZECH AMB. Planned when he first calls to give him stern treatment and to state if he hopes to carry on DIPLO business with this GOVT this case will have to be settled satisfactorily.

3. Action to embargo US exports Czech. Value exports running only about \$200,000 - \$250,000 month. This WLD have limited impact in itself but might be effective in suggesting Czechs' further and stronger action on our part to come. Dept requesting concurrence Dept Commerce (1) to use threat this step with Czechs and (2) to FOL through, if necessary, by revoking outstanding licenses and denial of future applications for exports Czech.

4. Denial permission CSA overfly W. GER. Because of probable difficulty in obtaining BRIT and/or FR concurrence in this step, desirable approach BRIT and FR on this after matter MIL permits out of way.

Our course of action SHLD thus proceed in stages in which we try to avoid creation of great INTERNATL issue raising obstacle to retreat of Commies by release Oatis but give impression skillfully to Commies that we are moving on step by step so that if they do not release Oatis pressure will

constantly

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constantly grow. We thus believe it desirable (to) explore first and soonest possibility exchanging bodies and to exploit threat of exports embargo in private discussion with FONMIN before going ahead to actual denial of export licenses and public announcement this effect.

ACHESON

Acheson
(FW)

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CONFIDENTIAL
CONFIDENTIAL

E-R-6
ATTACHMENT = **163**

Office Memorandum • UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

TO : EUR - Mr. Perkins
FROM : EE - Mr. Higgs
SUBJECT: The Oatis Case

DATE: July 25, 1951

There is attached a series of papers relating to the Oatis case for your use in connection with its consideration by the Senate. The basic paper (Attachment A) consists of comprehensive briefing material on the subject, including a chronology of developments in the case, a summary of the Department's steps in preparation, discussion of the several pending Senate resolutions with the Department's views on each, and position recommendations. A copy of the Department's press release of July 4 on the Oatis "trial" is given in Attachment B. Attachment C is a copy of the memorandum on this case which has already been supplied to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. Copies of the resolutions introduced in the Senate are given in Attachment D, and the comparable pending resolutions before the House in Attachment E. It may be noted that the House resolutions are identical with, or closely similar to, the Senate resolutions with one exception, that is H. Res. 345 (Rodino), which deals with both William Oatis and John Hvasta, an American citizen and dual national imprisoned in Czechoslovakia since October, 1948. In the event that the Hvasta case should come up for consideration copy of a separate memorandum on this subject is included in Attachment F. Attachment G is a memorandum from E supplying information on the treatment of Czechoslovak trade under the Trade Agreements Act should this subject be discussed in connection with the question of economic sanctions against Czechoslovakia for the benefit of Mr. Oatis.

REVIEWED BY ROMINE
DATE 7/25/51
REASON FOR
DECLASSIFIED
RELEASE DENIED
PA or FOI
DATE

349.1111 OATIS, William Perkins

Enclosures:

- Attachment A - Briefing Material
- Attachment B - Press Release No. 589
- " C - Memorandum on Oatis Case
- " D - Resolution Introduced in the Senate
- " E - Resolutions Introduced in the House
- " [REDACTED] - Memorandum from E on Treatment of Czech Trade under Trade Agreements Act

IRE

EUR:EE:HCVedeler/ml
July 25, 1951

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

Briefing Material on the Oatis Case

Chronology of Developments

- April 23 - Oatis arrested.
- April 25 - Embassy oral and written inquiry to the Foreign Office on Oatis' disappearance asking for an investigation.
- April 26 - Foreign Office informs Embassy orally that Oatis arrested and detained.
Embassy sends note requesting consular access and American lawyer.
- April 27 - Embassy receives text of note, dated April 25, containing general charges against Oatis of activities hostile to the Czechoslovak state.
Note sent requesting good offices of Foreign Office in forwarding Oatis' personal effects for his comfort.
- April 28 - Foreign Office replies to note of April 27 stating that Oatis is fully supplied with articles of personal need.
- April 30 - Foreign Office reply to note of April 26, denies consular access and permits only Czechoslovak lawyer.
- May 4 - Vinar, Czechoslovak's Charge d'affaires presents two notes, (one of which asks for agreement for Dr. Vladimir Prochazka as Ambassador, Assistant Secretary Perkins takes this occasion to impress on Vinar the seriousness with which we consider Oatis' arrest.
- May 16 - Meeting of Ambassador Briggs with Foreign Minister Siroky. The Ambassador urged immediate release and expulsion, and pressed for consular access. Siroky states Oatis has confessed, he is in good health, and trial will be held soon. Consular access prior to trial is denied "in accordance with practise in US, Great Britain, France, etc." He mentions RFE broadcasts and a border incident as creating an unfavorable atmosphere. Siroky agrees to see the Ambassador again before the trial.
- May 21 - Note handed to Ambassador Briggs states that in view of reports in American broadcasts that the Czechs would release Oatis if RFE broadcasts are stopped, which was termed a "malevolent and untruthful" interpretation of the conversation of May 16, the Czechoslovak Minister will not discuss the Oatis case further with the Ambassador. Separate note on RFE and alleged border violations is also handed to Ambassador.

May 23

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

-2-

- May 23 - Embassy sends two notes: one asks for a renewal of discussions with the Foreign Minister, asserting that the conversation has been correctly reported by the Embassy to the Department and that the report referred to originated in Vienna rather than Washington; the other requests advance notification of the trial and arrangements for the presence of an Embassy official and interpreter, should the Czechs insist on trial despite our representations.
- May 24 - Photostatic copy of letter purportedly from Oatis to his wife, in which he admits "guilt" is given to Embassy. This was communicated to Mrs. Oatis by AP.
- (June 1 - Agreement sent to Czech Embassy on new Czech Ambassador, Vladimír Prochazka.)
- June 2 - Ban on private travel to Czechoslovakia announced.
- June 6 - Cable from Oatis received by his wife which suggested she come to Czechoslovakia. She replied following day. The reply was transmitted to the Foreign Office immediately by the Embassy.
- June 15 - Ambassador saw Foreign Minister Siroky on question of the lost planes and took the occasion to renew representations in the Oatis case. He sought to justify his failure to discuss matter further because of alleged misrepresentations of the first meeting. He stated the trial would be held in a few days and that arrangements have been made for an Embassy official to attend. He repeated that Oatis had made full confession.
- June 30 - The Foreign Office informed the Embassy that the trial would begin at 8 A.M. July 2, and that Vice Consul Richard G. Johnson and Miss Mary Horak would attend.
- July 2 - Trial began.
- July 3 - Mrs. Oatis received another letter from Oatis dated June 21.
- July 4 - Oatis sentenced to 10 years imprisonment which may be commuted to 5 years for good behavior and expulsion from Czechoslovakia after completion of term. State Department issued press release on Oatis.
- July 16 - The Ambassador saw Siroky and presented a note stressing it is not customary to imprison an accredited newspaperman for carrying out normal duties and urging again the immediate release of Oatis with departure from Czechoslovakia.

July 21

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July 21 - The Embassy received a note stating that the U.S. demands represents a gross attempt at interference into matters which fall exclusively under Czech jurisdiction. The Czech Government therefore refused to consider the U.S. request. Simultaneously, a note protesting the activities of Radio Free Europe was received.

July 23 - Mrs. Oatis received from her husband another letter, dated July 10.

July 25 - Review discussed with Amb Prochazka

Steps in Preparation

To enter or travel across Western Germany

1. Denial of military permits, requiring concurrence of British and French which is now being sought.
2. Seeking release of Oatis by his exchange for one or more Czechoslovak prisoners in US Zone of Germany. Ambassador Briggs has been instructed to make this approach as soon as possible.
3. Vigorous demand for release of Oatis to new Ambassador, Vladimir Prochazka; stern treatment on the Oatis case when he first calls.
4. Plans, subject to concurrence of the Department of Commerce, to revoke export licenses and deny future applications for export to Czechoslovakia.
5. Action to deny permit to Czechoslovak Airlines to overfly Western Germany if British and/or French concurrence can be obtained. Present permit extends to end of this month.
6. Study of the means by which this matter can effectively be brought before the United Nations so as to aid our efforts in behalf of Mr. Oatis. US representative on the United Nations Economic and Social Council will make a vigorous statement of the US views at the meeting of the Council at Geneva beginning on July 30.

Senate Resolutions

Three resolutions on the Oatis case have been introduced thus far and referred to the Committee. The Department's views on each are as follows:

1. S. Con. Res. 37 (McMahon). This would be helpful in our continuing representations to the Czechoslovak Government by showing how deeply disturbed the American people are by this treatment of Oatis and suggesting the prospect that this Government will take further steps in his behalf. It is consistent with our program of action for Oatis and our overall national interests. It would permit the Department freedom to exert such pressures as seems most effective at a given stage.

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2. S. Res. 175 (O'Connor). There is no objection to the first and last items of the resolution. In regard to preventing representatives of the foreign Communist press from operating in the United States, it may be noted that Czechoslovakia has no press correspondents in the US at the present time. Some of the press representatives from Communist countries are accredited to the UN and would thus be invulnerable to the proposed action. If the US should take this step, the USSR could be expected to retaliate by the expulsion of the accredited American correspondents maintained by the New York Times, Associated Press, United Press and Overseas News agencies at Moscow. It is accordingly believed that this proposal would hamper our own press and violate the principle of free information without any assurance of effecting our purpose.

The provision urging a suitable representation to the United Nations for consideration of the Oatis case by that body presumably contemplates that the United States should seek to include this as an item on the agenda of the General Assembly or some other appropriate UN body. The Department is giving careful consideration to this question.

It is very doubtful that the US could obtain the necessary vote in support of a resolution condemning the Czechoslovak Government and calling for the release of Oatis. The Members of the UN have in the past uniformly held the view that the UN should not concern itself with individual cases. Other members tend to feel that by considering such a case as the Oatis case, they will open their own judicial proceedings in their own countries to attack in the UN. If the US should bring this case and fail to achieve the necessary vote, the result would only benefit the Communists and hurt our chances to obtain Oatis' release.

It must also be considered that by bringing such a case to the UN, we may be inviting the Communists in turn to attack the US for the way it administers its internal law, for example, the denial of visas to Communist correspondents, the conviction of Communist leaders, etc. The Department is also considering whether a public denunciation of the Czechoslovak Government by the UN, even assuming such a resolution would be adopted, would help or hinder the efforts of the US to obtain his release.

With reference to the proposal to prohibit trade with Czechoslovakia the Department is now consulting with the Department of Commerce on plans for revoking of present export licenses and denying all future applications, thus imposing in effect an embargo on exports from the United States to Czechoslovakia.

Action by the Executive to control imports from Czechoslovakia would involve freezing of assets under the Trading with the Enemy Act. This economic sanction would be the most far-reaching in its effects and would constitute a clear violation of our obligations under the Articles of the International Monetary Fund, need to be taken under authority of the Trading with the Enemy Act. If this step were not successful in achieving our end, it in turn would imply further and related action in the economic field, namely the blocking of Czech assets in the US. These economic sanctions would be the most far-reaching in their effects.

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If such economic measures are taken it should be borne in mind that this is about as far as the United States Government could go by way of reprisal and still maintain diplomatic relations or remain at peace. In that event no strong weapons would remain for any other occasion when it might be desirable to use them.

(Another consideration is that economic reprisals are available to both parties and the Czechoslovak authorities may retaliate in kind. The Department must consequently consult with other agencies of the US Government in considering carefully the net effect of whatever measures are adopted.) It is necessary, moreover, to weigh whether such action will induce the release of Mr. Oatis or harden the position of the Czechoslovak Government against that possibility. It would therefore be helpful to the Department's efforts if it were not placed under a mandatory requirement in the economic field and room were left for freedom of action to exert pressure which may most likely accomplish our purpose.

3. S. Res. 178 (Monroney). The foregoing comments on the O'Connor resolution cover the first part of this resolution on breaking commercial relations. The proposal to take steps to sever diplomatic relations raises grave questions involving overall national interests. The Departments of State and Defense believe important advantages derive from the maintenance of US diplomatic missions in the Eastern European countries (keeping an observation post in each, providing VOA guidance, flying the flag as source of continued hope and inspiration to the oppressed populations). They have opposed, for these reasons, any move to break diplomatic relations with these Communist countries so long as the US can retain its missions there without suffering intolerable indignities.

Recommendation

1. That you express the Department's appreciation for the various resolutions introduced in the Senate on this subject and indicate how they have been very helpful, particularly as they have been used over VOA, in conveying to the Czechoslovak regime and people the indignation of the American people at this treatment of Mr. Oatis.

2. That you take the position that the Oatis case should not be dealt with in a resolution concerned with the treatment of foreign nationals such as Archbishop Groesz of Hungary.

3. That if the question is raised whether in the Department's opinion the case of Jan Hvasta, an American citizen and dual national imprisoned in Czechoslovakia since 1948, should be included in a resolution on the Oatis case, you might indicate that the Department sees no objection. If, however, both cases are not dealt with in the same resolution, it would be helpful to have a separate one on the Hvasta case.

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4. That if you are asked specifically what kind of resolution might best serve the Department's efforts you might wish to suggest a resolution along the lines of S. Con. Res 37 (McMahon).

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E
(Cleared with
Mr. Schaetzel)

UNP
(Cleared with
Mr. Henkin)

UNE
(Cleared with
Mr. DePalma)

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MEMORANDUM

on

THE OATIS CASE

Development of the Case. The Czechoslovak authorities arrested Mr. William Oatis, AP correspondent at Prague, on April 23, 1951, acknowledged on April 26 that he was arrested and detained, informed the American Embassy on May 16 that he had confessed to "espionage", and brought him to "trial" on July 2. After proceedings lasting two days, he was sentenced on July 4 to ten years imprisonment subject to reduction to five years for good behavior. The presiding judge spoke of extenuating circumstances and the expulsion of Oatis from Czechoslovakia at the conclusion of the term of imprisonment. It is believed that this statement and the effective sentence of five years leave the possibility open for expulsion at any time.

Action of the United States. The American Embassy, acting on its own initiative and upon instruction from the Department, has pressed repeatedly through oral representations and by formal notes to obtain Oatis' immediate release and consular access to him. The Embassy sought, without success, to send him articles of personal comfort and to arrange American legal counsel for him. In all of these efforts, Ambassador Briggs has had a number of meetings with the Czechoslovak Foreign Minister and the Assistant Secretary for European Affairs has taken up the case with the Czechoslovak Charge here. The Department prohibited on June 2, until further notice, the private travel of American citizens to Czechoslovakia. This has prevented a number of American business men from going to Czechoslovakia to make purchases personally from Czechoslovak national enterprises and the Czechoslovak Foreign Office has given evidence to Ambassador Briggs that this retaliatory measure is disliked.

Further Steps in Preparation. The Department is determined that this Government will not pay ransom in order to gain the freedom of Oatis. It is uncertain whether the Czechoslovak regime ever had a "deal" in mind when it imprisoned Oatis. The Czechoslovak authorities have never made such a proposal, although the Foreign Minister mentioned the Radio Free Europe broadcasts in the Czech and Slovak languages as creating "an unfavorable atmosphere" for the settlement of the case.

The Department's course of action is therefore to proceed by firm and repeated representations and the application of pressure. That program of action is to advance in stages in the endeavor to avoid unalterably hardening the position of the Communists against Oatis, yet to drive home to them that this Government is moving ahead step by step so that if they do not release Oatis the pressure will constantly grow. The number of available and feasible possibilities of counteraction are

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unfortunately fewer than was the case earlier in our relations with the present Government of Czechoslovakia. When the Czechoslovak Government forced out our United States Information Service Library in Czechoslovakia, expelled the United States Press Attache, and reduced the size of the American Embassy staff in the spring of 1950, the Department closed all four of the Czechoslovak consular posts here and limited the Embassy staff at Washington to a minimum. It is not consequently possible to close any consular offices in the United States or proceed against the Czechoslovak Embassy unless we should move to a break in diplomatic relations, a move opposed by both the Department of State and the Department of Defense on the grounds of over-all national interests. The Czechs have no press representatives in the United States at this time and issue no publication here.

The Department is giving full consideration to various possibilities of economic action against the Communist regime in Czechoslovakia. In its study of this problem the Department has had to weigh carefully whether any given step will in fact increase the chances of effecting Oatis' release or will place the Czechoslovak Government in a position where, for its own internal political reasons and because of its relationship to Moscow, it cannot afford to appear to yield to outside force. In addition the Department has to take under consideration the effects of any given measure on our overall national interests.

In view of these considerations the Department is presently arranging for the following steps:

1. To deny military permits for the entry of Czechs to Western Germany, with certain exceptions such as diplomatic and consular personnel and diplomatic couriers, exceptions made necessary by the probability of Czechoslovak retaliation which would, on balance, leave the Czechs better off than ourselves. This action would affect the ability of Czechoslovak business men to do business in West Germany. This action requires the concurrence of the British and French authorities in Germany and we are now endeavoring to obtain it.
2. To seek the release of Oatis by his exchange for one or more Czechoslovak agents now imprisoned in the United States Zone of Germany. Since the hope of success in this approach depends upon finding the most opportune occasion to put it forward, we are carefully seeking the best moment to advance the proposal.
3. To make a vigorous demand for Oatis' release to the new Czechoslovak Ambassador, Vladimir Prochaska, who will arrive presumably about the end of this month. The Department took the retaliatory action of prohibiting private travel at the same time as an agrment was granted for a new ambassador. The Department thus attempted to impress the Czechoslovak Government with the seriousness attached to the Oatis case and with its adverse affect on United States-Czechoslovak relations,

yet to

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yet to preserve a high-level channel of diplomatic communication here at Washington with the Czechoslovak Government by which representations in behalf of Oatis might be pressed (should we have refused the agreement for the new Ambassador the Czechs might have been expected to ask for the recall of our Ambassador in Prague, thus reducing still further the possibility of high-level negotiation on the Oatis case). It is therefore planned that when Ambassador Prochazka first calls to give him stern treatment on the Oatis case and state that if he hopes to carry on any diplomatic business with this Government the Oatis case will have to be settled satisfactorily.

1. To take other appropriate action as may be determined to be feasible and effective.

Congressional Resolutions. The Department fully shares the outraged feelings which have led to the introduction in Congress of various resolutions on this subject. The Department also appreciates the help which all of these have provided in impressing the Czechoslovak Government with the importance of this issue to the American people and Government. These have been of value in our opinion especially as the Department has used them over the Voice of America as the medium for communicating them to the Czechoslovak Government and people.

As to the substantive merits of the different resolutions, it is hoped that the following consideration may be taken into account. However much it may be desired to punish the Czechoslovak Government for its outrageous treatment of this American citizen and representative of the free press and however much such punishment is warranted, it would in our opinion help Mr. Oatis the most, for the present, if any resolution not go so far as to encourage the creation of a great international issue, excluding room for retreat on the part of the Communists. The Department stresses again that its primary objective is to get Mr. Oatis released as soon as possible and is determined to do everything this Government can to achieve this purpose; and that punishment of or retaliation against the Czechoslovak Government should be subordinated to the attainment of our primary objective. At this particular moment the most assistance would be given to our diplomatic effort by a concurrent resolution along the lines of S. Con. Res. 37, which the Department could then use to advantage in our continuing representations to the Czechoslovak Government.

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THREE PAGES EXCISED

PER EXEMPTION B-6

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Office Memorandum • UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

TO : EUR - Mr. Perkins

DATE: July 24, 1951

FROM : E - Mr. Thorp

SUBJECT: The Treatment of Czech Trade under the Trade Agreements Act

In testifying before Congressional groups on the Oatis case, you may be asked what the Department has done regarding a provision of the Trade Agreements Act relating to Czech trade. The provision directs the President "as soon as practicable" to cease applying the tariff concessions to goods from the Soviet bloc which have been negotiated with any country pursuant to the provisions of the Trade Agreements Act. This requires the Administration to terminate the most-favored-nation treatment which it has heretofore granted to all nations.

Pursuant to this provision, the United States Government so far has taken the following action:

1. We have denounced our most-favored-nation agreements with the USSR, Rumania, Bulgaria, Hungary, and Poland, pursuant to the denunciation provisions of the various agreements. As soon as the period of notice provided for in each of these agreements has run out, most-favored-nation treatment will be withdrawn.
2. We have virtually completed the drafting of a document to be issued by the President which will have the effect of withdrawing the concessions under the Trade Agreements Act to goods emanating from those areas of the Soviet bloc with which no most-favored-nation agreements exist; this should be issued very shortly.
3. We are actively exploring with other Contracting Parties to the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade the best means by which to withdraw most-favored-nation treatment from Czech products. Czechoslovakia is the only member of the Soviet bloc which is a Contracting Party to the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade. This consultation process should shortly be completed.

If you are asked why the Administration has not withdrawn most-favored-nation treatment from the Soviet bloc more expeditiously, I suggest you should point out it would have been a great propaganda plum for the bloc if we had proceeded to violate our solemn international agreements with them. Accordingly, we have followed the more deliberate process of

terminating

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terminating these agreements or otherwise complying with their terms before withdrawing most-favored-nation treatment. This policy, of course, is being constantly reviewed and if, on balance, it appears that the process of withdrawing most-favored-nation treatment should be speeded up despite the existence of conflicting agreements, we will change our course.

You may also want to point out to the Committee the danger of identifying the withdrawal of most-favored-nation treatment too closely with the Oatis case. If the two actions become linked in the minds of the Czechs, they may insist that most-favored-nation treatment be restored whenever Oatis is released. Quite apart from the desirability of such a course, the restoration could not take place under existing legislation.

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FOUR
FOREIGN SERVICE DESPATCH

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William N./10-1151

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FROM : AMEMBASSY, PANAMA
TO : THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON.
REF : NONE
SUBJECT: RESULTS OF EMBASSY'S "ACTION OATIS"

272
DESP. NO.

October 11, 1951
DATE

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE
BUREAU OF
INTER-AMERICAN AFFAIRS
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249.1111 OATIS
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There are enclosed four clippings of editorial comments which have appeared in the Panamanian press since September 17, 1951, on the subject of the imprisonment of Associated Press Correspondent William OATIS behind the Iron Curtain. Little attention was given to the Oatis case by local newspapers prior to that date.

At the suggestion of the Ambassador, action was taken last month to inspire a movement on the part of Panamanian journalists to manifest their dedication to the First Freedom of the Atlantic Charter, namely, the freedom of speech and expression, through a statement of solidarity with Mr. Oatis. The first approach was to invite Crede CALHOUN and Jules DUBOIS, local American representatives respectfully of the New York Times and the Chicago Herald Tribune, to an informal luncheon at the Embassy residence along with Counselor Murray M. WISE and Public Affairs Officer Will AREY. When the opportunity presented itself during the luncheon conversation, the desirability of such action by the Panamanian journalists was mentioned. Mr. Dubois readily volunteered an assertion that an "Oatis Campaign" would begin in the local press immediately and, further, that a resolution condemning the Oatis imprisonment and the Communist assault on freedom of expression would be introduced by a Latin American journalist, possibly a Uruguayan, at the October meeting of the Inter-American Press Association in Montevideo.

1/ On September 17, an editorial was published in the afternoon tabloid El Pais strongly criticizing the action of the totalitarian Chechoslovakian government in arresting Mr. Oatis, and doing so "against the will of the majority of the Czech people who are essentially democratic." El Pais pointed to the need for the world's free press to guard against the Communist asphyxiation of freedom of expression and of thought spreading to other countries, even to those under dictators in this hemisphere. The editorial then appealed to the active forces of Panama and especially to the Panamanian journalists to form a single front with the objective of contributing toward obtaining the freedom of Mr. Oatis.

2/ In the September 22 edition of El Pais, there appeared a reproduction of a letter written to the newspaper by Ambassador WILEY commending the editorial. Since that date there has been some increase in the play

REVIEWED BY ROUINE DATE Nov. 26, 1982 /given

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3/ given news column stories concerning the Oatis case, particularly the reports on a special National Newspaper Week meeting of the local Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks at which time a resolution was passed giving support to President TRUMAN in taking the strongest measures to obtain the release of Mr. Oatis.

4/ The English language morning daily, Star and Herald, reprinted on September 19 the El Pais editorial and stated that the newspaper joined El Pais in its appeal. Again on October 5, the Star and Herald took advantage of President Truman's action to suspend trade with Czechoslovakia by

5/ publishing a second editorial which concluded that "it is to be hoped that President Truman's action will bring liberty not only for William N. Oatis but for all those behind the Iron Curtain who crave for liberty so intensely that they will risk their lives to attain it."

6/ On October 4, the afternoon daily EL Panama America added its name to those protesting the injustice to freedom of the press and to "the newspaperman Oatis, another victim of Communist persecution."



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For the Ambassador,

William G. Arey, Jr.

William G. Arey, Jr.
Public Affairs Officer

Enclosures: *att*

- ✓ 1. Clipping, editorial El Pais, 9/17/51
- ✓ 2. clipping, El Pais 9/22/51
- ✓ 3. clipping, The Star and Herald, 10/2/51
- ✓ 4. clipping, " " " " 9/19/51
- ✓ 5. clipping, " " " " 10/5/51
- ✓ 6. clipping, El Panama America, 10/4/51

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105
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Feb 8 1952
Oatis, William
N. 2-552

FROM : BIGOG FRANKFURT

OFFICE
OF EUROPEAN AFFAIRS
MESSAGE CENTER

DESP. NO.

TO : THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON.

February 5, 1952
DATE

REF : DEPCIRCA June 19, 1950
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XR 749.00

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SUBJECT: PERIPHERAL: COMMENTS REGARDING BEATA TORNOVA'S ACCOUNT OF HER
ROLE IN THE OATIS CASE.

Transmitted herewith is a memorandum setting forth the views of an officer of this unit regarding Beata TORNOVA's account of her role as an unwilling agent of the Czechoslovak security police in the construction of a false espionage case against William OATIS. Tornova, a Czechoslovak employee in Oatis' Associated Press office, entered Western Germany in December 1951 with the aid of an Iranian diplomat in Prague. She has been questioned with regard to the (X)(u) Oatis case.

On January 25, 1952, by the reporting officer.

Tornova's account illustrates the manner in which the Czechoslovak police compelled Oatis' employees to act as controlled agents who regularly supplied them with details regarding the day to day operations of the Associated Press in Prague. Oatis of course was aware of this, but believed he had nothing to fear from police surveillance. These details were distorted and misrepresented by the Czechoslovak Government as proof of espionage. Tornova's descriptions included in her report for the custodial agency of police agents with whom she was in contact are valuable since these agents appear to be the individuals within the secret police apparatus primarily responsible for the construction of the fraudulent case against Oatis.

Tornova's account would undoubtedly interest the press, but, if publicized prior to Oatis' release, might increase Czechoslovakia's reluctance to free him, since such action could be interpreted as a belated admission of his innocence after an eye-witness had escaped with the true facts. Her testimony, moreover, serves as much to confirm the factual substance of the Czechoslovak case against Oatis as to disprove the Czechoslovak communist interpretation of those

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facts. As has already been demonstrated, the communist deceit in the Oatis case was based upon misrepresenting the facts of Associated Press newsgathering as sinister espionage, rather than the manufacturing of a false case out of whole cloth.

(a)(4)

Francis B. Stevens

Francis B. Stevens
Chief, Peripheral Reporting Unit

Enclosure: *WTH*

✓ Memorandum as stated.

Distribution:

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MEMORANDUM REGARDING BEATA TORNOVA'S ACCOUNT
OF HER ROLE IN OATIS CASE

Biographic Data

Tornova is "western" and intelligent looking, tall, dark haired, and about 22 years old. She speaks fluent English which she learned as a refugee schoolgirl during World War II at Llanwrtyd Wells, Wales, United Kingdom. At present she is pregnant, presumably by Assad SADRY, an Iranian diplomat in Prague. Sadry is married but reportedly in the process of divorcing his Iranian wife, who has been residing in Paris.

Tornova lived at Henerova I, Prague IV, in the Hradcany area near the former apartment of Vladimir Clementis. Her Associated Press salary was approximately 8,000 crowns (\$160) per month. This is considerably higher than the salary of an experienced Czechoslovak white-collar worker and equal to the wages of many Czechoslovak shock workers. Tornova states that she spent her salary and her savings mostly on clothes, which she has brought out of Czechoslovakia with her.

Tornova's Collaboration with Police

Tornova fell into position under the Czechoslovak security police without breaking stride. She states, however, that she did not know that Oatis was to be arrested and tried before his arrest on April 23, 1951. (b) (4)

It was her function to provide the police with information about the Associated Press office which could be used in confronting Oatis and his three Czechoslovak employees. If any one of them attempted to deny, for example, that Oatis asked Vojtisek to go to Karlovy Vary to the Grand Hotel Pupp and inquire whether Soviet Foreign Minister Vyshinski was visiting there, the police could produce Tornova's corroboration of the assignment.

According to Tornova, it was unfortunate for Oatis that he permitted his Czechoslovak staff members to entertain their friends on the premises of the Associated Press. Some of these visitors, in particular the LEBENSKY brothers, were associated with underground activity against the communist regime.

Reservations Regarding Bona Fides of Tornova

Such facts as Tornova included in her account of her role as a

controlled

controlled agent of the Czechoslovak security police sound authentic. It will be seen from her own story that Tornova's adjustment to the power of the Czechoslovak security police can be described as at best one of supine accommodation. In view of the situation in Czechoslovakia, it is easy either to excuse or to condemn her actions. This observer believes, however, that her conduct compares unfavorably with that of other Czechoslovak employees of American organizations under similar pressure.

Three other employees of Oatis' office, SVOBODA, WOJDINEK and MUENZ, also acted, to a greater or lesser degree, as controlled agents of the Czechoslovak police prior to their arrest and imprisonment. According to Tornova, they are now imprisoned at Bory, near Pilsen. Without doubt they did not cooperate in a manner satisfactory to the Czechoslovak police. The three AP employees who were not arrested include in addition to Tornova, Vaclav PRECLIK, a mentally and morally unbalanced weakling, and the nightwatchman and mechanic Frantisek BURIAN, who appears to have had little or nothing to do with the case.

After the arrest of Oatis but prior to the Czechoslovak Government's admission of the arrest, the reporting officer visited the Associated Press office in Prague and asked the only person left there, Miss Tachova, whether she had any idea of Mr. Oatis' whereabouts. She was calm and bland in her denial of any knowledge, so much so that the reporting officer could only attribute such self-possession to an exact knowledge on her part as to Mr. Oatis' fate, and considerable confidence in her own non-involvement in this fate. The correctness of this assumption has since been proved.

It is believed that Miss Tornova was not included among the victims in the Oatis case because the Czechoslovak police were convinced that her cooperation with them was frank and complete. In view of the time she spent during World War II as a schoolgirl refugee in Great Britain and her fluency in English, it would not have been difficult for the Czechoslovak regime to cast Tornova as a "western cosmopolitan anti-state element", cooperating with Oatis in espionage, had they so desired. They had done as much in the case of Dagmar KACEROVA, a young Czechoslovak girl employed in the USIS office of the American Embassy in Prague, under press attache Joseph KOLARNEK.

After the Oatis trial various Czechoslovak government authorities encouraged Tornova to seek work where she could continue to be useful to the regime. It is worth recording that Richard SLANSKY, brother of Rudolf Slansky and then head of the press section of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, summoned Tornova to his office two weeks after

the Oatis

the Oatis trial and discussed the case with her. He defended Czechoslovak communist justice and its judicial procedures. He gave Tornova his personal assurance that no pressure had been used on Oatis. It is probable that Mr. Slansky himself has now been subjected to the same judicial machinery and that he is being treated as "fairly" as Oatis.

Tornova associated with Assad Sadry for many months prior to the arrest of Oatis. This association was well known to the police. It may reasonably be assumed that the Czechoslovak police were aware that if Tornova were not otherwise prevented from leaving, Sadry would take her out of the country. Tornova states that she herself wonders why the Czechoslovak police took no steps to prevent this eventuality. The suspicion remains in the mind of the reporting officer that assurances may have been given that Tornova's "illegal departure" would have no serious consequences for Sadry or for Tornova's brother in Czechoslovakia, possibly in return for her previous cooperation or in expectation of some future service, whether in Western Europe or in Iran with Sadry.

Tornova has devoted herself to a serious study of the Persian language, both spoken and written. It is believed that she expects to proceed to Iran at some future date, probably after the birth of her child.

The circumstances of Miss Tornova's departure from Czechoslovakia make it certain that the Czechoslovak authorities will see Sadry's role in it, if they were not aware of the departure before it took place. It is not expected that unpleasantness between Sadry and the Czechoslovak Government will result, however.

Reservations also exist regarding Tornova's statement that her first contact with the Czechoslovak police occurred in March 1951. She had been employed in the AP office since 1949 or early 1950. Long before March 1951 she could be observed in the lounge or in the bar of the Hotel Alcron. It is doubted that young Czechoslovak women who availed themselves of these comfortable facilities during 1950 were innocent of any contact with the security police. Until Oatis is free and able to express his opinion, it is recommended that Tornova be dealt with cautiously by the United States Government and by the Associated Press.

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