Cabinet conclusions on the Czechoslovak Crisis, dated 3 March 1948

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CABINET

THE CZECHOSLOVAK CRISIS

C.P. (48) 71

Conclusions

[1.] Czechoslovakia is in process of being absorbed into the Soviet Orbit as a result of a coup d’état on typical Communist lines. Action Committees have seized all strategic points in the State with the connivance of the police and armed forces and a purge of the whole country is in progress. We must expect trumped-up charges against our Czech friends and possibly against members of the Western Embassies.

2. This outcome is highly detrimental to our interests, but there is nothing we can do about it in Czechoslovakia itself except to express our disapproval. The French and United States Governments have joined His Majesty’s Government in the issue of the declaration of 26th February.

3. Subject to the views of the United States and French Governments, we propose to preserve frigid but correct relations with the new Czechoslovak Government and to maintain our contacts with the Czechoslovak people so far as we can. In pursuance of this policy we should not remove our Ambassador from Czechoslovakia any more than we have from other Eastern European countries. We have now heard from the United States Government that they wish to recall their Ambassador from Prague. I intend to discourage this. We should mark our disapproval of the Social Democratic Party who, by joining the Communists, made it possible for the latter to seize power, lest we encourage other continental Socialists (e.g. Signor Nenni[[1]](#footnote-1)) to think they can also aid and abet the Communists with impunity.

4. We should organise our publicity with a view to appearing as strong as we can, lest other friends of Great Britain (e.g. the Scandinavian countries) should be encouraged to think they must compound with the Russians while there is yet time. In the long run we shall only retain our friends if we are strong.

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Keywords: post-war Eastern Europe, Czechoslovakia

1. Nenni, Pietro Sandro (1891 – 1980) - Italian politician. Secretary of the Italian Socialist Party (1931–1945, 1949–1963), Italian Minister of Foreign Affairs (1946–1947, 1968–1969). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)