

C/S -- LIFE RETURNING TO NORMAL IN PRAGUE

PRAGUE, AUG. 29, REUTER--THE DEAFENING BLARE OF MOTOR HORNS IN WENCESLAUS SQUARE BROUGHT WESTERN CORRESPONDENTS TUMBLING OUT OF THEIR BEDS SHORTLY AFTER DAWN TODAY AND RUSHING TO THEIR HOTEL BALCONIES.

THEY EXPECTED TO WITNESS A MOTORISED DEMONSTRATION AGAINST THE KREMLIN AGREEMENT BUT ALL THEY SAW WAS A SQUAD OF SIX BRIGHT ORANGE STREET-CLEANING TRUCKS MOVING SLOWLY DOWN THE BROAD SQUARE.

POWERFUL JETS OF WATER WERE PURGING THE SQUARE CLEAN OF THE DUST AND RUBBISH ACCUMULATED IN A WEEK OF DEMONSTRATIONS AND CEASELESS ACTIVITY BY AMATEUR POSTER ARTISTS.

ONE POINTER TO THE RETURN OF NORMALITY IS THAT FOR THE FIRST TIME IN A WEEK PEOPLE ARE BRINGING THEIR YOUNG CHILDREN INTO THE CITY CENTRE ONCE MORE.

FOR THE PAST WEEK THEY HAVE BEEN LEFT AT HOME WHILE THEIR PARENTS WENT INTO WENCESLAUS SQUARE TO JOIN IN THE TORTURED PUBLIC DEBATES ON THE FATE OF CZECHOSLOVAKIA.

MOST SHOPS ON THE SQUARE ARE NOW OPEN AGAIN, AND THE QUEUES HAVE DISAPPEARED FROM THE FOOD SHOPS.

PEOPLE ARE HOPING THAT TOMORROW WILL SEE THE LAST OF THE RUSSIAN TROOPS IN THE CAPITAL. PREMIER OLDŘICH ČERNÍK LAST NIGHT SAID IN A BROADCAST THAT THE SITUATION IN THE CITY WOULD BE "NORMALISED" WITHIN TWO DAYS.

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