

UNCLASSIFIED

657

PAGE 01 SOFIA 06297 01 OF 03 200917Z
ACTION EUR-00

INFO LOG-00 ADS-00 INR-07 SS-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 H-01
NSCE-00 NSAE-00 SSO-00 HA-09 L-03 TRSE-00 PM-10
PA-01 OMB-01 INRE-00 USIE-00 SP-02 SNP-01 PRS-01
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FM AMEMBASSY SOFIA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8518
INFO CSCE COLLECTIVE
AMEMBASSY ANKARA
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

SECTION 01 OF 03 SOFIA 06297
BRUSSELS FOR USEC - AMBASSADOR NILES

E.O. 12356: DECL:OADR
TAGS: PREL, BU, US
SUBJECT: BULGARIAN CP POLITBURO MEMBER LUKANOV
DELIVERS "SIGNAL" ON BULGARIAN
DEVELOPMENTS AND U.S.-BULGARIAN RELATIONS

1. [REDACTED] - ENTIRE TEXT.

2. SUMMARY: DURING A NOVEMBER 17 CONVERSATION WITH THE AMBASSADOR, BCP POLITBURO MEMBER LUKANOV CLAIMED THAT (THEN) FOREIGN MINISTER MLADENOV'S DISAGREEMENT WITH ZHIVKOV OVER ECOFORUM DEVELOPMENTS PRECIPITATED THE MOVE TO OUST ZHIVKOV. LUKANOV SPOKE ABOUT THE NEW LEADERSHIP'S DEEP COMMITMENT TO CHANGE TOWARD DEMOCRACY AND PLURALISM, NOTING HIS AND MLADENOV'S MEETINGS WITH INTELLECTUALS/INDEPENDENT GROUPS, THE NOVEMBER DEMONSTRATIONS, AND THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY'S RESCINDING OF ARTICLE 273 AS EXAMPLES OF SUCH A COMMITMENT; NO ONE, HE SAID, WILL BE TRIED

PAGE 02 SOFIA 06297 01 OF 03 200917Z

OR JAILED FOR HOLDING DIFFERENT POLITICAL BELIEFS. HE INDICATED ANOTHER CENTRAL COMMITTEE MEETING WOULD PROBABLY BE HELD IN DECEMBER, AT WHICH THERE WOULD BE ADDITIONAL PERSONNEL CHANGES AND A NEW GENERAL POLITICAL LINE WOULD BE LAID OUT. HE INDICATED PROBABLE FLEXIBILITY IN THE LEADERSHIP'S TREATMENT OF THE ETHNIC TURKISH MINORITY, BUT INDICATED THIS WOULD TAKE TIME TO EVOLVE. FINALLY, HE EXPRESSED THE HOPE THAT THE NEW LEADERSHIP'S COMMITMENT TO DEMOCRATIZATION COULD LEAD TO A BREAK-THROUGH IN

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U.S.-BULGARIAN RELATIONS. END SUMMARY.

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3. DURING ALMOST AN HOUR OF PRIVATE CONVERSATION WITH THE AMBASSADOR NOVEMBER 17 AT THE RESIDENCE, NEWLY-ELECTED FULL BCP POLITBURO MEMBER AND PARTY SECRETARY ANDREY LUKANOV SPOKE CONFIDENTLY BUT SOBERLY ABOUT THE NEW LEADERSHIP'S INTENTIONS FOR DEMOCRATIC CHANGE AND READINESS FOR A "BREAK-THROUGH" IN BILATERAL RELATIONS. THE OCCASION WAS A JAZZ CONCERT, AN INVITATION TO WHICH LUKANOV HAD READILY ACCEPTED ON OCTOBER 29. ON THE DAY OF THE CONCERT (THE SAME DAY THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY WAS MEETING TO CONFIRM THE OUSTER OF ZHIVKOV AND COMPANY, AND ATTENDED BY LUKANOV), HIS OFFICE CALLED THE EMBASSY TWICE TO CONFIRM HIS ATTENDANCE. HIS OFFICE CALLED A THIRD TIME JUST BEFORE THE CONCERT TO SAY HE WAS STILL COMING, BUT WOULD BE A FEW MINUTES LATE.

4. LUKANOV EXPLAINED HIS DELAYED ARRIVAL SAYING HE HAD JUST COME FROM A MEETING WITH PARTY/STATE CHIEF MLADENOV, WHO WANTED TO USE THE OCCASION OF THE CONCERT TO SEND A "MESSAGE" TO THE USG. MLADENOV WANTED TO CONVEY HIS GREETINGS TO THE PRESIDENT

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PAGE 03 SOFIA 06297 01 OF 03 200917Z

AND THE SECRETARY. HE ALSO WANTED TO CONFIRM THE NEW LEADERSHIP'S FULL COMMITMENT TO DEMOCRATIC CHANGE, REGARDLESS OF THE DIFFICULTIES AND CHALLENGES INVOLVED. THERE WAS NO/NO TURNING BACK. FINALLY, BASED ON THE CHANGES THAT WOULD TURN BULGARIA INTO A DEMOCRATIC, CIVILIZED SOCIETY, MLADENOV HOPED FOR A "BREAK-THROUGH" IN BILATERAL RELATIONS, SOONER RATHER THAN LATER.

5. LUKANOV BEGAN THE PRIVATE AFTER-DINNER CONVERSATION BY CLAIMING THAT MLADENOV'S OCTOBER 23 LUNCHEON WITH THE AMBASSADOR/DCM HAD BEEN A KEY ELEMENT IN THE EVENTS LEADING UP TO ZHIVKOV'S OUSTER. ACCORDING TO LUKANOV, SHORTLY BEFORE THE LUNCHEON, ZHIVKOV HAD UPBRAIDED MLADENOV IN THE RUDEST POSSIBLE, PERSONAL MANNER FOR PERMITTING BULGARIA TO BE ATTACKED AT THE ECOFORUM MEETING. THE LUNCHEON EXCHANGE HAD FURTHER UPSET MLADENOV, WHO DECIDED THAT FINALLY SOMETHING HAD TO BE DONE ABOUT THE "OLD MAN." MLADENOV, LUKANOV AND UNSPECIFIED OTHERS ON THE POLITBURO BEGAN TO GATHER SUPPORT TO DEMAND CHANGE, AND WERE PREPARED TO LAY THEIR (POLITICAL) HEADS ON THE BLOCK. ASKED ABOUT DEFENSE MINISTER DZUROV'S ROLE, LUKANOV COMMENTED ONLY THAT DZHUROV WAS AN HONEST, DECENT PERSON WHO WOULD DO NOTHING TO HARM BULGARIA'S INTERESTS. ASKED ABOUT THE REPORTED CLOSENESS OF THE POLITBURO

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VOTE (5-4) TO OUST ZHIVKOV, LUKANOV SAID HE WOULD RATHER NOT/NOT COMMENT; NOR DID HE DENY THE REPORTS OF ZHIVKOV'S EFFORTS TO PACK THE CC SECRETARIAT WITH HIS SON AND OTHERS AS A REASON FOR THE MOVE TO OUST HIM. (COMMENT: LUKANOV'S ACCOUNT IS, OF COURSE, SELF-SERVING AND, WHILE IN A SENSE FLATTERING

UNCLASSIFIED

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PAGE 01 SOFIA 06297 02 OF 03 200919Z
ACTION EUR-00

INFO	LOG-00	ADS-00	INR-07	SS-00	CIAE-00	EB-00	DODE-00
	H-01	NSCE-00	NSAE-00	SSO-00	HA-09	L-03	TRSE-00
	PM-10	PA-01	OMB-01	INRE-00	USIE-00	SP-02	SNP-01
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-----256577 200921Z /23

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FM AMEMBASSY SOFIA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8519
INFO CSCE COLLECTIVE
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AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

SECTION 02 OF 03 SOFIA 06297

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TO THE AMBASSADOR/DCM, DOES NOT/NOT CLARIFY WHY THEY SHOULD GET SUCH "CREDIT." END COMMENT)

6. ASKED TO COMMENT ON WHERE THE NEW LEADERSHIP WOULD FOCUS ITS EFFORTS OVER THE COMING WEEKS AND MONTHS, LUKANOV SAID IT WOULD CONCENTRATE ON DOING A THOROUGH REVIEW/ANALYSIS OF THE STATE OF THE ECONOMY. MUCH THAT WAS IN THE PARTY'S JULY

UNCLASSIFIED

CONCEPT (87 SOFIA 3187) WAS VALID; BUT PART OF THE PROBLEM WAS THAT ZHIVKOV WAS NOT WILLING TO PERMIT ANY CONSISTENT IMPLEMENTATION OF IT. THE NEW LEADERSHIP ALSO WANTED TO ENSURE THE "STRUCTURAL STABILITY" OF THE GOVERNMENT. THEY WERE AWARE THAT THE FREQUENT ORGANIZATIONAL/INSTITUTIONAL CHANGES OVER THE PAST SEVERAL YEARS HAD RESULTED IN STAGNATION/

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UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 02 SOFIA 06297 02 OF 03 200919Z

CONFUSION, AND HAD LEFT OUTSIDERS WONDERING ABOUT THE SERIOUSNESS OF BULGARIA'S COMMITMENTS TO REFORM. IT WAS NOW THE LEADERSHIP'S INTENTION TO HAVE THE GOVERNMENT SET STRATEGIC ECONOMIC POLICY AND REGULATE ECONOMIC ACTIVITY OF FIRMS ONLY THROUGH THE TAX SYSTEM. ASSOCIATIONS AND ANY OTHER ORGANIZATIONS STANDING BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT AND FIRMS WOULD BE ABOLISHED.

7. ONCE THE REVIEW/ANALYSIS ARE COMPLETE, THE LEADERSHIP PLANS TO LAY OUT A NEW POLITICAL LINE AT A CENTRAL COMMITTEE MEETING, MOST LIKELY IN DECEMBER. THERE WILL ALSO BE FURTHER PERSONNEL CHANGES IN THE POLITBURO AND CENTRAL COMMITTEE, ALTHOUGH LUKANOV WAS NOT SPECIFIC. HE ADDED IN THIS CONNECTION THAT HIS PARTY SECRETARY RESPONSIBILITIES INCLUDED CADRES/PERSONNEL AND ECONOMIC MATTERS. THE LEADERSHIP WILL ALSO MOVE TO WORK ON CHANGES IN THE CONSTITUTION. IN ADDITION, THE NEXT PARTY CONGRESS IS NOW SCHEDULED TO TAKE PLACE IN THE FOURTH QUARTER OF 1990, RATHER THAN AT THE END OF 1990.

8. ON THE MATTER OF DEMOCRATIZATION OF SOCIETY, LUKANOV SAID HE, MLADENOV AND OTHERS WERE DEADLY SERIOUS ABOUT ITS DEVELOPMENT, ALTHOUGH THE PROCESS COULD TAKE MANY FORMS. MLADENOV HAD SPOKEN WITH THE INTELLECTUALS. HE, LUKANOV, HAD MET ALSO EARLIER IN THE WEEK WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF INFORMAL GROUPS. THE LEADERSHIP WAS PREPARED FOR AN OPEN DIALOGUE. INFORMAL GROUPS SHOULD HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO PRESENT THEIR VIEWS PUBLICLY IN THE PAPERS AND THE MEDIA. THE PARTY FELT ITSELF

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PAGE 03 SOFIA 06297 02 OF 03 200919Z

STRONG ENOUGH TO WIN IN OPEN DEBATE. NO ONE WOULD BE JAILED/TRIED FOR POLITICAL VIEWS, AS INDICATED BY THE REPEAL EARLIER IN THE DAY AT THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY. IN HIS ONLY NOTE OF CAUTION ON DEMOCRATIZA-

UNCLASSIFIED

TION HE HOPED THE AMBASSADOR AND THE EMBASSY WOULD NOT GIVE UNDUE WEIGHT TO THE VIEWS OF SUCH INDEPENDENT GROUPS. LUKANOV SAID THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE WOULD BE OPEN TO THE AMBASSADOR TO DISCUSS MATTERS OF INTEREST.

UNCLASSIFIED

9. THE AMBASSADOR SAID HE WAS ENCOURAGED BY LUKANOV'S COMMENTS ON DEMOCRATIZATION AND WHAT WE HAD OBSERVED OVER THE LAST WEEK IN TERMS OF THE TREATMENT OF INDEPENDENT GROUPS AND THE UNHINDERED APPEARANCE OF PLACARDS ANNOUNCING THE NOVEMBER 18 MEETING ORGANIZED BY THESE GROUPS. HE HOPED THIS DEVELOPMENT WOULD CONTINUE, AND WAS CONFIDENT THE USG WOULD BE PREPARED TO RESPOND TO THE GROWTH OF DEMOCRACY AND PLURALISM. AT THE SAME TIME, HE COULD NOT/NOT HELP BUT NOTE THAT NONE OF THE SPEECHES AT THE CRUCIAL CENTRAL COMMITTEE HAD BEEN PUBLISHED AND THAT VIRTUALLY ALL OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY, RESULTING IN SWEEPING PERSONNEL AND ORGANIZATION CHANGES, HAD BEEN BY UNANIMOUS VOTE. LUKANOV RESPONDED BY SAYING THAT SPEECHES FROM THE PLENUM WOULD BE PUBLISHED, PERHAPS ONLY EXTENSIVE SUMMARIES, BECAUSE THE LEADERSHIP DID NOT WANT TO ENFLAME PASSIONS AND WANTED TO PRESENT MATTERS IN A DIGNIFIED FASHION. ON THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY PROCEEDINGS, LUKANOV SAID THE LEADERSHIP WAS MORE CONCERNED ABOUT CONTENT RATHER THAN PARLIAMENTARY FORM. THEY HAD TO MOVE QUICKLY TO EFFECT CHANGE. THE LEADERSHIP



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PAGE 01 SOFIA 06297 03 OF 03 200920Z
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UNCLASSIFIED

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	H-01	NSCE-00	NSAE-00	SSO-00	HA-09	L-03	TRSE-00
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	PRS-01	E-01	E-C2	T-01	/040 W		

-----256620 200921Z /23

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WOULD PAY MORE ATTENTION TO FORM AT THE NEXT
SESSION.

10. TURNING TO FOREIGN POLICY, LUKANOV INDICATED
THERE WOULD BE CHANGE WITH RESPECT TO TURKEY, BUT
THIS WOULD HAVE TO EVOLVE. THE KEY THING WAS FOR
TURKEY NOT/NOT TO DO ANYTHING THAT WOULD AFFECT
"BULGARIAN NATIONAL INTEGRITY." THE LEADERSHIP
WAS AND WOULD PERMIT RELIGIOUS RITES AND CUSTOMS,
THE USE OF THE TURKISH LANGUAGE AND, ALTHOUGH NOT
SPECIFIC, LUKANOV INDICATED THE USE OF TURKISH
NAMES WAS ALSO UNDER CONSIDERATION. THE AMBASSADOR
SAID SUCH DEVELOPMENTS WOULD BE VERY WELCOME,
POSITIVELY NOTED, AND HAVE AN IMPACT ON THE
DEVELOPMENT OF OUR BILATERAL RELATIONS.

PAGE 02 SOFIA 06297 03 OF 03 200920Z

11. LUKANOV SAID HE UNDERSTOOD THE IMPORTANCE
OF TURKEY TO THE U.S., BUT HE HOPED THIS WOULD NOT
PREVENT THE DEVELOPMENT OF RELATIONS WITH THE U.S..
HE SAID HE HOPED THE US WOULD UNDERSTAND THE GOB'S
COMMITMENT TO DEMOCRATIZATION, WHICH COULD LEAD TO
A BREAKTHROUGH IN OUR BILATERAL RELATIONS. THE
AMBASSADOR AGREED THAT CONTINUING EFFORTS AT
DEMOCRATIZATION COULD OPEN THE WAY TO EXPANDED
RELATIONS. TURNING TO IMMEDIATE ISSUES, THE AMBASSADOR
NOTED HE WAS STILL WAITING TO SEE INTERIOR MINISTER
TANEV TO DISCUSS PROPOSALS FOR FURTHER NARCOTICS
COOPERATION. LUKANOV SAID HE WOULD LOOK INTO THE
MATTER. THE AMBASSADOR SAID WE WERE ALSO HOPING
FOR A GOOD PROGRAM IN WASHINGTON FOR GEOLOGY
COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN CHUDOMIR ALEKSANDROV, WHICH COULD
PROVIDE A GOOD OPPORTUNITY TO DISCUSS DEVELOPMENTS
IN BULGARIA. LUKANOV CONCLUDED THE DISCUSSION BY
SAYING HE WAS ALWAYS AVAILABLE TO THE AMBASSADOR

UNCLASSIFIED

IF HE HAD PROBLEMS IN ARRANGING APPOINTMENTS, ETC.

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12. COMMENT: LUKANOV'S MESSAGE WAS CLEAR. BY ITS ACTIONS TO DATE, THE NEW LEADERSHIP DOES INTEND TO MOVE TOWARD A MORE OPEN SOCIETY, WITH PLURALISM OF OPINION IF NOT, AT THIS STAGE, MULTIPLE PARTIES (EXCLUDING THE AGRARIAN PARTY). APART FROM THIS, HIS MOST NOTEWORTHY COMMENTS RELATED TO THE LEADERSHIP'S POTENTIAL APPROACH TO THE ETHNIC TURKISH ISSUE. AS THE NOVEMBER 18 DEMONSTRATIONS INDICATED (SOFIA 6289), THE LEADERSHIP'S ABILITY TO EFFECT CHANGE WHILE NOT LOSING SUPPORT OF PART OF THE POPULATION SHOULD NOT/NOT BE TAKEN FOR GRANTED. HE IS PROBABLY BEING CANDID IN SAYING

PAGE 03 SOFIA 06297 03 OF 03 200920Z

THAT THE SITUATION WILL HAVE TO EVOLVE. WHAT THIS MEANS FOR THE NEXT ROUND OF BULGARIAN-TURKISH TALKS REMAINS TO BE SEEN AS THE NEW LEADERSHIP, INCLUDING A NEW FOREIGN MINISTER, ASSESSES ITS OPTIONS. POLANSKY

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