

# WHO WAS IN FACT RESPONSIBLE FOR JAN MASARYK'S DEATH?

## Surprising Testimony From Beyond the Grave

In the early hours of March 10, 1948, the broken body of Jan Masaryk, Czechoslovakia's foreign minister and son of the country's first president, was found splayed out on the cobblestone pavement beneath the open window of his third-floor apartment in the Czernin Palace foreign ministry building.

Seventy-five years after the foreign minister's violent death, what more can be said? Did he jump of his own volition or was he pushed or thrown out by those wanting him permanently removed from the international scene? Or was it some sort of unfortunate accident? Five official investigations by various Czech government organs have fluctuated between murder and suicide, with the last one concluding in 2021 that all three outcomes, suicide, murder or accident were possible. And there certainly has been no dearth of books and articles propounding various theories and claims, not unlike those in the U.S. surrounding the death of JFK.

So, why would this one-time citizen of Czechoslovakia, who has spent most of his life in the United States – and even witnessed as a young naval reserve officer nuclear and thermonuclear tests on Bikini atoll -- want to get involved in this seemingly unrealizable quest? More consequential, why now, when the Big Bear from the East is again threatening the hard-won independence and tranquility of Central and Eastern Europe? A quick answer and perhaps merely a rationale: it is especially important at difficult times such as these to reassert the right to peacefully express unpopular truths, a foundational basis of a true

democracy. Besides, history sets its own pace, and it is only now that I have managed to extrapolate from a popular autobiography by a top-level government official the indispensable information the author seemed to be trying to protect.

My original involvement started with family connections. My father had been a lifelong friend of Jan Masaryk, and I myself as a twelve-year-old felt uniquely honored meeting the foreign minister only three months before his violent end. Masaryk had been spending a few days at his permanent London flat, enroute home from a troubling sojourn in the United States, when Father visited him on a particularly cold December day. About an hour into their conversation, Masaryk somehow learned that my older brother and I – we were attending an English boarding school at that time -- had been left waiting outside in the unheated embassy car. He immediately sent for us, and after some good-natured ribbing of my father, this jovial man with an endless, domelike forehead and a rotund body draped in a silky bathrobe personally fixed each of us an outsized cup of hot chocolate.

The main reason for my involvement, however, would come almost a half-century later. That's when following the Velvet Revolution, one of Jan Masaryk's former secretaries, Dr. Antonin Sum, sought me out at our restituted villa in a suburb of Prague. A wiry, bespectacled septuagenarian, who had spent ten years of a twenty-two-year sentence meted out by Communist justice at hard labor in the Jáchymov uranium mines, now made an unexpected though flattering proposal. He was prepared to extend to me his full cooperation and provide the necessary documentation that would definitively clarify the circumstances of Jan Masaryk's death. From his well-worn leather satchel, our visitor handed me a copy of the autopsy report. He could vouch for its accuracy, he said, because he had been present except for a brief fainting period

when the coroner removed the top of the minister's skull. "Of course it was a suicide," Dr. Sum said, "but unfortunately other versions have cropped up that are pure fiction." He was convinced that in view of my recent literary success in Prague – along with the respect enjoyed by our family name – I had the necessary credibility to write an authoritative version that would at last put this matter to rest. And he once again repeated what was becoming his mantra: that the minister's suicide was not some spur-of-the-moment decision; that the minister had gradually come to the conclusion that he must do this to alert the West about the danger of trying to deal with Stalin – and that his deliberate personal sacrifice hastened the creation of NATO. "The minister deserves to have the proper historic perspective," our visitor concluded.

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In the coming months merging into years, I would monopolize more of Dr. Sum's time than any other reporter or foreign visitor. Dr. Sum was pleased to have my wife joining us, since he regarded her as an esteemed foreign policy colleague due to her previous post as President Carter's ambassador to UNESCO. Now, almost another twenty-five years later, it has at last become possible to apportion blame for Jan Masaryk's death, and ironically, arrive at conclusions Sum didn't have in mind -- and that are likely to be met with disbelief and denials in certain quarters on both sides of the Atlantic. Also underscored from those years of meeting with Jan Masaryk's tenacious advocate are the inherent perils in being a foreign minister of a country trapped between rival behemoths and having little say in determining its own future.

The most immediate development in apportioning blame has little to do with Antonin Sum but is entirely due to a fortuitous mention during a telephone conversation with a friend knowledgeable in Eastern European affairs of Madeline Albright's autobiographical *Prague Winter*. Remembering to

check it out on my next trip to the local library, it was another few days before I turned to the index, and then flipping to the pertinent page, I came across a seemingly inconsequential narrative that would eventually prove to be of compelling consequence.

Albright on the very first line fingers Stalin's agents as the probable suspects. "The Soviets had a motive," she points out, "especially if they thought Masaryk was on the verge of flight." Offering several instances of how Stalin might have found out about Masaryk's plans, Albright expands on her indictment by arguing that murder, disguised as suicide "blamed on the West was the ideal solution." Reasserting that it was murder, Albright virtually rules out -- based on hard physical evidence and Masaryk's personal beliefs -- that it could have been suicide.

My first reaction was disappointment to find in Albright's voluminous work such a sketchy treatment of a subject about which so much had already been written with no ultimate resolution. Couldn't she have offered at least some new insight or fact? I was also surprised that she makes no mention of having met with Antonin Sum in Prague, which he had mentioned more than once. However, what is incomparably more significant-- having indicted the Soviets purely on the basis of motive-- is that Albright remains silent about any possible motives harbored by the West. And there certainly was no dearth of such motives, immediate or longer term, which would explain why Jan Masaryk's presence was no longer desired on the international scene by the West. As I repeatedly pointed out to Dr. Sum, it was Jan Masaryk whom the West had been trying to alert about the dangers of dealing with Stalin.

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Masaryk's fall from his established perch as an urbane, witty champion of the West dates back to the last months of World War II, when reluctantly and

mouthed expletives, he left his London sanctuary for Moscow, where plans for the future of post-war Czechoslovakia were being drawn up. This was in compliance with the marked tilt to the East by President Beneš. Having sworn at his father's deathbed future loyalty to the president, Masaryk had little choice. If he were to remain his country's foreign secretary, Masaryk was told in Moscow in no uncertain terms, he would have to "adjust its foreign policy absolutely and without reservations to Soviet policies."

What this meant came as a shock to Masaryk's friends in the West just days later in San Francisco. Voting at the conference that would establish the future U. N. on the proposed membership of a Polish Communist government that the West had declined to recognize, Masaryk was suddenly, astonishingly found to be siding with the Soviet delegates.

Masaryk had no illusions about his role during the post-war years as foreign minister in the coalition government headed by the Communist prime minister, Klement Gottwald. Returning home from one foreign trip, Masaryk spotted among the welcoming throng at Ruzyně Airport father's butler, who had occasionally moonlighted at the foreign minister's dinner parties in Czernin palace. Passing by him, Masaryk leaned closer, and muttered, "The situation, Rudolf, isn't worth a shit."

Masaryk's attempt to manage his reluctant role between East and West won him little sympathy in Washington. Seemingly unnoticed was even his daring confrontation with Stalin in his unsuccessful bid for permission to accept U.S. invitation to join the economically advantageous Marshall Plan. In fact, at the very time Masaryk was making my brother and me that hot chocolate, he was sharing with Father the details of his subsequent mission to the United States, where he had been officially shunned for his seeming subservience to Stalin. President Truman had refused to receive him, and

Secretary of State Marshall postponed their meeting for almost two months, only to give this lifelong friend of the West a polite but quick brush off without acceding to any of his pleas for desperately needed aid. For Masaryk this had been a personally painful reckoning. The United States had been his second home, his mother was an American, and on his frequent visits to Washington, all doors had been open, including President Roosevelt's.

Then came the fateful events of February 1948, when Masaryk declined to join his democratic-leaning colleagues in Klement Gottwald's coalition to resign, thus thwarting their attempt to hold new elections while leaving Gottwald in a position to form his own Communist regime. Prime Minister Gottwald, who was about to present this unified Communist administration in parliament, with Jan Masaryk as foreign minister, had sent word to Masaryk he wanted him to participate in this ceremonial media event. Having come to power in what was generally seen in the West as a coup d'état, Gottwald was hoping that the presence of this widely admired figure in the West would dampen such assumptions and provide his government with a measure of international legitimacy. Yet for Masaryk to appear as foreign minister among this band of Stalin's lackeys would have meant dishonoring the revered family name, and in the increasingly bitter confrontation of the nascent Cold War, Masaryk's prospective appearance in this Communist milieu was to be prevented by the West regardless what it might take.

"I am in mortal danger," Masaryk confided to his long-term romantic partner, the author Marcia Davenport, before sending her to safety in London. And as he tried to explain to the British ambassador, Sir Pierson Dixon, who was taking Masaryk to task for having stayed with Gottwald, "I have no yearning to be crowned a martyr."

When I asked Sum how he felt over Masaryk's failure to resign and his prospective role in the Gottwald government, he didn't hesitate. "Just awful!" he wailed, as if feeling the pain of his situation to this day. But he made it clear that while he and his colleague, Lumir Soukup, had been eager to protect the venerated family name, both had been hoping the minister would remove himself from the scene by going into exile.

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Since my years of interaction with Dr. Sum, new theories of Masaryk's demise have been proposed, most notably by the historian Václava Jandečková, and by Jiří and Líni Valenta from the Institute of Post-Communist Studies and Terrorism based in Florida. The Valentas as well as Jandečková point the finger at Britain's SIS, also known as MI6, acting through their chief agent in Prague, Masaryk's secretary general, Arnošt Heidrich, who had apparently been recruited during World War II while reporting secretly to London from German-occupied Czechoslovakia.

Despite Dr. Sum's 's unrelenting efforts to promote Masaryk's sacrificial intent to alert the West, my own view remained that if he had indeed jumped, it was because he had been irresistibly seized in a post-midnight fit of depression at the thought of being introduced the next day as Gottwald's foreign minister. This sudden depression overpowering Masaryk was also the official explanation offered by the Communist regime, but as Madeleine Albright pointed out, with the cause attributed to the West, citing the avalanche of excoriating telegrams Masaryk had received from his overseas friends, reproaching him for staying with Gottwald.

Sum dismissed this rationale. One of the most poignant moments in our interviews came as he explained how he and Soukup had intercepted those

telegrams from the West. “There were only a few,” Sum emphasized. “Not the dozens that people were claiming, and we didn’t show them to him.”

If it indeed was murder, the most viable scenario of the many that have been advanced is that Masaryk’s defenestration had been a case of a “house inspection” having gone awry. Suspecting that the foreign minister was about to flee to England, a group of men led by a certain Major Augustin Schramm had been deputized to sufficiently scare Masaryk so that he would show up at Gottwald’s side the next day. But in desperately trying to escape the clutches of these nighttime invaders, so this scenario went, Masaryk tumbled out of his bathroom window.

In his dismissive telling of this version, Dr. Sum remarked – for whatever reason, almost as an aside – that within days of Masaryk’s demise, several of Schramm’s alleged accomplices had turned up in West Germany at the Regensburg refugee center that served as a U.S. counterintelligence facility.

This Regensburg revelation reenforced suspicions of involvement by the West. My wife and I glanced at each other as if simultaneously electrified. This was the first time we had heard of any tangible connection with the West. The respective motivations couldn’t be more clear. While the Western powers had a non-negotiable interest in keeping Masaryk from appearing that day, the incoming Communist regime was counting on him showing up. As liaison between the secret services of Czechoslovakia and USSR, Schramm had been in a position to convince his superiors for the need of some action to keep Masaryk in line. Yet despite his unassailable Communist credentials, Schramm also happened to be sharing a house with his brother, who had spent the war years in England and was a member of the Western-oriented YMCA. Considering Sum’s Regensburg revelation, it takes no outsized imagination to suspect Schramm of having been a double agent, who could have artfully

grafted his orders from the West onto orders from his Communist superiors. "A most regrettable turn of events," Schramm could have afterwards ruefully reported.

Dr. Sum's revelation dovetailed with what had been previously publicly documented: that shortly after Masaryk's demise, another recent escapee to the West, a young man by the name of Choc, had been sent back to Czechoslovakia from his Regensburg asylum to kill Schramm, ostensibly in revenge for murdering Masaryk.

"No, no, Choc did not kill Schramm," Sum corrected me, eager to weigh in on another publicly unresolved issue. While waiting to be sentenced at the same prison where Choc was being held, Sum had heard of Choc's denials on the night before he was hanged. "He certainly had no reason to lie," Sum concluded. In fact, Choc himself had claimed at his trial that Schramm was already dead when he arrived at his house, and his intent had never been to kill anyone but to abduct Schramm and have him face justice in Regensburg for killing Masaryk.

Dr. Sum has since been proved right, and Choc has been officially rehabilitated. Yet Choc may have been at least partly telling the truth about abducting Schramm -- though not to face justice in Regensburg but to "retrieve an asset," to save the life of a secret agent who had carried out his task, and should that not prove possible, to ensure Schramm's secret mission would never come to light.

Choc's death begs a most consequential question: *Would the Western authorities in Regensburg have risked the lives of Choc and his colleagues, be it sending him to kill Schramm or abduct him, if Schramm had indeed acted solely on orders from Moscow or the Communist hierarchy in Prague? In that case, Schramm would have been rendering the West a most welcome and timely favor.*

Had Schramm perhaps been quietly eliminated by his own Communist colleagues who had figured out his duplicity? "These may indeed be possibilities, but we have no proof of their relevance to the minister's death," Sum said, shrugging off Schramm's murder as most likely nothing more than the result of some internal dispute. "What you have here is another of those theories that keep cropping up," he continued. "Did you know there are at least ten theories about the different ways the minister was murdered, each completely different from the other, involving completely different people, all of whom swear unimpeachable veracity?"

"Whatever the scenario," I asked Sum, "did you in a way feel relieved that the awful situation with the minister had been resolved?"

"At such moments," he said quietly after a lengthy pause, "one is not rational but emotional. I knew the minister since I was a child . . ."

Not everyone was entirely saddened by the violent outcome. "We mourn his loss – it is a heavy loss," declared Winston Churchill in Parliament a few hours after Masaryk's body had been discovered, "but one cannot help rejoicing . . . that the esteemed name to which Masaryk was heir will remain an inspiration to the people of Czechoslovakia."

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Whether it was Schramm himself who personally conducted Masaryk's defenestration cannot be said with certainty – or even whether he and his group were the ones involved. What can be ascertained on the basis of logic, clarity of motive and circumstantial evidence is that the direction for the operation most likely originated in the West with some sort of Anglo-American collusion. According to Jiří and Líni Valenta at their Florida think tank, the British had an additional motive. By arming and otherwise supporting the

Zionist cause to form the State of Israel, Masaryk had been disrupting Britain's mandate in Palestine.

Listening to Dr. Sum make his case for sacrificial suicide, I was struck how often he reinforced his points by materials from the book by Sum's colleague Soukup, who had spent World War II as a student in Scotland and even then was fulfilling assignments for Masaryk; and also from another book by the afore mentioned Heidrich, who had emigrated to the United States within months of Masaryk's demise. When I suggested to Sum that it looked as if a binding agreement had been sealed between him, Soukup and Heidrich about their narratives, Sum interrupted to add the name of Masaryk's third and most senior secretary, Jiří Špaček.

"No, no," I interrupted in turn. "Špaček was just a regular Czech. He was a bureaucrat doing his work with no foreign agendas on the side. It was only the three of you."

"Well, in a way you are right," Sum conceded after brief reflection, "because the three of us found ourselves in the same situation and saw the situation in the same way." In subsequent years, each of them would provide poignant recollections of Masaryk's specific remarks indicating that he would take his own life. "I also must do that," Masaryk is reported by Heidrich to have said, after hearing of the suicide attempt by Minister of Justice, Prokop Drtina. When I inquired whether any other officials close to the minister had included similar statements in their ex-post-facto accounts, Sum gave no meaningful response.

I couldn't help but wonder: Had there been a wider, more consequential collusion between this Western-oriented triumvirate of Sum, Soukup and Heidrich?

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Antonin Sum was a modest man, reluctant to talk about himself; yet the most relevant information I gleaned from him was as an aside to his own life. On more than one occasion he volunteered that he was regularly reporting during this period to the U. S. embassy. He said it with evident pride, implying that his “reporting” at times transgressed normal diplomatic relations. “It was a suicide!” Sum was zestfully informing the U. S. embassy within hours of Masaryk’s death of the official finding that the Communist government was about to make public. It would take years for me to understand the full significance of what Sum may have really meant. Sum also seemed to take satisfaction in telling me that his colleague Soukup had been regularly reporting to the British and the French. As Sum on several occasions suggestively pointed out, “There are circumstances when you cannot always act the way you would normally act.” Another time, while adhering to his mantra of the minister’s self-sacrifice, Sum allowed that he couldn’t be more than ninety-nine percent certain, since he wasn’t a witness to the deed. Reflecting on his experience in jail, he was ready to concede that "the Russians in those days were capable of doing their work without leaving traces, as also were the Americans."

In many ways Soukup remains the most enigmatic character in this real-life drama. Having emigrated to Scotland shortly after Masaryk’s demise, Soukup addressed his countrymen in a broadcast over BBC on the first anniversary of Masaryk’s death. The next day Soukup’s former colleague Sum, who had heretofore been overlooked by the Communist authorities, was fired from his foreign ministry post, and a few months later, arrested. Despite Sum’s years in the uranium mines that followed, I never heard him voice any reproaches or speak unfavorably about his former colleague. However, during the Prague

Spring of 1968, on being informed that Soukup was “speaking out in unguarded ways” in England and in France, Sum sent word to him to be careful or there would be what he variously characterized as “průšvich” or “průser,” the latter translating to “shit hitting the fan.”

The year 1968 being also the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the defenestration, Soukup took the occasion to write in the influential daily, the Scotsman, how three days prior to that fateful night, he had accompanied Masaryk on a drive to his father’s grave in Lány. “God and Father will forgive me,” Soukup writes that he heard Masaryk break the silence on the way back. “They will understand.” When Claire Sterling in her 1968 comprehensive work, *The Masaryk Case*, exposed Soukup’s claim, having learned from her interviews with Masaryk’s favorite niece, Herberta, and his siter, Alice, that they were the only other passengers in the car, Soukup in his 1994 posthumous memoir explains: Jan Masaryk had indeed asked Soukup to accompany him, but not wishing to intrude on a private event, Soukup had merely followed in a borrowed friend’s car. As for Masaryk’s portentous statement, the chauffeur had been the one to relay it to Soukup -- though both women in that car also agreed that their favorite relative would have never stooped to such mawkishness.

Possibly more telling was Soukup’s account about delivering Gottwald’s message requiring Masaryk’s presence in parliament on March 10th. Soukup finds Masaryk sitting, as was his custom, cross-legged on his bed, surrounded by sheaves of papers and is writing. “When he finally put down his pen, I gave him Gottwald’s message,” Soukup notes, “and because I thought he hadn’t heard, I started to repeat. I didn’t finish. He turned toward me and his eyes silenced me. ‘There I will not go!’ His eyes spoke even more definitively. Where in previous days dwelled troubled uncertainty, now reigned absolute inner equilibrium and peace. I wanted to speak, I tried, in vain. Words failed me. I

turned and hobbled toward the door, still unable to speak ...” Soukup had to be driven home and take to bed, where he remained with high fever for the next two days until Sum came to tell him of Masaryk’s fate.

Reading this passage, I had the eerie feeling Soukup was describing a man supposedly reconciled with his imminent suicide, but in reality, that man himself having no idea he was about to take his own life. No one else close to Masaryk seems to have noticed this transfiguration, certainly not Sum, who visited with the minister on the day after Soukup. The last person to see Masaryk alive on the eve of his demise was his butler, who found his employer comfortably settled in bed and routinely asking to be awakened “tomorrow morning at half-past eight.”

Did Soukup’s collapse stem partly from the unbearable stress of knowing what was about to happen to the man he admired, worked for and been close to since his student days? Did Soukup feel responsible for having somehow contributed to the result about which Churchill couldn’t “help rejoicing?” Or was Soukup just an inveterate publicity seeker and confabulator?

Whatever the case, as I wrote to Soukup’s widow, Catriona, “I have no doubt that in those darkest days of February and March 1948, the paramount guiding principle for your husband and Dr. Sum had been to do their utmost to uphold his Czechoslovakia’s democratic traditions and spare its citizenry the forty ‘lost years’ of Communist rule that ensued.”

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Dr. Sum invariably responded to my questions with patience, a glint of enthusiasm reflected in his bespectacled eyes. To particularly challenging probing, however, he was liable to provide so much circumstantial background as to obfuscate his answer. Whenever I would question Sum sharply, I would feel guilty about such unsparing treatment of this elderly man who had suffered

so much. I often thought of his years of drilling underground and breathing the noxious dust of the uranium mine, where his labor began at four in the morning and lasted eleven or twelve hours, Saturdays didn't exist and Sundays often didn't either. When I tried to apologize and asked if I wasn't beginning to sound like his inquisitors of the 1950s -- we had by then become friends and were on familiar, first-name basis -- Sum merely smiled, as if to say I was hardly in the same league, his courtly, insouciant façade obscuring a steely constitution developed during that prison ordeal.

. Despite the many conversations I had with my friend Sum, I was left with unanswered questions. In Sum's unwavering quest to present the foreign minister's death as sacrificial suicide, had his intent been solely to restore the historic reputation of the Masaryk name and give the minister his due? Or had Sum provided wittingly or unwittingly information to his U.S. embassy contacts that would set the fatal process in motion, and his present efforts were at least partly a form of expiation? And not unlike Dostoevsky's Raskolnikov, was Sum through his occasional unguarded revelations perhaps hoping to be exposed? Moreover, was Sum's suicide scenario also part of a broader attempt to obfuscate the identity of those behind the irremediable deed?

A close reading of Claire Sterling's exhaustive work suggests this may also have been her intent in pinning the blame on Stalin's USSR. Had Sterling merely been viewing her overabundance of facts through a prism that enabled her to arrive at a narrative the public was at that time most eager to believe? Or had she been prompted to marshal her wealth of material in a way that would counter whatever incriminating theories might crop up during the freewheeling days of the Prague Spring? If Sterling's aim had indeed been to deflect the blame on the Soviets, how ironic that Albright in her book concluded that for the Soviets, "Suicide, blamed on the West, was the ideal solution."

Perhaps most revealing has been that Madeleine Albright, immediately following her rationale why Stalin's agents were "probably" to blame for Masaryk's murder, provides a disclaimer, "I can't prove this and would hardly be shocked should conclusive evidence one day surface to the contrary."

Reading this disclaimer for the first time failed to rise any red flags. It was a standard device used by many writers who want to cover their rear by having it both ways. It was only several after several weeks of working on this 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary piece that the enormity of what the former secretary of state had disclosed began to sink in.

Madeleine Albright should not be viewed as a dispassionate observer. Throughout her book she repeatedly expresses her lasting admiration for Jan Masaryk and holds him out as an inspirational example for future generations. Masaryk also gave her father his first job, offered to lend him money, once even joined him in a piano duet, and otherwise played a key role in her family's life. By the time Madeleine Albright left Czechoslovakia as an eleven-year-old only months after Masaryk's brutal end, she was surely among the millions of her countrymen who felt they had lost a personal friend.

Who would now doubt that one of Madeleine Albright's first goals in taking advantage of her virtually unlimited access to the country's most secret files had been to find conclusive evidence how Jan Masaryk had really died -- evidence she had pledged not to reveal but nevertheless suggested she would hardly be shocked if it turned out contrary to what she wrote?

In her book Madeleine Albright indicts Stalin's agents. Whom would this leave to blame beyond any reasonable doubt should that conclusive evidence contrary to what she wrote surface one day? Disheartening though it may be to accept, Albright was in effect saying: if it were not those Stalin agents, it must have been operatives of the be West. Assuming Albright had indeed already

seen those secret files, it is understandable why she would hardly be shocked if this truth were to surface, since she wouldn't be learning anything new; however, if Albright had not seen those incriminating documents and truly considered Stalin's agents as the probable suspects, she would not only have been shocked but surely crushed to learn it was her adopted country that had been involved in the violent death of the man whose memory she continued to revere.

So why would Albright have even wanted to take a position on this unresolved issue and single out the Soviets because "they had a motive?" She could have let the matter rest on the varied results of the official Czech investigations that she mentions in her book. Or she could have left well enough alone by settling on the Soviet agents as "probable" suspects. Why then did she decide to follow up with the disclaimer in the first place? Was it an inadvertent error whose significance had escaped even the security agents vetting her book – as it had escaped me? Or was it because Madeleine Albright had succeeded to embed in a subtle way in her book the fact that she had indeed seen those compelling secret documents, and what she had learned was as different as could be from what she wrote? In fact, had Madeleine Albright's seemingly awkward attempt to obfuscate actually been a brilliant ploy that enabled her to remain faithful to the official narrative yet would also help to publicly reveal the truth on this 75th anniversary -- and finally provide Jan Masaryk with the justice he deserves?

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Jan Masaryk was a noble messenger of peace, who didn't believe in violence against others any less than in violence against himself. He was painfully aware that regardless of what he might or might not do within the realpolitik dictates of the world, he would end up a victim of circumstances. One of the most

poignant moments when my friend Sum and I were at last in full accord was when I suggested writing a true account about Jan Masaryk in the role of a minister of foreign affairs in a country that had no control over its own destiny.

I shall always remember Jan Masaryk as a jovial man in a silky bathrobe who brought two little boys out of the cold and made them each a cup of hot chocolate.

Jan Masaryk was also his country's most dearly loved man. Isn't it time after seventy-five years to clear the air?

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