

MEMORANDUM

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Friday, August 2, 1968, 11:25 A. M.

11:30 am

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MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

SUBJECT: Dubcek Address to the Czechoslovak Nation

Before flying off to Bratislava for tomorrow's Summit, Dubcek spoke to the Czech people in a hastily arranged mid-day address. The speech adds little new firm information about the nature of the accommodation reached at Cierna.

Dubcek said Czechoslovakia's army is strong enough to defend its borders -- and the press is interpreting this to mean that the Czechs did not give the Soviets the right to station troops permanently on Czech soil. On the other hand, Smrkovsky characterized the removal of the remaining Soviet troops on Czechoslovak soil as a "detail", and this transparently defensive reaction to the troops question is not reassuring.

Dubcek emphasized economic cooperation within the Bloc -- as did Svoboda yesterday -- and there is some guessing in the press and in our Intelligence Community that this means a commitment was made to go very slow in breaking out to economic cooperation with the West.

Dubcek explained the Czech concession in agreeing to a conclave rather than a series of bilateral meetings by saying there wasn't time to negotiate bilaterally and prepare for the September Party Congress. This was clearly an effort to put the best face on things.

Ulbricht's departure by plane for Bratislava has already been reported. Speculation has it that Tito's visit is now scheduled for Monday. Our Intelligence People believe there may be 10-20,000 Soviet troops still in Czechoslovakia. There are no indications yet that the troops ringed around the periphery have moved to a lesser state of readiness since the talks -- but it is probably too early to tell from our indicators in any case.

Nathaniel Davis

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