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WESTERN EUROPE REACTS TO SOVIET-CZECHOSLOVAK DEVELOPMENTS

Setbacks for Soviet policies in Western Europe are already visible as a consequence of Moscow's intervention in Czechoslovakia. The Soviet action has disillusioned the Western Europeans and has reinforced the appeal of NATO and European regional institutions.

Recent events have also confirmed Western European Communists in their nationalistic approach. The effect on the Communist parties and Communist-led labor unions is likely to be the more lasting. Western European governments are discussing, at least for the present, slowdowns of bilateral programs with the USSR, but are keeping their doors open for steps toward resumption of detente.

In Western Europe, the Soviet invasion was greeted with expressions ranging from consternation in such capitals as London and Brussels to the low-key statements of neutrals--Austria, Switzerland, Sweden, and Finland. The Finns, particularly sensitive to their strategically exposed location, are expressing concern over a possible deterioration in their relations with the Russians. The UK, Italy, and West Germany are all stressing the importance of NATO, and it appears that the Alliance's future may be strongly influenced by the fact of the rapid Soviet occupation of Czechoslovakia.

NATO's present theory of warning, which presupposes a period of critical consultation and military build-up by prospective attackers,

is being re-evaluated. Moreover, the recent trend of force reductions and redeployment within the Alliance is likely to be halted by a collective pledge to freeze current levels pending a review of European security. Italy and others may reiterate calls for another 20-year extension of the NATO treaty. Italy and West Germany have also stressed the need for greater European political unity. At the same time, however, Italy, West Germany, and Switzerland are using the Czechoslovak situation as an excuse to postpone signature of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty.

French President de Gaulle has denounced the invasion as an exercise of the "doctrine of power blocs, a consequence of the Yalta accords." Paris' initial reaction to the Moscow talks is that the Czechoslovaks came out surprisingly well.

The Western European public has expressed outrage over the developments in Czechoslovakia, both in the press and through public demonstrations. Except for the Communist parties in Luxembourg and West Berlin, and the illegal Communist parties of Spain, Portugal, and West Germany, orthodox Communists in Western Europe have castigated Moscow. The Italian and French parties have been foremost in this Communist rebellion, accompanied by the labor confederations each dominates. The Communist-controlled World Federation of Trade Unions has not yet taken a public position.

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