

SECRET

Czechoslovakia-USSR: Czechoslovak leaders have gone directly to the people in an effort to retain popular support and yet establish conditions leading to Soviet troop withdrawal.

Party leader Dubcek, Premier Cernik, and President Svoboda visited several factories in the Prague area and reportedly called for "unity, consideration, and reason." They stressed that there must be no provocations against Soviet troops. Yesterday's edition of the party daily Rude Pravo also pointed out that one of the main tasks facing the Czechoslovak people is to "establish the conditions" for withdrawal of occupation forces. The Slovak central committee plenum yesterday announced its complete solidarity with the policies of the central authorities and appealed to each segment of the population--and especially to the students now beginning a new school year--to support the Czechoslovak leaders' policies. The Czechoslovak news agency also reflected this theme.

Moscow's press treatment continues to hold that the "counterrevolutionary" threat to Czechoslovakia has not ended. This has become the rationale for what will probably be a lengthy presence of Soviet troops on Czechoslovak soil.

A possible indication that some of the Warsaw Five would like to see Dubcek ousted was contained in an article printed in a Polish newspaper on 4 September. In an appraisal of the Czechoslovak central committee meeting of 31 August, the Prague correspondent of a Warsaw paper cited unnamed Czechoslovak sources as characterizing Dubcek as well-meaning, but weak and politically naive. This line--praise for Dubcek's intentions but deprecations of his abilities--could be used should the Soviets decide to ease Dubcek out of power.

25X1

6 Sep 68

Central Intelligence Bulletin

1

SECRET