

SOVIETS AND CZECHOSLOVAKS STRUGGLE OVER "NORMALIZATION"

Moscow is pressing for "normalization"--a term subject to varying interpretation by the Soviets and the Czechoslovaks--of the political situation in the country in accordance with the agreement reached in Moscow in late August. The Czechoslovaks have partially met some of the reported Soviet demands, but have procrastinated on others. Moscow has not failed to note this procrastination. Czechoslovak efforts to preserve some parts of their action program have nettled the Soviets to the point where they are now characterizing this "quiet counter-revolution" as no less dangerous than the more violent brand shown by the Hungarians in 1956.

A possible indication that some of the five Warsaw Pact hard liners would like to see Dubcek ousted was contained in a Polish newspaper on 4 September. In its appraisal of the Czechoslovak central committee meeting of 31 August--the session that brought additional liberals into the party presidium--the Warsaw paper cited unnamed Czechoslovak sources as characterizing Dubcek as well-meaning but weak and politically naive. Such a line about Dubcek could become the tack taken by the occupiers should a decision be made to ease him from power.

Soviet First Deputy Foreign Minister Kuznetsov arrived in Czechoslovakia on 6 September for meetings with the Czecho-

slovak leadership, and Premier Cernik held a one-day meeting in Moscow with the three top Soviet leaders. Moscow apparently is still trying to work through the present Prague leaders and hopes to gain at least grudging acquiescence in revamping the present government.

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Czechoslovak efforts so far to accommodate the Soviets have been showy, but they do not, from a Soviet point of view, deal with the heart of the problem. For example, two non-Communist political organizations that had been bitterly attacked by the Soviets--the Club of Committed Non-Party People and the K-231, an association of rehabilitated political prisoners--have been banned. A few days later, however, the Czechoslovak cabinet approved draft legislation that would not exclude at some future date the addition of similar organizations to the Communist-controlled National Front. Moreover, personal freedom and security were guaranteed by Czechoslovakia's leaders in a proclamation issued on 10 September.

Government officials have continued to discuss censorship

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requirements in the wake of the formal re-establishment of censor's offices in Prague and Bratislava. Two editors of liberal journals have been replaced. On 8 September, the Prague censor confirmed on television that his two guiding principles were to avoid overt criticism of the occupying states and to prohibit publication of anything detracting from the leading role of the Communist Party. Czechoslovak news media,

however, are filled with countless thinly disguised criticisms of the occupiers. During the week, newspapers, radio and television stations, and the Czechoslovak News Agency were returned to Czechoslovak control. They are returning to normal operations, despite the damaged condition in which their quarters were left by Soviet troops.

The government is also making plans to restrict public

COMMUNIST PARTY OF CZECHOSLOVAKIA

FIRST SECRETARY

Alexander Dubcek

SECRETARIES

Alois Indra

Zdenek Mlynar

*Josef Spacek

OTHER MEMBERS OF THE SECRETARIAT

*Lubomir Kovalcik

*Jiri Sakera

Vaclav Slavik

MEMBERS OF THE PRESIDIUM

Vasil Bilak

*Vladimir Kabrna

*Bohumil Simon

Oldrich Cernik

*Zdenek Mlynar

*Vaclav Slavik

Alexander Dubcek

*Vaclav Neubert

Josef Smrkovsky

*Evzen Erban

Jan Piller

Josef Spacek

*Jaromir Hettes

*Josef Pinkava

Oldrich Svestka

*Libuse Hrdinova

*Stefan Sadvovsky

*Ludvik Svoboda (Honorary)

*Gustav Husak

*Vaclav Simecek

*Anton Tazky

*Jozef Zrak

CANDIDATE MEMBERS OF THE PRESIDIUM

*Frantisek Barbirek

Jozef Lenart

*Karel Polacek

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*New members since the invasion

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assembly and foreign travel. Until such laws are enacted by the National Assembly, it will consider extraordinary measures to limit public assemblies and the imposition of temporary restrictions on the issuance of exit passes for travel to Western countries. There are unconfirmed reports that Soviet troops are monitoring the performance of Czechoslovak border guards.

At the same time, however, measures are being considered for compensation of individuals and corporations for damages suffered during periods of illegality, an obvious reference to the invasion and occupation. A plaque has been mounted on Bratislava's main post office commemorating those citizens killed or wounded during the invasion on 21 August. Political rehabilitation of victims of Stalinism will begin in late September or early October. Work continues under the terms of the liberal action program for weakening the Interior Ministry by transferring its jurisdiction over prisons to the Justice Ministry.

Meanwhile, the unreconstructed Czechoslovaks and their Rumanian, Yugoslav, and Italian

allies are still under considerable fire from their Eastern European neighbors.

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Although the disposition of occupation forces remains essentially unchanged, troops are withdrawing from within towns and major cities. The US military attaché in Prague says that the estimated 7,500 Soviet troops that began bivouacking at Prague's Ruzyně airport last week--presumably for rotation home--were still encamped there on 10 September.

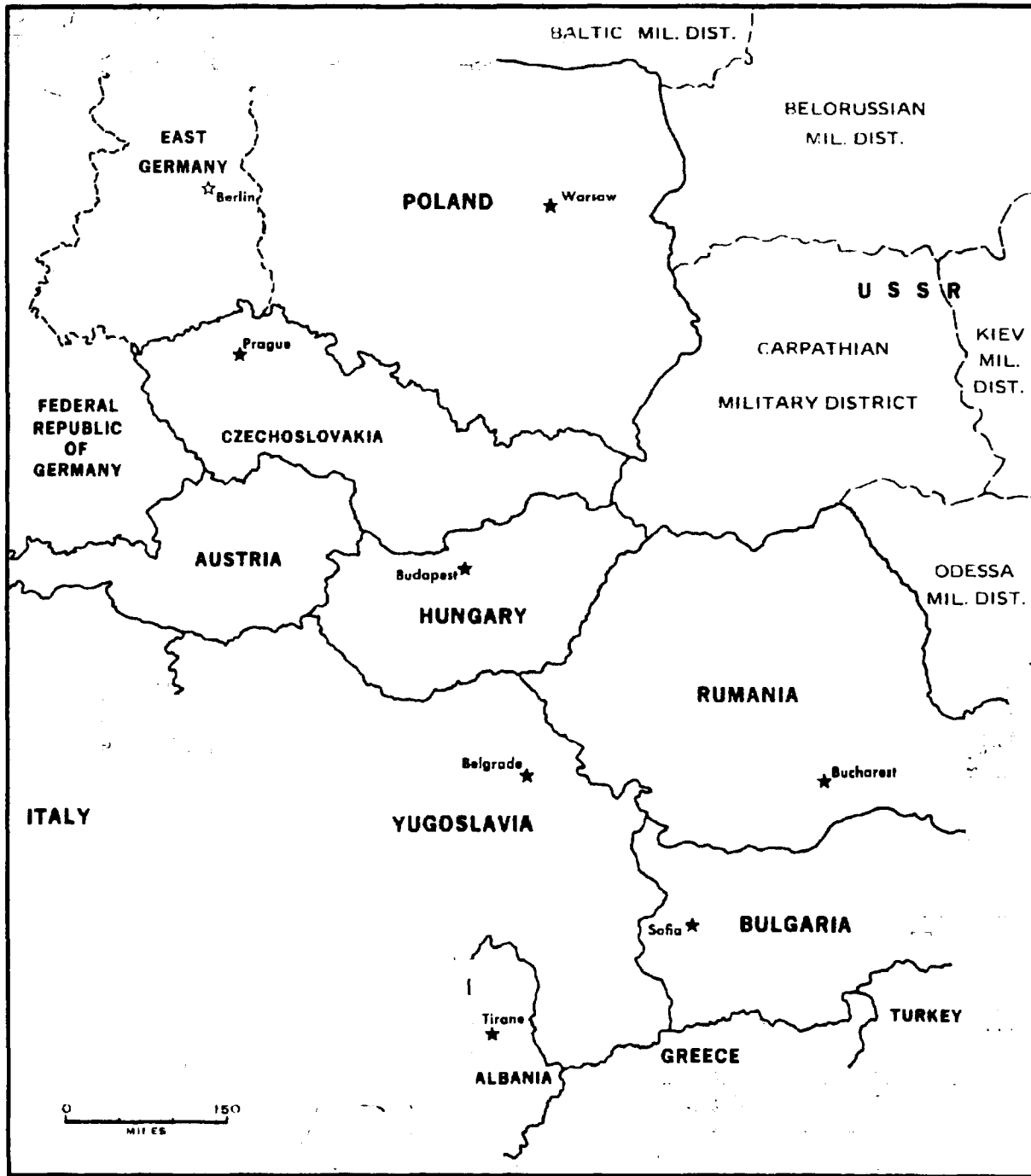
The ending on 6 September of a Bulgarian military exercise near the Rumanian frontier probably has contributed to a relaxation of tensions in Bucharest.

Neither Rumania nor Yugoslavia have reduced the alert status of their armed forces, however. As of 10 September, the Yugoslav call-up of individuals with special skills was still under way, and contingency plans were being implemented to disperse television and radio facilities to permit clandestine operations--as the Czechoslovaks had done with the assistance of their armed forces--in the event of an occupation. 25X1

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