

SECRET

Czechoslovakia-USSR: There are indications that the Soviets are scanning the Czechoslovak hierarchy for a leader who will be more responsive than Dubcek to their demands.

Moscow believes that Dubcek has failed to carry out in a timely and effective manner his commitments in Moscow. The removal of Dubcek will be difficult to achieve without arousing the population because of his reputation as a "popular hero." Such a Soviet imposed shift, moreover, would further complicate the situation and make matters worse for Moscow.

The most frequently mentioned candidate for Dubcek's position is Gustav Husak, who since the end of August has been a member of the party hierarchy. Husak's statements on a variety of subjects, including his endorsement of the Moscow agreement, and his favorable treatment by the Soviet press, suggest that he is acceptable to Moscow. He would be a controversial choice, however, because of his background as a Slovak nationalist and a reformer who supports Dubcek's liberal policies.

The Czechoslovak National Assembly yesterday voted into law measures restricting the individual rights of assembly and association. The primary purpose of the new legislation is to eliminate political activity outside the Communist front and to prevent public gatherings that might lead to antiregime or anti-Soviet demonstrations. The assembly also passed temporary censorship provisions that will remain in effect until a new press law legalizing tight controls over mass media can be enacted.

Prague has been restricting travel to Czechoslovakia to comply with Soviet demands that "counter-revolutionary elements" be prevented from posing as tourists. According to Czechoslovak officials, border guards are admitting visitors only for medical treatment, "serious compassionate reasons," and attendance at the Brno international trade fair. There

14 Sep 68

Central Intelligence Bulletin

2

SECRET

SECRET

will also reportedly be a drastic reduction in the number of Czechoslovaks permitted to travel to the West.

The Czechoslovaks are proceeding with their pre-invasion plans to federalize the country. A Yugoslav correspondent in Prague has reported that the embryonic Communist Party of the Czech Lands, comprising Bohemia and Moravia, may hold its constituent congress around the middle of October. This meeting, establishing a Czech regional party parallel to the existing Slovak party, will therefore pave the way for the convening of a new congress of the national party. The Soviets will probably insist that it correct the errors of the congress which met secretly on the day after the invasion.

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There has been no significant change in the status of the military forces occupying Czechoslovakia during the past 24 hours.

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[redacted] the occupying forces "except for a couple of Soviet divisions" will leave Czechoslovakia by 26 October. [redacted] the withdrawal was arranged during Cernik's discussions in Moscow earlier this week. There have been other reports of a large Soviet troop withdrawal prior to the Czechoslovak national day on 28 October, but thus far neither Moscow nor Prague has issued an official statement on the matter. [redacted]

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*Because of the shortage of time for preparation of this item, the analytic interpretation presented here has been produced by the Central Intelligence Agency without the participation of the Bureau of Intelligence and Research, Department of State or of the Defense Intelligence Agency, Department of Defense.

14 Sep 68

Central Intelligence Bulletin

3

SECRET