

SECRET

Czechoslovakia: Dubcek and his colleagues are searching for means to deter further public disturbances while attempting to convince the Soviets that they are in full control of the situation.

Prague's top leaders--Dubcek, President Svoboda, Premier Cernik, and National Assembly President Smrkovsky--met with university officials on 20-21 January in an attempt to mollify students incensed by the self-immolation of two Czechoslovak youths who attributed their acts to despair over the political situation. The leadership must come up with a compromise satisfactory to the students or face the possibility of other suicide attempts and demonstrations.

The first "human torch," Jan Palach, will be given a "hero's funeral" on 25 January and will be buried alongside the country's great composers, intellectuals, and writers. The ceremony will be private, but it will undoubtedly attract youths from all over the country who are intent on demonstrating in Prague.

During the demonstrations of 18-20 January, the police apparently initiated no special security precautions, and no military forces were seen in the streets. However, Cernik told the Czech trade union congress on 21 January that some of the student actions were "antisocialist" and that the security police would clamp down on any future demonstrations. Attempts by the police to break up such gatherings could lead to disturbances that would undoubtedly worsen the situation for the Dubcek leadership.

The Soviets have warned Czechoslovak leaders that they must control the situation. TASS has condemned the student acts as anti-Communist provocations, and Pravda, in describing Palach's suicide, appeared to have deliberately misrepresented

22 Jan 69

*Central Intelligence Bulletin*

2

SECRET

SECRET

the Prague leadership's sympathetic attitude. Pravda also noted that the Czechoslovak authorities will permit no further demonstrations to take place, leaving the impression that the Dubcek leadership is prepared to take strong measures to prevent them.

25X1

22 Jan 69

*Central Intelligence Bulletin*

3

SECRET