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Czechoslovakia-USSR: Party leader Dubcek has for the first time publicly acquiesced in just about all Soviet demands, and has announced his intention to set Czechoslovakia back on the road to orthodoxy.

In an emotional speech on 11 October, Dubcek said no opposition to Moscow would be allowed in the country, and that his policies would be guided by the principles of Communist party supremacy and of alliance with the USSR. All that remained of the hopes he had previously held out was his guarantee of the personal safety of law-abiding citizens. He conceded his regime's failure to appreciate Soviet views.

Dubcek's remarks may deepen divisions within the leadership on compliance with Moscow's edicts. He implicitly blamed several of his colleagues for bringing about the invasion by being "too slow" in taking effective countermeasures against incipient "antisocialist" elements. Dubcek made clear that because of Soviet demands people who dragged their feet in the past had one last chance to fall into line, and that he expects compliance with the demands of the "new reality" from party and government officials as well as from the people.

Dubcek set out severe guidelines for the public media. He stressed that censorship must be combined with dissemination of "positive views." He explicitly warned that further polemics with Moscow and its allies, "even in the face of slander," would serve no purpose.

Dubcek made it clear that while he would not resign voluntarily, Soviet dictates will be implemented with or without him. In giving this stark choice, he indicated he would stay because he had the trust of the people and implied that any Soviet-implemented successor might be much worse.

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He was probably motivated to speak as a result of an incident on 9 October, when a rally of pro-Moscow Communists in a Prague factory adopted a resolution condemning the "weakness and incompetence" of the Dubcek regime. The rally took place in the approving presence of four high-ranking Soviet military officers, at least one of whom joined in urging the adoption of the resolution.

Subsequent wide Soviet domestic publicity for the meeting suggests that Moscow feels it has found and is ready to exploit the nucleus of an indigenous Czechoslovak opposition to Dubcek. Moscow's announcement on 12 October that it will publish a Czech and Slovak language newspaper in Prague indicates that it is intent on giving its supporters there a guaranteed forum.

Both Dubcek and the Russians may be uneasy, however, about signs of unwillingness by the great majority of the people to accept the heavy Soviet hand. Numerous worker petitions are circulating, demanding complete withdrawal of Soviet troops. Dubcek admitted the course he was taking was harsh and unpopular, and he warned that continued pamphleteering against the USSR presence in the country would not be tolerated.

Dubcek's speech probably will clear the way for the conclusion of a Czechoslovak-Soviet status of forces agreement. The head of the Czechoslovak delegation which has been negotiating the agreement in Moscow reportedly returned to Prague on 11 October, while the rest of his delegation stayed behind working on details. A central committee plenum will probably follow the signing of the agreement, which may sanction the indefinite stationing of about 100,000 Soviet troops in Czechoslovakia. So far, however, there have been no changes in the status of the occupying forces.

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