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Czechoslovakia-USSR: Soviet First Deputy Foreign Minister Kuznetsov left Prague for talks with Slovak officials in Bratislava yesterday amid signs of conflicting interpretation of his mission between Czechoslovak and Soviet leaders.

Prior to his departure from the capital, Kuznetsov met with Dubcek, Premier Cernik and President Svoboda. The talks with Dubcek were characterized by Czechoslovak radio as an "exchange of opinions on topical questions of mutual relations"--language which suggests disagreement over the course of Prague's efforts to implement the Moscow accord.

There is evidence, moreover, that Moscow sent Kuznetsov to Prague to monitor Czechoslovak implementation of the agreement and not to determine to what degree it will be accepted by the Czechoslovaks. An unconfirmed UPI report states that Kuznetsov delivered a "warning" to Dubcek to purge all "counter-revolutionaries" or face extended Soviet occupation.

The Czechoslovaks, on the other hand, have been attempting to create an atmosphere conducive to negotiations. A communiqué issued by the party presidium on 6 September said that conditions have been created for "concrete and responsible negotiations by plenipotentiary representatives of both parties to the Moscow agreement."

Soviet propaganda has become increasingly sanguine over the prospects for easing tensions, taking the line that the situation in Czechoslovakia is returning to normal. Continuous allusions to alleged Western subversion and to "counterrevolutionary" forces appear to be a justification of the intervention directed toward those foreign Communist parties that condemned the Soviet action.

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[redacted] the Soviet central committee]

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9 Sep 68

Central Intelligence Bulletin

2

SECRET

[recently decided to avoid further repressive measures in Czechoslovakia in view of the increased "internal tension" there and because of the situation within the international Communist movement. Moscow apparently hopes to divert attention from the darker aspects of the occupation, and to lay the groundwork for its long-planned international Communist conference, now scheduled for late November. This conclave, however, will almost certainly be postponed.

There are tenuous indications that the Soviet party central committee may meet soon to discuss the Czechoslovak situation. Some ambassadors who are central committee members reportedly have left or are leaving their posts for Moscow, apparently for such a session. A central committee plenum would presumably endorse the Politburo's proposals for a return to normalcy in Czechoslovakia. These probably would include a prolonged military occupation of the country.

A Soviet party plenum could also result in some high-level personnel shifts should the leadership be looking for scapegoats as a measure to ease the "normalization" process in Czechoslovakia. [redacted]

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