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Czechoslovakia-USSR: The leadership changes announced in Prague are another partial step toward satisfying Soviet demands for "normalization," but are also designed not to jeopardize popular allegiance to the regime.

Former deputy premier Sik's reassignment as an economic adviser in the Czechoslovak Embassy in Belgrade was followed yesterday by the resignation of Foreign Minister Jiri Hajek and the temporary assumption of his duties by Premier Cernik.

Three pro-Soviet officials were also involved in the shifts. Internal Trade Minister Pavlovsky and the chief of the National Communications Board have been ousted from their posts. Former presidium member Drahomir Kolder was exiled to a new embassy job in Sofia.

There have been recurrent reports that Dubcek will be replaced by Slovak party chief Husak, although the latter's receptivity to Soviet overtures is as yet unclear. In recent speeches, nevertheless, Husak has been implicitly critical of the Dubcek leadership for its failure to control "antisocialist forces" prior to the intervention.

Dubcek is still to lead a high-level Czechoslovak delegation to Moscow within a few days--possibly next week--reportedly to explain Prague's responses to Soviet demands. Western correspondents have reported that he will be accompanied by President Svoboda, Premier Cernik, Husak, presidium member Spacek, and possibly others. Czechoslovak fears concerning the meeting are giving rise to rumors that it will be a showdown, with the Soviets insisting on the ouster of Dubcek and National Assembly President Smrkovsky, as well as strict Czechoslovak adherence in the future to the Russian interpretation of the Moscow agreement. President Svoboda allegedly will

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tell the Soviets that if some Czechoslovak leaders must quit, the entire Dubcek team, including Svoboda, will resign.

A hard-line Pravda article yesterday suggested that the Soviets intend to adopt an uncompromising attitude during talks with the beleaguered Czechoslovak leaders. The article argues forcefully for strengthening both discipline within the party and the party's position as the guiding force within the state. It also repudiates a variety of economic, cultural and political reforms, in effect calling for abandonment of an earlier pledge not to interfere in Czechoslovak domestic affairs. [REDACTED]

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