

SECRET

USSR-Czechoslovakia: Moscow has expressed guarded approval of the trend of developments in Czechoslovakia but continued to criticize "reactionary elements" in the country.

Pravda yesterday ran an article from its "special correspondents" in Prague alluding favorably to the restrictive measures recently adopted by the Czechoslovak regime. The article cited a growing "tendency" to understand that the "only correct and possible course has been charted in the Moscow agreements" and in the Czechoslovak central committee decisions "drawn up after the Moscow talks."

The article, however, failed to echo Prague's claims that the situation is being "normalized"--the ambiguous precondition for the withdrawal of Soviet troops. Instead, Pravda alleged that "antisocialist forces still have influence on rather considerable sections of the population," and attributed the popular hostility to the occupation forces to the "subversive activity of the right-wing forces."

Prague has been irritated by the failure of its Soviet bloc allies to keep their promise of noninterference in Czechoslovakia's internal affairs. The Czechoslovak Government has protested to Poland about allegations in the Polish press that the Czechoslovak National Assembly's foreign affairs committee had endorsed "neutrality" for Czechoslovakia.

In addition, the main Czechoslovak party daily Rude Pravo published a statement by 13 leading economists criticizing Soviet news media for their attacks on Ota Sik, foremost Czechoslovak economic theorist who recently resigned from the post of deputy premier. The Rude Pravo statement reminded the Soviets that they had promised not to interfere with the planning and management of the Czechoslovak economy.

(continued)

17 Sep 68

Central Intelligence Bulletin

2

SECRET

SECRET

* * * *

[redacted]

25X1

a Czechoslovak delegation is supposed to go to Moscow next week to negotiate the withdrawal of some of the Soviet troops. According to reports on the Moscow agreement, some Soviet troops will continue to be stationed on Czechoslovakia's border with West Germany.

There has been no substantial change in the status of Soviet forces in Eastern Europe. The US military attaché in Rumania has reported that some Rumanian troops appeared to be returning to garrison on 11-13 September. These troops probably deployed to positions near the Bulgarian border during the Czechoslovak crisis.

25X1

[redacted]

25X1

[redacted] the personnel strength of the Czechoslovak armed forces will be at least temporarily reduced.

25X1

[redacted]

25X1

[redacted] all enlisted men who had served their two-year term of service would be discharged on or about 26 September, but that the 1968 call-up of recruits had been "indefinitely deferred." [redacted]

25X1

17 Sep 68

Central Intelligence Bulletin

3

SECRET