

23 August 1968

DCI BRIEFING FOR
CONGRESSIONAL LEADERS

SOVIET TROOP MOVEMENTS

- I. The Soviet Union began deploying the forces which eventually invaded Czechoslovakia to their assembly areas near the Czech border as early as July 17. These movements, which amounted to a mobilization and deployment phase, were completed about August 10, when the Soviets terminated what had been described as a rear services exercise.
- II. In this preliminary period, the following force deployments took place:
 - A. Two armies of the GSFG--the Group of Soviet Forces in Germany--deployed to the southern part of East Germany, near the Czech frontier.
 1. These were the First Guards Tank Army and the 20th Guards Army.
 2. In addition, two East German Army divisions--the 7th Tank and the 11th Motorized Rifle--also moved near the Czech border.
 - B. The Soviets moved into Poland the 11th Guards Army from the Baltic Military District, and a division which had recently been attached to the 38th Army in the Carpathian Military District.

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1. This movement into Poland probably also included two divisions of the 28th Army from the Belorussian Military District.
 - C. In Hungary, all four Soviet divisions of the Southern Group of Forces moved from their normal garrison areas to the Czech border region.
 - D. In the Carpathian Military District, the 31st Tank Division was moved up to the border area at the eastern tip of Czechoslovakia.
 1. The 13th Army was probably mobilized and brought up to full strength, but there is no indication that it moved out of its normal area.
- III. As soon as these deployments were completed, the Soviets and their hard-line Warsaw Pact allies began a command post exercise which amounted to a rehearsal for the move into Czechoslovakia.
- IV. The actual intervention has involved 150,000 to 200,000 troops, most of them Soviet forces. There are elements, at least, of some 20 divisions--and I might note parenthetically that the Czech Army consists of 10 divisions in all, two of them well below combat strength.
- A. The main non-Soviet forces are 20,000 to 30,000 Poles in two or three Polish divisions.
 1. We cannot confirm that either Hungarian

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troops or Soviet forces from Hungary are in Czechoslovakia, but there are low level reports that some Soviet elements, with token Hungarian detachments in company, have crossed the border.

2. There is apparently some Bulgarian participation, probably under Soviet control. One report indicates that a Bulgarian regiment is in eastern Czechoslovakia, at Kosice.
3. There may be small East German units with the Soviet forces in western Czechoslovakia, but the East German divisions which deployed to the border area apparently remain in reserve on the German side of the frontier.

V. Since the intervention began, we have traced the following movements:

- A. The Soviet 20th Guards Army moved from East Germany across western Czechoslovakia on a line of march paralleling the West German border, and is deployed west of Prague.
- B. The First Guards Army moved into and south of Prague and may have pushed on to the Austrian border, which would cut Czechoslovakia in two.
 1. We have indications that the Soviet troops have been ordered to stop a few miles short of Western frontiers.

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TROOPS-3

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- C. One airborne division was airlifted into Prague from Kaunas in Lithuania, and remains in Prague. Elements of another airborne division are at Nitra in south-central Czechoslovakia.
- D. The Polish Army contingents--the 4th Mechanized Division, the 11th Tank Division, and possibly the 10th Tank Division--were sent into central Czechoslovakia. They are deployed on a line running from the vicinity of Prague to an area about 60 miles farther east.
- E. The Soviet 38th Army moved south from Poland and west from the Soviet Union into Czechoslovakia, and is apparently spread across the eastern half of Czechoslovakia.
- F. The Soviet 11th Guards Army remains in Poland.

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23 August 1968

DCI BRIEFING FOR
CONGRESSIONAL LEADERS

CIERNA AND BRATISLAVA

- I.--The leaderships of Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union confronted each other for four days--from July 29th through August first--at Cierna in extreme eastern Czechoslovakia.
- In contrast, the meeting at Bratislava on August 3, involved all of the East Europeans except Rumania, was brief, and served mainly as a joint ratification of agreements that had been reached at Cierna.
- The Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia last Tuesday is evidence enough that the meetings were a failure from Moscow's point of view.
- II. The Russians were not able to wring the concessions they wanted from the Czechs at Cierna. They discovered that verbal pressure, even backed up by the threat of military force, was not enough to make the Czechs give in. In the end, the Russians got little more than Czech pledges of good intentions.
- A. Unsatisfactory though this was, some of the Soviet leaders were probably prepared to wait, and see how the Czechs would carry through on their promises.

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1. For a time, this may even have been the attitude of a majority of the Soviet politburo.
2. By Tuesday, obviously, it was the minority view

III. We have many accounts of what went on at Cierna. They agree that the Soviets made three principal demands:

- A. One, the Czechs must accept Soviet military forces stationed in Czechoslovakia to defend the border with West Germany.
Two, the Czechs must restore complete control of their press and broadcasting--in other words, reinstitute the censorship which the Dubcek regime had abolished.
Three, they must purge certain individuals objectionable to the Russians from party and government posts.
- B. The Czechs were prepared to satisfy the Russians only on the second point--control of information media--and then only partially.
 1. Dubcek said he could not reimpose censorship, but that he was certain he could persuade the Czech press to take a more "positive" line toward the Russians.
- C. Assurances were sought and given that the Dubcek regime would maintain the predominance of the Communist party in Czechoslovakia, and would

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remain closely tied into the East European military and economic systems.

1. If the Czechs spelled out for the Russians just what they would do specifically to fulfill such promises, this would have amounted to some further concessions. We have no evidence that the Czechs went this far.

D. The Cierna meeting ended with a terse communique, implying that there was much that the two sides still disagreed over---but that they had finished on a fairly amicable note.

IV. The subsequent meeting at Bratislava was largely a matter of getting signatures on a long declaration of principles, with a heavy accent on orthodoxy.

A. The Russians in effect told the other East Europeans that Moscow had worked out an agreement with Prague, and it was up to the others to go along.

B. It seems that Ulbricht put up some resistance, but otherwise the meeting was proforma.

C. The declaration repeated standard Soviet formulas about Communist unity, the leading role of the Communist Party, and the threat of imperialism.

1. As a gesture to the Czechs, it also acknowledged that all Communist states were entitled to equality, sovereignty, and national independence.

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- V. It quickly became evident from what the Soviet press said about Bratislava that the Russians had every intention of insisting on the obligations which the Czechs had undertaken by signing, without much respect for the rights acknowledged in the same declaration.
- A. Even if the Czechs had been given more time to work out an accommodation, there would have been a long and bitter struggle between Moscow and Prague over the meaning of the declaration.
- B. Some time between the end of the Bratislava meeting and last Tuesday, a decision was taken in Moscow against letting this struggle drag on.
- C. Our present judgment is that a shift of opinion and influence within the Soviet politburo itself had much to do with the decision.
- D. In any case, the conclusion had been reached that the Cierna and Bratislava meetings had settled nothing, and that the Soviet Union was not prepared to run the risk of Czech defection from the Soviet bloc, or of contamination by the reformist ideas in Prague.

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23 August 1968

DCI BRIEFING FOR
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THE WARSAW LETTER

- I. The Warsaw Letter sent to Dubcek on July 17 by the leaders of the Soviet Union, East Germany, Poland, Hungary and Bulgaria set forth charges and demands which foreshadowed Soviet demands at the Cierna meeting. These same points presumably will be at the heart of Soviet efforts now to re-mold the Czech party and state to Soviet satisfaction.
- II. The signatories stated that the letter had been prompted by the failure of the Czech party to oppose activities designed to overthrow Communism and remove Czechoslovakia from the Communist alliance system. Basically, there were six charges, elaborated at great length:
- One, the Communist Party in Czechoslovakia was being weakened and turned into a kind of "debating club."
- Two, "Forces of reaction" had been permitted to form clubs and organizations outside the framework and control of the Communist-dominated National Front.
- Three, The Social Democrats were trying to take over leadership of the country.
- Four, anti-Communists were in control of the information

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WARSAW-1

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media.

Five, the liberal so-called "2,000 Words" Manifesto, representing the "platform of reaction," was being supported by members of the Communist Party.

Six, attempts were being made to revise Czech foreign policy, particularly with regard to West Germany and to Czechoslovakia's position within the Communist alliance.

III. Along with these charges, the letter presented specific demands, virtually ordering the Czech Party to take these steps:

One, take the offensive against "anti-Socialist"-- that is, anti-Communist--elements.

Two, mobilize the administrative powers of the state to suppress these forces.

Three, eliminate all non-Communist political organizations.

Four, Reassert control over the information media, and curtail freedom of speech and press.

Five, crush liberal opposition within the Party.

IV. The letter warned that if the Czech party failed to comply with these demands, the signatories themselves would "take the necessary steps to block the path of reaction."

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23 August 1968

DCI BRIEFING FOR
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THE ULBRICHT-DUBCEK MEETING

- I. The Ulbricht-Dubcek meeting on August 12 and 13, according to all the available evidence, amounted to nothing more than an attempt by the East German party boss to explore details of some routine bilateral problems, and improve his own somewhat tarnished image within East Germany.
 - A. The Czech National Assembly president said after the talks that discussions had focussed on "the future," and had emphasized economic relations.
 - B. This bland and polite description glossed over the background of the talks.
 1. Ulbricht had taken a highly hostile line at Bratislava, with no success. He went home with his nose out of joint.
 2. This subsequent visit, ending in a communique couched in polite diplomatic language, was supposed to give the impression back home in East Germany that he and Dubcek were still on speaking terms and that Ulbricht's views on the Czech crisis were important.

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- II. As it turned out, textual analysis of the communique, backed up by innuendos in press conference remarks by both Dubcek and Ulbricht, makes it pretty clear that there was little agreement on any of the discussion points.
- A. Ulbricht implied that Dubcek had made some concession on Ulbricht's main bugaboo, the Czech moves to improve relations with West Germany.
 - 1. Press leaks in Prague, however, possibly inspired by Czech leaders, indicated that Dubcek had yielded no ground to any of Ulbricht's criticisms.
 - B. Ulbricht himself hinted publicly that there were continuing difficulties on the important economic problems discussed.
 - C. The communique itself was brief and uninspiring.
- III. There was nothing in the whole visit that could have improved Ulbricht's assessment of the Czech reforms, and he was unusually snide in his comments on reform at the final press conference.
- A. Czech crowds openly displayed disdain and hostility toward Ulbricht.
 - B. Only a few days before the visit, the Czech Communist Party had published revised liberal party statutes that could only irritate an orthodox Communist like the East German boss.

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IV. However black Ulbricht's mood may have been when he went home, there is no evidence which would support speculation that his reaction could have been a significant element in the Kremlin decision to intervene.

- A. His advocacy of intervention was already well-known in the Kremlin before he visited Dubcek.
- B. In addition, several Soviet leaders are known to dislike Ulbricht intensely.

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CPSU CC MEETING

- I. There were two press reports that the Central Committee of the Soviet Communist Party met early this week.
 - A. The United Press reported at 10:56 EDT Tuesday morning, August 20, that the Central Committee was meeting to discuss the Czech situation.
 1. It noted that Brezhnev, Kosygin, and President Podgorny had interrupted their vacations to attend.
 2. The United Press said it could obtain no official confirmation of the report, but that there were many limousines on the Kremlin grounds.
 - B. At 3:35 p.m. Washington time, AFP, the French press agency, reported that an extraordinary session of the Central Committee had begun Monday and was expected to end Tuesday or Wednesday.
 1. AFP said that according to "reliable sources," the meeting was linked to the Czechoslovakian

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situation, and that "important and new measures were envisaged by the Soviet party leadership."

II. Those two press reports comprise all of the information that there is which bears directly on a Central Committee meeting.

- A. The U.S. Embassy in Moscow has checked its regular sources with negative results.
- B. We have not detected the usual best indication of such a meeting--the travel to Moscow of Soviet ambassadors abroad and important party officials in outlying areas of the Soviet Union who are Central Committee members.
- C. Nevertheless, we think it likely that a meeting did take place. We believe it was called suddenly and with great secrecy, and that Central Committee members serving abroad may have been left out for that reason.

III. We do know that a number of top Soviet leaders did in fact return to Moscow from their vacations over the week-end.

- A. Almost immediately after the Bratislava meeting, most of the top men headed for several vacation spots, mainly on the Black Sea.
 - 1. Brezhnev and Podgorny, for instance, were at Sochi on the Black Sea. They interrupted

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their stay briefly to visit President Nasser of Egypt, who was taking the waters at a spa in the Georgian Republic.

- 2. From August 6th to 17th, the only Politburo members noted in Moscow were Kirilenko and Mazurov. They were presumably left behind to manage routine party and government business.

SENSITIVE

- [B. We know [REDACTED] (b)(1)]
- [[REDACTED] however, that Brezhnev, Kosygin, (b)(3)]
- [Podgorny, and at least four other Politburo (T)]
- [members returned hurriedly to Moscow from their]
- [vacation spots shortly after noon Saturday,]
- [Moscow time.]
- [1. They immediately plunged into a nine-hour]
- [conference in the Kremlin which included all]
- [top party figures and, on the basis of past]
- [practice, probably Foreign Minister Gromyko]
- [and Defense Minister Grechko as well.]

- C. There is no direct information on what the politburo members discussed that brought them hurrying back to Moscow.

- 1. Their talks, however, almost certainly cast the die for the military intervention in Czechoslovakia, and we presume that this was the decision which required ratification by a Central Committee meeting.