

APPROVED FOR RELEASE
DATE: JUL 2001

~~T-O-P S-E-C-R-E-T~~ [REDACTED]

SC 05890-68

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
OFFICE OF NATIONAL ESTIMATES

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12 July 1968
1900 Hours

MEMORANDUM FOR THE DIRECTOR

SUBJECT: The Crisis in Czechoslovakia

1. Relations between Moscow and Prague have deteriorated to the lowest point since the change in the Czechoslovak leadership in January. The situation appears to be moving toward a decisive stage.

2. During the Warsaw Pact exercise in June, the Soviets introduced several thousand military personnel into Czechoslovakia. The bulk of these remain in the country, concentrated northwest and northeast of Prague. Western military attache sightings have not confirmed the presence of such large numbers of Soviet troops. Some four to six divisions have apparently been moved into positions in close proximity to the Czechoslovak frontier. The number of Soviet troops which have actually entered the country cannot be determined.

GROUP 1
Excluded from automatic
downgrading and
declassification

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3. Since about 10 July five new communications links controlled by the Soviet General Staff have been established: two terminals appear to be located in Czechoslovakia; a third is located near Budapest; another is near Uzhgorod on the Soviet-Czechoslovak border; the last is southwest of Magdeburg, East Germany. These additional links indicate an expectation by the Soviets of a substantial increase in communications. The establishment of these terminals suggests, though it does not prove, a movement or preparations for a movement of Soviet troops into Czechoslovakia from the USSR, Hungary, and East Germany.

4. Within the last two weeks increased propaganda indicates that Moscow has made some new decisions regarding Czechoslovakia. On 27 June the "2000 Words" Declaration of the Czechoslovak liberals (many of them Communist Party members) was published in several Czechoslovak newspapers. On 30 June TASS announced that the Warsaw Pact exercise was ended, then cancelled the announcement a few hours later. In early July Moscow, Warsaw, Pankow, Budapest, and Sofia sent private letters to Prague, apparently warning the Czechoslovak Party leadership and summoning the Czechs to a meeting; the Dubcek regime refused to attend. On 11 July Pravda attacked the "2000 Words" Declaration as being

- 2 -

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"counterrevolutionary," and in the spirit of the "counter-revolutionary elements" who "attempted to undermine the Hungarian people's socialist achievements" in 1956. The most ominous part of the article is that it judges guilty by association "certain leading figures in Czechoslovakia" who have made "ambiguous statements in which they try to minimize the danger inherent in the counterrevolutionary '2000 Words'." This probably points to Dubcek himself.

5. The heightened Soviet pressure constitutes a demand on Dubcek to halt or reverse the basic current of political evolution in Czechoslovakia since last January. They are backing up this demand with an evident threat of military force. To satisfy the Soviets now, Dubcek would have to make some visible concession, such as the reimposition of press censorship; or the arrest of the authors of the "2000 Words;" or the purge of some of Dubcek's liberal associates who have been criticized by the Soviet press, such as Cisar or Kriegel; or his acquiescence in the permanent stationing of some foreign troops on Czechoslovak soil. It would be extremely difficult for Dubcek to make any of these concessions at this point without running a serious risk of public disorder, with a strong anti-Soviet cast. Thus the most recent developments

- 3 -

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indicate that the chances for a violent Soviet intervention
have sharply increased.

FOR THE BOARD OF NATIONAL ESTIMATES:

Abbot Smith

ABBOT SMITH
Chairman

- 4 -

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