

APPROVED FOR RELEASE  
DATE: SEP 2004

EO 12958 3.3(b)(1)>25Yrs  
(S)

~~SECRET~~ [redacted]



BC No. 10755/88

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY  
Directorate of Intelligence  
24 August 1968

INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

The Situation in Czechoslovakia  
(As of 1700 EDT)

1. The Soviet and Czechoslovak delegations have agreed to continue their talks in Moscow on 23 August, according to TASS. Dubcek's presence at these talks is unconfirmed, although he is reliably reported to be in Moscow. The only Czechoslovak representative that the Soviets name is President Svoboda, who continues to be praised as an "outstanding statesman and soldier."

2. Foreign Minister Hajek, who addressed the Security Council this afternoon, had been instructed [redacted] to ask the council to take the Czechoslovak issue off the agenda because the Socialist countries will solve their own problems among themselves. [redacted] Hajek was also instructed by President Svoboda today to return to Prague. Deputy Premier Sik in Yugoslavia had

~~SECRET~~ [redacted]

~~SECRET~~ [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

said earlier that Hajak would return to Belgrade from New York. [REDACTED]

3. Soviet tank crews opened fire with small arms today in Prague, according to UPI. While we have no direct evidence of this incident, Moscow today accused "counterrevolutionary thugs" of trying to provoke armed clashes and bloodshed in Czechoslovakia. TASS stated that secret arms caches have been discovered in Prague and other cities and that arms were hidden in a camouflaged underground radio station broadcasting hostile information. The broadcast claimed that provocateurs have more than once opened fire on troops of the allied armies.

4. There are signs that the Soviets are taking measures to conceal from the Czechoslovak populace much of their military presence in the country. Warsaw radio this morning reported that Warsaw Pact units were continuing their withdrawal from cities in Czechoslovakia leaving only small forces to guard communications and other strategic points. The US Army attache stationed in Prague states that Soviet troops are placing their major tank and vehicle parks in wooded areas away from observations. During a trip

~~SECRET~~ [REDACTED]

~~SECRET~~ [redacted]

[redacted]

EB the West German border yesterday he also observed that most of the towns and villages were clear of road blocks and heavy armor.

5. Soviet encampments and movements are being closely watched by the Czechs.

[redacted]

In doing this it was stated that nothing should be done to provoke the Soviets. [redacted]

6. The US Embassy in Prague reporting at 1200 EDT today, stated that stores are opening that that factories were open although workers were not in them. The Embassy reported that food is still available and there is no evidence of hoarding. Noting that the occupation is bizarre, the Embassy observed that the Soviets appear perplexed and that the calm determined attitude of the population and the avoidance of anti-Soviet excesses places the Czechoslovak reformists in a stronger political

~~SECRET~~ [redacted]

~~SECRET~~

position than could have been expected. The Embassy also noted that the credit for the cohesion of the Czechoslovak must be attributed to the individuals manning the numerous independent radio stations, at least nine of which were heard on 23 August.

7. The Czechoslovak National Assembly, apparently in continuous session, this morning reaffirmed its loyalty to the government of Premier Cernik and stated it will persevere in its work until the legal representatives--Dubcek, Cernik and Smrkovsky--return. The Assembly also appealed for an end to strikes and took note of the dismissal of the hardline deputy minister of the interior Salgovec who has been collaborating with the Soviets. A few minutes later Radio Czechoslovakia broadcast an order issued by Interior Minister Pavel who confirmed Salgovic's ouster and stated that several other members of the ministry had been relieved.

8. There is no additional information concerning the situation in Rumania since our last sitrep issued at 1200 hours EDT today. There is no evidence that Rumanian Party First Secretary Ceaucescu flew to Pula, Yugoslavia, today as expected. Unconfirmed western--

~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~ [redacted]

[redacted]

press reports claim, however, Ceaucescu and Tito met today at the Yugoslov border town of Vrsac.

[redacted]

10. The US Embassy in Warsaw reported that the popular reaction in Poland is one of increasing concern and bewilderment at the fact the Soviets have not terminated things. Commenting on the difference between western and bloc versions of the Soviet intervention,

[redacted]

11. West Berlin Mayor Schuetz told the three allied commandants on 23 August he had the impression

~~SECRET~~ [redacted]

[redacted]

~~SECRET~~

that a "strong feeling of insecurity prevails in the city." In East Berlin, he said, the population was depressed but showing considerable sympathy for the Czechoslovaks, for example, by contacting the Czechoslovak embassy and cultural center there in order to express their views. Schuetz presumed that the people of East Germany were listening to West German and West Berlin radio stations and reacting very much like West Berliners and West Germans. The mayor is of the opinion that additional East German - USSR moves against West Berlin seem most unlikely, in any case until Moscow has settled the situation in Czechoslovakia.

11. Contrary to Western expectations, surprisingly few Czechoslovaks have requested political asylum abroad. The American Consul in Munich reported that as of 1200 hours (local time) on 24 August only seven Czechoslovak refugees had requested assistance. The American mission in Geneva reported that only 100 Czechoslovaks had requested asylum there as of 23 August. In contrast to the massive exodus of the Hungarians following the Soviet invasion of their country in 1956, Czechoslovaks abroad are apparently returning to Czechoslovakia in great numbers to support their country's resistance against occupation forces.

-6-

~~SECRET~~