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**CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY  
Directorate of Intelligence  
10 May 1968**

APPROVED FOR RELEASE  
DATE: OCT 2002

**INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM**

**The Situation in Czechoslovakia  
(As of 4:00 P.M. EDT)**

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1. The first inkling as to how Moscow plans to respond to press reports of Soviet troop deployments has come from a Soviet diplomat in Latin America. The Soviet, [Redacted] [Redacted] has also provided the first known response of any kind from a Soviet source to these reports. When questioned yesterday, the Soviet officer produced what he claimed was a Moscow press release that said that the troop movements are part of a Warsaw Pact exercise. Soviet troops would not, he said, enter Czechoslovakia. No such press release has yet been reported from Moscow but it is entirely possible that the officer in Montevideo has simply jumped the gun. The release as he described it is pretty much what the official Soviet response can be expected to be.

2. In a somewhat similar vein, the Czechoslovak news service reported today that the government in Prague had been informed beforehand of the Soviet troop movements and described the activity as "regular maneuvers...by the armies

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of the Warsaw Pact countries." This appears to be another effort by the Czechoslovak regime to keep tensions from rising.

East German Views

3. The number two man in the East German party, Erich Honecker, has confirmed that the Soviet and East European leaders meeting in Moscow on 8 May decided that from their viewpoint the situation in Czechoslovakia had deteriorated to such an extent that something had to be done to restrain the Czechoslovaks. The East Germans at least appear hopeful that the Dubcek regime itself soon will clamp the lid down.

4. Honecker informed a district party first secretary today that the "general evaluation", presumably made at the Moscow conference, was that the "counter-revolutionary development" in Czechoslovakia had continued after the Dresden meeting and that "it is necessary to put an end to it." Honecker added that hopefully "a group" will soon emerge "that will openly oppose the counter-revolutionary development." Honecker added that this must be "encouraged."

5. In a later conversation with another party functionary, Honecker stated that "probably in the next few days, some of the Czech comrades will openly call for a struggle against the counter-revolution." In what may have been another reference to this topic, Honecker also

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stated that "we figure that in the next few days Dubcek and others will come out openly against it. If not Dubcek, then others will."

Polish Views

6. A 9 May message from the Polish leaders to their Czechoslovak counterparts seemed designed to influence the Prague leaders to curb the liberals in Czechoslovakia. Although effusive and cordial on the surface, when read against the background of the 7 May Polish protest and of critical Polish press commentaries the message clearly was reminding Prague of its binding ties with the USSR, Poland, and other Communist states. The Warsaw regime remains unmistakably nervous about the potential effects of Czechoslovak events on the internal Polish situation and about the damage which a Czechoslovak-West German rapprochement would do to Polish foreign policy interests.

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7. In what was probably an effort to play down the situation, a Polish-Czechoslovak delegation, headed by provincial secretary Gierok and secretariat member Indra respectively, issued a resolution yesterday in Tesin, Czechoslovakia, which sanctioned the Czechoslovak

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"democratization process" while warning that the two parties will not allow "anti-socialist" elements to exploit this process. The resolution is probably designed to reassure Prague's allies that the Czechoslovak regime has not lost and will not lose control of the situation.

8. The resolution could also represent an attempt by the Poles to mitigate their earlier criticisms while at the same time re-affirming that they will oppose any further loosening of control by the Czechoslovaks.

#### Other Eastern European Views

9. Information media in most East European Communist states have not reflected the critical situation between Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union nor have rumors of Soviet troop movements towards Czechoslovakia been made public. Yugoslavia, Rumania and Hungary were effusive in their congratulations to Czechoslovakia in honor of its National Day on 9 May. While Bulgaria's congratulations were a shade cooler than in 1987, Bulgarian attendance at the Czechoslovak National Day reception in Sofia was slightly more prestigious than last year's.

10. Tito has applauded the turn of events in Czechoslovakia from the beginning and neither he nor Ceausescu would collaborate in whatever measures Moscow might take against Czechoslovakia. On the contrary, they are almost certain to exert whatever influence they have to oppose any intervention in Czechoslovak internal affairs. The Yugoslav

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Foreign Office regards the situation as serious and expects Soviet psychological pressures to continue in various forms.

11. With the possible exception of Ulbricht and Gomulka, other East European party leaders would not favor Soviet military intervention in Czechoslovakia in spite of any anxieties they may have over the course of Prague's democratization. They undoubtedly recognize that such a course of action on the part of the Soviets would seriously set back their own hard-won independence from Moscow and could unleash irrational nationalist sentiments within their countries against their own regimes.

Western European Reaction

12. Results continue to be received from yesterday's solicitation of European governments for information regarding rumored troop movements around Czechoslovakia. The British, Italian and Austrian governments are inclined to believe that some troop movements are in fact occurring, but are unanimous that no invasion is likely at this point.

13. There is some divergence of opinion over the likely objectives of troop movements. The British suspect that maneuvers are designed to encourage hard-line elements in the Czechoslovak Party's central committee to avert the course toward liberalization, while the Austrians see the maneuvers as one of several elements (others being economic pressure and media attacks) intended to slow the pace in Czechoslovakia. The Italians, too, see the military maneuvers

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as a form of pressure and warning.

14. The Austrians also believe that Czechoslovak efforts to clarify the deaths of Masaryk and other Czechs executed in the late '40s are what concern the Soviets most at this time. Moscow, they feel, fears that such suck-raking will uncover the complicity of still-active Soviet leaders, including Mikoyan, and will have a certain resonance elsewhere in Eastern Europe.

15. The Italian Ambassador in Budapest has heard rumors of Soviet troops movements in northern Hungary, and has despatched his MA to investigate.

16. [Redacted]

Italian party secretary general Longo returned from a two day visit to Prague on 7 May with a reassuring impression. Longo views Czechoslovak leader Dubcek as a responsible person who will not give the Soviets cause for provocation.

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~~MILITARY ACTIVITY~~

17. There is continuing evidence of increased Soviet military activity in southern East Germany. [Redacted]

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This is not normal exercise procedure as there is no regular training area south of Dresden.

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18. Out-of-garrison activity beginning on 7 May has been noted at the Soviet 57th and 89th Guards Motorized Rifle Division installations in south and southwest East Germany. There have been indications of a pending exercise in the Eisenach training area which may involve elements of one or both of these divisions.

19. [Redacted]

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These airfields are used by the tactical air army of the Soviet Northern Group of Forces.

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20.

21. The high-ranking Soviet military delegation which yesterday attended "Victory Day" celebrations in

Prague returned to Moscow today.

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a parade (probably on 9 May) had been cancelled because of an alert and the troops departed in such haste that they didn't have time to change their parade uniforms. It is unlikely that a practice alert would be called disrupting a Victory Day parade.

23. The Yugoslav military attache in Budapest told his US counterpart on 9 May that Soviet troops in Hungary have not moved northward and are not on alert.

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24. US and French military liaison personnel noted no major move of GSGF units toward the Czechoslovak border during Auto tours of the border area on 9 May. Further reports from these missions are expected late this evening.

25. Unfavorable conditions led to cancellation of plans for low altitude photography of selected Soviet 20th Guards Army installations in the Berlin area (see paragraph two of the 0700, 10 May Situation Report in Czechoslovakia). The flight has been rescheduled for 11 May.

LATE ITEM

26. A report [redacted] on 10 May attributed to a [redacted] correspondent there claims that Dubcek told the Soviets during his visit to Moscow on 5 May that he no longer controlled events; that the Czechoslovak army is wholly on the side of President Novboda; that Czechoslovak troops have been moved to the Polish and East German borders; and that Dubcek favors a

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break up of the state into two parts, one composed of Bohemia and Moravia, the other of Slovakia. The source claims his information was acquired at the Polish embassy.

27. As to the specifics of this report, there is no indication that Czechoslovak troops have been alerted or moved since the crisis broke. Dubcek's is known to be against any break up of the country into two parts, and it is doubtful that Moscow would countenance such an outcome. All our evidence points to the Army's loyalty being on the side of Dubcek.

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