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(S)CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
Directorate of Intelligence
28 July 1968

INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

The Situation in Czechoslovakia

(As of 11:00 AM EDT)

1. Neither Prague nor Moscow shows any give as the time for the confrontation between the Czechoslovak party presidium and the Soviet politburo draws near. This morning an important Prague Radio news commentator said in a broadcast that the meeting will be held "not in a matter of weeks or days, but practically of hours." This would tend to substantiate numerous unofficial reports that the meeting will be held on Monday.

2. Yesterday a Newsweek correspondent may have stumbled on the meeting site. While in the village of Cierna in extreme southeast Slovakia, just across the border from the Soviet rail transloading town of Cno, he noted the installation of telephone lines and other communications equipment. He further observed a number of Czechs in civilian clothes--obviously officials--

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disembark from a train. Czechoslovak military guards were patrolling the town. When his presence was discovered he was asked to leave. Communications to Cierna from Prague already are good via the Czechoslovak railroad communications lines. There are airfields within fifty miles both on the Soviet and Czechoslovak sides of the border. Traffic in the area is easily controlled and it is lightly populated.

3. A massive outpouring of citizen support emboldened party leader Dubcek to tell the nation over radio and television yesterday that the leadership would stand firm during its meeting with the Soviets. A number of other leaders have directly addressed reports of disunity in the Czechoslovak presidium, denying that such a problem exists. Nevertheless, the rumors persist. In what may have been an attempt to provoke the Soviets, ousted General Prchlik's earlier contentious statements about the Warsaw Pact were re-transmitted--along with a caveat that Prchlik's statement was unauthorized--by the Czechoslovak News Agency last night. The item was later killed.

4. Today's Pravda article set the tone for a spate of Soviet warnings on the Czechoslovak situation

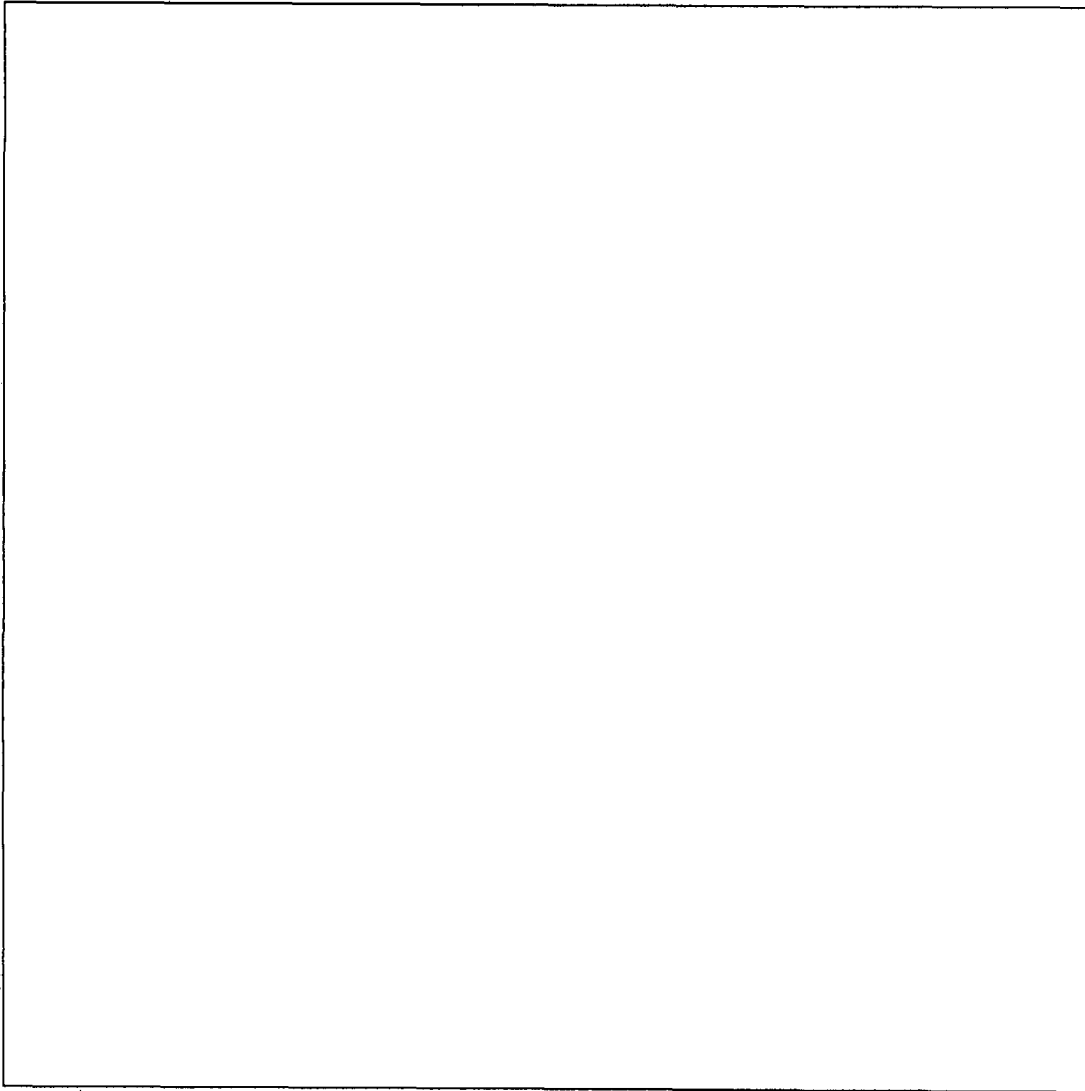
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which are being featured prominently in both domestic and international radio programming. Pravda, seemingly urging a coup, called on the "working class and all working people of Czechoslovakia with Communists at their head to bar the way to counterrevolution." The Soviet party paper also reminded the Czechs that "our party and our people attach much importance" to the meeting of the two leaderships, and hinted that Moscow was prepared to intervene if Czechoslovak "Communists" failed to act. The propaganda barrage is undoubtedly intended to influence those members of the Czechoslovak presidium who may be wavering. Moscow probably entertains hopes of being able to swing the presidium against Dubcek and the liberals at the meeting.

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9. At 11:30 AM EDT a Western press service reported from Prague that the entire Czechoslovak presidium had boarded a plane and left the city.

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At 11:30 AM EDT a Western press service reported from Prague that the entire Czechoslovak presidium had boarded a plane and left the city. Their destination is not known but there are unconfirmed reports that the site of the Soviet-Czech meeting may be the village of Cierna in the extreme southeast of Slovakia.

A massive outpouring of citizen support emboldened party leader Dubcek to tell the nation over radio and television yesterday that the leadership would stand firm during its meeting with the Soviets.

Today's Pravda article set the tone for a spate of Soviet warnings on the Czechoslovak situation which are being featured prominently in both domestic and international radio programming. Pravda called on the "working class and all working people of Czechoslovakia with Communists at their head to bar the way to counterrevolution." The Soviet party paper also hinted that Moscow might be prepared to intervene if Czechoslovak "Communists" failed to act. The propaganda barrage is undoubtedly intended to influence those members of the Czechoslovak presidium who may be wavering.

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