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CZECHOSLOVAK LEADERS FACE NEW PRESSURES

The Czechoslovak Government signed a demeaning status-of-forces agreement with the Soviet Union on 16 October. Although the treaty touches on a number of important points that are still to be negotiated in detail, it was ratified two days later by both Prague and Moscow. On the basis of its terms, the bulk of the occupation forces theoretically should be out of the country by mid-December.

Many of the articles in the treaty lend themselves to various

SELECTED EXCERPTS FROM THE TREATY

Art. I. ...Soviet troops...will remain temporarily...to ensure against the increasing revanchist strivings of West German militarist forces.

Art II. ...Soviet troops do not interfere in internal affairs....

Art III. The Soviet side shall bear maintenance costs....

Art IV. ...Persons serving with Soviet troops... are exempt from passport or visa control....

Art VII. The government of the CSSR shall give...the necessary sums of Czechoslovak crowns for expenses....

Art IX. ...In cases of crimes committed by...persons serving with Soviet troops...Czechoslovak legislation shall be applied....Crimes committed by Soviet servicemen shall be examined by [Czech] military judicial bodies....

Art X. ...The USSR agrees to compensate...the CSSR for material damage...inflicted by...Soviet armed units....

interpretations. Among those requiring further negotiations between the two sides are the number and location of the remaining Soviet troops; regulations under which the Czechoslovaks will provide currency, goods, and services to these troops; and the procedures applicable to Soviet payments for these services.

The Soviet press gave heavy play to the treaty. Moscow probably believes that although it has not yet forced Prague's leaders to admit that the intervention was justified, the agreement represents a large step toward achieving what it regards as "normalization." All Czechoslovak newspapers printed a full text of the treaty without comment. Moreover, Czechoslovak mass media continued to criticize the Soviets subtly, to voice popular support for the Dubcek leadership, and to attack a resurgence of conservative activity.

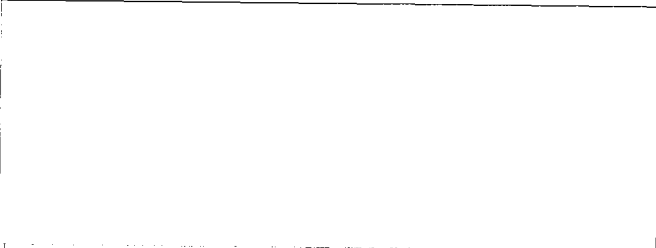
There are sharp differences of opinion among top Czechoslovak officials over the treaty, which parliament ratified after a stormy session punctuated by speeches and resolutions opposing it. Dubcek appears resigned to the agreement,

Slovak party boss Husak's

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recent speeches suggest that he too may be willing to collaborate with Moscow.



press reports suggest that another new hard-line "leader" has emerged: Miroslav Jodas, an Interior Ministry official during the Stalinist era, is reportedly heading a group trying to mobilize pro-Soviet elements in the party.

Fear among liberals and moderates that the conservatives have formed the nucleus of an organization with which to challenge Dubcek is leading to a polarization in the party ranks.

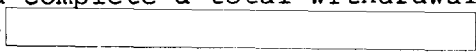


Moreover, the pro-Dubcek party organization in Prague claims that the conservatives have called for legal proceedings against officials of the mass media for their activities during and immediately after the invasion. This report may have contributed to rumors that hard liners have drawn up a blacklist of liberals and plan to stage show trials once they have sufficient power.

Moscow presumably is attempting to strengthen the conservative cause by imposing certain selective restraints on Czechoslovak liberals. The Soviets are said to have prohibited mass public celebrations on the 50th anniversary of the First Republic on 28 October while forcing Dubcek to allow pro-Soviet conservatives to meet openly in preparation for an anniversary "celebration" of the Russian Revolution on 7 November. 25X1

The Soviets also reportedly insisted that the Czechoslovak party central committee postpone any meeting until after 27 October. Moscow probably hopes that the dissension over the treaty among Czechoslovak leaders will intensify, while conservative elements--with Soviet assistance--strengthen their position.

Warsaw Pact troop withdrawals continued this week. The bulk of the occupying forces, however, is still situated in or near Czechoslovakia. 25X1

By 24 October two Soviet divisions had finished their withdrawal from Czechoslovakia to the Baltic Military District of the USSR. The Hungarian, Bulgarian, and Polish governments have indicated that their troops have begun to return home and that they would complete a total withdrawal soon. 

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