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CZECHOSLOVAKIA BOWS TO NEW SOVIET DEMANDS

Stepped-up Soviet efforts to force the Dubcek leadership into submission have been partly successful.

Premier Kosygin led a high-ranking Soviet Government delegation to Prague on 16 October to get formal Czechoslovak acquiescence in a status-of-forces agreement that will provide the basis for the indefinite stationing of Soviet troops in Czechoslovakia. Premier Cernik signed for Czechoslovakia. Details of the treaty were not immediately available.

In a speech at the treaty signing ceremony, Kosygin said that the bulk of the Soviet and other Warsaw Pact troops will be withdrawn by stages in the next few months. Taken with his strong statements on the continuing need to defend the socialist community, this formulation suggests that it will be at least well into the winter before even the 100,000 level is reached.

The Kosygin delegation's arrival in Prague followed Premier Cernik's talks in Moscow on 14-15 October. The large delegation Cernik brought with him apparently concerned itself with the legal and financial issues raised by the presence of Warsaw Pact troops.

[redacted] the Soviets have developed a "no-nonsense" attitude toward Prague. Rather than being treated as equals in negotiating with the Russians, the Czechoslovaks were presented with a new set of demands that included a sharp reduction in Czechoslovak Communist Party membership, reorganization of the party's structure, and installation of new leaders. The talks were reportedly so one-sided that the Czechoslovak party presidium subsequently approved the conduct of the delegation, but not the results of the negotiations.

Dubcek, in an emotional speech on 11 October, for the first time publicly acquiesced in virtually all the Soviet demands, and announced his intention to steer Czechoslovakia back on the road to orthodoxy. He said that no opposition to Moscow would be allowed and that his policies would be guided by the principles of Communist party supremacy and of alliance with the USSR.

Dubcek's remarks may have deepened divisions within the leadership over compliance with Moscow's edicts. He blamed several of his colleagues for bringing about the invasion by being "too slow" in taking effective countermeasures against "antiso- cialist elements." In addition, Dubcek make it clear that officials who had dragged their feet in the past now had one last chance to fall into line, and

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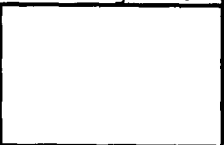
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that he expects compliance with the demands of the "new reality" from party and government functionaries as well as from the people.

Dubcek also made it clear that while he himself would not resign voluntarily, Soviet dictates will be implemented with or without him. He indicated that he would stay because he had the trust of the people and implied that any Soviet-implemented successor might be much worse.


Moscow, moreover, may believe that it has found and can begin to exploit the nucleus of Czechoslovak opposition to Dubcek. Pro-Soviet Communists have held at least two meetings, one of which concluded by adopting a resolution condemning the "weakness and incompetence" of the Dubcek regime.



Moscow's announcement on 12 October that it will publish a Czech and a Slovak language newspaper in Prague indicates that it is intent on

giving its supporters there a guaranteed forum.

The resurgence of party conservatives is probably responsible in part for a growing dissidence among the population at large. Some non-Communist political groups, which have been banned since the invasion, reportedly have been meeting in secret and allegedly are being encouraged by provocateurs. Moreover, some intellectuals believe that it is time for the Czechoslovaks to show their disapproval of Prague's growing subservience to Moscow, and that it may be necessary to go to jail to get this message across. There is also talk of the need for a new intellectuals' manifesto similar to the sensational anti-Soviet tract, entitled "2,000 Words," which was published last summer.

The Czechoslovak party presidium plans to present to a meeting of the central committee, tentatively scheduled for later this month, a list of party tasks drawn up in the light of several "situation reports" prepared by Czech and Slovak officials. Resignation of some high-level liberals may be announced at that meeting. 

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