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## INVASION OF CZECHOSLOVAKIA LEAVES UNCERTAIN AFTERMATH

Czechoslovak courage and coolness in the face of overwhelming Soviet force left the question of victor and vanquished in doubt even in Czechoslovakia where the Soviets seemed determined to settle in for a relatively lengthy "presence." There is no doubt that the pace of Czechoslovak liberalization has been slowed and that the Soviet troops will assure greater compliance with the Soviet interpretation of the Moscow agreement than the USSR was able to achieve after the earlier Cierna and Bratislava agreements.

As one Czechoslovak official put it, however, the last ten days have raised Czechoslovak national unity to new heights, stirred massive anti-Soviet sentiments, and thoroughly convinced the people of the need for free media--all grounds for new conflict between Moscow and Prague.

Whatever the outcome, for Moscow the losses of prestige around the world and the significant statements of opposition from heretofore "loyal" Communist parties are palpable. Seldom has the propaganda line issuing from Moscow provided a thinner cover for its actions, and many Soviet officials abroad have expressed dismay. Over time, Moscow can probably count on national interest reducing the harsh feelings now being expressed, and some of the Communist parties that broke with Moscow probably will also edge back into the fold. With the West, and especially with the US, the chance of working out mutually advantageous agreements has been set back.

Presumably, Moscow took all of these things into account when it made the decision to invade, but decided that the need to halt Czechoslovak liberalization was overriding. As it turned out, however, Moscow took the expected losses without real assurance that it had achieved its main goal.

The settlement announced in Moscow on 27 August was at best a Pyrrhic victory for the Soviet leaders. In contrast to its well-planned and smoothly executed military take-over on 20 and 21 August, the USSR does not seem to have had any well conceived, soundly based political alternatives. If the Soviets expected a puppet government to form from conservatives and hard liners in the regime, they were sadly misled. Instead, the existing government, though missing some members, continued to act effectively. The party also did not falter and--with its leader, Dubcek, under arrest--convened its extraordinary 14th Party Congress--originally set for 9 September--on 22 August.

The Congress elected an acting first secretary, a new reformist-minded central committee, and a new party presidium, with Dubcek, Premier Cernik, and President Svoboda named as members. Several other Czechs who had been strongly criticized by Moscow were also elected, but none of those members of the former presidium who were considered Soviet collaborators.

The unity and moral strength of the Czechoslovaks in their opposition to the occupation, as well as

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the high discipline of the populace and the Czechoslovak military forces, apparently gave the USSR second thoughts about the severe risks of provoking active resistance if it imposed a narrowly based occupation regime. This behavior on the part of the country also provided the Czech leadership with some of its strength in negotiating with the Soviet leaders.

Out of the stalemate that had developed--a total Russian occupation and an unbending population and government--emerged the plan for President Svoboda on 23 August to lead a delegation to Moscow to negotiate a settlement. He was accompanied by two conservative party members and three reformers, all Dubcek appointees. In a speech before his departure, Svoboda said he was going to Moscow at his own request. He was received by Brezhnev, Kosygin, and Podgorny, and accorded the full honors befitting a chief of state.

The talks in Moscow, instead of lasting only a day as originally announced, covered four hectic days ending on the night of 26 August. The original delegation from Prague was joined on 24 August by Dubcek and Premier Cernik, and later by nearly all of the Czechoslovak party presidium. On the last day of the talks, the leaders of Moscow's allies--Gomulka, Ulbricht, Kadar, and Zhivkov--gave their stamp of approval to the modus vivendi worked out between the Czechoslovak and Soviet leaders.

On 27 August, Moscow released a communiqué providing the substance of the agreement with the Czechs. It was signed by 13 So-

viet leaders, including 9 out of the 11 members of the politburo, and by 19 Czechoslovak leaders, also including 9 of 11 presidium members. President Svoboda and Party First Secretary Dubcek subsequently gave grave, emotion-laden speeches appealing to their people to understand the circumstances of the agreement and to maintain order, unity, and discipline.

The key points in the agreement, as set forth in the communiqué, are: the Soviet troops that "temporarily" entered Czechoslovakia will not interfere in Czechoslovak affairs and will be withdrawn "as the situation normalizes"; all Czechoslovak media would serve the party and the cause of friendship among Communist nations, i.e., censorship; both sides agreed to strengthen the solidarity of the socialist community, fulfill bilateral and multilateral agreements, and "administer a resolute rebuff" to those who would encroach on the existing borders in Europe; and, the Czechoslovaks agreed to demand the removal of the Czechoslovak question from the UN agenda.

The Czechoslovak people have somehow found it within themselves to live with, at least for the moment, the terms of the communiqué--a very bitter pill--and at the same time to retain their sense of pride and of having played an historical role in the restoration of Czechoslovakia's honor. The realization of their still precarious position will probably prevent any serious active popular resistance. At this point, it is evident to the populace that they would have much to lose and nothing to gain by such action.

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Since 28 August, the government has seemed intent on restoring the country to an even keel. A special commission has been established to determine the steps necessary to implement the Moscow "agreement." At the same time, the newly elected party central committee met, possibly to discuss the validity of the extraordinary 14 Party Congress. Dubcek had implied in his speech on 27 August that the results of this congress might not be acceptable. There were signs, however, that Dubcek would face stiff resistance within the party if he tried to overturn the congress' actions.

The National Assembly resolved unanimously that the Warsaw Pact occupation was illegal and insisted that a "concrete date" be fixed for the troops' withdrawal. It also demanded that information media and government organs be allowed to function freely. The Slovak party, for its part, on 28 August elected a liberal as its new first secretary, replacing a conservative. A new presidium was also elected with nine newcomers, giving it a decisively reformist character.

Moscow's handling of the political side of the invasion and its aftermath gave many signs of misjudgement and vacillation in

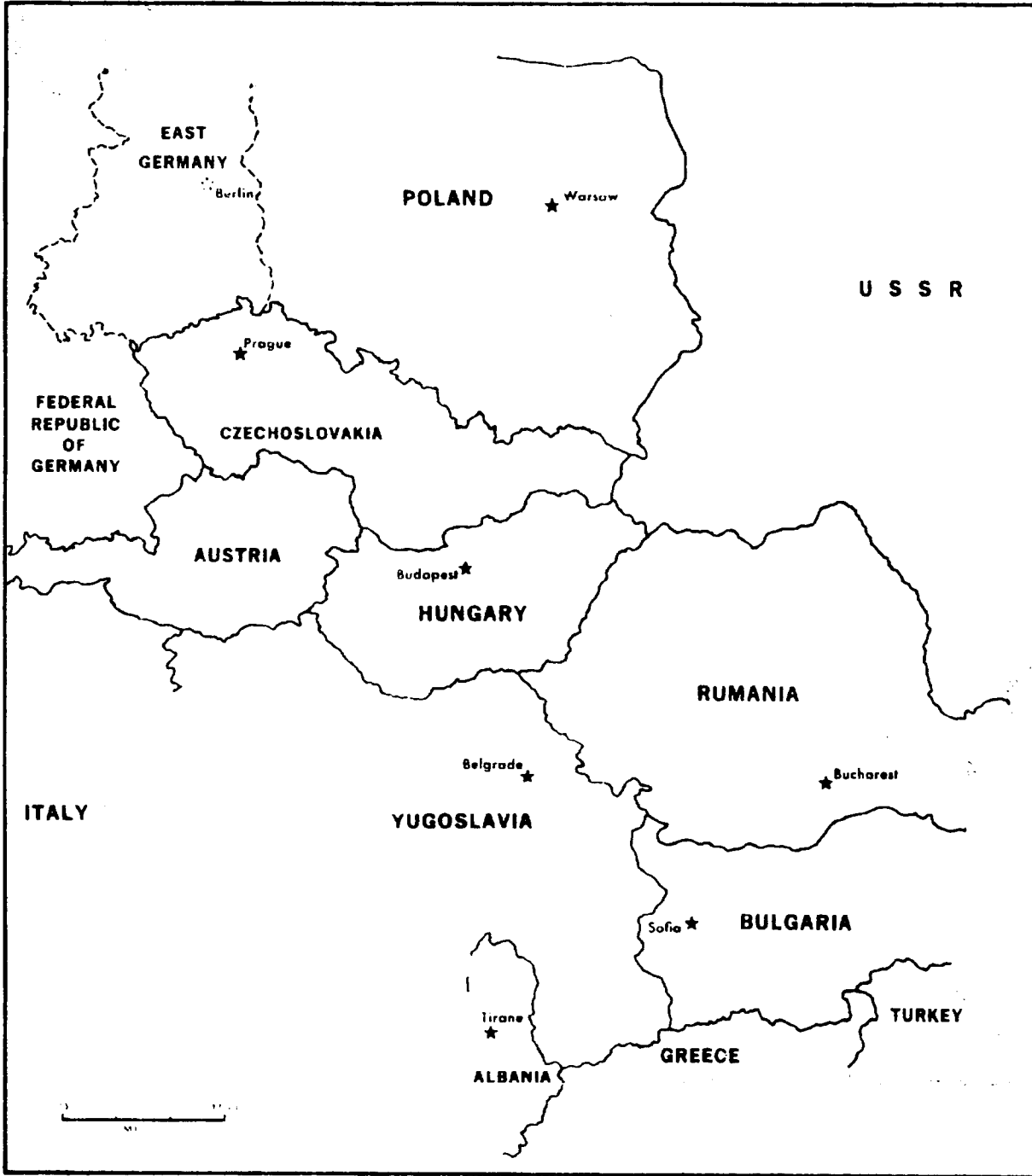
the leadership. Although the collective leadership as a whole has the responsibility for the decisions taken in the crisis, there have been persistent reports of divisions within this group. The Czech issue will, in any case, put severe strain on Brezhnev's "centrist" coalition--Podgorny, Kirilenko, Polyansky, and Shelest, 25X1 plus the doctrinaire Suslov and the more moderate Premier Kosygin.

[redacted] Suslov and Kosygin opposed military intervention. It is possible that the younger members of the politburo whose political ambitions have been frustrated under the Brezhnev leadership may be seeking to capitalize on any dissatisfaction with the leadership's handling of the Czechoslovak problem. 25X1

Large numbers of Soviet troops moved out of towns and cities into positions away from the population, but the Soviets continued to strengthen their hold on the country. [redacted] 25X1

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