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### NATO'S RESPONSE TO THE CZECHOSLOVAK CRISIS

The NATO allies ended the first round of their continuing assessment of the Czechoslovak crisis last week in general agreement on the need--if not the means--for strengthening the alliance.

In four days of special consultations, all 15 allies recognized the importance of developing a greater degree of solidarity

in the wake of the Soviet intervention. There was also a general reaffirmation--although without French concurrence--of the traditional concept of "forward defense," envisioning an initial response to Soviet aggression as close to Communist borders as possible.

The three allied powers responsible for Berlin reasserted

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their basic commitment to defend the city. The allies pointedly subordinated the search for détente to their own defense interests. In advancing the date of the regular NATO ministerial meeting to mid-November the members symbolically underlined the importance of the events in Czechoslovakia for the alliance.

Judging from initial statements, however, few of the European governments were willing to match principle with performance. West Germany tentatively offered to maintain a small number of additional forces, while Italy agreed to upgrade the readiness of units already assigned to NATO. Only Greece, with an obvious stake in strengthening its image, went beyond a purely minimal commitment, offering both a budgetary increase and a hike in the number of its NATO contingents.

The British, who had already pledged two increases in their forces prior to the Soviet invasion, declined to take on any new obligations until the allies jointly determined NATO's needs and priorities. Most of the

smaller members were also unwilling to move ahead without some kind of prior agreement on joint defense goals.

One decision taken last week may eventually meet this requirement. Ignoring French protests, the North Atlantic Council finally endorsed a summary statement on the meetings highlighting various categories of action deemed necessary. This document may permit some of the more cautious allied governments to urge their parliaments to grant higher appropriations for defense.

The progress toward a collective initiative could also pay another dividend. It has already focused new attention on the possibility that Europe could assume a more equitable share of NATO's defense burdens and responsibilities. In particular, it revived interest in creating a European "identity" within NATO. Talk has also been renewed--especially in the Benelux states--about using the Western European Union as a center for European collaboration in defense as well as political matters.

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### ~~NEW PORTUGUESE GOVERNMENT MAKES IMPRESSIVE DEBUT~~

~~Marcello Caetano's initial moves as prime minister are creating a favorable impression of his ability to handle the transition from Salazar.~~

~~His inaugural speech was a model of balance between affirming continuity with Salazar's pol-~~

~~icies and hinting at the need for cautious and gradual changes. While praising Salazar, Caetano clearly showed that he means to be his own man. His cabinet retains most of Salazar's key ministers, but the few new appointees--mostly professional people close to Caetano--will bring~~

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