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## PRAGUE AND MOSCOW EDGE TOWARD SUMMIT MEETING

The Soviets intensified their political pressure on Prague this week, as Czechoslovak and Soviet leaders prepared to confront one another directly. Although Moscow agreed to the Dubcek regime's proposal to hold bilateral discussions on Czechoslovak soil, there was little information as of 25 July on when the meeting would take place or on the composition of the delegations.

TASS announced on 22 July that the Soviet politburo had agreed to the bilateral meeting, "having in mind" that the entire ruling bodies of both parties would attend. The Czechoslovak presidium quickly acknowledged the TASS statement, but said nothing as to the specific place and time of the meeting. Czechoslovak officials stated that these details were being negotiated.

Prague has yet to announce officially that its entire 11-member presidium would meet the Soviet politburo, and the composition of the delegations may be another detail being negotiated. The Soviets are pressing to have the entire Czechoslovak presidium included, presumably because they believe that one or more of the Czechoslovaks will waver in the face of Soviet pressure.

Various factions are represented in the Czechoslovak presidium, and some members reportedly favored the Soviet - Eastern European summons to attend the summit meeting in Warsaw on 14-15 July. They eventually acquiesced in the final decision not to go, however,

and since then the nationwide support given to the leadership has strengthened party leader Dubcek's position. Although Dubcek presumably would prefer that a smaller group of his most trusted supporters represent Czechoslovakia, he may relent on this point in the expectation that the Czech ranks can be held together. Moscow's heavy-handed use of military pressure seems to be helping unite the Czechoslovaks and their leadership.

The steadily mounting Soviet pressure indicates that Moscow probably will restate the demands made on Prague in the joint letter sent by the Warsaw conferees, and will seek tangible Czechoslovak concessions. Partly for domestic political reasons, however, Prague cannot afford to give much ground.

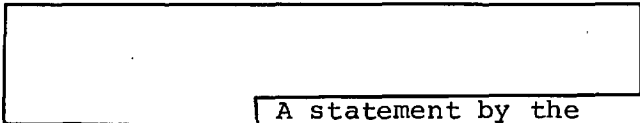
In an effort to bolster the position of its politburo in the confrontation with the Czechoslovak leadership, Moscow announced on 23 July that a large Rear Services exercise was taking place in most of the western USSR. Along with this saber rattling, the Soviets stepped up their propaganda against Prague, broadening their blacklist of Czechoslovak officials in the process. Earlier, several editorials in Pravda and Izvestia and a statement by President Podgorny had clearly expressed the USSR's disenchantment with the situation in Czechoslovakia.



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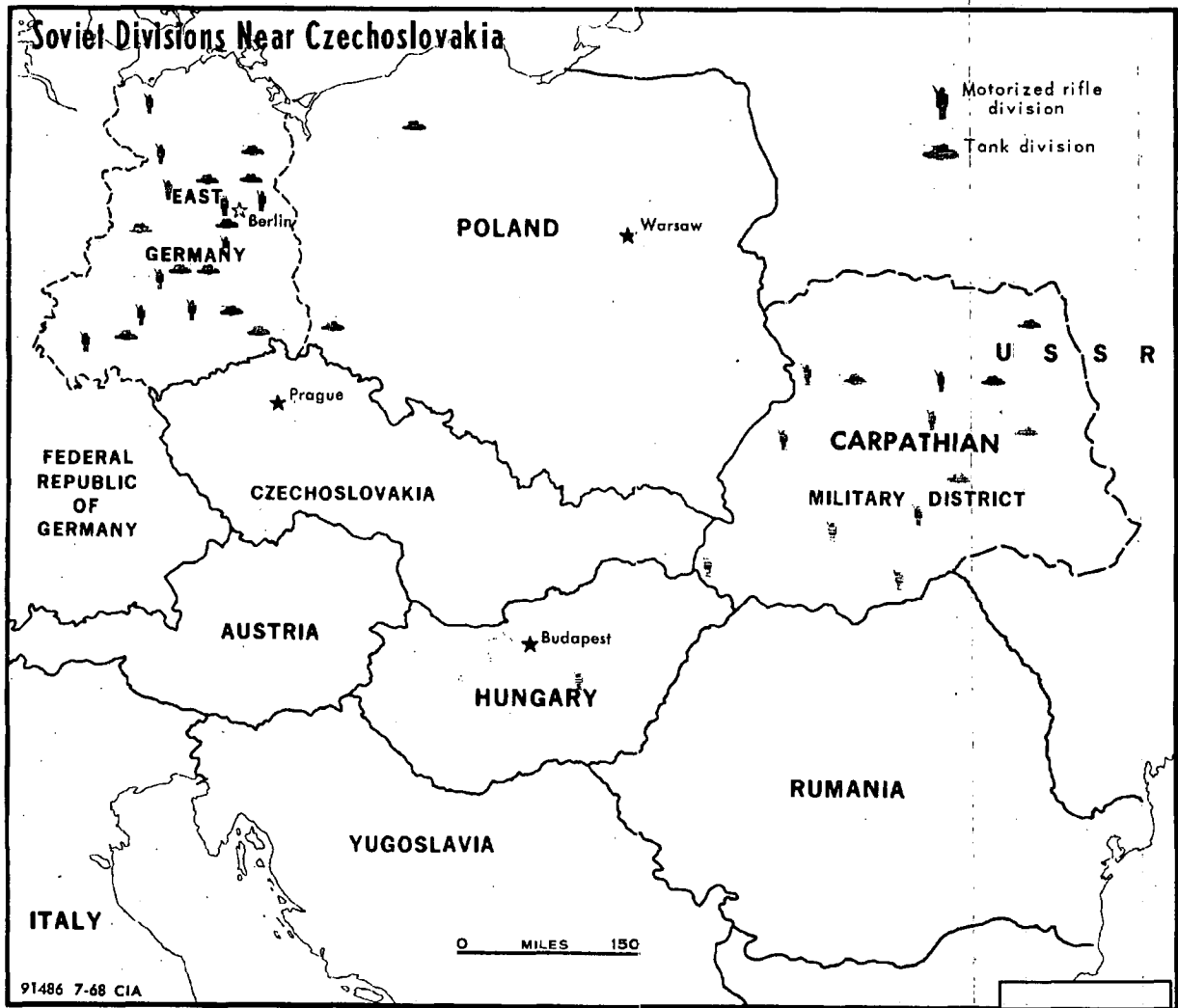
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A statement by the commander of the Czechoslovak border guards defending Prague's ability and willingness to protect its borders suggests that the Czechoslovaks are alert to a possible attempt by Moscow to justify a demand for stationing some of its troops in Czechoslovakia.

Despite Moscow's pressure tactics, Prague has maintained its resolute stance. A central committee meeting on 19 July unanimously acclaimed the presidium's reply of 18 July to the Warsaw conferees. Dubcek restated at the meeting that the party is "resolved" not to depart from the path it charted in January. He again asserted that if the party were to reverse its course, socialism in Czechoslovakia and the



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"international Communist movement" would be discredited. As he had on earlier occasions, Dubcek called on the Czechoslovak news media to exercise voluntary self-restraint, but offered no essential concessions in the face of the Soviet demand for a severe crackdown. The presidium's stand has received widespread and continuing support from the Czechoslovak public as well as from government and party organizations.

Only Poland, East Germany, and Bulgaria have backed the USSR. Of these, the East Germans led the way in launching vicious propaganda attacks against Prague. Indeed, 25X1 with the exception of East Germany, no Eastern European country appears to favor Soviet military intervention in Czechoslovakia.

Yugoslav and Rumanian diplomats are planting seeds of optimism in Eastern Europe, suggesting that in their view Soviet military intervention is unlikely. The Yugoslavs

and Rumanians are, however, anticipating a continuation of psychological pressures on the Dubcek leadership.

At a reception in Prague on 22 July, Czechoslovak military officials told the US Army attaché that the Soviets had moved 15-16,000 troops into Czechoslovakia for the recent Pact exercise and that 5-6,000 were still in the country but would be withdrawn by 25 July. On 24 July, however, a Czechoslovak party spokesman confirmed the continued presence of some Soviet troops. The spokesman said "small units" would remain in Czechoslovakia until the issuance of a communiqué.

The large-scale Rear Services exercise in the western USSR includes units in the Carpathian Military District adjacent to Czechoslovakia. US military attaché observations in the Moscow area on 23 July indicate that some Rear Services exercise-associated activity is under way in that area. At least one other large Rear Service exercise of this type took place in the Soviet Union in 1961. The exercise reportedly is to end on 10 August.

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