

## USSR RESORTS TO INVASION IN CZECHOSLOVAK CRISIS

Soviet and East European forces began moving into Czechoslovakia late on 20 August and by early morning on the next day had occupied Prague and other major cities. The movement of forces was implemented suddenly and apparently caught the Czechoslovak leadership off guard.

A large portion of the 20-odd Soviet divisions ringing Czechoslovakia apparently have moved into the country along with East German, Polish, Hungarian, and Bulgarian units.

There are no indications that any Czechoslovak military units resisted the intervention.

Despite the smoothness of the military operation, the Soviet political actions which preceded it suggest that the decision to intervene militarily came at a fairly late date. Among these were the reported convening of the Central Committee when the top leaders were on vacation, the flimsiness of the legal base for Soviet action, and the failure to surface quickly an alternative leadership in Prague. It would appear that Soviet intervention did not flow naturally from the Cierna meeting but represented instead a scrapping of the position agreed to there.

The most likely explanation of this reversal appears to be that under the impact of internal pressures within the leadership and importuning from its anxious allies in Eastern Europe, the fragile balance in the politburo was upset in favor of those who may all along have wanted the toughest kind of policy and who have made use of the time and developments since Cierna to undo the agreement.

Soviet troops quickly rounded up the leading liberals in the Czech administration, including party chief Dubcek, Prime Minister Cernik, National Assembly chairman Smrkovsky, and Party Secretary Cisar. At the same time the occupation forces permitted leading Czechoslovak political bodies to meet and issue proclamations and allowed the press and radio to operate through most of the 21st.

By evening, however, many of the regular radio and television stations had ceased transmitting and Soviet troops had occupied the news agency headquarters. Numerous loyalist transmitters, nevertheless, continued to broadcast in support of the Dubcek regime. As the Soviets arrived in other localities, many unit commanders agreed with local authorities to limit their presence

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in the cities and towns in exchange for assurances that the local populations would be restrained from provocative activities.

Czech party and government authorities ordered that there be no military resistance to the intervening forces and, later, urged the Czech people to avoid active resistance. Sporadic resistance, however, was offered in a few localities; a total of six killed and about 200 wounded was reported during the first 24 hours. The people also manifested their support for Dubcek in a series of parades, demonstrations and wildcat strikes. The Czechoslovak military refused to cooperate with the occupying forces, and Defense Minister Dzur, who was later arrested, instructed the army to obey only those orders issued by President Svoboda. A progovernment radio station suggested to signal units of the army and amateur radio operators that they jam the signals of the occupying forces. The National Assembly held out the prospect of a general strike as a last resort to counter the intervention.

The Soviets apparently did not have a puppet government ready to take power, but by 22 August it was evident that they were working with a group of the more conservative members of the regime in an effort to establish a more malleable government. On the 22nd, Pravda for the first

time condemned Dubcek by name, accusing him of leading a minority faction which supported counter-revolution and had treacherously betrayed Communist ideals. A Moscow radiobroadcast cited approvingly an anonymous address by certain regime members who claimed that the intervention had safeguarded Czechoslovakia's past, present and future.

Czechoslovak radio stations loyal to Dubcek claimed that a group of central committee members--including presidium members Bilak, Barbirek Svestka and Kolder, and secretariat member Indra--had met with the Soviets on 21 August and planned other meetings. These men are likely candidates to form the nucleus of a new regime.

Radio Prague reported that according to "military circles" of the Soviet Army, Moscow apparently hoped to impose a new government on Czechoslovakia on 22 August. The radio added that a list of those legally-elected Czechoslovak representatives to be arrested has been prepared. An earlier broadcast had stated that members of the Czechoslovak security forces, in cooperation with Soviet military police, are "taking action" against the lawful Czechoslovak representatives. This does not, however, appear to be true in all cases.

Czechoslovak party loyalists apparently still hoped on 22 August

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to stage the 14th Party Congress--originally scheduled for 9 September--in a last ditch effort to demonstrate that they would not accept a government and party leadership imposed from Moscow. A loyal radio station has appealed to delegates to the Congress to go to factories in the Prague area to prepare for an immediate meeting. The radio told them not to go the Hotel Praha or to district party headquarters, warning that the former was a trap and the latter would no longer help them. The radio also denounced as "traitors" the five high party officials who have urged cooperation with the Soviets.

The reactions of European Communist states and parties to these events have been as expected. The Eastern European participants in the military move echoed the Soviet rationale for intervention.

In Rumania, a joint session of party and government officials and representatives of mass organizations issued a communiqué on 21 August which expressed full

solidarity with the Czechoslovak people and the Czechoslovak Communist party. The communiqué bluntly stated that "nothing can justify" armed intervention against Czechoslovakia which it described as a "flagrant violation of national sovereignty."

Following the joint session, Rumanian party and state chief Nicolae Ceausescu made a highly nationalistic speech and condemned the action of the Warsaw Pact five. Ceausescu appealed to the populace to be calm and firm but vigilant, and ready "at any moment to defend our socialist fatherland, Rumania." Ceausescu announced the establishment of Worker-Peasant Guard units.

In Yugoslavia, Tito spoke more softly than Ceausescu, probably because of concern that unrest might be sparked in Yugoslavia by the Russian action. Tito merely expressed "concern" over the violation of Czechoslovakia's sovereignty. The details of the Yugoslav position probably will be developed at a party plenum scheduled for 23 August.

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### Military Intervention in Czechoslovakia



*Movement of Soviet and East European Forces*

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