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POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE CZECHOSLOVAKIA CRISIS

Report by the Council in Permanent Session

I. INTRODUCTION

The forces of the Soviet Union and of Poland, the Soviet Zone of Germany, Bulgaria and Hungary invaded Czechoslovakia in the night of 20th/21st August, 1968. A brief description of the events leading up to the invasion appears at Annex to this Report.

2. The Czechoslovak crisis is not ended and the situation is still fluid. New developments and ramifying implications point up the highly tentative nature of any assessment made at this time. On many points our information is too incomplete to warrant a conclusion, and on some important questions e.g. what happened in the Soviet Politburo, it is likely to remain so. However, significant elements essential to an understanding of the situation have already emerged.

II. MOTIVATIONS OF THE SOVIET DECISION TO INTERVENE

GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

3. The present Soviet leaders, inheriting an empire based on the use of force, have long had the problem of insuring the cohesion of a political structure within which evolutionary and centrifugal forces have been at work. So there has been a post-war record of disputes with Yugoslavia, Albania, and Rumania, as well as internal troubles in the Soviet Zone of Germany in 1953 and in Poland and Hungary in 1956.

4. The Soviet leaders have been unable to develop any coherent plan to cope with the continuing problems raised by the internal evolution within the countries of Eastern Europe or arising from their relations with the West.

(1) This edition contains the amendments previously circulated in P0/68/522.

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5. In recent years, however, it has been generally assumed that there was a degree of tolerance in Moscow for change within the Soviet bloc which would permit evolutionary reforms and a gradual process of improved relations between East and West. In the climate of 1968 many observers did not believe that 1953 and 1956 could be matched by another military intervention. Why did they do it?

6. It is now evident that the Dubcek régime, especially in the work programme adopted by the Czechoslovak Communist Party in April, surpassed the limits of Soviet tolerance for the scope and rate of change they were willing to permit on the part of their Warsaw Pact allies.

7. After the Dubcek group ousted Novotny from power in January, the Soviets sought initially to contain and limit developments. Later, as it became more apparent that the Czechoslovak leaders could not, or would not, control events, the Soviets attempted to reverse the course in Czechoslovakia by a campaign of rising political propaganda and diplomatic and military pressure. There are grounds for thinking that the decision to carry out the threat of military invasion, always implicit since the month of May, was made no earlier than the weekend of 16th to 18th August, when the Soviets concluded that their aims could not be achieved by non-military means.

8. No doubt the Soviet Government anticipated at that point that there would be a prompt change in the Czechoslovak leadership and a degree of popular acceptance both for the new régime and of Soviet action in support of it. Whatever plan the Soviets had in mind for political implementation of their move to control events in Czechoslovakia, therefore went wrong.

9. The Soviet leaders very probably judged that there was no significant risk of a military confrontation with the West in taking the step of military intervention. On the other hand, they were well aware, in at least a general way, of the serious implications which would follow from military intervention, and of the damage likely to result to the international Communist movement, to Soviet international relations, and to the Soviet "image" of peace and respectability which they have been seeking to promote in recent years. Given the price of the action taken, it must be assumed that Soviet leaders had strong convictions that intervention was in their interest.

SPECIFIC MOTIVATIONS

10. It is, of course, extraordinarily difficult to analyse Soviet motivations with assurance or to assess any particular order of priorities as they were seen through Soviet eyes. None the less, without attempting to reflect an order of priorities, it seems clear enough that the following motivations were at work.

(a) Ideological

11. The efforts of the Czech régime to "humanize" socialism led them into positions - particularly with respect to non-Communist political activity and freedom of the press and other media - which were intolerable to the Soviet leadership in view of the latter's insistence that "democratic centralism" and the "leading rôle of the party" require monopoly of power in all spheres.

(b) Political

12. A liberalized and more independent Czechoslovakia, coming on the heels of increasing polycentrism in the already shrunken "socialist camp", must have been seen in the Kremlin as a mortal threat to the coherence of the Soviet political system in central Europe and thus to the European status quo.

(c) Security

13. The Soviet leaders must have seen a continued evolution in the course of events in Czechoslovakia as a threat to the strength and unity of the Warsaw Pact, to the military primacy of the Soviet Union in Eastern Europe and ultimately to the security of the Soviet state. Notwithstanding the declared intentions of the Czech leaders, the Soviets could no doubt imagine a time when Czechoslovakia would defect from the Warsaw Pact. As they themselves said, they could not tolerate the prospect of "any link" being torn away from the community of socialist countries.

(d) Economic

14. The reform movement in Czechoslovakia had its immediate origins in continued economic stagnation and certain economic reforms were agreed to while Novotny was still in command. But under Dubcek the Czechs appeared to be escaping from overwhelming dependence on the Soviet-dominated COMECON system and were beginning to turn towards what the Soviets considered to be dangerous dependence on foreign investment and world markets.

(e) Contagion

15. There is ample evidence that the Communist leaders, especially in the Soviet Zone of Germany and in Poland, feared that the reforms and the spirit of liberalization would prove to be contagious and would spread from country to country, not excluding the Soviet Union itself, especially the Ukraine.

MOTIVATIONS OF THE OTHER FOUR

16. The four Warsaw Pact allies who joined in the invasion of Czechoslovakia were no doubt under Soviet pressure to do so. However, they will not have been wholly unwilling since many of the considerations which determined the decision of the Soviet Union will have been equally valid for the allies. Each will also have had its own particular reasons for deciding to intervene. The Soviet Zone of Germany was the most vulnerable of all the member countries to contagion from Czechoslovakia and to any weakening of Soviet domination of Eastern Europe. Gomulka was also faced with acute problems for both his domestic and foreign policies. The Bulgarian leaders, habitually loyal to Moscow, may have had the fewest hesitations. As for Hungary, although Kadar showed signs of doubts and mixed feelings, he was no doubt persuaded to go along by the presence of Soviet troops and fear of a second Soviet intervention in his own country.

SUMMARY

17. In sum it can be said that Soviet motivations for invading Czechoslovakia can be found in strategic, ideological, political, economic, and other considerations. Separately and together they brought about a Soviet decision for which the central and over-riding general motivation was a defensive concern about a process of erosion of the political, economic and military integrity of the Warsaw Pact and socialist bloc, including adverse effects of this process within the USSR itself. Thus the Soviet action was a vivid demonstration of the determination of the Soviet leadership to maintain its grip, by force if necessary, on the levers of power in Eastern Europe. Notwithstanding this evidence of their attachment to their version of the "status quo" in Europe, the Soviets by this very action have created a new situation with profound implications for themselves and for the Alliance.

III. EFFECTS AND IMPLICATIONS

A. FOR THE WARSAW PACT

Prospects for Liberalization

18. The Soviet action against Czechoslovakia has applied the brakes to the liberalization process in that country but it has not solved the fundamental Soviet problem of how to cope with pressures for change in Czechoslovakia, in Eastern Europe and, indeed, within the USSR itself. Over the longer run the Soviet action may even make these pressures more severe, and they are likely to show up again and again.

19. The régimes of the invading Pact members are likely to follow a generally repressive policy towards dissidence and a very cautious line on reform, at least for the short run. Although the Soviet Government may allow some variety of practice in the running of affairs in each different country, this will not be such as to satisfy national feeling. The gap between rulers and ruled in the Eastern Europe satellites has increased and more people than ever will be watching for the day of change not only in Czechoslovakia but also in the Soviet Zone and elsewhere. The tendency to knuckle under may prevail for most of the time, but there may well be further troubles.

20. The USSR will probably intensify its efforts to strengthen the mechanism of the Warsaw Pact and COMECON as a means for dampening tendencies towards diversity in the area and to tighten Soviet control under the convenient guise of multilateralism.

Soviet Public Stance

21. The USSR, reluctant to acknowledge the indigenous causes of the Czechoslovak events or to admit that the principles and practice of Marxism-Leninism as dictated by the USSR themselves contain the contradictions which led to those events, will continue to seek reasons for the crisis in alleged machinations by outside forces. It can be expected to maintain a high level of polemics, accusations and threats directed against the Federal Republic of Germany and probably also against Yugoslavia and others. It is already clear that Soviet propoganda and diplomatic efforts to promote their concept of West Berlin as a separate political entity will be reinforced.

Problems for the Soviet Leadership

22. The way in which the Soviet Government handled the Czechoslovak problem will have contributed to any stresses which there may be in the Soviet leadership. Much will depend on the outcome and on the extent to which there is agreement among the Soviet leaders that their Czechoslovak policy has succeeded or failed, and also on whether it will be possible after the event, to identify that policy with a part of the Politburo, even though the leaders seem acutely aware of the danger of breaches of collegiality. The action taken to suppress Ozechoslovak aspirations for independence, however, will influence the internal scene also by removing to some extent, the risk of similar problems developing in the Ukraine and elsewhere in the USSR.

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Military

23. The specifically military implications relating to the Warsaw Pact are being considered elsewhere, but in the general political context it may be said that Soviet forces will now have to be more concerned with the internal security of the Warsaw Pact than in the past. The Soviet Union must have less confidence in the reliability of the forces of its Allies in the event of war. Moreover, the Soviet Union may now consider it can place no reliance on Rumania and Czechoslovakia as military allies. This will remain true even if, later on, they were to concede to the lesser members a greater say in the running of the organization. It is thus highly probable that a substantial contingent of Soviet forces will remain in Czechoslovakia for some time.

Economic Impact

24. The political problem of allocation of resources, already acute in the USSR and known to be an area of decision-making which has caused strains in the leadership, will now present still more difficulties. Apart from the costs of the invasion itself, there will be a considerable increase in costs if Soviet forces are to be installed and maintained in Czechoslovakia on a long-term basis. Moreover, the defence effort of the USSR has hitherto been projected on the basis of relative stability of the Western effort and of some increase in the efforts of their Warsaw Pact allies. No doubt the USSR will find whatever is needed for military purposes, including strategic weapons, but this will have serious repercussions on other programmes such as consumption and investment, and suggests that tensions may grow out of the tautness of resource allocations.

Non-Ruling Communist Parties

25. Those non-ruling Communist Parties which are principally dependent on Moscow for financial support can be expected, aside from temporary tactical or emotional departures from the line, to return to the fold and do Moscow's bidding. The same cannot be said of those major parties, particularly West European, which are dependent to a significant degree on local support. The Czechoslovak intervention has clearly sharpened the conflict between the desire to remain part of an international movement and the desire to avoid being closely associated with the behaviour of the Soviet Union, which is no asset for a Party seeking support. In most parties this conflict will probably eventually be decided in favour of some semblance of unity, but even in those parties there will continue to be an increased need for demonstrating independence from Moscow. Moscow's hand may thus be further weakened within the international movement.

Public Opinion

26. All available information indicates that the Russians were roundly condemned by broad segments of public opinion throughout the East European states and the Soviet Zone of Germany. Information on the success of the Soviet effort to justify their actions to their own people is less conclusive. Dislike for the Russians is certainly not a new element in East Europe. But if the Russians are the villains, it does not follow that the Czechoslovaks are regarded as the heroes everywhere in East Europe. Particularly in Hungary, concern has been expressed that by forcing the Soviets' hand, the Czechoslovaks have jeopardized the more moderate internal liberalization programmes or tendencies of other Warsaw Pact countries.

27. The Soviet image in the Third World has suffered as a result of the invasion. Third World reaction has shown strong moral indignation. Revulsion was almost immediately expressed by Governments and public alike throughout much of the Third World. The major exception was that portion of the Arab world which is looking to Soviet arms and diplomatic support against Israel. We must assume that in the events of future shifts in Soviet policy, such common interests as may emerge will more than outweigh lingering revulsion. Nevertheless, on at least two counts the Soviets can anticipate more difficult going in the Third World. First, it has been discovered that popular demonstrations and government statements critical of the Soviet Union are possible in a number of countries where previously their occurrence seemed highly unlikely. Secondly, in those countries which feel they are within reach of Soviet military power, Soviet assurances are even less likely to satisfy even the most optimistic.

Balance of Advantage

28. However, despite all negative effects and implications for the Soviet Union and its allies mentioned in preceding paragraphs the hard fact remains that the Soviet Union, by its occupation of Czechoslovakia, has tightened its grip in Eastern Europe and reduced the prospects for disintegration or polycentrism in the Warsaw Pact area.

B. FOR NATO

The New Uncertainties

29. Although throughout the summer there was a clear possibility of the Soviet occupation of Czechoslovakia, members of the Alliance were not aware of the Soviet decision to move until the invasion actually began. In this sense the Soviet action contained an element of unpredictability. We now know however that the Soviet Government is willing to use force in order to maintain such authority as they consider necessary over members of the Warsaw Pact, and in this sense their actions are now more predictable. Any estimation of how far the Soviet Government will carry this policy depends on one's interpretation of their statement that they will not permit any link to be torn from the chain of socialist countries. It is not clear, for instance, whether these words would cover the cases of Yugoslavia or Albania.

30. There must also be a strong element of uncertainty about Soviet political judgement in that they seriously mistook Czechoslovak reactions to the occupation. This does not mean that they would necessarily misjudge Western reactions to any aggressive move against any member of the Alliance; but there is now a wider range of possible Soviet moves and it is therefore essential that members of the Alliance should continue to make plain what the results of action against the Alliance or one of its members would be, so that there can be no possibility of misunderstanding.

31. The unfinished and unpredictable situation in Czechoslovakia may give rise to further steps by the Soviets to press for the realization of their objectives and has so far led to a growing state of uncertainty there.

32. The continued strains in Soviet-Rumanian and Soviet-Yugoslav relations have injected a further element of uncertainty into the situation. These strains would be particularly exacerbated if the situation in Czechoslovakia were to deteriorate and to lead to the use of brutal force against the recalcitrant Czechoslovaks in order to establish a quisling régime. Such an action, by escalating the tendency to use force as a means of removing obstacles, could make the question of the use of force against Rumania more actual in Moscow. The possibility of a further increase of Soviet pressure, up to and including military action against Rumania and/or Yugoslavia, cannot be excluded. It would be desirable for the Allies to exchange views on the attitude they would adopt in the event of increased Soviet pressures on Rumania, Yugoslavia, Albania, or possibly Austria.

33. The situation today in Europe and in the world is unquestionably worse than it was formerly. The range of uncertainty is clearly magnified by the large concentration of Soviet forces in Eastern Europe and the consequent extension of options open to the Soviet Union, with the danger of spill-over in contiguous areas.

Re-examination

34. The crisis has emphasized the need for solidarity in the Alliance; this is particularly true with regard to the Federal Republic of Germany at a moment when the Soviet Union is mounting a vehement propaganda campaign against that country.

35. For this and other reasons, the Defence Planning Committee is engaged in a re-examination of the military preparedness of NATO and a study is being made of crisis management arrangements.

36. The Alliance has moreover been obliged to reconsider its estimate of the evolution of Soviet policy, and a preliminary assessment based on discussions within the Senior Political Committee will be found in the next section of this report. In the course of those discussions, it has been taken for granted that there is no need to re-define the two fundamental goals of defence and détente as set forth in the Report on the Future Tasks of the Alliance; despite setbacks to our expectations for détente, the search for secure and peaceful East/West relations is the only political goal consistent with western values.

Public Opinion

37. Public opinion in the member countries of the Alliance has been deeply shocked by the events in Czechoslovakia. There is a new public understanding of the need for effective Allied defence.(1)

(1) As regards the second sentence in this paragraph, the French Delegation recalled the position of its Government in matters of defence.

C. EAST/WEST RELATIONS

Détente and East/West Contacts

38. Taking account of public opinion in the West and in East European countries, as well as the need to reinforce such counsels for moderation as may exist in the ruling circles of the five invading Powers, the West should avoid anything which would tend to condone the invasion of Czechoslovakia. It would seem advisable, therefore, to limit contacts at this time with the responsible political leaders in the five intervening states. Official contacts should be pursued with discretion. A certain amount of differentiation could be applied to the various categories of contacts. The West could react in a more positive way with regard to the initiatives of non-aggressor states taking care not to jeopardise the interests of the peoples of Eastern Europe. Consultation in NATO provides a basis for continued review in this area.

39. The Soviet Union will probably impose a closer control over the response of its Warsaw Pact allies to Western détente policy. In other words, the response is being redefined and the opportunities for progress may therefore be less than before the intervention in Czechoslovakia. The Soviet Union is particularly likely to discourage détente between Eastern Europe and the Federal Republic. The Allies should therefore re-emphasize their conviction as stated in paragraph 7 of the Report on the Future Tasks of the Alliance, that the pursuit of détente must not be allowed to split the Alliance.

Disarmament and Arms Control

40. The Soviet Government will try to keep up all the contacts with the West which they consider as of advantage to themselves. They see their interest in détente mainly in terms of a "modus vivendi" with the United States, based on a mutual "second strike capability". They almost certainly attach great importance to early entry into force of the Non-Proliferation Treaty; and they would probably welcome the opening of Strategic Arms Limitation Talks with the United States. Our efforts in the field of disarmament and practical arms control should be continued. It should be noted, however, that it remains important that every proposal first be examined to see that it is consistent with Western security requirements. It is also at least as important as before the Czechoslovak crisis that there be no unilateral Western concessions in advance.

41. Mutual balanced force reductions remain a long-term goal of Western policy and we should not fail to make this clear. On the other hand, there now appears to be little chance of any Soviet agreement to balanced mutual force reductions in the foreseeable future. To show over-eagerness to discuss such matters would suggest to both public opinion and to the Soviet Government that we were unwilling to face up to the responsibilities of the situation created by the invasion of Czechoslovakia. Meanwhile, the technical study of the subject within NATO should go ahead until the moment is more opportune.

European Security

42. The Alliance is still committed to the search for progress toward a more stable relationship with the East in which the underlying political issues can be solved and this policy should be pursued as appropriate. For the present, the invasion of Czechoslovakia has made the prospects for a European security system recede even further.

The German Problem

43. The efforts of the Alliance, taking account of the special responsibilities of France, the United Kingdom and the United States, to contribute to a solution of the German question as part of its European peace and détente policy, have suffered a serious setback. A blow has been struck against the right of peoples to determine their own national future. It should be expected that, as at Reykjavik, an unequivocal statement on the German question will be made at the next Ministerial meeting. This could emphasize that a European peace order, which is in the interests of both East and West, and which would include the German question, can be reached only if both sides refrain from the use of force or the threat of force. Furthermore, it could indicate that the Allies associated themselves with the point of view of the Three Western Powers according to which Soviet claims of a right of intervention in the affairs of the Federal Republic are not valid.

Berlin

44. In Soviet eyes, West Berlin remains a serious irritant, which could lead to heightened tension, although the USSR probably does not intend to produce any full-fledged crisis. Recent indications from the Soviets that no action was intended with regard to Berlin can, in the light of experience, be interpreted to mean that the Soviet Union, as in the recent past, will probably refrain from taking measures against Allied rights as such. It is to be expected that the Soviet Zone régime, acting jointly with the Soviet Union, will pursue its long standing campaign against the presence and activity of the Federal Government in Berlin, and against the viability of the City. The main need at present is to restore and strengthen the confidence of the people of Berlin which has suffered as a result of the invasion of Czechoslovakia and also from the "salami" tactics practised against them in recent months. In this respect it is appropriate to take into account:

the determination of the three Allies with special responsibilities in Berlin to ensure the freedom and security of the City;

the measures which have been taken by the Federal Government in conformity with the status of Berlin, for the purpose of maintaining the viability of the City;

and the declaration of the North Atlantic Council on Berlin of 16th December, 1958, and the responsibilities which each member-state assumed in regard to the security and welfare of Berlin.

The Mediterranean

45. The use of force by the Soviet Union against Czechoslovakia, together with existing Soviet pressures and threats against other countries inside and outside the Socialist camp, has broadened the range of uncertainty. This destabilizing effect on the general international situation extends to the Mediterranean area, where there are already increasing reasons for concern about security.

46. There is no intrinsic reason for believing that the Soviets to the extent that they are able to control developments are any more anxious than before to see renewed outbreaks of open warfare in the Mediterranean area. The dilemmas involved remain much the same as in 1967. However, it is also possible that the USSR, already concerned about the adverse international effects of its action in Central Europe, may be more reluctant to restrain its Arab associates.

47. Clearly the Council's previous assessment of the situation in the Mediterranean (C-M(68)21, Part III) would be radically altered if the Soviet Union were to attack Rumania, Yugoslavia or Albania. In particular, a military occupation of Yugoslavia by Soviet forces and the use of the Dalmatian coast by the Soviet navy would not only increase the military threat against members of the Alliance, but also change very significantly the political situation in the Mediterranean. It would be advisable to take these contingencies into account within the general framework of the activities of the Alliance and in the spirit of the consultations provided for in paragraph 8 of the Reykjavik communiqué. The implications(1) for the readiness and watchfulness of the Alliance in the Mediterranean in face of the new and flexible instrument constituted by increasing Soviet naval presence there, are under study.

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- (1) The French Delegation indicated that it was up to the Defence Planning Committee to undertake the study of the military implications.

A. DESCRIPTION OF SITUATION (brief description of the events leading up to the invasion).

1. The forces of the Soviet Union and of Poland, the Soviet Zone of Germany, Bulgaria and Hungary invaded Czechoslovakia in the night of August 20th/21st. In this section we briefly summarize the events leading up to this action.

2. The ousting of Novotny on January 5th ushered in a period of rapid reform described later by Czech intellectuals as a "season of surprising revelations, resignations from high places, and intoxicating speeches of unprecedented verbal boldness"(1). With the relaxation of press and radio censorship the national past and such great national figures as Huss, Comenius and the Masaryks were recalled and the record of Soviet interference in Czech affairs was disclosed and discussed publicly. In April the "humanization of socialism" took shape through the Czechoslovak Party's Action Program. Its aim was genuine popular support for the Communist Party through democratic reforms including: an enhanced rôle for the National Assembly, equal rights for Czechs and Slovaks, genuine freedom of speech and press, and the full rehabilitation of all victims of injustice in the 1950s.

3. The anxiety of the Kremlin was reflected in its progressive intensification of high-level efforts to stop, set limits or perhaps reverse the Czechoslovak reform movement. After Dubcek's visit to the USSR January 29th and 30th came the March meeting in Dresden of Bulgarian, Czechoslovak, Soviet Zone, Hungarian, Polish and Soviet party leaders; Warsaw Pact Commander Yakubovsky's discussions in Prague in April; a second Dubcek visit to Moscow in early May; and the May 8th Moscow gathering of the Dresden conferences but this time without Czechoslovakia.

4. By this time Soviet polemics directed at Prague left little doubt that the Kremlin had decided that matters could not be allowed to go on unchecked. Czech officials received Marshal Konev's delegation May 8th, Soviet Defense Minister Grechko and General Yepishev May 19th to 22nd and finally Soviet Premier Kosygin himself for a ten-day stay May 17th to 26th.

5. On June 1st an extraordinary Czechoslovak Party Congress was called for September 9th to consolidate "progressive" control; under the Action Program the Assembly passed laws preparing a federal constitutional arrangement and abolishing advance censorship on June 24th and 26th.

(1) "2,000 Words" published June 26th by a group of 70 writers, scientists and others.

Yet Czech leaders took pains to stress their basic alignment with Soviet foreign and economic policy and their solidarity with the Warsaw Pact, and at home they went on to criticise attempts to force the pace of liberalization (such as the "2,000 Words" declaration of June 26th). The Czech leaders reportedly rejected Soviet demands for the permanent stationing of Warsaw Pact forces in Czechoslovakia; however, extensive "command staff exercises" took place in the country June 19th to 30th under Marshal Yakubovsky.

6. The withdrawal of "exercise" forces from Czechoslovakia appeared to proceed sluggishly. The Dubcek team countered a summons to a multilateral summit meeting by offering instead to talk bilaterally and in the end a summit was held without them July 14th and 15th in Warsaw. From this meeting came a letter from the "Five" to the Czechoslovak Party declaring that the signatories were "deeply disturbed" by events in Czechoslovakia, calling the Czechoslovak situation "unacceptable", and demanding an "offensive against right-wing and anti-socialist forces", cessation of the activity of "all political organizations coming out against socialism", "seizure of mass information media by the working people", and Party cohesion on the basis of democratic centralism. The Soviet, Polish, and the Soviet Zone press began to polemicize against "counter-revolutionary trends" and "Western subversion" in Czechoslovakia. On July 23rd the USSR announced military exercises along the USSR's Western frontiers.

7. The split between the Czechs and the Soviets are papered over temporarily in an apparent compromise at the bilateral Cierna meeting July 29th to August 1st, and the outcome was endorsed by the USSR's four partners at Bratislava August 3rd. Departure of the last Soviet "exercise" troops from Czechoslovak soil was announced on August 3rd, and the propaganda campaign subsided.

8. During the fortnight following the Bratislava communiqué, the Dubcek régime tried with some success to slow down the momentum of liberalization. For example, spontaneous outdoor meetings were banned; General Prchlik (who had offended the USSR by proposing changes in the Warsaw Pact) had his office dis-established; and voluntary press censorship was imposed. However, the cold welcome accorded to Ulbricht was in marked contrast to the enthusiastic reception of Marshal Tito who preceded Ulbricht and of Rumanian Party leader Ceausescu whose visit followed on August 15th to 17th.

9. Marshal Grechko had a meeting with East German Defense Minister Hoffmann on August 14th. There were rumours of a Communist "little entente".

10. Czech officials renewed references to possible Western financial support. Meanwhile public criticism of the USSR went largely unchecked, and the final political demise of Czech conservatives seemed likely to occur at the imminent Slovak and Czechoslovak Party Congresses.

11. During the third week of August the Soviet press campaign against "reaction", "hostile forces", and "subversive activities" persisted but no high-level diplomatic contacts or statements were observed. The CPSU central committee met on August 20th, and before midnight the Warsaw Pact forces crossed the Czechoslovak frontier.