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APPROVED FOR RELEASE
DATE: SEP 2004

SC #12356/68

EO 12958 3.3(b)(1)>25Yrs
EO 12958 3.3(b)(6)>25Yrs
(S)

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
Directorate of Intelligence
26 August 1968

CP

INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

The Situation in Czechoslovakia
(As of 0600 EDT)

1. Last night the Czechoslovak delegation in Moscow sent a letter of encouragement to the government in Prague. The message, according to Radio Czechoslovakia, was signed by "Svoboda, Dubcek, Cisar, Smrkovsky and the others."

2. The Slovak Communist Party has ruled out a proposal for the creation of a separate Slovak state, according to a UPI report of a clandestine radio broadcast. There is a strong "nationalist" group within the Slovak leadership that has favored separation of Slovakia from the Czech lands, and opposed Dubcek's plans to give the Slovaks a greater role in national organizations. Some reports indicate that Vasil Bilak, the conservative head of the Slovak party and a member of the Czechoslovak delegation in Moscow, has been spearheading the drive toward Slovak "independence."

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3. Embassy Prague's communications facilities were seriously impaired by a fire in the chancery yesterday. The fire, which was caused by heat from an incinerator used to destroy classified files, damaged the attic and roof of the central section of the building, but no US personnel were injured. Normal telegraphic reception capabilities have now been restored, and temporary restrictions on telegraphic traffic were lifted shortly after 0400 EDT.

4. The Yugoslav army is reported to be on alert and army reserves have been called up, according to UPI dispatch from Belgrade this morning. On 23 August,

[REDACTED] Yugoslav military units, reinforced by recalled reservists, began an exercise in the southern part of the country on 19 August, and that some of the units were moving toward the Hungarian border. There is, however, no other information to confirm this activity. [REDACTED]

5. After five days of occupation duty, Soviet forces are beginning to feel a supply pinch. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Soviet troops scavenging food and fuel from local sources. The original supplies which they brought into Czechoslovakia have probably been depleted by now. Considering the size of Soviet forces in Czechoslovakia and their supply requirements, it is likely that resupply will be a major problem. As for

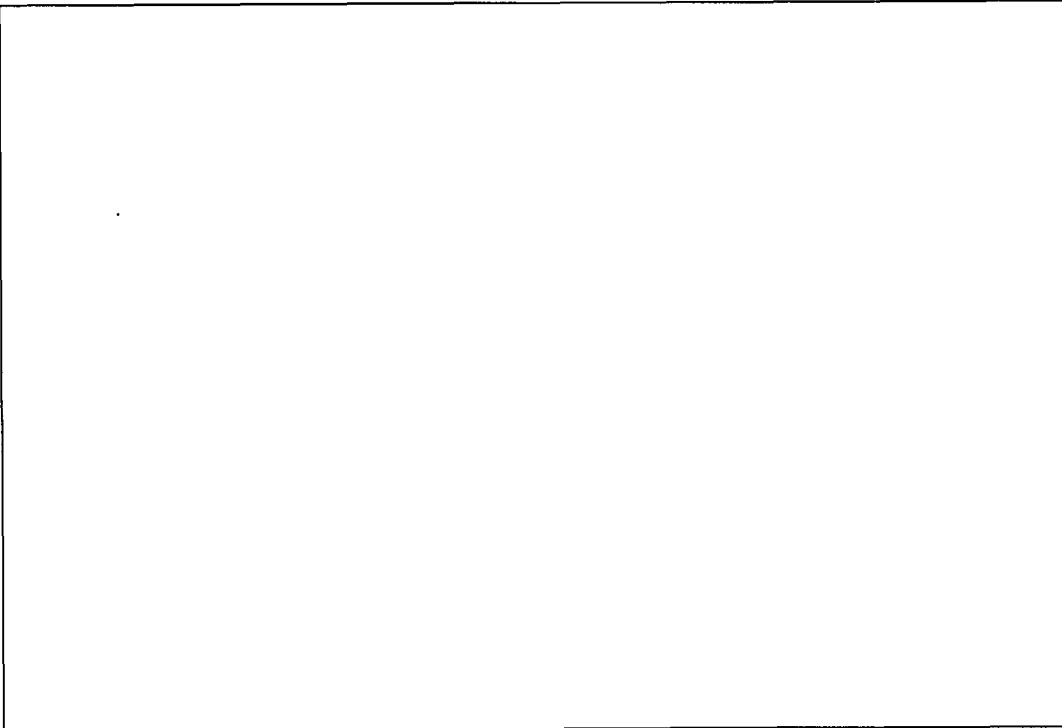
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the Czechoslovak citizens, Radio Czechoslovakia advises them to "lock up their cats and dogs lest they lose them in the course of supply operations for the occupation forces."



8. The general mood in Prague is still tense as apprehension over the settlement in Moscow and arbitrary repressive actions by the occupation forces increase. The Soviets shut down the Brno TV station and destroyed another TV transmitter yesterday, and there were reports early Sunday that they closed some churches after services had started. Firing in Wenceslaus Square in Prague was heavy just after the curfew last night. Czechoslovak radios have noted an increased willingness to open fire by Soviet troops.

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9. Despite the continuing defiance of occupational troops, there is evidence of Czechoslovak attempts to moderate the situation in order to avoid serious confrontations during the negotiations. Illegal radios have received instructions to limit anti-Soviet statements, and they have counseled citizens to drop their petitions for neutrality since these might undercut Svoboda's bargaining position in Moscow. Radio Czechoslovakia also broadcast a demand that Soviet commanders restrain their troops from firing on unarmed civilians. Furthermore, there is evidence of attempts to curtail inflammatory actions abroad. Foreign Minister Hajek is reported to have received orders from Moscow to attempt to remove the Czechoslovakian problem from the UN [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] denied any intention of forming an exile government. [REDACTED]

10. There was another token general strike for 15 minutes in Prague at 1200 (0700 EDT).

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