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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
Directorate of Intelligence
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INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

The Situation in Czechoslovakia
(As of 4:00 P.M. EDT)

1. Dubcek went on the radio today in an attempt to calm the jittery Czechoslovak people. To this end he stressed several times the necessity of good relations with the USSR and the other East Europeans. He indicated that at Cierna the Soviets had accepted the party's action program and implied that no arrangement had been made for the stationing of Soviet troops on Czechoslovakia's western frontier: Czechoslovak armed forces, he said, are "a sufficient guarantee of the defense of our state frontier and by the same token, of the frontiers of socialism." Czechoslovak Foreign Ministry officials indicated yesterday, however, that the agreement at Cierna might entail the presence somewhere else in Czechoslovakia of a "few hundred allied officers with supporting and technical services, not exceeding a few thousand."

2. In his radio address Dubcek was mainly concerned, however, with damping the fear and frustration which this

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By Sj, NARA, Date 12-3-04

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morning appeared to be widespread. An apparently spontaneous demonstration of about 100 youths which began in Prague yesterday afternoon turned into a mass meeting of sceptical and querulous thousands in Old Town Square by night. They dispersed peacefully after being somewhat mollified by Smrkovsky, but the crowd was clearly still unhappy when it broke up into small groups and scattered throughout the city. Dubcek addressed the issues raised by the demonstrators. He said Czechoslovak sovereignty is not threatened. He stressed the need for patience and calm, however, as well as for a prudent and statesmanlike attitude on the part of the populace. "There must be no misuse of various spontaneous actions and meetings for expressions of...antisocialist and anti-Soviet sentiments."

3. All of the delegations for the collective meeting arrived today at Bratislava. They are led by their first secretaries. President Svoboda and Foreign Minister Hajek were on hand with Dubcek to greet them.

4. Czechoslovak radio announced the arrival by train of the Soviet delegation including Brezhnev, Kosygin, Podgorny, Suslov, Ukrainian party chief Shelest, and the two party secretaries--Ponomarev and Katushev--who were at Cierna. [redacted]

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5. On his departure from Prague, Premier Cernik declared today that the Bratislava talks will not deal specifically with the Czechoslovak situation. In what appears to be the Czechoslovak view of the agenda, Cernik said that the talks will concern "things which unite us," European security, economic cooperation, problems of the international communist movement, and the question of sovereignty in the communist commonwealth, as expressed in the 1957 and 1960 Moscow conference declarations. Dubcek also implied in his speech that this was his view of the agenda. Other meetings, presumably on similar subjects, will follow, he added.

6. There are some fears in official Prague, however, that the Bratislava meeting could degenerate into a new confrontation between Prague on the one hand and hardline parties of East Germany and Poland on the other. In such an event the Soviets could pose as mediators but actually could be orchestrating further pressures on the Czechs.

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7. Dubcek also revealed that the Bratislava talks will be followed by visits to Prague by Yugoslav President Tito and Rumanian party boss Ceausescu. Smrkovsky said last night that these two Czech allies probably will come early next week.

8. Last night Smrkovsky said the Bratislava meeting was to last only one day, but today Premier Cernik hedged, saying the length of the talks depends on the "wishes of the fraternal parties attending." Smrkovsky promised the crowd last night that Dubcek would report to the nation as soon as possible after the Bratislava talks, on Saturday night or Sunday.

9. The Soviet press silence on Czechoslovakia and the Cierna meeting (except for the communique) went into its third day. The voluble commentators of the past several weeks are probably awaiting some authoritative guidance which may not come until after the Bratislava meeting. The standdown in Polish editorial attacks on Prague is now in its fourth day. The Hungarian press has characterized the results of the Cierna talks as "positive" but otherwise refrained from extensive comment. East German media so far have carried only an abridged version of the Cierna communique.

10. There is no further word on the timing of Mrs. Dubcek's reportedly intended return from her visit to Yugoslavia.

11. There has been no substantial change in the status of Soviet forces in and around Czechoslovakia.

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12. Over 7,000 Soviet troops and all kinds of ground combat equipment including "Scud" tactical missile (150 mile range) launchers were observed by the US Army attache in Prague on a trip through central Czechoslovakia during the period

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15. On 1 August, the Hungarians announced a rear service exercise of their own, designed to test the military's and the health ministry's response to large scale disasters. Hungarian troops have not been involved in the massive Soviet, Polish, and East German rear service exercise which has been under way for a week.

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