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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

CZECH TASK FORCE

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Situation Report 1500 Hours EDT, September 6, 1968

1. Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister Reported in Prague: AFP reports that Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister Vasilii Kuznetsov arrived this afternoon in Prague. At the time of the report he was said to be conferring with President Svoboda. AFP had reported earlier today that Moscow would send an emissary to Prague "with full powers to negotiate with the Czechoslovak leaders." It is not clear what Kuznetsov's functions could, in fact, be. His position suggests that he may become Soviet proconsul although presumably the military aspects of the occupation are under the control of General Pavlovsky, the commander of the occupation forces.

The New York Times reported this morning that Soviet Ambassador Chervenenko had returned to Moscow. It is possible that disagreements had arisen between him and the Czechoslovak leaders concerning the implementation of the Moscow agreements. Moscow may have decided that, in view of his long and at times acrimonious relations with the Czechoslovaks over the past year, Chervenenko had lost most of his usefulness. The Soviet press in the past two days has indicated concern at the slow pace of "normalization" in Czechoslovakia, and Kuznetsov's major role may be to impress once again upon Prague the necessity for firm control over political and social life within the country. (FBIS 46; 56)

2. Hajek Reported in Bratislava: Press reports state that Czechoslovak Foreign Minister arrived today in Vienna and then immediately went on to Bratislava, where he will remain until tomorrow, when he will go to Prague. According to an AP story from Geneva, Soviet diplomats in Switzerland privately assured Hajek that there would be no reprisals against him. (UPI-100; FBIS 65; AP-19)

3. Romanian Situation: Embassy Bucharest reports that the Romanians continue to be apprehensive about Soviet intentions. The Embassy notes that Ceausescu's speeches on September 5 have emphasized desire to overcome the present "difficult situation" among socialist countries and to strengthen cooperation within the socialist camp. It further notes that the Romanian press in recent days has provided only very brief coverage of Czechoslovak affairs and has conveyed the impression that "normal activity" has resumed in that country.

Finally, the Embassy passes on a report from a "usually reliable source" who was told by a "'highly reliable source'" that the USSR had presented an ultimatum to Bucharest on September 4. Moscow is said to have demanded that the Romanian press cease making offensive statements concerning Czechoslovakia and that Bucharest agree to the passage of Soviet troops and tanks across

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Romania to Bulgaria. Romania is said to have agreed to the first demand; it replied to the second by agreeing that troops could pass nonstop in "sealed trains." The Soviets reportedly rejected this. As a result, Ceausescu is reported to have decreed on September 4 a "State of Alert No. 1" (involving a high state of readiness). There is no confirmation of this story and USDAO, Bucharest, reports that an inspection of all major military installations in Bucharest at midday on September 6 indicates that they appear to be in the same state of alert as previously reported, which could be characterized as a low-level of alert. (Bucharest 2477; USDAO Bucharest 061740Z Sept 68)

4. Bulgarians Renew Call For International Communist Conference: The Bulgarian First Deputy Premier Zhivko Zhivkov (not premier Todor Zhivkov) supported on September 4 the convening of an international meeting of communist and workers' parties (scheduled for Moscow in November) and stated that the Bulgarian Communist Party is taking active part in its preparation. This appears the first authoritative public Bulgarian statement on the desirability of an international communist parties meeting since the invasion of Czechoslovakia and was presumably made at the behest of the Soviets to keep the idea of a meeting alive and elicit current attitudes toward the conclave among other parties. (Sofia 1268, 9/5)

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