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MOSCOW'S NEXT MOVE

"The Soviet Union deems it necessary to proclaim from this rostrum, too, that the socialist states cannot and will not allow a situation where the vital interests of socialism are infringed upon and encroachments are made on the inviolability of the boundaries of the socialist commonwealth and, therefore, on the foundations of international peace."

Soviet Foreign Minister Gromyko at the United Nations,
October 3, 1968.

Enough dust has settled since the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia to allow some hard and sobering conclusions to be drawn from this affair. The refusal of the Kremlin to allow the Czechs to go their own way in peace is probably the most important single development of the 1960's. The repercussions will be profound and of long duration. They will be highly dangerous to the existing balance of power and may, by reducing other options, induce Moscow to become less cautious and more frankly militaristic and adventurist in its foreign policy. The consequences for the United States will be serious and of the utmost importance. An ultimate war with the Soviet Union has become considerably more likely as a result of the intense pressures now operating within the Soviet bloc and upon the Soviet leadership. A new international crisis is very likely to confront the next American president early in his term of office.

A Watershed Decision

On the available evidence, it appears that the Czech invasion reflects a truly watershed decision by the Soviet leaders to re-impose the most rigid discipline and obedience on their own society and that of their satellites and then to pursue, with great vigor, a no-holds barred struggle with the West. Its eventual outcome is regarded in absolute terms, i.e. the eventual destruction of one system or the other.

The Soviets may or may not have misjudged the Czech reaction to their invasion. If so, it is probable that this was more a question of degree than of a total failure to comprehend that the move would be deeply resented. In any case, the action resulted from a forced choice over basic policies for the future. The Czech liberalization program compelled the Soviet leadership either to move toward a genuine accommodation with the West, with the recognition that this must eventually result

in an end to their own Marxist-Leninist dictatorship, or else to reject this approach in favor of a military solution to the problems of socialist deviation and nationalism. The Soviet Government has evidently chosen the latter policy.

A widely heard analysis to the effect that the Czech move reflects only a temporary digression from the main line of Soviet policy, brought about by a transitory majority of Soviet hawks over doves, so far lacks any proof. Some reports have it that Brezhnev and Kosygin split over the issue, with the "dovish" Kosygin in a state of near apoplexy, particularly when the beaten and still bloody Alexander Dubcek was unceremoniously hauled before the full Soviet Presidium in Moscow. French President De Gaulle is known to be deeply concerned because he thinks that the Soviet military has virtually taken over control of the country. These things may or may not be. What is clear is that the Soviet Government has unflinchingly demanded, and is steadily obtaining, a complete Czech capitulation to its demands. These include an absolute end to Czechoslovakia's liberalization policy and the emplacement of a permanent Soviet military force along her western frontier.

In the light of Moscow's purpose, the invasion of Czechoslovakia is a success. Now the big question mark for worried NATO governments is what Russia will do next.

The Pravda Doctrine

On September 26, 1968 the Communist Party newspaper *Pravda* published an article titled "Sovereignty and International Duties of Socialist Countries." The dissertation laid down for the first time an ideological justification for the use of force by one socialist state against another. Some of the key paragraphs are as follows:

"The peoples of the socialist countries and communist parties certainly do have and should have freedom for determining the ways of advance of their respective countries.

"However, none of their decisions should damage either socialism in their country or the fundamental interests of other socialist countries, and the whole working class movement, which is working for socialism.

"What the right-wing anti-socialist forces set out to achieve in recent months in Czechoslovakia had nothing to do with the specific features of socialist development or the application of the principle of Marxism-Leninism to the concrete conditions in that country, but constituted encroachment on the foundations of socialism, on the basic principles of Marxism-Leninism.

"Naturally, the Communists of the fraternal countries could not allow the socialist states to be inactive in the name of an abstractly understood sovereignty, when they saw that the country stood in peril of antisocialist degeneration.

"Those who speak about the 'illegal actions' of the allied socialist countries in Czechoslovakia forget that in a class society there is not and there cannot be non-class laws.

"Formal juridical reasoning must not overshadow a class approach to the matter. One who does it, thus losing the only correct class criteria in assessing legal norms, begins to measure events with the yardstick of bourgeois law.

"Such an approach to the question of sovereignty means that, for example, the progressive forces of the world would not be able to come out against a revival of neo-Nazism in the Federal Republic of Germany, against the actions of butchers Franco and Salazar, against reactionary arbitrary actions of 'black colonels' in Greece, because this is the 'internal affair' of 'sovereign' states."

The implications of this language are limitless.

Pravda asserts the ominous thesis that in a "class society" there cannot be "non-class laws." The generally understood definition of national sovereignty, it declares, is nothing more than a "bourgeois law" which must not be allowed to stand in the way of Communist intervention to prevent "antisocialist degeneration." Neither must it be allowed—and this is most important—to stand in the way of intervention in non-socialist states, such as West Germany.

When we add to the *Pravda* article Gromyko's solemn warning at the U.N. that "socialism really and genuinely does settle the national question," and that the socialist states will not allow their "vital interests" to be infringed upon or "encroachments" made upon their boundaries, we find that the necessary groundwork has been laid by both Party and Government for future military moves by the Soviet Union.

The Next Crisis Area

Possible locales for the next international crisis—assuming the Soviets pursue their new doctrine—would appear to include Rumania, Yugoslavia, Albania, West Germany and/or West Berlin in Europe and the Sino-Soviet border in the Far East.

In each of these areas Moscow has the physical capability and a sufficient excuse for military action. Rumania has sought a large degree of political and economic independence and has dragged her feet on her Warsaw Pact obligations. Yugoslavia wrenched herself out of Stalin's control in 1948 and the Kremlin would logically like to restore it. Moreover, Tito has furiously condemned the invasion of Czechoslovakia and now finds himself accused of "damaging the interests" of socialism in Yugoslavia itself.

Albania has made common cause with Red China against the Soviet Union. In 1961 she forced the Soviets to abandon their promising naval base at Valona, on the Adriatic Sea. And now, in the aftermath of Czechoslovakia, Albania has formally withdrawn from the Warsaw Pact and has called upon Red China for military assistance.

The cockpit of the Balkans is currently Bulgaria. The Albanians constantly assert that there are Soviet troops in Bulgaria concentrated along the frontier with Yugoslavia. The U.S. still can find no proof of the presence of Soviet *combat* forces in the country, but the subject is one of primary concern to the NATO intelligence community. The new Soviet helicopter carrier *Moskva* has recently moved from the Black Sea into the Mediterranean to add to the jitters. Warsaw Pact action against Yugoslavia or Albania would not formally bring the NATO alliance into play, but it would pose a serious threat to the security of Greece and Italy.

More serious yet would be the harassment or seizure of West Berlin or even an invasion of West Germany. The Soviets could offer as an excuse that West German efforts to spread "counter-

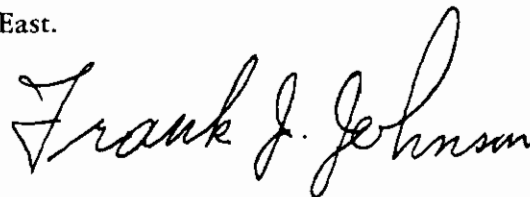
revolution" or her "encroachments" on West Berlin constitute a threat to socialist security. In this regard the Soviets have repeatedly cited as justification for military intervention Articles 53 and 107 of the United Nations Charter, which pertain to a revival of aggressive purpose by the enemy states of World War II. The specific charge could be West Germany's refusal so far to formally recognize the Oder-Neisse border with Poland, to renounce the Munich Pact of 1938 concerning Czechoslovakia, and to ban the allegedly "neo-Nazi" National Democratic Party from political activity.

Any Soviet move in Germany, of course, does directly involve NATO. But although the United States has reassured a jittery Bonn that any action against West Berlin would bring an "immediate allied response" the question remains unanswered as to just what that response could be. American officials in private discussion concede that "we can live without Berlin." Having only just denounced as "irresponsible" any talk of nuclear weapons in connection with Vietnam, it is difficult to foresee how the American Government could embark upon their use to recover West Berlin if it should suddenly be seized. And what other deterrent to Communist action is available?

The facts of life are, lamentably, that NATO is in a poor position, at present, to effectively challenge the hard Soviet line established in the wake of Czechoslovakia.

It should come as no surprise, therefore, that West German Chancellor Kiesinger should have again pleaded, on October 6, for a dialogue with the USSR on a "peaceful understanding" in Europe. The decent interval of mourning for the Czechs has passed. But it is the Soviets, now, who are calling the shots. Their will to act has just been effectively demonstrated. Their capability to do so, vis-a-vis their opponents, has never been as great.

The initiative, clearly, lies with the East.



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