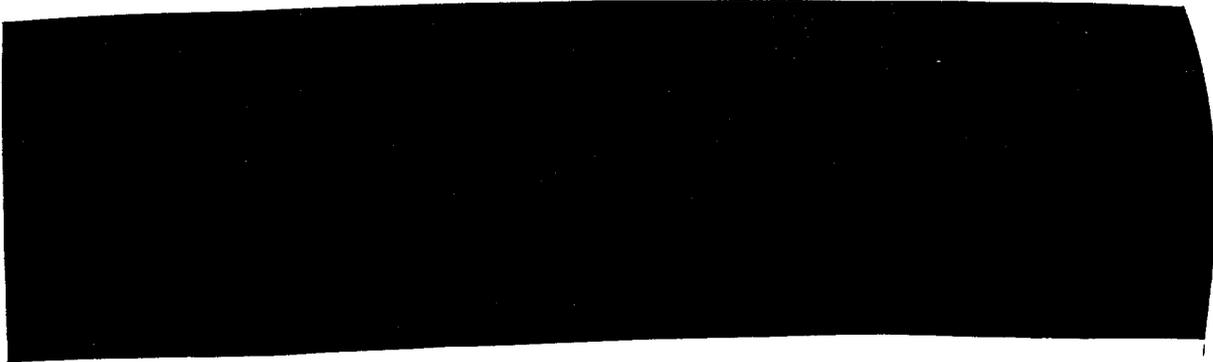


N.R.



EASTERN EUROPE

- 3. The Hungarian situation: Fighting continued in Budapest through the evening of 25 October and there was growing evidence that the disturbances had spread to the provinces. Early on 26 October the government ordered a general attack against the rebels and closure of all offices and factories.

Pecs radio in southern Hungary broadcast during the late evening hours on the 25th announcements denying the existence of a revolutionary committee. The broadcast stated: "There is no revolutionary committee. Irresponsible elements have posed as a revolutionary committee. They broke into the studio and read an announcement." The American legation in Budapest has also heard reports of disturbances in Debrecen, Szeged and Miskolc.

Some Hungarian troops have joined the insurgents and legation officers personally witnessed on the afternoon of the 25th some Soviet tanks and their crews who had also joined the rebels. The legation reported that antigovernment forces appeared to be moving freely in part of the city and at least one of the four bridges in the central Budapest area was under their control. Soviet forces and Hungarian security forces have established defensive positions, including heavy guns, in the downtown area around the government buildings. A crowd assembled in front of the legation during the afternoon to ask for assistance; earlier, the legation area had been the scene of a "big battle."

In an effort to bolster the government's position, Premier Imre Nagy announced at 1525 Budapest time on the 25th that the "Hungarian government is initiating negotiations on relations with the USSR on the basis of national independence and equality between Communist parties and will ask for the withdrawal of the Soviet forces stationed in Hungary when order is

19

SEP 1956



restored." An unconfirmed press report indicated that Nagy's statement followed talks with Soviet presidium members Mikoyan and Suslov, who left Budapest at noon on the 25th. Nagy's statement followed the replacement of Erno Gero in the top party post at an early morning politburo meeting by national Communist Janos Kadar.

The major party shake-up which occurred on the night of 23 October and Gero's subsequent ouster as party first secretary complete the victory of the moderate national Communists in their fight for control of the Hungarian party. These elements may be presumed to have the support of most of the party membership. Nagy has reaffirmed his complete fidelity to his program of liberalization and promised that after the restoration of order he will submit a reform program embracing all important problems of national life. He added that implementation of this program will necessitate a major change in government personnel on the basis of the rallying of the popular front and the broadest democratic national forces.



N.R.

