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WARSAW PACT EXERCISE PLANNED IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA AND POLAND

Soviet and East European news media last week announced that a Warsaw Pact exercise will be held in Czechoslovakia and Poland in June. The exercise probably was arranged to force the new Czechoslovak leadership to demonstrate its continuing active participation in Pact affairs.

The activity either was hastily set up by the Soviet high command or moved up on the Pact training schedule.

A radiobroadcast from Prague on 24 May stated that the exercise will be a "staff command" exercise directed by the Pact commander, Soviet Marshal Yakubovsky. Details of Czechoslovakia's participation probably were discussed by Soviet Defense Minister Grechko during his visit to Prague in mid-May. The term, "staff-command," suggests participation of some

troop units in the exercise. Soviet units probably will be drawn from forces in East Germany and in the Carpathian Military District, which borders eastern Czechoslovakia. Some of these units are now in positions on the Czechoslovak frontiers, having moved there early in May as part of Moscow's pressure tactics against the Dubcek government. The end of the exercise would give the Soviets a pretext for withdrawing these troops if the political crisis has subsided by then.

If the exercise focuses on Czechoslovakia, it probably will test in part the role of a Czechoslovak army group formation attacking enemy forces on the Pact's southern flank.

By pressing for such an exercise at this time, the Soviets can achieve the twin objectives of testing the efficacy of Pact plans and solidifying the Czechoslovak role in them.

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