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Rumania: Rumania's pique over its exclusion from the meeting at Bratislava probably foreshadows increased tension between Bucharest and Moscow.

The Rumanians may be embarking on a new tactic to undermine the Soviet-dominated Warsaw Pact. They apparently consider that decisions taken by the Pact in their absence are not binding on them. They also reserve the right to refuse to participate in meetings to which they are invited. An editorial published on 7 August appears to suggest this new tactic by noting that the Rumanians intend to be "faithful to their alliances," presumably their bilateral ones, "whether or not the Warsaw Pact exists."

Bucharest has been excluded from the last four summit gatherings of Soviet allies held since last March. The editorial implied that the Rumanians are pleased that the Czechoslovak crisis has eased but argued that the exclusion of Rumania from the high-level decision-making process is "utterly incompatible with the norms" of interparty relations and the "principles of equality between parties and countries." This point was reinforced by quoting the words of Rumanian party and state chief Ceausescu, who has said that discussions of problems "pertaining to international bodies in whose founding Rumania participated cannot be carried out by only some countries."

Following the Rumanians' critical editorial, the Czechoslovak press and Chairman Smrkovsky of the Czechoslovak parliament seem bent on assuring Bucharest and Belgrade that there will be no more such rump meetings. Smrkovsky told a Yugoslav correspondent on 7 August that the Czechoslovak Communist Party will insist that "those empty places around the table of the socialist countries should be filled." Smrkovsky's remarks and the conclusion of a new Rumanian-Czechoslovak treaty of friendship, cooperation, and mutual assistance, expected to be signed during Ceausescu's visit to Prague in mid-August, may further aggravate an already delicate situation.

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9 Aug 68

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