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NATO RE-EVALUATES DEFENSE CONCEPTS IN A NEW CLIMATE

The rapid occupation of Czechoslovakia has produced a new climate of apprehension within the Atlantic Alliance. The present NATO concept of warning time, which presupposes a military build-up by a prospective attacker during which time the Allies would engage in political consultation, is being re-evaluated.

The West Germans are particularly insistent on this, contending that the demonstration of Soviet mobilization efficiency and speed makes the present NATO concept not only of doubtful validity but also dangerous. They point to the massive number of Warsaw Pact troops near the Bavarian frontier and to the successful jamming of the early warning radar system there. The review of the warning time concept will be part of the September work program developed by NATO Secretary General Brosio in the wake of the Czechoslovak crisis.

The Alliance's Military Committee has recommended that any plans for reductions in troop strength should be held in abeyance and that withdrawal of forces should be postponed. Reactions to this proposal in the Defense Planning Committee--which does not include France, a nonparticipant in

the integrated military command--revealed much disagreement.

The Danes saw the proposal as merely an example of the "emperor's new clothes." Belgium and Canada opposed any decision that would require them to change their force reduction and redeployment plans. West Germany, the United Kingdom, and the Netherlands wanted a strong public statement on the maintenance of Alliance force levels. The dispute was apparently resolved by a statement of the committee on 4 September which reaffirmed that NATO's military capability should not be reduced except as part of a pattern of mutual East-West force reductions balanced in scope and timing.

National responses to Chancellor Kiesinger's vague reference to the need for a NATO summit conference have been universally unfavorable, but there is some interest in accelerating ministerial consideration of this month's re-evaluation program. The United Kingdom is proposing that the Defense Planning Committee and North Atlantic Council ministerial meetings, scheduled for December, be 25X1 held in October or November; preliminary reactions have been favorable.

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