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Czechoslovakia-USSR: Anti-Soviet demonstrations in Czechoslovakia over the weekend probably will lead the Russians to insist that Prague crack down.

The disturbances, which followed the Czechoslovak ice hockey team's victory over the Russians, were the most serious since the invasion. In Prague, nearly 200,000 people watched the ransacking of the office of the Soviet airlines, Aeroflot, in Wenceslaus Square. In Mlada Boleslav, where a comparatively large number of Soviet troops are concentrated, demonstrators smashed windows in the Russian barracks, prompting Soviet soldiers to fire their machine guns into the air to disperse the attackers.

There has been considerable tension for several weeks between the Czechoslovak citizens and Soviet soldiers in areas where Soviet occupation troops are stationed, particularly in Mlada Boleslav. The Soviet commander there recently warned local authorities that he would impose martial law and a curfew if provocations continued.

The Soviet press reacted strongly to the demonstrations, emphasizing the failure of the Dubcek leadership to take effective steps to curb unrest and criticizing Czechoslovak mass media for stirring "nationalist passions." It also accused progressive presidium member Josef Smrkovsky--who appeared briefly in Wenceslaus Square during the demonstration--of taking part in the disturbances.

It is uncertain whether these accusations may foreshadow new Soviet demands that Dubcek remove Smrkovsky and other "antisocialist elements"--particularly among newsmen--from responsible positions in the party and government. A renewal of such Soviet pressure would aid the pro-Soviet conservatives, who are working behind the scenes to assemble a significant opposition to the Dubcek leadership. [redacted]

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