

# Czechoslovak and Soviet State Security Against The West Before 1968

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At the turn of the 1960s, twelve years after the 1948 coup in Czechoslovakia and seven years after the death of Communist leaders Josef Stalin and Klement Gottwald, the Czechoslovak political police known as the State Security Service (StB) won trust of Soviet leaders by its activity carried out both inside the country and behind the Iron Curtain. In consequence of changes in the former system of direct control of Eastern bloc satellite secret services by way of a complicated system of KGB advisers, the KGB transferred more powers to the leadership of satellite services. From then on, the KGB ensured control of the security apparatus bilaterally, particularly by way of top-level meetings held alternatively in Prague and in Moscow. Even though the preserved records of these meetings are obviously not complete, the remaining documents allow us to get a certain picture of the joint activity of both countries' communist secret services directed against the West.

The first top-level meeting devoted to cooperation between the StB and the KGB was held in Moscow in July 1960. The leaderships of the Czechoslovak Interior Ministry and the State Security Service needed to make sure that their subordinate sections operated in compliance with the intentions of Soviet policy. They called for the signing of a specific agreement on cooperation in individual world regions and for intensified mutual exchange of information, while offering execution of joint active measures. Czechoslovak intelligence suggested launching of an action called "CENTRAL" against the United States, with the aim to allow Soviet and Czechoslovak intelligence to evaluate information on 300 CIA employees. This information was to be used later for the purpose of recruiting the so-called auxiliary agency for the object of U.S. intelligence. In addition, the Czechoslovak side offered to carry out a series of active measures aimed to discredit representatives of the U.S. government. In Latin America, e.g., Czechoslovak intelligence recommended that the positions of the "major enemy" should be disrupted by way of activating nationalist and anti-American groups. More specifically, they wanted to carry out a joint action aimed at the Morazan Institute in Buenos Aires. An agent of the Czechoslovak StB First Department operating under the code name "PILAR" was to be planted in the institute's leadership.

In Europe, Czechoslovak intelligence focused its attention primarily on the

Federal Republic of Germany. A number of active measures were aimed chiefly to compromise Germany's Bundesnachrichtendienst (BND), the Federal Intelligence Service, and its alleged activity against the Italian minority in Austria, activities in Africa, etc. As far as Great Britain was concerned, possibilities of joint "active work" on some African political groupings from London were to be considered. The StB First Department also asked for assistance in handling an agent of its London residence operating under the code name "KOLON", who had allegedly a number of unused opportunities for active intelligence work in Africa. In France, both sides were to concentrate more on the "exchange of experience" from work directed against NATO bodies. In relation to Austria, the Czechoslovak side wanted to discuss information on German and U.S. agencies in the Austrian state machinery and their activities directed against the communist bloc.

In the Asian region, the StB leadership suggested, with reference to its created positions - joint actions in Indonesia, India, Turkey, Iraq, Lebanon and Israel. Intentions in Africa were similar and concerned in particular the United Arab Republic, Guinea, Mali, the Congo, Ghana, Angola, Sierra Leone and Zanzibar. The scope of suggested operations was relatively broad, ranging from mere use of about twenty top Czechoslovak agents or contacts, execution of active measures, up to acts of sabotage against the U.S. base in Zanzibar.

Counterintelligence departments of the State Security Service monitored and infiltrated diplomatic and economic facilities of Western and developing states which pursued activities on the Czechoslovak territory. They even aimed for sweeping control of the arrivals and movement of tourists coming from the democratic world. Besides monitoring the activity and movements of Western diplomats (and naturally discovering members of foreign intelligence services), agents recruited from among Czechoslovak and foreign nationals were used to gather compromising information. For example, Czechoslovak intelligence monitoring British ambassador Cecil Parrot was to assist the KGB in planting a Soviet agent with the code name "CERNY". The KGB also asked for investigation of the possibility of linking their agents with the code names "DUBROSKY", "ELEKTRON" and "SVYETLOV" to the British intelligence service in Prague. Similarly, an StB collaborator with the code name "HANUS" was to help plant Soviet agents with operating under the code names "TARASOV", "VASILYEV" and "VOLSKY" on the Americans. Overall, more than five StB agents (and 13 a year later) helped plant 15 (and later almost 20) KGB agents operating against the West. Plans for joint systematic infiltration of institutions in the democratic world were rather extensive (40 actions altogether in the Second Counterintelligence Department), and they went into surprising details.

However, some evaluations of cooperation between the StB and the KGB reveal that not all joint operations were carried out or ended with success. At the close of 1960, Czechoslovak intelligence had to reduce its activity due to the disclosure of part of its agency network in Germany, Switzerland and France. Among other things this fact prevented intelligence services from gathering any more essential information materials about NATO. The situation began to change in the course of 1961. The First Department allegedly identified another 100 CIA employees, and they found several persons suitable for recruitment as collaborators in the Pentagon and State Department facilities (e.g. code names "RISA" and "KING"). In Western Europe, Czechoslovak intelligence focused its attention on several dozen female secretaries and translators who worked for NATO. It was to establish contact with a few of them in France with the help of an agent operating under the code name "BURDA". A similar procedure was applied in activities directed against NATO objects in Germany and Greece. In London, a collaborator with the code name "LEE" was used for gaining documents from British Parliament, NATO and the British Ministry of Defence. The StB pursued a number of objects immediately behind the Iron Curtain in democratic Germany, which included political and state structures and foreign institutions. A collaborator with the code name "DRAB" operated within the CDU (German Christian Democratic Union), "STANEK", "KUCERA" and "SIRA" were being prepared for operating in Bundestag, "JAKUB" and "STERN" worked on the object of the SPD (Social Democratic Party of Germany), with "MOJZIS" being prepared for collaboration, a secretary, "KVETA", was being worked on in the office of the federal chancellor, agents "PLAVEC" and "NELLA" concentrated on the Ministry of Defence, agents "BRADA", "KOLAR" and "CESAR" were oriented on Radio Free Europe in Munich, etc. Czechoslovak intelligence also launched an extensive operation against the German Federal Intelligence Service, sending to Germany a total of 77 agents of whom 14 were allegedly contacted and 6 drafted for collaboration. This operation led to the identification of BND members and provided a certain overview of their interests in the then communist Czechoslovakia. One of the major goals of communist infiltration was the Vatican. Work on the Vatican was co-ordinated by communist intelligence in co-operation with StB regional units.

At the beginning of the 1960s, some negotiations about specific forms of operative agency cooperation shifted to the level of individual departments. The leadership of the StB counterintelligence department and the intelligence technology department in particular maintained relatively frequent contacts with the leadership of the KGB partner units. Top-level talks, i.e. those attended by interior ministers Rudolf Barak, Lubomir Strougal and Josef Kudrna, their

deputies and chiefs of the main StB departments on the one hand, and by KGB chairmen Aleksandr Shelepin and Vladimir Semichastny, their deputies and chiefs of the main KGB directorates on the other, were not restricted to operative actions, but they dealt with all state security activities. Czechoslovak representatives could thus gain a relatively detailed knowledge of the structure of some KGB units, which later served as a basis for the reorganization of their satellite secret service.

Based on the analysis of the existing cooperation, Strougal and Semichansky even prepared and signed the Agreement on Collaboration between the Czech Ministry of the Interior and the Committee of State Security at the Council of Ministers of the USSR

(KGB) on 19 June 1962. Under the pressure of Soviet imperialism, the Czechoslovak State Security Service expanded its scope of activity almost all over the world. In the second half of the 1960s, some members of Czechoslovak intelligence felt that their service verged on the limit of their possibilities. Under the pretext of return to Czechoslovakia's state interests, which was the first step toward the Prague Spring political movement of 1968, they strove to reduce the number of their subversive as well as merely information-related tasks. In January 1965, the KGB leadership no longer approached talks with their Czechoslovak counterparts as before. The document on the talks of representatives of the Czechoslovak and Soviet intelligence services Second Departments listed only Czechoslovak collaborators from the ranks of foreign nationals (numbering about 30 persons) who could be used not only against objects behind the Iron Curtain (e.g. youth organizations such as the Union of African Students in Europe, UASE, the International Union of Socialist Youth, IUSY, or the Coordinating Secretariat of National Unions of Students, COSEC), but also among students in Moscow. At a meeting in Prague in June 1965, leading representatives of both sides again confirmed that cooperation between the KGB and the StB was "successfully" developing, in the interest of security of both communist countries. The joint report of Interior Minister Josef Kudrna and KGB Chairman Vladimir Semichastny of 4 July 1965 supplemented and further elaborated some points of the preceding agreement of 1962, including joint operations directed primarily against the enemy's intelligence services, against centres of "ideological subversion", NATO. The document also called for close cooperation between both intelligence services residences in "capitalist" states.

Close cooperation of satellite secret services with the KGB reached a new level at the close of the 1960s. In the second half of July 1967, representatives of the political police from Bulgaria, Poland, East Germany, the Soviet Union, Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Romania met for a conference in Budapest. This

meeting actually raised the surveillance of the Vatican and its activities to the level of Eastern bloc state security services operations against the “major enemy”.

In the course of 1968, cooperation between the KGB and the StB changed substantially in consequence of sweeping political developments in Czechoslovakia and the change of the Soviet stand on the Prague Spring political movement. The existing system of Soviet advisers was de-conspired to some extent. These advisers began to work hard on preparing future occupation of an allied country, even though their sources of information were both conservative and more progressively oriented. Shortly after August 1968, even some StB chiefs, who had been formerly involved in talks with top KGB officials, found themselves on the other side of the barricade, which resulted in their internment, dismissal from the political police, and even in subsequent imprisonment of some of them. However, their successors established fully-fledged cooperation with the KGB as early as fourteen days after the occupation, and this cooperation continued until the fall of the communist regime in Czechoslovakia at the close of 1989.