

CN 177

C/S - 2ND ADD - THE LONG MARCH (CN 176) XXX MINISTRY

WHILE ALL THIS WAS GOING ON, THE SOVIET UNION STATED IN AN UNPRECEDENTED ANNOUNCEMENT ON JULY 23 THAT REAR-ECHELON EXERCISES - THE LARGEST OF THE POST-WAR ERA, HAD BEGUN ALONG THE SOVIET WESTERN BORDERS, INCLUDING THE AREA BORDERING CZECHOSLOVAKIA.

THESE EXERCISES, WHICH INVOLVED THE CALLING UP OF SOVIET RESERVES, WERE OFFICIALLY STATED TO BE A TEST OF THE ABILITY OF TROOPS AND BODIES OF THE REAR TO ENSURE AN UNINTERRUPTED SUPPLY OF TROOPS IN DIFFICULT CONDITIONS.

IT WAS LATER ANNOUNCED THAT THE POLISH AND EAST GERMAN ARMIES WERE ALSO HOLDING SIMILAR MANOEUVRES.

NO SOONER DID THESE MASSIVE ANOEUVRES END ON AUGUST 10 THAN JOINT SOVIET-EASTGERMAN-POLISH EXERCISES OF COMMUNICATIONS TROOPS BEGAN IN THE SOUTH OF EAST GERMANY, IN POLAND, AND IN THE WESTERN UKRAINE.

MEANWHILE, THE SOVIET, POLISH AND EAST GERMAN NAVIES HELD LARGE-SCALE LANDING EXERCISES IN THE BALTIC.

THROUGH IT ALL, SOVIET DEFENCE MINISTER GRECHKO AND YAKUBOVSKY KEPT POPPING UP IN WARSAW AND EAST BERLIN FOR CONFERENCES WITH EAST GERMAN AND POLISH OFFICIALS.

BG/A/PT1417/68 AUG 21

by