

CN 320

X/13 C/S - STEWART SEES INVASION AS WORLD TRAGEDY (WITH CN 301)

LONDON, AUGUST 21--(RFE SPECIAL/HOOD)--

BRITISH FOREIGN SECRETARY MICHAEL STEWART SAID TONIGHT THAT THE RUSSIAN INVASION OF CZECHOSLOVAKIA MEANS A "FREEZING AND BLIGHTING" OF HOPES FOR IMPROVED EAST-WEST RELATIONS.

"THAT IS WHY IT IS A TRAGEDY NOT RPT NOT ONLY FOR CZECHOSLOVAKIA BUT FOR THE WHOLE WORLD," HE SAID IN AN EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW RECORDED FOR RFE.

ALL SMALL NATIONS SHOULD NOW ASK THEMSELVES WHERE THEIR SECURITY LIES, HE SAID.

FOLLOWING IS THE TEXT OF THE INTERVIEW SUMMING UP THE BRITISH POINT OF VIEW:

MR. STEWART, YOU HEARD THE NEWS FROM CZECHOSLOVAKIA IN THE EARLY HOURS OF THIS MORNING. WHAT WAS THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT'S IMMEDIATE REACTION?

STEWART: WELL, IMMEDIATELY, THE PRIME MINISTER AND I CAME BACK TO LONDON WHERE WE HAD CONSULTATIONS. WE HAVE ISSUED A STATEMENT MAKING IT CLEAR THAT THE ACTION TAKEN BY THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT IS A VIOLATION OF THE UN CHARTER AND CONTRARY TO ALL ACCEPTED STANDARDS OF INTERNATIONAL CONDUCT.

Q. ARE YOU PROPOSING TO RAISE THE MATTER IN THE UNITED NATIONS?

A: WE, AND OTHERS, JOINTLY, NO DOUBT WILL RAISE IT.

Q: WHAT SORT OF APPROACHES HAVE YOU MADE ROUND THE WORLD?

A: WELL, I HAVE SEEN MYSELF, FOR EXAMPLE, THE AMERICAN, FRENCH AND GERMAN REPRESENTATIVES. A NUMBER OF OTHER HEADS OF MISSIONS HAVE BEEN SEEN BY OTHERS IN THE FOREIGN OFFICE. THE COMMONWEALTH OFFICE HAS SPOKEN TO ALL THE COMMONWEALTH HIGH COMMISSIONERS AND WE MADE CONTACT ALSO WITH OUR EMBASSIES ABROAD AND IN NATO AND THE UNITED NATIONS.

Q: APART FROM WHAT YOU MAY ACHIEVE IN THE UNITED NATIONS, WHAT DO YOU SEE AS THE EFFECTS OF THIS ACTION OF THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT?

A: WELL, A FREEZING AND A BLIGHTING OF THE GENUINE HOPES THERE WERE FOR IMPROVED RELATIONS BETWEEN EAST AND WEST. THAT IS WHY IT IS A TRAGEDY NOT ONLY FOR CZECHOSLOVAKIA, BUT FOR THE WHOLE WORLD.

Q: ARE ANY NATIONS IN PARTICULAR THREATENED, DO YOU THINK?

A: WELL, IT SEEMS TO ME THAT ALL SMALL NATIONS OUGHT NOW TO ASK THEMSELVES "WHERE DOES OUR SECURITY LIE?"

Q: YOU THINK THAT THEY MAY SEE IT IN NATO PERHAPS?

A: AND IN THE STRENGTHENING OF THE AUTHORITY OF THE UNITED NATIONS.

TP/E 2008/68

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