

X13 CURT -- BENELUX PRESS PLAY ON CZECHOSLOVAKIA

BRUSSELS, AUG. 22 (RFE SPECIAL/DYBVIK/JM) -- THE SOVIET-LED INVASION OF CZECHOSLOVAKIA WAS THE TOP STORY IN ALL BENELUX NEWSPAPERS TODAY.

IT ALSO OCCUPIED THE NUMBER ONE POSITION IN RADIO AND TELEVISION NEWS PROGRAMMING YESTERDAY AND TODAY. MOST TV STATIONS CARRIED SPECIAL COMMENTARY OR DISCUSSION PROGRAMS ON CZECHOSLOVAKIA LAST NIGHT.

IN BELGIUM, LE SOIR (INDEPENDENT) THE COUNTRY'S LARGEST NEWSPAPER, DEVOTED MOST OF ITS FRONT PAGE TO CZECHOSLOVAKIA UNDER THE HEADLINE: "CZECHOSLOVAKIA INVADED BY TROOPS OF FIVE COMMUNIST NEIGHBOR COUNTRIES DESPITE THE AGREEMENT MADE IN BRATISLAVA BETWEEN THE PARTNERS OF THE WARSAW PACT." ALL OF PAGE THREE -- THE NORMAL LEADING FOREIGN NEWS PAGE AND HALF OF PAGE FOUR DEALT WITH CZECHOSLOVAKIA AND REACTIONS TO THE OCCUPATION.

LA DERNIERE HEURE (INDEPENDENT) GAVE ITS ENTIRE FRONT PAGE TO THE INVASION. ALL OF PAGE THREE AND MOST OF PAGE FOUR WERE SIDEBAR STORIES AND ONE PROMINENT HEADLINE READ: "THE NEW COUP OF PRAGUE."

THE SOCIALIST DAILY LE PEUPLE DEVOTED ALL OF ITS FRONT PAGE AND PAGES FOUR AND FIVE TO THE CZECHOSLOVAK OCCUPATION STORY. THE FRONT PAGE CARRIED THE TWO-LINE BANNER: "USSR SEEKS TO ESTABLISH A PUPPET POWER IN PRAGUE."

LA LIBRE BELGIQUE (CATHOLIC) GAVE HALF ITS FRONT PAGE TO THE STORY UNDER THE FOUR-COLUMN HEADLINE: "COUP OF FORCE AGAINST CZECHOSLOVAKIA." ALL OF PAGES THREE, FOUR AND FIVE WERE ALSO DEVOTED TO THE STORY AND REACTION SIDEBARS.

THE FLEMISH INDEPENDENT PAPER DE STANDAARD HEADLINED "RED ARMY OCCUPIES CZECHOSLOVAKIA" AND GAVE PAGES ONE, THREE AND FIVE TO THE STORY.

SIMILAR PLAY AND HEADLINES APPEARED IN ALL THE OTHER MAJOR FRENCH AND FLEMISH BELGIAN PRESS. ALL MADE EXTENSIVE USE OF PICTURES, MAINLY THOSE SHOWING SOVIET TROOPS OCCUPYING WELL-KNOWN SITES IN PRAGUE.

IN HOLLAND, THE LIBERAL CATHOLIC PAPER DE TIJD TOPPED ITS FRONT PAGE WITH A DOUBLE BANNER HEADLINE "RUSSIAN TROOPS INVADE CZECHOSLOVAKIA" AND FILLED THE ENTIRE FRONT PAGE WITH AN EDITORIAL ENTITLED "ANXIETY AND DESPAIR." NEWS OF THE OCCUPATION FILLED FOUR INSIDE PAGES.

THIS MORNING'S DE TELEGRAAF, (INDEPENDENT) AMSTERDAM'S LARGEST POPULAR DAILY, TOPPED ITS FRONT PAGE WITH TWO DRAMATIC PICTURES OF REFUGEES FLEEING ACROSS THE CZECHOSLOVAK BORDER. THE HEADLINE READ: "HE IS THERE AGAIN: THE EUROPEAN FUGITIVE." FOUR INSIDE PAGES TOLD THE STORY AND REACTION.

ALGEMEEN DAGBLAD OF ROTTERDAM GAVE ITS FRONT PAGE OVER TO REACTION STORIES, INCLUDING DUTCH DEMONSTRATIONS AGAINST THE INVASION, WHILE THE ACTUAL INVASION STORY LED PAGE THREE. OTHER STORIES FILLED PAGES FIVE, SIX, SEVEN AND NINE.

THE HAAGSCHE COURANT (INDEPENDENT) AND ONE OF HOLLAND'S LARGEST PROVINCIAL PAPERS, CARRIED SEVEN PAGES ON THE STORY WITH MANY PICTURES AND A FULL-PAGE COMPARISON WITH HUNGARY, 1956.

HET PAROOL, THE INDEPENDENT SOCIALIST DAILY, GAVE ALL OF PAGE ONE AND THREE INSIDE PAGES TO THE STORY. IT ALSO CARRIED A SHARPLY CRITICAL FRONT-PAGE EDITORIAL.

ALL DUTCH NEWSPAPERS ALSO MADE WIDE USE OF PICTURES.

MOST RADIO AND TV BROADCASTS USED ON ACTUALITY NEWS PROGRAMMING RECORDINGS OF THE PRAGUE RADIO AND TELEVISION ANNOUNCEMENTS OF THE INVASION AND APPEALS TO REMAIN CALM.

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