

CN 68

C/S -- USIA DIRECTOR CONDEMNS RUSSIAN JAMMING OF WESTERN BROADCASTS
(AMPLIFIES CN 52)

WASHINGTON, AUG 23 (USIS)-- LEONHARD H. MARKS, MARKS, DIRECTOR OF THE U.S. INFORMATION AGENCY, THURSDAY TERMED THE RESUMPTION OF SOVIET JAMMING OF RUSSIAN-LANGUAGE BROADCASTS BY THE VOICE OF AMERICA (VOA) AND OTHER WESTERN STATIONS FOR THE FIRST TIME IN MORE THAN FIVE YEARS " A REGRETTABLE STEP BACKWARDS."

"I EARNESTLY HOPE THAT THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT WILL RECONSIDER ITS ACTION," DIRECTOR MARKS SAID. HE TERMED THE ACTION A "RESUMPTION OF COLD WAR TACTICS."

A VOA SPOKESMAN SAID THE JAMMING BEGAN WEDNESDAY A FEW HOURS AFTER TROOPS OF THE SOVIET UNION, POLAND, POLAND, EAST GERMANY, HUNGARY AND BULGARIA INVADED CZECHOSLOVAKIA.

POINTING OUT THAT VOA IS BROADCASTING LIVE THE CURRENT SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL, MR. MARKS SAID HE HOPED THAT THE PEOPLES OF THE SOVIET UNION WOULD HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO HEAR THE WORLD BODY DEBATE THE MOMENTOUS EVENTS IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA.

"FREEDOM OF INFORMATION IS ESSENTIAL IF NATIONS ARE TO UNDERSTAND ONE ANOTHER'S VIEWPOINTS AND IF PEOPLES OF THE WORLD ARE TO KNOW THE FACTS ON WHICH TO BASE THEIR JUDGMENTS.

"IN THE UNITED STATES, AS IN MOST OF THE REST OF THE WORLD, CITIZENS ARE FREE TO TUNE TO WHATEVER BROADCASTS THEY CHOOSE. THIS IS AS IT SHOULD BE, AND AS I HOPE IT SOON WILL BE AGAIN IN THE SOVIET UNION"

INTERFERENCE WITH THE RUSSIAN-LANGUAGE PROGRAMS OF THE BRITISH BROADCASTING CORPORATION (BBC) THE CANADIAN BROADCASTING CORPORATION (CBC) AND GERMANY'S DEUTSCHE WELLE HAS ALSO BEEN REPORTED.

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