

X/13 E-W -- BONN CLAIMS SOVIET INVASION PLANS KNOWN IN ADVANCE
(ATTRIBUTION REQUIRED)

BONN, AUG. 23 (RFE SPECIAL/DEWITT) -- A BONN SPOKESMAN ASSERTED TODAY THAT WESTERN INTELLIGENCE SERVICES HAD RECOGNIZED THE WARSAW PACT MANEUVERS IN AND AROUND CZECHOSLOVAKIA FROM THE OUTSET AS PREPARATIONS FOR AN INVASION OF THE COUNTRY.

WHAT WAS AND COULD NOT BE KNOWN IN ADVANCE WAS THE ACTUAL DATE OF THE INVASION ON WHICH THE DECISION WAS MADE EVIDENTLY JUST SHORTLY BEFORE THE TROOPS MARCHED IN, DEPUTY PRESS CHIEF CONRAD AHLERS TOLD A NEWS CONFERENCE HERE.

THE TIME REQUIRED FOR THE BUILD UP OF SOVIET AND ALLIED TROOPS HAD PROVED THE ACCURACY OF THE NATO ESTIMATES OF THE PRE-WARNING PERIOD WHICH WAS TO BE EXPECTED BEFORE AN ATTACK DEVELOPED, AHLERS SAID. HE CONCEDED, HOWEVER, THAT NOW THAT SOVIETS TROOPS WERE IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA WHERE NONE HAD BEEN BEFORE, NATO WAS CONFRONTED WITH A NEW SITUATION TO WHICH ITS MILITARY PLANNERS WOULD HAVE TO ADJUST THEIR ESTIMATES.

BUT THE GOVERNMENT SPOKESMAN STRESSED THAT WESTERN INTELLIGENCE HAD CLEARLY IDENTIFIED THE WARSAW PACT DEPLOYMENT AS BEING DIRECTED ONLY AGAINST CZECHOSLOVAKIA, AND NOT AGAINST ANY NATO MEMBER.

IN REPLY TO QUESTIONS, AHLERS STATED THAT EAST GERMAN UNITS DEFINITELY WERE IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA, BUT HE REFUSED TO DISCLOSE THEIR STRENGTH OR LOCATION. A DEFENSE MINISTRY SPOKESMAN WOULD MERELY SAY THAT SOME OF THE TROOPS HAD CROSSED THE BORDER NEAR KARLOVY VARY. THE SPOKESMAN ALSO DISCLOSED THAT NON-SOVIET OCCUPATION TROOPS WERE DEFINITELY NOT MERELY TOKEN FORCES BUT RELATIVELY SUBSTANTIAL CONTINGENTS. HE DID NOT SPECIFY THEIR SIZE EXCEPT TO SAY THAT BULGARIAN UNITS COMPRISED A RE - INFORCED REGIMENT.

AHLERS SAID THAT SOVIET TROOPS SENT INTO CZECHOSLOVAKIA FROM EAST GERMANY, POLAND, AND HUNGARY HAVE MEANWHILE BEEN REPLACED BY UNITS FROM THE INTERIOR OF THE SOVIET UNION. DEFENSE MINISTRY SPOKESMEN INTIMATED THAT THE AIRBORNE LANDING IN PRAGUE AND OTHER CITIES WERE MADE BY A CRACK DIVISION STATIONED IN WESTERN RUSSIA.

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