

CN 63

CS - MORNING INTRO - TITO SPEECH

BELGRADE, AUG 24 (UPI)--YUGOSLAV PRESIDENT JOSIP BROZ TITO FRIDAY NIGHT DENOUNCED THE INVASION OF CZECHOSLOVAKIA AND WARNED THAT YUGOSLAVIA WOULD FIGHT ANY COUNTRY THAT THREATENED ITS INDEPENDENCE.

TITO MADE HIS REMARKS TO THE YUGOSLAV COMMUNIST LEAGUE CENTRAL COMMITTEE SHORTLY BEFORE THE COMMITTEE UNANIMOUSLY CONDEMNED THE WARSAW PACT INVASION OF CZECHOSLOVAKIA.

TITO TOLD THE COMMITTEE THAT HE HAD WARNED THE SOVIET UNION LAST APRIL NOT TO USE FORCE AGAINST CZECHOSLOVAKIA IN ITS DEMOCRATIZATION DRIVE.

THE SOVIET EXPLANATION THAT THE OCCUPATION WAS TO PROTECT CZECHOSLOVAKIA FROM INVASION FROM WEST GERMAN FORCES WAS ABSURD, HE SAID.

TITO REITERATED HIS SUPPORT OF CZECHOSLOVAKIA AND ITS LIBERAL LEADER ALEXANDER DUBCEK AND SAID THAT RUSSIA HAD NO REASON TO DOUBT CZECHOSLOVAKIA AS A LOYAL PARTNER IN THE WARSAW ALIGNMENT OR AS A MEMBER OF THE SOCIALIST CAMP.

TITO TOLD THE 153-MEMBER COMMITTEE THAT "IF SOMETHING COMES UP THAT WOULD ENDANGER OUR INDEPENDENCE WE WILL KNOW HOW TO DEFEND AND PRESERVE IT WITH ALL MEANS, WE WILL KNOW HOW TO DEFEND OUR FREE DEVELOPMENT REGARDLESS FROM WHICH SIDE THE DANGER CAME."

TITO SAID HE BELIEVED THE MAIN MOTIVES WHICH LED THE SOVIETS TO INVADE WERE THE WISH TO PREVENT DEMOCRATIC DEVELOPMENT IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA AND TO PREVENT DEMOCRATIZATION TRENDS IN OTHER MOSCOW-CONTROLLED COUNTRIES WHICH WOULD FOLLOW.

(MORE) RB/LA 0410/68

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15