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U.S. - MCCARTHY: VIETNAM STEP-UP NOT JUSTIFIED

WASHINGTON, AUG 24, REUTER - SENATOR EUGENE MCCARTHY LAST NIGHT CONDEMNED THE SOVIET INVASION OF CZECHOSLOVAKIA BUT SAID THIS ACT DID NOT JUSTIFY STEPPING UP U.S. MILITARY ACTION IN VIETNAM.

IN A NEW STATEMENT ON THE CZECHOSLOVAK SITUATION WHICH HE SAID WAS DESIGNED TO CLEAR UP ANY DOUBT ABOUT HIS WEDNESDAY COMMENT ON THE SUBJECT, THE DEMOCRATIC PRESIDENTIAL CONTENDER SAID:

"OF COURSE, I CONDEMN THIS CRUEL AND VIOLENT ACTION. IT SHOULD NOT REALLY BE NECESSARY TO SAY THIS, BUT TO MAKE CLEAR MY ATTITUDE, I DO."

THE SENATOR HAD SAID ON WEDNESDAY THAT HE DID NOT VIEW THE INVASION "AS A MAJOR WORLD CRISIS" AND CRITICISED PRESIDENT JOHNSON FOR SUMMONING HIS TOP ADVISERS TO THE WHITE HOUSE IMMEDIATELY AFTER NEWS OF THE INVASION CAME TUESDAY NIGHT.

THE SENATOR SAID TODAY A CONSIDERABLE NUMBER OF REPUBLICANS AND "A FEW DEMOCRATIC LEADERS" SEEMED TO BELIEVE THE U.S. SHOULD STEP UP ITS MILITARY ACTION IN VIETNAM BECAUSE OF THE RUSSIANS "BRUTAL" BEHAVIOUR.

"THIS IS CERTAINLY NOT MY POLICY," HE SAID.

HE ADDED "OUR INVOLVEMENT IN VIETNAM IS LEAVING US WITHOUT TACTICAL, MORAL AND DIPLOMATIC POWER TO BE EXERCISED IN OTHER PARTS OF THE WORLD AND IN OTHER CRISES."

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