

IN THE REPORT, OCCUPYING NEARLY FIVE COLUMNS IN THE MORNING STAR, GOLLAN BEGAN BY SPEAKING OF THE GRAVE CONCERN" OVER THE SITUATION CREATED BY THE MILITARY INTERVENTION BY FIVE OF THE WARSAW PACT COUNTRIES.

AFTER ATTACKING OTHER BRITISH POLITICAL PARTIES FOR USING THE SITUATION " TO STOKES UP COLD WAR", GOLLAN SAID:

"WE THINK A TRAGIC ERROR HAS BEEN MADE. AS THE STATEMENT (BY THE POLITICAL COMMITTEE WEDNESDAY DEPLORING THE ACTION) SAID, WHATEVER DIFFERENCES OF VIEW THERE MIGHT BE ABOUT DEVELOPMENTS IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA, MILITARY INTERVENTION WAS COMPLETELY UNJUSTIFIED."

GOLLAN REFERRED TO THE JULY DECISION OF THE EXECUTIVE EXPRESSING SOLIDARITY WITH THE CZECHOSLOVAK COMMUNIST PARTY AND ANXIETY LEST THERE BE INTERVENTION, AND SPOKE OF THE LARGE-SCALE SOVIET TROOPS MANOEUVRES AFTER THE WARSAW LETTER AND THE PRAGUE REPLY.

"THESE EVENTS CAUSED US ALL GREAT CONCERN", HE SAID.

GOLLAN THEN RECALLED THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF BILATERAL TALKS BETWEEN THE CPSU AND THE CZECHOSLOVAK PARTY WHICH THE BRITISH CP HAD WELCOMED ON JULY 26 IN A STATEMENT STRESSING MUTUAL COOPERATION AND RESPECT FOR NATIONAL SOVEREIGNTY.

AFTER MENTIONING THE CIERNA MEETING, GOLLAN QUOTED FROM THE COMMUNIQUE ISSUED AT THE CLOSE OF THE SIX-COUNTRY BRATISLAVA MEETING AND SAID HE HAD HOPED THAT THIS WAS THE BEGINNING OF A POLITICAL SOLUTION TO THE PROBLEM, BUT 17 DAYS LATER THE WARSAW PACT TROOPS MOVED IN.

GOLLAN QUOTED AT LENGTH FROM THE ARTICLE IN PRAVDA ON AUGUST 21 GIVING THE RUSSIAN EXPLANATION, AND SAID THE CZECHOSLOVAK COMMUNISTS HAV NOT BEEN ABLE TO REPLY EITHER TO THIS ARTICLE OR SIMILAR STATEMENTS MADE IN THE LAST FEW DAYS.

"THEY DID, HOWEVER, EXPLAIN IN THEIR REPLY TO THE WARSAW LETTER LAST MONTH WHAT THEIR ATTITUDE WAS TO THE MAIN CHARGES WHICH IT MADE...

GOLLAN QUOTED FROM IT AND WENT ON: "THIS LETTER OF THE CZECHOSLOVAK COMRADES IS, IN MY OPINION, A LETTER OF HONEST COMMUNISTS ENDEAVOURING TO TACKLE A DIFFICULT SITUATION, WITH AN UNDERSTANDING OF THE DANGERS AND A PLAN FOR DEALING WITH THEM.

(MORE) BG/HI *1st NR* 1530/68