

CN 210

X/13 - C/S - DUTCH SALUTE CZECHOSLOVAKS; GROUP OF TEN WORK STALLED

THE HAGUE, AUG 27 (RFE SPECIAL/JM/RD) -- FOR TWO MINUTES EARLY THIS AFTERNOON, ALMOST THE ENTIRE DUTCH NATION CAME TO A SILENT HALT, DISPLAYING ITS SYMPATHY AND ADMIRATION FOR THE PEOPLE OF OCCUPIED CZECHOSLOVAKIA.

WORK AND TRAFFIC WAS HALTED THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY AT 1300 MT. EVEN TRAINS ON THE EXTENSIVE DUTCH RAILWAY SYSTEM STOPPED. THE DUTCH COMMUNIST PARTY, WHICH HAS OPENLY CONDEMNED THE SOVIET-LED OCCUPATION, WAS THE ONLY LARGE POLITICAL OR LABOR GROUP WHICH DID NOT ACTIVELY TAKE PART IN THE TWO-MINUTE SILENT SALUTE.

MANY OF THOSE PARTICIPATING REMEMBERED THE INVASION AND OCCUPATION OF HOLLAND DURING WORLD WAR TWO BY NAZI GERMANY.

DUTCH PREMIER PETRUS DE JONG, ADDRESSING A SPECIAL SESSION OF PARLIAMENT CALLED THE RUSSIAN ACTION "AN EXCESSIVE REACTION" TO CZECHOSLOVAKIA'S MOVE TOWARD A LIMITED FREEDOM.

NOTING THE UNANIMOUS ACCORD AMONG NATO COUNTRIES, WHO TODAY WERE CONTINUING THEIR ASSESSMENT AT A SPECIAL NATO COUNCIL MEETING IN BRUSSELS, DE JONG WARNED THAT ANY CONCENTRATION OF TROOPS IN EAST GERMANY NEAR THE BORDER MUST BE CLOSELY WATCHED.

HE TOLD PARLIAMENT THAT HE WAS ADVISED OF THE INTERVENTION IN THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT BY SOVIET OFFICIALS HERE AND WAS TOLD THE PRAGUE GOVERNMENT HAD REQUESTED THE WARSAW PACT TROOPS. DE JONG SAID HE HAD REQUESTED THE SOVIET AMBASSADOR PUT HIS MESSAGE IN WRITING AND HAS REPEATED THE REQUEST IN RECENT DAYS, BUT HAS NOT YET RECEIVED A WRITTEN TEXT OF THE SOVIET MESSAGE.

(MORE) BG/A 1656/68

1/16