

CN 303

CS - LONGO REAFFIRMS SUPPORT FOR PRAGUE LEADERS

ROME, AUG 27 (UPI)--THE ITALIAN COMMUNIST PARTY, LARGEST IN THE WEST, REITERATED ITS CONDEMNATION TONIGHT OF THE SOVIET-LED INVASION OF CZECHOSLOVAKIA.

PARTY BOSS LUIGI LONGO LEVELED A NEW ROUND OF CRITICISM AT MOSCOW AND ITS WARSAW PACT ALLIES AND RE-AFFIRMED HIS SUPPORT OF THE CZECH LEADERSHIP.

"WE CONSIDER RIGHT AND POSITIVE THE DIRECTION OUTLINED AND TAKEN BY THE NEW LEADERSHIP OF THE CZECHOSLOVAKIAN COMMUNIST PARTY," LONGO SAID IN A SPEECH OPENING AN EXTRAORDINARY SESSION OF THE ITALIAN PARTY'S CENTRAL COMMITTEE.

HE ALSO SAID A FUNDAMENTAL RIGHT OF PARTIES IN EVERY COMMUNIST STATE WAS AUTONOMY, INDEPENDENCE AND SOVEREIGNTY.

"WE CANNOT AGREE (WITH THE SOVIET-LED INVASION)," LONGO SAID. "MORE, WE DISAPPROVE THE INTERVENTION INTO CZECHOSLOVAKIA."

LONGO COUPLED HIS CRITICISM OF MOSCOW AND HIS APPROVAL OF THE PRAGUE LEADERSHIP WITH EXPRESSIONS OF PLEASURE OVER THE ANNOUNCEMENT BOTH SIDES HAD REACHED AGREEMENT IN NEGOTIATIONS.

HE SAID HE HOPED THE SETTLEMENT WOULD SEE POWER RETURNED TO CZECH WORKERS -- "SO THEY CAN HEAL THE HEAVY DAMAGE CAUSED BY THE INTERVENTION."

THE SETTLEMENT, HE SAID, SHOULD MARK THE FIRST STEP TOWARDS A NORMALIZATION OF RELATIONS AMONG COMMUNIST NATIONS.

THE PARTY SESSION BEGAN TWO HOURS LATER THAN SCHEDULED.

LUNITA EXPRESSED "NEW WORRIES" AND DISAPPOINTMENT AMONG THE WORLD'S COMMUNISTS BECAUSE OF SOVIET DELAY IN REACHING A SOLUTION WITH THE CZECHS.

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