

US - HAJEK CALLS SOVIET UNION A FRIEND (RELEADS CN - 122)

LONDON, AUG. 28, REUTER - CZECHOSLOVAK FOREIGN MINISTER JIRI HAJEK SAID HERE TODAY THAT THE SOVIET UNION WAS "A FRIEND WHO MADE A BLUNDER."

DURING A THREE-HOUR STOP-OVER HERE ON HIS WAY HOME FROM THE UNITED NATIONS IN NEW YORK, THE MINISTER WAS ALSO QUOTED AS SAYING HIS COUNTRY'S FUTURE WAS NOT AS GOOD AS HAD BEEN HOPED BUT THEY WOULD HAVE TO MAKE THE BEST OF IT.

MR. HAJEK FLEW TO BELGRADE WHERE HE WILL PICK UP HIS WIFE AND FAMILY, WHO HAVE BEEN ON HOLIDAY. THEY WILL FLY ON TO PRAGUE LATER TODAY.

BEFORE LEAVING, MR. HAJEK TOLD REPORTERS AT LONDON'S HEATHrow AIRPORT: "WE REGARD THE SOVIET UNION AS AN ALLY AND AS A FRIEND -- A FRIEND WHO MADE A BLUNDER. BUT THE SOVIET UNION DOES NOT CEASE TO BE AN ALLY AND A FRIEND."

ASKED WHEN HE THOUGHT SOVIET TROOPS WOULD LEAVE CZECHOSLOVAKIA, HE REPLIED: "I AM NOT A PROPHET. IT IS A QUESTION OF FURTHER TALKS."

MR. HAJEK ALSO PAID A BRIEF VISIT TO THE CZECHOSLOVAK EMBASSY HERE, WHERE HE SERVED FOR THREE YEARS.

A CZECHOSLOVAK STUDENT WHO SPOKE TO HIM THERE SAID: "HE TOLD US THE FUTURE WOULD PERHAPS NOT BE AS GOOD AS WE HAD HOPED BUT THAT WE MUST MAKE THE BEST OF IT." ||

(UPI) WHEN HE LEFT THE EMBASSY TO RETURN TO THE AIRPORT, HAJEK SAID CZECHOSLOVAKIA WOULD CONTINUE TO BE A SOCIALIST STATE AND A MEMBER OF THE COMMUNITY OF SOCIALIST COUNTRIES.

HE SAID HE "HOPED" THE CRISIS IS OVER, ADDING "WE ARE MAKING EFFORTS TO ACCOMPLISH THE PRINCIPLES WHICH HAVE BEEN AGREED BETWEEN THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC AND RUSSIA."