

E/W - WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES URGES USSR TO RENOUNCE USE OF FORCE

GENEVA, AUG 30 (USIS)-THE WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES (WCC) HAS APPEALED TO THE SOVIET UNION TO REMOVE ALL ITS TROOPS FROM CZECHOSLOVAKIA AND TO RENOUNCE THE USE OF FORCE AGAINST ITS ALLIES.

IT HAS EXPRESSED SYMPATHY FOR THE CHURCHES AND PEOPLE OF THE OCCUPIED COUNTRY AND SUPPORT FOR THEIR "PEACEFUL RESISTANCE TO THE REIMPOSITION OF SPIRITUAL, INTELLECTUAL AND SOCIAL CONTROLS."

THE WCC REPRESENTS AN ESTIMATED 400,000,000 MEMBERS IN OVER 200 PROTESTANT, EASTERN ORTHODOX AND OTHER CHURCHES. AMONG ITS MAJOR CONCERNS ARE INTERCHURCH COOPERATION AND AID TO THE NEEDY.

THE STATEMENT TO THE COUNCIL'S MEMBER CHURCHES WEDNESDAY WAS SIGNED BY GENERAL SECRETARY EUGENE CARSON BLAKE AND THE CHAIRMAN AND VICE-CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCIL'S POLICY-MAKING CENTRAL COMMITTEE--M.M. THOMAS OF BANGALORE, INDIA, AND MISS PAULINE M. WEBB OF LONDON.

FOLLOWING IS THE TEXT OF THE STATEMENT: (BEGIN TEXT)

THE OFFICERS OF THE WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES, HAVING ASKED ADVICE FROM MEMBER CHURCHES IN THE NATIONS DIRECTLY INVOLVED IN THE RECENT MILITARY INTERVENTION IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA, HAVING EXAMINED AND MADE AVAILABLE TO THE SECURITY COUNCIL OF THE UNITED NATIONS THROUGH THE CHURCHES' COMMISSION ON INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS RELEVANT STATEMENTS MADE BY THE CHURCHES TOGETHER IN THE PAST SEVERAL ASSEMBLIES, ADDRESS THIS NEW STATEMENT TO ALL MEMBER CHURCHES AND REQUEST THEM TO MAKE IT KNOWN TO THEIR MEMBERS AND GOVERNMENTS. WE SPEAK NOT ONLY BECAUSE OF THE GRAVE ISSUES OF PEACE, HUMAN LIBERTY AND DIGNITY AT STATE, BUT ALSO IN RESPONSE TO A PLEA INDIRECTLY FORWARDED TO US FROM ONE OF OUR MEMBER CHURCHES IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA.

ONE, WE DEPLORE THE MILITARY INTERVENTION INTO THE INTERNAL AFFAIRS OF CZECHOSLOVAKIA, A SMALL ALLIES FRIENDLY NEIGHBOURING STATE, BY THE GOVERNMENTS OF THE USSR, POLAND, EAST GERMANY, HUNGARY AND BULGARIA.

TWO, WE NOTE THAT THE NEW LEADERSHIP OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF CZECHOSLOVAKIA WAS ATTEMPTING REFORM OF THE PARTY AND OF THE STATE BY LEGAL MEANS, IN NO WAY UNFRIENDLY TO ITS EASTERN NEIGHBOURS, AND THAT THESE REFORMS, AIMED AT ENLARGEMENT OF SPIRITUAL AND INTELLECTUAL FREEDOM, WERE AND ARE OVERWHELMINGLY SUPPORTED BY THE PEOPLE OF CZECHOSLOVAKIA.

THREE, WE FEAR THE EFFECT OF THIS ILL-CONSIDERED ACTION BY THE USSR AND ITS ALLIES, BECAUSE OF ITS DAMAGE TO THE CONFIDENCE OF PEACE-LOVING PEOPLE EVERYWHERE, A CONFIDENCE UPON WHICH ALONE WORLD PEACE CAN BE ESTABLISHED.

FOUR, WE APPEAL TO THE GOVERNMENT OF THE USSR TO RECONSIDER THE POLICY WHICH DICTATED THE MILITARY INTERVENTION, TO REMOVE ALL ITS TROOPS FROM CZECHOSLOVAKIA AT THE EARLIEST POSSIBLE MOMENT, AND TO RENOUNCE THE USE OF FORCE OR ITS THREAT UPON ITS ALLIES, REMEMBERING THAT THE USE OF MILITARY FORCE FOR ANY PURPOSE BY ANY POWER, ESPECIALLY A GREAT POWER GIVES EXCUSE OR REASON TO OTHER POWERS TO RESIST SUCH FORCE BY FORCE.

THE ASSEMBLY OF THE WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES AT NEW DELHI SAID: "ALL MUST RENOUNCE THE THREAT OF FORCE. THIS CALLS FOR AN END TO THE WAR OF NERVES, TO PRESSURES ON SMALL COUNTRIES.... ORDERLY METHODS TO EFFECT CHANGE AND TO SETTLE DISPUTES ARE ESSENTIAL." WE MAKE THIS APPEAL WITH SOME HOPE, BECAUSE OF REPORTED NEW INITIATIVES ALREADY UNDERTAKEN BY THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT.

FIVE, FINALLY WE EXPRESS TO THE CHURCHES AND THE PEOPLE OF CZECHOSLOVAKIA OUR CONCORD AND SYMPATHY IN THEIR ORDEAL. WE SUPPORT THEIR PEACEFUL RESISTANCE TO THE REIMPOSITION OF SPIRITUAL, INTELLECTUAL AND SOCIAL CONTROLS UNACCEPTABLE TO A BRAVE AND COURAGEOUS NATION. WE CALL UPON ALL OF OUR CHURCHES TO PRAY FOR THE PEOPLE OF CZECHOSLOVAKIA AND FOR THEIR LEADERS, THAT BY COURAGE, WISDOM AND RESTRAINT, PEACE AND FREEDOM MAY BE ESTABLISHED WITH JUSTICE IN THEIR LAND AND THROUGHOUT THE WORLD.