

CN 60

C/S -- WHEELER: OCCUPATION PROVES NATO NEED

(EMBARGOED FOR AUTOMATIC RELEASE AT 1700 MT)

DALLAS, TEXAS, AUG 31, (UPI) - GEN. EARLE G. WHEELER, CHAIRMAN OF THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF, SAID TODAY THAT RUSSIA'S DEMONSTRATION OF FORCE IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA INCREASES THE NEED FOR A STRONG NORTH ATLANTIC ALLIANCE AND A "STRONG BUT NOT BELLIGERENT" AMERICAN MILITARY POSTURE.

WHEELER ALSO SAID "MUCH HARD FIGHTING LIES AHEAD IN VIETNAM." HE SAID COMMUNIST FORCES WILL SEEK HEADLINES BUT IN THE LAST ANALYSIS MILITARY FACTORS WILL DETERMINE ANY VIETNAM SETTLEMENT.

HIS REMARKS WERE IN A SPEECH PREPARED FOR THE 43RD ANNUAL REUNION OF THE 36TH INFANTRY DIVISION.

WHEELER SAID THE SOVIET INVASION OF CZECHOSLOVAKIA MAKES "CLEARER TODAY THAN EVER" THE NEED TO KEEP THE NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY ORGANIZATION "COHESIVE AND MILITARILY STRONG" DESPITE BUDGETARY AND OTHER PRESSURES FOR REDUCING FORCE LEVELS.

HE SAID THE INVASION ALSO SHOWS THAT WESTERN PLANNING MUST FOCUS ON SOVIET CAPABILITIES, NOT ON "WILL-OFF-THE WISP OF SOVIET INTENTIONS."

HE SAID THE UNITED STATES CANNOT "PRINCIPALLY" RELY ON LONG RANGE AIR LIFT OF TROOPS TO PROTECT EUROPE AND THERE WILL REMAIN A "SUBSTANTIAL REQUIREMENT" FOR U.S. TROOPS TO BE STATIONED IN EUROPE. THERE ARE 300,000 U.S. FORCES IN EUROPE, INCLUDING TURKEY AND THE 6TH FLEET.

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