

C/S - BRITAIN AIDING REFUGEES (RELEADS CN 58, 117 BRIEFS)

LONDON AUG 31 REUTER-BRITAIN TODAY PROMISED QUICK ACTION TO HELP HUNDREDS OF CZECHOSLOVAKS WISHING TO FLEE TO HERE BEFORE THE RUSSIAN OCCUPATION OF THEIR COUNTRY BECOMES TIGHTER.

THE BRITISH EMBASSY IN PRAGUE IS OPEN THIS WEEKEND TO GRANT BRITISH VISAS AND WILL REMAIN OPEN SEVEN DAYS A WEEK UNTIL THE RUSH ENDS, GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS STATED.

THEY SAID BRITISH HOME SECRETARY JAMES CALLAGHAN HAD AGREED VISAS SHOULD BE GIVEN "READILY" TO CZECHOSLOVAKS WITH URGENT AND COMPELLING REASONS TO LEAVE BESIDES THOSE WITH NEAR RELATIVES OR OTHER CLOSE TIES WITH BRITAIN.

THE CZECHOSLOVAK EMBASSY HERE TODAY STATED THERE WAS NO REASON WHATSOEVER FOR THE MASS EXODUS FROM CZECHOSLOVAKIA.

AN EMBASSY STATEMENT SAID LIFE THERE WAS "BEING NORMALISED" AND IT PASSED ON AN APPEAL FROM ITS GOVERNMENT TO CZECHOSLOVAKS ABROAD TO RETURN HOME AS SOON AS POSSIBLE TO HELP THE COUNTRY'S ECONOMIC LIFE.

"DESCRIBING SOME NEWS ABOUT THE CZECHOSLOVAK SITUATION AS "ALARMING" AND "UNFOUNDED," THE STATEMENT SAID: "CZECHOSLOVAK CITIZENS RETURNING HOME DO NOT FACE ANY DANGER OF MALTREATMENT."

BG/E 2034/68

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