

CN 49

X/13/9 CS - BRITAIN SOUGHT TO CANCEL ATHLETICS MATCH WITH POLAND

LONDON SEPTEMBER 1--(RFE SPECIAL/HOOD)--THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT DISCLOSED TODAY THAT IT HAD TRIED TO GET THE WEEK-END ATHLETICS COMPETITION IN LONDON BETWEEN THIS COUNTRY AND POLAND CANCELLED BY THE BRITISH AMATEUR ATHLETICS BOARD, AND AGREED ONLY RELUCTANTLY FOR IT TO BE HELD.

THE ATTEMPT FOLLOWED A MEETING LAST WEEK BY MPS FROM ALL PARTIES WHO AGREED THAT THE COMPETITION OUGHT TO BE CALLED OFF IN PROTEST AGAINST THE ASSISTANCE POLAND GAVE TO RUSSIA IN THE INVASION AND OCCUPATION OF CZECHOSLOVAKIA.

A STATEMENT ISSUED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND SCIENCE, WHICH OVERSEES SPORT IN BRITAIN, SAID:

"HER MAJESTYS GOVERNMENT WOULD HAVE PREFERRED THIS MEETING TO HAVE BEEN CANCELLED. THE GOVERNMENT'S VIEWS WERE MADE CLEAR TO THE AMATEUR ATHLETICS BOARD.

"IT APPEARED, HOWEVER, THAT ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE MEETING WERE TOO FAR ADVANCED AND CONTRACTS HAD BEEN ENTERED INTO WHICH WOULD HAVE BEEN DIFFICULT TO BREAK.

"THE GOVERNMENT ACCEPTED RELUCTANTLY THAT THE ARRANGEMENTS MADE SHOULD STAND."

THE INTERNATIONAL MATCH BEGAN SATURDAY AND ENDS MONDAY.

JON/A

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