

C/S - SOVIETS JOIN FOOTBALL PROTEST

MOSCOW, SEPT. 4, REUTER - THE SOVIET UNION TODAY JOINED POLAND, BULGARIA AND POLAND IN PROTESTING AGAINST THE DECISION TO SEPARATE EAST AND WEST EUROPEAN CLUBS IN EUROPE'S TOP TWO SOCCER COMPETITIONS, THE DECISION TO SEGREGATE THE TEAMS IN THE EUROPEAN CUP AND EUROPEAN CUP-WINNERS CUP WAS TAKEN BY THE EUROPEAN FOOTBALL UNION (UEFA) AT AN EMERGENCY MEETING IN ZURICH ON FRIDAY "TO FORESTALL DISRUPTION BY POSSIBLE BOYCOTTS OVER THE CZECHOSLOVAK CRISIS."

A NEW DRAW WAS MADE FOR ALL PAIRINGS BETWEEN EAST AND WEST EUROPEAN TEAMS.

TASS REPORTED TODAY THAT THE SOVIET FOOTBALL FEDERATION HAD LODGED AN "EMPHATIC PROTEST" WITH UEFA, CLAIMING THAT THE MODIFIED DRAW WAS A "FLAGRANT AND UNPRECEDENTED VIOLATION OF THE CONSTITUTION OF UEFA AND FIFA (THE INTERNATIONAL FOOTBALL FEDERATION) ..."

"SUCH A DECISION BY THE UEFA LEADERSHIP IS FRAUGHT WITH DANGEROUS CONSEQUENCES FOR CONTACTS BETWEEN COUNTRIES IN THIS POPULAR SPORT," SAID THE PROTEST NOTE.

IF UEFA DID NOT REVERT TO THE ORIGINAL DRAW, THE SOVIET FEDERATION WOULD ASK FIFA TO INTERVENE AND ORDER UEFA TO REVISE THEIR "UNLAWFUL DECISION", IT ADDED.

MEANWHILE TASS SPORTS COMMENTATOR A. KACHALOV CLAIMED THAT THE DECISION TO CHANGE THE DRAW WAS MADE AT THE INSISTENCE OF THE SCOTTISH CLUB CELTIC BECAUSE THEY FELT THEY HAD LITTLE CHANCE OF WINNING THEIR FIRST-ROUND EUROPEAN CUP MATCH AGAINST FERENCVAROS, OF HUNGARY.

HE SAID THE CZECHOSLOVAK SITUATION WAS ONLY A PRETEXT FOR THE NEW DRAW AND CLAIMED THAT MANAGERS OF WESTERN TEAMS WHICH HAD AN EASIER PATH TOWARDS THE FINAL BECAUSE OF THE NEW DRAW WERE OPENLY GLOATING OVER THE DECISION.