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CS - NATO STARTS ASSESSMENT

BRUSSELS, SEPT 4 (UPI)--THE WESTERN ALLIES TODAY ANNOUNCED THEY ARE RE-PLANNING THE STRENGTH AND DEPLOYMENT OF MILITARY FORCES IN EUROPE BECAUSE OF THE RUSSIAN INVASION OF CZECHOSLOVAKIA.

THE ANNOUNCEMENT WAS MADE BY A NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY ORGANISATION (NATO) SPOKESMAN AFTER A MEETING OF NATO'S DEFENSE PLANNING COMMITTEE.

THE SPOKESMAN SAID "DEVELOPMENTS IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA CANNOT FAIL TO BE OF GREAT CONCERN AND NATO HAS INITIATED A THOROUGH ASSESSMENT OF THEIR IMPLICATIONS FOR ALLIED DEFENSE POLICY, PARTICULARLY FOR FORCE POSTURES."

THE DEFENSE COMMITTEE RECOGNIZED "THE ALLIANCE MUST ASSURE A BALANCE OF FORCES BETWEEN NATO AND THE WARSAW PACT NATIONS" THE SPOKESMAN SAID.

THE COMMITTEE RULED THAT NATO FORCES SHOULD NOT RPT NOT BE REDUCED "EXCEPT AS PART OF A PATTERN OF MUTUAL FORCE REDUCTIONS BALANCED IN SCOPE AND TIMING."

THE COMMITTEE "DEPLORES THE FACT" THAT HOPE OF NEGOTIATING SUCH REDUCTIONS WITH THE RUSSIANS "HAS SUFFERED A SEVERE SETBACK."

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