

CS - BENDA: AID AVAILABLE FOR CZECHOSLOVAKS

NEW YORK, SEPT 5 (UPI)--WEST GERMAN MINISTER OF THE INTERIOR ERNST BENDA SAID TODAY AID WOULD BE GIVEN TO STRANDED CZECHOSLOVAK CITIZENS IF THEY NEEDED IT.

"WE ARE NOT FORCING ANY CZECHOSLOVAKS TO RETURN HOME IF THEY DESIRE TO STAY IN GERMANY," BENDA TOLD A NEWS CONFERENCE AT THE WALDORF ASTORIA HOTEL. "THE CZECHOSLOVAKS ARE GETTING THE SAME AID AS GERMANS IF THEY RUN OUT OF FUNDS AND ARE IN NEED OF WELFARE," THE MINISTER SAID.

BENDA ARRIVED IN THE UNITED STATES MONDAY WITH A WEST GERMAN DELEGATION TO ATTEND A CONFERENCE OF MINISTERS AT THE UNITED NATIONS.

HE TOLD CORRESPONDENTS THERE WERE ABOUT 50,000 CZECHOSLOVAKS IN YUGOSLAVIA AT THE TIME OF THE SOVIET INVASION, MANY OF WHOM WERE EXPECTED TO FIRST GO TO GERMANY AND THEN DECIDE WHETHER THEY SHOULD RETURN HOME. THESE CZECHOSLOVAKS HE ADDED, WOULD ALSO BE ASSISTED IF THEY NEEDED AID.

IT WAS TOO EARLY, BENDA CONTINUED, TO ASSESS THE EFFECTS OF THE SOVIET-CZECHOSLOVAK CRISIS ON THE FUTURE TRADE RELATIONS BETWEEN HIS COUNTRY AND CZECHOSLOVAKIA. "FOR THE PRESENT," HE STATED, "CZECHOSLOVAK EXPORTS OF RAW MATERIALS ARE STILL MOVING INTO GERMANY. BORDER TRAFFIC CONTINUES BOTH WAYS, ALTHOUGH IT APPEARS NOW THAT LEAVING CZECHOSLOVAKIA IS GETTING MORE DIFFICULT, ESPECIALLY FOR CZECHOSLOVAK CITIZENS."

THE U.N. WELFARE CONFERENCE, BENDA SAID, HAD NOT PROGRESSED BEYOND THE GENERAL DEBATE IN WHICH THE PARTICIPATING COUNTRIES, PRESENTED INDIVIDUAL WELFARE PROBLEMS.

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2146/68/AB/15