

FRANCE - 1800 INTRO - DE GAULLE

PARIS, SEPT 9 (CNR/RFE SPECIAL/AGENCIES)- FRENCH PRESIDENT CHARLES DE GAULLE TOLD A PRESS CONFERENCE TODAY THAT THE SOVIET INVASION OF CZECHOSLOVAKIA WAS ABSURD AND MUST BE CONDEMNED.

HE TOLD REPORTERS THAT THE RECENT EVOLUTION OF CZECHOSLOVAKIA HAD BEEN A FAVORABLE SIGN FOR THE WHOLE OF EUROPE.

CZECHOSLOVAKIA, HE SAID, HAD BEGUN TO TAKE POSSESSION OF ITSELF AND TO OPEN UP A LITTLE TO THE WEST. BUT THEN, THANKS TO THE FORCE OF ARMS, SOVIET LEADERS HAD OBTAINED ITS RETURN TO OBEDIENCE AND SUBMISSION.

THIS WAS CALLED SOCIALIST SOLIDARITY, DE GAULLE SAID, BUT IT WAS NOTHING MORE THAN SOVIET HEGOMONY.

DE GAULLE SAID THAT THE NATIONAL COHESION AND ASPIRATIONS OF A PEOPLE SUCH AS THE CZECHOSLOVAKS HAD SHOWN THAT FRENCH POLICY HAD BEEN RIGHT AND IN CONFORMITY WITH THE PROFOUND FEELINGS OF EUROPEANS.

HE SAID IT WAS TOO LATE FOR FOREIGN DOMINANCE TO WIN THE ADHESION OF A NATION, EVEN IF THAT NATION'S TERRITORY WAS OCCUPIED.

DE GAULLE ALSO CONDEMNED THE DIVISION OF EUROPE INTO WHAT HE CALLED TWO BLOCS.

HE SAID IT WAS AN INFRINGEMENT OF THE RIGHT TO INDEPENDENCE AND PRODUCED TWO CAMPS DOMINATED BY TWO RIVALS, AND PRODUCED TENSIONS WHICH CONSTANTLY PUT PEACE IN QUESTION.

(MORE) BG/ASB/EH/L 1755/68

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