

CN 159

X/13 E/W - U.S. GAVE MOSCOW NO ASSURANCE ON CZECHOSLOVAKIA

WASHINGTON, SEPT 9 (RFE SPECIAL/HILL) - THE STATE DEPARTMENT TODAY STRONGLY DENIED A REPORT FROM PRAGUE TO THE EFFECT THAT THE UNITED STATES HAD ASSURED THE SOVIET UNION BEFORE THE SOVIET INVASION OF CZECHOSLOVAKIA THAT THE U.S. CONSIDERED CZECHOSLOVAKIA TO BE IN THE SOVIET SPHERE OF INFLUENCE.

"THE REPORT IS FALSE FROM BEGINNING TO END," SPOKESMAN ROBERT MCCLOSKEY SAID, "AS WELL AS A NUMBER OF OTHER VARIANTS OF DISCUSSION, CONSULTATION OR WHATEVER BEFORE THE INVASION OF CZECHOSLOVAKIA."

MCCLOSKEY THEN REFERRED TO A DEPARTMENT STATEMENT OF AUGUST 23, TAKING ISSUE WITH A SIMILAR REPORT. THAT STATEMENT SAID: "THE U.S. GOVERNMENT HAS NEVER ENTERED INTO ANY SPHERES OF INTEREST AGREEMENTS OR UNDERSTANDINGS WITH ANYONE ANYWHERE IN THE WORLD."

ASKED ABOUT PRESS REPORTS TO THE EFFECT THAT THE U.S. WAS PRESSING ITS NATO ALLIES TO INCREASE THEIR TROOP COMMITMENTS TO THE ALLIANCE, MCCLOSKEY SAID HE WOULD NOT COMMENT. HE SAID CONSULTATIONS WERE GOING ON IN NATO AND BETWEEN MEMBER COUNTRIES OF NATO BUT THAT NO DECISIONS HAD BEEN TAKEN.

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RECEIVED SEP 10 1968

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