

CN 8

CS - RUSK: SPHERE OF INFLUENCE "RIDICULOUS"

(RELEADS CN-159)

WASHINGTON, SEPT 10 REUTER - SECRETARY OF STATE DEAN RUSK MONDAY DISMISSED AS "MONSTROUS RUMOURS" SPECULATION THAT THE UNITED STATES AND THE SOVIET UNION HAVE A SPHERES-OF-INFLUENCE AGREEMENT AFFECTING CZECHOSLOVAKIA.

SPEAKING TO REPORTERS AFTER TESTIFYING AT A PRIVATE MEETING OF THE SENATE FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEE, RUSK DECLARED THERE WAS "NO SHRED OF TRUTH IN THE RIDICULOUS RUMOURS THAT SOME UNDERSTANDING HAS BEEN REACHED WITH THE SOVIET UNION" OVER CZECHOSLOVAKIA.

HE SAID HE WAS PUZZLED ABOUT HOW TO DEAL WITH SUCH "MONSTROUS" RUMOURS". THERE WAS NO AGREEMENT, TACIT OR OTHERWISE.

(UPI)--"THE WHOLE IDEA IS SO RIDICULOUS I'M HARD PUT TO KNOW HOW TO RESPOND TO IT," RUSK SAID. "PERHAPS WHAT WE NEED IS A RESIDENT PSYCHIATRIST."

(MORE) MBW/L 0111/68
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