

CS -- MORNING INTRO - RUSK STATEMENT

WASHINGTON, SEPT 10 (USIS)- SECRETARY OF STATE DEAN RUSK HAS TERMED "MONSTROUS" AND "RIDICULOUS" RUMORS THAT THE SOVIET INVASION OF CZECHOSLOVAKIA WAS BASED ON ANY U.S.-SOVIET UNDERSTANDING ABOUT SPHERES OF INFLUENCE.

RUSK TOLD NEWSMEN AFTER A TWO-HOUR MEETING WITH THE SENATE FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEE MONDAY:

"THERE IS ABSOLUTELY NO RPT NO SHRED OF TRUTH IN THE RIDICULOUS RUMORS THAT WE MADE A DEAL WITH THE SOVIET UNION."

THESE REPORTS WERE "SO MONSTROUS", HE ADDED, "THAT MAYBE WE NEED A CONSULTING PSYCHIATRIST" TO DETERMINE HOW THEY GOT STARTED.

EARLIER MONDAY STATE DEPARTMENT SPOKESMAN ROBERT MCCLOSKEY HAD EXPRESSED THE HOPE "THAT WE CAN LAY TO REST ONCE AND FOR ALL" PRESS REPORTS THAT THE KREMLIN HAD CHECKED FIRST WITH THE UNITED STATES BEFORE THE WARSAW PACT OCCUPIED CZECHOSLOVAKIA ON AUGUST 20.

(CNR)-"THE REPORT IS FALSE FROM BEGINNING TO END," 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." +,

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