

X/1 3 CURT -- BELGIUM SUGGESTS MINISTERIAL ROLE IN NATO REASSESSMENT

BRUSSELS, SEPT 10 (RFE SPECIAL/DYBVIK) -- THE BELGIAN GOVERNMENT TODAY SUGGESTED THAT "INTERESTED MINISTERS" OF MEMBER GOVERNMENTS COULD TAKE PART IN REGULAR NATO COUNCIL MEETINGS DURING THE COURSE OF THE POLITICAL REASSESSMENT OF WESTERN DEFENSE STRATEGY.

"THE BELGIAN GOVERNMENT FEELS THAT THE POLITICAL ASPECTS OF EVENTS IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA TAKE PRECEDENCE OVER THE MILITARY ASPECTS," A FOREIGN OFFICE SPOKESMAN SAID.

"A POLITICAL EVALUATION OF THE CZECHOSLOVAK EVENTS IS BY FAR THE MOST IMPORTANT NEED AT PRESENT," HE SAID.

TO THIS END, HE SUGGESTED A "RETURN TO THE PROCEDURE FOLLOWED DURING THE PREPARATION OF THE REPORT OF THE FUTURE TASKS OF THE ALLIANCE."

(THIS PROCEDURE WAS USED IN PREPARING THE SO-CALLED HARMEL REPORT, WHICH UNDERLINED NATO'S NEW POLITICAL ROLE AS A BROKER OF PEACE AND DETENTE, SECOND ONLY TO INSURING THE SECURITY OF THE WESTERN WORLD. DURING THAT PREPARATION, MINISTERS ATTENDED COUNCIL SESSIONS TO PRESENT THE VIEWS OF THEIR OWN GOVERNMENTS.)

THE BELGIAN SPOKESMAN PRAISED THE "USEFUL JOB" NATO HAD DONE IN THE WAKE OF THE SOVIET-LED OCCUPATION OF CZECHOSLOVAKIA IN BOTH ENSURING WESTERN MILITARY SECURITY AND PROVIDING AN EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION AMONG ALLIANCE GOVERNMENTS.

HE SAID IT WAS GENERALLY AGREED THAT A HIGHER LEVEL OF CONSULTATION WAS NEEDED IN THE POLITICAL EVALUATION OF THE NEW EAST-WEST POLITICAL SITUATION AND SAID THE BELGIAN GOVERNMENT SUGGESTED THAT "INTERESTED MINISTERS ASSOCIATE THEMSELVES WITH THE WORKING SESSIONS (OF THE NATO COUNCIL) NORMALLY RESERVED TO, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVES."

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