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SUBJECT: REACTION TO SOVIET INTERVENTION IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA

1. WHILE SOVIET INVASION OF CZECHOSLOVAKIA WAS WIDELY CONDEMNED IN TAIPEI DURING FIRST 24 HOURS SINCE NEWS RECEIVED, OFFICIAL REACTION WAS LIMITED. EDITORIAL COMMENT TENDED TO REVIEW THE FACTS RATHER THAN ARRIVE AT SIGNIFICANT CONCLUSIONS OR SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION.

2. GRC OFFICIAL STATEMENTS ON CZECH SITUATION HAVE BEEN LIMITED TO AUGUST 21 STATEMENT OF ACTING SPOKESMAN OF FOREIGN MINISTRY THAT GRC "WATCHING CLOSELY THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE SITUATION IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA," AND THAT MOFA WOULD NOT COMMENT FURTHER UNTIL IT HAD MORE DETAILS ON THE SITUATION. HU CHING-VQU, SENIOR ADVISER IN FOREIGN MINISTRY, DID HOWEVER REMARK PUBLICLY ON SAME DAY THAT THE CZECH PROBLEM COULD NOT BE SOLVED BY FORCE AND PREDICTED THAT THE SOVIET ACTION WOULD LEAD TO A FURTHER SPLIT IN THE COMMUNIST CAMP IN EASTERN EUROPE.

3. MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE AND CONTROL YUANS IN PUBLIC STATEMENTS ON AUGUST 22 HAVE CONDEMNED THE SOVIET UNION FOR "FLAGRANT AGGRESSION." KUO TEH-CHUAN, CONVENOR OF THE FOREIGN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE OF LEGISLATIVE YUAN, CALLED RUSSIAN INVASION "THE MOST MALICIOUS AGGRESSION IN OUR AGE," AND DECLARED THAT SOVIET ACTION WAS TAKEN OUT OF FEAR THAT MOVEMENT IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA WOULD LEAD

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3. GENERAL COLLAPSE OF COMMUNISM IN EASTERN EUROPE AND SOVIET UNION ITSELF, KU CHUNG-TING, MEMBER OF SAME COMMITTEE, CALLED ON ALL COUNTRIES OF FREE WORLD TO SUPPORT CZECH RESISTANCE TO THE SOVIET INVASION AND TO ACCUSE SOVIET UNION OF AGGRESSION THROUGH THE UNITED NATIONS. SEVERAL OTHER PARLIAMENTARIANS PREDICTED THAT THE SOVIET PROBLEMS IN EASTERN EUROPE WERE BY NO MEANS SOLVED AND THAT THE SOVIET INTERVENTION COULD EVENTUALLY TURN INTO THE BEGINNING OF END FOR EASTERN EUROPEAN COMMUNISM. TAO PAI-CHUAN, MEMBER OF CONTROL YUAN, DECLARED RUSSIAN INVASION OF CZECHOSLOVAKIA HAS SHATTERED THE THEORY OF "PEACEFUL COEXISTENCE" ADVOCATED BY KREMLIN LEADERS. "THE FACTS ARE THAT THE RUSSIANS COULD NOT EVEN COEXIST WITH THEIR COMRADES," HE SAID, "HOW CAN WE EXPECT THEM TO COEXIST WITH THE FREE WORLD?"

4. KMT STANDING COMMITTEE MEMBER TAO HSI-SHENG STATED AUG 22 THAT OCCUPATION OF CZECHOSLOVAKIA WILL GREATLY DAMAGE THE PRESTIGE OF RUSSIA. TAO STATED THAT HE BELIEVED THAT SOVIET INVASION OF CZECHOSLOVAKIA WAS ACTUALLY MOTIVATED BY EAST GERMANY AND POLAND.

5. MOST MILITARY AND GOVERNMENT LEADERS WITH WHOM EMBASSY OFFICERS DISCUSSED MATTER WITHIN FIRST TWENTY-FOUR HOURS, EXPRESSED OPINION THAT US WAS NEVER IN POSITION TO TAKE ANY EFFECTIVE RESPONSE TO DEVELOPING SITUATION IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA. SEVERAL EMBASSY CONTACTS HAVE EXPRESSED THEIR STRONG OPINION THAT THE SOVIET INTERVENTION PROVES ONCE AGAIN THAT THE RUSSIANS DO NOT VALUE WORLD PUBLIC OPINION AND THAT SOVIETS UNDERSTAND AND RESPOND ONLY TO CONSIDERATIONS OF MILITARY POWER. SUBSIDIARY TO THIS THEME HAS BEEN THE EXPRESSED HOPE THAT THIS SOVIET ACTION WILL "PULL THE MASK OFF OF RUSSIAN COMMUNISM" AND SHOW TO THE WORLD "TRUE NATURE OF COMMUNISM." SOME GRC MILITARY AND CIVILIAN OFFICIALS - ESPECIALLY THOSE WHO HAVE EXPRESSED CONCERN OVER "TREND TOWARDS APPEASEMENT" IN THE US AND ELSEWHERE IN THE FREE WORLD - MAY HOPE THAT THE SOVIET INTERVENTION WILL SERVE TO LAY TO REST WHAT THEY CONSIDER UNFOUNDED HOPES THAT WORLD COMMUNISM WAS MOVING TOWARDS A GENUINE POLICY OF CO-EXISTENCE.

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6. EDITORIALS IN AUGUST 22 PRESS HAVE RECOUNTED SITUATION LEADING UP TO RUSSIAN INTERVENTION, BUT HAVE NOT MADE ANY SPECIFIC POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS. KMT-OWNED CHUNG YANG JIH PAO ASSERTED POLISH AND EAST GERMAN PRESSURE WAS ELEMENT IN SOVIET DECISION, AND THAPCOMOVE HAS MAJOR IMPLICATIONS IN TERMS OF KREMLIN LEADERSHIP. THERE HAS BEEN NO DIRECT EDITORIAL CRITICISM OF US POLICY IN CZECH SITUATION, ALTHOUGH SEVERAL PAPERS HAVE STRESSED THAT FUTURE OF CZECHOSLOVAKIA DEPENDS ON UNSPECIFIED US, JOINT US AND BRITISH OR UN ACTIONS.

GP-3. MCCONAUGHY

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