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FBIS 253

SVOBODA SPEECH

Seen by Mr. Rostow

PRAGUE DOMESTIC SERVICE IN CZECH 2130 GMT 21 AUG 68 L

(SPEECH BY CZECHOSLOVAK PRESIDENT LUDVIK SVOBODA ; NO DETAILS AS TO WHERE OR WHEN AND NO INDICATION WHETHER LIVE OR RECORDED)

(TEXT) DEAR FELLOW CITIZENS, I AM ADDRESSING YOU FOR THE SECOND TIME DURING THIS FATEFUL DAY , TODAY . WE ARE GOING THROUGH EXCEPTIONALLY GRAVE MOMENTS IN THE LIFE OF OUR NATIONS . MILITARY UNITS OF THE SOVIET UNION, TOGETHER WITH UNITS OF THE POLISH PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC, THE GDR, AND THE BULGARIAN AND THE HUNGARIAN PEOPLE 'S REPUBLICS, HAVE STEPPED ON THE SOIL OF OUR REPUBLIC .

THIS TOOK PLACE WITHOUT THE AGREEMENT OF THE CONSTITUTIONAL BODIES OF THE STATE, BODIES WHICH, HOWEVER, PROCEEDING FROM THEIR RESPONSIBILITY TO THE NATIONS OF OUR HOMELAND, MUST SPEEDILY SOLVE THE SITUATION THUS CREATED AND ACHIEVE A DEPARTURE OF THE FOREIGN TROOPS SOON.

IN THIS RESPECT I MADE EFFORTS TODAY, (?ALLOWED) BY THE PRESENT CONDITIONS. APART FROM OTHER THINGS, TODAY I CONVOKED A PLENUM OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY . IN THE EVENING I HAD TALKS WITH MEMBERS OF THE GOVERNMENT ABOUT SOME OF THE MOST PRESSING PROBLEMS OF RESTORING THE NORMAL LIFE OF THE COUNTRY AND FOR SECURING ITS INTEGRITY. TALKS WILL CONTINUE TOMORROW, AND I BELIEVE THAT THEY WILL TAKE PLACE WITH PREMIER OLDRICH CERNIK, TOO.

I AM AWARE OF ALL THE PROBLEMS AND DIFFICULTIES WHICH THE PRESENT SITUATION IS AROUSING. BUT, DEAR FELLOW CITIZENS , I APPEAL AGAIN TO YOU EARNESTLY TO MAINTAIN THE GREATEST PRUDENCE AND TO AVOID EVERYTHING WHICH COULD GIVE RISE TO REGRETTABLE ACTIONS WITH IRREPARABLE CONSEQUENCES . I ASK FOR THIS SINCERELY, ESPECIALLY OF YOU, OUR YOUTH.

I APPEAL TO YOU ALL--WORKERS FARMERS, MEMBERS OF THE INTELLIGENTSIA --TO DEMONSTRATE AGAIN BY YOUR ATTITUDE YOUR RELATION TO SOCIALISM, FREEDOM, AND DEMOCRACY.

FOR US THERE IS NO WAY BACK. THE ACTION PROGRAM OF THE CZECHOSLOVAK COMMUNIST PARTY AND THE PROGRAMMATIC STATEMENT OF THE GOVERNMENT OF THE NATIONAL FRONT EXPRESS THE LIVING INTERESTS AND NEEDS OF THE ENTIRE PEOPLE OF OUR HOMELAND, AND, THEREFORE, WE MUST CONTINUE FURTHER IN THE WORK WE HAVE EMBARKED UPON. WE WILL NOT FALL INTO A LACK OF FAITH . WE WILL ALL DRAW CLOSE TOGETHER AND, TOGETHER WITH THE CZECHOSLOVAK COMMUNIST PARTY AND THE ENTIRE NATIONAL FRONT, WE WILL REMAIN UNITED IN THE EFFORTS FOR A BETTER LIFE OF OUR NATIONS.

21 AUG 2244Z JRC /GY