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August 21, 1968

Tass Invasion Statement

Following is a statement issued last night by Tass, the official Soviet news agency:

Tass is authorized to state that party and state officials of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic appealed to the Soviet Union and other socialist states to give the fraternal Czechoslovak people urgent aid, including the assistance of armed forces.

This appeal was prompted by the threat which had arisen to the socialist order existing in Czechoslovakia and to the form of state established by the constitution from counter-revolutionary forces who had entered into a plot with external forces hostile to socialism.

Events in Czechoslovakia and around it have more than once been the object of exchange of opinions between the leaders of the fraternal socialist countries, including the leaders of Czechoslovakia. These countries are united in the view that the support, strengthening and protection of the socialist achievements of the peoples is the common international duty of all socialist states. This common posi-

tion of theirs was formally proclaimed in the Bratislava statement, too.

The further worsening of the situation in Czechoslovakia touches on the vital interests of the Soviet Union and other socialist countries, the interests of the stability of the states of the socialist community. The threat to the socialist order in Czechoslovakia at the same time represents a threat to the foundation of peace in Europe.

The Soviet government and the governments of the allied countries: the Bulgarian People's Republic, the Hungarian People's Republic, the GDR and the Polish People's Republic, acting from principles of unbreakable friendship and cooperation, and in accordance with existing treaty obligations, decided to accede to the above request to provide the necessary aid to the fraternal Czechoslovak people.

This decision is in full accordance with the right of states to individual and collective self-defense provided for in treaties of alliance concluded between the fraternal socialist countries. It is also in

accordance with the vital interests of our countries in the defense of peace in Europe against the forces of militarism, aggression and revenge which more than once have plunged Europe into war.

On August 20, Soviet military units, together with allied formations, entered the territory of Czechoslovakia. They will withdraw from the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic without delay, as soon as the threat which has arisen to the achievements of socialism in Czechoslovakia, the threat to the security of the countries of the socialist community, is removed and the legitimate authorities consider that there is no need for these military units to stay any longer.

The actions which have been undertaken are not directed against any state and do not in the slightest degree infringe upon the interests of any state. They serve the ends of peace, and are dictated by concern for strengthening it.

The fraternal countries freely and determinedly oppose any threat from the outside by