

August 21, 1968

STATEMENT BY THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

The Canadian Government views the invasion of Czechoslovakia with shock and dismay. We condemn this use of force. All Canadians feel the deepest concern for the courageous people of Czechoslovakia in this hour of trial.

The invasion and occupation of Czechoslovakia constitute a flagrant breach of the principle of non-intervention to which the Soviet Union itself professes to subscribe. It is also a tragedy for all peoples who prize human freedom and national independence and I am confident that its significance will not be lost on the people of Eastern Europe and even the Soviet Union.

We are engaged in consultations on the developing situation with other interested governments in the respective capitals, at the United Nations, and in the North Atlantic Council. As far as the Atlantic Alliance is concerned I am sure that all of us will be anxious to keep in mind our ultimate goal of seeking a durable East-West accommodation, but no one can doubt that the Soviet occupation of Czechoslovakia constitutes a serious setback to a rational dialogue.

We are in continuing touch with our Embassy in Prague and are taking such measures as are available to us to ensure the safety of all Canadian citizens there.