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NSC BRIEFING

30 November 1956

HUNGARIAN REFUGEE SITUATION

- I. As of 27 November, the American Embassy in Vienna reported 87,525 Hungarians had fled to Austria. According to press reports, the number has now reached 96,079, reportedly including 45,000 under 18 years of age. Over 22,200 ^{HAVE NOW} had been transferred to other countries ~~by 27 November.~~
- A. The influx of refugees has been running about 4,000 a day. An average of 2,500 are moving on from Austria to the West daily.
- B. Soviet-Hungarian units patrolling the Austro-Hungarian border have sought to limit the refugee flow, and most recent reports suggest these efforts met with some success on 29 November. They have fired on potential refugees and on 25 November succeeded in closing a major crossing point at Andau. Austrian frontier police reportedly stated that Soviet troops were mining areas of the border on 29 November. Many Hungarian armed patrollers, however, have apparently stood by or even abetted the flight of refugees.
- C. Press reports of 29 November state that transfers of refugees from Austria now total as follows:

Switzerland	3,917	Holland	1,976	
Germany	3,675	Italy	1,162	
UK	3,345	Sweden	1,122	TOTAL: 22,261
Belgium	3,300	USA	627	
France	2,976	Ireland		

DOCUMENT NO. 161 CLASS.
 RECLASSIFIED
 CLASS. CHANGED TO: TS
 NEXT REVIEW DATE:
 AUTH: HR 79-2

REVIEWER:

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State Dept. review completed.

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1. Several Western countries (UK, France, Denmark, Belgium) have sent trains to move the refugees without prior processing. The Danes, for example, reportedly took 1,000 on a special train on 28 November.
 - D. Some refugees are reluctant to leave Austria because of a hope that other relatives may escape or that they may yet be able to return to Hungary. The Kadar government, meanwhile, has promulgated an amnesty for all who return by 31 December.
 1. The Austrian government has expressed concern that refugees remaining in Austria will engage in political activity.
 - E. The American Embassy in Vienna reported on 8 November that approximately 1,200 Hungarians had sought asylum when the rebels had the upper hand.
 --200 have been suspected as being lesser Communist functionaries or have been detained for special screening. A further group, estimated at 1,500, were members of the Hungarian military who have been disarmed and interned by the Austrian army.
 1. It is possible that some reliable Communists or security officers are posing as refugees and entering Austria now with the intention of subverting the refugees. However, there are no reports of such a development. The overall weakness and disorganization of the Kadar regime mitigates against an extensive coordinated Hungarian operation of this nature.

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II. The number of Hungarians seeking refuge in Yugoslavia has been officially reported as very small.

- A. The Yugoslavs stated on 27 November that only 530 Hungarians had entered their country and that they did not need any assistance in caring for them. The Yugoslavs said the refugees are free to determine their own ultimate status.
- B. We have rumors of mass Hungarian movements into Yugoslavia,



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- 1. The US Embassy has been unable to confirm these rumors.
- 2. The Embassy estimates, however, that the figure totals several thousand, many of them peasants who have sought only temporary refuge.

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