CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

INFORMATION REPORT

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COUNTRY	Czechoslovakia	**REPORT NO.**	
SUBJECT	Operation of Freight Trains	**DATE DISTR.**	26 November 1954
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1. The Soviet system of "heavy tonnage" freight shipments, consisting in moving freight by extra heavy freight trains, was introduced on the Czechoslovak Railroads. Under this system, the railroad area managements are issuing orders to the dispatchers to increase the load of freight trains, with the objective to achieve the same loads per train as is customary in the USSR, although Czechoslovak railroad cars have smaller loading surfaces than Soviet cars, which are built on a broader gauge.

2. Cars built to carry loads of 20 tons are now frequently loaded with 30 tons. _____ the Bohumin freight yards, such overloading has been causing much damage. Running hot of axles has increased 37%; breaks in couplings have increased 60%, and damage to rolling stock 54%. Freight trains have been running an additional 68% behind scheduled times.

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3. On 7 July 1954, the main line between Bratislava and Kuty was closed for heavy-tonnage trains, as it was found that these extra heavy loads were causing serious injury to the roadbeds and bridges. Most of the bridges already are in need of repair, especially those near Devinske Jazero and Devinska Nova Ves. Experts who checked the road estimate that the damage caused by the brief period of heavy-tonnage operation amounts to two million Kcs. on this sector.

4. This system of operating freight trains has been very unpopular with railroad personnel. There have been instances of refusal to obey orders to load trains according to the new system. Railroad men claim that it is far more likely to cause accidents. They also estimate that the consumption of fuel (coal or oil) is about 30% higher than under the old system. This may not be the case in Russia, where there are very long open and straight tracks and consequently much less occasion for slowing down and accelerating of these extra heavy trains. But the system is not at all advantageous for a much more densely populated and less flat country like Czechoslovakia.

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