

X13- E/ W - IMPACT OF INVASION ON TRAFFIC BETWEEN AUSTRIA  
AND CZECHOSLOVAKIA

VIENNA, AUG 23 (RFE SPECIAL/KOSTRBA)-- WITH THE EXCEPTION OF CZECHOSLOVAK TOURISTS AND TRAVELLING DIPLOMATS, ROAD TRAFFIC FROM AUSTRIA TO CZECHOSLOVAKIA HAS COME PRACTICALLY TO A STANDSTILL, AUSTRIAN AUTHORITIES ANNOUNCED TODAY.

ALTHOUGH THERE SEEM TO BE NO CLEAR DIRECTIVES ON THE CZECHOSLOVAK SIDE OF THE BORDER, IN GENERAL NO FOREIGNERS ARE ADMITTED TO CZECHOSLOVAKIA.

AUSTRIAN BORDER POLICE AT THE OBER-WULLOWITZ BORDER CHECK POINT HAD BEEN TOLD BY THEIR CZECHOSLOVAK COLLEAGUES THAT THE BAN ON FOREIGN ROAD TRAFFIC TO CZECHOSLOVAKIA WAS IMPOSED BY SOVIET TROOPS AND NOT BY CZECHOSLOVAK BORDER AUTHORITIES.

THE SAME SITUATION WAS REPORTED ON FRIDAY BY THE AUSTRIAN RAILWAY ADMINISTRATION: A SPECIAL TRAIN WITH CZECHOSLOVAK TOURISTS LEFT VIENNA ON THURSDAY FOR THE CZECHOSLOVAK BORDER RAILWAY STATION CESKE VELENICE. PASSENGERS WITH OTHER THAN CZECHOSLOVAK PASSPORTS WERE NOT ADMITTED TO BOARD THE TRAIN.

BUS TRAFFIC BETWEEN VIENNA AND CZECHOSLOVAKIA ENDS AT THE AUSTRIAN SIDE OF THE BORDER. PASSENGERS WITH CZECHOSLOVAK PASSPORTS HAVE TO CROSS ON FOOT TO THE OTHER SIDE WHERE CZECHOSLOVAK BUSES ARE WAITING.

ON THE OTHER HAND, THE FLOW OF FOREIGN TOURISTS FROM CZECHOSLOVAKIA TO AUSTRIA CONTINUES ON THE ROADS AND OCCASIONALLY BY SPECIAL TRAINS.

ACCORDING TO INFORMATION RECEIVED BY AUSTRIAN BORDER POLICE FROM THEIR CZECHOSLOVAK COUNTERPARTS, IT SEEMS THAT THE SOVIET OCCUPATION FORCES ARE SHOWING STRONG INTEREST THAT ALL WESTERN TOURISTS STRANDED IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA SHOULD LEAVE THE COUNTRY AS SOON AS POSSIBLE, AUSTRIAN AUTHORITIES SAID.

THE AUSTRIAN FOREIGN MINISTRY HAD TAKEN "DIPLOMATIC STEPS" TO PROTEST AGAINST WHAT IS CONSIDERED BY AUSTRIAN AUTHORITIES A VIOLATION OF THE DANUBE CONVENTION:

SINCE WEDNESDAY MORNING HUNGARIAN DANUBE RIVER AUTHORITIES HAVE STOPPED ALL DOWN-STREAM RIVER TRAFFIC AT KOMARNO WHILE SHIPS ON THEIR WAY UP-STREAM ARE BEING HALTED IN BUDAPEST. THESE HUNGARIAN MEASURES HAVE BROUGHT THE DANUBE RIVER SHIPPING BETWEEN WEST GERMANY, AUSTRIA ON THE ONE SIDE, AND YUGOSLAVIA, RUMANIA AND THE BLACK SEA PORTS ON THE OTHER SIDE TO A COMPLETE STOP.

ACCORDING TO AN ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE AUSTRIAN POSTAL ADMINISTRATION, THE EXCHANGE OF TELEGRAMS BETWEEN AUSTRIA, PRAGUE AND BRNO CEASED ON WEDNESDAY BECAUSE BOTH CZECHOSLOVAK TELEGRAPH OFFICES FAILED TO ANSWER CALLS. THE BRNO TELEGRAPH OFFICE RE-ESTABLISHED ITS COMMUNICATIONS WITH VIENNA AGAIN ON THURSDAY BUT AUSTRIAN AUTHORITIES ARE NOT SURE WHETHER THIS STATE OF AFFAIRS WILL LAST.

ON THE OTHER HAND, TELEGRAM COMMUNICATION BETWEEN VIENNA AND BRATISLAVA CONTINUES NORMALLY.

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