

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

INFORMATION REPORT

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SECURITY INFORMATION

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1. During the summer of 1952, the Yugoslav government stopped all locomotive towage facilities at the Iron Gates for Russian, Rumanian, Hungarian and Czechoslovak vessels. The pretext for this action was the failure of these countries to pay the necessary towage taxes in the Cataracts sector.
2. To counter the Yugoslav move, the Russians and Rumanians decided to move their locomotive Vascapu from the Greben point to the Iron Gates. When the Yugoslavs received information on the intended move, they promptly seized the locomotive with its entire crew. The Rumanians retaliated by seizing the MACEDONIA, a Yugoslav vessel, thus forcing the Yugoslavs to release the locomotive.
3. Following this incident, the Satellite countries paid the taxes due, but the Yugoslavs still refused to grant towage facilities on the pretext that they had not yet paid fees due for the use of Yugoslav ports.
4. The towing procedure in the Sip Canal at the Iron Gates and when crossing the Greben boundary is as follows:
 - a. In the past with the aid of a locomotive, a 1,200 horsepower vessel was able to tow 150 to 200 car loads in three barges of any type through the Sip Canal. The crossing took from 25 to 46 minutes when the Danube River was at its normal level of from 150 to 500 centimeters. When the river was at a higher level, a maximum of 150 car loads could be shipped.
 - b. At the present time, without the aid of a locomotive, a similar vessel can tow a maximum of 50 car loads, using only one barge which must be of a special type.

25 YEAR RE-REVIEW

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5. Sovromtransport, the Soviet-Rumanian transport company, possesses more large-sized Greek barges than the special type needed without the aid of a locomotive. They are therefore obliged to use two tugs for each large barge. The crossing is extremely dangerous, and takes three times longer than normal. In addition, taking on of the tow, maneuvering, and release take six times as long as when a locomotive was used.¹
6. The Greben shelf at Svinita in the Cataract sector is no longer serviced by the locomotive Vascapu because of the fear that it may be detained by the Yugoslavs.
7. At present, the crossing is carried out by tugs, each towing its respective barge. This operation becomes even more difficult when the level of the Danube rises above 300 centimeters and each barge is delayed an additional three hours.

1. Comment: Because of the lack of towing facilities on the Yugoslav side, a serious blow has been dealt to the Danube navigation companies of the Communist countries. Transports have piled up at both ends of the Cataracts and it now takes five times longer to tow each vessel. Because of the continuous use made of the tugs, they soon become worn out and as others are unobtainable, the navigation companies are faced with a serious problem.

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Comment: A meeting has been scheduled for 15 April 1953 between Yugoslav and Rumanian representatives to discuss the joint administration of the Iron Gates.

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