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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

INFORMATION REPORT

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COUNTRY: Czechoslovakia
SUBJECT: Foreign Broadcasts
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THE SOURCE EVALUATIONS IN THIS REPORT ARE DEFINITIVE.
THE APPRAISAL OF CONTENT IS TENTATIVE.
(FOR KEY SEE REVERSE)

1. Listening to foreign broadcasts in Czechoslovakia is not forbidden except in groups of more than three; in other words, people can listen to foreign broadcasts at home, but inviting neighbors and friends in to listen is forbidden. The spreading and dissemination of what is heard is labeled anti-state activity and is strictly forbidden. I do not know whether those people who listen to foreign broadcasts listen regularly but it is my opinion that 90% of the population, including Communists, listened either to VOA or BBC. Listening to Western broadcasts is forbidden to military personnel in barracks and camp areas, but they undoubtedly listened to foreign broadcasts anyway. None of them dared talk about the programs they heard so I cannot say which type was the most popular. I last listened to VOA broadcast [redacted] district of Beroun, on the 19 and 41 meter bands.
2. Tesla Electronics Corporation manufactured all the radio sets on the market when I left. Following are the names and prices of some of these sets: Talisman, three or more tubes, 5,500 kcs.; Pionyr, three or more tubes, 5,500-8,000 kcs.; Largo, five tubes, 1,200-1,500 kcs. (sic) I have no production figures for any of these sets, [redacted] there was no plan to replace any of the tubes with weaker ones or tubes of another type. Parts were available only for those sets manufactured after World War II.

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(Note: Washington Distribution Indicated By "X"; Field Distribution By "#".)

3. I estimate that 95% of radio set owners have sets to receive programs on long, short, and medium wave. Each radio set had to be registered with postal authorities; the owner received a license of operation. A tax of 75 crowns every three months was levied on each radio.
4. The foreign broadcasts which were jammed most were those of RFE and VOA. The jamming was not regular and at times in the winter during very cold weather both could be heard very well. Least jammed are the BBC broadcasts from London which consequently could usually be heard very well.
5. The following are my suggestions for the improvement of VOA programs:
 - a. VOA should broadcast more programs aimed at the housewife because she has more opportunity to listen to foreign broadcasts, particularly during the day, and could tell her husband what she had heard. The influence of the mother on the children should also be taken under consideration in planning programs.
 - b. More programs should be directed at military personnel, because of the vast number of personnel in uniform and the importance of the military force in the event of war. The fact that the soldiers are serving in an armed force for which the country presumably has no need should be pointed out to them.
 - c. Any technical improvement which would overcome jamming and strengthen the power of VOA would be most welcome. Apparently the programs are much better than those of other Western broadcasters which would account for the strenuous efforts to jam VOA transmissions.
 - d. Discussions with refugees are very effective; they serve to remind people that escape is possible.
 - e. The program transmitted at 2100 hours was the most popular; therefore, I suggest that the long commentaries on this program be shortened and more news of the world be substituted.