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COMMITTEE OF POLITICAL ADVISERS

TRAVEL RESTRICTIONS ON MEMBERS OF EASTERN  
EUROPEAN DIPLOMATIC MISSIONS IN THE US

Note by the United States Delegation

The following statement on travel restrictions placed on members of Eastern European diplomatic missions in the US is in response to the request of the Committee of Political Advisers that the NATO governments furnish information on this subject to bring up to date the factual reports submitted to the North Atlantic Council in 1954.

For the past several years, the US Government has had in effect restrictions on the travel of diplomatic and official representatives in the US on the basis of strict reciprocity for restrictions placed on US representatives in each Soviet bloc country insofar as this was determined to be feasible. At present the implementation of this policy by countries is as follows:

USSR: On January 3, 1955, the US extended to all Soviet citizens in the US (except those employed by the United Nations Secretariat) the requirement, established in 1952 for Embassy, Press and Intergovernmental personnel only, of prior notification of contemplated travel and also established areas in the country closed to Soviet citizens except when transiting by train or plane. Criteria used in selecting the areas to be closed were reciprocity with regard to the areas closed in the USSR and the denial to the Soviets of access to defense installations. In announcing these additional regulations, the US indicated that it would be willing to consider the mutual relaxation of travel controls if the Soviet Government were so inclined.

On several occasions since January 3, 1955, the US Government has informed prospective Soviet Embassy travelers that certain areas were "temporarily closed," but it has generally related such closures to specific similar instances in which Soviet authorities have prevented travel by Americans in technically open areas. The US Government has also occasionally granted exceptions to its travel restrictions when special circumstances or the US interest made it appear advisable.

In a note dated May 13, 1957, the US protested the restrictions imposed by Soviet authorities on American travel in officially open areas of the USSR, and again stated its willingness to consider a relaxation of officially established restrictions on a reciprocal basis. In its reply of June 15, 1957, the Soviet note did not respond to this proposal, even though Khrushchev had stated in his June 2, 1957 television interview that if there were mutual agreement he would be willing to do away with these restrictions.

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Rumania: Rumanian diplomatic personnel are required to give 24 hour notice of intended travel exceeding a distance of 35 miles from Washington. They are permitted to travel almost anywhere in the US, although a section of the East North Central part of the country is officially closed to them. In practice the Rumanians have been allowed recently to visit this "closed" part of the country, and the degree to which Rumanian diplomats will be excluded from travel there will depend upon the restrictions applied to Legation travel in Rumania.

Poland: Czechoslovakia: Hungary: There are no regulations as to prior notice or closed areas in effect in the US for non-military diplomatic personnel of these countries. There are no restrictions as to the travel of US non-military diplomatic personnel in the countries. In Poland and Czechoslovakia, however, US military service attaches are required to provide advance notice of travel and an itinerary of the intended trip.

Albania: Bulgaria: These countries, of course, have no diplomatic missions in the US. Their UN delegations are limited to the New York area and are required to obtain permission for any travel outside that area.

All foreign military attache personnel in Washington, including those representing Soviet Bloc countries, are requested to give advance notification of travel outside the Washington area and to furnish an approximate itinerary and date of return. In the case of naval attache personnel, this advance notification is requested one working day in advance, except for Russian naval attache personnel who must provide advance notification two working days in advance. All foreign air attache personnel are requested to provide advance notification two working days in advance. For foreign army attache personnel, the prior notification stipulated is 48 hours in advance. However, in practice an exception has been made permitting 24 hour advance notice for all foreign army attache personnel with the exception of those representing Czechoslovakia, Rumania and the USSR.

As is the case for all Russian citizens in the US, all Russian military attache personnel are barred from certain areas in the country.

The request made of all foreign military attache personnel for advance notification, approximate itinerary and date of return is, in the case of naval and air attache personnel, enforced only with respect to those personnel representing the USSR. For administrative reasons, in the case of army attache personnel the request is enforced equally strictly with respect to those representing all countries.

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