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May 24
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HUNGARY

BORDER ZONES /400/

DEMOLITION OF BORDER BARRIERS PROCEEDS AT
SNAIL'S PACE.

SOURCE GRAZ: RFE News Bureau.

DATE OF OBSERVATION: May 15 1956.

EVAL. COMMENT: In line with information published on this subject by the Austrian press.

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On May 15 and 16 1956, the local Communist paper "Wahrheit" published articles and photos which gave the impression that the Hungarian border barriers are being demolished at stakhanov speed. A particularly enthusiastic description was given of the way in which the barbed wire and mines are being removed in the area around LUISING, District GUESSING.

However, a check in the JENNERSFORD and GUESSING areas produced very little evidence to support the "Wahrheit's" claims. Although troops are definitely working on the barriers near LUISING and EBERAU, there is no sign of similar activity elsewhere.

At LUISING, demolition work is at present restricted to that part of the border formed by the Pinka river. Every day, pioneer /?/ troops are brought to the border by truck and spend the time from 0800 to 1400 hours locating mines. They do not work in the afternoons and have as yet not cut a single strand of wire. Austrians, who wanted to watch these troops,

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were approached by a Hungarian officer and asked to go away "as it is dangerous so near the border." It is interesting to note that the troops' activity in this part of the border need not necessarily be the result of a change of Regime policy. According to the terms of an Austro-Hungarian agreement, the bed of the Pinka river is to be regulated during the coming months and this particular section of the frontier to be cleared of mines and barbed wire by May 20 1956. In other words, this stretch of the border would have been opened, at least temporarily, whether or not the Regime had decided to dispose of the "technical barriers."

At EBERAU, "troops have allegedly rendered mines harmless by blasting during the past few days," and clusters of red and white flags can be seen among the wire just north of SZENTPETERFA. The wire barrier itself and the small, fifty centimeter high /trip-wire?/ stakes to its rear show no signs of demolition work, while no craters such as would result from the destruction of mines by blasting, were visible through powerful fieldglasses. In short, work in this area also seems to be restricted to that section where the Pinka river crosses the border.

No evidence of any kind of demolition work is to be seen in the area between WEICHSELBAUM and HEILIGENKREUZ, along the border road north of the latter village or near PINKAMINDSZENT.

Thus it would seem that, even if the frontier barriers are to disappear entirely within three months, the Regime intends to leave them in existence as long as possible. Why otherwise should work only have been started in those isolated border sections where the Pinka's banks and bed are to be regulated, while the mines and wire adjoining roads from HEILIGENKREUZ to GUESSING and WEICHSELBAUM are left untouched, although their removal would be of far greater propaganda value?

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