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17 December 1953

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3.5(c)

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3.5(c)

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

3.5(c)

~~TOP SECRET~~

~~TOP SECRET~~**SUMMARY****GENERAL**

1. Beria and associates to stand trial (page 3).
2. Peiping presents aide-memoire to Pakistan on American "bases" (page 4).
3. Satellites participating in North Korean reconstruction (page 4).
4. USSR may seek German participation at proposed Berlin meeting (page 5).

**SOVIET UNION**

5. [redacted]

3.3(h)(2)

**FAR EAST**

6. Communists reportedly still holding 6,000 South Korean prisoners (page 6).

**NEAR EAST - AFRICA**

7. Iraq's chief of staff wants informal military talks with Iran (page 6).

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3.5(c)

~~TOP SECRET~~

## GENERAL

### 1. Beria and associates to stand trial:

The sudden announcement that the case of L. P. Beria and six of his close associates will be subject to the hearing of a special session of the Soviet Supreme Court appears at present to be a liquidation of Beria's followers in the secret police rather than the opening gun in a general purge.

In the five months since Beria's arrest was announced, the Soviet leaders have been quietly erasing his influence from the MVD and the Caucasian Republics by various personnel shifts. None of the six officials indicted as Beria's accomplices were party leaders but all were directly connected with him through their positions in the USSR's police organization and many had past associations with him in the Georgian Republic.

The announcement set no specific date for the hearing, nor was there any indication whether it would be staged publicly or held in camera. Both techniques were used during the 1930 purges.

The decision of the present Soviet "collective" leadership to bring the case against Beria to a head at this time indicates a belief that it is in firm control of the internal situation.

While the accusation formally connects Beria with British intelligence efforts immediately following the Revolution, this appears more as part of a necessary historical association than as an indication that the USSR is launching a serious anti-Western propaganda campaign.

3.5(c)

- 3 -

17 Dec 53

~~TOP SECRET~~

3.5(c)

**2. Peiping presents aide-memoire to Pakistan on American "bases":**

3.3(h)(2)

Chinese Communist premier Chou En-lai about 8 December presented to the Pakistani ambassador an aide-memoire requesting confirmation of Peiping's belief that Pakistan

would neither grant bases to the United States nor associate itself with a Middle Eastern defense pact.

3.3(h)(2)

Chou stated that Peiping was concerned because of Pakistan's proximity to the Chinese frontier and argued that Asians "must rely on each other."

Comment: Peiping's communication followed a Soviet protest of 30 November and Chinese broadcasts denouncing the American-Pakistani talks as a threat to the USSR, Communist China, and Southeast Asia. Chou's appeal for Asians to "rely on each other" illustrates the Chinese role in Sino-Soviet joint efforts to exploit Asian "neutralist" sentiment.

Pakistan has been much less susceptible to Peiping's maneuvers than have other Asian governments recognizing the regime.

**3. Satellites participating in North Korean reconstruction:**

3.3(h)(2)

Comment: North Korea concluded assistance pacts with Rumania and Bulgaria in October and November. Czechoslovakia and East Germany have also announced that they would assist in North Korean economic rehabilitation.

~~TOP SECRET~~

The USSR and Communist China have both signed pacts calling for material and technical assistance to North Korea. Numerous reports indicate that large numbers of Chinese construction workers have entered North Korea already.

**4. USSR may seek German participation at proposed Berlin meeting:**

The 16 December statement by Walter Ulbricht, acting East German premier, welcoming Western acceptance of a Berlin conference, indicates East German anticipation that the USSR will agree to the meeting.

Ulbricht's remarks suggest continued Soviet insistence that a united Germany could follow an independent foreign policy but could never be incorporated in a Western military pact. The speech further indicates that the USSR may urge that East and West German representatives be invited to the Berlin conference. Another East German spokesman has proposed that a mixed German commission prepare a program for the meeting.

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3.3(h)(2)

German government is preparing studies to show that the principles of democratization laid down at Potsdam have been followed in East Germany. Such studies would defend the East German claim to representation at Berlin and support the Soviet desire for all-German elections without four-power supervision. [redacted]

3.5(c)

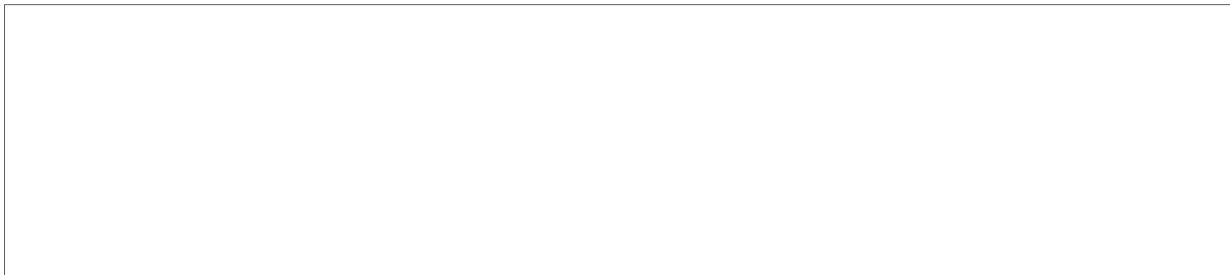
**SOVIET UNION**

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~~TOP SECRET~~

3.5(c)

17 Dec 53

~~TOP SECRET~~

## FAR EAST

**6. Communists reportedly still holding 6,000 South Korean prisoners:**

[Redacted] Two escapees from North Korean army service, [Redacted]

3.3(h)(2)

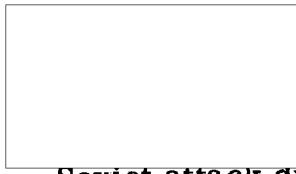
[Redacted] claimed on 15 December that 6,000 South Korean troops are still being held in Communist labor battalions in North Korea. They said that on about 22 September 1,000 captives demonstrated in Pyongyang demanding repatriation and that other smaller riots have occurred from time to time.

The escapees also claimed that they were forced into slave labor near Pyongyang and compelled to dig tunnels for gasoline and ammunition storage and to repair roads, buildings, and bridges.

Comment: This is the first evidence of the magnitude of North Korean violation of the prisoner provisions of the truce agreement, which provide that all prisoners be repatriated or delivered to neutral custody.

## NEAR EAST - AFRICA

**7. Iraq's chief of staff wants informal military talks with Iran:**



Iraq's chief of the general staff has informed [Redacted] an American official that he believes the time has arrived for informal Iraqi-Iranian military talks in order to make plans for delaying any

3.3(h)(2)

Soviet attack directed through the two countries in an attempt to outflank Turkey.

~~TOP SECRET~~

~~TOP SECRET~~

Comment: A principal deterrent to collaboration between Iraq and Iran disappeared with the removal of Mossadeq, but neither country will be able to build up an effective defense without American military assistance. Iran may delay such talks until it has assurances of receiving American support. It is not likely, however, that any mutual defense agreement between Iran and its neighbors would be possible until at least the oil dispute has been settled and a Majlis is elected which is capable of carrying out an effective domestic program.

~~TOP SECRET~~