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GENERAL

1. Uruguayan official sees possibility of break with Czechoslovakia:

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A break in Uruguayan-Czech relations may result from the Uruguayan Foreign Minister's virtual ultimatum on 10 January that two Uruguayan citizens of Czech descent who have been detained in Czechoslovakia since last August be granted exit visas.

The Foreign Ministry official who reports this states that the Uruguayan Government considers the Czech mission in Montevideo "extremely dangerous from the subversive point of view."

Comment: The Uruguayan citizens involved had been outspokenly disillusioned by conditions discovered on a trip to Czechoslovakia.

Czechoslovakia has accredited only two diplomats to Montevideo but has shown considerable interest in trade. The USSR also has representation in Uruguay and Orbit countries maintain missions in Argentina, Brazil, Ecuador and Mexico.

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3. Comment on Soviet attack on Israeli leaders:

In blasting Israeli's Premier Ben-Gurion, Foreign Minister Moshe Sharett and the late President Weizmann as tools of American-British imperialism and "executors" of US State Department spy operations in the USSR, Soviet propaganda reverted to the anti-Zionist theme which had been muted since the initial accusations against the nine Soviet doctors.

An article in New Times further charged Aubrey Eban, Israeli delegate to the UN and Ambassador to the United States, "and others" with being British agents, and was the sharpest attack on Israeli officials yet to appear in an official Soviet publication.

The editorial also accused the Israeli nation of "waging a cruel war of destruction against the local Arab population in Palestine," thus attacking the Israeli nation as well as Zionism.

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SOUTHEAST ASIA

5. Viet Minh use of river mines threatens French naval support in Tonkin:

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The American Naval Attaché in Saigon reports the increasing use of river mines by the Viet Minh in the central delta area of Tonkin. Successful use of this weapon could seriously tax the limited French repair facilities at Haiphong.

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Comment: The Viet Minh have heretofore limited their use of river mines to South Vietnam, where conditions are more favorable for such warfare. Increasing success with mines in the north would seriously handicap the French Navy in maintaining the security of river traffic and continuing its indispensable support to ground forces.

6. Clash between Burmese Army and Chinese Nationalists reported:

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A force of approximately 1,500 Chinese Nationalists, plus an unknown number of Karens, has attacked and almost annihilated a Burmese Army battalion,

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This action reportedly took place some time prior to 14 January in an area less than 200 miles northeast of Rangoon.

Comment: Chinese Nationalist troops previously have been reported in this region of southern Burma, but not in such large numbers.

In the more than two years of sparring between the Nationalist and Burmese Government forces, this is the largest number of troops said to be involved. This engagement may have prompted the recently reported decision of the Burmese Government to take concerted military action against the Nationalists and retaliatory measures against Chinese residents of Rangoon.

NEAR EAST - AFRICA

7. Mossadeq insists he cannot prevent oil sales to Soviet bloc:

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Prime Minister Mossadeq told Ambassador Henderson on 19 January that he would not have prevented the Italian

tanker Miriella from loading oil even if he had known that the shipment was going to Poland. He insisted that the Iranian population was deeply aroused by the Western "conspiracy" to prevent Iran from selling oil and would demand that it be sold "to Stalin himself" if he would buy it.

The Prime Minister contended that if Iran could sell its oil, it would not need American aid. In any event, he hoped that the United States would take a "tolerant, understanding attitude," since it was unlikely that enough Iranian oil would reach the Soviet bloc to affect American security.

Comment: The Miriella reportedly sailed for Genoa on 20 January carrying 5,000 tons of oil. The American Ambassador in Rome reported on 16 January that Italy would make no effort to interfere with the shipment.

EASTERN EUROPE

8. Purge predicted in Hungary:

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Indications of a forthcoming purge in Hungary are accumulating, according to the US Legation in Budapest. It is rumored that Zoltan Vas, head of the National Planning Office, is under police surveillance, and that Gabor Peter, chief of the security police, and Sandor Nogradi, chief deputy to the Minister of Defense, have been arrested. All are Jews and old-line Communists. The director of the Jewish Hospital in Budapest, who is related by marriage to Vas, is reliably reported to have been arrested on 15 January.

In the opinion of the Legation, Vas' connection with relief payments by the American Joint Distribution Committee also makes his position vulnerable.

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Comment: A high proportion of Hungary's top government officials are veteran Jewish Communists of the type that has been purged recently in Czechoslovakia and Rumania. This fact, combined with Hungary's economic difficulties, makes Hungary ripe for a major purge.

WESTERN EUROPE

9. French diplomats see need for increased Western unity:

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[Redacted]

At a 16 January conference of French Premier Mayer and his principal ambassadors, there was "unanimous and wholehearted agreement" on the need to push forward all projects for European unity and to strengthen NATO's effectiveness, according to a Foreign Ministry participant. Louis Joxe, Ambassador to Moscow, made a "deep impression" by arguing that greater strength and unity with the other Western nations are the only basis for a settlement with the USSR.

Mayer expressed confidence that he had broken Gaullist opposition to the EDC treaty and that 50 of the 85 orthodox Gaullists would vote for it.

Comment: Joxe had reportedly been the object of Russian feelers for a separate Franco-Soviet understanding, and there had been some reason to believe that he might be sympathetic to such a move.

Even with substantial Gaullist support, the EDC treaty can be expected to meet opposition from non-Gaullist elements within the French Government coalition, particularly as a result of Herriot's influence in Mayer's own Radical Socialist Party. Furthermore, Socialist leader Guy Mollet has just retracted the qualified support he had been giving the treaty for almost a year.

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