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19 July 1952

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

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DIA and DOS review(s)
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25X1A

S U M M A R Y

GENERAL

1. Comment on Stalin's attempt to lend prestige to forthcoming peace congresses (page 3).

25X1

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6. British officials disturbed by lack of French aggressiveness in Indochina (page 6).
 7. New Chinese Communist incursion into Indochina reported (page 7).

25X1

NEAR EAST - AFRICA

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10. Egyptian Prime Minister insists Sudan title issue cannot be dropped (page 9).

25X1

25X1A

GENERAL

1. Comment on Stalin's attempt to lend prestige to forthcoming peace congresses:

Stalin's interview with Pietro Nenni, vice-chairman of the World Peace Council, underlines the importance the USSR attaches to such forthcoming Communist activities as the Asian Peace Congress scheduled for September in Peiping and the World Peace Congress for December in Vienna. The interview coincides with new emphasis placed by various Communist parties in both Europe and Asia on united front and "peace" tactics.

The interview will also serve to end speculation that Nenni intends to break with the Italian Communists. Nenni's left-wing socialist party has been exploited by the Communists to promote a "unity of all anti-Fascist forces," particularly after neo-Fascist gains in the local May elections.

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Next 1 Page(s) In Document Exempt

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6. British officials disturbed by lack of French aggressiveness in Indochina:

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Ambassador Heath in Saigon was told by the British Minister that Letourneau, during his recent visit to Singapore, "disquieted" British officials with his statements on French military plans in Indochina.

Letourneau had emphasized holding operations and had spoken of a sizable reduction of French forces by the end of 1954, to be made possible by the development of the Vietnamese National Army to a strength of eight divisions.

The British Minister stated that Letourneau had left the impression in Singapore that he lacked the "victory psychology" of the late Marshal de Lattre. The British official added his personal view that the French Commander in Chief was of the same mind as Letourneau and would not oppose French Defense Ministry requests for a reduction of expeditionary forces. He concluded that British officials in Singapore fear that the military position of Indochina in 1954 will be significantly weaker than at present.

Comment: It has been evident since De Lattre's death that the French have no specific plan for defeating the Viet Minh other than the seemingly impossible objective of gradually wearing it down to an insignificant guerrilla force.

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The development of a national army in Indo-china is hampered by both budgetary and political considerations. It will be a matter of years before a Vietnamese army will be capable of supplanting present French forces and insuring adequate defense of Vietnam.

7. New Chinese Communist incursion into Indochina reported:

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[REDACTED] in Indochina has told the US Army Attache that an estimated twelve battalions of Chinese Communist regular troops numbering between 5,000 and 6,000 men are now engaged against 1,000 French-supported tribesmen in northwestern Tonkin, east of Laokay. The Army Attache comments that this latest incursion has not been mentioned in regular briefings by the French.

Comment: This is the third such incursion in the vicinity of Laokay this year. Three battalions entered in mid-May and withdrew several weeks later. In the latter part of June, ten battalions allegedly were repulsed after suffering heavy casualties.

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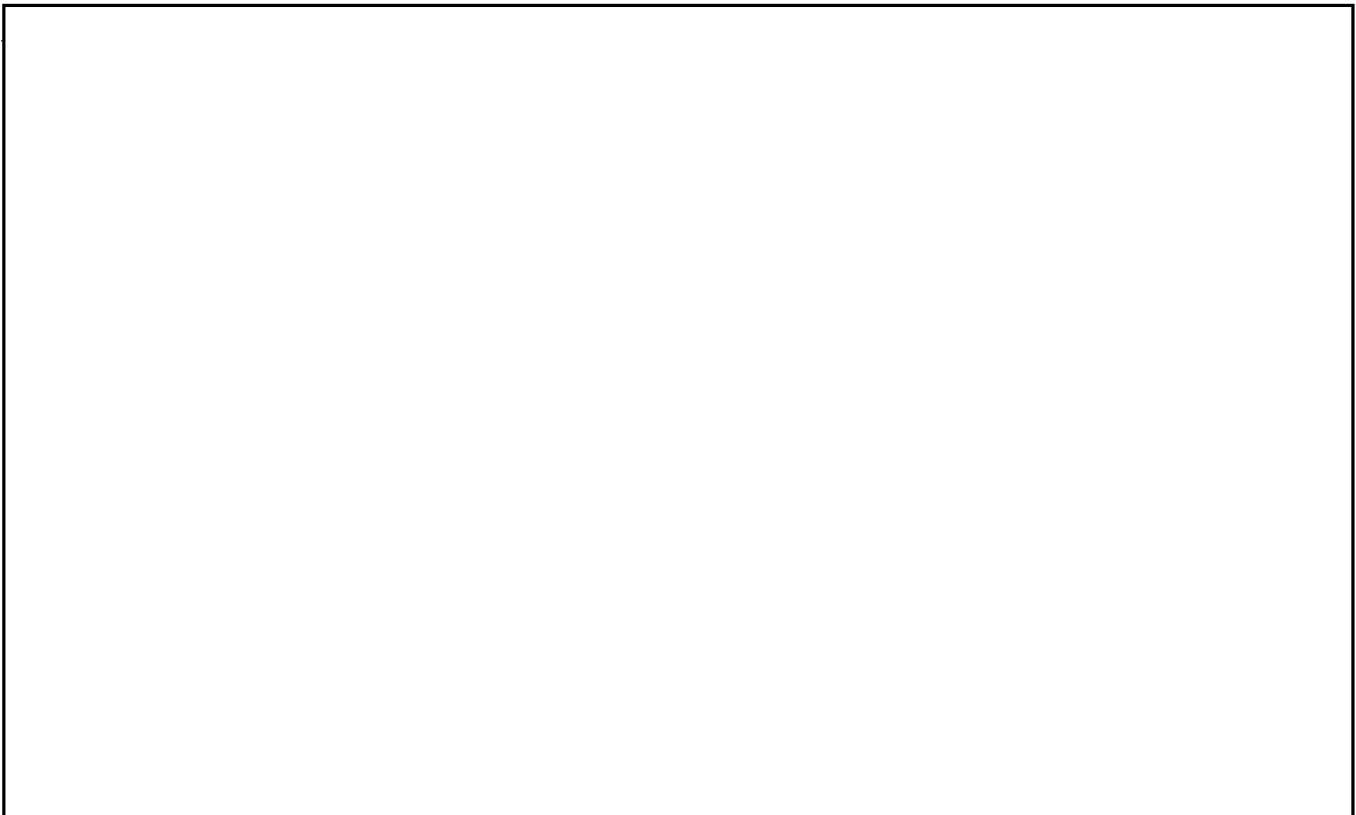
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10. Egyptian Prime Minister insists Sudan title issue cannot be dropped:

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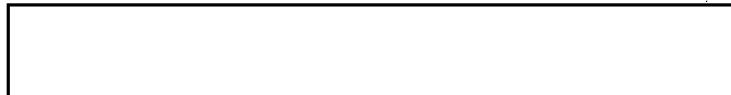
Egyptian Prime Minister Sirry Pasha has stated to Ambassador Caffery that in spite of his friendliness toward Britain neither he nor any other Egyptian Government can allow the Sudan title issue "to be put in mothballs." Sirry believes that if Egyptian leaders agreed to setting it aside, they would be faced with insurrections which would threaten foreign residents, especially the British. Sirry considers that under these circumstances King Farouk would lose his throne.

25X1



- 9 -

25X1A



25X1

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