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GENERAL

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GENERAL

1. May Day celebrations emphasize peace:

May Day celebrations throughout the Communist Orbit played down the past theme of military strength and stressed instead the current campaign of conciliation. Major speeches offered no concessions on any important issues and left the current state of divisive issues between East and West essentially unchanged.

Editorials and speeches from Moscow reiterated the collective character of the new Soviet Government. In Communist China, contrary to the past practice of featuring Stalin along with Mao, Malenkov and other Soviet leaders were given secondary rank following portraits of Mao and his lieutenants.

FAR EAST

2. Long detention of Korean war prisoners might reduce opposition to repatriation:

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Ambassador Briggs fears that a long detention of Communist prisoners now unwilling to be repatriated might cause many of them to change their minds. He notes that this would create serious embarrassment for the United States and a propaganda victory for the Communists.

Briggs recommends that the Chinese and North Korean prisoners be handled separately. He urges that the neutral trustee be given the power of final decision, making possible a speedy transfer to South Korean authorities of the 32,000 North Koreans who are opposed to repatriation. He also suggests that the Chinese prisoners, most of whom say they want to go to Formosa, be retained initially in Korea. He fears that an attempt to send them elsewhere would make them apprehensive that eventually they would be returned to Communist control.

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Comment: President Rhee informed General Clark on 27 April that his people would never permit removal of North Korean prisoners from Korea, and that the prisoners themselves would resist it. Although Chou En-lai appeared interested last October in a distinction between Chinese and Korean prisoners, Peiping now insists that all prisoners must be physically removed from Korea so as to free them from "apprehensions."

3. Peiping propaganda may be designed to deter Thailand from aiding French:

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The American consul general at Hong Kong believes that recent Chinese Communist propaganda attacks on Thailand, alleging Thai military aid to the French, are designed both to deter the Thais from giving aid to Laos and to prepare the ground for possible future action against Thailand from Laos.

He comments that there is no doubt that the Chinese Communists intend eventually to bring about the downfall of the Thai Government, but he does not foresee any early Chinese military action.

Comment: The Chinese Communist press, after failing to mention the Laos invasion until 29 April, now reports it as the work of a "Laotian People's Liberation Army."

As yet no "liberation" movement has developed in Thailand for Peiping to support. The "Thai Autonomous Government" established in Southwest China last February can be used in a long-range program to subvert the Thai Government.

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