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GENERAL

1. Greek-Italian talks on Balkan defense inconclusive:

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Greek Prime Minister Papagos told Italian Prime Minister De Gasperi during the latter's visit to Athens that he would be glad to help resolve Italian-Yugoslav differences, although

Greece was too small a power to attempt to mediate. Papagos, who informed American Ambassador Peurifoy of the statement, added that he had told De Gasperi that military coordination with Yugoslavia was essential to NATO defense planning. De Gasperi admitted this, but declared that no Italian-Yugoslav agreement was possible until the Trieste problem was solved.

De Gasperi added that Italy had renounced all ambitions in Albania, and Papagos reassured him that Greece would pursue its claims to northern Epirus only through diplomatic means.

2. Yugoslav-Turkish defense accord awaits political agreement:

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Yugoslavia and Turkey agreed during their recent military talks in Belgrade that after the necessary political agreements have been made, a joint defense plan would be undertaken, according to a Turkish Foreign Office official. These talks also produced a plan for an immediate exchange of military students and certain military information, and for observing each other's maneuvers.

Comment: Yugoslavia desires a tripartite mutual assistance agreement with Greece and Turkey. Both Turkey and Greece have asked for guidance on what further steps can be taken toward military collaboration with Yugoslavia, since they are unwilling to make any military arrangements which conflict with their NATO obligations.

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SOUTHEAST ASIA

6. French reportedly plan offensive in Vietnam:

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The French are planning a landing operation in the Thanh Hoa area of northern Annam between 15 and 20 January, [redacted]

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[redacted] The attack will be a raid in force by at least three battalions rather than an attempt to occupy the area. Objectives are Viet Minh rice and arms stocks in the area.

Comment: The Thanh Hoa area has been held by the Viet Minh since 1945. A successful French raid, following the Viet Minh's failure to take Na San and its more recent abandonment of objectives in Laos, could have a considerable psychological and military effect.

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NEAR EAST - AFRICA

7. Ruling clique expected to win election in Iraq:

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Ambassador Berry in Baghdad reports that candidates favored by the Iraqi Regent and Nuri Said are expected to win approximately 123 of the 141 parliamentary seats

in the elections on 17 January. Three of the four opposition parties, including the important Umma Party of Saleh Jabr, have virtually boycotted the elections in protest against the government's manipulation of the electoral machinery.

Comment: A Regent-Nuri victory promises no basic reforms. The tensions which preceded the Baghdad riots of 22 November may thus be expected to continue.

8. Egypt disappointed by British proposals for the Sudan:

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General Nagib has told Ambassador Caffery in Cairo that the latest British proposals for the future of the Sudan represent a "regression."

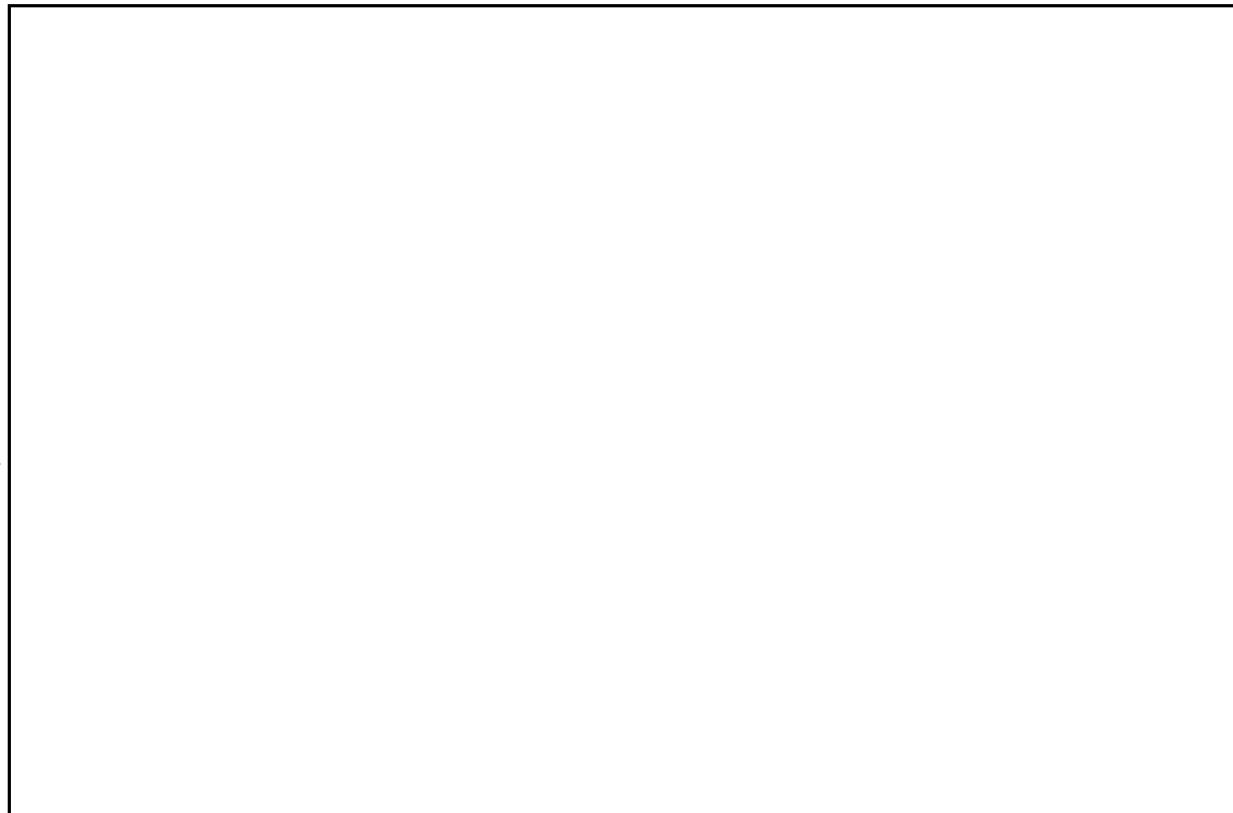
Comment: Current reports reflect a growing anti-British feeling in Egypt and official encouragement of extreme nationalism. British military authorities reportedly fear that the anniversary of the 26 January riots may be the occasion for renewed violence.

Prospects for an early solution of the Sudan issue appear slight since sentiment in both Britain and in Egypt seems opposed to further concessions.

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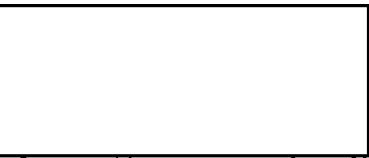
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EASTERN EUROPE

10. Scandinavian diplomats anticipate easier trade negotiations with
Poland:

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Chiefs of the Swedish, Finnish and Danish missions in Warsaw consider that Poland is finding payment for badly needed imports increasingly difficult because of the strained domestic economic situation and the lowering of coal prices in the West. The heads of the Danish and Swedish missions do not anticipate

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that their countries will have to make important concessions to Poland in trade negotiations scheduled to begin soon in Warsaw, despite their need for Polish exports.

WESTERN EUROPE

II. Paris Embassy sees brighter EDC picture:

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The possibility of French ratification of the EDC treaty has greatly improved since Mayer's investiture, in the opinion of the American Embassy in Paris, which is confident that Mayer will push the EDC more vigorously than did Pinay.

The Embassy points out that Mayer has pledged early study of the treaty by the National Assembly committees, and has suggested that any modification be in the form of protocols. This would offer a face-saving device for erstwhile opponents.

Comment: "Unofficial" press releases, allegedly originating in French NATO representative Alphand's office, indicate that basic French policy on the organization of the EDC remains unchanged, and that protocols can be negotiated without reopening the treaty.

Mayer expects to negotiate protocols providing for a formal British tie with the EDC, the right of rapid withdrawal of French forces for overseas emergencies, and identification of all French forces in the EDC and elsewhere as elements of a single French army.

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