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GENERAL

1. British Foreign Office officials comment on recent Soviet tactics:

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British Foreign Office officials privately agree that until there is concrete evidence of Soviet willingness to make genuine concessions, no four power meeting should be held. In their opinion such evidence is lacking.

They believe that current Soviet propaganda should be regarded with the greatest skepticism, but that there seems no reason to interpret it as a cover for more aggressive actions. The officials further agree that the West should adopt a "wait and see" policy while avoiding provocative actions.

Comment: Recent Soviet propaganda tactics such as the renewal of the coexistence line, while appearing conciliatory, have been accompanied by sharp attacks against the United States. Other propaganda and diplomatic moves also suggest that the Soviet aim is more divisive than conciliatory.

2. Molotov offers to intervene on behalf of French internees in Korea:

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In a 26 March interview with French Ambassador Joxe, Molotov offered to intervene with the North Koreans to secure the release of French internees.

The offer came in response to the Ambassador's question on the relationship of Malenkov's statements of peaceful intentions to a Korean settlement.

Joxe regards his interview as one of several Soviet conciliatory gestures which have cost the Soviet Government nothing and have the advantage of relaxing Western vigilance. He does not think that the USSR will forfeit its bargaining power through any substantial concessions.

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The American Embassy recommends that the United States make a similar approach regarding American internees in North Korea.

Comment: Molotov has already offered to intervene for the release of British internees.

Soviet reaction to any American proposal of this nature would help to show whether recent Soviet conciliatory tactics have been primarily aimed at dividing the West or represent a modification in policy by the new regime.

SOVIET UNION

3. Comment on Soviet amnesty decree:

The amnesty decree of the new Soviet regime, although its scope is limited, appears to be a gesture in support of the leaders' often repeated claims of humanitarian interest in the people.

It is unlikely that this concession was motivated by a feeling of weakness on the part of the new regime. Previous Soviet amnesties have been declared on such historic occasions as the "victorious conclusion of the civil war," the "tenth anniversary of Soviet power," and "the victory over Hitlerite Germany."

This development will provide Soviet propagandists with a new point of emphasis for internal consumption and will be beamed to foreign audiences in support of the regime's "liberal character and prestige."

FAR EAST**4. Comment on the Communist offer to exchange prisoners in Korea:**

The Communists' apparent agreement to exchange sick and wounded prisoners in Korea probably represents an attempt to regain the propaganda initiative, not only on an issue of wide humanitarian appeal, but on the whole East-West controversy of which Korea is the focus. The move is consonant with the recently intensified effort to portray the Soviet side as the "camp of peace."

The Communists' statement emphasizes their desire for an agreement in accordance with Article 109 of the Geneva Convention, which specifically provides that no sick or injured prisoner of war "may be repatriated against his will during hostilities." Thus, while the Communists could negate the offer by attaching unacceptable stipulations, they could, in the interest of their broad propaganda objectives, agree on a partial exchange of sick and wounded prisoners without compromising their stand on "total repatriation." They could continue to interpret Article 118 as calling for repatriation of all prisoners following the cessation of hostilities.

Recent propaganda has given no indication that the Communists would be willing to accept a truce on anything but their own terms.

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NEAR EAST - AFRICA

8. Mossadeq proposes West German organization handle Iranian oil:

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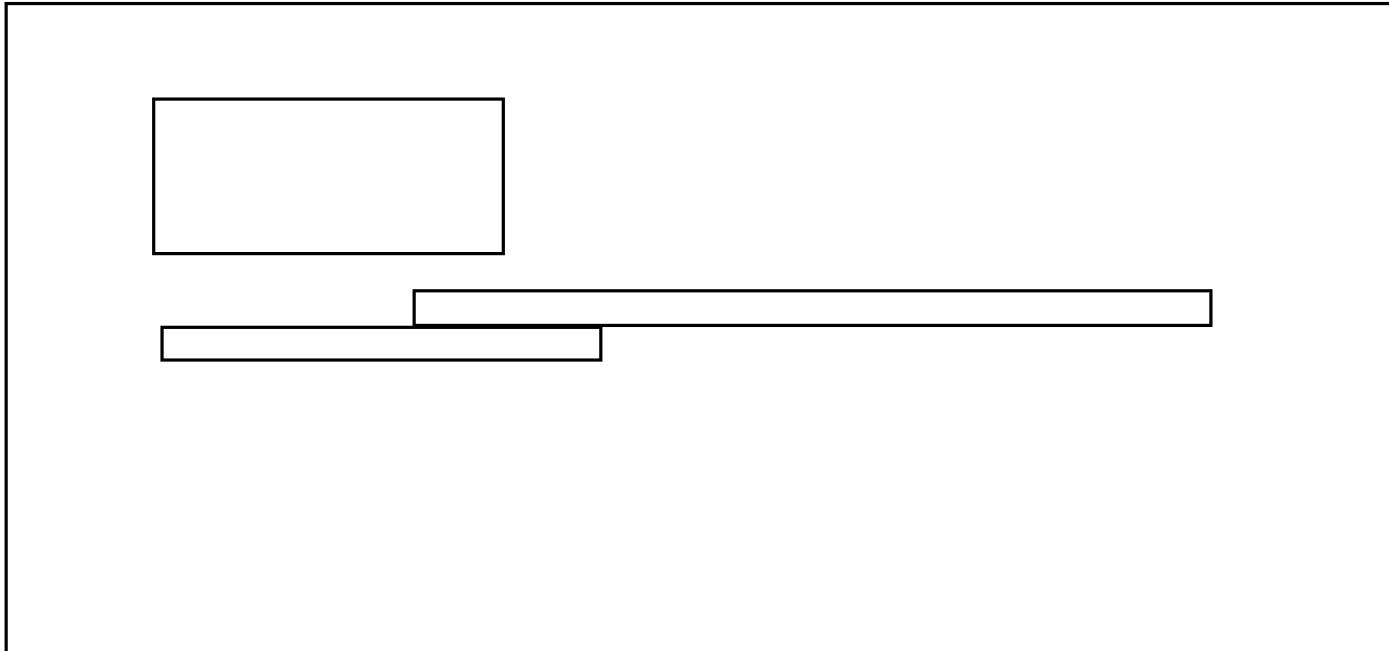
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Prime Minister Mossadeq has proposed to officials of the West German Berliner Handelsgesellschaft Bank that a pool of German banks organize the purchasing, selling and distribution of Iranian oil on a world-wide basis. The German organization would also provide technical assistance for rehabilitating the Abadan refinery.

Chancellor Adenauer approves the plan in principle, with the proviso that the United States Government does not object.

Comment: Mossadeq, aware of the relatively small potential of the companies he is currently dealing with, apparently still hopes to find a large organization to market Iranian oil. Strong British disapproval of such an operation can be expected.

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10. Israeli publicity dims prospects for peace with Arab states:

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The Israeli press during the past few days has given front page attention to a possible Israeli-Arab peace. It has emphasized that the United States would use its good offices to bring this about as part of a new approach to Middle East problems.

According to some news reports, the American plan includes splitting the Arab bloc, using Nagib's "pro-American regime" as the lever. Wide reporting was also given the conversation Nagib held with Ralph Bunche last month in which Nagib indicated an interest in achieving peace with Israel.

Comment: This extensive Israeli publicity will create unfavorable reactions among the Arab states toward any peace proposals. Premature Israeli publicity wrecked Israeli-Jordanian negotiations in early 1951.

General Nagib has indicated his interest in peace with Israel but also has shown sensitivity to Egyptian public opinion which continues unyielding on this issue.

11. Comment on Mau Mau terrorism in East Africa:

Officials in Kenya fear a general uprising resulting from an expansion of Mau Mau terrorism which has threatened the security of Britain's Kenya Colony for the past six months. Despite the arrest of alleged leaders, wholesale arming of the European population, aggressive patrols by African and British troops, and mass roundups of suspect natives, Mau Mau gangs have grown in number. On 26 March they massacred at

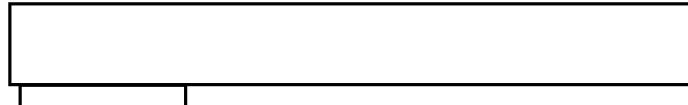
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least 150 pro-British tribesmen near the colony's capital, increasing by more than one third the total of known victims.

According to earlier plans, two battalions of British troops are to be flown to Kenya beginning 30 March to assist the single British battalion and local forces already there, but British inability to protect loyal Africans and informers will seriously handicap future operations. The most dangerous period is believed likely to coincide with the anticipated conviction of Jomo Kenyatta, a leading African accused of instigating and directing the terrorist movement.

Although the Mau Mau movement is at present confined to a single tribe comprising about a fifth of Kenya's 5,000,000 Africans, there have been indications that its influence may spread to other tribes and neighboring territories in east and central Africa.

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