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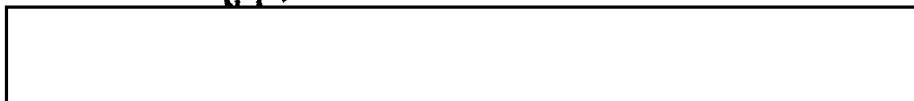
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State Department review completed

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S U M M A R Y

SOUTHEAST ASIA

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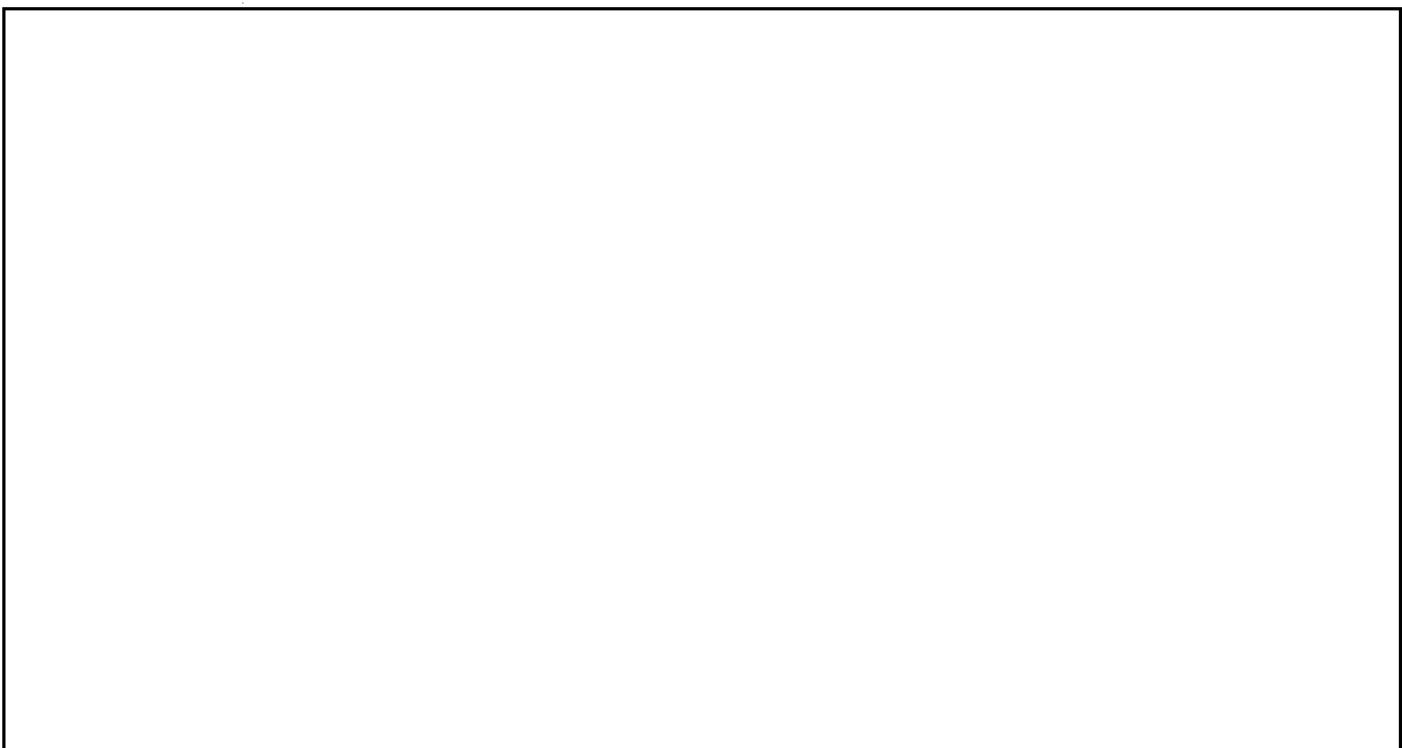
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SOUTHEAST ASIA

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25X1A 2. Chinese Nationalists threaten to halt evacuation from Burma:

The Chinese Nationalist guerrillas' representative on the joint evacuation committee in Bangkok stated on 4 March that the evacuation may be halted unless

the Burmese government pays for the damage done to Chinese property during a 2 March air raid on a guerrilla outpost.

Meanwhile, the joint committee has asked Burma to enforce a cease-fire throughout the Shan States until 31 March.

Comment: The present cease-fire is limited to small assembly areas adjacent to the evacuation route. The area covered by the cease-fire is to be restricted further after 15 March.

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Although the Burmese army's current limited offensive is being conducted some distance southwest of the assembly areas, it may hamper the Chinese commanders' efforts to induce outlying groups of guerrillas to accept evacuation. It also offers both Taipei and the Mong Hsat commanders an excuse for halting the evacuation.

NEAR EAST - AFRICA

3. New Syrian cabinet termed weak, caretaker government:
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[Redacted]

The new caretaker cabinet of Syrian prime minister Asali is even weaker and more partisan than had been anticipated, according to the American ambassador

in Damascus. It includes no responsible party leaders or outstanding independents, but does contain such "unpredictable figures" as Defense Minister Dawalibi, who is sympathetic to the Moslem Brotherhood, and Foreign Minister Atassi, who has been anti-Western in the past.

Comment: The present political situation in Syria offers an opportunity for exploitation by influential leaders outside the government, especially the extreme leftist Akram Hawrani. It is also unclear whether the army, which has dominated Syrian politics for the past five years, will fulfill its promise to avoid political meddling in the future.

The elation of other countries, particularly Iraq, over recent events in Damascus suggests possible outside exploitation. Iraqi prime minister Jamali recently stated to Ambassador Berry that Baghdad had foreknowledge of the move to oust Shishakli. He indicated sympathy for the insurrectionists, and stated that Iraq, wished to gain the friendship of the new regime.

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4. Comment on announcement that Egypt will return to constitutional government:

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The Revolutionary Command Council's sudden announcement on 5 March that it intends to restore parliamentary government in Egypt is evidence of its sensitivity to popular dissatisfaction.

Without an effective political organization of its own and reportedly still suffering internal dissension, the regime is ill prepared to contest free elections. The promised removal of press censorship and greater civil liberties will encourage activities by opposition groups.

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In any event, it could be expected to make an effort to dominate an elected assembly and thus assure the continuation of its authority. The danger remains, however, that early elections could result in a victory for an alliance of right and left-wing extremists.

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5. British officials in Khartoum fear new troubles in the Sudan:

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British authorities in the Sudan fear renewed disorders if General Nagib returns to Khartoum for the ceremonial opening of the Sudanese parliament on 10 March.

As a result of the 1 March riots, the governor general's office has indicated that it will not permit the new parliament, dominated by those favoring union with Egypt, to change the composition of the governor general's advisory commission. The governor general is prepared to declare a "constitutional breakdown" and assume his "extraordinary powers" if the parliament refuses to approve the pro-independence member of the commission.

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Comment: Any attempt at this time by the pro-Egyptian National Unionist Party government to move against the pro-independence Umma Party or to promote closer ties with Egypt could result in new disorders. Subsequent stern countermeasures by the British administrators could be expected to aggravate further Anglo-Egyptian relations.

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