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SUMMARY

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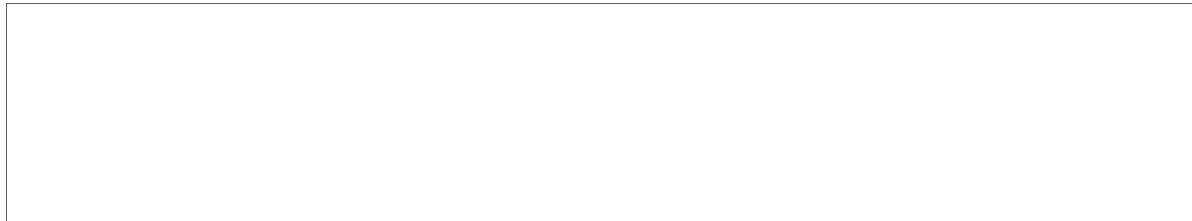
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FAR EAST

1. Democrats confident they will form next Japanese government:

[Redacted] Shinsuke Kishi, secretary general of the Japan Democratic Party, told Ambassador Allison on 16 February that it is now virtually certain his party will be returned with a plurality in the 27 February elections and will form a new government under Hatoyama. Kishi foresees a large-scale reshuffle in the cabinet, but thinks that Shigemitsu will remain as foreign minister.

Kishi also stated that Prime Minister Hatoyama had been persuaded to entrust the coming negotiations with the USSR entirely to Shigemitsu, and to cease "freewheeling" on his own. Kishi said that in negotiations with the USSR, Japan would not accept conditions which might adversely affect its relations with the United States.

Comment: Despite Kishi's confidence that Shigemitsu will continue as foreign minister, there have been other reports which indicate considerable opposition to this within the present cabinet.

Since the Moscow radio broadcast of 14 December, the USSR has continued to assure the Japanese that normalization of relations does not require Japan to sever its relations with the United States. In its present drive for better relations with the Orbit, Japan is likely to take an uncritical view as to what might adversely affect relations with the United States, but is not likely to overlook the overriding importance of maintaining its basic pro-American policy.

SOUTHEAST ASIA

2. Thailand to assist Burmese operations against Chinese Nationalist guerrillas:

[Redacted] Police Director Phao has committed Thailand to support a Burmese army offensive against remnants of the Chinese Nationalist forces in northeastern Burma, according

to the American embassy in Bangkok. The offensive is reportedly scheduled to begin on 5 March. Thailand's assistance is to be rendered through joint Thai-Burmese liaison teams stationed at critical points in the theater of operations and at the Thai police headquarters in Bangkok.

Ambassador Peurifoy warns that fighting might break out between retreating Chinese Nationalists and Thai police forces unless the Chinese surrender promptly on crossing the border. Should there be a large number of internees, Thailand may request reactivation of the joint military committee which last year handled the evacuation of 7,000 Chinese Nationalists to Formosa.

Comment: Phao

[redacted] held a low opinion of the Burmese government heretofore and to have aided various non-Communist dissidents in Burma, including the Chinese Nationalists. The action he has now taken, however, indicates that he has revised his attitude, and this should materially enhance Thai-Burmese relations.

There are estimated to be 6,000 Chinese Nationalists, concentrated largely along the Thai border, remaining in Burma. While they are no match for the Burmese army, the terrain is admirably suited for evasive tactics, which the Chinese have been using successfully in the last two years.

3. Coup against Diem government reported imminent:

[redacted]

Diem's efforts to strengthen his government have created a great deal of resentment and tended to unify

the disparate elements opposed to him. In the final analysis, however, a successful coup would depend on the degree of French support.

NEAR EAST - AFRICA

4. Iraq and Turkey seem agreed on draft of defense treaty:

[redacted] Secretary General Birgi of the Turkish Foreign Ministry considers that Iraq's "final" draft of the proposed Iraqi-Turkish defense pact is "satisfactory though far from ideal." Birgi also told Ambassador Warren on 16 February that he hoped to obtain Turkish prime minister Menderes' acceptance of the draft immediately in order to arrange for signature of the treaty "in the next few days."

Comment: The Iraqi draft does not meet Turkish desires for provisions for specific measures to meet aggression. The draft does provide, however, that "the competent authorities" of the two countries may conclude, after the treaty comes into effect, whatever "special agreements" are considered necessary to ensure the "security and defense" of Iraq and Turkey.

5. Struggle for control of Syria may enter military phase:

[redacted]
Iraq has advised pro-Western president Atasi of Syria that it is ready to help "in any way possible" to counteract Egyptian, Saudi Arabian and French machinations in Syria.

[Redacted]

Comment: Syria's pro-Western conservatives, apparently convinced that the country is being undermined by foreign intrigue which would give control to the Communists, seem ready to call on military leaders to take over.

Ankara and Baghdad, which view the developments in Syria as inimical to their plans for Middle East defense, appear ready to give even military support to the Syrian conservatives. Such support would probably be interpreted throughout the Middle East as an effort to effect an Iraqi-Syrian union.

6. Serious incident on Jordan-Israel border may be imminent:

[Redacted]

Tension is mounting on the Jordan-Israel border as a result of a series of provocative raids by Israeli military forces now on maneuvers. The American army attaché in Amman believes there may be a serious incident unless the Israeli maneuvers close to the border are stopped.

Comment: The Israeli press in past weeks has been directing popular attention to Arab-Israeli problems, specifically the Cairo spy trial, the detention of five Israeli soldiers in Syria, and the prospects of Arab participation in Western defense arrangements for the area. In addition, Israeli army spokesmen have been bitter and outspoken over these recent developments.