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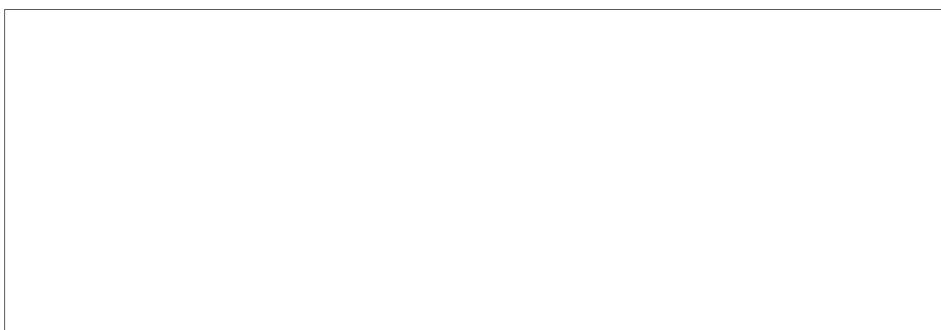
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1. SOVIET STATEMENT ON THE NEAR EAST

The Soviet Foreign Ministry's statement of 17 April expressing the USSR's readiness to contribute with other states to the peaceful solution of unsolved questions in the Near East is another bid to gain Western acceptance of the Soviet interest in Near Eastern affairs. The statement is timed to take full advantage of Britain's difficulties in the Near East at the time of the Bulganin-Khrushchev visit to the United Kingdom beginning on 18 April. The statement coincides with a growing conviction in France that the USSR must be included in any attempt to solve Near East problems.

Moscow probably intends the statement as a reply to President Eisenhower's announcement on 9 April pledging American aid to any Near Eastern state that might be the victim of aggression. It asserts that the Soviet government considers "illegal and inadmissible" any attempt to use the Arab-Israeli dispute to justify "interference from without" in the Arab states or the introduction of foreign troops into the area. The statement is evidently intended to give notice that the USSR will not agree to any Western action on the Arab-Israeli dispute except as taken through the UN Security Council.

The statement calls for "interested parties" to refrain from any action that might exacerbate the "situation of the existing demarcation line" and to try to alleviate the position of the "hundreds of thousands of Arab refugees deprived of their homes and means of subsistence."

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2. MOLOTOV AND MIKOYAN ATTEND ISRAELI RECEPTION

The attendance of Foreign Minister Molotov and First Deputy Premier Mikoyan at the Independence Day reception at the Israeli embassy in

Moscow reportedly is the first time since the establishment of the Israeli state that such high-ranking members of the Soviet hierarchy have attended such an Israeli function. Only a minor protocol officer attended the reception last year.

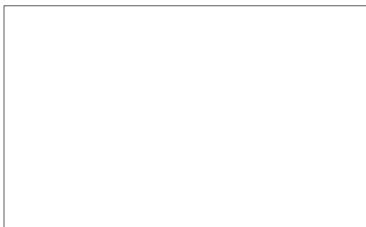
Soviet leaders may believe this diplomatic gesture will gain for the USSR some credit for being impartial in the Arab-Israeli dispute. The Soviet Foreign Ministry statement on 17 April mentioned Israel, along with the Arab states, in an expression of sympathy and support for states attempting to strengthen their independence.

The Soviet pro-Arab policy is unlikely to be compromised by gestures toward Israel since Arabs will interpret them as a restraining influence on the Israelis in the period before arms deliveries give the Arab states military superiority in the area.

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3. COMINFORM DISSOLUTION ANNOUNCED



The dissolution of the Cominform, announced by Soviet leaders Mikoyan and Shepilov on 17 April, is presumably intended by Moscow as further "proof" of Soviet willingness to remove the causes of international tension. During their trip to India in December, Bulganin and Khrushchev strongly defended the Cominform against suggestions by Nehru that it be dissolved. The timing of the step may be intended to improve the reception of Bulganin and Khrushchev in London.

Having been expelled from the Cominform in 1948, Belgrade will welcome the dissolution as a further vindication of its anti-Stalin policy. The Yugoslavs will presumably now consider the way clearer for them to achieve a working arrangement between Western European Socialist parties and Soviet bloc Communist parties. This was probably one of the main purposes of the Soviet move, which may be followed eventually by proposals for an international organization including both Socialist and Communist parties.

Khrushchev told the Yugoslav ambassador in February that the Cominform was of only secondary importance as a mechanism for interparty consultations, and had not met since 1949. Apparently its major function since then has been the publication of its weekly journal.

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4. DEMANDS FOR RAKOSI'S REMOVAL INCREASE

The American legation in Budapest has received a number of reports [redacted] which indicate that strife within the Communist Party over Rakosi's status has reached an unprecedented level.

At a meeting of the Hungarian Writers' Association on 30 March, certain writers reportedly condemned Rakosi for his "unbridled demagoguery" and demanded his resignation; similar demands were reportedly made of Rakosi in person at a recent party activist meeting in Budapest. Legation sources also report that Rakosi encountered serious opposition at the central committee meeting which was called to discuss Rajk's "rehabilitation" and that Rakosi walked out of the meeting in a rage.

Comment	Moscow reaffirmed its support for Rakosi as recently as 4 April. The mounting opposition in the Hungarian party, however, which will be strengthened by the resignation of Chervenkov in Bulgaria, increases the likelihood that Moscow will withdraw its support of Rakosi. His removal would be another indication that the USSR is permitting the Satellite parties to settle their own internal problems. It would be viewed favorably by a majority of Hungarian Communists and would provide a means to restore a semblance of unity to the faction-torn party. It would also remove another symbol of Stalinism in the Orbit and would be another step toward restoring relations between Yugoslavia and the Satellites.
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5. INDIAN-PAKISTANI RELATIONS DETERIORATING

Comment on:

Tension between India and Pakistan has increased following more than a dozen border incidents since mid-February and Indian prime minister Nehru's recent statements ruling out a plebiscite on Kashmir.

Pakistan is genuine. New Delhi reportedly believes that 1957 will be a critical year because by then American military aid will have given Pakistan arms superiority.

General Thimmayya, former chairman of the Neutral Nations Repatriation Commission in Korea and now commander of the Southern District of the Indian army, is convinced that war with Pakistan over Kashmir is inevitable in late 1957 or early 1958

War between the two countries does not appear likely at the present time.

Each side can still resort to measures other than war: Pakistan has already decided to return the Kashmir issue to the UN and the problem will probably be discussed at the Commonwealth prime ministers' conference in June.

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THE ARAB-ISRAELI SITUATION
(Information as of 1700, 17 April)

On the night of 16-17 April a mess hall at an Israeli cement factory near the Jordan border was wrecked by an explosion. (Press)

25 Egyptian-directed terrorists were recently returned from Jordan to Cairo in an Arab Legion aircraft following completion of missions in Israel.

Cairo instructed the Egyptian arms mission in Prague to increase the number of four-wheel drive military trucks under an existing contract to 500 each of the 5-ton ZIS-151 and the 2-ton GAZ-63, and added that it required 60 ambulances as well.