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9 May 1956

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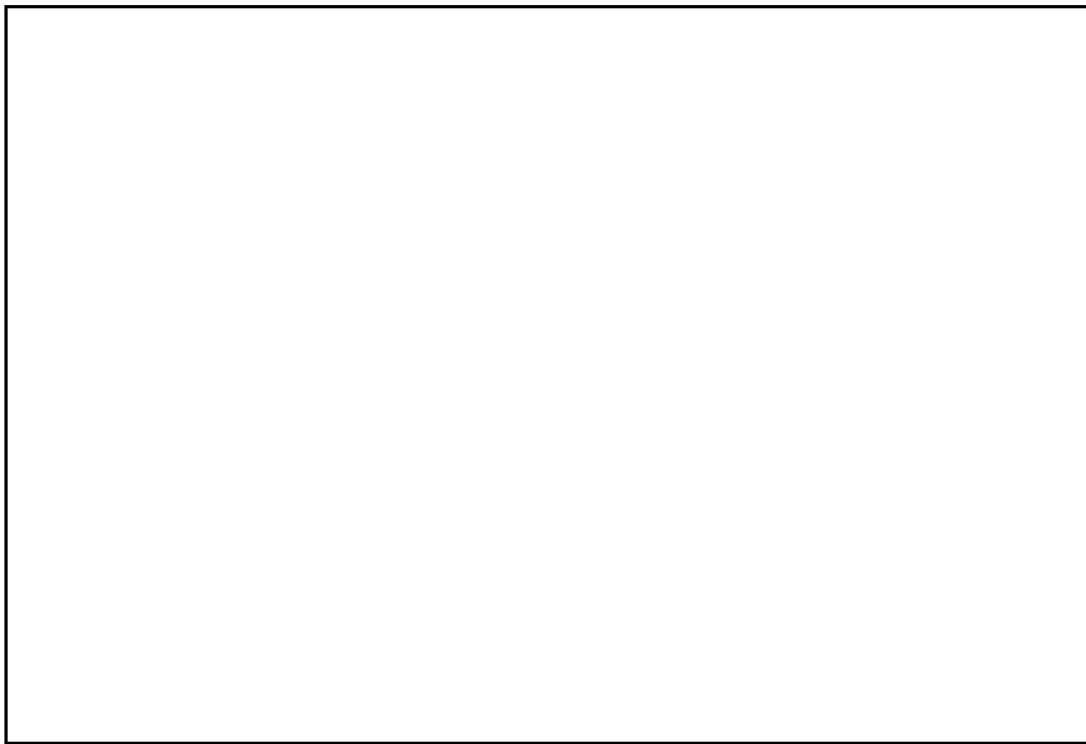
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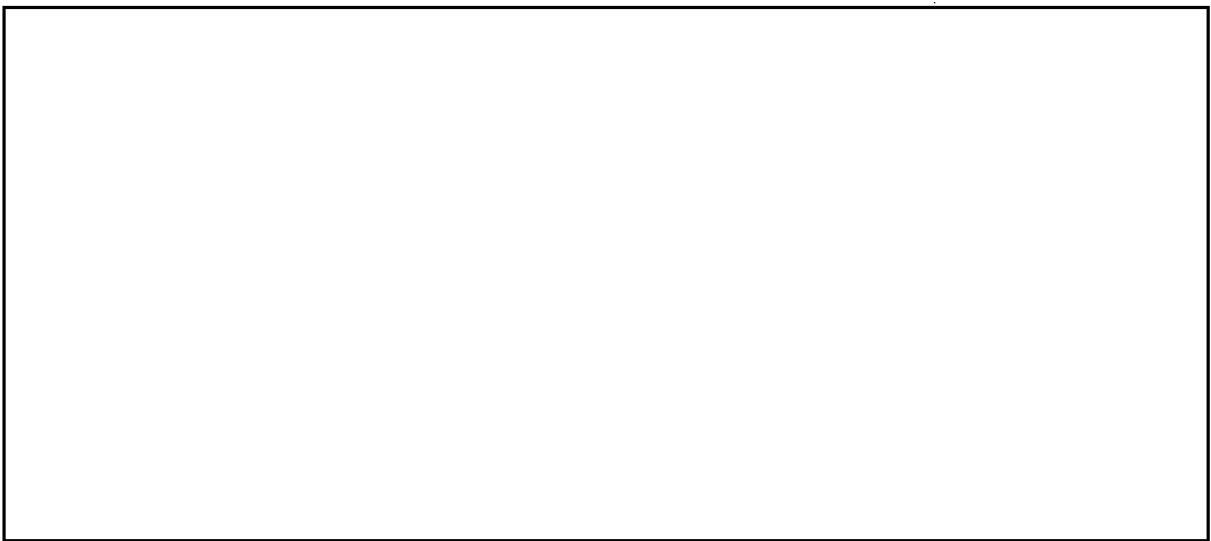
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AID STAFF



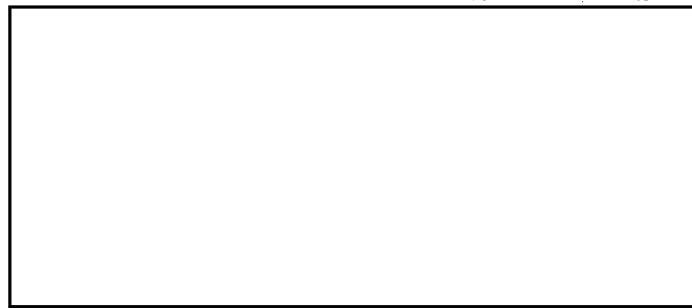
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1. YUGOSLAVIA OPPOSES EXPANSION OF US MILITARY AID STAFF

Yugoslav acting foreign secretary Prica told Ambassador Riddleberger on 5 May that his government at this time opposes any increase in the American Military Assistance Staff (AMAS) and the reopening of US-Yugoslav talks on future military aid.

In reply to Riddleberger's complaints over the difficulties to date in implementing the agreement reached last October between Deputy Under Secretary of State Murphy and Tito, Prica said that his government felt that the world situation has changed considerably. An enlargement of AMAS at this time, he said, would be tantamount to an undesirable "political manifestation" and contrary to Belgrade's policy of propagandizing nonmilitary co-operation.

Prica said that his government had not lost interest in military aid, but indicated that nothing could be done before Tito returned from his visit to Moscow in June.

Riddleberger concludes from his interview that the Yugoslavs are now willing to risk not honoring the October agreement in hopes that the United States will nonetheless complete the present military aid program.

Comment

The Yugoslavs probably feel that the question of American military aid will be raised in Moscow and new activity now would prove embarrassing to Tito's course of "detachment and active coexistence." Belgrade, however, has always been reluctant to permit Western activities to expand in Yugoslavia, particularly in the military sphere.

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**5. POLES REPORTEDLY TO BLAME KATYN MASSACRE
ON STALIN**

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A Polish journalist recently told a visiting American correspondent that high officials of the Polish United Workers (Communist) Party are considering the possibility of blaming Stalin for the Katyn Forest massacre of 10,000 Polish officers in 1941 and for not aiding the 1944 Warsaw uprising, according to the American embassy in Warsaw.

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The embassy also stated that

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[redacted] a joint Soviet-Polish commission is presently investigating the Katyn massacre; the "result" reportedly will be that Stalin and former Polish first secretary Bierut will be blamed for the crime.

Comment

An admission that the USSR rather than Germany was responsible for the Katyn massacre probably would intensify Polish hatred of the Soviet Union. The present Polish regime may feel that in the long run, however, such an admission would convince the people that a real break has been made with the past.

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6. USSR ENDORSES PROPOSAL FOR POLITICAL
SETTLEMENT IN LAOS

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The American embassy in London reports that Andrei Gromyko has criticized the Laotian government's use of force against the Pathet Lao and said that the Geneva co-chairmen should summon both parties to negotiate a political settlement in conformance with the 1954 armistice agreement.

Meanwhile, the influential crown prince of Laos has reiterated to the American chargé his concern over Viet Minh strength in the disputed provinces and requested a "firm" guarantee of Western military support in the event of "outside" aggression. The chargé comments that the prince may feel the only alternative is for Laos to turn toward neutralism.

Comment

Gromyko's statement serves to put the Soviet Union on record in support of demands for negotiations advanced by Peiping, Hanoi and the Pathet Lao. The Communists have intimated that they would accept the Laotian government's sovereignty over the disputed provinces in return for a pledge of strict neutrality.

Although the Laotian government is conducting a fairly successful guerrilla war of attrition against the Pathet Lao, it is under internal pressure to seek a political settlement. In addition,

India is exerting strong pressure on Vientiane to renew negotiations with the Communists.

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