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SUMMARY

SOUTH ASIA

1. Afghan-Pakistani clash reported (page 3).

NEAR EAST - AFRICA

2. British Joint Chiefs agree to War Office proposal for Gaza base (page 3).

EASTERN EUROPE

3. Yugoslav Foreign Minister warns of approaching trouble in Balkans (page 4).

WESTERN EUROPE

25X1

5. East Germany may be planning military conscription (page 6).
6. West Germany reveals plans for troop build-up (page 6).

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SOUTH ASIA

1. Afghan-Pakistani clash reported:

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[REDACTED] The Pakistani Foreign Secretary has reported that 3,000 Afghans unsuccessfully attacked a Pakistani border post near Chaman, opposite southern Afghanistan, on 24 March.

The American Embassy in Karachi notes that a year ago similar skirmishes led to fairly large-scale Afghan and Pakistani troop movements and created a tense situation which lasted several months. The Embassy adds that the Pakistani Government is now in a highly emotional state over the apparent "failure" of the Graham mission on Kashmir, and that it may take "extreme action" against Afghanistan. This could include fomenting a tribal insurrection against the Afghan Government.

Comment: No other reports on the above incident have been received.

Simultaneous Afghan and Indian pressures have previously been exerted on Pakistan during periods of crisis in United Nations consideration of the Kashmir question. To date, none of these has had serious results.

It is unlikely that the Pakistani Government would become seriously embroiled with the Afghans at a time when it is deeply concerned over Kashmir and when it is making efforts to assume a position of leadership in the Islamic world.

NEAR EAST - AFRICA

2. British Joint Chiefs agree to War Office proposal for Gaza base:

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[REDACTED] The British Joint Chiefs have adopted the War Office recommendation regarding Britain's future military plans for the Middle East. The War Office proposals provide for Britain's

- 3 -

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25X1A

acquisition, with Egyptian and Israeli consent, of a fifty-year lease on the Gaza strip on the Palestine coast. The plans also require Egypt's agreement to establish, with British assistance, base facilities in the Suez Canal zone for use in the event of war.

The American Army Attache in London believes that this plan, which would cost 100 million pounds and take ten years to complete, may meet with opposition in the British Cabinet, particularly from Mr. Churchill.

Comment: The establishment of a base in the Gaza area has already been given consideration by the British as a possible solution to the Anglo-Egyptian dispute over the Suez Canal base. Adoption of the War Office recommendation may presage the gradual withdrawal of the British forces from the Canal area in an effort to reach an agreement with Egypt on this question.

EASTERN EUROPE

3. Yugoslav Foreign Minister warns of approaching trouble in Balkans:

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Foreign Minister Kardelj stated privately in early March that he had received information that "things would again flare up in his area," that the situation was far more dangerous than the United States believed.

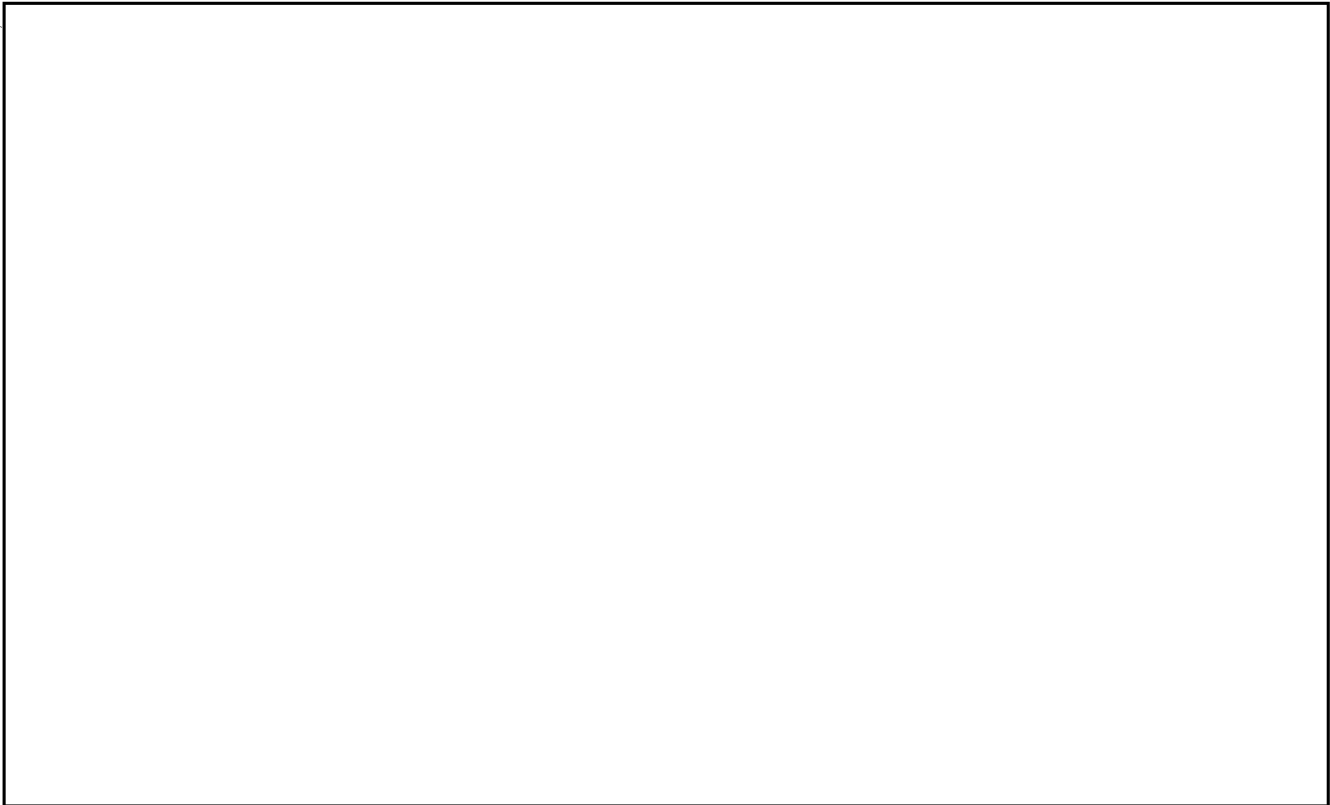
Kardelj added that despite the adoption of a more doctrinaire party policy, there is not the slightest intention on the part of the Yugoslavs to alter their present friendly policy towards the West. He remarked that if proper circumstances presented themselves, Yugoslavia would seriously consider joining the Western defense system.

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Comment: Marshal Tito in a recent public statement remarked that the danger of Soviet aggression has decreased during the past year. However, on the basis of recent Cominform attention to the theme of popular resistance against Tito, Yugoslav leaders may be anticipating an intensification of border pressures and subversive activity within Yugoslavia.

Reports from the American Embassy in Belgrade state that Yugoslav leaders fear a stiffening of United States policy towards Yugoslavia. Hence, the prospect of a reduction in Western aid may be responsible for Kardelj's expressed concern at this time over Soviet intentions towards Yugoslavia.

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5. East Germany may be planning military conscription:

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Socialist Unity Party Central Committee has ordered that its propaganda line be changed to eliminate everything directed against conscription laws. On 15 March all anti-conscription posters were ordered removed. The disappearance of these posters from the Soviet Sector of Berlin has been confirmed.

American officials in Berlin comment that one obvious purpose of this action is to make East German propoganda consistent with the Soviet peace treaty proposals. They suggest that the action could also be in preparation for the introduction of conscription laws in East Germany, after the Allied-West German contractual agreements have been ratified. This would be in preparation for the expansion of the East German paramilitary forces.

Comment: Reports of plans for the expansion of the East German paramilitary police to form 24 understrength Soviet-type divisions suggest that 44,000 to 68,000 additional men would have to be recruited. The difficulty of obtaining volunteers for paramilitary service increases the possibility of conscription. The present manpower shortage may delay such an expansion until after the creation of an effective West German defense force.

6. West Germany reveals plans for troop build-up:

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West German delegates at the European Defense Community discussions in Paris state that their government expects to have 180,000 men under arms within one year after the EDC treaty comes into force. Three months later, the government will have enough recruits to fill out its 400,000-man defense contingent. The delegates declare that the costs of this force in the first year will amount to 2.8 billion dollars.

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The West German Government will seek parliamentary approval of its defense proposals when it submits the Defense Community treaty for ratification.

Comment: Allied observers have felt that the German delegation would be inclined to overestimate both the speed with which German units could be formed and the costs of these units.

Germany has agreed to provide Allied logistical support to the amount of 1.6 billion dollars. This sum, added to the estimated cost of the German force, exceeds the country's 2.7 billion dollar defense contribution by 1.7 billion.

- 7 -

25X1A

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