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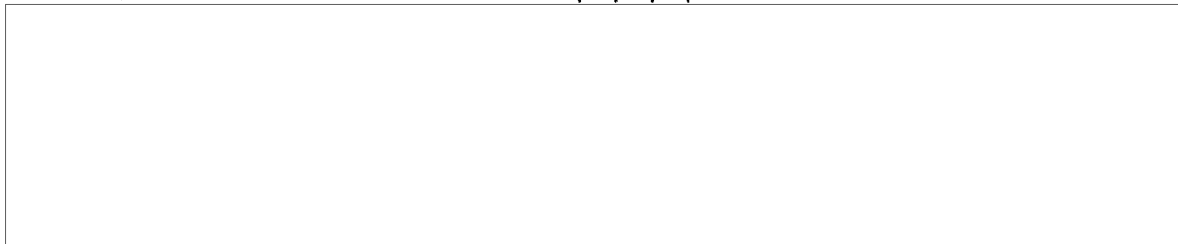
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GENERAL

1. USSR hints at Asian pressure to force American withdrawal from China area:

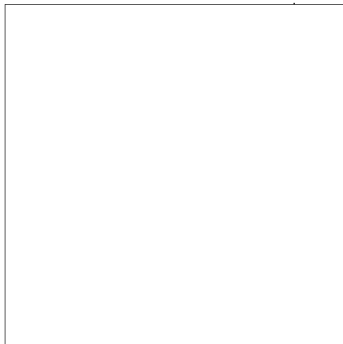


Comment: Yudin's remarks suggest a Communist effort next month to maneuver the Afro-Asian conference into endorsing a call for withdrawal of the Seventh Fleet. Soviet propaganda has supported the Chinese Communist position that a Formosa settlement can be achieved only on the basis of a withdrawal of all American forces from the China area.

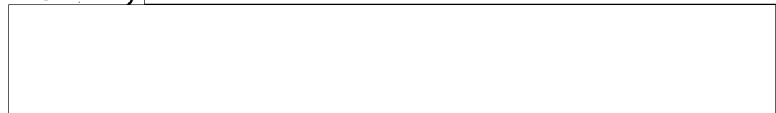
Both Soviet and Chinese Communist spokesmen have thus far rejected the idea of having Nationalist China participate in any conference, on the grounds that this would compromise Peiping's claim to being the sole legitimate government of China.

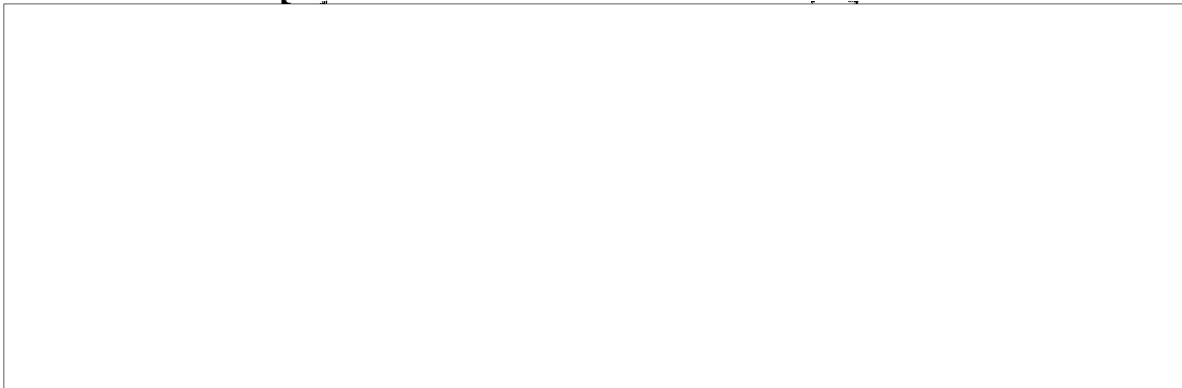
FAR EAST

2. Chinese Communist leaders' comment on nuclear weapons reported:



Mao Tse-tung and Chou En-lai have both expressed confidence in the Orbit's capabilities for retaliation and survival in the event that nuclear weapons are used against China,





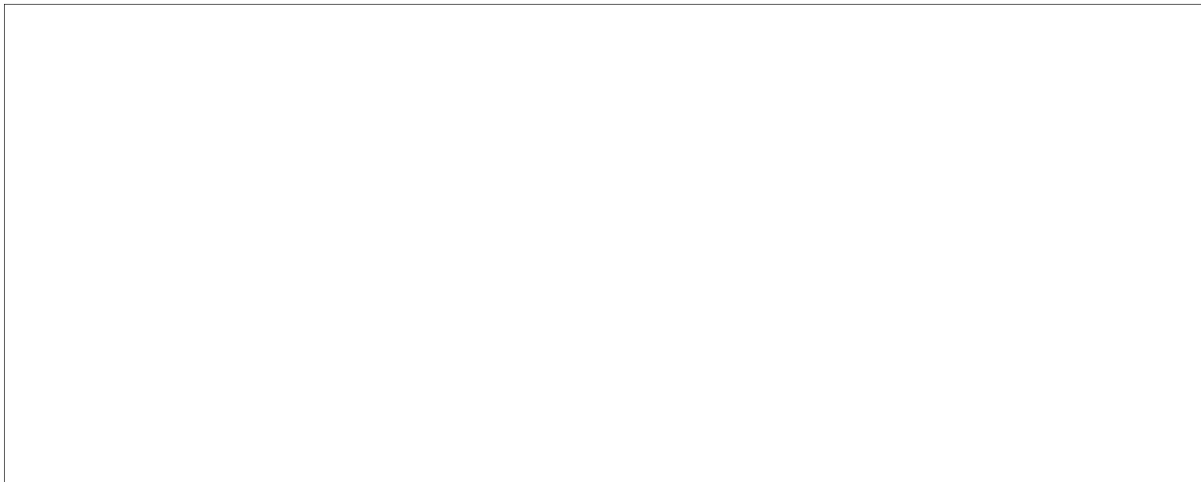
[redacted] Mao said publicly, on the 14 February anniversary of the Sino-Soviet treaty, that if the "imperialists start a war of aggression, we, together with the people of the whole world, will certainly wipe them from the face of the earth." This statement was interpreted by some observers as implying confidence in Soviet retaliation against the United States.

Peiping's current propaganda on nuclear weapons has been greatly expanded in recent weeks. It expresses the view that a predominantly agrarian country like China would be less vulnerable to such weapons than would the United States and United Kingdom. At the same time Peiping has indicated some apprehension, and its line has apparently been designed in large part to mobilize international pressure to deter the United States from using nuclear weapons. [redacted]



SOUTHEAST ASIA

3. [redacted] Bangkok conference:



Comment: Dejean's reported pessimism reflects to some extent the general feeling among the French delegation to the Bangkok conference. France has been convinced for some time that the Manila pact would not be sufficient to protect South Vietnam, and the French delegation apparently was largely concerned with being sure the conference did not openly conflict with the Geneva settlement.

The other countries represented at Bangkok have been generally content with the results of the meeting there.

NEAR EAST - AFRICA

4. Britain and Iraq hope to conclude new defense arrangements by 2 May:

Britain is making every effort to meet Iraq's target date of 2 May for the termination of the present Anglo-Iraqi treaty and the completion of new defense arrangements, according to the Foreign Office.

Iraqi's premier Nuri Said has proposed that the new arrangements provide for joint training of military forces, reciprocal staging rights, British technicians at Iraqi airfields, and flying of the Iraqi flag over the fields. He has suggested that these arrangements be effected by British accession to the Turkish-Iraqi pact, signature of a brief new agreement containing nothing which might antagonize extreme nationalists in Iraq, and an exchange of secret notes containing those provisions most likely to disturb the nationalists.

Comment: The new arrangements will probably also include a provision for stationing British planes at Iraqi airfields. Currently Britain has three fighter squadrons and a photo reconnaissance squadron at two fields in Iraq.

5. Syrian president considers asking Iraq to send troops to Damascus:

Syrian president Atasi appears prepared to ask Iraq to send troops to Damascus in order to frustrate the establishment of Egyptian military control over Syria, according to Ambassador Moose.

Atasi told Moose on 7 March that under the military arrangements now being discussed by Defense Minister Azm with Egypt and Saudi Arabia, Egyptian troops might be stationed in Syria, ostensibly to protect, but in reality to control, the country. Atasi declared that if the time has come for Syria to align itself with another country, that country should be Iraq because of their common boundary, common cultural backgrounds and complementary economies.

The president's son, stressing his father's preference for Iraqi over Egyptian troops in Syria, said that their entrance into the country, while hard to defend legally, could be regularized after the fact.

Comment: The Syrian conservatives, led by Atasi, are desperately looking for a means to overthrow the leftist government of Premier Asali in order to regain power.

A move to bring Iraqi troops into Syria would have serious repercussions in the Near East. None of the other Arab states is in a position to counter such a move with effective military force. Israel is bitterly opposed to an Iraqi-Syrian union, but would hesitate to resort to war over it.

LATIN AMERICA

6. Political crisis seen in Chile:

Chilean president Ibanez' sudden return from vacation to the capital on 9 March leads the American embassy in Santiago to believe that a political crisis has arisen.

On 5 March Ibanez had commented "in anger" on the increasingly vehement public attacks against him, and he has undoubtedly returned to Santiago "in an angry mood."

A close friend of the president, former interior minister Olavarria, asked American ambassador Beaulac on 8 March how the United States would regard a "government of force."

Comment: The chronic instability in Chile since Ibanez' inauguration in November 1952 has given rise to frequent reports that he would assume dictatorial control of the country. Ibanez himself stated last year that if Congress did not grant his request for special powers, he might dissolve it and rule by decree. He did not carry out this threat, however, and is believed still reluctant to abandon constitutional procedures.

Any "government of force" would almost certainly require army support, which in the early stages would probably be forthcoming. The current commander in chief of the army, General Enrique Franco Hidalgo, has not shown any personal political ambition, but is popular within Chile and is friendly to the United States.