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24 April 1953

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Office of Current Intelligence

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

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State Department review completed

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GENERAL

1. Malenkov reportedly invites Mossadeq to visit Moscow:

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[Redacted]

According to a member of the Soviet Legation in Baghdad, Premier Malenkov has extended an official invitation to Prime Minister Mossadeq to visit Moscow.

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Comment: It is unlikely that Mossadeq would leave Iran as long as his political position remains unstable. The Iranian Foreign Minister emphatically denied a 5 April press report of such an invitation.

Mossadeq has repeatedly tried to obtain concessions from the West by threatening to seek closer relations with the Soviet Union.

FAR EAST

2. British internee from North Korea confirms brutality:

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[Redacted]

Salvation Army Commissioner Lord, a British internee from North Korea who was with elements of the US 7th Division after their capture, claims that during the march north there was a 68-percent death rate with the number of prisoners in Lord's group declining from 722 to 289. Stragglers were shot.

He revealed that food conditions for internees improved greatly in August 1952 when the Chinese began to provide the food supply. Lord also states that while North Korea has been leveled and the people reduced to living in caves, present bombing only increases their will to resist.

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Comment: This is the first eyewitness report from a non-American civilian of Communist brutality toward UN prisoners.

SOUTHEAST ASIA

3. Laos wants Viet Minh aggression put before United Nations:

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[Redacted]

The Laotian Foreign Minister told the American Charge on 22 April that his government wants the question of Viet Minh aggression officially put before the United Nations. The Crown Prince is to meet with high French authorities on 24 April to determine whether France is willing to present a Laotian appeal and, if so, in what manner.

Comment: In mid-April an official of the French Foreign Ministry, referring to action against Laos, stated that the problem in Indochina was one of "civil war" and that an appeal to the UN would probably be made only in the event the Chinese Communists cross the border. This statement reflects the consistent French policy of opposing any UN role in Indochina.

4. French general foresees Viet Minh bridgehead in Thailand:

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[Redacted]

General de Linares, French commander in Tonkin, believes the Viet Minh may be attempting to reach the Thailand-Laos border and to join with Communist elements in northern Thailand. If this is accomplished, he says, the "roads would be open in all directions" for a Communist advance into Southeast Asia.

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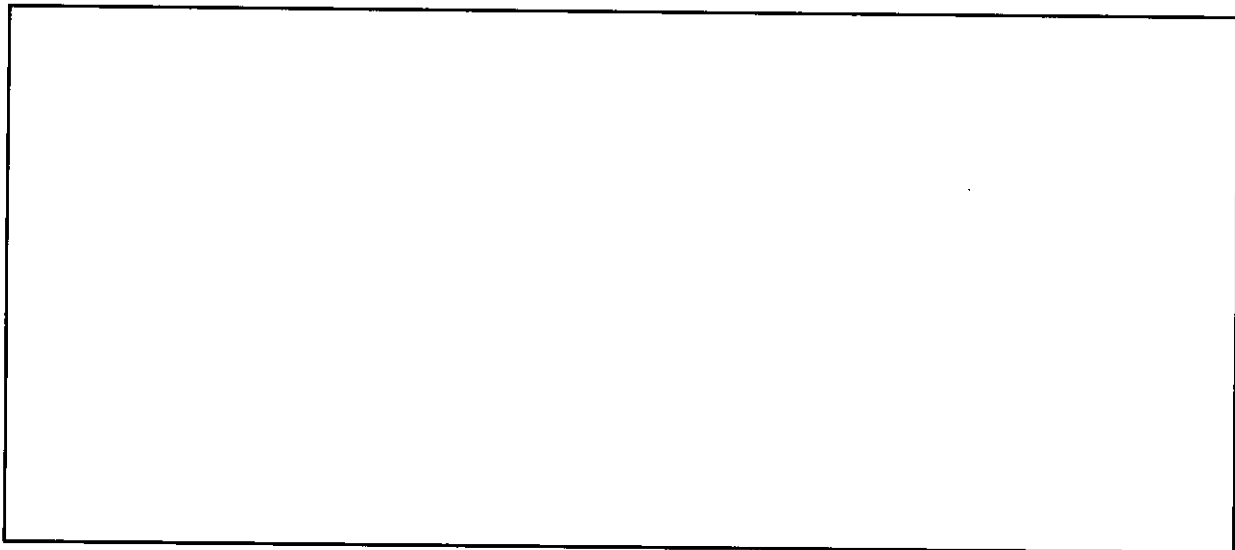
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The American Embassy in Bangkok states that Thai officials are seriously worried that the Viet Minh offensive may be a prelude to a deep thrust into Southeast Asia. The Embassy feels that after the seizure of Laos and the establishment there of a puppet government, the Viet Minh may use the same strategy in Cambodia, thus splitting Southeast Asia in two. There also may be a future link-up between a "Free Laos" government and the Peiping-sponsored Thai autonomous state in southern Yunnan.

Comment: There are 50,000 Vietnamese living in northern Thailand, most of whom are sympathetic to the Viet Minh. There have been recent reports of paramilitary activity among these people, possibly timed to coincide with the present Viet Minh offensive.

Because of the rapidly approaching rainy season and extended supply lines, it seems likely that the Viet Minh will confine its current campaign to northern Laos and leave further objectives for a future campaign, possibly in October.

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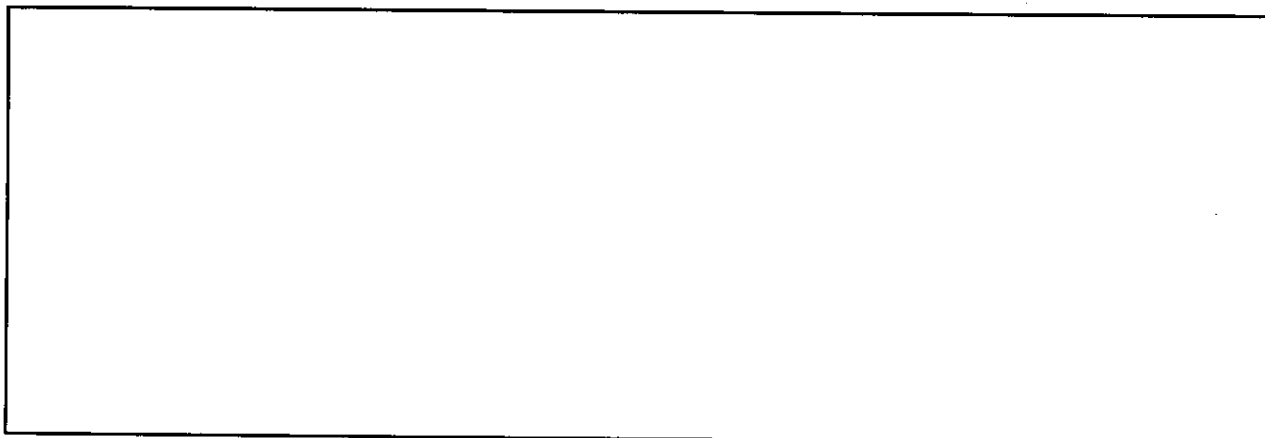


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6. Comment on increased Arab-Israeli friction:

A series of minor Arab-Israeli armed clashes and incidents has been magnified and publicized by both parties to dramatize the unsettled situation and, if possible, to place the onus on the other side. This publicity appears timed in anticipation of Secretary Dulles' visit in early May. While the acrimonious exchange of charges and threats will increase local tension and make any approaches to settlement more difficult, there is no indication that there will be a change in the status quo.

7. Comment on Malan's statement in favor of a South African republic:

Prime Minister Malan's 22 April statement that a South African republic will be established as soon as he considers the country ripe for it suggests that he now feels strong enough to push toward this goal.

A South African republic has long been a Nationalist objective, but Malan took no overt steps toward it during his first five years in office and reference to the issue was soft-pedalled in the election campaign. A South African republic with status comparable to India's would not necessarily withdraw from the British Commonwealth, although this course is favored by Nationalist extremists.

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EASTERN EUROPE

8. Satellite policy conference reportedly held in Moscow:

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The American Minister to Hungary has been informed [redacted]

[redacted] that a Satellite foreign policy conference was held in Moscow sometime between 12 and 18 April.

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Hungarian Deputy Premier Gero and Bulgarian Premier Chervenkov are reported to have led their respective delegations.

Comment: Although there is no information available to corroborate this report, such a meeting may have been held in order to acquaint Satellite leaders with current Soviet policy developments and organizational changes planned for the Satellites.

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