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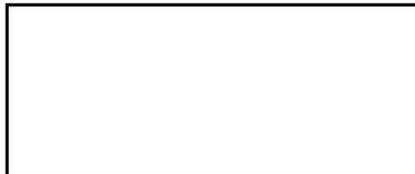
GENERAL

1.



2. Prague trial seen as opening move to influence Arabs:

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The Yugoslav Minister in Damascus is convinced that the injection of anti-Zionism into the recent Prague trial was the opening move in a Soviet campaign to influence and ultimately dominate the Arab states.

He believes that Czechoslovakia was selected to spearhead the campaign as the Satellite best prepared to satisfy Arab trading needs, particularly to replace West Germany, now in Arab disfavor as a result of the reparations agreement with Israel.

Comment: Available evidence indicates that the anti-Zionist charges in the Prague trial were intended to "prove" the collaboration of the defendants with an international movement acting in the interests of "American imperialism."

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It is probable, however, that the Communists will exploit the favorable Arab reaction to the anti-Zionist aspect of the trial to appeal to the Arab bloc. The American Charge in Prague has suggested such an explanation for the Czech Government's recent declaration that the Israeli Minister to Czechoslovakia is persona non grata.

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3.

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SOUTHEAST ASIA

4. Improvement of Red River supply route to Viet Minh indicated:



construction is now in progress on an airfield in Yunnan along the Red River about 150 miles northwest of the Indochina border town of Laokay. The French Air Force officer who gave this report also stated he had confirmed information that construction of a new road south-southwest from Mengtzu in China toward the Red River was begun in August.

Comment: The Red River enters Indochina near Laokay in northwestern Tonkin. Although some facilities already exist in the Red River area, the majority of Chinese supplies to the Viet Minh enter Tonkin by routes considerably to the east.

Improved communications north of Laokay would facilitate the more direct supply of forces in northwest Tonkin, where the Viet Minh has improved its position during this year's campaign.

NEAR EAST - AFRICA

5.



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6. Comment on the abolition of the Egyptian constitution:

General Nagib's announcement of 9 December abolishing the Egyptian constitution is a significant step in expanding the army group's control of the country. Just prior to abolishing the constitution, the Prime Minister reshuffled and strengthened his cabinet.

This action, together with the reported formation of a "national bloc" to sponsor a new constitution, represents an effort by the military to strengthen its position through a popular measure. Nagib apparently hopes to remove the last vestiges of the "corrupt" monarchy and provide a constitutional basis for the regime and its reform program.

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