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NSC BRIEFING

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"FIRST TEAM" TO VISIT BELGRADE

- i. Moscow has made a remarkable gesture--to show the world how far it is willing to go in "normalizing" relations and permitting independence and neutrality on the part of small nations in Europe--by announcing (13 May) that a top-level Soviet delegation (including Khrushchev, Bulganin and Nikoyan) <sup>WILL</sup> would make a pilgrimage late this month to the formerly much-vilified Communist apostate, Tito.
  - A. Leaders of this team of travelling Soviet good-will salesmen are the same as those who paid the state visit to Peiping last October.
  - B. Tacit Soviet willingness to make public apology to the Yugos by coming to Belgrade will have strong impact on world opinion as evidence of a basic change of heart in the USSR. Tito has hailed visit as "a courageous decision."
  - C. Molotov's conspicuous absence from pilgrims' ranks is added measure of intensity USSR's desire insure success of the visit.
  - D. Molotov is last of "'48 team" that kicked Yugos out of Cominform. Says Yugo foreign minister Popovic: His omission "perhaps has a certain significance."

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**II. Yugoslav kept plans for Soviet visit a close secret.**

- A.  initiative came from  
USSR during course of trade talks in Moscow (Dec '54).
- B. However, no hint of subsequent negotiations given  
Western diplomats in Belgrade.

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**III. Yugoslav reported "not too happy" over role of Khrushchev  
(party boss) as leader of delegation.**

- A. His role deemed indication that Soviets will plug  
for reestablishment of Party-to-Party relations.
- B. While Yugoslav glad to raise comradely glass to Marx,  
they reluctant to wake up in bed with Stalin again.

**IV. Soviet Belgrade visit represents latest in series of  
conflicting pressures being applied to Tito:**

- A. US, UK, and Turks have been trying unsuccessfully  
to pin Yugoslav down on subject informal NATO tie,  
military planning and better cooperation on aid  
problems.
- B. But Tito against further Western military prepara-  
tions, lest alarmed Soviet reaction foreclose  
possibility of long-term adjustment differences.

**V. Although outside possibility exists that Tito and USSR  
have made or are making a secret deal for eventual Yugo  
return to Bloc (or for Yugoslav neutrality in event of  
war), we conclude in new NIE (which goes before IAC  
today) that basic elements of Tito's policy remain  
unchanged:**

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- A. His dominant concern--stay in power as head of independent state.
- B. His first objective--beneficial relations with both sides and minimum of commitments to either.
- C. His second--reduction of likelihood of war since, in all-out conflict between Bloc and West, Yugos likely to be losers no matter which side they chose.

VI. Therefore, we believe that coming meet with Soviets is unlikely to produce major shift in Yugoslav policy.

- A. Tito may join in renouncing "aggression," endorsing "peaceful coexistence."
- B. Unlikely, however, that he would join Warsaw Pact or take other steps flatly inconsistent with present Balkan commitments or with continued receipt of Western aid.
- C. In this connection, Tito now taking great pains to reassure West of his bona fides.