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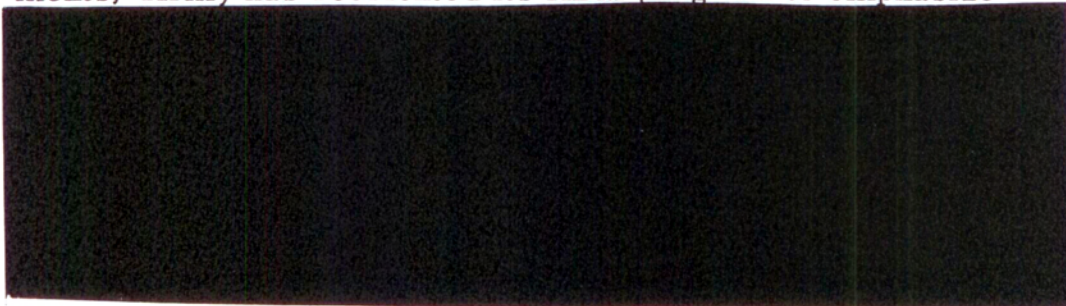
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THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

STAFF NOTES NO. 331

March 21, 1958

1. Department Store Sales. -- Dr. Saulnier informs us that department store sales in March (after seasonal correction) are running distinctly better than February and about equal to January. These incomplete March figures tend to confirm the theory that February sales were much affected by weather conditions and that their sharp drop did not reflect a cyclical decline in consumer demand. However, only half of the month of March has been reported so far, and particular care must be taken in interpreting the figures in view of this year's early Easter. (Admin. Conf.)
2. Project Plowshare. -- This AEC program to investigate non-military uses of nuclear explosive devices includes their possible application to excavation in large construction and reclamation projects, mining of low grade ores and low yield oil deposits, and the possibility of producing power through the use of contained nuclear explosions. A specific excavation project receiving consideration would provide a harbor in Alaska in the Nome to Point Barrow region during the Summer of 1959. Informal discussions have been held with representatives of interested agencies. (Admin. Conf.)
3. Atomic Demolition Munitions (ADM) Program. -- Based on a recent evaluation of R&D developments and user requirements, Army has reoriented its ADM program to emphasize



(S-RD)

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5. Soviet Submarines. -- Captain Aurand reports that US Naval Patrol Aircraft from Iceland, temporarily based in the British Isles, are keeping track of three modern long range Soviet "W" class submarines which sortied from the Baltic Sea on March 18. On March 20 the three submarines, and the minesweeper and naval auxiliary tanker which are escorting them, were entering the English Channel on a southerly course. It is estimated that these submarines are enroute the Eastern Mediterranean for ultimate delivery to the United Arab Republic. If this is correct, they should enter the Mediterranean on or about March 26, 1958. Tracking operations, designed to avoid any possible indication of interference with the rights of vessels in international waters, will continue as long as possible in order to determine the final destination of the submarines. (S)



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