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Intelligence Report

THE GROWTH OF THE SOVIET COMMITMENT IN THE MIDDLE EAST

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THE GROWTH OF THE SOVIET COMMITMENT IN THE MIDDLE EAST

MEMORANDUM TO RECIPIENTS:

This study deserves careful attention because of the soberness of its message.

True, this examination of the sources of Soviet Middle East conduct finds no master plan, no inexorable advance, no plot to extinguish Israel. The Soviets avoid high-risk courses and seek no Middle East war with the US. There is some uncertainty and hesitance within Soviet leadership concerning an assertive course. A number of forces act to complicate and restrain Soviet ambitions. Enhanced Soviet presence does not translate into Soviet dominance of any Arab state.

Nonetheless, this study illustrates the immense advantages the USSR enjoys in the Middle East, and the success Soviet leadership has had in exploiting them.

Perhaps most importantly, this study points up the many forces which serve to restrict the USSR from reducing its Middle East bid. Each added commitment creates new defense concerns and heightens the prestige stakes. Hawkish pressures from within the Soviet military and security services sharpen Brezhnev's caution not to be found soft on capitalism. The Soviet piecemeal military commitments become steps which, once taken, cannot easily be reversed. Then, too, the USSR is to some degree the prey, and not the master, of its clients.

The study reminds us that the USSR is not fully in control of events in the Middle East: there are not only Soviet and US moves in play, but Arab, Israeli, fedayeen, and even Chinese. This does create a certain common Soviet interest with the US in preventing irresponsible

local initiatives from embroiling the two great powers, but the Soviets have shown a fairly keen sense of what the traffic will safely bear in the way of gaining unilateral advantage. There is no apparent Soviet interest at present in an Arab-Israeli settlement not largely on Soviet terms. There is no evidence that the USSR intends any Middle East halt or major retreat.

The resulting problems for the US are of course enormous. Not least, as the study emphasizes, any major improvement in the Middle East scene and any undercutting of Soviet political capital with the Arabs probably require sufficient Israeli territorial concessions to bring about a settlement.

This study has received constructive comment from a wide number of other offices. Although there is a considerable body of agreement with the judgments of the study, its views remain those of its author, Mr. Harry Gelman, and of this Staff. We would appreciate receiving any comments on the study's data, argument, or conclusions. The study includes information received through 1 December 1970.

Hal Ford
Chief, DD/I Special Research Staff

THE GROWTH OF THE SOVIET COMMITMENT IN THE MIDDLE EAST

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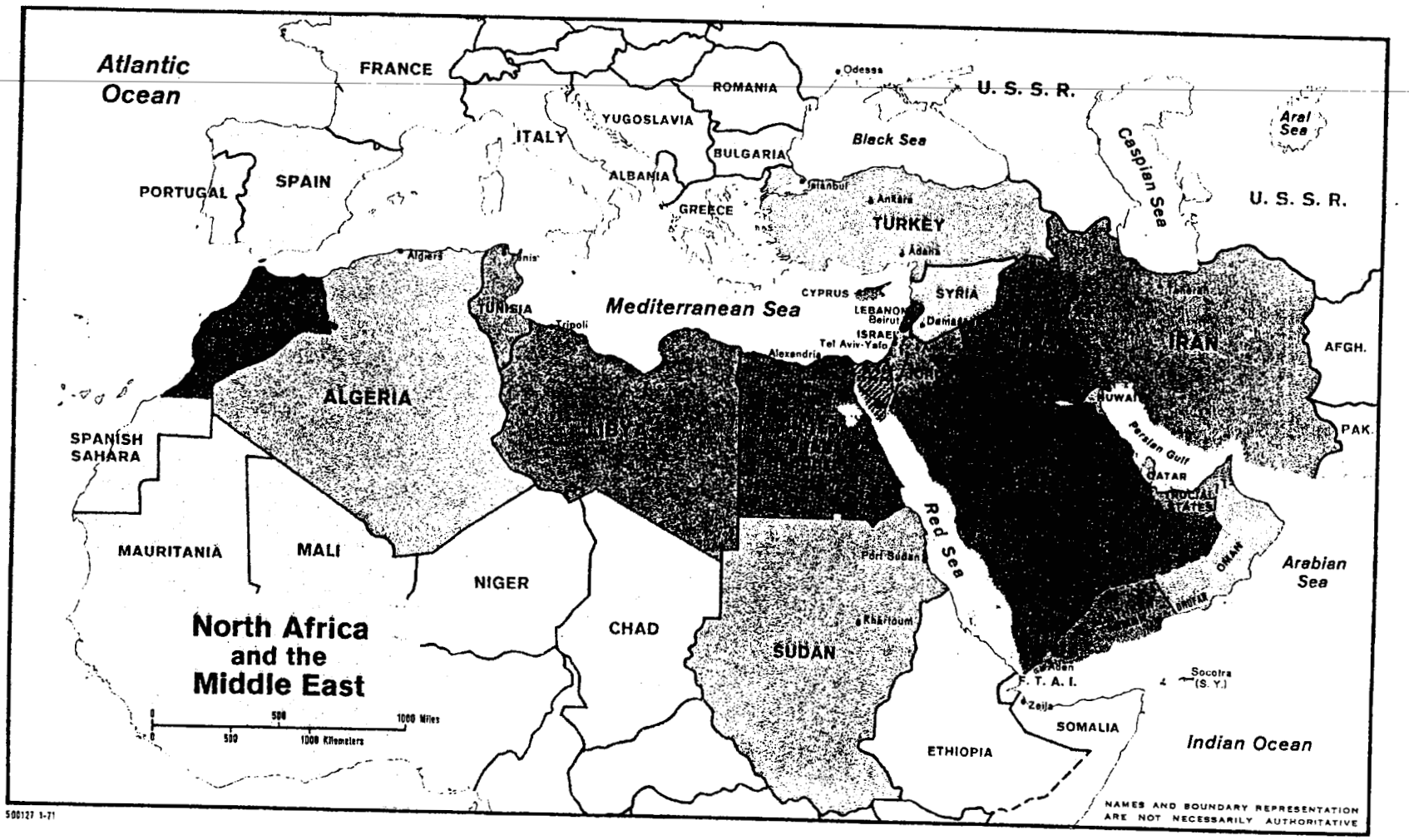
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THE GROWTH OF THE SOVIET COMMITMENT IN THE MIDDLE EAST

Summary

Russia enjoys enormous advantages in its abiding desire to expand southward. The Middle East is largely a strategic vacuum. Turkish, British, and French power no longer frustrate Russian advance. The US is a distant power beset on many fronts. The rise of radical Arab nationalism restricts US efforts to generate political capital in the Arab world.

The Soviet advance has been uncertain and has brought many new problems. Soviet policy has frequently been bedeviled by the consequences of advance into the radical Arab world: the fragmentation and mutual hostilities of many of those regimes, the complexities of their intrigues against one another, and the irrationality of many of their acts. Nonetheless, the USSR has been without economic investments in the area to defend, without ties to creaky feudal governments, and largely free of the colonial taint which has accrued to the US. And, post-Stalin leadership has shown considerable flexibility in exploiting opportunity -- and creating Soviet political strength in the area.

But, superimposed on these forces, it is primarily the Israel issue which has aggravated difficulties for the US and caused the Arabs to gravitate toward Soviet support. To the Arab radicals, the key role played by the US in the creation and support of Israel has served as the basic, irrefutable evidence of the essentially "malevolent and imperialist" intentions of the US. This alienation has been worsened over the years by the severe defeats Israel has inflicted on the Arabs -- each humiliation greater than the one before, and each creating new bitterness and new waves of radicalism.

The Arab-Israeli issue is also one which radical Arab leaders have repeatedly used as a point of attack upon conservative Arab leaders and governments friendly to the US. Even the most moderate Arab leaders have, in self-defense, frequently succumbed to the temptation to accuse the radicals of hypocritical unwillingness themselves to challenge Israel. Rival Arab radicals -- such as Nasir and the Syrian and Iraqi Baathists -- have similarly taunted each other. Over the years, competitive demagogy of this sort has been one of the factors that has helped to preclude a settlement with Israel. What is more, it has sometimes led to competitive displays of militancy against Israel against the better judgment of most of those involved. In 1967, the Syrian regime which precipitated the chain of events that led to the six-day Arab-Israeli war -- and which was by far the most fanatical in its motivation of the three "confrontation states" bordering Israel -- was the one which suffered the least.

A parallel factor serving Soviet interests has been Israeli obduracy. Understandably conditioned by their beleaguered fortress setting, Israel's leaders have consistently behaved as if they believed that US ties with Arab states offered little hope of moderating Arab attitudes toward Israel, but much danger of softening US support for Israel. Although the Israelis are generally aware that their Arab enemies have multiplied and increased in fervor as the Western position has deteriorated and as Soviet influence has spread, they have been slow to draw conclusions from this for their conduct toward their remaining pro-Western Arab neighbors. Thus, in defending rigidly-defined security interests, Tel Aviv has tended to underestimate the counter-productive effects of its own actions in radicalizing its opponents, multiplying their number, and undermining the support of pro-Western Arab moderates.

Against this backdrop, the Soviet military presence was introduced into the Middle East in the 1950s and 1960s gradually, in the form of military aid advisers and technicians sent to accompany the growing quantities of military hardware with which the USSR flooded the Arab world.

The appearance of these forerunners was matched by the introduction of what were initially small Soviet naval forces in the Mediterranean alongside what was then the overwhelming strength of the US Sixth Fleet. From these beginnings, there was a rapid expansion of the Soviet military presence following the 1967 war.

This 1967 war indeed represented a turning point for the Soviet Union in the Middle East. Paradoxically, it was from this moment of deepest humiliation for the Soviet clients and embarrassment for Moscow that the USSR began to cash in on its political and economic investment in the area, and commenced to draw important strategic dividends. The trend toward more direct Soviet participation in the Arab struggle with Israel in turn furnished a pretext for the Soviets to use part of their military presence for purposes which have much more to do with Soviet military interests, both nuclear-strategic and regional, than with Egyptian security interests. The Soviet fleet in the Eastern Mediterranean which uses UAR ports may thus be portrayed as deterring US naval forces from attack on the Arab states, but the Soviets in fact seem more concerned with creating a capability to neutralize those forces in the event of a Soviet war with the US. To some extent the Soviets may thus be said to have succeeded where the British failed, in the early 1950s, in harnessing Egypt to the military interests of a major protagonist in the cold war.

Regardless of how the political future of the Middle East unfolds, some Soviet military presence can henceforth be expected to remain in the area, if only because of the USSR's proximity and growing naval strength. And beyond this, the maximum Soviet military desires seem extensive: it is apparently now the hope of some Soviet military planners that the USSR can gradually gather together in its own hands the old British Middle Eastern "lifeline," creating a belt of Soviet military domination from the Eastern Mediterranean through the Suez Canal to the Red Sea, the western Indian Ocean, and eventually, the Persian Gulf.

It is by no means inevitable, however, that all such grandiose plans will be fulfilled. As their private designs become more apparent, the Soviets must increasingly deal with many of the same nationalist forces that made the British Middle East Defense Command scheme unfeasible twenty years earlier. It is significant, for example, that radical Arab states such as Algeria and Syria have not found the Arab cause against Israel sufficient reason to yield to the reported Soviet hints or importunities for base facilities in these countries.

There is, moreover, an inherent conflict between Soviet military and political aims on this question of bases. The Soviet military establishment's desire to expand its use of overseas facilities runs directly counter to the old Soviet claim that only the imperialist West seeks foreign military bases, and never the USSR. It is probable that many in Moscow continue to feel that open acknowledgement of such facilities would be politically counterproductive. Besides any such ideological embarrassment involved, the Soviets may be influenced in part by past British and US experience with some military bases which proved not a source of increased influence, but instead a major drain on the political credit which allowed them to be established.

In short, before Soviet military forces had ever entered the Middle East, the Western political base in the area decayed first, and the Western military presence inevitably declined. The Soviet Union established a political base first, and a Soviet military presence has followed. But even now the Soviets do not "control" any of the Arab states they are exploiting against NATO and the US Navy, in the sense that they control, say, Czechoslovakia. For one thing, the Soviet presence is vulnerable to possible turnovers in the often volatile Arab governments. More important, the Soviets in the Middle East must always supply a quid pro quo. The Soviet military presence is dependent on continued Arab perception of common political interests, and, as the Western presence before it, is highly vulnerable to any future fundamental change in the political situation. Because

a final settlement of the entire Arab-Israeli dispute might bring such a change, there is evidence that even the remote prospect of such a settlement is regarded with anxiety by certain Soviet military planners and intelligence officials.

A host of other ambiguities complicate the Soviet desire to expand its strategic position. One is the oil issue, and the powerful economic position occupied by the Western oil companies, which has inhibited Arab thoughts about nationalization since Mossadeq's day. Soviet lust for Middle Eastern oil is not a central factor in the Soviet policy mix. The oil of the Middle East today has some marginal significance to the Soviet Union in economic terms, particularly as a potential future source of some additional hard currency which could be used to import Western technology and equipment. But Middle East oil appears clearly to not be a vital Soviet national interest for which the Soviets would willingly sacrifice long-established political goals. Of far greater significance to the Soviet Union is the manipulation of the issue of the oil to weaken the political position of the US and strengthen that of the Soviet Union. Partly because of Soviet unwillingness to be saddled with the responsibility of guaranteeing the Arabs large-scale hard currency markets for nationalized oil, the USSR has sidestepped outright encouragement of nationalization. Compelled to avoid a frontal assault on the oil majors, the Soviets have sought instead to persuade both France and the Arabs of the advantages of gradually replacing US oil interests with those of European states -- such as France.

Another subject of perplexity with the Soviet leadership has been the question of expenditures for Middle Eastern aid. Despite the contribution wich Soviet post-Stalin economic and military assistance to the Arab states has made in opening the doors of the Middle East to a Soviet presence, nagging doubts have persisted in Moscow over whether the USSR has gotten its money's worth. The conduct of some of the radical Arab states has repeatedly brought to the fore the issue of

the degree of influence that the Soviets actually obtain for their money. To a certain extent, the Soviet position in the radical Arab states is indeed fortified by their varying degrees of dependence on the USSR and Eastern Europe for economic and military assistance. The Soviet Union's use or prospective use of bases for its own strategic purposes in the UAR and Southern Yemen is closely tied to Soviet assistance to those states. Nevertheless, while Soviet aid helps to ensure a continuing tie with sometimes recalcitrant recipients (e.g., a very strong tie with the UAR, a fairly strong one with Syria and Iraq, a weaker one with Algeria), the Soviets have been unable to translate such ties into more than very moderate leverage over radical Arab policy. At most, the Soviets have been able to tip the balance on decisions that the Arabs were already inclined to consider for other reasons. We know that the Soviets spend much of their time reacting to Arab initiatives, often requiring frantic Soviet efforts -- sometimes successful, sometimes not -- to head off unilateral Arab actions carrying undesirable or dangerous overtones.

Another complicating factor for the Soviets has been their continuing reluctance to abandon the Communist movements of the Middle East as instruments of policy, even when support of local Communists has conflicted with the post-Stalin policy of cultivating radical bourgeois nationalists. Soviet influence on most radical Arab regimes turns essentially on a convergence of certain foreign policy interests, and despite some limited Communist gains, many Arab regimes that accept Soviet help remain acutely suspicious of Soviet efforts to exert influence in their domestic affairs. The Soviets have continued to experience difficulty in judging how far it is expedient to press the ruling left-wing nationalists for protection of the local Communists or pro-Communists or for an improvement in their political status. In the last few years, there has been some Soviet tendency to increase such pressures, with some limited success. In October 1968 and October-December 1969, a few individuals believed to be Communists were in fact admitted to the cabinets of Syria, Iraq, Sudan, and South Yemen, and a friend of the

Party and the Soviet Union temporarily became a cabinet member in Lebanon. But Communist Party influence in each such Arab regime remained fragmentary and precarious, frequently insufficient to save the Party itself from sporadic repression and arrests or exilings. Ironically enough, despite the Soviet supply of military hardware to the radical Arab armies, opposition within the Arab regimes to cooperation with the local Communists has often been centered in the leadership of the armed forces. Most recently, a potentially serious problem has begun to arise for the Soviet Union concerning the extreme leftist regime in South Yemen, from which the USSR may hope eventually to receive an air facility at Aden or Socotra. The UAR has become increasingly exercised in recent months over what it regards as Communist influence within this regime, all the more so because it came to power at the expense of another South Yemeni faction favored by Egypt.

Two additional factors render it difficult for the Soviet Union to maintain Middle Eastern tension at a "controlled" level. One is the sharp growth in the influence of Palestinian nationalism since the 1967 war, and the consequent rise of the fedayeen. The Soviets have reluctantly adjusted their policy to the political impact of the fedayeen movement in a series of small, halting steps, moving from private disparagement of the guerrilla struggle against Israel in 1967 to public endorsement of that struggle by Politburo members two years later. The Soviets have for over two years allowed East European states to sell arms to fedayeen groups for cash, and other bloc-made weapons have been donated to the fedayeen by some radical Arab states with or without Soviet approval. But the Soviets have continued thus far to defer a publicized donation of arms to the fedayeen because the USSR is unable to control them and does not wish identification either with undiluted fedayeen goals (the abolition of the state of Israel) or with extremist fedayeen tactics (such as kidnappings and hijackings). While the Soviets have not endorsed the fedayeen demand for abolition of Israel, Soviet propaganda has become somewhat more ambiguous on this score in the last year, occasionally speaking of

the struggle to restore unspecified Arab "national" rights in Palestine. If there is no settlement, the groundwork has thus been laid for a possible further evolution of the Soviet position in the next few years to accommodate the Palestinians.

At the same time, a succession of events in the summer of 1970 has again reminded the Soviets of the extent to which certain of their primary interests in the Middle East run counter to those of the fedayeen. These events were the outburst of fedayeen opposition to the Israeli-Egyptian ceasefire endorsed by the Soviet Union; the crisis created by the PFLP airplane hijackings engineered to counter the ceasefire; and the greater crisis surrounding the September Jordanian civil war that followed the hijackings and Syrian intervention. The net effect was to dramatize for the USSR both how dangerous the fedayeen were for Soviet efforts to control risks in the Middle East and how politically potent the fedayeen remained. In the aftermath, the Soviets have sought to claim credit for having allegedly helped to save the fedayeen from complete destruction, while continuing to court the Palestinians with aloof encouragement.

Meanwhile, since almost the first moment of Soviet intrusion into the Middle East in the 1950s, the Soviet leaders have been looking over their shoulders at the Chinese. Peking's indirect influence on Soviet conduct has been far out of proportion to the actual Chinese investment of effort in the area. Much of the Soviet tenacity in demagogic pursuit of unstable and uncontrollable forces such as the Syrians, Iraqis, fedayeen, et al. appears to derive at least in part from extraordinary sensitivity to Chinese competition for influence over these forces.

Over the years, one of the principal functions of the Chinese goad has been to increase the political costs to the Soviets of not accepting high risks in crisis situations. Quick to recognize the vulnerability of the USSR's qualified position on the fedayeen, the Chinese

have consistently attacked Soviet professions of desire for a peaceful settlement in the area, and Soviet criticism of fedayeen "extremists." Perhaps most importantly, Peking has never had diplomatic relations with Tel Aviv, and the Chinese have implied willingness to see Israel destroyed.

This Chinese attitude has a practical consequence for the Israeli evaluation of any proposed UN guarantee of a Middle East settlement. If added reason were needed for Israeli scepticism about the value of such a guarantee, this would be provided by the prospect that Communist China might occupy a Security Council seat within the next few years, championing in the most demagogic fashion the views of those militant Arab states angry over any relative Soviet restraint toward Israel, possibly inducing the USSR in turn to harden its stand toward Israel to meet this competition, and in any case vetoing any Security Council Middle East resolution not hostile to Israeli interests which the Soviets might conceivably be disposed to allow to pass.

But the most serious problem created for the Soviet leadership by their involvement in the Middle East is the risk of military confrontation with the US. In general, the more intimately the US has been involved in a crisis, the more closely US military forces have been placed to the geographic focus of the crisis, and the greater the chance that those forces might be used, the more circumspect the Soviets have been. This has been true under both Khrushchev and his successors.

Secondly, the post-Khrushchev leadership has condemned as dangerous and provocatory Khrushchev's practice in the Suez crisis of 1956 (repeated in the 1957 crisis over Syria) of publicly brandishing, as an instrument of pressure in a crisis, an insincere threat to use military force. But while the present Soviet leadership in general disapproves of open bluffing, it committed another kind of bluff before the 1967 war by encouraging Arab misunderstanding of its intention to stay out of such a war, through calculated ambiguity.

Thirdly, the Soviet willingness to take risks in the Middle East obviously also varies with the nature of the radical forces on whose behalf or at whose instigation the risks would be run. One of the reasons for the great Soviet caution exhibited in the crisis over the September 1970 Jordan civil war was clearly the lack of identification of Soviet interests with those of the fedayeen, and uncertainty concerning Chinese influence upon the most radical fedayeen groups. Unwilling to risk a collision with the United States as a result of a chain of events begun by uncontrollable Palestinians, the Soviets were only a few degrees less reluctant to become involved as a result of adventurist actions by the self-willed Syrian regime. It should be noted in this respect that the Soviets did not sponsor or encourage the Syrian invasion of northern Jordan. And in contrast to all previous Middle Eastern crises, in this case Soviet warnings to the United States were not accompanied by even a veiled or ambiguous threat to take any counteraction in the event of any specific Israeli or US move.

This particular reason for Soviet caution would apply much less, however, to a crisis directly involving the UAR, the local regime to which the Soviets have most closely tied their interests. Despite the evidence of Soviet concern lest a Middle Eastern crisis cause them to clash with the US, the Soviet relationship with Egypt has drawn Moscow into acceptance of undesired risks. In particular, the question of the degree of possible Soviet involvement in any future large-scale Middle East fighting has again been made dangerously ambiguous. By 1968 the Soviet leaders were apparently already debating the dangers that would be incurred if the Soviet military advisory program in Egypt were to lead to demands for more direct Soviet participation in Egyptian defense. It also looks as if the main impetus for direct Soviet involvement came from the Egyptian side, and not from the Soviet leadership. Nasir wanted the maximum possible USSR commitment to him in case of a future war, and this could best be secured by the previous presence in Egypt of some Soviets fulfilling a combat function. He also had an immediate practical military need for the Soviets which grew in time and became a dire need by 1970. Shortly

before his death Nasir stated -- no doubt, with considerable exaggeration -- that before he finally obtained Soviet agreement to send men and weapons he had written a letter to Brezhnev "every week" asking for them.

When in January 1970 the critical situation created for Nasir by the Israeli deep penetration raids finally induced the Soviet leadership to yield to his entreaties and send Soviet air defense units to Egypt, a turning point was reached: sixteen years after the British signed a treaty with Nasir abandoning their long-dominant military position in Egypt, forces of another great power had begun to take on combat roles. In the process of Soviet decision-making, nonetheless, there is every indication that this step was taken only after long hesitation and with considerable reluctance, because of doubts that the prospective gains were commensurate with the risks.

The active participation of Soviet air defense units in the fighting in Egypt, and the apparent stationing of some limited Soviet ground forces in Egypt to protect installations, has reduced somewhat the Soviet ability to choose under what circumstances the USSR would or would not participate in a future Israeli-Egyptian war. By the summer of 1970 the distinction between the war and peace had long been finessed by the Egyptian abrogation of the ceasefire and the creation of an intermittent state of hostilities just below the level of all-out war. Under these circumstances, with no sharp boundaries between levels of fighting to demarcate conditions under which the USSR would cease to be involved, it became much more difficult for the Soviet Union to extricate itself from involvement if the fighting should gradually escalate to the point of all-out Arab-Israeli war.

The USSR showed increasing concern over this involvement in late July 1970 when Soviet fighter planes began to engage the Israelis near the Suez Canal, and four Soviet fighters were shot down in one notable engagement. Marshal Kutakhov, commander of the Soviet Air Forces, made a hurried trip to Cairo to investigate.

Kosygin a week after this incident said that the Soviet leadership was "very worried" about the event, presumably because of the implication that the USSR might have to increase its military commitment in Egypt even further in order to deal with Israel.

Thus, although the Soviet forces sent to Egypt had in fact accomplished their primary mission of deterring Israel from staging further deep-penetration raids, the Soviet leadership had reason to grasp the opportunity for a restoration of the ceasefire offered by the US proposals in the summer of 1970. This ceasefire halted, for the time being, a growing trend toward more direct Soviet combat with Israeli forces which might soon have led to an escalation of the Soviet combat presence in Egypt. Because of Soviet nervousness about possible US reactions to such escalation in Soviet grappling with Israel, the USSR also has reason to want Egypt to continue to accept a ceasefire indefinitely.

Unfortunately for the Soviet leaders, while they can influence the Egyptian decision in this matter they do not have the decisive say. The Soviet need to pay a policy price for every Egyptian policy concession was illustrated after the ceasefire began by Soviet willingness to assist the UAR in placing SAM missiles near the Suez Canal in violation of the ceasefire agreement. A Soviet promise to help bring missile defenses close to the canal was apparently a quid pro quo exacted by Nasir, in talks with the Soviets, in exchange for agreement to accept the ceasefire. The Soviets apparently did not expect this action to kill peace talks, or -- more important to them -- to endanger the ceasefire, possibly because they expected the United States to wink at the violation and to compel Israel to accept it as well.

The real risk accepted by the Soviets when they placed air defense forces in Egypt in 1970 was not the moderate one posed by the immediate prospect of conflict with Israeli pilots. Rather, it was the fact that this Soviet involvement would make it more difficult for the USSR to avoid increasing its involvement when and if the

present situation should change for the worse. In short, the Soviets risk having entered a whirlpool, and if they are drawn in further they will no doubt protest at each stage that it is the US and the Israelis who are forcing them to take untoward risks. This process of greater and greater acceptance of risks through small, discrete steps could ultimately bring the Soviets willy-nilly into a situation of serious risk of war with the US which their leaders would not have accepted if it had been offered as a single large choice, all at one time.

A central consideration in the matter of Soviet risk-taking in the Middle East is of course the Soviet reading of US intentions and capabilities. If the Soviets were to become convinced, for example, that for political reasons (domestic or external) the US Government is more inhibited than formerly from taking a given action in response, risks formerly considered out of the question by the Soviets might now be somewhat downgraded. The Soviets seem at present to be doubtful of the degree to which any political considerations hinder the Presidential ability to use force in response to concrete Soviet actions in areas where the US already has both a commitment and armed forces in being. The Soviets have good reason to believe that the Middle East is such an area. Further, the net effect of the US incursion into Cambodia in the spring of 1970 was apparently to shake Soviet confidence in the predictability of US conduct and the power of domestic restraints on Presidential action. And, in any event, during and since the September 1970 crisis over Syrian intervention in the Jordan civil war, the Soviets have spoken and acted, publicly and privately, as if they give a high rating to the possibility that the United States might act forcefully in the Middle East.

Soviet actions in the Middle East -- and Soviet response to US actions -- are impelled by the world view of most of the Soviet leadership requiring the maximum possible advance consistent with the safety of the Soviet state. This urge to keep pressing as far as

seems practicable (but no further) is driven in the first place by an underlying, implacable ideological hostility toward the US which a majority of the post-Khrushchev leaders feel more strongly than did Khrushchev. It is reinforced by awareness of the degree to which Soviet strength has increased since Khrushchev's day, both absolutely and in relation to the US. And finally, the Soviets appear particularly reluctant to retreat in the Middle East because of the special importance they assign to the advances over the US which they have made there and are now trying to consolidate.

The degree to which such attitudes are held undoubtedly varies within the Soviet leadership, and many of the leaders -- particularly General Secretary Brezhnev and his long-time adversary Shelepin -- also seem to be swayed in advocating particular Middle East policies by judgments about their own personal political interests at each juncture, as much as by their opinions of Soviet interests. Brezhnev seems to be governed in large part by his perceptions of the prevailing political wind among his colleagues and the forces immediately below them; Shelepin, by his desire to offer a vigorous alternative program, tempered by his fluctuating view of the political risks. But while Brezhnev has often vacillated between the poles of Politburo opinion on foreign policy, Shelepin has appeared to be one of those in the Politburo who are most in favor of a dynamic, "forward" strategy of maximizing pressure abroad, and who therefore seem likely to rate the Soviet interest in the Middle East most highly, to favor the acceptance of greater risks than others would feel justified, and -- most important -- to lean toward the sanguine side in evaluating the evidence of US determination whenever that evidence is ambiguous.

On the other hand, those Politburo members who seem less strongly motivated by either Soviet great-power chauvinism, ideological hostility, or a mixture of both, who are less enamored of a "forward" strategy, and who are generally more sensitive to the economic advantages of detente may feel the acceptance of large Middle Eastern risks to be less natural for overall

Soviet interests, and also may be somewhat more alarmist in measuring US capabilities and intentions. There is some evidence that Premier Kosygin is the leading figure on this side.

Actual Soviet policy, reflecting a Politburo consensus, has wobbled between these extremes, trying to have the cake and eat it too; that is, attempting to find an arrangement which would preserve some intermediate level of Arab-Israeli tension, sufficient to safeguard Soviet influence yet somehow not sufficient to bring about a Soviet-US clash. As one Soviet has put it well, the USSR seeks a "controlled tension."

There is evidence, however, that some forces within the Soviet regime just below the policymaking level are skeptical about the feasibility of this balancing act. They insist that a settlement of any type -- even, apparently, one acceptable to UAR interests -- would be perilous for the Soviet position in the Middle East because it would reduce Arab dependence on the Soviet Union. Such people apparently also consider others in the Soviet regime as inclined to exaggerate the latent risks if no settlement at all is reached.

The available evidence suggests that the forces in the Soviet regime now most hostile to some Middle East settlement with Israel and the United States are centered (1) in the two Soviet intelligence organizations, the Committee of State Security (KGB) and the Main Intelligence Directorate (GRU) of the Ministry of Defense; and (2) in some portions of the regular Soviet military establishment. There is also evidence to suggest that the forces least hostile to any such settlement are centered in the Foreign Ministry, with supporters in policy-advisory institutes such as the Institute of the USA and the Institute of World Economics and International Relations.

The discordant advice furnished the Politburo has an effect on policy to the degree that it affects the political atmosphere within the upper reaches of the Party to which individual Politburo members are acutely

sensitive. Even if an attempt to reshape policy to reflect such pressures fails utterly for the time being, it may have some ultimate effect if it modifies the climate of top opinion within which the Brezhnev leadership operates. Reverberations of the June 1967 Middle East crisis seem to have had such an effect on the Soviet Politburo. At a Central Committee plenum held soon after the 1967 war to endorse the Politburo's actions in the crisis, Moscow Party chief Yegorychev appears to have made a direct attack on Brezhnev's conduct of policy. Reports on what Yegorychev said are fragmentary and partly conflicting, but the most credible of them suggest that he coupled complaints that the leadership had not acted more vigorously during the crisis with criticism of the state of preparedness of the Soviet armed forces. The cummulative effect of the Soviet refusal to take risks to defend the UAR in the 1967 debacle. of the predictable subsequent Chinese sneers, of the vociferous Arab complaints, and especially of Yegorychev's voicing of domestic complaint, appears to have been to make the Brezhnev leadership somewhat more sensitive to the political consequences of inaction in defense of the USSR's primary Middle Eastern interests. Brezhnev has become increasingly concerned to demonstrate -- both to the Party and to the military -- that his hand did not, and would not, tremble. Part of the groundwork for the Politburo's unprecedented decision to send some Soviet forces to Egypt early in 1970 was thus almost certainly created by the disturbances within the Central Committee over the Middle East three years before.

While permitting themselves to be led by the parallel evolution of Nasir's needs and Brezhnev's needs into this unprecedented commitment on the military side, the Soviet leaders have also allowed themselves to follow most of the fluctuations in the Egyptian negotiating posture. Despite the opposition to any agreement from some Soviet quarters, Brezhnev and the leadership majority seem sufficiently worried about the risks to prefer a settlement which would reduce tensions to, say, the pre-1967 level -- but only if it is a settlement acceptable to their heterogeneous Arab clients, or at least to the

UAR, their primary client. Nevertheless, the military risks still do not impress most Soviet leaders enough to justify either the personal political risk or the joint political sacrifice involved in exerting untoward pressure upon the Egyptian leaders to accept any settlement formula the Egyptians find politically intolerable.

It is true that the more moderate elements in the Soviet leadership appear to have been considerably alarmed by the events of 1970 and may -- to the extent that their influence and political courage permits -- make stronger attempts in the future to push the leadership consensus away from the acceptance of additional risks and toward a settlement. The three events which crystalized this alarm were the shootdown of four Soviet fighters in late July, which reminded Moscow that it might have to escalate its combat role much further to deal adequately with Israel; the Syrian intervention into Jordan in September, which brought home the capability of the USSR's Arab clients to create independently unacceptable risks for the Soviet Union; and the increased evidence of US attention to its military power in the eastern Mediterranean.

It nevertheless continues to appear improbable that the present Politburo can reverse the momentum of Soviet policy and avoid taking greater risks if worse comes to worst -- if no settlement is reached, if the ceasefires eventually cease to be extended, if the Egyptians feel obliged to resume their "war of attrition," and if the Israelis feel obliged to respond strongly in some fashion. The weight of the existing Soviet military involvement in the UAR would then be likely to impose itself heavily upon Soviet policy and to reduce Soviet options.

In the meantime, until they feel more seriously menaced by the Soviet Union, many Israeli leaders will probably continue to find the concrete military protection offered by conquered territory more valuable to Israel than any UN or great power guarantee which might accompany a settlement. Most Israelis will therefore probably continue to prefer a stalemate to any settlement which might entail major territorial concessions in exchange for what they apparently regard as a questionable

guarantee. The Israelis may find, however, that the security offered them by the conquered territories is illusory and that the UAR-Soviet danger to them will multiply in time if there is no settlement. The problem, thus, is whether the Israelis can be brought to see that major concessions by them, though risky, are the lesser danger and might produce a settlement which would be viable and long-lasting. It is probably chiefly through such an Arab-Israeli settlement that the US can hope to reduce the Soviet political base in the Middle East which today supports an expanding Soviet military presence.

THE GROWTH OF THE SOVIET COMMITMENT IN THE MIDDLE EAST

I. THE SETTING

The fact of spectacular Soviet advance in the Middle East at the expense of the West is clear and simple, the pattern of cause much less so. Expansionist Soviet impulses are only one of the factors that have helped to bring Russian pilots and SAM crews to the old British lifeline of Suez, Russian ships to the old British base at Alexandria, and Russian airfield construction to the western Indian Ocean. This has not happened as the result of anyone's master plan or secret timetable. It is rather the end-product of years of opportunistic Soviet cultivation of complex local forces whose interaction served Soviet purposes -- however imperfectly-conceived and partly conflicting. The starting point traces back to Soviet intrusion into Western conflict with the rising tide of Arab post-colonial nationalism. Early in the game the Soviets took decisive advantage of grievous Western mistakes in initially reading the post-Stalin Soviet threat as one essentially of crude military aggression -- and in preparing responses which often helped rather than hindered Soviet infiltration. Eventually, the main focus of Soviet policy became the Arab-Israeli confrontation, a windfall which multiplied radical Arab antagonisms toward the United States and laid the political basis for Soviet military penetration. On this long and tortuous road the Russians have been neither unerring nor particularly farsighted, but they have on the whole been imaginative, adaptable, and fortunate.

This study seeks in particular to factor out the respective influence of the various forces which, together, form the sources of Soviet conduct: that is, the respective influence of defensive concerns, ideological prejudice, manifest destiny, oil, appraisals of

US determination, regard not to run unacceptable risks, some divided counsels, some vacillation, some seizing of opportunity, some decision-making by Arab clients, and some consequent willing-unwilling Soviet steps into new commitments, rewards, and hazards.

In the twenty-five years since the end of the second World War, the Soviet role in the Middle East has been dramatically transformed. Virtually shut out of the area and frustrated by allied vigilance with respect to Iran in 1945-1946, developments have since brought Russian presence indeed "southward, in the direction of the Persian Gulf," to use Molotov's phrase of thirty years ago, to a cornerstone position with respect to Egypt and to future war or peace in the Middle East. Since 1955, Moscow has expended some $5 billion worth of economic and military assistance to the Middle East: Soviet weapons now clog the area, some in ruin or Israeli capture, some outfitting latter-generation Arab forces. The Soviet navy, which in 1945-1946 was virtually absent from the high seas, now fluctuates between fifty and sixty-odd units of ostentatious presence in the Mediterranean and the Indian Ocean. Some 10,800 Soviet non-combat military and economic technicians are now stationed throughout North Africa and the Middle East, and 7,000 more are fulfilling combat roles in Egypt. The Soviet Union has become an important new factor in the often tense relationship between the area's oil-producing states, the international oil companies, and the oil consumers in Western Europe and Japan.

The USSR can influence the flow of events in the Middle East, but it cannot control them. The Soviets are aware of a risk of eventual collision with the United States, and would therefore like to defuse the Arab-Israeli confrontation -- on Soviet terms, of course -- to prevent an explosion. Yet any Soviet desire to cooperate to this end is sharply limited by their greater desire to protect their gains in the Arab world. To a considerable extent the Soviets are the prisoners of their own success in the Middle East, and their policy alternatives are also locked within the framework of what

can plausibly be sold to their Egyptian clients as consistent with Egyptian political and military needs. This was most recently demonstrated in the summer of 1970, in Soviet willingness to violate an understanding with the United States and assist Nasir to move missiles closer to the Suez Canal during the ceasefire period, despite the possible effects of this action on the chances for peace. Both Egypt and the USSR are in turn affected by the radicalism of Syria, Iraq, and the fedayeen, and, to a lesser degree, by Chinese Communist attempts to outflank the Soviets in the area. While the pressures brought by these volatile forces can be resisted, together they help to fix the limits of what the Soviet Union considers to be politically feasible.

Thus the very success the Soviets have had in expanding their political and military presence in the Middle East is now pushing them toward hard choices which they have thus far sought to evade. The USSR wants -- and intends -- to keep and enlarge all that it has gained in the Arab world, but it does not wish to bump heads with the United States in the process. The Soviets desire the US to become even more clearly lined up behind Israel, and thus even further estranged from the Arabs; but not so much so that US forces eventually become directly involved in conflict with Soviet forces. In the absence of a settlement acceptable to Egypt, the Soviet Union wants at all costs to preserve its image as the UAR's effective shield in the confrontation with Israel, yet it does not want to become involved in a new Arab-Israeli war. The Soviets wish to shore up their standing with the diverse militant forces of the Arab world -- in Syria, Iraq, Algeria, and among the fedayeen -- yet Moscow does not wish to encourage their yearnings for a new showdown with Israel. The Soviets would be happy if the Arab-Israeli struggle helped to destroy the position of US oil companies in the Middle East, but their enthusiasm for this is tempered by fear of being saddled with the responsibility of finding hard currency markets for nationalized Arab oil. The Soviets would like to advance politically and militarily into the Persian Gulf, but they are well aware that hasty moves in this direction would be likely to destroy their laboriously improved

relations with Iran. They would like to get the Suez Canal reopened to strengthen their strategic communications with the Indian Ocean, but any settlement with Israel far-reaching enough to get the canal opened is also likely to reduce Egyptian military dependence on the USSR and thus weaken Egyptian willingness to cooperate with Soviet strategic ambitions. In short, the USSR needs a certain amount of peace in the Middle East but not too much of it. Some reduction of Israel-Arab tension is probably seen as desirable in order to reduce the likelihood of full-scale hostilities or US involvement. But a total Arab-Israeli settlement on all issues and a final resolution of the long quarrel would undermine the political basis of much of the Soviet military position in the Middle East, and particularly in Egypt.

On all these points the Soviets are pursuing goals which to some extent are not compatible, and we know that there are divergent leanings among different groups in Moscow. Some Soviets, for example, seem to assign greater weight than others do to an estimate that present trends may bring an eventual direct clash with the United States. Even among those who believe this, some may fear this eventuality more than others. And some may be more impressed with the harm that a genuine peace in the Middle East might offer to the preservation and further expansion of Soviet interests. In the next few years the momentum of events rather than conscious planning is often likely to settle such issues for the Soviet policymakers. And if a settlement is not achieved and Israeli-Egyptian fighting is renewed, there will be considerable danger that the Soviets will be drawn on gradually by the lure of growing political and military influence into greater participation in the hostilities and greater hazard to themselves.

II. POST-COLONIAL VACUUM - SOVIET OPPORTUNITY

A. The Colonial Heritage

The first prerequisite for the penetration of Soviet influence into the Middle East was the rapid decay after World War II of the mechanisms by which Britain and France had previously maintained predominance in the area. These two colonial powers emerged greatly weakened from the war and were forced to begin a long retreat before nationalist pressures in the Middle East and elsewhere. As Arab nationalism and xenophobic forces grew, they gave impetus to radical discontent with the conservative or feudal regimes which were the chief props of the remaining British and French presence. Such radicalism in several cases made strong inroads into the armed forces of the Arab states. The base of support of a number of conservative Middle Eastern governments -- and thus of the British and French -- became progressively narrower.

In this process the factor of the visibility of the Western presence took on new and added import, so that in some Middle Eastern states an overt, close relationship with Britain, France, or the United States became less and less a bulwark for conservative local governments and more and more a political embarrassment. This was not true everywhere, certainly not with respect to the US relationship with Turkey and Iran, two states bordering on the Soviet Union and confronted, until recent years, by what they considered as a real military threat. But in some Arab countries military arrangements with Western powers proved even dangerous to the regime: this was the case, for example, with the government of Nuri Said in Iraq in 1958, and the regime of King Idris in Libya eleven years later.

From the early 1950s on, Soviet policy was aided, and United States policy encumbered, by the problems the

US encountered in seeking to dissociate itself from the assorted conflicts of Britain and France with Middle Eastern nationalism. As early as the outset of the Mossadeq oil crisis in Iran in 1951, for example, a major concern of US policy was the possibility that the British might use force to defend their local interests, and that this would not only destroy the remnants of the Western political position in Iran, but also bring a Soviet military incursion into northern Iran. In the same period, the impasse in negotiations with the old regime in Cairo over a new Anglo-Egyptian military arrangement created serious concern in the US at the possibility of large-scale Egyptian hostilities with British troops still stationed there.

The desire to maintain unity in the Western alliance in the face of Soviet hostility placed limits on how far the US could usually go to conciliate the nationalist adversaries of the two harassed colonial powers. (During the long French struggle with the Algerian nationalists, for example, the US was prevented by its relationship with Paris from taking a posture likely to separate the US from the colonialist side in the eyes of the Arab world. The Soviets, although also somewhat inhibited by Khrushchev's desire to cultivate good relations with France, were able to furnish arms to the rebels through indirect channels, and thereby fortified their anti-imperialist credentials much more than did the US.) One notable exception was in 1956, when the US openly opposed the Anglo-French invasion of Suez: but even in this case the benefits the US derived in its relations with Arab nationalists were limited and short-lived.

A variety of factors made for continued Arab nationalist hostility toward the United States. One very important ingredient was Arab-Israeli hostility, to be discussed below. Another was the vigorous and successful Soviet effort to pose as the defenders of the Arabs, to denigrate local US actions, and to identify the US with the most prominent Arab enemies of the moment: after Suez, with Britain and France, and today, with Israel. A third reason was Nasir's felt

need to expand his personal influence as leader of the pan-Arab movement, and his chagrin at US opposition. A fourth factor was the ideological world-view of the radical nationalist Arab leaders, which predisposed them to accept the Soviet depiction of the US as a "world gendarme" bent on suppressing "liberation movements" led by men like themselves everywhere in the world. In the case of Nasir, this was reflected in "anti-imperialist" activities outside the Middle East in opposition to the United States and in cooperation with the Soviet Union, most notably in support of rebellions in the Congo in the mid-1960s.

A final factor was the geopolitical dilemma the United States faced. US Suez behavior in 1956 could not alter the basic incompatibility of interests between the US and the Arab radicals. US commercial investments were located in countries with conservative regimes that the radicals longed to bring down. It was not possible for the US itself to do much to modify the nature of most such regimes. Nor was it possible to conciliate the radical nationalist tide into subsiding: any such attempt to further appease Nasir, for example, was not likely to induce him to halt his radiating of revolutionary pressures but was very likely to accelerate the weakening of the remaining conservative areas of the Middle East and the US presence there. On the other hand, forthright opposition to Nasir's pressures, such as the US undertook with its landings in Lebanon in 1958 and its assumption of support for Jordan thereafter, confirmed the radical nationalist identification of the US as a chief villain.

In the long run, US policy -- whether conciliatory or hostile -- could not halt a continuing trend toward the assumption of power by radicals in different parts of the Arab world. In the 1950s, radical nationalist elements of different hues took control in Egypt, Syria, and Iraq; and in the 1960s in Algeria, the Sudan, South Yemen, and Libya.

On the other hand, the pan-Arab movement for unification of the Arab world -- so feared in the 1950s as the apparent driving force of Arab radicalism -- has proven a paper tiger. This has happened for reasons having comparatively little to do with US policy. Competitive pan-Arab movements -- particularly that of the Baath party -- grew in strength to challenge Nasir's original ascendancy as the supreme pan-Arab leader, and then themselves splintered. Like the world Communist movement, the remnants of the pan-Arab movement are today fragmented mostly along national lines, with mutually competing centers in Egypt, Syria, and Iraq. This trend partly reflects the fact that the local nationalism and parochial interests of individual states have proven to be of overwhelming importance in the Middle East as elsewhere in the world. Although local regionalism still has some pulling power in limited areas such as western North Africa (the Maghreb) and the Nile Valley, in general local national interests seem in the long run to be paramount for radicals and conservatives alike, and have repeatedly frustrated efforts at wider unification. Nasir's two chief attempts at unification with or military intervention in other Arab states -- in Syria from 1958 to 1961 and in Yemen from 1962 to 1967 -- both ended badly.*

Finally, competing personalities and egos -- e.g., the rivalry between Nasir and Iraq's Qasim in the late 1950s, between Nasir and Algeria's Boummediene more recently -- add greatly to the centrifigal forces in the Arab world. All these factors making for diversity have on the whole tended to soften the adverse effects of the growth of radicalism upon US interests in the Middle East and have considerably complicated the tasks of Soviet policymakers.

*This does not augur well for current Egyptian efforts to promote some form of amalgamation with Libya and the Sudan. Nasir's decision to station Egyptian personnel in Libya is particularly likely to prove counterproductive in the long run.

B. The Arab-Israeli Confrontation

The position of the US as heir to the colonial resentments would have been difficult enough. But the superimposition of the Arab-Israeli issue has immensely aggravated US difficulties.

For the Arab radicals, the key role played by the US in the creation of the state of Israel has served over the years as the basic, irrefutable evidence of the US' essentially malevolent and imperialist intentions. For most Arab conservatives, this has been the one point on which they have always found it difficult to argue with the radicals. Almost all Arabs have seen Israel as a humiliation and a grevious, unavenged wrong, an injustice committed not merely against the dispossessed Palestinians but against the entire Arab world by an alien invading culture and technology. This is a festering wound that has never healed.

In dealing with Soviet inroads in the Middle East, the basic problem created for the US by the Arab-Israeli struggle has been made all the more difficult by Arab mutual incitement. The Arab-Israeli issue is one which radical Arab leaders have repeatedly used as a point of attack upon conservative Arab leaders and governments friendly to the US. In self-defense, even the most moderate Arab leaders have frequently succumbed to the temptation to accuse the radicals of hypocritical unwillingness themselves to challenge Israel. Rival Arab radicals -- such as Nasir and the Syrian Baathists -- have similarly taunted each other. Over the years, competitive demagogy of this sort has been one of the factors that has hampered a settlement with Israel. What is more, it has sometimes led to competitive displays of militancy against Israel against the better judgment of most of those involved.

Until recent years, the benefits of such rival Arab paradings of militancy probably seemed to the Soviets to far outweigh any possible hazards. In the middle 1960s, for example, the arms race in the Middle

East was greatly accelerated, tensions heightened, and the US position weakened as a result of a sudden increase in Arab awareness of their military inferiority to Israel and determination to change it. Events began to move in this direction when Israeli engineering projects intended to draw irrigation water from the Jordan River neared completion in 1963 and the new Baathist regime in Syria, then as later the most irreconcilable of Israel's neighbors, pressed other Arab regimes for the diversion, in reprisal, of water already flowing into Israel.* The Israeli government made it plain that it would respond with military action to any such attempt, and the Arabs were faced down. As a result of subsequent Arab agitation, Nasir with Soviet support was enabled to force the conservative Arab states most friendly to the United States into greater military cooperation and closer dependence on radical Arab policies toward Israel.

A few years later, however, the Soviets learned that the very intensity of these reverberating, ill-controlled Arab passions also contained significant dangers for Soviet policy. In the spring of 1967 the radical Arab practice of daring and double-daring, spurred on by an ill-considered Soviet act of encouragement, produced a chain reaction disastrous for the Arab states and hazardous for the Soviet Union. Actions against Israel taken by a new and even more militant left-Baathist regime in Syria produced limited retaliation and threats from the Israeli government -- and these threats the Soviets, for reasons which are still cloudy, exaggerated into what is known to have been a false report to the Arabs of imminent Israeli invasion of Syria. Nasir, impelled in this apparent crisis by a compulsion to demonstrate his anti-Israeli credentials as the principal leader of the Arab states, then took actions he

*Characteristically, the Syrians sought to ensure that the most important such diversion project be done not in Syria but in Lebanon, much to the dismay of Lebanon. Over the years, Syrian pugnacity toward Israel has generally been linked with efforts to have someone else bell the cat.

had previously considered unwise (to close the Strait of Tiran and compel the withdrawal of the UN buffer force). These actions, which apparently surprised the Soviet Union, the Israelis considered to be grounds for war. At the last moment before the war, King Husayn of Jordan was also moved to action by a compulsion to demonstrate his own anti-Israeli credentials in order to defend himself against political pressures now being brought by the radical Arabs. Husayn therefore came to Cairo to sign a humiliating treaty with his erstwhile enemy Nasir which committed him to participation in the coming war. In the ensuing disaster, the Syrian regime which precipitated the chain of events was the one which suffered the least. And while the Soviet Union in the long run has more than recouped the political losses it suffered from the Arab debacle, it was nevertheless gravely embarrassed by this Arab defeat and considerably alarmed at the time by the risk of conflict with the US.

Since the 1967 war, the Soviets have apparently had more ambivalent feelings about the mutual incitement and anti-Israeli militancy of the radical Arab world. While recognizing that these waves of emotion have continued to erode the US position in hitherto pro-Western states such as Jordan and Lebanon, the Soviets have shown themselves increasingly nervous about the possible consequences of irresponsible acts of unpredictable Arab regimes. For example, the USSR showed varying degrees of concern at Syrian acts of intervention into Lebanon in 1969 and 1970 and into Jordan in 1970, in each case apparently because the USSR feared the possibility of Israeli or US intervention and of a subsequent general Middle Eastern war. The evolution of the Soviet attitude was demonstrated in November 1970 when the USSR easily reconciled itself to the advent of a somewhat less radical and militant regime in Syria under General Asad because this regime seemed likely also to be less irresponsible.

Syrian periodic use of the Israeli issue to attack the stability of the pro-Western governments of Lebanon and Jordan has thus been one of the independent factors with which both the US and the Soviet Union have had to

reckon in jockeying for position in the Middle East. Another such factor is the attitude of the Iraqi regime, controlled by a rival faction of the radical Baathist party. In recent years this regime has acquired special importance for Husayn because several thousand Iraqi troops have been stationed in Jordan, and have at times lent support to fedayeen pressures on the Amman government. Baghdad has also demonstrated its intransigence by supporting fedayeen opposition to the ceasefire with Israel arranged in the summer of 1970, despite Soviet support of the ceasefire and Syrian willingness to tolerate it. On the other hand, when the civil war between the Jordanian authorities and the fedayeen erupted in September 1970, the Iraqis, unlike the Syrians, refused to take part. In short, while both Syria and Iraq represent factors which in general serve to weaken the US position in the Arab world, they often work at cross-purposes to each other and frequently alternate in opposition to Soviet wishes.

III. ISRAELI VICTORIES -- SOVIET WINDFALL

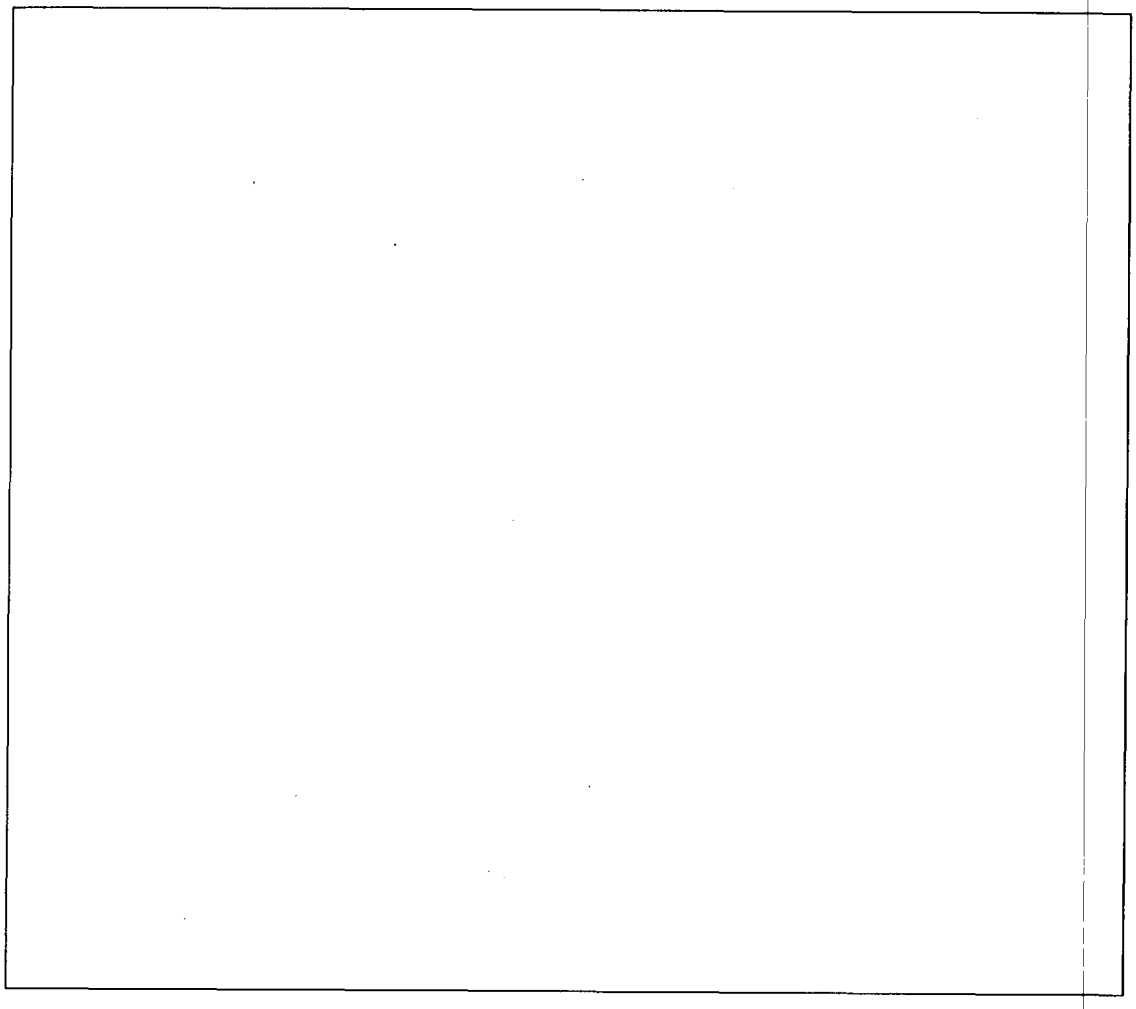
A. The Polarizing Effect of Arab Defeats

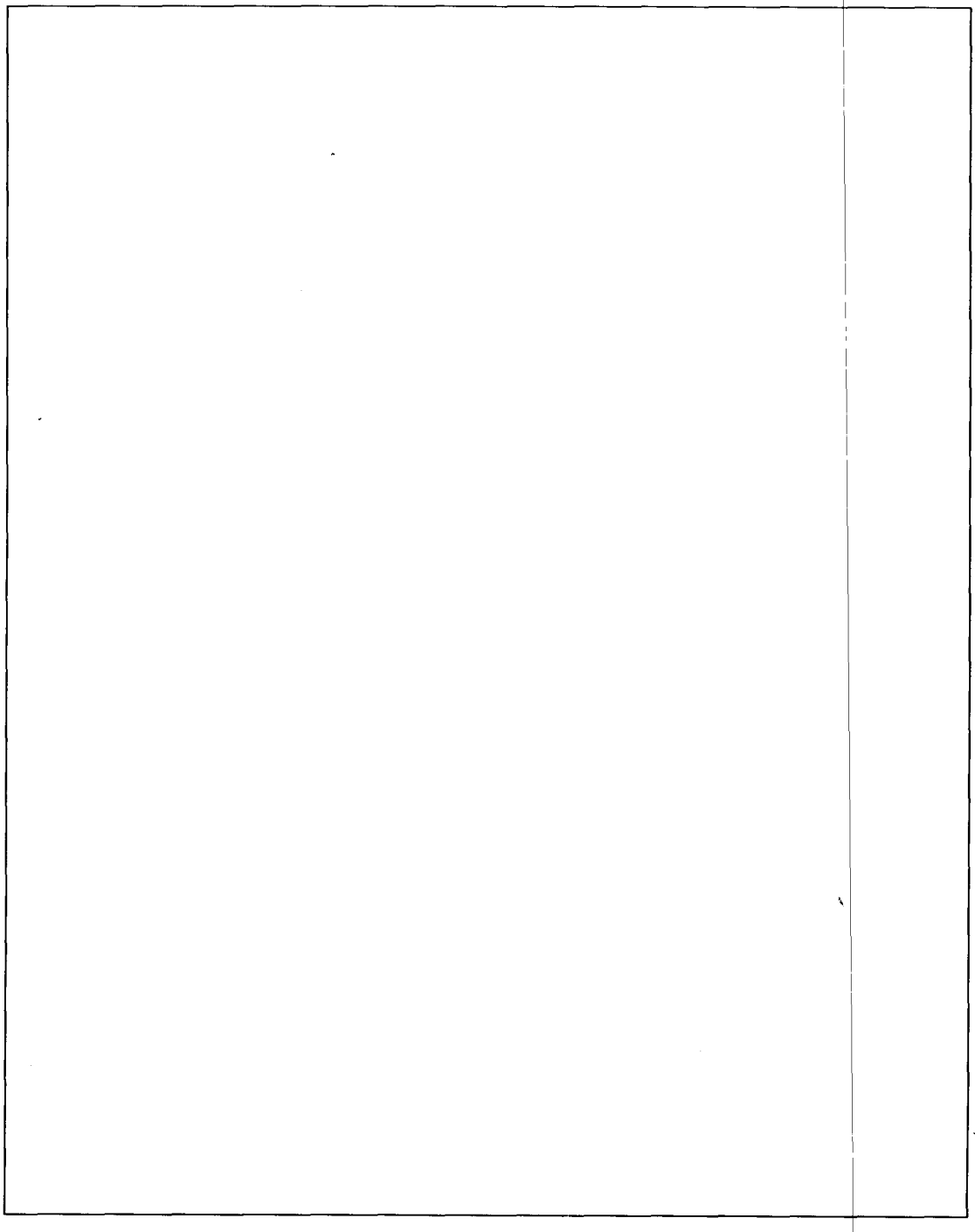
Of all the factors that have tended to alienate the Arab world from the US and cause the Arabs to gravitate toward the Soviet Union, the most important has been the series of military defeats inflicted upon the Arabs by Israel. Each fresh humiliation at the hands of Israel was greater than the one before. Each created new bitterness and a new wave of radicalism, and the effect was cumulative.

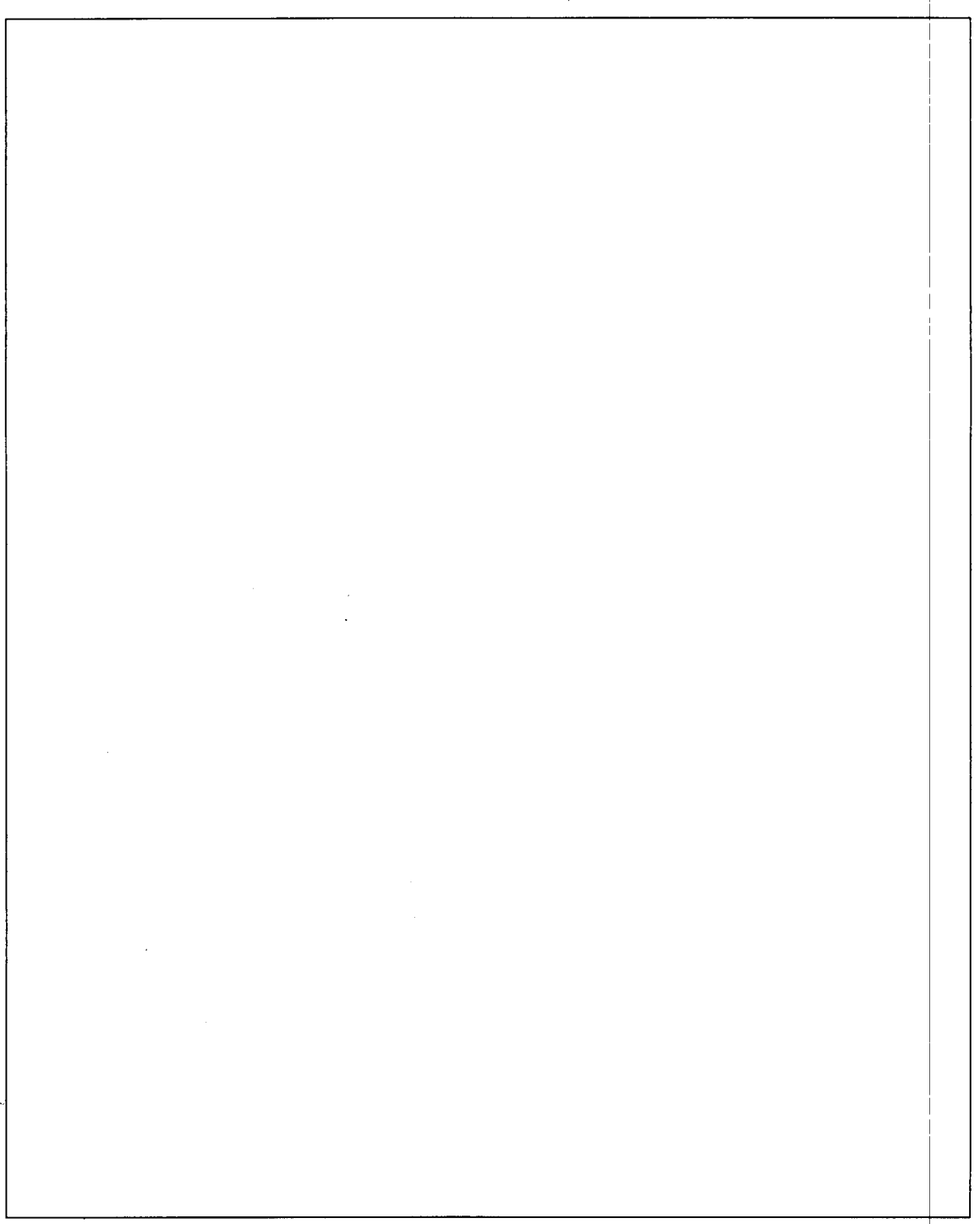
The third Arab defeat, in the six-day war of June 1967, was the greatest and most humiliating of all. This time, not only were the military disasters exceptionally grievous but the territories lost were not, as in 1956, quickly restored by great power fiat. The fact that the remaining portion of Palestine still in Arab hands was overrun gave fuel to Palestinian Arab nationalism and new vigor to subsequent Palestinian resistance. The fact that Egypt, Syria, and Jordan now had irredentist territorial claims to redeem gave a new, permanent instability to the aftermath of the war. The new, higher level of hatred was now focussed more directly at the US as the principal supporter of Israel. The false claim made by the Arab states during the war that the US and Britain had participated in the Israeli attack continued to be widely believed in the Arab world even after those leaders who had made the charge had ceased to believe it.

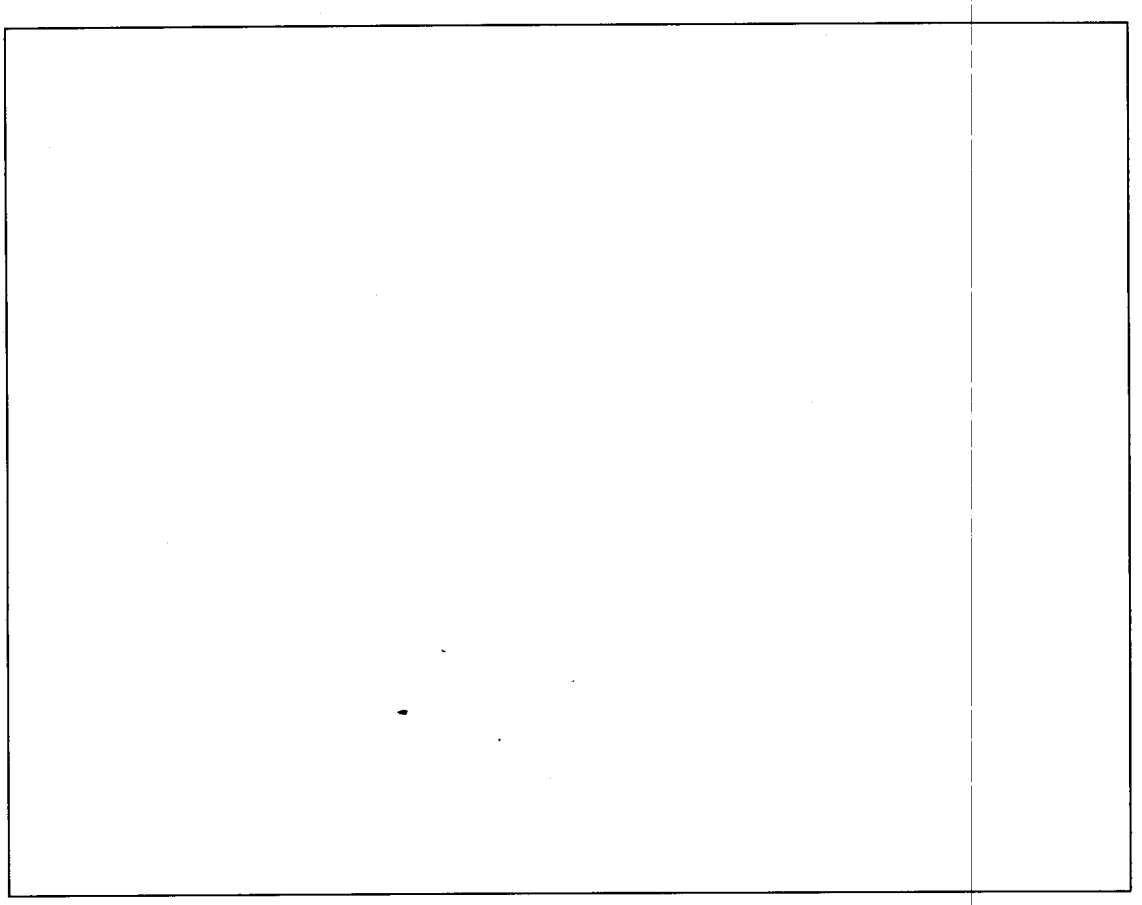
In addition, the curtailment of French arms aid to Israel left the US in the spotlight as the principal arms supplier to Tel Aviv. The sustained low boil of confrontation between Israel and the Arab states that ensued after the war caused the arms race to enter a new stage of greatly increased tension. Unlike the situation before 1967, many of the major new weapons acquired by

each side did not merely add to estimated military potential, but had an immediate effect in ongoing combat. This fact caused Arab antagonism toward the United States to become inflamed anew each time attention was directed at US consideration of further military assistance to Israel. Meanwhile, the Soviet Union, despite its inability to prevent the 1967 defeat or to secure quick restoration of the Arab territories, became more and more firmly entrenched because of the steadily growing Arab need for Soviet assistance.









Leaders of both sides in the Arab-Israeli struggle have tended to belittle the importance of the political pressures on leaders of the other side inhibiting them from making concessions. Each leadership, acutely sensitized to the temper of public opinion surrounding it and conditioning its own actions, has tended to postulate a mythical near-freedom of action to its opposite numbers in hostile capitals. For example, Israel showed such insensitivity in May 1959 when it publicized a tentative Nasir private agreement with the UN to allow a Danish ship with an Israeli cargo through the Suez Canal; at least partly in consequence, Nasir reneged on this agreement.

Nasir, for his part, on many occasions displayed ignorance or unconcern at the effect of his own demagogic statements and actions upon political forces in Israel, and on at least one occasion -- in the spring of 1967 -- grossly misjudged the probable Israeli response to his actions. After Nasir decided to abrogate the ceasefire with Israel in early 1969, he hoped that the casualties created by steady military harrassment would induce greater Israeli willingness to retire from the occupied territories. Instead, the major immediate effect was to summon an Israeli escalating response (the deep penetration raids) which endangered Nasir's political position and obliged him to request direct Soviet assistance which rendered him more dependent on the USSR than ever before. Meanwhile, the continued clashes with Egypt only reinforced the intrenched fears of much of the Israeli population. While the threat posed by the new Soviet role has finally induced some movement in Israel to determine the limits of possible territorial concessions, the intransigence of the Israelis on the general question of withdrawal prior to a complete settlement remains as great as ever.

The obdurate attitude of the Israelis on this point is reinforced by popular memories of how they were deprived by the great powers of the fruits of their Sinai victory over Nasir in 1956 without the compensation of a peace settlement with the Arabs. On 13 November 1956, Nasir told US Ambassador Hare that "peace" could be established with Israel only if the Israelis in no way profited from their attack; similarly in 1970 he maintained that negotiations for a settlement could be entertained only after Israeli commitment to a total withdrawal. The Israelis are also impelled to be adamant in refusing prior withdrawal in exchange for some great power guarantee because of their recollection of great power hesitancy to assist them in breaking Nasir's blockade of the Strait of Tiran in May 1967, despite what they view as a US pledge to them in February 1957 to maintain the freedom of the Straits. Scepticism as to the value of a United States guarantee may have been further reinforced by what the Israelis regard as failure to enforce a US guarantee to them in August 1970

that a ceasefire would not be used to strengthen Egyptian missile installations near the Suez Canal. Finally, the Israelis are not prepared to trade their occupation of the Sinai for a UN guarantee of peace because they identify the UN with numerous betrayals of their interests. These include the failure to enforce a September 1951 Security Council resolution calling on Egypt to allow Israeli shipping through the Suez Canal, the withdrawal of United Nations buffer forces from Sinai at Nasir's demand in May 1967, and the passage of several Security Council resolutions in recent years condemning Israeli reprisal raids without mention of the fedayeen attacks that prompted them.

Both the Israelis and the UAR have tended to delude themselves and others about the political capabilities of the great power supporting the other side. For example, the Israelis insist to the US that the Soviet Union has the ability, should it wish to do so, to compel the UAR to make great concessions to facilitate a settlement. The Soviets do indeed have some leverage on the Egyptians, but it is only usable on decisions which the UAR considers closely-balanced or which do not touch what the UAR sees as its vital interests. One example was the successful Soviet effort in July 1970 to persuade Nasir of the tactical advisability of accepting the US limited ceasefire proposal. As the issue at stake becomes more fundamental for the UAR, the Soviet leverage rapidly dwindles. Leaving aside the matter of the USSR's willingness to risk its political capital in the Arab world by pressing the Arabs for large concessions for a settlement, it is questionable that a hypothetical maximum Soviet effort to squeeze Egypt into making fundamental concessions would be effective.

On the other side, Nasir long insisted that the US enjoys enormous leverage over Israeli policy and could if it wished force Israel to make drastic concessions. The radical Arab leaders have preferred to cling to the fantasy of Israel as a virtual US puppet because this comforts them with the belief that they have been defeated by a great power rather than by a small, numerically inferior state. The Soviet Union assiduously encourages

this belief because it helps to perpetuate Arab hostility to the US. Both Nasir and the USSR miscalculated on the eve of the 1967 war in part because they believed the US not only desired that Israel refrain from attacking but would in fact be able to prevent Israel from doing so. Although it is possible that this assumption that the US can in the last analysis control Israeli actions is at last being debated privately in Moscow, up to now it has still seemed an article of faith in Cairo.*

In fact, the US does have some leverage on Israeli policy. But this leverage varies from time to time and issue to issue, and like Soviet influence over Nasir and his successors, it has sharp limits. On matters considered by a wide spectrum of Israeli opinion to be vital to Israeli national interests, it is questionable whether even the most unrealistically severe US pressures would prevail.

Some Israelis, for their part, no doubt see themselves as having become dangerously dependent on the US and regret the loss of the greater diplomatic flexibility of earlier years when they enjoyed important support from France and "normal" relations with the Soviet Union. The relations with the USSR have gradually evaporated between the crises of 1956 and 1967 as a result of Soviet opportunistic courting of the Arabs; the support from France has largely vanished for similar reasons more recently. Left alone with the US, Israeli leaders now seek to make the best of their role in the East-West polarization of the Middle East, and argue that Israel serves US strategic interests as a point of resistance to the spread of Soviet influence.

*In the last year however, there have appeared a few faint signs that even Egyptian faith in this proposition has begun to waver. In a speech on May 1, 1970 Nasir declared that the US must order Israel to withdraw from the occupied territories, but added that if the US does not have the capability of issuing orders to Israel, the US should at least stop "any new aid" to Israel.

IV. THE SOURCES OF SOVIET CONDUCT

A. The Power Setting

The first ingredient in Soviet conduct in the Middle East is the historical Russian urge to expand to the south. The Soviets inherited from their predecessors a long history of frustrations in this respect, chiefly inflicted by the military power and political influence of Britain and France. The quest for warm-water ports and the desire to break out of the prison of the Black Sea gave impetus to repeated vain Russian strivings to overcome a succession of obstacles erected by the West. To this tradition of a "manifest destiny" on the southern border stymied by distant intruders there has been added, in Soviet times, a new ingredient: the politics of oil and, hence, the enhanced importance of the Persian Gulf area.

It was therefore for a mixture of reasons that the Soviet Government, in formal proposals sent to Hitler in November 1940 regarding the allocation of spheres of influence after Britain's defeat, specified that the area south of Batum and Baku in the general direction of the Persian Gulf should be recognized as the center of the aspirations of the Soviet Union.*

*Since the Second World War the Soviet attitude toward the Persian Gulf has probably been considerably modified. While the Soviets undoubtedly would still like to achieve political domination of the area, the factors enticing them on have been somewhat weakened and those inducing caution have been strengthened. Among other things, Soviet emergence as the second-largest oil producer in the world -- not only self-sufficient but a sizeable oil exporter --, has reduced their need for the oil of the Persian Gulf. See discussion in the following section.

This effort to use a prospective Hitler victory in the Second World War as the vehicle by which to replace Britain as the dominant power in the Middle East was blocked when Hitler turned on the Soviet Union and when Britain finally emerged as one of the victors. In the long run, however, the war itself did prepare the way for subsequent Soviet advances in the Middle East by gravely weakening Britain and undermining British instruments of control in the area.

After the war, defensive military concerns came to the fore in Soviet thinking about the Middle East. As one consequence of Soviet initiation of a worldwide struggle against the US and the West, the principal Soviet antagonist, the US, became directly involved in repelling Soviet efforts to secure the overthrow of the Greek government and the intimidation of Turkey, and in enlisting Greece and Turkey in a Western military alliance. US strategic missiles aimed at the Soviet Union were placed in Turkey. A US fleet, eventually equipped with Polaris missiles, patrolled and dominated the Eastern Mediterranean.

The Soviet Union, concerned at the prospect that the entire Middle East might be organized by the Western powers into a adjunct of NATO on the southern Soviet flank, watched with interest and surprise as local nationalist forces undercut efforts to do this and forced a gradual reduction of Western military strength in most of the area. The real military threat faced by the Soviet Union from the region east and south of Turkey steadily declined, as shadow failed to compensate for substance, and the Western erection in 1955 of a paper alliance of heterogeneous partners along the "Northern Tier" bordering the USSR was no compensation for the forced evacuation of the historic British bases in Egypt and the Suez Canal area the year before. And -- all this happened before the Soviets had taken any significant action to encourage the process.

To speak, however, of the Soviets then moving to take advantage of a military vacuum in the Middle East is to miss the point. It was not the military vacuum, but the political one, that was fundamental. The Western political position in the area did not decay because of local military weakness, but vice versa; the British forces which evacuated the Suez area in 1954 were incomparably stronger than those of the Egyptian government which compelled them to go. Western military strength steadily diminished as the result of a combination of the adverse political trends discussed. Western attempts to conjure up the Baghdad Pact, in defiance of the desires and growing political strength of Arab nationalism, were actually counterproductive for the Western presence in the Arab world in the long run. The Soviet Union, on the other hand, by abandoning Stalin's disdain for local nationalism and by working after 1954 to identify itself with the interests of the strongest political forces in the area, laid the groundwork for the establishment of a significant Soviet military presence later -- but much later.

While the dangerous potentiality of revolutionary Egypt was underestimated by the West, it is possible that this would not have been decisive if the new Soviet leadership had fulfilled the expectations of continuity with Stalinist policy which underlay the Baghdad Pact. Western policy was predicated upon the assumption that Soviet policy would not be sufficiently changed to offer Egyptian and other nationalists a real alternative to dealings with the West. To have radically adjusted Western policies in the Middle East by 1954 in anticipation of the very different Soviet challenge that subsequently materialized would have required drastic and imaginative conclusions to be drawn on limited evidence within twelve to eighteen months after Stalin's death.

Soviet exploitation of the potentialities of this situation began with the decision to offer Soviet bloc arms to Egypt in 1955 and the UAR decision to accept them in the fall of that year. Between 1955 and 1958 the Soviet position as an outsider excluded from a

Western preserve in the Middle East was completely transformed, partly as the result of the reversal of previous Stalinist policies (in furnishing arms and economic aid to bourgeois nationalists), partly through demagogic encouragement of trends native to the Arabs (the hatred of British colonialism and the desire for arms with which to oppose Israel), and partly by taking opportunistic advantage of Western mistakes.

It is questionable whether the Soviets at the outset of this effort foresaw clearly where they were going, or had but the vaguest of hopes that they might soon be in a position to "outflank" US power in the area in a military sense. During these earlier years, however, by championing the radical Arab cause in repeated crises the Soviet Union gradually established the principle that the USSR was henceforth an inevitable participant in the resolution of all major disputed issues of the area. This revolutionary notion was fixed in the minds of friend and foe alike merely through the assertion of Soviet political and military weight as a great power neighbor of the Arabs, and long before there had been a substantial deployment of Soviet military forces anywhere in the Middle East.

The Soviet military presence was introduced by degrees into the Middle East in the 1950 and 1960s, in the form of military aid advisers and technicians sent to accompany the growing quantities of military hardware with which the USSR flooded the Arab world. At the same time, the appearance of these personnel was matched by the introduction of what were initially small Soviet naval forces in the Mediterranean alongside what was then the overwhelming strength of the US Sixth Fleet.

From these beginnings, there was a simultaneous rapid expansion of a multi-dimensional Soviet military presence in the middle and late 1960s. On the one hand, the growth of Soviet strategic capabilities as well as of conventional instruments for overseas intervention accelerated the trend away from Stalin's conservative reluctance to become committed "beyond the range of Soviet artillery." Soviet naval units appeared in

increasing numbers in all parts of the world; Soviet ballistic missile submarines took up station off the coast of the US; the abortive attempt in 1962 to establish a surface-to-surface missile base in Cuba was followed in 1970 by the apparent start of construction of a nuclear submarine base there; and the use -- or attempted use -- of masses of Soviet military air transports in crisis situations became a favorite Soviet ploy which the USSR sought to repeat in Africa, in Vietnam, in Latin America, and in the Middle East.

This expanded deployment of Soviet planes and ships outside the immediate boundaries of the Soviet empire became particularly vigorous in the Middle East and adjoining waters. In part, this was because of geography: it was easier to move large numbers of air transports from the Soviet Union to the Middle East than to more distant parts of the world, and easier to support more or less permanently a sizeable Soviet fleet in the Eastern Mediterranean than elsewhere because of proximity to the Black Sea bases (and, later, because of the availability of Egyptian bases). Even more, however, Soviet overseas deployments were greatest in the Middle East because the combined political and military payoff was greatest there. The deployment of Soviet might in the Middle East to offset that of the US at times gave a pro-Soviet cast to events in specific local areas directly, enhanced Soviet prestige in the Arab world generally, and incidentally became a factor in the world-wide Soviet-US strategic matchup.

Simultaneously with this natural growth in the presence of certain Soviet units in the Middle East, the long-established Soviet military aid program finally led to the involvement of other Soviet units in Middle East fighting for the first time. A preview of this new trend was furnished in November and December 1967 during the Yemen civil war: a Soviet military aid program begun a decade before for the feudal Immamate, and then continued and expanded for the republican regime fighting the Immam's heirs, involved the Soviets more and more intimately with the republican government's fortunes. A crisis in the civil war late in 1967 led to a sizeable

Soviet airlift to the Arabian peninsula and direct participation in the fighting by Soviet fighter-bomber pilots and some ground personnel. There is reason to believe that this initial Soviet military intervention in the Middle East was followed closely and anxiously by the Soviet Politburo. Within a few weeks, as soon as the threat to the republican capital was eased, the Soviets disengaged their personnel. There was little political or military profit in continued Soviet intervention, in part because the US and Israel were not involved.

This trial run, however, revealed in miniature the basic change that had taken place in the Middle East as a whole. In the wake of the Israeli defeat of the Arab states in June 1967, the Soviet military aid program for the Arab world led to both opportunities and pressures from Soviet clients for more and more direct Soviet involvement in the confrontation with Israel. Some leading Soviets were apparently eager from the first to accept these opportunities because of the associated strategic advantages, while others were more dubious, because of the attendant risks, but were eventually induced to agree.* Soviet reequipping of the armies of the combatant Arab states led in short steps first to an increased Soviet advisory role in the armies of Egypt and Syria and then, in 1970, to close Soviet supervision of the Egyptian armed forces and the introduction of Soviet MIG pilot and SAM personnel in combat roles.

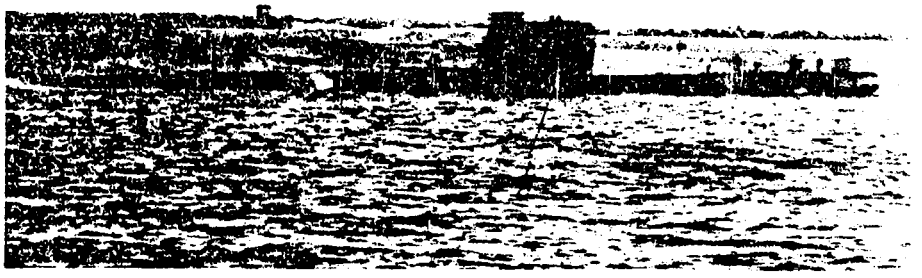
The 1967 war thus represented a turning point for the Soviet Union in the Middle East. It was, paradoxically, from this moment of deepest humiliation for the Soviet clients and embarrassment for Moscow that the USSR began to cash in on its political and economic investment in the area, and commenced to draw important

*See section IV-G for a discussion of these differences.

strategic dividends. Henceforth the UAR in particular was linked to the USSR by new bonds of iron necessity. In earlier years Nasir could afford at times to seek rather blatantly to play the Soviet Union off against the West. While accepting Soviet aid and cooperating with the many Soviet policies he found congenial, Nasir had felt free to quarrel publicly with Khrushchev when offended and otherwise to demonstrate his independence in many ways. Now the new need to recover the lost territories, coupled with the greatly intensified pressure of the Palestinian issue, reduced Nasir's freedom of maneuver. While he was still far from being a Soviet satellite, he had more powerful reasons now to accommodate the Soviet Union on matters deemed not intolerable to his interests. Only the Soviets could furnish essential diplomatic support, could reequip and retrain the Egyptian armed forces, and could furnish effective help of their own when Nasir's renewed confrontation with Israel got him into new difficulties.

As a result, the trend toward more direct Soviet participation in the Arab struggle with Israel has in turn furnished a pretext for the Soviets to use part of their military presence for purposes which have much more to do with Soviet military interests, both nuclear-strategic and regional, than with Egyptian security interests. Premier Kosygin alluded to this fact [redacted] asserting that the real victors in the Arab-Israeli war were the Soviets, because the conflict had enabled them to transfer naval units to that part of the Mediterranean and to establish a presence there in such circumstances that no one could object. The

Soviet fleet in the Eastern Mediterranean may be portrayed as deterring US naval forces from attack on the Arab states, but the Soviets in fact seem more concerned with creating a capability to neutralize those forces in the event of a Soviet war with the US. Soviet use of Egyptian bases for naval reconnaissance flights against the Sixth Fleet seem similarly motivated. More recently, the Soviets seem to have begun preparations to send numbers of additional TU-16 bombers to Egypt, apparently to be armed with an air-to-surface missile designed for naval -- i.e., Sixth Fleet -- rather than ground -- i.e., Israeli -- targets. The presence of Soviet naval units in three Egyptian ports does serve as a deterrent against possible Israeli attacks on those ports, but the use of these ports as virtual Soviet bases also serves to support the Soviets' own interest in challenging the strategic mission of the Sixth Fleet. To some extent the Soviets may thus be said to have succeeded where the British in the early 1950s failed in harnessing Egypt to the military interests of a protagonist in the cold war. The Soviets may hope eventually to secure



Soviet Submarine Entering Alexandria Harbor, August 1967

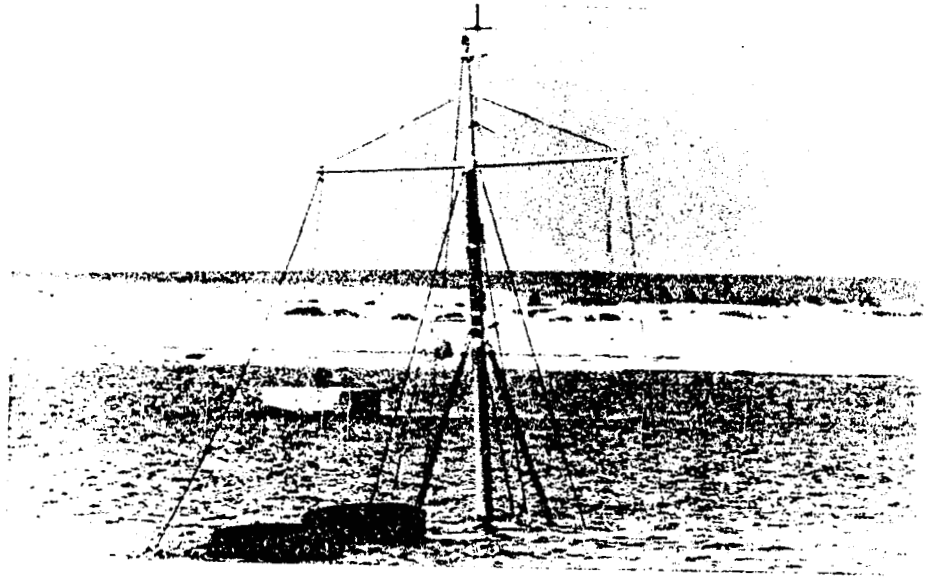
from the radical South Yemeni government rights to some base facility, possibly at Aden or on the island of Socotra in the western Indian Ocean. This would be another small step forward in the effort to insert Soviet military power into areas vacated by British power.*

Regardless of how the political future of the Middle East unfolds, some Soviet military presence can henceforth be expected to remain in the area indefinitely, if only because of the USSR's proximity and growing naval strength. And it is apparently now the hope of some Soviet military planners that the USSR can gradually gather together in its own hands the old British Middle Eastern "lifeline", creating a belt of Soviet military domination from the Eastern Mediterranean through the Suez Canal to the Red Sea, the western Indian Ocean, and eventually the Persian Gulf.

Central to all calculations is the Suez Canal, which much evidence testifies the Soviets are impatient to see reopened. In part, this is because of the heavy additional costs the closing of the canal has inflicted on Soviet trade; but in part, it is because the Soviets wish to achieve military control of the eastern exit of the Mediterranean and the ability to supply and reinforce units quickly in the Red Sea and Indian

* [redacted] the Soviets in the spring of 1970 also offered to build for the Somali government naval port facilities at Zeila, just outside the mouth of the Red Sea, in return for use of the facilities. There is no evidence yet that any such proposal has been accepted. The Soviets also may have plans or hopes to use Wadi Seidna airfield in northern Sudan, which reportedly has been improved to handle larger planes than the Sudanese possess. If such schemes should come to fruition, they would among other things mark a considerable Soviet advance toward domination of the Red Sea, and would greatly alarm the Israelis.

Sunken Ships in Suez Canal

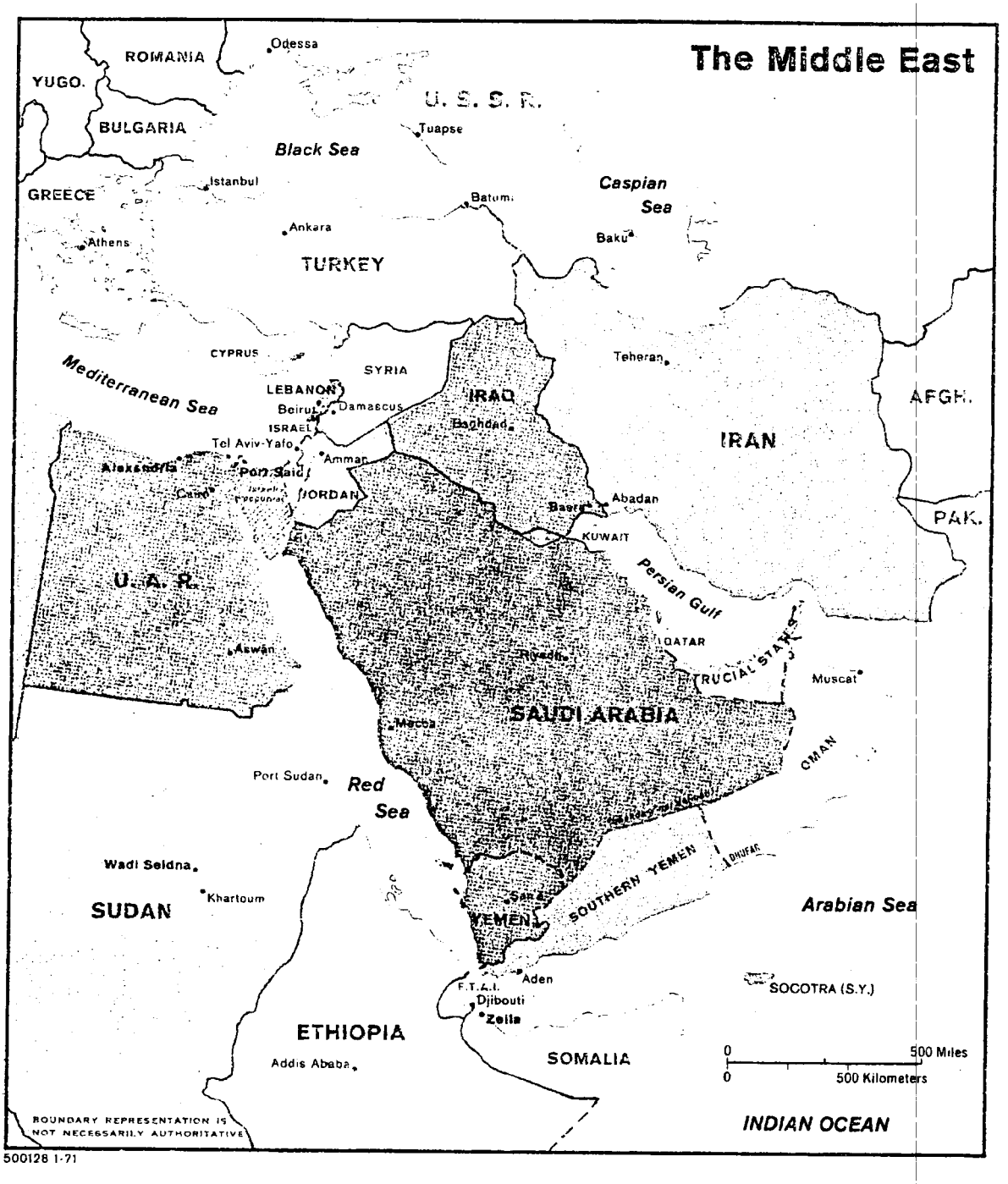


Ocean. A Soviet [redacted] confided in the summer of 1970 that in addition to reopening the canal, the USSR "must secure our interests in Alexandria," both in order to support the Soviet Mediterranean fleet and to guarantee that the Suez Canal is "protected." Once again, the suggestion is that the USSR would like to restore and control indefinitely the interlocking pieces of the old British strategic hub in the area: the Mediterranean fleet, the base at Alexandria, and the Suez Canal.

It is by no means inevitable, however, that all such grandiose plans will be fulfilled. As their designs become more apparent, the Soviets must increasingly deal with many of the same nationalist forces that made the British Middle East Defense Command scheme unfeasible twenty years earlier. Suspicion of the Soviet desire to use the Arab cause for Soviet strategic purposes is already visible among some radical Arabs who are dependent on the Soviet Union in many ways.

Shortly after the Arab defeat in 1967, a Soviet [redacted] in the Middle East asserted that "it is time for the bloody Egyptians, Syrians and Algerians to realize the importance of having Soviet military bases. If we had had bases in those countries, the whole situation would be different now." It is significant that since that time radical Arab states such as Algeria and Syria have not found the Arab cause against Israeli sufficient reason to yield to the reported Soviet hints or importunities for facilities in these countries.

As usual, the Syrians have been particularly obdurate. In early 1969 Syria is reported to have twice rejected Soviet requests for permanent supply points in Syrian harbors to serve Russian ships. Early in 1970, the Syrians rejected repeated Soviet proposals for increased naval cooperation, including special naval rights at Syrian ports. In April 1970, Damascus also apparently rejected a proposal for a


The Middle East
ROMANIA
Odessa
YUGO.
U. S. S. R.
BULGARIA
Tuapse
Black Sea
GREECE
Istanbul
Caspian Sea
Batumi
Ankara
Baku
Athens
TURKEY
CYPRUS
Teheran
SYRIA
Mediterranean Sea
LEBANON
IRAQ
AFGH.
Beirut
Damascus
Baghdad
ISRAEL
IRAN
Tel Aviv-Yafo
Amman
Alexandria
Port Said
JORDAN
Abadan
PAK.
Basra
KUWAIT
Persian Gulf
U. A. R.
QATAR
Aswan
Riyadh
TRUCIAL STATES
Muscat
SAUDI ARABIA
Mecca
OMAN
Port Sudan
Red Sea
Wadi Seidna
Khartoum
SUDAN
Sana
SOUTHERN YEMEN
DHUFAR
Arabian Sea
YEMEN
Aden
F.T.A.I.
Djibouti
SOCOTRA (S.Y.)
Zeila
ETHIOPIA
SOMALIA
Addis Ababa
0
500 Miles
0
500 Kilometers
BOUNDARY REPRESENTATION IS NOT NECESSARILY AUTHORITATIVE
INDIAN OCEAN

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visit to Syrian ports by the Soviet fleet. In addition to all this, Soviet disappointment was likely to have been particularly marked at the failure of their efforts in 1968 to secure the use of the large Algerian naval base at Mers-el-Kebir. Renewed efforts in April 1970 by Soviet Navy head Admiral Gorshkov to get the Algerians to agree to joint naval maneuvers with the USSR or to Soviet use of an Algerian port or military airfield were similarly rejected. In short, while the commitment the Soviet Union has offered the Arab cause has bought the USSR certain important strategic advantages, and may buy more, it has already been found insufficient to procure all the Soviet military planners wish to get.

There is some inherent conflict between Soviet military and political aims on this question of bases. The Soviet military establishment's desire to expand its use of overseas facilities runs directly counter to the old Soviet claim that only the imperialist West seeks foreign military bases, and never the USSR. Soviet articles in October 1970 plaintively repeated this general disclaimer while piously denying that the USSR had ever intended to secure a Soviet submarine base at Cienfuegos in Cuba. The prospect of acute problems with the US was a major factor prompting this Soviet dissembling attitude over Cienfuegos, but this was a special case; in most cases open acknowledgment of the existence of Soviet base facilities would not trigger such conflict. There are more general reasons for the public defensiveness which the Soviets continued to display on the matter of bases, and for the secrecy in which apparent Soviet efforts to secure a facility in Southern Yemen, for example, have been enveloped. It is probable that many in Moscow continue to feel that open acknowledgment of such facilities would be politically counterproductive. Besides the ideological embarrassment involved, the Soviets may be influenced in part by past British and US experience with some bases which, whatever their military value, constituted a major drain on the political credit which allowed them to be established.

A common Soviet subterfuge employed thus far with respect to Egyptian ports, and others, has been to use whatever facilities are required while allowing formal title to them to remain with the host country, thus avoiding the nomenclature of extraterritorial bases while obtaining much of the substance. But however the nature of the bases sought is disguised and qualified, the pressure of Soviet military ambitions is likely eventually to override Soviet pretensions to innocence on this subject. For their part the Chinese are likely to have more to say about Soviet bases as time goes on. And, in any event, as the Soviet Union behaves more and more like a conventional military power in these respects, it will necessarily incur more of the customary political liabilities from xenophobic nationalism, in addition to those it has already experienced.

The Soviets are pursuing other purposes which may to some extent be contradictory. While Soviet strategic planners may hope eventually to secure a military presence in the Persian Gulf, the USSR has thus far felt obliged to defer efforts in this direction and to deny haboring any such intention in order to propitiate Iran, which has made strong representations to the Soviets on this issue. The Soviets have made very large expenditures in recent years in the interests of blunting Iranian hostility and have no desire to see this investment wasted. (Indeed, it seems likely that the relatively low Soviet posture adopted toward the Dhufar rebellion in Muscat and Oman has been determined largely by a desire to avoid alarming Iran.*) Soviet strategic hopes regarding the Gulf may perforce be obliged to wait on the evolution of political prerequisites such as the gradual

*Contrariwise, the Chinese Communists, who have no relations with Iran, actively support the Dhufar rebellion and call the Persian Gulf the Arabian Gulf.

radicalization of the new Federation of Arabian Sheikdoms, and perhaps even the death of the Shah.

More immediately, the Soviets urgently desire that the Suez Canal be reopened, both for economic reasons and for strategic purposes. Yet the USSR is not likely to succeed while the Arab-Israeli confrontation goes on, if the Israelis remain intransigent about not permitting the canal to be used until a complete settlement has been reached. The Soviet Union may therefore find it most difficult to secure conditions which will in fact allow the canal to be reopened without at the same time reducing Egyptian military dependence on the Soviet Union and the Egyptian need and disposition to cooperate with Soviet strategic intentions.* There were reasons to believe Nasir's [redacted] assertions, in the months before his death in September 1970, that he was chafing at the degree to which he had become dependent on the Soviets and would gladly have sought to reduce their presence if conditions were created that would enable him to do without them. There is evidence that some Soviets have held this view of the UAR.

To recapitulate: the Western political base in the Middle East decayed first, and the Western military presence inevitably followed. The Soviet Union then established a political base first, and a Soviet military

*This Soviet problem could be eased, however, if the Israelis, in the interests of preserving a military stalemate with Egypt which would leave them in possession of the Sinai, should propose a mutual pullback from the canal which would allow the canal to be used. Israeli Defense Minister Dayan was reported to be toying with such a proposal in the fall of 1970. The Soviets would still, however, have the problem of persuading the UAR to accept such an agreement.

presence has now followed. But even now the Soviets do not "control" any of the Arab states they are exploiting against NATO and the US Navy in the sense that they control, say, Czechoslovakia. Soviet influence on most Arab regimes turns essentially on a convergence of certain foreign policy goals; as will be seen below (sections IV-C and D), despite some limited Communist gains in the area, many Arab radical nationalist regimes remain acutely suspicious of Soviet efforts to exert influence in their domestic affairs. This wall between foreign interests shared with the Soviet Union and domestic interests not shared has served as a restraint on Soviet ability to bend many Arab nationalist regimes to their will. Moreover, even when such regimes are disposed to cooperate in a given matter, the Soviet presence is vulnerable to possible turnovers in the often volatile Arab governments. The facility which the Soviets may hope to obtain at Aden or Socotra would not be much more firmly grounded in Soviet relations with the present South Yemeni government than was the US base at Wheelus Field in US relations with the government of Libya's King Idris.* And most important, the Soviets in the Middle East must always supply a desired quid pro quo. The Soviet military presence is dependent on continued Arab perception of common political interests, and like the Western presence before it, is highly vulnerable to any future fundamental change in the political situation. A final settlement of the entire Arab-Israeli dispute might well bring such a fundamental change, and there is evidence to suggest that even the remote prospect of such a settlement is therefore regarded with anxiety by Soviet military planners and intelligence officers.

*Indeed, even if those forces in the South Yemeni regime willing to give the Soviets a military facility prevail on this issue and then retain a hold on power, this is likely to pose problems for other Soviet strategic interests. The pro-Communist nature of the regime, the same factor which makes some South Yemenis disposed to cooperate with the USSR, has recently evoked increasing hostility toward South Yemen from the UAR and Libya as well as from more conservative states such as Saudi Arabia and Yemen.

B. The Dual Politics of Oil

A major area of Soviet uncertainty is the matter of Soviet policy toward Western oil interests in the Middle East. The USSR is here faced with a sizeable dilemma.

Given the central Soviet aim of maximum reduction of Western influence and maximum implantation of Soviet influence, the powerful economic position still held by the Western oil companies in much of the Middle East remains a formidable obstacle. In the conservative redoubt of the Middle East centering around the Persian Gulf -- in Iran, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and the small east Arabian states -- the central fact of economic life for each regime is the relationship with the Western oil interests which produce, transport, process, and market the product which brings a steady flow of wealth to each of these governments. Despite periodic squabbles between the regimes and the companies over the division of profits and the scope of production, their overall relationship promotes the economic and political orientation of these countries toward the West at the expense of the Soviet Union. The oil revenues are also, in the main, a factor strengthening the hand of local conservative forces both in their domestic and foreign policies, again at the expense of Soviet interests.* Where the oil revenues bring unsettling pressures for change, they also provide at least the means for orderly adaptation to change under continued conservative control. All this would seem

*For example, the Soviets have been greatly exercised about the pernicious influence of [redacted] money on the fedayeen organization Al Fatah. Soviet frustrations in supporting the republican side of the long Yemeni civil war [redacted]

to suggest that if the Western oil presence could somehow be undermined, the Soviets should rejoice.

Since the 1950s the monopoly of conservatives in area oil production has been broken in four radical oil-producing states of North Africa and the Middle East (Iraq, Egypt, Libya, and Algeria). In these states the role of the Western oil companies is a potential or actual source of tension between each regime and the West, but it is also one of the factors enabling some Western goods and influence to continue to enter to compete with Soviet influence. Thus here, too, the elimination of the Western oil companies would at first seem a logical goal of Soviet policy.

For nearly two decades, however, the Soviets and all the oil producing states, conservative and radical, have been deeply impressed and inhibited by the outcome of Mossadeq's attempt at oil nationalization in Iran in the early 1950s. Through their control of distribution and marketing facilities in the principal market area, Western Europe, the seven major international oil companies were able to prevent Mossadeq from selling Iranian oil. Iranian foreign exchange earnings fell toward zero, and Stalin was both unable and unwilling to render serious help. Eventually, after Mossadeq was ousted, the Iranian government negotiated an agreement acceptable to the oil companies, and the oil revenues again began to flow in.

Since that time, governments of the oil-producing states have repeatedly reminded themselves and each other that it was essential not to kill the goose that lays the golden eggs. Regimes toying with the notion of nationalization have again and again been restrained from such action by the memory of what

happened in Iran.* Similar considerations apply to proposals for an Arab oil boycott of Western countries, which Soviet and Egyptian propaganda was vainly encouraging for a few weeks after the 1967 war. Efforts by Arab militants to get the oil-producing states to use Western Europe's dependence on Middle Eastern oil as an instrument of anti-Israeli pressure have thus far been unavailing, because of each state's fear that a rash step would mean the loss of precious markets and foreign currency earnings to its rivals.**

In this respect the Soviet Union is therefore hampered in its natural desire to exploit the anti-American sentiment being generated in the Arab world by the Arab-Israeli conflict. While Soviet propaganda customarily devotes much attention to the depravity of the Western "oil monopolies" and the profits they extract from Arab soil, the Soviets are generally much more guarded in discussing what to do about it. While the Soviets occasionally report without comment some Arab hothead's call for nationalization of Arab oil resources, they withhold endorsement of this notion. They note that the oil question is "double-edged," and admit that

*[redacted] told the US Ambassador in October 1970 that the only reason the Arabs had not retaliated against US interests in the Middle East for the US support of Israel was because they had not found a way to do so without harming their own interests.

**During the boycott of Iranian oil in the early 1950s, Arab oil-producing states profited at Iranian expense. During the Suez crisis of 1956 and the accompanying temporary cessation or reduction of Arab oil sales in the West, the Iranians returned the compliment.

> cessation of oil extraction under conditions when they [the Arab countries] are still not in a position to exploit the oil resources by their own means would be not only a blow at the oil monopolies of the U.S. and England, but also would inflict great harm on the economic interests of the Arab states. (Za Rubezhom, No. 13, 1970)

Soviet apprehensions on this matter are many-fold. First, they apparently fear that if they encouraged an important oil-producing Arab state to nationalize its oil and that country then found it impossible to market its product, the Soviet Union and its allies might be expected to buy the oil. This would be virtually impossible on the scale required, even as part of a barter or long-term aid deal, and without expectation of payment in hard currencies. Although East European requirements for free world oil are expected to rise over the next decade, the quantities that could be absorbed from the Middle East will at best be of a much smaller order of magnitude than the exports of even one of the major Middle Eastern or North African oil-producing states.

Secondly, the Soviets would be even more embarrassed if the hypothetical country in question hoped to receive from the USSR the payment in hard, convertible currencies it is now getting from the Western oil companies. For the quantities of oil that would be involved, this would similarly be beyond Soviet capabilities, let alone desires. (Even if the USSR were to cede to the Middle Eastern state its own total share of the Western oil market and all the hard currency the USSR now earns through export of Soviet oil to the West -- obviously ridiculous -- this still would not suffice to replace the present hard currency earnings of any of several Middle Eastern oil-producers.) One of the greatest advantages the West has over the Soviet Union in the Middle East and North Africa is thus the

technological advantage over Eastern Europe and the USSR which makes Western goods -- and the hard currencies necessary to buy them -- much more attractive to oil-producing countries than the goods the Soviet bloc can offer in barter arrangements.*

Thirdly, the Soviets may fear unforeseeable political and military dangers arising from unpredictable Western reactions to such a drastic step by an Arab state. Despite the changed circumstances today, the Soviets still remember with dismay the risks run by Khrushchev at the time of the Suez crisis of 1956.

Finally, in some cases the Soviet Union has acquired some economic interest of its own in having the Western oil companies remain in place to exploit and sell the oil for the given country. A loss of the hard currency foreign exchange now earned by Egypt through Western exploitation of Egyptian oil might ultimately place an additional indirect burden on the Soviet Union to help support Egypt's economy. If the UAR were to lose the subsidies it now receives from Libya, Saudi Arabia or Kuwait as a result of oil nationalization in one of those countries, the costs to the Soviets of supporting the Egyptian regime might be similarly affected. Another type of economic interest exists in the case of Iran. Under terms of agreements signed with Iran in 1966 and 1967, the USSR

*Even an ultra-radical state such as Syria is unwilling to sell much of its small oil surplus to Eastern Europe, preferring the hard currency of the West. [redacted] in the summer of 1970, Syria informed Hungary that it had no additional crude oil to sell Hungary in 1970. Hungarian representatives in Damascus were told to try to buy Syrian oil for 1971. They suggested that certain lures such as motor vehicles or a five-year credit be offered to sweeten the negotiations and make sales to Hungary more palatable.

extended credits totalling $400 million to be used for construction in Iran of a steel mill complex, a heavy machinery plant, and a gas pipeline, and for the purchase of Soviet military goods. These credits were to be repaid by exporting natural gas to the Soviet Union over a 15-year period. The natural gas is produced in association with the oil by the Western Consortium in Iran. Unless the Consortium continues to extract and sell the oil, the Soviet Union will receive no natural gas and no repayment. And unless Iran continues to acquire foreign exchange through sale of the oil by the Consortium, Iranian investments necessary for the completion of the projects the USSR has undertaken in Iran will be impossible.

All this does not mean that the position of the seven major Western oil companies in the Middle East* is as impregnable today as it proved in Mossadeq's time, or that the Soviets can find no suitable avenue of attack on that position. A number of factors are tending to make the Western majors -- particularly those of the United States -- gradually more vulnerable.

Most important is the irrational factor. As Arab passions against the US grow because of the Arab-Israeli fight, it is by no means certain that calculations of rational economic self-interest will continue indefinitely to govern the policies of the oil-producing states. Eventually, a rash decision could be taken in one of these states -- e.g., Libya -- to strike back at the US through nationalization, despite the consequences. More likely and more imminent is the possibility of major sabotage, by Arab militants, of

*Standard Oil of New Jersey, Standard Oil of California, Texaco, Gulf, Mobil, Royal Dutch/Shell, and British Petroleum Co.

oil-producing or transporting facilities controlled by US companies.* The Soviets apparently disapprove of such acts, and certainly have no control over those who commit them. Nevertheless, the general Soviet policy of encouraging the greatest possible Arab hatred of the US and fanning the flames of Middle Eastern tension is an important factor assisting the growth of such fanaticism.

Also, the seven major international oil companies that successfully blackballed Mossadeq's oil no longer hold quite the overwhelming position in the international distribution and marketing system for oil that they did in Mossadeq's time. Their share of the world market has dropped from about 90 percent in 1952 to less than 75 percent today. They are therefore no longer as well situated as previously to prevent the marketing of nationalized oil. Moreover, it seems likely that West European populations and governments would not give the oil companies the support in such a crisis that was furnished in 1952 in the case of Iran.

Other, smaller foreign companies have acquired somewhat greater importance than before in the extraction of Arab oil. Over the years, the eagerness of Japanese and other interests to get a foot in the door has helped to bid up the share of revenues paid to the producing countries by the oil companies. In one case, Libya, the major oil corporations today produce only about half the oil output. The vulnerability of the

*Fortuitous events can also precipitate major trouble for the oil facilities. After an accident early this year broke the Saudi Arabian pipeline through Syria, TAPLINE, the Syrians seized the occasion to attempt to extract more money from Saudi Arabia. As a result, this pipeline was still closed in the fall of 1970, and ARAMCO oil thus still cut off from direct access to the Mediterranean.

smaller Western oil producers to Libyan government pressures gives the Libyans greater leverage over the major corporations.

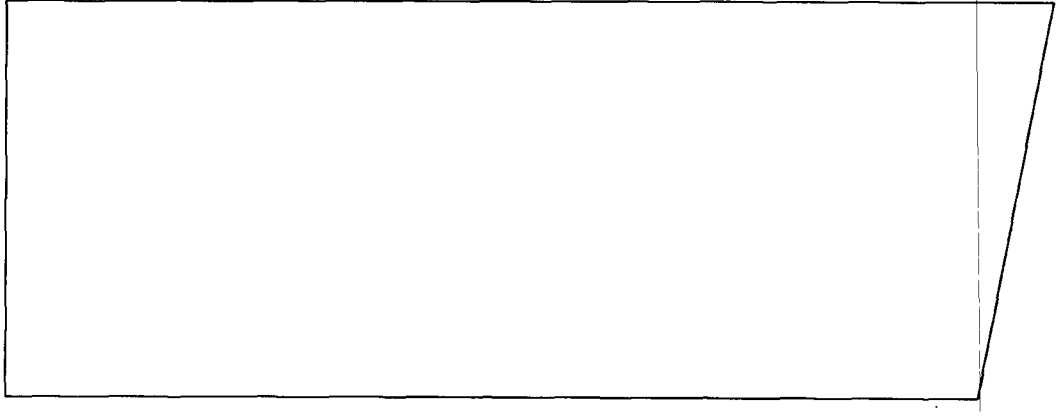
Another important phenomenon of the last decade -- as Soviet propaganda notes -- has been the growth of national oil companies owned by the producing states. These companies obtain oil either through production from areas reserved for themselves or through production for them under joint ventures, partnerships, and service contract agreements with foreigners. They sell some of the oil for hard, convertible currency to small, independent Western refiners or in direct marketing agreements with West Europe, but are forced to dispose of some of it in countries whose currency is not convertible -- i.e., East Europe -- in foreign aid and barter deals. In all the major oil-producing states of the area, the national company's share of the oil produced in still small, and its share of the country's hard currency earnings even smaller. Nevertheless, the Soviets apparently regard these national companies with considerable hope, and encourage them with technical help and with agreements for modest oil purchases in the future.

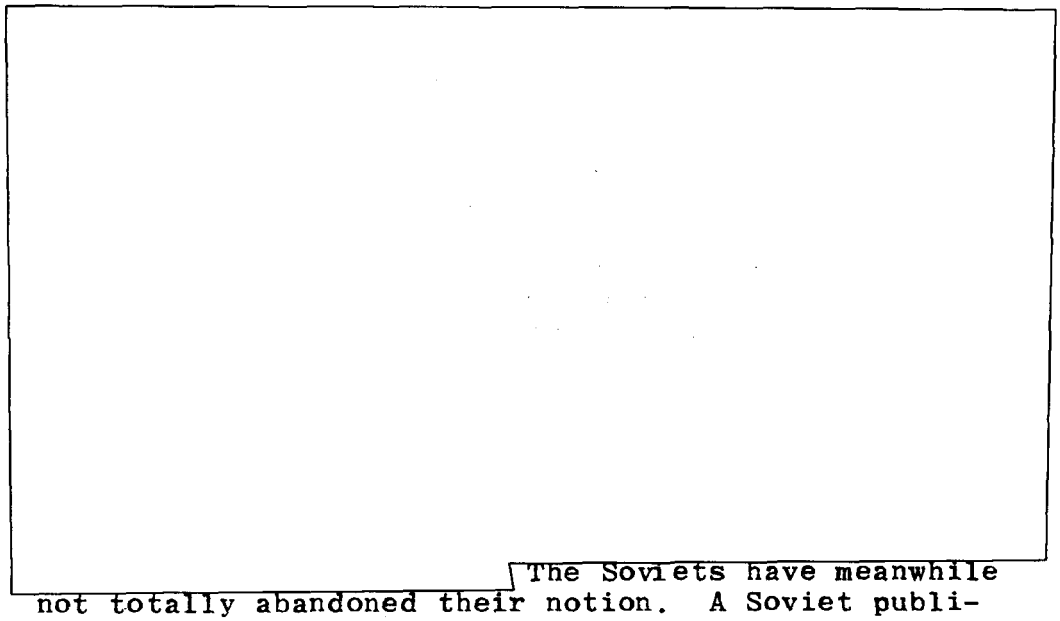
A step forward was taken in the rendering of such assistance when the USSR signed an agreement with Iraq in 1969 to help the national company exploit oil resources in Iraq's North Rumaila oilfield. The total oil production Iraq will expect to obtain from this operation will probably be less than a quarter the amount now produced and sold for hard currencies by the Iraq Petroleum Company (IPC), the foreign-owned consortium that developed Iraq's oil industry. Moreover, Iraq may find it difficult to sell all its North Rumaila oil for hard currency. Therefore, the Soviet agreement will not remove Iraq's basic dependence on the IPC for hard currency earnings. Nevertheless, it may have symbolic significance for the future, since the North Rumaila oilfield was originally part of the area concession held by the IPC, and was taken from the

IPC by Iraqi legislative fiat in 1961 without effective IPC countermeasures. If Iraq in the future could take other slices of oilfield concessions from the IPC in gradual succession without precipitating a crisis, if it could operate these fields with Soviet help, and if it could market their additional increments of oil for hard currency, it would have found a method of piecemeal, partial nationalization which other oil-producing states might emulate. Any such effort based on "salami tactics," however, would be difficult and long-drawn-out and its success problematical.

Still another negative factor for the major oil corporations is the Soviet capability to act as broker for oil-producing states in selling some of their oil in the West for hard currencies. Although, as noted earlier, the quantities the Soviets could handle in this way are too small to make oil nationalization practicable, this service would nevertheless be useful to the growth of the Middle Eastern national oil companies. Since the quantities of Soviet oil available for export probably will not grow much and could shrink over the next few years, the Soviets could fill the gap and try to maintain their present share of growing Western markets by selling some oil for Middle Eastern states.

Finally, the Soviets have gingerly begun to test a totally different approach to the problem of the intrenched position of the major Western oil companies.





The Soviets have meanwhile not totally abandoned their notion. A Soviet publication in March 1970 quoted approvingly an Egyptian newspaper recommendation that the Arabs practice "a differentiated approach to Western states and oil companies, taking into account their position in the Near East conflict"; to this end, said Za Rubezhom,* the Arab states should strive "to replace American capital investments with the capital of Western European countries, drawing them into both the oil-extracting and the oil-processing industry, as is taking place in Libyan-French relations."

All these considerations of the pros and cons of Arab nationalization of Western oil holdings also suggest answers to a more basic question: do the Soviets lust for the oil themselves?

*No. 13, 1970.

This question is ambiguous. If it is interpreted as asking merely whether the Soviets have an economic interest in buying some Middle Eastern oil, the answer of course is yes. For the reasons already cited, the Soviets have a growing interest in acquiring some oil to resell. However, even though the amounts so desired will probably increase, they will at most amount to no more than a small fraction of Middle Eastern production, and therefore need not in themselves upset present basic marketing arrangements.

But if, on the other hand, the question is interpreted to inquire whether the Soviets feel that they want or need all, or most, or even a large portion of Middle Eastern oil, the answer is "probably not." If the question is further refined to ask whether the Soviets seek to possess or control Middle Eastern oil as a matter of economic warfare, in order to have and use it themselves and deny it or dole it out to the present Western consumers, there are good reasons why this also seems improbable.

In the first place, the Soviets are already the second largest producer of oil in the world (after the United States), and as already noted, they are important competitors of the Middle Eastern states. The Soviet Union is a sizeable net exporter of oil (chiefly to Eastern and Western Europe) and will almost certainly remain so indefinitely, the only uncertainty being the precise level of future exports that will be permitted by future Soviet domestic production and consumption levels. Therefore, it is unlikely that the Soviets will ever need foreign oil "for themselves" (i.e., for domestic consumption).

Under present circumstances the Soviets show no desire even to seek to buy large quantities of Middle Eastern oil or to make sacrifices for this purpose. The USSR and East Europe have taken only an insignificant segment of Middle East oil production (around one percent) as payment in barter and aid deals. This is partly because not much more has been offered them and partly because, as noted, the Soviets have so far

had only limited use for such oil for resale and virtually no need for it for domestic consumption. A more fundamental reason is the general Soviet aversion to becoming dependent on foreign sources for large quantities of any important raw material. Thus, the Soviets may have a mild interest in buying some of Iran's surplus oil for consumption in adjacent areas of the Soviet Union, to economize distribution costs of supplying Soviet oil to those areas. But the Soviets have thus far not been sufficiently eager to do this to be willing to underwrite the cost of constructing an oil pipeline in Iran to carry such oil to the Soviet border. Soviet President Podgornyy made this point clear when asked about the matter during a visit to Iran in the spring of 1970.

With this in mind, we may list the alternatives for the future in decreasing order of probability.

a. First, as previously indicated, the Soviets may indeed have a growing need in future years for supplementary supplies of oil from outside the Soviet Union -- not for their own use, but for resale to Eastern and Western Europe. They will want this additional oil -- if, as expected, their own supplies of oil available for export eventually diminish somewhat -- particularly in order to maintain their present volume of oil sales, and thus hard currency earnings, to Western Europe. If they also want to try to maintain their present relative share of the growing Western European market, they will need to buy still more foreign oil. In either case, however, the quantities desired to fill the gap could not total more than a small fraction of Middle East oil production. Moreover, as noted, the Soviets certainly will not pay hard currency for such oil, since the major purpose of procuring the oil will be to sell it to obtain hard currency. The Soviets will instead seek to

obtain the oil in barter trade or as payment for Soviet economic or military aid to the Middle Eastern states. Since these states put a high priority on maintenance of their own hard currency earnings, they would hardly be likely to reduce the Western oil companies' hard-currency sales of their oil to the West merely to find oil for the Soviets; but the fact that only a relatively small portion of total oil production would be sought by the Soviets would make this unnecessary in any case. If the Soviets do seek some more Middle Eastern oil, they will therefore obtain it from the holdings of the national oil companies of the Middle Eastern states, holdings which also constitute only a small fraction of total production at present, but which will probably grow as time goes on. Yet another limitation, however, is imposed by the desire of the Middle East states to earn still more foreign exchange through sales by the national oil companies themselves to the West. In the end, the quantities of oil the Soviets actually obtain from the Middle East for resale will be determined by a mixture of factors, including the amount the Soviets seek; the quantity then available to the national companies; the portion of this total that these national companies succeed in selling in the West (and therefore the amount that will be left over for the Soviets); the quantity of arms and economic aid that the Soviets provide to the Middle Eastern states, to be repaid in oil; and the degree of success the Soviets have in improving the quality of their trade goods to make them more attractive in barter trade. In sum, the Soviets will in the future doubtless obtain more Middle Eastern oil, but they will probably neither seek nor obtain quantities likely to affect significantly what is sold directly to the West.

b. The Soviets may, as noted earlier, act as brokers for the national oil companies in selling their oil for hard currency to some of the Soviets' own customers in the West. The Soviets might combine such a role with help to the national oil companies in producing the oil, therefore at least hypothetically preparing the way for piecemeal nationalization of holdings granted to the Western oil companies (e.g., in Iraq). While some steps in this direction may be taken, it is questionable whether nationalization could be completed in this way without first endangering the existing markets of the state concerned. It is also uncertain whether the USSR could steadily expand its own markets in the West sufficiently to accommodate the inputs of newly-nationalized oil from the Middle Eastern states. If not, Soviet brokerage services would not eliminate the dependence of the Middle Eastern states on the Western oil companies. Such services might nevertheless help the earnings and growth of the national oil companies, but could affect only a minor portion of Middle East oil production, because of the limited size of the existing Soviet oil market in the West and the even more limited number of customers the Soviets could not satisfy themselves. Indeed, to the extent that the Soviets do any such brokerage business for the Middle Eastern states at all, the USSR will sacrifice some potential hard currency earnings it could have accrued for itself through sale of either native Soviet or purchased Middle Eastern oil. The fees the Soviets would earn would not fully make up the difference. This hint of sacrifice renders the brokerage concept a shade less likely an alternative for the Soviets than the first alternative of barter purchase and resale. If the Soviets find it impossible

to buy all the Middle Eastern oil they need to fill their markets, they may be willing to act as brokers for the rest.

c. Moving toward outright improbabilities, a third alternative might be a sudden attempt by the Soviets to replace totally the Western oil companies in one or more Middle Eastern states in all their present roles of discovering, extracting, transporting, refining, and selling the oil in the West. This would presumably follow an outright act of nationalization. While it is conceivable that the USSR could carry out the exploration and production functions, it would find the usurpation of the marketing function from the Western companies a most difficult and risky business, and it might find the transportation function beyond Soviet capabilities entirely. The sum of all these uncertainties will probably make such reliance on the Soviets seem an undesirable risk of hard currency earnings to the Middle Eastern states for the foreseeable future. Introducing the Soviets into the picture might seem to the nationalizing state a move which would make it more rather than less difficult to get the West to swallow the pill. The Soviets, for their part, would probably consider the political and even military risks of such an effort to outweigh the possible gains.* It is far more

*Thus in the fall of 1970 the Soviets were reported [redacted] to have been asked by the Libyans to supply personnel to supervise operation of oil fields in Libya. (There was no mention of transportation or marketing.) The Soviets are said to have replied that they would not supply the large number of personnel required "because of other commitments" but that they could provide limited technical assistance. Moreover, they stated that they did not want to become involved in a "direct confrontation" with Western interests at a time of general Middle Eastern tension.

likely, if nationalization of any Western oil concessions does occur, that the national oil company of the state concerned will attempt to deal directly with the governments of the consuming states to make marketing and transportation possible.

d. Finally, "getting" the oil of the Middle East might be defined as obtaining political sovereignty and military control over the oil reserves. This is the most improbable alternative as a realistic Soviet goal. It is true that the Soviets would no doubt be gratified -- if there were no other considerations -- to find themselves one day the possessors of a major producing source of Middle Eastern oil. One could imagine this happening either through Soviet direct absorption of the country in question or through a Communist revolution that somehow converted the country into a satellite of unprecedented obedience. The Soviets would be pleased at this major addition to their oil reserves, they might be happy to delay the exploration and development costs of exploiting new fields in the Soviet Union, and they might find production costs of the big newly-acquired source cheaper than those of some existing Soviet sources. But even if they simply added the new oil to what they would otherwise have produced, their total domestic consumption would for the time being probably not increase much faster. If total production were nevertheless allowed to rise, immediate use of the additional oil would therefore at most serve directly or indirectly to bolster foreign exports and the earning of foreign exchange. If the Soviets could find the West meekly accepting the change

because of dire need and continuing to purchase Middle Eastern oil exactly as before, the USSR would have greatly enlarged its share of the Western oil market. If not, the Soviet Union might have to shut down some of its old or newly-acquired oil wells.

To the Soviet leadership, however, calculations such as these almost certainly must appear as fantasy. They would consider such possible economic benefits as far from commensurate with what they would feel to be probable enormous political costs and military risks. They would expect Soviet acquisition of such a Middle Eastern state to precipitate a grave political crisis in all Soviet relationships with the United States and the West generally. They could not rule out the possibility of a military confrontation over the issue. Equally important, they would also expect the Soviet relationship with other Middle Eastern states -- and, indeed, the underdeveloped world as a whole -- to be gravely damaged, and that of the United States to be strengthened. Similarly, they would expect Communist China to make widespread gains at Soviet expense. Since the death of Stalin, the Soviet leadership has attached great importance to the avoidance where possible of such self-inflicted political wounds and the minimization in the underdeveloped world of fear of crude Soviet aggression.

Thus, the evidence suggests that while the Soviet Union would find it pleasant to possess the oil of the Middle East -- as it would find even more use for comparable valuables such as, say, the Ruhr or Japanese industry -- it has no great economic need for any of these valuables. Soviet policy is not motivated by a classical economic imperialism seeking to expand to assimilate new sources of wealth from outside. The Soviet empire in Eastern Europe and Mongolia is maintained for ideological, political, and military reasons. If the military costs of maintaining this empire are included (as they should be),

the Soviet Bloc costs the USSR at least as much, perhaps more in economic terms than it obtains from it. Cuba clearly is a net economic burden supported for political and military benefits. Similarly, Soviet policy toward the outside world is largely governed by determination to expand -- at US expense -- Soviet political influence, and where possible, hegemony, often at considerable economic cost.

In sum, the oil of the Middle East has some significance to the Soviet Union in economic terms, particularly as a potential source of additional hard currency which could be used to import Western technology and equipment. Soviet economic interest in this oil is, however, moderate. It is not a vital Soviet national interest for which the Soviets would willingly sacrifice long-established political goals. Of greater significance to the Soviet Union is the manipulation of the issue of the oil to weaken the political position of the US and strengthen that of the Soviet Union. In a word, the acquisition of oil gains of some kind in the Middle East would constitute a bonus factor for Moscow -- welcome only in those cases where Soviet political and military interests did not suffer but clearly profited in the first instance from the particular development or transaction.

C. The Rewards and Hazards of Foreign Aid

Another area of perplexity and occasional dispute within the Soviet leadership in the formation of policy toward the Middle East has been the question of expenditures for aid. Within a general post-Stalin consensus that promotion of a military and economic assistance program in the Middle East promised political dividends that Stalin had neglected, there has been plenty of room for recurrent differences over the details and scope of aid.

Generally, there seems to have been less controversy over military assistance than over some economic

projects, perhaps because the political returns from Soviet military aid in the Middle East have often been so much more spectacular and difficult to deny. In addition, large-scale, long-term economic assistance sometimes raises ideological problems more directly.* This is because such economic projects bring into sharper focus the question of the nature of the regime whose economy is being aided by the Soviet Union and the desirability of helping a bourgeois-run society to strengthen itself. Thus in the early post-Stalin years the Indian Communist Party was at first greatly embarrassed by the introduction of Soviet aid to India because this necessitated a gradual reversal of the Party's attitude toward Nehru. Later, in the early years of open Sino-Soviet dispute the Communist Chinese criticized the scope of Soviet aid to Nehru and to Nasir as tending to perpetuate the rule of the local bourgeoisie. At that time, Khrushchev showed considerable defensiveness about such charges.** More recently, the Soviet leadership has

*Military assistance is generally on safer ideological ground, since it can be described as helping the armed resistance of "revolutionary" or "patriotic" forces to "imperialism." Thus in the second half of 1960, soon after the collapse of the summit conference and the eruption of the Sino-Soviet conflict, the USSR embarked on an unprecedented wave of military aid activity. This seemed aimed largely at demonstrating to the rest of the Communist world militant Soviet support for the "national liberation movement," in the face of Chinese Communist charges that the Soviets were discouraging armed struggle.

**In December 1962 and August 1963 Pravda published elaborate and explicit defenses against what were depicted as Chinese Communist claims that Soviet economic aid to developing countries in which "progressive forces" are a small minority is of no value and only serves to strengthen capitalism. In August 1963 Pravda went so far as to construct a detailed chronology to show the political gains the Communist world had received from such Soviet aid since 1956. Pravda supported its advertisement with testimonials from local Communists in underdeveloped countries about the value of this aid.

been somewhat less sensitive about the ideological factor, and has for example entered into large economic arrangements with the pro-Western Shah of Iran which Stalin would not have considered proposing to the anti-Western Mossadeq in 1952.

Thus, Soviet leadership attitudes on aid spending have been based partly on necessarily subjective and changeable estimates of the political usefulness or appropriateness of an expenditure in a given country. Such opinions are likely to have varied somewhat from one leader to another, both under the early post-Stalin leadership and today.

In addition, optimism about the overall returns to be expected from aid generally has been modified by time and experience. Certainly the fate of the $1 billion thrown away in military and economic assistance to Sukarno's regime in Indonesia has been a chastening experience to the Soviet Union, in view of the cold Soviet relations with the present Indonesian regime. In the volatile Middle East, the USSR has also had temporary setbacks and disappointments because of the occasional replacement of regimes and individuals it had been cultivating with aid -- in Algeria, Syria, and Iraq, for example. And although the Soviet leadership was willing to renew its bet by replacing the large quantities of equipment lost by the Arab states in the war of 1967, it has surely not been totally oblivious to the sizeable sums expended.

Finally, the state of budgetary pressure is a factor which has undoubtedly affected the timing of many aid allocations for the Middle East. In the Soviet Union as in the US, even relatively modest sums proposed to be sent abroad may be questioned more sharply than before if political pressure arises sufficiently over competing claims on the national purse.

One of the early questions that was likely to have been affected by differences among the Soviet leadership was that of aid to the Aswan Dam project. [redacted] within a year after

Stalin's death, the Soviets had begun to entice the new Egyptian revolutionary government with offers of help on the Aswan project. These offers were reiterated by Pravda editor Shepilov during a visit to Cairo in August 1955, and were publicly stated in October. In December 1955 the Soviet ambassador said that even if the West agreed to finance the dam, the Soviet Union would still like to participate in the project. In May 1956 Nasir began to show some renewed interest in the Soviet offer, whose terms reportedly had been further liberalized.

In July 1956, however, the United States withdrew its own previous proposal to construct the dam, suggesting at the same time that Egypt was not an economically sound country. Immediately thereafter, the Soviet Union pulled back, and Soviet spokesmen denied that a commitment had been made to finance the dam. There were simultaneous signs of confusion in Soviet officialdom, however, and the Soviet ambassador made statements implying that such a commitment had indeed been made; these statements were then denied.

Thereafter, there was silence from the Soviet Union about economic commitments to Nasir for a year and a half. It was not until January 1958 -- three years after the Soviets had signed a major agreement to build a steel plant for India at Bhilai -- that the Soviets extended their first sizeable line of credit to Nasir for economic development. And it was not until December 1958 that the Soviets signed an agreement to build the first stage of the Aswan Dam.

In the interval -- in June 1957 -- Khrushchev's opposition, the "anti-party group" led by Molotov, Malenkov, and Kaganovich, had been expelled from the Soviet leadership. There is some reason to believe that opposition from the conservative members of this group had been at least one factor in the long Soviet hesitation over making major economic commitments to Nasir.

Evidence of such differences is normally kept from the public eye, but on one occasion -- at the 21st Congress of the Soviet Party in February 1959 -- the veil was lifted inadvertently for an instant. This revelation was made in a speech of recantation delivered at the congress by Maxim Saburov, a junior member of the "anti-party group" removed from power in 1957. Saburov accused the leaders of the "anti-party group" of having "opposed the bringing up of certain foreign-affairs problems" or having "held up their solution." Among other things, he said, this included the matter of Soviet "assistance to underdeveloped countries." The regime has never made any such direct statement on this point, presumably because of the sensitivity of the matter. Perhaps for this reason, some hours after Saburov's speech was summarized by TASS it was expunged from the Pravda record, and even the fact that he had spoken was not reported.

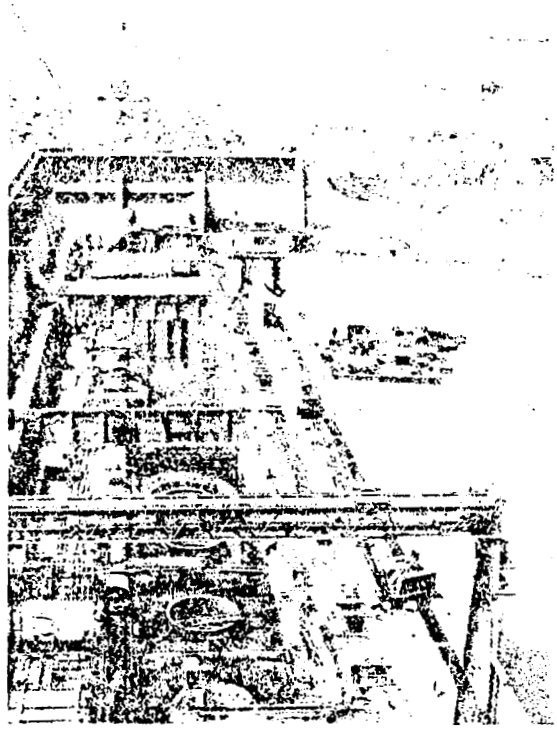
If Saburov's allegations are correct, it is likely that there was dissension in the Soviet leadership in July 1956 over the embarrassing predicament created by the unexpected US rejection of the Aswan project.* It is possible that the two conservatives,

*Fourteen years later, Khrushchev in his memoirs Khrushchev Remembers referred to the Aswan Dam and then added:

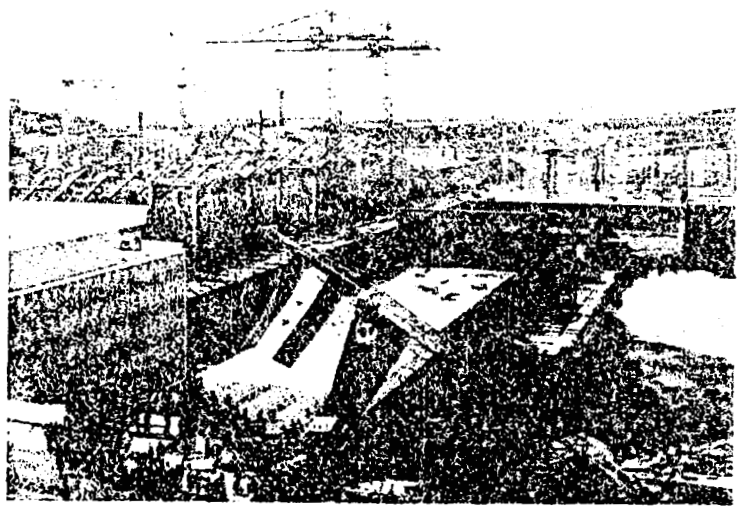
> I think our policy toward Egypt was unquestionably sound, and it has already repaid us in full. I'm still convinced my own judgments were correct -- despite the grumbling of those skunks, those narrow-minded skunks who raised such a stink and tried to poison the waters of our relations with Egypt.

While Khrushchev does not elaborate, it seems likely that he was alluding to Molotov and Kaganovich and their opposition in 1956 and 1957 to the building of the Aswan Dam.

Construction of the Aswan Dam



Power House and Dam, April 1968



Celebration of Eighth Anniversary of Construction Start, January 1968

Molotov and Kaganovich, had previously been induced to go along with authorization of politically profitable offers to Egypt on the assumption that the US would in fact build the dam and the Soviet Union would never be faced with a challenge to follow through. When that challenge did materialize, they forced an embarrassing retreat. Their opposition to a large Soviet economic commitment to Nasir may have been partially influenced by the adverse US appraisal of the capability of the Egyptian economy to absorb such aid. More fundamentally, however, they seem to have distrusted Nasir on ideological grounds, and like the US, questioned the wisdom of such a sizeable financial sacrifice and long-term commitment for the sake of a mercurial and unpredictable Egyptian leadership.*

This distrustful attitude toward Nasir never completely disappeared in the Soviet Union. Briefing a foreign Communist delegation in 1964 after Khrushchev's fall, Soviet Party secretary Ponomarev alluded to Khrushchev's award of the Hero of the Soviet Union medal and the Order of Lenin to Nasir and complained indignantly that "this is the highest Soviet order and we all know what Nasir is." In the fall of 1969,

said that Nasir

*India, on the other hand, was much more of a known quantity as well as a more valuable target for long-term cultivation through investment, with a stable leadership with clearly-defined and acceptable policies, an immense improverished population waiting to be influenced, and an important Communist Party whose influence might grow over the long term. The principle of major economic aid to India was therefore accepted more quickly within the post-Stalin Soviet leadership. The attitude taken by Molotov and Kaganovich toward foreign aid seems to have been halfway between Stalin's blank negativism and Khrushchev's relative open-handedness.

was considered a mere petit-bourgeois nationalist at the time of the Egyptian revolution in 1952: the speaker noted some internal reforms Nasir had carried out since then and expressed hope that he would be forced further to the left; nevertheless, "although Nasir has changed his attitudes he still does not represent a progressive ideology -- we refer to such leaders as revolutionary democrats."

While such reservations have not been strong enough over the years to prevent the steady climb of Soviet military and economic assistance to Egypt, they have provided some ideological backing for a continual undercurrent of complaints in the USSR about these expenditures. In September 1962 Pravda made a rare effort to recognize and respond to such complaints by publishing a letter rebuking the views of citizens who say "that we give too much help to underdeveloped countries." This attitude also seems shared within the Soviet elite. In February 1963, in conversation with a US official, a Soviet diplomat admitted that there was strong opposition in the USSR to foreign aid, and said that many people felt that for the amount of money expended on the Aswan Dam, for example, "seven or eight" projects of similar magnitude could be completed in the USSR. Capping it all, he said, was the feeling that the Egyptians "are not worth it."

There are reports from many sources that one of the charges made against Khrushchev after his ouster in October 1964 was that he had made a major new aid commitment to Egypt during his visit there in May without securing Presidium approval. Although this was generally interpreted merely as an objection to Khrushchev's high-handed method of rule, a few reports suggest that it also reflected resentment in some circles of the aid expenditure itself. One version of a document prepared by the Central Committee on the Khrushchev ouster said that "he granted credits of a magnitude unacceptable to the Central Committee Presidium, and forced the Presidium to approve them. Egypt is given as an example." An account of the report on the ouster given by Ukrainian Party chief

Shelest to the Ukrainian leadership attributed to Shelest the view that Khrushchev had "granted 100,000,000 pounds in credits to the UAR when the USSR itself had no money."

In November 1964, the influential Egyptian editor Heykal, returning from a high-level visit to the Soviet Union, stated that the Soviets would probably keep their present commitments to the UAR, but noted a growing resentment of foreign aid on the part of the Soviet people. The following month, a Soviet diplomat told a US observer that there had recently been "lively discussions" in Moscow about the value of Soviet assistance programs, since some felt the money and effort could be used to better purpose at home.

All this muttering in Moscow about foreign aid has been accompanied by recurrent complaints from the East Europeans about the portion of the burden of such aid assigned to them by the Soviet Union. There are several good reports of efforts over the years by Czechoslovak President Novotny to persuade the Soviets to reduce the load heaped on Prague.* In March 1962, an article in a Hungarian Party journal addressed itself to "comrades in our Party who do not understand the necessity of aid to young national states." While appealing for wider understanding of the political benefits of bloc aid, the article nevertheless made a point of rejecting the claims of

*Such complaints are a two-way street. In the spring of 1970 Soviet Foreign Minister Gromyko is reported to have expressed concern to high Czechoslovak officials at the extent of the USSR's Middle East burden and requested a larger Czech contribution. The now supine Czechoslovaks are said to have agreed to reopen three former camps for training Arabs which allegedly had been closed down in 1968 under Dubcek.

"some" that the bloc has an obligation to increase such aid "even at the expense of their economies." [redacted] the then Polish party chief Gomulka refused a Soviet demand that Poland invest in production of certain military vehicles to be used in part to supply the Arab states.

Despite all this, after an extensive review of the Soviet foreign aid program the post-Khrushchev leadership apparently concluded that while aid requests in general should be looked at with a more jaundiced eye and granted more selectively, the Middle East deserved an even higher priority in the Soviet aid budget. In particular, it was evidently decided that aid policies toward Egypt were politically justified and would continue to be the cornerstone of Soviet policy in the Middle East. Not only was military assistance expanded after the 1967 war to include replacement of the hundreds of millions of dollars worth of equipment lost, but a large new economic project was inaugurated in 1968 as the successor showpiece to the Aswan Dam project. This involved the commitment of $161 million for an industrial complex to be built near Helwan, centering around a major iron and steel plant.

Elsewhere in the Middle East, sizeable Soviet aid projects continue to go forward, most notably the Euphrates river project in Syria. The Soviets continue to be alert for targets of opportunity in their aid policy, and apparently recognized such an opportunity after a left-nationalist coup in Sudan in May 1969. Late in 1969 the USSR offered to supply the new regime with credits to begin construction of the important Rahad irrigation project, at a time when loans for this purpose were being sought from the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD). When the IBRD continued to delay because of a desire to force Sudan to put its economic house in order, the Sudanese government in June 1970 announced acceptance of the Communist offer. This sequence of events resembled the pattern in which the USSR had replaced the West in 1955-1958 as the builder of the

Aswan Dam for another new revolutionary government, although the sums involved in Sudan are much smaller.

This does not mean that the various political pressures against the foreign aid program have had no effect. Aid allocations, including those for the Middle East, have undoubtedly been involved like other Soviet expenditures in the annual budgetary bargaining, and have been whittled down accordingly. In some years requested aid commitment for one country or another have had to be deferred entirely because it was felt in Moscow that the money simply could not be spared for some time. The knowledge that the foreign aid program is a politically sensitive one at home has also undoubtedly helped spur Soviet leaders to drive hard bargains in trade and payment agreements and to press Middle Eastern countries that were sluggish in repaying credits. This has caused recurrent problems with Egypt, Syria, and Iraq. Discomfiting experiences with aid to highly unstable Middle Eastern governments has also reinforced caution when the prospects for a regime are particularly cloudy. When the new regime in Southern Yemen requested Soviet aid in early 1968, the Soviets sent some limited military assistance but deferred economic credits for some time while they waited for the chaos in the country to subside. In the fall of 1968 the Soviet ambassador in Aden remarked indignantly that the South Yemenis were trying to pressure Moscow to hasten the granting of economic assistance by sending a delegation to Peking to secure Chinese aid. While some Soviet economic help was eventually forthcoming, these Soviet recriminations were apparently repeated after South Yemen received a new Chinese credit in 1970.

Beyond this, the Soviet military and economic aid program for the Middle East is now generally intertwined in the Soviet mind with both the advances and the frustrations and risks the Soviets encounter there. Objections to what might otherwise seem reasonable financial costs are heightened by their association with political anxieties and growing military dangers. Although this has not yet had a major inhibiting effect on Soviet policy, there is little doubt that it is now,

more than ever, a live political issue. In November 1967, for example, Soviet Ambassador to Iran Zaytsev* remarked to the Polish Ambassador in Tehran that it is not good economic policy for the Soviet Union to resupply arms to the Arab states. Zaytsev hastened to add that it was obviously a political necessity to do so, but that he thought the added burden of supporting the Arabs would work a hardship on the Soviet Union. He also felt that no one should consider the Arabs completely reliable from a political point of view, and said he was bothered by the fact that Soviet aid was often not properly utilized. His Polish colleague emphatically agreed.

Evidence that this point of view is still represented in influential Moscow circles was provided in early 1970, [redacted] quoted Soviet Central Committee officials as having told him on a recent visit that the Soviet population blames the Arabs for many of their domestic difficulties. A frequent complaint, he said, is that the Soviet Union is doing a great deal for the Arabs, but the Arabs do not know how to fight and are wasting the materiel support from the Soviet Union. This results, he claimed, in strains on the Soviet budget and more belt-tightening for the Soviet population. Also, in a January 1970 editorial summarizing the foreign and domestic matters discussed at an important closed plenum of the Central Committee the month before, Izvestiya made a highly unusual defense of the costs incurred by current Soviet foreign policy. After reviewing the Central Committee's examination of foreign policy -- particularly policy toward the Middle East -- the editorial declared:

> The socialist countries are steadfastly fulfilling their revolutionary

*Zaytsev is a long-term Arab specialist and a graduate of the Moscow Institute of Economics.

> international duty. This is placing a definite and considerable material load on the socialist countries. But what would happen if the aggressive forces were not receiving a decisive rebuff? In such a case they would be proceeding further along the path of armed adventures and would be creating an even greater threat to universal peace.

The polemical overtones of this statement suggest that controversy exists over the costs being defended. It is likely that such controversy will continue and will grow if the USSR becomes still more deeply involved in the Arab-Israeli confrontation.

The Limits of Soviet Leverage

At the heart of the issue, for the complainers, is the question of the degree of influence that the Soviets actually obtain for their money. To a certain extent, Soviet influence today over the radical Arab states is indeed fortified by their varying degrees of dependence on the USSR and Eastern Europe for economic and military assistance. The Soviet Union's use or planned use of bases for its own strategic purposes in the UAR and Southern Yemen is closely tied to Soviet assistance to those states. In the last analysis, such states as Egypt, Syria and Iraq can look neither to the West nor to Communist China for really significant quantities of such help, as a 1969 Syrian mission to China was again reminded. Despite all of Syria's annoyance with the Soviet Union, up to now it has had nowhere else to go for most of the wherewithall to fight Israel.

Nevertheless, the Soviets have nowhere else to go, either. That is, although the Soviets can and do deny individual Arab states some particular weapons

they desire,* the Soviets are limited in how much they can deny by their own felt political needs. No matter how these Arab states behave, the USSR would find it difficult not merely to threaten but actually to enforce a complete cutoff of the flow of military hardware.** Such an action would be portrayed publicly as a betrayal of the Arab cause. This is realized by all concerned. Therefore, while Soviet aid helps to ensure a continuing tie with sometimes recalcitrant recipients (a very strong tie with the UAR, a fairly strong one with Syria and Iraq, a rather weak one with Algeria), the Soviets have been unable to translate it into more than very moderate leverage over radical Arab policy.*** The Soviet Union has thus now fallen heir to some of the apparently universal frustrations of a great power

*For example, when the Soviets began to furnish the SA-3 anti-aircraft missile to Egypt in the spring of 1970, the Syrians are reported to have asked that they also be given this weapons system; and this request was refused, at least for the time being.

**Financial considerations, however, are apparently another matter. Irritated at Iraqi slowness in repaying previous credits, the Soviets in 1970 were reported to have refused to supply new weapons on anything other than a cash basis, arguing that Iraq had sufficient cash at hand. The Soviets are thus less ready to put up with lagging repayment from Arab states that have proven particularly recalictrant in policy matters (such as Iraq) than for those who are more cooperative (such as the UAR).

***This statement applies only to the radical Arabs' policy in the Middle East, which is their primary concern. The Soviets do appear to have gained considerable leverage over the radical Arab reactions to events elsewhere. Notable was the absence of significant Arab criticism of the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in August 1968, or of the Soviet veiled threats of nuclear attack against China a year later.

practicing foreign aid and has rediscovered vexing limitations on the returns to be expected from such aid.

At most, the Soviets have been able to tip the balance on decisions by the radical Arabs that they were already inclined to consider for other reasons. (E.g., Nasir's August 1970 decision to accept the US proposal for a ceasefire; the Syrian regime's decision to go along with this Nasir decision; the Iraqi government's early 1970 decision to accept an agreement with the Kurds; the Syrian regime's September 1970 decision to withdraw its invading tank units from Jordan.) In dealing with the radical Arabs, the Soviets spend much of their time reacting to Arab initiatives. Sometimes this involves a direct request to the USSR, such as Nasir's January 1970 appeal for additional Soviet air defense help. Often it involves frantic Soviet efforts -- sometimes successful, sometimes not -- to head off unilateral actions by the radical states with undesirable or dangerous overtones. The Soviets thus strove to get the Syrians to cease their interventions in Lebanon in the fall of 1969 and the spring of 1970, as well as in Jordan in the fall of 1970, and in each case the Syrians did eventually desist for the time being, although largely for reasons of their own and not primarily because of Soviet wishes. The Soviets failed, however, when they tried to get the Syrians to halt a crackdown on the Communist Party in the spring of 1970, and when they attempted in August 1970 to pressure Iraq into abandoning opposition to the temporary ceasefire with Israel. The Soviet relationship with the radical Arab states that receive Soviet aid thus resembles that of a boy continually engaged in plugging recurrent leaks at different points along a dike.

Finally, the Soviet problem has been compounded in recent years by the appearance of gaps in Soviet domination of the supply of aid to militant Arabs. One key feature of the rise of the Palestenian fedayeen movement since 1967 has been its very broad base of financial support throughout the Arab world. For example, the Soviets have been most unhappy at the extent of Saudi Arabian backing for Fatah, the largest fedayeen

organization. At the other extreme, Communist China has also provided some training and weapons to the fedayeen, and the Soviets have shown what seems disproportionate concern over Chinese influence over the fedayeen. At the same time, Soviet encouragement of Nasir to accept subsidies from Saudi Arabia and other Arab oil-producing states (a Soviet ideological concession to financial stringency) eliminated for the time being Soviet ability to benefit as in former years from Nasir's revolutionary campaigns against these conservative states.*

In addition, the Soviets may regard the French sale of jet fighters to Libya as a mixed blessing and an ominous sign for the future. The USSR certainly welcomes the resulting US-French friction and the additional strains on US-Arab relations produced indirectly by this sale (by increasing pressure on the US to sell more planes to Israel). But the Soviets probably feel that in the long run they will lose more than they will gain if this sale presages further arms sales from Western sources to other radical Arab states. For this reason, the Soviets were probably particularly gratified when the Libyans finally agreed to accept Soviet arms and deliveries commenced in the summer of 1970. The USSR will undoubtedly attempt to use this success in an effort to block the French from further arms sales, and if possible to secure cancellation of the French aircraft deal. The Soviets may sense that while the US will suffer from such French sales (because of further friction with its allies and the heightening of the arms race and Middle Eastern tension), the USSR

*This is not to imply that countries such as Saudi Arabia are now free from indigenous pressures for revolutionary change, but merely that Egyptian-sponsored efforts to bring about such change -- in the past, a very important threat to these regimes -- must now necessarily be muted so long as Egypt is dependent on its subsidies.

will lose some of the limited leverage it now has over the policies of the radical Arabs if a serious breach is made in its near-monopoly as arms supplier to them. In this case as in others, not every US net loss is a Soviet net gain.

D. The Problem of the Middle East Communist Parties

While the ideological dimension lost importance in the determination of Soviet tactics in the Middle East after Stalin's death, it did not disappear. The subsequent aims of Soviet policy never were, and are not even now, entirely limited to purely great-power national interests. Ideological and other considerations have continued to contribute to Soviet perceptions of the USSR's main interests.

Thus Khrushchev, who in general was less strongly motivated by ideological hostility to the West than most of his successors, nevertheless for that very reason felt an occasional need to make gratuitous, off-the-cuff remarks apparently chiefly calculated to demonstrate what an ardent Communist he was and thus to disprove Chinese charges against him of softness toward capitalism. For example, during an otherwise successful visit to Egypt in 1964 Khrushchev went out of his way to annoy his hosts by publicly belittling the pan-Arab concept and insisting that the only valid link between Arab states was the class solidarity of each country's proletariat.* During this visit,

*Characteristically, Khrushchev followed this up with a gesture at the opposite extreme, offensive to Soviet Party traditionalists. He awarded the Hero of the Soviet Union medal, and the Order of Lenin, normally given only to distinguished foreign Communists or Soviet citizens, to Nasir and Marshal Amir. This act was included in the bill of particulars against

(footnote continued on page 71)

Khrushchev also hurled a gratuitous public insult at the Emir of Kuwait, thus storing up years of added difficulty for future Soviet efforts to get a foot in the door in that country.

More often, Soviet conduct has reflected some continuing reluctance to abandon the Communist movement as an instrument of policy, even when support of local Communists has conflicted with the new line of policy. Such aberrations are in part the result of Soviet sensitivity to Chinese charges that the CPSU has betrayed the world Communist movement and abandoned the cause of world revolution for reasons of expediency. In part, they are also the result of a residual Soviet belief that Communists, besides possessing a legitimacy as revolutionaries which bourgeois nationalists lack, are also likely -- if they ever should get to power -- to be more consistent supporters of Soviet policy than even the most fiery of the USSR's bourgeois nationalist friends. The fragmentation of the world Communist movement has shaken Soviet faith in this assumption but apparently has not yet eliminated it -- the Soviet view on this matter probably varies from case to case, though the Soviets have certainly shown no interest in seeing Communist Parties gain power which are not substantially dominated by the CPSU.

Problems arose fairly early in the Soviet relationship with Nasir over this question of local Communists. To help keep peace with Nasir, the Soviets accepted with good grace his initial suppression of his own, Egyptian Communists (a negligible Soviet asset in any case), and even ratified the formal dissolution of

(footnote continued from page 70)
Khrushchev drawn up by the Soviet Central Committee at the time of his ouster in October 1964. An offended Nasir then went through the motions of offering to return the medals; and the new Soviet leadership was forced to insist that he keep them.

the Egyptian Communist Party. The Soviets were much more chagrined at the setback caused the most important Syrian Communist Party by the Syrian union with Egypt in February 1958, and were pleased for this and other reasons when the union broke up in 1961. Even in this case, however, the USSR refrained for the sake of its relations with Nasir from making a major issue of the immediate reduction of Syrian Communist influence after the formation of the UAR.

The results of the Iraqi revolution of July 1958 were much more serious for Soviet relations with Nasir, and in fact led to a temporary crisis. Contrary to some expectations at the time, this revolution did not lead to the further extension of the United Arab Republic to include Iraq. Instead, it gave the first check to the pan-Arab thrust for political unification under Nasir, and produced for the first time a radical Arab ruler -- General Qasim -- hostile to Nasir and in competition with him. Nasir was most annoyed at what appeared to be Soviet satisfaction at the appearance in the Middle East of a radical alternative to him, and at Soviet offers of military and economic aid to Qasim. Beyond this, Nasir was alarmed and angered by the rapid growth of the Iraqi Communist Party's size and influence under Qasim and at Soviet apparent encouragement of an Iraqi Communist drive to take power.

The Soviets were confronted with a dilemma by the Communist upsurge in Iraq as the result of the favor shown by Qasim to the Party as a principal source of his support in his first year in power. The USSR was not primarily responsible for this Communist advance but apparently was severely tempted by the prospect of a Communist achievement of power in an important Arab state, whatever consequences this might bring elsewhere. Moreover, whether or not the USSR had serious misgivings, it was placed in a delicate position before the world Communist movement by the Iraqi Communists' good fortune: the Soviet Party could hardly appear to be less than enthusiastic about the Communists' seemingly

unstoppable march toward power as a result of gratuitous favors from Qasim. Finally, Soviet authority over the Iraqi Communist Party was less than complete; there was dissension within this Party, with an important faction in the leadership urging forceful action to take advantage of the situation and to bring Qasim completely under Communist control. If, as the Soviets later claimed, they urged Communist caution regarding Qasim, this advice was not followed.

Meanwhile, Nasir reacted more and more strongly to this threat of a Communist-dominated Arab state. His hostile statements, and widespread arrests he ordered of Communists in Syria in 1958 and 1959, led to ascerbic exchanges between the Egyptian and Soviet press and eventually to public polemics between Nasir and Khrushchev. Soviet-Egyptian relations were never again as bad as they were in this period from late 1958 through 1959. One result was a moderation in the Egyptian posture toward the US which lasted for the next few years, and was symbolized by the July 1959 signing of the first US technical aid agreement with Egypt since the 1956 Suez crisis. Through the worst of the troubles with Nasir, however, the Soviets were careful to continue economic and military aid to the UAR previously agreed upon, and in particular did not halt preparations for the Aswan project.

Eventually, the Soviets were involuntarily rescued from their problem by the foolish adventurism of the Iraqi Communists, who pressed Qasim too far by instigating bloodshed at Kirkuk in July 1959. Much to the surprise of Soviet, Egyptian, and US observers alike, Qasim thereafter displayed both the power and the will to crack down on the Communist Party, and within a few months the Party's political strength was permanently reduced to manageable proportions. Years later, in 1963, a final curtain was drawn over this episode when Qasim himself was ousted in a Baathist military coup; the Soviets then assuaged their feelings by publicly denouncing the ensuing massacres of the once-proud Iraqi Communists by revengeful Baathists, and by blaming the Chinese Communists for the Iraqi Communist misfortunes.

It is not entirely clear how much the Soviets learned from these events. In general, the main emphasis of Soviet policy in the Middle East since the Qasim episode has been to rely principally upon the interests shared by the USSR with ruling left-nationalist forces; to maneuver for the advancement of particular individuals deemed most friendly to the Soviet Union and if possible also to local Communists; and to use the Communist Parties in a supporting role in this effort. But in practice the Soviets continue to experience difficulty in judging how far it is expedient to press the ruling left-wing nationalists for protection of the local Communists or pro-Communists or for an improvement in their political status.

In the last few years, there has been some Soviet tendency to increase such pressures. Since the advent to power in Syria (in February 1966) of a militant wing of the Baathist party favoring (at the time) improved relations with the Communist Party, the Soviets have sought to expand elsewhere on this success. They have intensified attempts to bring together a broad front of the diverse and often warring left-wing forces of the Middle East in which the Communists would play a unifying role.

To a limited extent the Soviets made progress in this effort. In 1967, in the wake of the Egyptian defeat, the Soviets pressed hard publicly and privately for a greater use of "progressive" forces -- i.e., pro-Soviet leftists and pro-Communists -- in the propaganda apparatus and the administration of Egypt. Nasir made concessions to these demands, but not, apparently, in the army, despite the gradual purges that took place there. In November 1967, Brezhnev similarly informed Syrian Premier Zuayin in Moscow of his regret that the Syrian government was "isolated" from the Syrian people and urged that "real, progressive socialists, not only Communists," be called on "to share the responsibilities of government." The following March, Soviet Defense Minister Grechko during a visit to Syria renewed Soviet pleas that the ruling Syrian Baathists broaden their base of support by including other non-

Baathist left-wing groups in the regime. In October 1968 and October-December 1969, a few individuals believed to be Communists were in fact admitted to the cabinets of Syria, Iraq, Sudan and South Yemen, and a figure friendly to the Party and the Soviet Union became a cabinet member in Lebanon.

But Communist Party influence in each such Arab regime remained fragmentary, precarious, and frequently insufficient to save the Party itself from sporadic repression and arrests or exilings. In no Arab country -- not even in countries where individual Communists held official responsibilities -- has the Communist Party been given open recognition by the regime; and in each Communist Party there were many opponents of attempted collaboration with the local government because of pessimism about the chances for success. Ironically enough, despite the Soviet supply of military hardware to the radical Arab armies, opposition within the Arab regimes to cooperation with the Communists has often been centered in the leadership of the armed forces: for example, in the military wings of the Baathist party in Syria and Iraq, and the military establishment in Sudan.*

Even where Communist Parties are small and relatively weak, however, the Soviets attempt to find some uses for them. For example, in the last year the Parties of Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, and Iraq have been permitted

*This phenomenon -- in which the receipt of Soviet weapons did not dissuade the military recipients from moving against local Communists -- is an old one. The Soviets had seen this happen in the Middle East before, in the behavior of Colonel Nasir and General Qasim in the 1950s. The oustanding example, however, was the case of Indonesia, where Generals Suharto and Nasution decimated the PKI after having received hundreds of millions of dollars in Soviet military equipment.

to form anti-Israeli guerrilla organizations of their own, so that the Soviet Union may have some bargaining counters in its hitherto unsuccessful efforts to influence the major fedayeen organizations. It is not yet clear whether this gambit will gain the Soviets more through an increased presence among the fedayeen than it will lose because of fedayeen distrust of the Communists.

Meanwhile, Brezhnev in April 1970 announced that a new struggle for "social liberation" had just replaced the old struggle for "national liberation" as the "chief factor" in the former colonial world. This theme -- which clearly implies more vigorous efforts to bring to the fore the Communist Party and its allies -- has been repeated in Soviet propaganda and has been reflected in Soviet diplomatic conduct. In the spring and summer of 1970 warnings in Pravda about attempts by "reaction" to split the Sudanese Communist Party away from the "national democratic forces" did not prevent a momentary reduction in Communist strength in the Sudanese cabinet as a result of pressure from the army. In the same period both in Syria and in Iraq the USSR became involved in [redacted] exchanges with the local regime because of recent deterioration of the position of the local Communist Party and the refusal of dominant elements in each regime to cooperate with Soviet desires. In each case, Soviet attempts at the time to coerce the regime into better treatment of the Communists through financial and other pressures did not succeed and probably were counterproductive. And in the case of Syria, the Soviets and the Communist Party were forced to reverse their field quickly in the fall of 1970 when the Syrian Baathi faction they had been supporting as most sympathatic to their ideological interests was ousted by the faction they had been opposing, led by Defense Minister Asad. Although both the Soviets and the local Communists then accepted a modus vivendi offered by Asad, the Communists, at least, are known to have done so with great reluctance because of scepticism about their prospects should Asad continue in power.

Even when the Soviets do not deliberately press coercive tactics, they still occasionally find their relations with one or another Communist Party inadvertently embarrassing for their relations with local nationalist authorities. For example, in March 1966 they apparently did not anticipate that Algerian Premier Boummediene's National Liberation Front, which they had invited to the 23rd Congress of the Soviet Communist Party, would be infuriated by the simultaneous invitation to the congress of the Algerian Communist Party, which is banned in Algeria. Since the Soviets felt that they could hardly ask the Algerian Communists to leave, the FLN delegation of the Algerian regime departed in a huff. This did not serve to advance the generally cool Soviet relations with Boummediene.

While most Middle Eastern Communist Parties -- as Parties -- thus have relatively modest weight in their countries and can usually offer only marginal assistance to Soviet policy, the Soviets have received somewhat more help from Arab Marxist sympathizers who either never have been members of a formal Communist organization or who are dissidents who have left their Communist Parties and thus shed the organizational baggage that often frightens the ruling non-Communist leaders. In the UAR, for example, pro-Soviet influence has centered around mutually hostile Marxist groups which have sought to control Egypt's only legal party, the Arab Socialist Union. One of these groups is composed of former Communists whose Party was dissolved in 1965, and the other is led by the leading pro-Soviet Egyptian, Ali Sabri, who has never belonged to a Communist Party at all. In the Sudan, the setback which the Communist Party received in the summer of 1970 when its representatives were expelled from the government has been followed, in November 1970, by an advance into the government of Communist dissidents who had formally split with their Party. These dissidents are apparently more palatable to the Sudanese regime because they support its pro-Egyptian line and seem willing, as in Egypt, to accept a dissolution of the Party as a price for the opportunity to operate within the regime.

However, even the advantages which have accrued to the Soviet Union from the views of pro-Communist Arabs who are divorced from a formal Communist Party may bring compensating drawbacks. Thus a potentially serious problem may be growing for the Soviet Union over the extreme leftist regime in South Yemen, from which the USSR has apparently sought to obtain a base facility of some kind, possibly at Aden or on the island of Socotra. The UAR has become increasingly exercised in recent months over what it regards as Communist influence within this regime, all the more so because it came to power at the expense of another South Yemeni faction favored by Egypt. Since Nasir's death, UAR President Sadat is reported to have vowed to aid opponents of the South Yemeni regime because "the UAR does not agree to have a Communist government in the Arab world." Sadat has taken some small diplomatic steps hostile to South Yemen and has apparently sought, with some success, to influence Libya in the same direction. The USSR may therefore eventually be faced in South Yemen with a ressurection of some of the elements of its 1958 Iraq dilemma. Such recurring embarrassments suggest that the Soviets have not yet mastered the problem of using indigenous Communists and pro-Communists without antagonizing anti-Communist Arab nationalists -- a difficult job, indeed, given the continuing awareness of many Arab regimes that their basic interests -- the retention of political power -- are incompatible with those of local Communist movements.

E. Two Special Complicating Factors

1. The Palestinians

The greatest political change in the Arab confrontation with Israel after the 1967 war has been the sharp growth in the influence of Palestinian nationalism, both among the Palestinian refugees and throughout the

Arab world generally. The hitherto ineffectual Palestinian fedayeen increased in numbers, acquired permanent bases in Jordan and Lebanon, and achieved some measure of organizational unity under the leadership of the largest of the fedayeen organizations, Fatah. Above all, they acquired a respectability and emotional support among Arabs everywhere which gave them important leverage over all the Arab governments and compelled even the Soviet Union to modify its posture toward them.

This change occurred partly as a result of the growth of the fedayeen image as the most active force challenging the Israeli post-1967 occupation on behalf of the Arab world. Even more important in mobilizing the Palestinian refugees, however, has been the very fact that Israel now holds the West Bank territories ruled by Jordan since 1948. Egypt, Jordan, and Syria each lost some territory as a result of the 1967 war; the Palestinians lost the last portion of Palestine heretofore controlled by Arabs. They therefore have acquired a highly emotional stake in the struggle with Israel which is greater than they had before, and greater than most of the Arab governments have even now.

The interests of the Palestinian fedayeen are not the same as those of the Arab states, and contradict them in some cases. For the governments of Lebanon and Jordan, the fedayeen have been a growing internal security danger. For the UAR, the fedayeen constitute no internal security problem, since they are not present in Egypt in large numbers; but Nasir considered them an uncomfortable ally insofar as they constricted his freedom of maneuver. The political pressures for maximum confrontation with Israel which the fedayeen movement helped to generate were one of the major factors in Nasir's decision to terminate the ceasefire with Israel in early 1969.

Although Nasir showed himself willing in July 1970 to defy fedayeen opposition to his acceptance of a limited ceasefire proposal -- and even to strike back at fedayeen critics by cutting off their radio

facilities, at the moment of his death in September 1970 he remained hemmed in by the passions mobilized by the fedayeen. For his successors, the claims of the Palestinian movement still enormously complicate diplomacy and the possibility of a settlement. The national interests of the two main Arab confrontation states, Egypt and Jordan, are chiefly tied to the recovery of the territories each has lost. On the other hand, the claims on Israel posed by the Palestinian guerrillas are not partial and limited like those of the Arab states, but total: they require, at least in principle, the formal dissolution of the Jewish state, and return of all the refugees to create a joint Arab-Jewish state.

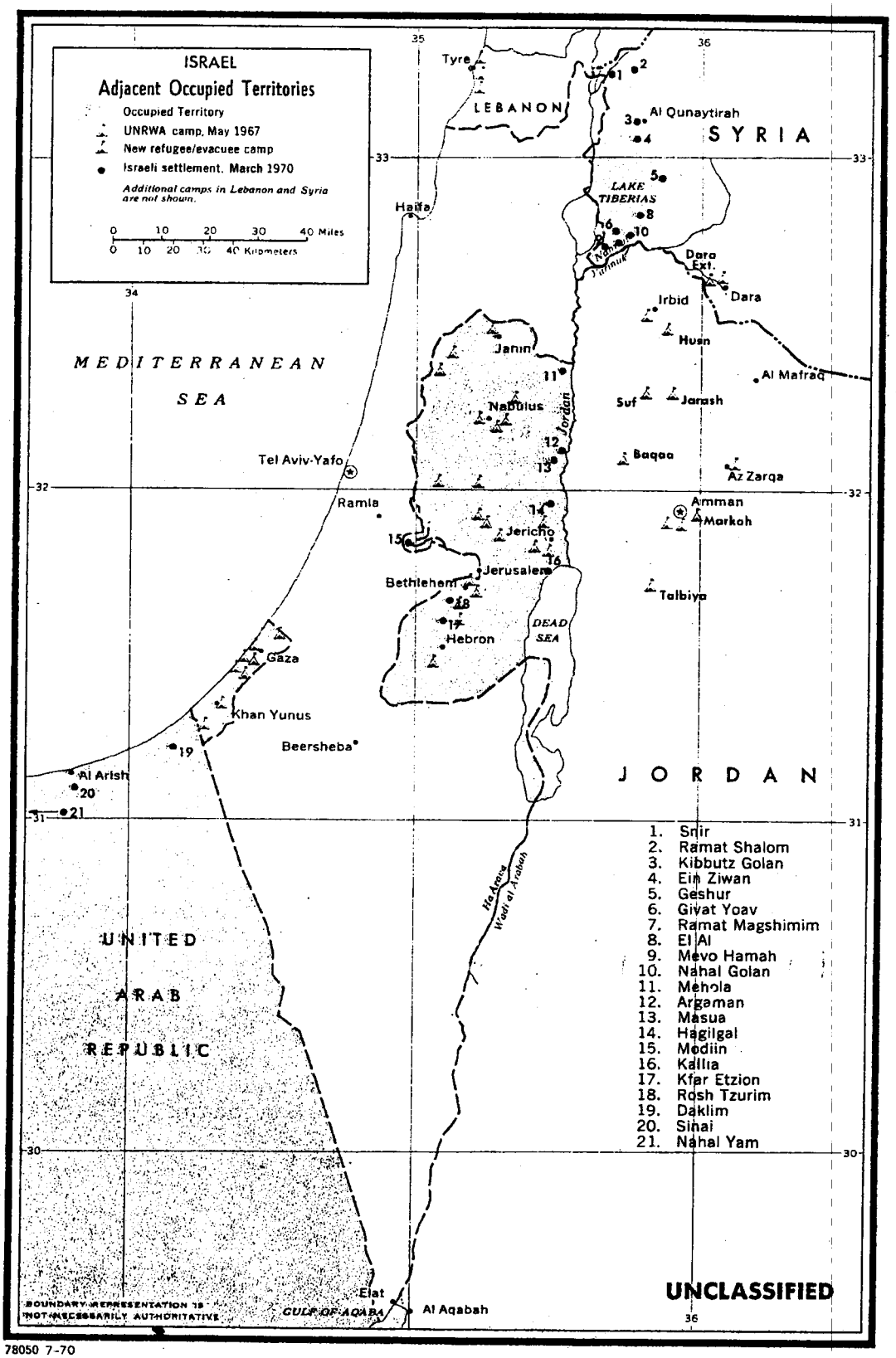
In the diplomatic sphere, the three Arab states which lost territory in the 1967 war are therefore to some extent now the prisoners of the Palestinian issue. Syria's captivity has been voluntary, deriving from fanatical adherence to the anti-Israeli cause. Jordan's position is most involuntary; Husayn might long ago have been willing to bargain with the Israelis to the exclusion of the demands of the Palestinian nationalists if he could have found a way to do so without the likelihood that he would be overthrown (or assassinated, as was his grandfather). While the inconclusive outcome of the civil war between the Jordanian army and the fedayeen in September 1970 may for the time being have strengthened Husayn's position somewhat, it did not remove all of his constraints. As for Egypt, Nasir was in an intermediate position at the moment of his death: he was neither sincerely devoted to the maximum goals of the Palestinians like the Syrian government, nor seriously threatened, like Husayn, with ouster if he were to betray the Palestinians. He, like Husayn, avoided acceptance of the maximum fedayeen position and held to the line that the Jewish state may continue to exist but must offer the refugees a choice of either return or compensation. This line is of course ambiguous; if it were interpreted to mean a return of the refugees to full rights of citizenship, and if most refugees actually accepted such an offer, the Jewish state would be swamped and transformed in any case by an Arab majority. If the new leaders of the UAR were to receive a serious

Israeli counterproposal, they might well seek to sell the refugees a compromise settlement which would in practice avoid this extreme result. In the absence of such an offer, however, Sadat & Co. are unlikely to abandon the safety of ambiguity.

The Soviet Response

The adjustment of Soviet policy to the political impact of the fedayeen movement has occurred in a series of small, halting steps. A high-ranking Fatah leader has stated that his organization's initial contacts with the Soviets began in 1964-1965, but that then and for some time afterward the Soviets (unlike the Chinese) tried to dissuade the fedayeen from armed struggle. Even after the 1967 war, complains this source, the Soviet attitude did not at first change. Particularly annoying were Soviet efforts to persuade Fatah to accept the November 1967 United Nations resolution which affirms the independence and territorial integrity of Israel and therefore, as the source noted, "implies an undertaking by the Arab governments to liquidate the Palestinian revolution." The Fatah leader noted with gratification, however, that "recently" there have been some changes in such Soviet attitude.

These changes appear to have begun to evolve quietly and slowly in 1968, in the wake of the growth of fedayeen influence throughout the Arab world. The Soviets were confronted with doubly unpleasant facts in the leadership of the largest fedayeen organization, Fatah. This body was basically oriented toward its conservative Arab sources of support, yet it was also willing to accept help from China. Nevertheless, the Soviets were increasingly forced to deal with the fact of Fatah's rise within the fedayeen movement and its evolution into a Jordan-based independent force uncontrolled by any single Arab government. Beginning in March 1968, Soviet propaganda began to refer in general terms to the "lawful right" of the Arabs to resist Israeli occupation, and simultaneously began to


ISRAEL
Adjacent Occupied Territories
Occupied Territory
UNRWA camp, May 1967
New refugee/evacuee camp
Israeli settlement, March 1970
Additional camps in Lebanon and Syria are not shown.
0 10 20 30 40 Miles
0 10 20 30 40 Kilometers
LEBANON
SYRIA
JORDAN
MEDITERRANEAN SEA
UNITED ARAB REPUBLIC
Tyre
Al Qunaytirah
Haifa
LAKE TIBERIAS
Dara Ext.
Dara
Irbid
Husn
Al Mafraq
Janin
Nablus
Jordan
Suf
Jarash
Baqaa
Az Zarqa
Tel Aviv-Yafo
Ramla
Amman
Markoh
Jericho
Jerusalem
Bethlehem
Talbiya
Hebron
DEAD SEA
Gaza
Khan Yunus
Beersheba
Al Arish
Ha Arava
Wadi al Arabah
Elat
Al Aqabah
GULF OF AQABA
1. Snir
2. Ramat Shalom
3. Kibbutz Golan
4. Ein Ziwan
5. Geshur
6. Givat Yoav
7. Ramat Magshimim
8. El Al
9. Mevo Hamah
10. Nahal Golan
11. Mehola
12. Argaman
13. Masua
14. Hagilgal
15. Modiin
16. Kallia
17. Kfar Etzion
18. Rosh Tzurim
19. Daklim
20. Sinai
21. Nahal Yam
BOUNDARY REPRESENTATION IS NOT NECESSARILY AUTHORITATIVE
UNCLASSIFIED
78050 7-70

carry occasional brief news accounts of Arab guerrilla activities. During a visit to Moscow in July, Nasir appears to have persuaded the Soviets to receive Fatah chief Arafat, who made an unpublicized initial trip to the Soviet Union soon thereafter. Although no sudden, dramatic change followed this visit, over the following year Soviet propaganda gradually and steadily increased its laudatory references to the "resistance movement against the Israeli occupiers."

Interposed in this stream of praise for the fedayeen, nonetheless, were occasional expressions of disapproval of actions of fedayeen extremists: e.g., in blowing up pipelines or aircraft. The Soviets also indicated some unhappiness with the fedayeen elements who have forced sporadic crises with the governments of Jordan and Lebanon. Infrequent, brief criticism of "irresponsible elements" who preach the slogan "the worse the better" were repeated with each such crisis, and Soviet officials privately referred bitterly to Chinese influence upon the tactics of the more extreme fedayeen. There were elements of demagogy and hypocrisy in the Soviet attitude: thus the Soviets praised the fedayeen use of Jordan and Lebanon for attacks on Israel, despite the fact that these fedayeen operations were the original source of fedayeen friction with Husayn and are still an important cause of internal strife in Lebanon.

By the fall of 1969, the Soviet leadership had evidently become convinced that it was necessary to take another step forward in conciliation of Arab pro-fedayeen sentiment. In a speech at a world trade union congress in October, Politburo member Shelepin made the first public statement by a member of the Soviet leadership in support of the guerrillas:

> We consider the Palestinian patriots' struggle for eliminating the consequences of Israeli aggression as a just, national liberation, anti-imperialist struggle and will render support to it.

Although it is likely that Shelepin -- believed to be a proponent of a "forward" Soviet strategy toward the underdeveloped world -- was personally in favor of unveiling Soviet support in this way, it is probable that the formula he used had received advance Politburo approval. In December, Premier Kosygin in an address to a visiting Egyptian delegation employed an almost identical formulation.

In February 1970, representatives of the Palestine Liberation Organization -- the most prestigious fedayeen body, dominated by Fatah -- finally paid a public visit to Moscow. While this logical sequel to the statements by Shelepin and Kosygin a few months before was a definite step forward in the Soviet political posture toward the fedayeen, the Soviets were apparently only willing to take a very small step, and denied a PLO request to set up a permanent mission in Moscow. The Soviets also deferred a reply to a request for Soviet arms, supposedly pending consultations with the governments of Egypt, Syria, and Iraq, the states that would transmit such arms to the fedayeen. The Soviets did, however, offer to supply instructors and training in the USSR to fedayeen desiring these services. CPSU Secretary Ponomarev had stated privately in October 1969 that the USSR would offer military and "political" or "ideological" training to fedayeen cadres; it is likely that the Soviets are particularly eager to provide political indoctrination to Arab guerrilla leaders, as a riskless form of "aid" which may nevertheless increase Soviet influence among the fedayeen.

While the evidence is ambiguous and conflicting on the question of Soviet direct arms aid to the fedayeen, on balance it indicates that after two years of reported contemplation of such aid, the Soviets have done little or nothing so far. To some extent, the question is an artificial one. Just as many Arab states supply money to fedayeen organizations, so several radical Arab states (Syria, Egypt, Algeria and Iraq) have furnished them with weapons from their own army stocks. Since

the armies of each of the Arab states concerned are supplied largely by the Soviet Union and its allies, nearly all the weapons involved come originally from the Soviet Bloc. The question of Soviet aid to the fedayeen may therefore in practice have boiled down to how willing the Soviets have been to encourage these Arab governments to do what they were doing already and to compensate them for it. As recently as June and July 1969 some reports suggested that the Soviets were unhappy with the past activities of Egypt and Syria in arming fedayeen with Soviet-made weapons. One report asserted that the Soviets had even attempted to put pressure on Syria -- without success -- to get Damascus to desist from such diversion of weapons intended for the use of the Syrian army.

It is likely that this Soviet attitude, born of distrust of the fedayeen as a disruptive and unpredictable factor out of Soviet control, has been modified since the summer of 1969. The upsurge in Soviet propaganda support of the fedayeen since that time and Shelepin's public pledge in October 1969 to "render support" to the fedayeen implied at least a more cooperative Soviet attitude toward the tithing activities of the Arab states in money and arms. A high-ranking Fatah official stated in December 1969 that three months previously -- i.e., just before Shelepin made his statement -- Fatah received for the first time a "small donation" from the Soviet Union,* and that this seemed to make a turning point in relations with the Soviets.

In October 1969 -- at about the time of the Shelepin statement -- CPSU Secretary Ponomarev stated privately to foreign Communists that hitherto the Soviets had not given arms to any fedayeen organization,

*He did not say whether this was money or arms.

but that such arms came from arsenals in Syria or Egypt which were replenished by the USSR. He did not indicate what the past Soviet attitude had been on replenishing arms stocks used for this purpose, but his remarks suggested that the USSR was now at any rate going along, however reluctantly.* On the other hand, Ponomarev noted that the uncontrolled use of arms provided "directly" by the USSR -- by which he apparently meant arms for which the USSR was publicly identified as the donor, however they were transmitted -- could lead to serious consequences. Ponomarev was presumably worried, among other things, about subsequent Soviet identification with irresponsible fedayeen acts such as the sabotage of airliners. Nevertheless, he said, the USSR had decided to give "aid" -- unspecified -- to Palestine organizations and would be conferring with other Bloc countries on the question of such aid. This tends to mesh with the Fatah leader's statement that the Soviets had made an initial direct donation to the Fatah at about this time.

While it is conceivable that the Soviets may therefore eventually agree to the February 1970 PLO request that the USSR furnish weapons -- in effect, to an arrangement under which some arms reaching some of the fedayeen from the Arab governments would be identified as the gift of the Soviet Union, the public Soviet posture does not suggest that the Soviets are yet ready for such a commitment. Consent to such an arrangement would be much more significant politically than militarily, since it would imply a greater commitment to the Palestinian Arab cause than the Soviets have yet been willing to make. Soviet publications

*Such donations of arms are apparently entirely separate from the commercial purchases of arms which the PLO and Fatah have made in both Eastern and Western Europe since 1968.

from time to time still run down the list of Soviet complaints about the Palestinian movement: the bourgeois influences in it, its lack of unity, what is termed its "complexity of mutual relations" with some Arab governments, and the tendency of some Palestinian figures to use "extremist slogans."

It seems most likely, therefore, that the Soviets will continue to try to defer a publicized donation of arms to the PLO until forces they consider reliable -- particularly the Communists -- secure a foothold within the PLO. Simultaneous with the Soviet shift in the fall of 1969 toward greater contacts with the fedayeen and the beginning of "donations" to them, the Soviets have sought to improve their leverage within the fedayeen movement by authorizing four local Communist Parties -- those of Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, and Iraq -- to organize their own "Partisan Forces." The major role in this undertaking is probably that of the Jordan CP, which has the closest contacts with the Palestinian refugee population in Jordan. The Soviets may have staked considerable hopes on the ability of Communist and pro-Communist forces to construct significant political alliances within the fedayeen movement, and may hope to find deserving recipients for Soviet direct arms aid in this way. In view of the hostility of many fedayeen leaders to the Communists, however, satisfactory alliances may be some time in coming.

In sum, the Soviets have attempted to court the fedayeen movement discreetly, to flatter it with propaganda coverage, and to infiltrate it, but simultaneously to avoid so close an identification with it as to restrict Soviet freedom of maneuver on the Palestinian issue. Occasionally, Soviet representatives are apparently allowed to overstep the limits set by this delicately balanced policy in their efforts to make headway with the Palestinians. On the eve of Lenin's anniversary in April 1970, for example, Soviet diplomats in Jordan and Iraq made simultaneous statements to Arab newsmen in which they alluded to Israel

as a "racist state" and asserted Soviet support for a "democratic Palestinian state" of Arabs and Jews. These tacit endorsements of the fedayeen war aims were quietly disavowed when subsequently challenged, but it is unlikely that Soviet representatives in two Arab countries both made the same such error at the same time. It is more likely that the Soviet diplomats in question -- who may be intelligence officers -- were authorized to say once in public what they have undoubtedly been saying in private for some time.

Soviet official policy and official propaganda have not endorsed the fedayeen demand for abolition of the state of Israel -- which would mean abandonment of the principles of the November 1967 Security Council resolution. But they have become somewhat more ambiguous. The shift was symbolized by the differences between an article on Fatah in Sovetskaya Rossiya of 15 April 1969, and a similar one in Komsomolskaya Pravda on 12 April 1970. The first article summarized the desire of Fatah for the liquidation of the state of Israel and the creation of a "democratic Palestinian state", and stated bluntly that these aims "do not appear practicable," because "one doubts whether it is possible now to turn back the clock and recreate a united Palestinian people out of Jews and Arabs." The second article, a year later, quoted at length from a Fatah placard calling for "the independent democratic state of Palestine, where Christians, Muslims, and Jews will enjoy equal rights." Also quoted was the Fatah statement that "this is not a utopian dream nor false promises." This time, there was no adverse comment.

There is a growing internal tension in Soviet policy on this question. On the one hand, Soviet leaders and Soviet propaganda continue to deny that they favor the elimination of the state of Israel, and affirm that Israel has a right to exist. On the other hand, they now habitually place equal stress on insuring "the legitimate rights and interests of the Palestinian Arab peoples." On one occasion last fall, V.P. Rumyantsev -- the official in the Central Committee's International Department in charge of

North Africa and the Middle East -- went further, and wrote that the Palestinian Arabs were "struggling for the restoration of their national rights." (Kommunist No. 16, November 1969; emphasis added.) This formula has been repeated in some Soviet propaganda. In addition, on 20 May 1970 an Izvestiya article for the first time depicted Israeli internal life -- and not merely Israeli foreign policy -- as that of a racist state. If there is no settlement, the groundwork has thus been laid for a possible further evolution of the Soviet position in the next few years to accommodate the Palestinians.

On the other hand, a succession of events in the summer of 1970 again reminded the Soviets of the extent to which certain of their primary interests in the Middle East ran counter to those of the fedayeen. First came the Egyptian acceptance of a temporary ceasefire with Israel in August and the violent fedayeen reaction to it, which obliged Nasir to cut off fedayeen radio facilities in Cairo and arrest many Palestinians in Egypt. Here the Soviets found themselves of necessity lined up in support of Nasir, Jordan's Husayn, and the ceasefire, against the fedayeen, Iraq, and other opponents of the ceasefire.

Next, a few weeks later, came a direct stroke by fedayeen extremists in answer to the ceasefire: the hijacking of several Western airline planes to Jordan by George Habash's Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP). The Soviet press had been critical of Habash's group on previous occasions; it reiterated this criticism now in support of the UAR position that such hijackings were counterproductive

to the Arab cause.* It was characteristic of Soviet vacillation on the fedayeen issue that shortly before the hijackings, the Soviets had reportedly arranged to give some PFLP personnel training in the USSR, despite the group's extremist reputation. When the hijackings occurred, the training was reportedly postponed.

Finally, in September, the hijackings precipitated a showdown in Jordan between the Jordanian army and all the fedayeen groups. The Soviet Union was disturbed at the unstable prospect that would open up if the fedayeen won control of Jordan, and was concerned at the possibility of Israeli or United States intervention in the fighting. At the same time, the reaction in the Arab world -- where popular sympathies were overwhelmingly with the fedayeen rather than with

*The USSR was finally moved by these events, after years of silence, to make its first explicit public criticisms of hijacking in September, and in November finally abandoned its habitual reluctance even to discuss -- in the UN or elsewhere -- any international measures to control hijacking. The regime had acted ruthlessly to suppress attempts by Soviet citizens to hijack Soviet aircraft; but Moscow was long unwilling even to be heard talking about any public commitment which might some day require the USSR to take specific actions against Arab or other "revolutionary" hijackers of Western aircraft. The Soviets were probably also deterred by Cuban reservations on this subject. It is likely that this Soviet attitude was modified by Moscow's first experience, in October 1970, with a successful hijacking of a Soviet aircraft. The issue of Soviet willingness to assist in the suppression of air piracy and air sabotage is an important test case for Soviet policy. It involves a choice of which of two conflicting lines is more important to the USSR: the pursuit of improved and "regularized" relations with the West or the pursuit of influence over assorted revolutionary militants around the world.

Husayn -- again demonstrated to the Soviets the emotional pulling power of the Palestinian issue among the Arabs.

The net effect of these three events in August and September 1970 was to dramatize for the USSR both how dangerous the fedayeen were for Soviet efforts to control risks in the Middle East and how politically potent the fedayeen remained. Brezhnev reflected this dual attitude in a speech of 2 October when he first deplored the "fratricidal war" that had taken place in Jordan and then spoke of Soviet efforts during the fighting to stop "the annihilation of detachments of the Palestinian Resistance Movement." It is apparently the Soviet intention to claim credit for helping to save the fedayeen from complete destruction and to continue to court the Palestinians with aloof encouragement.

2. The Chinese

For a decade and a half, since almost the first moment of Soviet intrusion into the Middle East in the 1950s, the Soviet leaders have been looking over their shoulders at the Chinese. Peking's indirect influence on Soviet conduct has been far out of proportion to Chinese direct influence in the area. Much of the Soviet tenacity in demagogic pursuit of unstable and uncontrollable forces such as the Syrians, Iraqis, fedayeen, et al., appears to derive from extraordinary sensitivity to Chinese competition for influence with these forces.

The Chinese View of Soviet Risks

Over the years, one of the principal functions of the Chinese goad has been to increase the political costs to the Soviets of not accepting high risks in crisis situations. At the time of the Western troop landings in Lebanon and Jordan in July 1958, Khrushchev

sought refuge in proposals for a summit meeting or United Nations consideration of the crisis, in order to avoid the dangerous alternative of unilateral action. Chinese editorials at the time not only avoided endorsing these proposals but implied that they were "yielding to evil and coddling wrong." The Chinese insisted that "the only language they [the imperialists] understand is force" and called for "international assistance" by unspecified "volunteer armies" to "hit the aggressors on the head." A decade later, at the time of the Arab-Israeli war of 1967, the Chinese used the more open language of the later stages of the Sino-Soviet dispute, fulminating about Soviet betrayal of the Arab cause in collusion with the United States. In 1970, the Chinese similarly opposed acceptance of the Rogers plan for a temporary ceasefire.

During the early years of the Sino-Soviet dispute (e.g., in the 1958 Middle East crisis) Peking was attempting essentially to influence Soviet policy to get the West to back down. Peking has broadened its aims in these respects. In addition to seeking to extract maximum political profit from each crisis by belaboring Soviet failure to act, Mao has continued to do what he can through indirect means to encourage Soviet-US tension. In the summer of 1970, Chinese Politburo member Kang Sheng stated [redacted] that the Chinese are aiding the Palestine guerrillas in order to help keep the tension high in the area and prevent a US-Soviet agreement in the Middle East. In addition to their old purpose in favoring tension (it helps foster revolutions), the Chinese in recent years have had a new motive: Kang and other Chinese Communist officials have been quoted as fearing that a peaceful settlement in the Middle East would give the Soviets a freer hand for the border confrontation with China.

Soviet policy has probably been influenced, at least marginally, by the years of Chinese hectoring about Soviet cowardice. In the Middle East, Soviet sensitivity to the cumulative effect of such charges

upon the Arab audience may have been one of the several factors that impelled the USSR to take some risks to come to Nasir's aid in the spring of 1970.*

Armed Struggle

A second major concern of the Chinese in the Middle East has been to give maximum encouragement to armed revolutionary struggles of every description. Once again, unencumbered by Soviet responsibilities, Peking has been able to point a finger of scorn at inhibited and hesitant Soviet policies. An early example was the Algerian rebellion against France, where, just as Soviet policy was less constrained than that of the US, so Chinese was less constrained yet.

There are two armed struggles which presently engage most Chinese attention in the Middle East. In both cases the Chinese are far more vociferious in support of the fighting than the Soviets. One is a small-scale rebellion in the Dhufar area of the south Arabian Sultanate of Moscat and Oman, which the Chinese have supported with propaganda, arms, and a few Chinese cadres, using South Yemen as a base. The Soviets have given this rebellion little material aid or propaganda backing, partly, apparently, out of deference to the strong Iranian warnings to them that disruption near the Persian Gulf would be harmful to Soviet-Iranian relations.

The other armed struggle in question is the main contest, the Palestinian fedayeen struggle against Israel. In dealing with this question the Chinese reflect none of the constraints that bear upon Soviet

*The subject of Soviet evaluations of risk is considered later in greater detail.

policy, such as the need to keep reaffirming Israel's right to exist; the fear of uncontrolled and irresponsible fedayeen actions such as hijacking or destroying aircraft, blowing up pipelines, or assaulting the governments of Jordan and Lebanon; the distrust of the fedayeen as rivals to Egyptian leadership in the struggle against Israel; or the fear that the fedayeen might drag the Soviet Union into conflict with the US. Quick to recognize the vulnerability of the USSR's qualified position on the fedayeen question, the Chinese have consistently attacked Soviet professions of desire for a peaceful settlement in the area. The Chinese have made propaganda mileage from Soviet criticism of "extremists" in the Middle East; no fedayeen action, however extremist, has ever been publicly criticized by Peking.* Peking has never had diplomatic relations with Tel Aviv, and the Chinese have implied willingness to see Israel destroyed: in April 1965, Mao told visiting fedayeen leaders that "Israel and Taiwan are the basis of imperialism in Asia... They created Israel for you and Taiwan for us... Imperialism is afraid of China and the Arabs." Shortly after the 1967 war, People's Daily denounced Kosygin for having described Israel as an "independent national state."

While giving unqualified verbal support to the most extreme fedayeen positions (restoration of a Palestinian state and rejection of a political compromise), the Chinese have chosen to give material support to the more politically conservative fedayeen groups (PLO and Fatah). A PLO delegation visited Peking

*This does not mean that the Chinese would counsel or approve such fedayeen activities as aircraft hijacking. On the contrary, there is evidence that they have told some fedayeen leaders that such actions are counterproductive. This has not prevented Chinese propaganda, however, from condemning the Soviets for voicing similar views publicly.

as early as 1965, and during the period from 1965 through 1968 the Chinese gave some limited aid in the form of training, small arms (supplied through Syria), and financial assistance to the PLO, Fatah, and to some extent to the PFLP. However, they rejected a request for aid from the pro-Chinese People's Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PDFLP) in mid-1969, telling the group it must first demonstrate a more disciplined Marxist-Leninist approach. Thus the Chinese have decided, as have the Soviets, that their best chance for future influence in the area lies in supporting the strongest group rather than the most ideologically sympathetic one.

For their part the fedayeen have been appreciative of Chinese support, but somewhat skeptical about the long-term advantages of close ties with the Chinese, fearing this might jeopardize their chances with the Soviets. But while some of his colleagues have been cautious in dealing with the Chinese, Fatah chief Arafat has not. Always suspicious of Soviet intentions and probably less than satisfied with their promises of material assistance during his February 1970 visit, Arafat accepted a Chinese invitation to visit Peking in March. He was received warmly and met with Chou En-lai. Upon his return he was far more effusive in his praise for China than he had been for the USSR.

A body of evidence testifies to the Soviet concern over these fedayeen dealings with the Chinese. In the spring of 1968, a Soviet [redacted] concerned with Near Eastern affairs referred to the "almost pathological" Soviet fear of becoming involved in a situation in which they would be competing with the Chinese for fedayeen favor. In the summer of 1969, the [redacted] his anger over the pro-Chinese, anti-Soviet influence displayed at an international conference of Palestinian students held in Amman. A year later, Moscow's Komsomolskaya Pravda complained of a similar event at an Arab student seminar in Amman in early September 1970. The article lamented that "with the connivance of the conference organizers," pro-Chinese Europeans and others who had

"wormed their way into the confidence of the leaders of the Palestinian movement" had "carried out a violent attack against the Soviet Union and the socialist and progressive Arab states." In fact, the UAR delegation to this conference is reported to have walked out, apparently as a result of pro-Chinese and fedayeen attacks on Soviet and Egyptian acceptance of the ceasefire with Israel.

The Arab-Israeli ceasefire and ensuing events in Jordan in August and September 1970 appear to have made the Soviets feel particularly vulnerable to Chinese inroads among the fedayeen.

Although unconfirmed, these reports have some plausibility in view of the demonstrated readiness of Peking to commit a small number of its personnel as advisors to the Dhufar rebellion in Arabia.

In response to the Chinese challenge, on 10 September Soviet officials visiting Beirut pleaded with fedayeen representatives to believe that the USSR would never betray the rights of the Palestinians. These Soviets made the doubtful claim that since World War II, experience had shown that the USSR had never betrayed any "liberation movement" anywhere in the world. They asserted that the Soviet Union would aid all such movements in the future, and insisted that the Palestinian movement should remain "on the side of the USSR" despite disagreement over Soviet acceptance of the ceasefire proposals.

In short, the Soviets seemed increasingly defensive about the Chinese attacks on their position among

the Palestinians and anxious to outbid the Chinese for fedayeen support, despite the limits that had been placed on the Soviet ability to do so by Soviet support for the ceasefire and for negotiations with Israel. The Soviet position is made all the more difficult by the fact that North Korea and North Vietnam, two militant Communist states which the post-Khrushchev Soviet leadership has sought to conciliate, have taken positions on the fedayeen issue much closer to the Chinese than to the Soviet line.*

State Relations

The third aspect of the Chinese challenge to the Soviets in the Middle East is in the field of state-to-state relations with the Arab countries. Here the Soviets have always had a decisive advantage. The Soviets are a great power bordering on this area, with instruments of military power at hand, able to influence events directly. The Chinese are none of these things; in this respect they are essentially noisy onlookers while the Soviets are participants, a fact recognized by all concerned. At the same time, the Chinese over the years have been able to offer no more than token competition to the Soviet domination of the field of economic and military assistance to the radical Arab states.

Indeed, in the early years of the Sino-Soviet dispute the Chinese had protested Soviet large expenditures for economic aid to national bourgeois regimes

*Unlike the Soviets, Pyongyang, Hanoi, and Peking all openly and vehemently sided with the fedayeen during the civil war in Jordan, denouncing the Jordanian army as US "henchmen" and "military reactionaries." Earlier, at the moment of the hijacking of the airliners to Jordan, PFLP leader George Habash was reported to be visiting North Korea. He then travelled to Peking.

in the underdeveloped world, including those of the Middle East. But as the breach with the Soviet Union widened in the 1960s, these original Chinese complaints within the Communist movement about Soviet aid to undeserving national bourgeois leaders were succeeded by warnings to some of those same bourgeois leaders that Soviet aid could not be relied upon and was designed to fetter them. Unable to match the Soviet aid program, the Chinese instead preached to the underdeveloped world the virtues of self-reliance. More recently, the Chinese have shown increased willingness to use aid to enhance their influence in cases carefully selected for maximum impact, the outstanding example being Chinese agreement to help build the Tanzania-Zambia railroad, which is apparently intended to become the Chinese counterpart of the Aswan Dam as a showcase project.

Chinese relations with Nasir waxed and waned over the years, and became permanently cool after the middle 1960s as Egypt became more and more closely aligned with the USSR. This strain in relations continues to be evident.

While the Chinese have little hope of making headway soon in Egypt, the cornerstone of Soviet influence in the Middle East, they have renewed their efforts to influence other Arab states where they feel the Soviets are less well entrenched. This has been reflected partly in an increase this year in the aid program: Sudan and Southern Yemen have each recently received additional Chinese interest-free credits of forty million dollars each. While Southern Yemen's seeking and acceptance of Chinese aid has particularly irritated the Soviets, the Chinese are aware that even there the Soviets can continue to outbid them in the economic field. The major Chinese effort in the radical Arab states continues to be political, focussed on issues on which the Arabs differ with the Soviet Union, and stressing Chinese support for the Palestinians. In September 1967 Peking supported Syrian rejection of the UN Security Council resolution on the Middle East; in August 1970 the Chinese supported Iraqi opposition to the present ceasefire; and in September 1970 the Chinese defended Syrian intervention in the Jordan civil war. The Chinese funnel aid to the fedayeen through Syria, and support for the Dhufar rebellion through Southern Yemen; these activities are certainly also useful for Chinese relations with Damascus and Aden. Several radical Arab statesmen have visited Peking in the last two years -- sometimes to demonstrate pique at the Soviets -- and have been warmly greeted by Chinese leaders, including Mao. The Soviets have noted with concern an activization of Chinese diplomatic efforts in Middle Eastern states in 1970, as part of the general Chinese diplomatic offensive that has succeeded the self-isolation of the cultural revolution. One aspect of this offensive is a planned visit by Chou En-lai to Southern Yemen on a tour, now scheduled for 1971.

Despite the remoteness of the Chinese from the Middle East, the Chinese will continue to strive to exacerbate the recurrent Soviet difficulties with the radical Arabs. While economic and military realities will prevent them from displacing the Soviets as the

Arab world's self-appointed protector, the very remoteness of the Chinese serves in some respects to enhance their standing. They seek no strategic bases from the Arabs for their navy; nor, unlike the Soviets, do they yet use their aid as a lever with which to press the Arab regimes for concessions to local proteges. Their condemnation of the machinations of the "two superpowers" in the Middle East strikes a responsive chord among radicals chafing under repeated Soviet pressures for restraint. Their pose as disinterested defenders of Arab interests is therefore credible to many. Consequently, the desire to fight their influence places increasing pressure on the USSR in the direction of concessions to or compromise with the demands of the Arab militants.

F. Measuring the Limits of What the Traffic Will Bear

1. Soviet Evaluation of Past Risks

The most serious problem created for the Soviet leadership by their involvement in the Middle East is the risk of military confrontation with the West, and particularly with the United States. One important component of the present Soviet attitude is the leadership's evaluation of past risks run by the USSR in the Middle East and the wisdom of these actions.

The 1956 Suez Crisis

In the weeks preceding the Suez crisis of November 1956, Khrushchev and other Soviet leaders made repeated statements calculated to create the impression that the Soviet Union might intervene with "volunteers" if Britain and France invaded Egypt, while carefully refraining from explicit commitments to do so. At a reception on 23 August, for example, Khrushchev said

the Arab world "would not be alone" if there were war over Suez, and said he would give his approval if his son volunteered for service in Egypt.* On 6 September, Communist sources floated rumors in the Western press that military leaves in the Soviet Bloc had been cancelled; on 8 September Pravda repeated previous sober but qualified warnings on the possible spread of war beyond the Middle East. But when the Israelis, British and French actually invaded Egypt in late October, there was no immediate Soviet military or diplomatic response. It was not until 4 November -- after US opposition to the invasion had been made manifest and, incidentally, after the Hungarian revolt had been suppressed -- that the Soviet Union sent protest notes to Britain and France. The next day, additional notes were sent to Britain, France, and Israel in a harsher tone, raising a threat of some Soviet action, but this was immediately qualified by a Foreign Ministry spokesman's explanation that the USSR envisaged action only in cooperation with other nations.

Nevertheless, the Soviet threats, backed by private Soviet statements to the Egyptians about Soviet readiness to take action "if necessary," impressed the British and French. Both Eden and Pineau expressed fear that the USSR intended to intervene in the Egyptian hostilities, using Syrian bases. Israel, Britain, and France announced ceasefires on 6 and 7 November; and Khrushchev on the 7th then told that he had never intended unilateral action anyway. Three days later, with the fighting stopped

*The Chinese Communists characteristically went Khrushchev one better in floating such vague threats. Mao Tse-tung told that he, himself, along with other Chinese, would volunteer for service if Egypt were forced into war. This vision of Mao leading a Chinese horde across the Red Sea did not, however, materialize.

and the danger greatly reduced, the Soviets finally released a TASS statement explicitly threatening to permit "volunteers" to go to Egypt unless Britain, France, and Israel withdrew their troops in accordance with UN decisions.

After the invaders had begun to withdraw, some observers concluded from the timing of Khrushchev's actions that he had been bluffing, and the Soviets apparently felt sensitive on this score. On 21 November Foreign Minister Shepilov told a Syrian official that the USSR had been late in coming to Egypt's assistance but would not be late in helping Syria if needed. A couple of years later, in the course of Nasir's polemics with Moscow in March 1959, the Egyptian leader declared publicly that the Soviet warning to the West at the time of Suez did not help the UAR.

Reports from several sources indicate that when Khrushchev was ousted eight years after Suez, his colleagues made scathing comments about his handling of the 1956 crisis. One version of the anti-Khrushchev bill of particulars said that he had indulged in "ill-advised saber-rattling over Suez." Another account complained that "his threats to send 'volunteers' during the Suez crisis in 1956 unnecessarily endangered the security of the USSR." A third version held that "with his threatening, and fortunately very effective, ultimatum, Khrushchev involved the Soviet armed forces in the possibility of intervention, thus carrying the country to the brink of war without having consulted with sufficient clarity the high leadership bodies of the USSR."

These complaints may have overstated the actual danger run by Khrushchev in 1956 because they exaggerated the possibility that he would in fact have allowed Soviet "volunteers" to engage the British and French. Nevertheless, they reveal a significant aversion by the post-Khrushchev leadership to Khrushchev's habit of threatening the use of Soviet armed force. The new Soviet leaders apparently considered such conduct dangerously provocatory, especially if the USSR

were not in fact ready to go to war for the sake of Nasir. Implicit in the criticism of Khrushchev is the judgment that public threats should not be made unless the Soviet leadership had already decided that it was willing if necessary to carry them out. Also implicit is a further judgment made by the new Soviet leadership in 1964 that in any case a genuine commitment to go to war for the sake of Egypt would not have been justified, at least in 1956.

The 1957 Crisis Over Syria

In two successive years after Suez, Khrushchev again indulged in Middle East brinkmanship. In the fall of 1957, the USSR issued warnings -- particularly in strong notes to Turkey -- against pro-Western intervention to overthrow the radical regime of the moment in Syria. Unlike many other occasions when the Soviets have spoken of threats to Syria, this one may have been real. There were rumors of imminent Iraqi intervention, and substantial forces had been massed in southern Turkey in apparent readiness for an invasion. Khrushchev backed up his warnings by transferring a leading Soviet general, Marshal Rokossovskiy, to the Caucasus Military District adjoining Turkey. When the Iraqis and Turks desisted, Khrushchev was credited with a victory. It seems possible, however, that there was some murmuring within the Soviet leadership about the risks run of embroilment with Turkey, a NATO member. When, immediately thereafter, in October 1957, Khrushchev seized the occasion to purge Defense Minister Marshal Zhukov, one of the charges hurled at Zhukov was that of "adventurism." This mysterious charge, unlike all the others, was never explained. It is conceivable that Khrushchev sought privately to blame Zhukov for some of the provocative steps he himself had been responsible for the month before, particularly the transfer of Rokossovskiy. If so, the matter was too delicate to spell out in public.

The 1958 Lebanon-Jordan-Iraq Crisis

In the summer of 1958, a third crisis erupted as a result of the US and British landings in Lebanon and Jordan after the coup in Iraq. The Soviet leadership was concerned about the possibility that the Western powers might next move to attack the revolutionary Iraqi regime, but because United States armed forces were now directly involved Khrushchev proceeded with caution. He made no public threats, and there were no public Soviet references to Soviet "volunteers." The Chinese were apparently chagrined at this modification of the Soviet public posture from what it had been in 1956 and 1957 Privately, however, Soviet officials around the world pressed the line that any military move against Iraq would provoke "serious" but unspecified Soviet counteraction. In addition, the Soviet Ambassador to Iran reportedly told the Shah that if American or British troops used Iranian territory to invade Iraq, Soviet forces would invade Iran. The Soviet charge in Ankara expressed to the Turkish government the hope that Turkey "will refrain from taking any steps which might increase tension." Khrushchev backed this up by moving large numbers of Soviet aircraft into Bulgaria and sending the Black Sea fleet out to sea. At the same time, Khrushchev moved to maintain maximum propaganda pressure on the West, and despite Chinese objections, accepted a proposed summit meeting within the UN Security Council framework as a riskless means of preventing Western military action. Eventually, US and British recognition of the new Iraqi regime made it apparent that they did not intend to invade, Khrushchev abandoned his summit meeting project as evidently unnecessary, and the crisis was gradually allowed to dissipate.

The 1967 War

The fourth crisis was the Arab-Israeli war of June 1967, and involved the post-Khrushchev leadership.

Here differences of approach between Khrushchev and his successors were made manifest. This time the Soviets not only made no public references to "volunteers" or to Soviet action during the crisis, but also did not even raise the possibility of intervention in private until the crisis period was virtually over.

On 9 June, at a time when Israel had accepted a ceasefire with Syria but had not yet implemented it, several Soviet diplomats warned that the USSR might intervene if Israel did not observe the ceasefire. These statements were backed up by the dissemination of reports -- probably intended to frighten the Israelis -- of Soviet preparations for landing token numbers of sailors or paratroops in Syria. Months later, a secret CPSU document distributed to other Communist Parties claimed that it was resolute Soviet action -- i.e., forthright risk-taking -- that had forced the Israelis to halt their advance in Syria. This document asserted:

> In those tense days the Soviet Government brought constant pressure to bear on the US Government to use its influence on Israel to bring about an immediate cessation of hostilities. Thus, during the morning of June 10 an urgent message was communicated to President Johnson that if Israel did not stop its aggression within the next few hours, the USSR would be compelled to take the actions it considered necessary. At 7 p.m. on June 10 Israel stopped hostilities on all fronts.

But if the Soviets did send such a message some hours before the Israelis ceased firing, they already had good reason to suspect by then that Israeli military purposes were limited (to seizure of the Golan Heights), that the Israelis had halted their advance and would probably not try to seize Damascus or unseat the Syrian

regime, and that the USSR would not be faced with the problem of fulfilling a threat. Thereafter, before the ceasefire came, the Soviets moderated their tone to the United States and refrained from dispatching a message to Israel containing a concrete military threat despite previous statements that they would do so.

Thus, while the Soviets had undoubtedly been seriously concerned over the potential danger to the radical regime in Damascus raised by the Israeli invasion of 9 June, these fears -- the main motive for any prospective Soviet action -- had diminished by the time of the Soviet message to the US on 10 June. It appears highly uncertain that the dominant forces in the Soviet leadership would have been willing to accept the risks of military action even if the Damascus regime had been clearly threatened, and unlikely that they had made up their minds on this subject when they sent messages to the US and Israel on the 10th. These messages were clearly intended to hasten an Israeli ceasefire and thus remove whatever possibility existed that Israel might attempt to advance further and exacerbate the Soviet problem. But despite the exaggerated claims the Soviets later made that their messages had forced the Israeli ceasefire, it is unlikely that the last-minute Soviet warnings were the major factor. The main reason the Israelis ceased firing was clearly the fact that they had accomplished what they had set out to do in Syria: they had no reason to go on firing.

In sum, Soviet public conduct during this crisis was more circumspect than Khrushchev's public behavior had usually been, and Soviet private threats to take action seem to have been belated and ambiguous in nature.

The Soviets were considerably embarrassed during the 1967 war, however, by another matter: the false

expectations of some of the Arab leaders that the Soviets would, or might, intervene militarily. Such misunderstanding resulted from the calculated ambiguity the Soviets had previously maintained in dealings with the Arab states over the question of what the Soviets would do in an Arab-Israeli war.

The Soviets cultivated this ambiguity because they were reluctant to pay the political price entailed in telling the Arabs forthrightly that they would not come to their aid, particularly since they did not believe that a war would actually start and the issue thus arise. UAR Ambassador to the Soviet Union Ghaleb later stated that he had tried to warn Nasir that the USSR would not help in a war, but that Nasir had preferred to believe UAR Minister of Defense Sadran, who visited the USSR shortly before the war (in May 1967) and allegedly "completely misunderstood" what the Russians were saying. Ambassador Ghaleb also asserted that the Syrians had "hypnotized themselves" into believing that the Soviets would participate in a war, and that the Russians were "partly at fault in not realizing" that the Syrians would seize on any ambiguous phrase and twist it to suit their emotional needs.* The Soviet embarrassment was compounded when the Arab states during the war claimed falsely that the US and Britain had attacked them, thus implying that the Soviet Union should enter the war in response.

It seems likely that Soviet policymakers had rationalized their conduct to themselves before the 1967 war by adjusting their estimate of the military and political risks to make them compatible with Soviet

*On one occasion in mid-May 1967, the Soviets did apparently blurt out the truth to the Syrians, but there is good reason to doubt that this one clear statement in a welter of conflicting and ambiguous signals ever got through to Nasir.

desires. Soviet intelligence appraisals also appear to have been unduly influenced by awareness of what the policymakers wanted to hear. The Soviets appear to have believed that the US enjoyed decisive leverage over Israel; that the US would not only seek to prevent an Israeli attack, but would succeed in doing so; that if there nevertheless were a war, the Arabs, at the very least, would not be quickly overwhelmed by Israel; that in any case, the Soviet Union could keep itself from becoming directly involved; and that if worse came to worst, an Arab defeat could only further degrade the US political position in the Middle East. The first three of these suppositions proved false, the USSR was unable to prevent an Arab defeat, and the Soviet Union suffered great political embarrassment as a result. The last two assumptions, however, proved correct. The USSR was able to keep itself from being dragged into the fighting, despite the Arab attempt to involve the Soviets by incorrectly claiming that the United States and Britain were participating. And as noted, one of the long-term consequences of the 1967 war has been to isolate the US more and more from the Arab side, and thus to allow the Soviet Union to recoup its 1967 political losses because of the increased Arab dependence on the USSR.*

*This is not to say that even in retrospect the Soviets look back at the events of 1967 with complete satisfaction. There is good evidence that they have been quite concerned at the errors made by different Soviet intelligence organs, and the USSR has tried to prevent their repetition. Aside from the question of military risks, the political risks the Soviets ran in 1967 as a result of their miscalculation were considerable. Nasir might well have fallen immediately after the June defeat, with uncertain consequences for the huge Soviet political and economic investments in Egypt. The Israeli armies might not have stopped at the Suez Canal, nor at the Golan Hieghts in Syria; it is questionable whether the Soviets had decided what they would have done in either of these cases. The Soviet Union was fortunate in having escaped having to deal with these possibilities.

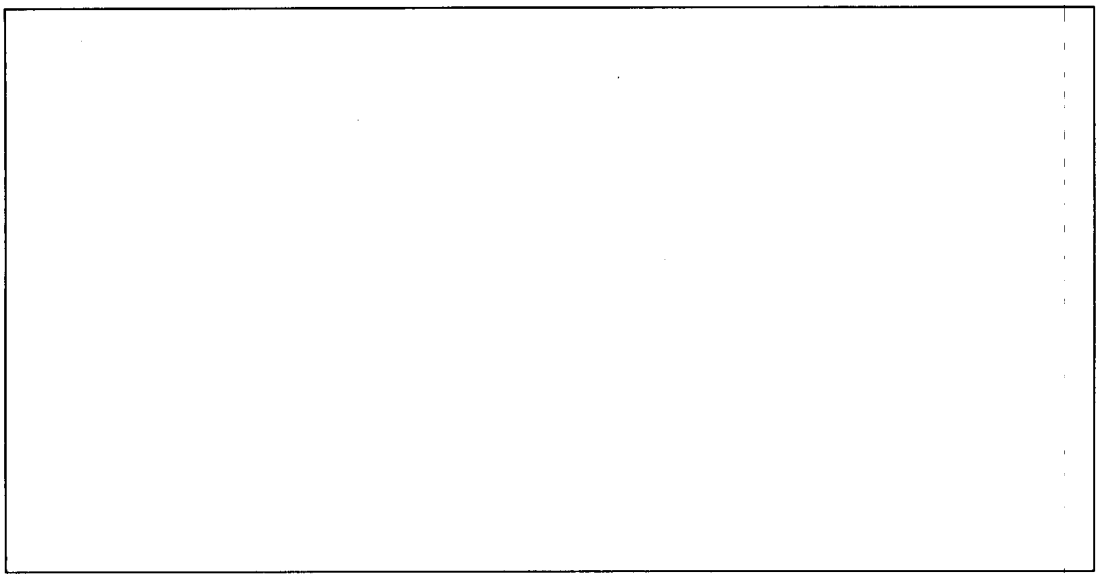
The September 1970 Jordan Civil War

The most recent Middle East crisis in which the Soviet leadership was forced to deal with the possibility of US intervention arose in the course of the Jordan civil war of September 1970. Even before the Syrians intervened in this conflict the Soviet Union exhibited disquiet over the possible consequences of the battle between Husayn's army and the fedayeen. The USSR was particularly concerned over the possibility of a fedayeen victory, in which case there was considered to be a fair possibility that Israel would intervene, and that this in turn might then touch off a general Arab-Israeli war. Soviet representatives had indicated nervousness about such a possibility on several occasions in the past during conflicts between the fedayeen and the Jordanian or Lebanese governments.

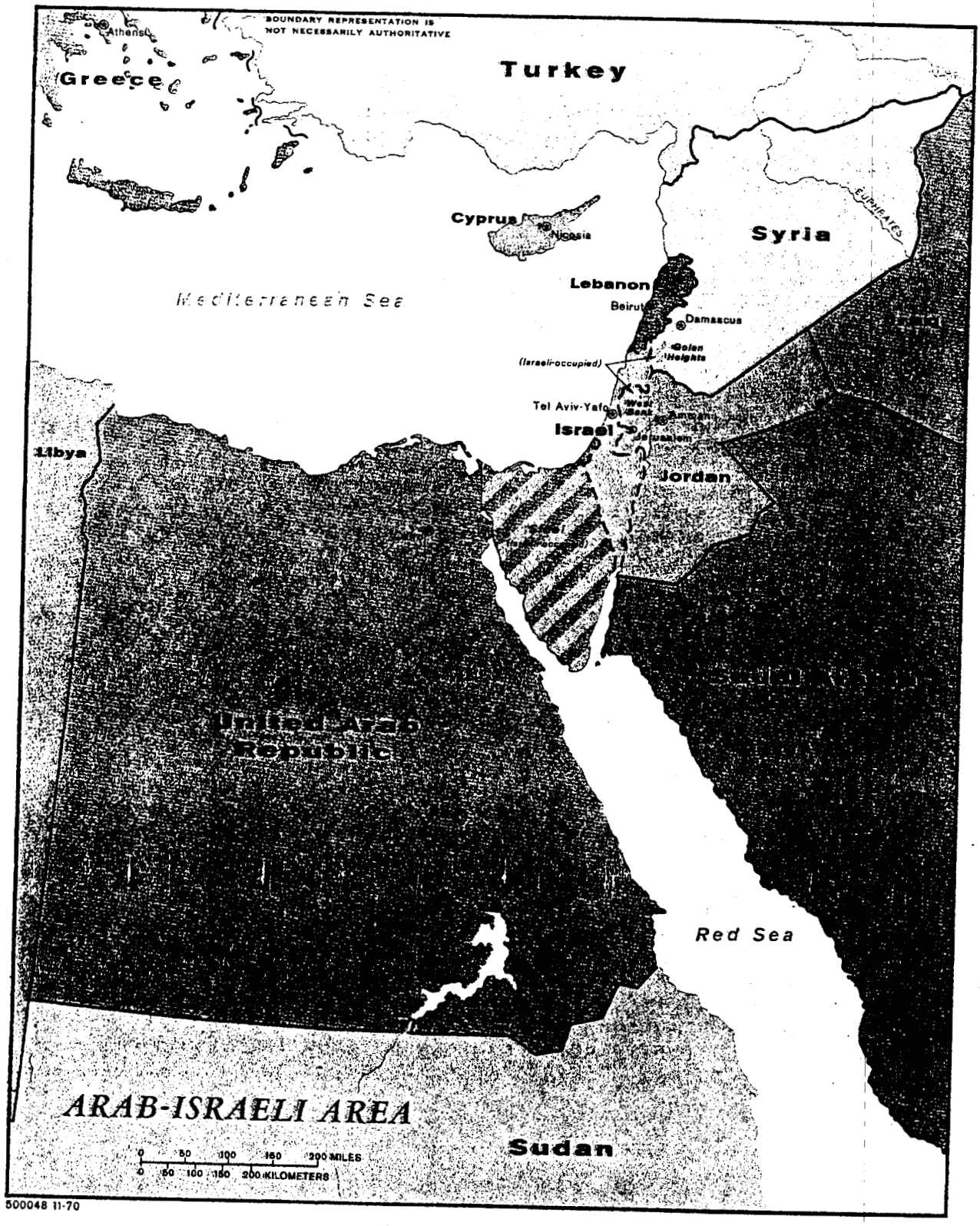
On 18 September, two days before the Syrians invaded, the Soviet ambassador in Iraq therefore stated [redacted] that "King Husayn has every right to restore order in his country." Soviet [redacted] on 19 and 21 September cited the threat of Israeli or US intervention to apply pressure on fedayeen representatives to accept a ceasefire. A Soviet public lecturer in Moscow on 22 September stated:

> The position of the Jordanian government is perfectly understandable. It is Jordan's sovereign right to insist that the Palestinians coordinate all of their actions with the government. As you know, we are opposed to the hijacking of airplanes. The Palestinians are acting very much like our anarchists did before the revolution. No good can come of this. During World War II we also had foreign troops operating from our soil, but we naturally insisted that they behave. When they didn't, we forced them to leave. The Palestinians are using tanks and

artillery in their battles against the Jordanians. They must be getting help from somewhere. Syria appears to be aiding them. We are against any foreign intervention in this matter. The US and Israel are just looking for an excuse to intervene. The Sixth Fleet has been augmented with forces from Germany and the United States. This is an extremely dangerous situation.



The 20 September entry of Syrian tanks into Jordan made matters worse, from the Soviet point of view. The possibility of an Israeli counterincursion into Jordan or Syria now became a live one, loudly signalled by deliberately ostentatious Israeli mobilization and troop movements. The Soviets had to appreciate that any such Israeli move might well receive active backup protection from the US Sixth Fleet -- as US newspapers later claimed had been arranged. In such circumstances any of several possible developments could have drawn the US into direct hostilities. In short, once Israel began to move across


BOUNDARY REPRESENTATION IS NOT NECESSARILY AUTHORITATIVE
Athens
Greece
Turkey
Cyprus
Nicosia
Syria
EUPHRATES
Mediterranean Sea
Lebanon
Beirut
Damascus
Golan Heights
(Israeli-occupied)
Tel Aviv-Yafo
West Bank
Amman
Israel
Jerusalem
Libya
Jordan
United Arab Republic
Red Sea
ARAB-ISRAELI AREA
Sudan
0 50 100 150 200 MILES
0 50 100 150 200 KILOMETERS

500048 11-70

an Arab border in response to the Syrian action the Soviet Union might very quickly find itself faced with the dilemma of allowing one or more of its radical Arab clients to be humiliated again or coming to their rescue and clashing directly with US forces.

The evidence cited strongly suggests that these probable adverse consequences of a Syrian invasion were not unknown to the USSR before the event. It therefore seems most improbable that, [redacted] the Soviet authorities were informed by the Syrians of Syrian intentions on 17 September, three days in advance, and replied through the Soviet Ambassador with an encouraging response. Such a reply would hardly have been consistent with the demonstrable Soviet vested interest in preventing both Syrian intervention and a fedayeen victory in Jordan, nor with the secret Soviet efforts in Beirut to pressure the fedayeen into accepting a ceasefire, nor with the efforts the Soviets had shown themselves willing to make in the past to try to get the Syrians to stop specific acts of intervention in Lebanon.

A credible report, [redacted] indicates that the Syrians did not consult the Soviets at all because they knew -- as they should have known on the basis of past Soviet conduct toward them -- that the Soviets would oppose the intended action. This version is also more consistent with the generally recalcitrant Syrian attitude toward the USSR; and Damascus is not believed to have asked Soviet permission prior to earlier unilateral acts, such as the Syrian interventions in Lebanon. This interpretation also meshes better with a credible Soviet statement to the US as early as 18 September that the USSR had approached Damascus, Amman, Baghdad, and Cairo, urging an early end to the fighting. On 21 September -- the day after the Syrian invasion -- the Soviets spoke again to the Syrians, warning them that their intervention had greatly increased the danger of US intervention and urging them to pull back their forces. Soviet statements to the United

States and Britain about this 21 September demarche may be regarded as largely confirmed

In the end, the Syrians withdrew, largely because of their own apprehensions of Israeli intervention, partly because of the chance of US action, partly because of the difficulties they had met in their battle with Jordanian armor, and partly because of the Soviet pressure. The crisis then subsided when Husayn and the fedayeen leaders were persuaded by Arab statesmen to negotiate a truce.

The Soviet posture toward the US during this crisis was the most circumspect of any crisis in the area to date. The USSR rained upon the US through various channels a series of private warnings and entreaties -- and eventually, public admonitions as well -- not to take any precipitate action to complicate the situation. As incentive for US and Israeli restraint, the Soviets furnished the United States with reports of Soviet efforts to restrain the Arabs. But in contrast with all previous Middle Eastern crises, in this case not only were there no public Soviet threats, there was no reported instance of even a veiled or ambiguous private Soviet threat to take any counteraction in the event of any specific Israeli or US move.

Conclusions

The first impression that emerges from this survey of Soviet public and private behavior in five Middle Eastern crises is one of steadily increasing Soviet wariness and caution. In general, the more intimately the US has been involved in a past crisis, the more closely US military forces have been placed to the geographic focus of the crisis, and the greater the chance that these forces might be used, the more circumspect the Soviets have been. This has been true under both Khrushchev and his successors.

Secondly, the post-Khrushchev leadership has condemned as dangerous and provocatory Khrushchev's practice in 1956 (repeated in 1957) of politically brandishing insincere threats to use military force. Consistent with this, no public Soviet threats were made in 1967 and 1970. No private threats were made in 1970, and the private warnings advanced in 1967 were belated and vague. But while the present Soviet leadership in general appears to disapprove of open bluffing, it committed another kind of bluff in the spring of 1967 by encouraging misunderstanding of its intentions by the Arab states through calculated ambiguity. The Soviets were also willing, later in 1967, to make retroactive, exaggerated claims that they had successfully used a threat of force.

Thirdly, the Soviet willingness to take risks in the Middle East obviously also varies with the nature of the radical forces on whose behalf or at whose instigation the risks would be run. One of the reasons for the Soviet caution exhibited in September 1970 was clearly the lack of identification of Soviet interests with those of the fedayeen. Soviet apprehensions about the possible consequences of fedayeen actions were intensified by suspicions [redacted] that the most radical fedayeen groups were under Chinese influence. Unwilling to risk a collision with the US as a result of a chain of events begun by uncontrollable, pro-Chinese Palestinians, the Soviets were only a few degrees less reluctant to become involved as a result of adventurist actions by the self-willed Syrian regime. This particular reason for Soviet caution would of course apply to a much lesser degree, however, to a crisis directly involving the UAR, the local regime to which the Soviets have most closely tied their interests.

2. The Chief Present Risk: Soviet Forces in Egypt

Despite this evidence that the conduct of the Soviet leaders continues to reflect concern lest a Middle Eastern crisis cause them to clash with the US, the Soviet relationship with Egypt has drawn Moscow into acceptance of greater risks. And in particular, the question of the degree of possible Soviet involvement in any future large-scale Middle East fighting has again been made dangerously ambiguous.

For a year or so following the June 1967 war, a number of Soviet statements seemed to want to make clear the USSR's basically cautious attitude. In July 1967 the USSR reportedly sent word to the Arab leaders, meeting in Cairo, that the Arabs should expect no Soviet armed intervention if "hostilities" were resumed; only if "clear-cut" intervention by the US occurred -- and this would be determined by the Soviets -- might the USSR become directly involved. At about the same time, a Soviet Party official in Moscow remarked that the Soviets would send aid and advisers to help the Arabs, but that the USSR could not fight the Arabs' war. In general, the Soviets would extend all moral and material help to "national liberation" struggles such as the Arab cause, "but to involve Soviet forces in them would mean something more." The Chinese, said this official, were striving their utmost to achieve direct Soviet involvement, in order "to push us into a nuclear war with the US."

In November 1967 [redacted] a new Arab-Israeli war would be "on a larger scale than the last one" and that "the Soviet Government is not prepared to take part in it." Brezhnev is said to have added that such a war would be a form of suicide for the Arabs and would merely enable Israel to enlarge her territory at the expense of the Arabs. In February 1968, the Soviet ambassador to Jordan indicated [redacted] that if a Middle Eastern war broke

out again Soviet help for the Arabs would be limited, as in June 1967, to the supplying of arms and to political and diplomatic support. In March 1968, Marshal Grechko told the Syrians that while the USSR was ready to supply more arms to Syria, there was no question of sending combat troops. In November 1968, a Soviet stated that in the event of another Arab-Israeli war, the Soviet fleet in the Mediterranean would not go to the aid of the Arabs; the fleet's function was said to be solely to prevent US intervention.

At the same time, the growing special Soviet relationship with Cairo seems to have exerted special weight toward calculated ambiguity with respect to Soviet intentions vis-a-vis the UAR. Nasir had asked the USSR to make clear its attitude if the UAR became involved in an Israel-Jordan conflict. The USSR reportedly replied that it would intervene "only" if the UAR were itself the "direct victim of a general attack." The Soviets reiterated this formula in early April. It is not stated whether the Soviets meant by this an attack in which the US participated or merely an all-out Israeli invasion of Egypt, or whether the Soviets left this point unclear.

there is other evidence to suggest increasing Soviet uncertainty in 1968 over how far to become involved in the present defense of Egypt. A few days after a successful Israeli commando raid on 31 October 1968, Soviet Ambassador Vinogradov that the USSR would not permit Israel to attack the Aswan Dam in this way. He referred to the Dam as the "apple of the Soviets' eye," and said that if necessary, Russian military personnel themselves would protect the Aswan area. This statement seems likely to have been made on instructions, to deter the Israelis from planning any such attack. A few weeks later, Vinogradov is reported

to have stated categorically [redacted] that under no circumstances would the Soviet armed forces participate directly in the defense of the Aswan Dam complex. He indicated on this occasion, however, that this was a controversial issue in Moscow, and implied that he was resisting recommendations from the UAR government and certain of his own Soviet colleagues -- unspecified -- to the effect that the Soviet military should play a more active role in Aswan defense.*

The issue involved had been spelled out by Soviet Ambassador to the US Dobrynin [redacted] Dobrynin stated:

> Russian military advisors in Egypt are now teaching the Egyptian Army the techniques of war. This is not a thing that we really want to do, since it is bound to give rise to other requests and face us with a kind of responsibility that will not be free of difficulty in case of the occurrence of fresh incidents.

Dobrynin was doubtless exaggerating the degree of Soviet reluctance to get further involved, and he avoided mentioning positive factors such as the extent to which Soviet political and strategic gains were dependent on continued, expanded military aid to the UAR. Nevertheless, there seems little doubt that as early as 1968 the Soviet leaders were already debating the dangers that would be incurred if the Soviet military advisory program in Egypt were to lead to demands for more direct Soviet participation in Egyptian defense.

*In the upshot, Soviet SA-3 units were indeed emplaced around Aswan in 1970, when the USSR assumed a central overall role in Egyptian air defense.

It also seems probable that the main impetus for direct Soviet involvement came from the Egyptian side, and not from the Soviet leadership. Nasir wanted the maximum possible USSR commitment to him in case of a future war, and this could best be secured by the previous presence in Egypt of some Soviets fulfilling a combat function. He also had an immediate practical military need for the Soviets, which grew in time and became a dire need by 1970.

the Egyptian leaders had told him that soon after the 1967 war the Egyptians had asked the Soviets to take over responsibility for the war-shattered Egyptian air defense; an elaborate agreement was supposedly worked out between the UAR and the USSR at that time, but the Soviets then "got cold feet" and backed away from the proposal. It seems unlikely that the USSR would have even considered such a suggestion in the immediate aftermath of the dangers run during the June 1967 war, but this story may nevertheless have some validity as a garbled reflection of Egyptian-Soviet arguments on the subject in 1968 and 1969. We have seen that some such discussion may have occurred in November 1968 over the specific question of whether the Soviets should help defend the Aswan Dam. Nasir seems to have revived the general issue in 1969 as he felt the increasing effects of Israeli retaliation against his proclaimed "war of attrition." Nasir subsequently stated -- no doubt with considerable hyperbole -- that before he finally obtained Soviet agreement to send men and weapons he had written a letter to Brezhnev "every week" asking for them.

Jamal 'Abd Al-Nasir

As this Egyptian pressure grew, the caution with which the Soviets were responding to the growth of pro-fedayeen sentiment in the Arab world gave the USSR added reason to be more bold in defense of the primary Soviet political investment in the Middle East: Nasir's Egypt. The Soviets shared a vested interest with Nasir in his retention of leadership of the anti-Israeli struggle against the competition of the unreliable and uncontrollable fedayeen. As Nasir took a tougher line with Israel in 1968-1969, and accordingly got into hotter water, the Soviets apparently felt a compulsion to take greater risks in helping him. And in assisting Nasir, the Soviets created a bright image of Soviet defense of the entire Arab cause to obscure what they had not done for the fedayeen.

Thus, Soviet policy was increasingly affected by the consequences of Nasir's desire to refurbish his position as leader of the Arab forces confronting Israel, and the Soviets allowed themselves to be guided more and more by Nasir's evaluation of his political necessities. In the fall of 1968, fearing that the Israeli occupation of UAR territory was being converted with the passage of time into a fait accompli, Nasir proclaimed a struggle of attrition to force a withdrawal. Early in 1969, with the assistance of Soviet advisers, he opened growing artillery barrages and commando raids against Israeli positions near the Suez Canal, in the hope that the Israelis' sensitivity to casualties would

eventually weaken their will to persist in the occupation. Throughout 1969, Soviet propaganda supported Nasir's efforts while obscuring their purpose, terming UAR military actions "counterblows" and Israeli actions "aggression," and generally avoiding the question of the ceasefire.* Only in 1970, after the Soviets had become more directly involved, did they begin openly to defend Nasir's abrogation of the ceasefire. Soviet policy was thus dragged into line with Nasir's policy through the process of supporting his actions.

At the same time, the Soviets were showing repeated signs of concern as the Israelis responded to Nasir's campaign more and more vigorously in the second half of 1969. In July, Israel introduced aircraft into the Suez Canal zone for the first time, coupling air strikes along the canal with commando raids further inland. After September, the air strikes were greatly intensified in an effort to silence Egyptian artillery and radar and the land raids were extended further. The Soviets were obviously chagrined at humiliating episodes such as the Israeli purloining of a Soviet-supplied radar installation. [redacted] during one such Israeli raid a subordinate Soviet military advisor vainly urged his Soviet superior to get the Egyptians to counterattack the raiding force.

*On rare occasions Soviet propaganda did approach the matter, arguing that Israel's stated desire for reciprocal peace along the ceasefire line was due to its wish to be free to assimilate the occupied territories. More commonly the Soviets went no further than to say that Israeli refusal to withdraw from the Sinai Peninsula was responsible in some unspecified way for the aggravation of tensions. The basic Soviet theme was to cheer Nasir on as a victim fighting back against continued acts of aggression.

In January 1970, the struggle entered a critical stage for Soviet policymakers when the Israelis initiated a new policy of mounting air strikes at military installations in the Nile delta closer and closer to Cairo. The primary Israeli aim remained the same: to force Nasir to call off his war of attrition, in which case he would be left with a choice of either accepting Israeli occupation of the Sinai or seeking to end it through direct negotiations. A subsidiary Israeli hope, however -- apparently nurtured by the military successes of the past few months -- was that the humiliating new raids near Cairo would add sufficient pressure to cause Nasir's political demise.

It is not clear how close the Israelis came to achieving this goal. There is no good evidence that Nasir was ever in danger of imminent overthrow, but to the degree that this possibility became a consideration for the Soviets at all, it became an added argument for them to decide to act. More importantly, the Israeli raids and their command of the air over Egypt had in fact brought Nasir's war of attrition to a halt and were undermining the basis for his claims of leadership of the Arab crusade against Israel, as well as the Soviet image as protector of the Arabs. When Nasir therefore made an emergency visit to the Soviet Union in the third week of January to demand help, the Soviet leadership consented. This decision was not prompted but was reinforced by news received by the Soviet leadership soon after Nasir's visit that important Soviet advisers in Egypt had been killed and wounded in an Israeli attack. Some Israelis -- sensitive to the implication that their deep-penetration raids had proven unwise -- have since argued that the Soviet intervention which materialized on behalf of Egypt had been planned for months before those raids began. This argument is not credible in view of the evidence suggesting that the Soviet Ministry of Defense and the Soviet leadership were galvanized to action and to decision-making during and shortly after Nasir's visit.

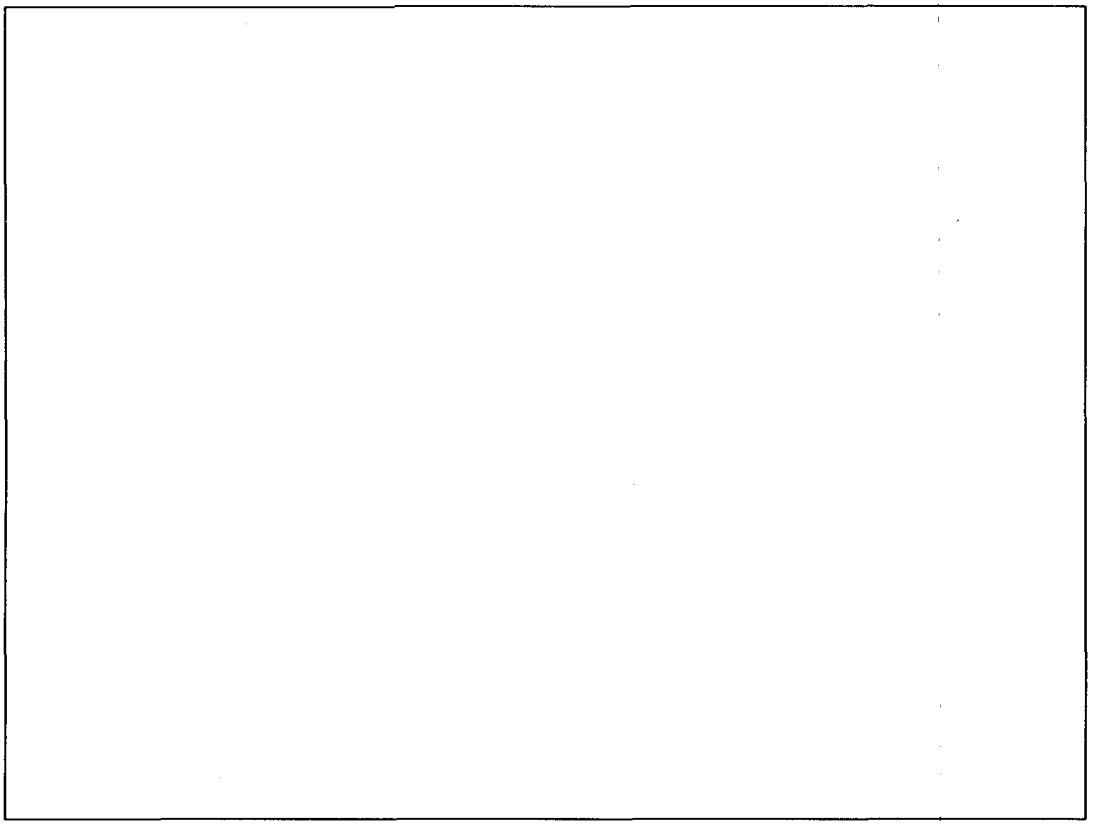
When the critical situation created by the Israeli deep penetration raids finally induced the Soviet leadership

to yield to Nasir's entreaties and send Soviet air defense units to Egypt, a turning point was reached. On the one hand, the arrival of Soviet forces at the Nile, and subsequently at the Suez Canal, seemed to many in the West -- and perhaps to some Soviet military planners -- a significant step forward for Soviet strategic ambitions. Sixteen years after the British signed a treaty with Nasir abandoning their long-dominant military role in Egypt, fighting units of another great power were invited to enter. Yet on the other hand, there is every indication that this step was taken by the Soviet political leadership after long hesitation and with considerable reluctance, simply because they were not fully convinced that the prospective gains were commensurate with the risks. The dispatch of Soviet forces to play defensive combat roles in Egypt represented a new departure for Soviet policy in the Middle East. Except for the brief 1967 intervention of some Soviet combat pilots in the Yemen civil war -- in which the US and Israel were not involved -- Soviet armed forces had not previously been allowed to become involved in Middle Eastern fighting.

The active participation of Soviet air defense units in the fighting in Egypt, and the apparent stationing of some limited Soviet ground forces in Egypt to protect installations, has rendered even more ambiguous the question of under what circumstances the USSR would or would not participate in a future Israeli-Egyptian war. The distinction between war and peace had already been obscured by the Egyptian abrogation of the ceasefire and the creation of an intermittent state of hostilities just below the level of all-out war. Under these circumstances, with no sharp boundaries between levels of fighting to demarcate conditions under which the USSR would cease to be involved, it has doubtless become much more difficult for the Soviet Union to extricate itself from involvement if fighting should gradually escalate to the point of all-out war. Rather than retaining the option to react or not to any possible direct US involvement -- which was the Soviet intention in July 1967 -- the Soviets have

placed themselves in a position which carries greater chance that their own prior involvement could eventually drag the US in after them.

In the spring and summer of 1970, the USSR got further embroiled in various ways. In mid-July there casualties at one of the Soviet-manned SA-3 sites attacked by the Israelis. A Soviet electronics van was seized at an SA-3 site by the Israelis. Worst of all, in late July Soviet fighter planes began to engage the Israelis near the Suez Canal, and four Soviet fighters were shot down in one notable engagement. Marshal Kutakhov, commander-in-chief of the Soviet Air Forces, made a hurried trip to the UAR to investigate soon afterward. Kosygin a week after this incident said that the Soviet leadership was "very



worried" about the event, presumably because of the implication that the USSR might have to increase its military commitment in Egypt even further in order to deal with Israel.

Thus, although the Soviet forces sent to Egypt had in fact accomplished their primary mission of deterring Israel from staging further deep-penetration raids, the Soviet leadership had reason to grasp the opportunity for a restoration of the ceasefire offered by the US ceasefire proposals in the summer of 1970. This ceasefire halted, for the time being, a growing trend toward more direct Soviet combat with Israeli forces which might soon have led to an escalation of the Soviet combat presence in Egypt. Because of Soviet nervousness about possible US reactions to such escalation in Soviet grappling with Israel, the USSR has reason to want Egypt to continue to accept a ceasefire indefinitely.

Unfortunately for the Soviet leaders, while they can influence the Egyptian decision in these matters they do not have the decisive say. The Soviet need to pay a price for every Egyptian policy concession was illustrated after the ceasefire began by Soviet willingness to assist the UAR in placing SAM missiles near the Suez Canal in violation of the ceasefire agreement. A Soviet promise to help bring missile defenses close to the canal was apparently a quid pro quo exacted by Nasir, in talks with the Soviets, in exchange for his agreement to accept the ceasefire. The Soviets apparently did not expect this action to kill peace talks, or -- more importantly for them -- to endanger the ceasefire, possibly because they may have expected the US to wink at the violation and to compel Israel to accept it as well. The USSR later showed some indignation when the US eventually ceased attempts to do so.

The prospect facing the Soviet leadership is not encouraging if the new post-Nasir Egyptian leadership eventually should decide to end renewals of the ceasefire and relaunch the "war of attrition". Although there is evidence that there has been an attempt to replace

some Soviets with Egyptians at some SA-3 facilities in recent months, it is unlikely that the UAR will for many years be in a position to dispense with Soviet defenders -- particularly Soviet fighter pilots -- while confrontation with Israel continues.

The Soviet involvement thus far has encompassed a successful effort to extend domination of Egyptian airspace by Soviet-manned MIGs and missiles up to the Suez Canal. It is unlikely that the Soviets wish to add to their risks by going further. But in the first place the leadership majority had probably not wished to go even this far. It is likely that if the process of escalation seen since 1967 were to continue in the next few years, the Soviets would in fact feel themselves obliged to become more deeply engaged.

The possible steps in such a future evolution are difficult to foresee in detail, but some contingencies are apparent. The most immediate possibility of heavy Israeli engagement with Soviet ground and air crews will arise if combat is resumed around the canal. More remotely, such continuous engagement would result if the Israelis should ever decide that they must attack Soviet airfields in Egypt or resume the assault on Egyptian facilities in the Nile Delta. In either case, the USSR would find its prestige more and more heavily pledged on the outcome of this contest and therefore would feel severe pressure to keep funneling more and more air defense forces into Egypt so long as the issue was in doubt. This, in turn, would place increasing pressure on the US to furnish greater and greater assistance to Israel. If Israeli commando raids on air defense installations were to persist and expand, the Soviets might feel obliged to supply more and more ground forces to secure them, and thus could find themselves involved in sporadic ground fighting with the Israelis. Eventually, expanded Israeli raids on the Delta could result in accidental damage to Soviet naval units in Alexandria or Port Said; the Soviets

would have to consider their reaction to this.* Also over the long term, heavy Israeli damage to Egyptian cities despite Soviet defense could create severe internal pressure on Egyptian leaders to respond with bomber attacks on Israel.** Any such Egyptian response would in turn put the Aswan Dam, the Soviet pride and joy, in immediate danger, and would also raise a grave possibility of all-out ground war between Israel and the UAR. Finally, the deployment of nuclear weapons by Israel as a response to such escalation would present the Soviets with the somber problem indeed of deciding what threats to Israel or guarantee to Egypt they would be obliged to counterpose, and what the US reaction to such threats would be.***

*On 1 and 2 June 1970, the Israelis made unusually heavy air strikes on the area around Port Said. They had previously restricted their attacks on the area, apparently because of the presence of Soviet naval units in the harbor. In late May, the Israelis for the first time deployed a SAAR-class guided missile patrol boat to an area about 20 miles from Port Said.

**A Soviet lecturer in Moscow in fact rashly threatened (5 June 1970) that if the Israelis did not curtail their air activity, the Egyptians would respond by flying missions deep into Israeli territory. It is almost certainly not present Soviet policy to encourage this, although the Soviets have given the Egyptians some TU-16 bombers and the construction of revetments for many more has been accelerated since early 1970.

***On 24 July 1970 Nasir replied publicly to a question about possible Israeli achievement of a nuclear capacity, asserting that the USSR had pledged in the non-proliferation agreement to give immediate aid to any state exposed to a nuclear threat. Nasir added that "the United States could stand on Israel's side, but we would appeal to the Soviet Union in regard to this pledge." Growing Soviet concern over this question was indicated in an unusual surfacing of the issue

(footnote continued on page 127)

Many of these contingencies may not now seem highly likely, but neither are they beyond the realm of possibility. The real risk accepted by the Soviets when they placed air defense forces in Egypt in 1970 was thus not the initial, fairly moderate, one posed by the immediate prospect of conflict with Israeli pilots. It was the fact that this Soviet involvement would make it more difficult for the USSR to avoid increasing its involvement when and if the present morass should deepen. In short, the Soviets risk having entered a whirlpool, and if they are drawn in further they will no doubt protest at each stage that it is the US and the Israelis who are forcing them to take untoward risks. This process of greater and greater acceptance of risks through small, discrete steps could ultimately bring the Soviets willy-nilly into a situation of serious risk of war with the United States which they would not have accepted if it had been offered as a single large choice, all at one time.

3. Soviet Estimates of US Capability to Act

This is of course a central consideration in Soviet policy decisions concerning the Middle East. If the Soviets were to become convinced that for political reasons (domestic or external) the US government is more inhibited than formerly from responding to Soviet initiatives, risks formerly considered out of the question by the Soviets might be somewhat downgraded. The available evidence of Soviet judgments on this score

(footnote continued from page 126)
in Pravda on 14 December 1970. The Pravda writer made a vituperative attack on a US newspaper suggestion that Israel be encouraged to deploy nuclear weapons. By breaking their usual silence on this matter, however, the Soviets are likely to have alarmed the Arabs further and to have encouraged a growth of unwelcome Arab pressures on them.

however, is thin, and to some degree, ambivalent. It seems doubtful that the Soviets have fully made up their minds about the meaning, for future US conduct, of past US initiatives and responses in the Middle East. Also, the Soviets seem to have modified their opinions on the US willingness to act in the Middle East as they evaluated the flow of evidence of US actions in Southeast Asia and elsewhere in the world, and the effect of these actions on the domestic US scene. Finally, it also seems likely, for reasons examined in the next section, that all such subjective Soviet judgments have varied from one observer to another in the Soviet leadership and in the institutions just below the Politburo.

Such evidence as exists suggests that until 1970 many Soviets were inclined to suspect that the US ability to act in the Middle East had been degraded by domestic US pressures against forceful US courses abroad. Soviet uncertainty in this regard increased, however, with recent US actions with respect to Cambodia, North Vietnam, and the Mediterranean. A turning point in Soviet thinking on this subject seems to have come as a result of the US temporary move into Cambodia in the spring of 1970. Intermingled with the many Soviet denunciations of the action was a note of hurt surprise implying that the US had done the unexpected. Yuriy Arbatov, the USSR's leading America-watcher who heads the USA Institute, charged that doubt had been created whether the US leadership could in a crisis situation "control its emotions and maintain the necessary circumspection." It is possible that an Arbatov evaluation for the Soviet leadership of the probability of US action had been proven wrong.

The net effect of the Cambodian episode was thus probably to shake Soviet confidence in the predictability of US conduct and the power of the restraints on Presidential action. While some Soviet diplomats reportedly sought to persuade the Arabs during the Cambodian incursion that this new involvement might make the US less likely to act in the Middle East, the credibility of this argument was weakened by the subsequent US withdrawal from Cambodia. And while some Soviets may have

pointed to the withdrawal as motivated by US domestic pressure and therefore testimony to the weakness of the Presidential powers, many are likely to have reacted as did Vasily Kulish, a military-political strategist of the Institute of World Economics and International Relations and former official of the Soviet General Staff. Kulish stated in June 1970 that campus unrest in the United States was not considered a very important influence on policymaking in Washington. After all, he said, "Nixon did move into Cambodia."

The Soviets have shown awareness of statements in the United States that the Cambodian action had been undertaken partly to impress upon the Soviet Union that the US is capable of decisive action elsewhere in the world, particularly in the Middle East. In an August article in his Institute's journal, Arbatov referred directly to Washington intimations that the US government had desired "to put the fear of God into the enemies of the United States and to show them that it is ready for resolute, unexpected, and risky actions." Arbatov professed to believe, of course, that this "show of force" had made no impression on the Soviet Union. He quoted a passage from a Brezhnev speech on 12 June which proclaimed the utter ridiculousness of hoping "to scare the Soviet Union by any kind of show of force," and which advised "the people in Washington" that the USSR would "continue" to give a "resolute rebuff" to imperialist intrigues. In other words, the Soviets were loudly claiming that their evaluation of risks had not been affected at all by what happened in Cambodia. Their highly defensive public reaction on this point indicated instead the opposite of what they were saying, and suggested that their calculations had indeed been modified.

This conclusion was confirmed by Soviet behavior during the September 1970 crisis over Syrian intervention in the Jordan civil war, when the Soviets spoke and acted, publicly and privately, as if they gave a very high rating to the possibility that the United States might act (somewhat higher, in fact, than may have actually been warranted).

this danger was alluded to in Soviet public lectures in Moscow during the crisis. After the crisis, in a 2 October speech in Baku, Brezhnev sang a different tune from his June denial that he had been impressed with US resoluteness. Now he said that "the imperialists from across the sea used this opportunity to bring their forces forward, expecting that a possibility for a new military interference into the Arabs' affairs would present itself." He did not claim or imply that the Soviet Union had "rebuffed" anybody or had faced the United States down (as he had implied in June that they would do). While he spoke of the danger that such intervention could cause one to "lose one's arm," he identified the "people's wrath" in the Middle East rather than the Soviet Union as the surgeon who would have accomplished this amputation. Afterward, Soviet propaganda used the term "decisive rebuff" in a new context, as having been administered to "Washington's attempt to heat up the situation in the Middle East" by Soviet efforts to get the Arab states to desist from actions which might have induced the United States to act. In subsequent discussions of President Nixon's visit to the Sixth Fleet, the Soviets have continued to reflect a general sense of increased US reliance on military power in the Middle East, and seem to take for granted an increased danger that the US might some day use that power.

In sum, the Soviets may still perceive an inhibiting effect upon Presidential initiatives by US opinion hostile to creating new US commitments in areas of the world where the US had previously had no involvement at all. Yet the Soviets seem clearly to be less sure of the degree to which any such hostility or hesitance hinders the Presidential ability to use force in response to concrete Soviet actions in areas where the United States already has both a commitment and armed forces in being. The Soviets have good reason to believe that the Middle East is such an area, and that, indeed, for

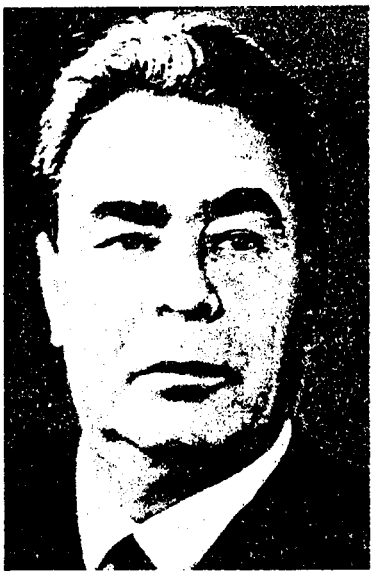
a variety of US foreign and domestic reasons, any such constraints upon Presidential actions there are weaker than those on initiatives in many other parts of the world.

G. The Internal Soviet Factor and Middle East Policy

Soviet actions in the Middle East -- and Soviet responses to US actions -- are impelled by the world-view of most of the Soviet leadership requiring the maximum possible advance consistent with the safety of the Soviet state. This urge to keep pressing as far as seems practicable (but no further) is driven in the first place by an underlying, implacable ideological hostility toward the US, which a majority of the post-Khrushchev leaders feel more strongly than did Khrushchev. It is reinforced by awareness of the degree to which overall Soviet strength has increased since Khrushchev's day, both absolutely and in relation to the US. And, finally, the Soviet leaders clearly appear reluctant to retreat in the Middle East because of the special importance they assign to the advances over the US which they have made there and are now trying to consolidate: risks in the area taken by collective Soviet decision may be regarded by the advocates of those risks as defensive acts aimed at holding on to the Soviet gains won at Western expense; and some Soviet leaders may consider the mere fact that the USSR borders on this area, while the US does not, a consideration which legitimizes these gains as a new Soviet national interest justifying the acceptance of greater risks.

The degree to which these attitudes are held undoubtedly varies within the Soviet leadership, but Soviet external conduct usually provides direct evidence only of the shifting, least-common-denominator consensus of leadership opinion, and only the most general contours of individual differences can be perceived. In addition to a scarcity of information,

there are other reasons why attempts to categorize individual Politburo members rigidly as Middle East "hawks" or "doves" are not likely to be useful. Most of them, including General Secretary Brezhnev, seem to hold personal views on the Middle East that may not only vary considerably from one Middle East issue to another at a given moment, but also may subsequently shift back and forth along a spectrum as events and dangers arise. In addition, many of the leaders -- and particularly Brezhnev and his long-time adversary Shelepin -- seem to be swayed in advocating particular Middle East policies by judgments about their own personal political interests at each juncture, as much as by their opinions on Soviet interests. Brezhnev seems to be governed in large part by his perceptions of the prevailing political wind among his colleagues and the forces immediately below them; Shelepin, by his desire to offer a vigorous alternative program, tempered by his fluctuating view of the political risks.* As their own fortunes change, such men may appear to become more or less "hawkish" or "dovish."



L. I. Brezhnev

*Despite Shelepin's general claim to represent a new and forceful broom that would sweep the cobwebs out of all Soviet policy, he has apparently infuriated Brezhnev at times by cautiously maintaining ambiguity and declining to commit himself on some aspects of policy. He has apparently preferred to reserve attacks on Brezhnev's conduct of policy for occasions -- such as June 1967 -- when he believed that conduct to be peculiarly vulnerable.

For all such reasons even the most moderate-leaning Politburo member will at some time or other partake of some of the views of his most risk-tending colleague, and vice versa: thus Premier Kosygin has expressed gratification that the 1967 war furnished the opportunity and pretext for the Soviet fleet subsequently to expand its operations in the eastern Mediterranean, whereas Shelepin has expressed a belief that the Chinese have been trying to provoke a war between the Soviet Union and the United States.

Finally, the Soviet collective decision-making process is not geared to compel each leader to make up his mind on the most fundamental issues of Soviet policy unless and until they are forced upon the Politburo as a concrete short-term choice. Thus, if most Soviet leaders consider the Soviet stake in Eastern Europe a consideration for which they would if necessary accept nuclear war, the evidence of Soviet conduct in the summer and fall of 1970 suggests that a majority would be less likely to feel this way about the Soviet stake in the Middle East if they were ever compelled to face such a critical issue. But the Soviet leaders may themselves never be confident about how they would jointly decide such a question unless dire circumstances forced them to choose. In short, the length to which individual Soviet leaders would go if necessary in order to defeat the US in the Middle East is ordinarily not measured even for those leaders by day-to-day, step-by-step policy decisions which bypass conclusions about ambiguous long-term risks.

Some general distinctions among the Soviet leaders can, however, be made. Those in the Politburo who are most in favor of a dynamic, "forward" strategy of maximizing pressure abroad seem likely to rate the Soviet interest in the Middle East most highly, to favor the acceptance of greater risks than others would feel justified, and -- most importantly -- to lean toward the sanguine side in evaluating the evidence of US determination whenever

A. N. Kosygin

A. N. Shelepin

that evidence is ambiguous. Aleksandr Shelepin appears likely to be an example of such a leader.

On the other hand, those Politburo members who are less strongly motivated by either Soviet great-power chauvinism, ideological hostility, or a mixture of both, who are less enamored of a "forward" strategy, and who are generally more sensitive to the economic advantages of detente may feel the acceptance of large Middle Eastern risks to be less natural for overall Soviet interests, and also may be somewhat more alarmist in measuring US capabilities and intentions. There is some evidence that Premier Kosygin is the leading figure on this side.*

has claimed that Kosygin privately told him, off the record, that Soviet

(footnote continued on page 135)

1. Pressures from Below

The continuing policy choice which these opposing attitudes reflect is whether the net effect of Soviet actions should be to encourage continuation of the Arab-Israeli confrontation and the accompanying tensions despite the risk that these may ultimately lead to a Soviet-US collision, or seek to avoid such a collision by encouraging a search for an end to the Arab-Israeli struggle despite the harmful effects that such a hypothetical settlement could have for the Soviet position in the Middle East. Actual Soviet policy, reflecting the Politburo consensus, has wobbled between these extremes, trying to have the cake and eat it too: that is, attempting to find an arrangement which would preserve some intermediate level of Arab-Israeli tension, sufficient to safeguard Soviet influence yet somehow not sufficient to bring about a Soviet-US clash.*

(footnote continued from page 134)
planning prior to the March 1971 24th Party Congress was being revised to reflect several major international agreements being negotiated which Kosygin hoped would permit a diversion of resources, presumably from military purposes. In addition to the SALT talks and the West German treaty, "some settlement in the Middle East" was mentioned.

*In the last year the Soviets have begun to admit privately these conflicting desires. In September 1970, [redacted] speaking of the "frightful dilemma" the USSR faced because of the Jordan civil war and the possibility of US intervention, admitted that the Soviet Union has been interested in maintaining a certain tension in the Middle East, but insisted that it must be a "controlled tension" from which the USSR could advance its interests. This is probably just about it.

There is evidence, however, that some forces within the Soviet regime just below the policymaking level are skeptical about the feasibility of this balancing act and insist that a settlement of any type -- even, apparently, one acceptable to UAR interests -- would be perilous for the Soviet political position in the Middle East because it would reduce Arab dependence on the Soviet Union. Such people apparently also consider others in the Soviet regime as inclined to exaggerate the latent risks if no settlement at all is reached.

The available evidence suggests that the forces in the Soviet regime now least hostile to some Middle East settlement with Israel and the US are centered in the Foreign Ministry, with supporters in policy-advisory institutes such as the Institute of the USA and the Institute of World Economics and International Relations. There is also evidence to suggest that the forces most hostile to any such settlement are centered in the two Soviet intelligence organizations, the Committee of State Security (KGB) and the Main Intelligence Directorate (GRU) of the Ministry of Defense, and in some portions of the regular Soviet military establishment.

In late August 1970, a Soviet [redacted] stated that there was a sharp division of opinion within the Soviet government on the advisibility of reaching a Middle East settlement. The Soviet Foreign Ministry, he declared, was "solidly" behind the notion of attempting to reach some settlement, while Soviet "intelligence" (the organization unspecified) was said to be opposed. Soviet intelligence was said to feel that a fully-implemented peaceful solution would ultimately bring the Arab states closer to the West politically as well as economically, and that this would come at the expense of Soviet gains in the area since 1967.

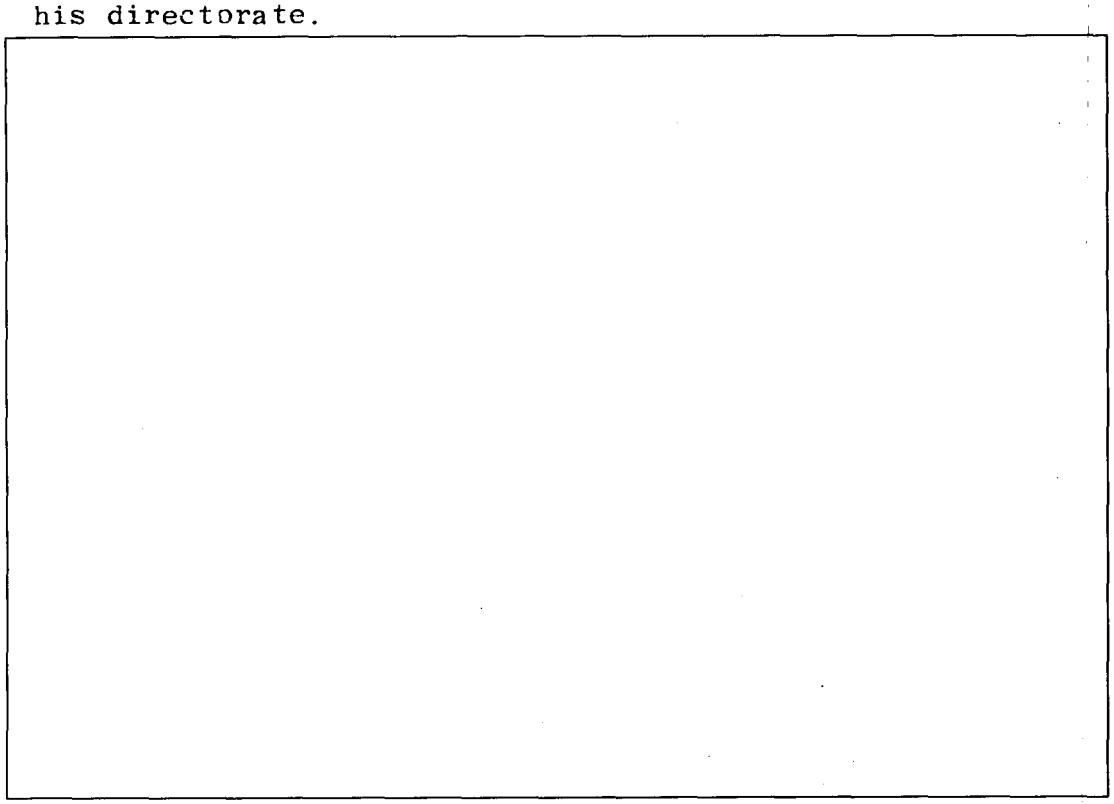
Moreover, [redacted] Soviet Foreign Ministry officials in Beirut who are not also RIS

intelligence officers had for some time been "slanting" their reporting to Moscow to reflect only facts strengthening the Ministry's case for a political settlement, while ignoring "information which points to the anti-Soviet reaction which would occur following a peaceful settlement." Soviet on the other hand, were said to have gone to great pains to report the situation "accurately" and to point out the dangers of a peaceful solution to Soviet interests in the Middle East. Soviet intelligence was said to be particularly distrustful of Nasir and believed that following a peaceful settlement he would become responsive to Western aims in the area.

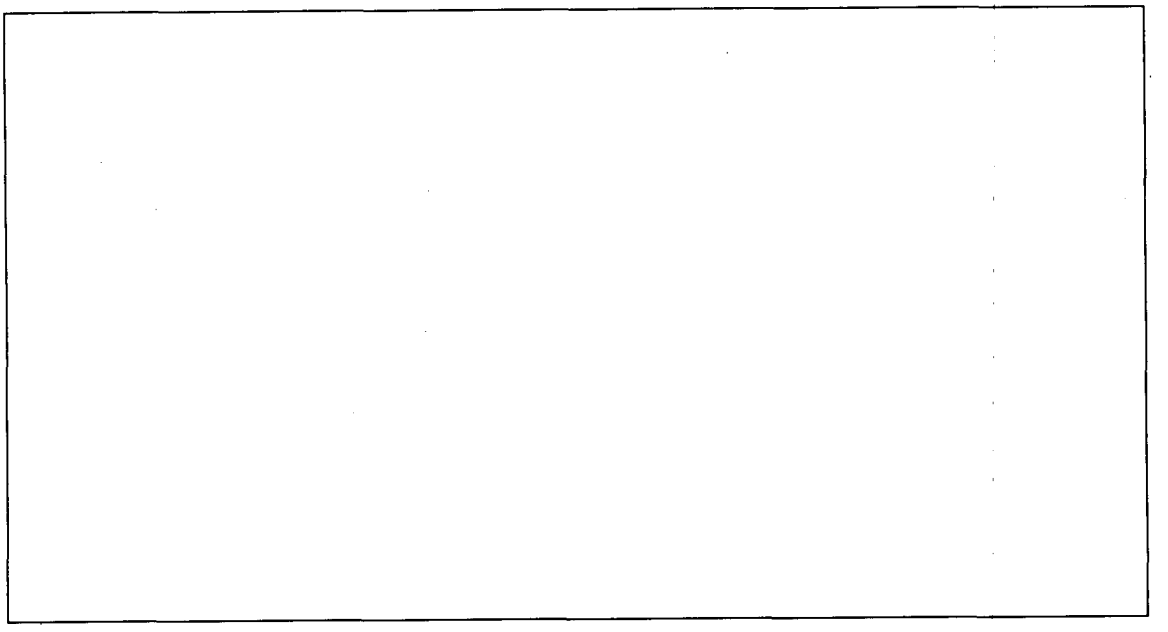
there are independent grounds for considering the allegations in this report plausible. In the first place, such views logically follow from the missions of these officers' respective duties. Furthermore, it is solidly established that there is in fact a long tradition of rivalry between the reporting and analysis of Foreign Ministry officers and those of the two Soviet clandestine services (KGB and GRU), with the latter agencies often displaying a condescending and contemptuous attitude toward the former.

there are special reasons for believing that military intelligence reporting may also reflect negative bias in describing the possible consequences of a Middle East settlement. General Konstantin Seskin, the chief of the GRU Afro-Asian operational directorate which includes the Middle East, is known to have sought in 1966 to peddle to the CPSU

Central Committee, out of channels, a paper he had written in which he expressed highly alarmist and unrealistic views about US hostile intentions in another part of the world; as a result, he became involved in an intramural dispute with less passionate observers within the Soviet intelligence community. It is possible that this ideological bias permeates the work of his directorate.

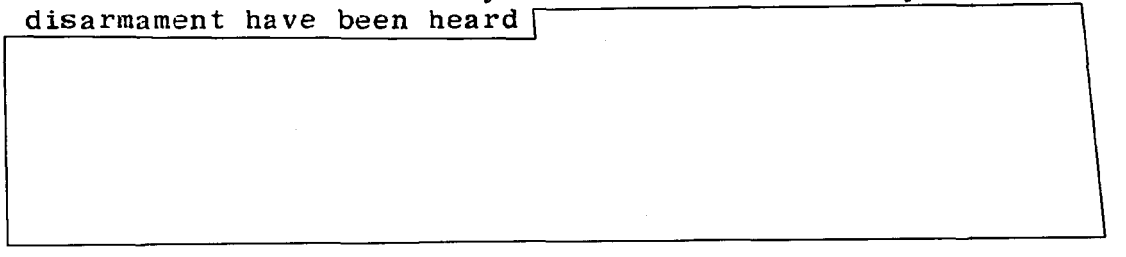


*The Soviets raised a public clamor in December 1956 about a threat of Western intervention against Syria which they knew to be nonexistent, and in May 1967 launched the chain of events that culminated in the June war by falsely reporting that Israel had mobilized its forces on the Syrian border in preparation for a major attack.



2. The Soviet Military and the Middle East

The notion that the Foreign Ministry has such differences with some people in the Soviet intelligence establishment also appears more reasonable in the light of evidence of Foreign Ministry problems with elements of the military establishment. There is a considerable body of evidence of such differences, for example, over SALT, and Soviet Ambassador Dobrynin has confirmed that delays have been caused in preparing Soviet positions for the SALT talks because of the lack of Foreign Ministry liaison with the military. Caustic allusions to the obstinacy of the Soviet military over disarmament have been heard



There is some reason to believe that similar and partly related differences have existed for several years over the question of the extension of the Soviet military presence in Egypt. We have seen that Ambassador Dobrynin as early as April 1968 expressed some apprehension that the Soviet military advisory program might lead to pressure for a greater Soviet military role with attendant dangers. We have also seen that Ambassador Vinogradov in Cairo in November 1968 claimed that he had just recommended against Soviet assumption of a direct role in the defense of the Aswan Dam, that not only the UAR Government but certain unspecified Soviet colleagues had forwarded opposing recommendations, and that a debate was taking place on the subject in Moscow. The following month, Foreign Minister Gromyko paid a visit to Cairo. Nasir later told that while Gromyko emphasized the need for a peaceful solution, a Soviet commented to Nasir on the Gromyko visit a few days later that "we must not pay any attention to what the politicians say; as military men we must do our duty by preparing the Arab armies for war." Nasir commented that Gromyko's recommendations were not consistent with the Soviet military's advice. It is probable, because of the multiple sourcing, that Nasir made some such statements; although he may have been exaggerating the differences depicted, it seems unlikely that they were totally invented.

It is therefore credible that the leaders of the Soviet military advisory organization in Cairo, totally caught up in the very difficult work at hand, may have indeed expressed indiscreetly some impatience with Foreign Ministry expressions of desire for a peaceful settlement which seemed both unrealistic and irrelevant to practical military needs. It also seems credible that persons charged with such growing responsibilities will request all the imputs that they feel the military situation requires and will escalate their requests as the situation worsens. It is therefore likely that Col. General Katyshkin, the chief Soviet military advisor,

was one of the Soviets on the spot who reportedly opposed Ambassador Vinogradov's recommendation in November 1968 that the USSR refrain from assumption of a direct role in defense of the Aswan Dam. While Vinogradov apparently won this point for the time being, he told [redacted] in January 1969 that "more arms" had meanwhile been requested by the UAR at the direct suggestion of the chief military advisor.

Although there is very little direct evidence on the attitudes held within the Soviet General Staff on these matters, certain judgments can be made. Some Soviet military authorities in Moscow may have been reluctant to see the growing Soviet involvement in Egypt's struggle with Israel [redacted] Others, however, may have been primarily influenced by hunger for expansion of the Soviet strategic presence and by a conviction that preservation of the strategic advantages the USSR had already won from the Arab-Israeli conflict hinged largely on continued Soviet satisfaction of the UAR's growing military needs. Such observers are likely to have put a high premium on Soviet use of Egyptian naval and air facilities against NATO, on the promise of new Arab bases in the area, and on the hope of gaining control of the Suez Canal and of expanding the Soviet naval and air presence further. They are therefore likely to have considered the dangers attending more direct Soviet involvement as an acceptable price to pay.*

*A relatively minor factor working in the same direction may have been the desire of some Soviet military authorities to see Soviet sophisticated weapons and tactics tested under combat conditions. Soviet military men have long privately expressed considerable envy of the experience they felt the US had accumulated in this regard in Vietnam. The fact that Soviet units had not had combat experience for many years was probably reflected in the showing of Soviet pilots in combat against Israeli pilots in the summer of 1970.

In May 1970, one Soviet [redacted] expressed deep personal concern that Soviet Middle Eastern policy was creating a Soviet Vietnam without it being recognized as such. He said that if Soviet pilots were being used for operational flights in Egypt, this was a mistake in judgment. He expressed alarm over the possibility of "inadvertent escalation," and depicted the military and Party apparatus as being "not entirely objective" on matters of defense and foreign policy. If this view of General Staff attitudes is accurate, it is also likely that some elements in the military share the misgivings of people in the intelligence services about the adverse consequences for the Soviet strategic position in the Middle East of any Arab-Israeli settlement.

3. The Channels for Influencing The Politburo

The divergent urgings and pressures from below regarding the Middle East reach the Politburo policy-makers in a multitude of ways. On one side, one may visualize cautionary and moderating influences having reached them in the form of the so-called "Political Letters" from Ambassadors such as the now-deceased Vinogradov in Cairo, Azimov in Beirut, and Dobrynin in Washington. Such letters are the most important vehicle for Embassy analysis and recommendations and are often circulated within the Politburo. Argumentation leaning toward the side of moderation might also be heard in personal presentations by Foreign Minister Gromyko and read in the estimates known to be prepared in various of the foreign-policy institutes at the request of the Central Committee apparatus. Such influences may also be exerted in papers written by two

secret organizations within the Foreign Ministry. One is a Directorate for General International Problems, headed by M. Gribanov. There is good evidence that Gribanov's judgments concerning at least some aspects of relations with the United States have been moderate and relatively free from ideological bias. The other secret organization is a Directorate for Planning Foreign Policy Measures. The Soviets are aware that their failure to foresee one or two steps ahead has at times in the past -- e.g., in June 1967 -- led them into serious difficulties, and in December 1968 a secret Central Committee decree ordered that this directorate be "reinforced" with "highly qualified specialists from other departments and academic establishments." It is questionable, however, how much concrete effect this directorate has yet had on Middle East policymaking, which appears to remain highly opportunistic and pragmatic.

On the other side, the Soviet leadership has apparently been pressed over the last few years to expand its commitment in Egypt not only in direct communications and contacts with UAR leaders but also in recommendations from the Soviet military advisory group in Cairo which are likely to have been endorsed by military leaders in Moscow. The views of the latter on such matters would reach the Politburo in direct, informal personal contacts, in occasional papers written by the Main Operations Directorate of the General Staff, and most importantly, in formal presentations to the Defense Council of the USSR. The latter is the Soviet rough counterpart to the US National Security Council, chaired by Brezhnev with only a few top Politburo members participating. At the same time, warnings about the inimical effects of any Middle East settlement upon Soviet interests have apparently been sent to Moscow by KGB and GRU rezidenturas in the Middle East, and in accordance with known practice at least some of these cables are likely to have been slugged by the authors for dissemination in the Politburo and to have been read there. It is quite likely that similar views are held today by some Soviet military leaders and have been expressed in contacts with Politburo members.

The two final elements in the mixture of conflicting advice and pressures on the Middle East reaching the Politburo are the positions taken by the personal foreign policy aides of the Politburo members and the stand taken by the International Department of the Central Committee, which is the main focal point of incoming intelligence from all sources and serves as the Politburo's immediate staff for the preparation and execution of foreign policy.* Unfortunately, almost nothing is known about the line on the Middle East adopted by either the personal Politburo aides or the International Department. Kulish's remark about the Party apparatus as well as the military apparatus as being "not entirely objective" suggests, however, that he suspected that the International Department had concurred in a recommendation to the Politburo that Soviet pilots be employed in Egypt.

4. The Military and the Yegorychev Challenge

All these discordant pieces of advice to the Politburo have an effect on policy to the degree that they affect the political atmosphere within the upper reaches of the Party, to which individual Politburo members are acutely sensitive. Even if an attempt to reshape policy to reflect such pressures fails utterly for the time being, it may have some ultimate effect

*The three key International Department officers on Middle East questions are Central Committee Secretary Ponomarev, the Department Chief; Deputy Department Chief (for Asia and Africa) R.A. Ul'yanovskiy; and V.P. Rumyantsev, chief of the Department's Middle East/North Africa sector. These men have an influence on foreign policy which is at least as great as their Foreign Ministry counterparts, and sometimes greater.

if it modifies the climate of top opinion within which the Brezhnev leadership operates. Reverberations of the June 1967 Middle East crisis seem to have had such an effect on the Soviet Politburo.

At a Central Committee plenum held soon after the 1967 war to endorse the Politburo's actions in the crisis, Moscow Party Chief Yegorychev appears to have made a direct attack on Brezhnev's conduct of policy.

Soon thereafter, Yegorychev was removed from his post at Brezhnev's instigation.

N. G. Yegorychev

Reports on what Yegorychev said are fragmentary and partly conflicting, but the most credible of them suggest that he coupled complaints that the leadership had not acted more vigorously during the crisis with criticism of the state of preparedness of the Soviet armed forces.

* While the policies and actions Yegorychev attacked were apparently supported by all the most senior members of the Politburo, it is difficult to believe that he would have had the temerity to speak out without some high-level support. There is no hard evidence of the identity of such supporters, but a common and plausible speculation is that they included Politburo member Shelepin, who had been repeatedly identified in reporting over the last six years as challenging the Brezhnev leadership over its lack of more vigorous leadership at home and abroad.**

The most important aspect of the Yegorychev challenge, however, is not what happened to Yegorychev -- who was disposed of in a raw display of political power -- but rather what happened to Soviet policy in the aftermath.

*Some Eastern European sources have claimed that Yegorychev criticized the decision to throw good money after bad in the Middle East. This is, of course, what many East Europeans would prefer to believe, since it is their view. Yet Yegorychev may have made this point in the context of his other criticisms, arguing that the money lavished on the Arabs would have been better spent on the Soviet military establishment to enhance Soviet ability to act in such a crisis. For a fuller discussion, see CAESAR XXXVIII, Intelligence Report "Soviet Policy and the 1967 Arab-Israeli War," 16 March 1970,

**Shelepin's close associate KGB Chairman Semichastnyy had also been ousted at Brezhnev's instigation only three weeks before the onset of the Arab-Israeli war and five weeks before the Central Committee plenum at which Yegorychev spoke. There is some reason to believe that Brezhnev subsequently suspected that Semichastnyy before his ouster had furnished Yegorychev with classified information which Yegorychev apparently used to back up his charges at the plenum.

The overall culmulative effect of the Soviet refusal to take risks to defend the UAR in the 1967 debacle, of the predictable subsequent Chinese sneers, of the vociferous Arab complaints, and especially of Yegorychev's voicing of domestic complaint, appears to have been to make the Brezhnev leadership somewhat more sensitive thereafter to the political consequences of inaction in defense of the USSR's primary Middle Eastern interests. Brezhnev became increasingly concerned to demonstrate -- both to the Party and to the military -- that his hand did not tremble. Part of the groundwork for the Politburo's unprecedented decision to send Soviet combat forces to Egypt early in 1970 was thus created by the disturbances within the Central Committee over the Middle East three years before. The foreign and domestic events of 1967 thus ultimately strengthened the relative influence on policy of those Soviets within the top leadership (apparently, Shelepin) and below it (apparently, elements of the Soviet military and intelligence and their Party supporters) who wished the USSR to take a more forward line to defend the Soviets' strategic gains in Egypt.*

*This is not to say that Shelepin's personal standing has been strengthened, any more than was Yegorychev's. On the contrary, as a result of several Brezhnev moves against him and his supporters Shelepin's position in the hierarchy is if anything somewhat weaker today than it was in 1967. But Shelepin seems nevertheless to have caused Brezhnev to modify policy out of self-defense, much as the Chinese attacks on Soviet "betrayal" of the national-liberation movement had caused the post-Khrushchev leadership to cultivate many such uncontrollable radical forces.

5. The Soviet Politburo and a Middle East Settlement

While permitting themselves to be led by the parallel evolution of Nasir's needs and Brezhnev's needs into this unprecedented commitment on the military side, the Soviet leaders have also allowed themselves to follow most of the fluctuations in the Egyptian negotiating posture. In July 1969, Nasir publicly cited a letter received the day before from Brezhnev "saying that they will not accept anything connected with this /Middle East/ question unless the Arab nation agrees with it." There is little reason to doubt the sincerity of this particular Soviet pledge, since it seems to correspond to a consensus which has long existed in the Politburo about Soviet primary interests.

It may be an exaggeration to say that this Soviet leadership consensus now prefers the benefits of the present state of tension in the Middle East to any conceivable settlement. Despite opposition to any agreement from some Soviet quarters, Brezhnev and the leadership majority seem worried enough over present risks to prefer a settlement which would permit a return to say, the pre-1967 level of tensions -- but only if it is a settlement acceptable to their heterogenous Arab clients, or at least to the UAR, their primary client. This represents a change from the leadership position shortly before the 1967 war, when a Soviet official asked [redacted] rhetorically if there were any reason why the USSR should work with the United States at all in the Middle East. But it remains a marginal change. As in the spring of 1967, the military risks still do not impress most Soviet leaders enough to justify either the personal political risk or the joint political sacrifice involved in exerting untoward pressure upon the Egyptian leaders to accept any settlement formula the Egyptians find politically intolerable. This has not precluded Soviet efforts from time to time to persuade the UAR on points

over which the Egyptians themselves were vacillating. The Soviets made such efforts, for example, to secure Nasir's initial acceptance of the UN Security Council November 1967 resolution, and probably made similar exertions during Nasir's July 1970 visit to Moscow to discuss a response to Secretary Rogers' ceasefire proposal. As noted earlier, Nasir's greatly increased military dependence on the Soviet Union after 1967 made him less ready to dismiss out of hand those Soviet suggestions he did not find completely objectionable. But because of the balance of forces in the Soviet leadership, the major voice in the determination of the joint Soviet-Egyptian line on a Middle East settlement has continued to belong to the UAR leadership, and not to the Soviet Politburo.*

This pattern of Soviet behavior is long-established. On 15 October 1956, during the growth of the Suez crisis and six weeks before the Anglo-French-Israeli invasion, Soviet Politburo member Mikoyan sought to help defuse the crisis by stating at an Afghan Embassy reception that all states, including Israel, should have equal freedom to send ships through the Suez Canal. This was the first (and only) time a Soviet leader ever made such a statement until after the 1967 war. But when the Arab press responded with fury and the Egyptian and Syrian governments inquired through diplomatic channels about Soviet intentions, the USSR drew back, hastily dropped the suggestion, and withheld mention of it from the Soviet press. It is probably significant that this venture in a direction so unwelcome to the Arabs and the UAR was launched by

*This deferential Soviet posture strongly resembles the Soviet position on the question of a North Vietnamese settlement with the United States. The USSR favors the notion of a settlement, in the abstract, but is unwilling to take significant political risks by pressing Hanoi to make unacceptable concessions for a settlement.

Mikoyan, an economically-oriented figure long associated with Kosygin and long known to be the most moderate member of the Soviet leadership on most issues. This venture was evidently squelched by the consensus of Mikoyan's colleagues who put a different order of priorities on Soviet interests. Mikoyan is gone now, and such individual sallies are less likely in the present Soviet collective leadership.

The wagging of the Soviet dog by the Egyptian tail was similarly demonstrated late in 1969, when Nasir's initial tentative acceptance and then subsequent rejection of the concept of Rhodes-type talks with Israel were mirrored in initial Soviet indication to the United States that the formula might be acceptable and subsequent Soviet reneging on this position. This Soviet acquiescence in the UAR's zigs and zags on occasion is not the only negative aspect of Soviet diplomacy on the Middle East. Also noteworthy has been the Soviet desire to preserve as much as possible of the Soviet role as broker or intermediary between the UAR and the United States, and the apparent Soviet inability to resist the temptation to blacken the US further in Egyptian eyes when transmitting or commenting on some US proposals. But the major aspect of Soviet policy which has helped to delay a Middle East settlement has not been such sporadic obstruction, but rather the tendency to defer in the final reckoning to the views of the primary Soviet client.

H. A Balance Sheet

Judgments about the future of the Soviet-US struggle in the Middle East may be aided by a listing of the recent factors, favorable and unfavorable, which have affected the prospects for a Arab-Israeli settlement.

Among the events on the plus side over the past year or so have been the following:

1) Both the Egyptian population and most of the Egyptian military seem to have grown more war-weary and more ready than ever before to welcome some peaceful resolution of the struggle if one could only be found on terms they consider honorable. Soundings of UAR officers taken by Nasir before acceptance of the August ceasefire and by his successors before the November extension of the ceasefire indicated strong support for these moves.

2) Israel has been made aware, by a more adverse lineup on a November 1970 UN vote and by gradual shifts in West European opinion (e.g., by Britain), that its stonewalling tactics regarding the resumption of negotiations have increased its isolation. At the same time, the combination of greatly increased dependence on the United States created by the new Soviet menace in Egypt and the pressure created by US diplomatic moves in the summer of 1970 has finally caused some glacial movement to begin within the Israeli political leadership, which had long been frozen regarding terms for a settlement by its most recalcitrant elements. The evolution of Israeli public opinion and the process of internal political realignment has hardly begun, however, and would have to go much, much further for concrete Israeli concessions to be agreed upon within the Israeli leadership which might be sufficient for a settlement.

3) As a result of a chain of events begun by the August ceasefire and culminating in the September Jordan civil war, the power of the Palestinian fedayeen to threaten the Jordanian government and to obstruct the initiation of talks has been somewhat reduced. Within the Palestinian movement, the relative influence of the most inflammatory elements such as the PFLP's Habbash has also, for the time being at least, been somewhat diminished, and that of more moderate elements such as Fatah's Arafat increased. The interest of both the US and the Soviet Union has grown in exploring for mechanisms to bring the Palestinians into a settlement. Premier Kosygin in an October 1970 talk with Arafat in Cairo on the occasion of Nasir's funeral is reported

to have urged him to deal with the US as the only power capable of securing the restoration of Gaza and the West Bank. Arafat, however, professed to be unwilling to negotiate (which would mean, in effect, abandoning the effort to abolish Israel proper and include it in an all-Palestinian state), so long as some radical Arab states (Algeria, Iraq) were still calling for all-out struggle.

4) Finally, the most moderate elements in the Soviet leadership appear to have been considerably alarmed by the events of 1970 and may -- to the extent that their influence and political courage permit -- make stronger attempts in the future to push the leadership consensus away from the acceptance of additional risks. The three events which crystalized this alarm were the shoot-down of four Soviet fighters in late July, which brought it home to Moscow that the USSR might have to escalate its combat role much further to deal adequately with Israel; the Syrian intervention into Jordan in September, which demonstrated anew the capability of the USSR's Arab clients to create independently risks unacceptable to the Soviet Union; and the increased evidence of US reliance on its military power in the eastern Mediterranean, capped by President Nixon's visit to the Sixth Fleet. Kosygin in particular has on several occasions this year privately indicated concern over the trend of events.

The factors on the more somber side of the ledger, however, are still more potent:

1) Assuming Kosygin's sincerity, and even assuming that some degree of his concern is shared by others in the Soviet leadership, it nevertheless continues to appear improbable that the present Politburo can reverse the momentum of Soviet policy and avoid taking greater risks if worse comes to worst -- if no settlement is reached, if the ceasefires eventually

cease to be extended, if the Egyptians then feel obliged to resume their "war of attrition," and if the Israelis feel obliged to respond strongly in some fashion. The weight of the existing Soviet military involvement in the UAR is likely then to impose itself heavily upon Soviet policy and to reduce Soviet options.

2) Meanwhile, the Soviet desire to have the cake and eat it too works against the viability of any settlement discussed and the credibility of a settlement in Israeli eyes. For example, Soviet intelligence officers have apparently been instructed in recent weeks to begin to urge on the fedayeen the advantages of a settlement giving the Palestinians the West Bank. In order to protect Soviet standing with the fedayeen, however, these officers have not urged that the fedayeen make permanent peace with Israel but rather that they accept such a West Bank arrangement as providing a better base for future guerrilla and terrorist operations against Israel proper. Soviet use of such arguments is likely to come to the attention of the Israelis and is hardly likely to make them more willing to give up the West Bank.

3) The death of Nasir and his replacement by a weaker, less charismatic Egyptian leadership in which power is initially more widely diffused may work both for and against an Arab-Israeli settlement. On the one hand, the need to protect Nasir's long-established claim to lead the Arab world will no longer itself be a factor inhibiting UAR concessions, and the new collective Egyptian regime, like many such regimes, is likely at least in the short run to require a respite from turmoil and external tension. But the negative factors may in the long run prove more important. The loss of Nasir's prestige has already reduced somewhat the UAR's relative weight in the Arab world in comparison with that of the other radical Arab states and the fedayeen. This slightly diminished Egyptian stature may make it somewhat more difficult for the new UAR regime to secure general acceptance of marginal concessions which Nasir might possibly have been able to put over. In addition, the loss of Nasir and establishment

of a collective Egyptian regime confronts the Soviets with a more precarious political position in Cairo which is likely to inhibit even further Soviet willingness to take political risks with their Egyptian investment for the sake of a settlement.* Even if the Soviets refrain from overt attempts at intervention to Egyptian politics, they must henceforth consider all proposed actions regarding the UAR in terms of their effect on the Egyptian balance of forces -- particularly on the position of leaders they consider especially hostile or friendly. The Soviets must therefore avoid, even more than before, pressures for concessions to Israel which would be generally resented in Cairo and which might reduce the relative influence of the most pro-Soviet Egyptian elements.

4) Finally, the most serious obstacle to a settlement was not reduced in 1970, and may even have been heightened: this is the difficulty of constructing security guarantees to Israel which Tel-Aviv would find as credible and as valuable as the concrete military protection now offered by the conquered territory it holds. The notion of a UN guarantee, considered by the Israelis as virtually worthless because of what they feel to be the repeated evidence of strong UN bias against them, was made even less valuable in their eyes by UN action and inaction on the Middle East this year. If added reason for Israeli scepticism were needed, this would be provided by the prospect that Communist China may occupy a Security Council seat within the next few years, championing in the most demagogic fashion the views of those militant Arab states angry over

*In October 1970 [redacted] who had previously expressed private criticism of Soviet Middle Eastern policy as creating an irrevocable involvement in Egypt, stated that he thought Nasir's death would only deepen the Soviet involvement because the post-Nasir leadership would be a weaker one and in need of "propping up."

relative Soviet restraint toward Israel, possibly inducing the USSR to harden its stand toward Israel to meet this competition, and in any case vetoing any Security Council Middle East resolution not hostile to Israeli interests which the Soviets might conceivably be disposed to allow to pass.

At the same time, the Israeli suspicion is likely to have been strengthened that US interests in the Arab world would, after a settlement, cause the US to hesitate to fulfill a unilateral guarantee against renewed Arab harrassment or attack. Such suspicion was fostered by what the Israelis considered US hesitancy in May 1967 over the Strait of Tiran crisis, in the face of what the Israelis regarded as a long-standing US pledge to act. Developments concerning the UAR ceasefire violations in recent weeks have doubtless supported Israeli suspicions. Although currently enhanced US military assistance may have assuaged the Israelis somewhat, no amount of such hardware is likely to assure Israeli confidence in a US post-settlement guarantee. Only convincing evidence of US enduring willingness to override its important and legitimate national interests in the Arab world could restore such confidence. If this is so, some Israelis may feel that the present situation of confrontation with the Soviet Union in the UAR, with all its grave dangers, offers the closest approach to a credible guarantee of US assistance in a crunch, since it harnesses the worldwide strategic interests of the US' competition with the USSR to Israel's interests in its struggle with the Arab world. Until the Soviet menace becomes more acute for Israel there will therefore be strong reasons for many Israelis to continue to prefer a stalemated version of the present situation, and to resist movement toward any settlement which entails drastic Israeli concessions in exchange for a questionable guarantee.

The Israelis may find, however, that the security offered them by the conquered territories is illusory

and that the UAR-Soviet danger to them will multiply in time if there is no settlement. The problem, thus, is whether the Israelis can be brought to see that major concessions by them, though risky, are the lesser danger and might produce a settlement which would be viable and long-lasting. It is probably chiefly through such an Arab-Israeli settlement that the US can hope to reduce the Soviet political base in the Middle East which today supports an expanding Soviet military presence.

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