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SUBJ: Soviet Pressure for Iraqi-Kurdish Agreement

1. During Secretary's discussion on Middle East with Israeli FonMin DirGen Rafael April 10, latter asserted Soviets had played decisive role in Iraq-Kurdish agreement. According Rafael, Iraqis were extremely reluctant to settle Kurdish problem but Soviets insisted, indicating they wanted peace in proximity of USSR's borders. Iraqi negotiators had literally asked Kurds to state their terms for agreement and then signed without further discussion.

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EUR/SOV - Mr. Anderson *fm*

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2. Rafael volunteered the same comments on subject during conversation April 10 with DepAsst Sec Swank (septel), offering this alleged Soviet action with Iraq as illustration of powerful influence Rafael thinks USSR could bring to bear in Cairo if so disposed. (Latter point also made by inference in conversation with Secretary.) Rafael added Israeli info, which he called totally reliable, indicates Soviets put into balance (A) further Soviet arms assistance to Iraq, (B) Soviet oil cooperation with Iraq, and (C) probably also promises of Soviet support for bigger Iraqi role in Persian Gulf affairs.

3. Rafael expanded his thesis in Swank conversation to suggest that Moscow has traditionally alternated its Middle East attention between penetration into Red Sea as gateway to East Africa and into Persian Gulf as avenue to South Asia, and when stymied in one direction, shifts back to other. Rafael asserted Soviets in 1950s had not calculated potential setbacks to their efforts in]

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Egypt or enormous investments required. Said that Israel take on UK commitments east of Suez. Rafael predicted to Swank that Soviet pressures which produced Iraqi-Kurdish agreement were only first manifestation of new Soviet drive for influence in Persian Gulf.

4. COMMENT: We realize Israelis have good sources on Kurdish matters but believe Rafael has exaggerated Soviet role in recent Iraqi-Kurdish agreement. Addressees' views would be welcome.

GP-3 END

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