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Soviet Policy Toward the Middle East Since the October 1973 Arab-Israeli War

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It comes as no surprise that the long-term Soviet goal in the Middle East is to diminish, if not to replace, Western and particularly United States influence. However, at least since the Yom Kippur War, the states and the political forces in the Middle East are subjects and are no longer objects of international politics. Middle East politics are characterized by volatility, and the region is riven not only by the Arab-Israeli conflict, but also by disputes and conflicts among the various states and by political instability within many of the states. Professor Freedman's detailed account of recent Soviet policy in the Middle East shows that Soviet influence has actually decreased since 1973.

SOVIET POLICY TOWARD THE MIDDLE EAST SINCE THE OCTOBER 1973 ARAB-ISRAELI WAR

by

Robert O. Freedman

Since the arms deal with Egypt in 1955, Soviet policymakers have sought to establish the Soviet Union as the dominant power in the Middle East. The main objective of Soviet strategy has been to eject the Western Powers from their positions of political, military, and economic influence within the region and to promote the growth of Soviet positions of influence in their place. In their quest, the Soviet leaders have relied primarily on massive shipments of military equipment to many of the states in the region. They have also been engaged in large economic aid projects such as the Aswan and Euphrates Dams, and more recently they have sought to consolidate their influence through long-term "Friendship and Assistance" treaties such as the ones signed with Egypt in 1971 and Iraq in 1972.

The Middle East is a highly complex and volatile region, studded with ethnic, linguistic, and religious minorities and seared by a large number of interstate and intrastate conflicts. As a result of the region's strong resistance to the Soviet drive for influence, the Soviet leaders have had to contend with a number of major problems in their quest for influence in the Middle East, including the decisions as to which nation to support in regional conflicts such as the ones between Iran and Iraq, and Morocco and Algeria, or intrastate conflicts such as the Kurdish drive for autonomy in Iraq and the Eritrean separatist movement in Ethiopia. They also have had to decide which Arab leader to support in the post-Nasser competition for leadership in the Arab world between Egypt's Anwar Sadat,

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Syria's Hafiz Assad, Libya's Muammar Kaddafi, Iraq's Hassan Al-Bakr, and Algeria's Houari Boumedienne—a competition made more severe by the hostility in the relations among Egypt, Iraq, and Syria, three of the major recipients of Soviet aid in the Arab world. In addition, the Soviet leaders have been confronted with the dilemma of dealing with the Arab Communist Parties which are suspected by the Arab leaders as competitors for power.

Finally, the Soviet leaders have had to cope with competition from the United States and Communist China which actively opposes Soviet efforts to secure dominant influence over the Middle East. For the Russians, the most serious arena of Soviet-American competition in the Middle East has been in Egypt, the most populous and militarily powerful of the Arab States. This competition increased sharply following the death of Nasser and was one of the central issues in Middle Eastern politics following the October 1973 Arab-Israeli War.¹

The Soviet leadership has evolved one overall policy to deal with these highly disparate problems. Their strategy has been to encourage Arab unity on an "anti-imperialistic" basis, seeking to unite the Arab States together with the Arab Communist Parties and other Arab political organizations (including the Palestine Liberation Organization) in a united front directed against Israel and its supporters in the West. Given the variegated elements in the united front the Soviet leaders have been seeking, this strategy has met with considerable difficulty. With the end of the October 1973 Arab-Israeli War, Soviet diplomacy was beset by a revival of many of the old problems that had beset it in the prewar period, plus a number of new problems as well. The Soviet effort to deal with both the resurgence of those old problems and the emergence of new ones in the October 1973-January 1976 period merits examination.

Soviet Policy from the End of the War to the End of the Oil Embargo. Perhaps the major problem facing the Soviet leadership in the postwar period lay in the fact that their long-sought Arab unity "on an anti-imperialistic basis" did not survive the war. In addition, the United States was soon not only able to restore its prewar position in the Middle East, but actually to improve it. Finally, the Soviet leadership, still dependent on good relations with the United States because of its need for American trade and technology, its fears of a Sino-American alliance, and its interest in further strategic arms limitation agreements, found itself confronted by a rising swell of antidétente feeling in the United States which threatened many of the Soviet-American relationships.

The Arab unity created by the war, which the Russians had welcomed so warmly, began to disintegrate even before the war ended. The Ba'athist regime in Iraq, despite the presence of Iraqi Communists as junior partners in a national front government and despite close ties to the U.S.S.R., rejected the Soviet-supported cease-fire agreement as being "against the will of the Arab masses,"² much as it had rejected the Soviet-supported U.N. Resolution No. 242 of November 1967 which laid the framework for an Arab-Israeli peace settlement. The Al-Bakr regime was, in fact, so opposed to the cease-fire that it refused to attend the Algiers summit conference of Arab leaders which took place in late November 1973 to coordinate Arab postwar strategy. Similarly opposed to the cease-fire was Libyan leader Muammar Kaddafi who termed it "a time bomb offered by the United States and the Soviet Union."³ To make matters worse for the Russians, bloody fighting erupted between the Kurds and the Iraqi Communists from 7 to 20 November 1973 and was followed the next month by renewed frontier clashes between Iraq and Iran,⁴ which soon

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escalated into such severe battles that the Russians had to admonish the Iraqis in a *New Times* report of the clashes.⁵

A far more serious problem for the Soviet leaders after the war lay in Egypt where Soviet influence had again begun to erode. By the end of the war, the primary alignment in the Arab world was the Egyptian-Saudi Arabian alliance with Egypt supplying the military power and Saudi Arabia the oil leverage. U.S. Secretary of State Henry Kissinger clearly recognized this when he helped negotiate the cease-fire, thereby saving Sadat from probably political ruin as his armies seemed to be on the verge of being overrun by the Israelis. Kissinger also probably remembered Sadat's past efforts to improve relations with the West and his evident dislike for the Russians whom he had openly opposed on a number of occasions since becoming Egypt's President in October 1970.⁶ Thus Kissinger may have decided that he had a unique opportunity to win over Egypt and perhaps the rest of the Arab world as well (or at least the key oil-producing states of Saudi Arabia and Kuwait) by forcing the Israelis to accept a cease-fire and then working out an exchange of prisoners (7 November) and finally a complete disengagement agreement (18 January) which resulted in Israel's withdrawal not only from its large salient on the West Bank of the canal commanding the road to Cairo, but also from the East Bank of the Suez Canal, thus enabling the Egyptians to control both banks of the canal for the first time since 1967. In the process, Kissinger achieved the reestablishment of diplomatic relations between the United States and Egypt. Relations between the United States and Egypt warmed up so rapidly that there soon began a steady stream of American businessmen to Egypt which, under Sadat's economic policies, provided a profitable haven for foreign investments. In addition, Kissinger obtained Sadat's help in lifting the Arab oil

embargo, thus effectively splitting the "anti-imperialist" Arab unity the Russians had tried to maintain.

As might be expected, the Soviet leadership which had provided the weaponry to enable Sadat to go to war in October was far from happy with these developments. The Russians sought to counter rising American influence by deepening their relationship with the Palestine Liberation Organization—one of the most anti-American forces in the Middle East—by floating a "trial balloon" for the establishment of a Palestinian state.⁷ It would appear that the Soviet leadership came out for the establishment of a Palestinian state which would include the Israeli-occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip areas in order to secure another area in the Middle East where they could exercise influence, along with South Yemen, Iraq, Syria, and, to a lesser degree, Egypt where their influence was declining. It may also have been Soviet reasoning that the emplacement of a pro-Soviet state in the midst of such pro-Western states as Lebanon, Jordan, and Israel would serve to weaken further the position of the United States in the region while strengthening that of the U.S.S.R.

In addition to upgrading their relations with the PLO, the Soviet leaders sought to offset the growing Egyptian-American rapprochement by emphasizing continued American military support of Israel and the direct U.S. military "threat" against the Arabs. The Russians also continued to urge the Arabs to maintain their unity in the face of "imperialist intrigues."⁸ This was the theme of Soviet propaganda as the first Arab-Israeli peace conference in 24 years opened at Geneva on 22 December 1973. The conference, however, was boycotted by the Syrians who claimed that Israel's interests would be served by the conference and that the United States and Israel were "engaged in maneuvers that would lead us into an

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endless wilderness."⁹ The fact that the U.S.S.R. had strongly supported the conference—to insure Soviet participation in any peace settlement—made the Syrian remarks take on an anti-Soviet as well as an anti-American character. Despite the lack of Arab unity evidenced by the Syrian boycott, the Soviet Union championed the cause of the Arab States and the Palestinian Arabs at the conference and demanded the total withdrawal of Israeli troops to the 1967 prewar boundaries. Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko made a point of stating, however, that “the Soviet Union has no hostility to the State of Israel as such.”¹⁰ After several days of meetings, the conference adjourned for the Israeli elections, but in the interim there were meetings of the Arab oil-producing countries and the Persian Gulf oil-producing states which took measures which the Soviet leadership greeted with satisfaction. The Persian Gulf oil-producing states more than doubled the “posted-price” per barrel of crude oil, in effect, therefore, quadrupling the price they charged for it. This move was certain to aggravate the balance of payments problems of the West European states, thus further hampering both Common Market and NATO unity. The Russians also profited from the fact that, as a net exporter of oil, their hard currency income would rise with the market price of the oil they sold to Western European nations and Japan. The decision of the Arab oil producers to maintain their oil embargo against the United States was also warmly welcomed. The Soviet leaders, however, were apparently caught by surprise by the Kissinger arranged Israeli-Egyptian disengagement agreement on 18 January, and the new Egyptian Foreign Minister, Ismail Fahmy—a man who had clashed with the Russians in the past—had to make a hurried visit to Moscow immediately thereafter to explain the Egyptian action. The Russians put into *Pravda*'s

description of the talks the assertion:

It was stressed that an important factor in the struggle for a just settlement in the Near East is the close coordination of the actions of the Soviet Union and Egypt at all stages of this struggle including the work of the Near East Peace Conference and all the working groups which come out of it.¹¹

The Soviet leadership probably put this assertion in the description of Fahmy's visit because Soviet-Egyptian coordination was anything but close. Meanwhile, the Russians were also warning the Arabs about United States, West European, and Japanese plans to increase their investments in Arab countries and about the oil-for-technology deals a number of West European states and Japan were in process of signing with Arab States in an effort to insure themselves a secure oil supply.¹²

A further blow to the Russians came when Sadat began to urge the lifting of the oil embargo against the United States. *Pravda*, in a feature article on 30 January, warned against the disengagement agreement leading only to a partial settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict and against the attempts by Israel and “imperialist reaction” to weaken the unity of the Arab countries. This was to be a consistent Soviet theme over the next 2 years.

Nonetheless, the momentum of Middle Eastern events seemed to be favoring the United States. Even the decision by the United States to host a conference of energy-consuming nations in mid-February did not serve to arrest the slow splintering of Arab unity on the oil embargo. Saudi Arabia's oil minister, Sheikh Ahmed Yamani, also talked openly about lifting the oil embargo, and it appeared to be only a matter of time until this would take place. In this atmosphere,

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Kissinger made another journey to the Middle East at the end of February, shuttling back and forth between Damascus and Jerusalem and procuring from the Syrian leaders the list of Israeli prisoners of war the Israelis had demanded as a precondition for talks with Syria. It appeared that once again Kissinger would be able to pull off another diplomatic coup. Having seen the United States moving in to replace the U.S.S.R. as the leading foreign influence in Egypt, the Soviet leaders had no desire to see the process repeat itself in Syria. Consequently, Gromyko, who had just paid a surprise visit to Cairo, followed Kissinger to Damascus.¹³ The Soviet-Syrian communique issued upon Gromyko's departure was far more bellicose than the Soviet-Egyptian communique and demanded a fixed timetable for Israeli withdrawal from "all occupied territory," threatening a "new eruption of war" that would bring about "a threat to peace and security in the Middle East and throughout the world" if Arab demands were not met.¹⁴ Strengthened by new shipments of Soviet arms and encouraged by Soviet support, the Syrian regime of Hafiz Assad, less willing (or able) to make peace with Israel than was Sadat, began a war of attrition against Israeli positions in the Golan Heights as soon as Gromyko left for Moscow.

The Soviet and Syrian leaders apparently hoped that by heating up the conflict in the Golan Heights they would be able to prevent the oil-rich states from lifting the embargo against the United States. While Syria stepped up its level of fighting, the Soviet media urged the Arab States to maintain the oil embargo while simultaneously belittling Kissinger's mediation efforts, with *Pravda* on 17 March calling them "a mountain that gave birth to a mouse." Despite these tactics, Kissinger's efforts were

successful. On 19 March, the oil embargo against the United States was lifted by the major Arab oil-producing states, and Arab unity on the embargo was broken as Libya and Syria refused to go along with the majority decision to lift the embargo.

The termination of the oil embargo may be considered a defeat for Soviet diplomacy in the Arab world. The Soviet leadership had come out strongly for the maintenance of the oil embargo as a means of keeping the Arab world unified against the United States and had greatly profited from the disarray in both NATO and the EEC caused by the embargo. Egypt's decision to support an end to the embargo—despite all the aid the U.S.S.R. had given Egypt before and during the October war—was yet another indication of the sharp diminution of Soviet influence in Egypt and the corresponding rise in American influence. Consequently, following the termination of the oil embargo, the Soviet leadership was compelled to reevaluate its Middle East policies in an effort to halt the pro-American trend that was emerging in the region.

Soviet Policy from the End of the Oil Embargo to the Soviet-American Summit in Moscow. The Soviet response to the termination of the oil embargo was threefold. First, the Soviet leadership launched a public attack on Sadat in an effort to isolate him both inside Egypt and from other Arab leaders. Second, the Soviet Union stepped up its support to both Syria and Iraq lest these two Soviet clients be attracted to the Egyptian-Saudi Arabian alignment which, backed by the United States, held out the promise of Western economic and technological assistance for their national development plans. Finally, the U.S.S.R. moved to improve relations with Libya, its erstwhile Middle East

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enemy, which moved closer to the Soviet Union in response to the Egyptian-American rapprochement. In pursuing these policies, the Soviet leadership was careful to maintain contact with the United States while Kissinger, despite the war of attrition, was working for a Syrian-Israeli troop disengagement agreement. The Russians sought both to maintain the semblance of détente and to avoid the repetition of their earlier experience when Kissinger had worked out the Egyptian-Israeli disengagement agreement without any participation by the Soviet Union.

Soviet-Egyptian relations began to deteriorate very rapidly following the end of the oil embargo. The Soviet leadership retaliated against Sadat for his opposition on the embargo issue by branding him a traitor to Nasser's heritage—an obvious attempt to undermine Sadat's position among the Egyptian public and among Egyptian elites who still revered Nasser's memory.¹⁵

Sadat, however, was not cowed by the Soviet attacks and replied in kind by charging that the Soviet Ambassador to Egypt, Vladimir Vinogradov, had lied to him on the first day of the war by claiming that Syria had called for a cease-fire.¹⁶ He followed up this charge with a major speech on 3 April in which he stated that he had expelled the Russians from their Egyptian bases in July 1972 because they had defaulted on promised arms deliveries to Egypt.¹⁷ On 18 April, Soviet-Egyptian relations hit a new low when Sadat announced his decision to cease relying exclusively on the Soviet Union for arms,¹⁸ and the Egyptian leader, in a *New York Times* interview 3 days later which was widely reprinted in the Egyptian press, asked the United States to supply Egypt with arms because the U.S.S.R. had used the supply of weapons and ammunition as an "instrument of policy leverage" to influence Egyptian actions.¹⁹ While the United States was not yet willing to commit itself to arms sales to Egypt,

U.S. officials had discussed loans of up to \$250 million as a means of further improving Egyptian-American relations. In pursuing his rapprochement with the United States, Sadat was trying to drive a wedge between the United States and Israel while at the same time aiding the weak Egyptian economy and playing off the United States against the Soviet Union. For his part, Kissinger, in offering Egypt economic aid was trying both to win Egypt over to the Western camp and to raise the threshold of any Egyptian decision to support Syria in its rapidly escalating war of attrition against Israel.²⁰ To many outside observers—including the Russians—it appeared that by the end of April the Egyptian-American rapprochement was turning into an alignment.

Meanwhile, despite two Palestinian terrorist attacks against Israeli settlements at Kirvat Shemona (12 April) and Maalot (15 May), the latter killing 24 schoolchildren, by the end of May it appeared that the Israeli-Syrian disengagement negotiations, mediated by Kissinger, might well meet with success. Consequently, the Soviet leadership took a more positive posture toward Egypt, whose prestige in the Arab world was sure to rise if the Syrians followed the Egyptian lead in working out a disengagement agreement. Thus, on 19 May, with the third anniversary of the Soviet-Egyptian treaty approaching, the Soviet leadership sent a new Ambassador to Egypt bearing a friendly message for Sadat. Soviet press comment on the treaty was far more limited than on the past two anniversaries, however, and a *New Times* article commemorating the occasion implicitly acknowledged Soviet concern over the deepening American involvement in Egypt.

While Sadat's decision to help end the oil embargo against the United States led to a sharp deterioration in Soviet-Egyptian relations, Libyan leader Muammar Kaddafi, who, like the Russians, opposed an end to the oil

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embargo, drew closer to the U.S.S.R. Isolated regionally and in the Arab world, Kaddafi was on poor terms not only with Sadat, who in the summer of 1973 had declined Kaddafi's offer to merge Libya with Egypt and had allied instead with Saudi Arabia's King Faisal, who was one of Kaddafi's chief enemies, and also with Sudanese Premier Jaafar Nimeri, who accused Kaddafi of a number of subversive plots against his regime, and with Algeria's Houari Boumedienne and Tunisia's Habib Bourgiba as well. Thus isolated in North Africa and the Arab world and angry at Egypt's move toward the United States, Libya turned toward the Soviet Union for support, despite the fact that Kaddafi had earlier attacked the U.S.S.R. in the strongest terms as an "imperialist power," following the conclusion of the Soviet-Iraqi treaty in 1972. In the middle of May, Libyan Premier Abdul Jalloud arrived in Moscow to seek Soviet aid. In welcoming the Libyan leader, who was second in command to Kaddafi, Soviet Premier Kosygin emphasized the Soviet Union's willingness to forget the past differences between the two countries in the interest of future cooperation. In reply, Jalloud emphasized Libya's isolation and need for Soviet support against "imperialist and reactionary forces."²¹

The Soviet leaders saw in the visit of the Libyan delegation a useful opportunity to counter Sadat's move toward the United States and also a means of strengthening the Soviet economy. Thus, in his speech, Kosygin called for an agreement to arrange Soviet-Libyan trade on a long-term basis, and the final communique issued at the conclusion of Jalloud's visit announced the establishment of a Soviet-Libyan intergovernmental commission for this purpose. In addition, the two countries pledged to "the highest possible mutually advantageous trade turnover."²² In appealing for a sharp increase in trade, the Soviet leaders may have hoped to gain access

to Libya's large hard currency reserves—a development which would enable the Soviet Union to increase its purchases on Western markets.²³ In addition, the Russians may have hoped to exchange Soviet technology and equipment for Libyan oil, which could be resold on Western markets or used to fulfill the U.S.S.R.'s own increasing domestic oil needs.

While Soviet-Libyan cooperation had now become a factor in Middle Eastern politics, the Soviet leadership did not neglect its ties with Iraq, which had been its leading Middle East partner since 1972. Although weakened by its war with the Kurds and its continual confrontation with Iran, Iraq provided the Russians with a useful center for anti-Western and anti-Egyptian propaganda. The most pressing issue for the Iraqi leaders was their war with the Kurds, and the Soviet leadership, faced by the defection of Egypt, now apparently pledged Soviet military support for a massive Iraqi offensive against the Kurds which was designed to end the Kurdish separatist threat (and the danger to the Kirkuk oil fields claimed by the Kurds). The Soviet propaganda media gave full support to the Iraqi Government's policy toward the Kurds, and on 23 March Soviet Defense Minister Andrei Grechko flew to Baghdad for what *Pravda* reported as a "detailed discussion of questions relating to the present state and future development of Soviet-Iraqi cooperation in the military and other spheres," and probably to inspect Iraqi preparations for their offensive against the Kurds as well.²⁴

While working to improve relations with Libya and to solidify their ties with Iraq, the central Soviet concern during the postembargo period was their relations with Syria. The Soviet leaders were clearly concerned that Syria might follow Egypt's example and move toward the West in return for economic and technical aid. The Syrian Government's decision on 13 March to lift

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restrictions on the movement of private capital in and out of Syria and to facilitate foreign investment must have added to this concern.²⁵ By supporting Syria in its war of attrition against Israel, the Soviet leaders hoped to avert a Syrian turn to the West while at the same time isolating Sadat as the only Arab leader to have reached an agreement with Israel. In addition, they may have entertained the hope that should the fighting intensify sufficiently, the Arab oil-producing states might be forced by Arab public opinion to reimpose the oil embargo, and Sadat himself might be forced to return to war. Yet in pursuing their policy of encouraging Syrian belligerency, the Soviet leaders had to toe a very narrow diplomatic line. A new summit meeting with the United States was on the horizon, and important strategic arms limitation issues between the two superpowers were under active consideration. Consequently, the Soviet leaders adopted a dual policy of supporting Syrian belligerency while at the same time maintaining close contact with Kissinger's mediation efforts. This dual policy was designed to underscore Soviet support for the Arab cause while also enabling the Soviet leadership to claim a share of the credit should Kissinger succeed in persuading the Syrians and Israelis to accept a disengagement agreement. It would also create the necessary climate for the convening of a summit conference between Nixon and Brezhnev, since many of the preliminary matters could be taken care of by meetings between Kissinger and the Soviet leadership.

The first high-level Soviet-American meeting following the lifting of the oil embargo took place on 29 March when Kissinger journeyed to Moscow. While strategic arms issues were the main topic of consideration, the Middle East also came under discussion. The final communique, however, stated only that the "two sides would make efforts to

promote the solution of the key questions of a Near East settlement."²⁶ Interestingly enough, while Western press reports of Kissinger's talks in Moscow portrayed them as being relatively unsuccessful, the Soviet media challenged this interpretation. Thus, on 20 March, *Izvestia* commented: "The mood and content of the talks did not at all correspond to the pessimistic accompaniment that certain Western media provided for H. Kissinger's mission."²⁷

While making this gesture toward Soviet-American relations, the Soviet leaders went out of their way to emphasize their support for Syrian President Hafiz Assad during his visit to Moscow in mid-April. Assad was met at the airport by the top three Soviet leaders (Brezhnev, Kosygin, and Podgorny), and the Syrian President's visit received major front page coverage in both *Pravda* and *Izvestia*. In his dinner speech welcoming Assad, Brezhnev pointedly attacked Kissinger's diplomatic efforts in the Middle East:

... against the background of reduced tensions, the aggressors and their protectors may once again attempt to evade a fundamental all-inclusive solution to the [Middle East] problem. It is by no means happenstance that recently "ersatz plans" as I would call them for a Near East settlement have been launched.²⁸

Following 5 days of talks, which the final communique described as taking place in an atmosphere "of frankness and mutual understanding," an indication that serious disagreements remained between the two sides, the Soviet leadership agreed to "further strengthen Syria's defense capacity." Perhaps in return, the Syrians agreed to wording in the joint communique which stated "The Syrian side reemphasized the importance of the Soviet Union's participation in all stages and in all areas of a settlement."²⁹

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Soviet attention switched back to the United States at the end of April when Gromyko met with Kissinger in Geneva. While the main topic of the talks was Nixon's forthcoming visit to Moscow, for which no date had yet been set, *Pravda* also reported that the two leaders:

exchanged opinions concerning the current situation in the talks on the Near East settlement and concerning the next stage of these talks. The two sides agreed to exert their influence in favor of a positive outcome of the talks and to maintain close contact with each other while striving to coordinate their actions in the interests of a peaceful settlement in the region.³⁰

Kissinger, however, gave a far less optimistic view of the talks, stating only that in regard to his forthcoming mediation efforts "I expect we'll have Soviet understanding, and, I hope, cooperation."³¹

Gromyko met Kissinger yet another time on 7 May as the Soviet leadership continued to demonstrate its desire to remain closely involved with the disengagement talks while also fostering détente. For his part, Kissinger seems to have humored the Soviet desire, evidently hoping that the frequent meetings would serve to limit Soviet obstructionism of an Israeli-Syrian settlement. Only 2 days later, however, Soviet concern about détente must have been sharply reinforced when West German Chancellor Willy Brandt was forced to resign over a spy scandal involving East Germany. At this point, with the West European architects of détente, Brandt and Pompidou, having departed from the European political scene and with a Watergate-weakened Nixon under increasing attack by opponents of détente in the United States, Brezhnev may have seen the whole structure of his détente policy toward the West in danger of collapse. Consequently, the Soviet

leader may have decided that overt obstructionism of a Syrian-Israeli agreement on American terms was becoming too great a threat to Soviet-American relations. This feeling may have been reinforced by the fact that despite a series of bloody Palestinian terrorist attacks on Israeli settlements aimed at undermining Kissinger's mediation efforts, the American diplomat had nonetheless managed to work out the outlines of an agreement by the latter part of May. Thus, as the Syrians and Israelis were in the process of ironing out the last details of their agreement, Gromyko made yet another trip to Damascus, perhaps hoping to salvage some prestige for the U.S.S.R. from the American-mediated agreement. Possibly as a sop to the Soviet leadership, which could well have been afraid that Syria, tempted by promises of American economic aid, might follow Egypt into the American camp, the joint communique issued at the conclusion of Gromyko's visit stated:

The Soviet Union and the Syrian Arab Republic affirm the durability of the relations that have been established between them and the durability of the friendship between the peoples of the two countries, and they declare that *they will let no one disturb these relations and this friendship.*³² (Emphasis added.)

In general, Soviet comment on the Syrian-Israeli disengagement agreement, which set up a U.N. force on the Golan Heights between the armies and returned to Syria all the land it had lost in the 1973 war as well as the city of Kuneitra lost in 1967, stressed two main points: that the U.S.S.R. had played a major role in bringing about the agreement and that it was only the first step toward a much more comprehensive settlement. *New Times* Associate Editor Dmitry Volsky, in a review of the agreement, also took the opportunity to warn the Arabs that it was not in their

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interest to have the U.S.S.R. excluded from the peace negotiations.³³

The Syrian-Israeli disengagement agreement ended the period of direct military confrontation between Israel and the Arab States, although Palestinian terrorist attacks continued to plague the Israelis. Nonetheless, the threat of renewed warfare, for the time being at least, had receded as diplomatic efforts to bring about a peace settlement now seemed to have the upper hand. In this atmosphere the United States set the date for Nixon's visit to the Soviet Union.

Prior to his scheduled visit to the Soviet Union at the end of June, President Nixon set out on a multination tour of the Middle East to reap the political benefits of the disengagement agreement so painfully negotiated by his Secretary of State. Nixon received a hero's welcome in Egypt as the man who had forced the Israelis to withdraw from the Suez Canal, and he received a warm welcome in Syria as well where American aid in getting Israel to withdraw not only from its gains in the 1973 war but also from the city of Kuneitra was highly praised. During Nixon's visit to Damascus, diplomatic relations between Syria and the United States were restored, and the Soviet leadership could not have been too happy with Syrian Deputy Premier Muhammed Hazdar's statement on 20 June that Syria was ready for "an open-minded dialogue with any foreign capital that wants to participate in Syria's development."³⁴ During his trip, Nixon signed a large number of economic and technical agreements with Arab leaders, the most important of which was a pledge of American assistance in the development of atomic energy in Egypt. As a result of the disengagement agreement and Nixon's visit to the region, American prestige rose to a new high in the Arab world, and the Soviet leadership was clearly discomfited by this unwelcome development.

While the primary Soviet interest in the summit was to achieve progress in the areas of strategic arms limitation and Soviet-American trade, the Middle East also received its share of attention. In the section of their final communique dealing with the Middle East, Brezhnev and Nixon devoted considerable attention to the Palestinian problem—something the Soviet leadership was to capitalize on after the summit:

Both sides believe that the removal of the danger of war and tension in the Middle East is a task of paramount importance and urgency, and therefore, the only alternative is the achievement on the basis of Security Council Resolution 338 (which ended the October war) of a just and lasting peace settlement, in which should be taken into account the *legitimate interests of all peoples in the Middle East, including the Palestinian people*, and the right to existence of all states in the area.

As co-chairman of the Geneva Peace Conference on the Middle East, the U.S.S.R. and U.S.A. consider it important that the conference resume its work as soon as possible, *with the question of other participants from the Middle East to be discussed at the conference*. Both sides see the main purpose of the Geneva Peace Conference, the achievement of which they will promote in every way, as the establishment of a just and stable peace in the Middle East.

They agreed that the U.S.S.R. and U.S.A. will continue to remain in close touch with a view to coordinating the efforts of both countries toward

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a peaceful settlement in the Middle East.^{3 5} (Emphasis added.)

While the Soviet leadership may have welcomed the summit as an indication that Soviet-American relations had returned to their prewar level of friendship, the Russians were still faced with the problem of reversing the pro-American trend in the Middle East. They were to set about solving this problem as soon as the summit had been concluded.

From Moscow to Vladivostok: Soviet Policy Toward the Middle East Between the Summit Conferences. Following the summit, Soviet propaganda gave great attention to the final communique's emphasis on the role of the Palestinians in a peace settlement. This was part of the Soviet drive to reinforce the U.S.S.R.'s relations with the PLO as a counter to Sadat's Westward move and the unwelcome possibility of a similar move by Syria. In an effort to prevent the latter development, the Soviet Union also stepped up its arms shipments to Syria and exploited the renewed tensions between Syria and Israel. Finally, Soviet propaganda continued its efforts to isolate Sadat from the other leaders of the Arab world, as the Soviet leadership sought to rebuild the U.S.S.R.'s position in the Middle East following the American successes in May and June.

The Palestine Liberation Organization played a major role in Soviet plans to rebuild the Soviet position in the Arab world. Gromyko had met PLO leader Yasir Arafat on a regular basis during the negotiations for the Syrian-Israeli disengagement agreement, and these meetings had been given prominent attention in the Soviet press. Despite their military weakness, the Palestinian guerrilla organizations still enjoyed a great deal of popularity among the more radical Arab States and among large sectors of the Arab public

as well. They played a special role in Syria, where the Shii Moslem Assad helped legitimize his rule among his largely Sunni Moslem countrymen by supporting the Palestinian cause. The Soviet leaders evidently hoped that by strengthening their ties to the PLO they would strengthen a major anti-Western force in the Middle East and associate themselves with the PLO's popularity in the Arab world, as well. For their part, the Palestinian Arabs were now in greater need of Soviet aid than ever before because the Israeli disengagement with Syria had left the PLO alone in its confrontation with Israel despite pledges of support by Arab leaders.

Following the Syrian-Israeli disengagement agreement, the Palestinian National Council, a quasi-Parliamentary body composed of representatives from almost all the variegated Palestinian organizations, convened in Cairo to determine the direction of the Palestinian movement. The Council worked out a ten point program. In its first point, the program rejected participation in the Geneva conference under Resolution No. 242 so long as it dealt with the Palestinian Arabs only as a refugee problem. The second point stated that the PLO would struggle "by all means, foremost of which is armed struggle, to liberate Palestinian land," while opposing any agreement with Israel. In addition, in point five the PLO pledged to work to establish "a national-democratic government" in Jordan—a thinly veiled call for the overthrow of King Hussein. While disagreeing with the Palestinians' refusal to come to Geneva or deal with Israel and remaining silent on the call to oust Hussein, the Soviet leadership warmly welcomed the ninth point of the program which stated that the PLO "will struggle to strengthen its solidarity with the socialist countries and the world forces of liberation and progress to foil all Zionist, reactionary and imperialist schemes."^{3 6}

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With the reconvening of the Geneva peace conference under active discussion, the Soviet leaders increased their efforts to persuade the PLO to participate in the Geneva Conference with the ultimate goal of creating a Palestinian Arab state on the West Bank and in Gaza. *Izvestia*, in a key article on the Middle East on 9 July, stated:

Back in November 1947, the 1947 U.N. General Assembly adopted a resolution on the division of Palestine into two independent Arab states—Jewish and Arab. Israel was created in 1948. The Arab Palestinian state never became a reality . . . The Palestinian Arabs must now have the opportunity to decide their own fate. The Geneva Peace Conference on the Near East can and must be the most suitable place for a discussion of their legitimate rights.³⁷

While the Soviet leadership came out strongly in favor of a Palestinian Arab state and tried to convince the Palestinian Arabs to be satisfied with a state of limited size in the West Bank-Gaza regions, Soviet-Egyptian relations again deteriorated and the Soviet leadership utilized the Palestinian issue to try to isolate and embarrass Sadat. The effusive Egyptian welcome given to Nixon and the numerous Egyptian-American agreements signed during Nixon's visit clearly angered the Soviet leaders who saw Egypt appearing to move farther and farther into the American camp despite all the military and economic aid the U.S.S.R. had given Egypt and the risks the U.S.S.R. had taken in Egypt's behalf. Soon after the end of the Soviet-American summit, the Soviet leadership demonstrated its displeasure with Sadat's policies by abruptly postponing the scheduled Moscow visit of Egyptian Foreign Minister Ismail Fahmy which was supposed to lay the groundwork for a Sadat-Brezhnev summit. In taking this action, the Soviet leaders

spoiled Sadat's plan to demonstrate that he could still play the Soviet Union off against the United States.

Perhaps in retaliation for the Soviet move, Sadat, in an interview with the Lebanese weekly *Al-Hawadess* on 18 July, accused the Russians of trying to restrict Egypt's freedom in determining its foreign policy. The Egyptian leader also criticized the Soviet leadership for postponing Fahmy's visit to Moscow until October.³⁸ The Russians responded to Sadat's attacks with a major *Izvestia* article by its editor, L. Tolkunov, who made a detailed attack both on "anti-Sovietism in Egypt" and on Sadat's opening of Egypt's economy to the West.³⁹

While Tolkunov attacked Sadat's economic policy, *New Times* correspondent Y. Potomov was attacking Sadat for his agreement with Jordan's King Hussein, that the Jordanian monarch and not the PLO represented the Palestinians living in his kingdom. This agreement, although somewhat vague, seemed to imply that Hussein represented the Palestinians on the Israeli-occupied West Bank. While Sadat was later to change his position on this, Potomov seized the opportunity to demonstrate that Sadat was isolated from the mainstream of Arab thinking on the Palestinian question.⁴⁰

The Soviet embrace of the Palestinian cause reached a new high at the end of July when the Soviet leadership invited Yasir Arafat to come to Moscow. At the time of Arafat's visit, the Soviet press gave unprecedented coverage to the Palestinian question, including a six-page report in *New Times* and a 3,700 word article in *Izvestia*.⁴¹ During the talks with Arafat and his delegation, the Soviet leadership again emphasized its recognition of the Palestinian Arabs as the "sole legitimate representative of the people of Palestine," thus indirectly attacking Sadat. According to the description of the talks in *Pravda*, the U.S.S.R. also

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expressed its support for the participation of the PLO at the Geneva conference "on an equal basis with the other participants" and agreed to the opening of a PLO mission in Moscow. In return, the PLO delegation, which included a Jordanian Communist (probably as a sop to the Russians) gave its usual lipservice praise of the Soviet Union for its "unvarying support and assistance," and for its "principled policy."^{4 2}

Soon after Arafat's departure, however, the Soviet Union was confronted with a problem of far greater significance than the role of the PLO in the Geneva talks—the sudden resignation of U.S. President Richard Nixon who had been the architect of the U.S. détente policy with the U.S.S.R. In a speech to a joint session of Congress after assuming the Presidency, Gerald Ford pledged continuity in America's relations with the Soviet Union (the pledge was given wide play by the Soviet press). Nevertheless, the accession to power of a man neither burdened by Watergate nor wedded to détente must have been of great concern to the Soviet leaders. Indeed, they may well have recalled the changes made by Anwar Sadat in Egypt's relations with the Soviet Union when he succeeded to Egypt's Presidency in October 1970.

Gerald Ford came to power in the United States at a time when politics in the Middle East were in a great state of flux. Alignments among the states in the region and between regional states and extraregional powers were changing. Most important of all, the Arab-Israeli conflict, which had been temporarily defused by the Syrian-Israeli disengagement agreement, appeared headed once again for war.

The Soviet leadership had contributed to the new round of Middle East war talk by a sharp increase in shipments of sophisticated arms to Syria in July and August. The increased shipments of Soviet arms raised the fear in Israel that Syria was acquiring the

capacity to wage war against Israel all by itself. The Israelis were concerned that Syria might launch a preemptive attack with its newly obtained SCUD surface-to-surface missiles, possibly after the termination of the mandate of the U.N. force on the Golan Heights on 30 November. This fear led to renewed Israeli arms requests to Washington and a 1-day practice callup of Israeli reserves which, in turn, alarmed the Arabs. As talk of war returned to the Middle East, the Soviet position improved. In case of any resumption in major fighting, the Arabs would be in need of large amounts of Soviet weaponry, although the Arab States had taken steps to limit this dependency by moving to establish their own arms industry and searching for weapons in Western Europe and the United States.^{4 3}

In an attempt to keep the momentum for peace created by American diplomacy from breaking down, Kissinger and Ford entertained a parade of Middle East leaders in August and September as the United States sought to work out the optimum approach for the next stage of the peace talks. Visiting Washington during this period were Egyptian Foreign Minister Ismail Fahmy, Syrian Foreign Minister Abdel Haiim Khaddam, Jordan's King Hussein, Saudi Arabian Foreign Minister Omar Saqqaf; and finally, in mid-September, Israel's new Premier, Yitzhak Rabin. Following meetings with Ford and Kissinger, Rabin presented a formula for Arab "non-belligerency" which he said would be an acceptable price for another Israeli withdrawal. In return for a further withdrawal in Sinai, he stated, Egypt could demonstrate its good intentions by ending its economic boycott against Israel or taking a similar action.^{4 4} While one of the goals of Rabin's trip to Washington was to coordinate strategy in the peace negotiations, a second goal was to acquire sufficient weaponry should the peace negotiations fail. Rabin was apparently

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successful in his arms quest, because in a news conference on 13 September the Israeli Premier stated "We reached an understanding on our on-going military relationship in a concrete way with concrete results."⁴⁵

While the Arab leaders could not have been too happy with the support secured by Rabin in Washington, less than a week after the Israeli Premier's visit another event occurred to irritate Arab-American relations. President Ford, deciding to try to come to grips with the inflation problem which threatened to undermine the economies of the NATO alliance and Japan—a problem exacerbated by the quadrupling of oil prices—issued both an appeal and a warning to the oil-exporting states in a major speech at the U.N. on 18 September. He stated that "a world of economic confrontation cannot be a world of political cooperation" and implicitly threatened the use of the American "food weapon" to counter the Arab "oil weapon." Kissinger echoed a similar warning at the U.N. 5 days later when he stated "The world cannot sustain even the present level of prices, much less continuing increases."⁴⁶

As might be expected, the Soviet leadership, unhappy that Washington continued to be the center of Middle East diplomacy, seized upon Rabin's visit to Washington and Ford and Kissinger's warnings at the United Nations in an effort to undermine the U.S. position in the Arab world. The Soviet media carried numerous reports about massive U.S. arms shipments to Israel and about U.S. military and economic threats against the Middle East oil producers.⁴⁷

In any case, it was with this background of Arab irritation over the U.S. policies that Kissinger embarked on yet another trip to the Middle East in early October. The main target of his diplomacy was Egypt, since both the United States and Israel felt that another Israeli-Egyptian agreement would

be the logical next step in the process of securing a final Arab-Israeli peace settlement. Unfortunately for Kissinger, Sadat was not to prove as accommodating to the United States as on previous occasions. The Egyptian leader, who desired to maintain his position as leader of the Arab world and who was quite conscious of Soviet attempts to isolate him, was unwilling to agree to the cessation of the Arab economic boycott against Israel or to make any other political concessions to Israel in return for another Israeli withdrawal. Sadat, too clever a diplomat to reject Kissinger's approaches directly, decided to throw his support to the PLO and proclaim that any further Israeli-Egyptian agreement was contingent upon Israeli withdrawals from the Golan Heights and the West Bank; in the latter case ceding the territory to the PLO rather than to King Hussein.⁴⁸ In adopting these policies, Sadat abrogated his earlier agreement with Hussein and made Kissinger's mediation efforts considerably more difficult, given the PLO's continuing terrorist activities against Israel and its professed policy of dismantling the Jewish state. In choosing to support the claim of the PLO to represent all Palestinians, Sadat also adopted a policy favored by the Soviet Union (albeit for a different reason), and the two nations were to draw somewhat closer together as Kissinger's peacemaking activities waned. Given Sadat's unwillingness to come to an agreement with Israel, Kissinger's diplomatic efforts made little progress during his October visit to Cairo, although Sadat did agree to accept a 6-month extension of the United Nations force in the Sinai Desert—possibly because without a resumption of Soviet arms deliveries, he was unable to demonstrate that he could exercise the option of returning to war. Indeed, Egyptian Foreign Minister Fahmy left on a visit to Moscow to obtain Soviet arms several days after Kissinger's visit to Cairo.

The Russians were clearly still unhappy at the Westward turn of Egypt's economy, and a *Pravda* article published on the eve of Fahmy's visit continued the Soviet leadership's criticism of Egyptian Government policies aimed at weakening the state sector of the Egyptian economy and fostering foreign investments.⁴⁹ In addition, in a major policy speech in Kishinev on 11 October, just before Fahmy arrived in Moscow, Soviet Party leader Brezhnev made clear his opposition to the type of personal diplomacy carried on by Kissinger with the Egyptians. The Soviet leader called for the speedy resumption of the Geneva Conference, where the U.S.S.R. would be an equal partner with the United States in overseeing Middle East peace negotiations.⁵⁰ Possibly reflecting the still cool nature of Soviet-Egyptian relations, no mention was made in the final communique issued at the conclusion of Fahmy's visit of renewed Soviet arms deliveries to Egypt. This was in marked contrast to Brezhnev's promises of continued military aid to Syrian President Assad who had stopped off in Moscow on 27 September on his way to a state visit to North Korea.⁵¹ The Soviet leadership did agree to a visit by Brezhnev to Cairo in January 1975, and the Brezhnev visit would clearly facilitate Sadat's policy of playing the two superpowers off against each other. In return, the Egyptians agreed that a "complete and final settlement of the Middle East crisis can be achieved only within the framework of the Geneva conference."⁵²

Having secured Brezhnev's promise to visit Egypt, Sadat turned his attention to the summit conference of Arab leaders which convened at Rabat, Morocco, at the end of October. After several days of intense debate, Sadat, together with other Arab leaders, won King Hussein's agreement to a declaration that the PLO was the "sole and legitimate representative of the Palestinian people and had the right to

establish the independent Palestinian authority on any liberated Palestinian territory."⁵³ The Soviet press hailed the Rabat decision recognizing the PLO, and it may have appeared to the Soviet leadership that the radical, anti-Western position of the PLO had won over the pro-Western Arab leaders. Indeed, Dmitry Volsky, writing in *New Times*, claimed that the Rabat conference's decision on the PLO was proof of the Arab States' growing unity "on an anti-imperialistic basis"—the type of unity the Soviets had so long desired.⁵⁴

Arab unity at the Rabat conference was not as strong as the Soviet press made it appear, however. Libyan leader Muammar Kaddafi boycotted the conference, and Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein stated at the end of the meetings at Rabat—in a clear disagreement with Sadat—that "Should the PLO go to Geneva or become a party to the contacts being held with the United States., Iraq's commitment to this draft resolution would be null and void."⁵⁵ The Iraqi leader's statement also clearly demonstrated that despite extensive Soviet military aid and assistance in the war against the Kurds, on this important issue the two states were diametrically opposed, because the U.S.S.R. had strongly advocated a PLO role at Geneva.

While the Arab world may not have been totally unified in its policies toward the PLO and while the PLO had itself split with George Habash of the PFLP openly denouncing Arafat and the Rabat decision, nonetheless the Middle East appeared much closer to war after Rabat. Given Arafat's continuing call for the dismantling of Israel, the Israelis began to gird for war. In an effort to prevent war from breaking out, Kissinger made yet another visit to the Middle East in early November. At this point, Sadat was able to play the role of a "moderate," telling Kissinger "We shall always be, in Egypt, ready to regain whatever land we can . . . I can't see at

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all that the Rabat conference has put any block in the step-by-step approach."⁵⁶ The Egyptian leader let it be known that while he would agree to another Israeli withdrawal, he could not make any political agreements with Israel to obtain it.⁵⁷ In taking this position, Sadat indicated to Kissinger that if the United States wished to keep the momentum of its diplomacy toward peace, Egypt would be happy to cooperate—so long as Kissinger could secure another Israeli withdrawal in the Sinai at no political cost to Egypt.

If Sadat had hoped that through this diplomatic maneuvering Kissinger would now be forced to bring pressure on Israel for an unconditional withdrawal in order to recoup his personal prestige and secure a continuation of the American-sponsored peace effort, the American Secretary of State's task was made infinitely more difficult by Arafat's speech at the U.N. on 13 November. In his U.N. address, Arafat repeated his call for the dismantling of Israel and threatened that if his demands were not met, the PLO would continue its terrorist attacks.⁵⁸ The Soviet Union, while hailing Arafat's appearance at the United Nations, was careful to emphasize, as it had done in the past, that while the PLO had a right to a state, Israel also had a right to exist.⁵⁹ Indeed, given the strong American support for Israel and a summit conference between Ford and Brezhnev scheduled for 23 November, the Soviet leadership clearly had no desire to alienate important segments of American public opinion by supporting the PLO's demands to liquidate Israel—particularly with new agreements on strategic arms limitation to be discussed at the summit and the U.S.S.R.'s need for American technological assistance and long-term credits for its new 5-year plan which was under preparation.

Nonetheless, despite Soviet and American statements that Israel had a right to exist, it appeared that after Arafat's appearance at the United

Nations war loomed ever closer. Indeed, in mid-November, the Syrian Government, long a champion of the PLO, refused to state whether it would permit a 6-month extension for the mandate of the U.N. force in the Golan Heights which was due to expire at the end of the month. Following a report that 20 Soviet ships were unloading arms at Syrian ports, the Israelis began to mobilize reservists and move them to the Golan Heights. It looked for a while as if war was imminent, until the personal intervention of Kissinger succeeded in calming the situation.⁶⁰ At the end of November, Syria agreed to extend the U.N. force, although to what degree the Syrian decision was due to Soviet pressure, American inducement, internal politics, or Egypt's unwillingness to support Syria in a new war at that time is not yet known.⁶¹

The Middle East occupied a relatively small, although not insignificant, section of the communique issued by Ford and Brezhnev at the conclusion of the United States-U.S.S.R. summit at Vladivostok.

Although vague, the communique appears to have been a compromise between the two sides. The statement supporting the right of all Middle Eastern states to "independent existence" explicitly repudiated the PLO plan to dismantle Israel. Indeed, the Soviet Union's support of the Palestinian Arabs, at least as reflected in the joint communique, was weaker than in the Nixon-Brezhnev communique issued 5 months earlier. On the other hand, however, by agreeing to a speedy resumption of the Geneva Conference, the United States appeared to be acceding to the Soviet desire to play a more active role in the peace negotiations.⁶² Nonetheless, since no date was set for the resumption of the conference and since similar language had been used in the July communique,⁶³ the United States kept alive the possibility of more activity by the peripatetic Kissinger.

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From Vladivostok to the Collapse of the Kissinger Mission. In the period following the Vladivostok Conference, the Soviet leadership returned to its major Middle Eastern themes by calling for a speedy resumption of the Geneva Peace Conference (with PLO participation on an equal basis), emphasizing Soviet opposition to any "partial settlements" of the Arab-Israeli conflict, and urging the maintenance of Arab unity on an "anti-imperialist basis." The Soviet relationship with Egypt, once its primary Arab ally, which had improved somewhat because of Fahmy's visit to Moscow in October, again deteriorated, as Brezhnev abruptly canceled his scheduled January visit to Cairo, and an angry Anwar Sadat responded with some strong words criticizing Soviet arms-supply policy. Relations were to improve between the two nations—albeit temporarily—the following month when the U.S.S.R. decided to resume arms shipments to Egypt. While the U.S.S.R.'s ties with Egypt remained strained, the Soviet leadership continued to strengthen its relationship with the PLO and with Syria. The U.S.S.R. now sought to establish Syria as the leader of its long desired anti-imperialist Arab coalition.

With PLO prestige in the Arab world on the upswing after the Rabat Conference and Arafat's appearance at the United Nations, the Russians hoped to capitalize on its relations with the PLO to enhance the Soviet position in the Arab world. Thus, when Arafat visited Moscow in late November 1974, the Soviet media gave a great deal of emphasis to a *Pravda* interview in which Arafat hailed the U.S.S.R. as "a true and sincere friend of the Arab peoples."⁶⁴ Indeed, the Soviet leadership cited this interview to refute Chinese Communist claims that the U.S.S.R. had given insufficient support to the Arab and Palestinian causes during Brezhnev's meeting with Ford at the Vladivostok summit.⁶⁵

In praising Brezhnev's scheduled January visit to Egypt, Syria, and Iraq, the Palestinian leader stated: ". . . Like the peoples of Egypt, Syria and Iraq, and like all those who cherish the cause of establishing a just and lasting peace in the Middle East, we Palestinians say to L. Brezhnev from the bottom of our hearts, Welcome! . . ."⁶⁶

Unfortunately for the Russians, the welcome they were to receive in Egypt was considerably colder than the one promised by Arafat. Despite a relatively favorable Soviet press treatment of Egyptian developments in November and December, as well as a large propaganda buildup for the Brezhnev visit, Sadat proved unwilling to reach an agreement on key issues with the Russians, and the Soviet leader abruptly canceled his trip at the end of December. According to Sadat, the cause of the cancellation lay in the U.S.S.R.'s unwillingness to grant Egypt the kind of weapons the Egyptians wanted, as well as the Soviet leadership's refusal to accede to an Egyptian request for a deferral of Egyptian debt payments to the U.S.S.R.⁶⁷ What apparently especially rankled Sadat was the fact that Syria had been able not only to get the arms it desired, but also a deferral of its very large debt to the Soviet Union. While the Soviet leadership, in clearly favoring Syria over Egypt, sought to demonstrate the rewards available to those Arab States that cooperated with the U.S.S.R., Sadat publicly aired his complaints about the U.S.S.R. to the Arab world in an effort to embarrass the Russians into granting the Egyptian requests. Sadat's anger at the Russians may also have stemmed in part from what appear to have been leftist-inspired riots in Egypt on New Year's day when both students and workers protested Egypt's poor living conditions. Indeed, when asked if the riots had had any effect on Soviet-Egyptian relations, Sadat replied "Our relations are between one state and another. There is

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no room for meddling in our internal affairs."⁶⁸

While the Soviet position in the Arab world suffered as a result of the cancellation of Brezhnev's visit and the new acrimony in Soviet-Egyptian relations, the course of events soon gave the Soviet leaders a chance to improve their position vis-a-vis that of the United States. Inflation had turned to recession in the industrialized West, and unemployment soon rose to near-record proportions. In this atmosphere, Kissinger had an interview with the U.S. magazine *Business Week* in which he threatened to use force in case the oil producers "strangled" the industrialized world. In replying to the question "Have you considered military action on oil?" Kissinger stated:

[It would be] A very dangerous course. We should have learned from Vietnam that it is easier to get into a war than to get out of it. I am not saying that there's no circumstance where we would not use force. *But its one thing to use it in the case of a dispute over price, its another where there is some actual strangulation of the industrialized world.*⁶⁹

Taken in context, Kissinger's remarks appear little more than the common-sense expression of a statesman stating that his country would fight rather than be strangled to death. Nonetheless, the reaction in the Arab world to Kissinger's *Business Week* interview was bitter, with even Anwar Sadat terming the American leader's statement "very regrettable."⁷⁰ The Soviet leadership seized on Kissinger's comments to demonstrate that the United States was a major threat to the Arab world—a theme that Soviet propaganda had been echoing since the 1973 war. *Pravda*, on 7 January 1975, printed two stories about the "oil war" and charged that the West was resorting to military blackmail against the Arab oil-producing countries; and the Soviet

leaders may have entertained the hope that the Arab oil-producing states, concerned with Kissinger's "threat," might draw closer to the U.S.S.R. for protection.

The imbroglia over U.S. oil intervention came at an inopportune time for American diplomacy, as Kissinger was in the midst of preparations for another trip to the Middle East, as he once again tried to bring about a second Egyptian-Israeli disengagement agreement. Israeli Foreign Minister Yigal Allon had visited Washington in early December for talks aimed at working out a plan for the disengagement process, and he returned to Washington in mid-January for further discussions with Kissinger.

As Kissinger was preparing to depart for his trip to the Middle East in February, the U.S.S.R. stepped up its efforts to prevent a partial settlement. Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko visited Syria and Egypt in early February, prior to Kissinger's trip to the two Arab States. In Damascus, Gromyko received Syrian agreement for the immediate resumption of the Geneva Conference and even got Syrian consent to have the date of the meeting set for "no later than February or early March 1975"—an action aimed at enabling the Russians to prevent any major accomplishments by Kissinger before the conference resumed its work. Syria also again agreed to Soviet participation "in all areas and at all stages" of Middle East peace efforts, thereby assuring, at least on paper, that the U.S.S.R. would not again be isolated from any peace settlement that Kissinger might be able to work out. In return, the Soviet Foreign Minister emphasized the U.S.S.R.'s willingness to continue "to strengthen the defense capability of Syria" and even went so far as to indicate the U.S.S.R.'s preference for Syria as the leader of the Arab anti-imperialist coalition.⁷¹ Thus the U.S.S.R. began openly to back Syria as the center of an Arab grouping of states

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that would, the Soviet leaders hoped, support Soviet policy irrespective of any action taken by Egypt. For his part, Assad was in need of Soviet aid, given the unlikelihood of another Israeli withdrawal on the Golan Heights prior to a final peace settlement, and Israel's stated unwillingness to attend any peace conference to work out a final settlement so long as the PLO was allowed to attend. The impasse between Israel and Syria became very severe at this point because Syria refused to attend any peace conference unless the PLO attended as an equal partner.

Perhaps because the U.S.S.R. now clearly favored Syria over Egypt, Gromyko's reception in Cairo was considerably cooler than the one he received in Damascus. The joint communique issued at the conclusion of his talks with Sadat stated that they had taken place in a "friendly and businesslike atmosphere"—a clear indication that serious conflict had arisen. Nonetheless, Egypt was to agree to an "immediate resumption of the Geneva talks"—although, unlike Syria, no fixed date was set—and the Egyptians also agreed that the U.S.S.R. should participate in "all areas and all stages" of a Middle East peace settlement. The joint communique ended with a pledge that both sides were determined to expand and deepen Soviet-Egyptian cooperation.⁷²

Perhaps in return for Egypt's limited willingness to support the Soviet position, and also perhaps in hopes of avoiding any further Egyptian movement into the American camp during Kissinger's forthcoming trip to Cairo, the Soviet leadership decided to resume arms shipments to Egypt following Gromyko's visit.⁷³

Meanwhile in the United States voices were calling for the seizure of the Arab oil. An article in the March 1975 issue of *Harpers* detailed the hypothetical American seizure of the Saudi Arabian oilfields. The Soviet press seized upon this and similar articles to

reinforce their contention that the Arabs needed the U.S.S.R. for protection against the United States. Indeed, the Soviet media now coupled this message with its continued detailed descriptions of CENTO maneuvers near the Persian Gulf oilfields and of American military aid to Israel and even asserted that Israel was now willing "to assume the role of a strike force for the oil monopolies."⁷⁴

American posturing on the issue of seizing the Arab oilfields, while perhaps aimed at deterring another oil embargo, did not enhance the American diplomatic position in the Arab world as Kissinger set out once more in early March on what was earmarked as the decisive shuttle to bring about a second-stage disengagement between Egypt and Israel.⁷⁵

During this shuttle between Cairo and Jerusalem, Kissinger's mediation efforts were affected by developments in Southeast Asia. The Cambodian Government of Lon Nol, allied to the United States, was on the verge of being toppled by Cambodian Communist forces which besieged the capital city of Phnom Penh. The situation in South Vietnam was scarcely better, and it appeared that the U.S. Congress' unwillingness to send any more military assistance to the American allies in Southeast Asia spurred the Communist offensives in the two countries. It may well have been the feeling in both Cairo and Damascus that just as the U.S. Congress had tired of pouring aid into Cambodia and South Vietnam, so too would it eventually tire of aiding Israel. In addition, strengthened by new shipments of Soviet arms, Sadat (as well as Assad whom Kissinger also visited during the shuttle) could adopt a strong bargaining position vis-a-vis both the United States and Israel.

Despite continued professions about Arab unity during the shuttle, it is clear that Syria, as well as the Soviet Union, was very concerned about the

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possibility that Sadat might yet agree to a second-stage disengagement agreement with Israel. To combat the possibility of being isolated against Israel should this occur, the Syrian Government, in early March, offered to join the PLO in a joint command⁷⁶ and also signed a far-reaching economic and political agreement with its erstwhile enemy, the regime of King Hussein of Jordan.⁷⁷ By taking the first steps toward a PLO-Syrian-Jordanian alignment, Assad was also moving toward a position of leadership in the Arab world. The U.S.S.R. strongly endorsed this effort because it had the potential of leading pro-Western Jordan into the Soviet camp, thereby helping to establish the "anti-imperialist" Arab unity the U.S.S.R. desired.⁷⁸

The Iranians had terminated their aid to the Kurds as a result of an agreement between the Iranian and Iraqi Governments delineating their long-disputed border and agreeing to cease assistance to dissident groups within each other's territory. The Israelis, meanwhile, seriously concerned by what they perceived as an Iranian sellout of the now defeated Kurds—and cognizant of the fact that they were almost totally dependent on Iranian oil should they give back the Abu Rodeis oilfields which Sadat demanded—also took a hard bargaining stance with Kissinger. Indeed, for the first time since the October war, Israel seemed to unite with public opinion backing Premier Rabin's opposition to Kissinger's terms, as such hardliners of the right as Gen. Arik Sharon joined such "doves" of the left as Aryeh Eliav and Abba Eban to demand meaningful concessions from Egypt before any settlement could be agreed upon. The end result was the failure of Kissinger's mission and the temporary end of the U.S. diplomatic initiative in the Middle East.

From Disengagement Failure to Disengagement Success: Middle East Diplomacy April-September 1975. The

failure of Kissinger's disengagement efforts in March led to a major re-appraisal of U.S. policy toward the Middle East. Meanwhile, it was clear that no new American peace initiatives would be forthcoming. In such a situation, the Soviet Union stepped forward and, for the first time since the 1973 war, the Soviet leadership took the diplomatic initiative, once again calling for the resumption of the Geneva Peace Conference to work out a settlement that would secure a total withdrawal of Israel forces from all Arab territory occupied in the 1967 6-day war, establish a Palestinian state, and guarantee the right to existence of all states in the Middle East—including Israel. Yet even while the Soviet leaders were successively entertaining leaders of Egypt, Iraq, Syria, and the PLO in Moscow, they continued to be concerned about a new U.S.-sponsored disengagement agreement. Indeed, the *New Times* article discussing the failure of Kissinger's mission indicated the nature of Soviet concern:

... Ever since the October 1973 war, Israel and its imperialist backers have exerted a great deal of effort to break up the United Front of the Arab states and to persuade them to enter into separate deals that would outwardly appear to be a step forward while actually impeding the Arabs' struggle for a comprehensive settlement . . .

Had their strategy succeeded, a wedge would have been driven between Egypt and Syria and the solution of the Palestine question, which lies at the root of the Middle East problem, would again have been postponed.⁷⁹

It was to prevent such a wedge from being driven and to forge a united Arab stand on a peace settlement that representatives of Egypt, Iraq, Syria, and the PLO were invited to Moscow in April.

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The first to arrive was the Iraqi regimes second-in-command, Saddam Hussein. At the time of Hussein's visit to Moscow, Iraq and Syria were heavily at odds over the amount of water Syria was willing to allow to flow into Iraq from the Euphrates Dam, thus gravely diminishing the possibility that the Syrian-PLO-Jordan entente, which had come into being in March, might also attract the Iraqis. It was perhaps for this reason that Kosygin, in his welcoming speech, urged the Arabs to take a more unified stand lest they be at a disadvantage in dealing with Israel and the United States at the Geneva Conference.⁸⁰ The joint communique issued at the end of Hussein's visit stated that there had been an "exchange of opinions" on the Middle East situation, indicating that there had been disagreement on a number of issues, although Iraq did join with the U.S.S.R. in reaffirming the need for the "cohesion of the Arab states on an anti-imperialist basis," and the need to strengthen Arab cooperation with the socialist countries.⁸¹

Following Hussein to Moscow was Egyptian Foreign Minister Ismail Fahmy. While Egypt's relations with Syria had improved somewhat by the time of Fahmy's visit, relations with another of the Soviet Union's allies, Libya, had deteriorated; Sadat went so far as to say that Kadaffi was "100 percent sick" and that his actions were "directed by the devil."⁸² This, in turn, led Libya to threaten to break diplomatic relations with Egypt. Like the Libyans, the Soviet leadership itself was also not too positively inclined toward Egypt, and in his welcoming speech Gromyko said that the U.S.S.R. was prepared to deepen and enrich its policy of cooperation with Egypt, but "only if Egypt and the Egyptian leadership pursue the same policy with respect to the U.S.S.R."⁸³ Once again, disagreements were evident in the discussions between the two sides, as *Pravda's*

description of the talks referred to them as having taken place in a "businesslike atmosphere." Nonetheless, the *Pravda* description also stated that Egypt did agree that "any partial measures and decisions on them must be a component, inalienable part of a general settlement, and must be adopted in the framework of the (Geneva) conference on the Near East"⁸⁴—a stipulation that Egypt was to show no hesitation in disregarding several months later.

The third in the parade of Middle East visitors coming to Moscow in April was Syrian Foreign Minister Abdel Khaddam. Khaddam's visit coincided with the arrival in Syria of Soviet Chief of Staff Victor Kulikov, thus underlining the close military relations between the two countries.⁸⁵ Indeed, the joint communique issued at the conclusion of the meeting stressed the importance of "strengthening the defense capability of the Syrian Arab Republic" and denounced "separate agreements." In addition, the U.S.S.R. again hailed Syria for its "efforts to consolidate Arab solidarity and strengthen the Arab countries' unity of action." Nonetheless, the reference to an "exchange of opinions" in *Pravda's* description of the talks indicated that disagreement was present.⁸⁶ In this case, it was probably not only over Soviet unhappiness at the escalating Syrian-Iraqi quarrel over the Soviet-built Euphrates Dam's waters, but also over Gromyko's blunt statement to his Syrian colleague that no peace was possible without the guarantee of Israel's right to exist and that the U.S.S.R. was prepared to guarantee Israel's existence.⁸⁷ While the timing and content of Gromyko's speech were clearly intended as a signal to Israel, given Syria's unwillingness to recognize Israel's existence, the Syrian Foreign Minister's failure to reply in public to Gromyko's initiative was perhaps an indication that Syria was not yet ready to embrace this Soviet position on the prerequisites for a Middle East peace settlement.

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If the Syrian Government proved unwilling to recognize Israel's existence during Haddam's talks in Moscow, the next Arab visitor to the Soviet capital, Yasser Arafat, was even less prepared to do so. The most both sides were able to agree on was the need for the PLO and the Arab States to coordinate their efforts "against any bilateral separate deals outside the context of a comprehensive settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict."⁸⁸ Arafat, whose forces in Lebanon were now engaged in occasional battles with Lebaneses Phalangists, also supported the Soviet position that the policy of partial settlement was "aimed at dividing the Arab countries" and "isolating them from their valuable allies, the Socialist countries, and drawing them into the sphere of imperialist domination."⁸⁹

One week after Arafat's departure from Moscow, Soviet Premier Alexi Kosygin himself left the Soviet capital for a journey to Libya which, over the last year, had become one of the Soviet Union's primary allies in the Middle East. Just as in the previous year when Jalloud had visited Moscow, the Libyan Prime Minister openly called for Soviet aid. After warmly praising the U.S.S.R. for its economic and military assistance, Jalloud went on to say: "I would like to say that there are possibilities for further development of this assistance so that, relying on it, we would be able to defeat Zionism and imperialism, in the same way that the defeats in Vietnam and Cambodia took place."⁹⁰

Kosygin's reply was equally frank. Despite the Libyan Government's stated opposition to the existence of the State of Israel, Kosygin publicly reiterated the three-pronged Soviet solution for the Middle East conflict—including the passage which called for the "independent existence and development of all states in the region." In addition, Kosygin, mindful of the strained relations between Libya and Egypt, sought to play down the seriousness of the

differences dividing the Arab world, while at the same time urging them on to greater unity to solve their problems.

Soon after Kosygin's visit, large amounts of Soviet military aid began to arrive in Libya, and the Egyptian press went so far as to accuse Kaddafi of granting the U.S.S.R. base rights in Libya in return for this aid, a charge vehemently denied by the U.S.S.R.⁹¹

From Libya, Kosygin went on to Tunisia, one of the pro-Western Arab States, where his welcome, while not as warm as in Libya, was nonetheless cordial. In summing up the Kosygin visits to the two north African countries, *Izvestia* stated that they had demonstrated the importance of Soviet-Arab cooperation. The article also stated that Kosygin was convinced that despite "differences among the Arab countries in their approaches to the settlement of the Near East conflict," the Arab countries would "be able to overcome these disagreements, put the fundamental interests of the Arab world first and foremost, and subordinate their actions to the strengthening of unity in the anti-imperialist struggle."⁹²

While the Soviet leadership was seeking to produce a coordinated and unified Arab approach to the peace talks, it did not overlook the necessity of gaining Israeli agreement for the Soviet peace plan. Mention has already been made of Gromyko's offer to guarantee Israel's existence in his welcoming speech to Syrian Foreign Minister Khaddam. In addition, the Soviet leadership sent two high-ranking diplomats on a secret mission to Israel, apparently to convey the same message personally and to sound out the Israelis on possible terms for reconvening the Geneva Conference.⁹³ A number of articles also appeared in the Soviet press openly offering Israel improved relations with the Soviet Union if it were to agree to Soviet conditions for peace.

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Thus, in a *New Times* article with the headline "Growing Peace Sentiment in Israel," columnist J. Schreiber stated:

... Judging from their public statements, realistically-minded representatives of Israeli public-opinion are increasingly coming to see that if Israel renounced its present policy and unequivocally declared for a just settlement of the conflict, the way would be opened to a normalization of relations with the Soviet Union and other countries of the socialist community...⁴

Similarly, an associate editor of *New Times*, Vladimir Shelepin, in a column answering a Moroccan reader's question as to why the U.S.S.R. supported the partition of Palestine at the United Nations in 1947 and the subsequent establishment of the State of Israel, replied that the Jewish community in Palestine had become an "objective fact" by 1947 that could not be ignored. Shelepin went on to pointedly state "The road to peace in the Middle East does not lie through the cancellation of the 1947 U.N. Resolution"⁵—a position advocated by a number of the more radical Arab States, such as Libya and Iraq.

Despite all of these diplomatic efforts, however, the Soviet leaders were ultimately to prove no more successful than the United States had been in working out the mechanics of a peace settlement. While their overall position in the world had improved with Communist victories in Vietnam and Cambodia and a sharp movement to the left in Portugal, little could be shown for the extensive Soviet diplomatic efforts in the Middle East. Although events such as the joint Soviet-American space flight (Apollo-Soyuz), visits of U.S. Congressmen, and the Conference on European Security at Helsinki dramatized the positive achievements of détente and gave an appearance of Soviet-American cooperation, the two

superpowers continued to compete sharply for influence in the Middle East. The main area of competition remained Egypt, whose President, Anwar Sadat, at the end of March, had agreed both to a 3-month extension of the U.N. force in the Sinai and to reopen the Suez Canal despite the failure of Kissinger's disengagement mission. Sadat also arranged to meet Ford in Salzburg, Austria, in early June, and these events, when coupled with the announcement of Israeli Premier Yitzhak Rabin's planned visit to Washington several weeks later, seemed to indicate that the United States was now resuming its efforts to obtain a second-stage Egyptian-Israeli peace agreement. Indeed, on the eve of Sadat's meeting with Ford in Salzburg, *Izvestia* launched yet another attack on "partial agreements," this time openly castigating Egypt for its continued willingness to deal with Kissinger and contrasting Egypt's position with the "principled position" of Syria:

What was Egypt's attitude to the Kissinger plan? *The very fact that talks were held with the American Secretary of State was evidence that Cairo is not rejecting the search for an accord on the question of a partial withdrawal...*

Syria's position is very clear. It would regard an Egyptian-Israeli agreement as a separate agreement, one at variance with the spirit of Arab unity... [This is] in keeping with Syria's principled position which organically links a Near East settlement with the creation of an independent Palestinian Arab State.⁶ (Emphasis added.)

While the Soviet Union praised Syria's "principled position," it might have been at least somewhat concerned about the development of Syria's economic relations with the West, and with the United States in particular.⁷ In

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addition, the fact that Sadat had journeyed to Salzburg via Damascus at least implicitly indicated Syria's support for the trip. Syrian Foreign Minister Khadam's visit to Washington, soon after Rabin's, may also have provided evidence to the Russians that the Syrian Government continued to keep its diplomatic options open. A more serious concern for the Soviet leadership was the exacerbation of relations between Syria and Iraq, the U.S.S.R.'s two primary allies in the Middle East.⁹⁸

Although the Syrian-Iraqi dispute over the Euphrates Dam was to recede somewhat, the hostility between the rival wings of the Ba'ath Party ruling in Damascus and Baghdad remained acute, and Syria's reported willingness to defend Kuwait in the event of an Iraqi invasion did little to improve Syrian-Iraqi relations.⁹⁹ However, although Syria and Iraq differed on a number of critical issues, they both agreed that it was in their national interest to improve economic relations with the West. Indeed, Iraq followed Syria's example in this regard and, blessed with a large amount of oil revenues and no longer having to spend large amounts of money on the war against the Kurds, the Iraqis turned to the West to fund their national development, thus reducing their economic dependence on the Soviet bloc.¹⁰⁰ Perhaps to avert the impression that Iraq was sliding into the economic camp of the West as Egypt already seemed to have done, the Soviet media gave major coverage to the cooperation agreement reached between Iraq and the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance, (the Soviet bloc's counterpart to the Common Market), which was designed to plan multilateral economic projects between Iraq and Soviet bloc countries.¹⁰¹

While the U.S.S.R. displayed considerable concern about developments in Syrian-Iraqi relations, it was very well disposed toward the steady improvement in Syrian-Jordanian relations

which reached a high point when Assad visited Amman in mid-June and the Syrian and Jordanian Governments announced the formation of a permanent Joint High Commission to coordinate military, political, economic, and cultural policies.¹⁰² While to the Soviet leadership this development may have appeared to be yet another step toward the creation of a Syrian-Jordanian-PLO entente which would isolate Egypt and become a center of "anti-imperialist Arab unity," both Syria and Jordan had other reasons for improving relations. One reason was Assad's desire to cover his flank in case another Egyptian-Israeli disengagement agreement were to be consummated. In addition, an agreement with Jordan would also serve as a counter to Iraq, which, in the early spring, had made several moves to improve its relations with Egypt and Saudi Arabia as well as Iran.¹⁰³

The Jordanian-Syrian rapprochement also met a number of King Hussein's needs. First, an improved relationship with Syria would strengthen Hussein's position against the PLO which had not forsaken its pledge to overthrow him,¹⁰⁴ but was now dependent on Syria for most of its support, particularly since hostilities had begun to break out in Lebanon. Consequently, in return for Jordan's agreement to close cooperation with Syria, Hussein may well have extracted a pledge from Assad to keep the PLO under tight control and to prevent any subversive or overt actions against the Jordanian Government. Second, the rapprochement would keep open the Syrian border for the transit of Jordanian goods—the border had frequently been closed in the past by Assad because of Hussein's attacks on the Palestinians—and this would facilitate Jordan's economic development. Third, a major arms deal was under negotiation between Jordan and the United States, and the Jordanian movement toward Soviet-backed Syria may

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have been expected to be seen in Washington as a first step toward an arms purchase from the U.S.S.R. This, coupled with the Soviet diplomatic visits to Jordan in the spring, could well have been a ploy to obtain the maximum in arms from the United States. If this was one of Hussein's goals in moving closer to Syria, he failed to consider the growing power of the U.S. Congress which vetoed the large arms agreement the Ford administration was eventually to promise Jordan, and the final arms-supply arrangement was considerably less than the Jordanian monarch had hoped for.¹⁰⁵ A final Jordanian goal in the rapprochement with Syria was similar to the Syrian goal in moving toward Jordan—a desire to avoid being isolated against Israel in case an Egyptian-Israeli disengagement agreement was worked out.

As Jordan and Syria moved closer together, Sadat made an attempt to speed up his negotiations with Israel by threatening, on 15 July, not to renew the mandate of the U.N. Sinai force set to expire on 23 July. Sadat backed down from this decision, however, and agreed to renew the U.N. mandate when he saw the image he had so carefully nurtured of himself as an Arab "moderate" begin to fade in American eyes.¹⁰⁶ Following the renewal of the U.N. mandate, bargaining between Israel and Egypt resumed in earnest, and on 6 August, the Egyptian newspaper *Al-Ahram* published an article stating that it was Sadat's policy to live in peace with Israel, if it withdrew to its 1967 borders.¹⁰⁷ The United States, for its part, was even more interested in a second-stage Egyptian-Israeli agreement than before, because its position in the eastern Mediterranean had suffered a major blow on 25 July when Turkey decided to halt operations of American troops at their Turkish bases because the U.S. Congress had halted arms aid.

With the rise of anti-American spirit in Turkey, and in Greece as well, where

the United States lost its home port privileges for the U.S. 6th Fleet, it became imperative for the United States to work out a peace agreement between Egypt and Israel, not only to shore up the faltering American position in the eastern Mediterranean, but also to restore confidence in American leadership which had suffered severe reverses in Vietnam, Cambodia, and Portugal. As the U.S. leadership stepped up its efforts to achieve the disengagement agreement, the Soviet leadership increased its public attacks on Egyptian policy and again began to try to isolate Egypt from its Arab neighbors, perhaps hoping thereby that the power of Arab public opinion might prevent Sadat from making the agreement. In following this strategy, the Soviet leaders may have hoped that if Sadat's policies could be portrayed in a sufficiently negative light, the oil-rich Arab States might be swayed by the power of Arab opinion to withhold the economic aid on which Egypt depended. In retaliating against this Soviet policy, Sadat began to denounce publicly the Soviet Union for its failure to support Egypt, only to be accused of anti-Sovietism and selling out to the West by the Soviet press. On 15 July, *Pravda* openly attacked the government-controlled Egyptian newspaper *Al-Akhbar* for deliberately trying "to mislead millions of Egyptians and citizens of other Arab countries, to pervert the U.S.S.R.'s policy in the Near East, and, in the final analysis, to sow anti-Soviet sentiments among the Arabs."¹⁰⁸

A second step in the U.S.S.R.'s anti-Sadat policy was the decision of the Soviet leadership to revive the Egyptian Communist Party which had been dissolved 11 years before in a Soviet attempt to influence Egypt's single political party, the Arab Socialist Union, from within.¹⁰⁹ The program of the newly reconstituted Egyptian Communist Party was published in the pro-Libyan Lebanese newspaper *As-Safir* on

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4 August and consisted of a scathing attack on Sadat's domestic and foreign policies. While officially eschewing a call for the overthrow of Sadat's regime, the party gave notice that it would seek to exploit "patriotic trends within the Egyptian armed forces" and would "struggle to strike at agent forces in the regime which seek to implement the imperialist designs and remove these forces from the ruling alliances."¹¹⁰

Nonetheless, neither Soviet press attacks nor the revival of the Egyptian Communist Party served to deter Sadat from working out a 3-year disengagement agreement with Israel, under Kissinger's mediation, in the latter part of August. Throughout these negotiations, *Pravda* kept up its efforts to isolate Sadat by citing Western reports of Israeli withdrawal concessions as "militarily meaningless,"¹¹¹ and stating that the negotiations ignored such important questions as a withdrawal from the Golan Heights and from the banks of the Jordan as well as a recognition of the legitimate rights of the Palestinian Arabs.¹¹² The Soviet press also cited Arab newspapers denouncing the agreement as a threat to Arab unity.¹¹³ Its strongest criticism, however, appeared on 29 August when the agreement was just about to be concluded. In a feature article headlined "The main problems are not settled," *Pravda* cited Syrian Foreign Minister Abdul Khaddam's denunciation of the agreement as "not a step toward peace, but a step toward war."¹¹⁴

As the disengagement talks reached their successful conclusion, perhaps the only positive development the Soviet leadership could detect was a move toward still closer cooperation between Syria and Jordan. On 22 August, Hussein journeyed to Damascus to sign an agreement with Syria for the establishment of a Syrian-Jordanian supreme leadership council to coordinate the foreign policy and military activities of the two countries. In addition, the

two states issued joint communiques on 25 August stating that peace in the Middle East could only come about through the complete withdrawal of Israeli forces from all occupied Arab territories and the assurance of the legal rights of the Palestinian Arabs. Soviet approval of the intensification of Syrian-Jordanian cooperation can be noted from the fact that the joint communique received front-page coverage in *Pravda*.¹¹⁶

Thus, the U.S.S.R. proved unable to prevent the second Egyptian-Israeli disengagement agreement, despite its attempts to isolate the Sadat regime both within Egypt and throughout the Arab world. Given these Soviet efforts, one must question Kissinger and Ford's evaluations that the U.S.S.R. deliberately kept quiet during the Middle East negotiations lest it upset détente and prevent Ford's journey to Helsinki for the European Security Conference.¹¹⁷ It would appear, rather, that despite the Soviet leadership's strong opposition to the second Egyptian-Israeli disengagement agreement, they proved powerless to prevent it, much as they were unable to prevent the earlier Egyptian and Syrian disengagement agreements.

Soviet Policy Toward the Middle East Since the Second Egyptian-Israeli Disengagement Agreement. The Soviet leadership was clearly discouraged by the second Egyptian-Israeli disengagement agreement which seemed to herald both a resurgence of American influence in the Middle East and a further erosion of the Soviet position. Following the agreement, the U.S.S.R. redoubled its efforts to isolate Sadat and to denigrate his domestic and foreign policies. At the same time, the U.S.S.R. drew closer to Syria which considered itself abandoned by Egypt in the Arab confrontation with Israel. The Syrians also found themselves confronted by a civil war in Lebanon between Christians and

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Moslems, with Libya and Iraq—nations with whom Syria had been at odds—funneling money into some of the leftist Moslem groups. With a possible conflict facing them on two fronts, the Syrians drew closer to the U.S.S.R. and seemed to play the role of leaders of the anti-imperialist bloc of Arab States ascribed to them by the Russians. The U.S.S.R. also maintained close contact with the PLO, and the Soviet leaders indicated that the U.S.S.R. would not at all be unhappy if the Palestinian forces, together with Lebanese Moslems, overturned the Christian power structure and swung Lebanon away from its traditional pro-Western position.

Meanwhile, the U.S.S.R. was having difficulties in other parts of the Middle East. Although Soviet-Kuwaiti relations seemed improved following the visit of Kuwait's Foreign Minister to Moscow, Soviet hopes for an increased role in the Persian Gulf following the end of the Iran-Iraq conflict seemed thwarted as the leading local power, Iran, took a more assertive position. Indeed, the U.S.S.R. began to criticize openly Iran both for its continued cooperation with CENTO and for its intervention in Oman to help the Sultan defeat the Popular Front guerrillas who were aided by Soviet-backed South Yemen. On the other side of the Arab world, the old feud between Algeria and Morocco was rekindled as the two countries, which had gone to war in 1963, maneuvered for control of the phosphate-rich Spanish Sahara. The U.S.S.R., which had endeavored to maintain good relations with both nations, was therefore caught in a dilemma not unlike the one which had plagued it in the Iran-Iraq confrontation.

Finally, Soviet relations with the United States, both in the Middle East and other areas in the world, such as Portugal and Angola, became increasingly strained. In addition, while the U.S.S.R. continued to call for a resumption of the Geneva Conference, the

United States (and Israel) refused to attend if the PLO were present, and no conference materialized. Nonetheless, both Syria and the U.S.S.R. were able to maneuver a resolution through the U.N. Security Council making the continued stationing of U.N. forces on the Golan Heights conditional upon the participation of the PLO in the January 1976 Security Council debate on the Middle East. While securing increased diplomatic prestige for the PLO and Syria in the short run, the ultimate value of this maneuver remained very much in doubt.

The Soviet Union launched a strong attack on the second-stage settlement as soon as it was completed. The U.S.S.R. not only opposed it because it "sowed discord in the Arab world," but also because the agreement called for the stationing of Americans (rather than U.N. troops) to monitor the six electronic surveillance posts in the Mitla and Giddi passes which Israel agreed to evacuate (along with the Abu Rodeis oilfields).

To show their displeasure over the agreement, the Russians boycotted the signing ceremony in Geneva. The United States also did not attend the session, despite all the hard work Kissinger had put in to secure the agreement—reportedly to avoid embarrassing the U.S.S.R.¹¹⁸ Whether the U.S.S.R. would have boycotted such a ceremony in deference to the United States if Soviet representatives had worked out an agreement in the face of U.S. opposition is a very open question. Indeed, Soviet leadership may well have interpreted the American action as yet another case of American weakness, similar to Ford's failure to meet Solzhenitsyn the previous month.

If the United States was taking a rather soft stand toward Soviet opposition to the disengagement agreement, Sadat was not. The Egyptian President, whose long postponed trip to the United States had been announced the

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day after the agreement was concluded, launched a blistering attack on the Soviet Union for "flagrant incitement and an attempt at splitting the ranks of the Arab nation."¹¹⁹ The Soviet response to Egypt's signing of the pact was twofold. In the first place, Soviet media attacks on the Sadat regime's foreign policy increased in intensity, reaching a new crescendo on the eve of the Sadat's trip to the United States at the end of October.¹²⁰ Second, the Russians played up American promises of large-scale, long-term military aid to the Israelis (including nuclear-capable Lance missiles and, initially, long-range Pershing missiles), implying that as a result of the agreement Israel was in a far better military position than before, and Sadat had therefore sold out the Arab cause.¹²¹ Finally, in meetings with Arab heads of state and heads of political organizations,¹²² the Russians sought to denigrate Sadat's policies and so isolate the Egyptian leader that no other Arab head of state would be tempted to follow his path in working out separate deals mediated by the United States.

A feature article in *Pravda* appearing on the eve of Sadat's visit to the United States typified Soviet criticism of Sadat, saying that the signing of the Egyptian-Israeli agreement could not fail to strike a blow at the unity of the Arab people and further stating that:

There has been no meeting between Soviet and Arab leaders, there has been no Soviet-Arab document, in which the Soviet side has not emphasized the importance of the solidarity of the Arab states and of strengthening the unity of their actions in the struggle against Israel's continuing aggression. In its practical activity, the Soviet Union is doing everything it can to facilitate the solidarity of the Arab states and peoples on an anti-imperialist basis.¹²³ (Emphasis added.)

Indeed, the U.S.S.R. was making an intense effort to rally the Arabs behind the anti-imperialist banner, although with only mixed success. Just as in the period following the failure of Kissinger's mission in March, a parade of high-ranking Arab visitors came to Moscow. This time, however, the visitors not only came from the "progressive" Arab States and organizations (Iraq, Syria, Libya, and the PLO), but also from such conservative states as Jordan and Kuwait. The key to Soviet policy in the Arab world, however, remained Syria which denounced the Egyptian agreement with Israel as "shameful and disgraceful"¹²⁴ because it did not contain a commitment by Israel to negotiate the return of the Golan Heights to Syria. Assad came to Moscow on 9 October, and the joint announcement describing the meeting stated that "no one would be allowed to disrupt or damage" the friendship between the two states.¹²⁵ The trip was evidently a profitable one for the Syrians since 1 week later Assad refused to enter into negotiations with the United States on a disengagement agreement similar to that worked out by Egypt and Israel.¹²⁶ This may have occurred because the Israelis had spoken only of "cosmetic arrangements" on the Golan Heights until a full peace treaty was signed, and even then it appeared doubtful whether Israel would give up all of the Golan Heights because of its security problems in northern Galilee.¹²⁷ In addition, in an interview with the Kuwaiti newspaper *Al-Rai-Al-Am*, Assad, whose support of the Palestinians helped secure his domestic position, stated: "Syria will never accept American offers to mediate a similar disengagement accord on the Golan Heights because such an accord will be mainly designed to separate Syria from the Palestine question."¹²⁸ In return for taking this stand, which scuttled American moves to keep the shuttle momentum alive, Assad was promised new shipments of

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Soviet weapons, including MIG-25, which more than made up for Egypt's pulling out its warplanes from Syria as relations between the two Arab nations sharply deteriorated. The MIG-25's arrived in Syria in the middle of November, thereby strengthening Syria's position as yet another deadline for the extension of the mandate for the U.N. force in the Golan Heights approached.¹²⁹ Syria used the approaching deadline to strengthen its demands for changes in U.N. Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338, favorable to the Palestinians, as its price for renewing the mandate. When the United States opposed the Syrian position, Assad reduced his requirements to a demand that the PLO be permitted to participate in the Security Council debate on the Middle East in January 1976. The United States did not oppose this Syrian ploy, probably in order to keep the momentum toward a peace settlement (or at least the appearance of such a momentum) alive. Israel's decision to boycott the Security Council session if the PLO were present deprived the forum of having the ability to negotiate a real peace settlement. Nonetheless, the Syrian maneuver, backed by the U.S.S.R. which used the opportunity to embarrass the United States, won the PLO increased diplomatic stature by enabling its representatives to address the Security Council for the first time and won Syria new prestige in the Arab world as well.

While the PLO was winning more prestige in the U.N., it was facing greater difficulty in the Middle East and becoming even more dependent on Syria. Civil war had broken out in earnest in Lebanon, and the various PLO groupings allied to Moslem factions found themselves in almost daily battle with Christian Lebanese forces. Indeed, they may have feared a repetition of the events of 1970 when Hussein had bloodily suppressed the Palestinian guerrillas in Jordan. At the same time, the

PLO's relations with Egypt had deteriorated very sharply. Zuheir Mohsen, head of the military department of the PLO, had called Sadat "a traitor and conspirator" for signing the agreement with Israel and promised an all-out Palestinian offensive against the Sadat government.¹³⁰ In addition, a Palestinian group seized the Egyptian Embassy in Madrid and another tried to hijack an Egyptian plane in Beirut. In retaliation for PLO opposition, Sadat closed down the PLO radio station in Egypt, much as Nasser had done 5 years earlier when the Palestinians had opposed the Egyptian-Israeli cease-fire negotiated by then U.S. Secretary of State William Rogers.¹³¹

While the PLO forces suffered from a severely strained relationship with Egypt and were encountering difficulties in Lebanon, the Soviet leadership appeared to be reevaluating its own strategy toward them. As early as 12 April, Viktor Kudryavtsev, Vice-Chairman of the Soviet Committee for Solidarity with the countries of Asia and Africa, wrote an extensive article in *Izvestia*, in which he described the Palestinian resistance movement both as an aid to Soviet policy opposing separate agreements and as an instrument for social change in the Arab world. Kudryavtsev envisioned the Palestinian "resistance movement" as a "kind of motor making it possible for the national liberation movement in the Arab East not to get stuck at intermediate stages, seduced by the promises of imperialist sirens, but to develop further along the path of progress."¹³²

Three days later, Kudryavtsev published another article on the Palestinian resistance movement, noting with satisfaction (and perhaps a bit of wishful thinking) that the Palestinian movement had become committed to social change, although he also expressed concern that the PLO might be subverted by reactionary forces in the Arab world.

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Certain circles interested in keeping the Near East within the framework of their own interests would like to turn the future state of the Palestinian Arabs into a kind of trap for the P.R.M. To confine this movement within certain boundaries, taking advantage of economic difficulties, to subordinate it to the interests of the monopolies and their local agents, to emasculate the progressive content of the Palestine Resistance Movement, to eliminate or at least to restrict the influence of the democratic elements in it, to shift it from the front lines far into the rear—these are the reactionaries' hopes. For this reason, the P.R.M. leaders are even now doing a great deal of work to ensure that the future state will be progressive, taking into account the inevitability and necessity of social changes that should consolidate in the Arab countries the fruits of their anti-imperialist and anti-Zionist struggle.¹³³ (Emphasis added.)

It is interesting to note the Soviet emphasis on the PLO as an agency for social change in the Middle East, particularly given Yasser Arafat's opposition to Marxism—and the Marxist groups within the PLO—and his willingness to accept aid from any and all Arab States, including the conservative Arab States of Kuwait and Saudi Arabia. It was perhaps for this reason that Kudryavtsev's article went on to praise the Marxist Palestinian leader Naef Hawatmeh (leader of the Marxist Popular Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine) as "a politically experienced and erudite person" with whom Kudryavtsev had a "very useful and profound conversation."¹³⁴ The subsequent Soviet decision to invite Hawatmeh to Moscow in December for a week of negotiations¹³⁵ indicated that the U.S.S.R. might be considering trying to

groom Hawatmeh as an alternative to Arafat in a newly established Palestinian state, or at least using him as a means of leverage on Arafat to prevent him from agreeing to a settlement not to the liking of the U.S.S.R.

Soviet hopes to use the Palestinians as a force for social change in the Middle East continued to develop during the summer when Lebanon stood on the edge of civil war between Christians and Moslems, with the Palestinians, allied to the Moslems, becoming involved in fighting with the right-wing Christian forces, many of whom wished to expel the PLO from Lebanon.

Indeed, as the Lebanese civil war grew in intensity in the late summer and early fall, the U.S.S.R. continued to express concern that the Palestinians might be overcome by Lebanese "reactionaries." As the civil war became even more severe in mid-December, *New Times* correspondent Anatoly Agaryshev offered a solution:

Will Lebanon resume the unique role it played until recently in the capitalist world's trade and finances? This is the question all Lebanese are asking today.

The reactionary forces responsible for unleashing the fratricidal conflicts want to preserve the system of free enterprise which has multiplied their capital . . .

Not all the Lebanese businessmen belong in this category of course. *There are some who are sensible enough to see that Lebanon's past and future are linked not only with the capitalist West but with the Arab world as well. Consequently, they reason, Lebanon cannot be a bystander in the Middle East conflict. Her place is with the Arab states resisting Israeli aggression. They realize that the one to gain most*

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from the bloodshed in Lebanon is Israel. It is noteworthy that this is the opinion not only of Moslem businessmen but of some Catholic Maronites too. There are many Christians in the progressive front-workers as well as petty and middle bourgeoisie. (Emphasis added.)

Agaryshev saw one of the central problems in Lebanon to be "... the growing number of paramilitary organizations involved in the conflict... Some of them are extreme-Rightist... Big landowners, tribal chieftains and prominent politicians maintain their own private armies." It was his view the presence of such paramilitary formations could only aggravate the situation.¹³⁶

During the fall, various mediation efforts were attempted in Lebanon—to little or no avail—and full-scale war between the Christian and Moslem communities erupted in January. The termination of the civil war by Syrian intervention was favored by the U.S.S.R.,¹³⁷ and it appeared by late January 1976 that Syria had become the decisive influence in Lebanon. Were this situation to continue, the power of the right-wing, Christian forces in Lebanon could be decisively weakened, if not eliminated, and Lebanon might well move from the position of a country tied to the West over to the pro-Soviet group of Arab States.

Nonetheless, the PLO (and the Russians) also had to face the possibility that just as Assad had enforced strict curbs on PLO operations in Syria, he might adopt the same strategy in Lebanon, thereby leaving the PLO with even less room for maneuver than before. In addition, since the Syrian Communist Party was kept under tight control in Syria, it was quite possible that Assad might move to control the hitherto freely operating Lebanese Communist Party—a development that would deprive the U.S.S.R. of an important

propaganda voice in the Arab world.¹³⁸

While the civil war in Lebanon provided the Soviet Union with an opportunity to increase its influence in the Mediterranean country, the Soviet leadership was encountering resistance to the spread of its influence in the Persian Gulf. Perhaps expecting that upon the conclusion of the Iran-Iraq conflict the major barrier to Soviet influence in the region had been eliminated, the U.S.S.R. found itself confronted not only by the Iraqi-Syrian conflict, but also by a more assertive Iran which, while occasionally quarrelling with the United States over the cost of oil, nonetheless closely cooperated with the United States in CENTO affairs. In addition, by improving relations with the now conservative regime of Egypt and with Saudi Arabia as well, the Shah seemed to be in the process of establishing a conservative, anti-Soviet grouping of states in the Middle East which would undermine Soviet efforts to establish anti-imperialist Arab unity.

Indeed, part of the program of the newly revived Egyptian Communist Party attacked the Sadat regime for "strengthening its relations with the regimes which are agents of the U.S. imperialism, such as Iran," as well as for "increasing its cooperation with the reactionary Arab regimes and establishing a Cairo-Riyadh axis."¹³⁹

The Soviet Union was disappointed by the trend of developments in the Persian Gulf and became increasingly critical of Iran, especially in the area of its defense budget and for its close ties with the West. The Soviet leaders were also clearly unhappy with Iranian policy in Oman where Iranian troops were aiding the Sultan in suppressing the guerrillas of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Oman who were aided by Soviet-backed South Yemen, which now appeared close to war with Oman.¹⁴⁰

It was perhaps to counter what it perceived as a developing Saudi Arabian-

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Iranian-American alliance grouping in the Persian Gulf region that the Soviet leadership invited Kuwaiti Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah al-Ahmad al-Jaber al-Sabah to Moscow at the beginning of December. For the Kuwaitis, the visit also held important possibilities, since Kuwait continued to fear an invasion by Soviet-supported Iraq which, while moving to improve relations with other Persian Gulf states, had not renounced its claims to Kuwaiti territory. In addition, the Kuwaitis were interested in diversifying their arms purchases, hitherto supplied by the West, in part, at least because of Western oil threats, and the U.S.S.R., which had long used the supply of arms as a means of political influence, proved willing to meet the Kuwaiti requests. The U.S.S.R. may have perceived both the Kuwaiti Foreign Minister's visit and the supply of arms as the first step toward detaching Kuwait from its pro-Western stance in the Middle East, much as it hoped to do with King Hussein's regime in Jordan.¹⁴¹ While the joint communique published after the visit referred to a number of "exchanges of opinions"—thus indicating disagreement—both sides did agree to the following declaration concerning the Persian Gulf:

Peace and security in this [Persian Gulf] area could be strengthened by prohibiting *foreign interference in the affairs of this region*, by insuring freedom of navigation in the Persian Gulf, and by establishing trust and good-neighborly cooperation among *all the states in the gulf zone on the basis of noninterference in each other's internal affairs and respect for the right of each to free and independent development.*¹⁴² (Emphasis added.)

Thus both sides seemed to get what they wished. Kuwait obtained, at least on paper, Soviet support for Kuwait's independence against Iraq while the

U.S.S.R. obtained Kuwait's support of its position opposing "foreign (i.e., U.S.) interference in the region."

While the U.S.S.R. was endeavoring to promote its version of détente in the Persian Gulf, events in North Africa were moving toward war. As Spain withdrew from the phosphate-rich Spanish Sahara, both Morocco, which wished to annex the territory, and Algeria, which wished it to be "independent" as an Algerian protectorate, asserted their claims to the area, with Mauritania supporting Morocco in return for the southern section of the disputed territory.

This situation posed an old dilemma for the Soviet leadership: which side to support in a conflict when the optimum Soviet policy is to maintain good relations with both countries. If, given the closer tie between the U.S.S.R. and Algeria—a tie reinforced by Algeria's willingness to transship Soviet war material to the Soviet-backed faction in Angola¹⁴³—the U.S.S.R. were to support Algeria, Morocco would be alienated. In such a situation, any hopes the Soviet leadership may have entertained to win over Morocco to its side, much as it was trying to do with other conservative Arab States like Kuwait and Jordan, would be dashed. This, indeed, appeared to be the outcome as the Soviet press supported independence for the Spanish Sahara,¹⁴⁴ and the Moroccan Navy captured, off the coast of the Spanish Sahara, a Soviet cargo ship which contained both arms and three Algerian officers—a clear indication that the weapons were bound for anti-Moroccan forces (the so-called Polisario Liberation Front) in the former Spanish colony.¹⁴⁵

While the conflict in North Africa thus posed a dilemma for Soviet diplomacy, it also appeared to hold some benefit for the U.S.S.R. Libya, a Soviet client state long isolated in the Arab world, signed a pact with Algeria at the end of December calling for the two

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nations to coordinate their policies in support of the Polisario Liberation Front and for each nation to consider an attack on the other as an attack on itself.¹⁴⁶ The Libyan-Algerian Pact was one of a number of moves made at the time by the Libyans in an effort to escape from their isolation in the Arab world. Libyan Prime Minister Jalloud had gone to Iraq at the beginning of January, reportedly to coordinate policies opposing any settlement with Israel;¹⁴⁷ and several weeks earlier a Libyan-Kuwaiti agreement had been signed to establish joint military industries to produce aircraft and other weapons.¹⁴⁸ Whether either of these latter moves by Libya will be of benefit to the Soviet Union is an open question. Both Libya and Iraq have continued to oppose the Soviet Union's three point plan for peace in the Middle East because it stipulated Israel's right to exist, and closer coordination of what has been called their "rejectionist front" policies is not likely to make the Soviet diplomatic position any easier. Also, the establishment of the Libyan-Kuwaiti joint arms industry, if ever realized, could make Libya more independent of Soviet weapons supplies. Nonetheless, the establishment of an arms industry is a long-term undertaking, and even if it were not done under Soviet technical supervision, the U.S.S.R. may have seen the move as another step toward detaching Kuwait from the pro-Western camp of states in the Arab world.

The Soviet Union may have also viewed the steady improvement of Libyan-Turkish relations in the same light, particularly since it coincided with a Soviet effort to reduce Turkey's ties to NATO. Indeed, Premier Kosygin visited Turkey at the end of December and the two countries agreed to draw up "a political document on friendly relations and cooperation."¹⁴⁹ This rather vague statement could be interpreted more as an expression of Turkish unhappiness with American policy rather

than as a real move toward the U.S.S.R., because the Soviet leadership continued to strongly condemn the Turkish occupation of Northern Cyprus.

While Soviet diplomacy was active throughout the entire Middle East, from Morocco to Kuwait, in the period following the second Egyptian-Israeli disengagement agreement, Soviet-American relations continued to be a major concern for the Soviet leaders. Strategic arms negotiations remained stalled, Sino-Soviet relations continued to be strained (despite China's return of the Soviet helicopter crew captured in 1974), and the worst Soviet harvest in a decade made the U.S.S.R. once again dependent on large imports of American grain. At the same time, the Soviet Union had suffered a defeat in Portugal as the Portuguese Communists were driven from their positions of power in the Portuguese Government—a development viewed with great relief by Washington because of Portugal's membership in NATO and the U.S. bases in the Azores. The Soviet leadership moved quickly to counter this defeat, however, by stepping up its aid to Soviet-backed forces fighting in the Angolan civil war. This Soviet aid, which consisted of heavy weapons and the airlift of thousands of Cuban troops, turned the tide of battle and enabled the Soviet-backed side to score a string of victories against Western-backed forces. This development, however, angered Ford and Kissinger who were already on the domestic political defensive against such critics of détente as Presidential candidates Ronald Reagan, Henry Jackson, and George Wallace.

Nonetheless, the Soviet leadership must have been satisfied with such events as Ford's firing of Defense Secretary Schlesinger, a strong critic of détente,¹⁵⁰ and the resignation of Daniel Moynihan as U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations. Indeed, while Ford had gone out of his way to avoid embarrassing the Soviet Union and "endangering

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détente" by refusing to meet Solzhenitsyn; Moynihan, whose resignation may have been prompted by a lack of White House support, showed no hesitation in quoting Andrei Sakharov, another leading Soviet dissident, during a U.N. debate on amnesty for political prisoners—despite a request by the chief Soviet U.N. delegate, Yaakov Malik (who had seen the advanced text of the speech), that the passage be deleted because Sakharov was "an enemy of the Soviet people."¹⁵¹ The Soviet leaders may also have been encouraged by Ford's rather cool reception during his trip to China and the American President's public refusal to use the threat of withholding U.S. grain shipments to the U.S.S.R. as a lever for gaining Soviet concessions on Angola.¹⁵² Indeed, Soviet press coverage of Ford continued to be positive, as he was portrayed as one of the leading U.S. advocates of détente.¹⁵³

As before, however, détente was not very visible in the Middle East, as the two superpowers sought to weaken each other's positions. The Soviet Union continued to seek to attract such Western allies as Kuwait, Jordan, Greece, and Turkey to its side while reinforcing its ties to Syria, Libya, Iraq, and the PLO. The United States, for its part, sought to reinforce its ties with once pro-Russian Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Israel while increasing its trade with such ostensibly pro-Soviet states as Syria and Iraq and even hinting at a change in policy toward the PLO.¹⁵⁴ The Soviet Union also continued to demand the reconvening of the Geneva Peace Conference, with the full participation of the PLO and on 18 December rejected an American plan to hold a preparatory conference without the PLO as "an intention to avoid convening the Geneva Conference."¹⁵⁵ On the eve of the U.S. Security Council debate on the Middle East in early January, in which the PLO representative, for the first time,¹⁵⁶ would be allowed to speak, Pravda

sought to tie the debate to a resumption of the Geneva Conference while at the same time condemning the United States for its attempts to split the Arab world:

Certain states that have long been encouraging Israel's aggressive policy continue putting spokes in the wheel of the process of an overall political settlement in the Middle East. They continue striving to bypass the Geneva Conference, and are seeking separate deals that overlook key problems of the settlement. They clearly hope to find weak links among Arab countries, and gain an influence and control over them . . .

The main result of discussions of the Middle East situation at the Security Council must be the creation of the necessary conditions for the resumption and effective work of the Geneva Conference.¹⁵⁷

This renewed Soviet call for a resumption of the Geneva Conference provides a useful point of departure to draw some conclusions as to the course of Soviet policy in the Middle East since the October 1973 Arab-Israeli war.

Conclusions. Three main conclusions may be drawn. First, Soviet influence in the Middle East, even in its main Arab client states, remains limited. Second, the policies employed by the Soviet leaders have basically been reactions to a series of regional developments which the Soviet leadership not only had not caused but which they also often had difficulty in trying to shape to fit Soviet goals. Finally, the Soviet leadership has not succeeded in attaining its primary Middle Eastern goal, the ouster of Western influence from the region—indeed, Western influence has increased since the October war. Nonetheless, cognizant of the continued volatility of the region, the U.S.S.R. has given no indication

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that it has ceased its efforts to attain its goal.

Measuring the level of international influence is a very difficult task. As a working definition, we may say that Nation A has influenced Nation B if Nation B takes an action (or refrains from taking an action) it otherwise would not have taken (or would have taken) as a result of assistance or pressure from Nation A. This is the clearest case of influence; a lesser degree of influence can be noted if Nation A can be shown to reinforce an action Nation B was planning to take even in the absence of assistance or pressure from Nation A. In measuring Soviet influence in the Middle East according to this simple model, one can say that the U.S.S.R., hitherto at least, has been singularly unsuccessful in influencing Middle Eastern ruling elites, unless their objective and the Soviet objective coincided. This has been the case not only with respect to Egypt, but also with respect to such major Soviet clients as Syria, Iraq, and Libya.

Egypt, which by January 1976 seemed to have moved—at least temporarily—into the American camp, serves as the best example of limited Soviet influence. By signing two disengagement agreements with Israel, the latter in the face of strong Soviet opposition, by working to persuade the oil-rich Arab States to lift their embargo against the United States, and by opening up Egypt's economy to Western investment after a long experiment with a quasi-Soviet model of economic development, the Egyptian regime of Anwar Sadat has opposed a number of fundamental Soviet Middle Eastern policies. Indeed, Soviet-Egyptian relations have deteriorated so far—despite all the military assistance and diplomatic support which the U.S.S.R. had given Egypt in the past—that by agreeing to reconstitution of the Egyptian Communist Party, itself a rather powerless entity, the Soviet leadership may have signaled Sadat that

it was now not only trying to isolate Egypt in the Arab world, but that it would try to bring down Sadat's regime unless Egypt's policies changed.

Although the Soviet Union's relationship with Syria has been considerably better, Soviet influence is limited in the Assad regime as well. While Syria has been only too willing to accept Soviet weaponry and diplomatic support in its continuing confrontation with Israel (a good example of influence as behavior reinforcement), its boycott of the Geneva Conference in December 1973, its willingness to sign a disengagement agreement with Israel under American mediation in May 1974, and its economic turn to the West attest the limits of Soviet influence. While Soviet-Syrian relations have been particularly close in the last year, as both countries have opposed Kissinger's renewed disengagement efforts, it is doubtful whether this will be a permanent arrangement—particularly if the United States succeeds in bringing sufficient pressure on Israel to make meaningful concessions in the Golan Heights. Finally, while the U.S.S.R. supported Syria's intervention in the Lebanese civil war and hailed Syria's leadership in the formation of the Syrian-PLO-Jordanian entente, these moves were taken on Syrian—not Soviet—initiative, and it would appear that Syria will benefit from the consequences of these moves far more than the U.S.S.R.

By associating itself with the Syrian actions, the Soviet Union does gain, particularly insofar as they serve to isolate the anti-Soviet Sadat regime and help Syria emerge as the leader of the Arab world. Still, any genuine development toward the Arab unity “on an anti-imperialist basis” so long sought by the U.S.S.R. would depend first on the viability of the reconciliation between the PLO and Hussein (a doubtful prospect at best) and on a rapprochement between Syria and Iraq, yet another doubtful possibility, even in the highly

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volatile Middle East where diplomatic rearrangements occur frequently.

The course of Soviet relations with Iraq and Libya, the other major recipients of Soviet military aid in large quantities, also reflect the limits of Soviet influence. Both states continue to oppose U.N. Security Council Resolution 242, the existence of the State of Israel, and PLO participation in the Geneva Peace Conference—three cardinal elements of the Soviet plan for a Middle East peace settlement. Indeed, if the two Arab States draw more closely together into a formal "Arab Rejectionist Front," Soviet diplomatic efforts in the Middle East will encounter further difficulty.

The Soviet relationship with the loosely federated Palestine Liberation Organization should also be seen in this light. PLO leader Yasser Arafat has come to Moscow on a number of occasions, and he has been rewarded with Soviet military and diplomatic support for his anti-Western, pro-Soviet statements. Yet, in following the example set by the leaders of Syria, Arafat has joined the long list of Arab leaders who appear to be exploiting the Soviet drive for influence in the Middle East while giving little more than lipservice to Soviet policy preferences in return, unless, of course, the Soviet policy preferences matched their own. Given Arafat's lack of a firm political base, however, the Soviet leaders may have felt that he could be made more amenable to Soviet policies, and this may have been one of the reasons they have begun to develop closer relations with the Marxist Palestinian leader, Naef Hawatmeh. Whether this move will enable them to have any more influence in the PLO, however, remains to be seen.

All in all, given the lack of success on the part of the Soviet leadership in trying to modify the behavior of Arab leaders on issues of importance to the U.S.S.R. and the Soviet unwillingness, or inability to replace them with other

Arab leaders more favorably inclined to Soviet policies, how then can one explain the continued Soviet aid to these states? In seeking an answer to this question, one must keep in mind the overriding Soviet goal in the Middle East—the elimination of Western influence—and view Soviet activity as being directed in support of that goal. The Soviet leadership, taking a long-term view of politics in the highly volatile Middle East, has been willing to pay a substantial price in economic and military aid to often recalcitrant Arab regimes in the hope of stimulating or reinforcing anti-Western trends in the Middle East; perhaps considering such assistance as a down payment toward the ultimate ouster of Western influence from the region. Continued aid to these regimes maintains the Soviet presence, which may then be exploited when developments within the Middle East present the Soviet Union with the requisite opportunity. Indeed, as one examines the course of Soviet policy toward the Middle East in the period since the October 1973 war, it becomes clear that Soviet policy has been highly reactive in nature as it has sought to exploit developments it had not caused in an effort to improve the Soviet position in the region while weakening that of the United States.

The leading example of the U.S.S.R.'s opportunistic policy has been the Arab-Israeli conflict. As the conflict erupted in full-scale war in October 1973, Soviet prestige rose among the Arab States who received the weaponry needed to fight the conflict from the U.S.S.R., while the position of the United States in the Arab world dropped sharply because of its arms aid to Israel. Similarly, as Kissinger's diplomatic efforts waned in the fall of 1974 and war again loomed on the horizon, the Soviet leadership was again able to improve its position as even Sadat, at the time, felt it necessary to make a gesture to the U.S.S.R. Conversely, as

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the United States succeeded in defusing the Arab-Israeli conflict with a series of disengagement agreements, U.S. prestige waxed while that of the U.S.S.R. waned, although the Soviet Union was able to capitalize on Syria's unwillingness to follow Egypt into a second disengagement agreement with Israel, thereby isolating Sadat as the Arab leader who had gone the furthest toward making peace with Israel.

In addition to exploiting the Arab-Israeli conflict, the Soviet leadership has sought to capitalize on other Middle Eastern developments as well. Thus, when Kissinger and Ford began to issue veiled (and not so veiled) threats to the Arab oil-producing states, the U.S.S.R. seized the opportunity to demonstrate to the Arabs the hostile position of the United States, while at the same time urging the Arabs to draw closer to the U.S.S.R. for protection. Kuwait's movement toward the Soviet Union may, in part at least, have been due to such concerns. Another example of the Soviet policy lies in its efforts to exploit the Greek-Turkish crisis over Cyprus which has led to the weakening of the American position in the eastern Mediterranean. Finally, the Russians have sought to exploit the civil war in Lebanon to weaken the pro-Western ruling elite of the country in the hope that Lebanon could be detached from the pro-Western bloc of Arab States.

Middle Eastern developments, however, have not always moved in a direction amenable to Soviet desires. The severe conflict between Morocco and Algeria over the Spanish Sahara and the bitter clashes between Syria and Iraq on a number of issues have worked against Soviet long-range goals in the region, while the settlement of the Iranian-Iraqi conflict, which the Russians evidently hoped would lead to an increase in Soviet influence in the Persian Gulf has not had the desired result. Indeed, Soviet-Iranian relations, instead of improving, seem to have worsened with

the U.S.S.R. condemning Iran for both its increasingly active participation in CENTO and for its intervention in Oman. In addition, while the quadrupling of oil prices both weakened the West and added, in the short run at least, to Soviet hard currency reserves, the increasing wealth generated by the oil revenues also increased Arab maneuverability as an oil-hungry West and Japan scurried to make long-range economic and military deals with the oil-producing Arab States. Indeed, now the U.S.S.R. had to cope with Western European and Japanese competition in the region as well as American. The Arab States were thus able to play off all the major powers against each other, limiting the amount of influence any one power, including the Soviet Union, could wield. This situation promised to become even worse for the Russians as the Arabs built up their stocks of non-Soviet weapons. Finally, the recent rapprochement between Iraq and its two erstwhile Arab enemies, Egypt and Saudi Arabia, holds some potential problems for the Soviet Union. While the Soviet leaders may hope that as Iraq leaves its position of isolation in the Arab world it may attract Saudi Arabia (and possibly even Egypt) toward the pro-Soviet group of Arab States, nonetheless, the reverse may also result as Iraq is attracted toward the Saudi Arabian-Egyptian axis and, hence, toward the West.

All in all, the thrust of this paper indicates that the Soviet Union remains far from its goal of ousting the West, and particularly the United States, from its positions of influence in the Middle East. Indeed, the Western position in the highly volatile area appears to be better now than it was in October 1973. At the same time, however, it should be realized that the States of the Arab world, with growing military, economic and diplomatic power, have moved from objects to subjects in world affairs, thus lessening the amount of influence any

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outside power can exert over them. Should the situation in the Arab world continue to develop in a pattern unfavorable to the U.S.S.R., the Soviet leadership may be tempted to urge certain Arab States, such as Syria, whose minority Shil Moslem regime gains legitimacy from its largely Sunni population by fighting against Israel, to resort to war again. The Assad regime, for its own reasons, may in fact do so, particularly if the Israelis do not withdraw from all the Golan Heights. Soviet reasoning might be that the war would spread to other Arab States whose leaders, impelled by popular opinion and memories of the Arab successes in the early stages of the October war, would then join Syria in its battle with Israel. Assuming the United States would again support Israel, this would make the U.S.S.R. again a major factor in the Arab world because of the need for immense supplies of weaponry to fight an October-type war, while at the same time the American position would again be undermined.

Yet a Soviet policy of urging renewed warfare also has its limitations. First, Egypt, under Sadat, may not be willing to go to war at the Syrian behest. Second, it may be more difficult for Syria or the U.S.S.R. to mobilize the Saudi Arabian "oil weapon," just as they were unable to convince Faisal to maintain his oil embargo despite the "war of attrition" on the Golan Heights. Finally, a clear Soviet push for the Arabs to return to war might just about destroy the vestiges of the Soviet-American détente.

Consequently, assuming that present trends continue, the Soviet leadership may decide to try to obtain a Middle East peace agreement that would lead to the establishment of a Palestinian Arab State on the West Bank of the Jordan River and the Gaza Strip in which they could expect to exercise influence. Similarly, they may reason that the conservative monarchies of Saudi

Arabia, Kuwait, and the United Arab Emirates may soon be replaced by radical regimes of the Iraqi type which would appeal to the U.S.S.R. for support; and that the Sadat regime, beset by economic problems, may yet fall, to be replaced by a more radical regime. The Soviet leadership may also reason that conflict over the high price of oil may split the conservative oil-producing states away from their alignment with the United States—a development that could spur them to turn to the Soviet Union for support and protection. Such a policy of "watchful waiting" and exploiting regional developments rather than encouraging a new war is also less damaging to Soviet-American relations. Yet one could also question the value of this type of "watchful waiting" policy since, as past events have shown and as the Soviet leaders themselves have ruefully acknowledged, developments in the Middle East are contradictory and do not always take a Soviet turn. In addition, there is no guarantee that even radical Arab regimes, should they come to power in the Gulf States, will follow Soviet-approved policies. It is also possible that the oil price problem can be solved without causing a rupture in Arab-American relations and that pro-

BIOGRAPHIC SUMMARY



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Western trends in the region will continue—particularly if an Arab-Israeli peace is achieved. Nonetheless, given the overall Soviet goal of expelling Western influence from the Middle East, the Soviet leadership seems willing to continue to provide large amounts of military and economic aid as well as diplomatic support to often recalcitrant Arab regimes in the hope of spurring

anti-Western trends in the region. The Soviet leaders seem to be willing to pay the costs involved in pursuing such a policy because they have made the basic decision that the Middle East is a region of great importance to the Soviet Union, and that they will continue their efforts, irrespective of short-run results. Détente has not yet come to the Middle East.

NOTES

1. For a more detailed discussion of the obstacles facing the Soviet Union's drive for influence in the Middle East, see the Robert O. Freedman, *Soviet Policy Toward the Middle East Since 1970* (New York: Praeger, 1975), chap. 1.

2. Cited in *Brief: Middle East Highlights* (Tel Aviv), No. 68 (16-31 October 1973), p. 2.

3. *Ibid.*

4. For a discussion of the Kurdish-Communist clashes, see "Kurds, Communists Clash in Northern Iraq," *Middle East Monitor* (hereafter *MEM*), 1 December 1973, p. 1. At the start of the war, Iran had acceded to Iraq's request to restore diplomatic relations and improve relations so that Iraqi troops could be moved from the Iranian border to Syria to join the fighting against Israel. The Iranian Government accepted this offer, perhaps in the expectation that it could later trade on its solidarity with the Arabs to get them to agree to a rise in the price for oil.

5. "Crisis Abates," *New Times*, No. 8, 1974, p. 13.

6. For a detailed discussion on Sadat's policy toward the United States since he took power, see Freedman.

7. Cf. *Pravda*, 16 November 1973.

8. Cf. *Pravda*, 27 November 1973; 4 December 1973; and 12 December 1973.

9. Cited in report by Bernard Gwertzman, "Syrians Refuse to Attend Peace Parley at Geneva," *The New York Times*, 19 December 1973, p. 1:6.

10. *Pravda*, 22 December 1973.

11. *Pravda*, 25 January 1974. Translated in "On the Visit to the U.S.S.R. by Jamail Fahmy, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Arab Republic of Egypt," *Current Digest of the Soviet Press* (hereafter *CDSP*), vol. 26, No. 4, p. 25.

12. *Pravda*, 20 January 1974.

13. The communique was published in *Pravda* on 16 March 1974 and referred to the talks as having taken place in a "businesslike atmosphere"—the usual Soviet terminology for low-level cooperation.

14. *Pravda*, 8 March 1974.

15. *Pravda*, 25 March 1974.

16. Cited in Henry Tanner, "Sadat Says Soviet Misinformed Him on Syrian Stand Early in Mideast War," *The New York Times*, 30 March 1974, p. 9:1.

17. Radio Cairo, 4 April 1974.

18. Cited in Henry Tanner, "Egypt Will End Total Reliance on Soviet Arms," *The New York Times*, p. 1:8.

19. C.L. Sulzberger, "Sadat Says Soviet Sought Leverage in Arms Supply," *The New York Times*, p. 1:6.

20. For a further discussion of this point, see the author's testimony before the U.S. Congress, House, Foreign Affairs Committee, *The Middle East, 1974: New Hopes, New Challenges* (Washington: U.S. Govt. Print. Off., 1974), pp. 87-88.

21. *Pravda*, 15 May 1974. The speeches are translated in "Libya's Premier Jalloud Visits Moscow," *CDSP*, vol. 26, No. 20, pp. 17-18.

22. *Pravda*, 22 May 1974.

23. For a recent article depicting Soviet interest in Arab States with "spare capital," see R. Klekovsky, "Fruitful Cooperation Between the CMEA States and Arab Countries," *Foreign Trade* (*Vneshniala Torgovlia*), No. 8, 1974, pp. 16-19.

24. *Pravda*, 27 March 1974.

25. Cited in "Syrian Economy Liberalized," *MEM*, 1 April 1974, p. 1.

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26. *Pravda*, 29 March 1974.
27. *Izvestia*, 30 March 1974. Translated in "Kissinger's Visit Reported and Analyzed," *CDSF*, vol. 26, No. 13, p. 11.
28. *Pravda*, 12 April 1974. Translated in "Syria, U.S.S.R. Reach New Accords," *CDSF*, vol. 26, No. 16, p. 2.
29. *Pravda*, 17 April 1974. Translated in "Syria, U.S.S.R. Reach New Accords," pp. 5-6.
30. *Pravda*, 30 April 1974. Translated in "Kissinger and Gromyko Meet in Geneva," *CDSF*, vol. 26, No. 17, p. 5.
31. Cited in Bernard Gwertzmann, "Kissinger and Gromyko Vow Mideast Cooperation," *The New York Times*, 30 April 1974, p. 1:1.
32. *Pravda*, 30 May 1974. Translated in "Toward Peace in the Middle East," *CDSF*, vol. 26, No. 22, p. 5.
33. Dmitry Volsky, "Step Toward Settlement," *New Times*, No. 23, 1974, p. 9.
34. Cited in "Syria Extends Invitation to West," *MEM*, 30 June 1974, p. 1.
35. "Joint Soviet-U.S. Communique," *New Times*, No. 28, 1974, p. 23.
36. A description of the meeting and the text of the 10-point program is found in *MEM*, 30 June 1974, pp. 2-4. For a Soviet evaluation of the Conference, see Victor Bukharov "Palestinian National Council Session," *New Times*, No. 25, 1974, pp. 12-13.
37. *Izvestia*, 9 July 1974. Translated in "Near and Middle East," *CDSF*, vol. 26, No. 27, p. 21.
38. Cited in "Sadat Criticizes Russians," *The New York Times*, 19 July 1974, p. 2:7.
39. *Izvestia*, 25 July 1974.
40. Y. Potomov, "Middle East Settlement: Urgent Task," *New Times*, No. 31, 1974, p. 22.
41. "The Palestinian Tragedy," *New Times*, No. 32, 1974, pp. 26-31; *Izvestia*, 30 July 1974. The same issue of *New Times* carried a front-page editorial supporting the PLO and a two-page interview with Yasir Arafat.
42. *Pravda*, 4 August 1974.
43. "Arabs to Develop Arms Industry," *MEM*, 1 June 1974, p. 1. According to a report by Joseph Fitchett, "Egypt and Iran May Shift Middle East Balance," *Christian Science Monitor*, p. 1:4, Egypt had also contacted Iran in an effort to gain access to sophisticated military weaponry. Egypt was later to make extensive military purchases in France and Britain.
44. Cited in Bernard Gwertzmann, "Rabin Says Israel Hopes to Exchange Land for Egyptian Accord," *The New York Times*, 16 September 1974, p. 3:4.
45. Cited in Bernard Gwertzmann, "Rabin Says He and Ford Agree on Drive for Talks," *The New York Times*, 14 September 1974, p. 3:1.
46. For the texts of Ford and Kissinger's U.N. speeches, see the news releases of the Bureau of Public Affairs of the U.S. Department of State for 18 September 1974 and 23 September 1974.
47. Cf. editorial "On Thin Ice," *New Times*, No. 38, 1974, p. 17; *Pravda*, 29 September 1974.
48. Sadat made this agreement at a conference in Cairo attended by Syria, Egypt, and the PLO. The conference took place on 22 September, 1 week after Rabin's trip to Washington. For the text of the agreement, see "Egypt, Syria Recognize PLO," *MEM*, 1 October 1974, p. 4.
49. *Pravda*, 10 October 1974.
50. *Pravda*, 12 October 1974.
51. *Pravda*, 28 September 1974.
52. "Fruitful Talks," *New Times*, No. 4, 1974, p. 17. Brezhnev was also scheduled to visit Syria and Iraq.
53. "Rabat Summit Supports PLO," *MEM*, 15 November 1974, pp. 2-3.
54. Dmitry Volsky, "After the Rabat Meeting," *New Times*, No. 45, 1974, p. 11.
55. Cited in *MEM* 15 November 1974, p. 4.
56. Cited in Bernard Gwertzmann, "Sadat and King Faisal Strongly Endorse Kissinger's Step-by-Step Negotiating Approach in Mideast," *The New York Times*, 7 November 1974, p. 7:4.
57. Cf. report by Henry Tanner, "Cairo Sees No Gain by Kissinger," *The New York Times*, 9 November 1974, p. 3:1.
58. The text of Arafat's speech was printed in "Arafat's Speech," *The New York Times*, 14 November 1974, p. 22:1.
59. Cf. Gromyko's speech to the United Nations on 24 September 1974 and *Pravda*, 14 November 1974.
60. For a good analysis of the "war-scare" see the report by John Cooley, "Mideast War Peril Eases Off," *Christian Science Monitor*, 18 November 1974, p. 1:2.

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61. The United States promised to sell a large quantity of grain to Syria in mid-November. The United States had also promised to sell a large quantity of grain to Egypt in the early part of the month. Both deals were long-term, low interest, and low price and, in a grain-short world, held political significance.

62. The text of the communique is found in "Text of Ford-Brezhnev Communique," *The New York Times*, 25 November 1974, p. 14:5.

63. See above, note 35.

64. *Pravda*, 28 November 1974.

65. *Pravda*, 5 December 1974.

66. *Pravda*, 28 November 1974. Translated in "Near and Middle East: True Friends of the Arab People," *CDSP*, vol. 26, No. 48, p. 18.

67. Excerpts from Sadat's speech were printed in Juan de Onis, "Sadat Says Soviet Refused to Resume Weapons Deliveries," *The New York Times*, 9 January 1975, pp. 1:2, 3:1.

68. Cited in report by Jim Hoagland, "Sadat Says Soviets Hold Back on Arms," the *Washington Post*, 9 January 1975.

69. The entire *Business Week* interview (issue of 13 January 1975) was reprinted by the Bureau of Public Affairs, Department of State.

70. Cited in report by Juan de Onis, "Sadat Says Arab Oil Countries Would Ruin Wells if Luvaded," *The New York Times*, 10 January 1975, p. 3:1.

71. *Pravda*, 4 February 1975. The joint communique is translated in "Gromyko Visits Syria, Egypt," *CDSP*, vol. 27, No. 5, p. 15.

72. *Pravda*, 6 February 1975. The joint communique is translated in *CDSP*, vol. 27, No. 5, p. 16.

73. Cited in report by Drew Middleton, "Soviet MIG-23 Shipment to Egyptians Is Reported," *The New York Times*, 19 February 1975, p. 1:1.

74. Cf. *Izvestia*, 11 February 1975; Dmitry Volsky, "Offensive Against Neo-Colonialism," *New Times*, No. 9, 1975, p. 5; Dmitry Volsky, "Blackmail Again," *New Times*, No. 12, 1975, p. 13.

75. Cf. report by Joseph Harsch, "Mideast Diplomacy Builds to Climax," *Christian Science Monitor*, 7 March 1975, p. 1:3.

76. Cited in Associated Press Report from Damascus, "Syrian, Supporting Palestinians, Offers to Form Joint Commands," *The New York Times*, 9 March 1975, p. 3:1.

77. See "Diplomatic Thaw in Arab World," *MEM*, 15 March 1975, p. 2, for a description of the agreement.

78. *Izvestia*, 15 April 1975.

79. O. Alov, "Wanted: A Genuine Mid-East Settlement," *New Times*, No. 14, 1975, p. 8.

80. *Pravda*, 15 April 1975.

81. *Pravda*, 17 April 1975.

82. Cited in report by Henry Tanner, "Egypt Says Libya Threatens to Cut Relations in New Rift," *The New York Times*, 18 April 1975, p. 3:5.

83. *Pravda*, 20 April 1975.

84. *Pravda*, 23 April 1975.

85. Cited in John K. Cooley, "Arab Summit Meeting Rebuilds Mideast Strategy," *Christian Science Monitor*, 24 April 1975, p. 4:1.

86. *Pravda*, 27 April 1975.

87. *Pravda*, 24 April 1975.

88. *Pravda*, 5 May 1975.

89. A. Usvatov, "Palestinian Delegation in Moscow," *New Times*, No. 19, 1975, p. 24.

90. *Pravda*, 14 May 1975. Translated in "Kosygin Visits Libya and Tunisia," *CDSP*, vol. 27, No. 20, p. 10.

91. *Pravda*, 27 May 1975. Soviet terminology about "bases" can be deceptive, however, since the Soviet leaders have a definition of a "base" which differs from the West. Thus the U.S.S.R. denied it had a base in Somalia despite on-the-spot evidence collected by an American Congressman.

92. *Izvestia*, 21 May 1975. Translated in "Kosygin Visits Libya and Tunisia," *CDSP*, vol. 27, No. 20, p. 14.

93. Cf. reports by Dev Muraka, "Moscow Makes Dramatic Bid to Israel," *Christian Science Monitor*, 25 April 1975, p. 1:2; and Wolf Blitzer in the 25 April 1975 issue of the *Jerusalem Post*.

94. J. Schreiber, "Growth of Peace Sentiment in Israel," *New Times*, No. 25, 1975, p. 10.

95. Vladimir Shelepin, "Taking Up a Point," *New Times*, No. 28, 1975, p. 31.

96. *Izvestia*, 29 May 1975. Translated in "The Outlook for Mideast Peace," *CDSP*, vol. 27, No. 22, p. 10.

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97. See the reports by John K. Cooley, "Egypt Moves to Attract Western Capital Funds," *Christian Science Monitor*, 26 June 1975, p. B2:1, and "Sadat Waits: What Accord Could Mean," 23 July 1975, p. 1:4.

98. "Steps Toward Agreement," *New Times*, No. 25, 1975, p. 17.

99. Al Hawadeth (Beirut) cited in Associated Press report in the *Jerusalem Post*, 29 August 1975.

100. See the report by Juan de Onis, "Iraq's Wealth Opens a New Market for the West," *The New York Times*, 19 March 1975, p. 69:3, which cited Jawad Hashem, director of the economic staff of Saddam Hussein as stating "What we want is the best technology and the fastest possible fulfillment of orders and contracts." See also the report by Mohammed Azhar Khan, "Western Investors 'Discover' Iraq," *Christian Science Monitor*, 8 July 1975, p. 10:1. For an Arab analysis of the development possibilities in Iraq, see "Iraq Looks Forward to Long-Term Growth," *The Middle East*, April 1975, pp. 57-58.

101. *Pravda*, 10 July 1975; *Izvestia*, 13 July 1975; Y. Zhuravlyov, "Iraq and CMEA," *New Times*, No. 31, 1975, p. 17.

102. See the report by Henry Tanner, "Syria and Jordan to Coordinate Policies," *The New York Times*, 13 June 1975, p. 3:3.

103. For an analysis of Iraq's improvement in relations with Egypt, its long-time Arab enemy, see "Egypt and Iraq Rivalry Gives Way to Cooperation," *The Middle East*, June 1975, pp. 51-52. See also "Diplomatic Thaw in Arab World," *MEM*, 15 March 1975, pp. 1-2.

104. See above, p. 18.

105. For an analysis of the evolution of the arms negotiations, see "Compromise Won on Hawks," *The Near East Report*, 17 September 1975, p. 159; and "Hussein to Accept Hawk Restrictions," 24 September 1975, p. 167.

106. Cf. editorial, "Strength and Stability," *The New York Times*, 23 July 1975, p. 34:1.

107. For a translation of this article, see "Egypt's Position on the Palestine Question," *MEM*, 1 September 1975, pp. 3-4.

108. *Pravda*, 15 July 1975. Translated in "Pravda Unhappy with Soviet Press," *CDSF*, vol. 27, No. 28, pp. 7-24.

109. For the background behind this event, see Robert O. Freedman, "The Soviet Union and the Communist Parties of the Middle East: an Uncertain Relationship," Roger E. Kanet and Donna Bahry, eds., *Soviet Economic and Political Relations with the Developing World* (New York: Praeger, 1975), pp. 100-134.

110. *As Safir*, 4 August 1975. (Translated in the *Foreign Broadcast Information Service: Daily Report*, 13 August 1975, pp. D2-D13.)

111. *Pravda*, 12 August 1975.

112. *Pravda*, 18 August 1975.

113. *Pravda*, 26 August 1975.

114. *Pravda*, 29 August 1975.

115. For a description of the agreement, see "Syria, Jordan Set Up Joint Command," *MEM*, 15 September 1975, pp. 2-3.

116. *Pravda*, 26 August 1975.

117. Cf. report by Godfrey Sperling, Jr., "U.S. Tells of Soviet Help on Mideast," *Christian Science Monitor*, 21 August 1975, p. 1:1.

118. Reuters report from Geneva, "Israel and Egypt Sign Their New Pact; Ceremony Is Shunned by Soviet and U.S.," *The New York Times*, 5 September 1975, p. 3:3.

119. Excerpts from Sadat's speech were printed in "Excerpts from Sadat Speech on Pact and Its Critics," *The New York Times*, 5 September 1975, p. 4:5.

120. The Soviet attacks also concentrated on Sadat's opening of the Egyptian economy to foreign capital, with *Pravda* on 23 November 1975 going so far as to infer that Egypt was losing its "economic independence."

121. Cf. *Pravda*, 17 September 1975; *Pravda*, 21 September 1975.

122. These organizations included not only the PLO but also such bodies as the "Arab Popular Front in Support of the Palestine Revolution." For the background of this group, see Freedman, *Soviet Policy Toward the Middle East Since 1970*, pp. 107-108. For a description of the activities of this group in opposing Sadat's policies, see "Voice of Arab Opinion," *New Times*, No. 44, 1975, p. 9.

123. *Pravda*, 25 October 1975. (Translated in "The History of Soviet-Egyptian Relations," *CSDP*, vol. 27, No. 43, pp. 1-2.)

124. Cited in Associated Press report from Damascus, "Syrians Denounce Egypt's Agreement with Israel on Sinai," *The New York Times*, 6 September 1975, p. 6.

125. *Pravda*, 11 October 1975.

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126. Al Rai al-Am (Kuwait) cited in Associated Press report from Kuwait in "Syria Rebuffs U.S., Awaits Soviet Arms," *The New York Times*, 19 October 1975, p. 4:1.

127. Indeed, soon after the disengagement agreement with Egypt, Israeli Premier Rabin stated that there was "virtually no chance" for an interim agreement with Syria. See the report by Henry Kamm, "Premier Rabin Sees Almost No Chance of Pact with Syria," *The New York Times*, 6 September 1975, p. 1:1.

128. Al Rai al-Am, *loc. cit.*

129. A report by Bernard Gwertzmann, "Soviet's Advanced MIG-25 Is Reported in Syria," *The New York Times*, 18 November 1975, p. 3:3.

130. Cited in United Press International report from Beirut, "P.L.O. Assails Sadat," *The New York Times*, 6 September 1975, p. 6:6.

131. Cited in "Egypt Closes PLO Radio Station," *Christian Science Monitor*, 12 September 1975, p. 2:4.

132. *Izvestia*, 12 April 1975. (Translated in "The Problem of the Palestinian Arabs," *CDSP*, vol. 27, No. 15, p. 2.)

133. *Izvestia*, 15 April 1975. (Translated in "The Palestinian Resistance Movement: A People in Struggle," *CDSP*, vol. 27, No. 15, pp. 2-3.)

134. *Ibid.*, p. 3.

135. *Pravda*, 20 December 1975.

136. A. Agaryshev, "Beirut Days of Trial," *New Times*, No. 51, 1975, p. 25.

137. *Pravda*, 27 January 1976.

138. For a description of the role played by the Communist Party of Lebanon in the Arab world, see Freedman, "The Soviet Union and the Communist Parties of the Middle East," *loc. cit.*

139. As Safir, *loc. cit.* pp. D2-D3.

140. "Around the World . . . Oman Change," the *Washington Post*, 24 December 1975; and "Oman Sultan Sees South Yemen Peril," *The New York Times*, 25 December 1975, p. 3:3, carried reports that Oman threatened war against South Yemen.

141. For a description of the arms deal, see the report by John K. Cooley, "Kuwait to Buy Arms from Soviets," *Christian Science Monitor*, 12 January 1976, p. 3:1.

142. *Pravda*, 9 December 1975. (Translated in "Near and Middle East: Kuwait," *CDSP*, vol. 27, No. 49, p. 23.)

143. Cited in report by Jim Hoagland, "Sahara: Africa's New War," the *Washington Post*, 19 January 1976.

144. Cf. analysis by V. Sidenko in "Western Sahara," *New Times*, No. 44, 1975, p. 17. In mid-November, Morocco broke off diplomatic relations with East Germany over this issue, possibly as a signal to the U.S.S.R.

145. Cited in Associated Press report from Agadir, Morocco, "Morocco Says Soviet Arms Cargo Stopped," *Christian Science Monitor*, 6 January 1975, p. 2:1.

146. See reports in the *Washington Post*, 30 December 1975, "North Africa Accord, and 1 January 1976, "Morocco Concerned at Algerian Build-up."

147. Cited in "Radical Arab Topic?" *Christian Science Monitor*, 2 January 1976, p. 2:1.

148. Cf. Reuters report in the 19 December 1975 issue of the *Jerusalem Post*.

149. *Pravda*, 30 December 1975.

150. *Izvestia* on 6 November 1975 indicated that Schlesinger had been fired because of his opposition to detente.

151. Cited in "Russian Leaves U.N. Assembly as Moynihan Quotes Sakharov," *The New York Times*, 19 December 1975, p. 4:3.

152. Cited in report by Philip Shabecoff, "Ford Bars Cutoff of Grain to Soviet in Angola Dispute," *The New York Times*, 6 January 1976, p. 1:8.

153. Cf. *Izvestia*, 6 November 1975; "Ford's Asian Tour," *New Times*, No. 50, 1975, p. 11.

154. For excerpts of a U.S. State Department Paper by Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Harold Saunders indicating a possible shift in the U.S. position on the PLO, see "State Department Hints Shift on PLO." *MEM*, 1 December 1975, pp. 3-4.

155. *Pravda*, 20 December 1975.

156. Technically, it was the second time; the PLO representative was permitted to speak at a brief Security Council meeting in early December dealing with Israeli air attacks on PLO bases in Lebanon.

157. *Pravda*, 10 January 1976.

