

Naval War College Review

Volume 25
Number 1 *January 1972*

Article 4

1972

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Recommended Citation

Freedman, Robert O. (1972) "The Soviet Union and The Middle East: The High Cost of Influence," *Naval War College Review*: Vol. 25 : No. 1 , Article 4.
Available at: <https://digital-commons.usnwc.edu/nwc-review/vol25/iss1/4>

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A common concern harbored by many Americans regarding the current Middle Eastern situation has been the ostensibly growing measure of Soviet influence over Arab regimes in the area. While influence is an extremely difficult factor to measure, evidence presented below would seem to suggest that the Soviets have paid dearly for whatever influence they managed to gain among the Arabs and that such influence may be of an exceedingly transitory nature.

THE SOVIET UNION AND THE MIDDLE EAST: THE HIGH COST OF INFLUENCE

**An article prepared
by
Dr. Robert O. Freedman**

INTRODUCTION

In the 26 years since the end of World War II, the Soviet Union has clearly emerged as one of the major powers in the Middle East.¹ Indeed, scarcely a day passes without a scholarly article or a worried admiral acknowledging this fact. Yet, while there has been general agreement that the Russians now play an important role in Middle Eastern affairs, no such consensus exists as to the Soviet Union's goals in the region. Some commentators contend that the main Soviet goal is an offensive one—to dominate the Middle East in order to deny its oil, strategic communication routes, and other assets to the United States and its allies. An opposing view holds that the Soviet aim is primarily defensive, to prevent the region being used as a base for an attack

on the U.S.S.R. Other hypotheses place Soviet objectives somewhere between these two parameters.² Whatever the ultimate goal of Soviet policy, it is quite evident that in the period since World War II the Russians have been making a determined effort to increase their influence in the Middle East. It appears that the Russian leaders have hoped that by extending large amounts of military and economic assistance, together with diplomatic support, to a number of key Middle Eastern states, they would be able to significantly influence, if not control, the policies (both foreign and domestic) of the states.

Influence, however, is a very difficult factor for statesmen (and political scientists) to measure. The leaders of all the Great Powers want the interests of their nations to be seriously considered when decisions are made in other countries.

Yet it is a truism to state that "influence" and "control" are not synonymous terms. Indeed, one nation must have a predominant amount of influence over another before it can be said to control it. The spectrum of influence which extends between normal or even good diplomatic relations on the one hand and "control" on the other is a very broad one, as the Russians have discovered in their dealings with the nations of the Middle East.

In order to properly evaluate the Soviet position in the Middle East, it is first necessary to briefly describe the dynamics of Middle Eastern politics so as to illustrate the problems confronting the Russian leadership.

THE CONTEMPORARY MIDDLE EAST: A BRIEF OVERVIEW

From a political and economic standpoint, the Middle East is perhaps the most complex region on earth. Western-style democracies, feudal monarchies, and "socialist" military dictatorships are all present, along with a number of other forms of government. Added to the region's complexity is its broad spectrum of economic systems which range all the way from free enterprise capitalism to state socialism. This economic and political diversity, as we shall see, poses a number of problems for the Soviet leaders.

There are basically two forms of monarchy in the Middle East. Some nations, such as Saudi Arabia and the sheikdoms of the Persian Gulf, can be termed feudal monarchies. Others, such as Morocco, Iran, and Jordan, whose rulers have initiated major social reforms and economic development projects, may be termed "modernizing" or "progressive" monarchies. Democracies in the region include Lebanon and Israel, although these nations differ sharply as to economic structure. Lebanon has a free enterprise economy, while Israel basically has a socialist one.

The "socialist" military regimes of the Middle East such as Egypt, Syria, Iraq, Libya, and the Sudan form another major class of Middle Eastern governments. Although all call themselves "Arab Socialist Republics" and are called the "radical" Arab States by Western commentators, they differ sharply among themselves as to the degree in which they tolerate Islam, foreign investments, and private ownership of land and business, to mention but a few important categories.³

Soviet leaders, in attempting to classify these varied nations according to the doctrines of Marxist-Leninist ideology, have encountered serious difficulties and have often contradicted each other. According to Marxist-Leninist ideology, which serves to legitimize the rule of the Soviet Communist Party as well as provide a *weltanschauung* for its leadership, the nations of the Middle East must be somewhere on the long road to communism. The fact that a nation may be a feudal monarchy one day but proclaim itself an "Arab Socialist Republic" the next, after a *coup d'état*, presents a number of difficulties for Soviet ideologists. Even more ideologically discomfiting is the fact that the Communist Parties of some of these Arab socialist countries (which theoretically should be leading them down the path to communism) remain as suppressed under the new regimes as they were under the old feudal monarchies. Indeed, defining a role for the Communist Parties in the economic and political life of the Middle East has been one of the most difficult problems with which Soviet leaders have had to grapple. The Russians have had to decide whether or not to give military and economic support to non-Communist "bourgeois nationalist" leaders such as Nasser who, although they suppressed the Communist Parties of their countries, nevertheless pursued "anti-imperialist" foreign policies often favorable to the Soviet Union.⁴

The almost innumerable conflicts in the Middle East present another serious dilemma for the Russian leaders. While the Arab-Israeli conflict is perhaps the most familiar one to Americans, numerous other conflicts of almost equal intensity abound within the region. Iraq and Iran have been on the verge of war over their Shatt-al-Arab River boundary, and each has accused the other of aiding dissident movements within its borders.⁵ Yet another factor embittering relations between these two countries is their struggle for power over the Persian Gulf, a struggle which will sharpen in intensity as the remaining British forces are withdrawn from the area. Further complicating the power struggle in the Persian Gulf is the fact that Saudi Arabia has its own claims in the area.

Another major conflict, although somewhat subdued since the June 1967 6-day war, is the one between Saudi Arabia and Egypt over Yemen and Southern Arabia. This conflict, which threatened to break out into a full-scale war in 1963, could erupt again if Egypt should attempt to rebuild its waning influence in Yemen. A second area of tension between Egypt and Saudi Arabia has been their competition for leadership in the Arab world—a competition made more intense by their sharply differing forms of government.⁶

A fourth major focus of conflict in the Middle East lies in the relations between Syria and her two smaller Arab neighbors, Jordan and Lebanon. Successive Syrian regimes have sought to dominate these two nations and even to incorporate them into a "greater Syria." The Syrians were on the verge of invading Lebanon in December 1969 and actually did invade Jordan during the Jordanian civil war of September 1970.

Even the relations among the so-called Arab "socialist" regimes are not devoid of conflict. There has been a historic competition for power in the Middle East between Iraq and Egypt which dates back to Biblical times, and

the fact that they now have similar governments has not lessened the conflict.⁷ In recent years Syria has also entered into the competition with its own claims for leadership among the radical Arab regimes.

Other conflicts in the Middle East include that between Algeria and Morocco (they fought a brief border war in 1963); between Iraq and Kuwait, which Iraq tried unsuccessfully to annex in 1961; and between Egypt and Iran. Conflicts of a more recent vintage include the one between the Palestinian guerrillas and the Kingdom of Jordan and among the various Palestinian groups themselves. Domestic conflicts with serious international repercussions include the hostility between Christian and Moslem Arabs in Lebanon which erupted into civil war in 1958; the civil war presently underway in the Sudan, pitting the Arabs in the north against the Blacks in the south, and the endemic conflict between the Iraqi Government and its large Kurdish minority.

These numerous conflicts pose a very difficult dilemma for the Soviet Government. In attempting to increase their influence in the Middle East, the Russians may be forced, sooner or later, to take a stand on some of these conflicts. Although the Soviet leadership was successful in mediating the Indo-Pakistani conflict at Tashkent and thus preserved, albeit temporarily, good relations with both sides, the way of the mediator is not an easy one, as the United States discovered in attempting to prevent its two NATO allies, Greece and Turkey, from going to war over Cyprus. Thus, one should not rule out a situation in which a nation with close relations with the Soviet Union would turn to the West for aid in a future conflict where the Russians either mediated to its dissatisfaction or else took the side of its opponent.⁸

Another Middle Eastern problem with which the Russians have had to contend is the issue of Arab unity.

Despite the numerous conflicts among the Arab States, there has also been a strong psychological drive for unity. Yet even here conflict is present, since the Arabs have been unable to agree on a political structure on which to build their unity. The most serious attempt at a union of Arab States to date—the Syrian-Egyptian union—lasted only 3 years (1958-1961).⁹ Nonetheless, the Arab drive for unity has posed yet another dilemma for the Soviet leadership and at one point brought Khrushchev into an open confrontation with Nasser. The Russians have vacillated between supporting the idea of Arab unity as part of their emphasis on the unity of all “anti-imperialist forces” and opposing it on the grounds that a unified Arab world might block Soviet penetration of the Middle East.

These, then, are some of the problems which confront the Russians in their dealings with Middle Eastern nations. Although Moscow’s efforts toward exerting influence over certain Middle Eastern nations have markedly increased over the last 5 years, the origins of the modern Soviet thrust lie in policy decisions dating back to the days of Stalin. Thus we should first briefly outline past Soviet moves and the difficulties that these have engendered when seen in the broader context of Russia’s role in international communism before turning to a more detailed examination of Soviet Middle Eastern policy since the fall of Khrushchev.

THE EVOLUTION OF SOVIET POLICY TOWARD THE MIDDLE EAST SINCE WORLD WAR II

In the period since World War II, the Soviet Union has tended to pursue one line of policy toward the two northernmost nations of the Middle East—Iran and Turkey (hereafter called the “Northern Tier”)—and another toward

the other Middle Eastern states. Iran and Turkey differ sharply from the other nations of the region in three important respects. Both nations have long borders with the Soviet Union, and both have fought numerous wars against invading Russian troops in the last 400 years. As a result, both Iran and Turkey have had a great deal of experience with Russian imperialism, and for this reason the Soviet leadership has had far greater difficulty in extending Soviet influence in these nations than in the other countries of the Middle East. Conversely, all the nations of what we shall call the “Southern Tier” have had bitter experience with *Western* imperialism—particularly that of Britain and France—which dominated the region from Morocco to the Persian Gulf in the interwar period. It is precisely in this Southern Tier that the Soviet Union has seen the greatest increase in its influence since the end of World War II.¹⁰ It should be noted, however, that the Russians have experienced a great deal of difficulty in expanding their influence to the point of actual control in any nation in the area.

Stalin’s foreign policy toward the Middle East was a relatively uncomplicated attempt at increasing Russian security by acquiring territory and military bases at the expense of Turkey and Iran. These relatively crude attempts at territorial aggrandizement were counterproductive, however, and served only to drive the nations of the Northern Tier into the arms of the West.

Stalin’s policies toward the Southern Tier were scarcely more productive. Viewing the world in terms of two camps, Communist and anti-Communist, Stalin was either unable or unwilling to see that the leaders of what we now call the Third World wished to belong to neither camp, but desired to remain neutral instead. Thus, if a Third World leader was not a Communist, to Stalin he was hopelessly pro-Western and should be attacked as such. While

the Soviet recognition of the State of Israel in 1948 and its diplomatic and military support for it during the first Arab-Israeli conflict (1947-1949) seem to have been aimed at weakening the British position in the Middle East,¹¹ this stance also weakened the Russian position among the Arab States, while the period of good relations between the U.S.S.R. and Israel was of a very short duration.¹²

The death of Stalin brought a fundamental change in Soviet policy toward the Middle East—a change which became readily apparent with the rise of Khrushchev in 1955. Khrushchev saw the world as being divided into three main zones or blocs—the socialist bloc, the capitalist bloc, and the Third World which he hoped to win over to communism through political support and large doses of economic and military aid.¹³

Despite the fact that the Russians gained influence in the Middle East through the sale of weapons, they simultaneously became immeshed in a dilemma which has persisted to this day. Mere provision of weapons to a country does not give the donor nation control over the policies of the recipient nation. Indeed, the supply of advanced weaponry may enable the recipient nation to embark on a military adventure which the donor nation considers undesirable. Even worse, such a military adventure might threaten to drag the donor nation itself into a war which it does not want. Thus, while the supply of weapons to military regimes may be relatively inexpensive in terms of cost to the Soviet economy, if one considers the risk that the Russians could be involved in a war not to their choosing as a result of such military assistance, the potential cost of such aid can be very high indeed. The Russians became aware of this danger in 1956 with the outbreak of the Sinai campaign and found themselves in an even more dangerous predicament with the outbreak of the 6-day war in June 1967.

Besides running the risk of direct involvement in an Arab-Israeli war, the Russians faced yet another dilemma in their dealings with Arab leaders. While happily accepting large quantities of Soviet economic and military aid, as well as support against the West following his nationalization of the Suez Canal in 1956 and during the subsequent Suez crisis, Nasser declared the Egyptian Communist Party to be illegal and kept its leaders in prison. Indeed, he made it very clear that he differentiated between the Soviet Union as a “great friend” and the Egyptian Communist Party which he considered a threat to his dictatorship. The role of indigenous Communist Parties proved to be troublesome for Khrushchev in his dealings with Syria and Iraq as well (even after the revolution of 1958 which brought about Iraq’s withdrawal from the Baghdad Pact) when the concepts of nationalism and Arab unity came in conflict with one of Khrushchev’s goals—the promotion of communism throughout the area.

Khrushchev’s policy toward the Northern Tier nations was far more limited in scope. Since these two nations were military allies of the United States, Khrushchev was not above rattling Soviet rockets at them, and, as can be imagined, this was not conducive to improved relations. The U.S.S.R.’s relations with Turkey remained quite cool throughout the period as a consequence of Soviet backing for the Greek position on the Cyprus crisis. Russian-Iranian relations, however, did improve somewhat as a result of the Shah’s announcement in 1962 that no foreign missiles would be permitted on Iranian soil. It should be pointed out, however, that this was the result of a Persian initiative which was more the product of internal difficulties arising from the Shah’s land reform program than it was the consequence of fruitful Soviet diplomacy. Improved relations with the U.S.S.R. was seen by the Shah as a useful

insurance policy to take out before concentrating his attention on internal opposition.¹⁴

In examining the Soviet Union's position in the Middle East at the time of Khrushchev's fall in October 1964, one cannot but conclude that it was considerably better than when he came to power. Perhaps most significantly, the Baghdad Pact had been all but destroyed by the withdrawal of its one Arab member, Iraq. In addition, the Russians had succeeded in establishing diplomatic relations with almost all the states in the Middle East and had given many of them military and economic aid. The Middle East was clearly no longer the Western sphere of influence it had been at the time of Stalin's death, yet the Soviet position in the Middle East was far from being dominant.

The Brezhnev-Kosygin Era. When the impulsive and energetic Khrushchev was replaced by the conservative and rather phlegmatic duo of Brezhnev and Kosygin, Western observers called the changeover in leadership "the triumph of the bureaucrats."¹⁵ As bureaucrats everywhere, they were tired of the constant administrative reorganizations of the Khrushchev era, along with his impulsive actions in foreign policy.¹⁶ Unlike Khrushchev, who tried to spread Soviet influence everywhere in the world at a rapid pace, the new leaders appear to have decided to concentrate Soviet energies and resources on becoming the dominant power in the Middle East, while adopting a much more gradualist policy toward the growth of Soviet power in other parts of the non-Communist world. The Soviet drive for power and influence in the Middle East became increasingly evident in 1965 and 1966, both in the Northern Tier nations which became the recipients of large doses of Soviet economic aid and in the Arab States of Egypt, Syria, Iraq, and Algeria. By early 1967 the new Soviet policy was in high gear,

and one can lay at least part of the responsibility for the June 1967 Arab-Israeli war at the door of the U.S.S.R. which was exploiting the Arab-Israeli conflict to increase its own influence among the Arab States.

While the Israeli victory in the 6-day war was a temporary setback for the Russians, one consequence of the Arab defeat was a marked decline of American influence in the radical Arab States of the region.¹⁷ As a result, the Russians redoubled their efforts to oust Western influence from the Arab States, while cementing their newly improved relations with Iran and Turkey. Yet, by becoming more involved in the Middle East, the Soviet leaders have encountered a number of serious problems, and although by May 1971 (the time of writing) Soviet influence had reached its highest point since World War II, the Russians were still far from controlling the region. Indeed, they were paying a far higher price than ever before in terms of economic and military aid, while running an increasingly serious risk of war with the United States. The aftermath of the 6-day war brought yet another problem with which the Russians had to deal—the Palestinian guerrillas, and the Soviet leaders have not yet found an adequate way to deal with this newest Middle Eastern phenomenon. One could well ask, "Who is exploiting whom in the Middle East?"

In surveying the Soviet position in the world after they took power in 1964, Brezhnev and Kosygin seem to have reached the conclusion that further expansion of Soviet influence in Western Europe and Latin America was, at least for the time being, out of the question, since these areas were of vital importance to the United States. U.S. determination to assert its military superiority in crisis situations in these regions was amply demonstrated to the Soviets in the early sixties. Similarly, the active hostility of the Chinese Communists had confronted the Russians

with a clear danger as well as an obstacle to the spread of their influence in South and Southeast Asia. While the U.S.S.R. still had several important footholds in Africa, the Soviet leaders evidently decided that, because of the serious problems facing the Soviet economy, they should begin to concentrate their military and economic assistance in the Middle East, an area contiguous to the U.S.S.R. and one holding greater possibilities for Soviet gains.¹⁸

The growing influence of the Russian military, with its call for an expanded navy, probably was a contributing factor to this decision. The key naval communication routes which run through the Middle East and the Russian need to cope with American missile-carrying *Polaris* submarines, which were already cruising in the Mediterranean at the time of Khrushchev's fall, made the region a particularly important one for the Soviet military.¹⁹

A second contributing factor to the Soviet decision was the increasing instability in the region itself. Nasser's prestige had begun to wane, as his regime was beset with increasing economic and political difficulties, not the least of which was the failure of the Egyptian intervention in the Yemeni civil war. Egypt's relations with the United States also began to deteriorate badly in the 1965-66 period.²⁰ In addition, the endemic Arab-Israeli conflict had begun to worsen; the frequently changing Syrian and Iraqi regimes were unable to cope with internal difficulties; and the British were hard pressed to maintain their position in riot-torn Aden. All of these developments must have tempted the Russians into greater involvement.

The Soviet leaders' attempt to gain increased influence in the Middle East was also aided by a number of events occurring elsewhere in the world in the 1965-66 period. Perhaps the most important was the American troop commitment in 1965 to Vietnam. This

was a major bonus to the Russians for a number of reasons. Not only did the Vietnamese war cause increasing internal turmoil in the United States itself, it also served another major Soviet goal—the containment of Communist China. For with a half million American troops to its south, a hostile India (supported by both the United States and the Soviet Union) to its southwest, and 32 Russian divisions along its northern border, China was indeed “contained”—from the Russian point of view, that is. Another important consequence of U.S. policy in Vietnam was that it tended to divert American energy and attention from other parts of the world, including the Middle East, thus enabling the Russians to operate more freely there.

A second major bonus for the Soviet Union was China's so-called Cultural Revolution which occurred in 1966. This effectively removed China from competition with Russia in the Third World and greatly reduced Chinese influence in the international Communist movement as well. Not having to compete economically with China for influence throughout the Third World freed the Russians to concentrate their resources in the Middle East.²¹ It should be added that the Cultural Revolution, much like the U.S. involvement in Vietnam, tended to divert Chinese attention from the Middle East.²²

Yet another bonus for the Russians came with Britain's eventual decision to pull out of Aden (now the Republic of Southern Yemen) on 20 February 1966.²³ This, together with increasing discussion in England about the necessity for pulling out of the Persian Gulf as well, must have given the Russians the impression that a major power vacuum was opening up along the southern and eastern periphery of the Arabian peninsula—a power vacuum which the Russians could fill. The fact that Western unity also seemed to be breaking down, as evidenced by De

Gaulle's 1966 decision to take French military forces out of NATO, must also have been encouraging to the Russians. This French move, coupled with the British decision to pull out of Aden, made it appear very unlikely that the Western Powers would develop a joint policy to confront the Russians in the Middle East.

Soviet failures elsewhere in the Third World may also have served to sharpen the Russian drive into the Middle East. The fall of Sukarno's regime in Indonesia in October 1965, a regime in which the Russians had invested nearly \$2 billion in military and economic aid, was a blow to the Russians. Four months later, in February 1966, came the fall of Nkrumah's government in Ghana, and the Russians lost their investment of nearly a half-billion dollars worth of military and economic aid. Both pro-Russian regimes were replaced by pro-Western ones.²⁴ Another blow to the Russians during this period was the overthrow of Ben Bella by a military coup in June 1965. While his successor, Boumediene, did not become pro-Western as did the leaders of the new regimes in Indonesia and Ghana, he was considerably less friendly to the Russians than Ben Bella had been. In addition, he removed Communists from their government jobs and imprisoned a number of Communist leaders.

These events must have made the Russians prize even more highly the good relations they still had with a number of Middle Eastern nations, particularly the regimes of the "radical" Arab States, in which they had similarly invested extensive economic and military assistance. This was particularly true of the Syrian regime which took power after a coup d'état in February 1966 and announced its intention to undertake a major "socialist transformation" in Syria as well as work for improved relations with the Soviet Union. The fact that this regime took power so soon after the overthrow of

Nkrumah must have been heartening for the Russians; even more heartening was the new regime's decision to permit the Syrian Communist leader Khalid Bakdash to return from his 8-year exile in Europe.²⁵ Yet the Russians were to find that their initial enthusiasm for the new Syrian regime was to become a very costly one, for it was this regime, with its encouragement of the Palestinian guerrillas, which was to help precipitate the June 1967 Arab-Israeli war.

New Policy Initiatives. The decision of Brezhnev and Kosygin to make the Middle East a primary area of Soviet interest meant that the new Russian leaders would have to come to grips with some of the dilemmas left unsolved from the Khrushchev era. Most important of these was the role the Communist Parties of the Middle East were to play in the political and economic life of the countries in which they operated. While Khrushchev had been generally ambivalent about this, the Brezhnev-Kosygin leadership adopted a clearer position. They no longer entertained much hope that any of the Communist Parties of the region would seize power; indeed, confronted by a hostile Communist China, the Russian leaders must have wondered if it was to their benefit if any more countries were taken over by independent Communist Parties. In any case, the new Russian leaders began to emphasize the importance of good state relations with the nationalist leaders of the Middle East and generally let the Communist Parties of the region fend for themselves. In the case of the Northern Tier states, the Russians virtually disregarded the Communist Parties; in the case of the radical Arab States, the parties were urged to disband and their members urged to join the large state parties of their countries, such as Egypt's Arab Socialist Union with which the Russians, in another policy change, were now trying to develop party relations.²⁶ While continued

persecution of Communists by the nationalist leaders was decried, this was done in a *proforma* manner and did not seriously affect the U.S.S.R.'s relations with any nation of the region. Indeed, other than occasional articles in *Pravda* urging the radical Arab leaders, particularly the Iraqis, to broaden their regimes by including some "progressives" (Communists),²⁷ it appeared that the Russians had generally lost interest in the fate of the Communists of the region.

Yet the Russians were not totally successful with their new policy toward the Communists of the Middle East. To be sure, some parties followed the Soviet directives; this was the case in Egypt where the Egyptian Communist Party officially dissolved and many of its members joined the Arab Socialist Union.²⁸ Other parties, however, either rejected the Soviet policy or else split into factions which followed Soviet, Chinese, or independent policies. The Communist Parties of the Middle East have, in fact, become somewhat of an embarrassment to the Russians in recent years. At the 23d Congress of the CPSU, which took place in 1966, there was a serious strain in Algerian-Russian relations when the Algerian FLN, invited as a friendly (albeit non-Communist) party, walked out rather than see the Algerian Communist Party (which was illegal in Algeria and which had refused to dissolve on Soviet orders) seated as an official delegation.²⁹ This was a case where the new Russian leaders ran into another dilemma. In seeking to develop close party ties with the non-Communist state parties of the radical Arab States, they invited the Algerian FLN to the conference; yet, because of the Sino-Soviet conflict and for reasons of domestic legitimacy, they had to invite the Algerian Communist Party as well. The Soviet goal to remain the leaders of the international Communist movement had once again come into conflict with its Middle Eastern policies. Unfortunately for the Russian leaders, this

particular conflict was to occur again.³⁰

In addition to deemphasizing the importance of the Middle Eastern Communist Parties and attempting to develop close party ties with the nationalist parties of the radical Arab States, there was another policy change under Brezhnev and Kosygin. This involved a revised estimate of the desirability of Arab unity. While Khrushchev was ambivalent on the issue of Arab unity and occasionally opposed it because he feared that it would be a barrier to the spread of Russian and Communist influence, the new Russian leadership has given it almost unqualified endorsement. Thus, in a revealing article in *Pravda* on 11 November 1970, the Soviet commentator Aleksei Vasilyev stated, in describing a meeting in which the leaders of Libya, Egypt, and the Sudan were working out the plans for a federation of their countries:

... This event is concrete evidence of the Arab people's will toward unity, so that they can oppose *imperialist* plans to divide, fragment and weaken the national liberation movement in the Near and Middle East.

What serves as the true foundation for rapprochement... is the similar progressive social and economic measures within each of the three countries, these countries' *anti-imperialist course* in foreign policy, and their policy of *strengthening cooperation with the Soviet Union and the other socialist countries*.

This conference of leaders from the UAR, Libya, and the Sudan has dealt a blow to the calculations of the aggressive circles in Israel and that country's protectors to weaken the will of the Arabs in the *struggle against imperialism*.³¹ [Emphasis added.]

The significance of the Russian endorsement of Arab unity lay in its "anti-imperialist" emphasis. The

Russians, beginning in 1965-66 and continuing to the present, have been trying to forge a quasi-alliance of the "anti-imperialist" forces of the Middle East under their leadership. The fact that perhaps the only issue on which all Arabs can agree is opposition to the State of Israel has led the Russians to brand Israel as the "imperialist wedge" in the Middle East and to closely link the Arab struggle against Israel with the "struggle against imperialism."³² By becoming the champion of the Arab States against Israel, the Russians hope to align the Arab States against the West as well. Yet this policy, while it has paid some dividends to the Russians, is also a very dangerous one. It almost got the Russians involved in the June 1967 war and may yet involve the Russians in a war with the United States. A more detailed treatment of the dilemmas inherent in such a policy will be given below.

Soviet Policy Toward the Northern Tier under Brezhnev and Kosygin. When the new Russian leadership began to step up the Soviet drive in the Middle East, their attention was first turned to the nations of the Northern Tier. A deliberate effort was made to improve relations with Turkey, and the Russians shifted their position on the Cyprus issue to gain Turkish support. Kosygin visited Ankara in September 1966, and a \$200 million Soviet loan was worked out in which the Russians were committed to construct a steel mill and several other industrial projects. Interestingly enough, the agreement stipulated that the Russian loan could be repaid by the shipment of certain types of Turkish products—products which had a difficult time finding markets in the West.³³

Soviet relations improved even more rapidly with Iran. In July 1965 the Shah paid an official visit to the Soviet Union, and in January 1966 the Russians gave Iran a \$288.9 million loan for a series of industrial projects.³⁴ Of

greatest diplomatic importance was the Soviet-Iranian agreement reached at the same time whereby the Russians would provide Iran with \$110 million worth of military equipment, primarily small arms and transport equipment, in return for Iranian gas. While some Western commentators stated that the Russians were now making dangerous inroads in Iran, it appeared that the Shah was utilizing the Soviet arms for several purposes of his own. The first was to persuade the United States to sell Iran more sophisticated weapons, including anti-aircraft equipment, under the implicit threat that Iran would otherwise turn to the U.S.S.R.³⁵ Perhaps more important, however, was that the U.S.S.R., in supplying arms to Iran, had implicitly strengthened the Shah in his dealings with Iraq, a nation with good relations with the Soviet Union and one with which Iran was continuously in conflict. In any case, the Russians evidently found their rapprochement with Iran to be a most satisfactory one, because in April 1968, in another visit to Iran, Kosygin offered still another loan, this time for \$300 million.³⁶

Thus, by the summer of 1968, the Brezhnev-Kosygin leadership had agreed to provide no less than \$788.9 million in economic aid to the nations of the Northern Tier along with \$110 million in military aid. Yet, what had the Russians obtained in return? Relations had improved considerably with both Turkey and Iran, but both remained within the Western alliance system, and any thoughts of a drift toward neutralism seem to have been aborted by the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in August 1968. Soviet ships now visit Iran's Persian Gulf ports (along with Iraq's), but this merely makes the Russian choice more difficult in case of a clash between the Persian Gulf powers. Indeed, with the politics of the Persian Gulf growing hotter with the British withdrawal from the region (to be completed in 1971), the Russians may well

find that Iran will exploit her newly improved relations with the U.S.S.R. to achieve her own objectives in the region.³⁷ Similarly, although the Russians enjoy a larger degree of freedom of maneuver through the straits as a result of their improved relations with Turkey, the Turks remain quite independent, as evidenced by their refusal, despite a great deal of Soviet pressure, to return the Lithuanians who had hijacked a Russian plane to Turkey in September 1970.

Soviet Policy Toward the Southern Tier under Brezhnev and Kosygin. The Russian leadership's policy toward the Arab nations and Israel since 1964 has been considerably more complex than their policy toward Iran and Turkey. Mention has already been made of the changed Soviet position on the desirability of Arab unity and the Soviet effort to promote close party relations between the CPSU and the radical Arab socialist parties of the region. Economic and military aid continued to play an important role in the Soviet-Arab relations, as it had done under Khrushchev, but Soviet political support for the radical Arab regimes, primarily Syria's, was perhaps even more important. The Syrian regime which had taken power in February 1966 espoused not only the need for a socialist transformation in Syria and close cooperation with the Soviet Union, but also military and financial assistance for the Palestine Liberation Organization of Akhmed Shukniry, which began a series of terrorist attacks against Israel.³⁸ The almost total Soviet support for the Syrian regime, Soviet efforts to tie Egypt to it through the Syrian-Egyptian defense agreement of November 1966,³⁹ and its attempt to rally an anti-imperialist, anti-Israel alliance among the Arab States seem to have led a number of Arab leaders to believe that they could count on Soviet support in the long-desired confrontation with Israel, a confron-

tion which was to come in June 1967.

The events preceding the June 1967 war are well known and need not be repeated here in any detail.⁴⁰ All things considered, it appears probable that by closing the Straits of Tiran and goading Israel into making the attack, Nasser went well beyond Soviet wishes. In any case, the lack of Soviet support during the war together with Russian efforts to achieve a cease-fire with Israeli troops still occupying Arab territory were bitter pills for the Arabs to swallow. Yet, while the Russians probably never wanted to see the 1967 war become reality, they did move to profit from it. Indeed, a Soviet commentator on the Middle East, George Mirsky, in a *New Times* article noted:

... It is not to be excluded that the left socialist tendencies in the Arab world may gain ground as a result of the recent events. A broader base will thus be provided for the establishment of genuine Arab unity, which, as democratic Arab circles emphasize, can only be achieved along the lines of anti-imperialist and anti-capitalist social reforms. . . .⁴¹

Immediately after the 6-day war, the Russians moved to rebuild the defeated armies of Syria, Iraq, and Egypt and increase their influence in other Arab countries as well. Having broken diplomatic relations with the United States and Britain as a result of the war, the radical Arab countries had nowhere else to turn for sophisticated military equipment, although De Gaulle, in condemning the Israeli attack, sought to preserve a modicum of Western influence in these states. Nasser purged Egypt's army and civil service of those particularly outspoken in their opposition to the Russians, and the Russians increased their troop strength in Egypt from about 3,000 men to 10,000. Nasser's continuing military difficulties, including his inability to successfully wage the "war of attrition" begun in 1969 in

an effort to dislodge Israel from the Sinai, led to a much greater Soviet military presence, including Soviet airmen to fly combat missions against Israeli aircraft and the installation of Russian Sam-2 and Sam-3 missiles.

Yet, despite the major increase in Soviet influence in Egypt, the Russian position there today is not without its difficulties. The death of Nasser deprived the Russians of the one man in Egypt so obsessed by his humiliation at the hands of the Israelis that he was willing to give up a considerable amount of Egypt's sovereignty in an effort to get revenge for his humiliation. The accession of Anwar Sadat to Egypt's Presidency, although it is as yet too early to make a conclusive judgment on this matter, has presented the Russians with a more independent personage with whom to deal, a man unencumbered by Nasser's past mistakes. Indeed, the Sadat regime seems to be running its own affairs and, although there are frequent consultations between Egyptian and Russian officials, it appears that at the time of this writing (May 1971) it is the Egyptians and not the Russians who are running Egypt.⁴²

If Soviet influence, although greatly increased, is not dominant in Egypt, it is far more limited in Syria and Iraq, the other primary recipients of large amounts of Soviet aid. The Russians have been unable to convince the Syrians even to accept the Soviet-backed 22 November 1967 United Nations Resolution.⁴³ Perhaps even worse, from the Soviet standpoint, have been the Syrian attempts to play the Russians off against the Chinese. Indeed, in May 1969, less than 2 months after the bloody Sino-Soviet border clash along the Ussuri River, the Syrian Chief of Staff, Lt. Gen. Mstapha Tlass, went to China at the head of an arms procurement mission (the Syrians having earlier failed to get the desired arms from Moscow), and allowed himself to be photographed waving the famous little

Red Book of Chairman Mao's sayings.⁴⁴ This must have been particularly galling for the Russians, after all the Soviet economic, military, and diplomatic support for Syria.

The Russians also have had a great deal of trouble persuading Iraq to follow their policies. One case in point was the cease-fire worked out between Israel, Jordan, and Egypt in July 1970. Iraq, along with Syria, opposed the cease-fire, and *Pravda*, in an article on 1 August 1970, called the Iraqi opposition to the cease-fire "incomprehensible" and then went on to note:

... the stand taken by the leadership of the Iraq's Baath party is surprising... *Without warning*, Baghdad began saying that "attempts are being made to dispose of the Palestine question" and so forth... the negative attitude of Iraq's Baath Party leadership toward President Nasser's initiative and toward the position of the UAR government does not contribute to the actual struggle against the aggressor and the forces of Imperialism and Zionism that support aggression.⁴⁵ [Emphasis added.]

The fact that the Russian leadership used the term "without warning" probably indicates that they were not even consulted by the Iraqi regime on this important policy statement. It is interesting to note that *even after* an Iraqi delegation went to Moscow for talks in early August there was no change in Baghdad's position.⁴⁶ This is a clear indication of the very limited Soviet influence in Baghdad. If, on such critical issues as the 22 November 1967 U.N. Resolution and the July 1970 cease-fire, the U.S.S.R. was unable to get political obedience from its so-called "client states" in the Middle East, then one must begin to doubt the high degree of Soviet political influence in the Arab world so often taken for granted by the Western press.

Some commentators have indicated that the radicalization of some of the Arab regimes since the June 1967 war has been a major gain for the Russians.⁴⁷ This may be true, but only to a limited extent. To be sure, there was a coup in the Sudan in May 1969, bringing to power an even more anti-American regime than the one which had preceded it. Similarly, in September 1969, a coup in Libya ousted the pro-Western regime of King Idris and replaced it with a radical military regime similar in many ways to the Syrian and Iraqi.⁴⁸ It should be pointed out, however, that merely because a regime is anti-Western does not necessarily mean that it has entered into the Soviet orbit. Indeed, on 13 February 1971, the Sudanese strong-man Maj. Gen. Jaafar al-Nimeri announced the smashing of a "Communist plot" directed against his regime. One faction of the Sudanese Communist Party had voiced strong opposition to the planned federation of Sudan, Libya, and Egypt, and as a result Nimeri had purged his regime of three pro-Communist ministers on 13 November 1970. The general policy of the Sudanese Communist Party could only have embarrassed the Russians since they had come out in support of the proposed federation,⁴⁹ although Nimeri claimed that the smashing of the Communist "plot" in 1970* had not affected Soviet-Sudanese friendship.⁵⁰ Such incidents are but further manifestations of difficulties arising from Soviet Middle East policy first illustrated during the Algerian episode at the 23d CPSU Party Congress in 1966, where a Middle Eastern Communist Party had

seriously embarrassed the Soviet Union in its relations with an important state in the region.

The coup in Libya may be considered another limited victory for the Russians in that it hastened the termination of American control over the Wheelus Air Force Base. Nonetheless, in an age of ICBM's and Polaris missiles, the base had lost much of its military usefulness and had become a political liability for the United States in the Arab world. While Libya has entered the camp of the radical Arab States, the new Libyan regime shows no more intention of becoming a tool of the Russians than any of the other radical Arab regimes. Willing to accept both weapons from the Soviet Union and the general "anti-imperialist" line of the radical Arabs, the Libyans have nonetheless maintained a free hand in both their domestic and foreign policies.

The Brezhnev-Kosygin Years—a Balance Sheet. In assessing the success of the Brezhnev-Kosygin regime in its drive for influence in the Middle East, one is struck by the fact that many of the gains which it has achieved by May 1971 can also be considered disadvantages. Thus, Russia has acquired *de facto* military bases in Egypt and port rights in Syria, Yemen, Southern Yemen, Iraq, and Iran.⁵¹ The bases in Egypt give air cover to the Soviet Fleet sailing in the Mediterranean, and thus are partial substitutes for the aircraft carriers which the Russian Fleet does not possess.⁵² The presence of these bases is also an advantage for the Egyptians, since the stationing of Soviet together with Egyptian aircraft and warships in these bases tends to inhibit Israeli attacks on them. Yet the large military presence of the Russians in the Middle East also contains a major risk for the Soviet leaders. There are a number of Arabs who would like to involve the Russians in a war against Israel, irrespective of the international

*[Nimeri's policy of executing Sudanese Communists following the abortive Communist-backed coup in July 1971 did lead to a serious deterioration of Soviet-Sudanese relations. Ed.]

consequences of such an action.* As the Russian military presence grows in the volatile Middle East and as Soviet "advisers" get more and more involved in military activities, the momentum of events may force the U.S.S.R. to become involved in a new outbreak of war. If this occurs, one may see a repetition of the events of the early days of World War I, where Russia's client Serbia pulled the Czarist empire into a world war which led to its destruction. Whether the Russians have learned the lessons of history and can prevent "the Egyptian tail from wagging the Russian dog" remains to be seen.

Other than improving their military position in the Middle East, there are few other concrete gains the Russians can point to from their expensive involvement in the region. The Russians seem to have assumed the role of military supplier and financier of the economically weak radical Arab regimes of the area and appear to be attempting to buy influence in the Northern Tier nations as well. Nonetheless, as Aaron Klieman points out in his study of the Soviet involvement in the Middle East: "... In return for enabling the Soviets to claim influence, the Arabs expect Moscow to supply loans, weapons, technical advice, diplomatic support, and favorable terms of trade..."⁵³ Again, the obvious question—who is exploiting whom in this relationship?

One Middle Eastern problem which Khrushchev did not have to worry about was the Palestinian guerrillas who now pose a serious dilemma to the Brezhnev-Kosygin leadership. Although divided into a number of competing groups, the guerrillas pose much more of a threat to the existing Arab regimes, including the radical ones, than they do to Israel. A number of the guerrilla

groups are extremely leftwing in character and are under Chinese influence.⁵⁴ Some of these groups even proclaim that the "road to Jerusalem leads through Amman, Cairo, and Damascus." The Soviet dilemma lies in the fact that, if they neglect the Palestinian guerrillas, Chinese influence in their organizations will grow, yet if the Russians support the guerrillas, they jeopardize their expensive investment in a number of Arab regimes.⁵⁵ Although the guerrillas are presently (May 1971) weakened following their defeat in the civil war in Jordan, they have the potential for again becoming a very potent force in the Arab world. The creation of a Moscow-directed guerrilla force *Al Ansar*, in March 1970, was an attempt by the Russians to gain a degree of influence in the guerrilla movement without damaging the Soviet position in the existing Arab regimes. Whether or not this proves to be possible remains to be seen.

In concluding this analysis of Soviet policy in the Middle East, it is also necessary to briefly discuss the position of the United States which is the Soviet Union's main competitor in the region. Although there has been some disenchantment with the United States in both Iran and Turkey in recent years, both nations remain U.S. allies, and the military takeover in Turkey in March 1971 seems to have moved Turkey a little closer to the United States. Israel remains closely tied to the United States both for reasons of ideology (both are democracies) and because it still relies on the United States for sophisticated weaponry and to deter a Soviet-backed Arab attack.

Even in the Arab world, where the U.S. position reached a low point in 1967, some U.S.-sponsored initiatives have been partially successful in recent years. The Rogers plan,⁵⁶ which was first announced on 9 December 1969, was a factor in preventing the Arab summit conference which convened at

*Nasser appears to have tried to involve the Russians in the 1967 war by claiming that the United States and Britain had participated in the air attacks on Egypt.

Rabat, Morocco, a few days later from issuing an anti-American statement, as had been rumored in early December. The cease-fire between Israel, Egypt, and Syria which began in July 1970 was an American initiative, and although it was violated by Egypt (Israel received partial compensation for this by increased delivery of American weapons), it nonetheless seemed to set the climate for substantive peace negotiations. American support for King Hussein's regime when Syria invaded Jordan in September 1970 helped restore a great deal of American influence in that country (and in Lebanon as well), and Secretary of State Rogers' recent trip to the Middle East—the first for an American Secretary of State since 1953—was another indication of the restoration of an American role in the Arab world. While the net effect of all these actions may still be small, the fact that the United States seems to be willing to assist the Arab States in regaining at least part, if not all, of the land lost to Israel in 1967 (something the U.S.S.R. has been unable to do by diplomacy and is still unwilling to do by force) may yet lead to a general improvement of relations between the United States and the radical Arab States, with a subsequent decline in the relative influence of the U.S.S.R. throughout the Arab world.^{5 7}

CONCLUSIONS

There are five major conclusions which can be drawn from this brief study of Soviet policy in the Middle East. The first, and perhaps the most important, is that while Soviet influence in the region has sharply increased since the death of Stalin, it is nowhere dominant, and the regimes of the area have retained their freedom of maneuver both domestically and in foreign policy. Secondly, it has been shown that the Russians have paid and will continue to pay a high price for the degree of influence which they have achieved in

the Middle East. It can be expected that the radical Arab States, with their almost limitless needs, will continue to demand economic and military assistance from the Russians, while the nations of the Northern Tier may be expected to continue to cash in on the Soviet desire to maintain their good will. There is a real question as to who is exploiting whom in this relationship.

Next, it has been demonstrated that by increasing their involvement and influence in a Middle East riven by conflicts, the Russians are increasingly likely to find themselves forced to choose when two nations with whom they have good relations, such as Iraq and Iran, are locked in conflict. Such a situation is not conducive to maintaining a high degree of influence with both sides.

A fourth conclusion which may be drawn from this study is that the Communist Parties of the Middle East have become liabilities rather than assets in Soviet dealings with the nations of the region. Unable to control all the Communist Parties of the Middle East,

BIOGRAPHIC SUMMARY



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but as the avowed leaders of the international Communist movement still at least partially responsible for their actions, the Russians may be expected to continue to be embarrassed by such incidents as the Sudanese Communist Party's opposition to an Arab federation which the U.S.S.R. had endorsed.*

Finally, although the Russians have greatly improved their military position in the Middle East with the acquisition

of *de facto* bases in Egypt, even this is not an unmixed blessing. The presence of large Soviet forces may tempt some Arab radicals to involve the U.S.S.R. in a war not of the Soviet Union's choosing. Since June 1967 the Soviets have sharply increased their military presence in Egypt; it may be far more difficult for them to avoid direct participation should another major conflict break out.

In summation, the Middle East has been, is now, and will be a *very difficult* area for any Great Power to control, and the Russians may one day decide that the effort was not worth the costs and risks involved.

*[The Khartoum regime's slaughter of Sudanese Communists in retaliation for their support of the anti-Nimeri coup was even more embarrassing. Ed.]

FOOTNOTES

1. Although geographical designations of the Middle East vary, for the purposes of this study the nations of the region will include Turkey, Iran, Israel, and the Arab States (including the African ones).

2. For general surveys of the Soviet involvement in the Middle East, see Walter Laqueur, *The Struggle for the Middle East* (New York: Macmillan, 1969); and Aaron Klieman, *Soviet Russia and the Middle East* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1970). For an analysis of the Russian interest in Middle Eastern oil, see Robert F. Hunter, *The Soviet Dilemma in the Middle East, Part II: Oil and the Persian Gulf* (London: Institute for Strategic Studies, 1969). For general discussion of possible Soviet objectives, see A.S. Becker and A.L. Horelick, "Soviet Policy in the Middle East," R-504-FF (Santa Monica, Calif.: 1970), p. 63-64.

3. For a useful taxonomy of the governments of the Middle East, see J.C. Hurewitz, *Middle East Politics: the Military Dimension* (New York: Praeger, 1969).

4. In the 1920's, the Soviet leadership faced the same dilemma in its relations with Ataturk's regime in Turkey and Chiang Kai-shek's regime in China. In both instances, Russian support was given to the "bourgeois" nationalist regime rather than to the Communists. For an analysis of these events, see Adam Ulam, *Expansion and Coexistence: the History of Soviet Foreign Policy 1917-1967* (New York: Praeger, 1968), p. 167-81. For an overall analysis of the twists and turns in Soviet ideological formulations about the Third World, see Ishwer C. Ojha, "The Kremlin and Third World Leadership: Closing the Circle?" in W. Raymond Duncan, ed., *Soviet Policy in Developing Countries* (Waltham, Mass.: Ginn-Blaisdell, 1970), p. 9-28 and R.A. Yellon, "Shifts in Soviet Policies Toward Developing Areas 1964-1968," in the same volume, p. 225-86.

5. The Iraqis accuse the Iranians of aiding the Kurds in their drive for autonomy, while the Iranians accuse the Iraqis of aiding an Arab separatist movement in Khuzistan. For a recent study of Iranian-Iraqi relations see J. Gaspard, "The Eastern Arab Front," *The New Middle East*, July 1969, p. 22-26.

6. For a recent analysis of Saudi Arabian-Egyptian relations, see J. Gaspard, "Faisal's Arab Alternative," *The New Middle East*, March 1969, p. 15-19. For a description of American attempts to reduce the dangers of war in 1963, see John Badeau, *An American Approach to the Arab World* (New York: Harper & Row, 1968), p. 128-48.

7. The Sino-Soviet conflict is a similar example, since China and Russia have been at odds irrespective of the fact that both have Communist governments.

8. In the Moroccan-Algerian war of 1963, Russia was caught in just such a quandary. Prior to the conflict, Khrushchev had supplied both military and technical assistance to both countries. During the war, however, the U.S.S.R. gave tacit support to Algeria, and the end result was a turn toward the West by Morocco.

9. At the time of this writing (May 1971), another attempt at Arab unity is underway, this time between Syria, Egypt, and Libya. The participation of the Sudan in the proposed union is presently in doubt. (See below, footnote 51.) For a very useful discussion of the inherent difficulties in any union of Arab States, see Malcolm Kerr, *The Arab Cold War 1958-1967* (London: Oxford University Press, 1967), p. 30-34.

10. For an analysis of Soviet policy toward the Middle East between 1917 and 1945, see Ivar Spector, *The Soviet Union and the Muslim World* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1956). This book also contains a useful survey of Czarist foreign policy toward the Middle East from 1552 to 1914. For an analysis of Soviet policy toward the Communist Parties and radical movements of the Middle East in the interwar period, see Walter Laqueur, *The Soviet Union and the Middle East* (New York: Praeger, 1959), p. 1-134. For an excellent treatment of Western involvement in the Middle East, see William R. Polk, *The United States and the Arab World*, rev. ed. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1969).

11. According to Khrushchev's memoirs, Stalin considered the Near East part of Britain's sphere of influence and felt that Russia did not have the power to challenge Britain there directly. See Strobe Talbott, ed., *Khrushchev Remembers* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1970), p. 431. Soviet support for the ouster of British and French troops from Lebanon and Syria in 1946 seems to have been motivated by the same considerations as its early support for Israel. A collection of Soviet documents pertaining to its relations with the Arab world from 1917 to 1960 is found in *SSSR i Arabskie Strany (The USSR and the Arab States)* (Moscow: Government Printing Office of Political Literature, 1960). The documents pertaining to Soviet support of Lebanon and Syria are found on pages 87-96 of that volume.

12. For a detailed analysis of the U.S.S.R.'s relations with Israel, see Avigdor Dagan, *Moscow and Jerusalem* (New York: Abelard Schuman, 1970).

13. In the 1955-56 period, while there were already some strains in Sino-Soviet relations, Russia was still the unquestioned leader of the "Socialist Bloc." In addition, the rapprochement between Yugoslavia and the U.S.S.R. which took place at the time seemed to many observers to bring Yugoslavia back into the Soviet sphere of influence. [Yugoslavia had been ousted from the "Socialist Bloc" by Stalin in 1948 and had subsequently turned to the West for aid.] Thus Khrushchev apparently considered that any state which became Communist would automatically come under Soviet leadership. This situation was to change radically with the onset of the Sino-Soviet conflict several years later.

14. For a more detailed description of the Shah's problems, see Laqueur, *The Struggle for the Middle East*, p. 30-35.

15. For a description of the new Soviet leadership and its policies, see Sydney Ploss, "The Rise of Brezhnev," *Problems of Communism*, May-June 1970, p. 1-14.

16. For an excellent analysis of the factors, both domestic and foreign, which led to Khrushchev's fall, see Carl Linden, *Khrushchev and the Soviet Leadership 1957-1964* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1966).

17. For a description of the U.S. position in the Middle East at this time, see Polk, chap. XIX.

18. An examination of Soviet policy toward sub-Saharan Africa during the early years of the Brezhnev-Kosygin leadership is found in Robert Levgold, "The Soviet Union's Changing View of Sub-Saharan Africa," in Duncan, p. 62-82.

19. For an analysis of Soviet military thinking during the period 1965-1969, see Thomas W. Wolfe, *Soviet Power and Europe* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1970), chap. XVI.

20. Badeau, p. 158.

21. The competition was becoming very expensive, as indicated by a large number of Soviet loans to Afro-Asian countries in the 1963-1965 period. These loans appear to have been motivated, at least in part, by the Soviet effort to gain admission to the Second Bandung Conference of Afro-Asian states which was scheduled to be held in Algeria in 1965. The Chinese Communists strongly opposed the admission of the U.S.S.R. to the conference and offered loans of their own in an effort to prevent it. A very useful chart comparing Chinese and Soviet loans to Afro-Asian countries in the 1963-1965 period is found in Marshall Goldman, *Soviet Foreign Aid* (New York: Praeger, 1967), p. 190.

There is some indication that Nasser was able to secure a Soviet promise to accelerate the construction of the Aswan Dam in return for supporting Soviet admission to the conference. On this point, see Sevinc Carlson, "China, the Soviet Union and the Middle East," *The New Middle*

East, December 1970, p. 34. In addition, the Soviet decision to give a quarter billion dollars worth of loans to Algeria during the 1963-1964 period may have been motivated by the same considerations.

22. Interestingly enough, however, the only Chinese Ambassador not to be called home during the Cultural Revolution was Huang Hua, China's Ambassador to Egypt.

For a useful survey of Communist China's policies toward the Middle East until 1964, see Malcolm Kerr, "The Middle East and China," A.M. Halpern, ed., *Policies Toward China: Views from Six Continents* (New York: McGraw Hill, 1965), p. 437-56. For a more recent analysis, see Carlson, p. 32-40.

23. Kerr, p. 145.

24. A detailed analysis of Soviet policy toward Sukarno's regime is found in Uri Ra'anan, *The USSR Arms the Third World* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1969), pt. II. For a case study of the Soviet experience with Nkrumah, see W. Scott Thompson, "Parameters on Soviet Policy in Africa: Personal Diplomacy and Economic Interests in Ghana," in Duncan, p. 83-106.

25. It appears that this decision was a ploy to get Soviet support for the narrowly based regime. Whatever the reason, the Russians pledged in April 1966 to help build a large Euphrates Dam and extend the Syrian railroad network. (Laqueur, *The Struggle for the Middle East*, p. 89-90.)

26. For a description of the Brezhnev-Kosygin policy toward the Communist Parties of the Middle East, see *ibid.*, chap. IX.

27. See Y.A. Yodfat, "Unpredictable Iraq Poses a Russian Problem," *The New Middle East*, October 1969, p. 17-20.

28. As the Egyptian Communists themselves admitted, however, their power and influence was limited. In an interview in *Jeune Afrique* on 1 October 1967, one Egyptian Communist commented:

... We have committed major errors, we have been "drooling" so much during the (last few) years because Nasser permitted us to participate in national life and had given us posts in editorial offices and the university, that we have let ourselves become embourgeois. We have lost all contact with the masses and these, abandoned to themselves, are completely disorganized. The truth is that we are tired and not at all prepared to return to prison . . .

[Cited in Jean Pennar, "The Arabs, Marxism and Moscow: a Historical Survey," *The Middle East Journal*, September 1960, p. 446.]

29. For a description of this event, see Yellon, p. 258. It is interesting to note that neither the FLN nor the Algerian Communist Party received official greetings at the 24th Congress of the CPSU. Since delegations from other Arab States such as Egypt, Iraq, Syria, and the Sudan received official mention, it is doubtful whether the FLN would have been officially overlooked had it attended. It appears, therefore, that the FLN failed to attend, and this is further evidence of a cooling of relations between the U.S.S.R. and Algeria. It is not clear, at the time of this writing, whether or not the Algerian Communist Party actually attended the Congress. The list of those Communist and "friendly" parties which attended the 24th Congress of the CPSU is found in *Pravda*, 31 March 1971 (translated in *CDSF*, 20 April 1971), p. 3; 10-19).

30. It was the Syrian Communist Party's turn to embarrass the Russians in 1968. During the Budapest Consultative Conference of Communist Parties, the Syrian delegate, Khalid Bakdash, attacked Rumania's position on the Arab-Israeli conflict, calling the Rumanians "tools of the Zionists," and even went so far as to claim that the Rumanians were "putting themselves outside the Communist movement." It is doubtful that the Russians, who had convened the conference in an effort to garner support for the expulsion of the Chinese Communists from the international Communist movement, wished to provoke the Rumanians to such an extent, and Bakdash was compelled to retract his remarks. Nonetheless, the Rumanians walked out anyway. A detailed description of the conference is found in *World Communism 1967-1969: Soviet Efforts to Re-establish Control* (Washington: U.S. Govt. Print. Off., 1970), p. 63-91. For an excellent study of the effect of the Arab-Israeli conflict on Soviet relations with Eastern Europe, see Andrew Gyorgy, "Eastern European Viewpoints on the Middle East Conflict" (paper delivered to the National Meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Slavic Studies, Denver, Colo., 25 March 1971).

A general discussion of the problems the U.S.S.R. is having with the Communist Parties of the Middle East is found in Lawrence L. Whetton, "Changing Soviet Attitudes Towards Arab Radical Movements," *The New Middle East*, March 1970, p. 20-27 and A. Yodfat, "The USSR and Arab Communist Parties," *The New Middle East*, May 1971, p. 29-33. See also M.S. Agwani, *Communism in the Arab East* (London: Asia Publishing House, 1969).

31. Translated in *CDSF*, 0 December 1970, p. 17-18.
32. *Investia* of 7 November 1966 carried an article expressing this view and also condemning King Feisal as a "reactionary" who cooperated with "the peddlers of Neocolonialism in the Arab East." For a translation of this article, see *CDSF*, 30 November 1966, p. 17.
33. Laqueur, *The Struggle for the Middle East*, p. 36. For the importance of this type of agreement for a developing country, see Robert O. Freedman, *Economic Warfare in the Communist Bloc* (New York: Praeger, 1970), p. 5-6.
34. Kurt Mueller, *The Foreign Aid Programs of the Soviet Bloc and Communist China* (New York: Walker and Co., 1967), p. 224.
35. For a description of Western speculation on this point, see Laqueur, *The Struggle for the Middle East*, p. 40. There is also evidence that both Morocco and Jordan used the same ploy to acquire more military equipment from the United States.
36. Klieman, p. 51.
37. In a recent interview, the Shah candidly discussed Iran's policy toward the gulf. See Alvin J. Cottrell, "Shah of Iran Concerned Over Saudi Arabia's Future," *The New Middle East*, April 1971, p. 21-23.
38. Kerr, *The Arab Cold War*, p. 162.
39. *Ibid.* *Pravda*, 22 November 1966, had the following comment about the treaty: "... The defense treaty signed by the UAR and Syria is called upon to play an especially important role in rebuffing the intrigues of imperialism and Arab reaction ..." (Translated in *CDSF*, 14 December 1966, p. 27.)
40. Perhaps the best study of these events is found in Walter Laqueur, *The Road to Jerusalem* (New York: Macmillan, 1968). See also Charles Yost, "The Arab-Israeli War: How It Began," *Foreign Affairs*, January 1968, p. 304-20. For a collection of Arab viewpoints on the June war which tends to minimize the role of the U.S.S.R. in the outbreak of the conflict, see Ibrahim Abu-Lughod, ed., *The Arab Israeli Confrontation of June 1967: An Arab Perspective* (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 1970).
41. George Mirsky, "Israeli Aggression and Arab Unity," *New Times*, 13 July 1967, p. 6.
42. For a preliminary analysis of the Sadat's approach to foreign policy, see J. Gaspard, "The Kremlin without Abdul Nasser," *The New Middle East*, November 1970, p. 17-19. For a description of Nasser's efforts to preserve his freedom of action in his last years, see Klieman, p. 81.
- At the time of this writing (May 1971), Sadat seems to have strengthened his position by eliminating his rivals, including those with particularly close relations with the Russians such as Ali Sabry and Shaarawi Gomaa. Whether Sadat will be able to consolidate his position still further remains in doubt, as does the effect of the governmental shakeup on Soviet-Egyptian relations. Should Sadat be able to consolidate his position, however, he will emerge in a stronger position vis-à-vis the U.S.S.R. since the Russians will then be less able to factionalize in the Egyptian Government against him.
43. The Syrian regime which took power after a coup d'état in November 1970 has continued to officially oppose the U.N. Resolution. The new Syrian leader, Gen. Hafez Assad, during his visit to Moscow in February 1971 made no mention of the resolution, although Kosygin, in a welcoming speech, did. For a translation of most of the speeches, as well as the final communique, see *CDSF*, 2 March 1971, p. 1-6.
44. Klieman, p. 80. Assad is reported to have said at the time: "Why shouldn't we boycott the Soviet Union and its supporters inside the country? If we do so, we can force them to review their stand. Either they give us what we want and what is necessary or they lose our friendship." *Jerusalem Post*, 11 April 1969, cited in Whetton, p. 25.
45. Translated in *CDSF*, 1 September 1970, p. 10.
46. *The New York Times*, 13 August 1970.
47. Klieman, p. 57-B.
48. For an analysis of the new Sudanese regime, see J. Gaspard, "The Sudan Revolution: Why It Happened," *The New Middle East*, August 1969, p. 23-27. For an indication of the problems facing the new Libyan leadership, see J. Gaspard, "The End of the Libyan Revolution: What Next?" *The New Middle East*, June 1970, p. 36-38.
49. John Cooley, in a column in the *Christian Science Monitor* on 13 March 1971, gives a useful survey of recent developments in the relations between General Nimeri and the Sudanese Communist Party.
50. *Ibid.* Following these events, Nimeri flew to Moscow, probably to seek Soviet support in pressuring the Sudanese Communists into giving up their opposition to Sudan's participation in the proposed federation. The Russians, however, were either unwilling or unable to bring effective pressure to bear on the Sudanese Communists, and the report of Nimeri's visit in *New*

Times, 28 April 1971, p. 16, said nothing about the Sudanese Communists or the federation. The end result was that the Sudan pulled out of the talks on the federation, and it was not a signatory to the preliminary agreement signed in Cairo on 17 April 1971.

51. A detailed discussion of the military positions the Russians have acquired in the Arab world is found in Klieman, p. 60-62.

52. The Russian Fleet possesses ships capable of carrying helicopters but not fighter bombers.

53. Klieman, p. 78.

54. For a description of Chinese influence on the Palestinian guerrillas, see Carlson, and R. Medzini, "China and the Palestinians: a Developing Relationship," *The New Middle East*, May 1971, p. 34-40.

55. For an analysis of the Soviet dilemma in dealing with the Palestinian guerrillas, see Y. A. Yodfat, "Moscow Reconsiders Fatah," *The New Middle East*, October 1969, p. 15-18; and John Cooley, "Moscow Faces a Palestinian Dilemma," *Mid East*, June 1970, p. 32-5.

56. An official description of the Rogers plan, which basically calls for the withdrawal of Israeli forces from all but "insubstantial" portions of the territory captured in 1967 in return for a binding peace settlement, is found in U.S. Dept. of State, *United States Foreign Policy 1969-1970: a Report of the Secretary of State* (Washington: U.S. Govt. Print. Off., 1971).

57. For further discussion of this point and for an analysis of possible future Soviet policies in the Middle East, see Becker and Horelick, pt. II.



The allies we gain by victory will turn against us upon the bare whisper of our defeat.

Napoleon I: Political Aphorisms, 1848