

## Naval War College Review

---

Volume 13  
Number 2 February

Article 5

---

1960

# The Soviet Union and the Middle East

Walter Z. Laqueur

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digital-commons.usnwc.edu/nwc-review>

---

### Recommended Citation

Laqueur, Walter Z. (1960) "The Soviet Union and the Middle East," *Naval War College Review*: Vol. 13 : No. 2 , Article 5.  
Available at: <https://digital-commons.usnwc.edu/nwc-review/vol13/iss2/5>

This Book Review is brought to you for free and open access by the Journals at U.S. Naval War College Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Naval War College Review by an authorized editor of U.S. Naval War College Digital Commons. For more information, please contact [repository.inquiries@usnwc.edu](mailto:repository.inquiries@usnwc.edu).

## BOOKS

Doenitz, Karl. *Memoirs, Ten Years and Twenty Days*. Cleveland, World Pub. Co., 1959. 500 p.

A thorough and fascinating chronological account of the Battle of the Atlantic as waged and directed by an authority on submarine warfare. The author recounts the interplay between the personalities within the government, and discusses the problems with which he was faced in the execution of war against the two major sea powers. The student of antisubmarine warfare will find this book a "must" if he is to understand a former enemy's viewpoint of this phase of warfare, and further, fully to appreciate what the future holds in store with the use of the high underwater speed, truly submersible boat in attacks against United States shipping. Admiral Doenitz utilizes numerous quotations from the "War Diaries" of his commanding officers to enhance the reading and to factualize where necessary to describe better the changing tactical role of the submarine. There is an underlaying attempt to refute the Nuremberg verdict against him; in another section he goes to some length to question the actions of the U. S. Navy during America's "Neutrality Period" which preceded December 11, 1941.

Laqueur, Walter Z. *The Soviet Union and the Middle East*. New York, Praeger, 1959. 366 p.

*The Soviet Union and the Middle East* is a very thorough and extensively documented research study which traces the role of Soviet policy in the Middle East since the time the Bolsheviks first came to power through 1958. Additionally, it is a highly productive analysis of the internal political developments in the Soviet Union, and the *modus operandi* that finally resulted in the successful attainment of a long sought-after foreign policy goal. The comprehensive recital contained in the first half of the book concerning the ideological differences which for many years hampered Soviet efforts in the Middle East has more than historical value. In addition to a detailed

presentation of the turbulent internal policy conflicts which occurred during this period, and which under Stalin were resolved principally by purges, the author documents the difficulties that arose in the efforts to reconcile Communist ideological objectives with Pan-Islamism, Pan-Arabism and Arab nationalism (an insight which is necessary for an intelligible comprehension of the contemporary situation developed in the second part of the book). These differences of the Stalin era, however, finally resulted in the casting adrift of all indigenous Communist parties in that area shortly before World War II, and the temporary abandonment of the field to the West. At the same time, the author points out that the debacle for the West which followed on the heels of the Soviet-Egyptian arms deal in September, 1955, involved many politico-socio-economic factors, which could have been far more controlling than default by the West, or the ineptness and lack of a coherent policy by the Soviet Union.

A very important lesson is drawn from an analysis of Soviet successes in finally penetrating the Middle East. The Soviet political, social and economic system has attracted more sympathizers and imitators in the backward countries than in the more developed ones through its presentation of a blueprint for the rapid modernization of these backward societies, while, to those that have already reached a higher stage of development, it does not have as much to offer. This revealing recapitulation of Soviet techniques employed in achieving Communist penetration of the Middle East offers the reader a possible clarification of current developments in Cuba, South America, Africa and Southeast Asia, as well as forecasts of future political trends in these areas. It would appear that these political events in the Middle East indicate that the Soviet Union will be a much more formidable opponent for the United States in the Khrushchev era than it ever has been before.