

ALVIN Z. RUBINSTEIN

Red Star on the Nile

*The Soviet-Egyptian Influence
Relationship Since the June War*



PRINCETON LEGACY LIBRARY

A FOREIGN POLICY RESEARCH INSTITUTE BOOK

RED STAR ON THE NILE

RED STAR ON THE NILE

*The Soviet-Egyptian Influence
Relationship since the June War*

BY ALVIN Z. RUBINSTEIN

PRINCETON UNIVERSITY PRESS

PRINCETON, NEW JERSEY

Copyright © 1977 by Princeton University Press

Published by Princeton University Press, Princeton, New Jersey
In the United Kingdom: Princeton University Press
Guildford, Surrey

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data
will be found on the last printed page of this book

The transliteration of Arabic names used in this study
is generally the system used by *The Middle East Journal*.
In quoted material, discrepancies arise from the different
systems of transliteration used by the Foreign Broadcast
Information Service, the BBC, and commercial publishers.

PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
by Princeton University Press, Princeton, New Jersey

TO

FRANKIE RUDA

EXACTING CRITIC
AND GREAT COMPANION

Contents

<i>Preface</i>	xi
<i>Prologue</i>	3
<i>Chapter One. Transfiguration</i>	9
DEFEAT	9
DECISION IN MOSCOW	13
DISSONANCES	19
THE DIPLOMATIC FRONT	24
ARMS	29
PLUS ÇA CHANGE	32
THE UNITED NATIONS AND RESOLUTION 242	37
WAITING FOR BREZHNEV	42
<i>Chapter Two. The Illusory Consensus</i>	44
THE MAZUROV VISIT	44
PAYOFFS OR COME-ONS?	46
THE PROMISES OF MARCH 30	49
JARRING'S ODYSSEY	53
THE PALESTINIAN RESISTANCE MOVEMENT:	
FROM SIDE-SHOW TO SYMBOL	55
NASIR TAKES HIS CASE TO MOSCOW	59
OBSERVATIONS	63
<i>Chapter Three. To the War of Attrition</i>	66
MILITARY JOCKEYING	66
MOUNTING PRESSURES	71
FRATERNAL FRICTIONS	73
EGYPT MOVES TOWARD WAR	79
NASIR HAS HIS WAY	85
<i>Chapter Four. Myrmidons from Moscow</i>	90
CRISIS IN CAIRO	92
PAS DE DEUX	95
NASIR IN EXTREMIS	98
THE SOVIETS CROSS THE NILE	103
ISRAEL IN CHECK	114

CONTENTS

DECISION IN MOSCOW	118
CEASE-FIRE OR RESPITE?	121
NASIR'S LEGACY	126
<i>Chapter Five. Sadat's Uneasy Alliance with the</i>	
Soviet Union	129
THE EMERGENCE OF SADAT	130
THE CEASE-FIRE IMBROGLIO	132
SABRI'S VISIT TO MOSCOW	133
THE POLITICS OF REOPENING THE SUEZ CANAL	136
THE SOVIET-EGYPTIAN TREATY OF MAY 27, 1971	144
TACTICS IN SEARCH OF STRATEGY	153
MISSION TO THE KREMLIN	157
DEFERRING THE YEAR OF DECISION	160
<i>Chapter Six. The End of Illusion</i>	
THE KREMLIN VISITS	170
STASIS	180
EXODUS	188
EXEGESIS	192
RECONSIDERATION	202
<i>Chapter Seven. Toward Confrontation</i>	
OVERTURE TO THE KREMLIN	213
THE HOME FRONT	217
SETTLING WITH THE SOVIETS	223
SADAT COALIZES THE ARABS	238
COURTSHIP OF THE NON-ARAB CONSTITUENCY	244
THE MOMENT OF TRUTH	245
<i>Chapter Eight. Strategic Imperatives and the October War</i>	
COUNTDOWN	249
THE SOVIET ROLE: COMPLICITY OR COLLUSION?	251
CONFLICT	262
THE SKIP TO THE BRINK	275
THE UNENIGMATIC KREMLIN	277
THE STRATEGIC HARVEST	282
<i>Chapter Nine. The Diplomacy of Discord</i>	
POST-OCTOBER DIVERGENCES	289
THE ADO ABOUT ARMS	297

CONTENTS

MOSCOW SEEKS LEGITIMIZATION OF ITS	
MIDDLE EAST ROLE	305
THE PALESTINIAN FACTOR	313
DENASIRIZATION	316
SKIRTING THE BRINK	320
<i>Chapter Ten. Currents of Influence</i>	330
<i>Appendices</i>	347
<i>Selected Bibliography</i>	367
<i>Index</i>	375

Preface

DEFEAT transformed the Soviet-Egyptian relationship. The massive flow of Soviet aid after the June War restored Egypt's military capability and intensified interactions between the two countries on all levels. What previously had been a friendly but limited arrangement became an intimate association that cut across the national, regional, and international interests of each and drew the Soviet Union into the mainstream of Egyptian and Arab politics. Never a partnership or an alliance in the true sense of the term—not even after the Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation of May 27, 1971—the relationship, nonetheless, was of a new type for both parties. For the Soviet Union, it was a pioneering venture in military-political involvement with a non-Communist Third World country. While providing a solid basis for the Soviet strategic presence in the area, it also had serious implications for Soviet relations with the United States. For Egypt,¹ the relationship required a fundamental reversal in Nasir's diplomatic strategy: whereas he had heretofore avoided entanglement with any great power, after June 1967 he made every effort to enmesh a superpower directly in the defense and promotion of Egyptian interests. Politically in difficulty and militarily impotent, Nasir gambled that he could control the actions of the bear while riding it to safety.

The main purpose of this study is to contribute to an understanding of the Soviet-Egyptian influence relationship in the period since the June War: who influenced whom to do what? when? how? and why? Indeed, we must ask, could influence be exerted when wanted by the USSR? by Egypt?

Answers to these questions will provide an understanding not only of the Soviet-Egyptian influence relationship, important in its own right, but also of other Soviet-Third World relationships and of the limits on superpower influence in the Third World. They can contribute to the study of foreign policy in general through the light they shed on the parameters and constraints—

¹ The country will generally be referred to as Egypt in this study, even though the official name was the United Arab Republic (UAR) from 1958 to January 1, 1972, when it was changed to the Arab Republic of Egypt (ARE), following the short-lived federation with Syria and Libya.

PREFACE

occasionally intuited but seldom specified—that inhere in relations between a superpower and a nonaligned Third World country; on the contrast between the multidimensionality of influencebuilding and the finiteness of influence; on the linkage between the bilateral relationship and the regional and international politics of each of the parties; and on the interface between domestic politics and foreign policy decisions. What theoretical utility this study may have for foreign policy analysis must emerge from a detailed examination of the actual Soviet-Egyptian influence relationship and from a deliberate effort to understand the phenomenon of influence. The unknowns are considerable. The unavailability of certain crucial data makes divergent interpretations inevitable. But though definitiveness be unattainable, thoroughness is not.

This study seeks to use data and criteria that are as precise and pertinent as possible, and hopes that the hypotheses and approaches used here may help us devise a method for assessing an influence relationship. A few words will define our underlying assumptions. First, every nation engages in influencebuilding—the process whereby a ruling elite seeks by nonmilitary means to advance national aims. This study treats one type of influence relationship, that between a superpower and a nonaligned, developing, non-European country.² Even within this category, differences of approach are unavoidable both because of the intra-systemic particularities that distinguish Egypt from non-Arab Third World countries and because it is the USSR and not the United States that is being studied;³ we assume that variations

² Five types of influence relationships may be distinguished: 1) the relationship between a superpower and a nonaligned, developing, non-European country (such as Egypt); 2) the relationship between two countries within one alliance system; 3) the relationship between two countries each of which is the member of a different alliance system; 4) the relationship between two nonaligned countries that are not part of the same alliance system; and 5) the relationship between one country or group of countries interacting with another country or group of countries within the framework of international or regional organizations. The manifestations of influence and the criteria by which they are evaluated would differ from one typology to another.

³ It was my original intention to attempt a comparative study of the Soviet-Egyptian and Soviet-Indian influence relationships, but once into the research I came to the conclusion that, given the many differences between Egypt and India, a truly cross-national and cross-regional paradigm for assessing influence was beyond reach. The best that can be hoped for at present is a workable approach that will have applicability to societies of similar socio-political

PREFACE

in political systems produce differences in the manifestation and exercise of influence. Second, to be useful operationally, the concept of influence should be used in as limited a sense as possible, in the context of normal diplomatic transactions. Statements such as "Soviet influence in Egypt is growing" will be avoided because they are too general to treat empirically or analytically. The study of Soviet influence on Egyptian policy is quite different from speculation about Soviet goals or objectives, which remain unknown and unknowable, however much "guesstimates" may abound. Though such speculation is essential, the fact is that we have no way of knowing what Soviet aims in Egypt are at any given time—Soviet leaders do not say. We assume a multiplicity of goals, whose order of priority may vary over time and with circumstances. The best that can be done is to infer aims from behavior. Third, changes in Soviet or Egyptian behavior or attitudes, however slight, are the stuff of which assessments of the influence relationship are made, and the place to look for them is in the interaction of the two parties within the developing country that is the target. Thus Soviet influence in Egypt must be sought primarily in Egypt's political system and diplomatic behavior. Fourth, foreign policy is a function of domestic determinants. Any influence that may be exercised by the Soviet Union should be evident from an examination of the "issue areas,"⁴ which reveal the concrete policy divergences that are manifested at some point in Egypt's interaction with the Soviet Union. Fifth, there are relatively few instances of influence that can be positively identified as such, because the number of issue areas is, in reality, quite limited. Sixth, the Soviet Union will not press attempts at influencebuilding to the extent of seriously compromising Egypt's sovereignty or undermining the essential internal political base of Egypt's ruling elite, for fear that this would occasion a counterreaction detrimental to the attainment of the Soviet goals that originally motivated the support. Conversely,

backgrounds within a particular geographic and cultural area. Hence this study should prove especially germane for those dealing with Soviet relations with Arab countries.

⁴ James Rosenau, "Pre-Theories and Theories of Foreign Policy," in R. Barry Farrell (ed.), *Approaches to Comparative and International Politics* (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1966), pp. 60-92. Rosenau's notion of "issue areas" is useful, but his conceptual framework and proposed model is unwieldy and impossible to operationalize using the data that are available to a researcher concerned with Soviet foreign policy.

PREFACE

Egypt's rulers will not make concessions that would jeopardize their domestic political control. Seventh, the donor is not unaffected by his courtship of the donee; there is a feedback that appertains to all influence relationships. Finally, the Soviet-Egyptian influence relationship is not constant and is never a mere reflection of disparities in power. In the present international system, power-in-being has less utility for influence-building in nonwar situations than at any time in history. Soviet inputs into Egypt do not automatically bring increments in influence. They are the materials used in the hope of building influence. But the building blocks must not be confused with the completed design.

Our aim is to identify and understand influence, not to predict it: we want to know when it exists and how it can be assessed. As a working definition we may use the following: influence is manifested when *A* (the Soviet leadership) affects, through non-military means, directly or indirectly, the behavior of *B* (Egypt's rulers) so that it redounds to the policy advantage of *A*. Definition immediately raises a semantic problem because the phenomenon of influence is both a process and a product. As defined here, influence is a process; yet what is in fact observed and assessed is the net result or outcome of the process. No wording can completely free us of this problem. However, we hope our use of either of the two meanings is sufficiently precise to make our intent clear.

Influence may be considered to have a number of characteristics:

a) it is a relational concept involving "the transferral of a pattern (of preferences) from a source (the controlling actor) to a destination (the responding actor), in such a way that the outcome pattern corresponds to the original preference pattern";⁵

b) it is issue-specific and situation-specific: the duration of influence is restricted to the life of the issue or the situation

⁵ Jack H. Nagel, *The Descriptive Analysis of Power* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1975), p. 33. Nagel uses the terms *power* and *influence* interchangeably. Though he does not operationalize his own definition of power, which he describes in terms of preferences among variables rather than overt behavior of individuals or groups, he provides a lucid assessment of the difficulties entailed in measuring and evaluating power, i.e. influence.

PREFACE

within which it appeared, and when these change so does the influence relationship;

- c) it is a short-lived phenomenon;
- d) it is an asymmetrical interaction process;
- e) it has no fixed pattern of achievement costs; and
- f) it is multidimensional, manifesting itself in different spheres.

Several possible criteria for identifying instances of influence may be considered. First, we can try to isolate the concrete instances in which Egypt modifies its position or behavior in a manner congenial to the Soviet Union. From the degree, frequency, and implications of such modifications, inferences can be made concerning Soviet influence. It is important, however, to be aware that what seems to be influence often turns out instead to be joint interests of the two parties: there are in practice only a few issues of importance to both parties on which one of them adapts to the preferences of the other. Minimal adaptations are part of the overall influence relationship; they are the "payoffs" for services rendered or requested and are usually made since the costs are negligible. The problem of distinguishing between important and less important issues can be knotty, but in the case of Soviet-Egyptian relations it is not insuperable. The critical instances become apparent to the close observer; and agreement on them, though perhaps not always on their significance, should not be difficult to reach. What may not always be readily apparent, however, is who influenced whom.

A second criterion of influence is a sharp improvement in Soviet ability to carry out transactions in Egypt. However, it is difficult to know when quantitative increments connote qualitative changes. Sergei Vinogradov, the overbearing Soviet ambassador in Cairo from September 1967 to late 1970, frequently bragged of his ability to see Nasir any time he wanted. Even if he had more *entrée* than any other ambassador, how significant was the content of the discussions? Was Nasir more responsive to his views than to those of other ambassadors whom he saw less frequently? Again, we know that Soviet advisers are at different times more or less active in many important areas of the Egyptian economy, but how does that correlate with their influence on the leadership's development strategy and priorities?

PREFACE

Third, any sudden and marked increase in the quantity, quality, and variety of resources committed by the USSR to Egypt suggests a change in the influence relationship. But whereas a major change in Soviet security commitments, for example, may result in greater influence, it may also represent a response to Egypt's enhanced bargaining position, an effort to maintain and consolidate the previous relationship at even greater cost. The final determination of who is the influencer and who the influencee must await examination of specific issues arising during the course of subsequent interactions.

A fourth and very important criterion is the extent to which the Soviet Union's strategic position improves. Obtaining tangible short-term advantages within the framework of the Soviet-Egyptian relationship may not always be the Soviets' main purpose. The success or failure of their influencebuilding also needs to be evaluated in terms of the consequences discernible within the broader context of the regional and global benefits the Soviets hope will redound to them as a result of enabling Egypt to follow its policy preferences. A donor may have a number of objectives in mind; the desire for immediate return may be present but not pressing. By way of illustration, the Soviet Union gave Egypt extensive aid after the June War. It quickly received strategic dividends: naval facilities at Alexandria and the use of airfields for reconnoitering the U.S. Sixth Fleet. These capital gains were virtually wiped out after July 17, 1972, when President Anwar Sadat ousted most of the Soviet military personnel. One might therefore argue that the Soviet Union made a poor investment, and, if the argument relates primarily to the immediate payoff, the case is convincing. But this would overlook or minimize what may well have been the most important consideration for Soviet leaders: to keep Egypt from negotiating a settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict lest this eliminate from the Middle East the festering problem that helped the Soviet Union intrude itself into the politics of the region. Gauging influence in terms of consequences external to the Soviet-Egyptian relationship itself is clearly open to the criticism of being highly judgmental and of complicating rather than clarifying the concept of influence. Yet this criterion does serve an explanatory function that provides an additional, perhaps crucial, dimension to our analysis.

The utility of the concept of influence for policy-oriented analysts depends on the extent to which it can be operationalized.

PREFACE

The determination of influence in the relationship between Egypt and the Soviet Union demands a method and data appropriate to that milieu. It may be likened to building a house: certain essentials govern the building of any house, but adaptations in design, materials, and methods will be necessary in light of the particular conditions attending in Egypt. Just as we know in advance the limitations imposed by the landscape and make appropriate allowances in the blueprints, so, too, do we know and allow for the data limitations inherent in studying Soviet-Egyptian relations. In both cases a useful end-product is possible nonetheless.

The task of identifying data that are relevant, that lend themselves to comparative analysis, and that can be set in a conceptual framework is formidable. The body of data available for the study of Soviet-Egyptian relations may be organized into five broad categories: 1) measures of direct interaction; 2) measures of perceptual and attitudinal change; 3) measures of attributed influence; 4) case studies; and 5) impressionistic and idiosyncratic commentary. Each of these categories has definite limitations.

First, the measures of direct interaction bring into play the entire range of quantitative and aggregate data, such as trade, aid, U.N. voting patterns, and exchanges of missions. Though readily available and abundant, these data turn out to have a low substantive yield: certainly, as generally compiled and used they provide us with little that can flesh out an influence relationship. Studies based on Soviet-Egyptian trade and aid flows are apt to make judgments about Soviet influence that are not warranted by the data as presented; they read into economic data political assessments that may be true but that need to be proven not merely postulated. For example, a heavy trade deficit does not necessarily bring the creditor political influence, because it no longer causes fears of "gunboat diplomacy." Military intervention to collect debts or seize valuable natural resources has gone out of style. Trade data could be useful if we knew more about the terms of trade, the prices that Egypt pays for Soviet imports and receives for its exports to the USSR relative to world market prices. Not surprisingly, these are closely guarded commercial and political secrets, but the Egyptians say the USSR drives a hard bargain, something not likely to foster sentiment in Cairo about the disinterested nature of the relationship.

Similar shortcomings attend the use of data on economic aid.

PREFACE

More pertinent than the totals of Soviet credits would be the amounts actually utilized by the Egyptians. Instead of dwelling on the projects to which the credits were applied, analyses are needed to tell us what individuals or groups benefited from the economic aid; what ministries and sectors of the economy were strengthened, and how the power of specific elites was enhanced as a consequence; in what ways, if any, Soviet inputs facilitated Soviet penetration of economic or non-economic institutions. Certainly the Aswan High Dam is a monumental example of Soviet assistance, and the Soviets can be justifiably proud of their role in its construction; but has it made Cairo more receptive to Soviet wishes? One is reminded of the congressman who was campaigning for reelection and asked a farmer how he intended to vote. On receiving a noncommittal response, the congressman indignantly recalled all that he had done for his constituent: "Six years ago I saved you from bankruptcy with a government loan; four years ago I arranged for power and telephone lines to be extended to your farm at no cost; and two years ago I had your government subsidy payments doubled."

"That's true," drawled the farmer, "but what have you done for me lately?"

One type of aggregate data that has virtually no value for evaluating influence, at least not as presently compiled, is U.N. voting statistics. They do not tell us who influenced whom: whether Egypt voted with the Soviet Union because of Soviet pressure, because it independently opted for the same outcome as the USSR, or because it wanted to be on the winning side on a popular issue; or whether it was the other way round, and the Soviet Union voted for the resolution out of a desire to align itself with Egypt. Voting studies examine end-products, not processes. They do not consider the political dynamics that are responsible for modifying the antecedent resolutions on which, after intensive corridor lobbying, the final resolution is drafted and acted upon. By using roll call votes as the basis for attributing influence, they divorce the outcome from the reality that produced it, with the frequent result that the outcome itself is misinterpreted. Only by comparing all the draft resolutions introduced by the various national delegations on a given issue with the resolution finally voted on would it be possible to make meaningful inferences concerning the extent of Soviet influence. It may also be important to know the dynamics within individual

PREFACE

delegations, the degree to which nondecisions play a role in the General Assembly, and the ways in which decisions are reached without voting.

For our purposes one potentially useful type of aggregate data is the exchange of visits. Those who use these data view them as "communications flows" whose patterns throw light on influence relationships, on the assumption that "the nation *receiving* the preponderant number of visits will be considered the nation exercising asymmetrical influence over the other," and that in the long run "the nation which is visited, when it boosts its 'credit' with the nation seeking support, tends to exercise continuing direction over that nation's foreign policy."⁶ While highly innovative, this approach treats all visits as equally important and ignores their significant differences. Thus, in addition to tallying the number of visits, it is essential to examine their composition, to compare their apparent purposes with the results achieved, and to evaluate the treatment accorded them in the media before, during, and after the visits. Exchanges of missions are meaningful only when evaluated contextually. The measures of direct interaction used in this study have been adapted to meet some of the caveats noted above, and they will be linked to specific issue areas.

A second category of data is measures of perceptual and attitudinal change, which include thematic content analysis of joint communiqués and evaluations of editorials and articles in key newspapers and journals, official speeches and statements, and radio broadcasts. Of these, joint communiqués and key newspaper editorials are especially valuable. Strict quantitative content analysis was not applied to the joint communiqués and editorials because preliminary research revealed that this technique did not yield any additional substantive insights into the influence relationship itself. Thus, the use of thematic content analysis is deliberate.

The examination of joint communiqués as a method of ascertaining the condition of relations between states has been neglected. Little has been written on this pulse-taking procedure.⁷

⁶ Steven J. Brams, "The Structure of Influence Relationships in the International System," in James N. Rosenau (ed.), *International Politics and Foreign Policy*, rev. ed. (New York: The Free Press, 1969), pp. 585, 595.

⁷ For example, there is no discussion of joint communiqués in Robert C. North, et al., *Content Analysis* (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1963), which treats the more voluminous types of diplomatic documents,

PREFACE

Communiqués are generally published at the conclusion of visits by high-ranking delegations. The usual procedure is for each party to prepare a draft before the actual talks begin. Working groups of the two parties negotiate to determine what will appear in the final communiqué, while the leaders exchange views and go sight-seeing—an interlude for allowing loose ends to be tied together and for public relations.

In communiqués issued after meetings between representatives of the Soviet government and Third World governments, a preponderance of Soviet formulations (whose style and content are readily identifiable) indicates that the final draft is basically the one provided by the Soviet delegation. The more formal the visit, the more commitments the Soviet Union is apt to make and the longer the communiqué it is likely to request, leading to the inclusion of issues broached by the USSR and of interest primarily to it.

As the path of least trouble, Third World leaders often accept the Soviet draft on issues extraneous to their immediate concerns. Since Egyptian leaders care little about developments outside of the Middle East, the inclusion of issues such as disarmament, European security, Berlin, or SALT (strategic arms limitation talks) is a sop for some service. But on matters of consequence to them, Third World leaders are quite capable of looking out for their own interests. The Egyptians, especially, have a reputation for Jesuitical skill in drafting communiqués, hence it is to be assumed that these instrumental expressions of position say precisely what their drafters intend.

The particular language of communiqués that the Soviet Union signs with Third World countries is a rough measure of the degree of agreement. For example, we take the words “frank” or “candid” to mean that differences were aired but remained unresolved. The term “the Soviet Union appreciates” indicates that the USSR understands the Third World country’s policy dilemma but does not agree with its proposed course of action. A “similarity of views” signifies some disagreement; in cases of agreement “identical views” is the preferred term. Other examples will be developed in the analysis of specific communiqués. The terms, unfortunately, are on occasion used in ways that

in its effort to link the content and flow of messages to perceptions of hostility.

PREFACE

confound easy standardization. Also, each party relies on the version put out in its own language, a situation that can give rise to a difference in emphasis. Finally, as the Arabologists argue persuasively, communiqués have an ephemeral significance for the Egyptians. Once issued, once the obeisance and commentaries are made, they are quickly forgotten and rarely referred to again.

Sovietologists and Arabologists disagree on the precise weight to be assigned to communiqués: the former regard them as important, the latter as merely suggestive, their main use being propaganda for domestic consumption. Sovietologists scrutinize each phrase; Arabologists are less concerned with identifying key words and focus on the explicit and on the context. Both look for departures from the norm, for variations from preceding communiqués. The absence of a communiqué may not be significant, but if a high-ranking official is involved, the presumption usually is that the visit was a failure, that substantive disagreements proved irreconcilable. Refusal to sign even a pro forma statement of principles, as was the case during Boumedienne's visit to Moscow in June 1967, means that the Third World country is completely at odds with the Soviet position unless the mission or visit has been secret. However one approaches them, communiqués offer an important barometer of the ups and downs of the Soviet-Egyptian influence relationship.

Those using the data outlined here will, I believe, find them appropriate for an elucidation of changes of attitude and tensions between national positions. They are particularly useful in studying the foreign policies of authoritarian and closed societies. (Although Egypt is a more relaxed society than the Soviet Union, it is in some ways even more difficult to obtain political information from, because of the paucity of serious journals expressing official views. The accessibility of Egyptians to foreigners and the richness of rumors give the illusion that more information is available than really is.)

Third, measures of attributed influence entail polling the experts, on the assumption that consensus among the leading specialists will provide an authoritative answer. While useful as a control on the work of the individual researcher, polling is no substitute for the effort undertaken in this study; it merely begs the central questions about influence raised earlier. No matter what the specialists say about the Soviet-Egyptian influence rela-

PREFACE

tionship, the problem remains of evaluating the assumptions, data, and criteria on which their analyses are based.

Fourth, case studies offer an opportunity to trace the unfolding of influence on significant issues and to bring varieties of data to bear on a particular problem. Heavy reliance will be placed on them, though with the realization that key information may be unavailable. This problem, of course, faces anyone studying contemporary affairs.

Finally, where appropriate, impressionistic and idiosyncratic material will be used to supplement "hard" data and to reinforce speculative interpretations. Though their printed matter may repeat basic facts and lack depth, the journalists, privy to declassified NATO intelligence reports and leaks from friendly embassies, are privately an important source of information. A well-informed journalist in Cairo, for example, often knows a great deal about the constraints on Moscow's ability to operate in Egypt. He knows about the day-to-day relationship between Egyptian officials and their Soviet counterparts and the kinds of preferential treatment accorded to Soviet diplomats in Cairo. Lebanese commentaries are particularly informative on Egyptian politics and Egypt's relations with the Arab world. Interviews are also useful: knowledgeable officials, in a communicative mood, can fill in some gaps in the published record.

A chronological approach has been adopted for several reasons. The manifestations of influence that emerge will do so within discrete historical time frames. They need to be identified, examined, traced, and compared over time. Chronological scrutiny lessens the possibility that anything important will be overlooked and increases the likelihood of identifying the variables that lend themselves to analysis and comparison. Like ballet, an influence relationship can be properly understood only if the moves of the performers are watched closely and each action is taken to have a meaning that enhances understanding of the whole. Such an approach also lends itself to the exploration of issue areas, to seeing foreign policy as an integral function of domestic politics. Finally, it sensitizes the analyst to the concatenation of pressures, attitudes, and options.

A number of hypotheses that seek to establish correlations between Soviet inputs and Soviet influence will be tested, utilizing the relevant data that are available.

1. The greater the economic, military, and cultural interaction

PREFACE

between the USSR (*A*) and Egypt (*B*), the greater will be Soviet influence. (Rationale: A stepped-up flow of goods and services from *A* to *B* creates a measure of dependency, which, in turn, fosters expectations in *A* that *B* will become more amenable to *A*'s preferences.)

2. The greater the presence of *A* in *B*, the more likely *A* is to exercise influence over *B*. (Rationale: Access is held to be the key to influence: the more that *A* channels aid into *B*'s domestic system, the more will be its dealings with *B*'s decision-makers; the more that *A* has access to *B*'s decision-makers, the greater will be its influence.)

3. The larger the relative number of *B*'s missions to *A*, the greater will be *A*'s influence. (Rationale: The influencer will be the one who receives the disproportionate share of visits.)

4. The treatment in *B*'s media of visits by *A*'s officials (or the converse) reveals more about the *A-B* influence relationship than does any asymmetry in the number of visits exchanged. (Rationale: Interactions assessed as aggregates miss much of the continuing ebb and flow that characterizes influence relationships. To identify influence, which is time-specific, interactions must be evaluated within fairly limited time periods.)

5. The political use of aid diminishes over time. (Rationale: Aid is useful primarily in establishing a presence; its utility in bringing influence wanes with regularization; and its diminution entails costs to *A*.)

6. The more sophisticated the weaponry sent by *A* to *B*, the more likely *A* is to have influence. (Rationale: The quality of weaponry greatly affects *B*'s dependence on *A* for spare parts and sustained deliveries of equipment and ammunition, since it makes replacement from other sources more difficult, and hence makes *B* more compliant to *A*'s preferences.)

The moment has come to proceed, even though the tools and materials are imperfect. Surgeons, even with the impressive advances in medicine must, I am told, often operate on the basis of suggestive symptoms, lacking a surer way of knowing what really is the problem. Only by venturing can they hope to learn. And so with us.

A few words of appreciation: many would not be inappropriate. This project has led me into interesting byways and blind alleys. It could not have been completed without the encourage-

PREFACE

ment and support of a number of institutions, to whom I most gratefully acknowledge my deep appreciation. The Barra Foundation and the National Science Foundation helped in the initial stage. The American Philosophical Society supported a month of research in Cairo. The Earhart Foundation and the Joint Committee on Soviet Studies of the American Council of Learned Societies and the Social Science Research Council made possible a year of uninterrupted research to complete the study. The chapters began to take form during a month's stay as a Resident Scholar at the Rockefeller Foundation's Bellagio Study and Conference Center in September 1974. The first draft was completed during the 1974-1975 academic year at Cambridge University, where I was a Visiting Fellow at Clare Hall and the Center for International Studies. Professor F. H. Hinsley of St. John's College was most helpful in making my stay in Cambridge productive and pleasant. The Foreign Policy Research Institute provided a summer to complete the writing. Officials, scholars, and journalists in Washington, Cairo, Jerusalem, London, and Belgrade were generous with information.

The study has benefited from the critical analysis and helpful comments of a number of individuals who read all of the manuscript, and I acknowledge their assistance with pleasure and appreciation: Richard H. Dekmejian of the State University of New York at Binghamton; William B. Quandt of the University of Pennsylvania; and Oles M. Smolansky of Lehigh University. Ibrahim M. Gheiyadi ably assisted with the Arabic translations. Mrs. Katherine Wainright and Miss Jo Ellen Milkovits of the Foreign Policy Research Institute typed the manuscript. As always, Princeton University Press was a delight to work with, and I especially wish to thank Sanford G. Thatcher and Mrs. Gail Fillion.

Alvin Z. Rubinstein

Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania
May 30, 1976

RED STAR ON THE NILE

Prologue

THE Soviet Union and Egypt discovered one another after 1953 in the changed domestic, regional, and international circumstances that followed the death of Iosif V. Stalin and the emergence of Gamal 'Abd al-Nasir as the dominant personality in the Revolutionary Command Council, which had deposed King Faruq in July 1952. Soviet interest in Egypt, like its policy toward the Arab world in general, matured only after World War II. From 1917 to 1945 Soviet strategy in the Middle East had centered on geographically contiguous Turkey and Iran. Through treaties and correct diplomatic relations, Moscow had sought to ensure that these countries would not become part of any prospective hostile capitalist coalition and that Soviet access to the eastern Mediterranean through the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles would be assured. In 1945-1946 Stalin tried to acquire a trusteeship over either Libya, Eritrea, or Italian Somalia, but was rebuffed by the Western powers, already suspicious of Soviet imperial ambitions as manifested in pressure on Turkey for a return of the area of Kars and Ardahan in eastern Anatolia, the granting of a military base in Turkish Thrace, and the attempted incorporation of Persian Azerbaijan into the Soviet Union. Stymied in these expansionist thrusts, Soviet policy, with the exception of the intercession on behalf of the partition of Palestine and the creation of the state of Israel, had no effect on developments in the Arab East.

But decolonization, domestic upheavals in Syria and Egypt, and the Western fixation with military pacts, whose consequence was the polarization of regional rivalries and loyalties, transformed the Middle East environment and paved the way for Soviet penetration. After seizing power in Egypt, Nasir moved to end the residual British presence in the Suez Canal zone. He refused to join any Western-sponsored military pact and opposed the U.S. and British policy of containing Soviet expansion through a network of interlocking alliances with the countries of the Middle East and Southern Asia. Further, angered at the flow of arms to Iraq, Egypt's main rival in the Arab world, which was reaping its reward for participating in the Western security

PROLOGUE

system, and pressed by his military to end the weakness that they perceived Egypt to be in vis-à-vis Israel, Nasir turned to Moscow. The timing was felicitous, the convergence of interests was to prove momentous.

One of the objectives of the post-Stalin Soviet leadership was to crack the chrysalis of containment. Starting in the United Nations in the summer of 1953, the USSR evinced new interest in the Third World. It ended the Soviet bloc's unwillingness to contribute to U.N. economic programs for developing countries, extended economic and military credits to Afghanistan, concluded a mini-arms deal with Syria in late 1954, and agreed in February 1955 to construct the Bokaro steel plant in India. Underlying this incipient, far-ranging foreign aid program was a determination to undermine and destroy, if possible, the Western system of regional alliances and the military threat that it posed to the exposed southern underbelly of the Soviet Union.

On April 16, 1955, the USSR Ministry of Foreign Affairs issued a statement signifying Moscow's intention to pursue an active policy in the Arab world and counter the newly created Baghdad Pact. It attacked the Western countries for drawing the nations of the Middle East into military groupings linked to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and asserted that "the Soviet Union cannot remain indifferent to the situation arising in the region of the Near and Middle East, since the formation of these blocs and the establishment of foreign military bases on the territory of the countries of the Near and Middle East have a direct bearing on the security of the USSR." Coming less than a month after Moscow had publicly declared its readiness to help Syria defend its independence, the statement put the Western powers on notice that continued Turkish and Iraqi pressure on Syria would bring full Soviet support to Damascus to uphold the Syrian government's policy of nonalignment. If it were to weaken the West's grip on the area, the USSR had to make alternative policy options feasible for the regional actors. The ideological sanction for this "forward policy" in the Third World was proclaimed at the Twentieth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) in February 1956, when Khrushchev emphasized the political-strategic importance of the Afro-Asian world, noting that "a vast 'zone of peace,' including both socialist and non-socialist peace-loving states in Europe and Asia has emerged in the world arena."

PROLOGUE

Nasir's aims paralleled Moscow's. Accordingly, the Soviet government, perceiving the disruptive potential of Egypt's nationalist and anti-Western position, responded to Cairo's request for weapons and in so doing escalated the Middle East arms race. In late September 1955, Nasir announced a major arms agreement between Egypt and Czechoslovakia (the USSR's temporary surrogate). While it enabled him to circumvent the Western arms embargo, this commercial transaction had fateful consequences: it further alienated the United States and Britain, heightened Israel's fears, and strengthened Nasir's confidence, leading both to his recognition of the People's Republic of China in May 1956, a move that, in turn, impelled Secretary of State John Foster Dulles to drop support for America's financing of the Aswan High Dam, and to his nationalization of the Suez Canal Company in July 1956, thus triggering the chain of events that prompted Israel, France, and Britain to attack Egypt at the end of October 1956.

Notwithstanding Moscow's professions of full support for Egypt in the weeks preceding the Suez War, the USSR behaved with the utmost caution during the eight critical days of October 29 to November 5, when the fighting and maneuvering of the interested parties were at their peak and when Nasir seemed defeated. The unexpected intervention of the United States saved him. True, the Soviet Union was absorbed with unrest and revolt in Poland and Hungary, but it did not really have the military power to challenge the tripartite invasion. Khrushchev blustered and threatened only after America's stand had obviated the need for any direct action.

In the years that followed, the full implications of the arms deal materialized. Moscow established strong links to Egypt, thus facilitating the expansion of its relations with Syria, Lebanon, and Yemen; and the arms race it set off was to have enormous significance for the future of Soviet-Egyptian relations: from mere arms merchant, the Soviet Union was to become, in time, the ultimate guarantor of Nasir's rulership. Moscow's commitments to Egypt expanded; in October 1958, it agreed to finance the construction of the Aswan High Dam. Trade increased, as did interaction in the political and cultural spheres. Soviet support underpinned Egypt's independent line in Middle East affairs, and it showed what friendship with the Soviet Union could bring.

However, successes also brought underlying conflicts of interest

PROLOGUE

to the fore. The toppling in July 1958 of the pro-Western leaders in Iraq and that country's formal withdrawal from the Baghdad Pact the following March were hailed by Moscow and Cairo. Yet during the 1959–1961 period this major turnabout in Arab politics contributed to the serious strains that were besetting the Soviet-Egyptian relationship. These were engendered by a number of developments: by differences over the treatment of Egyptian Communists; by Khrushchev's stress on the struggle against imperialism (i.e. the West) at a time when Nasir was making an effort to balance good relations with the Soviet Union with an improvement in ties to the Western powers; by the struggle between the Nasirites and the Communists in the United Arab Republic, which had been created by the union of Egypt and Syria in February 1958; by the deterioration in relations between Cairo and Baghdad, which adversely affected Soviet-Egyptian relations because of Moscow's interest in promoting ties with the Iraqi military regime of General 'Abd al-Karim Qasim, who was more tolerant of local Communists; and by discordant public exchanges over the merits of Arab socialism versus the Soviet version—scientific socialism.

If in the 1950s the Soviet Union had courted Egypt with political aims in mind—to strengthen Nasir's resistance to Western pressure, to provide him with the wherewithal to make nonalignment a viable option and thus thwart the American plan of linking Egypt to NATO, and to allay anxieties elsewhere in the Arab world over the supposed dangers of improved relations with the USSR—in the 1960s it was motivated, in addition, by a growing desire for military privileges. The Sino-Soviet rift cost Moscow its naval base in Albania and whetted its strategic interest in Egypt. The Soviet Union's pro-Yugoslav policy led Tirana to side with Peking in the widening Sino-Soviet rift and in May 1961 to evict the Soviet navy from the base at Vlone that it had been operating since 1945. This military setback coincided with the USSR's increasing concern over its vulnerability to America's nuclear strike force: not only did the United States have intermediate range ballistic missiles (IRBM's) deployed in Italy, Greece, and Turkey and attack aircraft carriers in the Mediterranean that could launch planes capable of reaching key Soviet targets, but it was also on the verge of deploying Polaris submarines. These SSBN's (fleet ballistic missile nuclear-powered submarines) greatly expanded American strike capabilities against

PROLOGUE

the Soviet Union. The Soviet military establishment acted to offset these advantages.

Moscow proceeded on several fronts: diplomatically, it proposed that the Mediterranean be declared a nuclear-free zone; militarily, it gave the go-ahead for a permanent naval presence in the Mediterranean, with all that was required to expand the Soviet navy; politically, it brought increasing pressure to bear on Egypt and other friendly Arab states for naval and air facilities and played up the threat to them all from imperialism. Military considerations persuaded Khrushchev to tone down his on-again off-again dispute with Nasir.

For reasons of his own, Nasir did not want the quarrel with Khrushchev to jeopardize the Soviet-Egyptian relationship. As a gesture, he amnestied all political prisoners (mostly Communists) on the eve of the Soviet leader's visit in May 1964 and allowed them to resume political activity within Egypt's one-party structure. Soviet naval ships were permitted to make visits, but Nasir carefully side-stepped any permanent arrangements.

After Khrushchev was deposed in October 1964, his successors, urged on by the Soviet military, signified their intention of promoting closer ties between the Soviet Union and Egypt. Economic aid was increased (though this had been one of the grievances the other members of the Politburo had held against Khrushchev); high-ranking officials exchanged visits more frequently (for example, Nasir visited the USSR in August 1965 and Premier Aleksei N. Kosygin made his first trip to Egypt in May 1966); major arms agreements were concluded in November 1964 and again a year later. Moscow increased the size of its military and economic package to Egypt and tried to persuade Nasir to grant the Soviet navy full and automatic access to Egyptian ports and permanent naval facilities. However, there is no evidence that they succeeded in this until after June 1967. Soviet assistance in 1965 and 1966 helped alleviate Nasir's economic difficulties. Also, he was dependent on Soviet military support to sustain his intervention in the Yemeni civil war, which started in October 1962; and since Moscow, too, had a stake in the survival of the pro-Nasir Yemeni Arab Republic and in the fanning of unrest in that region, the flow of weapons remained largely unaffected by the periodic tensions that beset their overall relationship.

In broad political terms, the Soviet Union had, through its

PROLOGUE

assistance to Nasir, helped to nurture a diplomatic environment in the Arab world that was far more congenial to Soviet interests in the spring of 1967 than it had been twelve years earlier. Relations between Moscow and Cairo were good, but far from intimate. It took a catastrophe to alter this relationship and to bring the Soviets the military dividends they coveted.

TRANSFIGURATION

THE Middle East war of June 1967 was a watershed in Soviet-Egyptian relations. In the ensuing months, Moscow assumed commitments far greater than any it had previously undertaken in quest of imperial objectives in the Third World: the arms deal of September 1955 and the building of the Aswan High Dam in the 1960s were by comparison low-risk, uncomplicated initiatives whose dramatic impact overshadowed their actual strategic significance. After the June War, the Soviet Union became Egypt's benefactor, munificent but calculating, supportive but ambitious and sometimes overbearing. This ever-changing relationship acquired global importance, affecting as it did issues of war and peace and the superpower *détente*.

In the following pages the historical background is presented with the purpose of delineating the relationships and outlooks that serve as the starting point for our study of the Soviet-Egyptian influence relationship.

DEFEAT

Shortly after the outbreak of fighting in the early hours of June 5, 1967, the Kremlin activated the "hot line" to Washington for the first time.¹ Premier Aleksei N. Kosygin "expressed Soviet concern over the fighting," called on the United States to make Israel desist from its attack against Egypt, Syria, and Jordan, and stated Moscow's intention to seek a cease-fire through the United Nations.² Later in the day, the Soviet government denounced the Israeli "aggression" in a statement that criticized the encouragement given by the "covert and overt actions of certain imperialist circles." It affirmed the "resolute support" of the USSR for the

¹ The "hot line," which was an outgrowth of the superpower experience during the Cuban missile crisis of October 1962, was installed on August 30, 1963, to provide instantaneous teletype communications between Moscow and Washington in times of crisis.

² Lyndon Baines Johnson, *The Vantage Point: Perspectives of the Presidency, 1963-1969* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1971), pp. 287, 298.

Arab governments and peoples, demanded that Israel "stop immediately and unconditionally its military actions . . . and pull back its troops beyond the truce line," and ended on the ominous note: "The Soviet Government reserves the right to take all steps that may be necessitated by the situation."³ In the United Nations, the Soviet delegation proposed a resolution calling for an immediate cease-fire, condemnation of Israel, and a full Israeli withdrawal. Egypt (and the other Arab states), however, opposed any cease-fire because in Cairo Gamal 'Abd al-Nasir was still being told by his Military Operations Command that an Egyptian counter-attack was imminent and that the campaign was far from lost.

On the morning of June 6, Cairo and Damascus broke off diplomatic relations with the United States and Great Britain, accusing them of collusion with Israel, of "taking part in the Israeli military aggression insofar as the air operations are concerned."⁴ In Moscow, Egyptian Ambassador Muhammad Murad Ghaleb met with Premier Kosygin and urged prompt Soviet support. Kosygin again exchanged views with President Lyndon B. Johnson via the hot line and was informed—indeed, he probably already knew on the basis of his own intelligence reports—that Cairo's allegations were false: American aircraft were not involved, nor had they been at any time. A meeting of the Politburo of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) was held on the morning of June 6 to discuss the situation. It is evident that the Politburo realized the inaccurate and reckless nature of the Arab charges of American participation in the Israeli attack

³ BBC Summary of World Broadcasts: The U.S.S.R. (hereafter referred to as BBC/SU). BBC/SU/2484/A4/1 (June 7, 1967).

⁴ BBC Summary of World Broadcasts: The Middle East (hereafter referred to as BBC/ME). BBC/ME/2484/A/18 (June 7, 1967). On June 8, 1967, Israeli authorities issued the text of a monitored radio telephone conversation that had taken place on Tuesday, June 6, at 0450 hours between Nasir and King Husayn. The conversation reveals the fabrication by Nasir and Husayn of the lie that American and British planes were flying with Israeli forces. Nasir is quoted as saying: "I say it would be better for us to issue a statement. I will issue a statement and you will issue a statement. We will also let the Syrians issue a statement that there are American and English aircraft acting against us from aircraft carriers. We will issue a statement and thus make the subject more emphatic, I mean." BBC/ME/2487/A/12 (June 10, 1967).

Not until October 20, 1967, were the Egyptian people officially told, albeit elliptically, that the air attacks had been carried out solely by Israeli planes flying low over the sea: "The enemy did not fly in from the West as we had previously thought, but rather followed the natural course of approach—the gap between Port Said and the Lake of Burullus." *The New York Times* (hereafter referred to as NYT), October 21, 1967.

TRANSFIGURATION

for the Soviet press ignored them. Moscow had no desire to be dragged into a war with the United States just to pull Arab chestnuts out of the fire. The same evening the Soviet delegation at the United Nations dropped its previous demand for the condemnation of Israel and announced its readiness to accept a resolution calling for an immediate cease-fire, without the precondition of a withdrawal to the June 4 lines. This resolution, which the Americans had proposed from the very beginning, was unanimously adopted by all fifteen members of the Security Council. But of the Arab states, only Jordan accepted on the following day, Egypt insisting on a full Israeli withdrawal. Israel agreed to a cease-fire, but only on the condition that it was accepted by all the Arab states.

The June 6 issue of *Pravda* carried, in addition to the text of the Soviet government's declaration of June 5 condemning Israel, an article by Igor' Beliaev, a well-known analyst of Middle East affairs, in which he went beyond a mere reaffirmation of Soviet support for the Arab nations and emphasized that "Nobody can doubt this for a single minute."⁵ The target of his remark was not clear, though it was probably intended for Washington and not Cairo, since the situation early on June 6 may still have appeared fluid in Moscow, given the claims of intense fighting and counter-attacks emanating from Arab sources; and Moscow was putting Washington on notice that it would not stand idly by and accept an American intervention to help defeat Egypt and Syria.

Twenty-four hours later Moscow no longer had any doubts about the truth: Egypt, Syria, and Jordan had been decisively defeated, and by Israel alone. Surprised by the dismal showing of Arab forces and unable to prevent the unfolding disaster on the battlefield, the Soviet Union mustered diplomatic support for the Arabs. The Soviet government "warned" the Israeli government that if it did not "comply immediately" with the demand for a cease-fire expressed in the Security Council's resolution, "the Soviet Union will reconsider its attitude towards Israel and decide whether to continue to maintain diplomatic relations with Israel."⁶ In the United Nations, Soviet Ambassador Nikolai Fedorenko pressed for immediate implementation of the cease-fire resolution, but his efforts foundered on Egypt's continued insistence that this also entail a full Israeli withdrawal, an interpre-

⁵ *Pravda*, June 6, 1967.

⁶ BBC/SU/2486/A4/1 (June 9, 1967).

tation of the Security Council's resolution with which not even the USSR could agree.⁷ On the afternoon of June 8 Cairo submitted to the inevitable: Egypt's catastrophic defeat in Sinai was finally realized by Nasir. When it was no longer possible to ignore the evidence of collapse, Foreign Minister Mahmud Riyad hurriedly telephoned Ambassador Muhammad al-Quni at the United Nations "just a few seconds before he was due to address the Council. The instructions this time were completely different from those given a few hours before." Riyad said, "the picture has changed. Go back to the meeting and announce acceptance of the ceasefire."⁸ Once Egypt had agreed to the cease-fire, the Soviet delegate pushed for new resolutions condemning Israel as an aggressor and demanding its full withdrawal.⁹

Syria agreed to the cease-fire on June 9, but the fighting continued, each side accusing the other of violations. It was clear that Israel was making an all-out effort to capture the Golan Heights before the cease-fire took hold. On June 10 Moscow again activated the hot line. Kosygin impressed upon President Johnson the urgency of forcing Israel to stop further military operations, or else the Soviet Union would take "necessary actions, including military."¹⁰ Johnson responded to the implicit threat in Kosygin's message by ordering the U.S. Sixth Fleet closer to the Syrian coast, but he also pressured Israel to abide by the cease-fire, which it did on June 10, having achieved its objective—the capture of the Golan Heights.

For the moment there was nothing the Soviet government could do for the Arabs, other than mount a major diplomatic campaign in the United Nations. Beyond that, Moscow was faced with the question, how far should it go to help Egypt and Syria. The answer came quickly.¹¹

⁷ Arthur Lall, *The UN and the Middle East Crisis, 1967* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1968), p. 61.

⁸ This account was given by Muhammad Hasanayn Haykal in his weekly column in *Al-Ahram* on May 30, 1969. See BBC/ME/3088/A/8 (June 2, 1969).

⁹ Lall, *The UN*, p. 66. Soviet media accused Israel of ignoring the Security Council resolutions calling for a cease-fire; they made no mention of Israel's conditional acceptance of June 6 and suppressed all information concerning the nonacceptance by Egypt until June 8 and by Syria until June 9.

¹⁰ Johnson, *Vantage Point*, pp. 301-303.

¹¹ The Soviet decision not to trim its commitments in the Middle East was a surprise to many in the U.S. government. State Department experts were divided between those who thought Moscow would not allow its stake in the area to go by default and those who saw a Soviet disengagement as inevitable.

TRANSFIGURATION

DECISION IN MOSCOW

On June 9 Moscow mobilized the East European Communist countries on behalf of the Arab states. The leaders of Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, East Germany, Hungary, Poland, Romania, and Yugoslavia attended a conference in Moscow and issued a Declaration condemning Israel and pledging to "do everything necessary to help the peoples of Arab countries to give a firm rebuff to the aggressor, to protect their lawful rights, and to eliminate the hotbed of war in the Middle East and to restore peace in that area."¹² The Declaration was the first of the Soviet steps taken to entrench Moscow's position in the area and to stiffen Cairo's resolve not to settle with Israel. On June 10 the Soviet Union broke diplomatic relations with Israel. The East European countries followed suit, with the exception of Romania, which had also not signed the Declaration. *Pravda* repeated the USSR's intention of providing "all necessary material assistance" to the Arabs, and on June 12 the Soviet government sent a squadron of TU-16 bombers to show the flag and bolster Egyptian morale.

A massive Soviet airlift of military equipment began on or about June 12, the day Algeria's leader, Premier Houari Boumedienne, unceremoniously arrived in Moscow to assess Soviet intentions. His visit was an irritant as much to Moscow as to Cairo, which resented his unsolicited advice on how to fight a guerrilla war and his high-handed offer of Algerian troops.¹³ The arrival

One high-ranking official, an acknowledged specialist on Soviet affairs, was quoted as saying, "The Soviets are finished in the Middle East."

Veteran Washington correspondents reported the lack of consensus. Max Frankel quoted American officials who thought that "Soviet leaders would need several weeks or months to reassess their Middle Eastern policies. They are expected to try to press their traditional campaign to exploit the Arab cause against Western interests in the region and to conserve the huge amounts of military and economic aid that encouraged the Arabs to provoke war but did nothing to avert a humiliating defeat," *NYT*, June 11, 1967; and John W. Finney reported that State Department officials were skeptical of Israeli reports of a major Soviet resupply effort and doubted that "the Kremlin has yet made a new decision to send military aid to the Cairo Government," *NYT*, June 15, 1967.

¹² BBC/SU/2488/A4/2 (June 12, 1967).

¹³ The absence of a communiqué at the time of Boumedienne's departure on June 13 suggests his continued skepticism of Soviet policy, notwithstanding the start of the Soviet airlift. Boumedienne's attitude was reflected in Algeria's newspapers, which questioned whether the Soviet bloc, in its promotion of peaceful coexistence between the socialist and capitalist blocs, was

of "significant quantities of Soviet military assistance" in Egypt was reported on June 15 by Tanyug (the Yugoslav News Agency), quoting the Cairo correspondent of *Oslobodjenje*, a Sarajevo newspaper, to the effect that "for the past three days large Soviet army transports have been arriving in the UAR with MiG's as the first urgent assistance to the Egyptian Army," about one hundred MiGs having already been delivered.¹⁴ For the next few weeks Antonov-12s landed at about the rate of one every fifteen minutes. This air bridge, which facilitated the rapid rebuilding of the Egyptian army and air defense system, was made possible by Tito's immediate accession to Nasir's request that the Soviet transports be allowed to refuel in Yugoslavia.¹⁵ No mention of the airlift or of the magnitude of Arab losses and Soviet replacements appeared in the Soviet press. The resupply effort continued at an intensive pace throughout most of the summer.

While reprovisioning the Arab armies, the USSR simultaneously moved on the diplomatic front. Since all the Soviet resolutions in the Security Council had been overwhelmingly rejected, it looked to the General Assembly for vindication of its position and that of the Arab states. On June 13 Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei A. Gromyko formally requested the U.N. secretary-general to convoke an emergency special session of the General As-

prepared to relegate its support for national-liberation movements to second place. BBC/ME/2490/A/6 (June 14, 1967).

It is alleged that Boumedienne asked, "Where is the line at which peaceful coexistence ends?" to which Brezhnev retorted, "What's your opinion of nuclear war?" *Egyptian Mail*, August 26, 1967.

¹⁴ Radio Belgrade, June 15, 1967. Yugoslav correspondents in Cairo reported heavy traffic of Soviet transport airplanes continuing "almost without interruption." *Bor'ba*, June 26, 1967.

¹⁵ On the occasion of Tito's 80th birthday, *Al-Ahram's* editor Muhammad Hasanayn Haykal, revealed the following: "When Egypt had lost her arms in the battles of the six day war and the Egyptian Ambassador in Moscow went to see Soviet Premier Alexei Kosygin with a message conveying Egypt's needs, Kosygin replied that while the Soviet Union was prepared to rush the arms Egypt needed, Yugoslavia, maintaining her policy of nonalignment, denied any facilities to military traffic across her territory. Abdel Nasser referred the Soviet reply to Tito, who immediately replied that Yugoslavia's territory was open for the free passage of anything dispatched from the Soviet Union to Egypt and that he had given instructions to all authorities concerned for the prompt execution of the order. The whole arrangement took only three hours which was the time spent in deciphering the coded messages from Moscow to Cairo to Belgrade and back to Cairo. Immediately afterwards an airlift began between the Soviet Union and Egypt via Yugoslavia." *Cairo Press Review* (hereafter referred to as CPR), no. 5598, May 19, 1972.

TRANSFIGURATION

sembly, in accordance with Article 11 of the Charter. Gromyko's letter asking that the General Assembly consider the situation and "adopt a decision designed to bring about the liquidation of the consequences of aggression and the immediate withdrawal of Israeli forces behind the armistice lines" was unusual in that it implied the Security Council was failing in its assigned Charter responsibilities regarding the Middle East, even though there were a number of resolutions still awaiting its consideration.¹⁶ The United States did not agree with the Soviet view that a stalemate existed in the Security Council, but "was not disposed to be too strict" and insist that all the resolutions before the Council be considered first, as would have been proper procedure.¹⁷

As a result, the Fifth Emergency Special Session of the General Assembly convened briefly on June 17 and started its substantive deliberations on June 19 with a major statement by the Soviet premier. Kosygin blamed Israel for "unleashing" the war, condemned it as the aggressor, demanded its withdrawal from all occupied territory, and insisted on restitution for the damage inflicted on the Arab countries. While extolling the United Nations and calling upon it to "use all its influence and all its prestige in order to put an end to aggression," he also said the USSR "will undertake all measures within its power both in the United Nations and outside this organization in order to achieve the elimination of aggression, and promote the establishment of a lasting peace in the region."¹⁸ Besides general criticisms of Israel, Kosygin made three specific points, whose intent was to dispel the shadow from Soviet policy and ingratiate Moscow with the Arab nations. First, clearly sensitive to Arab criticism over the lack of timely Soviet support, Kosygin tried to vindicate Soviet behavior by claiming that several weeks prior to the outbreak of fighting "the Soviet government, and I believe others, too, began receiving information to the effect that the Israeli government had chosen the end of May for a swift strike at Syria in order to crush it and then carry the fighting over into the territory of the United Arab Republic" (emphasis added). He thus implicated

¹⁶ Lall, *The UN*, pp. 118-121.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 122. The former Indian ambassador to the United Nations presents a clear analysis of the manner in which the General Assembly, with the tacit agreement of the permanent members of the Security Council, modified through practice the legal provisions of the U.N. Charter pertaining to the 1950 Uniting for Peace Resolution.

¹⁸ U.N. General Assembly Document, A/PV.1526.

the Egyptian government and apportioned to it some responsibility for what had happened. Yet it was the Soviet Union alone that had passed on to Cairo and Damascus the faulty intelligence information that an attack was impending.¹⁹ Indeed, Moscow had apparently given Nasir assurances, which he had erroneously interpreted as a promise of full support in the event of war.²⁰ Second, Kosygin likened Israeli actions to those of the Gauleiters of Hitler's Germany, thus initiating a virulent propaganda campaign whose blatant anti-Semitism had not been witnessed internationally since the latter years of the Stalin era. By linking Zionism and Hitlerism, he tried to tarnish Israel's achievement and case and to curry favor with the Arabs. Third, Kosygin maintained that the policy of the Soviet Union and the other anti-imperialist forces in the world had succeeded in frustrating Israel's attempt to topple the progressive regimes in Egypt and Syria.

¹⁹ According to Lt. General Salah al-Din Hadidi, chief of Egyptian Intelligence during the Six-Day War, Egypt was dissuaded by Moscow from attacking Israel on May 27 [1967]; he confirms that the Soviets misled Egypt into believing that Israel was about to attack Syria. As quoted in *The Jerusalem Post Weekly*, August 29, 1972. See also, Mohamed Heikal, *Nasser: The Cairo Documents* (London: New English Library, 1972), p. 217.

In a speech in Cairo on September 28, 1975, President Anwar al-Sadat related that, when he was in the Soviet Union in early May 1967 as the head of a delegation from the National Assembly, the Soviet leaders had officially told him that "Israel was massing 10 or 11 brigades against Syria. . . . What they told me was also communicated to 'Abd an-Nasir.'" Foreign Broadcast Information Service, *Daily Report: Middle East and Africa: Egypt* (hereafter referred to as FBIS/Egypt), September 29, 1975, p. D 28. (FBIS will be used with other countries as well.) Sadat also revealed that a committee under Vice-President Husni Mubarak was conducting an investigation into the causes of the 1967 Six-Day War and would make its findings public.

²⁰ On May 29, 1967, in a speech to members of the National Assembly, Nasir, discussing Egypt's military build up in Sinai and the tense situation, had said: "After my statements yesterday I met with the War Minister Shams Badran and learned from him what took place in Moscow. I wish to tell you today that the Soviet Union is a friendly Power and stands by us as a friend. . . . Last year we asked for wheat and they sent it to us. When I also asked for all kinds of arms they gave them to us. When I met Shams Badran yesterday he handed me a message from the Soviet Premier Kosygin saying that the USSR supported us in this battle and would not allow any power to intervene until matters were restored to what they were in 1956." BBC/ME/2478/A/15 (May 31, 1967).

According to Haykal, Badran apparently had reported the Soviet position incorrectly. Accordingly, after Nasir finished the above-mentioned speech, an Egyptian official who had taken minutes of the meeting between Badran and Kosygin sent the minutes to Nasir, requesting that he read them. The implication is that Nasir read them and then moderated his position, only to be deceived by the Americans. Heikal, *Nasser*, pp. 219-222.