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ARAB-ISRAELI CONFLICT

BREZHNEV URGES STABLE PEACE; ISRAEL BLAMED FOR HALT OF TALKS

Moscow has continued its approving publicity for the 26-28 November Arab summit conference in Algiers, with Soviet media pointing up the Arab leaders' statement on support from the USSR and other socialist countries. Comment on Egypt's 29 November decision to halt the Egyptian-Israeli talks at Kilometer 101 on the Cairo-Suez road holds Israeli tactics of "sabotage and procrastination" responsible for Cairo's move. But only once did Moscow suggest that suspension of these talks might affect the forthcoming peace conference, when TASS on the 2d cited the MIDDLE EAST NEWS AGENCY as claiming that Israel was preventing the creation of conditions for convocation of the conference. Brezhnev in his 29 November speech to the Indian parliament briefly mentioned the need to achieve a peace settlement "in the coming talks," but in line with routine Moscow comment, he did not mention any Soviet role as a sponsor of the conference. Consistent with this reticence, TASS in reporting President as-Sadat's 28 November press conference ignored his remarks on Soviet and U.S. participation in the peace conference.

TASS on 4 December reported the State Department announcement that Secretary Kissinger would begin a tour of Middle East countries on 13 December, visiting Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Jordan, Lebanon and Israel. The TASS report on as-Sadat's remarks had quoted him as saying that a new Kissinger visit was a possibility. And in noting as-Sadat's statement that Israel was procrastinating in implementing the Egyptian-Israeli 11 November agreement, TASS explained that this "protocol" was "signed as a result of Kissinger's previous visit" to the Middle East. Moscow heretofore had gone out of its way to avoid linking the agreement with Secretary Kissinger's Middle East talks.

BREZHNEV SPEECH Brezhnev's restrained remarks in his New Delhi speech on the 29th stressed the need for a stable peace to prevent a still more dangerous military explosion "at any time." He made the usual stereotyped call for elimination of the "consequences of Israeli aggression" and referred to Israel's "aggressive policy" but otherwise refrained from criticism of Israel. He underlined the importance of Soviet-U.S. detente in preventing an even more dangerous clash

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in the Middle East and in making possible the big-power initiative for a cease-fire. Assessing the changes in the Arab world in the past six years--since the 1967 war--Brezhnev cited the Arabs' increased strength and their effective solidarity in the military sphere and in political and economic steps, as well as the end to the "myth of invincibility" of Israel's armed forces. Brezhnev as usual predicated a peace settlement on the satisfactory solution of two issues, Israeli withdrawal and the Palestinians. With respect to the latter, he issued a lukewarm call to "safeguard justice vis-a-vis the Arab people of Palestine," rather than the usual demand for insuring the "legitimate rights" of the Palestinians, or, as in the recent Soviet-Yugoslav communique on the Brezhnev-Tito talks, Palestinian "national" rights.

Brezhnev added that peaceful coexistence and "goodneighborliness" between the Arab states and Israel should be founded on the basis of such a settlement. Kosygin was apparently the first of the Soviet leaders to advocate "good-neighborly" relations between the Arabs and Israel when he referred in a February 1971 speech to a desire for peace under conditions in which all the peoples of the Middle East could live as good neighbors. Since then Soviet commentators from time to time have said that peace should be insured through the establishment of such relations.

KILOMETER 101 TALKS Soviet media, reporting Cairo's decision to break off the Kilometer 101 talks, have been at pains to stress Israeli responsibility for this action through its failure to fulfill the second point of the 11 November Egyptian-Israeli agreement--the question of return to the 22 October positions in the framework of agreement on the disengagement and separation of forces. Soviet comment has avoided any discussion of the flurry of diplomatic contacts to resolve the problem and continued to dwell on the need for Israel to comply with the agreements it has signed and withdraw its troops to the 22 October positions. Moscow has repeated the Egyptian Government spokesman's statement holding Israel responsible for the consequences resulting from nonfulfillment of Security Council resolutions.

The Egyptian action and ensuing military tension has not prompted any noticeable increase of comment from Moscow, which has noted that Israel put its troops on full alert and has remarked on "alarming reports" of Tel Aviv's "latest military preparations." TASS has continued its practice of periodic dispatches from New York citing UNEF and UN observer reports of Israel's cease-fire violations. A 3 December report claimed that Israel continued

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to whip up tension and "intensified its armed provocations" in all sectors. A report on 30 November acknowledged Israel's "impudent 'complaints' over alleged violations by Egypt" and declared that not one of a dozen such complaints lodged on 27 November had been confirmed by UN patrols. Moscow in a 3 December Arabic-language broadcast provided the first report on the stationing of Soviet observers on the cease-fire line. The radio's Cairo correspondent interviewed the leader of the 12-man group of observers "who were sent to Egypt at the request of the Egyptian Government" in accordance with a UN decision. Describing the group's duties, the Soviet colonel said an Israeli violation of Egyptian airspace had already been reported to the UNEF command.

A Moscow domestic service commentary on the 30th and PRAVDA on the 1st commented that Egypt fulfilled its obligations under the 11 November agreement, but that Israel, through "sabotage and procrastination," was trying to use the talks to camouflage continuing military preparations. The PRAVDA article, by Cairo correspondent Glukhov, accused Israel of trying to turn the Kilometer 101 talks into an arena for political maneuvers while attempting to circumvent Resolution 339 demanding the withdrawal of Israeli troops to the 22 October positions. PRAVDA's international review on 2 December said UN observers thought new fighting might break out and declared that "naturally this cannot be accepted." The Arabs and their friends, PRAVDA said, demanded that Israel stop its dangerous maneuvers, sit at the negotiating table, and agree to withdraw its forces from occupied Arab territory.

TASS on the 3d cited the Egyptian spokesman as saying that Egypt would agree to resumption of the Kilometer 101 talks only if Israel displayed a genuine desire to fulfill all points of the UN resolution on a cease-fire. While TASS noted that UNEF Commander Siilasvuo had met with the Egyptian war minister, it did not mention Siilasvuo's similar contacts in Jerusalem. A Moscow broadcast in Arabic on the 1st did make one of the infrequent mentions of Soviet diplomatic activity in citing the MIDDLE EAST NEWS AGENCY for a report that President as-Sadat had received Soviet Ambassador Vinogradov, but without indicating the subject of the meeting. Cairo radio's press review on the 2d said the Egyptian press highlighted urgent diplomatic contacts among Cairo, Moscow and Washington in an effort to prevent a new explosion in the area "as a result of Israel's refusal to implement the Security Council decisions on withdrawal."

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ARAB SUMMIT Moscow's considerable attention to the Arab summit conference in Algiers has largely consisted of replays of the five conference statements--a political statement and four separate documents addressed to the African countries, the nonaligned states, West Europe, and the socialist countries. Comment has predictably played up the latter statement, with PRAVDA on the 30th, for example, remarking that the Arab leaders noted "with pride and satisfaction" the full political support and military and economic aid rendered by the USSR and other socialist states to the Arabs in their just struggle to liberate their territories and restore Palestinian rights. A foreign-language commentary by Rassadin on the 29th said the most important result was the fact that the participants took "concrete decisions" on problems discussed; implementation of these decisions, he said, would contribute in a practical manner to the strengthening of Arab solidarity.

Moscow reportage has singled out, among other points, the political statement's declaration that the cease-fire is not peace, which requires several conditions including two "basic" ones--Israeli withdrawal from all occupied Arab territories and restoration of the Palestinian people's "national rights." Moscow comment did not mention the summit decision recognizing the Palestine Liberation Organization as the sole representative of the Palestinian people. This omission may be due at least in part to the fact that the decision, while reported in Arab media, was apparently not incorporated in any of the formal conference documents.

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U. S. - SOVIET RELATIONS

SOVIET LEADERS DISCOUNT IMPACT OF MIDDLE EAST WAR ON DETENTE

Soviet leaders who have spoken since the outbreak of the Middle East conflict have sought to play down its impact on the regime's detente policies. Brezhnev, Kosygin, Kirilenko, Suslov and Shcherbitskiy have reaffirmed the goals of the landmark April plenum and have asserted that the "main trend" of international affairs is toward detente. Brezhnev and Kosygin have gone on to minimize difficulties in U.S.-Soviet relations and reaffirm the high marks given the Administration for its approach to bilateral relations. The remarks of the two leaders have implied, however, that the U.S. military alert and its public rationale were an unfortunate deviation from the general course of improvement in U.S.-Soviet relations.

In a speech to the Indian Parliament on 29 November, Brezhnev again took the offensive on detente in a manner reminiscent of his expansive discussion of East-West relations during his U.S. visit in June. He depicted broad international cooperation as "the only alternative to nuclear disaster" and emphasized the urgency of peace as a prerequisite for Soviet economic progress. Kosygin in Minsk on 14 November, as reported in SOVIET BELORUSSIA of the 15th, had expressed optimism that "the international situation is taking shape in a way which is favorable to our country" and that "the noble aims which the party sets itself in the sphere of foreign policy will be achieved."

Brezhnev's New Delhi speech was his first major statement on foreign affairs since President Nixon's 26 October news conference in which he discussed the U.S. alert. In the speech Brezhnev echoed earlier remarks by Kosygin in Minsk in denying that the U.S. actions had altered Moscow's attitude toward relations with the United States. Like Kosygin, Brezhnev emphasized the role of detente in ameliorating the Middle East crisis: "If the current conflict had flared up in a situation of universal international tension and aggravation of relations, say between the United States and the Soviet Union, the clash in the Middle East might have become much more dangerous, and it might have assumed a scope threatening world peace." Kosygin had also sought to lay to rest suggestions that Moscow has begun to question U.S. intentions to honor commitments made at the Moscow and Washington summits. He emphasized that the "Soviet Government"

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believes the United States, like the Soviet Union, is "doing everything incumbent on it" to carry out joint agreements. A more conditional assessment of U.S. intentions had seemed implicit in the immediate aftermath of the Middle East crisis, in Kirilenko's cool assessment of bilateral relations in his October Revolution anniversary speech and in a Matveyev commentary on trade in the 3 November IZVESTIYA.*

That Brezhnev continues to value improved U.S.-Soviet relations as a key to the success of the regime's overall foreign policy goals was evident in the joint declaration released at the close of his India visit. The declaration highlighted the improvement in U.S.-Soviet relations and the prevention of nuclear war agreement in particular. But it was also in Brezhnev's New Delhi speech that the effects of the Middle East events were most apparent. While disclaiming that detente, "like all significant changes in history," would be a "simple matter" to achieve, he displayed greater awareness of the pitfalls in the U.S.-Soviet relationship by publicly acknowledging the presence of "zigzags and hitches" in the process of improving relations. Greater appreciation for the potential obstacles to U.S.-Soviet rapprochement was also evident in Brezhnev's statement that "the positive processes taking place in international relations in our time are becoming, perhaps, most strikingly expressed on the European continent." Similar statements have appeared in Soviet commentary since the U.S. alert.

* These developments are discussed in the TRENDS of 7 November 1973, pages 9-10.

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