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ARAB-ISRAELI CONFLICT

MOSCOW RESERVED TOWARD EGYPT-ISRAEL DISENGAGEMENT ACCORD

Moscow has been correct but restrained in its treatment of the Egyptian-Israeli military disengagement agreement and the diplomatic activities leading up to it. While it tacitly acknowledged the primacy of the U.S. role in these events by reporting the agreement initially on the basis of the President's announcement, it subsequently shifted to Arab sources for follow-up reportage. Moscow's self-initiated comment on the agreement has been minimal, although qualified official approval seemed to be implied in Gromyko's reference to the agreement in his Yerevan speech. In the meantime, Moscow has provided a skeletal account of Secretary Kissinger's diplomatic activities, and it has reported with obvious approval his remarks in a 22 January press conference on the "constructive role" of the Soviet Union "at all stages" in the negotiations.

KISSINGER'S "MEDIATION"

While Soviet accounts of Secretary Kissinger's activities have tended to be brief and factual, an Arabic-language broadcast on the 19th did credit him with "mediation" in preparing the text of the disengagement agreement. IZVESTIYA reports on 17 and 18 January gave Soviet readers a generally sympathetic picture of his role in working out the agreement. Both accounts drew on Western news agency and Cairo press reports to suggest the strenuous nature of the Secretary's efforts. Thus IZVESTIYA on the 18th reported that U.S. and Israel officials had created a special working group to prepare a new draft plan after holding a "strenuous" round of meetings. IZVESTIYA added that Kissinger's contacts with Egyptian and Israeli leaders were entering a decisive stage, and cited the Cairo AL-AKHBAR as saying the Secretary would continue his trips to Egypt and Israel until an accord was achieved.

TASS on the 19th, and PRAVDA the next day, carried a brief report on the joint press conference held by Kissinger and as-Sadat at the conclusion of their talks in Aswan. The account reported that as-Sadat was questioned about the possibility of resuming Egyptian-U.S. diplomatic relations, and that he had replied that he would make no decision without consulting other Arab states which had broken relations with Washington. Secretary Kissinger was quoted as declaring that the United States would

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make every effort to strengthen the cease-fire and to achieve the establishment of peace between the Arabs and Israel on the basis of justice. Kissinger, the account added, concurred in President as-Sadat's statement that Egyptian-Israeli disengagement must be followed by disengagement of Syrian and Israeli troops.

DISENGAGEMENT AGREEMENT Moscow first reported the announcement of the agreement--which was released simultaneously in Washington, Cairo and Jerusalem on 17 January--in a TASS dispatch from Washington less than an hour after President Nixon had appeared on television. Attributing the announcement to the President, TASS provided the text, which stated that in accordance with the decision of the Geneva conference, the Governments of Egypt and Israel, with the assistance of the Government of the United States, had reached agreement on the disengagement and separation of their military forces. The announcement further stated that the agreement would be signed on 18 January by the Egyptian and Israeli chiefs of staff at Kilometer 101 and that the UNEF commander had been invited to witness the signing. TASS made no mention of the President's accompanying statement.

Some 45 minutes later, Moscow's domestic and Arabic-language services broadcast shorter versions, attributed to Cairo radio and excising the reference to the United States. Of the three major Moscow papers, only the military organ, RED STAR, carried the announcement in its issue of the 18th, printing the brief version attributed to Cairo radio. PRAVDA and IZVESTIYA reported the signing of the agreement at Kilometer 101 the following day.

TASS on the 19th and PRAVDA the following day reported the MIDDLE EAST NEWS AGENCY's version of the disengagement agreement signed at Kilometer 101 on the 18th. MENA itself altered two points in the second section of the agreement outlining the principles of separation: Where the agreement specified that Egyptian and Israeli zones would be limited in armament and forces, MENA substituted the statement that the areas on both sides of the UNEF forces would be "considered security areas." TASS and PRAVDA further truncated the entire second section, saying only that the forces would be disengaged and UNEF forces would be stationed between the Egyptian and Israeli lines. A TASS report on the signing ceremony, however, had noted on the 18th that according to Western news agency accounts the agreement provided for "some reduction" of Egyptian troop strength and armaments on the east bank of the canal and for reduction of Israeli troops and withdrawal of heavy arms from "advance positions."

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GROMYKO SPEECHES High-level Soviet reaction to the agreement has been confined to remarks by Gromyko in a Yerevan speech on 19 January and a speech at a 22 January luncheon for visiting Egyptian Foreign Minister Fahmi. According to available accounts, in neither speech did he mention the United States in connection with the Middle East situation. In Yerevan, Gromyko lauded the "exceptionally active and beneficial role" of the Soviet Union in obtaining a cease-fire and convening the Geneva peace conference, and he depicted the disengagement agreement as a result of the Geneva talks. He gave qualified approval of the agreement, declaring that it had "positive significance," and that it would prove itself if it were followed by a "radical settlement."

In the speech at the luncheon for Fahmi, Gromyko paid tribute to Soviet-Egyptian coordination and "concerted actions on a large scale," implying that this "effective cooperation" led to the Geneva talks and "practical steps" to remove the tension in the Middle East and, ultimately, to the disengagement agreement. He again urged that this agreement should be followed by other steps aimed at solving "radical questions" on the basis of Security Council resolutions. In both speeches Gromyko reiterated that a settlement was impossible without Israeli withdrawal from all lands occupied in 1967 and insurance of the Palestinians' legitimate rights.

Meager Soviet follow-up comment on the agreement has called it only the first step toward implementation of Security Council Resolution 242 and has expressed reservations about Israeli intentions, suggesting that Tel Aviv would again try to "freeze" the problem in the present stage and charging Israel with continuing its "armed provocations" while the agreement was in preparation.

FAHMI IN MOSCOW Moscow has given little publicity to Egyptian Foreign Minister Fahmi's "official friendly" visit to Moscow beginning 21 January.* TASS' report on the meeting between Gromyko and Fahmi on the day of his arrival said

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* Fahmi's visit is the first to Moscow by a high-level Egyptian official since the October war. The last previous such visit was by President as-Sadat's adviser Hafiz Isma'il in July; prior to that, the then foreign minister, az-Zayyat, had visited Moscow last May.

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the discussions were held in a "friendly atmosphere" and a "spirit of mutual understanding." TASS said the sides reaffirmed their determination to continue efforts for a political settlement based on implementation of Security Council resolutions, and noted that complete Israeli withdrawal and respect for Palestinian rights were indispensable conditions for the establishment of peace. The second round of talks on the 22d, continuing the "comprehensive exchange of opinions," was described by TASS as "friendly and constructive." A TASS report on Fahmi's talks with Brezhnev, Podgornyy and Gromyko on the 23d noted satisfaction with the development of friendly Soviet-Egyptian relations in keeping with the 1971 friendship and cooperation treaty. TASS said the sides emphasized the "great significance" of the Geneva peace conference.

Cairo's AL-AHRAM was cited by Moscow in an Arabic-language broadcast on the 22d as stressing the importance of Fahmi's visit in light of the signing of the disengagement agreement, after which Security Council resolutions should be implemented. AL-AHRAM, the broadcast said, noted strong opposition in Israel to the Geneva conference and thus Egypt must work for unification of all forces supporting the Arabs, above all the USSR. Cairo radio on the 22d explained Fahmi's trip as aimed at "acquainting the Soviet leaders" with the disengagement agreement.

KISSINGER NEWS CONFERENCE

Moscow has reported with obvious approval Secretary Kissinger's remarks in his 22 January news conference on the Soviet role in bringing about the agreement. TASS on the 23d drew particular attention to the Secretary's remark that the Soviet Union had played a "constructive role" at "all stages" in the settlement of the Middle East conflict. The account noted Kissinger's remark that the disengagement talks had been conducted in the framework of the Geneva conference and his affirmation that the United States has taken its "cochairman" role very seriously and has kept the Soviet Union informed of its actions. TASS also reported the Secretary as saying that while in the last phase of the negotiations the tactical details were handled primarily by the United States, the USSR "was informed and indicated its strong support for the effort."

SYRIA

Soviet media have touched only briefly on the question of possible Syrian-Israeli disengagement in reporting Kissinger's final stops in Jordan, Syria and Israel and Egyptian President as-Sadat's visits to Syria and other Arab states. Moscow

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has noted as-Sadat's expression of hope that the Egyptian-Israeli disengagement agreement would facilitate a similar move on the Syrian-Israeli front, and a domestic service broadcast on the 22d cited him as saying at a press conference in Algiers that the problem of Syrian-Israeli disengagement "is the most important issue now." A domestic service broadcast the previous day reported that Secretary Kissinger, before leaving the Middle East, had spoken of the "possibility in principle" of a Syrian-Israeli agreement on disengagement.

Soviet sensitivity regarding its relations with Syria was suggested by Moscow's prompt response to an article in the Libyan AL-FAJR AL-JADID which, according to the Libyan news agency on the 21st, claimed Syria was being pressured to attend the Geneva conference and to hand over lists of prisoners of war to Israel. The Libyan paper charged that the Soviet Union had refused to provide Syria with requested military supplies in an effort to force it to submit to holding direct negotiations with Israel. A commentary broadcast by Moscow in Arabic on the 22d took the paper to task for trying to disrupt Arab unity and "create doubts about Soviet-Syrian relations." The commentary pointed out that the article in AL-FAJR AL-JADID came at a time when as-Sadat was touring Arab countries to explain Egypt's policy and the disengagement agreement, and it added that as-Sadat had clearly explained that the question of the disengagement agreement "had been agreed on with the Syrian Government." The commentary went on to note that a Soviet parliamentary delegation had just arrived in Syria to a "warm welcome" in keeping with Soviet-Syrian ties of "traditional cordial relations."

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EAST EUROPE WELCOMES MILITARY AGREEMENT AS "FIRST STEP"

The Egyptian-Israeli military disengagement agreement signed on 18 January evoked a moderate volume of cautiously optimistic comment from Moscow's orthodox East European allies. Commentators pointed out that the accord is only a first step toward a settlement which must be achieved by Israeli withdrawal from all occupied territories in accordance with Resolution 242. Czechoslovak and East German comment portrayed the agreement as a success for Moscow's policies, while Hungary and Poland were more evenhanded in acknowledging the role of the United States. The independently minded Romanians and Yugoslavs were less restrained in expressing approval of the agreement, while the Albanians ran true to form in denouncing it as a sellout of the Arab cause, serving only the interests of "the two superpowers."

CZECHOSLOVAKIA, EAST GERMANY

Attributing the agreement primarily to the peaceful coexistence policy "of the Soviet Union and the other socialist countries," Prague's RUDE PRAVO on the 21st conceded that the United States had also played a role. Noting that Secretary Kissinger had helped to give the agreement its "final form," the paper observed that even the United States "must take into consideration the major changes" in the balance of forces in the world, including the Middle East. The commentary cautioned that further developments in the area will depend on "Israel's behavior" on the Syrian front. A Prague broadcast in English on the 19th was similarly grudging in its references to the United States, stressing that its "mediation" had to be assessed against the background of its responsibility for contributing to the "deplorable situation" persisting in the Middle East.

The East Berlin domestic service on the 21st carried a comment from its Moscow correspondent which approvingly noted that "the unchanged principled stand of the Soviet Union on the Middle East" had been reiterated by Gromyko in his Yerevan speech on the 19th. Building up the Soviet role, the commentary said the USSR's diplomatic activity, coupled with "the success of its weapon technology" in the hands of Egyptian and Syrian troops, "led to a joint Soviet-U.S. initiative" which brought about a cease-fire and subsequently the Geneva conference. It stressed that "official Soviet quarters" view the disengagement agreement as the first step in the complete evacuation of all occupied territories by Israel.

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HUNGARY, POLAND

A commentary on Budapest TV on the 18th appeared at pains to underscore the joint responsibility of Moscow and Washington for the agreement, to counter the view that it was primarily a success for Kissinger's diplomacy. The talk noted that the American newspapers portrayed Kissinger as a "Figaro" personality--"Kissinger here, Kissinger there, Kissinger everywhere." It went on to give credit for the agreement to Soviet political, economic, and arms aid to the Arab countries and to U.S. mediation "as well." It added that the contribution made by the detente atmosphere, exemplified by current Soviet-American relations, was "by no means small." The talk also cautioned that the United States might gain increased influence among rightwing Arab forces as a result of the agreement, since it would tend to confirm their view that the United States "alone," and not the socialist countries, could get the Israelis to withdraw from occupied territory.

A similar concern about a possible boost to American prestige was reflected in a 19 January NEPSZABADSAG article by the authoritative foreign affairs commentator Varnai. He expressed hope that the Arab countries would show "vigilance" regarding U.S. efforts to restore its "weakened" position in the area. On the 20th, a talk on the Budapest domestic service remarked that "the active participation of the great powers in the agreement is very important."

A Warsaw TV commentator on the 18th described the agreement as the result of international detente, which has made possible "a joint Soviet-American initiative for a cease-fire and for finding a permanent solution to the Middle East problem." The talk noted that Arab and Israeli spokesmen were both claiming that the agreement was a success for their side. A commentary in the government daily ZYCIE WARSZAWY on the 19th declared that, while the agreement was "just a preliminary" to a settlement, it could not be "disregarded." It alleged that the accord had eliminated the possibility of a new outbreak of hostilities in the Suez area and called this "a great achievement." The relatively brief article did not mention either the United States or the USSR.

ROMANIA

While Bucharest media had approvingly publicized Secretary Kissinger's diplomatic activities in advance of the agreement, the principal Romanian commentary on the accord, a SCINTEIA article by Cimpeanu on the 20th, portrayed it as primarily a vindication of Romania's own proposals and

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initiatives to solve the Middle East situation. Judging by the extensive AGERPRES report, the article avoided mentioning either the United States or the Soviet Union, describing the agreement as "a result of the laborious negotiations which started a month ago under the auspices of the United Nations." It added that the agreement "proves the profound correctness of the constant international position of Romania"--security through negotiations rather than force or threat of force. After reiterating Bucharest's support of the 1967 Security Council resolution, the article voiced the hope that the military negotiations would be followed by negotiations to ensure "independence, sovereignty, and territorial integrity to all states in the region."

YUGOSLAVIA Belgrade media, while manifesting caution regarding implementation of the disengagement agreement, were generally enthusiastic. BORBA on the 19th said the accord would have "far-reaching and positive effects of a psychological and political nature" on the future course of negotiations, and POLITIKA the same day termed it "a welcome first step" toward ultimate implementation of Resolution 242. The agreement's dimensions could prove "history-making," POLITIKA added. Regarding the USSR's role, TANJUG remarked on the 18th that "although the USSR was not directly engaged" in the Kissinger negotiations, "there should be no doubt that the Soviet leadership was kept informed" about the course of the negotiations and the key points of the agreement.

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ENERGY CRISIS

MOSCOW STILL COOL TO U.S. OIL CONFERENCE, PLAYS UP DISTRUST

As Western efforts to devise coordinated approaches to the oil crisis continue, Moscow is maintaining a low propaganda profile, relying mainly on selective replays of Western news accounts to convey a picture of deepening crisis and Western disarray. Moscow has still not made any authoritative comment on President Nixon's 9 January proposal for a conference of oil-consuming countries, to be followed by a broader conference including the oil-producing countries, or on the various Western responses to the U.S. initiative. It has presented these moves in a critical light, however, by playing up foreign press criticism of U.S. policies and by elaborating on alleged Western and Arab distrust of U.S. motives. In the meantime, it has given a minor boost to its own trial balloon, a proposal by oil expert Boris Rachkov for a world oil conference of both communist and noncommunist states.

Reporting on Western reactions to President Nixon's proposals, IZVESTIYA's political observer Vikentiy Matveyev told a Moscow domestic service audience on the 20th that the U.S. initiative had engendered strong suspicion of U.S. intentions and widespread criticism and dissatisfaction. Matveyev maintained, while speaking on the international observers roundtable program, that many West Europeans believe "U.S. ruling circles" intend to use the energy crisis to reinvigorate their diminishing influence in Western Europe. In other comment Moscow has offered even sharper criticism of the Nixon plan. Broadcasts to European countries, for example, carried a Yuriy Soltan dispatch from Washington accusing the United States of trying to establish a "Holy Alliance" to confront the Arab countries and impose "an egotistical policy" on the oil-consuming states. Soviet oil expert and radio commentator Boris Rachkov, in a commentary broadcast in Arabic on the 16th, warned that anyone supporting such goals would invite a worsening of relations with the Arab countries.

Moscow has placed particular stress on the allegedly self-serving aspects of the U.S. initiative and on the differences this has engendered between the United States and its European allies. During the roundtable discussion on the 20th, for example, Moscow radio and television observer Anatoliy Potapov said that U.S. opposition to bilateral oil agreements between consuming and

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producing states was predicated on efforts to protect the interests of U.S. oil monopolies. On the same program Matveyev also asserted that the moves by France, Britain and West Germany to conclude such bilateral agreements represented a forceful reply to U.S. demands for coordinated multilateral dealings. Commenting on reports that the United States was contemplating capital investments in Arab countries, PRAVDA commentator Yuriy Kharlanov, according to a TASS report on the 20th, said this sudden interest reflected selfish motives. Moscow has stressed that responsibility for the oil shortages rests with Western--and especially U.S.--oil monopolies, supported by their governments. It has defended the Arabs' use of the "oil weapon," but has avoided detailed discussion of the embargo as such, as well as of the rapid escalation of oil prices.

Meanwhile, the suggestion for a broad conference on oil matters of both communist and noncommunist countries, made by Soviet oil expert Rachkov in a 16 January REUTER interview, has been acknowledged by Soviet media, albeit at a low level. A Moscow broadcast to North America on the 19th expressed mild support for the proposal, saying it would constitute "a good way to begin" solving the energy problem. It did not suggest, however, that Moscow has formally endorsed the proposal. In the interview Rachkov had said that Moscow trade authorities favored a broader conference than the one proposed by President Nixon in which "a long-term plan for oil exports and imports on a stable cost basis" could be discussed. This idea had been floated by Rachkov earlier. Moscow broadcasts in Arabic last summer publicized his proposal for a plan similar to the one discussed in the REUTER interview. At that time Rachkov maintained that such an agreement would check the exploitation of Third World resources and forestall the formation of an international group of Western consuming countries that might serve "as a prop for the cartel of private oil empires." Similarly, in a letter to the London TIMES on 19 December 1973, Rachkov proposed that mutually beneficial relations between oil consumers and producers could develop within the "framework of international stabilizing commodity agreements" drawn up under the auspices of the UN Conference of Trade and Development. Such agreements, he added, could "to some degree" prevent sharp fluctuations in prices and supplies.

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SINO-SOVIET RELATIONS

FOREIGN MINISTRY PROTESTS REFLECT DETERIORATING RELATIONS

In giving extensive publicity to its expulsion of five Soviet diplomats on charges of espionage, Peking has brought its campaign of anti-Soviet invective to the highest point since the start of the Peking border talks in October 1969. The 19 January PRC foreign ministry statement announcing the expulsions and the answering Soviet foreign ministry statement on 21 January marked only the second such formal exchange of protests since 1969; the other instance, a 1971 exchange over a collision between a Chinese and a Soviet ship, was passed over with little attention by the media of either country. Peking has followed up its statement with an NCNA account on 22 January detailing how the Soviet diplomats were captured and Moscow, after denying all charges in its foreign ministry statement, has expelled a Chinese diplomat in retaliation. The language used in the statements is reminiscent of the mutual invective of the 1960's, prior to the start of the border talks.

PEKING Giving full coverage to charges of espionage by the five expelled diplomats, the 19 January Chinese foreign ministry statement took pains to focus on Moscow's allegedly longstanding subversive activities in an effort to discredit Soviet affirmations of goodwill toward China. It alleged that Moscow has persistently used diplomats to steal secrets and establish "counterrevolutionary organizations," claiming that these actions have not only violated Chinese sovereignty and universally accepted principles of international behavior, but have exposed the "utter hypocrisy of the Soviet authorities' official claim that they want to normalize" relations with China. The same theme was stressed in a lengthy 22 January NCNA commentary describing how the Soviet diplomats were captured while allegedly committing espionage. The commentary was accompanied by an NCNA replay of a "confession" by an alleged Chinese accomplice of the five expelled diplomats. The foreign ministry statement "sternly" warned Moscow to give up spying or bear full responsibility for the consequences. (Peking's last reported official protest over Soviet espionage, a 4 April 1968 foreign ministry statement, had similarly stressed the long-term nature of Moscow subversive activities against China, and had warned that continued espionage would result in "severe measures" by the Chinese. This earlier statement did not level any charge of Soviet hypocrisy toward China, but accused Moscow of colluding with the United States against China.)

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Peking has reinforced the negative assessment of Sino-Soviet relations in the foreign ministry statement with a continuing propaganda campaign designed to undercut Moscow on a wide range of issues previously given little attention in Chinese media. In the past few weeks Peking has assailed Moscow's repression of domestic dissidents and attacked Moscow positions on the border dispute and on Taiwan.* More recently, a 16 January signed commentary in PEOPLE'S DAILY for the first time commemorated the anniversary of the death of Jan Palach, the Czech student who had committed suicide in Prague in January 1969 to protest the 1968 Soviet occupation. While Peking had previously treated the Palach incident in low key, the current PEOPLE'S DAILY article played it up as a sign of popular opposition to Soviet oppression in Czechoslovakia and as a cause of continuing anxiety for the Soviet leadership.

MOSCOW The first Soviet public reaction to the arrest and expulsion of the diplomats came in the form of a 21 January foreign ministry statement which, according to TASS, was presented to the Chinese ambassador in Moscow the same day. The statement, published in the central press on the 22d, gave a version of events surrounding the incident which implied that it was "carefully planned" to give "new impetus" to Peking's "anti-Soviet chauvinistic campaign." The statement "confirmed" an unpublished 17 January foreign ministry statement which was described as having stated that "the Soviet side cannot let pass this blatant violation of diplomatic immunity of Soviet diplomats" and as having warned that "responsibility for the consequences" of the incident "rests completely with the PRC government." (The last official Moscow protest containing such language was in response to a border incident in August 1969. The only other public protest since 1969 was a 22 June 1971 note responding to Chinese criticism of Soviet actions during the ship collision incident.)

Moscow's desire to play down the incident's impact on the already badly deteriorated state of relations seemed implicit in its belated disclosure of the 17 January statement only after the Chinese foreign ministry statement was released two days later. Moscow also seemed to be counseling restraint by both sides in its 21 January statement, which declared that "the USSR Ministry

* For discussion of Peking's recent attacks see TRENDS of 9 January 1974, pages 8-9; and 28 December 1973, pages 11-12.

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of Foreign Affairs expects that the Chinese side will take the necessary measures to prevent actions leading to an aggravation of Soviet-Chinese relations." Moscow radio has begun to publicize extensively the foreign ministry statement and the Soviet version of surrounding events. TASS confirmed on 23 January that PRC diplomat Kuan Heng-Kuang had been declared persona non grata for "activities incompatible with his diplomatic status."

Yugoslavia's TANJUG reported on 19 January that the expulsion of Soviet diplomats came just as the chief Soviet negotiator Ilichev was about to return to Peking. Despite this report, Moscow's public stance on China has been unrelentingly harsh in recent weeks. Soviet Politburo members, in presenting awards to the various union republics during December and January, have almost without exception had harsh words for Peking. And the media have attacked Peking on a wide variety of international and domestic issues, playing upon the recent reshuffle of Chinese district military leaders and the elevation of Teng Hsiao-ping to the CCP Politburo to suggest a new exacerbation of leadership disputes and possible signs of a new cultural revolution.

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PRC-GVN

PEKING CLAIMS "SELF-DEFENSE" IN PARACEL ISLANDS CLASH

Chinese statements following the successful PRC military action of 19-20 January against Saigon forces in the disputed Paracel Islands have taken pains to show that the Chinese acted with restraint and resorted to force only in self-defense. A 20 January PRC Foreign Ministry statement and an NCNA article on the 19th broke the silence Peking had maintained earlier in the week regarding its armed confrontation with Saigon forces. Peking stressed that it had used force only after Saigon forces unilaterally opened fire on Chinese occupying one of the islands, on the morning of the 19th, causing several casualties.

A Chinese foreign ministry spokesman's statement of 11 January, which reaffirmed Peking's claim to the Paracels and three other disputed island groups in the South China Sea, had not referred to a Chinese or Saigon presence in the area.* Saigon pronouncements of 16 and 17 January, claiming that the Chinese had recently occupied some of the Paracel Islands and that GVN forces were closely observing their movements, triggered no Peking response at first.

The 20 January Chinese statement, responding implicitly to Saigon charges that the clashes fully demonstrated that Peking's "territorial expansionist ambition" would be satisfied at the expense of smaller neighboring countries, pointedly underlined China's claim to be a socialist country that would "never occupy other countries' territory." Striving to preclude any tarnishing of Peking's self-proclaimed image as defender of the rights of small countries, the Chinese statement rebutted Saigon's recent affirmations of a longstanding Vietnamese claim to the islands. It recalled Chou En-lai's 15 August 1951 pronouncement that the Paracels and three other disputed South China Sea island groups "have always been Chinese territory" to justify armed defense against Saigon's alleged seizure. Reflecting a clear desire to deflate the issue quickly, Peking pledged in its foreign ministry statement immediately following the end of the fighting that the Chinese would return captured Saigon personnel "at an appropriate time."

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* The Chinese statement and the initial GVN response were discussed in 16 January 1974 TRENDS, pages 6-7.

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Pyongyang has thus far been the sole Peking communist ally to offer support, in a 22 January NODONG SINMUN commentary expressing full backing for the Chinese foreign ministry statement. Hanoi has neither reported the dispute nor commented upon it, even though Saigon has persistently pointed to Hanoi's silence as evidence of North Vietnamese subservience to China at the expense of Vietnamese national interests. Moscow has maintained a low posture, avoiding comment that could be interpreted as taking sides in the dispute. TASS on the 20th briefly referred to the 19 January NCNA account of fighting that day, while Moscow radio on the 22d attributed to Western observers the theory that the clash may have been initiated for "some Peking internal propaganda aims," and reports that the U.S. Seventh fleet had strictly avoided involvement despite Saigon entreaties. A Taipei foreign ministry statement on the 19th publicly reiterated its position that the Paracels and the three other disputed South China Sea island groups are Chinese territory, but it carefully avoided reference to the GVN-PRC confrontation.

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INDOCHINA

DRV, PRG ISSUE DOCUMENTS MARKING ANNIVERSARY OF PEACE ACCORD

In anticipation of the first anniversary on 27 January of the signing of the Paris agreement, the DRV and PRG foreign ministries issued documents outlining their views on the present situation in South Vietnam and the reasons that the agreement has not been fully implemented. Over the years, the Vietnamese communists have periodically issued such documents for the record, but this is only the second case since the Paris accord. Just prior to the Kissinger-Le Duc Tho talks in Paris last May, Hanoi issued a "white book" which detailed alleged U.S. and Saigon violations of the peace agreement.*

The current DRV document was first publicized on 17 January when a foreign ministry official held a press conference in Hanoi at which the document was distributed to foreign journalists. The full text of the lengthy DRV paper is not known to have been carried in Hanoi media; VNA and Hanoi radio summaries on the 17th were followed by a more detailed radio summary the next day. The only version of the PRG document to date is a brief summary broadcast by Liberation Radio on the 22d.

Explaining the purpose of the current DRV document, the foreign ministry official at the Hanoi press conference on the 17th observed that it would enable "just public opinion in the world" to "grasp the true nature of the situation" in Vietnam. The document maintains that the people in South Vietnam should by now be able "to live in peace, national reconciliation, and concord, with full democratic freedoms to decide themselves the political future of South Vietnam," but that in fact the "guns have not yet been stilled," the "bloodshed has continued," and the situation has become "increasingly serious." Denying that the DRV or PRG bears any responsibility for this state of affairs, the DRV document places the blame squarely on the GVN and the United States in a comprehensive list of alleged violations of and non-compliance with the agreement.

Like the DRV White Book last May, the current document stresses U.S. "responsibility" for Saigon's actions. It flatly states that "the chief and direct cause of the present situation in

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* While Hanoi media referred to the current release as a "document," Liberation Radio on the 18th referred to it as a "white book."

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South Vietnam is the fact that the United States has not yet agreed to completely end its military involvement and interference in the internal affairs of South Vietnam." The document reiterates objections Hanoi media had voiced last month when it said that "there is absolutely no question . . . of the present conflict in South Vietnam being a civil war, as is being claimed by key U.S. authorities" and that "the United States must be held entirely responsible for the very serious present situation in South Vietnam." The reference to statements by "key U.S. authorities" is obviously an allusion to remarks made by Kissinger at a 6 December press conference. Two days after the press conference, a NHAN DAN Commentator article had objected to Kissinger's labeling the conflict in the South a "civil war" and had reiterated long-standing charges of U.S. military involvement in Vietnam.*

The catalog of charges against the United States includes conventional complaints about the length of time taken to deactivate mines in DRV waters, the delay in U.S. agreement to provide aid to North Vietnam, and U.S. aerial reconnaissance over the North. The document also objects, without strong invective, to speculation by "key personalities in the Nixon Administration" on the possibility of new U.S. intervention in Indochina. It specifically cites Secretary Schlesinger's 30 November press conference remarks on this question, but not more recent statements he made on 6 and 10 January--an omission which suggests the document may have been composed some weeks ago in preparation for the Paris agreement anniversary.

In the concluding portion of the document a plea is made for the United States and Saigon to "strictly respect and scrupulously implement" the Paris agreement and the 13 June joint communique and for the United States to "end its military involvement and interference" in South Vietnam's internal affairs, to fulfill its obligation for the "healing of the wounds of war" in the DRV, and to respect the national rights of the Lao and Cambodian peoples. To achieve this, the document asserted, would bring about "favorable conditions for proceeding toward normalizing the relations between the DRV and the United States . . . ." References to normalization of U.S.-DRV relations, while not common, are not new in Hanoi comment. The last previous mention came in 14 December NHAN DAN and QUAN DOI NHAN DAN articles published on the eve of the most recent Kissinger-Le Duc Tho

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* For a discussion of the Commentator article, see the TRENDS of 12 December 1973, pages 9-10.

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talks; prior to those articles the question had not been raised since the period immediately after the signing of the 13 June joint communique.

COMMUNISTS REJECT GVN PROPOSAL FOR LUNAR NEW YEAR CEASE-FIRE

A GVN four-point appeal for a cease-fire during the Tet holidays, proposed at a meeting of the two-party Joint Military Commission (JMC) on 15 January, drew a scornful rejection from the PRG. Initial communist reports of the JMC meeting on the 15th ignored the Saigon proposal, but a PRG Foreign Ministry spokesman and Liberation Radio comment on the 17th attacked it, the latter labeling it a "crafty trick." The foreign ministry spokesman's statement charged that Saigon's four points were a "brazen falsification of the spirit and letter" of the Paris agreement and 13 June joint communique. It called upon Saigon to "correctly" implement the peace agreement and respond to the PRG's 13 July five-point cease-fire proposal and the 28 December four-point clarification set forth by its JMC delegation.*

In the only substantial publicity for the GVN proposal by Hanoi, an 18 January QUAN DOI NHAN DAN commentary broadcast the same day termed it "the U.S.-Thieu clique's partial cease-fire farce" and took the opportunity to warn Saigon not to take advantage of Tet to launch any "reckless acts" or it will be "appropriately punished" by the PLAF.

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* The JMC delegate in presenting the PRG's four-point initiative on 28 December had not referred specifically to the earlier 13 July proposal. A somewhat altered version of the original five-point proposal had been advocated in a 6 November note from the head of the PRG's JMC delegation to his Saigon counterpart--see the TRENDS of 14 November 1973, pages 14-15.

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NOTES

CULT OF BREZHNEV: Brezhnev continues to be honored as "head" of the CPSU Politburo at various republic and regional awards meetings attended by Politburo members and candidate members. According to central press accounts, the seven such meetings held to date in January--in the Tatar ASSR, Moldavia, Bashkir ASSR, Dagestan ASSR, Udmurt ASSR, Azerbaydzhan and Armenia--elected the Politburo with Brezhnev "at the head" as their respective honorary presidiums, as was the case at five similar gatherings in December. In other areas, however, there is no consistent pattern to the practice of honoring Brezhnev in this manner. During the past month various ceremonial gatherings in the Ukraine--including those attended by Politburo member Shcherbitskiy--adhered to the collegial principle in electing honorary presidiums consisting of the Politburo, without any mention of Brezhnev, whereas similar meetings in Leningrad have consistently conferred the honorific title of primacy on Brezhnev. The latter practice was followed at an 8 January Moscow meeting commemorating the fiftieth anniversary of the newspaper RED STAR, as well as at a 14 January Moscow city aktiv meeting. But the Moscow city rayon conferences reported in the 18 January MOSKOVSKAYA PRAVDA adhered to the collegial principle, and the 18 January Moscow conference on the fiftieth anniversary of Lenin's death avoided the issue entirely by not electing any honorary presidium.

WORLD PARTY CONFERENCE: While the Canadian and Austrian communist parties have now joined Moscow's five orthodox Warsaw Pact allies in calling for a new international conference of communist parties, the Romanians remain opposed to such a gathering. The Canadian and Austrian appeals were published in Bratislava PRAVDA and NEUES DEUTSCHLAND, respectively, on 15 and 19 January. Bucharest registered its opposition indirectly by publicizing a November 1973 resolution of the Japanese Communist Party's 12th Congress, which had opposed the convocation of a new world conference on grounds that "conditions" were not ripe for reestablishing international communist unity. The JCP resolution, published in SCINTEIA on 11 January, also disclosed that in talks between a touring JCP delegation and the Romanian and Spanish CP's in 1971, agreement had been reached on the need to eliminate "any interference in the affairs of another party" as a precondition for communist unity.

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U.S. ICBM RETARGETING: Moscow has not publicly reported or commented on Defense Secretary Schlesinger's announcement, at his 10 January press conference, that some U.S. ICBM's were being retargeted from Soviet cities to other installations. An article in the 18 January IZVESTIYA by Vikentiy Matveyev referred to the press conference but did not discuss its substance. Indeed, Matveyev, criticizing Schlesinger's assessment of Soviet intentions in several recent statements, indicated that his concern with the press conference was "not a question of the content of Schlesinger's speech" but rather its "allegories and hypotheses" about the Soviet Union.

Moscow's East European allies have also limited their response, with comment only by Czechoslovak and GDR media. Articles in the Prague party daily RUDE PRAVO on 16 and 23 January were strongly critical of the U.S. decision as a move toward lowering the barriers to nuclear war through making provisions in strategic planning for a limited nuclear strike. RUDE PRAVO's commentator "PY" on the 16th said that Schlesinger's announcement was "an undisguised threat to the Soviet Union." A GDR domestic radio commentary on the 14th also criticized the decision, without giving any reasons.

NFLSV-PRG DELEGATION IN LAOS: The 13-16 January visit to Sam Neua by NFLSV-PRG leader Nguyen Huu Tho and several other officials was the first high-level visit ever made by an NFLSV-PRG delegation to the territory controlled by the Lao Patriotic Front (LPF), according to PATHET LAO NEWS AGENCY reports. The visit followed trips late last year by North Vietnamese party leader Le Duan and two Chinese Communist Party Central Committee members, the highest level representatives of those countries known to have visited Sam Neua. A joint statement issued on the 15th reported that talks between the two sides "proceeded in an atmosphere of sincerity and were filled with militant solidarity and fraternal friendship," and that there was "complete unanimity on all questions" discussed. Few details have been revealed on the results of the talks, but the statement indicated that an economic and cultural agreement had been signed and that the South Vietnamese had agreed to appoint a representative to the LPF. Last August the LPF had sent an official to South Vietnam to submit credentials as the LPF representative to the PRG. The statement also noted the satisfaction of both sides with implementation of existing agreements: The PATHET LAO NEWS AGENCY version of the statement vaguely cited agreements "on postal cooperation and on the passage of goods and passengers," but the NFLSV-PRG's clandestine Liberation Radio account mentioned "mutual cooperation in the spheres of post and telecommunications and transportation of goods, passengers, baggage, postal packages, and mail across the border."

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APPENDIX

MOSCOW, PEKING BROADCAST STATISTICS 14 - 20 JANUARY 1974

Moscow (2726 items)			Peking (1050 items)		
Lenin 50th Death Anniversary	(--)	7%	Domestic Issues	(57%)	54%
China	(8%)	6%	Malagasy Foreign Minister in PRC	(--)	6%
Middle East	(1%)	5%	Indochina	(9%)	5%
[Gromyko Meeting With Egyptian Ambassador	(--)	3%]	[Paracel Islands Dispute	(5%)	2%]
Upcoming Brezhnev Visit to Cuba	(2%)	4%	Korea	(4%)	5%
Attacks on Solzhenitsyn	(5%)	4%	PRC Expulsion of Soviet Diplomats	(--)	2%

These statistics are based on the voicecast commentary output of the Moscow and Peking domestic and international radio services. The term "commentary" is used to denote the lengthy item—radio talk, speech, press article or editorial, government or party statement, or diplomatic note. Items of extensive reportage are counted as commentaries.

Figures in parentheses indicate volume of comment during the preceding week.

Topics and events given major attention in terms of volume are not always discussed in the body of the Trends. Some may have been covered in prior issues; in other cases the propaganda content may be routine or of minor significance.

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