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MEMORANDUM

*Special Assessments on the Middle East Situation*

SOVIET PREMIER KOSYGIN'S UN SPEECH, 19 JUNE 1967

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY  
Directorate of Intelligence  
20 June 1967

INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

Soviet Premier Kosygin's UN  
Speech, 19 June 1967

1. Kosygin's speech at the General Assembly yesterday combined a severe attack on Israel with an effort to appear statesmanlike and generally moderate. The aim seemed to be to pull as many Assembly members as possible toward the Soviet position on the Arab-Israeli question without resorting to bombast assuming extreme poses.

2. Throughout, Kosygin sought to portray Soviet policy around the world as consonant with the objectives of the UN, in contrast with the US, whose conduct in the Middle East, in Vietnam, and elsewhere endangered international stability. His presentation was undramatic, however, and did not bring any new or more serious Soviet charges against either Israel or the US.

3. The Soviet leader made it clear that he did not regard the General Assembly session as an end in itself or as the place for bringing forward constructive proposals with regard to the Middle East. The draft resolution he put forward called on the Assembly to condemn Israeli "aggression," demand Israeli troop withdrawals, call for Israeli restitution to the Arabs, and to return to the Security Council for further "effective measures." He ducked two of the most pressing immediate issues: the question of direct Arab-Israeli talks and Israeli access to either the Suez Canal or the Gulf of Aqaba.

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4. Kosygin's references to the US role in the Middle East were on the whole temperate and unprovocative. While charging that "imperialist circles... took practical action which might have been interpreted by Israeli extremists solely as direct encouragement to commit acts of aggression," he came nowhere near alleging that the US had intervened directly in the hostilities. Whether Kosygin intended to keep the door open for private talks with the US, he seems to have chosen his words so as not to raise obstacles to such talks. In a general reference to the undesirability of arms races, he indicated Soviet concern over a problem which President Johnson had mentioned earlier in the day. Kosygin may also have been intimating the possibility of US-Soviet conversations when he said that it would be good if the great powers "found common language to reach decisions meeting the interests of peace in the Middle East and the interests of universal peace."

5. The Soviet premier made a not-so-magnanimous concession in the direction of Israel when he said that "every people enjoys the right to establish an independent national state of its own." Otherwise, for the benefit of the Arabs, Kosygin was harsh and unrelenting toward the Israelis, even to the point of accusing them of behaving as the Nazis did. He said nothing to encourage the Arabs to be conciliatory.

6. Kosygin made it clear that the chief Soviet aim is to bring pressure on Israel to withdraw its troops from captured Arab territory. From the Soviet point of view, a good outcome in the General Assembly would be a simple resolution calling for such a withdrawal. The Soviet resolution goes well beyond this, probably in the hope that the Assembly will, by way of compromise, deliver an acceptable half-loaf.