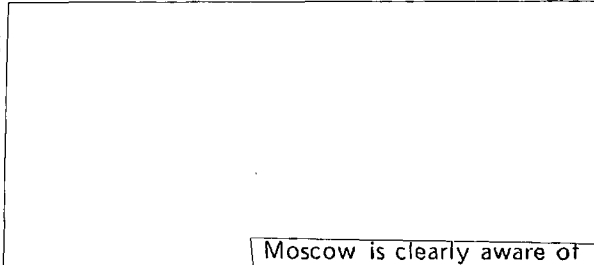


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probably stems from a desire to use every avenue to advance his own interests rather than from a real commitment to the Russians. There are pro- and anti-Soviet factions in the Somali leadership.

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Moscow is clearly aware of the shaky basis of its relationship with Siad and is undoubtedly concerned with protecting its investment. In the aftermath of the Egyptian experience and faced with a growing Chinese economic assistance program in Somalia, the Soviets can be expected to work hard to avoid another setback.



AT ARMS LENGTH IN SYRIA

The Soviets are scrambling, with some success, to preserve their position in Syria. They are providing new deliveries of military equipment and promising extensive economic aid. There are still loose ends in the relationship, and Moscow tried, not too successfully, to tie them up by sending Deputy Foreign Minister Kozyrev on a hurried trip to Damascus last week.

in Syria and assurances that Soviet naval units will be allowed to go on using Syrian port facilities.)

Kozyrev delivered a special message from Brezhnev, Kosygin, and Podgorny to President Asad in a late evening audience. The contents of the message have not been revealed, and there are no indications of how the Syrians will reply. In the past, the USSR has pressed Syria to sign a friendship treaty and has sought base rights in Syrian ports, but Moscow has surely tempered these requests following the Soviet expulsion from Egypt. Instead, the Kremlin may be asking for guarantees about the tenure of their advisers

Moscow's objective is to avoid another embarrassing ouster from a Middle Eastern country, and it would appear that the Russians have something to be concerned about. They are aware that the Syrian military, like the Egyptian, resents the Soviet presence. The Kremlin expects Asad to come under greater pressure from his fellow leaders of the Confederation of Arab Republics when they meet in October. Despite public declarations of friendship to the USSR by Syrian officials, including Asad, Soviet leaders seem to be searching for more concrete indications that their relationship with Syria is solid. The response from Damascus has been friendly but not overwhelming, and has given the impression that Syria is determined not to become the Soviet substitute for Egypt.

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