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Continuing Strains in Soviet-Egyptian Relations

Continuing differences between Moscow and Cairo have been highlighted by a reported exchange of letters between Brezhnev and Sadat.

Recent indications of strains include:

--friction over arms. In a *Le Monde* interview last week, Sadat indirectly chided the Soviets for failing to give Egypt up-to-date weaponry. [redacted]  
[redacted] Sadat approached the Soviets last month seeking to purchase additional Soviet aircraft for hard currency.

--detente. [redacted]  
Sadat complained [redacted]  
[redacted] that Moscow and Washington are trying to collaborate and freeze the Middle East problem in its present form. Sadat reportedly expressed greater bitterness over Soviet than US policy.

--Jewish immigration. [redacted]  
[redacted] Sadat vigorously criticized Jewish immigration from the USSR to Israel [redacted]  
[redacted]

--Soviet economic support. Soviet officials in Cairo have indicated that Deputy Prime Minister Hijazi's visit to Moscow earlier this month may not have gone as easily as indicated by a Soviet official in Moscow (see *Soviet Developments* of 10 September). They say that Moscow dragged its feet in responding to Hijazi's bid for an easing of the Egyptian debt burden. Soviet press coverage of Hijazi's visit had been distinctly cool, suggesting that he may indeed have encountered some difficulties.

18 September 1973

-1-

~~TOP SECRET~~ [redacted]

~~TOP SECRET~~ □

--Egypt's economic policy. Soviet officials in Cairo have been openly voicing displeasure with Egyptian moves toward increasing the role of the private sector and attracting private Western capital. □  
□ reportedly complained that the Egyptians had not even discussed these new policies with Moscow.

Against this familiar catalogue of strains, press reports of an exchange of letters between Sadat and Brezhnev seem quite plausible. The Egyptians yesterday publicized the existence of the exchange. UPI reports that "political sources" in Cairo state that Brezhnev had reassured Sadat on detente, but expressed concern over Egypt's rightward drift on economic questions. In his reply, Sadat allegedly complained that the Soviets are limiting arms deliveries and chided Moscow for inadequate political support for the Arabs.

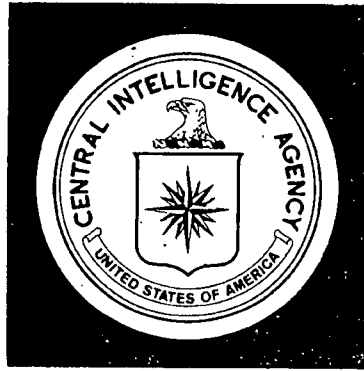
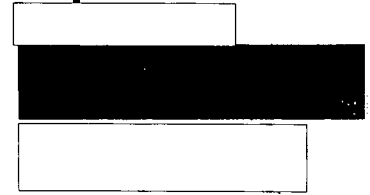
There has been no clear indication that this friction will lead to any dramatic development in Soviet-Egyptian relations. Sadat continues to say that he really has no alternative to maintaining the ties that presently exist with Moscow, and the Soviets likewise seem resigned to the present situation. The Brezhnev-Sadat correspondence may lead to further visits by officials of both countries in an effort to sort out present problems. It is doubtful, however, that Brezhnev will be encouraged by the present climate to accept the long-standing Egyptian invitation to visit Cairo.  
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18 September 1973

-2-

~~TOP SECRET~~ □

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*Soviet Developments*



~~**Top Secret**~~

82

18 September 1973

