

ROUTING

217

~~Top Secret~~

(Security Classification)

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NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE DAILY CABLE

Wednesday March 16, 1977

CG NIDC 77-061C

State Dept. review completed

[Redacted box]

NATIONAL SECURITY INFORMATION

Unauthorized Disclosure Subject to Criminal Sanctions

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USSR-SYRIA: Official Visit

[redacted] Syrian President Asad has accepted a Soviet invitation to meet with General Secretary Brezhnev in Moscow in early April, before Asad's meeting with President Carter in Europe. Foreign Minister Khaddam has confirmed to the US embassy in Damascus that the two leaders are planning to meet, but he did not give dates or a location.

[redacted] The USSR is unhappy over Syrian support for Egypt's efforts to encourage the US to resume its central role in promoting a Middle East peace settlement. The Soviets are probably also discouraged by the decline in the number of their personnel in Syria during the past several months; Asad has been reducing the Soviet military mission.

[redacted] Both sides probably hope the Asad-Brezhnev meeting will prevent more slippage in relations; they may sign a new arms agreement to demonstrate continued friendship. The USSR is anxious to prevent a further loss of its presence and face; Syria wants to retain its arms supply relationship with the USSR and to underscore for the US the independent role of Syria in the negotiating process. [redacted]