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NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE DAILY CABLE

Wednesday 7 December 1977 CG NIDC 77/283C

[Redacted]

NATIONAL SECURITY INFORMATION
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EGYPT-USSR: Further Action

[] Egyptian President Sadat told US officials yesterday that he intends to take "further action," which will be announced today, against the USSR. Sadat did not indicate what he had in mind. In his current mood he may announce a full diplomatic break with Moscow. It seems more likely, however, that Sadat's recent public commitment to work toward reconvening the Geneva conference will constrain him from further compromising the Soviets' role as cochairman of the conference.

[] Sadat told the US officials that he decided to break with Syria and other participants in the Tripoli summit after learning of their resolution to "freeze" relations with Egypt. In a diatribe against Syrian President Asad, Sadat remarked that he had wanted to shock Asad and "cut him down to size." Sadat primarily blamed Moscow, however, for the affront to Cairo and called the offending Arab governments "a block of Soviet agents."

[] The Egyptian President--who until the Tripoli conference had tried to minimize or ignore Arab criticism--now may be reacting without a clearcut idea of where his actions will lead. Sadat is obviously fed up with what he considers the abuse of Egypt by those who ultimately stand to gain from the risks the Egyptians have taken.

[] In reacting to Arab criticism, Sadat usually thinks that his erstwhile allies are taking the easy way out at Egypt's expense and fails to see that they are attempting at least in part to curb Egypt's independent actions and to salvage at least the appearance of having options of their own.

[] It is possible that Sadat is simply trying to force Syria, the Soviets, and even Arab moderates--such as Jordan and Saudi Arabia--to make the hard choices he has made and commit themselves to a concerted peace effort. His actions are more likely, however, to deepen suspicions that Egypt has been planning all along to negotiate a separate settlement with Israel. The USSR's attitude since Sadat's decision to visit Israel and the scathing Soviet press attacks in the past several days suggest that this is, indeed, Moscow's interpretation.

[redacted] Over the past several days the Soviets have dished out some of the strongest personal abuse aimed at the Egyptian President in nearly a year. On Sunday *Pravda* ran a TASS commentary that indirectly accused Sadat of pro-Nazi sympathies. TASS carried additional commentaries in this vein yesterday. The Soviets are usually circumspect and low key in treating heads of state, even those from countries with poor relations with the USSR.

[redacted] The Soviets wrote off Sadat as a possible ally long before his trip to Israel, but their actions in the wake of his trip suggest that they are also giving up on any possibility of a return to a Geneva Conference. Moscow presumably realizes that any further deterioration in its ties with Cairo only further places in doubt the USSR's role as cochairman at Geneva. If the Soviets are anticipating a separate agreement between Egypt and Israel, they will try to strengthen their ties with Syria, Iraq, and Libya in order to isolate Sadat even further.

