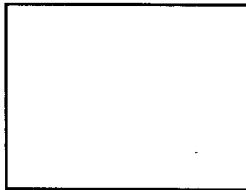


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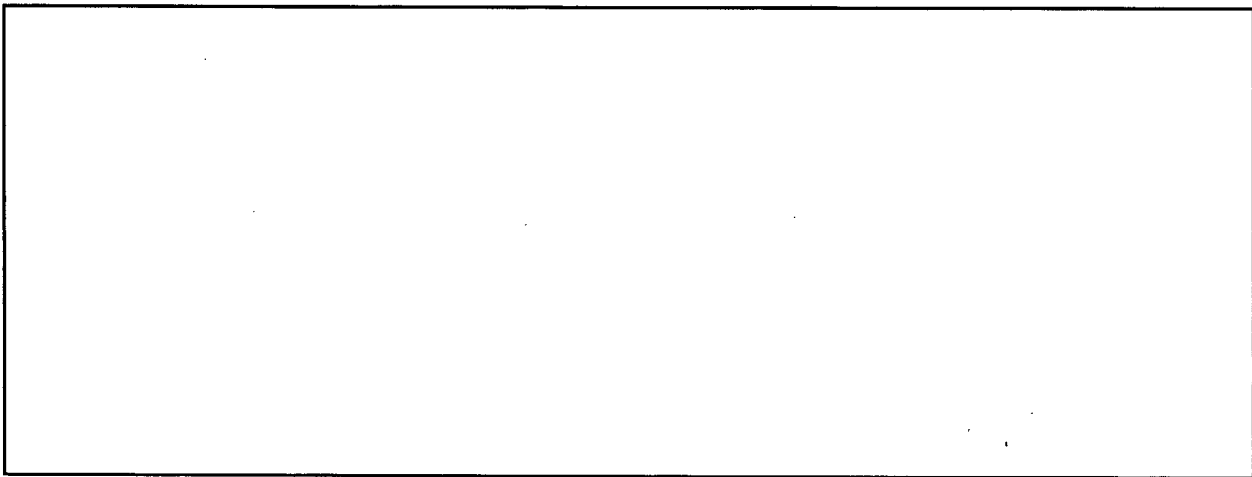
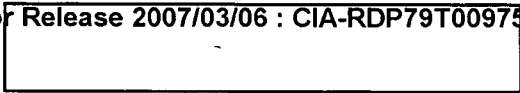
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Thursday 8 December 1977 CG NIDC 77/284C





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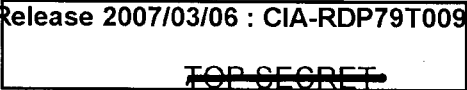
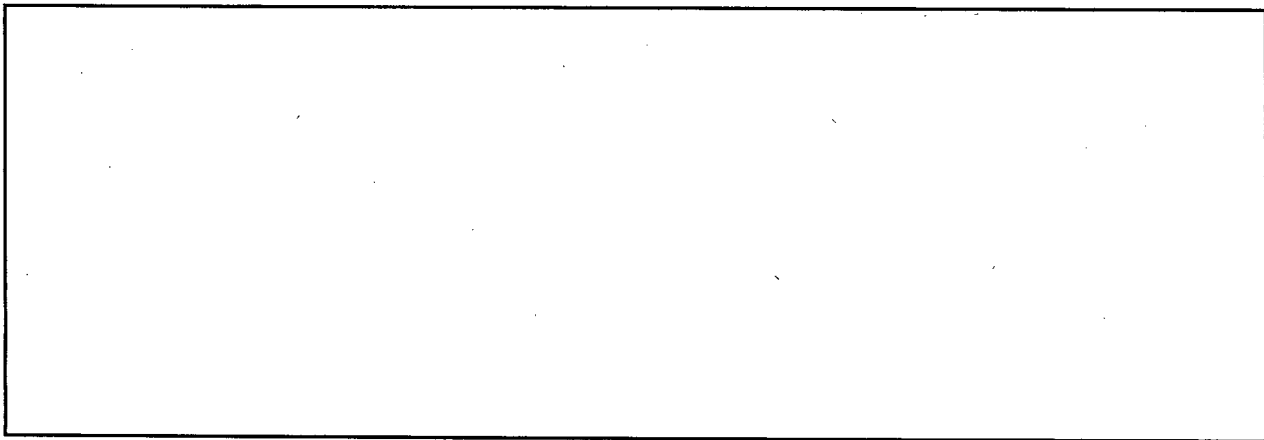
State Dept. review completed



WEST BANK: Opinion on Sadat's Plan

 Egyptian President Sadat has been unable to get West Bank and Gaza Palestinian leaders to endorse his peace initiatives publicly, despite significant support for his efforts among Palestinians living in the occupied territories. The local leaders want to avoid further divisions in the Palestinian movement, and they are skeptical about Israel's willingness to withdraw to its 1967 borders.

 Egyptian officials have asked representatives from Gaza and the West Bank to visit Cairo to discuss Sadat's initiative, but no major figure has accepted. We have no evidence that Egypt has formally invited any West Bank representatives to the proposed Cairo conference.



[redacted] A few conservative West Bank leaders, notably Bethlehem Mayor Ilyas Frayj who met with Sadat in Jerusalem, have commented favorably on Sadat's policy.

[redacted]

[redacted] Before Sadat's arrival in Jerusalem, many West Bank notables received threats, presumably from Fatah sympathizers, warning them not to meet with the Egyptian President. Some low-level representatives from Gaza and the Sinai will visit Cairo soon, however, according to press reports from Egypt and Israel.

[redacted] //There is substantial popular sentiment in favor of Sadat's initiatives. Palestinians in the occupied territories were initially skeptical about Sadat's trip to Israel but approved of his firm statement of the Arab cause to the Knesset. Many are now supporting Sadat and criticizing Syria.//

[redacted] //Sadat's initiatives have given rise to unrealistic popular expectations among the Palestinians of an easy peace settlement that will end the Israeli occupation. Even among the usually more radical student population large numbers are enthusiastically backing Sadat. This feeling could rapidly evaporate if the Cairo conference does not produce forward movement on the West Bank question.//

[redacted]

EGYPT-USSR: Expulsion Reaction

[] *The Soviets have thus far not reacted to Egyptian President Sadat's move yesterday to close their consulates and cultural centers.*

[] Moscow realizes, however, that the Egyptian President has issued a strong warning and that Soviet-Egyptian relations are continuing to deteriorate. Presumably the Soviets believe that if they do not moderate their attacks against Sadat, they may face another, more serious expulsion order.

[] The Egyptian Government's announcement ordered the USSR, Hungary, Poland, East Germany, and Czechoslovakia to close all their cultural centers and all consulates outside Cairo. The directive--issued by Prime Minister Salim before the parliament--accused all five Communist countries of using their facilities to interfere in Egypt's internal affairs and charged that their condemnation of Egypt's recent peace initiative had gone far beyond a mere rejection.

[] In contrast to the relatively mild language in Salim's statement, the Egyptian press excoriated the USSR in what US Embassy officials describe as the most severe attacks on Moscow in the past two years. []