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Soviet Policy Toward the Middle East

A Research Paper

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Soviet Policy Toward the Middle East

A Research Paper

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Soviet Policy Toward the Middle East

Summary

*Information available
as of 5 December 1986
was used in this report.*

By 1970 the Soviets had good reason to be happy with their accomplishments in the Middle East during the decade and a half since their first inroads with the Arabs. They had developed strong relationships with Nasser's Egypt—the most important Arab country—and with Syria, Iraq, and Algeria. Moscow had also steadily improved its relations with the non-Arab “northern tier” countries of Afghanistan, Iran, and Turkey

Since then, however, Soviet fortunes in the region have been mixed. The USSR's position has become far stronger in the northern tier, with the United States out of Iran and the Soviets controlling the destiny of Afghanistan. But in the Arab-Israeli theater, the Soviets' position is markedly inferior to that of the United States, because they have failed to make themselves a factor in a solution of the Arab-Israeli conflict or to appeal to the Arabs ideologically or economically.

Thus far in the 1980s, the Soviets have not made significant progress in capitalizing on the gains they made in the northern tier in the late 1970s or in compensating for the setbacks they suffered in the Arab world earlier in the 1970s. They have been unable to replace US influence in Iran with their own or consolidate Marxist rule in Afghanistan despite seven years of military occupation. Their increased presence in Syria, Libya, and South Yemen has not balanced the USSR's loss of influence in Egypt.

General Secretary Gorbachev has yet to make any major innovations in Soviet policy toward the region—save perhaps beginning a tentative dialogue with Israel. But he has demonstrated through his military support for Moscow's Arab and Afghan clients, his frequent meetings with Middle Eastern leaders, and the numerous envoys he has dispatched to the area that the Kremlin intends to be more assertive in promoting Soviet interests. The USSR's primary policy goals in the Middle East during the rest of the 1980s are likely to be:

- Consolidating control in Afghanistan.
- Blocking any US-sponsored Arab-Israeli peace settlement that leaves Moscow out and, optimally, regaining a voice in the peace process.
- Unifying the Arabs into a pro-Soviet front by ending the isolation of the Kremlin's Arab clients: Syria, Libya, and South Yemen.
- Stemming the drift of Algeria and Iraq toward lesser dependence on the Soviet Union and closer ties to the United States.
- Expanding influence in Moscow's key regional targets: Egypt and Iran.
- Eroding Turkey's security ties to the United States.

Gorbachev's best chances for success seem to be in preventing a US-sponsored Arab-Israeli settlement, in a modest expansion of Soviet influence in Egypt and Iran, and—possibly—in consolidating control in Afghanistan:

- Regaining a major voice in the Arab-Israeli peace process—a primary Soviet goal in the region since 1973—would greatly enhance the USSR's ability to be a major actor in the Middle East. In particular, it would enable the Soviets to block any US-sponsored settlement they believed harmful to their interests. We believe that Soviet concern about the Syrian reaction has prevented Moscow from taking the one step—reestablishment of relations with Israel—that would be most likely to overcome US and Israeli opposition to Soviet participation in the peace process. It appears, however, that Gorbachev is thinking seriously about correcting the blunder the Soviets privately acknowledge they made by breaking relations in 1967. He is likely to move very gradually to give the Arabs time to get used to the idea of better Soviet-Israeli ties before reestablishing full diplomatic relations.
- The USSR faces formidable obstacles in increasing its influence in Egypt and Iran. Soviet officials acknowledge there will be no return to the late 1960s' heyday of the Soviet-Egyptian relationship. Barring major internal unrest in Egypt, the best the Kremlin probably can hope for during the next few years is a marginal improvement in bilateral ties and a growing Egyptian disenchantment with the United States. In Iran, the Soviets seem convinced there can be no significant improvement in relations as long as Ayatollah Khomeini remains in power. This will not preclude an expansion of economic ties, however, and Moscow is certain to attempt to exploit Iranian weakness or domestic turmoil in the post-Khomeini era, which cannot be far off.
- Gorbachev appears determined to stanch what he has described publicly as the "running sore" of Afghanistan. His moves thus far have included a more aggressive pursuit of the rebels, increased military pressure on Pakistan, improved training of the Afghan military, replacement of the Afghan leader, and a diplomatic/propaganda campaign to portray the USSR as flexible about withdrawing. It is too early to tell whether this strategy eventually will allow Moscow to withdraw its forces without undermining the regime in Kabul, but it will take an adroit and

determined effort to carry it off. The odds are still high that, barring a collapse of Pakistani will, the Soviets will not yet have consolidated Marxist rule in Afghanistan as the 1990s arrive

The Soviets are likely to continue their efforts to remedy their overdependence on Syria in the Arab world by courting moderate Arab regimes. Moscow could become more willing to buck Damascus' interests if Egypt, other Arab moderates, or Israel make concessions to the USSR that they have avoided thus far, or if a successor regime in Syria proves less stable or more friendly to the West than President Assad's. Even so, Syria would be likely to remain the Soviet Union's most important ally in the Middle East, prompting Moscow to tailor its moves to avoid serious damage to bilateral relations

Soviet influence in Iraq and Algeria probably will continue to erode—despite Moscow's importance as an arms supplier—as Baghdad and Algiers pursue more moderate foreign policies and more Western-oriented economic policies. These trends appear to be strategic shifts rather than tactical adjustments, and the USSR, in our view, does not have enough to offer economically to reverse them

Finally, the long-term nature of Turkey's internal problems, the rivalry between Turkey and Greece, and Ankara's doubts about the intensity of US commitments to Turkey promise to continue to provide the Soviets openings to exploit Turkey's weaknesses and to attempt to woo it away from NATO. Nevertheless, Ankara, despite its frictions with Washington, is extremely wary of its northern neighbor and is likely to remain closely linked to the United States, barring an unforeseen breakdown in internal order

Despite the obstacles it faces, the Soviet Union is certain to be a major actor in the Middle East for years to come. The Soviets regard the Middle East as the most important region of the Third World because of its proximity to the USSR, its vast reserves of oil and gas, and its economic and geostrategic significance to the West and Japan. The Middle East is the Soviet Union's most volatile borderland, and its explosiveness poses dangers because of the high stakes for the USSR and the United States in the region and the possibility that uncontrolled events could lead to a military confrontation between the two. At the same time, this volatility offers opportunities for expansion of Soviet influence that are not present on the USSR's other borders.

Moscow attaches considerable importance to becoming a coequal of Washington in the Middle East, as the statements of Soviet leaders attest. This competition with the United States is a major determinant of Soviet policy toward the region. Soviet writings and remarks of Soviet officials make it clear that Moscow regards the increased US military presence in the Middle East since the late 1970s as a major security concern and will devote considerable effort to counter it.

This superpower competition and the Soviet leaders' Marxist-Leninist "strategic view" are common denominators that bring a degree of unity to Moscow's policies toward the Middle East. Moreover, the USSR's position on some major regional issues—such as the Arab-Israeli conflict—affects its policies throughout the Middle East. Beyond these unifying factors, however, we believe the Kremlin does not have a "grand strategy" for the Middle East as a whole. Rather it has related but distinct policies toward the widely divergent regions and issues of the Middle East. These policies reflect specific Soviet equities and interests in each region and on each issue, as well as local conditions.

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Soviet Policy Toward the Middle East

Introduction

Expressing a view that we share, a Soviet specialist on US policy toward the Middle East commented [redacted] in October 1985 that:

Moscow's role in the Middle East has been much smaller than it could be, given the Soviet Union's interests in the region, its superpower status, and the Middle East's location on the USSR's southern borders.

This paper explores why this has been the case and assesses the prospects for the USSR playing a more prominent role in the Middle East under General Secretary Gorbachev. Thus, the paper looks at the degree of influence the Soviets wield in different countries. Where have they developed strong influence in the country's military, ruling party, and economic sector? What influence do they have in the country's leadership decisionmaking, especially on questions of foreign policy? How do the Soviets rate the relative importance of the different countries in the region? In which countries do they consider a military presence vital to the projection of Soviet force in the Middle East? In which countries might they consider intervening militarily to protect their investment against internal threat, external invasion, or to expand Soviet influence into a new area?

The paper also examines possible new directions in Soviet Middle Eastern policy during the rest of the 1980s. It pays particular attention to the Soviet view of US influence and intentions in the region—one of the most important factors affecting the Kremlin's formulation of policy toward the Middle East. It concludes with a look at some developments that could have a major impact on Soviet and US interests in the region

The Middle East as Seen From Moscow

Soviet interests in the Middle East stem first of all from its proximity to the USSR (see foldout map figure 9 at back). As Soviet officials have stressed [redacted], Moscow considers the Middle East to be a Soviet borderland comparable to Latin America for the United States. One Soviet official told a [redacted] the USSR considers the Mediterranean area to be as strategically important to the Soviet Union as the Caribbean area is to the United States. The Soviets repeatedly have made public declarations of their vital interests in the Middle East since 1955, when a Foreign Ministry statement contended that US attempts to establish military blocs and bases in the "Near and Middle East have a direct relation to the security of the USSR . . . [which is] located in direct proximity" to the region. In arguing that the entire Middle East is their borderland, the Soviets capitalize on the ambiguities of the geographic scope of the region and its different connotations in Soviet and Western usage (see inset).

Other factors that make the Middle East important to the USSR include:

- **Energy.** The region's vast deposits of oil and natural gas make it vital to the functioning of the economies of many Western and Third World countries. The USSR itself is self-sufficient in oil and natural gas but frequently has considered it cost effective to purchase these commodities in the Middle East or, in the case of oil, to accept it as payment for arms.¹ Soviet domestic oil production peaked in 1983.

¹ The Soviets resell most of this oil

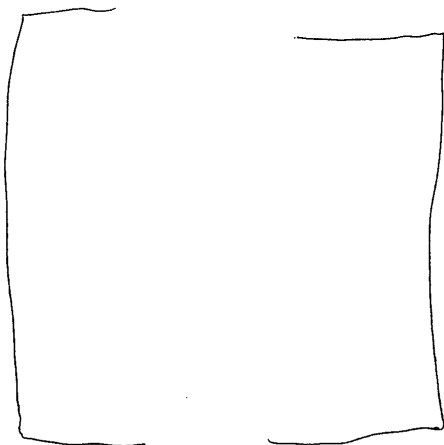
"Middle" or "Near"?

The Soviets divide the Middle East into three regions. They define the "Middle East" as Turkey, Iran, and Afghanistan—the three countries of the area that border the USSR. They classify the countries of the Levant (Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, and Israel) and the Arabian Peninsula, along with Iraq, Egypt, and Sudan under the "Near East," and the rest of the countries of North Africa west of Egypt under the term "North Africa." Correspondingly, coverage of the region in the Soviet Foreign Ministry is broken down into one department for the "Middle East," and another for the "Near East" and "North Africa." This paper examines Soviet policy in all three areas and, for sake of clarity, defines the entire region as the Middle East (see foldout map figure 1C at the back)

Although the downward trend was halted in 1986, the questionable prospects for a sustained rebound in output suggest that the Soviet Union will increase its purchases of Middle Eastern oil in the next few years.

- **Hard currency.** Despite the relative insignificance of the Middle East in overall Soviet trade (about 5 percent of dollar value), arms sales to the countries in the region have been a major hard currency earner. Since 1955 the Soviets have signed arms deals worth approximately \$67 billion with Middle Eastern states—about 70 percent of total Soviet arms sales to the non-Communist Third World. Earnings from these sales (in hard currency or its equivalent) have averaged about \$5 billion annually during recent years, or 15 to 20 percent of total Soviet hard currency earnings. These earnings have declined steadily, however, from the peak year of 1981 both in dollar terms and as a percentage of Soviet arms deliveries to Third World countries (see table 1).
- **Islam.** Beside the natural concerns any country has with a neighboring region, the USSR has the added concern that the Middle East contains many of the same religious and ethnic groups found within its

own borders (see figure 2). The approximately 45 million members of Islamic ethnic groups in the Soviet Union (roughly 16 percent of the total Soviet population) by and large have not been a security threat to the Communist regime since it subdued the Central Asian Basmachi rebels in the 1920s. Since the late 1970s, however, signs of increasing religious awareness among Soviet Muslims, coupled with the upsurge in Islamic fundamentalism in Iran, have prompted Soviet leaders to pay closer attention to the "Islamic factor" and to increase anti-Islamic propaganda. Just how seriously Soviet leaders regard the threat of "contamination" of



their Muslim population is unclear. A senior Soviet official

that concern over the impact that Islamic fundamentalism in Afghanistan and the Middle East as a whole could have on Soviet Muslims played a role in the Kremlin's decision to intervene. At any rate, it seems safe to conclude that the primarily Slavic leaders in the Kremlin view this issue with some concern. It gives a foreign policy question a domestic security angle and decisions about the treatment of a domestic minority implications for Soviet relations with Muslim countries.

- **Western and Japanese involvement.** Beyond its intrinsic value, the Middle East takes on added significance for the USSR because of the longstanding interest the Western powers and Japan have had in the region. The West European colonial powers dominated the Middle East until World War II, and the United States has been the predominant outside power since. Turkey represents NATO's southeastern flank, and the Levant and North Africa lie opposite NATO's entire southern flank. The West and Japan are vitally interested in the Middle East because of its vast reserves of oil and natural gas and its geostrategic location at the confluence of Asia, Africa, and Europe. The Western military presence—mainly US—is a primary concern to Moscow.

Table 1
Soviet Arms Deliveries to Middle Eastern Countries

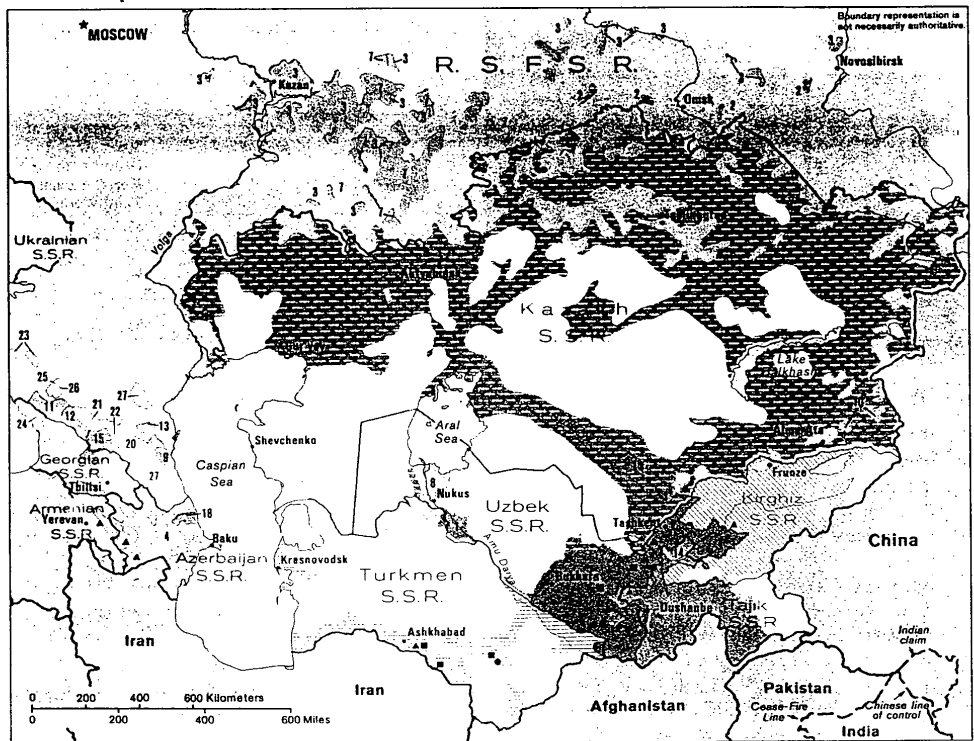
	Value (billion US \$)	As percentage of Soviet Arms Deliveries to the Non-Communist Third World
1978	4.3	67
1979	7.1	80
1980	5.8	70
1981	6.3	75
1982	6.6	74
1983	5.3	68
1984	4.6	61
1985	3.3	57
1986	1.4*	

* Through August.

For all these reasons, we believe the Soviets regard the Middle East as the most important region in the Third World. Yet, in the context of overall Soviet foreign policy, the Middle East takes a backseat to control over Eastern Europe, the strategic competition with the United States, the relationship with China, and relations with Western Europe.

The potential security threat to the Soviet homeland from the Middle East pales in comparison with those faced from the USSR's Central European and Far Eastern border regions. The overwhelming bulk of the Soviets' conventional forces and all of their intermediate-range nuclear missiles are stationed in these areas. The Middle East, however, is the USSR's most volatile borderland. The region's explosiveness poses potential dangers to the Soviets because the high stakes both the USSR and the United States have in the area mean that uncontrolled events could precipitate a military confrontation between the two superpowers. At the same time, the Middle East's volatility offers potential opportunities for rapid expansion of Soviet influence that are not present on the USSR's other border.

Figure 2
Muslim Peoples in the Soviet Union



Turkic Peoples

	1979 Population (in thousands)
1. Uzbeks	12,456
2. Kazakhs	6,556
3. Tatars	6,317
4. Azerbaijanis	5,477
5. Turkmens	2,028
6. Kirghiz	1,906
7. Bashkirs	1,371
8. Karakalpaks	303
9. Kumyks	228
10. Uighurs	211
11. Karachays	131
12. Balkars	66
13. Nogays	60

Iranian Peoples

	1979 Population (in thousands)
14. Tajiks	2,898
15. Ossetins	542
16. Kurds	116
17. Iranians	31
18. Tats	22
19. Baluch	19

Peoples of the Caucasus

	1979 Population (in thousands)
20. Chechens	756
21. Kabardians	322
22. Ingush	186
23. Adygeys	109
24. Abkhaz	91
25. Cherkess	46
26. Abazins	29
Dagestani peoples:	
Avars	483
Lezgins	383
Dargins	287
Laks	100
Tabasarans	75
Rutuls	15
Tsakhurs	14
Aguls	12

□ Non-Muslim people

Sparsely populated or uninhabited areas are shown in white.

The Ideological Dimension

The Middle East has not proved to be fertile ground for the export of Marxism-Leninism. Only in South Yemen and Afghanistan have Marxist regimes emerged, and even in those countries ideological roots do not run deep. The Communist parties in most of the other countries of the region have been largely irrelevant. The Soviets continue to support Communist parties and leftist movements in the region and undoubtedly seek the establishment of additional Marxist regimes. They have consistently shown, however, that they are willing to tolerate the suppression of the left if a Middle Eastern regime adopts a pro-Soviet foreign policy

A Key Factor: Competition With Washington

A leading Soviet expert on the United States told a Kuwaiti newspaper in December 1984:

When Kissinger was dealing with the Middle East, he did not consider Israel, Egypt, or Saudi Arabia, but he considered only the United States and the Soviet Union. This is the view of the current US Administration.

We believe this bipolar perspective also has long been the view of the leaders in the Kremlin. The Soviets' desire to erode US influence and replace it with their own has played a major role in most moves they have made in the Middle East since the decline of British influence in the region following World War II

For decades the Soviets have expressed open resentment and ridicule of Washington's claims that the United States has vital interests in the Middle East. The Soviet Foreign Ministry statement of 1955 asserting that the Middle East was vital to Soviet security because of the USSR's proximity went on to state that the same could not be said "about the USA,

located thousands of kilometers from this region." A quarter of a century later, then Foreign Minister Gromyko stated during a speech two months after the Carter Doctrine was pronounced that US foreign policy circles

... are stressing more and more often and with greater importunity the "vital interests" of the USA. It is asserted that in the Persian Gulf and, for that matter, anyplace where there are sources of oil are areas where US "vital interests" are involved . . . It is said that the same "vital interests" are present in the Middle East. In all parts of Asia—south of our borders—it is the same thing.

Gorbachev made a similar remark in October 1985 in the joint press conference he held with French President Mitterrand during their meetings in Paris

Despite this resentment, Soviet leaders clearly recognize that the United States is, indeed, vitally interested in the Middle East. Soviet commentaries note the importance US presidents have attached to the region dating from the Truman Doctrine of the 1940s, through the Eisenhower Doctrine of the 1950s, and the Carter and Reagan Doctrines of the 1980s. One scholarly Soviet study of US Middle Eastern policy in the 1970s highlights President Nixon's statement to Congress in May 1973 that "no other crisis region of the world has greater importance or priority for the USA than the Middle East.

The Soviets attach vital importance to the increased US military presence in the Middle East that began in the late 1970s. Ignoring US concerns over the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and possible Soviet exploitation of turmoil in post-Shah Iran, Moscow has portrayed all the recent deployments of US forces to the Middle East as "bridgeheads" for the future use of US military power in regional states and against the USSR itself. Soviet propaganda, for example, depicts the battalion of the US 82nd Airborne Division that participates in the Multinational Force of Observers monitoring the Egyptian-Israeli border in the Sinai as

a "shock unit of the US 'Rapid Deployment Force'" (RDF). A 1983 Soviet study of US policy in the Third World claims that the Reagan administration's goal is

the establishment of US military control over the resources of the Near and Middle East; the creation of a hotbed of tension close to the Soviet border; the imposition of constant pressure on the USSR from the south

Despite the self-serving exaggeration of such rhetoric, the Soviets have apparently regarded Washington's actions as a serious challenge to their position in the region. Lebanon is a case in point. Brezhnev stated publicly just prior to the formal US announcement that a contingent of Marines would be deployed to Beirut in the aftermath of the Israeli invasion of 1982 that the Soviet Union was "categorically opposed" to such a move, which, if it occurred, would force the USSR "to build its policy taking this fact into account." The Soviet decision to deploy SA-5 surface-to-air-missile (SAM) units to Syria was taken shortly after Brezhnev's warning. The Kremlin probably would have sent the SA-5s even without the US military deployment given the damaged state of Syria's defenses and Soviet-Syrian relations, but the Marine deployment may have erased any doubts the Soviets had about the necessity of such a move.

The creation of the RDF and later the US Central Command (CENTCOM) appears to be a particularly worrisome development for Moscow

[] Soviet

media continually focus on CENTCOM's activities in the Middle East, particularly on its alleged creation of bridgeheads for future military action against regional countries—including the USSR

In addition to the US forces in this region, the Soviets also have to consider the military potential of US allies France, Great Britain, and Italy, not to mention Turkey. The Soviets realize, however, that the United



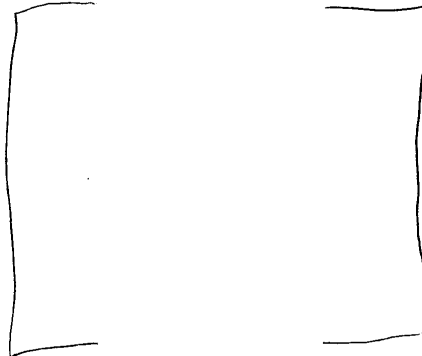
A US B-52 bomber drops bombs in Egyptian desert during last day of joint US-Egyptian "Bright Star" exercise

States and the West Europeans do not always agree on Middle Eastern matters, thus reducing the usefulness to Washington of the West European forces in the region. Moreover, Moscow's own East European and Cuban allies have numerous military, security, and economic advisers in Middle Eastern countries who complement the USSR's presence and give the Kremlin another lever with which to influence regional governments, insurgents, and terrorist groups. Unlike Washington's allies, though, none of these Soviet allies—with the possible exception of Cuba—is capable of force projection in the Middle East

Overview of Soviet Fortunes in the Middle East Since 1970

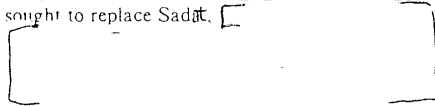
To evaluate the Soviets' current position in the Middle East, their past record in the region should be examined, especially during the period since the

height of Soviet influence in 1970.² The Soviet successes in the late 1960s in Egypt, Syria, and Iraq, coupled with the steady improvement in relations with the northern tier countries, gave Moscow the strongest position it has ever enjoyed in the Middle East. The comment of one Western scholar that the USSR's status in the region at the start of the 1970s "can only be regarded as a singular triumph from the perspective of the past" is representative of the generally held view in the West at that time



1970-78

Nasser's death in September 1970 marked the beginning of the decline of Soviet influence in Egypt and in the Arab world in general. His successor, Anwar Sadat, did not share his view of the importance of Soviet support for Egypt and resented Moscow's intrusive presence in the country. Sadat—at first tentatively, then decisively—moved to reduce Soviet influence. His first step in May 1971 was to remove the pro-Soviet faction headed by Ali Sabry, who sought to replace Sadat.



Two months after Sabry's removal, the Soviets suffered another blow, this time in Sudan. The Sudanese Communist Party—then the largest and most influential in the Middle East—backed a military coup against President Nimeiri and subsequently was decimated after he managed, with Sadat's help, to restore control. Soviet influence in Sudan declined precipitately

² For background on Russian/Soviet involvement in the Middle East prior to 1970, see appendix 7

³ Aaron S. Klieman, *Soviet Russia and the Middle East*, Studies in International Affairs No. 14 (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1970), p. 37



Over the next few years, Sadat made a decisive break with Moscow and threw Egypt's lot in with the United States. He sent most of the Soviet military personnel stationed in Egypt home in July 1972 and deprived the Soviets of the use of Egyptian air bases and most naval facilities.³ Although Soviet weapons enabled Egypt to score early gains in the October 1973 Arab-Israeli war, Sadat turned to Washington at the end of the fighting to obtain a settlement with Israel. Soviet-Egyptian relations steadily deteriorated as the United States brokered Egyptian-Israeli disengagement agreements in 1974 and 1975. The process culminated in Sadat's abrogation of the Soviet-Egyptian friendship and cooperation treaty in 1976 and his decision a year later to seek a separate peace with Israel using the United States as a middleman. Within a short span, the Soviets saw their premier relationship in the Middle East—one that had taken 15 years and extensive military and economic aid to build—crumble and Washington pick up the pieces, and they were unable to do anything to prevent it

The loss of Egypt forced the Soviets to shift their support to the more radical Arabs, who also opposed Sadat's willingness to negotiate unilaterally with Israel. Syria and the PLO became the USSR's primary clients in the region beginning in the mid-1970s. Moscow also developed closer ties to Libya and

³ Sadat completely cut off Soviet use of Egyptian naval facilities in 1977

Bilateral trade soared, and the two signed an accord on "Good Neighborly and Friendly Cooperation" in 1978.

1979-86

Since 1979 the Soviets have improved their position in the northern tier and benefited from US setbacks in the Middle East as a whole. Moscow's position in the Arab-Israeli arena, however, has not markedly improved.

The USSR received a strategic windfall in the northern tier in 1979 with the demise of the Shah and the loss of US influence in Iran. An article in the Soviet scholarly journal *Narody Azii i Afriki* in 1979 stated that:

As a result of the Iranian Revolution, a change has taken place in the balance of power in the Near and Middle East. The liquidation of the pro-Western . . . regime of the Shah and the collapse of the military-political bloc, CENTO, has weakened the economic and strategic position of the West, and especially that of the United States, in the region and in the entire world.

Instead of an Iran that acted as a US "gendarme" in the region

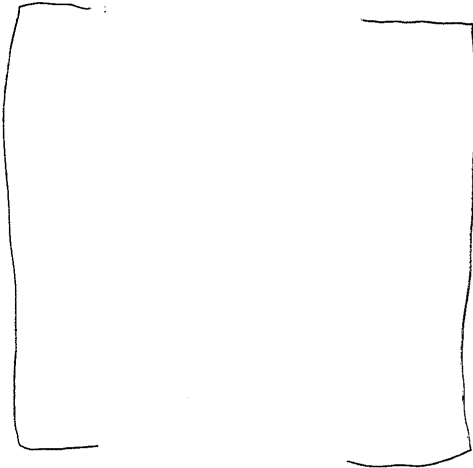
the Soviets now had a neighbor that was viscerally opposed to the United States. Moscow, however, was able to make little headway of its own in Tehran during the first three years of Ayatollah Khomeini's rule. By the spring of 1982, the Soviets—evidently concluding that as long as Khomeini was in power their prospects for increasing influence in Tehran would remain poor—abandoned attempts to court the regime and tilted toward Iraq in its war with Iran. Since then, relations have remained frigid.

The invasion of Afghanistan in December 1979 put Soviet forces in control of Kabul for the first time. The Afghan resistance, however, grew even stronger

Algeria, while South Yemen became the first Arab country to be ruled by a Marxist regime when 'Abd al-Fattah Isma'il seized power in 1978. Although Iraq was a major Soviet arms client and signed a friendship and cooperation treaty with the USSR, by 1978 it had begun buying arms from the West and cracking down on the Iraqi Communist Party.

The Soviets were unable to duplicate elsewhere in the Middle East the naval and air facilities they lost in Egypt (and in Somalia in 1977). Through wider use of port facilities in Syria, South Yemen, and other countries and greater dependence on replenishment at sea, however, they continued to maintain sizable naval contingents in the Mediterranean and the Indian Ocean.

The Afghan Marxists' seizure of power in 1978 was a breakthrough for Moscow in the northern tier. Soviet involvement in Afghanistan, already extensive, grew markedly under the Taraki regime. The Marxist takeover in Kabul, however, strained Soviet ties to the Shah of Iran. The cordial relations they had developed in the 1960s and early 1970s had already begun to sour as a result of Iran's expanding military ties to the United States and more assertive regional policy, which often clashed with Soviet interests. With Turkey, on the other hand, the Soviets managed to continue and even broaden the detente of the 1960s.



to help Arafat during the invasion and its unwillingness to jeopardize its relationship with Damascus by stepping in forcefully to resolve the Arafat-Assad feud strained its relations with the PLO chief. Arafat's setbacks led him to consider a political solution to the Palestinian problem through joint action with Jordan and—potentially—cooperation with the United States, a move that further chilled Soviet-PLO relations. The USSR moved no closer to its goal of being included in Arab-Israeli negotiations on the Palestinian issue but took solace from Washington's inability to convince other Arabs to join the Camp David framework for peace talks with Israel

after the invasion and prevented the Soviets from consolidating control, much less capitalizing throughout the region on their military presence. The invasion, in fact, made most Middle Eastern states even more suspicious of Soviet intentions and, coupled with the Iranian revolution and the outbreak of the war between Iran and Iraq, convinced some Arab countries (as well as Pakistan) to increase military cooperation with the United States.

The Soviets reaped some benefits from the anti-US backlash generated by the 1978 Camp David accords between Egypt and Israel and by Washington's abortive attempt to establish a pro-US central government in Lebanon following Israel's 1982 invasion. The USSR and Syria moved even closer together than they had been prior to the late 1970s. They signed a friendship and cooperation treaty in 1980, and Moscow qualitatively increased its involvement by sending two SA-5 SAM units to Syria in 1983 manned by approximately 2,000 Soviet personnel.

The USSR's other main Arab client, the PLO, underwent a serious decline beginning in 1982 with the Israeli invasion of Lebanon, which was aimed at eradicating PLO influence in that country. The jolt of the PLO's defeat led to a rift within Fatah, the PLO's main faction, and a falling out between PLO leader Arafat and Syrian President Assad. Moscow's failure

Libyan leader Qadhafi's growing fear of US intentions after US Navy jets shot down two Libyan aircraft over the Gulf of Sidra in 1981 prompted him to grant the Soviets wider access to Libyan naval and air facilities. That same year, Muslim fundamentalists in Egypt assassinated the Soviets' most formidable opponent in the Arab world, Anwar Sadat. The death of such an important US ally was a windfall for Moscow, but Egyptian President Mubarak has maintained his country's close links to Washington. Mubarak has avoided Sadat's outspoken anti-Sovietism but moved much more slowly in normalizing relations than the Soviets had hoped. Although ambassadorial ties were resumed in the summer of 1984, there has been no significant improvement in overall relations.

Perhaps one of the USSR's most significant achievements in the Arab world over the last few years has been its improvement in relations with Iraq. Seeing no prospects for gains in Iran and fearing an Iranian victory over Iraq, the Soviets began in 1982 to provide Baghdad with the weaponry it required to pursue the war. Political relations have improved as a result, but the legacy of past disputes has only been put aside, not forgotten. The relationship remains narrowly based on the supply of arms, and the Soviets continue to be worried about Iraq's increasing political, economic, and military contacts with the West—including the United States

Moscow similarly has been concerned over Algeria's drift Westward since President Bendjedid took over in 1979. The Soviets have tried hard to arrest the drift but with little success. The care and thoroughness with which Bendjedid has shifted Algeria's economy away from the socialist model and its foreign policy from a heavily pro-Soviet "nonaligned" stance suggest that these are strategic rather than tactical moves.

On the Arabian peninsula, the Soviet Union maintained its position in South Yemen despite the ouster of the staunchly pro-Soviet Isma'il in 1980 and the bloody coup against his successor, Hasani, in January 1986. The Soviets also managed to move closer to the regime in North Yemen without reducing their support for the South. Moscow and Sanaa signed a major arms deal in 1979 and a friendship and cooperation treaty in 1984. That positive trend has been jeopardized, however, by the frictions that the most recent coup in Aden has generated in Soviet-North Yemeni relations:

The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and the war between Iran and Iraq initially prompted most of the conservative Gulf states to increase security cooperation with the United States and shun establishing relations with the USSR. By 1985, however, the effects of these shocks had lessened, and the Gulf states' disenchantment with US support for Israel had increased to the point where Oman and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) established relations with the Soviet Union. The other Gulf states appear to be moving in the same direction, although suspicion of Soviet complicity in Hasani's ouster is likely to slow the process.

Gorbachev's record since assuming power in March 1985 suggests that the United States can expect a more activist and tactically flexible Soviet policy in the Middle East than it has faced since the early 1970s. He has yet to make any major innovations in Soviet policy toward the region—save, perhaps, beginning a tentative dialogue with Israel. But he has demonstrated through his military support for Moscow's Arab and Afghan clients, his frequent meetings with Middle Eastern leaders, and the numerous envoys he has dispatched to the area that the Kremlin intends to be much more assertive in promoting Soviet interests.

The Soviet Balance Sheet Today

The Arab World

The Strategic Prize: Egypt

The Soviets have yet to recover fully in the Arab world from their loss of Egypt. Soviet influence in Syria, Libya, and South Yemen hardly replaces the loss of influence in Egypt, which Moscow openly acknowledges, in the words of one Soviet scholar, as "the key and most important country of the Arab world." The Arabs' chances of winning or even holding their own in a war with Israel without Egyptian participation are slim.

Recognizing Egypt's strategic importance in the Middle East, the Soviets are devoting considerable effort to rebuilding their influence there or, at least, reducing Cairo's dependence on the United States. Since the return of ambassadors in the summer of 1984, the foreign ministers have met at the United Nations [

] Moscow also has toned down its media criticism of Egyptian policies. [

[Obstacles to Closer Relations. Egypt's estimated \$2.5 billion debt for past military purchases from the USSR appears to be the most immediate obstacle hindering an expansion of bilateral ties. The Egyptians have not serviced the debt since 1977, when Sadat unilaterally declared a 10-year moratorium on payments. [the Soviets have made resolution of the debt a precondition for meeting Egyptian requests for expanded trade and military equipment. Moscow, in our view, does not expect to recover the entire debt, but it wants the

Egyptians to begin making at least minimal payments on the principal before it is willing to engage in major new transactions. Although bilateral trade is likely to expand, Egypt's growing financial difficulties and the USSR's own economic stringencies limit both sides' ability to compromise on the debt issue and probably will constrain any significant expansion of overall trade.

Despite Cairo's hope to use the "Soviet card" in bargaining with Washington, Egyptian leaders have repeatedly stated in public that they are not about to reduce Egypt's strong political, military, and economic ties to the United States. Although the Egyptians need spare parts to keep their Soviet weapons purchased in the 1960s and 1970s functioning, they have made the expensive and disruptive shift to dependence on Western arms and do not appear anxious to purchase major weapon systems from the Soviets. Such purchases would not only create more logistic problems for the Egyptians and risk making them dependent on Moscow again but also might undermine their access to US arms. Cairo is likely during the next five years to purchase relatively small amounts of Soviet weapons and only those types that do not require a sizable Soviet advisory presence in Egypt.

Fundamental political differences between Moscow and Cairo also stand in the way of a major improvement in relations, and those differences are unlikely to abate significantly. The two sides take different approaches to resolving the Arab-Israeli dispute. Although the Egyptians endorse the concept of an international conference on the question—the Kremlin's pet project—they see greater merit in direct negotiations between the parties (what the Soviets criticize as "separate deals") to pave the way for a comprehensive settlement. In addition,

see the USSR's role more as one of a guarantor than as an active participant in the formulation of a final settlement.

Moscow's ties to Syria and Libya—Cairo's two main rivals—also impose some limits on any significant improvement in Soviet-Egyptian relations. The Soviets probably would justify any move closer to Egypt by trying to convince Damascus that they were



drawing Cairo away from Washington. The prospects for major Soviet advances in Egypt during the next few years are unlikely to be good enough, however, for the Soviets to risk undermining their position in Syria, which has taken so long to build. Moscow is less concerned about upsetting Libyan leader Qadhafi but still will not want to jeopardize its growing military access to Libya for uncertain gains in Egypt.

Moscow's Goals. The Soviets are likely to downplay these political differences with the Egyptians.

It appears, however, that Moscow, although the suitor, is not prepared to give something for nothing. Karen Brutents, senior Middle Eastern specialist in the CPSU Central Committee's International Department, noted in an interview in October 1984 that the improvement of bilateral relations "depends more on Egypt." That view apparently holds today. The Soviets' immediate aims seem to be:

- Poisoning US-Egyptian relations.
- Undermining Egypt's commitment to the Camp David accords.

- Achieving at least minimal progress in economic relations.
- Fostering a rapprochement between Cairo and Damascus.

Achievement of these goals would clear the path for a broader improvement in bilateral ties and minimize the risk of undercutting Soviet relations with Syria.

The Soviets apparently do not expect major progress any time soon in realizing these goals []

We believe that Egypt, while giving greater emphasis to its nonalignment, will almost certainly remain in the US camp for at least the next few years. Further limited improvement in Soviet-Egyptian ties is probable, but []

[] there will be no return to the close relationship of the late 1960s. The Egyptians have made it clear that they do not intend to repeat that experience

The Linchpin: Syria

Syria has been central to the Soviets' interests in the Middle East since the early 1970s. Their relationship with Syria—by far the most powerful Arab "confrontation" state opposing Israel—has provided them entree into the Middle East and influence in the Arab-Israeli dispute. Moscow and Damascus have been drawn together by some common objectives—above all, to prevent Israel and the United States from achieving separate peace settlements between Tel Aviv and each of its Arab neighbors—as well as by the USSR's lack of alternative avenues of influence in the region and Syria's lack of alternative sources of military support. To achieve their objectives, they have had nowhere else to turn but toward each other. In our view, it is this mutual dependence rather than affinity or ideological compatibility that has solidified the relationship

Military Backing: The Tie That Binds. The dominant factor in the Soviet-Syrian relationship is Moscow's willingness to provide military support. The Soviets have delivered almost \$17 billion worth of weapons through 1985 to Syria, more than to any other Third World client. The USSR and its East European allies provide Syria with virtually all of its arms and, in recent years, have ensured that it is among the first to receive newly exported versions of Soviet weapons.

The dollar value of Soviet weaponry delivered has decreased since the peak year of 1980, but the decline probably will be reversed soon []



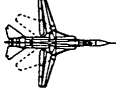




[] the Syrians will soon receive their first MIG-29s (see figure 3 and foldout figure 11 at the back).

Beyond the approximately 3,000 Soviet military advisers and technicians with Syrian forces (see inset, page 15), the USSR has some independent military units of its own in Syria. The most significant were the two SA-5 SAM units the Soviets sent to Syria in early 1983. There were some 2,000 Soviet personnel manning the SA-5 complexes at Hims and Dumayr until they began leaving in October 1984 [] strongly suggest that there now are 50 to 100 Soviet advisers and technicians at each complex and that they—along with the Soviets at the Syrian air defense headquarters in Damascus—maintain a primary role in the command and control of the missiles. Final control over firing the missiles.

¹ See figures in inset on page 18

⁴ For []

Figure 3
Selected Weapon Systems the Soviets Might Provide
Syria During the Rest of the 1980s

	Description	Introduced in Soviet Forces
Air/Air Defense Systems		
SA-10 	Transportable, medium-range (100 km) SAM. Newest, most capable Soviet system. Effective against aircraft at all altitudes. Radar can be used with other SAMs against low-altitude targets.	1980
SA-11 	Mobile low-to-medium altitude, medium-range (30 km) SAM.	1982
MIG-27 Flogger D/J 	Improved MIG-23 ground attack aircraft with greater payload and better navigation system. J variant equipped with laser range-finder and target designator.	1975/1978
MIG-29 Fulcrum 	Latest Soviet combat aircraft. Designed for close air-to-air combat. May also serve as a fighter-bomber. Only small number produced thus far.	1984
SU-25 Frogfoot 	Latest Soviet ground attack aircraft. In use with Soviet forces in Afghanistan and exported to Iraq in 1985.	1981
Ground Forces Systems		
T-80 	Latest Soviet medium tank with gas turbine engine, improved armor protection, and better mobility than earlier tanks. Able to fire antitank guided missile through gun tube.	1981
Naval Systems		
F-Class Submarine 	Diesel-powered attack submarine. Already exported to several countries outside the Warsaw Pact.	1958

Note: Data based on information as of November 1986.

Soviet Military Advisory Presence

To assist the Syrians in operating and maintaining Soviet equipment, as well as to train them in general military tactics and doctrine, Moscow maintains approximately 3,000 military advisers and technicians in Syria. They are present at virtually every level of the Syrian armed forces, from battalion to general command. The Soviets, themselves, assist in manning—and in some cases exclusively operate—most of the advanced electronic warfare equipment and the air defense early warning and command-and control network in Syria.

Moscow also maintains a dozen or so advisers and technicians with Syrian combat and early warning radar units in Lebanon, according to liaison source.

In addition, the Soviets provide Damascus with military intelligence.

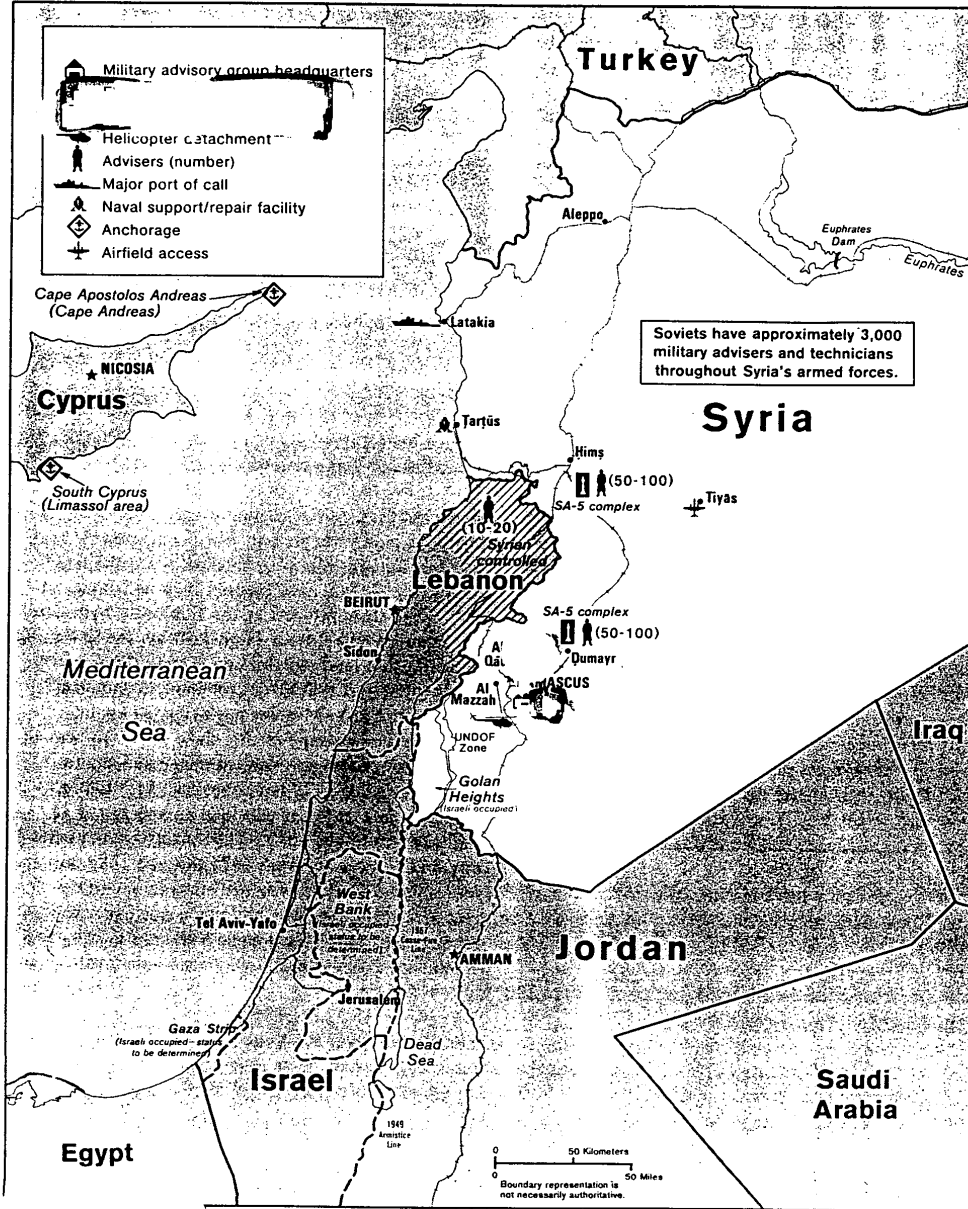
We assume that, since 1981, during periods of Syrian-Israeli tensions, the Soviets have passed intelligence to the Syrians gleaned by intelligence collection ships and aircraft deployed to the area.

however, probably has been turned over to the Syrians. Remaining independent Soviet units in Syria include:

Economic Aid. Soviet economic assistance to Syria has been highly visible but, when compared to Arab and Iranian aid, relatively modest. Since the late 1950s, the Soviets have focused their assistance on such large-scale projects as the Euphrates hydroelectric complex, the Tartus-Hims railway, the Syrian oil industry, and land reclamation. Today there are approximately 1,000 Soviet economic technicians working in Syria. Moscow has extended about \$2 billion in economic credits since 1957. (By way of comparison, Arab government disbursements to Damascus since 1979 have averaged \$1.3 billion annually, and Iran has provided an average of \$1 billion a year since 1982.) The Soviets did not extend any credits to Syria from 1977 through 1982, but the more than \$1 billion provided since then and the recent negotiations over building a nuclear power reactor and research center in Syria are leading to a significant expansion of Soviet economic involvement in the country.

The Syrian Quid Pro Quo. In return for this assistance, the Syrians have granted the Soviets some access to the Syrian ports of Tartus and Latakia and

Figure 4
Soviet Military Presence In and Near Syria, December 1986



Soviet Arms: How They Are Paid For

the military airfield at Tiyas. The Soviet Mediterranean Flotilla regularly receives support from Soviet logistic ships stationed in Tartus. The Soviets have used Tiyas airfield since 1972. They deployed IL-38 antisubmarine warfare and naval reconnaissance aircraft there in 1981 and have done so eight times since mid-1983 on what now appears to be a regular basis. TU-16 Badger reconnaissance aircraft also deployed to Tiyas in 1981 and six times since early 1985

Outside the military sphere, the Soviets receive Syrian support in international forums on many issues, including Afghanistan and Moscow's perennial "peace" offensives. In addition to the hard currency the Soviets earn from arms sales to Syria, the Syrians also apparently give Soviet bids on economic projects in Syria preferential consideration because of the USSR's importance as a source of arms.

Limited Soviet Influence. Despite the wide scope of their presence in Syria, the Soviets have little sway over important decisions made by the Assad regime.

On the one occasion when the USSR is known to have attempted to use its military relationship to pressure the Syrians to change their policy—during Syria's military intervention in Lebanon in 1976-77—it failed.

Damascus, in retaliation for Moscow's cutoff on arms deliveries, threatened in January 1977 to bar Soviet use of the port of Tartus. Assad's threat eventually led to a resumption of arms shipment.

A major factor behind the USSR's lack of influence over Syrian policymaking is the mutual distrust that has marked relations since Assad's seizure of power in 1970. The Soviets favored the man Assad ousted,

* The Soviets strongly opposed the Syrian intervention on the side of the Christians against the PLO and Lebanese leftist

Factsheet on Soviet-Syrian Relations*Soviet Ambassador: Aleksandr Dzasokhov (assumed post in October 1986)**Syrian Ambassador: Muhammad Ali Halabi (assumed post in March 1983)***Estimated Number of Soviet Personnel
in Syria (excluding dependents)**

<i>Diplomatic</i> ^a	90
<i>Military advisers and technicians</i>	3,000
<i>Independent Soviet military units</i>	400
<i>Economic advisers and technicians</i>	1,000
Total	4,490

**Estimated Number of Syrian Personnel
Receiving Military Training in USSR**

1980	50
1981	75
1982	100
1983	NA
1984	1,500
1985	NA

Soviet Trade With Syria (million US \$)^b

	<i>Exports</i>	<i>Imports</i>	<i>Total</i>
1975	138	96	234
1980	258	236	494
1981	387	350	737
1982	291	415	706
1983	277	405	683
1984	306	271	577
1985	384	227	611

**Soviet Economic Credits/Grants Extended
(million US \$)**

1975	7
1980	0
1981	56
1982	0
1983	273
1984	820
1985	0

Military Sales (million US \$)**Facilities Used by Soviet Military**

<i>Latakia</i>	<i>Major port of call</i>
<i>Tartus</i>	<i>Naval support/repair facility</i>
<i>Tiyas Airfield</i>	<i>Used by Soviet IL-38 and TU-16 naval reconnaissance aircraft</i>
<i>Al Mazzah Airfield (Damascus)</i>	<i>Used by Soviet electronic countermeasures helicopter unit</i>

^a All officials—political, economic, military, intelligence—who work in the Embassy and Consulate (Aleppo), as well as media and trade representatives.^b From official Soviet statistics, which do not include all military trade.

Salah Jedid, the leader of the radical left wing of the Syrian Ba'th Party, who, during his 1966-70 tenure, moved Syria closer to the Soviet Union.

[] stated that the Soviets were deeply suspicious of Assad when he first took power. They learned to live with him, but the suspicions remained.

Both sides have kept each other in the dark about major issues. Former Secretary of State Kissinger tells in his memoirs how Assad blocked the Soviets from any involvement in the 1974 Golan Heights disengagement agreement with Israel that the United States had mediated. In January 1977, []

Perhaps the most striking examples of failure to consult were the Syrian military actions in 1976 and 1980. Syrian troops began their move into Lebanon in June 1976 as a shocked Soviet Premier Kosygin arrived in Damascus. Four years later a similar embarrassment for the Soviets occurred when Syrian troops advanced toward the Jordanian border just as Deputy Chairman of the Supreme Soviet Kuznetsov was about to arrive in Damascus for ratification of the Soviet-Syrian treaty of friendship and cooperation.

[] Brezhnev personally contacted Assad to ask why the Soviets had not been consulted before Syria took this step.

This lack of consultation evidently continues. Soviet officials frequently complain [] that Damascus does not discuss its policy in Lebanon or contacts with the United States with them. Moscow, for its part, did not brief the Syrians fully on the US-Soviet talks on the Middle East in Geneva in February 1985. []

With Friends Like These . . .

Henry Kissinger describes in his memoirs President Assad's actions denying the Soviets a role in the Golan Heights disengagement talks between Syria and Israel in 1974. Kissinger, using "shuttle diplomacy," brokered the talks. Gromyko traveled to Damascus for the express purpose of obtaining a voice in the negotiations. But Assad, according to Kissinger, did not want to give Moscow a voice, "as he made clear by telling me proudly and in great detail how he had prevented Gromyko from visiting Damascus while I was there." Kissinger sums up the incident:

I have no idea how we could have insisted on an exclusively American mediation had Assad chosen otherwise. Nothing so much demonstrated the weakness of the Soviet position than the fact that Assad did not. . . . The President of Syria, remarkably, preferred to negotiate *without* his principal ally.^a

Soviet-Syrian ties have become closer since 1974, but the Soviets still worry that Assad, if he gets the right terms, will reach an agreement with the United States and Israel behind the USSR's back.

^a Henry Kissinger, *Years of Upheaval* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1982), pp. 956, 1033-3.

Despite the 1980 Soviet-Syrian friendship and cooperation treaty and all the emphasis Soviet media give to the development of socialism in Syria, the Soviets apparently do not see Syria as a secure base of Soviet influence or fertile ground for socialism. They have commented in the past that Syria is unlikely to develop a socialist system, given the lack of an organized working class and with the bourgeoisie firmly in power. They also have made it clear they have no illusions about the depth and durability of socialism in Syria. They regard Ba'thist socialism as a charade and the Syrians as traders and capitalists whose political dependability is suspect. In recent

years, there also have been reports [] of Soviet leaders urging Assad to limit capitalist practices in Syria

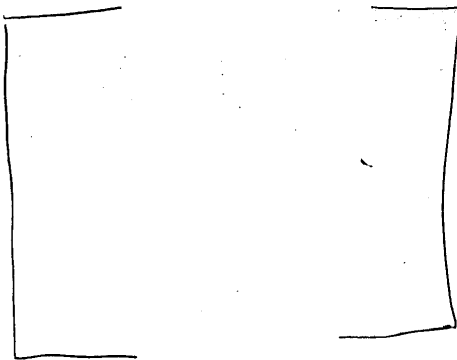
Policy Differences. On policy issues, Soviet-Syrian differences center on the extent of Soviet military support for Syrian strategic objectives and on specific policy toward the PLO and Iraq and—to a lesser extent—Egypt, Lebanon, and the Arab-Israeli peace process. The Soviets have claimed that a primary source of tension in the Soviet-Syrian relationship is the Assad regime's attempts to broaden the 1980 treaty to commit the USSR to come to Syria's defense militarily in the event of war. Soon after the announcement in 1981 of the US-Israeli "strategic cooperation" agreement, the Syrians began [] calling for a similar accord between Syria and the USSR. They have also sought Moscow's backing for their goal of "strategic parity" with Israel

The Soviets have been elusive, however. []

[] Soviet gave what Damascus considered a feeble response to a Syrian study of the Soviet position in the event of a US military move back into Lebanon.

[] and past Soviet behavior strongly suggest that Moscow is still determined not to tie its hands to a specific response in the event of another Syrian-Israeli war. Although the dispatch to Syria of Soviet SA-5 units in 1983 committed Moscow to a much greater degree than ever before, it evidently continued to refrain from putting that commitment in writing

Different perspectives on the PLO have led to some of the sharpest Soviet-Syrian differences over the past decade. Moscow has consistently opposed Syrian attempts to dominate the organization, from the Syrian intervention against PLO forces in Lebanon in 1976 to the Damascus-backed attacks on Palestinian camps



Syrian President Hafez Assad and Soviet General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev during their June 1985 meeting in the Kremlin.

there beginning in the spring of 1985 []

[] The Soviets, however, have had little success in tempering Syrian moves against the PLO and have mixed feelings because they have many of the same grievances with Arafat.¹⁰

Moscow, similarly, has had no success in convincing Assad to mend fences with Iraq and Egypt. As for Lebanon, the Soviets have suppressed their misgivings about Syrian policy there since the Israeli invasion in 1982, but they still oppose long-term Syrian domination of the country. They have made it clear that under no conditions would the USSR support the partition of Lebanon for the benefit of a "Greater Syria"

Differing Perspectives on the Peace Process. Soviet-Syrian difficulties over the Arab-Israeli peace process have usually not been over the final terms of a settlement but over how best to obtain those terms. Moscow has sought a comprehensive settlement at an

¹⁰ For a full discussion of the Soviet view of the PLO-Syrian dispute

international conference that it would chair jointly with Washington—the solution that would give the USSR the greatest voice. Damascus refused to attend the only international conference on the issue that has ever been held—at Geneva in December 1973—and would not support the US-Soviet call in October 1977 for reconvening the conference. The Syrians have publicly expressed support for the USSR's current effort to convene a conference, but Assad told

that an international conference would be meaningless until the Arabs unite and achieve military parity with Israel. The Deputy Chief of the Soviet Foreign Ministry's Near East and North Africa Administration admitted

that Syria was one of the few Arab countries that was not showing continuing interest in Moscow's proposed international conference

In our view, the Soviets cannot risk endorsing any peace initiative that does not meet most of Syria's objectives, even if by doing so they could achieve their main objective—gaining a voice in the peace process. Alienating Damascus to gain entree into the peace process would be an empty victory. The Soviets would have a seat at the peace conference but no ally to represent. At the same time, Moscow has not shown the ability to convince Damascus to soften its position. Thus, the Soviets are left with little choice but to follow the Syrian lead, and the Syrians appear in no hurry to engage in negotiations

More broadly, the Soviets' overwhelming dependence on Syria for influence in the region requires them, no matter how much they dislike it, to follow or at least acquiesce in Damascus' lead on most major issues in the Arab world. In our view, as long as Syria remains the centerpiece of Soviet strategy—which we believe it will for many years to come unless the Soviets can reestablish a close relationship with Egypt—Moscow will continue to adjust its policies toward other countries to mesh with its Syrian policy. This will not prevent improvement in the USSR's ties to Iraq, Jordan, Egypt, or Yasir Arafat, but it will limit such developments.¹¹

¹¹ See "Impact of Future Developments" section for discussion of Soviet policy toward Syria after Assad and of the impact a breakthrough in Moscow's relations with Egypt would have on Soviet-Syrian ties

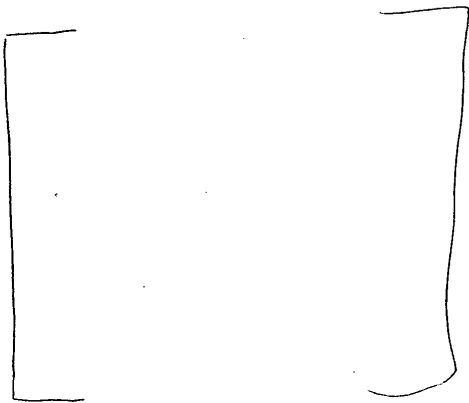
Footholds on the Periphery: Libya and South Yemen¹²

The USSR has devoted considerable resources to expanding its military presence in Libya and South Yemen and probably sees them as useful footholds for complicating US policy and, potentially, expanding Soviet influence in the region. Nonetheless, the fact that the USSR's only Arab clients beside Syria are Libya and South Yemen speaks volumes about the decline of Moscow's influence in the Middle East since the early 1970s. Both countries are geographically and politically on the fringes of the Arab world and the Arab-Israeli dispute

Libya. Libya is one of Moscow's consolation prizes in the Middle East. When the grand prize—Egypt—began to slip away from the Soviets in the early 1970s, they attempted to compensate for the loss wherever they could. Qadhafi's Libya, despite its pan-Islamic goals and virulent anti-Communism, was a logical candidate for Soviet courting. Both states opposed Sadat's Egypt, "separate deals" with Israel, and the US presence in the Middle East. Qadhafi saw, and still sees, the USSR as a primary source of the modern weapons he believes he needs to achieve his ambitious goals. For Moscow, Qadhafi's desire to buy arms and Libya's vast oil wealth make the country a lucrative source of hard currency. In recent years, the Soviets have also begun to make greater use of Libyan ports and airfields, although Moscow's access hardly replaces what it lost in Egypt. Finally, the Kremlin often benefits—without having to bear the risk or cost—from Qadhafi's worldwide subversive activities against friends of the United States:



As with Syria, Iraq, and Algeria, the military component is the core of the Soviet-Libyan relationship. The USSR has sold more arms to Libya (deliveries estimated to be worth over \$11 billion through 1985—all since 1970) than to any other Third World country except Syria and Iraq. Tripoli paid strictly in hard currency until 1982, when it began meeting part of its bill in oil.¹⁹ Since then Libya has provided Moscow an average of about 115,000 barrels of oil a day, which was worth about \$1.2 billion annually before this year's precipitate drop in the world price of oil. In addition, the Soviets maintain approximately 2,000 military advisers and technicians throughout Libya's armed forces. They have provided limited intelligence and logistic support to Libya for its forays into Chad and during the US-Libyan military confrontations in the Gulf of Sidra this year. Soviet pilots fly training flights with Libyans, and Soviet advisers help maintain and possibly operate Libyan naval ships. Substantial numbers of Libyans are sent to the USSR each year for military training:



Since mid-1981, Qadhafi has allowed the Soviets expanded use of Libyan air and naval facilities. Pairs of Soviet IL-38 naval reconnaissance aircraft []

[] conduct surveillance flights against US and other Western naval ships in the Mediterranean. Soviet naval combatants also use Libyan ports—Tobruk occasionally (for repairs and replenishment) and Tripoli (for ceremonial visits)—but the Mediterranean Flotilla makes far greater use of Syrian and other facilities:

Despite the Soviets' military investment in Libya, Qadhafi's mercurial personality has prompted them to keep a certain distance. President Brezhnev told Egyptian Foreign Minister Fahmy in 1974, according to the latter's memoirs: "That young man [Qadhafi] is crazy. . . . He is an unbalanced fanatic." By 1982,

[] Soviet Foreign Ministry officials in Moscow believed that Qadhafi had evolved and become more sympathetic toward the Soviet Union and, in some cases, behaved as an ally.

¹⁹ The Soviets resell virtually all the oil they obtain from Libya.

[] however, that KGB officials still saw the Libyan leader as "crazy, unpredictable, uncontrollable" and capable of acting against Soviet interests []

Some of the Libyan leader's activities confirm the KGB officials' belief that he is capable of undermining Soviet interests. Qadhafi:

- Publicly criticized the USSR for insufficient military aid to the Arabs during the October 1973 War and the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982.
- Has given military, financial, and political aid to Palestinian rebels bent on ousting PLO leader Arafat, whom Moscow still supports.
- Transferred Soviet-supplied surface-to-surface missiles to Iran in 1985 []
- Signed a "union" with Morocco in 1984, over which Soviet officials expressed concern, fearing that it would increase Libyan-Algerian tensions.

Factsheet on Soviet-Libyan Relations

Soviet Ambassador: Pogos Akopov (assumed post in October 1986)

Libyan Ambassador: Muhammad Humud (assumed post in November 1986)

Estimated Number of Soviet Personnel in Libya (excluding dependents)

<i>Diplomatic ^a</i>	50
<i>Military advisers and technicians</i>	2,000
<i>Economic advisers and technicians</i>	5,000
Total	7,050

Libyan Military Personnel Receiving Training in USSR

1980	1,150
1981	1,150
1982	1,150
1983	900
1984	750
1985	600

Soviet Trade With Libya (million US \$) ^b

	<i>Exports</i>	<i>Imports</i>	<i>Total</i>
1975	26	0	26
1980	252	443	695
1981	264	502	766
1982	305	1,554	1,859
1983	357	1,368	1,725
1984	172	1,394	1,566
1985	100	1,053	1,154

Soviet Economic Credits/Grants Extended (million US \$)

1980	0
1981	0
1982	0
1983	0
1984	0
1985	0

Military Sales (million US \$)

Facilities Used by Soviet Military

<i>Tobruk</i>	<i>Occasional use by Soviet submarines and submarine tenders for repairs and replenishment</i>
<i>Umm Aitqah Airfield (Tripoli)</i>	<i>Used by Soviet IL-38 ASW/naval reconnaissance aircraft</i>

^a All officials—political, economic, military, intelligence—who work in the Embassy, as well as media and trade representatives.

^b From official Soviet statistics, which do not include all military trade.

- Sent home in 1985 [] but 40 to 50 of the approximately 400 Soviet technicians working at the Tajura nuclear research center.

- Offered to intervene militarily in South Yemen on behalf of former President Hasani during the coup in January 1986 and on at least one other occasion since [] Moscow vigorously protested North Yemen and Ethiopian attempts to do the same, and we assume that the Soviets weighed in similarly with Qadhafi.

Some of Libya's other actions, such as the shooting of Libyan dissidents and a British policewoman in London in 1984, while possibly benefiting Moscow by disrupting friends of the United States, have placed the Soviets in awkward positions []

[] condemned the London shootings and displayed unease over the widely publicized Egyptian charges in the summer of 1984 that Qadhafi had planted Soviet mines in the Red Sea. (The first ship struck by a mine, in fact, was a Soviet one.) []

During 1984-85, Soviet-Libyan relations were particularly difficult [] reported in the latter half of 1984 that bilateral relations were cool [] this to problems over Libya's payments for Soviet arms—specifically, Moscow's unwillingness to compromise on the issue. We estimate that Libya owes the USSR approximately \$2 billion for past weapons purchases.

Frictions between the two have not prevented the Soviets from increasing their support for Libya during the last year. The most visible sign of this was the delivery late last year of Soviet SA-5 missiles. The Soviets also displayed a slightly greater readiness than earlier to back Qadhafi during US-Libyan tensions in January and April of this year. They sent a few ships to the central Mediterranean—some to Libyan coastal waters—to monitor the movements of the US Sixth Fleet and presumably passed tracking data to the Libyans. This Soviet monitoring activity was more

extensive than during past crises involving Libya. And, following the US airstrikes on Libya in April, the Kremlin postponed a meeting between Foreign Minister Shevardnadze and Secretary of State Shultz.

Nonetheless, the Soviets' continued determination to keep some distance from Qadhafi was clearly evident during the US-Libyan clashes. Moscow was careful in its public comments not to commit itself to take any action in support of Libya. Qadhafi requested Soviet military support to oppose the US attacks, but Gorbachev refused []

[] that Qadhafi was incensed over Moscow's stand and over its determination—despite the US attacks—that Libya clear up its past military debt before concluding a new arms deal.

The Soviets have subsequently signaled Washington that they want to stand clear of any future US-Libyan clash [] a Soviet diplomat []

stated in September 1985 that Moscow's backing for Qadhafi is moral only and that the USSR has no desire to get involved in the US-Libyan conflict. Other Soviet officials repeated these remarks during September.

Disputes over arms payments and concern over Qadhafi's unpredictability are likely to remain complicating factors in Soviet-Libyan relations as long as Qadhafi remains in power.¹⁴ Moscow also will almost certainly continue to avoid giving Qadhafi the security commitments he apparently wants. Besides their desire not to be drawn into a military clash with the United States, the Soviets probably fear that giving Tripoli such a commitment would harm their relations

¹⁴ See "Impact of Future Developments" section for discussion of Soviet options should Qadhafi die or be ousted.

with Algeria and Egypt. The USSR's unwillingness to commit itself to Libya's defense appears to be the primary reason that the friendship and cooperation treaty the two sides announced in principle in March 1983 has yet to be concluded. The Soviets, in our view, have been—and remain—ready to sign an accord similar to their other friendship and cooperation treaties with Third World countries that do not carry security commitments. If Qadhafi agrees to this, a treaty could be signed at any time

Despite the frictions and the Kremlin's desire to maintain some distance from Qadhafi, the benefits each side derives from the relationship probably will prompt them to continue, and perhaps even expand, their cooperation in the next few years. Qadhafi's heightened sense of vulnerability after the US raid in April probably will lead him to seek greater Soviet military backing. Although to date he has restricted Soviet access to Libyan air and naval facilities, he probably now would welcome an increase in that access because of the impression it would create of a greater Soviet willingness to defend Libya. We believe Moscow desires increased military access but would move cautiously to avoid giving such an impression. The Soviets probably would seek permanent access for their IL-38s, greater use of port facilities at Tobruk, and—possibly—permission to station logistic ships in Tobruk harbor as they do now in Tartus, Syria

The Libyans periodically threaten in public—most recently in April—to grant the Soviets independent military bases in Libya. In fact [

] that Al Jufra airfield, which the Soviets have been constructing, will be an exclusively Soviet base. We believe, however, that Moscow probably would not expend the resources on building independent Soviet naval or air bases in Libya as long as Qadhafi is in power. Apart from the high risk of being drawn into a US-Libyan conflict and the negative impact such a move would have on the USSR's relations with Algeria, Egypt, and Tunisia, the Soviets would be likely to calculate that the unpredictable Qadhafi could repossess the bases and send Soviet forces home once the US threat subsided, or that he would seek to hold Soviet policy hostage to base privileges. Moreover, from a purely operational standpoint, the risks of Soviet military bases in Libya might not be worth the benefits. For example, although Soviet strike aircraft,

if based at Al Jufra, could pose a threat to US naval operations in the Mediterranean, they would be vulnerable to NATO tactical aircraft and difficult to maintain and supply during a conflict

*South Yemen.*¹³ Syria is the Soviets' most important client in the Arab world, but South Yemen is the closest. Whereas in Syria the Soviets have a presence throughout the military but almost nowhere else, in South Yemen they—along with their East European and Cuban allies—permeate the entire government, party, and military structure. The Soviets' interests in the PDRY—a dismally poor country of little more than two million people—stem from its Marxist orientation and its strategic location. The Soviets value the PDRY because it is all they have to show for almost 70 years of trying to foster the growth of Marxist regimes in the Arab world.¹⁴ They promote South Yemen as a model for other Middle Eastern states to follow and work with it to aid leftist movements in the region. Aden is a haven for Middle Eastern Communists, leftist Palestinians, and the remnants of Marxist insurgents who once fought in neighboring Oman and North Yemen

South Yemen's location at the confluence of the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean gives it military significance for the Soviet Union. Naval ships of the Soviet Indian Ocean Squadron make regular use of the port facilities at Aden,¹⁵ and Moscow keeps two IL-38

¹³ Official [

¹⁴ The USSR however, played no role in the establishment of South Yemen in 1967 and only a supporting role in the country's swing to the left in the first few years after independence.

¹⁵ With the loss of the use of port facilities in Berbera, Somalia, in 1977, Aden grew in importance for the Soviets. Since 1980, Soviet Indian Ocean ships have made an average of about 75 visits annually to Aden. The port, however, is heavily congested with commercial traffic, and Soviet combatants usually use the anchorage off South Yemen's Socotra Island or the port facilities the Soviets have on Ethiopia's Dahlak Island.]

Figure 5
South Yemeni Facilities Used by the Soviet Military



naval reconnaissance aircraft at Al Anad airfield, north of Aden, on a continuous basis

enhances the ability to monitor US and other Western naval movements in the region (see figure 5).

The Soviets initially welcomed South Yemen's sharp turn leftward during 'Abd al-Fattah Isma'il's 1978-80 rule. They apparently realized, however, that his radicalism was disrupting the country—much as Hafizullah Amin's did in Afghanistan in 1979—and, after intensive consultations with PDRY leaders, they acquiesced in his replacement by Ali Nasir Muhammad al-Hasani in April 1980. From Moscow's vantage point, Hasani, though not as ideologically "pure" as Isma'il, probably was viewed as loyal and more adept at holding the ruling Yemeni Socialist

Party's (YSP) fractious elements together. The Soviets may have intended Isma'il's return in 1985 as a useful "insurance policy" to keep Hasani honest, but we believe they did not favor his reassumption of the top party post. As the noted Isma'il was popular with the Soviets, but they recognized that he did not make a good leader, and they accepted Hasani as the more effective alternative.

The radical Marxist coup in January that toppled President Hasani ushered in a new and unpredictable era in Soviet-PRDY relations. The weakening of the YSP, the death of many top pro-Soviet figures, and the tribal rivalries the coup inflamed have led to a more unstable South Yemen

Factsheet on Soviet-South Yemeni Relations

Soviet Ambassador: Al'bert Rachkov (assumed post in July 1986)

PDRY Ambassador: Ahmad Abdallah abd al-Ilah (assumed post in November 1985)

Estimated Number of Soviet Personnel in PDRY (excluding dependents)

Diplomatic ^a	30
Military advisers and technicians	1,000
Independent Soviet military units	300
Economic advisers and technicians	550
Total	1,880

Estimated Number of PDRY Personnel Receiving Military Training in USSR

1980	NA
1981	NA
1982	NA
1983	2,000
1984	2,000
1985	NA

Soviet Trade With PDRY (million US \$) ^b

	Exports	Imports	Total
1980	86	8	94
1981	129	8	137
1982	93	8	101
1983	184	7	191
1984	136	7	143
1985	172	10	182

Soviet Economic Credits/Grants Extended (million US \$)

1980	209
1981	0
1982	0
1983	0
1984	0
1985	0

Military Sales (million US \$)

Facilities Used by Soviet Military

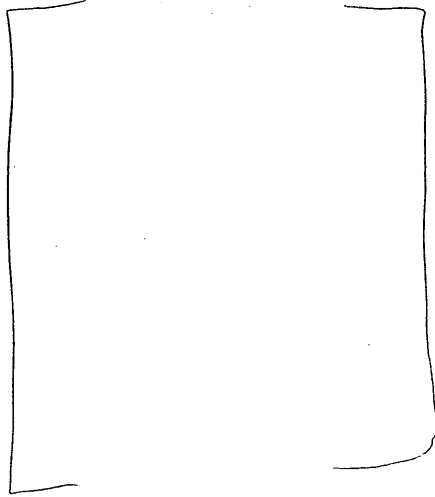
Aden Naval support/repair facility
 C J C

Socotra Island

Al Anad Airfield Two IL-38 naval reconnaissance/ASW aircraft stationed there

^a All officials—political, economic, military, intelligence—who work in the Embassy and Consulate (Al Mukallah), as well as media and trade representatives.

^b From official Soviet statistics, which do not include all military trade.



[] noted the increasingly pro-Soviet tenor in the Hasani regime's public statements during 1984-85. Hasani may have adopted this almost obsequious pro-Soviet posture to head off the threat to his leadership that began to arise within the YSP in mid-1984. []

[] Hasani weathered the threat in 1984, apparently with Soviet support, but—perhaps as part of a compromise to end the party factionalism—Moscow convinced him to accept the return to Aden and appointment to the party secretariat of Isma'il. []

[] A senior Soviet party official advised Isma'il and Hasani, during the latter's visit to Moscow in October 1984, to resolve their differences. []

[] Isma'il returned in March 1985, shortly after he was reinstated to the party secretariat, and Hasani relinquished his post as head of government.

We believe that Moscow had no compelling reason to seek Hasani's ouster, did not support the coup, and was surprised by it. By 1984 it had become clear that the Soviets and Hasani had resolved their differences over his opening toward the West and with moderate Arab states, as well as over the PDRY's displeasure with the low level of Soviet economic aid that plagued their relations in 1982-83. Hasani was the only Arab leader granted a meeting with Gorbachev at Chernenko's funeral in March 1985. Soviet leaders did not meet with him at the funerals of Brezhnev and Andropov in 1982 and 1984, respectively. []

The Kremlin presumably endorsed Isma'il's reinstatement to the Politburo at the YSP party congress in October 1985, but they also almost certainly backed Hasani's reelection as general secretary. Soviet leaders sent him a message on the eve of the congress, which, in effect, amounted to an endorsement of his continuation as party chief.

[] The Soviets appeared quite happy with Hasani's policies. In fact, his more moderate foreign policy played a decisive role in convincing Oman and the UAE to establish diplomatic relations with the USSR in 1985.

Moscow's behavior during the coup attested to its lack of complicity. Soviet media carried Hasani's erroneous announcement on the first day of the coup, 13 January, that the "counterrevolutionaries" had been crushed and their ringleaders executed. Four days into the crisis, Soviet media were still calling the rebel leaders "putschists." Shortly thereafter, as the Soviets evacuated their nationals from Aden and the fighting shifted in the rebels' favor, the USSR adopted a neutral public stance and attempted to mediate between the two sides. It was only 10 to 14 days into the

South Yemeni expressions of fealty to the USSR became more and more effusive during Hasani's last year in power. The communique from the YSP Central Committee plenum in February 1985 lauded the "increasing development of the strategic alliance relations" between the PDRY and the Soviet Union. The []

important *Pravda* article in September echoed this view. It also blamed Hasani for precipitating the January events—the first time the Soviets stated this in public

Isma'il and other prominent rebel leaders were killed in the fighting, but most of the key figures in the new regime—including Bidh and Salim Salih—have a reputation of being radical Marxists and fervently pro-Soviet. Moscow, however, appears to be advising the new leaders to portray themselves as moderates.¹⁸ The regime has repeatedly stated in public that it desires good relations with all its neighbors

Soviet trawler off the coast of Aden during the January 1986 fighting.

coup, when the rebels clearly had gained the upper hand, that Moscow threw its support to the new regime, and even then it did so discreetly

In February, argued that there are numerous moderates in the new cabinet

The Soviets kept a low profile to make it easier for them to deny any involvement in the fighting on the rebels' side. Moscow's more vital support consisted of pressure on North Yemen and Ethiopia not to aid Hasani's forces.

Despite the new regime's fervently pro-Soviet tenor, there is the potential for Soviet-South Yemeni tensions over the level of Soviet economic aid and efforts by Moscow to expand its military access in the PDRY. The South Yemenis have long been dissatisfied with the level and quality of economic aid the USSR has provided. Many Soviet projects have taken years to complete and have compared unfavorably with the few Western projects that South Yemen has contracted for in recent years. Aden was particularly rankled by the paltry Soviet relief package following the major floods in 1982. Moscow is unlikely to provide significantly increased economic aid in the years ahead because of its own economic constraints and its probable belief that Aden is securely within the Soviet orbit and therefore not likely to alter its political allegiance, even if it were to obtain substantial Arab or Western assistance.

The new regime, nominally headed by President 'Attas,¹⁹ not only is beset with internal factionalism, but forces loyal to Hasani continue to harass the government from their safehaven in North Yemen, and the tribal animosities that the fighting exacerbated continue to smolder. Soviet officials have acknowledged that tribalism is one of the major problems the regime faces. Leonid Zamyatin, then chief of the CPSU Central Committee's International Information Department, told a Lebanese newspaper in February that South Yemen is still encountering difficulties from the "tribal division of society." An

The Soviets may increase efforts to obtain expanded access to South Yemeni air and naval facilities and possibly even an independent Soviet military base.

¹⁹ 'Attas, a longtime Hasani supporter and without an independent power base, apparently is only a figurehead. Although he replaced Hasani as president, he did not assume Hasani's more important post of YSP secretary general. The real powers in the new regime appear to be YSP Secretary General Ali Salim al-Bidh and Deputy Secretary General Salim Salih Muhammad.

¹⁸ In fact, the choice of the "moderate" 'Attas to replace Hasani as president probably was a result of Soviet advice. 'Attas, in India when the coup began, fled to Moscow and remained there until the rebels announced their choice of him as provisional president.

with the YSP at war with itself, there is no credible organized threat outside the party to vie for control of the country. The most serious potential threat could come from Hasani's forces in North Yemen.

Such a development could lead Moscow to become even more directly involved in South Yemen's defense.

Partners of Convenience: North Yemen, Iraq, Algeria, and the PLO

North Yemen. The Soviets' ability to maintain relatively good relations with a variety of regimes in Sanaa for almost 60 years is one of their success stories in the Middle East. Moscow has been involved in North Yemen longer than in any other Arab country.²⁰ The treaty of friendship and trade the

Soviets signed with the feudal, theocratic regime of Imam Yahya in 1928 was their first with an Arab government. When the Imamate fell in 1962, the USSR moved quickly to support the new Yemen Arab Republic (YAR), going so far as to provide pilots to fly combat missions in 1962-63 and to provide both pilots and an airlift of military supplies in 1967—the first such Soviet military interventions in crises in the Arab world.

The Soviets adroitly managed to maintain and even increase their influence in North Yemen under President Salih, who took power in 1978, despite their close ties to Marxist South Yemen and indirect support for the Marxist insurgency in the North during the early 1980s. The YAR's need for a reliable source of arms and training to fend off its two neighbors, South Yemen and Saudi Arabia, induced Sanaa to seek Soviet support.

Soviet interest in North Yemen stems more from its neighbors than from its intrinsic value. The YAR, with approximately 6.3 million people, represents a

²⁰ The Soviets established relations with Saudi Arabia in 1926, two years before their treaty with Yemen, but withdrew their envoy in Jiddah in the mid-1930s and relations have been dormant ever since.

Soviet ships in Aden harbor.

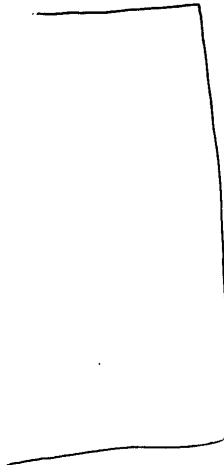
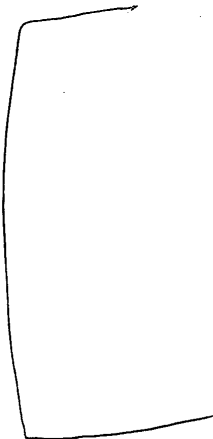
The most recent efforts occurred in 1983.

Admiral Gorshkov, then Commander in Chief of the Soviet Navy, traveled to Aden in March 1983 to seek permission to build new naval and air facilities in South Yemen that would be controlled by the Soviets.

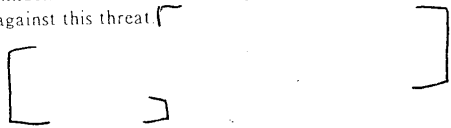
The current leaders probably would not object to expanded Soviet access to South Yemeni facilities but are unlikely to grant Moscow a sovereign base. This is a particularly sensitive issue with the South Yemenis, whose entire country was a sovereign British base for 129 years.

Neither issue—economic aid or military access—is likely to develop into a major problem between the two countries. The South Yemeni leaders would prefer more generous economic aid but almost certainly view it as secondary to the military assistance Moscow provides. The Soviets, for their part, are not in dire need of expanded military facilities. They can adequately maintain their current air and naval forces in the region with the facilities now at their disposal. The pressure for increased access would intensify if they decided to expand those forces.

Thus, despite the traumatic effect of the coup on the South Yemeni ruling structure, Moscow maintains a strong foothold in Aden and is likely to continue to do so for at least the rest of the decade. The current regime is even more pro-Soviet than Hasani's. Tribalism and YSP factionalism are likely to remain destabilizing factors, but—as the coup has shown—even



potential threat to Moscow's ally, South Yemen, which has about one-third the population. Soviet influence in North Yemen represents some insurance against this threat.



Moscow's presence in the YAR, although far less extensive than in the PDRY, is substantial. Soviet and East European arms compose approximately three-fourths of the inventory of the YAR's armed forces. About 500 Soviet military advisers and technicians are assigned to North Yemen, and about 250 Yemenis are presently receiving military training in the Soviet Union. In addition, there are approximately 175 Soviet economic advisers and technicians in the YAR and an embassy staff of about 150—after Egypt, the second largest Soviet mission in the Middle East. The Soviets may see Sanaa as the best place available to them to collect intelligence on Saudi Arabia, where they have no representation—thus, the large presence in a small country.

We are not certain how much influence this large presence gives the Soviets. Some YAR officials, most notably ~~Armed Forces~~ Chief of Staff Bashiri, as pro-Soviet, but the list is not long, and Salih himself does not appear to be unduly swayed by Moscow. Nonetheless, the Salih regime publicly supports many Soviet international initiatives

and almost never speaks negatively about the Soviets in its media—treatment it does not accord the United States.

Moscow scored a propaganda success by convincing Sanaa in October 1984 to upgrade its longstanding treaty to one of "friendship and cooperation." The accord is the most vague and least binding of all such treaties the Soviets have signed to date.² It differs from the 1964 treaty (the previous most recent update of the original document signed in 1928) in several ways; it has:

- A pledge to consult on international problems that affect both countries' interests.
- A pledge not to take part in actions directed against each other.
- Some anticolonialist rhetoric.
- A duration of 20, rather than five, years.

These points are common to all Soviet friendship and cooperation treaties with Third World countries. Unlike most of the other treaties, however, the one with North Yemen does not have a clause calling for closer military cooperation. Moreover, the treaty's call for consultations on international problems does not

² The friendship and cooperation treaty with the YAR is the 13th Moscow has signed; two—those with Egypt and Somalia—were later abrogated by those countries.

Factsheet on Soviet-North Yemeni Relations

Soviet Ambassador: Anatoly Filev (assumed post in September 1984)

YAR Ambassador: Abd al-Uthman Muhammad (assumed post in February 1983)

**Estimated Number of Soviet Personnel
in YAR (excluding dependents)**

<i>Diplomatic</i> ^a	150
<i>Military advisers and technicians</i>	500
<i>Economic advisers and technicians</i>	175
Total	825

**Estimated Number of YAR Personnel
Receiving Military Training in USSR**

1975	100
1980	1,200
1981	500
1982	600
1983	400
1984	250
1985	250

Soviet Trade With YAR (million US \$)^b

	<i>Exports</i>	<i>Imports</i>	<i>Total</i>
1981	32	NEGL	32
1982	47	1	48
1983	57	NEGL	57
1984	14	NEGL	14
1985	18	NEGL	18

**Soviet Economic Credits/Grants Extended
(million US \$)**

1981	55
1982	0
1983	0
1984	0
1985	0

Military Sales (million US \$)

Facilities Used by Soviet Military

None

^a All officials—political, economic, military, intelligence—who work in the Embassy, as well as media and trade representatives.

^b From official Soviet statistics, which do not include all military trade.

stipulate that the two sides should attempt to coordinate their policies during crises, as does every other Soviet treaty but one

*Soviet Friendship and Cooperation Treaties
With Third World Countries*

Substantively, the treaty adds more formality to the relationship and should, the Soviets hope, help to ensure its stability. The Kremlin's aim in such treaties apparently is to base the relationship on legal institutions, rather than on personalities, to ensure that Soviet-YAR ties will survive Salih's departure. There is nothing in the treaty, however, that guarantees that this will be the case or—as Egypt's and Somalia's abrogation of similar treaties showed—that the current North Yemeni leadership will not have a change of heart

<i>Egypt</i> ^a	<i>27 May 1971</i>
<i>Iraq</i>	<i>9 April 1972</i>
<i>India</i>	<i>9 August 1972</i>
<i>Somalia</i> ^b	<i>11 July 1974</i>
<i>Angola</i>	<i>8 October 1976</i>
<i>Mozambique</i>	<i>31 March 1977</i>
<i>Vietnam</i>	<i>3 November 1978</i>
<i>Ethiopia</i>	<i>20 November 1978</i>
<i>Afghanistan</i>	<i>5 December 1978</i>
<i>South Yemen</i>	<i>25 October 1979</i>
<i>Syria</i>	<i>8 October 1980</i>
<i>Congo</i>	<i>13 May 1981</i>
<i>North Yemen</i>	<i>9 October 1984</i>

A number of issues limit bilateral ties. Perhaps the most important is an economic one. North Yemen is a desperately poor country and is currently unable to meet the payments on its estimated \$900 million debt to the USSR. The servicing of this debt is a perennial topic at meetings between high-level Soviet and North Yemeni officials. The Soviets have apparently, for lack of alternatives, rescheduled at least part of the debt but are not willing to write it off as a loss. Sanaa's inability to pay also impinges on future purchases of Soviet military equipment. Moscow is unlikely to let the debt grow much beyond what it is today; the YAR is not as important to Soviet interests as Syria

^a Egypt abrogated the treaty on 15 March 1976.
^b Somalia abrogated the treaty on 13 November 1977.

Moscow reportedly was concerned enough about Sanaa's anger over the Soviet reaction to the coup in Aden to offer increased military aid on favorable terms. [

The discovery of oil in North Yemen by a US company in 1984 may eventually alleviate Sanaa's financial problems and ease frictions with Moscow over the debt. On the other hand, the newfound wealth might enable North Yemen to purchase more Western arms, and the involvement of a US oil company could lead to closer ties between Sanaa and Washington

Although genuinely worried about Sanaa's intentions, Soviet leaders probably calculate that Salih is too heavily dependent on the USSR for arms to downgrade the relationship significantly. We believe that, if the Soviets concluded that Salih were seriously moving in that direction, they would become even more cooperative about supplying arms and more lenient about the terms of payment

If weapons were available and affordable in the West, North Yemen probably would opt for them to reduce its dependence on Moscow. High-level YAR military commanders—especially in the Air Force—have been critical of the Soviet training program in North Yemen. [The main complaints were not enough flying time and a high accident rate

North Yemen's stance toward the regime in the PDRY will be a determining factor in Soviet-YAR relations over the next few years. If Salih provides significant military assistance to Hasani's forces, Moscow is certain to increase pressure on Sanaa to desist. Such pressure could include more visits by high-level Soviets, threats to cut off the supply of Soviet arms, or even a revival of the Marxist National Democratic Front guerrillas. Relations are likely to remain somewhat tense even if Salih eventually accepts the change of power in Aden. He already suspects that the radicals in the regime will attempt to destabilize North Yemen. At this point, we do not believe the Soviets will encourage such attempts short of major North Yemeni aid to Hasani's forces, but they probably calculate that the threat of potential PDRY destabilization efforts in the YAR will be a useful lever in their dealings with Sanaa.

- Iraq.* Iraq is important to the Soviets because it is:
- A major actor in the Arab world and a perennial rival with Syria and Egypt for preeminence among the Arabs.
 - A rival of Iran as the most influential power in the Persian Gulf region.
 - One of the world's major oil producers and, thus, a lucrative source of hard currency for Moscow.
 - Virulently anti-Israeli and, until recently, almost as adamantly anti-United States.

The Soviets' relationship with Iraq has been their most erratic in the Middle East. Relations were so hostile under the Iraqi monarchy that Baghdad severed relations with Moscow in 1955 in response to Soviet protests about the formation of the Baghdad Pact. General Qasim's ouster of the monarchy in 1958 brought an immediate reestablishment and improvement of relations, but ties fluctuated with the various regimes that ruled in Baghdad through the mid-1960.

The Ba'th Party's reemergence as the ruling group in Iraq in 1968—it remains in power today—led to another upsurge in Soviet-Iraqi relations. The new leaders of the Ba'th—in the aftermath of the massive Arab defeat at the hands of Israel in the June 1967 war—saw the Soviet Union as vital to the achievement of Arab aims. The Ba'th followed a radical

anti-Israeli, anti-US foreign policy and professed allegiance to a socialist internal order. Despite some differences, the USSR and Iraq drew closer over the next decade

Relations began to sour again, however, by the late 1970s, as Baghdad—fearful of growing Soviet involvement in Ethiopia, South Yemen, and Afghanistan—cracked down on the Iraqi Communist Party (CPI) and sought to reduce Iraqi dependence on Soviet arms by purchasing Western weapons. The relationship plummeted to its lowest point since 1958 when Moscow cut off arms shipments to Iraq at the outbreak of the war with Iran in September 1980. After attempting to capitalize on this embargo with the Khomeini regime in Iran and failing, the Soviets lifted it in the spring of 1981 and began to tilt decisively toward Baghdad in the spring of 1982, when the two sides signed their first new arms deal since the war began.²⁷

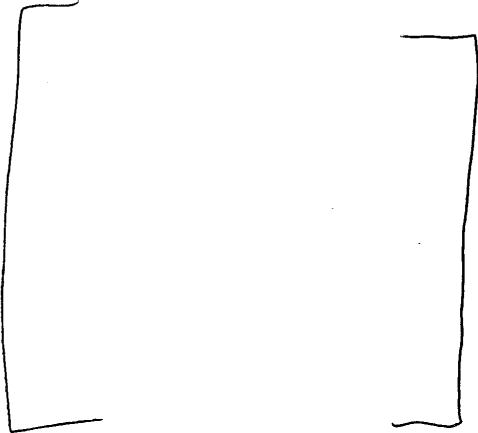
Soviet-Iraqi ties today are the best they have been since the heyday of the relationship in the early 1970s. This is almost entirely due to the Kremlin's decision to open up the arms tap to Iraq. The Soviets have delivered military equipment worth more than \$7 billion to Iraq since ending the embargo in early 1981, making them Baghdad's largest supplier (see figure 6).²⁸ To maintain this equipment and train the Iraqis, Moscow has approximately 1,000 military advisers and technicians in Iraq.

The Soviets have coupled the arms flow with a more supportive public posture for Iraq in its war with Iran since Iraqi forces were driven out of most Iranian territory in June 1982. Most Soviet public statements take a neutral stance on the war, but Soviet media are

²⁷ For a full discussion of the Kremlin's policy toward the war and its shift to a pro-Iraqi position, see DI Intelligence Assessment 50V 83-10145C. **ASSESSMENT 50V 2 SEPTEMBER 1983 THE WAR BETWEEN IRAN AND IRAQ**

²⁸ Moscow's Tilt Toward Baghdad: the USSR and the War Between Iran and Iraq

The Soviets have supplied Iraq with about one-third of its weaponry (in terms of dollar value) since the war began. France is second with over \$5 billion worth of deliveries.



increasingly leaning toward the Iraqi position, particularly since the Iranian capture of Al Faw in February. They are praising Baghdad's willingness to end the conflict through mediation and criticizing Tehran's unwillingness to do the same.

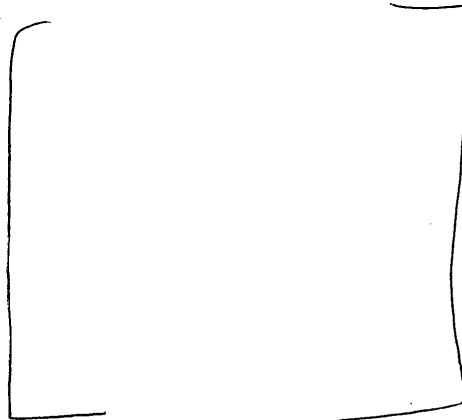
Moscow's military support and backing for Iraq's position on the war has led to an improvement, both politically and economically, in the relationship. President Saddam Husayn acknowledged in an interview in October 1984 that "circumstances" at the beginning of the war with Iran had "cast their shadow" on Soviet-Iraqi relations but that ties were now "good." His visit to Moscow in December 1985, his first since 1978, highlighted the improvement in relations, even though it revealed continuing differences.

The two countries have expanded their economic dealings. In April 1984, the Soviets extended Iraq a \$2 billion line of credit on favorable terms for civilian projects, according to a public statement by Foreign Minister Tariq 'Aziz. Baghdad has awarded Moscow major contracts since late 1983 to develop Iraq's West Qurnah oilfield, build a pipeline between Baghdad and Iraq's Southern Rumaylah natural gas field, construct two thermoelectric power plants, and survey sites to build a nuclear power plant. In addition, the USSR has since mid-1983 accepted oil as a partial means of payment for the arms it ships to Iraq.²⁴

²⁴ This oil is provided in two ways: Iraqi crude is pumped through the pipeline across Turkey and picked up at the Ceyhan terminus on the Mediterranean, and Saudi crude is picked up in the Persian Gulf and credited to the Iraqi account with the Soviets. Moscow resells all of this.

Figure 6
Estimated Values of Soviet and Warsaw Pact Military Deliveries to Iraq, 1981-85

Million US \$



During 1984 and 1985, the Soviets received an average of 80,000 barrels per day (b/d) of Iraqi oil and 40,000 b/d of Saudi crude, which was part of Saudi Arabia's aid to Iraq.²⁵ The Kremlin's willingness to forgo the usual cash-on-delivery terms of Soviet-Iraqi weapons trade is another indicator of the importance it has assigned to improving relations with Baghdad and preserving the Soviet share of the Iraqi market.

Even with the increased Soviet involvement in the Iraqi economy over the past three years, however, Baghdad is still heavily dependent on Western and Arab trade and aid. Three-quarters of Iraqi civilian imports continue to come from the West, while aid provided by the Arab Gulf states dwarfs that of the

²⁵ See table on page 7

Factsheet on Soviet-Iraqi Relations

Soviet Ambassador: Viktor Minin (assumed post in March 1982)

Iraqi Ambassador: Sa'ad Abd al-Majid Faysal (assumed post in March 1984)

**Estimated Number of Soviet Personnel
in Iraq (excluding dependents)**

Diplomatic ^a	50
Military advisers and technicians	1,000
Economic advisers and technicians	5,500
Total	6,550

**Estimated Number of Iraqi Personnel
Receiving Military Training in USSR**

1980	NA
1981	0
1982	100
1983	100
1984	200
1985	200

Soviet Trade With Iraq (million US \$) ^b

	Exports	Imports	Total
1975	381	452	833
1980	729	398	1,127
1981	1,259	5	1,264
1982	1,347	25	1,373
1983	501	516	1,017
1984	336	823	1,159
1985	322	668	990

**Soviet Economic Credits/Grants Extended
(million US \$)**

1975	0
1980	0
1981	0
1982	0
1983	1,000
1984	45
1985	NA

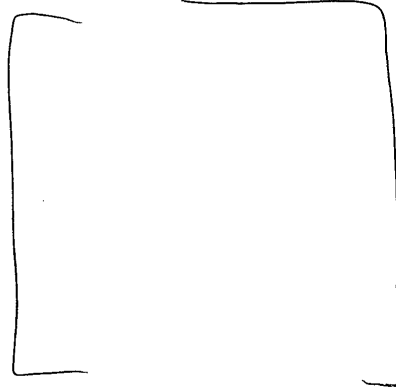
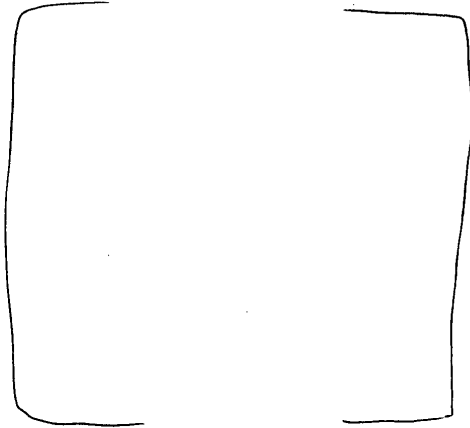
Military Sales (million US \$)

Facilities Used by Soviet Military

None

^a All officials—political, economic, military, intelligence—who work in the Embassy, as well as media and trade representatives.

^b From official Soviet statistics, which do not reflect all military trade.



Soviets. In 1983, for instance, the Arabs extended approximately \$12 billion in economic aid to Iraq; the Soviets provided \$45 million.

Despite Moscow's extensive involvement in Iraq, its record arms shipments, and the clear improvement in relations since the spring of 1982, fundamental differences continue to separate the two sides. The minimal time Gorbachev spent with Saddam during the latter's visit to Moscow in December 1985, TASS's description of their meeting as "frank," and the failure of the two sides to agree on a joint communique were a reflection of these differences and the legacy of intense enmity between the two sides

On international issues, the Soviets and Iraqis have long differed on the Arab-Israeli peace process. Baghdad rejected the 1967 UN Security Council Resolution 242, which the Soviets helped formulate. Foreign Minister 'Aziz told former US Middle Eastern envoy Joseph Sisco in January 1985 that Moscow pressed Baghdad hard to accept 242 in the early 1970s. The Iraqis not only refused but also condemned the ceasefire following the war in 1973 and the subsequent peace conference in Geneva. Iraq also refused to support the joint US-Soviet call in October 1977 for reconvening the Geneva talks and is one of the few Arab states not to endorse the USSR's more recent efforts to hold an international conference on the Arab-Israeli issue.

Moscow and Baghdad do not see eye to eye on a number of other international issues, including:

- The flow of Soviet-made arms to Iran through third parties such as Libya, Syria, and the USSR's East European allies.
- The Soviet invasion and continuing occupation of Afghanistan. Baghdad strongly condemned the invasion, but since 1983—presumably as a response to Moscow's willingness to provide Iraq with large amounts of weaponry—it has abstained from the yearly vote in the UN General Assembly call for Soviet withdrawal (see table 2).

The Soviets and Iraqis share a fundamental distrust of each other that will not easily be eroded. The Soviets have seen Saddam repress the Iraqi Communist Party (CPI) and have been unable to ease the repression significantly despite repeated attempts. Although the Kremlin has urged the Iraqi Communists to cooperate with the government as a means of increasing their influence in the country, Moscow's eventual goal almost certainly is to oust the Baath



Table 2
Middle Eastern Votes on Annual UN Resolution Demanding the
Withdrawal of "Foreign Troops" From Afghanistan

	January 1980	November 1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986
Afghanistan	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
Algeria	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A
Bahrain	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Egypt	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Iran	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Iraq *	Y	O	Y	Y	A	A	A	A
Israel	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Jordan	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Kuwait	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Lebanon	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Libya	O	O	N	N	N	N	N	N
Mauritania	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Morocco	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Oman	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Qatar	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Saudi Arabia	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Sudan	O	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Syria *	A	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
Tunisia	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Turkey	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
UAE	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
YAR	A	O	O	A	A	O	O	O
PDRY	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N

Y = Yes
 N = No
 A = Abstained
 O = Absent

* Voting pattern has changed.

[The Soviets realize that the CPI is weak and have welcomed the improvement in Soviet relations with Saddam; thus, they are unlikely in the next few years to push for his ouster]

The Iraqis are equally distrustful of the Soviets, resenting Soviet support for the CPI and past support for Iraqi Kurds (see inset). The Iraqi leadership believes that the Soviets could end CPI subversion in a moment if they wished to, according []

Moscow and Iraq's Kurds

The level of Soviet support for the Iraqi Kurds—20 percent of the population—has fluctuated with the shifts in Soviet ties to the various regimes in Baghdad. When relations are good, Soviet support has been minimal; when relations sour, Moscow pays more attention to the Kurds. Currently, the Soviets keep their distance from the increasingly rebellious Iraqi Kurds. Contact with Kurdish leaders is maintained through a faction of the Iraqi Communist Party that is fighting alongside Kurdish rebels in northern Iraq. Some claim that the USSR is providing arms to Iraqi, Turkish, and Iranian Kurds, but such reports have never been confirmed. Moscow is likely to continue its contacts with Iraqi Kurds to maintain the option of stepping up support to them should Soviet-Iraqi relations deteriorate.

Moscow's embargo of arms to Iraq in the early days of the war with Iran has had a lasting effect on Iraqi views of the Kremlin. E

Libya's provision of Soviet surface-to-surface missiles to Iran in 1985 heightened Baghdad's mistrust of Moscow.²⁶ Foreign Minister 'Aziz told US officials that Iraq has complained repeatedly to the Soviets. Although Gromyko assured 'Aziz in March 1985 that Moscow had issued a stiff warning to Qadhafi, Iraqi officials were skeptical that the Soviets would press Tripoli very hard.

Beyond the policy differences and the mistrust, the USSR's interests in Iraq are limited by its relationship with Syria and desire for influence in Iran. Moscow has long sought a reconciliation between Baghdad and Damascus with no success. The Soviets' stake in Syria prevents them from moving too close to Iraq, although, as Soviet officials have made clear in the past, Moscow will not give up its influence in Baghdad simply to please the Assad regime.

Na'am Haddad, then a senior Ba'th official, called the CPI a "lackey" party in a press conference in 1984 and said that Iraqi leaders saw "no relationship between our stand toward the Communist Party of Iraq and the Soviet Union. Therefore we reject that this or that should have any involvement in drawing up our internal policy."

Moscow's latest effort to improve the lot of the CPI in Iraq apparently came during Saddam's December 1985 visit to the USSR.

The Soviets convinced Saddam to meet with a CPI Central Committee member. Saddam offered amnesty to CPI members who would agree to return from exile but on terms that would severely hamper CPI political activity. The CPI official was inclined to accept the offer, but General Secretary Muhammad is adamantly opposed to reconciliation with Saddam. Thus, the Soviets may have as hard a task getting the CPI to unify and come to terms with Baghdad as they have had convincing Saddam to at least consider ending his repression of the party.

In the long run, the Soviets see Iran as more important than Iraq. He stated that, although Moscow hopes to avoid having to make the choice, it was prepared, if forced, to sacrifice its influence in Iraq for the chance to gain influence in Iran. Although the diplomat may have been exaggerating for effect, the Intelligence Community has long held that the Soviets see Iran as the greater strategic prize.

²⁶ Iran fired some of these missiles into Baghdad in the spring of 1985 and resumed firing in August 1986.

During the rest of the decade, the Soviet-Iraqi relationship is likely to remain a wary one, based almost solely on the arms supply link. Moscow might become even more cooperative in the quality, quantity, and financing of arms supplied to Iraq to counter Baghdad's growing ties to the West, particularly the United States. Such a Soviet step would be more likely should the war with Iran end,²⁷ which would ease Iraq's acute need for Soviet weaponry and allow it the breathing space to shift to greater dependence on Western suppliers—a move under way before the war began.

If Saddam were to die or be ousted, the effect on the relationship would depend upon the nature of the regime that replaced him. From Moscow's standpoint, only an Iranian-dominated Shi'a regime or a more Western-oriented leadership would be worse alternatives than Saddam. If Saddam were simply replaced by his chief lieutenants, which is the most likely scenario, chances are they would share his distrust of the Soviets, although they probably would not allow this to dominate Iraqi policy toward the USSR. The Kremlin might seek to ingratiate itself with the new leaders by offering better credit terms on arms purchases as well as some of the more advanced weaponry it has been reluctant to provide, and possibly intelligence and security support to help maintain them in power. The relationship might become less acrimonious in this case but would probably not differ markedly from that which prevails under Saddam.

*Algeria.*²⁸ The USSR has valued Algeria as an influential member of the Arab community and Third World and as a country developing along an "anti-imperialist" and "progressive" socialist path. Although the Soviets largely stayed aloof from Algeria's struggle for independence from France during 1954-62, they developed a close relationship with Algiers under its first two leaders, Ben Bella and Houari

²⁷ See pages 72-73 for a discussion of Iran-Iraq war scenario.
²⁸ For a more extensive discussion of recent trends in Soviet-

ALGERIAN RELATIONS

Boumediene. Algeria purchased virtually all of its military equipment from the Soviet Union and its East European allies, and Moscow and Algiers saw eye to eye on most international issues. The relationship reached its peak in the 1970s, when Boumediene met with the Soviet Ambassador on almost a weekly basis and party-to-party contacts were frequent.

Even under Boumediene, however, the Soviets were unable to develop the kind of influence in Algeria that they had, for example, in Egypt in the late 1960s. The Algerians maintained a certain distance and fiercely guarded their independence.

Since President Chadli Bendjedid came to power in 1979, the Soviet-Algerian relationship has become steadily more distant, and Moscow has been unable to reverse the trend. The Soviets clearly preferred Bendjedid's leftist rival, Mohamed Salah Yahiaoui, as a replacement for Boumediene, who died in December 1978, and they do not trust Bendjedid.

It is claimed that Soviet support for Yahiaoui has altered Bendjedid's attitude toward Moscow.

It is also claimed that the steady decline in Soviet-Algerian relations over the past few years is a result of Algiers's displeasure with Moscow's unwillingness to provide "full military support" and its attempts to influence Algerian foreign policy. In addition, the Algerians

Factsheet on Soviet-Algerian Relations

Soviet Ambassador: Vasilij Taratutu (assumed post in April 1983)

Algerian Ambassador: Abdel Madjid Allahoum (assumed post in October 1984)

**Estimated Number of Soviet Personnel
in Algeria (excluding dependents)**

Diplomatic ^a	80
Military advisers and technicians	800
Economic advisers and technicians	6,000
Total	6,880

**Estimated Number of Algerian Personnel
Receiving Military Training in USSR**

1980	NA
1981	NA
1982	200
1983	300
1984	100
1985	100

Soviet Trade With Algeria (million US \$)^b

	Exports	Imports	Total
1975	156	187	343
1980	143	96	239
1981	157	117	274
1982	183	64	247
1983	217	16	233
1984	175	180	355
1985	158	328	486

**Soviet Economic Credits/Grants Extended
(million US \$)**

1975	0
1980	315
1981	300
1982	0
1983	250
1984	0
1985	340

Military Sales (million US \$)¹

Facilities Used by Soviet Military

None

^a All officials—political, economic, military, intelligence—who work in the Embassy and Consulates (Annaba and Oran), as well as media and trade representatives.

^b From official Soviet statistics, which do not include all military trade.

resent the USSR's willingness to provide their rival, Libya, with large amounts of sophisticated weapons. Bendjedid has:

- **Lessened Algeria's overwhelming dependence on the USSR for arms.** Algiers has begun to purchase major weapon systems from Western countries, and the level of Soviet arms deliveries to Algeria has dropped off markedly since 1982, although a reported new arms deal signed this spring would reverse this decline.
- **Sharply reduced the number of Soviet military advisers and technicians in Algeria.** From a high of 1,500 in 1981, the presence is now down to approximately 800.
- **Curtailed regular consultations with the Soviets.** The visit by the Algerian President to the USSR this spring was only his second since assuming office, and he has not followed Boumediene's practice of frequent meetings with the Soviet Ambassador. The "privileged dialogue" the Soviets enjoyed with senior levels of the FLN under Boumediene was a thing of the past.
- **Dropped many senior-level pro-Soviet Algerian officials.** The Algerian President replaced them with people who support his policy of lessening dependence on the USSR.
- **Begun to modify Algeria's "socialist" economy.** This has included some decentralization, expansion of the private sector, encouragement of foreign

investment, and a shift of emphasis from heavy to light industry. These policies were reflected in the FLN's revision of the Algerian national charter in December 1985. Soviet officials have commented,

that the new charter represents a step backward of 10 years in the building of socialism in Algeria.

the Soviets are seeking assurances from FLN officials that Algeria will continue to adhere to socialist economic practices.

- **Improved relations with Western countries.** The Algerian President's more positive relationship with the United States appears to worry the Soviets the most.

The Soviets have exerted considerable effort to stem Algeria's drift away from the USSR under Bendjedid, especially over the past two and a half years. The Kremlin has sent a host of high-level officials to Algeria to shore up ties (see inset).

Marshal Ogarkov, then Chief of Staff of the Soviet Armed Forces, hoped

High-Level Soviet-Algerian Contacts, 1984-86

- May 1984* *Shevardnadze—then Georgian party chief and a candidate Politburo member—represents the USSR at the congress of the Afro-Asian Peoples' Solidarity Organization (AAPSO) in Algiers. Received by Bendjedid.*
- September 1984* *Gromyko—then Foreign Minister—and Algerian Foreign Minister Ibrahimi meet while in New York for opening of fall session of United Nations General Assembly.*
- October 1984* *Ponomarev—then candidate Politburo member and Chief of the CPSU Central Committee's International Department—has talks in Algiers with senior FLN and Algerian Government officials. Received by Bendjedid.*
- November 1984* *Soviet candidate Politburo member Demichev has talks in Algiers with Minister of Culture and with senior FLN official Messaadia.*
- December 1984* *Admiral Gorshkov—then Commander in Chief of the Soviet Navy—has talks in Algiers with senior Algerian defense and other government officials.*
- July 1985* *Algerian Navy Commander in Chief Cherif visits USSR and has talks with Admiral Gorshkov.*
- August 1985* *Algerian Prime Minister Brahimi has talks in Moscow with then Soviet Prime Minister Tikhonov.*
- December 1985* *General Ivanovskiy, Commander in Chief of the Soviet Ground Forces and Deputy Defense Minister, visits Algiers for talks with Algerian military and political leaders.*
- March 1986* *Bendjedid makes his second visit to Moscow as president.*
- June 1986* *Major General Benloucif, then Algerian Army Chief of Staff, visits the USSR and has talks with Soviet military officials.*
- August 1986* *Soviet First Deputy Foreign Minister Vorontsov visits Algiers and has talks with Messaadia and with Algerian Foreign Ministry officials.*
-

Natural gas liquefaction complex in Algeria built with Soviet assistance

during his December 1983 visit to convince the Algerians to abandon plans to purchase arms from the West. Another [redacted] claimed that the visit to Algiers in October 1984 of Boris Ponomarev, then Chief of the CPSU Central Committee's International Department, was prompted by Moscow's concern over Algeria's continuing drift toward the West [redacted]

Despite Algeria's slow drift from the USSR, it remains a valuable Soviet friend. It is still strongly nonaligned and anti-Israeli and continues to differ with the United States on many international issues—most important, on how to resolve the Arab-Israeli conflict. The relationship with Algiers also provides Moscow with influence in North Africa beyond its ties to the mercurial Qadhafi regime. The Soviets, moreover, continue to earn valuable hard currency from arms sales to Algeria and still have more economic advisers and technicians there (approximately 6,000) than in any other less developed country. Whatever Bendjedid's long-term plans are, they will be heavily influenced by the fact that Algeria's armed forces remain overwhelmingly Soviet equipped.

[redacted] that they believe Algeria's growing economic problems and concern about the intentions of Morocco and Libya will oblige Bendjedid to curtail his economic liberalization, distance Algiers from Washington, and strengthen ties to

Moscow. We believe, however, that the carefully planned nature of Bendjedid's policy changes indicate they are unlikely to be reversed while he remains in power. The broad-based support within the FLN for Bendjedid's shift away from the USSR makes it likely that the policy would even survive his departure. Thus, the Soviets almost certainly will not be able to restore the relationship during the rest of the decade to the closeness that characterized it under Boumediene. This represents an important setback to Moscow's position in the Maghreb and in the Middle East as a whole.

The PLO. The Soviets, by identifying themselves since the early 1970s with the Palestinian Liberation Organization (see table 3), have attempted to gain:

- Enhanced stature among the Arabs, most of whom regard a country's position on the Palestinian issue as a litmus test of its support for the Arab world.
- An edge with the Arabs over the United States, which does not recognize the organization.
- An added means of leverage on Israel.
- A potential tool with which to hinder a US-sponsored Arab-Israeli settlement and a right to claim for themselves a role in any settlement.
- A source of influence in the region beyond established government: [redacted]

Moscow, however, has never been comfortable with the ideologically diverse PLO, which depends on support from such conservative, anti-Soviet Arab governments as Saudi Arabia. As one scholar noted in a 1980 study of the Soviet-PLO relationship, the PLO is "far too unstable, uncertain and divided, far less Marxist and yet far too extremist to be Moscow's preferred partner."³⁰ Palestinian disunity, in particular, has contributed to the USSR's hesitation to take a definitive stance and has led to its numerous shifts in policy toward the PLO. Despite the PLO's importance

29

[redacted] Golia Golan, *The Soviet Union and the Palestinian Liberation Organization: An Uneasy Alliance* (New York: Praeger, 1980), pp. 253-54.

Table 3
Groups Within the Palestine Liberation Organization ^a

	Leader	Headquarters	Size
Pro-Arafat			
Fatah loyalists	Yasir Arafat	Tunis	6,000 to 8,000 scattered
Arab Liberation Front (ALF)	'Abd al-Rahim Ahmad	Baghdad	300 to 500 in Iraq
Front for the Liberation of Palestine (FLP) ^b	Muhammad 'Abbas (Abu al-Abbas)	Tunis	50 to 100
Neutral			
Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP) (Marxist)	Nayif Hawatmah	Damascus	1,200 to 2,000 scattered
Front for the Liberation of Palestine (FLP) ^b	Ta'alat Yaqub	Damascus	Approximately 150
Pro-Syrian			
Palestine National Salvation Front			
Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) (Marxist)	George Habbash	Damascus	1,500 to 2,000 scattered
PFLP-General Command (PFLP-GC)	Ahmad Jibril	Damascus	800 to 1,000, mostly in Syria and Lebanon
Sa'iqa	'Isam Qadi	Damascus	500 to 1,000
Popular Struggle Front (PSF)	Shamir Ghawshah		200 to 300 scattered
Front for the Liberation of Palestine (FLP) ^b	'Abd al-Fattah Ghanim	Damascus	Approximately 150
Fatah rebels	Sa'id Muragha (Abu Musa)	Damascus	500, mostly in Syria and Lebanon

^a The Palestinian Communist Party (PCP) is not a member of the PLO. In recent years, the PCP has cooperated closely with Hawatmah's DFLP. The Abu Nidal faction also is not a PLO member.

^b Also known as the Palestine Liberation Front.

to Moscow, the fact that it is not an established government allows the Soviets to pursue a more tactical policy toward

This tactical flexibility toward the PLO has been especially evident since the Israeli thrashing of PLO forces in Lebanon in 1982. The USSR's cautious reaction to the Israeli action strained Soviet-PLO

relations. Ties between Moscow and Arafat have been further complicated by the Soviet unwillingness to take forceful action to convince Syrian President Assad to abandon his efforts since 1983 to oust Arafat and gain control of the PLO. Although the Soviets have made their displeasure with this Syrian policy known to Assad, they have been careful not to allow the issue to jeopardize relations with their most important ally in the Middle East.

The Leftist Alternative

Moscow has long maintained support for the Palestinian leftists, even while its relations with Arafat were good. The Palestinian Communist Party is the faction closest to the Soviets, but its influence among Palestinians has been limited. The much more influential Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP)—a Marxist group—has cooperated closely with the Kremlin for years. Former Soviet leader Andropov told a [] Communist leader in 1982 that the DFLP is the PLO's purest element—evidently meaning the most ideologically sound. The Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP)—also Marxist—has had its differences with the Soviets because of its more militant stance toward Israel.

It does not appear that the Kremlin views the leftists at this point as a replacement for Arafat. []

Nonetheless, Moscow probably sees the leftists as a corrective influence on the "bourgeois" Arafat and as potential candidates for future leadership of the Palestinian movement. Soviet support for the leftists seems designed to reunite the PLO on a basis that curtails Arafat's ability to pursue talks with Arab moderates, the United States, and—eventually—Israel. Moscow also apparently hopes the leftists can help mend the Arafat-Assad rift.

The Soviets have been torn by conflicting interests in the Arafat-Assad dispute. Although the USSR agrees with some of the criticism directed at Arafat by Assad and the Syrian-backed PLO factions, it does not want to see the PLO come under Syrian control. Such a development would force the Soviets to deal with the Palestinians through fiercely independent Damascus. Arafat's moves in late 1984 to form a joint PLO-Jordanian delegation for peace talks with Israel, however, prompted Moscow to move closer to the position of Syria and Arafat's PLO opponents. The

Soviets' primary reason for opposing the Arafat-Hussein accord was the fear that it might have facilitated US-sponsored talks between the joint PLO-Jordanian delegation and Israel that excluded both Syria and the USSR. [] told PLO political department chief Qaddumi during his visit to Moscow in January 1986 that this would lead to US domination of the Middle East and pose a grave threat to the Soviet Union

Former Soviet leader Yuriy Andropov and PLO leader Yasir Arafat during his last official visit to Moscow in January 1985

continue championing the cause. But the PLO's value as a vehicle for advancing Soviet interests in the region probably will remain much diminished. The PLO's internal rifts and feud with Syria put the attainment of Arab unity, which the Soviets consider essential, even further away. It will be difficult for the Soviets to achieve one of their primary goals in the Middle East—a major role in an Arab-Israeli peace conference—without close ties to a strong PLO that cooperates with Syria. Moscow would be unable to parlay its role as a benefactor of the PLO to obtain a seat at such a conference if the mainstream of the PLO remains at odds with Syria and the Palestinians themselves remain badly divided

The unraveling of the Arafat-Hussein accord in late 1985 and early 1986 has prompted the Soviets and Arafat to once again move closer: Arafat, because he is increasingly isolated; and Moscow, because it evidently senses that Arafat's weak position leaves him no choice but to improve relations with the USSR on its terms. Gorbachev apparently met with Arafat during the East German party congress in April 1986, according to PLO radio and

This was the first time a Soviet leader held talks with the PLO chief since 1983. The Soviets are also stepping up efforts to reunify the PLO. According to Moscow's mediation was responsible for the PLO's decision to send a joint delegation, with representatives of all the major factions to the 27th Congress of the CPSU in February.

The Soviets, however, do not appear convinced that Arafat has totally abandoned hopes of collaboration with King Hussein

would not rule out Arafat's future cooperation with Hussein. He also was pessimistic about reconciliation among PLO factions. Moscow's failed attempts in the summer and fall of 1986 to broker PLO unity

The Palestinian issue is likely to remain the central one in the Middle East, regardless of who wins the power struggle within the PLO, and the Soviets will

Friendly Moderates

Moscow has long sought, as a part of its broader Middle Eastern strategy, to cultivate ties to the "moderate" Arab regimes. The Soviets have had their most success with three monarchies (*Jordan, Kuwait, and Morocco*), a military dictatorship (*Mauritania*), and three ostensible parliamentary democracies (*Tunisia, Sudan, and Lebanon*). Although the Kremlin's long-term objective is developing Soviet influence in these countries, its more immediate and realistic goal is eroding US influence. The Soviets have had their setbacks—most notably in Sudan under Nimeiri—but on balance their patient courting has paid some important dividends. Most, if not all, of these countries have:

- Acknowledged publicly that the USSR has an important role to play in the Middle East.
- Endorsed (albeit not necessarily enthusiastically) Moscow's call for an international conference on the Arab-Israeli dispute.
- Muted concerns about Soviet policies, particularly on Afghanistan

The key to Moscow's success has been its identification with the Arab cause, especially on the Palestinian question. The Soviets have also used arms sales to make inroads with some of the "friendly moderates." They signed minor arms deals with Morocco and Lebanon in the 1960s and 1970s and briefly were

Sudan's primary source of arms in the early 1970s. More recently, the USSR has provided Jordan and Kuwait with air defense weapons, capitalizing on the US Congress' reluctance to sell those countries certain arms. Although the Soviets have not sold arms to Tunisia, it is the one "friendly moderate" that allows Soviet naval ships regular access to its ports.¹¹

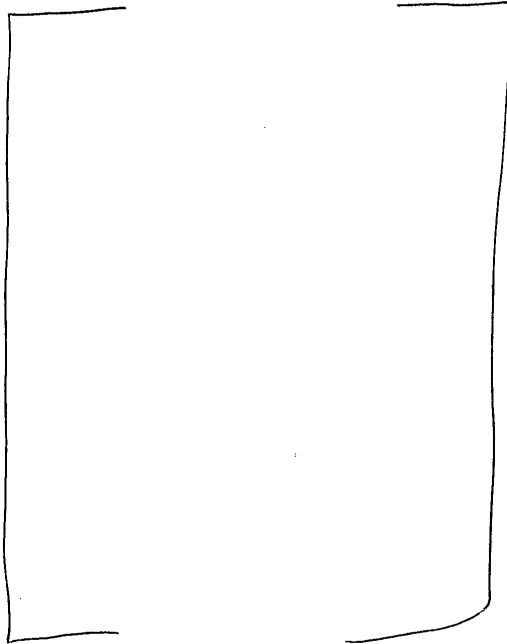
Trade and economic assistance have played only a minimal role in Moscow's relations with these countries. The only exceptions are Morocco, where the Soviets have invested heavily in the development of phosphates and have a profitable fishing agreement, and Mauritania, where they have a similar arrangement to fish in coastal waters in return for helping develop the Mauritanian fishing industry. Recent Soviet discussions with Kuwait on a variety of economic projects are likely to result in Kuwait's joining the list of exceptions.

Lebanon is important to the Soviets because of the Palestinian and Syrian presence and the US interest in it rather than for its intrinsic significance. They do not have major interests at stake there. They have sought influence with both the central government and the various political and religious factions but have never been a major actor. Moscow's closest ties are to the Lebanese Communist Party. The USSR also has a long history of dealings with such minor leftist groups as the Communist Action Organization, the Syrian Social Nationalist Party, and the Murabitun. Since the Israeli invasion of 1982, the Soviets have focused attention on two of the most influential factions, the Druze Progressive Socialist Party (PSP) of Walid Junblatt and the Shia Amal of Nabih Barri. They have become particularly close to the PSP, providing it with the bulk of its arms.

Similarly, the Soviets have attempted—unsuccessfully—to play some role in the international efforts to resolve the Lebanese problem. This has stemmed more from a desire to head off a US-brokered solution and find another entree into Middle Eastern affairs.

¹¹ The Moroccans apparently are easing their restrictions on Soviet naval visits. A Soviet guided-missile frigate and a minesweeper called at Casablanca in September, the first such port call in Morocco in a decade.

than from a genuine interest in getting involved in the Lebanese quagmire. Although the Soviets do not want to see Lebanon controlled by Syria, the importance of their relationship with Damascus is likely to prompt them to continue deferring to Syrian interests in Lebanon during the rest of the decade.



It appears that Moscow is also beginning to see an economic rationale for its presence in Kuwait. During the visit to Kuwait in July of Konstantin Katushev, Chairman of the Soviet State Committee for Foreign Economic Relations, the two sides neared agreement on a host of economic deals. According to [redacted]

and Kuwaiti newspapers, such deals include:

- A Kuwaiti loan to the USSR of \$150 million at a favorable interest rate for construction of a natural gas pipeline between the Soviet Union and Greece.

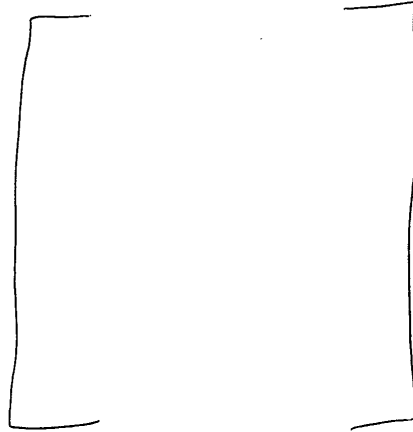
- A swap of oil, whereby Kuwait would provide oil to Soviet customers in Asia and East Africa while Moscow would do the same for Kuwaiti clients in Western Europe.
 - A similar swap involving ammonia deliveries.
 - Kuwaiti assistance in oil refining, exploration, and drilling techniques for joint projects in the USSR.
- The last deal, in particular, could provide Moscow access to advanced oil technology denied to it by the West

Moscow received a windfall in Sudan with the ouster of the anti-Soviet Jaafar Nimeiri in April 1985. The Soviets dealt cautiously with the transitional regime of General al-Dahab, probably out of uncertainty over its longevity and in deference to the Ethiopians, who strongly opposed the regime. At the same time, the Kremlin stepped up aid to the Sudanese Communist Party and, via Ethiopia, has been providing indirect military support to the Marxist southern insurgent leader, John Garang, and his Sudanese People's Liberation Army (SPLA), according to []

[] Although we believe Moscow's military support is not extensive, the Soviets almost certainly approve of Ethiopia's transfer of its Soviet-supplied arms to the SPLA.

The Soviets probably will continue their current dual-track approach with the new government headed by the Umma Party's Sadiq al-Mahdi. As his August visit to the USSR indicated, Moscow is likely to try currying favor with his government, while keeping a certain distance so as not to jeopardize relations with a possible successor should Sadiq's rule prove short lived. The Soviets may offer to repair Sudan's aging inventory of Soviet arms and possibly sell new weapon systems once they believe Sadiq has consolidated power, provided Khartoum first curtailed assistance to Ethiopian insurgents. Libya's ties to Sadiq could provide the Soviets an opening, but they are likely to tread carefully to avoid a backlash should Qadhafi's intrigues backfire

Should Sadiq's rule lead to increased instability, or should the SPLA score significant gains, the Soviets would be likely to step up aid to the Communists and to Garang's forces. They would attempt, however, to



disguise such aid to avoid harming relations with Cairo. Egypt is far more significant to Soviet interests in the Middle East than is Sudan, which is likely to remain an economic and political basket case during the next five years regardless of who is in control in Khartoum

Despite the inroads Moscow has made with the friendly moderates, virtually all maintain good relations with Washington. Morocco, Jordan, and Tunisia retain important military links to the United States. Moreover, all of the friendly moderates remain skeptical about Soviet intentions. Morocco, for example, continues to suspect that the Soviets are aiding the Polisario rebels in the Western Sahara (see inset).

The Soviets are certain to continue their low-cost efforts to woo the friendly moderates away from dependence on Washington. In most cases, Moscow has little to lose, and in those areas—such as Lebanon—where Soviet ties to more important Arab countries impinge, preserving those ties will continue to take precedence. Internal instability in some of these countries is likely to offer Moscow the best opportunities for advancement. Instability in Lebanon

Moscow, Rabat, and the Polisario

The Soviets sympathize with the cause of the Polisario rebels, who are seeking an independent state in the Western Sahara. The Kremlin supports Saharan "self-determination"—as opposed to independence—in international forums and sanctions the transfer of Soviet arms to the rebels by Algeria and Libya. [

] the USSR has authorized Algeria to transfer arms that it no longer needs to the Polisario, but not any major systems that might internationalize the conflict in the Western Sahara [

Moscow, however, refrains from direct contact with the Polisario and has neither accorded it the status of a national liberation movement nor recognized the Saharan Democratic Arab Republic (SDAR). Even the staunchly pro-Moscow Moroccan Communist party (the Party of Progress and Socialism) backs the Moroccan Government's claim to sovereignty over the Western Sahara. [

] the USSR provides no direct military support and scant humanitarian aid. Cuban officials reportedly [] that each time they have

urged Moscow to take a more active role in aiding the Polisario, they have been firmly rebuffed. [

The Kremlin's caution stems from its desire to maintain good relations with Moroccan King Hassan as well as an apparent judgment that the Polisario's chances of establishing an independent state any time soon are slim. In response to a question at a public lecture in 1982 in Moscow as to whether the Soviet Union recognized the SDAR, a Soviet specialist on North Africa from the Academy of Sciences' Africa Institute claimed the issue was "complex" because the Soviets had to "take into account our good relations with Morocco. [

] the Soviets believed that Hassan would maintain normal relations with the USSR to ensure that it would not step up aid to the Polisario. [

and Sudan during the past three years already has eroded US influence and brought in regimes much more willing to deal with the Soviets than their predecessors had been. Domestic unrest in Morocco and Tunisia is likely to grow over the next few years, potentially providing the USSR with fertile ground to expand its influence or at least undermine that of the United States. And in Mauritania, where a military-led coup occurred in 1984, the chronic instability of the central government may eventually offer the Soviets opportunities in that far-off corner of the Middle East [

Wary Moderates

The only states the USSR does not have diplomatic relations with in the Middle East are the Persian Gulf

monarchies of *Qatar, Bahrain, and Saudi Arabia*.³² The Soviets scored their first breakthroughs in the region in years in the fall of 1985, when they established relations with *Oman* and the *United Arab Emirates* (UAE). [

Moscow's primary objective in the Persian Gulf region, in our view, is the elimination of the US military presence. Soviet propaganda incessantly criticizes the conservative Gulf countries for cooperating militarily

³² Neither the Soviets nor the Saudis ever formally severed diplomatic relations when Moscow withdrew its emissary from Saudi Arabia in the late 1930s. Thus, technically they still have relations, but in fact there have been no ties for almost 50 years. [

with Washington. All but Qatar have some form of military agreement with the United States—ranging from the pre-positioning of military equipment in the UAE and Oman, to granting US naval ships access to port facilities in Bahrain, to the stationing of US AWACS aircraft and a 500-man support unit in Saudi Arabia. Moscow's December 1980 proposal that the major powers eliminate military bases in the Persian Gulf region was designed, in part, with these agreements in mind, and Soviet officials continue to tout the proposal. However, the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan and the war between Iran and Iraq have prompted the conservative Gulf states to be even more receptive to military cooperation with Washington.

Saudi Arabia's oil wealth, ties to the United States, growing military power, and influence over the other shaykhdoms make it Moscow's prime target on the peninsula. Since the early 1970s, the USSR has sought unsuccessfully to interest Saudi leaders in reviving relations. Although in recent years the Saudis have gradually allowed an increase in official and unofficial contacts, and Saudi leaders occasionally make public statements leaving the door open for resuming relations, there has been no significant movement in this direction. The Saudis have publicly linked the resumption of full relations to a Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan []

[]

The Soviets have made some headway in Bahrain but thus far have nothing to show for their efforts with Qatar. They sent their Deputy Director for Tourism to Bahrain in August 1985, the first visit ever by a Soviet official. Bahraini Prime Minister Shaykh Khalifa gave two interviews in the summer of 1985 suggesting that Bahrain was taking another look at the question of establishing formal ties to the Soviet Union. Since then, however, there has been no significant movement toward establishing relations'

The radical Marxist coup in South Yemen in January has complicated Moscow's efforts to court the conservative Gulf regimes. Most Gulf leaders, including the

Kuwaitis, suspected that the Soviets were behind the coup. We believe Oman and the UAE are likely to move more slowly in allowing the USSR to establish a full diplomatic presence in their capitals. Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, and Qatar probably will reassess the advisability of normalizing relations with the Soviet Union. The Soviets appear to be advising the new regime in Aden to avoid pursuing a radical foreign policy, which would almost certainly compel the Gulf conservatives to move closer to the United States.

While courting the Gulf monarchies, the Soviets also have been maintaining ties to local leftist forces. Moscow backs Marxist groups opposed to the regimes in Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, and Oman. The Soviets provided arms via South Yemen to the Popular Front for the Liberation of Oman (PFLO) during its revolt against Sultan Qaboos in the mid-1970s. Although the PFLO has been largely dormant since 1976, its members still travel to the USSR frequently and participate in Soviet-organized gatherings of Middle Eastern leftists. Two other participants at such gatherings are the Saudi Communist Party and the National Liberation Front of Bahrain. Moscow funds and provides guidance to both []

]]

None of these three groups, however, now pose—nor are they likely to pose any time soon—a major threat to the regimes in Riyadh, Muscat, and Manama. Nevertheless, the prospect of internal unrest in these countries may offer Moscow opportunities to advance its interests, and the Soviets are certain to keep the Marxist opposition groups viable to be in a position to capitalize on such instability. There have been no indications thus far that the Soviets are urging the Marxist groups to collaborate with Muslim fundamentalists—the real threat to the Gulf regimes. In fact, the disastrous results that Iran's Tudeh (Communist) Party suffered from cooperation with Khomeini's Muslim fundamentalist regime may have soured the Kremlin on such a strategy. Should the Muslim opposition gain strength, however, the Soviets may become more receptive to cooperation as the best way to increase the influence of the Marxist forces.

Israel

The USSR's relationship with Israel has been a paradoxical one. Since as far back as Lenin, Soviet Communists have intensely distrusted Zionism, which they regard as reactionary and "bourgeois" despite its socialist element. Nonetheless, the Soviets were among the first to recognize the new Jewish state in 1948; but they have severed relations with it twice since then, in 1953—for five months—and in 1967. Israel's existence and US support for it have provided the Soviets their best entree for influence in the Arab world; yet their self-inflicted inability to talk with Israel has put them at a distinct disadvantage vis-a-vis Washington—which has influence with both sides of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

The presence of over 2 million Jews in the Soviet Union, many of whom desire to emigrate, and the fact that Israel sees the protection and eventual emigration of Soviet Jews as a vital national interest add a volatile factor that is not present in the USSR's relationship with most other countries. The interest of American Jews and the US Government in the plight of Soviet Jews has had repercussions in US-Soviet relations. The collapse of the deal between Washington and Moscow in January 1975 that would have given the Soviet Union most-favored-nation trading status was a direct result of the Congress' Jackson-Vanik amendment, which required that the Soviets let a certain number of Jews leave each year—a pledge the Kremlin refused to make.

Moscow, in addition, has to factor into its Israeli policy the strong US commitment to the existence of Israel and the increasingly close security relationship between Washington and Tel Aviv. The Soviets have displayed concern over the US-Israeli "strategic cooperation" agreement—signed in 1981 but not implemented until 1983—particularly its focus on countering the USSR in the Middle East (see inset

¹¹ Another irony of Soviet policy toward Israel is that, although Israeli society and policies come under harsher criticism from Moscow than those of any other Middle Eastern state, Israel is the only country in the region where the Communist Party has some influence in the national legislature (it holds four seats in the 120-seat Knesset) and can legally criticize the government.

The US-Israeli Military Relationship

For years, Moscow's propaganda has depicted Israel as a US "gendarme" in the Middle East, and the US-Israeli "strategic cooperation" agreement of 1981 only reconfirmed that view. The USSR's special concern is that the US-Israeli Memorandum of Understanding on strategic cooperation is specifically aimed at countering potential Soviet military moves in the Middle East. One Soviet official, in talks in 1983, said the agreement is "an unprecedented military-political concord in the domain of international relations" because it refers to the Soviet Union as the "officially defined adversary."

The Kremlin also has been worried by the exchange of military technology and know-how between Israel and the United States. The Soviets, for example, issued an official TASS statement in May 1986 condemning Israel's decision to participate in research for the US Strategic Defense Initiative.

Lack of Relations

The Soviets have long acknowledged to US and Israeli officials that it was a mistake to break relations in 1967 at the end of the Six-Day War

Some Soviets have called the Kremlin's decision to break relations an "emotional act" and others a rash move "in the heat of the moment."

At the same time, Moscow has continued since 1967 to emphasize that Israel has the right to exist. The Soviets have stated this explicitly in most of their "peace plans" for an Arab-Israeli settlement. Gromyko made one of the most emphatic Soviet

public statements on this issue in a news conference in Moscow on 2 April 1983, when he declared that: "We do not share the point of view of extremist Arab circles that Israel should be eliminated . . . [this is both] unrealistic and unjust."

Within two years of the break in relations, the Soviets were probing for ways to renew ties

During this period, Soviet officials leaked numerous stories about an imminent resumption of Soviet-Israeli relations. In the reverse of today's situation, it was the Israelis who played hard to get and denied in public any movement toward restoration of ties. The Camp David accords in 1978 ended the USSR's courting of Israel, although periodic contacts have continued.

Recent Developments

There has been an increase in Soviet-Israeli contacts since Gorbachev's accession to power. The Kremlin almost certainly approved Poland's agreement with Israel to open interest sections in Warsaw and Tel Aviv. One of the most significant Soviet steps was the decision to meet with Israeli officials in Helsinki in August 1986 to arrange for a Soviet consular delegation to go to Israel to review the operation of the Soviet interests section run by the Finnish Embassy and handle some consular matters. Although the Soviets abruptly ended the meeting when the Israeli side attempted to discuss Soviet Jewry and demanded that an Israeli delegation be allowed to go to Moscow, the meeting served as a signal to the Arabs that the USSR has the ability to develop its own independent

* The foreign ministers met—on Israel's request—at the opening sessions of the UN General Assembly in 1981 and 1984; Shevardnadze met then Prime Minister Peres at the 1986 session; and Soviet and Israeli ambassadors in the major capitals meet occasionally. In addition, each May on the anniversary of the victory over Nazi Germany, Moscow sends a low-level delegation to Israel and Israeli leftists go to the USSR

policy toward Israel. Foreign Minister Shevardnadze's meeting with then Prime Minister Peres, at the latter's request, in September at the United Nations reiterated the point, even though Moscow went out of its way to criticize Israeli positions in its media coverage of the meeting

The Balance Sheet From Moscow's Perspective

When Soviet leaders weigh the merits of resuming ties to Israel, they probably calculate that, on the credit side, reestablishing relations would provide an entree into Arab-Israeli negotiations from which they have been excluded since 1973. Specifically, Moscow would hope to convene its long-proposed international conference. Israeli (as well as US) opposition has been the biggest obstacle to holding such a gathering. Such a step would probably also improve the atmosphere in US-Soviet relations and possibly even lead to an easing of US restrictions on trade with the USSR.

On the debit side, reestablishing formal ties would alienate Moscow's Arab friends, most importantly the Syrians and Palestinians. Gromyko cited this as the primary reason for not taking this step when

broached the issue with him in 1976. Syrian

opposition prevented the USSR from restoring ties to Israel any time soon. More recently, Shevardnadze

retorted that the USSR could not abandon its principles and must consider how its friends might react.

Moscow's concern about Syria's reaction appears to be well founded. President Assad's spokesman said in a public statement in November 1985 that "nothing justifies" the resumption of Soviet-Israeli relations as long as Israel continues to occupy Arab territories. Syria's severance of diplomatic relations with Morocco in July 1986 for hosting a visit by Peres indicates the intensity with which Damascus regards the issue.

Moscow could argue with its Arab allies that having relations with the Israelis will give it leverage over Tel Aviv, which could be used to obtain a favorable peace settlement. It is doubtful, however, that the Soviets would gain such leverage or that the Arabs would be placated by Moscow's argument. Israel has not been willing in the past to compromise on vital issues in return for better treatment of Soviet Jews and is unlikely to begin doing so simply because it has diplomatic relations with the USSR. Gromyko made this point in 1976, as did Vladimir Polyakov, chief of the Foreign Ministry's Near East and North Africa Administration, in talks with US officials in June 1986.

Some in Moscow would probably argue that the Arabs have nowhere else to turn and thus would have to acquiesce in a Soviet move to renew relations, no matter how distasteful. Most Soviet officials, however, probably are not that confident about the USSR's position with the Arabs. They are likely to worry that the damage in relations with the Arabs would be deep and lasting, possibly even severe enough to convince some—such as the Syrians and Palestinians—that there was no choice but to throw in their lot with the United States, as Egypt did, to get the best available deal with the Israelis. At the same time, these Soviets probably would argue that restoring relations is likely to encourage the moderate Arabs to reach an accommodation with Israel.

An added complication for the Soviets in restoring ties would be the opening of an Israeli Embassy in Moscow that would be a magnet for "refuseniks" (Soviet Jews who have applied to emigrate but have not been allowed to leave) and the Soviet Jewish population in general.

Moscow in 1974 that this would be a serious problem for the Soviets requiring firm guarantees from Israel limiting the activities of an Israeli Embassy in Moscow.

Prospects

Israeli flexibility on an international conference and the level of tensions between Israel and Syria are likely to determine the pace of Soviet moves to normalize relations, regardless of whether the hard-line Likud or the more moderate Labor Party is in power. It would be difficult for the Soviets to convince Syria of the necessity for renewed Soviet-Israeli relations if Israel continues to hold to its current positions on the Palestinian question and the Golan Heights or new Syrian-Israeli hostilities erupt. Moscow's officially declared position is that relations will not be restored until Israel returns all of the lands seized in 1967, but we believe it is likely to take further steps toward better ties even without such Israeli concessions.

The Soviets probably will move very gradually to give the Arabs time to get used to the idea of better Soviet-Israeli ties before reestablishing full diplomatic relations. And Likud leader Shamir's scheduled tenure as prime minister until late 1988 is likely to hinder progress in Soviet-Israeli relations. It appears, however, that the Gorbachev foreign policy team—possibly prodded by CPSU International Department Chief Dobrynin, who reportedly has long favored restoring ties—is determined to find a way to correct the blunder Moscow made in 1967 by breaking relations.

An easing of tensions between Moscow and Washington will not automatically lead to improvement in Soviet-Israeli relations, but the last serious Soviet

efforts to improve ties occurred during the heyday of detente. The Kremlin probably would hope that one benefit from improved US-Soviet relations would be cooperation on issues such as the Arab-Israeli conflict.

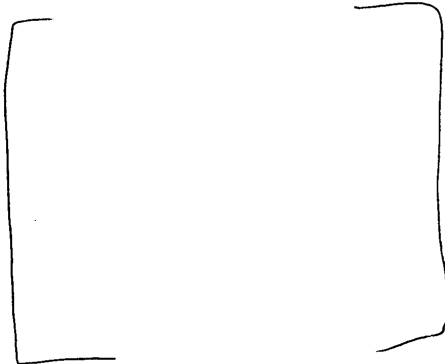
The Gorbachev regime's view of the USSR's internal security—specifically, the extent to which dissent and emigration are to be tolerated—also will color its policy toward Israel. If Gorbachev continues his current tough policies toward Soviet Jews, this probably would indicate that he has no real intention of softening the Soviet position on Israel.³⁵ On the other hand, an easing of restrictions on Soviet Jews would not necessarily mean Moscow was planning to reestablish ties to Israel. Such a liberalization could be directed more at influencing policy in Washington than in Israel.

The Northern Tier

Iran

Just as Egypt is the key Soviet target of opportunity in the Arab world, so Iran is in the northern tier. Its size, location, and oil wealth give it key significance in Soviet strategy toward the Middle East. Although we assume Moscow's ultimate goal has been and remains the establishment of a pro-Soviet regime in Tehran, its more immediate concern has been to prevent its adversaries from achieving predominant influence there. Soviet concern over British and German ascendancy in Iran and how those powers might use their position in the country to threaten the USSR played a role in prompting the Soviet occupation of parts of northern Iran in 1920-21 and again from 1941 to 1946. The Shah's overthrow in 1979 ended a period of more than 30 years during which the Soviets faced an extensive US presence in Iran. Capitalizing on this strategic windfall has been Moscow's primary aim in Iran.

³⁵ Although Gorbachev freed dissident Anatoliy Shcharanskiy, who has settled in Israel, he has not eased up on overall Jewish emigration. The number of Jews allowed to leave the USSR in 1986 is running at a rate that would put the yearend total lower than any year since 1970. In addition, Gorbachev's regime has stepped up its repression of Jewish "refusenik



The Soviets have had almost no success in replacing US influence in Iran with their own. Soviet-Iranian relations have deteriorated sharply since 1982, when Moscow abandoned its efforts to court Ayatollah Khomeini's regime and tilted toward Baghdad in the war between Iran and Iraq. Since 1984 Tehran has shown signs of desiring a halt to the slide, but Moscow has not been convinced of the Khomeini regime's sincerity and has maintained a tough posture toward Iran. Soviet media criticism of Iranian policies continues almost unabated.³⁶ The visit to Tehran in February of then First Deputy Foreign Minister Korniyenko was the highest level Soviet visit to Iran since the Shah's fall, but by most accounts neither side showed a willingness to compromise on the basic issues dividing them. Similarly, the visits to the USSR in the summer of 1986 by two Iranian ministers, despite the positive handling in both sides' media, yielded few results—save, perhaps, in the energy sphere (see page 57).

Despite this lack of success, the Soviets probably are satisfied that Washington also has not been able to reestablish itself in Iran. Concern that the United States will do so has evidently been high in Moscow.

³⁶ Moscow may have slightly softened its stance by stopping in September the operations of the "National Voice of Iran" (NVOI), a radio station that has broadcast in Persian and Azeri to Iran out of Baku in Soviet Azerbaijan since 1959. The significance of this step, however, is undercut by the fact that the Moscow-controlled Tudeh (Communist) party continues to broadcast anti-Khomeini propaganda to Iran from a radio station in Kabul, Afghanistan—"Radio of the Iranian Toilers

For example [

]Iran was increasingly turning to Western technology and that its leaders were at heart oriented toward the Western economic system. This theme is expressed more directly in Soviet scholarly and journalistic writings on the Islamic regime. For instance, Soviet media gave extensive coverage to the US acknowledgment in November that it had secretly provided some arms to Iran. [

[

]the Soviets viewed with considerable concern the possibility that the United States would take military action to restore its position in Iran. He said the USSR's primary goal in Iran is to prevent the United States from regaining influence [

Policy Differences. The trend in Soviet policy toward Iran since 1982 and the continued hostility of Khomeini toward the USSR strongly suggest that there will be no significant improvement in bilateral relations as long as the Ayatollah remains in power. Beyond the basic ideological differences separating the two regimes and Iran's traditional fear of its powerful northern neighbor, the issues hindering better relations today are:

- Moscow's military support for Iraq.
- The continuing Soviet occupation of Afghanistan and Iran's support for the Afghan rebels.
- Tehran's occasional hostile treatment of Soviets accredited to Iran and Moscow's withdrawal in 1984 and 1985 of most of its economic advisers and technicians from Iranian industries.
- The Khomeini regime's repression of the Tudeh Party.
- The public criticisms the two sides exchange in their media.

The first two issues are the most significant and the ones on which changes in Soviet and Iranian positions are least likely over the next few years. Moscow has gone to great lengths to improve its position in Iraq

Soviet Reassessment of the Iranian Revolution

An article in the July 1982 edition of the CPSU journal Kommunist was a landmark in the Soviets' reappraisal of the Iranian revolution. The author, Rostislav Ul'yanovskiy, a deputy chief of the CPSU Central Committee's International Department and one of the USSR's senior specialists on the Third World, stated that the fundamentalist clerics' consolidation of power in the summer of 1981 marked the end of the revolution's "genuinely people's antiimperialist" nature and the beginning of an "illusory" quest for an Islamic "third path" between capitalism and socialism.

Ul'yanovskiy claimed the February 1979 revolution was "bourgeois democratic" and could have moved in an "anticapitalist" (that is, pro-Soviet) direction. Unfortunately, he lamented, the complete triumph of the Shia clergy stifled the revolution's "progressive" tendencies:

The more the new organizations's power with its specifically Islamic features strengthened, the more rapidly the foundations of the revolution as a truly people's antiimperialist and democratic revolution were eroded

The article was a rationalization and, at the same time, a confirmation of the negative shift in the USSR's view of Khomeini's Iran. Articles and books by Ul'yanovskiy and others emphasizing the same themes in even more strident terms continue to appear in Soviet media

since 1982 and, as long as the war continues, is not likely to lessen its military support for Baghdad unless a clear prospect for major Soviet gains in Iran were to arise. The Soviets are not likely to pull out of Afghanistan entirely any time soon, and the Iranians are becoming bolder in their support for the rebels. Soviet media in February criticized Tehran for sending a clerical delegation into Afghanistan to meet

Table 4 Soviet-Iranian Trade Million US \$

	Soviet Imports From Iran	Soviet Exports to Iran
1975	317	391
1980	116	399
1981	653	567
1982	260	795
1983	509	755
1984	298	297
1985	163	245

Source: Soviet trade statistics, rounded to nearest million US dollars.

with rebels and claimed "the Iranian officials' intervention in Afghanistan's domestic affairs is becoming more blatant and overt."

Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister Larijani's talks with Soviet officials in Moscow in August yielded no meeting of the minds on Afghanistan. And, in December, Izvestiya, in one of the hardest hitting public Soviet criticisms of the Khomeini regime to date, accused it of cooperating with the United States in an "undeclared war" against the Marxist government in Afghanistan and in denigrating the USSR's "international assistance" to the Najib regime.

Possible Areas for Improvement in Relations. Even without movement on these issues, however, a lessening of the current high state of tensions is possible while Khomeini is in power.

Tehran's primary goals are to lessen Soviet military support for Iraq and convince Moscow to sell Iran major weapon systems. Although the Soviets have dragged their feet in responding to Iran's overtures, and bilateral trade in 1985 dropped to its lowest level since the early 1970s (see table 4), economic discussions are continuing. Both governments have indicated that some Soviet economic advisers and technicians are likely to return to Iran in the near future. Iran's Minister of Petroleum claimed after his August 1986 visit to Moscow that the two sides would conduct a three-month study to assess the possibility of resuming Iranian natural gas exports to the

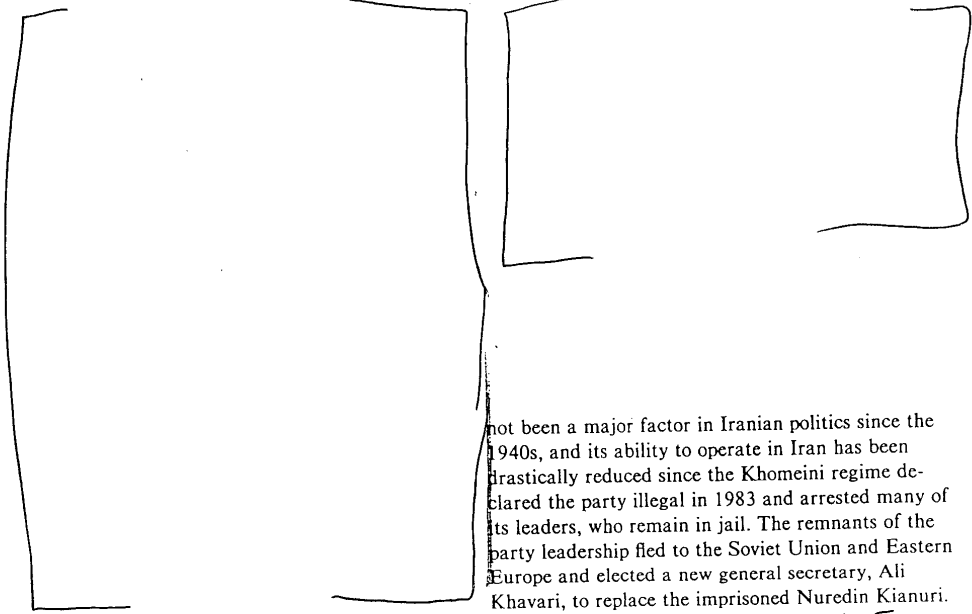
USSR." Tehran terminated such deliveries in 1980 because of difficulties over pricing. Even if the two could agree on pricing, refurbishing the IGAT I pipeline would take six months to a year.

The Soviets also might be willing, in return for Iranian concessions on other issues, to increase their arms sales to Tehran. Moscow already has allowed its East European allies to boost arms sales to Iran. Such sales increased by a factor of six in 1984 but dropped off again in 1985 (see

figure 7)

systems probably stems from two factors: they do not want to enable Iran to expand the war, and they want to avoid antagonizing Iraq.

The Soviets have made no public mention of such an agreement.



not been a major factor in Iranian politics since the 1940s, and its ability to operate in Iran has been drastically reduced since the Khomeini regime declared the party illegal in 1983 and arrested many of its leaders, who remain in jail. The remnants of the party leadership fled to the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe and elected a new general secretary, Ali Khavari, to replace the imprisoned Nureddin Kianuri. The party's membership, which—according to [redacted]—totaled no more than 1,000 in 1982, almost certainly has dwindled further.

After Khomeini. Although the Soviets are unlikely to soften their stance on Iran significantly as long as Khomeini is in power, they probably would mount a major effort to court a successor regime even if it were run by other fundamentalist clerics—the most likely development. (Khomeini is around 87 and reported to be in failing health.) If the new regime adopted a less hostile policy toward the USSR than Khomeini's, the Soviets would be likely to follow a policy of inducements aimed at improving state-to-state relations and, ultimately, increasing Soviet influence in Iran. They tried this for three years before giving up on Khomeini.

The Soviets presumably recognize the Tudeh's weakness, and they have been calling for a united front of leftists (including the Fedayeen-e Khalq, Mujahedin-e Khalq, and Paykar parties) and disaffected minorities (see inset). Not all of these groups, particularly the strongest—the Mujahedin—are interested in cooperating with either the Tudeh or the Soviets, however, and the prospects for such a united front seizing power or even wielding major influence are likely to remain slim for some time to come.

Should a successor regime prove to be as anti-Soviet as Khomeini's or, on the other hand, should a major power struggle ensue, Moscow almost certainly would use the potential levers it has both inside and outside Iran to promote the establishment of a pro-Soviet regime in Tehran. Ideally, the Kremlin would hope for a regime headed by the staunchly pro-Soviet Tudeh (Communist) Party. The Tudeh, however, has

Moscow has two other levers—economic and military—with which to influence Iran. Iran's need for Soviet assistance in operating key components of the steel and power industries has already been noted. In addition, approximately 13 percent of Iran's imports currently transit Soviet territory, according to Iranian trade data. A Soviet ban on this transit trade would

Moscow and Iran's Minorities

The Soviet Army helped install the short-lived leftist, separatist regimes in Iranian Azerbaijan and Kordestan in 1945, and Moscow has maintained relationships with the Azerbaijani and Kurdish Democratic Parties, which remain influential in their respective regions (see foldout figure 12 at the back). The Soviets have spoken out openly since 1982 for Kurdish autonomy, and the media in the USSR's own Azerbaijani Republic often issue veiled calls for "reunification" of Soviet and Iranian Azeris. In addition, reports [

] suggest that the Soviets maintain some contacts in Iranian Baluchistan, and Soviet media occasionally call for autonomy for the Baluch [

] that the Soviets were not backing the minorities out of concern that instability in Iran would be likely to bring about Western intervention [that they would much prefer influence over a unitary Iran rather than full control over fragments of the country

We believe concern about Western intervention will continue to shape Moscow's policy toward Iranian minorities as long it views the regime in Tehran as antagonistic toward Washington. Should an Iranian government begin to turn back toward the United States, the Soviets probably would try to stir up the minorities on the assumption that instability is preferable to an Iran that is again in the US camp.

create economic hardships for Iran, but almost certainly not enough to force it to alter its basic policies. Moreover, by wielding such a lever, Moscow risks pushing Tehran closer to the West out of economic need

Military Pressure. The presence of substantial Soviet military forces in the southern USSR and Afghanistan gives Moscow its most powerful potential lever

over Iran (see foldout figure 13 at the back). The Soviets have 28 divisions (26 motorized rifle, one tank, and one airborne) in the three military districts north of Iran and the equivalent of five or six divisions in Afghanistan. The divisions in the Turkestan, Transcaucasus, and North Caucasus military districts are among the least-well-equipped Soviet forces in the USSR's border regions. We believe, however, that these forces are sufficient, if mobilized, to mount either a limited or full-scale invasion of Iran on relatively short notice without substantial reinforcement from Soviet forces opposite NATO or China.⁹

The Soviets have also been developing contingency plans since 1980 for military campaigns in Iran and the Persian Gulf region. In August 1980 [

following the ~~Shah's~~ Fall the Soviet General Staff completely reevaluated contingency plans for Soviet military intervention in Iran. [

claimed in 1982 that the USSR maintained detailed contingency plans for a "complete" takeover of Iran. In addition [

indicates that Moscow has created a theater-level military command for the Southwest Asia region—the Southern Theater of Military Operations

Any of the following developments, in our view, probably would lead the Soviets to consider military intervention in Iran:

- Moscow perceived that the United States was itself preparing to intervene.
- Central power in Iran broke down and the country began to fragment.

⁹ We believe that a full-scale invasion of Iran would require some 20 Soviet divisions and at least a month of preparation. Alternatively, an invasion with a limited objective such as Azerbaijan could be launched by about five to seven divisions after two to three weeks of preparation. [

Treaty of Friendship Between Persia and the Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic, Signed at Moscow, 26 February 1921

Article 5

The two high contracting parties undertake

(1) To prohibit the formation or presence within their respective territories of any organizations or groups or persons, irrespective of the name by which they are known, whose object is to engage in acts of hostility against Persia or Russia, or against the allies of Russia. They will likewise prohibit the formation of armed troops within their respective territories with the aforementioned object.

(2) Not to allow a third party or any organization whatever it be called, which is hostile to the other contracting party, to import or to convey in transit across their countries material which can be used against the other party.

(3) To prevent by all means in their power the presence within their territories or within the territories of their allies of all armies or forces of a third party in cases in which the presence of such forces would be regarded as a menace to the frontiers, interest, or safety of the other contracting party.

Article 6

If a third party should attempt to carry out a policy of usurpation by means of armed intervention in Persia, or such power should desire to use Persian territory as a base of operations against Russia, or if a foreign power should threaten the frontiers of Federal Russia or those of its allies, and if the Persian Government should not be able to put a stop to such menace after having been once called upon to do so by Russia, Russia shall have the right to advance her troops into the Persian interior for the purpose of carrying out the military operations necessary for its defense. Russia undertakes, however, to withdraw her troops from Persian territory as soon as the danger has been removed.

- A leftist faction seized power and appealed to the USSR for help.⁴⁰

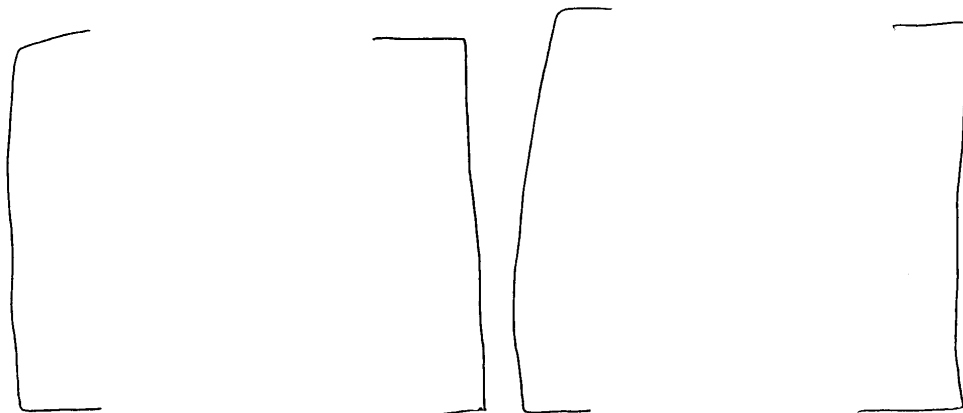
Although the USSR has the capability to intervene militarily, the decision to intervene would be an agonizing one. Even a limited intervention into Azerbaijan would face fierce Iranian resistance and major terrain and logistic problems. A US military response would be difficult in this scenario, but Soviet leaders probably would judge there would be a strong likelihood of a US move to occupy parts of southern Iran.

A full-scale invasion would present exponentially greater operational difficulties and risks of a major confrontation with the United States. Such a campaign would be on a scale larger than any the USSR has waged since World War II. In the best of circumstances—limited Iranian resistance and no US intervention—we believe it would take Soviet forces six to 12 weeks to seize the oil-rich Khuzestan region on the Persian Gulf littoral. Soviet leaders would anticipate that a full-scale invasion of Iran would prompt a major US military response [] claimed the Soviets were well aware of the serious risks of such a confrontation.

Afghanistan

Ever since Russia's expansion into Central Asia in the 19th century, Afghanistan had been a buffer between the Russian, then Soviet, domains and South Asia, controlled until 1947 by the British. Moscow's invasion of December 1979 changed Afghanistan's status from that of a buffer to a potential integral part of the Soviet imperium. The invasion not only marked the

⁴⁰ If the Soviets were to intervene, they would be likely to cite Articles 5 and 6 of their 1921 Treaty of Friendship with Iran as legal justification for any intervention, just as they did in 1941. Article 6 states that should a third party intervene militarily in Iran or use Iranian territory as a base of operations against the USSR: "Russia shall have the right to advance her troops into the Persian interior for the purpose of carrying out the military operations necessary for its defense." The Shah unilaterally abrogated Articles 5 and 6 of the treaty in 1959, and the Khomeini regime reiterated the abrogation in November 1979. The Soviets have ignored the Iranian moves and still speak publicly and privately of the entire treaty being in force.



USSR's first occupation of a Middle Eastern country since the withdrawal of Soviet forces from Iran in 1946, but also the first expansion of Soviet control in the region since the reconquest of Central Asia during and after the 1918-21 civil war. In addition, the invasion rescued the only Marxist regime—other than the one in South Yemen—in the Middle East.

The Soviets' occupation of Afghanistan has enhanced their ability to exercise influence beyond Afghan borders. They are in a better position to put military pressure on Iran and Pakistan. Thus far, Moscow has conducted only limited raids from Afghanistan into Pakistan and Iran against Afghan insurgent targets, and Soviet forces in Afghanistan as now constituted do not pose a major military threat to Pakistan or Iran. Moreover, before the Soviets could effectively use their presence in Afghanistan as a staging base for large-scale military operations beyond Afghan borders, they first would have to quell the insurgency and make massive logistic improvements (roads, airfields, fuel lines, communications). Nonetheless, Iran now faces Soviet forces on two flanks, Pakistan has to contend for the first time with a Soviet military presence on its border, and Soviet tactical airpower

has the potential to move some 400 kilometers closer to the Strait of Hormuz.

At the same time, the Soviets' invasion and continuing occupation of Afghanistan has had negative repercussions for them in the region and beyond. The occupation of a Middle Eastern, Islamic, and nonaligned nation has sparked resentment against Moscow from each of these constituencies (most Middle Eastern states are members of all three). Even some of the Soviet Union's friends in the region, such as Syria, Iraq, Algeria, and the PLO, were disillusioned by the invasion, although—for the most part—they have muted their displeasure. Perhaps even more important, the Soviet move has made some regional states more receptive to an increased US military presence in the region.

The Situation Today. Before the Soviets can even contemplate capitalizing on their military presence in Afghanistan, they must first establish control over the countryside, a goal they appear to be little closer to achieving than when their troops first entered the country in December 1976.

□

7

The Soviet Withdrawal

The Soviet leadership has made a decision which I will officially announce today. By the end of 1986, six regiments—one tank regiment, two motorized rifle regiments, and three antiaircraft regiments—along with their established equipment and weapons will be returned from Afghanistan to the motherland. [Applause] These units will return to the regions of their permanent deployment in the Soviet Union, and in such a way that all those for whom this may be of interest may be easily convinced of this.

—Speech by Mikhail Gorbachev
in Vladivostok, 28 July 1986

Unit	Location Prior to Withdrawal	Withdrawn?	Deception	Status
Tank regiment	Shindand (most tanks deployed elsewhere until early July)	Yes. Ceremony 15 October	✓	✓
Original motorized rifle regiment (MRR) with three battalions of armored personnel carriers	Shindand	No		
New MRR with one battalion of armored personnel carriers (APCs) and two battalions of trucks	Shindand (initial elements arrived by 31 August)	Yes. Ceremony 17 October		
Original MRR with two battalions of APCs	Konduz	No		
New MRR with one battalion of APCs and two battalions of trucks	Konduz (initial elements arrived 29 August)	Yes. Ceremony 17 October		
Air defense regiment	Kabul	Yes. Ceremony 19 October	✓	✓
Air defense regiment	Shindand	Yes. Ceremony 21 October		
Air defense regiment	Konduz	Yes. Ceremony 27 October		✓

People living in this city [Konduz] today bid a ceremonial farewell to the last of the six Soviet regiments being returned home in keeping with a joint decision by the governments of the USSR and Afghanistan.

—Moscow TASS in English, 27 October 1986

Over the past two years, the Soviets have attempted to redress the situation by augmenting their forces in Afghanistan, pursuing a more aggressive strategy against the insurgency, stepping up military pressure on Pakistan and Iran, improving training of Afghan military and political cadres, and replacing the Afghan leader. The USSR has some 116,000 men in Afghanistan, up about 30 percent since 1980. Among the most significant additions have been four more battalions of special-purpose forces, more fixed-wing aircraft (up from 75 to 115), and the deployment of a 2,500-man motorized rifle regiment to the Herat region near the Iranian border. None of the units—totaling about 1,800 troops—that Moscow withdrew from Afghanistan in October was critical to the Soviet war effort (see inset)

The more aggressive Soviet pursuit of the insurgents has led to higher than usual casualties on both sides. Although Soviet forces have fought more effectively, and at least some Afghan forces have shown tentative signs of improvement, the regime remains unable to stand on its own.

In for the Long Haul. The Soviets, despite their minor troop withdrawal in October, appear to be prepared for a protracted struggle in Afghanistan.

Throughout the Soviet party, government, and military there is a general resignation to the fact that the USSR would be in Afghanistan for a "generation or more."

Soviet officials often cite the fledgling Bolshevik regime's long fight against the Central Asian Basmachi resistance as an indicator of Moscow's capacity to persevere against the Afghan insurgents. Gorbachev himself made such a remark.

The Soviet domestic media have given much more extensive coverage to the war during the past two years, which suggests the leadership is trying to prepare the public for a long struggle.

From Moscow's perspective the costs of withdrawing are high. [redacted] said the consequences of a premature withdrawal would be even

A Reason To Hang Tough

The Soviets probably believe that the international costs of staying in Afghanistan are diminishing with time. Despite the continuing broad support for the annual vote in the UN General Assembly calling for the withdrawal of "foreign" troops from Afghanistan, most countries that condemned the invasion or even imposed sanctions against Moscow have returned to business as usual with the USSR. Oriental Institute department chief Gankovskiy told US Embassy officers in August 1985 that US involvement in Afghanistan is a passing whim of the Reagan administration. Although Gankovskiy probably was exaggerating for effect, and the Soviets are still quite concerned with US and other support for the insurgents, on balance most Soviet policymakers probably would agree with his basic point: US involvement is not likely to last indefinitely because Afghanistan is not of vital interest to the United States—as it is to the USSR

more catastrophic than those of failing to intervene in 1979. [redacted] said that [redacted] involved in Afghanistan believe that Soviet leaders would see it as "too shameful" to pull out. The Soviet Union's prestige as a superpower would be tarnished.

The ideological rationale for not leaving is also compelling from a Soviet perspective. A major factor behind the initial invasion was the desire to avert the collapse of a Marxist regime. An article published in *Novoye Vremya* shortly after Soviet forces moved in asserted that: "To refuse to use the potential which the socialist states possess [to aid the Afghan Marxists] would mean, in fact, avoiding an internationalist duty." The Soviet Ambassador to France, in a speech in April 1980, said the Soviets could not "permit the transformation of Afghanistan into a new Chile," where the Marxist regime of Salvador Allende was toppled in 1973 and the Soviets were powerless to

prevent it. The Soviets probably fear that allowing the Marxist government in Afghanistan to collapse would set a dangerous precedent and raise questions about their willingness to support Marxist regimes elsewhere.

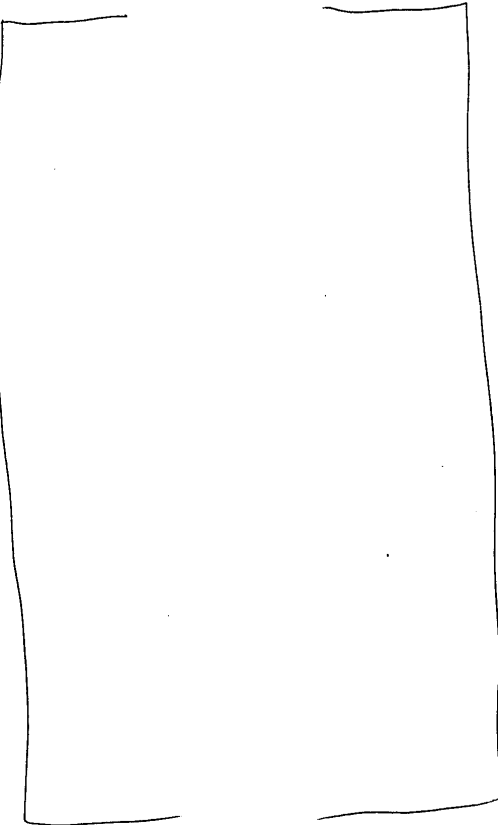
Despite the reasons to stay, some Soviet officials have indicated to Western and Pakistani sources that the Kremlin would seriously consider withdrawing its forces if reasonable terms could be worked out that preserve the nature of the Afghan regime. Some of these officials have actually claimed that a decision to withdraw has already been made. They may have been referring to Gorbachev's July announcement of a limited withdrawal. We doubt that a decision on a full withdrawal has already been made.

The conflicting signals coming from the Soviets might simply be a smokescreen to ease international pressure on the USSR to withdraw []

[] They could also be a reflection of a belief that the more aggressive strategy against the insurgents, the replacement of former Afghan leader Babrak Karmal with Najib, and Moscow's more flexible approach to the UN "proximity talks" with Pakistan will eventually lead to a resolution of the Afghan problem that would permit a withdrawal of most Soviet forces. If so, the Soviets are likely to stick with this policy course, which would probably involve:

- More aggressive attempts to eradicate rebel bases of support within the country and across the border in Pakistan and Iran.
- Intensive training of Afghan military and political cadres, coupled with a broader campaign to win domestic acceptance of the Najib regime.
- Diplomatic and subversive efforts to weaken outside support for the insurgents (especially in Pakistan) and widen international acceptance of the Marxist regime.

Skillful implementation of such a policy could, in our view, lay the groundwork for the Soviets to remove a substantial part of their forces within two to three years, provided that Pakistan could be convinced to end its support for the rebels—an exceedingly difficult task.



What Moscow evidently hopes to achieve in Afghanistan, [] in [] is the establishment of a regime as subservient and secure as the one in Mongolia. If the Soviets eventually succeed, they will have extended the borders of the Soviet imperium and enhanced their ability to exercise influence in South and South-west Asia. For at least the next few years, however,

Afghanistan is likely to remain a major headache for the Kremlin, whether or not the Soviets withdraw their forces:

US military installations are located, could undergo the tragedy of Hiroshima. [

Turkey

Strategically, Turkey is the most important country in the Middle East from Moscow's perspective. It is the only state in the region that is a NATO member and that grants US forces permanent basing rights. The Turkish armed forces are by far the largest in the Middle East, and Turkey controls the choke point to the Black Sea. A recent Soviet study of the Middle East claims that the United States has given Turkey:

the role of a "barrier," isolating the Soviet Union from territorial contiguity with the countries of the Arab East and from direct access to them, [and] the role of NATO's "guard," controlling the gate leading from the Black to the Mediterranean Sea.

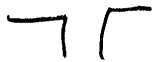
Undermining the Link to Washington. Moscow has attempted to take advantage of Ankara's dissatisfaction with the level of US support since the 1960s. Turkey's anger over Washington's willingness to bargain away US missiles based on Turkish soil—without consulting Ankara—for the Soviet missiles Khrushchev placed in Cuba in 1962 and over US condemnation of Turkish moves during the crisis in Cyprus in 1964 led to the first warming of Soviet-Turkish relations in the postwar period. Moscow similarly capitalized on the US criticism of Turkey's military intervention in Cyprus in 1974 and the resulting US embargo of arms to Turkey. Turkish-Greek disputes over Cyprus and sovereignty in the Aegean also provide opportunities for the Soviets, but Moscow is constrained from moving too blatantly in using these disputes to woo Turkey away from NATO because of Soviet interests in cultivating Greece.

Soviet concern about Turkey's security ties to the United States has grown since the late 1970s. When Washington and Ankara were renegotiating their Defense and Economic Cooperation Agreement in 1979, *Krasnaya Zvezda* warned that in the event of another war: "Turkey, where a substantial number of

] More recently, the Soviets have issued the same type of warning to Turkey in their media over Ankara's alleged desire to participate in research under the US "Strategic Defense Initiative." Moscow also has shown concern over Turkey's potential usefulness to US military efforts in the Middle East. In December 1983 Vasily Safronchuk, then chief of the Soviet Foreign Ministry's Middle East Department, criticized the reported establishment of US "Rapid Deployment Force" bases in Turkey during an interview with a Turkish newspaper.

Current Status of Relations. Despite the harsh Soviet criticism of Turkey's security ties to the United States, Moscow—by and large—has succeeded in maintaining a stable, if not always cordial, relationship with the various regimes in Ankara during the past two decades. The height of Soviet-Turkish cooperation came in 1978 with the signing of a "Political Document on Good Neighborly and Friendly Cooperation." The military takeover in Ankara two years later led to a cooling of relations that lasted until 1984

Moscow and the Turkish Straits



The Bosphorus Strait, as viewed from the Topkapı Palace, Istanbul

A Soviet merchant ship passes under the Bosphorus Bridge, just north of Istanbul

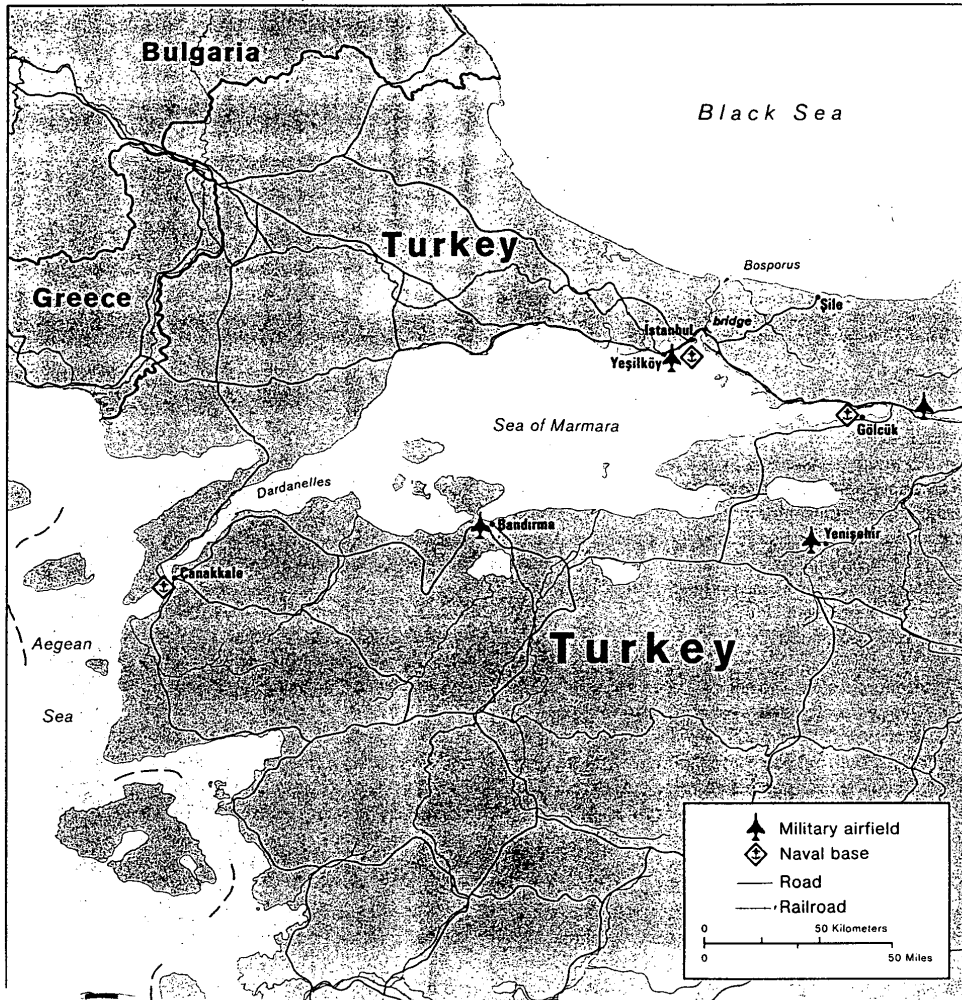
Control over the Turkish Straits has been an objective of Russian rulers since Tsarist Russia became a Black Sea power in the late 18th century (see figure 8). Even after the Russians won the right from the Ottoman Turks in 1774 to navigate the Black Sea and pass through the Straits, Russia's southern fleet was confined to the Black Sea for all but two brief periods until the Treaty of Lausanne in 1921. Great Britain and France awarded Russia the Straits and Istanbul on paper in a secret treaty in 1915, and the USSR asked for the same in talks with Germany in 1940 to divide up Europe and the Middle East. Stalin made a final bid for control of the Straits at the end of World War II through appeals to his Allied partners for revision of the Montreux Convention of 1936 and, when those failed, through direct pressure on Turkey—also unsuccessful.

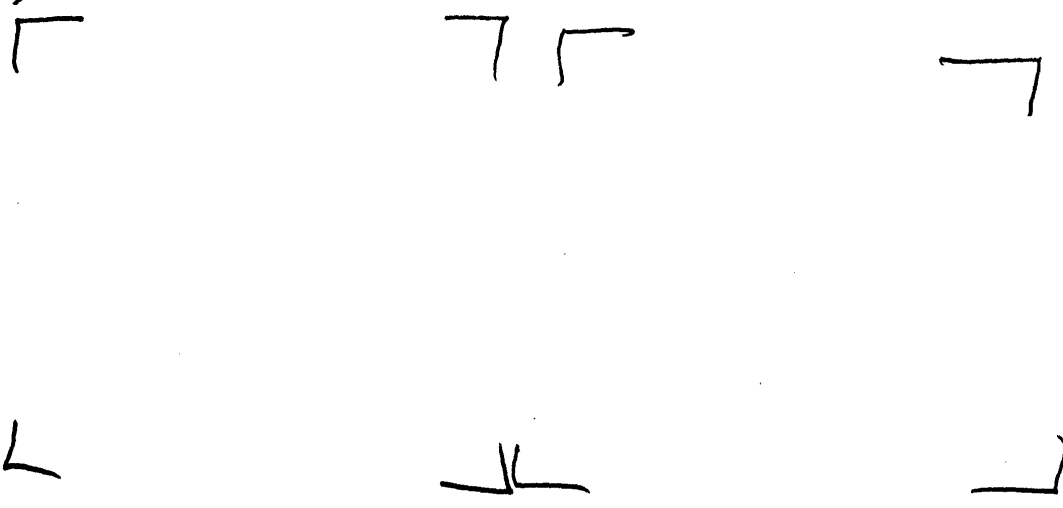
Turkish control of the Straits places restrictions on the movement of Soviet warships in and out of the Black Sea in peacetime and could bottle up Soviet naval and merchant ships in times of tensions or hostilities. The Montreux Convention requires that the Soviets provide the Turks eight days' notice before sending any warship over 10,000 tons through

the Straits, and only one may transit at a time. No Soviet aircraft carrier or submarine may transit, except, in the case of the latter, for repairs. Soviet civilian, but not military, aircraft are allowed to overfly the Straits

Despite these restrictions, Moscow has managed to stretch and sometimes circumvent the Convention's provisions. For example, since the late 1960s the Soviets have made it a practice to declare transits of warships, whether or not they intend to use them. This allows them to augment their Mediterranean Flotilla more quickly in times of crisis. Moscow also has contended—and the Turks have accepted—that its Kiev-class aircraft carriers are actually antisubmarine warfare cruisers, thus enabling it to circumvent the ban on carrier transits. The Soviets also have flown military transport aircraft—claiming they were civilian flights—over Turkey to resupply clients in the Middle East and Africa. The Turks have reluctantly allowed such flights on a limited basis, possibly because of concern about Moscow's capability to restrict Turkish flights to Western Europe across Bulgaria.

Figure 8
The Turkish Straits





Former Soviet Premier Tikhonov's December 1984 visit to Ankara—the first by a Soviet leader in almost a decade—put the relationship back on a more cooperative course, although tensions remain. Soviet media commentary on the strictly bilateral aspects of the relationship has been more positive since the Tikhonov visit, as reflected most recently by their favorable coverage of Prime Minister Ozal's July 1986 visit to the USSR

The economic sphere historically has been the most productive area of Soviet-Turkish relations. The focus of Tikhonov's 1984 trip was the signing of a trade agreement for the 1986-90 period that sets a target of \$6 billion in total trade between the two countries. Bilateral trade increased by 20 percent in 1985, according to official Soviet trade statistics:

Moscow has extended Ankara more credits—\$3.4 billion since 1958—than any other non-Communist country. To date, Turkey has drawn only about \$860 million of this amount, but it has used the aid to develop some important sectors of its economy. Soviet assistance has been crucial to construction of the Iskenderun iron and steel works (the largest in Turkey), the Seydisehir aluminum smelting plant, and an oil refinery in Izmir. The Soviets have approximately 1,500 economic advisers and technicians working at

these and other facilities in Turkey. In February the two sides signed a 25-year natural gas agreement that calls for the USSR to provide Turkey a peak of 4 billion cubic meters annually by 1992. This would equal almost 90 percent of Turkey's natural gas needs and about 5 percent of its energy needs

Soviet Assets for Subversion. Turkish authorities contend that Moscow was behind much of the leftwing terrorism that rocked Turkey in the middle and late 1970s

Turkish officials continue to claim that the USSR and its allies are supporting the Kurdish insurgency in eastern Turkey.

We believe that Moscow maintains contacts with various Turkish leftwing and Kurdish extremist groups and has provided funding and probably some small-arms support through intermediaries

It is claimed that Fidan had given guerrilla training to a small group of Turkish Kurds and

[there is also evidence that the Bulgarians have in the past smuggled small arms into Turkey, almost certainly with Moscow's acquiescence if not support. Although profitmaking is a motive and many of the arms apparently fall into the hands of rightwing terrorists, we believe the Soviets hope—at little risk or cost—to fuel opposition to the Turkish Government.

since 1980, the Soviets are likely to put more emphasis on improving state-to-state ties and less on subversion during the next five years, unless the internal situation suddenly deteriorates. They will continue to cultivate their clandestine assets, both as a hedge to the future and a reminder to Ankara that they can cause trouble. The Soviets almost certainly recognize, however, that Turkey continues to be a bulwark of NATO on the USSR's southern flank, and they are likely to act with appropriate restraint.

Soviet support, however, appears to have been relatively low level. Moscow, pursuing its traditional dual-track policy, apparently wants to be in a position to stoke the fires of Turkish internal unrest—which is indigenously generated—without damaging its state-to-state ties to the Turkish Government and provoking a confrontation with a NATO member.

Totaling Up the Balance Sheet

This survey of Soviet policy has shown that the USSR's position in the Middle East today is strong in the northern tier and much less strong in the Arab-Israeli theater. Whereas Moscow has the edge over Washington in all of the northern tier except Turkey, the United States retains greater influence than the Soviet Union in most of the Levant, the Arabian Peninsula, and North Africa.

The evidence of Soviet support for the Turkish Communist Party (TKP), in contrast to the circumstantial evidence of support for terrorist groups, is unquestionable. The USSR is the prime financial backer of the TKP, which follows the Moscow party line. The party, which has been illegal in Turkey since 1925, has its headquarters in East Berlin. With Soviet funding and technical assistance, the TKP operates two clandestine radio stations ("Our Radio" and "Voice of the Turkish Communist Party") out of East Germany that broadcast in Turkish to Turkey and Western Europe. The TKP, however, is a bit player in Turkey and has only a tiny following and a minimal ability to influence events there.

Moscow's influence in Syria, as well as in Libya and South Yemen, has not balanced its loss of influence in Egypt. The relationship with Syria—the USSR's most important in the Arab world—ensures Moscow a role in the region's central issue, the Arab-Israeli conflict. However, the Soviet position in the Arab-Israeli theater will remain inferior to that of the United States as long as Cairo maintains close ties to Washington, and it seems likely that—barring a major political upheaval in Egypt—those ties will continue to be strong during the rest of the 1980s.

Continuing the Dual-Track Policy. The long-term nature of Turkish internal unrest, West European criticism of human rights abuses in Turkey, the rivalry between Turkey and Greece, the Cyprus problem, and Turkish doubts about the intensity of the US commitment to Turkey promise to continue to provide the Soviets with openings both to exploit Turkey's weaknesses and to try to woo it away from the Western alliance. With the success the military regime and the subsequent civilian government of Prime Minister Ozal have had in stabilizing the country

The USSR is recognized as an important actor by most of the Arabs, who value its support for a Palestinian state. The pro-US Arab states also see relations, or at least contacts, with the Soviet Union as a useful tool to ensure that Washington does not take them for granted. For most of the Arabs, however, the USSR's atheistic ideology, aggressive penetration efforts, and invasion of Afghanistan are ample

reason to keep a certain distance. Even in the pro-Soviet states—the PDRY excepted—local Communist parties are either proscribed or thoroughly tamed, and the Soviets have shown little ability to sway the internal political order

In the northern tier, the USSR has been able to exert major political influence only in Afghanistan. Despite decades of trying, the Soviets have had no success in the postwar period in steering political events inside Turkey and Iran. The Communist parties of both countries are illegal and have been—with the exception of the Tudeh in the 1940s—bit players in Turkish and Iranian politics

Military power remains Moscow's strongest card in the region. The military forces the Soviets have deployed in the southern USSR opposite the Middle East, their naval and air operations in the Middle East, their willingness to use force in Afghanistan and deploy their own air defense forces in Syria, and their provision of large amounts of modern weapons to their clients all indicate that the USSR will be a force to be reckoned with in the Middle East for years to come.

Beyond the northern tier, however, the Soviets still cannot match the power-projection capabilities of the United States and its NATO allies, and, in fact, US improvements in this field since the late 1970s threaten to leave Moscow even further behind. The Soviet Union lacks the aircraft carriers or access to regional airbases necessary to operate fighter aircraft beyond the bordering regions of the southern USSR. Without fighter cover, the Soviets would not be able to mount a contested deployment of ground forces to the region or protect their Mediterranean Flotilla and Indian Ocean Squadron from Western carrier-based aircraft. The Soviets are working to remedy these deficiencies by developing full-size aircraft carriers and the capabilities for long-distance air refueling for their fighters. They are likely, however, to have only one of these new carriers by 1990, and they are still years away from perfecting long-distance fighter refueling

Economically, the USSR continues to lag far behind the West, Japan, and now even increasingly active South Korea in the Middle East. For Moscow's

clients or countries such as Iraq, which are temporarily strapped for the hard currency to pay for Western goods, Soviet economic aid and bilateral trade are important. Even countries as close to the Soviets as South Yemen and Syria, however, have been dissatisfied with the level and quality of Soviet aid and have been looking to the West and Japan to provide the consumer goods, technology, hard currency, and know-how that the Soviet Union generally lacks. Thus, the gap between Soviet and Western/Japanese/South Korean involvement in the Middle East is likely to widen.

The Soviets still have trouble turning their military strength into commensurate political influence in the Middle East. They remain frozen out of discussions to resolve the Arab-Israeli dispute. Obtaining a voice in the peace process—which would signify acceptance by the United States and the regional states involved of a major Soviet political role in the Middle East—continues to be one of Moscow's major goals (see appendix B). The USSR's prospects of realizing that goal in the next five years are not good

Impact of Future Developments

We believe the USSR's primary policy goals in the Middle East during the rest of the 1980s are likely to be:

- Consolidating control in Afghanistan.
- Blocking any US-sponsored Arab-Israeli peace settlement that leaves Moscow out and, optimally, regaining a Soviet voice in the peace process.
- Unifying the Arabs into a pro-Soviet front by ending the isolation of Moscow's Arab clients: Syria, Libya, and South Yemen.
- Stemming the drift of Algeria and Iraq toward lesser dependence on the USSR and closer ties to the United States.
- Expanding Soviet influence in Moscow's key Middle Eastern targets: Egypt and Iran.
- Eroding Turkey's security ties to Washington.

We have assessed Moscow's prospects for achieving these tasks and have concluded that in most cases they are not promising. Gorbachev's best chances for success seem to be in preventing a US-sponsored Arab-Israeli settlement, expanding influence in Egypt and Iran, and, possibly, consolidating control in Afghanistan. What remains to be examined are some developments that would have a major impact on Soviet policy in the region—as well as important implications for the United States—and prompt us to alter our assessments.

Positive Developments From Moscow's Perspective

Rapprochement Between Syria and Iraq

The Soviets have attempted for years to get Assad and Saddam to bury their differences, but with no success.

flatly ruled out a Syrian-Iraqi reconciliation so long as both Assad and Saddam remain in power. A rapprochement between the two would be likely to strengthen the hardline Arabs vis-a-vis Israel and bolster opposition to a US-sponsored settlement of the Arab-Israeli question. The Soviets, too, would hope that Syria could draw Iraq closer to the USSR, although both Damascus and Baghdad would remain fiercely protective of their independence from Moscow

Rapprochement Between Syria and Arafat

The Soviets have tried even harder to bring Assad and Arafat together—also to no avail. This development would almost certainly end US hopes of achieving resolution of the Palestinian question without Syrian or Soviet participation. It also would be likely to ensure that neither Jordan nor Egypt dominated the PLO. An Assad-Arafat rapprochement probably would lead to closer Soviet-PLO ties and might facilitate the Soviet proposal for an international conference on the Arab-Israeli question. That proposal stands no chance of going anywhere as long as Syria, Moscow's closest Arab ally, and the PLO, the representative of the people whose future is being negotiated, remain at odds.

Rapprochement Between Syria and Egypt

A Syrian-Egyptian detente based on anti-Israeli, anti-US policies would give more of a boost to Soviet fortunes in the Middle East than any other single development. Such a reconciliation, although unlikely any time soon, probably would lead to a significant improvement in Soviet ties to Egypt. It would not only end US hopes of achieving a settlement of the Palestinian question without Syrian and Soviet participation but also probably would lead to the unraveling of the Egyptian-Israeli peace settlement and revive the two-front threat to Israel.

Replacement of the Mubarak Regime in Egypt With a Neutral Regime

Such a development probably would lead to a sharp reduction or possibly to a cessation of US-Egyptian military cooperation and might result in Egypt's abandonment of the Camp David accords. Either step would be a major windfall for the Soviets, whether or not they were able to replace US influence in Cairo with their own. Moscow would step up its efforts toward that end, possibly offering to settle Egypt's military debt to the USSR on favorable terms and provide Cairo with major new weapon systems. The Soviets probably would encourage Syria and Libya to adopt a positive line toward the new regime in Cairo, hoping this would ease the way to better Soviet-Egyptian relations. If Damascus and Tripoli balked, however, Moscow would not be likely to be deterred from courting the new regime. The benefits from increased Soviet influence in Egypt probably would outweigh, in Soviet eyes, the costs of incurring Syrian and Libyan wrath.

Decision by Pakistan To End Support for Afghan Rebels

This would deal a shattering blow to the rebels. Although the insurgency would be likely to continue for at least a few more years, the Soviets probably could quickly ensure that the rebels would be no more than a nuisance. Moscow would be likely to bring the bulk of its forces home, while leaving a sizable contingent in Afghanistan. Iran probably would sharply curtail its support for the rebels, not wanting to bear the brunt of Soviet wrath alone.

Severe Instability in Turkey

Moscow probably would attempt via Bulgaria to resume funneling small arms to Turkish leftists, step up financial and propaganda support, and criticize the Turkish Government's efforts to control such instability and US support for Ankara's efforts. The Soviets, however, would act with prudence to avoid sparking a major US response

Developments That Could Have a Mixed Impact on Soviet Interests

A New Syrian-Israeli War

This would be a wild card for Moscow. Washington's relations with the Arabs would stand to suffer unless they viewed US pressure on Israel as responsible for ending the fighting. The war would offer the Soviets the opportunity to bolster their stock with Syria and the Arabs as a whole by providing timely military resupply. And, no matter what their actual behavior during the war, the Soviets would move as they have after past wars to restock the Arab military inventory and increase Arab dependence on Soviet weapons. The Syrians might even agree, as they did after their defeat in Lebanon in 1982, to station Soviet combat forces in Syria.

At the same time, a Syrian-Israeli war would entail major risks for the USSR—the most serious being a US-Soviet military confrontation, something Moscow has always sought to avoid. Slightly less serious, but potentially more humiliating, would be a clash between Soviet forces sent to Syria and Israeli forces. The Soviets probably have a healthy respect for Israeli military prowess. []

Moscow would also stand to lose if the Arabs perceived Soviet support to be insufficient, as they did in the 1967 and 1982 wars. Quick resupply of arms to the Arabs after the danger had passed rescued the Soviet position in those cases, but there is no guarantee that this strategy would work again. Moreover,

there is the risk that, should the United States prove successful in bringing about a cease-fire, the Syrians might come to view cooperation with Washington—as the Egyptians did after the 1973 war—as the best means of obtaining what they want from Israel

An End to the War Between Iran and Iraq

The Soviets consistently have called for an end to the war, but they would be likely to view its cessation with mixed feelings. On the one hand, they probably would welcome an end to a major and unpredictable war on their border that has already had some favorable repercussions for the United States. A negotiated settlement would:

- Reduce the significance of one of the prime irritants in Soviet-Iranian relations—Moscow's weapon sales to Baghdad.
- Probably make the Persian Gulf states less nervous about Iranian expansionism, decreasing their need and willingness to cooperate militarily with the United States.
- Possibly improve prospects for an Iraqi-Syrian rapprochement

An end to the war, however, would also carry potential liabilities for the Kremlin:

- We believe Iraq, without as acute a need for Soviet weaponry, would accelerate its diversification of weapon suppliers.
- Iraq probably would further improve its relations with the United States as it looked to rebuild its economy after the war.
- Although a dramatic improvement in Iranian ties to Washington is only a remote possibility, Moscow might worry that the absence of the unifying factor of the war could weaken the present fundamentalist regime and bring in more pragmatic clerics, who might not be as averse to dealing with the United States.
- Iran would have a freer hand to increase aid to Afghan insurgents

would have to worry that the new leaders could turn toward the West, which has the economic wherewithal to rebuild the war-damaged Iranian economy. A victorious Iran would undermine Soviet influence in Baghdad and probably make the Khomeini regime even less susceptible to Soviet inroads or pressure. Moreover, the Kremlin would not want to see an anti-Soviet Iranian regime, whose Islamic fundamentalism might potentially attract adherents among the USSR's own Muslims, spreading its influence beyond Iranian borders

A Major Increase in Outside Support for the Afghan Rebels

This would compel the Soviets either to abandon their current strategy of shifting the burden of the fighting to the Afghan military or to risk the Marxist regime's collapse, which we believe they are not prepared to accept. A major expansion of Soviet involvement in the war against the rebels—possibly including increased cross-border raids into Pakistan—would carry significant political and economic costs. Moscow probably would come under heavy criticism from West European, Middle Eastern, and Third World governments. The increased Soviet involvement would especially complicate Soviet relations with China and India, not to mention the further chill it would have on US-Soviet relations:

US-Sponsored Talks Between Israel and a Jordanian-Palestinian Delegation

Although such talks today appear unlikely following the split between King Hussein and PLO leader Arafat, the two leaders could quickly reconcile. US success in working out a settlement of the Palestinian question without Soviet participation would be the most significant blow to Moscow's position in the Middle East since its loss of Egypt. The Kremlin, in our view, would go to great lengths to block the achievement of such a settlement. Soviet efforts would center on backing Syria's moves to intimidate its neighbors against reaching an agreement. Moscow probably would even provide military support for Syrian saber rattling aimed at Jordan or Israel, but the Soviets would advise Damascus against moves

Negative Developments From the Kremlin's Perspective

A Marked Expansion of the War Between Iran and Iraq

The greatest risk in this scenario is that a major threat to the flow of oil out of the Persian Gulf could prompt US military intervention. Such a move—whether protection for convoys of oil tankers or, in the most extreme case, occupation of Iranian territory—would pose significant difficulties for the Soviets. Beyond the immediate problem of deciding what kind of military response they would have to make, the Soviets would face the longer term prospect of an expanded US military presence in the Persian Gulf region. The conservative Gulf states almost certainly would look to Washington for protection

The Soviets, in our view, also would not want either Iran or Iraq to emerge as a clear victor. Moscow has long preferred a relative balance between the two countries. If either state gained predominance, it would make it more difficult for the USSR to exert influence in the Persian Gulf region. A victorious Saddam would almost certainly be apt to act even more independently of Moscow than he does today. A defeated Iran would look for outside help. It might seek Soviet assistance, but, if the Khomeini regime collapsed as a result of losing the war, the Soviets

that would provoke a full-scale war with Israel or push Amman toward closer security cooperation with Washington. If these Soviet and Syrian efforts failed to prevent a settlement from being reached, Moscow almost certainly would work to subvert the accord. Even if the accord held together, the Soviets would not be likely to drop their opposition and recognize a US fait accompli during the next five years

Death or Ouster of Assad

Soviet-Syrian relations have been close for over 30 years, and Moscow should be able to maintain its influence in Damascus after Assad's departure, provided the Ba'th Party remains in power. Any Syrian regime would have as its top priority the confrontation with Israel, for which Soviet military support is all but indispensable. Assad's successor probably would come from the military and therefore would be all the more likely to value ties to the USSR

Assad, however, has brought 16 years of stability to a country that was previously unstable, and the Soviets would fear that his departure might lead to more instability. Assad's regime is based on the small Alawi minority, which might not be able to continue its dominance without his commanding presence. A contentious struggle for power in Syria or—less likely—the accession to power of a group that is not favorably disposed toward the USSR would seriously jeopardize Moscow's long-term investment in Syria and, thereby, the overall Soviet position in the Middle East

is scarce on whom among the current regime the Soviets regard as their favorite to succeed Assad. They have had long experience, however, dealing with the most likely candidates—Director of Military Intelligence Ali Duba, Chief of Air Force Intelligence Muhammad Khuli, Defense Minister Talas, Chief of Staff Shihabi, and Vice President Khaddam—and probably could adjust quickly to any of them as head of Syria

The one current Syrian leader Moscow probably would not want to see succeed Assad is his brother, Vice President Rif 'at Assad. Soviet officials have often noted their distrust of Rif 'at

Since the late 1970s, he has adopted a thinly veiled anti-Soviet posture, and Moscow is suspicious of his extensive Western contacts

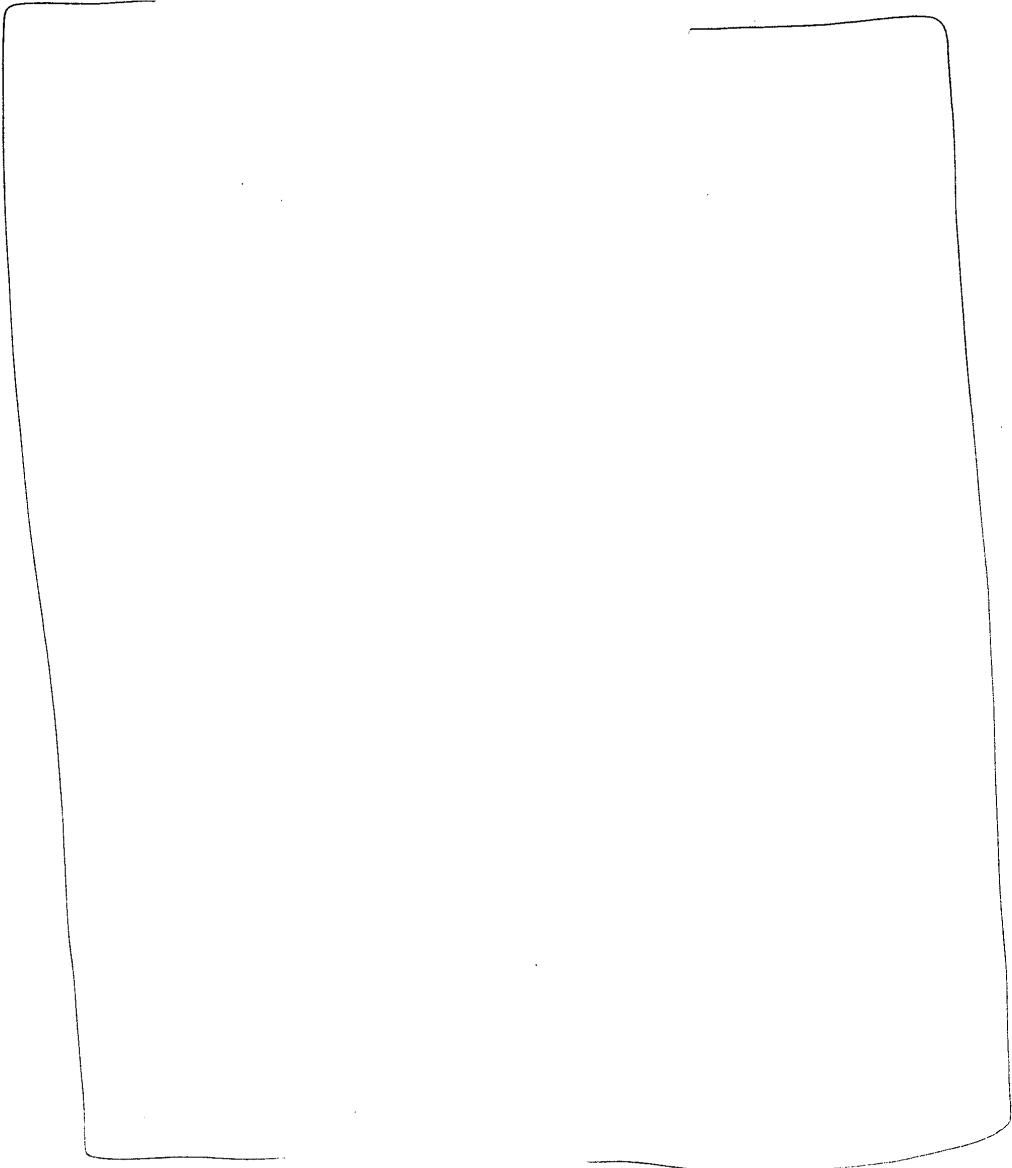
around the same time that the Soviets were pressuring Assad not to allow Rif 'at to assume any significant post because they cannot work with him. At a minimum, Rif 'at's accession to power would add a major degree of uncertainty to the Soviet-Syrian relationship.

Death or Ouster of Qadhafi

Moscow's relationship with Libya, more than any other in the Middle East, is dependent on one man. Qadhafi has revolutionized almost every aspect of Libyan Government and society and refashioned them in his own unique style. Without him, the odds would be against this system surviving for long in anything like its current form. Whether the Soviet position in Libya would survive the upheaval likely to follow Qadhafi's departure is an open question. Soviet officials have privately acknowledged

As with Syria, the Soviets almost certainly would not be able to sway a Libyan succession, but the long-standing arms relationship will give whatever regime

~~Secret~~



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that comes to power in Tripoli reason to pause before reorienting its policy away from Moscow. For that reason, the Soviets probably would hope that a military man replaces Qadhafi.

The Soviet-Libyan relationship might survive the succession relatively well should Qadhafi's de facto second in command, Major Jallud, assume the reins of power and hold the country together (see inset). The Soviets have dealt with Jallud longer and more extensively than with any other Libyan leader.

The Soviets preferred Jallud because he was more moderate and predictable than Qadhafi. By 1982 the Soviets no longer put such high hopes on Jallud, but they believed that his accession to power would nonetheless be welcomed by Moscow.

He would prefer Jallud as a successor.

A Major Drop in Soviet Oil Production

The slight increase in Soviet domestic oil production in 1986, which reversed a two-year decline, all but assures that the USSR will not become a net importer of oil during the next five years. The Soviets, however, have already increased their purchases of Middle Eastern oil in recent years (see table 5) and are likely to obtain even larger amounts throughout the rest of the 1980s.

Should the USSR's domestic oil production drop off much more sharply than we anticipate, the Soviets might become major consumers of Middle Eastern oil during the next five years. Such a development would give the Middle East even greater importance for Moscow and put the USSR in competition with the West and Japan for Middle Eastern oil.

⁴² In most cases, the Soviets accept the oil as payment for arms and resell it to their oil customer.

The Soviets would face major problems in coping not only with decreasing hard currency earnings from oil sales—currently about 35 percent of total Soviet annual hard currency earnings—but also in coming up with the countertrade or, as a last resort, hard currency to pay for oil imports. Moscow probably would attempt to increase arms sales to OPEC countries to finance the oil, but those countries can only absorb so many weapons, and their hard currency reserves have dropped markedly since the early 1986 decline in the world price of oil. There are few other commodities the Soviets could offer to trade for the oil, but they might attempt to expand their participation in economic development projects in the Middle East, accepting oil as payment for their services.

The USSR would have added incentive to improve relations with Iran and Saudi Arabia—two of the countries that have the reserve capacity for meeting the oil needs of the Soviets and their East European allies.⁴³ The Soviets might decide to adopt a more conciliatory policy toward Iran even while Khomeini remained in power, and they would be likely to work harder for normalized relations with Saudi Arabia. This need for oil would not force the Soviets to forgo opportunities to increase their influence in those countries and erode that of the United States. But Moscow would be likely to pursue those opportunities more cautiously while adopting a friendly posture toward the Iranian and Saudi Governments.

We do not believe the Soviets' need for oil would prompt them to try to seize Middle Eastern supplies during the next five years. Even if such considerations as the military and economic costs involved in conquering Iran, for example, and the risks of sparking a war with the United States are put aside, the cost of ruling the country would far outweigh that of buying

⁴³ The Soviet oil production drop would hit Moscow's East European allies especially hard. All but Romania are overwhelmingly dependent on Soviet supplies. Politically, the Soviets could not allow their allies' economies to collapse and would have to keep providing some oil.

Table 5
Soviet Purchases of
Middle Eastern Crude Oil, 1980-85^a

Thousand b/d

	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985
Libya	34	34	119	118	125	96
Iraq	36	0	2	46	77	65
Algeria	0	0	0	0	15	29
Saudi Arabia ^b	0	0	0	21	38	48
Iran	0	45	18	44	25	15
Syria	5	6	14	15	10	9
Oman	0	0	0	0	1	2
Total	75	85	153	244	291	264

^a Derived from official Soviet trade statistics.

^b Saudi Arabia sells crude to the USSR on behalf of Iraq.

the oil. Such a move would be a military-strategic gain, but it could not be justified nor prompted by economic need

Impact of Trends in Overall US-Soviet Relations

We believe the USSR will continue to pursue its longstanding strategic interests in the Middle East regardless of the state of US-Soviet relations. The central position the US-Soviet rivalry holds in Moscow's policy toward the Middle East, however, means that improvement or deterioration of the overall relationship between Moscow and Washington can have major consequences for that policy

Improvement

A revival of US-Soviet detente will not necessarily prompt the Kremlin to moderate its behavior in the Middle East because Moscow highly values potential gains in the region for their own sake and sees them as furthering its position in the superpower competition with Washington. Detente did not prevent the Soviets during the October 1973 war from mounting a massive arms resupply effort for their Arab allies and threatening to intervene unilaterally in the closing moment:

The most direct impact a US-Soviet detente is likely to have on Moscow's policy in the Middle East is in prompting the Soviets to intensify their efforts to be included in regional negotiations. The USSR almost certainly would center its efforts on convincing the United States to return to a joint US-Soviet initiative to resolve the Arab-Israeli dispute, preferably an international conference chaired by Washington and Moscow. To obtain US approval for such a course, the Soviets—under these conditions—might be willing to reestablish relations with Israel and attempt to convince Syria and the PLO to attend such a conference.

In an atmosphere of detente, the Soviets might give greater consideration to the impact their arms sales could have on regional stability. The USSR refrained from giving the Egyptians all they wanted in the early 1970s and might do so again with its current regional arms clients if it believed that the sale of a particular weapons system risked sparking an Arab-Israeli clash that could damage US-Soviet relations and if it believed Washington would act with similar restraint. The Soviets probably would be less worried about US-Soviet tensions over the Middle East than about the effect this might have on other, more important, areas of the bilateral relationship. They would want to avoid, for instance, a repeat of the effect their invasion of Afghanistan in 1979 had on East-West relations. It tilted the balance in Congress against ratification of the SALT II Treaty and steered NATO's determination to proceed with the deployment of intermediate-range missiles in Western Europe.

Moscow also would be likely to refloat a host of proposals designed to limit superpower arms sales and military deployments in the region—such as the Brezhnev Proposal of 1980 banning military bases in the Persian Gulf region, the plan to limit naval deployments in the Mediterranean Sea and Indian Ocean, and schemes for nuclear- and chemical-weapons-free zones. Of course, Moscow would design such proposals to have only minimal restrictions on its own military activities, but it might agree to some limitations if an overall agreement hindered US ability to deploy military power in the Middle East.

Deterioration

Soviet behavior in the Middle East since the decline of detente in the mid-1970s—including the invasion of Afghanistan, deployment of Soviet air defense forces to Syria, sale of increasingly more lethal arms to regional clients, and constant fanning of anti-US and anti-Israeli sentiment among Middle Eastern states—gives an indication of the types of actions Moscow could take if US-Soviet relations deteriorate further. The Soviets, for example, might press harder for Syria, Libya, and South Yemen to grant permanent naval and air bases to Soviet forces. They also might provide those countries and other regional clients with the latest and longest range versions of Soviet weapons complete with all of the most sophisticated electronics they often withhold. In addition, they could urge OPEC states to embargo oil sales to the West and step up aid to insurgents and opposition groups in pro-US countries.

Soviet behavior would still be constrained by objective factors, such as the risks of a major Arab-Israeli war, Israel's military superiority, and US advantages over the USSR in deploying forces to most of the region. In a period of deteriorating US-Soviet relations, however, Moscow almost certainly would be more apt to exploit rather than work to control regional crises.

Appendix A

Overview of Soviet Involvement in the Middle East Before 1970

When the history of Soviet and US involvement in the Middle East is compared, it is easy to see why the Soviets often view the Americans as upstarts. The United States has been directly involved in the Middle East for roughly half a century; the USSR and its Russian predecessors for more than a millenium. The first "Russian" involvement in the area occurred in 860, when a Kievan Rus army briefly laid seige to Constantinople, the capital of the Byzantine Empire, which encompassed much of what is today the Middle East. "Russia" and "Turkey" battled each other many more times over the centuries. From 1676 to 1914, alone, the Russian and Ottoman Empires fought 11 wars. During the same period, the Tsars also fought three wars with Iraq

Beginning in the late 18th century, with the decline of both the Ottoman and Persian realms, Great Britain became Russia's main rival for influence in the Middle East. The Russians and the British, in seeking to expand and protect their empires, vied for predominant influence in Afghanistan, Iran, and the Ottoman Empire, which held nominal sway over the Levant, North Africa, and the western rim of the Arabian peninsula. The growing power of Germany in both Europe and the Middle East prompted Russia and Britain to cooperate in the region during the last decade of Tsarist rule, but the traditional rivalry reemerged after the Bolsheviks took power in 1917.

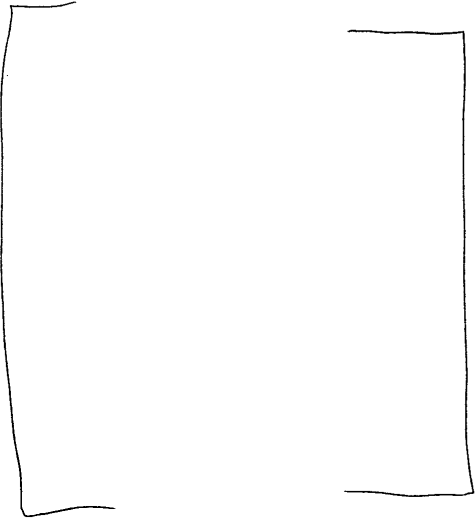
Despite the Bolsheviks' revolutionary rhetoric about igniting the colonial East against its "imperialist oppressors," the USSR under Lenin and Stalin exerted influence only in the northern tier borderlands. Khrushchev claims in his memoirs that Stalin considered the Arab world a British sphere of influence. Stalin believed that the USSR was too weak militarily in the region to challenge British hegemony, and indeed it was

World War II, however, created new opportunities. As the captured German documents from Nazi-Soviet negotiations of November 1940 indicate, Moscow hoped to supplant Great Britain as the predominant power in the Middle East. At the war's end, Stalin used the Soviet Army's occupation of northern Iran to establish "people's republics" in the Kurdish and Azeri regions. He also attempted through direct threats to obtain from Turkey a military base on the Straits and the return to the Soviet Union of two provinces in eastern Turkey that the Bolsheviks had ceded in 1921. Strong resistance by the Iranian and Turkish Governments and by the United States and Britain foiled each attempt and prompted Stalin to return to a conservative strategy in the region.

The most significant legacy of World War II for the Middle East was the weakening of the main colonial powers of the region, Britain and France. This development eventually led to the emergence of independent and strongly nationalistic regimes in the Arab world that distrusted the West and were willing to cooperate with the USSR

1955-67

The Soviets were not ready to take advantage of this opening until 1955. By then Stalin and his ideological aversion to dealing with local nationalists in the Third World were gone, and a confluence of interest had emerged among the USSR, Egypt, and Syria aimed at undermining the alliance system the United States and Britain were establishing in the region—the Baghdad Pact. Egypt's Nasser opposed the pact because he saw it aimed at splitting the Arabs and isolating his regime. The Soviets opposed it as another link in the Western alliance system along their borders and as an impediment to the expansion of their influence in the Arab world. Khrushchev was pragmatic enough to recognize the opportunity and devise



court the Iraqis—much to the displeasure of Nasser, who considered the Qasim regime a major rival. By the early 1960s, however, it had become clear that Marxist influence would not last in Iraq, and the Soviets accordingly paid more attention to cultivating Egypt and Syria

In the northern tier, the Soviets abandoned Stalin's heavyhanded attempts to expand Moscow's influence and instead developed relatively extensive ties first to the Afghans, then the Turks, and finally to the Iranians. Ankara and Tehran remained closely linked to Washington but were receptive to improving relations with their powerful northern neighbor. The regime in Kabul, ruling a country that was geographically isolated and without links to another great power, was ripe for Soviet cultivation. Afghanistan remained nonaligned but was drawn closer and closer to Moscow

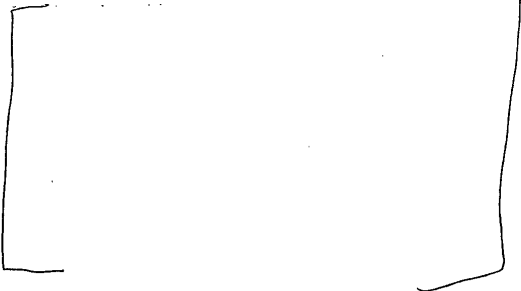
a strategy to capitalize on it. The Soviets developed links to most Arab countries in the mid-1950s, but, as one prominent Western scholar of Soviet Middle Eastern policy wrote, the key to Soviet success in the Middle East after 1955 was not

a "correct Marxist-Leninist appraisal," nor loans or credits, nor very cunning diplomacy. Moscow did not gatecrash; it was invited to become a major Middle Eastern power by Egypt and Syria

The Soviets patiently increased their influence in the Arab world between 1955 and 1967. They were aided by such events as the Anglo-French collaboration with Israel in attacking Egypt in 1956 and the anti-Western backlash this fueled among the Arabs, and the overthrow of the pro-British monarchy in Iraq in 1958, which removed the only Arab country from the Baghdad Pact.⁴ The radical new regime in Baghdad appeared for a time to offer the best opportunity to the Soviets for leftist, perhaps even Communist, influence in the region, and Moscow moved quickly to

1967-70

The massive defeat the Arabs suffered at the hands of Israel in the June 1967 war prompted them to move much closer to the USSR. The trend was most pronounced in Egypt, where Nasser put aside his earlier reservations about the Soviets and invited them in to rebuild and retrain his armed forces



The Egyptian facilities the Soviets were allowed to use during 1967-72 gave Moscow the widest military access to the Middle East it has ever enjoyed. The

⁴ Walter Laqueur, *The Struggle for the Middle East*. (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1972), p. 21.
⁵ After Iraq's pullout, the alliance was reorganized as the Central Treaty Organization (CENTO), composed of Turkey, Iran, Pakistan, Britain, and the United States.

Mediterranean Squadron gained extensive access to Egyptian ports and anchorages, and the Soviets established in Egypt their only naval aviation unit at the time outside the USSR. The unit eventually comprised naval reconnaissance, antisubmarine warfare, intelligence collection, and strike aircraft—significantly enhancing Moscow's capabilities to monitor US and NATO forces in the Mediterranean.

During 1967-70, the Soviets exerted more influence on Egyptian domestic policy than they ever have, before or since. Former Egyptian Foreign Minister Ismail Fahmy claims in his memoirs that the Soviet Ambassador in Cairo at the time played "a more influential role in Egypt than even Lord Cromer had during the early years of British Colonial rule." The Soviets looked favorably on the "progressive" changes Nasser implemented, especially the growing influence he gave the ruling Arab Socialist Union, which was led by the staunchly pro-Soviet Ali Sabry. Moscow may have even believed, judging from a study on Egypt by two of the USSR's leading Middle East watchers, that Nasser was gradually moving in his last years toward acceptance of "scientific socialism." Whether or not he was, his death in September 1970 made the question moot and marked the beginning of the decline of Soviet influence in the Arab world.

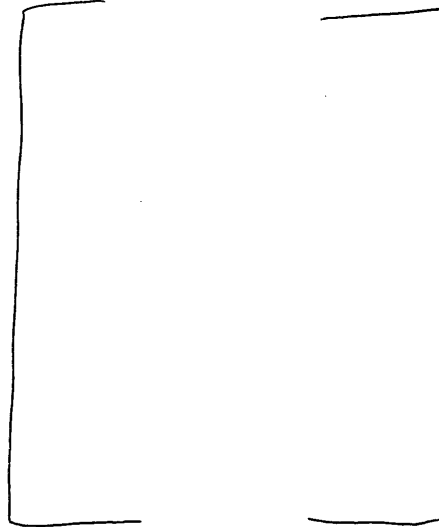
Appendix B

Moscow and the Arab-Israeli Peace Process

Soviet officials recognize that the Arab-Israeli conflict has been and is likely to remain the central issue in the Middle East. We believe the Soviets do not view the Arab-Israeli peace process as an end in itself but as a means to enhance their influence in the Middle East, especially at the expense of the United States. Moscow realizes US support for Israel is the major obstacle to improved US-Arab ties and that the Arab-Israeli dispute increases the receptivity of the Arabs to Soviet military and political backing. The Soviets do not necessarily want to solve a problem that has brought them substantial benefits but almost certainly would support a settlement that satisfied their Arab allies and institutionalized a Soviet role in the region.

The Soviet Union has been a participant in the peace process since the creation of the Israeli state and the first Arab-Israeli war in 1948. As the USSR expanded its presence in the region from the mid-1950s on, it played increasingly influential roles in negotiating the cease-fires that ended the Arab-Israeli conflicts in 1956, 1967, 1970, and 1973. Despite these efforts, the Soviets have been unable to sustain their influence in the peace process much past the end of each war. When the Arab states that Moscow had armed sought to develop the cease-fires into a genuine political settlement, they turned to the United States because of Washington's leverage with Israel.

Moscow's specific diplomatic goal has been to obtain a seat at the Arab-Israeli negotiating table as a coequal of Washington. It achieved this briefly in 1969-70, in December 1973 at the Geneva Conference, and—on paper—in an agreement with the United States in October 1977. Regaining such a role would be an acknowledgment by the United States and the states in the region of the Soviet Union's "legitimate role" in the Middle East. More concretely, it would enhance the Soviets' ability to block any US-sponsored settlement they believed harmful to their interests.



The Soviets repeatedly call both publicly and privately for a return to US-Soviet cooperation on the peace process and for a reconvened international conference. Senior Soviet Middle Eastern specialist Primakov's most recent book displays indignation at Washington's "betrayal" of the agreement between the United States and the Soviet Union in October 1977 to reconvene the Geneva Conference on the Arab-Israeli question. A TASS commentator noted that President Reagan's omission of the Middle East—during an address at the United Nations in October 1985—from his list of regional conflicts that the superpowers could jointly resolve was indicative of Washington's unilateral departure from "the joint Soviet-American accords on a Middle East settlement."

The Soviets have issued numerous Arab-Israeli peace proposals over the years. Their July 1984 plan contains the most detailed elaboration Moscow has issued of the mechanics of an international conference (see inset). The provisions closely follow the Kremlin's plan for the Geneva Conference of December 1973 but

29 July 1984 Soviet Proposal for an Arab-Israeli Peace Settlement ^a

The following six "principles" should be negotiated at an international conference:

1. *Israeli withdrawal from all Arab territories seized in 1967 and after; recognition of inviolability of new borders; dismantlement of Israeli settlements established on Arab land after 1967.*
2. *Creation of a Palestinian state on the West Bank and Gaza Strip; a short transition phase during which the United Nations administers the territories is acceptable; the new state has the right to form a confederation.*
3. *Incorporation of East Jerusalem into the new Palestinian state.*
4. *All states in the region guaranteed the right to a secure and independent existence and development.*
5. *An end to the state of war between Israel and the Arab states, and a commitment by all parties to respect each other's sovereignty, independence, and territorial integrity and to resolve disputes peacefully.*
6. *Guarantee of the settlement by the permanent members of the UN Security Council or the Council as a whole. The Soviet Union is ready to participate in such guarantees.*

The conference would be attended by Israel, Syria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, the PLO, the United States, the USSR, and by "some" other states from the Middle East and from "areas adjoining it" capable of making a "positive contribution."

^a Boldface points were not in Soviets' previous proposal, 15 September 1982.

appear aimed at preventing what happened then, when Washington outmaneuvered the Soviets and brokered separate Israeli-Egyptian and Israeli-Syrian agreements

The views of its Arab allies are a major constraint on the USSR's maneuverability with respect to a peace settlement. Moscow has made some attempts in the past to moderate the positions of its allies:

It claims that the Soviets were genuinely trying to influence the Arabs toward agreeing to a peace settlement with Israel in the late 1960s and early 1970s.

It indicates that the Soviets tried repeatedly—and unsuccessfully—in 1967 to convince Syria to accept UN Security Council Resolution 242 as a basis for resolving the Arab-Israeli dispute. They were similarly unable to convince Damascus to attend the Geneva Conference in 1973 or support its reconvening in 1977.

Moscow pressed Baghdad hard in the early 1970s to accept UN Resolution 242.

Senior PLO official Khalil Wazir noted in an interview with a Kuwaiti newspaper in March 1986 that the "Soviet Union has asked us since 1968 to recognize" resolutions 242 and 338

It indicates that the Soviets suggested that PLO recognition of Israel's right to exist would facilitate attainment of Palestinian objectives in the peace process. The Soviets continue to advise the PLO leader to accept resolutions 242 and 338 and Israel's right to exist according

The USSR, however, has shown it is not willing to press its Arab allies too hard or get too far out in front of them in the peace process. In 1969, for example, Egypt tentatively accepted a UN proposal for indirect negotiations with Israel, and the Soviets informed the United States that this framework might be acceptable to them.

When Nasser subsequently changed his mind, Moscow similarly reversed its position in discussions with US official:

The Soviets, if they obtained a significant role in a peace conference, might again attempt to moderate their allies' positions. We believe, however, that the Soviet Union does not possess the leverage to make Syria and the PLO sign an agreement that did not meet their objectives, and it would not risk damaging bilateral relations—especially with Damascus—by pushing them too hard on the issue

The Situation Today

The agreement between Jordan's King Hussein and PLO leader Arafat on 11 February 1985 to form a joint delegation for peace talks once again threatened to leave the USSR on the sidelines of the peace process. The Reagan Plan of September 1982 called for just such a joint Jordanian-Palestinian delegation to enter direct peace talks with Israel. Soviet criticism of the Arafat-Hussein agreement was direct and strong, and Moscow loudly applauded Hussein's abandonment of the agreement in February 1986.

The Kremlin may be encouraged by the wider support its plan for an international conference has received. Now virtually all of the Arabs—save Libya and Iraq—have endorsed the idea, although with widely varying degrees of enthusiasm. Even the United States and Israel have dropped their total opposition to attending some form of international conference at which the USSR is present. The Soviets, however, remain skeptical about Washington's and Tel Aviv's change of heart

Moscow's latest scheme for getting its foot in the door of Arab-Israeli negotiations—via a preparatory conference for the formal international conference—is likely to go the way of past Soviet gambits. The idea

first raised by Gorbachev in July 1986 was given formal public endorsement by Shevardnadze in his speech to the United Nations in September.

the Soviets had no clear ideas on such a preparatory conference

Among Moscow's Arab friends, the Syrians, as usual, have been the coolest toward the scheme. Although Soviet media stated that Shevardnadze and Syrian Foreign Minister Shara' discussed the Soviet proposal for a preparatory conference during their meeting at the United Nations in September, Syrian media made no mention of it. The key stumblingblocks for Damascus remain the participation in any conference on the Arab-Israeli dispute, whether preparatory or not, of Israel and Yasir Arafat's wing of the PLO. The Soviets are no closer to loosening the Syrian knot. Until they do, there will be no international conference along the lines they propose, even if Israel and the United States acquiesce in the Soviet plan

Appendix C

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Appendix D

Soviet Ambassadors to Middle Eastern Countries

Country	Ambassador	Assumed Post	Replaced (Assumed Post)
Afghanistan	Pavel Mozhayev	August 1986	Firkyat Tabeyev (1979)
Algeria	Vasilii Taratutu	April 1983	Vasilii Rykov (1975)
Bahrain	(no diplomatic relations)		
Egypt	Gennadiy Zhuravlev	September 1986	Aleksandr Belonogov (1984)
Iran	Vil Boldyrev	May 1982	Vladimir Vinogradov (1977)
Iraq	Viktor Minin	March 1982	Anatoliy Barkovskiy (1973)
Israel	(Moscow broke relations in June 1967)		
Jordan	Aleksandr Zinchuk	February 1985	Rafik Nishanov (1978)
Kuwait	(Post vacant since October 1986)		Pogos Akopov (1983)
Lebanon	Vasilii Kolotusha	May 1986	Aleksandr Soldatov (1974)
Libya	Pogos Akopov	October 1986	Oleg Peresyppkin (1984)
Mauritania	Leonid Komogorov	November 1986	Ivan Spitskiy (1981)
Morocco	Malik Fazylov	December 1983	Yevgeniy Neresosov (1978)
Oman	Aleksandr Zinchuk	May 1986	First ambassador (also ambassador to Jordan; resides in Jordan)
Qatar	(no diplomatic relations)		
Saudi Arabia	(no resident ambassador since mid-1930s)		
Sudan	Yevgeniy Musiyko	October 1983	Vladislav Zhukov (1978)
Syria	Aleksandr Dzasokhov	October 1986	Feliks Fedotov (1984)
Tunisia	Vladimir Sobchenko	November 1986	Vsevolod Kizichenko (1981)
Turkey	Vladimir Lavrov	October 1983	Aleksey Rodionov (1974)
UAE	Feliks Fedotov	October 1986	First ambassador
Yemen, North	Anatoliy Filev	August 1984	Oleg Peresyppkin (1980)
Yemen, South	Al'bert Rachkov	July 1986	Vladislav Zhukov (1982)

Appendix E

Estimated Numbers of Soviet Personnel in the Middle East, 1986



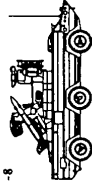


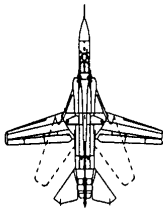
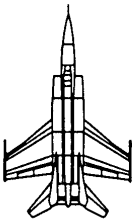








Country	Diplomatic (Not Including Dependents)	Military ^a (Advisers and Technicians)	Economic (Advisers and Technicians)	Total
Afghanistan	130	2,000	5,000	7,130
Algeria	80	800	6,000	6,880
Bahrain	0	0	0	0
Egypt	170	0	200	370
Iran	40	0	1,400	1,440
Iraq	50	1,000	5,500	6,550
Israel ^b	0	0	0	0
Jordan	20	50	0	70
Kuwait	40	20	0	60
Lebanon	40	0	0	40
Libya	50	2,000	5,000	7,050
Mauritania	20	0	0	20
Morocco	120	0	175	295
Oman	0	0	0	0
Qatar	0	0	0	0
Saudi Arabia	0	0	0	0
Sudan	20	0	0	20
Syria	90	3,000	1,000	4,090
Tunisia	130	0	240	370
Turkey	150	0	1,500	1,650
UAE	20	0	10	20
Yemen, North	150	500	175	825
Yemen, South	30	1,000	550	1,580
Total	1,350	10,370	26,750	38,470

^a In addition, there are approximately 116,000 Soviet combat troops in Afghanistan, and there are 400 troops in independent Soviet military units in Syria and 300 in South Yemen.

^b Although there are no official Soviet Government representatives in Israel, the Soviet-controlled Moscow Patriarchate of the Russian Orthodox Church has a dozen or so officials in Jerusalem administering the properties it has held since the 18th century. □

□ indicates that some of these "priests" are in fact KGB officers.

Figure 10
Major Soviet Weapon Systems
Delivered to Syria Since 1982

Air Defense Systems	Description	Introduced in Soviet Forces/ in Syria
SA-5	Long-range (240-275 km) high-altitude SAM. Primary Soviet strategic defense against US bombers.	
SA-6	Mobile low-to-medium altitude, medium-range (24 km) SAM with improved ECCM.	
SA-8	Mobile, low-altitude, short-range (12 km) SAM. Used by ground forces and for point defense.	
SA-13	Low-altitude, short-range (7 km) SAM. Tracked and possibly improved version of older wheeled SA-9.	
SA-14	Improved shoulder-fired SAM with cooled infrared detector to intercept target head-on.	
MIG-23 Flagger G	Tactical fighter. Syrians have latest version (MLD), best in Soviet operational inventory.	
Air Defense Systems	MIG-25 Foxbat E	
Ground Forces Systems	T-72 M1	
SS-21	Tactical surface-to-surface missile with effective range of approximately 70 km. Capable of firing nuclear, chemical, high explosive, or improved conventional warheads. Syrians probably provided with latter two.	
Electronics/Electronic Warfare Equipment	Electronic data link for ground-based air defenses; jam resistant	
Coax Dish	Top-of-the-line Soviet electronic warfare equipment. Possibly operated by Soviets.	
Big Cap	ECM-equipped helicopter for airborne jamming. Probably manned by Soviets.	
Naval Systems	An antiship cruise missile on mobile launcher for coastal defense with a range of up to 300 km.	
SSC-1B	Antiship cruise missile on mobile launcher for coastal defense with a range of 80 km.	
SSC-3	Antiship cruise missile on mobile launcher for coastal defense with a range of 80 km.	

Note: Data based on information as of November 1986.

Scot

Figure 11
Ethnic Groups in Southern Soviet Union and Neighboring Middle Eastern Countries



Figure 12
Soviet Theater Forces in Areas Adjacent to Iran, November 1986

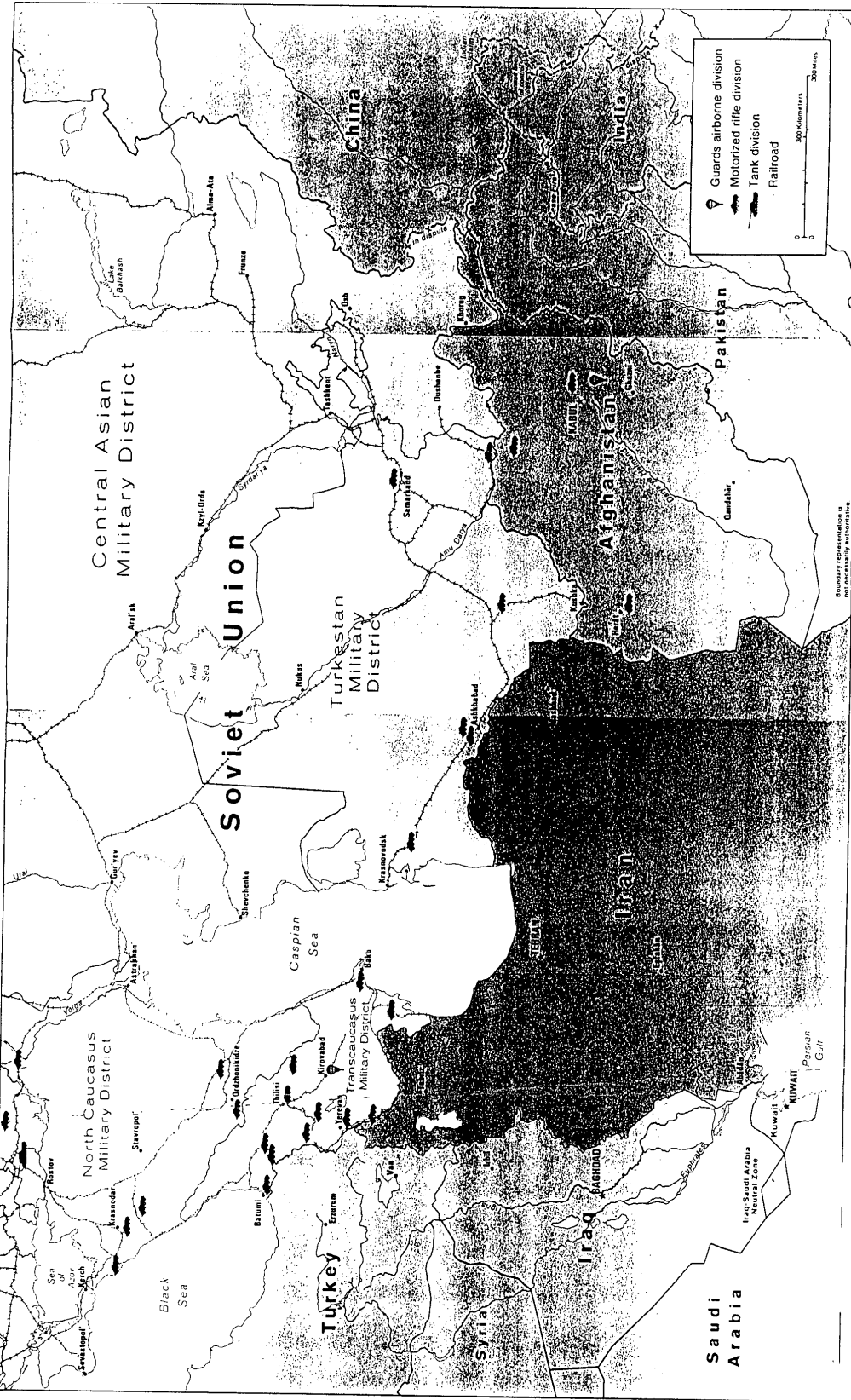
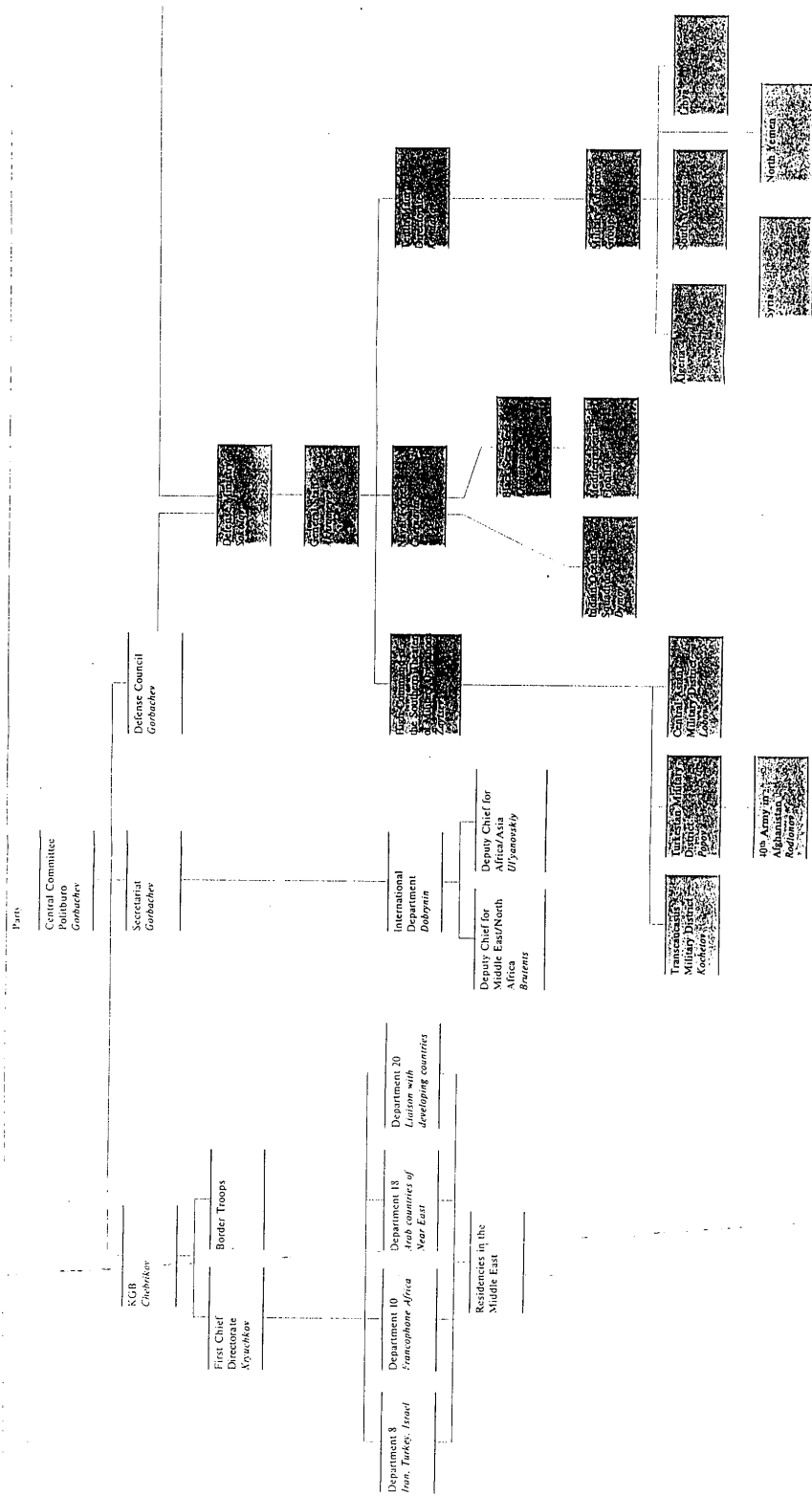
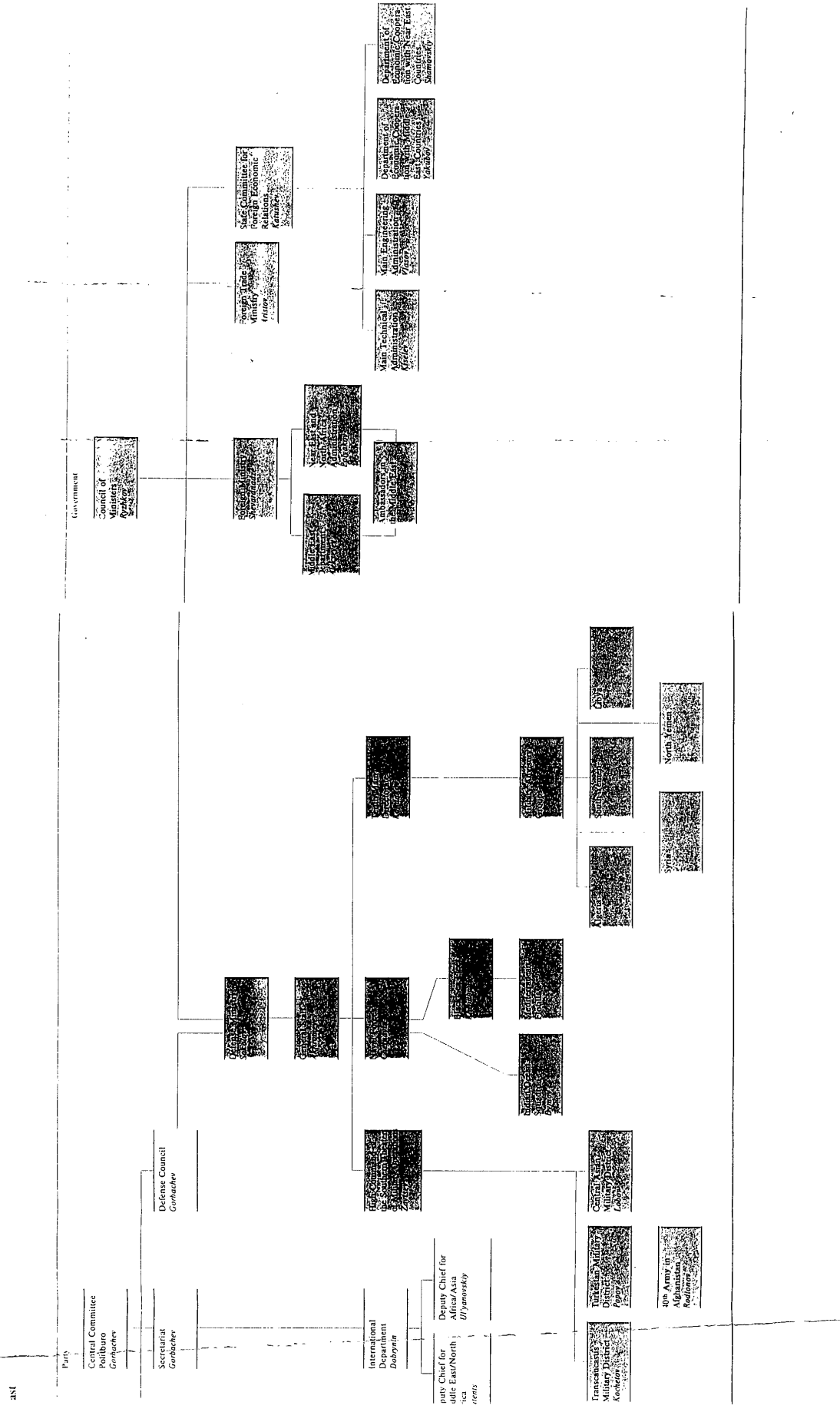


Figure 13
Organizations That Formulate or Implement Soviet Policy Toward the Middle East



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Secret



MSI

Party

Central Committee
Politburo
Bureaucracy

Secretary
Gorbachev

Defense Council
Gorbachev

International
Department
Dobrynin

Deputy Chief for
Africa/Asia
Ulyanovskiy

Transcaucasian
Military District
Korotkiy

United States
Military District
Korotkiy

Central Asian
Military District
Korotkiy

40th Army
Afghanistan
Rudakov

Belarus
Military District
Korotkiy

North Caucasus
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Figure 14
The Middle East

