

MEMORANDUM

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

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SECRET/NODIS (GDS)

February 7, 1975

MEMORANDUM FOR:

SECRETARY KISSINGER

FROM:

ROBERT B. OAKLEY *RB*

SUBJECT:

Soviet Military Intervention in
Another Middle East War

Following the January 14 WSAG Meeting on the Middle East, and as the result of questions raised therein, both DIA and CIA have issued studies on the likelihood and capability of intervention in the Middle East by Soviet military forces in the event of another Arab-Israeli war.

The CIA Study (Tab A) concludes that:

1. A Syrian-Israeli war would probably end quickly in an Israeli victory. Knowing this, the Soviets would most likely concentrate on diplomatic moves and intervention threats to end the fighting.
2. Soviet capability to intervene is severely limited by logistical factors. An airborne division could be deployed in Syria within four days, but would not be able to stop a major Israeli armor and attack on Syria. Therefore, the purpose of Soviet direct intervention would be to precipitate a ceasefire by political means and bolster Soviet political influence with the Arabs.
3. Soviet forces presently in the area would have negligible effect on the course of a ground war. CIA does not have evidence of Soviet prepositioning of equipment or forces in preparation for intervention and considers it highly unlikely that the Soviets would attempt such a pre-hostility deployment.

DIA generally concurs with CIA's estimate including the three critical points noted above. Their Study (Tab B), which is broader in outlook and more detailed, adds that:

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1. Soviet use of force would only be undertaken to accomplish political objectives attainable in no other way;
2. Military intervention would be considered only if Western hegemony were being reestablished in the Middle East, or if Israel was threatening to force the total capitulation of Syria or Egypt; and
3. To be an active option to the Soviets, intervention would have to be judged to be safe and effective.

Comment

Political judgements notwithstanding, the concurrence of view between CIA and DIA is based squarely on a military analysis that the facts of relative military strength, time and logistics capabilities, deprive the USSR of the technical ability to pose a credible military intervention threat until after Israel had either destroyed the combat effectiveness of Syrian forces, or in the event of a two-front war, Egyptian and Syrian offensive capabilities had been neutralized. Both studies recognize--but treat as very unlikely--the possibility that the USSR could intervene with major units within the context of a prolonged war in which Syrian forces were able to hold out for a period of weeks by fighting a withdrawal action aimed at holding northern Syria rather than protecting Damascus. Should this occur, it would pose a very serious problem for Israel--which could be locked into the protracted fighting it most fears--and for the United States which would be in a difficult political situation.

In either hypothesis--a quick battle with minimal Soviet intervention or a protracted war with greater Soviet intervention--the primary impact on the US of Soviet military action in Syria would be political rather than military.

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**POSSIBLE SOVIET MILITARY
INTERVENTION IN A SYRIAN-ISRAELI WAR**

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THE UNITED STATES INTELLIGENCE BOARD CONCURS, EXCEPT AS NOTED IN THE TEXT, AS FOLLOWS:

The following intelligence organizations participated in the preparation of the estimate:

The Central Intelligence Agency, the intelligence organizations of the Departments of State and Defense, and the National Security Agency.

Concurring:

The Deputy Director of Central Intelligence representing the Central Intelligence Agency

The Director of Intelligence and Research representing the Department of State

The Director, Defense Intelligence Agency

The Director, National Security Agency

The Acting Deputy Assistant Administrator for National Security, Energy Research and Development Administration

Abstaining:

The Special Assistant to the Secretary of the Treasury representing the Department of the Treasury

The Assistant Director, Federal Bureau of Investigation

Also Participating:

The Assistant Chief of Staff for Intelligence, Department of the Army

The Director of Naval Intelligence, Department of the Navy

The Assistant Chief of Staff, Intelligence Department of the Air Force

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POSSIBLE SOVIET MILITARY INTERVENTION IN A SYRIAN-ISRAELI WAR

THE PROBLEM

This paper estimates, in response to a specific request, the purposes, pace, forms, and consequences of possible Soviet military intervention if a Syrian-Israeli war should break out within the next several months. The fighting is assumed to be confined to the Syrian front,

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CONCLUSIONS

The Soviets probably anticipate that a Syrian-Israeli war would end quickly in an Israeli victory. Their capabilities for rapid deployment of militarily effective forces to Syria are seriously limited. Overt intervention would involve major political as well as military risks.

We believe that the USSR would concentrate mainly on diplomatic efforts to save the Syrian Army, limiting its military support to such measures as the use of the SA-6 regiment and the advisors already there. Through these measures, together with threats of more direct involvement, the Soviets would seek to get the fighting ended and to insure a major role in subsequent peace negotiations. The Soviets would also calculate that Syria, defeated once again, would become more dependent on them and that meanwhile the Soviet Union would reap major gains as a consequence of an oil embargo and its divisive effects on Western cohesion.

The Soviets might go further, and the Director of Naval Intelligence estimates that they probably would. If they did, they might concentrate on air defense or a limited ground presence.

- The first SAM regiment airlifted to Syria could go into operation two days after a decision to send it. Within three days, an entire fighter division could fly in and some of its aircraft could be ready for combat. Fighters could be disassembled and shipped in by air, but this would take longer.

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- An airborne regiment could reach Syria within one to two days, and a division within four days. Airborne units could not stand up to Israeli armor, and the Soviet purpose in sending them would be to intensify the crisis and precipitate a ceasefire by political means.
 - In these cases, air routes would be a critical factor. For geographic and political reasons, the USSR would probably focus its pressures more on Turkey than on Yugoslavia or Iran.
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¹ The Assistant Chief of Staff, Intelligence, Department of the Air Force observes that the controlling assumptions of this Estimate preclude adequate consideration of likely Soviet responses to an Israeli initiation of hostilities and the broad range of political, propaganda, and military actions which the Soviets could take. The Soviets probably consider protection of their client-state relationship with Syria as being of primary strategic importance, especially in view of the leverage the Soviets may believe that relationship (within the Arab structure) provides on Free World economic stability and NATO's viability. In the light of Soviet actions during the 1973 war, it is believed the Soviets would commit themselves to the defense of Syria from the first hour of hostilities and would not hesitate to immediately commit naval, air, ground, tactical rocket, and air defense forces, and perhaps resort to nuclear blackmail. He believes it would be dangerous to underestimate Soviet resolve in this regard nor their belief that the US may be powerless to respond effectively. While a sudden Israeli initiative campaign against Syria might seriously restrict Soviet tactical options, it is not at all certain that such a campaign would be concluded quickly or that seriously disruptive counteractions might not occur.

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DISCUSSION

I. GENERAL SOVIET CALCULATIONS

1. The Soviets

[redacted] prudence requires them to plan for the contingency of a short and successful Israeli campaign. They must also plan for the possibility of little or no advance warning. Syria might provide some notice of its intention to attack, though probably not its exact timing, but in the case of Israeli attack or unintended escalation from skirmishes, the USSR would have to rely on whatever tactical warning it could independently acquire.

2. In the event of a war between Syria and Israel, the Soviets would see some advantages to themselves, both regionally and globally. It would wreck, at least temporarily, the diplomatic efforts monopolized by the US since October 1973; it would generate strong anti-US sentiment among the Arabs; and it would produce US-West European strains which, if magnified by a new oil embargo, would be serious indeed.² As against this, the Soviets have a considerable stake in preventing a major Syrian defeat, which would damage their

²The likelihood and possible forms of another oil embargo will be considered in detail in a forthcoming inter-agency study.

position in the area, but they know that, once the fighting starts, they have no sure way to prevent such a defeat.

3. The Soviets probably could accept serious Syrian reverses in the Golan Heights, but they could not be sure that the Israelis would not fight on in pursuit of larger objectives, such as destruction of the Syrian armed forces. Such a defeat would cause extensive, but not necessarily irreparable, damage to the USSR's prestige and interests in the area. To take pressure off Syria, the Soviets would encourage other Arab nations, especially Egypt, to get involved and would offer to support them if they did. Moscow would bring diplomatic pressure on the US to get Israel to stop fighting and would use military signals to reinforce that pressure. But the Soviets would also have very little time for calculation and diplomatic maneuver. Thus they would also have to consider—indeed, must already have made some contingency plans for—intervention by military force.

4. On the positive side, in addition to the factors mentioned above, a successful Soviet intervention, i.e., one which stopped the Israelis and insured the existence of the Syrian regime, would:

—gain the USSR credit among the Arabs and discredit Sadat if he failed to open a second front;

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- gain it credit and subsequent influence in Syria, particularly if the fighting ended with a visible Soviet military presence in the country;
- insure a major Soviet voice in subsequent negotiations;
- extend Soviet military presence in the Middle East.

5. On the *negative side*, the Soviets would recognize that the risks of military intervention, while manageable to some extent, cannot be fully calculated and controlled.

- They respect Israeli military capabilities and, while they probably calculate that Israel would be reluctant to engage Soviet forces overtly, they cannot count on this.
- Their capabilities for rapid intervention with forces capable of sustained combat are limited.
- Their access to the area is doubtful for certain forms of intervention.
- They cannot be sure what is the threshold of Soviet military involvement beyond which the US might intervene in force.
- They must be concerned about negative effects to their larger interests, particularly relations with the US.

6. In this last connection, Soviet judgments will involve Moscow's view of the value and prospects of detente at the time when the war begins. Our present view is that this consideration would influence Soviet decisions but, by itself, would not prevent the Soviets from intervening in ways that were clearly designed only to defend Syria. In this regard, we have reviewed the evidence of October 1973, when the Soviets had to weigh Egyptian appeals for intervention against, among other things, their concern for relations with the US. The evidence, while not conclusive, indicates that there is a good chance that, if the destruction of the Egyptian forces had continued, the Soviets would have

sent airborne units to Egypt, counting on this to bring about a quick end to the fighting.

II. SOVIET CAPABILITIES FOR INTERVENTION

7. This section considers military operations which the Soviets could initiate early in the war, or a few days beforehand if they acquired advance warning of hostilities. Given the anticipated shortness of the war, warning could be an important factor in enabling the Soviets effectively to carry out some of these operations.

Forces Already in Syria

8. Since the October 1973 war the number of Soviet military personnel in Syria has risen by several hundred to a total of at least 2,000 men. These Soviets are mainly training Syrian pilots and advising ground forces down to the battalion level. The only Soviet combat unit currently identified is an SA-6 regiment located near Damascus, which accounts for about 500 of the Soviet personnel in the country. This regiment consists of five firing batteries of four transporter-erector-launchers (TELs) each, for a total of 20 TELs.

9.

military equipment

we believe that the excesses represent Syrian war reserves. There is evidence of a number of MIG-21s—perhaps as many as 75—in Syria that

are probably intended for Syrian use when additional pilots are trained. There are also about 250 unassigned [redacted] unlikely that the Soviets would plan to recover

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this or other military equipment from Syrian hands for their own use, but we cannot altogether dismiss the possibility.

Forces That Could be Sent From the USSR

10. *Air Routes.* There are three possible air routes for Soviet military intervention:

— The Yugoslav route would be readily available for transport overflights, but permission to send combat units or to stage through Yugoslav airfields is less certain. This route requires an over-water flight of 1,130 nm to Syria.

— The availability of the Turkish route is uncertain.



— Iran values its relations with the Arabs, but does not need their oil and opposes Soviet influence in the region. For these reasons, the Shah is less likely than the Turks to allow more than a few overflights



11. *Air Defense.* SAM units are air transportable, and the first new Soviet battery could arrive and go into operation within two days. A more potent force, such as an entire air defense regiment, would require several more days. Overflight rights for this intervention would probably not be a problem.

12. The quickest way of introducing Soviet combat air forces into Syria would be to fly in operational tactical air units directly from the USSR.

Such a move would be unprecedented, however, and the Yugoslav route would involve long over-water flights with which Soviet pilots are unfamiliar. The Soviets could ferry a combat air division—about 120 aircraft—via Yugoslavia in about three days; only a portion of this force could be ready for combat in Syria within this period. If the Soviets chose to overfly Turkey from bases in the Transcaucasus, several squadrons could be readied for limited combat activity within a matter of hours. In either case, at least an additional week would be required for the entire air division to reach combat status.

13. As for ferrying routes, Belgrade would probably drag its feet on, and might even deny, a request for staging rights. Iran would probably refuse overflights by combat aircraft. Turkey might acquiesce, accepting a contention that the fighters were being delivered to the Syrian Air Force.

14. Barring overflights by combat aircraft, the Soviets could fly disassembled fighters into Syria aboard transports, as they have done previously in Egypt. Allowing time to prepare the fighters for shipment, a complete Soviet air division of about 120 fighters could be transported from the USSR to Syria in three to four days. A few aircraft might be available for limited combat within a day or so after delivery. Using this method of shipment, more than a week would subsequently be needed to assemble all the aircraft and ready the entire unit for combat.

15. *Airborne Forces.* A Soviet airborne division is, by US standards, small, not highly ground mobile, and lightly armed. Soviet airborne forces alone could not successfully defend against an Israeli offensive. More than one airborne division would not increase the effectiveness of the Soviet show of force. Using military airlift, the Soviets could deploy one airborne regiment (1,500 men) to Syria within one to two days and an entire division (7,400 men) within four days. As for air routes, Turkey and even Yugoslavia might refuse overflight rights for this

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purpose, but the USSR might decide to proceed without permission.

16. *Naval infantry units*, while small, could arrive fairly quickly to provide a demonstration force or conduct port security. The Soviets can sealift the Black Sea naval infantry assault regiment (1,800 men) to a Syrian port in five days. If the Soviets had any naval infantry afloat in the eastern Mediterranean when the war began, it could reach Syria in a day or two.

17. *Tank or motorized rifle divisions* would be required if the Soviets wished to provide a major ground combat capability. If the Soviets pursued this course to the full extent, they would have to carry out a considerable mobilization and assemble much more shipping than is normally available in the Black Sea. The first sealifted Soviet division could not arrive in a Syrian port in less than two weeks after a decision to commit. It would take at least a month to load in the USSR, transport by sea, and unload in Syria a Soviet combined arms army of 66,000 men. Deployment of a Soviet force (two combined arms armies) of six tank divisions and four motorized rifle divisions, eight Soviet air regiments (320 aircraft) and air defense elements—the minimum force which the Soviets might regard as a military match for the Israelis in Syria—would require two to three months.

18. *Naval Forces*. The Soviets ordinarily maintain around 50-55 naval units in the Mediterranean. During the October 1973 war the Soviets doubled their major surface combatants from 14 to 29 and increased the total number of ships to 96. Without violating the Montreux Convention, the Soviets could deploy three major combatants, or nine small combatants (DEs) each day from their Black Sea Fleet, which contains about 10 major and 40 small surface combatants.

19. In the 1973 war, Soviet naval units escorted some cargo vessels, supplied some protection for Syrian ports, tracked Israeli air and naval units, and performed surveillance of the Sixth Fleet. In an-

other war, the Soviets could do these functions and provide some SAM defense of the Syrian coast.

20. *Airlift Capabilities*. Even with a full use of available transport aircraft, the USSR cannot exploit all its intervention possibilities simultaneously. For example, it would take at least eight days to deliver to Syria a force comprising an airborne division, a fighter division, and a SAM regiment. Within four days, however, the USSR could deliver a force with considerable visibility and some ability to protect itself against Israeli air attack, e.g., an airborne division, two SA-6 batteries, and a regiment of 40 fighters, if the fighters overflew Turkey.

21. *Combat Effectiveness*. The foregoing estimates regarding Soviet capabilities for intervention have focused primarily on the USSR's ability to transport tactical forces and equipment into Syria. The initial combat effectiveness of these forces in a Mideast war, however, would be severely constrained by a variety of problems, such as language difficulties, unfamiliarity of the terrain, and reliance on the Syrians for airspace control, combat and logistical support, and tactical intelligence. These prospective difficulties would, in our view, be an important inhibiting factor in any Soviet decision to send forces for combat rather than demonstrative purposes.

22. *Potential Interdiction*. The Soviets would have to consider possible Israeli interdiction of Soviet air or sea traffic en route to Syria. In previous Middle East wars, Soviet resupply of the Arabs and US resupply of Israel have been inviolate, although in 1973 the Israelis damaged some Soviet aircraft at Syrian fields and sank a Soviet supply ship in Latakia harbor.

At a minimum, the Soviets would have to assume that they would face such attacks.

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III. SOME POSSIBLE SOVIET COURSES OF ACTION

23. If the war broke out with little or no warning, the initial Soviet reaction would probably consist of diplomatic moves designed to effect a ceasefire. At the same time the Soviets would undertake certain military preparations that would serve in part as a warning to Israel and the US and also as the first steps toward possible military intervention. The Soviets meanwhile would encourage the other Arab states, especially Egypt, to go to Syria's aid. The USSR's subsequent decisions about additional involvement would be based on its calculations concerning the course of events, but Moscow would be under intense time pressures. Its immediate options would be:

— *Minimal military involvement.* The rationale would be a Soviet calculation that there was not enough time for a decisive intervention and that, in relation to Soviet interests, the risks of military defeat at Israeli hands or eventual US military reactions were too high. Under this option, the USSR would limit itself to such measures as resupply of the Syrians and commitment to combat of its advisors and the SA-6 regiment already there, plus the dispatch of additional advisors, and naval maneuvering and reinforcement to demonstrate support. Through these measures, together with threats of more direct involvement, the Soviets would seek to get the fighting ended and to insure a major role in subsequent peace negotiations. The Soviets would also calculate that Syria, defeated once again, would become more dependent on them and that meanwhile the Soviet Union would reap major gains as a consequence of an oil embargo and its divisive effects on Western cohesion.

— *Substantial air defense involvement.* This would be aimed at showing strong support and bringing an early end to the fighting while avoiding the risks of ground involvement. It would entail the immediate airlift of SAM units

and the dispatch of Soviet fighter units, by ferry flights if Turkish airspace were available for this purpose or, if not, by airlift.

— *Limited ground involvement.* This would involve more military risks and a greater engagement of Soviet prestige, but hold more prospect of precipitating a ceasefire; if successful, it would leave the USSR well positioned for the postwar negotiations. Under this course, airborne forces would probably be preferred over naval infantry for reasons of size and speed. These forces would probably be deployed demonstratively in an effort to deter the Israelis and to generate intense international pressures on the US and Israel for a quick end to the fighting.

24. These courses of action are necessarily arbitrary in their details. In general, however, we believe that Soviet behavior would approximate that described above as *minimal military involvement*. They might, however, go further and undertake some combination of the actions described under *substantial air defense involvement* and *limited ground involvement*. The Director of Naval Intelligence, Department of the Navy, believes that the Soviets probably would go further, considering that the dispatch of some such forces (probably excluding the airborne units) would be taken under the façade of an influx of technicians and instructors. He feels that the Soviets would not acquiesce in the destruction of Syrian forces if Israeli military success so indicated. He calculates that the Soviets would wish to establish themselves on Syrian territory to add impetus to efforts to cease hostilities.

25. It is possible that the Syrian reaction to initial defeats would be to save as many of their forces as they could, abandoning Damascus and retreating northward.

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In these circumstances, we think that the chances of additional Soviet *air defense involvement* would rise, but not those of *limited ground involve-*

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ment: while the military situation was fluid, the Soviets would find the risks high; once it stabilized, the Syrians would have little incentive to receive Soviet troops.

26. More far-reaching options for *substantial ground involvement* are theoretically available, should Moscow be convinced that its interests demanded committing forces to overt combat outside the USSR's contiguous sphere of influence for the first time.

—By prearrangement with Damascus, the Soviets could deploy divisions to Syria in advance of the fighting for a combined campaign with the announced aim of restoring Syria's pre-1967 boundaries. If the Soviets decided on such intervention, they would not be likely to attempt a piecemeal approach but would be prepared to introduce forces in sufficient strength to defeat the Israelis. This deployment seems to us highly unlikely for a number of reasons, including Syrian unwillingness to receive such a large Soviet force, reactions in other Mideast states and NATO, and US political and military reactions.

—Alternatively, the USSR could conceivably choose to commit substantial ground forces once the war had begun. This decision would be based on the possibility of a long war, in which the Syrians would retreat northward from Damascus. Moscow might calculate that, in these circumstances, even the delayed ar-

rival of Soviet divisions would halt further Israeli advances and leave the USSR in a strong postwar position on the ground. The time required and the major military and political risks involved lead us to regard this as an extremely unlikely Soviet course of action. Moscow could, however, proceed along this course—through movement of divisions to Soviet ports, embarkation, and transit of the Black Sea—while reserving a final commitment depending on the developing military and diplomatic situation. But this process would require considerable mobilization and generate great alarm in the US, in Turkey, and in NATO generally.

27. Chiefly because of possible US reactions, the Soviets would not wish to inject the idea of possible use of nuclear or chemical weapons into the crisis of a Syrian-Israeli war, even if the Syrians were being badly beaten.³

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*The Assistant Chief of Staff, Intelligence, Department of the Air Force believes that Soviet nuclear and chemical warfare options in the event of renewed Syrian-Israeli hostilities require further analysis.

While we have no evidence to indicate that the Soviets would inject the nuclear factor into the equation, neither do we have intelligence to allow us to dismiss this option with certainty.

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WSAG Follow Up

DIAIAPPR 11-75
3 FEBRUARY 1975

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SOVIET CAPABILITIES TO
PROJECT MILITARY FORCES
TO EGYPT AND SYRIA (U)



DEFENSE INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

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**SOVIET CABILITIES TO PROJECT
MILITARY FORCES TO EGYPT AND SYRIA (U)**



**DIAIAPPR 11-75
3 FEBRUARY 1975**

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SECRET**SOVIET CAPABILITIES TO PROJECT MILITARY
FORCES TO EGYPT AND SYRIA (U)****Overview**

(S/NFD) The major development in about the next six months that might cause the USSR to air- and sealift a military force to the Middle East would be the renewal of Arab-Israeli hostilities. This appraisal focuses only on Soviet deployment capabilities in Egypt and Syria, the most likely protagonists and the only Arab countries in which the Soviets' involvement is sufficient to warrant direct military intervention. Should fighting resume, the USSR would probably react with caution and a strong desire not to provide the West with a clear-cut threat. Moscow's projection of military forces would be undertaken only to accomplish political objectives attainable in no other way and if there were no circumstances that posed a serious danger of either a confrontation with the US that might escalate or the defeat of those forces by a minor power. Any such move would have to be safe and effective. In this context, the Soviets would most likely intervene militarily only if Western nations seemed to be reestablishing their hegemony in the Middle East or if Israel not only defeated but was threatening to force the total capitulation of Egypt or Syria. Although introduction of Soviet forces could significantly influence the outcome of any Arab-Israeli conflict, the USSR's capabilities for rapid deployment of militarily effective units to the Middle East are limited.

(S/NFD) If hostilities between Israel and its neighbors resume, the Soviets would probably accept serious Egyptian and Syrian losses but would most likely not stand by while Israel destroyed the forces of Syria or Egypt without at least the threat of

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direct intervention (introducing a discrete, clearly identifiable Soviet military unit in support of an Arab ally). Destruction of Egyptian or Syrian combat forces could be imminent as soon as a week after the initiation of hostilities. This would provide little opportunity for diplomatic maneuvers and military intervention by the USSR. The total military defeat and capitulation of either Egypt or Syria would discredit the Soviets in the eyes of the Arabs and seriously weaken their influence throughout the Middle East. It would further limit Moscow's participation in future Israeli-Arab peace negotiations and severely lessen its military presence in the area.

(S/NFD) The USSR's objective would be to prevent the capitulation of either Egypt or Syria without risking serious clashes between its forces and the Israelis. Considering this and the time constraints that would probably not allow for the introduction of a major Soviet intervention force by air or sea, the USSR would most likely limit its activities to resupply and military actions to demonstrate support for the Arabs and to deter the Israelis. Should these tactics not provide the desired deterrence and Israel achieve the position for complete destruction of either the Egyptian or Syrian forces, the Soviets might threaten to introduce ground forces. If deployed, these elements could be expected to be introduced in a manner that would not provoke an Israeli attack but which would be effective as a symbolic shield, ensuring the continued existence of the threatened Arab regime. The Soviets would hope that this show of force would deter continued Israeli advances and generate international pressures on the US and Israel for a quick end to the fighting. As an ultimate objective, Soviet military activities would also be designed to ensure a direct role in any ensuing peace negotiations.

(S/NFD) Commitment of substantial Soviet air and ground forces -- armor and mechanized -- by pre-arrangement with the Arabs is deemed highly unlikely because of the threat of possible US political and military reactions as well as the probable Arab unwillingness to accept their forces before hostilities. If the Arabs were faced with imminent destruction, they

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would probably accept Soviet intervention if time allowed. In either case, commitment of substantial Soviet ground forces would require considerable mobilization and extensive air- and sealift operations.

Soviet Objectives in the Middle East

(S/NFD) The Middle East has been a focus of attention for the Soviets since the earliest days of their rule, as it had been for previous Russian regimes. This interest in the area is motivated by political influence, petroleum, and geography. Only in recent years, however, has the USSR succeeded in asserting itself as a major influence in the region.

(S/NFD) The Soviets are intent on playing the part of a superpower in the Middle East with an ability to affect the general course of events there while reducing the US role in the area. Their ability to influence events in the Middle East and to maintain a military presence there also has important policy implications regarding Soviet objectives toward Western Europe and NATO. The Middle East is also an arena where the Soviets can demonstrate their support of radical movements and foster a general erosion of established, conservative powers. The region's oil reserves and strategic location are tightly interwoven with the central theme of increasing Soviet political influence.

(S/NFD) Control of world energy sources has become an increasingly critical factor in calculating international power as well as a tool of national policy. The Middle East's vast oil reserves will remain a key element in Western economic strategy for the foreseeable future. By successfully encouraging the Arabs' use of oil as a weapon, the Soviets have greatly reduced the West's access to inexpensive Middle Eastern petroleum and have complicated relations among the US, Western Europe, and Japan. Potential loss of access to this oil poses a threat to vital Western interests and NATO solidarity.

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(S/NFD) The factor of geography, although less urgent, is closely related to Soviet political and strategic interests. The Middle East is a crossroads between important land masses and sea areas. Influence in this region has long been viewed as a prerequisite to the ability to project national power into Africa and the Indian Ocean area. In addition to attaining this objective, the USSR's growing naval presence in the Middle East is probably partially motivated by the potential threat it poses to the West's sources of oil. The Soviet Navy's units in the Mediterranean Sea and Indian Ocean stand astride the distribution lines of Middle Eastern oil.

Limitations and Constraints

2. (S/NFD) The USSR's projective capabilities are much less than those of the US. The limited ranges of Soviet tactical aircraft, the minimal air-to-air refueling capability, and other constraints restrict Moscow's intervention options in Egypt or Syria. Even with the full use of available transport aircraft, the USSR cannot exploit all its intervention possibilities simultaneously. Airlift operations could also be restricted by international overflight complications. The possibility that Soviet intervention forces would transit either Turkey or Iran using ground routes is considered too unlikely to merit consideration.

✓ (S/NFD) Soviet use of air routes over Turkey, though not as critical as the sea lane through the Turkish Straits, would be of considerable importance. In the past, Turkish policy had been to consider each request for overflights individually. The Turks' criteria for denying some requests and granting others are not clear. In recent years, Turkish officials have assured the US that their country would not become an air bridge between the USSR and the Middle East. The Soviets did, however, make limited use of Turkish air space for transport flights during the October 1973 Arab-Israeli war. Some 15 of a total of 665 Soviet air transport flights crossed Turkish territory. If further relaxation of Turkey's policy could be obtained, use of this direct route would negate the requirement to use the longer path through

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Yugoslavia, which the Soviets have primarily used for Middle East support. Staging aircraft from bases in Yugoslavia would require overwater flights of over 1,000 nautical miles to Egypt or Syria, an operation for which Soviet fighter pilots are not well-prepared. Iran values its relations with the Arabs but does not need their oil. The Shah opposes Soviet influence in the region and is less likely than the Turks to allow more than a few overflights.

(S/NFD) Use of naval infantry and amphibious forces is suitable only for demonstration purposes or port security. Turkey can seal off the Turkish Straits, although such a move would be unlikely in any situation short of a major East-West confrontation. The Turks would not be expected to hamper Soviet access severely during an Arab-Israeli conflict. During the October 1973 Middle East war, 18 Soviet combatants and about 40 merchant ships with some 100,000 tons of military cargo bound for Egypt and Syria transited the Turkish Straits. Limited port facilities in Egypt and Syria constitute a further curtailment of sealift possibilities.

(S/NFD) If Soviet naval or air intervention is opposed, tactical air superiority would be an absolute requirement. Accomplishment of air superiority in an area so far removed from home bases in the USSR would require the commitment of air resources far beyond those Moscow would probably be willing to deploy. In previous Middle East wars, Soviet resupply of the Arabs and US resupply of Israel have been inviolate, although the Israelis damaged some of the USSR's aircraft at Syrian fields and sank one of its supply ships in Latakia harbor in 1973.

(S/NFD) Initial combat effectiveness of Soviet military forces in a Middle East war would be severely constrained by such problems as language difficulties, unfamiliarity of terrain, reliance on Egyptian and Syrian airspace control, combat and logistical support, and tactical intelligence. Moreover, Soviet airborne and naval-infantry elements are lightly armed and ill-equipped to oppose a modern combat force such as Israel's. Soviet doctrine calls for utilization of these troops in support roles. Extensive Soviet

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armor and artillery support as well as logistic assistance would be required if the troops were employed in combat for prolonged periods.

(S/NFD) In addition to these constraints imposed by access and support problems, economic dislocations and political risks would hamper the USSR's military intervention in Syria and Egypt. Extensive use of civil aircraft, the merchant marine, and the tanker fleet on a sustained basis would necessitate painful political choices among economic priorities. Furthermore, the Soviets must carefully weigh the risks involved in military intervention and the negative effects to their larger interests, particularly relations with the US.

Soviet Projection Capabilities

Military Airlift

(S/NFD) A military airlift by the USSR would be conducted by about 700 AN-12/CUBs, 40 AN-12/COCKs, and three IL-76/CANDIDs. During the first three days, an 80 percent serviceability rate might be expected -- 595 CUBs, 32 COCKs, and two CANDIDs. The percentage after that period would drop to about 60 -- 420 CUBs, 24 COCKs, and two CANDIDs. Soviet military transport aviation also has two IL-62/CLASSICs, four TU-134/CRUSTYS, 11 AN-10/CATs, 10 IL-18/COOTs, and eight TU-124/COOKPOTS available for trooplift.

✓ (S/NFD) Although serious consideration would undoubtedly be given to the resulting force degradation against NATO and the Peoples Republic of China, the decision to intervene militarily in the Middle East would probably result in the entire Soviet transport force being made available. Even with a full use of available transport aircraft, however, the USSR cannot exploit all its intervention options simultaneously, particularly if forced to use the Hungary-Yugoslavia route. It would, for example, take at least eight days to deliver one airborne division, a fighter division, and a SAM regiment to Syria. If the aircraft overflowed Turkey, however, the USSR could deliver one airborne

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division, two SA-6 batteries, and a regiment of 40 fighters within four days. ✓

(S/NFD) Normal aircraft turnaround time is estimated to be three days based on past Middle East airlifts. Such a turnaround time means that the total number of aircraft used in any three-day period cannot exceed the number of serviceable aircraft available. The Soviets may be able to achieve a two-day turnaround for aircraft overflying Turkey.

(S/NFD) Once Soviet troops are in place in the Middle East, a sizable number of transports will be required to airlift daily supplies. For example, sustaining an airborne division would require 56 CUB sorties per day.

Civil Airlift

(S/NFD) Aeroflot's inventory includes a total of 1,198 medium and heavy transports. Of these, only the 200 CUBs and three COCKs could be used for heavy cargo-carrying operations. The other aircraft are not suited for such use because they lack a rear-loading capability and require longer runways, although they could be used for transporting troops to well-developed airfields, delivering small cargoes, and evacuating casualties. If all Aeroflot's medium and heavy transports were made available to the military, cargo airlift capability would increase by an estimated 25 percent and troop airlift more than double. Used solely to move personnel without supporting equipment, the civil airline's medium and heavy transports have a lift capacity of over 65,000 troops -- or all seven available Soviet airborne divisions -- to a range of 1,400 miles. In a contingency situation short of general war, however, only about 25 percent of Aeroflot's medium and heavy transports would probably be diverted to support military operations directly. This could be done without disrupting essential civil transport services.

(S/NFD) Mobilization of Aeroflot personnel and equipment for military purposes would entail relatively minor technical and administrative adjustments.

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Aeroflot's military potential is enhanced by the fact that many of the different types of Soviet-manufactured transports are in use by both military and civil aviation, and transition from a civil to a military role would require only minor modifications. In addition, a substantial number of flight personnel are air reservists, and all key employees are believed to hold mobilization assignments.

Sealift Capabilities

(S/NFD) The Soviet merchant marine fleet presently consists of 1,553 ships totaling about 13.6 million dead-weight tons (DWT). Of this total, some 852 cargo ships -- six million DWT -- are capable of carrying military cargo to Egypt and Syria.

(S/NFD) Thirty-nine ships are presently available in the Black Sea. Each has an average of 33,800 square feet. Since a tank or motorized rifle division requires about 538,000 square feet of stowage space, 39 ships could transport in excess of two divisions. Some 2.2 days would be required to load each of the 39 ships using the ports of Odessa, Ilichevsk, and Nikolayev. The three ports are capable of accomodating and loading all the ships simultaneously. Therefore, assuming all 39 ships are empty and berthed at the quays, the two-plus divisions could be loaded out in 2.2 days. Steaming between 10 and 14 knots, four days are required to reach ports of debarkation in the eastern Mediterranean.

(S/NFD) The ports used to deliver aid are Latakia and Tartus in Syria, and Alexandria and Port Said in Egypt. If all four are used to offload the two divisions, it would take two days. If both divisions went to Syria or Egypt, four days would be needed. Considering assembly time at points of origin in the USSR, movement to the port, loading the ships, transit, and offloading, the Soviets would require 11 to 15 days to inject two divisions, assuming optimum conditions. Theoretically, the ships could transport an additional two divisions in another 13-15 days.

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SECRETGround Forces

(S/NFD) By US standards, a Soviet airborne division is small, not highly ground-mobile, and lightly armed. These forces alone could not successfully defend against an Israeli offensive. Using military airlift, the Soviets could deploy one airborne regiment -- 1,800 men -- to Syria within one to two days and an entire division -- 7,400 troops -- within four. Assuming that combat forces opposite NATO and the Chinese border will not be employed, that no preparations are conducted prior to the decision to deploy, and that the remaining six airborne divisions and the forces in the four military districts closest to the Middle East will be adequate for Soviet purposes, the airborne divisions and some or all of the 34 motorized rifle and tank divisions in the southwestern USSR could be sent to Egypt and Syria.

(S/NFD) The six airborne divisions would be ready for immediate deployment. An additional 13 divisions -- five motorized rifle and eight tank -- could be ready for movement in two days, and the remaining 21 motorized-rifle divisions could be ready to move in three days. Although these mobilization times may appear short, in a limited mobilization of this type they are considered to be within Soviet capabilities. Designated unit availability with notice of 24 hours, 48 hours, and 72 hours are shown on Figure 1. Artillery and SCUD units in military districts nearest Egypt and Syria are shown on Figure 2.

Tactical Aviation Forces

(S/NFD) The most expeditious means of deploying Soviet combat air forces into Egypt and Syria would be to fly in operational tactical air units directly from the USSR. Such a move would be unprecedented, however, and the Yugoslav route would involve long over-water flights with which Soviet fighter pilots are unfamiliar. The Soviets could ferry a combat air division -- about 120 aircraft -- via Yugoslavia in about three days, but only a portion of this force could be ready for combat in Egypt or Syria within the first 24 hours after arrival. If the Soviets chose to overfly Turkey from

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bases in the Transcaucasus, several squadrons could be readied for limited combat within hours. In either case, at least an additional week would be required for the entire air division to reach full combat status.

(S/NFD) Base support personnel and equipment would be flown in with the first contingent of aircraft or sealifted via Odessa or other Black Sea ports to Egypt and Syria. Subsequent to departure of the first contingent, other aircraft would move in turn to Transcaucasus bases for deployment. Aircraft and unit movement times are shown on Figure 3.

(S/NFD) If combat aircraft overflights are barred, the Soviets could fly disassembled fighters into Egypt and Syria aboard transports, as was previously done in Egypt. Allowing preparation time for shipment, one tactical air division of about 120 fighters could be transported from the USSR to Egypt and Syria in three to four days. Only a few of the aircraft, however, could be made available for limited combat within a day or so after delivery. More than a week would be needed to assemble all the aircraft and ready the entire unit for combat.

Air Defense Forces

(S/NFD) SAM units are air transportable, and a Soviet SAM battery could be airlifted and become operational within two days. A more potent force, such as an entire air defense regiment, would require several more days. Overflight rights for airlifting SAM units would probably not be a problem. This timetable presupposes use of only that portion of the total Soviet airlift capability that could reasonably be expected to support solely the air defense requirement. If Soviet intervention consisted of SAM forces alone, an entire SA-6/GAINFUL regiment could be airlifted to Egypt or Syria in four to five days, and a SA-4/GANEF brigade could arrive in six to seven days. Ground air defense airlift requirements are shown on Figure 4.

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Naval Forces

(S/NFD) The Soviets ordinarily maintain 50 to 55 naval units in the Mediterranean. Of these, an average mix might include nine major surface combatants, 15 submarines, and the remainder small combatants and auxiliaries. Soviet projection of forces to Egypt and Syria is expected to precipitate a maximum naval augmentation comparable to the October 1973 war experience, when the major surface combatant level reached 29 and the ship total 96.

(S/NFD) An eight-day notice is required by the Montreux Convention for the transit of Soviet warships through the Turkish Straits, although the Soviets have overcome this by contingency declarations. As a result, three major combatants could transit every two days. The USSR could opt to forfeit the long-range benefits it derives from the convention and surge-deploy to the Mediterranean from the Black Sea Fleet. In such an unlikely case, the entire augmentation could conceivably be accomplished in five days. Another even more unlikely option is the deployment of the entire available Black Sea Fleet to the Mediterranean. In such an event, 10 percent of the units would probably already be on station, 25 percent could deploy immediately, another 25 percent could begin deployment two days later, and the remaining 40 percent would be deployable within a month. The Soviets probably would not commit any of their warships to combat against Israel so long as the US 6th Fleet remained in the area.

Naval Infantry Forces

(S/NFD) Although small, Soviet naval infantry and amphibious forces could arrive fairly quickly to provide a demonstration force or conduct port security. The Soviets can sealift the Black Sea naval infantry assault regiment -- 1,800 men -- to a Syrian port in five days. If the Soviets had any naval infantry elements afloat in the eastern Mediterranean when the deployment began, they could reach Syria in a day or two. Under normal conditions, however, the maximum naval infantry presence in the Mediterranean does not

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exceed the equipment for a battalion landing team (BLT) and about one-third of the BLT's personnel. The remaining troops could be flown to Middle Eastern ports within 24 hours or shipped in about five days. Black Sea deployments would be at the expense of other predeclared contingency deployments or would require an eight-day lag. The Baltic and North Sea Fleets also have one regiment each. These could presumably be deployed to the Mediterranean but would have to come by sea in order to bring their equipment.

(S/NFD) An opposed amphibious assault would probably not be considered. This would require the establishment of air superiority and the support of other combatant ships whose primary role is to counter-balance the US 6th Fleet. Use of naval infantry in unopposed operations would be logical, but the naval infantry assault forces' light armament does not make them an ideal choice for holding an area unless the Soviets assumed that their presence would deter Israeli action.

Soviet Military Presence in Egypt and Syria

(S/NFD/WNSISMI) Since the October 1973 war, the number of Soviet military personnel in Syria has risen by several hundred to a total of over 2,000 men. They mainly train Syrian pilots and advise ground forces down to the battalion level. The only Soviet combat unit identified in Syria is an SA-6/GAINFUL regiment located near Damascus that consists of about 500 Soviet personnel and five firing batteries with four transporter-erector-launchers each. While all identified military equipment cannot be directly related to Syrian operational units, the excesses probably represent war reserves. Some 75 unassigned MIG-21/FISHBEDs are most likely intended for Syrian use when additional pilots are trained, and there are about 250 unassigned tanks, most of which are located at Al Qutayfah north-east of Damascus.

(S/NFD) The USSR has about 200 advisers in Egypt. No evidence of ready equipment stockpiled for use by Soviet ground, sea, or air units has been noted, and all indications are that major equipment items are controlled by the Egyptians. A Soviet MIG-25/FOXBAT

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detachment, including a support contingent of 75 to 100 personnel, is located at Cairo West Airfield, which has historically been used by Soviet aircraft for supply flights, personnel evacuation, and most other support activity. The Soviets are unlikely to plan to recover any military equipment from the Syrians and Egyptians for their own use, but the possibility cannot be dismissed.

Egyptian and Syrian Capabilities To Support Soviet Forces

(S/NFD) Soviet forces introduced into the Middle East would essentially be required to provide their own maintenance and logistic support with the possible exception of refined petroleum products. Few details of maintenance facilities in Syria and Egypt are known, but available evidence suggests that these facilities are marginally adequate to support indigenous forces. There are indications that repair and rehabilitation are still under way in Egypt on equipment damaged during the October 1973 conflict.

(S/NFD) In that war, roughly 35 percent of Syrian refined products storage capacity of 4.5 million barrels was destroyed by Israeli air attacks, while Egypt's 12.8 million-barrel capacity remained largely intact. Even though a comparable destruction of Syrian refined products storage capacity might recur, available stocks, when coupled with those in Egypt, should be adequate to fulfill Soviet needs for the size of forces envisioned.

(S/NFD) The Soviet SA-6 SAM regiment in Syria has an independent technical support-maintenance facility. Ground support at Arab airfields available to Soviet units would be limited. It can be assumed that the Arabs' available ammunition stocks would be largely consumed by their forces after several days of intense fighting. Egyptian and Syrian air, naval, and POL facilities are shown on Figures 5 through 10.
(XGDS-2)

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Capt L. Harrier, USAF
DE PROJECT OFFICER
LTC M. Stein, USA

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SECRET**GROUND UNIT AVAILABILITY****24 Hours**

Baltic MD	- 31st Gds Abn Div, Kaunas
Leningrad MD	- 76th Gds Abn Div, Pskov
Belorussian MD	- 103rd Gds Abn Div, Vietbsk
Transcaucasus MD	- 104th Gds Abn Div, Korovabad
Moscow MD	- 106th Gds Abn Div, Tula
Odessa MD	- UI Abn Div, Bolgrad

48 Hours

Odessa MD	- 34th(?) Gds Tank Div, Nikolayev
	- 28th Gds Motorized Rifle Div, Odessa
	- 59th Gds Motorized Rifle Div, Tiraspol
Kiev MD	- UI Tank Div, Vypolzov
	- UI Gds Tank Div, Cherkassy
	- UI Gds Tank Div, Chuguyev
	- UI Tank Div, Volnoye/Dnepropetrovsk
	- 42nd Gds Tank Div, Volnoye/Dnepropetrovsk
	- UI Gds Tank Div, Krivoy Rog
North Caucasus MD	- UI Tank Div, Novochoerkassk
Transcaucasus MD	- 164th Motorized Rifle Div, Yerevan
	- UI Motorized Rifle Div, Leninakan
	- 414th(?) Motorized Rifle Div, Batumi

72 Hours

Odessa MD	- 33rd Gds Motorized Rifle Div, Beltsy
	- UI Motorized Rifle Div, Belgorod
	- 126th Motorized Rifle Div, Simferopol
	- 128th Motorized Rifle Div, Feodosiy
Kiev MD	- UI Gds Motorized Rifle Div, Voroshilovgrad
	- 25th Gds Motorized Rifle Div, Lubny
	- 72 Gds Motorized Rifle Div, Belaya Tserkov
	- UI Motorized Rifle Div, Konotop

(Continued)

FIGURE 1**SECRET**

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- Transcaucasus MD**
- 6th Motorized Rifle Div, Lenkoran
 - UI Gds Motorized Rifle Div, Kirovabad
 - 75th Motorized Rifle Div, Nakhichevan
 - UI Motorized Rifle Div, Baku
 - UI Motorized Rifle Div, Kirovakan
 - 10th(?) Gds Motorized Rifle Div, Akhalkalaki
 - 11th Motorized Rifle Div, Akhaltsikhe
 - UI Motorized Rifle Div, Tbilisi

NOTE: No time has been allocated for training to attain a higher state of combat effectiveness. It is assumed that mobilization of reservists to fill out these units will be selective to ensure that only personnel recently released from active duty are mobilized. Such mobilization could theoretically be accomplished within the above time frames.

(SECRET NO FOREIGN DISSEM)

FIGURE 1

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ARTILLERY AND SCUD UNITS AVAILABLE IN SOUTHWESTERN USSR

- | | |
|-------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Odessa MD | - Arty Div (Type A), Zaporozhye |
| | - SCUD Bde, Raukhovka |
| | - SCUD Bde, Sarata |
| | - SCUD Bde, Veselyy Kut |
| Kiev MD | - Arty Div (Type A), Novomoskovsk |
| | - Arty Bde, Krivoy Rog |
| | - SCUD Bde, Kremenchug |
| | - SCUD Bde, Belaya Tserkov |
| North Caucasus MD | - Arty Div (Type A), Buynaksk |
| | - SCUD Bde, Krasnodar |
| Transcaucasus MD | - Arty Div (Type A), Kutaisi |
| | - Arty Bde, Baku |
| | - SCUD Bde, Tbilisi |
| | - SCUD Bde, Kirovabad |
| | - SCUD Bde, Stepanavan |

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FIGURE 2

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SECRET**TACTICAL AVIATION UNITS AND AIRCRAFT LIKELY TO BE DEPLOYED****First Seven Days**

Limanskoye	40 FLOGGERS
Staro Konstantinov	44 FLOGGERS
Tbilisi/Vaziani	40 FISHBED J/K/Ls
Tbilisi/Vaziani	16 FISHBED Hs
Kalinin	40 FITTER As
Voznesensk	40 FITTER As
Blagoyevo	4 FOXBAT Bs
2 multimission fighter regiments	
1 all-weather fighter regiment	
1 fighter-reconnaissance squadron	
2 fighter-bomber regiments	
1 fighter-reconnaissance flight	

Subsequent Three-Week Period

Pochinok	40 FLOGGERS
Pochinok	8 FOXBAT Bs
Kubinka	48 FISHBED D/Fs
Kiev/Borispol	40 FISHBED J/K/Ls
Chortkov	16 FISHBED Hs
Siauliai	40 FLOGGERS
Bobrovichi	40 FITTER As
Shchuchin	40 FLOGGERS
Kirovabad/Kanatovo	40 FISHBED D/Fs
1 fighter-bomber regiment	
3 multimission fighter regiments	
1 all-weather fighter regiment	
2 day-fighter regiments	
1 fighter-reconnaissance squadron	
2 fighter-reconnaissance flights	

(SECRET NO FOREIGN DISSEM)

FIGURE 3

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SECRET**GROUND AIR DEFENSE AIRLIFT REQUIREMENTS**

Ground Air Defense Units	Sorties Required		Total Days Required	
	AN-12	AN-22*	Route 1**	Route 2***
SA-4 Bde	20	70	7	5
SA-6 Rgt	12	52	5	4
ECM Bn	3	36	4	3
SIGNAL Bn	8	12	2	1
EW Rgt	9	39	4	3

* Assuming all COCKs used for each lift.

** Route 1 = Stage through Yugoslavia and Mediterranean
(3 days)

*** Route 2 = Overflight of Turkey and Iran (2 days)

(SECRET NO FOREIGN DISSEM)

FIGURE 4

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MAJOR EGYPTIAN AIRFIELDS AND PORTS OUTSIDE CAIRO AREA

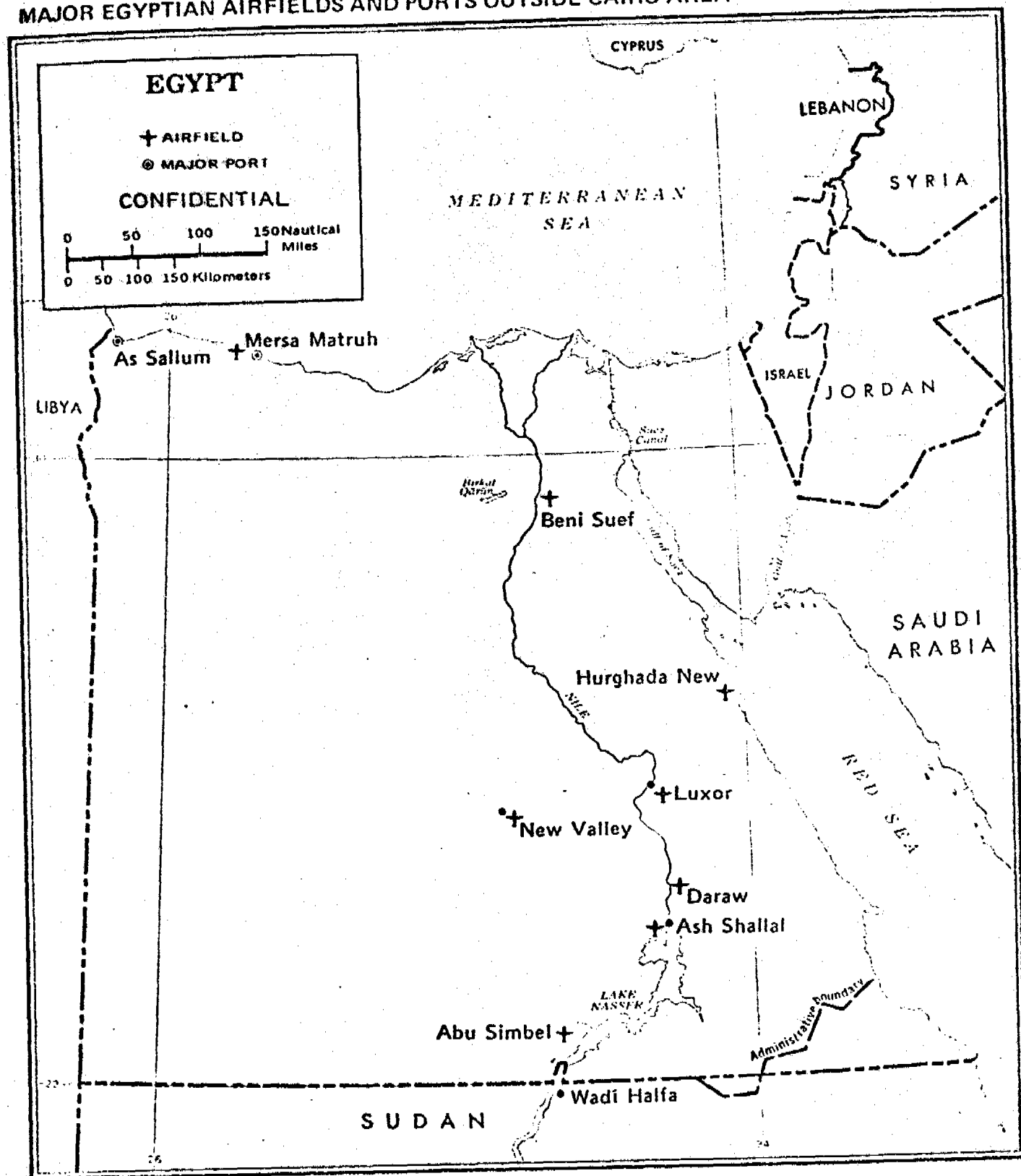


FIGURE 5

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MAJOR EGYPTIAN AIRFIELDS AND PORTS IN CAIRO AREA

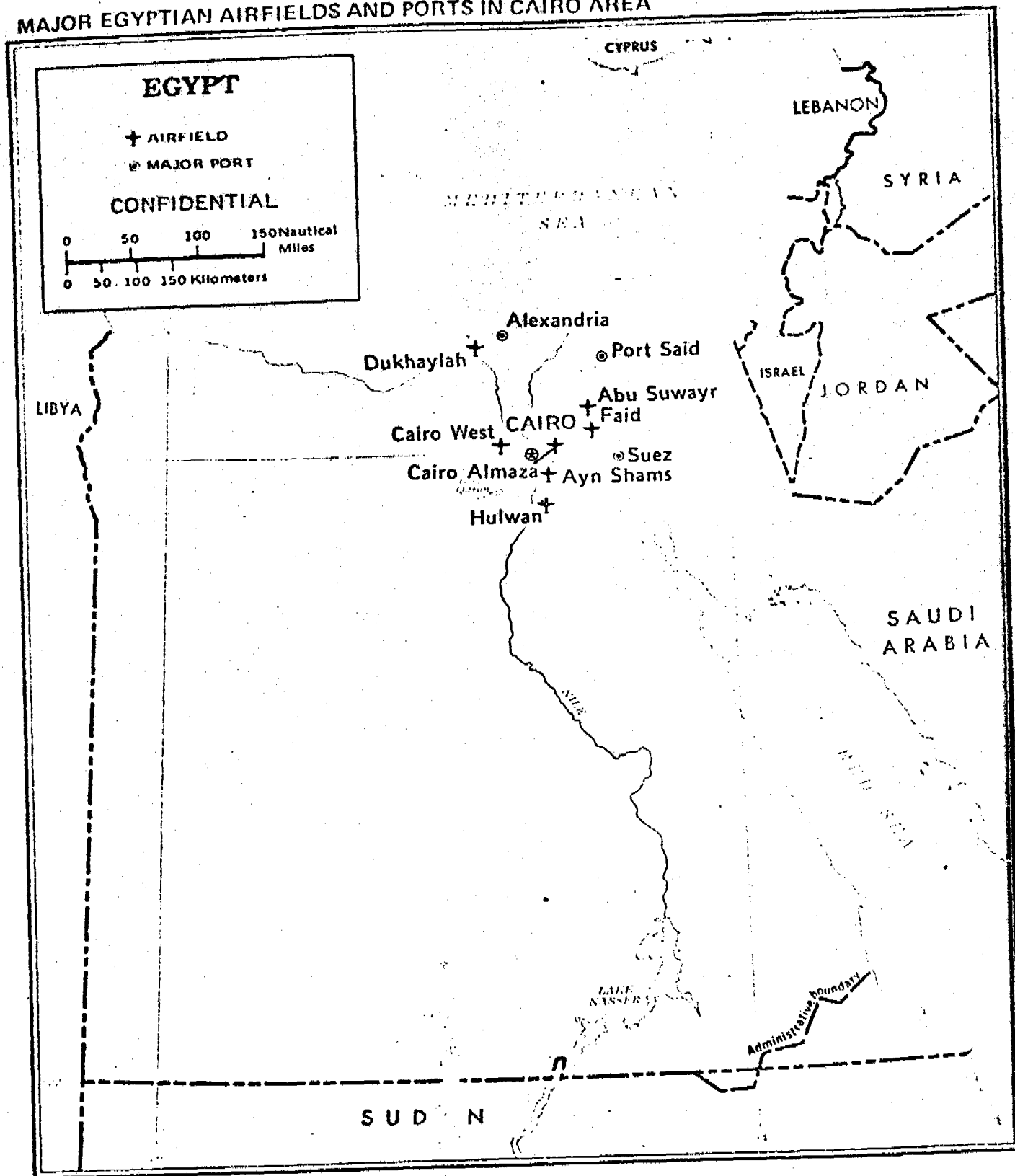
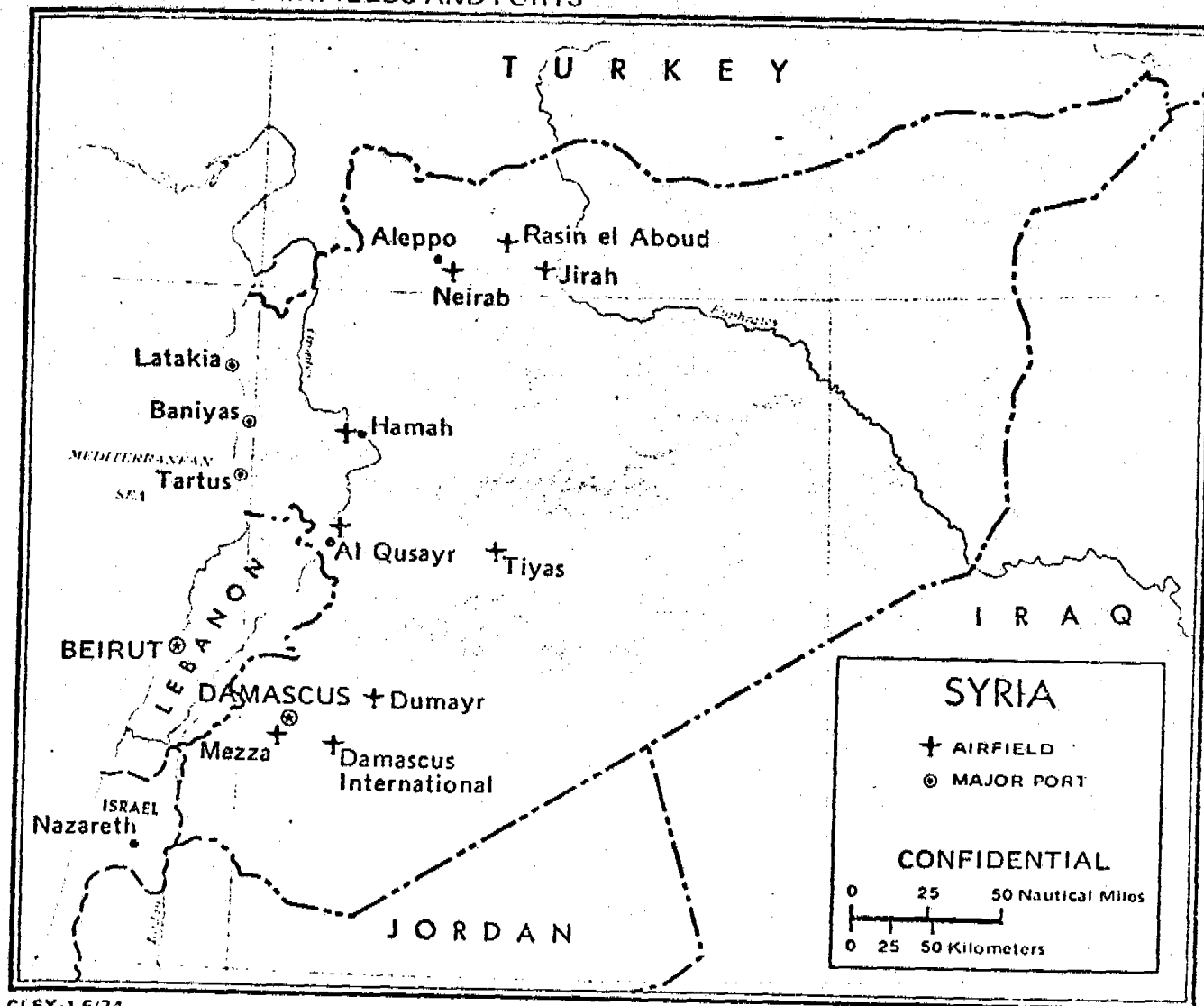


FIGURE 6

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MAJOR SYRIAN AIRFIELDS AND PORTS



CI-SY-1-6/74

FIGURE 7

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EGYPTIAN CRUDE-OIL AND REFINED-PRODUCTS STORAGE OUTSIDE CAIRO AREA

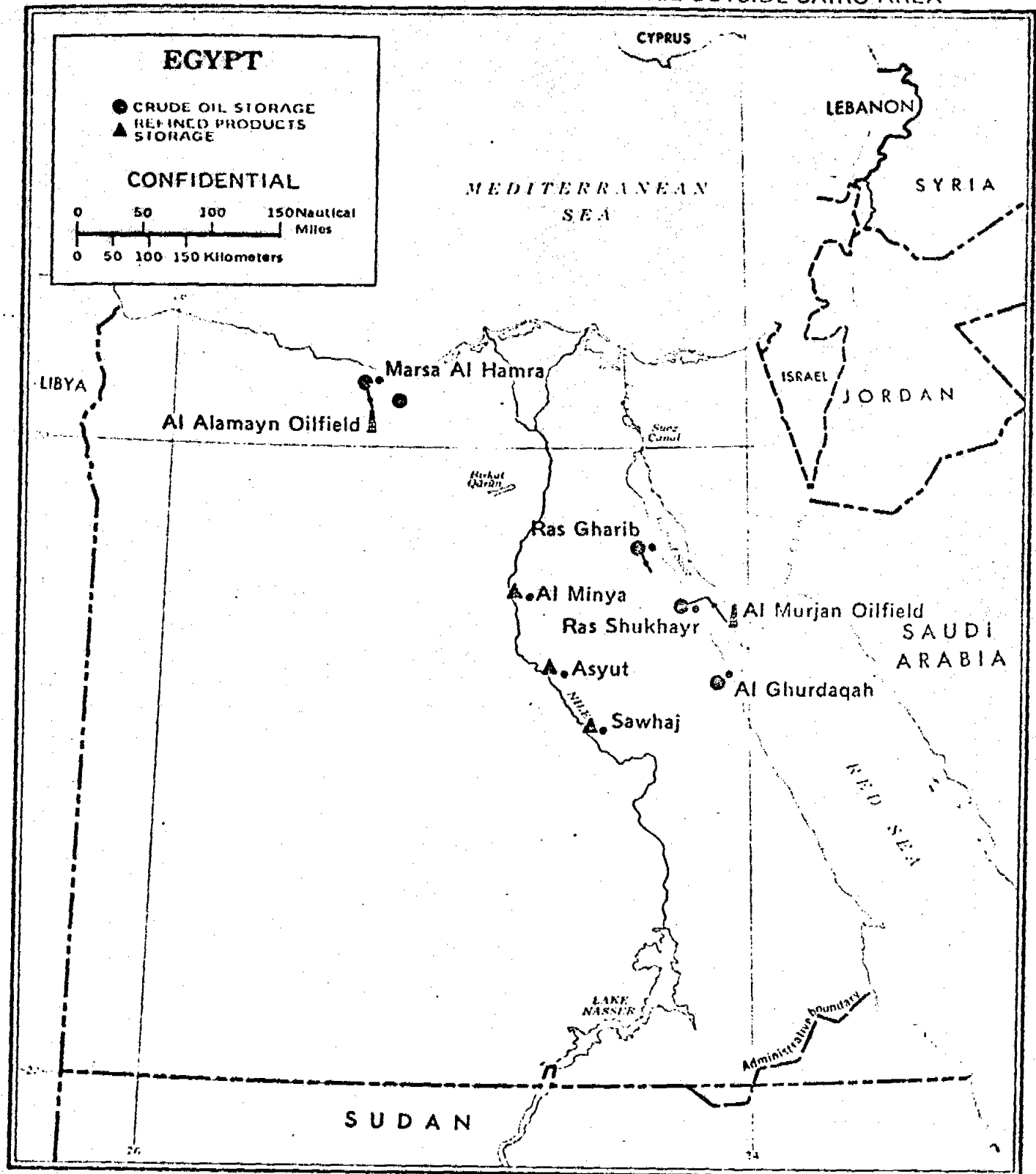
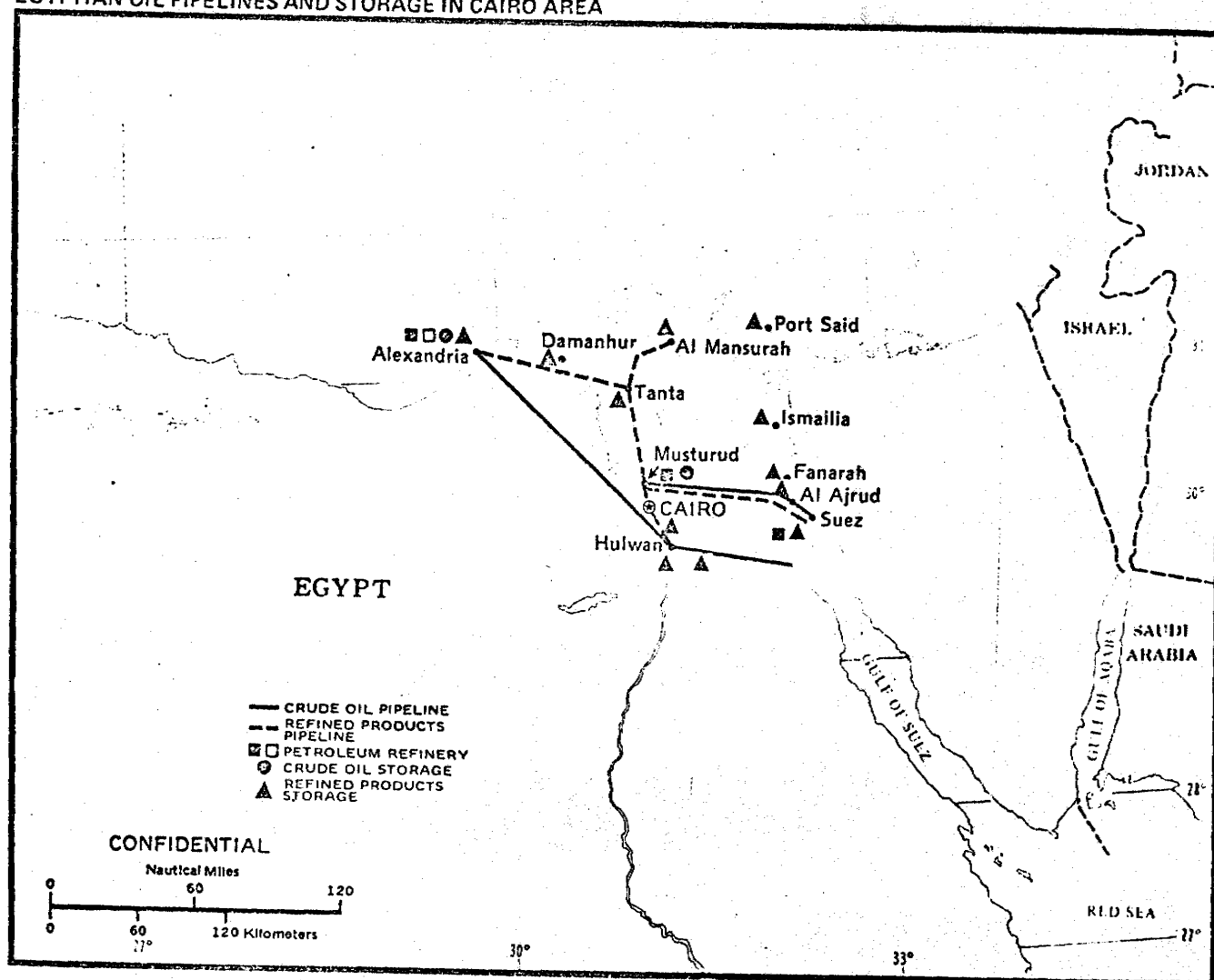


FIGURE 8

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EGYPTIAN OIL PIPELINES AND STORAGE IN CAIRO AREA



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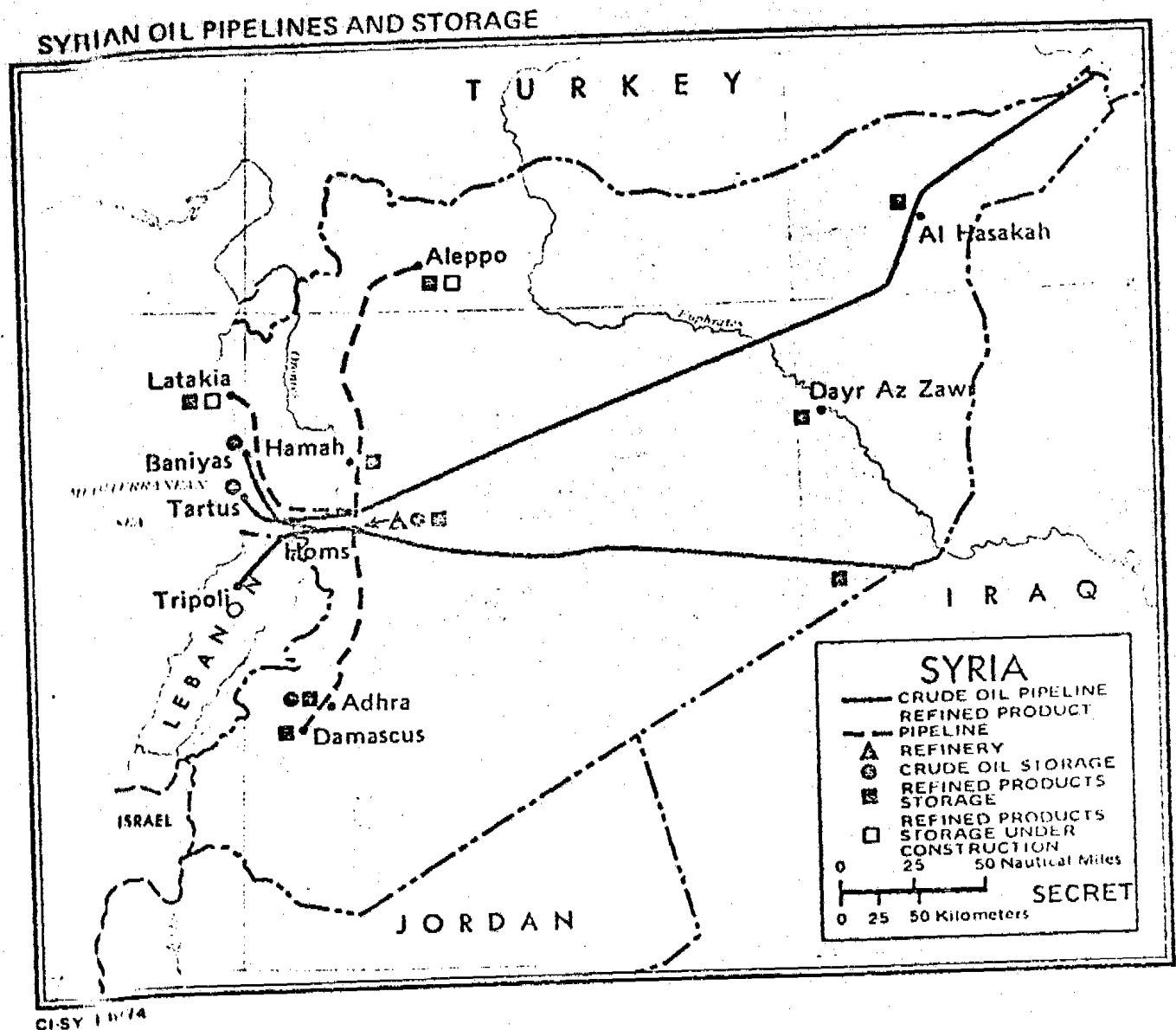


FIGURE 10

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