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ARAB-ISRAELI CONFLICT

MOSCOW CAUTIOUS, NONCOMMITAL ON PEACE CONFERENCE ISSUES

While Moscow has begun to give increased attention to the peace talks scheduled to open in Geneva on 18 December, comment has skirted the issues and maintained an attitude of caution regarding the outcome. Soviet media have portrayed Egypt as prepared to work in constructive and businesslike fashion to facilitate positive results at the conference and contrasted this stance with Israel's "obstructive" attitude and its intransigence on the issue of withdrawal from the territories occupied in 1967. Moscow has avoided discussion of the format of the conference and has not indicated any differences with Egypt over the question of UN versus superpower supervision of the talks.

KISSINGER NEWS CONFERENCE

In brief accounts of Secretary Kissinger's 6 December news conference, Soviet media cited him as saying the Soviet Union was playing a constructive role in preparations regarding the possible agenda, composition, and scope of the conference, and as declaring that a Middle East settlement could not be reached without Soviet participation. The Moscow account said that Kissinger, responding to a question about the possibility of joint Soviet-U.S. participation in guaranteeing peace, said the United States was willing to consider the question of guarantees "in the broadest sense, to study the opinions of the other side on this question, and to discuss the possibility of individual and joint guarantees." The Secretary in fact said that the United States was prepared to consider the question of guarantees in its broadest sense and "we're willing to examine any idea that any of the parties might put forward as to what would constitute adequate guarantees."

Moscow ignored his qualification that the United States was prepared to consider--"not necessarily agree to"--either individual or joint guarantees, and it did not acknowledge his remark that "we are somewhat dubious" about the permanent stationing of U.S. or Soviet forces in the Middle East and that "we do not rule it out totally, but we are reluctant to get into this."

ARAB, ISRAELI
STANCE ON TALKS

Soviet media have drawn a contrast between the "constructive" attitude that Egypt is taking toward the peace talks and the alleged Israeli efforts to frustrate the conference. Thus an Aleksandrov

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commentary on Moscow's domestic service on the 10th pointed to Egyptian compliance with the Security Council's cease-fire resolutions as well as the 11 November Egyptian-Israeli agreement, and compared this with Israel's refusal to fulfill its obligations by withdrawing to the 22 October positions. Moscow has not as yet taken note of recent statements by Israeli ministers raising the issue of Syrian-held prisoners of war as a barrier to talks with Syria at the peace conference. Brief reports on Israeli Defense Minister Dayan's 8-9 December talks in Washington cited him as saying he sought further arms supplies and had been received "sympathetically," but placed no particular stress on the arms issue and did not directly suggest that it had any implications for the peace talks. A Moscow domestic service broadcast on the 11th did observe that this sort of aid "is far from encouraging the Israeli leaders to undertake joint steps" toward a peaceful settlement, and went on to cite Dayan as declaring that Israel would not withdraw to the 1967 frontiers and would continue to maintain this position at the Geneva conference.

Soviet media have publicized Egyptian statements in connection with the peace talks but have not conceded that there is any difference of opinion between Egypt and the sponsoring powers over UN rather than U.S.-Soviet supervision of the conference. Thus TASS and Moscow's Arabic-language service reported without comment a 9 December AL-AHRAM article outlining Egypt's conditions for participation in a peace conference: invitations should be extended by the Security Council; the UN secretary general should appoint a representative to the conference; and all parties concerned--Egypt, Syria, Jordan and Israel, as well as the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO)--should participate, with Lebanon to be contacted to insure its presence. According to an IRAQI NEWS AGENCY account on the 10th, AL-AHRAM spelled out two differing views regarding invitations to the conference and responsibility for supervising its functions: in the American-Soviet view, the United States and the USSR should extend invitations and run the conference sessions with the UN secretary general representing the United Nations as an observer; in the view of "the nonaligned states, supported by Egypt," the invitation should be extended by the Security Council, not the superpowers alone, and the whole conference should be under UN auspices and supervision. AL-AHRAM reiterated this view in a 12 December article, reported by MENA, calling for "genuine" UN supervision of the conference.

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Soviet pickups of statements by Egyptian official spokesmen have included a TASS report on the 7th citing Foreign Minister Fahmi as saying in a Norwegian television interview that Egypt is prepared to attend the conference and demands full Israeli withdrawal from the territories occupied in 1967. Fahmi was quoted as saying that the establishment of an equitable peace with neighboring countries would be the best guarantee for Israel. A foreign-language commentary by Rassadin on the 10th cited Deputy Prime Minister Hatim as saying that Egypt, while prepared to attend a conference, would not allow it to be transformed into a platform for Israeli maneuvers and a return to the pre-war impasse.

Soviet media have only briefly alluded to the problem of Jordanian-Palestinian participation. Moscow domestic service on the 7th noted that the Jordanian prime minister had announced that Jordan proposed to begin a dialog with Egypt, Syria and the PLO to work out a common position on the eve of the peace conference. TASS on 9 December reported that according to the Palestinian news agency the Palestinian resistance movement had rejected a Jordanian "reconciliation plan" which envisaged the establishment of a government in Jordan which would include Palestinians and which would appoint a Jordanian delegation to the Geneva conference. TASS did not report Jordan's denial of this alleged approach to the Palestinians, broadcast by Amman radio on the 9th.

USSR LINKS AID TO ARABS WITH ITS SECURITY COUNCIL OBLIGATIONS

A standard reference to Soviet "assistance and support" to the Arabs appeared in an unusual context in the 4 December issue of the Moscow newspaper SOCIALIST INDUSTRY. After declaring that the USSR "has rendered and is rendering broad assistance and support" to the Arab states, the author went on to say:

However, as many international observers are stressing, in granting this assistance the USSR has never forgotten the great responsibility which it bears as a permanent member of the Security Council to maintain international peace, and has always expressed readiness to cooperate with all interested countries in the matter of normalizing the situation in this region.

By juxtaposing the phrase on assistance and support to a reminder of Soviet obligations as a Security Council member, it might appear that the article was suggesting Moscow would be prepared to review

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its military aid policies in the context of movement toward a Middle East peace settlement. But SOCIALIST INDUSTRY is an unlikely vehicle for any such signal, and the author, G. Dadyants, has not been known as a specialist in Middle East affairs, although a few years ago he wrote some articles on the area as a SOVIET RUSSIA correspondent. Soviet media have not addressed the issue of an arms limitation in the Middle East since the October conflict, but Moscow's position on this matter is not known to have changed from that spelled out by Kosygin in a June 1967 press conference at the United Nations. Limitation of arms shipments to the Middle East, Moscow has argued, cannot be discussed before Israel has withdrawn from the occupied territories.

In referring to Moscow's "broad assistance and support" to the Arabs, Dadyants was echoing Kirilenko's 6 November speech on the October Revolution anniversary. But Kirilenko's remark was placed in the more common context of Soviet principles of "solidarity with the struggle against aggression and for people's independence and rights." Dadyants' phrase on "readiness to cooperate" was drawn from Brezhnev's 26 October speech to the Moscow World Peace Congress in which he had declared that the Soviet Union, in the cause of normalizing the situation in the Middle East, was prepared to cooperate with all countries concerned. But Brezhnev in that speech made no pledge of Soviet "assistance" to the Arabs, going no further than to affirm Moscow's "firm and consistent support" for the Arab peoples' "just demands."

Dadyants also quoted, without attribution, from the Brezhnev speech when he described the USSR's "clear and consistent" policy on a Middle East settlement as proceeding from the general principles of socialist foreign policy and "from the fact that the Near East region is in direct proximity to the Soviet borders."

ARAB RECOGNITION
OF ISRAEL

Dadyants is the second Soviet commentator recently to touch on the issue of Arab recognition of Israel, a question seldom specifically addressed in Soviet media since the 1967 war. An article by Georgiy Mirskiy in NEW TIMES (No. 48, 30 November), in reviewing the provisions of Resolution 242, remarked that by withdrawing from the captured lands Israel would obtain lasting peace based on its recognition by its Arab neighbors and on international guarantees. Mirskiy in a broadcast commentary in February 1969 had also linked recognition with Israeli withdrawal. Dadyants argued that Arab recognition of Israel was implicit in Arab acceptance of Resolution 242: "It is sometimes said that the

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Arab countries should in some special form recognize the state of Israel's 'right to exist.' However, it is clear that by recognizing Resolution 242 the Arab states thereby also recognize Israel." "Under these conditions," Dadyants concluded, "the problem of 'recognition' can scarcely be an obstacle to a peace settlement."

In taking this tack, Dadyants was following PRAVDA's former Middle East expert Belyayev, who had noted in an INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS article in October 1968 that Resolution 242 recognized the right of every state in the Middle East to independent and sovereign existence, and had gone on to remark: "What is this, de facto recognition of Israel? Egypt, indeed, practically did recognize Israel as far back as 1949 by signing an armistice agreement with her." And in July 1970 Belyayev wrote in PRAVDA that Cairo had many times called for implementation of Resolution 242, and "surely this testifies that Egypt is ready to recognize the right of all states and peoples of the Near East to independence and free existence."

The same line of argument was amplified in a June 1971 INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS article by Dmitriyev and Ladeikin, who also maintained that by agreeing with Resolution 242 Egypt had expressed its willingness to recognize Israel. The authors declared that Egypt and other states had showed this willingness even earlier, and launched into a description of the Lausanne Protocol of 12 May 1949 according to which, they said, the Arab states recognized the 29 November 1947 UNGA resolution on the partition of Palestine and "thereby expressed a willingness to recognize Israel's right to existence but, of course, only if it adhered to the UN resolutions."

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