

Washed Post

WASHINGTON POST

30 MAR 1971

Soviet Aid to Egypt Seen Easing War Threat

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Washington Post Foreign Service

LONDON, March 29 — Russia has sent 200 of its pilots and 150 MiG-21J fighter-interceptors to Egypt and supplied it with \$2.5 billion of military aid in 1970, according to the authoritative Institute for Strategic Studies annual strategic survey.

The document, to be published Tuesday, points out that the sheer volume of military support is without precedent and that "never before had the Soviet Union injected anything like the quantity of sophisticated military equipment into a non-Communist country in such a short time."

Also, with the exception of the 1962 Cuban missile crisis, the U.S.S.R. has never deployed such large numbers of its own military personnel out-

side the Warsaw Treaty countries. They total 12,000 to 15,000 in SA-3 missile crews and 4,000 "advisers."

Nevertheless, the annual survey suggests in a sophisticated argument that the intent of this intervention, or at least the effect, was to lessen rather than increase the likelihood of conflict:

- It induced greater caution in Israel at a time when it was bombing Egyptian targets at will, as close as five miles to Cairo—and, by implication, greater caution in the United States.

- It also removed from Egypt the shadow of surrender and replaced it with a feeling of new strength. The Egyptians found themselves able at last to afford flexibility in their reaction to proposals for peace, while the Isra-

elis, as their military options diminished and the risks attached to them increased, found themselves urged by prudence in the same direction.

More substantial and more direct Soviet involvement thus seemed to combine the purposes of defense and deterrence, even if at the cost of increasing the risk of Soviet embroilment if the cease-fire should end and deterrence fail.

- A corollary, though—and depending on how one looks at it, perhaps a salutary one—is that the intervention left Egypt with "if anything, even less independent ability" to defend itself against Israeli air attacks than it had 12 months earlier. Now, there is a significant potential power

of the Soviets to deter or restrain Egypt from military action across the Suez Canal—which depends for success on air cover—by threatening to withhold or withdraw its air forces.

In some sense, therefore, Egypt had mortgaged its freedom of military—and even political—action to its Soviet ally in return for protection against the Israel air force. The Soviet Union, whether or not its ability to deter Israel would stand the test of time, seemed during 1970 to have established a very real ability to constrain, if it wished, the military policy of Egypt.

In all, according to the Institute's cataloging, the U.S.S.R. has put \$4.5 billion of military aid into Egypt since the Six-Day War in 1967.