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26 November 1969

INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

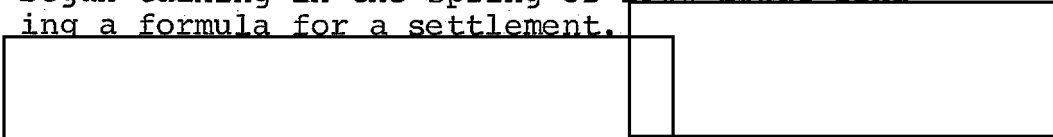
SUBJECT: US-USSR Talks on the Middle East

Background

In the early months after the June 67 war there was no movement toward peace in the Middle East. The Arabs were stunned and feebly reassembling their military establishments. The triumphant Israelis were waiting for the Arabs to make peace gestures. As time passed it became apparent that peace settlements were not coming and that instead a new drift toward hostilities was developing.

Five months after the war on 22 November 1967, the UN passed resolution 242 which, among other things, called for Israeli withdrawal from territories occupied during the war and asserted the right of every state in the area to live in peace within secure and recognized boundaries. Ambassador Jarring came to the Middle East to promote this settlement. As months passed it became evident that Jarring's efforts would not bring even indirect negotiations. Arab terrorists, meanwhile, were increasing their operations against Israel, and Israeli retaliation, harsh and extensive, inflamed the situation.

The Soviet Union, which immediately after the end of the June war began to re-equip the Egyptians, Syrians, Iraqis, and Algerians, also began talking in the spring of 1968 about finding a formula for a settlement.



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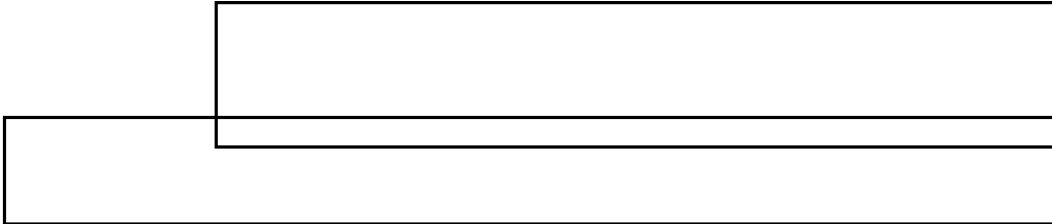


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In September Moscow indicated to Washington its interest in finding a solution for the Middle East.

In late 1968 the French began to promote a Big Four conference. When the Soviets transmitted a Middle East settlement proposal to the US on 30 December 1968, it was clear that discussions would be held.

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Soviet Motivations

1. The Soviet initiative springs out of several factors. Moscow wishes to open the Suez Canal to provide better access to the Persian Gulf and the Indian Ocean. But even more importantly Moscow fears that the Middle East situation might get out of hand with unforeseeable consequences for the Arabs and the Soviet Union itself. Moscow wishes to reduce the dangers of a Big Power clash and at the same time hopes to gain prestige by posing as the Arab champion. Moscow is aware that another Arab-Israeli war at this time would certainly bring another debacle to the Arabs and would risk a US-Soviet confrontation. On the other hand, Moscow recognizes that the chances of a settlement are poor.

2. Accordingly Soviet policy has been, and is, dual in nature. Moscow negotiates to achieve a settlement which would be acceptable to the Arabs. At the same time it maintains and hopefully improves its relations with Arab governments and with the guerrilla movements. The Soviets know that any settlements achieved would neither end suspicion and tension nor the Arab need for Soviet arms and political support. If settlement talks break down completely, the Soviet Union remains the strong friend of the Arabs. The Soviet Union has been cautiously maneuvering itself into a position of contact with and support for the guerrilla movements. The Soviets can move forward on this new relationship anytime they wish, taking their cue from the rise or fall of the fedayeen's political fortunes.

Developments in the Talks

3. The Soviet proposal of December 1968, drafted in patterns which the Arabs favor, was studied for weeks by US experts. The US decided that it would engage in talks to determine if the USSR were seriously interested in searching

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for Middle East settlements and damping down the expanding hostilities even though the Soviet proposals were not acceptable. Bilateral talks began on 18 March 1969 in Washington between Assistant Secretary Sisco and Ambassador Dobrynin. On 3 April Four Power talks by the respective ambassadors to the UN opened in New York.

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After a short time, the talks bogged down in trivia; for example, from the end of May until the talks were adjourned on 1 July, the meetings were devoted largely to developing wording for a possible draft communique, which would give the public the impression that something was being accomplished. Aside from developing working relations between the ambassadors concerned, the accomplishment of the Four Powers was agreement on six rather bland points: 1) support of the 22 November 1967 UN Resolution (aimed at promoting a Middle East peace); 2) Big Four suggestions will be submitted to the parties involved, not imposed; 3) all terms of a settlement must be agreed on as a package; 4) the settlement must reflect the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by war; 5) the aim is not an armistice but a just and lasting peace; 6) in accepting the charter of the UN, all member states have undertaken a commitment to act in accordance with Article 2 (Member states renounce the use of force). The Four Power talks are still in recess, awaiting the outcome of the bilateral discussions.

5. Early in the bilateral talks Dobrynin emphasized that the Soviet Union wanted peace, not simply an armistice. He repeatedly insisted that by UN resolution Israel had to get out of occupied territory, but he recognized that before this would occur a package settlement had to be accepted.

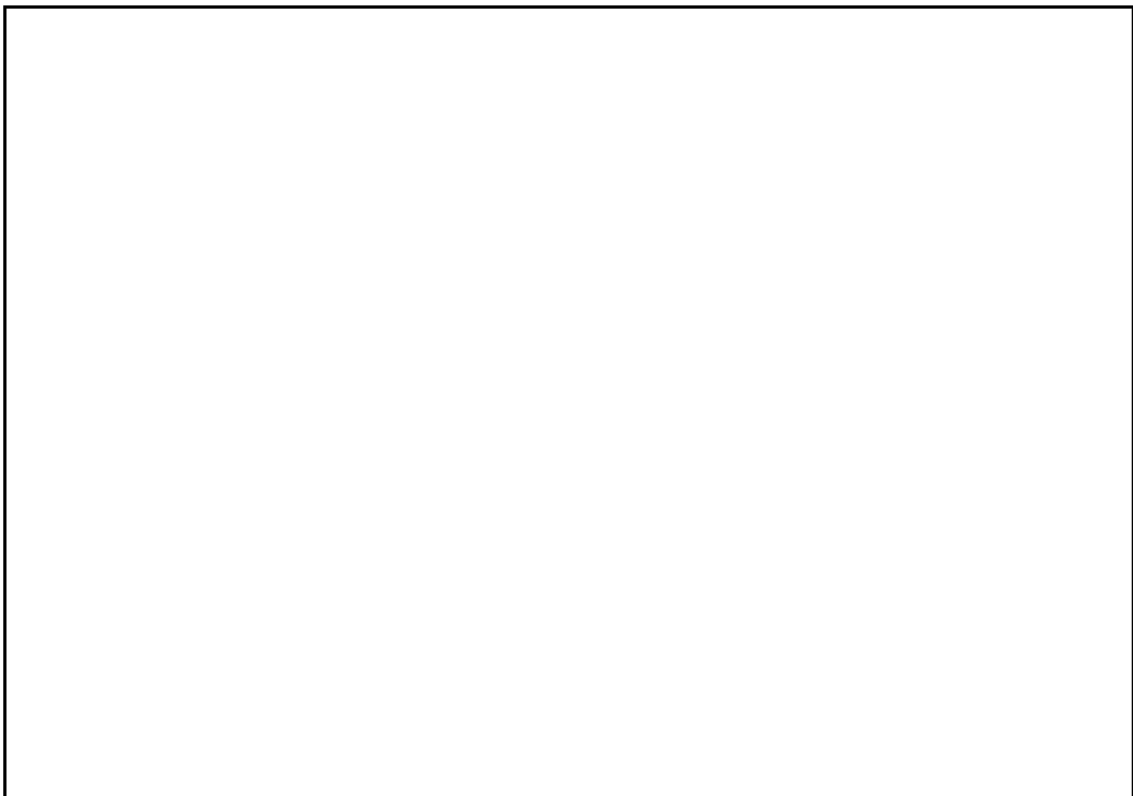
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6. In April 1969 the US prepared a draft proposal which was presented as its "14 points" to Dobrynin in early May. On 17 June Dobrynin presented a counter-draft which represented little Soviet "give." On 15 July Sisco delivered another draft, a "13 points" proposal. The USSR did not produce a counter proposal, but commented at length on each point.

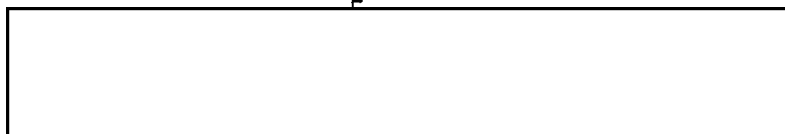


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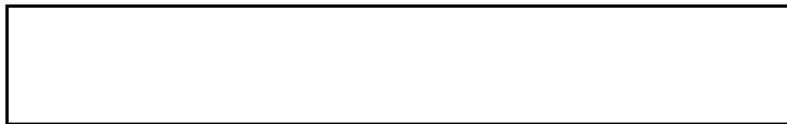
9. To date Moscow has yet to respond officially to the paper, but the remarks of a lower level Soviet official that Moscow found the paper "unbalanced and unacceptable" suggests an eventual unfavorable reply.

The Soviet Position

10. There has been movement in the Soviet position, but no major concessions. No real

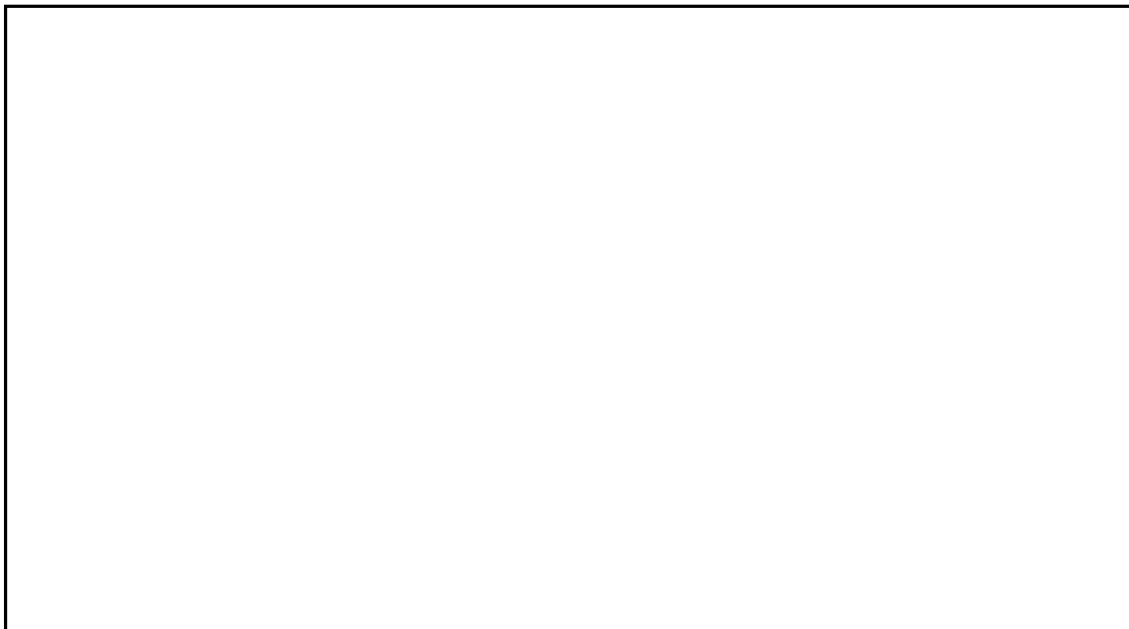


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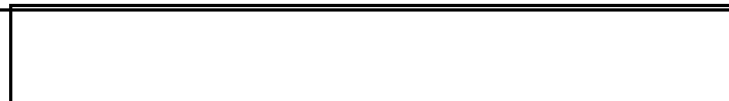
progress has been noted on basic issues such as refugees and the return of occupied territory. The Soviets seemed to be interested in arriving at an agreement, but one acceptable to the Arabs. Soviet gains in the Middle East have been too dramatic to be thrown away on a peace gamble which their friends, the Arabs, do not want.



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The Arab Position

12. The Arabs view the Two- and Four-Power talks as their last hope of dislodging Israel from their lands short of war. They are afraid that the talks have collapsed altogether; this accounts for the militant tone in Nasir's recent speech, which seems to have been designed not to close the door on a possible settlement but to serve notice to the US that should the talks be allowed to fail, there would be another war.

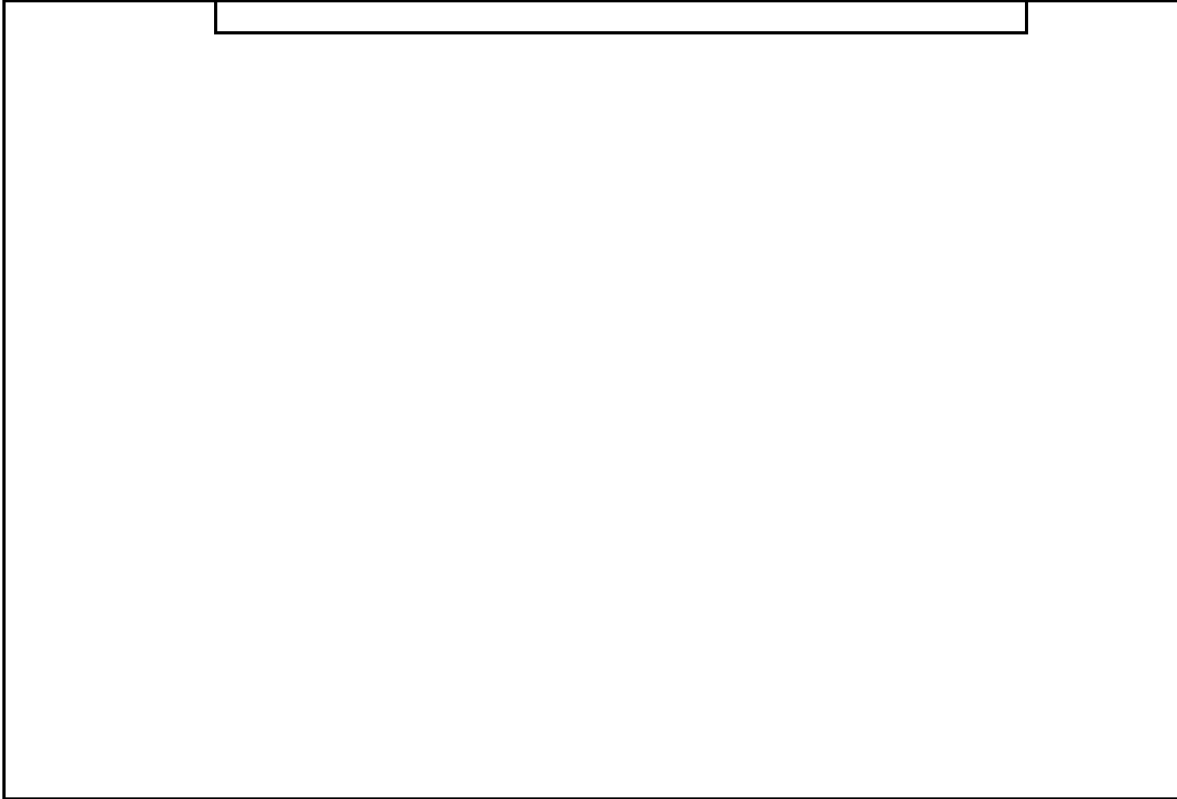


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The Israeli Position

14. Israel has been and remains adamantly opposed to the Two- and Four-Power negotiations. In Tel Aviv's view the cards are stacked against them. The Israelis believe that three of the participants (the Soviet Union, France, and the UK) are basically pro-Arab. Further the Israelis view the new US administration as less dependable than the previous one. They thus believe that in the process of the talks vital Israeli interests would be compromised in the interest of illusory approaches to peace. Israel, therefore, has consistently sought to characterize the US-Soviet bilateral talks as detrimental to US interests as well as to its own.

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Prospects

18. The Soviet Union's response to the latest US package seems almost certain to be negative

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The Soviet response, however, will again depend on the outcome of their continuing discussions with the Arabs.

19. Moscow is in any event ready to resume the Big Four talks in New York.

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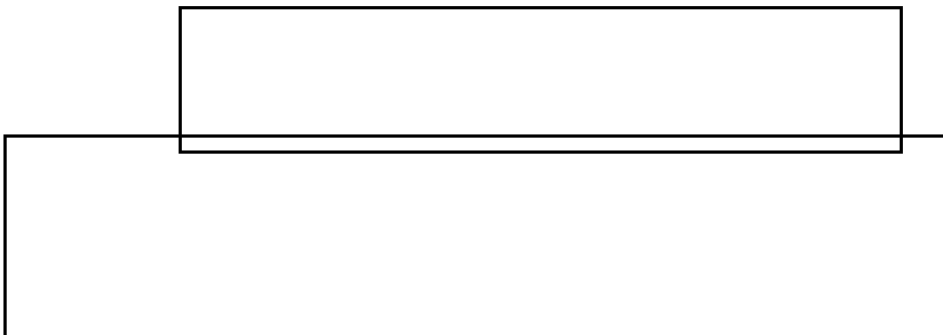
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20. Accordingly, it would seem that talks on a Middle East settlement will be continuing. The Four Power talks can only become meaningful, however, if some breakthrough is achieved in US-USSR discussions. There is no indication that this will happen. Gromyko recently referred to the Syrian Golan Heights as an area which must be evacuated by Israel. Tel Aviv insists that the Golan Heights are not negotiable. The Soviet reference to the Golan Heights could have been a Soviet tactic or it could prove to be an eventual stumbling block. The Syrian question has not been dealt with in the Big Power talks. Nevertheless, before any meaningful settlement can be achieved accord on Syrian problems must also be reached. Likewise, the incredibly complicated Jordanian problems, which have not been under US-USSR discussion, must also be resolved.

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