

SOCIETY FOR THE PREVENTION OF WORLD WAR III, Inc.

A Non-Profit Educational Organization

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Hon. Joseph C. Goodwin
Central Intelligence Agency
Washington, D.C.

Dear Sir:

We enclose a brochure entitled "HOW STUPID DO YOU THINK THE RUSSIANS ARE?" published by an organization called Americans for Permanent Peace in the Middle East.

Although this publication was not issued by our Society, it came to our attention and we believe it raises many points in which you will be interested, and we are therefore sending it to you.

The argument presented here, in very clear terms, is that Russia and the United States are in direct confrontation in the Middle East; that if we do not intend to abandon our interests there, we must insist even more vigorously upon direct peace negotiations between the Arabs and Israel; and that we must firmly state our purpose to prevent Soviet domination, if the Russian endeavor to become the controlling power in the area is not to succeed.

Respectfully yours,

SOCIETY FOR THE PREVENTION OF WORLD WAR III, Inc.

By: Rex Stout
Rex Stout, President

By: Albert Simard
Albert Simard, Secretary

How Stupid Do You Think The RUSSIANS Are?

An examination of the great danger to
American interests in the Middle East

How Stupid Do You Think The **RUSSIANS** Are?

An examination of the great danger to
American interests in the Middle East

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Who is Fighting Whom in the Middle East?

Premier Kosygin did not mince words at his UN press conference, immediately following his meetings with President Johnson. He flatly re-affirmed Russia's opposition to the American position on the Middle East; rejecting any suggestion that the two super-powers work together to bring a durable peace into the area.

Thus, he left bigger questions behind him than any he answered. As The New York Times reported:

“. . . Mr. Kosygin was a subject of considerable speculation. Some say it is the Arabs who are not yet ready to accept or even deal with Israel. Some suspect it is a divided Soviet leadership. Some sense a fear of Communist China's charges that the United States and the Soviet Union are in collusion against the rest of the world. Some say it is a combination of all these.”

None of these speculations, however, accounts for the most visible facts in the current crisis in the Middle East, nor suggests answer to such questions as these:

1. Why have the Russians supplied the Arabs with over \$3 billion worth of war-equipment in the past dozen years (beginning in 1955 when they gave Nasser his first \$100,000,000 worth)?
2. Why did the Russians, immediately after the Arab's recent military fiasco, start shipping new planes and tanks into

Egypt? Why are so many Russian "technicians" now openly crowding the hotels of Cairo? Is it likely that the Russians would "leave it to the Arabs" again to do the fighting; or are they moving to convert Egypt into a *de facto* Russian base? And why?

3. Why are the Russians insisting so strenuously that Israel must withdraw its troops first, *without any consideration of security-issues whatsoever*? Is it that they expect the Israeli to meekly withdraw—or do they want to continue and sustain the tensions, and hostilities? Why?
4. Is it not simple history that the Russians have long wanted to move into the Middle East as a dominant power; and that the United States is now the only power strong enough to interfere with Russia's present drive to fulfill an age-old dream?
5. Since the United States has vital national interests in the Middle East, both strategic and economic, can it afford to permit aggressive *Russian power, policies and influences* to replace *American power, policies and influences* in the Middle East?
6. Who can protect the interests of the United States in the Middle East except the United States?
7. How can this be done, *without the use of force*?

Analysis shows this can be done; but not by ignoring what the Russians are so plainly telling us.

We know they don't give up easily; but we also know they are not stupid, and never stop counting the risks.

We suggest this is why they are *so openly*, now, rigidly rejecting America's positions on the Middle East, including President Johnson's program for peace in the area; and *so openly* re-arming the Arabs.

It is because they are very much concerned about American reactions to their drive in the Middle East, and want to find out what we will *do*—or fail to do—to counter-act it.

This is a classic return to their Cold War strategy; trying to expand Communist interests and influences in other countries by direct and indirect force. The West effectively defeated this strategy in Western Europe and many other places. Now the Russians have transferred it to the Middle East—where only the United States has potential powers to stop their aggressions.

That is why they are now testing our alertness and reactions in the Middle East. They have converted the situation into something much larger, and far more important to the United States, than any contentions between the Arabs and Israel. They have planned long and hard to make it a confrontation between *Russian* and *American* national interests in the region, for very high stakes indeed.

And the real question we face today is:

How stupid do the Russians think the Americans are?

What's Different This Time?

Until the current crisis, Arab-Israel conflicts have been of little real consequence to the vital interests of the United States. The Arabs had already been defeated twice by Israel, with no significant effect on our national interests, whatsoever.

Why should a third time make a difference?

Russia has now deeply committed herself to plans of her own in the Middle East. Is it reasonable to think that Russia equipped Nasser and other Arabs with so many Russian planes and tanks "to help the Arabs"? Hardly. The planners in the Kremlin have judged the time has come to actualize Russia's age-old dream of domination in the Middle East. The British and French are no longer major powers in the area. Only the United States is left to stand in Russia's way. Why not, then, replace American power, policies and influences in this strategic area with their own?

And what better way to do it than to inflame Arab passions and prejudices *against the United States*; under cover of helping and encouraging the Arabs to destroy Israel?*

Headlines only a few weeks old fade rapidly, but we must not forget what makes the current situation in the Middle East so threatening to *American* interests is that the Russians had to take two bad lickings in the "Instant War", not one.

* They counted on the Arab logic which says: "If you are not *against* Israel, you are *therefore* our enemy!"

It was a bad day in Moscow when Russia's \$3 billion investment in military equipment for the Arabs went up in smoke, so quickly. Yet this was only a military defeat.

The Russians also suffered their worst beating in international prestige, before all the world, since Krushchev's bluff was called by President Kennedy in the Cuban missile crisis. Never before had so many Russian planes and tanks been so ignominiously destroyed.

It is this second defeat, the one of embarrassment, which calls for the greatest caution on our part, in dealing with the Russians in the Middle East.

We can be sure they are not going to take such a blow to their pride lightly.

What can we do about this?

Fortunately, we have very successfully met this kind of problem with the Russians before; when they were determined to advance what they considered to be their national interests over our own. They were stopped time and time again, by our *firmness*, not by *force*. For they never stop counting the risks.

We saw this happen in Berlin. When we made unequivocally clear to the Russians that we would NOT let them push us out of that city—no matter what they tried—they finally stopped pushing. They were stopped by our firmness, not by force.

We saw this happen in Cuba. When we made unequivocally clear to the Russians that we would NOT let them have their way—no matter what they tried—they accepted our ultimatum and withdrew. They were stopped by our firmness, not by force.

The Russians are not stupid, and when they see we *mean* it, they accept and respect our position, however reluctantly.

Can it be any different in the Middle East?

Clearly, Russia badly wants to win dominance there: *in the most valuable, most strategic area left in the world, where the Russians have not yet accepted the idea of "co-existence" with the United States and other Free World Powers.*

Just as clearly, it would be grossly against America's interests to allow Russia, through Arab satellites, to dominate the region's vast oil resources or strategic land-bridges and waterways, either directly or indirectly.

To take this position is not to hold out a fist of aggression to the Russians, but to hold up a firm hand of warning, which is a very different thing.

It is to make absolutely clear to them that we consider the Middle East *our area* of vital national interest; that we cannot, therefore, allow them to use military intervention in the Arab-Israel conflict to upset our interests in the Middle East, or replace our powers, policies and influences there; that we will have to checkmate them at this because we must—because we will NOT surrender any important national interest to the Russians, anywhere.

This is precisely the position we took in Berlin and at Cuba—to discover that ONLY THEN will the Russians accept our position peacefully.

And ONLY THEN can we expect the Russians to accept as a reality that—whatever they may try against our interests in the Middle East—it can never be worth its cost to them.

This is no more than to expect that President Johnson's Peace Program for the Middle East calls for a clear warning to Russia to refrain from military intervention in the area. Let them, instead, compete with us legitimately in political, social and economic efforts to improve conditions in the area. Let them compete with us in arriving at a stable peace instead of furthering war in the area, with cynical disregard of the needs of the very people they purport to be helping—when it is these people

who most need a time of peace, to advance their own human, social and economic progress.

History has thrust on us the decisive role, for who else will bring peace into the area, unless we stand firm with the Russians? Kosygin threw an ill-concealed challenge to the United States when he said (at his UN Press Conference):

“. . . at present the troops of the opposing sides confront each other, and naturally that gives rise to the possibility *that war can be resumed at any moment.*”

What kind of war, and by whom? Are the Arabs, after their third and most decisive defeat by Israel, so soon in a position to fight again? Does Israel, so much in need of peace, want war?

This is a *Russian* statement, at a time when *Russian* war-equipment is again moving into Cairo, with the *Russian* Chief of Staff there, and multitudes of *Russian* “technicians”. Who, then, is threatening the renewal of war but Russia, herself?

And the great danger is that *Russian personnel* may mount the *Russian* equipment next time (under one subterfuge or another); for who can expect the *Russians* to repeat the mistake of expecting the Arabs alone to defeat Israel.

What does the United States do then—let *Russian* military personnel win *Russian* victories in the Middle East?

It is not hard to anticipate what is most likely to happen should the *Russian/Arab Axis win*, the next time.

Russia would then have the decisive vote on what to do about American and Allied oil interests in the Middle East.

The Arab nations are deeply divided, with avowed enmities toward one another. *With Russian support*, what could keep her principal Arab satellites from taking over, and nationalizing this oil; losing it entirely for the Western oil companies.

Western Europe, which depends on this oil, would then be at the mercy of Russian *political policies* as to when this oil would flow to the West, and when it would be cut-off.

Should We Care?

It might be well to look a little more closely at the nature of our own vital interests in the Middle East, for they are substantially of two different kinds: economic and strategic.

Our economic interests are overwhelmingly in the oil of the area: 70% of the known oil reserves of the world. The United States is not directly dependent on this oil, although the Free World in Europe is. But it was major American and Allied oil companies who discovered it, produce it, transport it, and sell it, involving extremely heavy investments of money, talent, time and effort.

Nothing of yesterday's "colonialism" is involved in this. Private oil companies pay massive royalties and taxes on the oil, to every country in which they operate. In doing so, they have created more wealth for these countries than they have ever known before (over \$700,000,000 *annually*, at current estimates). They have created the greatest economic assets these countries have, with potentials of billions of dollars of income in years to come.

Such oil incomes can only be provided by the West in the foreseeable future (Russia has its own supplies of oil); and it is fair to say that the Arab's need for our money is greater than our need for their oil.

But we need the stable conditions of peace and of legitimate commerce to continue producing and increasing this wealth for the Arab nations; which our millions in investments have made possible—and which we have every right to protect from the plotting of the Russians, or of anyone else.

Strategic Considerations

Our national security is, of course, also related to this oil. One only has to consider what a devastating blow it could be to the West to allow such an enormous military and industrial resource to fall into control of enemy hands.

However, long before oil was involved and wholly apart from it, the geography of the Middle East has made it of vital significance to the security of the Free World. Here is the cross-roads of the world, the gateway to Africa, the back-door to Asia.

That is why this region has always been one of the great military prizes of history, fought over in innumerable wars.

A great prize worth fighting over is worth defending, too. And the issue we now directly face is: Which is it going to be, the United States or Russia, who is to be dominant "big power" in the Middle East, in our generation?

Call it power-politics if you will, but the United States does not dare let any possible *opponent* interfere seriously with our interests and policies in the Middle East; not until the world becomes far more peaceful than it yet is.

Isn't this reason enough to take a firm stand against Russia's aggressive activities in the area; where she is now testing our will, and will not stop until she is stopped either by our firmness or by our force?

We need make no apology before the tribunal of the world for taking such a position.

We have brought more resources to the peoples of the area, with which to advance their own progress, than they have ever had before.

We want peace in the area, instead of war, to continue doing so.

We would welcome the Russians there, if they come as *peaceful competitors* in the development of the area, whether politically, socially or economically. We have no fears of peaceful competition with the Russians on any front: in politics, in expansion of trade, in bringing social progress to under-developed areas. We believe in peaceful competition outside our borders as within them.

And there remains much to be done to reduce the indigenous poverty, now weighing so heavily on so many millions of people in the Middle East; a task for which the modern technologies of great nations are needed.

This is a far cry, however, from allowing the Russians to try by aggressive force, direct or indirect, to endanger or upset our own interests in the Middle East.

Our answer to them must be an unyielding, effective implemented insistence *on establishing peace in the area*; which they do not want, but is essential to our own interests, the Free World's, and to the peoples of the Middle East themselves.

Who and What Can Bring Peace to the Middle East?

20 years of Arab-Israel tensions have demonstrated that the mere cessation of hostilities and recurrent armistices do not lead to peace in the Middle East.

They have demonstrated that the conditions for peace are no different there than anywhere else in the world. There can be no peace until *the contending parties* agree to a peace.

Is this beyond achievement in the Middle East?

Only if the Arabs are to be treated as a unique people, susceptible to none of the rules of war or international law or economics.

It is true that Russian mischief-making hasn't made the task of getting a peace in the Middle East any easier. Badly defeated as they may have been in their initial efforts to move into the Middle East under Arab cover--derailed by the Israeli military defeat of the Arabs--the Russians accomplished (and continue to accomplish) one important thing in their favor.

The Arabs are now far more angry at the United States, and hostile to American interests, than they were before the current crisis began.

Russia insists on forcing the contrast between herself "as the great friend of the Arabs", and ourselves as the "opponent" of Arab dreams, illegal and immoral as these dreams may be.

This is a serious problem, not only in the interests of peace in the area, but in our own national interests. Yet it lessens in no

way our obligations to our own national interests to do everything in our power to rebuild stable, expanding, friendly relationships with the Arabs.

We must examine, therefore, the question of what *we* can do to help the Arabs most to strengthen their own national interests, and so help them to advance to the brilliant future within their reach.

It may be that at this time we can only do a minimum. But let us make sure what this minimum is.

How To Be A Friend

Can we, out of deepest friendship for the Arabs, try to do anything for them along the lines of what the Russians are now doing "as their friend"?

One might well ask: just how friendly were the Russians, in fact, to give so many planes and tanks to the Arabs? Events have shown this was no more a friendly act than handing over an automatic pistol to a child. Was it an action of friendship to lead the Arabs into the worst military humiliation of their history?

And is this any less true, whatever the Arabs themselves may think and say about it?

This poses the basic issue we face in dealing with the Arabs: Out of deepest friendship for them, how much should we guide American policies and actions in the Middle East in terms of what the Arabs *say* or what they actually *need*?

Given what the Arabs say, no one can suggest this is an easy choice—although it may not be nearly as difficult to resolve as some think, once we make up our minds to do what we *can* do about it.

In any event, what alternative do we have?

Can it help the Arabs in any way to continue to indulge them (as so much of the world does) in their refusals to face the facts of modern history, and the facts of their military defeats?

Are they to be the only people in the world to lose wars yet refuse peace; to seek protections from a neighbor yet not offer any; to interfere with basic rights of other nations and religions, yet not be called to account?

Beyond question, the Arabs are a great and ancient people. It is also true that, *as nations go*, they are still in their adolescence, having won their own sovereignty only a few decades ago.

It should not be altogether a surprise, under these conditions, that the Arabs, *as nations go*, are caught up in some of the paradoxes found so often in adolescence, everywhere:

Great dreams . . . without yet having the skills or resources to achieve them.

Great storms of emotion . . . when the outer world cannot conform itself to their demands.

Great sensitivities . . . which insistently turn their back on common-sense.

It is no way unfriendly to the Arabs to suggest that precisely such great dreams, emotions and sensitivities have colored the events in the Middle East for the past two decades.

And the issue we face, as friends of the Arabs, as well as in our own interests, is:

How can the Arabs best be helped from *continuing to hurt themselves and their future* by clinging to these unrealistic dreams, emotions and sensitivities?

The basic answer is suggested by what we know every responsible person does, when someone for whom we have love or friendship

—whether child, adolescent or adult—insists on behaving in defiance of reality.

We do not take at face-value what such a person is *saying*, for that defies reality, too. Instead, we act as gently—yet as firmly as possible—to bring the person back to reality; and we do so, essentially, *to keep him from hurting himself*.

Out of deepest friendship for the Arabs, isn't something like this now called for on our part?

Granted that the Arabs are emotionally refusing to face the great events of modern history; wherein many dozens of "new nations" (including themselves) have been created out of the holocausts of two great World Wars—one of these many new nations being their neighbor, Israel.

Granted also that the Arabs are insisting (with more passion than logic) that, if the United States is not *against* Israel, we must *therefore* be "their enemy."

What alternative do we have, or do the Arabs propose, to the reality that the *legal existence* of their neighbor, like their own, has been established, not by the United States, but by the world community, attested by common Arab-Israel membership in the United Nations?

Put another way:

What alternative do the Arabs propose to being either at war or at peace with their neighbor?

The relevance of this is demonstrated by recent events.

Egypt justified to the world community its closing of the Gulf of Akaba, to all ships destined for Israel, on the grounds of "being at war" with Israel.

Subsequently, Egypt and its friends appealed to the UN to condemn Israel "as the aggressor", for refusing to accept this and accepting the Arab challenge to war.

Setting aside all political passions and oratory . . .

What definition of war can be allowed in which *only one side* is to be permitted to engage in acts of war, by its own definition?

It is this issue of "war or peace" which suggests what the minimum goal of the United States should now be for the Middle East: as an act of friendship for the Arabs, not of enmity; to help them, not to hurt them.

Surely the time has come for the United States to insist firmly *with the Arabs*, out of genuine friendship for the Arabs, that they must accept the minimum requirement for ending wars in the Middle East.

This is to insist that the Arabs enter into peace-treaty discussions with Israel.

What else makes sense? What is the opposite of war, if not peace?

There are legitimate issues of contention between the Arabs and their neighbor. But these are "insurmountable" *only in a state of war*. They can readily be resolved, however, as the conditions for peace—even as far tougher issues between other belligerents have been resolved, in our time-life.

The tragedies of war can be stopped by only one thing.

That is peace.

And the conditions for peace in the Middle East have already been boldly and clearly called for by President Johnson, in his Five-Point Program. What the United States must do, now, is to *implement that program*.

There is no reason to think that an Arab-Israel peace conference is not practical and feasible, *if the United States really insists on it*; not only in words, but in our practical, realistic dealings with each of the Arab nations; in which every arm of the United

States government, and the private interests most concerned in the Middle East, fulfill with their actions the policy-goals of the United States.

"Partial firmness" cannot do the trick with the Arabs. But they are in the final analysis, dependent on the economics of the Western Powers for their own welfare; and if we make all our economic assistance to them dependent *on their acceptance of the "first step" to peace in the Middle East*—and mean it!—we can look forward to their taking this "first step", before very long.

Moreover, we can count on the support of our major¹ Western Allies in this; for such a "first step" of agreeing to discuss a peace-treaty *is* the minimum requirement for peace in the region.

Surely, if we can be firm with the *Russians* whenever our vital national interests require it; and if the United States could have acted so firmly to resolve the war between India and Pakistan not very long ago (with no less historic tensions on both sides), why should we not be as firm as we can be—which is a good deal—to resolve the state of war in the Middle East?

Moreover, who else will do it, if we don't?

It is true this calls for a new level of firmness with the Arabs than has been shown before.

We can see why, as hindsight puts a new interpretation on some of the events of the past 20 years.

Nobody in the world community made a strong issue of it, when Egypt closed the Suez Canal *only to Israel shipping*, "as an act of war" against its neighbor.

Nobody made a strong issue of it, when Jordan illegally barred the sacred places of Old Jerusalem *only to Jews* (and *Israeli* Christians and *Israeli* Moslems).

Could such hostile Arab acts conceivably lead to peace in the Middle East? We have seen they have not.

When the world community consented to overlook these hostile, illegal, immoral Arab actions, what other effect could this have had but *encourage* the Arabs, over the years, to feed on their dreams of destroying a member-nation of the UN?

And which is the greater act of friendship: To *encourage* the Arabs, directly or indirectly in their continuing hostilities? Or to be *firm* that they must accept the facts of modern history with everyone else, and accept their neighbor in *peace*?

Many have commented on the responsibilities of power.

This is an occasion for their use.

The United States must now play its full and unique part in getting the Arab nations, as friends not as opponents, to put an end to the state of belligerency in the Middle East; to choose *peace*, in their own interests, no less than in our interests, and the world's interest.

Israel

This analysis should not suggest to anyone that it makes out any special brief for Israel.

It doesn't.

The interests of the United States and Israel happen to coincide, at this time, because both nations, large and small, require a stabilized, enduring peace in the Middle East for their own national interests; even as the Arabs also need a time of peace to advance their own progress.

We have been trying to look at the facts as they are.

As we've said, Arab-Israel contentions in themselves make little real difference to the national interests of the United States.

It is *Russia* that makes the difference in the Middle East; converting the situation into a Russian vs. American confrontation of major, long-term consequences.

The best way the United States can now protect its vital national interests in the area is to achieve an end to the continuing state of belligerency between the Arabs and Israel; which not only plays directly into Russia's hands, but also gravely threatens the stability our economic interests require in the Middle East.

Furthermore, our basic friendship *for the Arabs* asks that we try hard and effectively to get them out of their 20-year cycle of illegal dreams and military defeats, which has diverted their best energies from advancing their own progress.

Devout as they are in their Moslem religion, the Arabs do not really want to become pawns of Russian Communism—but they need peace to keep them from doing so.

Thus, all issues join on the basic issue of achieving a stable, just, Arab-Israel peace in the Middle East.

None of this relates to any special commitment the United States has to Israel. In fact, we have no commitments to Israel which we do not also have to each of the Arab nations.

We have much to say to Israel directly about the contributions that country must make to stabilizing affairs in the Middle East.

There remain complex issues of settling borders, of a decent solution to the Palestinian Refugee problem, of an adequate machinery for handling grievances and insuring the peace, until it has firmly taken hold.

Yet, can the *minimum requirement* for even the beginnings of a lasting peace be any less than having the contending parties express their willingness to enter into peace-treaty discussions?

Israel has done this. What remains for us is to induce the Arabs to do so, also.

Unless the United States undertakes to do this—making it a firm condition of every help we can and want to give the Arabs—*who else will?* Which is another way of saying that only the United States can protect the interests of the United States in the Middle East.

In Sum . . .

We want and need peace in the Middle East.

Only the United States has both the reason and the power to insist that all parties must take the first steps toward actual peace.

This may call for a new level of firmness with the Arabs than we have yet tried, to induce them to participate in a peace-treaty; but what alternative do we, or they, have?

If we are not firm now, we face all the risks of still greater troubles in the Middle East, at far greater risks and costs to our national security and business interests.

Which, then, is better:

Firmness with the Russians and the Arab now; or having to defend by force, at some later date, what we could never afford to surrender?

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I. LONDON, *President*

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