

TS-HK-AR267

MEMORANDUM

NSA, DOS, NSS,  
reviews completed

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL ACTION

5607

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July 17, 1972

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C03323219

MEMORANDUM FOR: GENERAL HAIG

FROM: HAROLD H. SAUNDERS *HS*

SUBJECT: Status Report and Reflection on  
Sadat's Decision

Attached is a reflective memo for the President on (1) what we know today about Sadat's decision and (2) what prompted Sadat to move, A one-page summary is on top.

Gerry Livingston contributed the portion on Soviet reaction.

Recommendation: That you send the attached to the President as soon as possible.

*BE*

*Make your views  
in my name too.*

*HL*

*Res. did not see  
HAK did*

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MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

INFORMATION 5607

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MEMORANDUM FOR: THE PRESIDENT

FROM: HENRY A. KISSINGER

SUBJECT: Perspective on President Sadat's Decisions

Attached is a longer analysis of President Sadat's decisions on reducing the Soviet military presence in Egypt. The following are the highlights:

--There is a sharp difference between the official summary of Sadat's speech and the reactions of those who heard it. The summary is moderate in tone and reiterates the theme of Soviet-Egyptian friendship. The actual speech is described as a heated attack on the USSR.

--It is still not clear how many of the Soviet advisers will actually leave. "Instructors" seem to have been excepted, and Soviet operational units have not been mentioned. Sadat has called for consultations on future cooperation

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--Sadat's move seems to be a combination of (a) response to domestic frustration over his policies and lack of movement toward an Arab-Israeli settlement and (b) disillusionment at the dawning realization that the Soviets are not wholeheartedly supporting a military solution.

--There was no official Soviet reaction to Sadat's moves until a TASS announcement of July 19 which seemed an attempt to minimize the damage: "Now the Soviet personnel in the Arab Republic of Egypt has completed its functions. With the awareness of this, after the exchange of opinions, the sides deemed it expedient to bring back to the Soviet Union the military personnel that had been sent to Egypt for a limited period. This personnel will return shortly to the USSR."

[Redacted]

that Sadat acted mainly,

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to ease internal pressure and to press the Soviets to change their attitude on the need for a Mid-East solution which he considered too relaxed following the US-USSR summit. Sadat is not expelling the Soviet strategic presence, and the Soviets will turn the other cheek and try to minimize the damage.

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MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

INFORMATION

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MEMORANDUM FOR: THE PRESIDENT  
FROM: HENRY A. KISSINGER *HK*  
SUBJECT: The Situation in Cairo--Background  
on the Reduction of Soviet Military  
Advisers

The purpose of this memorandum is to review what we now know about President Sadat's decisions and to put them in the context of recent Egyptian thinking about the Egyptian-Soviet relationship.

President Sadat's Decisions

One important point to be made at the outset is that there is a sharp difference between the tone of the official Middle East News Agency summary of Sadat's statement and the tone of the speech described by sources who hear it. The tone of the summary is moderate and dominated with the theme of Soviet-Egyptian friendship. Those who heard the speech have apparently characterized it as a heated attack on the USSR for holding back on arms deliveries and for pursuing an "unacceptable" policy of "no war, no peace" in the Middle East. The disparity supports the argument that Sadat is trying to use this move in one way domestically and in another internationally.

Following are the three decisions that President Sadat announced Tuesday along with comment about their possible meaning:

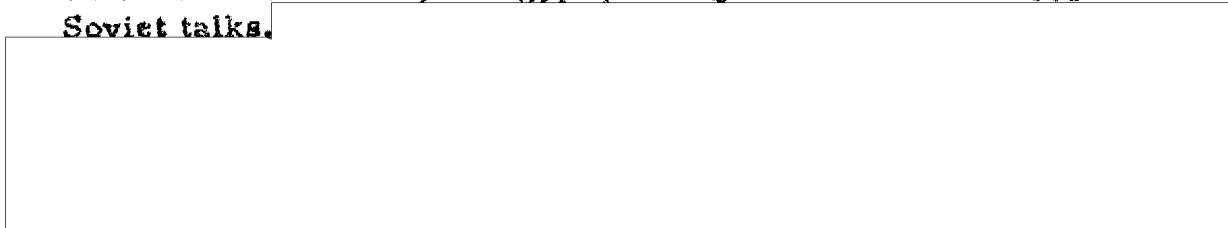
1. Sadat said that the mission of Soviet military advisers and experts in Egypt is terminated as of July 17. It remains unclear just exactly how many of the 15,000 Soviet military personnel in Egypt will be affected. The authoritative Al-Ahram this morning says that the termination of advisers does not affect Soviet personnel involved in training Egyptians. Since training is one of the missions of the operational Soviet air units in Egypt, it is possible that the 10,000 or so military personnel in

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those units could stay in Egypt pending the outcome of Egyptian-Soviet talks.



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2. Sadat said that military installations and equipment set up in Egypt since 1967 are to be the exclusive property of Egypt and under the administration of Egyptian armed forces. This provision probably reflects resentment that there have been areas at the installations where Soviet units are stationed that have been off limits to Egyptians. At one extreme, this statement could mean that the Egyptians were "nationalizing" these areas and the equipment on them. At a lesser level, of course, it could simply mean that the trappings of Egyptian sovereignty and Egyptian access to these areas would be made more apparent.

3. Sadat said that an Egyptian-Soviet meeting under the provisions of the friendship treaty will be held at a level to be agreed upon for consultations on a more effective method of cooperation for the future. This would seem to suggest that, while some of the more peripheral advisers may leave, the future of the overall Soviet presence remains subject to negotiation.

These decisions were prefaced in the official summary by a moderate statement spelling out the evolution of Egyptian-Soviet friendship and the points on which Egyptians and Soviets had differed within the context of that friendship. Based on that summary, the principal points of difference with the Soviets identified by Sadat seem to have been these three:

1. He identified a general difference in perspective, noting that such differences are natural. He said at one point that the Soviet Union is a big state which has a world role which Egypt cannot ignore. While Sadat seemed relaxed about this point early in his statement, later it seems to have become a possible point of irritation. He notes that the decisions announced yesterday were made

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after Egypt had received the Soviet explanation about the US-USSR summit talks. He probably fears those summit talks will lead to a US-Soviet understanding to freeze the Middle East situation. One point the US-USSR summit may have brought home to Sadat is that the Soviets will not support a military solution.

2. Sadat notes on several occasions differences over the kind of armament and the timing of arms deliveries. He also says that he rejected repeatedly any restrictions being placed on the use of arms by Egypt. This would seem to refer to the often mentioned Egyptian frustration at not being able to get as much advanced weaponry as it wants. More important, however, it may well refer to the possible fact that the presence of Soviet advisers with Egyptian units could serve as a Soviet brake on Egyptian offensive movements. Sadat even says that Soviet failure to deliver specific types of weapons on the timetable which he had laid down were responsible for his inability to make 1971 a "year of decision."

3. At a much lower level of importance, he notes that the Sudanese incidents in July 1971 -- revelation of Soviet support for a coup against the Sudanese President -- had temporarily affected Egyptian-Soviet relations. Sadat says that he did succeed in smoothing over these differences, but the allusion has broader connotations since it would refer to differences between the Soviet desire to use Egypt for expanding Soviet influence in the Middle East and the desire of other Arabs like the Libyans, Syrians and Saudis to see Soviet influence restricted.

It should be mentioned that, apart from the references to the US-USSR summit, Sadat apparently took only one passing swipe at US support for Israeli obstinacy -- at least according to the official summary.

Sadat closed with a reiteration that these actions will not postpone the battle with Israel. He said that he had never intended that the Soviet advisers be used in that battle. He affirmed that he does not seek a confrontation between the Soviet Union and the United States.

#### The Background of Sadat's Decision

To put these decisions in context, it is worth noting the following elements in Egyptian thinking over the last few months:

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1. It has been apparent in the last two months that the Egyptians have resigned themselves to the fact that there will be little diplomatic movement on the Arab-Israeli problem this year because of the US elections. This resignation began to appear as early as your trip to Peking and followed through your Moscow trip. In June, they quietly turned aside the invitation Secretary Rogers has had on the table since February to join in "proximity" talks with Israel on an interim settlement at this time, in a mood of depression over unfulfilled US promises of last year and resignation that the US won't pressure Israel before November.

2. Despite this apparently rational calculation, Sadat has faced the dilemma of how to avoid allowing inaction to produce a permanent freeze on the situation. This has been both a policy and a political problem for him. Frustration over the lack of movement on the Arab-Israeli issue has been high in Cairo, and some of this constitutes a judgment on Sadat's policy. Egyptians have a natural proclivity for finding scapegoats, and Sadat was a prime candidate. The criticism on lack of movement came from three corners: (a) There has been criticism from the military either for his not having got the equipment from the USSR that would make it possible to fight Israel effectively or because they resent excessive Soviet presence in their units. (b) There has long been division among Egyptian civilian leaders about the Egyptian relationship with the USSR. (c) There has been student criticism of Sadat's policies.

3. It has been convenient for Sadat to blame the US and the USSR for this lack of movement. He has previously made very strong public statements on how the US misled him and let him down last year. This week he blamed the Soviet Union for lack of movement. Sadat said that the arms he had requested did not arrive in time in 1971 to take decisive action. Then other developments such as the South Asian war and the US-USSR summit further preoccupied the Soviets. He also implied that the Soviets have tried to place limitations on the arms that they have supplied and have not provided all the arms requested.

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4. The US-USSR summit confirmed the sense that nothing was going to happen this year, and brought to a head criticism of the Soviet role that had been going on in Cairo even before the summit. Heykal, the influential editor of Al-Ahram who favored talks with the US last summer on an interim settlement, began a series of public debates about the Soviet-Egyptian relationship in April. Essentially, his editorials concluded that the Soviet Union is the chief beneficiary of the "no war, no peace" situation and that the Soviets maintain their presence in Egypt while the Arabs become increasingly dependent on Moscow and the gap between the US and the Arabs widens. Apart from this public debate, there have also been reports that Sadat has been presented with petitions from elements within the Egyptian establishment demanding a rolling back of Soviet influence. In other words, part of the criticism of Sadat is concern that his policy of dependence on the Soviet Union would produce no more than a freeze of the Middle East situation.

5. It is also worth noting that a gesture toward rolling back the Soviets would please a number of Egypt's important friends. Qadhafi, King Faisal and Syrian President Assad have persistently resisted too close involvement with the Soviets. While these relationships by themselves might not sway Sadat's decisions, a good deal of the support for his economy -- which is in bad shape -- comes from Libya and Saudi Arabia.

In sum, it would seem that the decisions announced yesterday were a combination of the following factors: (a) the necessity to respond politically to internal frustrations; (b) the necessity to keep, and show himself keeping, the Middle East from becoming completely frozen in this year of indecision; (c) the desirability of seeking greater Soviet support for offensive action next year; (d) the opportunity in taking these steps to offer an enticement to the US by showing that he could cut back on the Soviet relationship.

Israeli Analysis

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Soviet Reaction

There was no official Soviet reaction to Sadat's moves until a TASS announcement of July 19 which turned the other cheek and appeared to be an attempt to minimize the damage. The announcement stated that the Soviet Union had temporarily stationed Soviet military personnel in Egypt at the request of the Egyptians to help ensure Egypt's defense potential in the face of Israeli aggression. Both sides many times expressed their satisfaction with the effectiveness of such measures. "Now the Soviet personnel in the Arab Republic of Egypt has completed its functions. With the awareness of this, after the exchange of opinions, the sides deemed it expedient to bring back to the Soviet Union the military personnel that had been sent to Egypt for a limited period. This personnel will return shortly to the USSR."

It is hard to believe that the Soviets could have anticipated the abruptness and sharpness of Sadat's actions, even though there have been many Soviet-Egyptian frictions over Moscow's military presence and assistance during the last few months. The business-as-usual TASS announcement would indicate that the Soviets are probably considering how they can best attempt to repair the damage without appearing to the world to have suffered a serious blow to their prestige. This would seem to suggest responding positively to Sadat's call for consultations. They may try to use these consultations as a way to tie the Egyptians up in negotiations on the specifics of the withdrawal, hoping in this way to preserve the most essential aspects of their current presence in the end.

Outside of Egypt itself, the Soviets may weight the advantages of reinforcing their Mediterranean fleet, showing their flag as a way of demonstrating that Sadat's decision will not keep them from continuing to play a decisive role in the area. Perhaps, too, they will now direct more political attention to the Persian Gulf states, so as to strengthen their other footholds in the Arab world.

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Irrespective of how Moscow finally reacts, Sadat's decision is a rebuff to Brezhnev, who has backed the forward policy in the Mid-East. Had he not a string of successes; notably the Summit with the United States and the treaties with West Germany, to his credit, this setback might damage his power position. Unless Sadat's action leads to a further rollback of Soviet influence elsewhere in the Mid-East, however, this does not now seem likely.

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