

# Secret Reports on Russia in Mideast



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THE STORY is now leaking out of the strained, secret diplomacy that followed the outbreak of hostilities in the Middle East.

In one secret report, the Central Intelligence Agency suggests that the Russians actually orchestrated the Arab attack. It was part of a desperate maneuver, the CIA quotes an informed source as saying, to hang on to their beachhead in the Middle East.

Before the attack, Egypt had thrown out Soviet military advisers, tightened its ties with Saudi Arabia and shifted toward the West. Even in Syria, which had been the most Moscow-minded of the Arab powers, the Russians had encountered growing hostility.

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OTHER intelligence reports raise doubts about the precise Soviet role in planning the surprise attack. But the Kremlin clearly had advance knowledge that it was coming.

It has also been established that Soviet military shipments, both by air through Yugoslavia and by water through the Black Sea, started on their way before the guns began booming.

Immediately after the outbreak, President Nixon appealed to Soviet party chief Leonid Brezhnev for restraint. Both the superpowers, urged the President, should keep hands off the Middle East war.

Brezhnev argued that the Arabs had the right to recapture their lost lands and,

therefore, that the Russians couldn't withhold military supplies. Mr. Nixon responded that the United States was equally justified in helping Israel repel armed aggression.

Secretary of State Henry Kissinger stressed to Soviet Ambassador Anatony Dobrynin that the United States was quite capable of matching Soviet shipments and maintaining the military supply balance in the Middle East.

For four days, the United States held back military shipments to Israel while Kissinger tried to persuade the Russians to exercise similar restraint. However, the Soviet tonnage not only began to pour into Egypt and Syria, but the Russians also beefed up their naval strength in the Mediterranean.

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IN RESPONSE, the United States used its superior airlift capacity to catch up with the Soviet shipments.

Intelligence reports claim, meanwhile, that the cautious Egyptian commanders wanted to consolidate their hold on the Suez Canal's east bank but were goaded by the Russians to expand the offensive.

When the Israelis outmaneuvered the Egyptians by moving across the Suez and cutting the Egyptian supply lines, the Kremlin began showing signs of panic. Another Arab humiliation could backfire on the Russians, whose role in the debacle could bring them more blame than praise from Arab leaders.