

Soviet Role in Mideast War Assayed

By Jack Anderson

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 Soviets 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 Soviets had encountered growing hostility.

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 ap-

pealed 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 Soviets couldn't withhold military supplies. Nixon responded that the United States was equally justified in helping Israel repel armed aggression.

Secretary of State Henry Kissinger stressed to Soviet Ambassador Anatoly 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.

In response, the United States used its superior airlift capacity to catch up with the Soviet shipments. This apparently surprised the Soviet strategists, who had thought

the United States wouldn't risk an oil cutoff to support the embattled Israelis.

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. Brezhnev also brought personal pressure, according to one report, on Jordan's King Hussein, Morocco's King Hassan and Tunisia's President Habib Bourguiba to join in the fighting.

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

Suddenly, Brezhnev sent President Nixon an urgent message requesting that Kissinger come to Moscow at once to negotiate a cease-fire. Then the Soviets, in their haste to end the fighting, wanted to rush in a joint Soviet-American force to police the cease-fire.

President Nixon rejected the idea of direct superpower involvement in the Middle East. The Soviets apparently mistook this as a delaying tactic

and sent a bristling note to the President, threatening to send its own troops to the Middle East to keep the peace. The President reacted by placing the U.S. armed forces on a military alert. Then both of the big powers wisely backed away from a confrontation.

Grizzly Report—A secret Interior Department study warns that the nation's grizzly bear population is in danger of extinction because their food supply has been suddenly closed down.

In Yellowstone National Park, the last major stronghold of the big beasts, the grizzlies have fed for years on campers' garbage. Six years ago, a study urged that the dumps be closed gradually so the bears could return to their old eating habits in the wild.

Instead, the National Park Service has shut down the dumps abruptly, thus driving the panicky bears into campsites and off-park lands, where they have been shot.

The new secret study, done by Interior consultants, warns: "The grizzly bear population in Yellowstone Park and surrounding areas has declined rapidly and will continue to do so if conditions remain unaltered."

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