

July 18, 1972

**Report from the Yugoslav Embassy in Cairo
following the Soviet Union's removal of experts from
Egypt**

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Summary:

Report from the Yugoslav Embassy in Cairo on the situation in Egypt following the Soviet Union's withdrawal of experts and end to aid projects. Included are an Egyptian diplomat's explanation of the reasons for the change in relations and how this development affects the plans for resolution of the crisis in the Middle East.

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very urgent

Turdiev, first secretary of the USSR Embassy (translated the Sadat-Vinogradov conversation), among other things, told Vukov at his initiative:

All Soviet military experts in Egypt stopped their work yesterday (July 17).

Preparations are being made for their successive withdrawal to the USSR. The dates have not yet been fixed, but all of them will return "in the shortest time possible." In announcing this decision to Vinogradov, Sadat said that it is "irrevocable and definitive" and in the interest of developing friendly USSR-UAR relations. He added that it was the result of a "very long and deep thinking" and that it was necessary because the presence of Soviet experts among the members of the Egyptian army created constant frictions and conflicts, which was a source of major problems domestically. He also stressed that the decision was made easy by the "very good work of Soviet experts" who managed to train Egyptians in handling modern technology, as well as by the fact that many Egyptian officers finished top Soviet military schools "and know the same thing that your (Soviet) experts know."

This was the main reason for [Aziz] Sedky's visit to Moscow, who Sadat chose as the most suitable person to explain to Soviet leaders the reasons for making such decisions. In Moscow, Sedky was told that the USSR, respecting Egypt's independence and sovereignty, did not want to cause any obstructions to its implementation "because experts are needed at home too," but at the same time warned that any new talks on Egypt's renewed requests for sending Soviet experts would be conducted "differently and will last much longer." Sedky persistently repeated Sadat's instructions that the decision was definitive and that the UAR is aware of its consequences. Acknowledging the president Sadat's right to make fateful decisions for his country, Brezhnev stressed that the USSR would continue to provide all needed military and economic aid to Egypt in its confrontation with Israel, as well as in the area of further development of Egypt and its "still ongoing revolution."

The Soviets, according to the interlocutor, think that the decision on the one hand is Sadat's concession to the right forces in the country, and on the other, a concession to Nixon for a promise to secure the start of a concrete solution to the ME crisis after the election. Nixon's message to Sadat was delivered by Saudi Arabia's defense minister, who was visiting Egypt after returning from the US.

In the message, as Turdiev says, Nixon, among other things, urged Sadat to refrain from "canal skirmishes" at all costs. They also think that the main author of the "entire operation" - the "sick vice president" (Dr. Fawzi) and a smaller group of right-wing Sadat's associates. And the premier Sedky was informed about it shortly before he left for Moscow, while the other ministers - members of the delegation ([Mohammed Abdullah] Marzeban, [Murad] Ghaleb, et al.) learned about it "practically in Moscow." The delegation's imposing composition and economic experts were "just a screen" to "cover the essence of Sedky's negotiations." No other talks have been conducted (economic talks will be held later in Cairo).

The USSR, Turdiev says, expects "substantial realignments" in the Arab world after the decision was announced. The two main groups will be formed again, "but now the UAR will be aligned with pro-Western Arab countries." In that context they do not exclude the "very soon" restoration of Washington-Cairo diplomatic relations (the interlocutor points to the fact that American representative [Joseph] Green has visited Egypt's highest senior officials three times recently), the rapprochement in Cairo-Khartoum relations, but at the same time the "dissipation" of the confederation of Arab republics.

Syrian president Assad, who found out about the decision after his arrival from the USSR in Cairo, "pulled his hair out" and urged Sadat to reconsider his position. Namely, Syria will be brought back into isolation because it cannot agree with the Egyptians' orientation in searching a solution to the ME crisis, and the negotiations - "which the Egyptians have clearly oriented themselves to" - will not be accepted by Gaddafi either. In addition to that, in the Libyan Revolutionary Council, many are already against reuniting too quickly with and approaching to Cairo. The Egyptians'

latest moves and concessions will be the additional reason for cooling Libyan-Egyptian relations and cooperation.

As for Jarring, the Soviets think that he should only "fill the void until the American elections" when the new Nixon administration would approach to organizing Egyptian-Israeli negotiations ("it doesn't matter where, in what form, etc. because the Egyptians will accept anything"). The idea of continuing the Jarring mission is English and it represents a compromise, i.e., substitute for the idea of Waldheim's direct engagement of intermediaries (the US refused because they did not want to elevate it to that level), who wanted to organize a meeting of all SC members to that end.

The Soviets also agreed to the continuation of the Jarring mission, although they think that concrete resolution would begin next year with Egyptian-Israeli contacts and negotiations on partial solutions "which can take even ten years or so." For president Sadat it is important to accomplish "at least something" on the plan of resolving the ME crisis (for example, partial withdrawal from the Sinai), so he can justify his course and pro-Western policy, as well as the latest decision in relation to the USSR "who is the main culprit for not making progress so far in resolving the ME crisis, because it would not send the necessary weapons."

According to information from "Energoinvest" representatives, Soviet civilian experts working on the construction Helwan steelworks, did not come to work today but, according to our experts working on the same construction site, are preparing to return home.

Our reports follow.

Janevski