FINAL DECISION ON SG 255/2
A Report by the Intelligence Committee
on
THE THREAT TO NATO'S SOUTHERN FLANK ARISING FROM
SOVIET MILITARY PENETRATION OF THE MIDDLE EAST

1. The Standing Group has approved SG 255/2.

2. The purpose of this report is to provide:
   a. Major NATO Commands with guidance;
   b. All Military Representatives with information;
   c. Standing Group Representative with information for
      the North Atlantic Council.

3. SG 255/2 supersedes SG 255/1(Revised) and should be
   revised as and when events of significance occur in the Middle
   East.

FOR THE STANDING GROUP:

EUGENE A. SALET
Colonel, U.S. Army
Secretary

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A REPORT BY THE INTELLIGENCE COMMITTEE
to the
STANDING GROUP
on
THE THREAT TO NATO'S SOUTHERN FLANK ARISING FROM SOVIET MILITARY PENETRATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST*

INTRODUCTION

1. This study is made up of three parts, as follows:
   Part I - Nature of Soviet Military Penetration
   Part II - Extent of Soviet Military Penetration in UAR and Yemen
   Part III - Threat to NATO

2. This study does not consider the military implications of further possible Soviet penetration as the result of events in the Middle East after early July 58. Such implications, if pertinent, will be included in the next revision of this document.

* For purposes of this study, the Middle East is taken to include Syria, Egypt, Iraq, Iran, Lebanon, Yemen, Jordan, Israel, and Saudi Arabia.
PART I

NATURE OF SOVIET MILITARY PENETRATION

Soviet Aims in Middle East

3. Immediate
   a. To decrease Western influence and prestige in the area.
   b. To promote the concept of neutralism among the Middle Eastern nations.
   c. To weaken the unity of Western-sponsored defense alliances in the area.

4. Long Range
   a. To eliminate all Western bases in the area.
   b. To deny Middle Eastern oil to the West.
   c. To attain a dominant position of influence in the Middle East.
   d. To make possible further Soviet penetration in Africa.

PART II

EXTENT OF SOVIET MILITARY PENETRATION IN THE UNITED ARAB REPUBLIC AND IN YEMEN

A. General

5. In the Middle East it is difficult to separate the study of Soviet military and economic penetration from the study of the political penetration by means of subversion, which normally accompanies these other forms of penetration.

B. Military Aid in Equipment

6. To date, in the Middle East, only the United Arab Republic (UAR) (Egypt and Syria) and Yemen have accepted large-scale economic and military Soviet Bloc aid. Since 1955, Egypt has accepted approximately $250-300 million of Bloc military credit. Syria has accepted about $145 million and Yemen has
accepted over $10 million. Deliveries under these credit arrangements have now been almost completed. Equipment delivered includes various types of armor, artillery, piston and jet aircraft, submarines and other naval vessels, and a wide variety of small arms and ammunition. (See Enclosure on arms delivered.)

7. In addition, the Bloc has helped finance the construction of naval and air facilities, ports and harbors, and military maintenance facilities.

C. Aid in Training and Indoctrination

8. Bloc aid to the UAR in military training and indoctrination has been extensive. Over 700 Soviet Bloc military specialists were in these countries for one month or more during 1957 in addition to substantial numbers of civilian technicians engaged in projects of military significance. The military specialists provide training in the use and maintenance of a wide variety of armaments, ranging from light machine guns to late-model jet aircraft. Soviet officers are also advising the Armed Forces at the senior military level.

9. Almost 500 Soviet Bloc military specialists have been sent to Egypt. Of these it is estimated that about 150-200 were naval personnel, some of whom are supervising training on destroyers and submarines. About 125 Soviet military personnel were attached to the Egyptian Air Force in various training programs. There have been reports which indicate that the numbers of Bloc personnel in Egypt may be undergoing some reduction.

10. In Syria over 200 Bloc military specialists have been involved in military construction and training. In 1957, about
50 Soviet officers were assisting in the modernization of the Syrian Army. Egyptian military personnel are now believed to be replacing many of the Bloc advisors.

11. About 50 Bloc military technicians have been sent to Yemen to advise in the familiarization and tactical use of Soviet Bloc military equipment.

12. Large numbers of Egyptians and some Syrians have been sent to various Bloc countries for military training. Of the UAR military trainees now in the Bloc countries, a large proportion are undergoing flight training. To date, about 300 Egyptian naval personnel have received training in the Bloc, including training in submarines.

D. Dependence Upon Bloc

13. Increased use of Soviet military, industrial and agricultural equipment will result in greater dependence upon the Bloc for supplies, repair and maintenance, and technical assistance. Acceptance of economic and military aid also has had an effect upon the patterns of trade of these countries. More and more, UAR and Yemen exports are being directed toward the Bloc countries. If such trade patterns become fixed, they would give the Bloc countries considerable leverage over the economies of the UAR and Yemen.

E. Bases

14. Naval. There are numerous port facilities in the UAR and Yemen which could base the small surface units making up the bulk of the UAR naval forces. Existing and potential submarine bases include the following:

a. Mediterranean Egypt. In addition to Alexandria, which normally bases destroyers and submarines, potential base locations on the Mediterranean are: Abu Qir Bay, about 15 miles northeast of Alexandria; Matruh, 135 miles west of Alexandria; and Port Said. Reports of plans for
constructing additional naval facilities at Abu Qir Bay have been received; however, patrol craft are the largest naval units using the bay to date. Facilities at Matruh are meager and considerable development would be required to support submarines. Naval surface units now use existing commercial facilities at Port Said, and these could also be used by submarines.

b. Red Sea. The Egyptian Navy has a base at Adabiya in the Port of Suez, which could easily accommodate submarines. Other potential submarine bases are:

(1) Port Safaga, a secondary commercial port,
(2) Hurghada, where Soviet Bloc ships have been observed discharging construction material and which, at present, is only equipped to provide base support for MTB's, and
(3) the minor port at Quseir, about 40 miles south of Port Safaga.

c. Syria. Latakia, where major improvements have recently been made, has adequate facilities to handle submarines at any time the UAR chooses to base them there. Al Mina al Bayda, a small naval base about six miles north of Latakia, is nearing completion. While designed as the primary Syrian naval base, it is not yet known whether Al Mina al Bayda can accommodate submarines.

d. Yemen. Possible bases would probably be limited to the small ports of:

(1) Salif, which has limited landing facilities, but the best natural harbor,
(2) Al Hudaydah, which has negligible landing facilities and an unprotected anchorage,
(3) Mocha, which has a quayed breakwater for coasters although its harbor is little more than an open roadstead, and

(4) Ras el Khatib, 8 kms north of Al Hudaydah, where there is possible deep water harbor construction.

In summary, it is believed that Alexandria will continue as the main submarine base on the Mediterranean coast of Egypt. This base might be supplemented by Latakia or Al Mina al Bayda in Syria. In the Red Sea, Adabiya naval base at the Port of Suez may be supplemented by Port Safaga (near the Straits of Jubal and Tiran) and Salif (at the southern end of the Red Sea). It would also be possible for USSR submarines to use any of these bases for logistic support in peacetime in cooperation with the UAR.

15. Air

a. Egypt.

(1) The Egyptian airfield system has undergone considerable development since the Soviet loan agreement was signed. At the present time, major emphasis is on construction of new runways. Egypt now has three airfields believed capable of supporting medium jet bombers, five capable of supporting light jet bombers, plus five additional ones under priority construction, and ten airfields capable of supporting jet fighters.

b. Syria.

(1) Airfield construction in Syria is being carried out under Soviet Bloc supervision. The completion of the new jet airbase at Dumayr is a priority project. An apparent effort is also underway to increase fuel storage facilities
at the main airfields and to provide fuel storage installations at other strategic points.

(2) Syria now has three airfields believed capable of supporting light and possibly medium jet bomber operations, and two, capable of supporting jet fighters. It is believed that Syrian Air Force plans include construction of another jet airbase which will be of the same Soviet design as the new Dumayr airbase.

c. Yemen.

(1) Of the 17 known landing areas in Yemen, only one (Hudaydah) could possibly support jet fighters in an emergency. Although some of the landing strips are of sufficient length for C-47 use, the airfield system in general is limited to small propeller-driven aircraft because of high airfield elevations.

(2) It is believed that any projected airfield development for jet aircraft operations will, without outside assistance, be slow in materializing.

PART III

THREAT TO NATO

A. POL

16. During the past three years, Soviet influence over Egyptian/Syrian affairs has increased significantly. A continuation of this trend would constitute an increasing threat to NATO's Middle Eastern oil.
17. Seventy-two percent of Europe's oil supply comes from the Middle East. The Suez Canal and all pipelines to the Mediterranean can be interdicted by the UAR. However, such action would result in a substantial loss of UAR revenue but more importantly it would lead to a serious international situation over which the UAR could exercise little, if any, control. Therefore, the UAR would certainly first consider measures short of interdiction, such as:

a. increasing Suez Canal tolls and/or restricting the currencies in which they can be paid,
b. nationalizing the pipe-lines and/or increasing transit dues.

These measures could add considerably to the economic burden on Western Europe arising from imports of Middle East oil, but the UAR would probably reckon fairly low the danger of vigorous Western reactions to them. Nevertheless, if subjected to great provocation or pressure, the UAR might use its control over the Canal and pipe-lines to stop the movement of this oil.

B. Military Threat, Ground, Naval, and Air

18. Although the Soviet military activities in the UAR and Yemen do not in themselves constitute a threat to NATO at this time, a potential threat does exist. The construction of installations, including port facilities, in the UAR for the operation and maintenance of Soviet-made armament creates facilities in those countries which could be utilized by the Soviet forces in case of general war as advanced bases of operations.
ENCLOSURE

ESTIMATED SOVIET BLOC
DELIVERIES OF MILITARY EQUIPMENT
TO EGYPT, SYRIA, YEMEN

GROUND FORCES

EGYPT

Armor
T-34 150-250
JS-3 40-60
Rocket launchers and Recoilless Guns 40-50
Artillery and Mortars
Self-propelled Guns 70-100
AA and Anti-tank 200-500
Other 75-150
Armored Cars and Armored Personnel Carriers 150-300

SYRIA

Armor
T-34 200-250
Rocket launchers and Recoilless Guns 30-50
Artillery and Mortars
SP Guns 55-100
AA and AT 140-200
Other 200-300
Armored Cars and Armored Personnel Carriers 200-250

YEMEN

Armor
T-34 30-60
Rocket launchers and Recoilless Guns 10 or less
Artillery and Mortars
SP Guns 20-50
AA and AT 150-265

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<td>Armored Cars and Armored Personnel Carriers</td>
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<th>NAVAL FORCES</th>
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<td>EGYPT</td>
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<tr>
<td>Destroyers (SKORYY Class)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Submarines - Long-Range (&quot;V&quot; Class)</td>
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<td>Submarines - Short-Range (M-V Class)</td>
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<td>Mine Sweepers (T-43)</td>
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<td>Motor Torpedo Boats (P-6)</td>
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In addition to the above, Egypt received unknown quantities of ammunition, mines, torpedoes, and depth charges, and reportedly, a 5-year supply of spare parts for all equipment furnished.

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<td>EGYPT</td>
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<td>Jet Fighters</td>
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In addition to the combat aircraft shown above, the Soviet Bloc has provided trainer and transport aircraft, helicopters, communications, and other support materiel. Early warning equipment has been provided to Egypt and Syria.