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U.S. Foreign Policy Decision-Making During the 1973 Arab/Israel Conflict: Its Impact on Soviet-Egyptian Foreign Policy Relations

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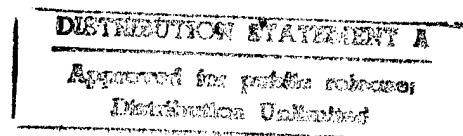
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

DISCLAIMER	ii
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	iii
BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH	iv
<i>Chapter</i>	
I. INTRODUCTION: THE LONG WINDING ROAD TO PEACE	1
The Setting	3
II. SOVIET FOREIGN POLICY IN THE MIDDLE EAST	6
The Door is Opened.....	6
Foreign Policy Difficulties.....	9
III. THE SOVIET EXPULSION FROM EGYPT	16
Sadat's Discontent.....	16
IV. THE NIXON ADMINISTRATION.....	19
The Nixon-Kissinger Team--A Recipe for Success	20
V. SIZING UP THE SITUATION	23
The U.S. Walks a Diplomatic Tightrope.....	23
VI. U.S. ALTERNATIVES/OPTIONS.....	27
Discarded Options	27
U.S. Resolves Solidifies	30
VII. EPILOGUE.....	33
Decreased Soviet Influence--A U.S. Foreign Policy Victory	34
BIBLIOGRAPHY	37
GLOSSARY.....	40

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

TITLE: U.S. Foreign Policy Decision-Making During the 1973 Arab/Israel Conflict: Its Impact on Soviet-Egyptian Foreign Policy Relations

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The historic confrontation between Israel and neighboring Arab countries since Israel's birth in 1947 is well known. However, it was the October 1973 war that provided U.S. foreign policy makers an opportunity to improve upon lukewarm (at best) U.S.-Arab relations in the Middle East. The actors involved and the volatility of the situation necessitated strong, competent leadership and a visionary decision-making capability. The courses of action chosen by President Nixon and Secretary of State Kissinger during those tenuous weeks of conflict would play an integral role in the gradual erosion of Soviet-Egyptian relations and, also impact the Soviet's overall influence in the Middle East, while bolstering U.S. influence in the region. These U.S. foreign policy decisions coupled with a stormy Soviet-Egyptian relationship, set the stage for Egyptian President Sadat's decision to allow the U.S. to act as sole mediator for resolution of the crisis--an action that dealt a severe blow to the USSR and its foreign policy plans in the Middle East.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Lt. Colonel William D. Wesselman (M.A., Webster University) has had a multitude of assignments since entering the Air Force in 1976. He served as an instructor and standardization/evaluation Titan Missile Launch Officer, a B-52 aircraft and flight commander, and just prior to attending Air War College, completed his tour as the commander of the 11th Air Refueling Squadron (KC-135R). Other assignments include executive officer to the 47th Air Division Commander, Chief of Strategic Aircraft Future Systems Branch at the Strategic Air Command (SAC) Headquarters where he was responsible for developing concepts of operation using classified technology as future weapons; and, a member of the Strategy, Policy and Doctrine Branch also at SAC where he formulated the headquarters' policy for effective integration of national security policy, military strategy and force structure planning.

He is a graduate of Squadron Officers School and Air Command and Staff College. Lt Colonel Wesselman is a graduate of the Air War College, class of 1995.

Chapter I

INTRODUCTION: THE LONG WINDING ROAD TO PEACE

'Frank and Explicit'-that is the right line to take when you wish to conceal your mind and to confuse the minds of others.

Benjamin Disraeli
Sybil Bk. vi, ch.1

October 17, 1994 may long be remembered as one of the most significant developments in Middle East history. With millions as their audience, thanks to the advances of television (CSPAN/CNN) and technology, and the desert as a backdrop, Jordan's King Hussein and Israeli Prime Minister Rabin met along the Israeli-Jordanian border to formally announce and sign a peace treaty between the two nations. Not since 1979, when Egypt and Israel signed the first ever Arab/Israel peace agreement, has any Arab nation taken such a monumental step towards Arab/Israeli reconciliation. This event "clear[ed] the way for regular diplomatic relations, enhanced commerce and easier travel after 46 years of veering between warfare and uneasy coexistence."¹ The agreement between the two begins what most nations prayerfully trust will be a prelude to lasting peace in the volatile Middle East region.

This historic occasion was preceded only 13 months before by one just as important to peace in the region. On September 13, 1993, Israel and the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) apparently resolved their historic differences or at least were willing to place those events behind them and work towards an equitable, peaceful solution for both sides. The hate/hate relationship which existed between the two for over four decades² is at last displaying signs of dissolving. Initiatives by each side coupled with the willingness to shelve past differences seem to have enhanced the chances for peace in the region. Middle Eastern experts point to the election

of the Labor party in Israel, while others suggest the demise of the Soviet Union, coupled with their deteriorating influence in the region and the resulting loss of monetary funding for the PLO and Arafat, as key reasons for the warming of relations between the two. Regardless of the explanation one attaches to this monumental event, the fact remains both parties have joined in the "search for a tolerable formula for coexistence between their two peoples within the same small land west of the river Jordan."³

The magnitude of these two occurrences are no less than remarkable when one realizes that "[s]ince the end of World War II no region of the world has received more attention and debate, or has experienced more conflict than the Middle East."⁴ What makes the 13 September '93 and 17 October '94 occasions different from prior Middle East peace settlements are the root issues being addressed and agreed to. Not only has Israel recognized the Palestinians' right to exist as a *self-governing* homeland (notice the intentional absence of the word "state"), but it also agreed to relinquish parts of the West Bank for future Palestinian settlements. Just a year later, Israel makes further concessions by "diverting some 50 million cubic meters of water, or 13.2 billion gallons, a year to arid Jordan"⁵--an extremely valuable resource and limited commodity in the region. The willingness of Israel, Jordan, and the PLO to address and resolve these issues optimistically provides a solid foundation for building a long and lasting Middle East peace.

Reaching this point in history was a difficult one. The road to rapprochement was mired in terrorist attacks, reprisal actions, regional skirmishes, distrust, ideological and theological differences, war, and thousands of innocent deaths. From its birth in 1947, Israel fought no less than five major wars against the Arab nations.⁶ With Israel's back to the Mediterranean Sea and the enemy on all other sides of its borders, its ability to survive speaks highly of its fortitude and national spirit. However, Israel's existence and survival can be inextricably tied to the specific

foreign policy decisions made by the United States. Historians, political scientists, and experts in international relations might attribute recent current events in the Middle East region as the result of almost a half-century of armed conflict and determined diplomacy--few could argue this point. However, I contend U.S. foreign policy decisions made during the 1973 Arab/Israeli war and the effects these decisions produced, specifically a decreased role for Soviet regional influence, are responsible for the political concessions currently being made in the Middle East and the impressive progress of continued warming of relations between actors in the region.

The Nixon administration's ingenious proficiency in foreign policy decision-making and its ability to understand the magnitude of importance this war offered, provided the opportunity American political leaders had long been looking for--international primacy in the region. The foreign policy decisions made by Nixon and Kissinger during this potentially explosive situation and opportunistic period began a new era in U.S. foreign policy and Arab/Israeli relations.

It is with this idea in mind that the following pages analyze the Nixon administration's foreign policy decisions during the 1973 Arab/Israeli War, the alternatives available to U.S. policy makers during this period and the effects these decisions had on U.S. and Soviet influence in the Middle Eastern region.

THE SETTING

On October 6th 1973 the Egyptian nation launched a massive military strike into the Sinai Peninsula in an effort to regain the territories lost in the 1967 Arab/Israeli War. The impact this encounter would have upon future U.S. foreign policy decisions would be enormous. The sensitivities involved coupled with the counter-balancing of national interests and alliances necessitated a cautious approach to a highly explosive situation.

The task at hand for the U.S. required balancing their long standing support of Israel's right to exist while at the same time, trying to find a medium that would satisfy the Arab nations and their leaders. If successful, this approach could provide the avenue for improved U.S./Arab relations. The danger lay in finding this fine line. If this concern wasn't enough, U.S. policy makers also had to contend with the Soviet Union. Since being expelled from Egypt by Sadat in 1972, Brezhnev and the Communist Party of the Soviet Union had been anxiously looking for a means to reenter the region as a prominent actor. This Soviet policy of maintaining a form of permanency in the Middle East region dates back to just after World War II. Their purpose apparently was "to ease out of the area the extraregional powers and to prevent the United States from replacing them, so as to assimilate at least the adjacent Middle East states into a Soviet sphere of influence."⁷ If successful, this policy would, the Soviets hoped, allow the USSR a chance to play a major role in ultimately shaping how resolution of the Arab-Israeli issue would be decided.⁸ The October 1973 attack by Egypt and Syria offered Brezhnev this opportunity. If successful, Soviet foreign policy makers would once again be able to play a **key**, integral role in the future developments and policy decisions of the Middle East.

It was a time that necessitated patience, perseverance, insight, intelligence and vision. The balance of power in the Middle East teetered on the verge of total collapse.⁹ Nowhere were U.S. national interests more important during this period. World-wide Soviet expansionism since the end of World War II had been a thorn in the side of every U.S. presidential administration. Likewise, concerns about Soviet influence in the Middle East region had plagued the U.S. political leadership since the early 1950's. President Nixon was well aware that any direct involvement by the United States in the Middle East region chanced a superpower confrontation and a possible weakening of his own doctrine.¹⁰ How the U.S. handled these sensitive issues

during the next three weeks would have long term effects upon not only the immediate needs of the country but also on future U.S. foreign policy opportunities in the region.

Before embarking upon an analysis of U.S. foreign policy during the 1973 war, it is essential to the understanding of why U.S. State Department decisions were made the way they were, that we examine the initial beginnings of Soviet influence in the region. In addition, this look will also explore the role Soviet foreign policy played in the Middle East region (specifically with Egypt) up to the beginning of the 1973 October War.

Chapter II

SOVIET FOREIGN POLICY IN THE MIDDLE EAST

The Russians have long desired expansion into the Eastern Mediterranean region. For almost two centuries the Soviets (Russians, of course, before 1917) attempted to gain influence and power over this area; realizing a "Middle Eastern sphere of influence" would provide them with year round access to the seas and eventual protection of their large southern landmass.¹¹ However, a strong British influence immediately after the end of the second World War and a strong American policy on the crises in Turkey and Iran, negated Soviet attempts to establish political, economic or military regional permanency. Further roadblocks to their attempt for regional influence occurred when the U.S. "containment policy" was developed and the Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan were set into action. These initiatives allowed the U.S. to become intimately involved in the welfare of Europe and act as a guaranteed protector to those countries who wished to remain free from imposed political ideologies. Implied within these two actions were also the underlying theme of containing any attempted Soviet expansion of its post-World War II borders.

THE DOOR IS OPENED

From a Soviet perspective, expansion was a necessity. An attitude of near paranoia existed regarding security of the country's borders--and with good reason. Many actual and would-be conquerors from the Mongol hordes to Napoleon and most recently Hitler have triumphed or threatened, or attempted to conquer Russia and its people. Without a buffer of loyalist states¹² along the miles of borders associated with the Russian landmass, the Soviets would continue to remain mindful of their vulnerability to aggressors. It is this frame of mind

through which the Soviets have historically tried to establish some form of enduring presence in the Middle East region.

Authors Mark Kauppi and R. Craig Nation in their book, *The Soviet Union and the Middle East in the 1980s*, identify the creation of the 1955 Baghdad Pact by Britain and the United States as the stimulus for Soviet activity in the Middle East region and thus their reason for pursuing inroads to the area. Kauppi and Nation suggest that "[t]he inclusion of Iraq and Pakistan [into the alliance] alienated Egypt and Afghanistan, [thereby] opening the way in both countries to the Kremlin's use, for the first time, of arms sales to weaken Western influence and enhance its own."¹³ Coincident with this occurrence was the removal of Malenkov (temporary successor to Stalin) and the emergence of Nikita Khrushchev as the Soviet Union's premiere.

Although Soviet foreign policy had long voiced a need for involvement in the region, it was not until Khrushchev came to power that an aggressive attitude, meshed with a sincere desire for involvement, became reality. "Unlike Stalin, Khrushchev was not afflicted with a two-camp view of the world. Instead, he saw the world as being divided into three main zones or blocs - the socialist bloc, the capitalist bloc and the Third World, which he hoped to win over to communism through political support and large doses of economic and military aid."¹⁴ This aggressiveness coupled with the formulation of the Baghdad pact provided the necessary impetus for action.

It is therefore logical to surmise that the opportunity for Soviet involvement in the region became a reality as an outgrowth of the Baghdad Pact, Khrushchev's rise to power, and Egypt's decision to engage in arms trade with the Soviets. Because of the sensitivities (from a U.S. and Western European point of view) of Egypt dealing directly with the Soviets during this period, the Kremlin used one of its satellite states to complete the transaction. With Czechoslovakia acting as an intermediary between the Soviet Union and Egypt, the "arms deal was signed in Warsaw, and

announced by Nasser on 27 September [1955]."¹⁵ This crack in the monopolized armor plate of U.S. Middle Eastern foreign policy objectives allowed Khrushchev and the Communist Party to begin to exploit U.S. Mid-East regional weaknesses while cultivating the warming of relations between the Kremlin and Nasser.

This warming of relations between these two completely different ideological governments continued throughout the remainder of the decade. Economic and technical agreements resulted in Soviet assisted construction of more than "120 industrial complexes... [to include] an engineering plant..., an antibiotics and pharmaceutical factory..., two oil refineries, a shipyard in Alexandria, and so on."¹⁶ However, the Soviet Union's decision to help Egypt build the Aswan Dam not only improved the perception Egyptians held of the Soviets but also opened the door for further economic and technical agreements with other Mid-East Arab nations. By the end of the 1960's, Khrushchev and the Communist Party boasted an enviable list of cooperative agreements with the countries of Egypt, Algeria, Iraq, Yemen, Syria and the Sudan.¹⁷

Rising Soviet regional influence in the Middle East is credited to Khrushchev, his aggressive leadership and the ability to opportunistically take advantage of a perceived slip in U.S. foreign policy. To Nasser and his country this directly translated to an industrialized boost and the realization that they were no longer dependent upon the Western world. What Egypt's leadership failed to take into account was the effect and future threat their dependency upon Soviet arms and economic support could or would have upon the nation as a whole; and how this dependency would affect the country's leadership role among Middle Eastern Arab countries and the impact on its ability to further influence world affairs--specifically those which involved Western hemispheric policies. Nevertheless, thrilled by his own statesman-like abilities, Nasser in

an effort to demonstrate his countries gratitude and appreciation, presented to Khrushchev Egypt's highest decoration--the Order of the Nile.¹⁸

FOREIGN POLICY DIFFICULTIES

The downside for the Soviet Union to this windfall foreign policy venture was the risk of becoming directly involved in the multitude of international issues that tended to gravitate to this particular region of the world. The Suez crisis in 1956, just one year after Soviet inroads were made in the Mid-East foreign policy arena, quickly demonstrated to the Soviets the volatility of the region and the fragility of international relations. The decision by the Soviets not to become involved militarily as an ally of Egypt against Britain, France and Israel had long-term consequences. Inaction by the Soviet government communicated to the Arab world their hesitancy and almost fearful desire "to challenge American superiority and influence in the Eastern Mediterranean."¹⁹

The resultant effect was Egypt's realization that the Kremlin could not be "considered a reliable factor in planning Egypt's foreign policy and so set about systematically cultivating and developing new sources of strength."²⁰ Although the Soviet Union would remain a political actor in the region and a welcomed supporter both militarily and economically of Arab countries who pursued anti-Western policies, they soon realized the product of their decision not to become involved during the Suez crisis had repercussions.

Reeling from the Kremlin's purposeful abandonment of Egypt in a time of crisis, Nasser reevaluated the USSR's influence and purpose in the region. He became acutely aware and concerned about the Communist Party situated in Egypt and the Soviets connection with the party. It was during this period of concern that "Nasser declared the Egyptian communist party

to be illegal [arresting the party's leaders and imprisoning them]. . . . [Nasser] made it very clear that he differentiated between the Soviet Union as a "great friend" and the Egyptian communist party, which he considered a threat to his own sovereignty."²¹ Nasser (in an attempt to alleviate a potential crisis arising out of these actions) went on to say ". . . nothing prevents us from strengthening our economic ties with Russia even if we arrest the Communists at home and put them on trial."²² This statement caused a contentious issue to emerge between the two countries. Khrushchev faced a dilemma, "[he] considered himself the head of the international communist movement, [and] felt constrained to try to protect the communist parties of the Middle East."²³ His efforts to convince Nasser to allow the party to exist were futile. This political difficulty resulted in an even more resolute hard line by Nasser and caused "relations between the Soviet Union and Egypt [to] deteriorate as a result."²⁴

Several other "hotbeds" of conflict arose in the Middle East between the time of the Suez crisis and the '73 war. In 1957, with Soviet influence climbing in the Middle East region, U.S. concerns of Soviet political control over the area prompted the now famous Eisenhower Doctrine.²⁵ This action by the U.S. and its delivery of arms to Jordan coupled with a stern warning to Syria about their movement towards a "procommunist domination" provided the opportunity for the Soviets to use the world as their stage.²⁶ As one would expect, the Soviet propaganda machine swung into action, accusing Turkey of massing forces along the Syrian border and, in the spirit of political brinkmanship, issuing strong warnings to Turkey, and the U.S. against any military actions towards Syria.²⁷ It was this determined spirit by the Kremlin (however hollow it may have been in reality) and its apparent willingness to stand up and confront the Western superpower that as a result placed them in good stead with the Arabs once again.²⁸

The roller coaster ride of up again-down again Soviet foreign policy relations with Egypt and the other Middle East nations continued into the next decade. In the early 1960's economic difficulties in Egypt induced talk by Nasser of possible moves toward socialism. Based upon past difficulties with Egypt and Egypt's aversion to the Communist ideology, this apparent move to the left allowed only for cautious optimism in Moscow. As Nasser leaned further towards a socialist government, Moscow's opportunity for external influence increased. This favorable path taken by Egypt pleased Moscow for many reasons, the foremost being an indication of further distancing between the Middle East Arab countries and the Western led alliance. This evolution of political policy towards a Soviet style government so enthralled Khrushchev and members of the Politburo that Khrushchev purposefully visited Nasser in 1964 to praise the "Egyptian regime for embarking on a path of socialist construction."²⁹ In an act of reciprocation and goodwill towards Khrushchev, Nasser released the entire population of jailed Egyptian communists.³⁰ From the Soviet perspective this was not only an act of goodwill but a conciliatory action that pointed to the possibility of something much more important to Khrushchev and the Soviet navy--the possibility of improving upon Soviet naval presence in the Mediterranean. U.S. submarine presence in the Mediterranean region was causing great concern for the Soviet military planners and their political counterparts during this period. The apparent move of Egypt to the left was reason for hope. This political move held the possibility for establishing a number of ports and airfields to support Soviet naval deployments to the region while also providing a counterbalance to the U.S. 6th fleet.³¹

Relations between the Soviets and Egyptians had never been better during their short marriage of only nine years. While both countries were benefiting from each other's willingness to provide a service the other needed, the Soviets appeared to be the big winner. From the Kremlin's

viewpoint, U.S. support of Israel and its deepening involvement in Vietnam ensured, at least for the present, no major attempts at seeking a diplomatic breakthrough between Egypt and the Western world. Focused on events thousands of miles to the east of Egypt, President Johnson and his foreign policy advisors found it necessary to dissociate themselves from many of the events occurring in the Middle East. The Soviets viewed this as an attractive opportunity for further enhancing their influence in the region and did just that.

Overtures of peace by the Soviets towards Turkey and Iran not only improved relations but led to trade agreements and substantial quantities of aid and loans to both countries."³² However, these foreign policy achievements were not the panacea the Kremlin hoped. Political turbulence involving the 1964 coup of Khrushchev and the attack by Israel upon Egypt and Syrian military forces in 1967 would continue to cause periods of instability and overall concerns for Soviet foreign policy issues in the region.

The Kremlin's foreign policy towards the Middle East did not change after the removal of Khrushchev in late 1964.³³ In fact, "[t]he logic of confrontation with the United States prompted Brezhnev and his associates to seek rapprochement with anti-Western regimes, while the Messianic idea of "undermining imperialism from behind" implied support of those who borrowed certain elements of the Soviet socio-economic model and who pursued the course of "socialist orientation""³⁴ By 1966, much to the chagrin of U.S. policy makers, Soviet influence continued to gain momentum in the region along with an ever expanding power base. If not for the '67 Arab/Israeli war and the Kremlin's failure to assist Syria and Egypt, the U.S. might have had to face an entirely different political situation during the October 1973 crisis. As it was, the purposeful decision by the Soviets *not* to become involved *again*, beyond the normal verbal rhetoric and issuance of diplomatic warnings to Israel and the United States, brought into

question once more from the Arab perspective the Soviet Union's degree of support for their cause.

There is no doubt that Nasser attributed part of the blame on the Soviets for the devastating defeat he suffered at the hands of the Israelis. In concert with his open criticism of Soviet inaction, anti-Soviet sentiment among the Arabs of Egypt and Syria mounted and led to several public outbursts directed against the Soviet presence. Normally one could expect a serious, if not severe reaction from the Arab nations for feeling abandoned just when they most needed Soviet support. Nasser however, was able to quell anti-Soviet reaction by focusing the Arab community on all the good they derived out of the Soviet friendship. Using *Al-Ahram*, a "semi-official Egyptian newspaper often used by Nasser to convey policy positions, [Nasser] was able to put a damper...on the anti-Soviet virus"³⁵ that was quickly spreading among the Egyptian people. Surprisingly, Soviet inaction during the '67 war did little damage to overall Soviet/Arab relations. In fact, history tells us it ultimately strengthened the odd-couple relationship, especially in the military advisory capacity³⁶--but only for a short while. Nevertheless, the sound defeat at the hands of Israel with substantial losses of territory served to reemphasize to the Syrians and Egyptians their total reliance upon the Soviet Union--militarily and economically.³⁷

Immediately after the '67 war, Soviet strategy continued to exploit Egypt and Syria's regional insecurity. Massive amounts of armament lost or captured in the war was replenished by the Soviets. It is estimated that "over three-fourths of their clients' total arsenal" required replacement.³⁸ By the late fall of '67, Moscow had replaced "almost 80 percent of the aircraft, tanks and artillery that Egypt had lost in June."³⁹ "Moscow's rearming of its clients was designed to strengthen their defenses and bring them to a state of parity with Israel; the objective was not, as the Soviets saw it, to prepare for another round of war but to strengthen the Arab hand for the

political bargaining that [they felt] lay ahead."⁴⁰ Perhaps even more important to the Soviets, which they had yet to realize, was the severe drain on their economy. The cost of keeping Egypt supplied with offensive and defensive weaponry to balance the threat of the Israeli military, was indeed extensive.⁴¹

The death of Nasser in 1970 was cause for Soviet concern. Unprepared diplomatically and politically to assess the impact of his untimely departure and a possible replacement, Moscow chose to remind the Egyptian government and its people of their reliance on Soviet aid. Almost immediately they reemphasized the long-term friendly relationship that continued to bond both countries. In an act of good faith, they also chose to demonstrate renewed support of Egypt and its anti-Western policy by accelerating an arms delivery contract by almost a year.⁴²

In October of that same year Anwar Sadat was sworn in as the next Egyptian president. His tenure would "mark a radical shift in the underlying elements of Egypt's internal and external policies."⁴³ In concert with this realignment in policy, the Soviets would find dealing with Sadat over the next few years difficult at best. Freedman, in his book, *Moscow and the Middle East*, cites Sadat's reason for the change in direction for Egyptian strategy as his realization that the Soviets had been "unable to get the Israelis to withdraw by diplomatic means, unwilling to use military force for this purpose, and hesitant to supply the Arab states with the weaponry they needed to fight effectively."⁴⁴ Not a nation to give up easily, the Soviet Union persisted and continued to urge a unification of all Arab nations to fight the Western "imperialists."

By early spring of 1971 the Soviets' persistence appeared ready to pay large dividends on the huge amount of money expended for many of the Middle Eastern Arab nations. "Despite major governmental changes in Syria and Egypt, both Arab states were closely cooperating with the Soviet Union, and the Russians seemed to have established good working relationships with

the new leaderships."⁴⁵ Additionally, internal friction's that once had existed between many of the Arab nations appeared to be in remission. Syria and Egypt were settling their differences and beginning a cooperative effort between the two for the first time since 1961. Likewise, Libya and Syria also appeared close to joining the Arab Federation that was closely aligned with the Soviets. Along with this warming of relations, the Soviets continued to court the Iraq leadership in hopes of their too someday becoming a part of the Arab Federation.⁴⁶ All in all, despite Sadat's guarded position towards the Communists and Egypt's role as the leader of the Arab Federation block, Brezhnev and the Communists leaders were very pleased with the level of cooperation among the Arab nations; and felt comfortable with the direction Soviet Middle East foreign policy initiatives were going. Finally, the cumulative efforts expended by the Russians over the past decade and a half to drive a wedge between the Arab nations and the Western capitalists were beginning to show signs of real progress away from the Western imperialist block--or so they believed.⁴⁷

Chapter III

THE SOVIET EXPULSION FROM EGYPT

Anwar Sadat was determined to punish the Israelis for their action in 1967.⁴⁸ What grew out of his anger was a hint to the world of what actions they might expect the Arab nations, specifically Egypt, to take. In light of his promise to the Egyptian people, he named 1971 as the "year of decision" and vowed to strike back at the Israeli aggressors during this period. However, the type of support he expected (weapons, manpower, advisors, aircraft, etc.) from the Soviets was not what he received. Instead, the Kremlin recommended pursuing diplomatic channels as the means to a peaceful settlement and unequivocally stated "they would not support an Egyptian attack on Israeli-held territory--"year of decision" or not."⁴⁹ This political game of "on again-off again" support by the Soviets so enraged Sadat that he began to openly blame lack of Soviet support as the reason for his failure to attack Israel and regain the lost territory. As a result of Sadat's verbal abuse about Soviet support, a fervor of anti-Soviet sentiment began once again to develop among the Arab nations by early to mid 1972.

SADAT'S DISCONTENT

Rising discontent among the Egyptian people towards Soviet inaction and its unwillingness to provide any offensive military support to Egypt, made Sadat feel he had no choice but to expel all 15,000 technicians in July 1972. "In August both countries recalled their ambassadors, and relations [remained] at a standstill for [several months]."⁵⁰ It was at this point that Sadat had made the decision to once again approach the Western world leaders, and specifically Nixon and the United States, in an attempt to convince their governments to put pressure on the Israelis to withdraw to pre-1967 borders. Unfortunately, events in Munich in

1972 by the terrorist group "Black September" (a part of the *Al-Fatah* terrorist group led by Arafat that claimed responsibility for the execution of Israeli Olympic team athletes) dispelled any hope Sadat might have had about the "Western European and American leaders putting pressure on the Israelis to withdraw its troops from occupied Egyptian territory."⁵¹ As we will see in a moment, this left Sadat with only one other course of action--to take back the land by force. However, to do this required weapons, aircraft, advisors, etc., and only the Soviet Union could provide these materials in the quantity required for such a large operation.

From a Soviet perspective, their expulsion from Egypt was not as crippling as one might expect. The Russians were at this same time involved in numerous other foreign policy "brush fires" around the world⁵², and almost welcomed a break from the intense conditions which existed in Egypt and the surrounding region. Still, regardless of the appearance of welcomed relief from such a volatile region and a political quagmire, Soviet influence in the Middle East region had suffered a damaging blow and its Middle Eastern foreign policy efforts weakened. Ironically, just when it seemed Soviet influence was waning and the possibility of increased Western influence was possible, the Munich massacre occurred; serving to undermine Sadat's attempt at enticing the U.S. and its allies to support restoration of Egypt's borders prior to the '67 war.

This continued deterioration of relations between Egypt and the Western world pleased the Soviet Union. With cautious optimism, a Soviet delegation visited Sadat in February '73 and offered once again to help Egypt in its rightful cause. Shortly after the Russian delegation's visit "large quantities of Soviet arms were flowing again to Egypt."⁵³ The quantity of arms shipped during this period was extensive and dwarfed by comparison the amount of arms Egypt had received the preceding two years from Russia. Unfortunately for Sadat, the type of weapons he expected ("strategic" modern aircraft and equipment to include "fighter-bombers" and surface to

surface missiles) were not part of the multitude of arms received. Sadat's complaints to the Soviet Union about the quality needed to successfully wage a war against Israel was for all intents and purposes ignored.⁵⁴

It was at this time that Sadat realized the futility of expecting or successfully pressuring the Soviets for more modern "offensive" technological weapons. Thus he resigned himself to the fact that Egypt would not be able to severely punish Israel to the extent he had hoped. ". . . [H]is war against Israel would have to be a limited one, fought as much for diplomatic and political goals as for military ones."⁵⁵ The Kremlin had won yet another battle in its efforts to do just enough for Egypt to keep it a quasi-satellite under the Soviet umbrella--but at what price? Perhaps if the USSR had known the direction Sadat and several other Arab nations were to take at the cessation of fighting between Egypt and Israel, their *quality* of arms might have been more in line with what was needed to fight the October War. It was Sadat's permanent change in foreign policy at the conclusion of the '73 War which started the perpetual erosion of Soviet influence in the region.

Chapter IV

NIXON'S ADMINISTRATION

On the first Tuesday in November 1972, Richard Nixon was reelected by U.S. voters in a landslide victory. Recognized for having a robust foreign policy plan during his first term in office, Nixon intended to continue along the same path while also expanding America's global partnerships and international influence during the next four years. His accomplishments in Vietnam and China,⁵⁶ along with a Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT I) agreement with the Soviet Union were only starting points. He fully intended to achieve a SALT II agreement, and "work for peace not only in Vietnam but also in the Middle East."⁵⁷ His ambitions were sincere and he vehemently believed that pursuing these avenues would best serve the country he was elected to lead. Unfortunately, his ambitious foreign policy plan would soon become secondary to his personal concerns about surviving Watergate and, from his point of view, the shark infested waters of politicians and press personnel who were determined to destroy his administration.

THE NIXON-KISSINGER TEAM--A RECIPE FOR SUCCESS

Whether it was an intelligent guess, visionary foresight, or just dumb luck that resulted in Kissinger's selection to Nixon's administration,⁵⁸ the decision to make him the National Security Advisor during the first term *and* the Secretary of State during the second term, would pay large dividends to the U.S. and its citizens.

Kissinger was the opposite of Nixon in many ways. His vocation centered around academia and writing, versus Nixon's lifelong love affair with the limelight of American politics. Kissinger spent years studying, teaching, researching and writing about America's involvement in

international relations and foreign policy matters, while Nixon pursued political avenues in hopes of living the history Kissinger studied.

Kissinger was also a devout Rockefeller supporter during the 1968 primary elections. He was not timid in voicing his dislike for Nixon. In fact, on several occasions he openly criticized Nixon with statements like, "[t]hat man Nixon is not fit to be President," or referring to Nixon as "...the most dangerous, of all men running, to have as President."⁵⁹ It was not until after first meeting and then working for him that Kissinger realized he had severely misjudged Nixon, and found it necessary to "modify his caricature of the man."⁶⁰

To the American public Kissinger appeared to be an introverted and secretive individual. His past identified him as an inwardly thinking scholar whose writings in the "1950s and 1960s... provide[d] a running commentary on the foreign policy achievements and failures of three presidents--Harry Truman, Dwight Eisenhower, and John Kennedy."⁶¹ It was this quiet intellectual who, as the Secretary of State and as the National Security Advisor, would share the credit with Nixon for taking American foreign policy ideals to a new level among the world's actors.

The proficiency and skill demonstrated by the Nixon/Kissinger team in foreign policy affairs are still today, two decades later, unmatched when compared to the fragile political environment which existed in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Establishment of the Nixon Doctrine, coupled with the administration's policy of "détente" and the movement away from nuclear confrontation; along with a movement towards "mutual interests that would help to ensure global stability and minimize the risks of confrontation"⁶² set the stage for Egyptian President Sadat's bold decision to lead his country toward warming relations with the United States.

From Sadat's perspective, it was America's willingness to approach both parties, and a deep faith in Kissinger's ability to "objectively mediate" a settlement between Egypt and Israel, that provided such a dramatic switch in Egypt's foreign policy direction.⁶³ Helpful too was the unsupportive track record over the past two decades of the USSR. Sadat was convinced that "they were [not] prepared to play an "even-handed" role in settling the conflict."⁶⁴ This belief set the stage for excluding the Soviets during the actual negotiations, which later translated into defeat for the Soviet's--a loss from which their Middle Eastern foreign policy initiatives never fully recovered.

The final act of a 45 year drama that would eventually lead to a Cold War victory for the United States in 1991, began in the fall of 1973--only two weeks after Kissinger assumed the duties of Secretary of State. To Kissinger, all the necessary ingredients existed (an insatiable Soviet desire for primacy in the region, possible avenues for improving U.S./Arab relations, availability of oil resources during a time when America was experiencing an energy crisis, and the possibility of long-term peace in the region) for advancing U.S. foreign policy issues in the Middle East--but at what cost to Israel or the Western world? The challenge was how to diplomatically achieve this goal without castigating Israel, further damaging tenuous relations with the Arab coalition and most importantly, avoiding a superpower confrontation while denying the Kremlin further dominance in the region.

As if possessed with the finest skills of a surgeon, Nixon and Kissinger skillfully dissected the essence of the situation and embarked upon a diplomatic venture that would eventually result in an amazing foreign policy triumph for America. Kissinger's now famous step-by-step diplomacy⁶⁵ created an atmosphere, along with an agreement, where Egypt, the Arab world, and Israel all consider themselves victorious. Only the Soviet Union lost in real terms as it failed to

reestablish close relations with Egypt and surrounding Arab nations. Their "high hopes of playing an important role in bringing about a political settlement to the dispute and in representing Arab interests at the international level"⁶⁶ were shattered when Sadat chose a different direction for his country. Soviet permanency in the region had suffered a near fatal blow to its' foreign policy goals--just as Nixon and Kissinger hoped would occur.

Chapter V

SIZING UP THE SITUATION

The United States was faced with three very difficult propositions at the outset of this conflict. First, how to stabilize the conflict without becoming directly involved militarily; second, how to maintain an equitable balance of power in such a volatile region while ensuring US national interests were effectively served; and third, how to avoid a direct superpower confrontation with the Soviets while denying them the opportunity to enhance their political, economic and/or military ties in the region. Nixon and Kissinger both realized any direct confrontation with the Soviets over Middle Eastern oil or territory could have catastrophic results and should be avoided at *almost* any cost. Nixon's policy of *détente* would experience its first genuine examination under ominous circumstances.⁶⁷

THE U.S. WALKS A DIPLOMATIC TIGHTROPE

The events leading up to the attack in October of '73 began to take form once Sadat replaced Nasser. His "year of decision" in 1971 came and went without conflict; while 1972 saw the expulsion of Soviet technicians and their materiel. Determined to succeed, Sadat continued to look for ways outside Soviet channels to initiate and win a war with Israel. Finally, faced with the realization that success was not realistic without Soviet involvement and military and economic support; he allowed the Kremlin back into the fold in early 1973. What quickly followed was a marked increase in Soviet arms to Egypt during the summer and autumn months of 1973, and led Sadat to the conclusion that it was now or never for his long threatened attack. In his own words Sadat felt, "[a]ll taps have been fully turned on . . . it looks as if they [the Soviets] want to push me into a battle."⁶⁸

Even prior to the onset of hostilities Prime Minister Meir and the Israeli Foreign Ministry were placing immense pressure on the Nixon administration for help in averting a potentially disastrous situation.⁶⁹ Kissinger attempted to forestall the situation by appealing to the Soviets to "use their influence to prevent war, telephoning the Egyptian ambassador to the UN that Israel would not preempt, and sending messages to King Hussein [Jordan] and King Faisal [Saudi Arabia] to enlist their help on the side of moderation."⁷⁰ What angered Nixon and Kissinger the most was the Soviet Union's purposeful violation of an agreement made just over three months before the outbreak of hostilities. This agreement is contained in Article IV of the "Agreement on the Prevention of Nuclear War" created during Summit II in June '73.⁷¹ The agreement states:

If at any time relations between the Parties or between either Party and other countries appear to involve the risk of a nuclear conflict, or if relations between countries not parties to this Agreement appear to involve the risk of nuclear war between the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics or between either Party and other countries, the United States and the Soviet Union, acting in accordance with the provisions of this Agreement, shall immediately enter into urgent consultations with each other and make every effort to avert this risk.⁷²

Kissinger's attempts to interrupt the sequence of events which would lead to war were impotent. Within hours after Washington's attempts to stop the war, Egypt and Syria launched their attack into the Sinai Desert and the Golan Heights. Almost simultaneously with the commencement of hostilities Israeli Ambassador Dinitz began a covert state-to-state campaign for U.S. support. Unfortunately, at least during the initial phase of hostilities, the difficulties the Israeli government anticipated having in attaining U.S. support militarily went beyond their worst expectations.⁷³

The first steps taken by the Nixon administration were to "play down the extent of Soviet involvement [which included military airlift, weapons, equipment and aid] and to refrain from

criticism of either the Arabs or the Russians."⁷⁴ Adopting such a non-committal policy in the beginning had a two-fold purpose of protecting U.S. oil interests in the region and preserving détente with the Soviet Union. The "strategic sensitivity"⁷⁵ card U.S. policy makers displayed was aimed at patronizing both parties in an attempt to reach a quick settlement. Surprisingly, the obvious omission of Israel in this stated policy was purposeful.

During the initial phase of the war, the West also had been cautioned by the Arab oil producing countries that any U.S. support given to Israel would result in a Middle Eastern oil embargo.⁷⁶ The stoppage of oil from the Middle East would have far reaching consequences, consequences that the U.S. was not willing at this time to deal with.

It was Kissinger who recognized this situation as an opportunity for possible improvement of present and future relations with the Arab countries. Kissinger envisioned the failure of Israel winning a decisive victory as it had in the '67 Arab/Israeli war possibly leading to a military stalemate between the actors.⁷⁷ If such a stalemate was reached, it could provide the ultimate "victory" for future U.S. foreign policy Middle East issues. On the other hand, if Israel was to soundly defeat their opponents, it would "contribute to a further isolation of Israel, and given America's close ties to the Jewish state, encourage a new wave of anti-Americanism in the Middle East."⁷⁸ As a result, Kissinger cautiously attempted to manipulate all sides by walking a diplomatic tightrope of non-aggression and non-attribution. Yet all the while behind the scenes, he continued pressuring the Secretary of Defense and Pentagon personnel to begin preparing for a massive U.S. military resupply effort to Israel.

Although admitting to having contact with the Israel leadership, U.S. policy makers believed any openly discussed issues about U.S. support of Israel in the war would only serve to

heighten the level of tension, damage already brittle U.S.-Arab relations and increase the possibility of a direct confrontation between the two superpowers.

Chapter VI

U.S. ALTERNATIVES/OPTIONS

Did President Nixon and Secretary of State Kissinger make the right foreign policy decisions? What other alternatives were available to them at the time?

Stabilizing the volatile situation and preventing any possible expansion of the conflict in other areas of the Middle East was paramount.⁷⁹ By not directly attacking or openly condemning the actions of Egypt, Syria or the Soviet Union, the U.S. avoided offending the Arab community and damaging détente with the Soviets. This "counterbalancing of national interests"⁸⁰ sidestepped a contentious issue that would have only served to strengthen the Arab nation alliance, provide further inroads for Soviet permanency in the region and further degrade U.S. and Israeli interests. However, by not condemning the attack, the U.S. senior leaders and policy makers sent a very clear signal to the Israeli leadership--*preservation of U.S. national interests are paramount in any situation*. To risk the possibility of losing Middle Eastern oil along with all diplomatic ties with the Arab countries, while possibly allowing the Soviet Union an entrenched stronghold in the region, was not worth the gamble (in the early stages of the conflict) of openly supporting Israel.

DISCARDED OPTIONS

Several other initial policy options were also available to the Nixon administration. On one end of the spectrum, the U.S. could simply have avoided the situation and refused to become involved. This option was then and would still be today the worst of all possible decisions. Failure to do anything, if Israel lost, would have lethal consequences for not only Israel but also U.S. interests in the region.⁸¹ A balance of power would cease to exist in the eyes of American

policy makers. Moscow would finally have their long sought after objective of squeezing out, possibly once and for all, American presence in the Middle East. The stage would be set for the USSR's ever increasing involvement and influence. "Third-party relationships"⁸² would be severely strained as U.S. and other Western countries could find themselves hostage to the whims of the OPEC nations--theoretically controlled under the Communist umbrella.

The United States and to an even more severe extent Europe and the Far East, would become economic hostages to the oil-producing Arab nations. Worse yet, the Soviet Union would have access to this vital resource. Their control of, or the ability to control access to the oil resources through surrogate countries such as Egypt, Iran, etc., could allow for devastating circumstances to develop.⁸³ If these events were allowed to come to fruition World War III would appear inevitable.

Would the circumstances be different if the U.S. failed to intervene and Israel still won the war? Ironically, this was just what the Nixon administration feared would happen. Although not as catastrophic as the above scenario, another embarrassing Arab defeat at the hands of Israel would have serious consequences for nations in the region and possibly U.S./Soviet relations. Such a devastating defeat would not only mean more territory lost and more embarrassment for Egypt and the entire Arab nation. It would also mean continued instability in the region with little or no chance of peace and further ensure an enduring hostility by all Arab nations towards Israel and the immutable fear of another Middle East war sometime in the distant future.

More importantly from a U.S. perspective, an Israeli victory would also deny Kissinger the opportunity to end the war on terms favorable to and in line with U.S. policy. He believed any conclusion to the war which resulted in conditions favoring the Arabs would only help overall relations between the two nations.⁸⁴ Therefore, a military stalemate between warring parties

might offer the favorable conditions Kissinger had been seeking. It also would help alleviate concerns about America's growing energy problem since "...Saudi Arabia [had] offered to boost its oil production to 20 million barrels a day once the United States [could] guarantee an Israeli pullback behind the 1967 boundaries."⁸⁵

By seeking such a conclusion to the war was the administration "selling out" U.S./Israeli relations? Had the Administration abandoned Israel or had it simply weighed the overall consequences of each option and selected the one that provided the least risk for the U.S. and her allies? If one adheres to the "past-future linkage principle"⁸⁶ an objective examination of the situation would lead one to the rational conclusion that the U.S. and its foreign policy decisions were accurate and just. Israel through its ancestry, religion and history is inextricably tied to the U.S. . Where else could it turn? Its existence, although not entirely dependent on American aid and protection, would be a great deal more difficult and most assuredly less secure without it. The Israeli government, like it or not, had to trust Kissinger and the Nixon administration to arrive at the right decisions and hope those decisions were also made in the interest of Israel.

The final alternative discussed looks at the possibility of the U.S. outwardly denouncing the Soviets, Egypt and Syria for their actions towards Israel. A publicly announced U.S. ultimatum during this fragile period of the cold war, which demanded an immediate cessation of all aggressive activities against Israel, would be the supreme move in foreign policy brinkmanship. On the surface most experts would consider such an option foolish because of superpower confrontation possibilities. Could the President and his National Security Council really afford to "roll the dice," betting the Soviets would once again back down as they did during the Cuban Missile and Berlin crises? The State Department's primary concerns revolved around how the

Soviets would react, how the Arab nations would react, and what affect such actions would have on Israel, the U.S. and its Western allies.

U.S. RESOLVE SOLIDIFIES

Almost all U.S. foreign policy actions undertaken during the Cold War necessitated evaluation of possible U.S.-Soviet confrontations. Likewise, any U.S. foreign policy decisions concerning the Arab-Israeli War and the path those decisions would lead required an in-depth analysis of the entire spectrum of the international foreign policy concepts. Counterbalancing national interests, third-party influences, past-future linkages, U.S. and its allies vital interests, strategic sensitivities, balance of power issues, etc., would all have to be taken into consideration before deciding upon a possible solution.

A disciple of past-future linkages concerning U.S.-Soviet confrontations might conclude that the Soviets **would** once again back down to prevent a possible escalation of activities. Over the quarter century preceding this event both sides had been very adept at avoiding situations that harbored the possibility of a superpower altercation. U.S. officials believed it was highly unlikely the Soviet Union would allow this situation to evolve into a "showdown" the entire world hoped each would continue to avoid. Furthermore, without solid support of the Arab nations (which they could not expect to receive) Kissinger felt this was neither the time, nor what is more important the place for the Soviets to "draw a line in the sand".

Conversely, when examining this situation from a different perspective, one finds the art of diplomacy is executed through a variety of means available to the state. Therefore, based upon the importance of the region and the Soviet Union's desire to play an integral role in the Middle East, coupled with an initial awareness by the Soviet leadership as to some economic difficulties

arising within their own country, U.S. state department officials might have expected the Kremlin to "press to test" the issue. Both U.S. and Soviet policy making officials were historically very adept at exploiting the diplomatic boundaries of brinkmanship. The Soviet Union was vying for international primacy in the Middle East region just like the United States. Entering into the third week of the conflict, the tides of war were now favoring Israel, and the promise of Mid-East regional primacy was in question for the Soviets. Realizing the impact and severity the potential outcome could have upon future Soviet foreign policy issues in the region, the Kremlin played its final card in an attempt to display solid support for Egypt and Syria, while hoping to retain some measure of involvement and importance.

Brezhnev's threat to send troops to the Middle East in an effort to help resolve the *unfortunate situation* caused great concern for those inside the White House. Brezhnev warned Kissinger that if the U.S. was not willing to join with the Soviet Union to stop further Israeli advancements, then they were prepared to unilaterally send troops to the region in an effort to protect Egypt.⁸⁷ President Nixon responded with a "...worldwide military alert of all U.S. forces," to include bomber and missile nuclear forces.⁸⁸ Through diplomatic channels the U.S. also stipulated that "one superpower taking 'unilateral' action would cause great concern throughout the world. The United States could not accept such action by the Soviet Union; it could not but jeopardize the entire pattern of Soviet-American détente."⁸⁹

The two actions taken by Nixon and Kissinger demonstrated to the Soviets, Egypt, Syria and the entire world, U.S. resolve and the importance U.S. leaders placed on the region and specifically this situation. Clearly, the U.S. would not tolerate Soviet combat troops in the Middle East--for any reason. This position further illustrated, despite U.S. public words of moderation towards the Arab nations and the purposeful avoidance of public statements supporting Israel,

that the U.S. would not allow conditions to deteriorate to a point where Israel would lose the war. This policy served notice to Egypt and the Soviet Union that the best they could hope for would be a stalemate or an agreed upon cease-fire. Implicit in this action was the underlying message that neither would U.S. leaders allow the Soviet Union to become a mediator between the nations involved.

As the crisis between the two superpowers abated and the violence of war between Israel and Egypt subsided, all players turned to the all important question of negotiation between the Israelis and Arabs. Not surprisingly, the United States decided to have Kissinger act as a mediator. In the end, it was evident that Kissinger had played the foreign policy game like a seasoned veteran. His ability to facilitate both sides diplomatically without angering or ostracizing either was a victory for the U.S. and its foreign policy platform . As a result, the reward for his diplomatic prowess would be the warring participants' approval for him to act as intermediary in the resolvment of the military stalemate--the *exact* development and result the administration desired at the outbreak of hostilities.

Chapter VII

EPILOGUE

There were a myriad of foreign policy options available to U.S. policy makers during the conflict. The actors involved and the volatility of the situation necessitated strong leadership and a visionary decision-making ability. With President Nixon's attention and energy principally focused on the Watergate scandal, the possibility of the '73 October War not being given the proper attention it deserved existed.

Enter Secretary of State Kissinger. His in-depth academic background in foreign policy coupled with an almost raucous political savvy ensured U.S. interests in the region were served during a critical period for U.S foreign policy initiatives. This is not to say, however, that Kissinger should be given exclusive credit for handling the crisis. Nixon's influence and leadership during the conflict ensured a focused direction toward the specific objectives of: gaining a peaceful resolution to the war, improving relations between U.S. and Middle East Arab nations without damaging U.S.-Israeli relations, and at the same time precluding a further entrenched Soviet international influence in the region.

At the risk of Monday morning quarterbacking, the Nixon administration appears to have made all the right moves for all the right reasons. Numerous articles have been circulated and books written second guessing and even condemning Nixon and Kissinger's evaluation/handling of the problem, and their selected courses of action. However, based upon the current atmosphere which exists between Israel and many of the Arab countries today, it would be difficult to agree with the reasons for criticism many have chosen in the past. The decisions made by the Nixon administration during the '73 October War laid the ground work for warming relations between

the U.S. and the Arab nations--a prophetic achievement that would pay large dividends some 17 years later during the Persian Gulf War.

Over twenty years after the '73 Arab/Israeli war ended, a peace treaty has been signed between Israel and Jordan, and some interim agreements by Israel and the PLO. The willingness of these parties to find a way to better serve their interests through changed regional policies (counterbalancing interests) with a resultant reduction in the hostilities they face (conservation of enemies) is laudable and long overdue. The ancestral ties of present day breakthroughs can be discovered in the historical events which have occurred in the region over the past forty-five or so years.

The sometimes stormy Soviet-Egyptian marriage constantly teetered on the brink of collapse prior to the 1973 conflict. It was Kissinger's ability to nullify Soviet involvement during the post-war mediation phase that served to tilt the fulcrum of influence towards the U.S. and away from the USSR. How this transpired is as much the fault of the Soviets as it was the brilliance of American foreign policy maneuvering.

DECREASED SOVIET INFLUENCE--A U.S. FOREIGN POLICY VICTORY

The erosion of Soviet influence in the Middle East region can be traced to its historical inability or controversial desire to assist Egypt (to the extent Egypt desired) during periods of conflict with Israel. Questionable in this action was also the Soviets' determination to actively seek a resolution to the Arab-Israeli disharmony. From the mid-1950's until the October War in 1973, Soviet foreign policy in the region focused on achieving three goals: first, pursuing a foreign policy of engagement with Middle East countries, specifically aimed at the leader of the Arab nations (Egypt). This policy had a dual purpose of developing an Egyptian dependency on

Soviet aid (both militarily and economically); and gaining access to ports and airfields which would allow for power projection maritime operations in the Mediterranean and Indian Ocean-- thus providing an opposing force to the U.S. sixth fleet; second, expanding its ideological principles of Communism, hoping to establish pockets of Communist Party factions throughout the Middle East region which could eventually be incorporated into the governing lifestyles of many Mid-East governments; and third, stimulate, enlarge and cultivate the existing "anti-imperialist/anti-Western" movement that was mounting among the Arab League members. The Soviets trusted this final initiative would result in effectively ostracizing American and Western European interests in the region, thereby causing a U.S. foreign policy disengagement from the area.

The Kremlin's pursuit of these goals was at times partially successful. However in the end, a complete failure to achieve these objectives occurred. The Soviets' failure can be attributed to several factors; but one continuous, underlying theme persisted throughout their relationship with Egypt--the Soviets inability to overcome the inherent distrust by the Arab nations and especially Egypt, over their motives in the region. This fearful atmosphere of Soviet expansionism was exacerbated by U.S. foreign policy that through the declaration of the Eisenhower and Nixon Doctrines illustrated an all out attempt to corral and defeat (in their eyes) this malignant disease. Accordingly, both Nasser and Sadat, along with the general population of the country, feared the Soviet ideological machine and the ever present possibility of falling prey to the communist regime. This was the reason for Nasser banning the Communist Party from Egypt in the 1950's and the continued imposed ban on "the party" by Sadat when he replaced Nasser in 1970. Although this did not retard Soviet influence in other parts of the Middle East (i.e. Syria, Iran, Iraq, and parts of Africa and Yemen), it did serve to lessen its influence and leadership in Egypt.

As a precursor to the attack in October, and through Sadat's own admission, it appeared the Soviets at one point were solidly behind his decision to attack Israel. This perception was supported as the Soviets heaped wave upon wave of arms supplies on Egypt in the spring and summer of 1973. From this action and with no evidence to the contrary, it appears the Soviets felt very confident about their chances of playing a major role in the mediation of activities following a cease fire among the parties. They believed their role in representing the Arab interests would not only bolster their international importance but once and for all illustrate to the Arab community its sincerity and concern.

Unfortunately for the Kremlin and its leaders, they failed to take into account Sadat's perspective and the influence the United States and specifically Kissinger would have in the negotiations. The decision by Sadat to allow Kissinger and the U.S. to act as sole mediator dealt a severe blow to the USSR and its foreign policy plans. Consequently, the Soviet government never recovered from this slap in the face by Sadat. As a result, relations between the two countries cooled and never reached the level of cooperation, influence and intensity it had enjoyed before the 1973 war.⁹⁰

In contrast to the Soviets' dwindling influence in the region as a result of this war, U.S. prestige and its relations between Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Jordan were not negatively impacted. The fact is, to the Soviets' dismay, U.S. standing and authority increased and relations with most Arab nations improved dramatically.

In retrospect, the accomplishments of U.S. foreign policy during this critical period were monumental. Today, America's involvement in the region remains steadfast thanks to Nixon and Kissinger's efforts. As a result, U.S. policy makers continue to pursue avenues which afford the U.S. a major role in molding and influencing Middle Eastern foreign policy affairs.

Although Nixon and Kissinger are no longer forces within the decision-making process, it is clearly evident their handling of the 1973 Arab/Israeli war provided the impetus and direction needed to reach today's position. To put it in the simplest of terms, their involvement has had and will continue to have, a major impact upon the Middle East region and the balance of power which currently exists in the world today. Without their contributions to this critical period present day outcomes may have been quite different.

Notes

¹*New York Times*. 18 October 1994, p. A1.

²Although the PLO did not officially exist until 1964, the organization Al-Fatah is considered the precursor to its genesis. Al-Fatah was founded by Arafat in the early 1950's. His brain child resulted from an idea that envisioned an organization who would represent and fight for the Palestinian people and the liberation of Palestine.

³William B. Quandt, *After the Israeli-PLO Breakthrough: Next Steps for the United States*. *Brookings Review Journal*, Winter 1994, p. 29.

⁴Lawrence Ziring, *The Middle East Political Dictionary*, (Oxford, England, Clio Press Ltd., 1984), p. xiii.

⁵*New York Times*. 18 October 1994, p. A3.

⁶Ziring, *Dictionary*, pp. 355-372. It is worth noting here that although most analysts agree to the figure of four wars, Israel insists it has been five. The difference of opinion resides with the event known as the "War of Attrition" that was embarked upon by Egypt in March of 1969 (see Alvin Z Rubinstein, *Red Star on the Nile*, for a more in-depth study of this period). This War of Attrition was an outgrowth of the defeat Egypt and Nasser suffered at the hands of the Israelis during the 1967 war.

⁷Mark V. Kauppi and R. Craig Nation, *The Soviet Union and the Middle East in the 1980s*, PG 19.

⁸Although Soviet influence in the region, especially with Egypt, had been a factor in molding Middle Eastern foreign policy towards the Western world since the mid-50s; an ongoing "roller coaster ride" of warm and cold Soviet-Egyptian foreign policy relations haunted the Kremlin's leaders.

⁹Egypt had long been the "self-appointed" (thanks to Nasser's aggressiveness) leader for the other Arab nations in the Middle East. The Soviet Union was of course a large supporter, in terms of arms and economic assistance, to Nasser. Any attack from an Arab nation (which included *direct* Soviet involvement) against Israel could expect direct U.S. and possibly Western European involvement. This face off could ultimately involve a direct confrontation between the superpowers; and at best a surrogate war. This confrontation seemingly could turn the balance of power in the region topsy turvy. The result of such a war, its outcome and its effect on the overall domination of one superpower vs the other, is much too complex to attempt any degree of satisfactory explanation in this limited space. Suffice it to say the distribution of power in the region would be decidedly one-sided.

¹⁰The Nixon Doctrine espoused a promise to provide an umbrella of protection to all allied nations and *other areas of the world* where the U.S. deemed their "vital interests" at risk. Implied in this statement is the responsibility of the nation threatened to provide for itself the primary responsibility of security. Then and only then can the threatened actor expect to receive military or economic assistance from the U.S. .

¹¹Mohrez Mahmoud El Hussini, *Soviet-Egyptian Relations, 1945-85*, (New York, St. Martin's Press, 1987), p. 25.

¹²Such as those that made up the Warsaw Pact.

¹³Mark V. Kauppi and R. Craig Nation, *The Soviet Union and the Middle East in the 1980s*, (Massachusetts, D.C. Heath and Company, 1983), p. 20. The reason for Egypt's anger was due to Iraq's decision to join the alliance. Iraq's leader, Nuri Said was Nasser's "principal rival" in the region. Nasser felt his leadership of the Arab nations would be threatened by the large amounts of military and economic aid Iraq would receive from Britain and the U.S. . For additional information see Robert O. Freedman, *Moscow and the Middle East*, p. 17.

¹⁴Robert O. Freedman, *Moscow and the Middle East: Soviet Policy since the Invasion of Afghanistan*, New York, Cambridge University Press, 1991), p. 16.

¹⁵El Hussini, *Soviet-Egyptian Relations, 1945-85*, p. 57.

¹⁶Alexei Vassiliev, *Russian Policy in the Middle East: From Messianism to Pragmatism*, (United Kingdom, Garnett Publishing, 1993), p. 53.

¹⁷*Ibid.*, p. 53.

¹⁸*Ibid.*, p. 55.

¹⁹El Hussini, *Soviet-Egyptian Relations, 1945-85*, p. 67.

²⁰*Ibid.*, p. 69. Hussini in his book goes on to identify three sources from which Nasser believed could be developed. These three sources were: Arab nationalism, Egypt's strategic position and Arabian oil. The Soviets decision not to risk confrontation with the Americans during the Suez conflict, would be a precursor of things to come for Egypt.

²¹Freedman, *Moscow and the Middle East*, p. 17.

²²*Ibid.*, pp. 17-18.

²³*Ibid.*, p. 18.

²⁴*Ibid.*, p. 18.

²⁵Passed by Congressional resolution in January 1957. Authorized the President "to render economic and military aid to the Middle Eastern countries that requested it." However, the more broad definition of the doctrine stated any nation (if requested) could expect total U.S. support against any threat from international communism. (See Noguee and Donaldson, *Soviet Foreign Policy since World War II*).

²⁶Joseph L. Noguee and Robert H. Donaldson, *Soviet Foreign Policy Since World War II, Fourth Ed.*, (New York, Macmillan Publishing Company, 1992.), p. 189.

²⁷*Ibid.*, p. 189.

²⁸El Hussini, *Soviet-Egyptian Relations, 1945-85*, p. 78. It is widely held that there actually was no American intervention and no Turkish troops massing along the border. Soviet propagandists had seen an opportunity to discredit U.S. intentions in the region and seized the occasion to do so.

²⁹Nogee and Donaldson, *Soviet Foreign Policy Since World War II*, p. 191.

³⁰*Ibid.*, p. 191.

³¹Aurel Braun, ed., *The Middle East in Global Strategy*, (Boulder, Colorado, Westview Press Inc., 1987), p. 97.

³²Nogee and Donaldson, *Soviet Foreign Policy Since World War II*, p. 192.

³³Vassiliev, *Russian Policy in the Middle East: From Messianism to Pragmatism*, p. 59.

³⁴*Ibid.*, p. 62.

³⁵Alvin Z. Rubinstein, *Red Star on the Nile: The Soviet-Egyptian Influence Relationship Since the June War*, (Princeton, New Jersey, Princeton University Press, 1977), pp. 19-20.

³⁶According to Rubinstein, "[t]he military relationship between the USSR and Egypt altered dramatically after the June War. From approximately 500 Soviet military advisers before the war, the number jumped to several thousand; from a purely advisory role relating primarily to the technical operation of weapons, Soviet advisers moved into all phases of training, planning, and air defense; and from advising mostly at the divisional level, Soviet personnel were assigned to all levels of the Egyptian armed forces."

³⁷Nogee and Donaldson, *Soviet Foreign Policy Since World War II*, pp. 193-195.

³⁸*Ibid.*, p. 193.

³⁹Rubinstein, *Red Star on the Nile*, p. 29

⁴⁰Nogee and Donaldson, *Soviet Foreign Policy Since World War II*, p. 194.

⁴¹How extensive is not really known. Inaccurate records and/or the failure to keep account records at all prohibit a reliable estimation of actual Soviet expenditures during this period.

⁴²Rubenstein, *Red Star on the Nile*, p. 130.

⁴³El Hussini, *Soviet-Egyptian Relations, 1945-85*, p. 191.

⁴⁴Freedman, *Moscow and the Middle East*, p. 49.

⁴⁵Robert O. Freedman, *Soviet Policy Toward the Middle East Since 1970*, 3rd ed. (New York, Praeger Publishers, 1982), p. 54.

⁴⁶*Ibid.*, p. 54.

⁴⁷*Ibid.*, p. 54.

⁴⁸It is important to realize that this urge to "punish" the Israelis was not a personal "vendetta" that influenced Sadat's motivation. Rather, his motivation stemmed from a national interest of regaining the territory lost in the 1967 Arab-Israeli War (i.e. re-establishment of the "territorial integrity of Egypt").

⁴⁹Freedman, *Soviet Policy Toward the Middle East Since 1970*, 3rd ed., p. 74.

⁵⁰El Hussini, *Soviet-Egyptian Relations, 1945-85*, p. 199.

⁵¹Freedman, *Soviet Policy Toward the Middle East Since 1970*, 3rd ed., p. 106.

⁵²Soviet involvement included: supporting India in its war against Pakistan, aggressively pursuing a treaty with Iraq, avoiding a confrontation with the U.S. over the Middle East situation, carefully bolstering forces along the Soviet-China border and attempting (with little success) to improve relations with Sudan.

⁵³Freedman, *Soviet Policy Toward the Middle East Since 1970*, 3rd ed., p. 125.

⁵⁴Whether or not the arms being supplied were sufficient in Sadat's estimation, the Soviets did definitely upgrade the modernization of Egypt's equipment. According to Alvin Rubenstein's, *Red Star on the Nile*, Egypt enjoyed a "10-percent increase in tanks and a 30-percent increase in the number of SAM batteries during the period from July 1, 1972, to July 1, 1973." Additionally, the number of the more modern "T-54/55 [tanks] increas[ed] from 150 to 1,650, and the most advanced T-62s increas[ed] from 10 to 100." See Chapter Seven for additional information on Soviet weaponry provided to Egypt during this period.

⁵⁵Freedman, *Soviet Policy Toward the Middle East Since 1970*, 3rd ed., p. 125.

⁵⁶During Nixon's first term, Vietnam had been an uncontrollable disease that continued to eat at the very fabric of the American institution. His first term focused on how to stop this cancerous growth America was experiencing from the Johnson administration's policies towards Vietnam, and how to disengage the U.S. from Vietnam without losing prestige among the world's actors and from within the foreign policy arena. By mid-1972 the North Vietnamese agreed to peace talks in Paris and a sincere commitment (at least the appearance of) to finding a possible solution to end the war. These accomplishment's, although long in coming, provided cautious optimism for the American people. Furthermore, if successful, it would allow Nixon and Kissinger to concentrate on "other", more important regions of the world such as; the Middle East and China. Quandt, in his book *Decade of Decisions* discusses the importance Nixon placed on these regions of the world-- namely, Vietnam, China, the USSR and the Middle East. Quandt in his discussion identifies Nixon's foreign policy theme of "linkage" and provides the insight into how each priority played in the overall game plan of American foreign policy.

⁵⁷Steven E. Ambrose, *Nixon Vol. III, Ruin and Recovery 1973-1990*, (New York, Simon and Schuster, 1991), p. 13.

⁵⁸In actuality it was Clare Boothe Luce (Congresswoman from Connecticut and Ambassador to Italy) who first conceived the idea of Kissinger working for Nixon. For a further discussion of this issue see Marvin and Bernard Kalb's book, *Kissinger*, pp. 14-17.

⁵⁹Marvin Kalb and Bernard Kalb, *Kissinger*, (Toronto, Little, Brown and Company, 1974), pp. 16-18.

⁶⁰*Ibid.*, p. 15.

⁶¹Stephen R. Graubard, *Kissinger: Portrait of a Mind*, (New York, W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1974), p. xiii.

⁶²William B. Quandt, *Decade of Decisions: American Policy Toward the Arab-Israeli Conflict, 1967-1976*, (California, University of California Press, 1977), p. 77.

⁶³The reasons for Sadat's decision to shun the Soviets and rely upon the U.S. and Kissinger to mediate a solution to the October War can be attributed to three major factors: 1) The U.S. close relationship to the Israelis. Sadat felt his best chances for gaining territory back and reaching an equitable solution could only be achieved by Kissinger and the U.S. State Department. In Sadat's eyes, the U.S. had the leverage through economic and military aid that could be used to "guide" Israel towards an agreement between the parties. This "weighted" influence could not be achieved by Soviet participation. 2) Sadat was also very impressed by the advances and agreements Nixon, Kissinger and the U.S. had made in playing the "China card." As a result, he felt secure in Kissinger being able to eventually reach, from the Egyptian perspective, an equitable solution. 3) Simply Sadat did not want the Soviets to participate. The Egyptian people and Sadat felt they had been continuously sold-out by the Soviet leadership. Egyptian critics of Soviet policy believed the Russian leadership was not sincerely dedicated to helping the Arab's plight against Israel; but only focused on using the Arabs for furthering their own priorities in the region.

⁶⁴Quandt, *Decade of Decisions: American Policy Toward the Arab-Israeli Conflict, 1967-1976*, p. 205.

⁶⁵Also referred to by scholars and foreign policy experts as "shuttle diplomacy". For an in-depth view of this diplomatic process see Quandt's, *Decade of Decisions*, Chapter VII and Ghanayem/Voth, *The Kissinger Legacy*, Chapter 6.

⁶⁶El Hussini, *Soviet-Egyptian Relations, 1945-85*, p. 205.

⁶⁷Nixon's policy of détente focused on "minimiz[ing] confrontation in marginal areas and provid[ing], at least, alternative possibilities in the major ones." (Hartmann and Wendzel, *To Preserve the Republic: United States Foreign Policy*, p. 255). With each superpower steadfast in its support for Israel and Egypt, conflict between the two seemed a very real possibility. The potentiality of surrogate warfare in an already volatile region posed the first direct assault against Nixon's "détente" policy.

⁶⁸El Hussini, *Soviet-Egyptian Relations, 1945-85*, p. 201.

⁶⁹The Israelis learned of Egypt's and Syria's intentions approximately 12 hours prior to the planned execution time. At Kissinger's insistence, Prime Minister Meir promised the U.S. that Israel would not preempt as long as they could rely upon U.S. diplomatic support and its pledge as a military ally if war could not be averted. Almost as if she could see the future, Prime Minister Meir's major concern rested with the United States willingness to provide equipment and materials expeditiously if the attack occurred and if Israel required assistance. William Quandt's *Decade of Decisions* provides further information on this subject.

⁷⁰Quandt, *Decade of Decisions*, p. 166.

⁷¹Nogee and Donaldson, *Soviet Foreign Policy Since World War II*, p. 297.

⁷²*Ibid.*, p. 297.

⁷³During the initial days of the war, Israel found itself being "slow rolled" by either someone in the State Department or the Pentagon. "Slow rolled" is a commonly used term from the Air Force lexicon which means to draw-out or prolong purposefully. Conflicting views exist

as to who was responsible for basically disregarding Israel's request for supplies. Regardless of precisely who it was, it is clear that someone was directly ignoring President Nixon's orders to begin airlifting supplies and equipment to Israel--immediately. Ghanayem and Voth, *The Kissinger Legacy*, p. 106, ascribes to William Quandt's perspective that it was Kissinger. In contrast, Kalb & Kalb, *Kissinger*, pp. 468-472 and Stephen E. Ambrose, *Nixon*, on pages 240-245, purport to hold Schlesinger (Sec. of Def) and the Pentagon directly responsible. However, just six pages prior on page 234, Ambrose quotes Admiral Elmo Zumwalt, then Chief of Naval Operations, as stating "Kissinger ordered Jim Schlesinger, in the name of the President, to stall in responding to Israeli requests for arms. While at the same time, Kissinger was telling Ambassador Dinitz that he was exerting every effort to get Schlesinger moving. . . ." Zumwalt's statement seems to be the view held by the majority of Kissinger critics.

⁷⁴Peter Allen, *The Yom Kippur War*, (New York, 1982), p. 202.

⁷⁵Frederick H. Hartmann and Robert L. Wendzel, *America's Foreign Policy in a Changing World*, (New York, HarperCollins College Publishers, 1994), p. 33.

⁷⁶Matti Golan, *The Secret Conversations of Henry Kissinger*, (New York, 1976), p. 46.

⁷⁷Marvin Kalb and Bernard Kalb, *Kissinger*, (Toronto, Little, Brown and Company, 1974), p. 487.

⁷⁸*Ibid.*, p. 487.

⁷⁹Thomas A. Bryson, *American Diplomatic Relations with the Middle East, 1784-1975: A Survey*, (New Jersey, The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 1977), p. 262.

⁸⁰Hartmann and Wendzel, *America's Foreign Policy*, p. 35.

⁸¹The challenge for Nixon and Kissinger was how much support they should provide the Jewish nation to ensure the Israelis did not suffer defeat; while also ensuring the U.S. did not provide military support in such quantities that would enable the Israelis to overwhelm their opponents and not only convincingly win the war but also punish the Egyptians and Syrians for their act. Simply put, any effort of support by U.S. leadership, in the form of economic or military aid, which would allow the tides of war to dramatically change and allow Israel to soundly defeat the Arabs, would only serve to worsen already frail U.S.-Arab relations. Unfortunately, to Nixon and Kissinger's dismay, the first days of the conflict inflicted enormous losses on Israeli military equipment (specifically aircraft and tanks) and put into question Israel's ability to effectively continue a war on two fronts. Nixon was forced to help America's ally. As a result, Nixon ordered one of the largest U.S. airlift resupply missions in history to begin. As discussed earlier, the difficulties of actually getting the airlift started took much longer than anticipated. Finally, on 14 Oct the first of many C-5 aircraft lifted off to begin the large airlift effort to Israel. "From Oct. 14 until the Oct. 25 cease-fire, the United States resupply effort delivered approximately 11,000 tons of equipment, forty F-4 Phantoms, thirty-six A-4 Skyhawks, and twelve C-130 transports." Quandt, *Decade of Decisions*, pp. 184-185.

⁸²*Ibid.*, p. 35.

⁸³Since 1967 the Arab nations had toyed with the idea of using their "oil rich resources" as a leverage tool against the United States and other Western countries--specifically Western

Europe. The Soviets during this period were equally attuned to the potential economic impact the oil crisis could have upon the Western world. If U.S. influence in the Middle East could be negated through an Israeli defeat, or a continued divergence in relations between the U.S. and Egypt be promoted, then the possibility of the Soviets reaping the advantages in holding American and Western European energy needs hostage, could conceivably allow the Kremlin to exploit the fragility of the NATO alliance. For additional information on this viewpoint see Kauppi and Nation, *The Soviet Union and the Middle East in the 1980s*, Chapter 13.

⁸⁴This included a 'military stalemate' among the three actors.

⁸⁵Gil Carl Alroy, *The Kissinger Experience: American Policy in the Middle East*, (New York, 1975), p. 149.

⁸⁶Hartmann and Wendzel, *America's Foreign Policy*, p. 35.

⁸⁷Kalb and Kalb, *Kissinger*, p. 490.

⁸⁸Mark A. Heller, Jacob Goldberg, and Steven L. Spiegel, ed., *The Soviet-American Competition in the Middle East*, (D.C. Heath and Company, 1988), p. 248. Although most foreign policy "experts" agree with Nixon's decision to order a heightened nuclear alert, "critics contend the alert was a shrill signal intended to deflect public attention away from the seamy Watergate affair and give President Nixon's prestige a much-needed boost[.] [A]ny appraisal [however] must also take into consideration the relative weakness of the conventional forces available to the United States to counter, if need be, a Soviet intervention; the worldwide deficiencies in U.S. stockpiles of arms and ammunition exposed by the airlift to Israel; and the strong domestic opposition--a reaction to Vietnam--to the use of American troops in any foreign war." Rubinstein, *Red Star on the Nile*, p. 276.

⁸⁹Kalb and Kalb, *Kissinger*, p. 492.

⁹⁰Although Soviet-Egyptian relations continued after the conclusion of the October War, it was apparent through Sadat's tone of public speeches and public criticism about Soviet arms support, that Egypt was intent upon pursuing a movement away from its dependency on Moscow (See Rubenstein, *Red Star on the Nile*, for further details). Hussini in his book *Soviet-Egyptian Relations 1945-85*, also discusses this relationship in detail. He identifies Sadat's expulsion of the Soviets in March of 1976 and his suspension of "debt repayments" in 1978 (for ten years) to the Soviets as the coup de grace in Soviet-Egyptian relations. Although Mubark (successor to Sadat after his assassination in October 1981) would invite the Soviets back and eventually restore diplomatic relations, the USSR would play a lesser role in the affairs of the Arab nations and the Middle East as a whole.

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GLOSSARY

Balance of Power: A venerable term in international relations. Usually used in one of two ways. First, to describe a system or process in which when any party threatens to become dominate, other parties (sooner or later) ally together to restrain or defeat the threatener. Second, the term sometimes is used simply to describe the actual distribution of power.

Conservation of enemies: Indicates that, to some extent, the enmity a nation faces is a variable, something that can be controlled or modified, increased or reduced. Refers specifically to making decisions which keep the number of enemies to more than are inescapable.

Counterbalancing national interests: Refers to an important aspect of choice in decision. Explains that the two major alternatives in important but controversial foreign policy choices often seem, as decision time approaches, of fairly equal value, and each to some extent tends to run counter to and balance the other. Also explains that all alternatives have both pluses and minuses, and potential changes in the international system often can be understood by examining the advantages and disadvantages of what a state has not yet chosen to do, but might.

Past-future linkages: All parties' decisions about the present and future are influenced by their perceptions of the past, especially their assumptions and projections about pluses and minuses and where in the future the choice of one alternative rather than another will lead.

Strategic sensitivity: To be strategically sensitive means to understand how any set of circumstances, patterns, or events does one or both of two things: changes the general tension level in the world, and/or increases or decreases the threat to a nation's vital interests.

Third-party influences: No relationship between two parties in international relations is ever wholly bilateral. There are always "third" (other) parties who are affected by anything two parties do with one another, and each is affected in a different way. Moreover, any party's decision or policy may originate out of or be shaped by concern about "third" parties.

*All terms and their definitions were taken from Robert L. Wendzel and Frederick H. Hartmann's book, *America's Foreign Policy in a Changing World*.