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Moscow's Realignment with Cairo: A Look at Gorbachev's New Political Thinking

STATUTORILY EXEMPT

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I. INTRODUCTION

In his speech to the Twenty-seventh Congress in 1986, Mikhail Gorbachev devoted a small amount of attention to Soviet priorities and goals in the Third World. Many Sovietologists, in fact, argue that the majority of Gorbachev's new foreign policy, what the Soviets refer to as the "new political thinking" (*novoe politicheskoe mishlenie*), is directed westward toward the United States and Western Europe. The reasons for Soviet preoccupation with political relations with the West are obvious. They reside in the perception that it is in the context of an East-West dialogue that many of the more pressing problems, which are viewed as being intrinsically connected to global concerns, can begin to be resolved, e.g., reducing nuclear and conventional weapons and economic reform.

It is not that the Third World plays an insignificant role in Soviet foreign policy – these countries play an integral part; they provide the criteria, i.e., a dual comparison that establishes the rationale that superpowers employ in order for them to be considered a superpower. It is in this interacting relationship of the powerful with the less powerful that such a status is attained in the international community. Gorbachev's strategy *vis-à-vis* the Third World is such that he is hoping to weather any short-term reversals that may follow from a partial disengagement from these countries by favoring longer-term policies of Soviet democratization and economic revitalization.[1] It is no secret, as one Sovietologist has pointed out, that "Soviet *alliances*" in the Third World have often been shaky and short-lived, and that the Soviets have gotten little from them. Egypt is the best example; Syria and Libya are not significantly better."[2]

While both superpowers have experienced the bite of anti-imperialist anger (the United States in Vietnam, Iran, and Nicaragua and the Soviet Union in Afghanistan), it is apparent that Gorbachev's new political thinking has provided Moscow with a positive tool in which to conduct its relations with the Third World. An illustration of how the new political thinking works is exemplified by recent Soviet diplomatic activity in the Middle East.

Given the geostrategic interests that the USSR has in the Middle East, one can understand the persistency of its foreign policy directed toward a region that is contiguous to its own borders. And although its relations with the major regional states (notably Egypt) have often been mercurial, originating from the USSR's insistence in viewing its relations with these states in the broader context of East-West or Sino-Soviet competition, it can be argued that current Soviet-Egyptian relations have more potential for mutual growth than at any time since the USSR began its Middle Eastern diplomacy in the mid-1950s. This improvement of relations provides Moscow with an opportunity to develop a constructive regional influence in the peace process, something that Gorbachev is actively pursuing and, thereby, directly challenging the dominant role played by the United States for several decades.

II. HISTORY

Soviet-Egyptian Relations: 1955–1980

In a speech delivered in Belgrade, Yugoslavia, in March 1988, Gorbachev stressed the importance of the Mediterranean region to Soviet national security:

> For us the Mediterranean basin is not some remote and distant area. It is close to our southern border and passing through it is the only sea lane linking our southern ports with the world ocean. Naturally, we are interested in seeing lanes of peace and not routes of war passing here.[3]

Others have commented, as well, on this particularly vital and strategic region. Michael MccGwire observed that "the Middle East and eastern Mediterranean area are of particular strategic concern to the Soviet Union because of their proximity. The Soviet leadership . . . considers the area to be the most likely source of a major East-West conflict."[4] Because the Soviet Union holds genuine security interests in this region (one can imagine as much as the U.S. has security concerns in its own hemisphere),[5] it ought to be identifiably clear to understand Moscow's incursions into and support for what was perceived to be at one time pro-Soviet regimes in the Middle East.

The first real incursion into the Middle East that the Soviets made was in September 1955; that was when the Soviet-Egyptian arms deal (accomplished through Czechoslovakia) was announced by Gamal Abdul-Nasser. This new relationship provided the Soviets with a conduit through which it could influence regional politics. The arms deal was brought about by several factors. On the Egyptian side, Nasser was searching for weapons (he initially sought them from the West) to build up the Arab Collective Security Pact, to provide Egypt with a suitable defense against Israeli strikes, and to strengthen his position as *the* Arab leader. Moscow was interested in countering American and British attempts to establish the Baghdad Pact, which was correctly perceived as an attempt to enlist regional states to contain the Soviet Union. Within these beginnings lie the pattern of Soviet-Egyptian relations: Egypt needed superpower backing to provide it with arms and supplies to sustain it in its role as the dominant Arab power; Moscow needed Egypt to help provide legitimacy to its socialist policies (as it was beginning to pursue them in the postcolonial world) and to strengthen its position *vis-à-vis* the West.

Soviet ties with Egypt during the period of the two major Arab-Israeli wars exemplify this dichotomous relationship. During the six-day war in June 1967, the Soviet Union stood solidly behind the Arab states, although it did caution them against militarily striking first. It was Nasser's aggressive actions of closing the Straits of Tiran and reoccupying Sharm al-Sheikh, as well as his vitriolic speech, that prompted the Israelis to opt for a preemptive attack. As Israeli successes mounted during the fighting, the Soviets began pressing for a cease-fire that went unheeded and caused the Soviet Bloc (less Romania) to break off diplomatic relations with Israel and, toward the end of the fighting, threaten direct intervention. Persuaded by American pressure, Israel acquiesced in accepting the Soviet proposal for a cease-fire.

The USSR rapidly increased its presence and influence in the Middle East, particularly in Egypt, during this period of Arab-Israeli tension as Nasser eagerly sought new weapons to build up Egypt's defenses following Israel's victory. This was a time that also witnessed a dramatic change of political leadership within Egypt with the death of Nasser and the rise of Anwar al-Sadat as the new Egyptian leader. As Soviet-Egyptian relations were based primarily on Nasser's personal charisma, Sadat was apprehensive and uncertain concerning the direction that Cairo's relations with Moscow were heading. Consequently, an increased period of tension and mistrust resulted between the two countries that contributed to Sadat's difficulty in acquiring new military equipment that

Egypt badly needed. Once Moscow reversed itself and agreed to meet Sadat's requests, Sadat was prepared to lead Egypt in the Arab cause against Israel.

Although Soviet influence increased sharply after each war, Sadat was acutely aware that Soviet generosity and friendship was limited and contingent on specific criteria. Remarking on the period between 1967 and 1973, Sadat wrote in his autobiography that "the Soviet Union had planned to provide us with just enough [assistance] to meet our most immediate needs and at the same time maintain its role as our guardian and ensure its presence in the region – a more important goal from the Soviet point of view."[6] Following the 1973 war, he compared the assistance both superpowers provided to their respective clients and criticized Moscow for not providing timely intelligence to the Arab front, as did Washington for Israel through the use of its satellites.[7] It was this Soviet failure to support Egypt on Egyptian terms that moved Sadat toward the West, making him realize that more could be gained by American influence than by Soviet policies. Relations were further strained when, in 1975, Moscow refused to reschedule Egypt's military debt, which led Egypt to abrogate the Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation that it had signed with the Soviet Union in 1971. And following the Camp David agreements signed by Egypt and Israel in 1978 and the Egyptian-Israeli Peace Treaty signed in 1979, Soviet influence reached its all-time low as Sadat began looking for solutions to his domestic problems from Western sources.

Soviet-Egyptian Relations in the 1980s

To understand the adverse impact this tension between the Soviet Union and Egypt was exerting on their relationship, a look at the history of their economic ties is illustrative of how the gulf between them had widened. From 1955 to 1964, Moscow had contributed one billion dollars in economic aid agreements to Egypt. In the following ten years this figure decreased over one-half to 440 million dollars. After 1975, to the end of the decade, no trade agreements were negotiated.[8] Also, by 1975, the Soviet share of Egyptian exports fell sharply from 50 percent during the previous five years to less than 15 percent.[9] These tense relations continued throughout the early 1980s and may have continued longer if Sadat had not been assassinated on 6 October 1981 by Islamic fundamentalists and Hosni Mubarak had not taken over the presidency.

Economic factors should not be the sole criteria used in determining the state of Soviet-Egyptian relations. Others must be factored into the equation, and one of the more important factors that disappeared with Sadat's assassination was the late Egyptian leader's intense distrust and, one can say without exaggeration, dislike for Soviet policies.[10] Whether Sadat may have softened his attitudes in light of current Soviet foreign policy pragmatism and compromises is difficult to ascertain. It is evident, as will be shown below, that since Mubarak came to power Moscow has displayed a willingness to improve relations with Cairo, even to the degree of reaching an agreement over past economic disputes.

The reappearance of Egypt back into the Arab camp began concurrently with the Soviet Union's own initiative *vis-à-vis* Egypt. In May 1984, the last Soviet ambassador to Egypt, Vladimir Polyakov, who had been asked to leave in 1981, visited Cairo; shortly thereafter, full diplomatic ties were restored. In September 1984, Jordan resumed its ties with Egypt, and three years later nine other countries did the same (United Arab Emirates, Iraq, Kuwait, Morocco, Yemen Arab Republic, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, Mauritania, and Qatar). Egypt was again reemerging as the traditional leader in the Arab world – without having to renounce the Camp David accords. The consequences this produces for Gorbachev's new political thinking and overall Soviet Middle East strategy

are staggering and promising, as was witnessed by Soviet Foreign Minister Shevardnadze's 11-day tour of the region in February 1989.

III. POLICY GAINS

Egypt

Egypt has always played the historical role as the cornerstone in Soviet Middle East policy; so when Sadat abrogated the Soviet-Egyptian Friendship Treaty in 1976, it was a blow to Moscow who had lost an ally and, consequently, a significant amount of influence in the region. Sadat's reasons for abrogating the treaty were many and included: Moscow's lack of desire for peace; its infringement on Egypt's sovereignty; Egypt's new economic policy, the open door (*infitah*), was opposed by Moscow; Moscow's refusal to reschedule Egypt's debt and its insistence on interest payments on the military debt; and Moscow's refusal to overhaul Egyptian military aircraft and prevention of other countries from doing so.[11] Paradoxically, the current state of affairs between Moscow and Cairo is the result of these same issues that have acted as the impetus for their rapprochement.

Soviet foreign policy initiatives are now emphasizing both the need for peace (the turning of the swords into plowshares for economic revitalization, i.e., conversion) and international cooperation.[12] In line with these initiatives is an agreement worked out by Moscow and Cairo over Egypt's repayment of its military debt.[13] With trade between the two countries increasing, it is conceivable that Moscow will begin sending replacement and spare parts for Egypt's inventory of Soviet military equipment and could possibly begin selling, once again, sophisticated weaponry in the near future. Suffice it to say that Gorbachev is attempting to regain the relationship with Egypt once enjoyed by his predecessors. This is evident by his sending Foreign Minister Shevardnadze to Cairo in February 1989 (the first such visit in 14 years). During his visit to Egypt, Shevardnadze commented that "...as the first week of our stay in the Near East draws to an end, we can see that through joint efforts Soviet-Egyptian relations have normalized completely and been brought onto an even path, and ahead of us are clear horizons."[14] The Soviet ambassador to Egypt, Gennadiy Zhuravlev, reinforcing Shevardnadze's remarks, observed that "Shevardnadze's visit had been a sign of the full normalization of economic and industrial relations between the two countries."[15]

Politically and economically, Egypt's relationship with the Soviet Union will provide it with great advantages, both in rebuilding its sagging economy and contribution to its status as a leader in Middle Eastern affairs. Mohammed Salem writes that, for Egypt, "an image of balanced international relations or nonalignment is required. This is particularly important . . . for a country . . . that sees itself as a trend setter, a leader in its own right, irrespective of the wishes of outside powers."[16] In this role, Egypt acts as an arbiter for both sides of the Arab-Israeli imbroglio; both the Soviet Union and the United States have recognized this and have included Egypt – the only Arab state with relations to Israel *and* the Palestine (PLO) – in their respective approaches to regional peace.

Commenting on Egyptian economic difficulties in November 1986, just over a year after Gorbachev came to power, a *Pravda* commentary noted that ". . . the policy of 'open doors' for private and foreign capital . . . is still harmful to the development of the national economy . . . . The country's needs, with its very fast population growth, are outstripping the pace of industrial and agricultural growth."[17] An integral part of Moscow's diplomacy *vis-à-vis* Egypt is to help meet this need for industrial growth.

Probably no single project undertaken by the USSR is more exemplary in showing Soviet economic policies of modernization in the developing world than the Aswan Dam

project was in Egypt. In his meeting with a Soviet parliamentary delegation in March 1986, Mubarak remarked that, in the past, "the USSR rendered valuable assistance to us, and we shall never forget that. The Aswan water project will always be a symbol of that friendship."[18] Speaking to the same delegation two days earlier, Salah al-Din Shihab, the head of the department of the High Aswan Dam, explained that "the economic effect of this impressive project was so great that the investment in its construction was repaid in 2.5 years, while in the first decade of its work it brought the country a new profit of 10 billion Egyptian pounds."[19] It is along these lines that Moscow is currently pursuing its relations with Egypt.

In May 1988, Foreign Minister Abd al-Majid traveled to Moscow to sign a five-year economic and trade agreement. This was the first visit of a senior Egyptian official to Moscow since 1977 and expresses a desire that both countries feel in developing warmer ties. One of the more important terms of the agreement included an increased Soviet investment in Egypt. Based on this, Moscow will provide help in developing Egypt's heavy industries (ferrous and nonferrous metallurgy), and Egyptian exports (which will, in part, contribute to paying Egypt's debt) will expand to include cotton, textiles, carpets, furniture, clothes, leather, and fruit and vegetables.[20]

This significant agreement, the fourth to be signed between the two countries (the others were in 1958, 1962, and 1971) and concluded at a time when Soviet foreign policy interests (particularly economic interests) are being reevaluated toward the Third World, exhibits the centrality of Egypt to Moscow's Middle East policy. In a recent interview, the Soviet deputy minister for foreign economic affairs emphasized that ". . . economic ties between the USSR and Egypt are of a mutually beneficial nature."[21] The economic advantages to Egypt are many. The modernization of its heavy industries (many of them Soviet-built) will contribute to Egypt's revitalization of its economy.

On the other hand, the Soviet's economic "payback" will not be as readily forthcoming. Moscow is aware of Egyptian primacy in the Middle East and is seeking its influence through establishing a viable *quid pro quo* relationship with Cairo. By providing economic assistance and being generous in forgetting past mistakes, Moscow is soliciting Egyptian support for its peace initiative and, more importantly, recognition as a superpower equal in status to that of Washington.

SOVIET UNION

New Political Thinking

If Gorbachev's reformation is to be comprehended, then his reforms, in their entirety, must be scrutinized and analyzed to determine what linkage, if any, may be found between his domestic and foreign policies. As with the other reforms that the West is so familiar with – reconstruction (*perestroika*), openness (*glasnost*), and acceleration (*uskorenie*) – "new political thinking" is intended to reinforce Gorbachev's overall reform policies.

Distinct from the domestic reforms, foreign policy reform is comprised of a more flexible and sophisticated diplomacy, grounded in pragmatism and enshrouded by a new theoretical approach.[22] With this new approach, the USSR is not seeking a diminished role in world affairs. On the contrary, it is seeking to establish what one writer has termed "a strategy of retrenchment," an inherently superpower stance that is designed to emphasize the universal values of the world community in an effort to downplay superpower differences.[23] A retrenchment permits the Soviet Union to take a "breathing space," a uniquely Soviet phenomenon that, in the warning of some, the West cannot afford to ignore.[24]

Gorbachev's United Nations speech, given in December 1988, was heralded by many as containing the elaboration of the Soviet new political thinking. Shevardnadze remarked in an interview given shortly after Gorbachev's UN address that "the speech signified the further and, moreover, very considerable materialization of the principles of new political thinking."[25] The principles enunciated in the speech contained numerous references to the new world order that the Soviet leader is envisioning (progress, interdependence, and security). As well, Gorbachev emphasized that "today we have entered an era when progress will be based on the interests of all mankind. Consciousness of this requires that world policy, too, should be determined by the priority of the values of all mankind."[26] These values include democratization (consensus of mankind), self determination, balancing of interests, disarmament (cessation of the threat of force), freedom of choice (unity in diversity), deideolologization of interstate relations, political dialogue, and an increased role by the United Nations in solving international issues (development, Third World debt crisis, ecological threats, and regional conflicts).[27]

New Political Thinking and the Middle East

Prior to his departure to the Middle East in February, Shevardnadze suggested that one ". . . can form a general impression about the course of our thinking in preparing for the tour by studying Mikhail Gorbachev's address to the United Nations on 7 December 1988. The principles of our vision of the world, set forth in the address, apply also to the Near and Middle East."[28] And throughout his visit, Shevardnadze reiterated the pertinence of the new political thinking to the Middle East.[29]

This visit, which followed immediately after the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan (and possibly timed to emphasize the moderation of the new Soviet policy *vis-à-vis* the Islamic nations), also following the development of new diplomatic ties with Oman and the United Arab Emirates, and the beginning of a dialogue with Saudi Arabia, is telling evidence of Moscow's earnestness in establishing a presence in the region. One author wrote that this presence is "most significant, [because] the Soviet Union has experimented with developing good ties to both sides of certain Third World conflicts – potentially a very formidable innovation in Soviet diplomacy, which has generally been limited to cooperative relations with one side only."[30] The most dramatic example of this new course in Soviet policy is apparent in Moscow's efforts to reestablish official ties with Israel. Relations between the two countries are currently being held back by Israel's reluctance to agree to a convening of an international peace conference. Shevardnadze explained during his visit to Cairo why the USSR is intent on developing relations with both sides of the Arab-Israeli conflict:

> Each time we establish a contact that seemed impossible or impermissible only yesterday, we ask ourselves: in the name of what?
> In this case, in the name of peace in the Near East. This is the answer formulated in its most general form. Answering more specifically, we say: for preparing an international conference on the Near East.[31]

The USSR has learned that, for it to be a player in the peace process, it must be in a position where it can persuade and assure each side that it is capable of fulfilling the promises it makes. To do this, a dialogue must be developed, and for the past two decades, Moscow has been unable to initiate one. The USSR unilaterally broke its ties with Israel during the 1967 war and in the mid-1970s fell out of grace with Egypt. To progress in finding solutions to regional problems, one must have influence with every interested party. Moscow is still attempting to develop this influence with Israel; it has, to a large degree, accomplished this task with Egypt.

The Egyptian Card

What is the value of Egypt's strategic advantage that Moscow is seeking to co-opt? Historically, Egypt has always maintained a position as a "cornerstone" for Soviet Third World policy. Clearly, it enjoys a position as the dominant Arab military regional power. It is, as well, the only Arab state to have formalized its relations with Israel, which now, ten years after Camp David, appears to have had a negligible effect on its position as an Arab leader. If anything, Camp David has shown that Egypt is able to pursue its own policies independent of regional pressures and continue to be influential.[32] Moscow has taken note of Egypt's position and recognizes that a Middle East diplomacy without Egypt is likely to flounder.

To underscore the significance of Soviet initiatives toward Egypt, it is important to note that with Shevardnadze's visit to Cairo, several "firsts" occurred. It was the first on-site campaign by Gorbachev to advance his Mideast peace proposals. It was also a first that all sides to the conflict (PLO Chairman Arafat, Israeli Foreign Minister Arens, and Egyptian President Mubarak) met in one country (albeit at separate times) with a high ranking Soviet official. The most significant first was the meeting held between the Israeli foreign minister and his Soviet counterpart *in* the Middle East.[33] These are important events for they show that Moscow, under Gorbachev's new political thinking, has initiated serious and positive policies aimed at challenging Washington's dominant role in the region; they also account for Egypt's central role in Soviet policy.

United States' Interests

Does Shevardnadze's visit to the Middle East portend an eclipse of American power and interests in the region? The peace process has long been stalled. Even with the PLO's bold actions in renouncing terrorism, recognizing Israel's right to exist within secure borders accepting UN Resolutions 242 and 338, and following that the U.S.'s willingness to talk with the PLO, there continues to be insufficient progress toward substantial peace talks. This led Gennadiy Tarasov, the deputy chief of the Middle East Countries Department at the USSR foreign ministry, to remark that "it is common knowledge that the Camp David accord died a long time ago."[34] After his meetings with Foreign Minister Arens and Chairman Arafat (six hours apart), Shevardnadze reminded those listening that "without the Soviet Union, there can be no peace process."[35] It is certain that the Soviets have started taking new steps in the Middle East, and there are many states in the region who welcome this new impetus in reviving the peace process.[36] It will be largely dependent on how the two superpowers resolve their competitiveness concerning their interests in the region that will decide how soon and in what direction the peace process will take.

Moscow's bold initiatives will provide a challenge to the United States. Part of the concept of the new political thinking is to disengage from severe and debilitating competition among the superpowers; however, as Gorbachev explained in his UN speech:

> The fundamental fact remains that the formation of the peaceful period will take place in conditions of the existence and rivalry of various socioeconomic and political systems. However, the meaning of our international efforts and one of the key tenets of the new thinking is precisely to impart to this rivalry the quality of sensible competition in conditions of respect for freedom of choice and a balance of interests.[37]

Moscow has already initiated this "sensible competition" in the region. With Egypt's Soviet debt repayment solved (with the agreement to forgo interest payments), the onus

will be on Washington to solve its own substantial debt problems with Cairo. No matter what steps are taken, the United States must soon establish the policies it feels it needs to pursue for it to maintain its Middle East interests and status.

IV. CONCLUSION

George Keenan recently noted that "[The Soviet Union] should now be regarded essentially as another great power like other great powers . . . " and stressed that Soviet-American relations should be viewed ". . . by the normal means of compromise and accommodation."[38] With most regional issues outside the superpower's respective borders, the specter of their interests are consistently present. One finds it difficult to discuss global affairs apart from this reality. As well, one cannot talk about Mideast affairs without the inclusion of the regional powers or those states that are directly involved. When one superpower pursues a policy objective in the region, inevitably it will be viewed in light of its rival's reaction to it. Recent Soviet diplomacy reflects this phenomenon.

Shevardnadze delivered his keynote address during his visit to Cairo, the third stop of his 11-day tour. The address was indicative of the sophisticated level that Soviet diplomacy has risen under the aegis of Gorbachev's leadership and was forceful in presenting Soviet goals in an even and unbiased way. The most significant action taken by Moscow was the use of Egypt as a means of meeting both Arafat and Arens, with its foreign minister acting as mediator. In this regard, Egypt's centrality to Soviet goals cannot be overemphasized. This is crucial to Gorbachev's larger plans in the region; it is most challenging to Washington's own status and interests.

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NOTES

1. This point was brought out in Stephen Sestanovich's "Gorbachev's Foreign Policy: A Diplomacy of Decline," *Problems of Communism*, January–February 1988, p. 7.

2. Seweryn Bialer, "The Soviet Union and the West: Security and Foreign Policy," in *Gorbachev's Russia and American Foreign Policy*, eds. Seweryn Bialer and Michael Mandelbaum (Boulder: Westview Press, 1988), p. 476.

3. Mikhail Gorbachev, "The Democratization of World Politics," *Vital Speeches of the Day*, 1 May 1988, p. 419.

4. Michael K. MccGwire, "Soviet Strategic Aims and Capabilities in the Mediterranean: Part I," in *Adelphi Papers 229: Prospects for Security in the Mediterranean Part I* (London: The International Institute for Strategic Studies, Spring 1988), p. 27.

5. This is, as is well understood, the very rationale behind the Monroe Doctrine when, in 1823, James Monroe argued that "any attempt on [Europe's] part to extend [its] system to any portions of this hemisphere [will be considered] dangerous to our peace and safety." As quoted in Alexander DeConde, *A History of American Foreign Policy*, 3rd ed., Vol. 1: *Growth to World Power: 1700–1914* (New York: Scribners, 1978), p. 130.

6. Anwar el-Sadat, *In Search of Identity* (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1978), p. 187.

7. Ibid., p. 260.

8. Ali E. Hillal Dessouki, "The Primacy of Economics: The Foreign Policy of Egypt," in *The Foreign Policies of Arab States*, eds. Bahgat Korany and Ali E. Hillal Dessouki, (Boulder: Westview Press, 1984), p. 138.

9. Ibid.

10. Sadat emphasized this in his autobiography, *In Search of Identity*, p. 284, when he wrote that ". . . from the very first [the Soviets] . . . behaved in their usual crude, even rude, manner, which showed no sign of apprehending reality. . . ."

11. Kornay and Dessouki, *The Foreign Policies of Arab States*, p. 136.

12. Gorbachev spoke directly to this theme in his December 1988 UN speech:

> *The world community must learn to shape and direct processes in such a way as to preserve civilization, to make it safe for all and more pleasant for normal life. It is a question of cooperation that could be more accurately called 'cocreation' and 'codevelopment.' The formula of development 'at another's expense' is becoming outdated. In light of present realities, genuine progress by infringing upon the rights and liberties of man and peoples, or at the expense of nature, is impossible.*

Mikhail Gorbachev, "M.S. Gorbachev's United Nations Address" (text), Moscow *Pravda* (8 December 1988), pp. 1–2. Translated by The Foreign Broadcast Information Service (hereafter cited as FBIS), *FBIS Daily Report-Soviet Union*, 8 December 1988. (FBIS-SOV-88-236; 12.)

13. Butrus Ghali, Egyptian minister of state of foreign affairs, announced in August 1988 that the USSR was willing to forgo interest on Egypt's military debt while, at the same time, agreeing to a long grace period and an appropriate payment schedule. Cairo *MENA*, 0700 GMT, 17 August 1988.

14. Eduard Shevardnadze, "Shevardnadze Cairo Speech on Mideast Conflict" (text), Moscow *IZVESTIYA* (24 February 1989), p. 4. *FBIS Daily Report-Soviet Union*, 24 February 1989. (FBIS-SOV-89-036; 19.)

15. Cairo *MENA*, 1609 GMT, 5 March 1989.

16. Mohammed Anis Salem, "The Soviet Union and Egypt after Sadat: Premises, Prospects, and Problems," in *The Soviet Union and the Middle East in the 1980s*, eds. Mark V. Kauppi and Craig R. Nation (Lexington: D.C. Heath and Company, 1983), p. 175.

17. "Pravda on Egyptian Cabinet's Economic 'Dilemma'," Moscow *PRAVDA*, 16 November 1986, p. 5. *FBIS Daily Report-Soviet Union*, 20 November 1986. (FBIS-SOV-86; H2)

18. "USSR Parliamentary Delegation Meets Mubarak" (text), Moscow *TASS*, 24 March 1986. *FBIS Daily Report-Soviet Union*, 25 March 1986. (FBIS–SOV–86; H1.)

19. "Supreme Soviet Delegation Visits Egypt's Aswan Dam" (text), Moscow *TASS*, 22 March 1986. *FBIS Daily Report-Soviet Union*, 24 March 1986. (FBIS-SOV-86; H1.)

20. Paris *AFP*, 1258 GMT, 19 May 1988.

21. Deputy Minister Mordvinov stated that the USSR hopes that Egyptian firms will take part in economic projects within the Soviet Union, such as hotels, tourist complexes, and hospitals. "TASS on Soviet-Egyptian Economic Cooperation" (text), Moscow TASS, 30 December 1988. *FBIS Daily Report-Soviet Union*, 3 January 1989. (FBIS-SOV-89-001; 32.)

22. Gorbachev's "new political thinking" and its incorporation into Soviet international relations theory is explained by Margot Light in her book, *The Soviet Theory of International Relations*, (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1988), Chapter 10.

23. Sestanovich, "Gorbachev's Foreign Policy: A Diplomacy of Decline," p. 4.

24. For example, Robert Gates, the deputy national security advisor, warns that the West ". . . cannot ignore the cyclical turn to reform, detente, and foreign assistance each time the [Soviet] system has faced catastrophe. For 70 years we have watched the Soviets proclaim reform and turn to the West for help, while at the end of the day the essential features of their system remained unchanged." Robert M. Gates, "Sovietology: The Uneven Cycles of Kremlin Reform" *The Washington Post*, 30 April 1989, sec. C3.

25. Eduard Shevardnadze, "Shevardnadze Comments on Gorbachev UN Speech" (text), Moscow *MOSCOW NEWS*, 25 December 1988, 1; 8-9. *FBIS Daily Report-Soviet Union*, 12 January 1989. (FBIS-SOV-89-008; 12.)

26. Gorbachev, "United Nations Address," p. 12.

27. The candid remarks by Soviet officials concerning the concepts enunciated in the "new political thinking" are indicators of Soviet sincerity in their foreign policy initiatives. In referring to these concepts, Shevardnadze explained that "there is also a need . . . for in-depth work on the modern interpretation of notions which are relatively new for us – 'the *common* interests of the whole humankind,' 'humankind's *common* values.'" Ibid., p. 13 (emphases mine).

28. Moscow *TASS*, 1511 GMT, 15 February 1989.

29. See, for example, Eduard Shevardnadze, "Gives Dinner Speech" (text), Moscow *TASS*, 19 February 1989. *FBIS Daily Report-Soviet Union*, 21 February 1989. (FBIS-SOV-89-033; 19.)

30. Sestanovich, "Gorbachev's Foreign Policy: A Diplomacy of Decline," p. 13.

31. Shevardnadze, "Shevardnadze Cairo Speech," p. 19.

32. Soviet diplomacy *vis-à-vis* other moderate Arab states can be viewed in light of Egypt's reentry into the Arab fold. In March 1989, King Fahd of Saudi Arabia visited Egypt in what was heralded in Egypt as its "symbolic confirmation of reconciliation with the Arab World." See "Egyptians Celebrate Arrival of Saudi King," *The Washington Post*, 28 March 1989, sec. A12.

Egypt is also developing, what was reported to be, an integral role in formulating "unofficial yet substantive dialogue between Israel and the [PLO]." See "Indirect PLO-Israeli Talks Evolving," *The Washington Post*, 19 April 1989, sec. A21, p. 24.

These new positions of Egyptian influence in the Mideast will readily affect Soviet-Egyptian relations as Moscow ascertains the advantages that such relationship promises. It is interesting that a large portion of Soviet diplomacy is directed toward those states involved with Egypt.

33. By urging the Egyptians to host this meeting, Moscow has demonstrated that it will be pursuing many of its objectives through its "regional friends." It is also illustrative of Gorbachev's broad foreign policy initiatives.

34. "Soviet Middle East Official Reviews Diplomacy," Kuwait *AL-ANBA'*, 7 January 1989. FBIS Daily Report-Soviet Union, 10 January 1989. (FBIS-SOV-89-006; 33.)

35. "Moscow Tries to Catch Up in the Middle East," *The New York Times*, 26 February 1989, sec. 4, p. 3.

36. President Mubarak stressed that "rapprochement between the superpowers facilitates their participation in resolving the Middle East problem." Cairo *MENA*, 1830 GMT, 25 February 1989.

37. Gorbachev, "United Nations Address," p. 19.

38. "Revolutionary Epoch Ending in Russia, Kennan Declares," *The Washington Post*, 5 April 1989, sec. A22.