

Middle East Report by Robert Dreyfuss

A Kremlin pact with Carrington

The Soviets are lining up with Britain's geopolitics to drive the United States out of the region.

Soviet President Leonid Brezhnev issued an unusually strong condemnation of the United States on Oct. 27 for "endangering" Libya with "saber-rattling" in the Mediterranean. In a speech greeting the arrival of the President of North Yemen, Ali Abdullah Saleh, Brezhnev declared: "The so-called 'strategic cooperation' between the United States and Israel means blood, destruction, and sorrow for the Arabs," and called for an international "people's" alliance to challenge "U.S. imperialism."

Brezhnev's statement is a signal from the top of the Soviet leadership that the Kremlin has adopted a policy of fomenting chaos in the Middle East, using its radical allies, such as Libya, to challenge the United States. Behind this policy is a deal between Moscow and the British Secret Intelligence Service under Foreign Secretary Lord Carrington to carve up the region and force the U.S. out. The mediators in arranging this agreement are a Soviet KGB faction under Soviet Communist Party Central Committee hardliners Michael Suslov and Boris Ponomarev—and the Russian Orthodox Church.

The Oct. 17 arrival in Moscow of Patriarch Ignatius, leader of the Antioch Orthodox Church, is seen by Arab intelligence sources as an indication that the Soviets are planning "a major crisis" in the Middle East. Lebanese sources report that the Patriarch's rare visits to the

Kremlin are always followed by fresh destabilizations in this area. Ignatius, a protégé of the British Anglican intelligence operative Herbert Waddams, will meet Patriarch Pimen of the Russian Orthodox Church, a leading KGB operative. These sources report that they are now plotting a renewed war in Lebanon, where the Antiochian Church has profound influence, with the complicity of a faction of Israeli intelligence centered around Defense Minister Ariel Sharon as the first phase of their policy.

Lebanese diplomatic sources report that during the last week in October, Israel began massing troops in preparation for a terrorist attack from radical Arabs in southern Lebanon.

As Ignatius was visiting Moscow, 14 communist parties of the Eastern Mediterranean, the Mid-east, and the Red Sea convened their first regional meeting to coordinate tactics on "combatting U.S. activity" in the area. The participants included the legal parties of Israel, Greece, Cyprus, Syria, Jordan, and Iran's Tudeh Party, and the outlawed parties of Turkey, Egypt, Sudan, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, and Bahrain, with representatives from Ethiopia and Afghanistan.

Qaddafi himself delivered a statement that was transmitted throughout the Arabic world on Radio Tripoli warning that Egypt's Hosni Mubarak would "soon receive the same treatment delivered

to Sadat."

And Radio Moscow's Arab-language broadcasts have taken on an increasingly radical tone. An Oct. 20 broadcast attacked Saudi Crown Prince Fahd's peace plan and endorsed the call of the "Steadfastness Front" meeting in September in Libya that Arab states should "use all resources at their disposal . . . including oil and the billions of dollars in American banks," as a weapon against the U.S.

Over the same period, Moscow intensified its Arab diplomacy. Palestine Liberation Organization chief Yasser Arafat made a surprise visit to Moscow late last month, where the Kremlin made the decision to give the PLO full diplomatic status, the first major power to do so.

The Arafat visit, which was set up by Ponomarev was followed less than 72 hours later by the arrival of both the President of North Yemen, and the Kuwaiti Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs, Abdul Aziz Hussein. The stepped-up Soviet diplomacy, particularly with nations of the Arabian peninsula such as Yemen and Kuwait, is intended to pressure Saudi Arabia to open relations with Moscow.

The unusual reception delivered Oct. 26 to North Yemenese President Saleh is meant to send a shock through the Saudi elite. North Yemen has traditionally been a strong Saudi ally and a buffer between Saudi Arabia and South Yemen, a Marxist-Leninist regime which recently signed a military pact with Libya. Arab sources report that the aggressive Soviet diplomacy will probably benefit a faction within the Saudi elite centered around Third Crown Prince Abdullah which favors closer ties with the Kremlin.