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MEMORANDUM

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

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December 1, 1972

MEMORANDUM FOR: MR. KISSINGER -

FROM: RICHARD T. KENNEDY *[Signature]*

SUBJECT: Moscow and the Fedayeen

To assist the Cabinet Committee on Terrorism, CIA has done a brief review of the relationship between Moscow and the fedayeen. The principal points of the paper, summarized below, are of interest.

- By supporting the fedayeen, Moscow is pursuing its own political -- not Palestinian -- goals in the Middle East. While Soviet military forces and advisers were being expelled from Egypt in July, a delegation of the Palestine Liberation Organization, headed by Yasir Arafat, was in Moscow seeking more and better arms. Although the Soviets until 1968 had stayed clear of the fedayeen and denounced guerrilla terrorism, the events of 1969 evidently convinced the USSR it could no longer forego riding the wave of fedayeen popularity in the Arab world nor leave support of this "liberation" movement exclusively to the Chinese.
- The decision to provide open support to the undisciplined and dangerous fedayeen could not have been easily reached by the USSR, and Moscow has kept the relationship sufficiently informal to avoid being blamed for the terrorists' worst excesses. In spite of the fact that the USSR is the greatest present and potential source of arms for the fedayeen, as well as a useful spokesman for "progressive" Arab causes, the fedayeen leaders are not subservient to Moscow.
- The USSR is aware that the principal aim of virtually all fedayeen organizations is the return of displaced Palestinians to their homeland -- i. e., the destruction of Israel. The Soviets also thoroughly understand that their support for any serious attempt to destroy Israel could set them on a collision course with the U. S. Herein lies Moscow's dilemma. However, until their popularity fades, Soviet assistance (although within careful bounds) to the fedayeen -- and consequently indirect support for their terrorist acts -- will continue.

Saunders and Sonnenfeldt (Livingston) concur.

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