

*(Revised draft)*

## **Un-Finished Business**

### **A never-sent diplomatic note confirms Moscow's premeditation of the Six-Day War Isabella Ginor and Gideon Remez**

Late at night on June 5, 1967, the Soviet Ambassador in Israel Dmitri Chuvakhin handed Prime Minister Levi Eshkol a note from the Soviet government, expressing its indignation at Israel's "adventurist act," which "exposed the essence of the policy of the ruling circles in Israel, who are prepared – for the sake of their own narrow interests – to play with the world's fate."<sup>1</sup> That morning, Israel had launched its devastating pre-emptive air strike at the air forces of its Arab neighbors, which in effect determined the outcome of what was to become known as the Six-Day War.

The contents of this Soviet note and the circumstances of its delivery are well documented by Israeli and other sources.<sup>2</sup> They would not merit any fresh interest, were it not for the note's recent publication in Russia, in a volume of documents on the Middle Eastern conflict from the Soviet Foreign Ministry archive.<sup>3</sup> This collection includes very few documents pertaining to the crisis and war of June 1967, and even fewer that appear to provide any new insights on the Soviet role therein. But a closer examination reveals that several important disclosures did slip through, perhaps inadvertently. These details provide important confirmation for the newly emerging evidence that the USSR played a much larger and more deliberate role in instigating and managing this crisis than has heretofore been recognized.<sup>4</sup>

One of these instances is an extraordinary example of diplomatic practice, or malpractice, concerning the aforementioned Soviet note of June 5 to the Israeli government. This note, as reproduced in the new Russian anthology, is accompanied by the following cover letter:

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the USSR expresses its respect for the Embassy of Finland in Moscow, and has the honor of requesting the Embassy not to decline the courtesy of forwarding to its destination the original of the letter from the Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the USSR, A.N. Kosygin, addressed to the Prime Minister of the State of Israel, Mr. Levi Eshkol, dated June 5 1967.

The Ministry thanks the Embassy in advance for fulfilling this request and takes this occasion to reiterate its expression of the highest esteem for the Embassy.

Moscow, < > June 1967

To: Embassy of Finland in the USSR

Moscow

ATTACHMENT<sup>5</sup>

The surprising aspect of this document is that Finland started representing the Soviet Union's interests toward Israel only after the USSR severed its diplomatic relations with Israel – which occurred five days later, on June 10, 1967. At the authors' request, Max Jakobson, who in 1967 was Finland's Permanent Representative at the United Nations, obtained the following authoritative clarification from the Foreign Ministry in Helsinki:

The USSR asked Finland to represent it toward Israel on June 10. The request was submitted to the Foreign Ministry by the Soviet Ambassador in Helsinki. The positive reply was given late in the evening of June 10, and, that same evening, a message was sent to the Finnish Embassy in Tel Aviv, instructing it to start functioning in that capacity from June 11. The messages of June 5 and 7 were not transmitted through Finland; in fact nothing was sent before June 11.<sup>6</sup>

Moreover, according to article 45 of the Vienna Convention governing diplomatic protocol, Israel's consent for Finland's representing Soviet interests also had to be obtained before any correspondence between the USSR and Israel via Helsinki could be started.<sup>7</sup> The USSR had a well-deserved reputation for meticulous observance of such diplomatic minutiae, and even if Israel's approval was a mere formality, nevertheless it was a time-consuming procedure that had to be accomplished before the Finnish channel could be activated – and this occurred only on June 11, as confirmed in documents provided to the present writers by the Ministry in Helsinki via the Finnish Embassy in Tel Aviv and others located in Israel's State Archive.<sup>8</sup>

Furthermore, even if this formal process had already been started on June 5, transmitting the message would have required a further delay. The *modus operandi* that came into effect after diplomatic relations had been severed, and the time this procedure necessitated, are illustrated by the first note that is documented as actually having been transmitted to Israel via Finland. This is a note from the Soviet Foreign Ministry dated June 13, which is also included in the new Russian volume. The format here is entirely different: not a note to Israel with a cover letter to the Finns, but a single note addressed to the “protecting power:”

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the USSR expresses its respect for the Embassy in Finland in Moscow and, by request of the Soviet Government, asks it to bring without delay to the knowledge of the State of Israel the following: <sup>9</sup>...

In an internal memorandum of the Israeli Foreign Ministry about the receipt of this note, official Arieh Ilan states:

This morning the Finnish Ambassador called me and asked to transmit a Soviet communication, which was received on June 13 at 01:45 by the Embassy of Finland in Moscow. The

communication was translated from Russian into Finnish and from Finnish into English. The Ambassador of Finland dictated to me the following version: ...<sup>10</sup>

Assuming that the Finns respected the Soviet request to transmit the message “without delay,” which explains its dictation by telephone, it emerges that due to the double translation, even an urgent message from Moscow to Tel-Aviv via Helsinki needed at least 8 hours to reach its destination.<sup>11</sup> The chronology of events on June 5, as reviewed below, shows this could neither have been contemplated nor accomplished on that day.

But in any event, on June 5 the formal groundwork for Finland’s involvement had not even been begun. Indeed, this was still the case on June 7, when yet another note to Israel is also described in the new Russian collection as “sent through the Embassy of Finland in the USSR”. This document, as reproduced, includes neither a cover letter as in the note of June 5 nor a preamble addressed to the Finnish Embassy as in the note of June 13. Its supposed transmission through the Finnish Embassy is asserted only in a footnote by the editors of the volume.<sup>12</sup> Like its predecessor of June 5, the note of June 7 is also amply recorded elsewhere as actually having been delivered directly to Israel: it was brought by a Soviet Foreign Ministry courier to Israel’s Embassy in Moscow,<sup>13</sup> and, in Israel, by Ambassador Chuvakhin to the Director-General of the Foreign Ministry, Arielevavi.<sup>14</sup> What is more, the main thrust of the June 7 note is a *threat* to sever diplomatic relations with Israel, which confirms that at the time of writing the USSR recognized these relations as still remaining intact.

In fact, on June 10 even the actual Soviet decision to sever diplomatic relations was read personally by Soviet First Deputy Foreign Minister Vasili Kuznetsov to Ambassador Katriel Katz, who was invited for the purpose to the Ministry in Moscow.<sup>15</sup> Remarkably, Kuznetsov’s report of carrying out this task is also included in the same new Russian volume of documents, even though it clearly shows that no Finnish services were required earlier.<sup>16</sup> Again, the message was transmitted in parallel in Israel as well, as historian Moshe A. Gilbo’a recorded soon after the events: “One hour later [after its delivery to Katz] Chuvakhin brought the Soviet decision to Israeli Foreign Minister Abba Eban.”<sup>17</sup> Finland was not involved in this exchange either, and still had no reason to be.

How, then, can the Soviet requests of Finland to forward the notes of June 5 and 7 to Israel be accounted for, since they were both diplomatically incorrect and – especially – since in practice they were never even presented to the Finns, much less carried out by them? This extraordinary discrepancy between historical fact, diplomatic protocol and archival records provides the documentary confirmation for the mounting evidence from other sources that well *before* Israel’s pre-emptive strike, which was supposedly the reason for Moscow’s decision to sever relations, this Soviet move had already been determined and its implementation planned – down to the detail of appointing Finland as the “protecting power.”<sup>18</sup> What is more, a decision of such magnitude must have been taken at the highest level of leadership – the Politburo – as a matter of political-military strategy.

This conclusion stems from a minute but telltale feature in the cover letter of the June 5 note. The full date of the attached message to Israel appears in the cover letter to Finland. However, this letter *itself* is dated only “< >June 1967” – that is, the day is left blank. The meticulous reproduction of this detail by the volume’s editors, headed by Vitaly Naumkin, can only be commended, as its implications are far-reaching and contradict the official Soviet version of events as well as conventional Western historiography. It demonstrates clearly that this letter was prepared *in advance* for delivery sometime in June, with only the exact day of the request left open, to be filled in when the letter was to be used – after the procedure of severing diplomatic relations with Israel was completed – although the note to Israel itself was prepared bearing the date June 5, for the record.

Could the note bearing the date June 5 have been prepared before the events to which it supposedly responded took place? Evidently so, if these events were expected. The new document collection also offers another example which illustrates how circulating such papers before their official date of promulgation was a standard operating procedure, and was used on other occasions in the same crisis. On May 21, Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko instructed the Soviet Permanent Representative at the United Nations, with copies to the Soviet Ambassadors in Egypt, Syria and the United States, how they were to make use of “the Soviet Government’s Statement *of May 23* [emphasis added]”<sup>19</sup> – which had evidently been formulated, approved and distributed even earlier.

It appears, therefore, that the central Soviet moves in the crisis, and the documents to be used for implementing them, were planned and prepared well beforehand. The documents just listed show that these premeditated moves included a break of diplomatic relations with Israel after it was to be provoked into a first strike against Egypt, following the latter’s massive troop deployment in Sinai, closure of the straits of Tiran to Israeli shipping, and increasingly aggressive rhetoric. This may account for the fact, of which more will be said below, that the June 5 note to Israel refers only to its attacking *Egypt*, although in fact other Arab states were already involved in the war: “the Soviet government expresses its strong condemnation of Israel’s treacherous attack on a neighboring Arab state – the United Arab Republic.”<sup>20</sup>

The same is true of the first Soviet message sent over the hotline to Washington on June 5, which was signed by Alexei N. Kosygin, the Chairman of the USSR’s Council of Ministers, as head of government.<sup>21</sup> Not only does it fail to reflect the sense of urgency and looming disaster, which does emanate from subsequent Soviet messages during the war; it too speaks only of “military clashes between Israel and the United Arab Republic,” even though by that time reports from the Soviet Ambassadors in Syria and Jordan should have reached Moscow. In the course of that morning, the President of Iraq had already informed the Soviet Ambassador in Baghdad that Syria and Jordan were involved as well as Egypt,<sup>22</sup> and in Amman, the Soviet Ambassador took part in a meeting of the chiefs of diplomatic missions, which was convened in the morning by King Hussein.<sup>23</sup>

Compare this with a telegram sent by Gromyko to the Soviet Ambassadors in Mongolia, North Korea and North Vietnam on June 13, 1967:

When as a result of the treacherous aggression by Israel military actions developed, the Soviet Union resolutely supported the UAR *and other Arab countries* [emphasis added] that were the subject of attack. On the day military actions began, the Soviet Government published a statement in which it qualified Israeli actions as aggression, resolutely condemned Israel and demanded of it, as a first urgent measure, to liquidate the military conflict, to stop immediately and unconditionally military operations against the UAR, *Syria, Jordan and other Arab States* [emphasis added], and to withdraw its forces behind the armistice line. The same goal was sought by the Chairman of the Council of the Ministers of the USSR A.N. Kosygin's message to the Prime Minister of Israel Eshkol, sent on the same day."<sup>24</sup>

Gromyko diplomatically avoided specifying the names of the countries attacked from his reference to Kosygin's message to Eshkol; But Kosygin's actual text named only the UAR as the victim of Israeli attack, as did the hotline message to Johnson. Gromyko's own mention of "Syria, Jordan and other Arab states" was made with the benefit of hindsight. So too was CPSU General Secretary Leonid Brezhnev's secret address to an urgent plenum of the Party's Central Committee on June 20, in which he spoke of an Israeli attack on several Arab states.<sup>25</sup>

The note to Israel and the cover letter to Finland are not the only documents that the Soviets are now shown to have prepared well ahead of the war's outbreak. On the propaganda front, according to the Russian orientalist Alexei Vasiliev, during the first two days of the war the Soviet press published reports that were written before fighting started.<sup>26</sup> This phenomenon was noted with surprise on June 5 by the Director of Intelligence and Research at the State Department in Washington:

The two commentaries on Moscow radio (one in English at 12:00Z [GMT] and one in Arabic two hours later) were unusual; the Soviet media normally clam up in a situation like this and then begin commenting only after some of the dust has settled. It may be that the two broadcasts were merely following the pre-established line with appropriate amendment for the fact of hostilities. But if so it would appear that the policy levels in Moscow made no move to turn off the propaganda spigot for six hours after they had the first word of hostilities (in Moscow the news of the fighting came during business hours).

Thus, the Soviet propaganda --- if only by a decision to do nothing different – has been allowed to continue its previous tack.<sup>27</sup>

Analysis of the sequence of the Soviet publications, declarations and military moves on June 5 thus suggests that the note to Israel bearing that date was itself prepared in advance. The date of this note appears in the text of the cover letter, which itself is undated; while the Soviets appear to have expected the war to begin on June 5, and intended the diplomatic protest to Israel to bear this date for the record, the technical procedure of breaking off relations, appointing Finland and obtaining Israel's approval might have been expected to take another day or two. The delay would only have served the Soviet war plan as outlined below, since it would help to hold off any ceasefire until the Israeli offensive was halted and countered.

The appearance of Egypt alone in the first Soviet documents, to be replaced later by a list of Arab states, is also accounted for by the Soviet premeditation of the crisis as exposed by recently accumulated evidence. The phrasing of the letter to Eshkol and the cover letter to the Embassy of Finland, and probably also the momentous decision to activate the hotline along with the first message to be sent on it, were made according to a war plan that envisaged only, or mainly, an Egyptian-Israeli conflict. This was evidently based on the Egyptian plan codenamed "Conqueror," which was developed with Soviet advice and called for provoking Israeli "aggression"<sup>28</sup> in order to justify Soviet military intervention in support of an Egyptian counterstrike.

The Soviet concept apparently held that before the USSR began hostilities against Israel, proper procedure called for it to sever diplomatic relations. In addition to Brezhnev's aforementioned speech<sup>29</sup>, this is the sequence given in a recent article by Russian Rear-Admiral Vladimir Vasyukov. He describes the events of June 10 1967, when, in response to Israel's advance into Syria, the USSR again prepared for military action::

The presence of real military strength in the region permitted the USSR on 10 June 1967 (*after diplomatic relations were broken with Israel*) to place the world on notice over the direct communications line with Washington that if Tel Aviv did not cease military operations, the Soviet Union "would not stop at the use of measures of a military nature." [emphasis added]<sup>30</sup>

This apparently reflects the authorized version as inculcated in the Soviet military, but it reverses the sequence of events as accepted by conventional western historiography. The latter holds that the USSR severed diplomatic relations with Israel on June 10 only *after it had failed* to intervene on behalf of Syria – either as a token gesture towards its Arab clients, or in response to pressure from leaders of Communist countries.<sup>31</sup> But it now emerges that in Soviet thinking, the break of diplomatic relations was seen as a *prelude* to military action, and the same was originally intended to be done on June 5 with regard to

Egypt. Soviet diplomats were instructed accordingly: at the United Nations, Ambassador Jakobson noticed that “from June 5, the Soviets behaved as if the relations with Israel were already severed.”<sup>32</sup>

Indeed, when this diplomatic break was actually implemented on June 10, it evidently was understood by the Warsaw Pact allies as a precursor to military action. Among the Pact members, Romania considered the Soviet move dangerous enough to invoke a secret agreement Bucharest had made with the United States. Foreign Minister Corneliu Manescu concluded this agreement with Secretary of State Dean Rusk in 1963, in order to prevent Romania’s entanglement in any new version of the Cuban missile crisis, as revealed by Rusk to his aide Raymond Garthoff:

...In Bucharest, the leadership decided ... that it would seek to disengage itself from any automatic involvement if their superpower alliance leader, the Soviet Union, again assumed such risks... The Romanian government wanted the United States to understand that Romania would remain neutral in any conflict generated by such actions as the Soviet deployment of nuclear missiles in Cuba, and sought assurances that in the event of hostilities arising from such a situation, the United States would not strike Romania on the mistaken assumption that it would be allied with the Soviet Union in such a war.<sup>33</sup>

In view of this agreement, the interpretation of the diplomatic-relations break with Israel as a precursor of overt military action at last provides a plausible explanation for Romania’s dramatic distancing of itself from the rest of the Warsaw Pact by leaving its own relations with Israel intact. The Romanians’ equation of the Middle East crisis with the Cuban one, in terms of its potential to ignite a global conflict, was prompted by the Soviets themselves, who activated the Washington hotline in June 1967 for the first time since its installation following the Cuban crisis.

June 5 was thus selected not only for diplomatic response to a predicted Israeli offensive, but also for a Soviet armed intervention to assist Egypt’s counterattack, which was calculated to tip the balance in the latter’s favor. In previous papers, one of the present writers has documented preparations for both naval and aerial operations, both of which were put in motion on June 4.<sup>34</sup> Whether the choice of timing was coincidental, or indicates that the Soviets had some prior intelligence of the zero hour for Israel’s first strike is a question that merits further research.

The latter possibility is supported by an undocumented statement on the website of the SVR, the present-day Russian successor of the KGB’s foreign-intelligence arm, that it had prior knowledge of the timing for Israel’s move.<sup>35</sup> If true, this would imply that the USSR had a source with access to the very top echelon of Israel’s decision-making elite, which alone had determined, and was aware of, the battle plan and its zero hour. Indeed, the KGB *resident* in Israel at the time, Ivan Dedyulya, claimed in his recently published

memoirs that exactly such a source had been recruited, whom he calls “N.”<sup>36</sup> The present writers are not yet in a position to accept this sensational scenario as established fact. However, it does seem indisputable that the USSR was geared up in advance for a diplomatic as well as military response to an Israeli offensive on June 5.

In addressing the United States, the Soviet leadership did not intend to stress the urgency of a cease-fire before the “Conqueror” plan was completed. In a “priority” telegram to Washington sent on June 5 from Amman at 8:50Z (GMT,) Ambassador Findley Burns, jr. reported his conversation that morning with his Soviet counterpart as they both waited for the meeting with King Hussein. The Soviet diplomat, “in a perfectly matter-of-fact way... said ‘...our estimate is that if the Israelis do not rpt not receive large scale outside assistance in the form of goods and arms, we think the Arabs will win the war, if the war is permitted to be fought to the finish.’”<sup>37</sup>

The original Soviet plan actually called for some delay before a ceasefire was arranged. In order to permit the Egyptians, with Soviet support, to contain an Israeli ground attack and launch their counteroffensive; the Soviets expected this would require extended warfare, and therefore needed to *prevent* an immediate ceasefire. As a senior Soviet official at the time attests, “no one expected that the war would go for only the six days and would end up so tragically for Egypt.”<sup>38</sup> If the Soviet Union’s response to Israel’s first strike would be severing diplomatic relations, the resulting delay in forwarding its protest note to Israel until the process of appointing Finland was completed would suit this purpose. The note to Israel would, *pro forma*, bear the date when hostilities began; in the cover letter to Finland, the date would be entered whenever the formalities creating this channel were completed – perhaps a day or two later. This appears to be the only plausible explanation for the cover letter’s presence and its undated form.

But events on the morning of June 5 obviated this plan. With Egypt decisively routed in effect before the ground war began, a demand to stop hostilities was already included in the Soviet government’s statement that was issued by the evening of June 5, which Gromyko referred to in the aforementioned circular. This statement also does mention the other Arab states as having been attacked by Israel.<sup>39</sup> The draft of this document was composed by Foreign Ministry staff after the war broke out and the version that was sent “upstairs” for approval included “severe words ... about American actions, that as a matter of fact were pushing Israel to start military actions” – words which were omitted from the version that was ultimately issued<sup>40</sup>, apparently after the broadcasts reported in the aforementioned American Intelligence note, since the latter mentions that “Moscow’s radio has blamed the US for egging Israel on to start the fighting”.<sup>41</sup> This appears to indicate that the Soviet Foreign Ministry underlings were still operating under the previous directives, even though the Politburo was already aware that these were no longer relevant, as any Soviet intervention on Egypt’s behalf now risked a superpower confrontation without achieving any benefit for the Soviet client.

Media reports from Israel were not revealing much, as part of the famous “battle fog” policy, and Soviet ambassador Chuvakhin inquired in the morning at the Foreign Ministry: “Where is the war?”<sup>42</sup> In Egypt, as a Soviet diplomat recalls:



One hour later [after the Israeli bombing] we already knew in effect what was happening. A group of Soviet specialists, who were working at the biggest base, “Cairo-West,” arrived at the Embassy . . . On the question ‘what has happened?’, the most ranking officer blurted out: ‘Egypt does not have an air force anymore, the “Cairo-West” base does not exist either’.<sup>43</sup>

The Israeli attack caused an emergency activation of the top Kremlin echelon,<sup>44</sup> and it would not be impossible for the letter to the Finns to be written that day at the Foreign Ministry. But if the Soviet measure was decided upon only after the USSR was utterly surprised by Israel’s launching of a first strike, and not only by its nature, speed and devastating effect, it would have been impossible to go through all the steps listed above in time to have the Finns deliver any message the same day.

The cover letter to the Finnish embassy therefore could hardly have been initiated on June 5; furthermore, if it had been hurriedly prepared for delivery on the same day, it would have borne its date. As an open form, prepared for use at a yet undetermined time, it must have been prepared earlier.

Another indication of this is the fact that there is no record on the cover letter to the Finns or the June 5 note to Israel of how they were originated and authorized within the Foreign Ministry – in contrast to the note of June 7, which (as recorded by the editors of the document collection) bears a “history” of being sent from the director of the Middle East Department to the Deputy Minister for approval and back for delivery.<sup>45</sup> The June 5 letter and note thus appear to be a final version, ready to be sent.

In 1990, American diplomat-historian Richard B. Parker was told in Moscow that “The Soviets had been prepared to cut relations with Israel since 1966”.<sup>46</sup> And indeed, the threat of such a step was voiced by Moscow throughout the year that preceded the war.<sup>47</sup> The Politburo decision that included severance of relations with Israel in its policy planning as well as the choice of Finland as the USSR’s representative might have been taken at any time during this period. The Politburo would have instructed the Foreign Ministry to submit a draft of this procedure for discussion and a vote.

But even after the Politburo resolution was taken, no one in the Foreign Ministry would prepare a letter to the Finnish Embassy on his own initiative; the directive to implement the decision also had to come from the top – from the Politburo to Minister Gromyko, to be passed down to the actual writer of the document. As attested to by a former senior Foreign Ministry official, Gromyko (who himself was only a non-voting member of the Politburo) would never make any move on his own, without the blessing of the Party’s highest ruling body: “Gromyko did not resolve a single tiny question: he would not fulfill a decision or make up his mind without getting the approval of the Politburo first.”<sup>48</sup> Such a decision to go ahead with a measure that already had been decided upon could have been taken at one of the last Politburo meetings before the war broke out, or by a telephone poll of the members, as was frequently done: on May 31 Brezhnev and

Kosygin were inspecting the Northern Fleet,<sup>49</sup> and Brezhnev then spent the first days of June, until the Middle Eastern war broke out, at his *dacha* outside Moscow.<sup>50</sup>

The Israeli strike on Egyptian airfields started at 7:45 a.m. Israel time, which was 9:45 a.m. in Moscow. The Politburo convened around noon, so that the decision to proceed with the previously adopted resolution to activate the hotline could have been taken there and then. Most probably it was taken soon after the meeting began, because shortly after its outset the senior and trusted translator Victor Sukhodrev was summoned by a phone call from Gromyko to come to the new government communications center, which housed the Moscow end of the hot-line to Washington.<sup>51</sup>

So by about 12:00 Moscow time, when the Politburo gathered in the Kremlin, the extent of Israel's crucial blow to Arab air forces was at least partly known. About 14:00 MT Kosygin, KGB chief Yuri Andropov and Gromyko went down to the hotline terminal, in the basement of the building of the Council of Ministers, with the Politburo's approved message to President Lyndon B. Johnson – the first ever transmitted over the line. Sukhodrev's impression was of "burning urgency", but there was nevertheless a delay of almost two hours until the telex message was actually transmitted: it is recorded as sent from Moscow at approximately 4 p.m. local time. All three leaders waited for Johnson's reply to arrive and to be decoded and typed. "Kosygin put the paper into his briefcase, and all three went back to the Politburo, which was sitting upstairs and awaiting the reply."<sup>52</sup>

By this time it had become evident that the pre-planned military intervention against Israel on behalf of Egypt would now not be worth risking a clash with the United States. And it indeed did not occur, severing relations with Israel became unnecessary for the time being, the date was never inserted into the cover letter to Finland, and the note itself was delivered directly to Israel in its originally prepared language. The chain of events would be repeated, with a different result, on June 10, in the context of Israel's action against Syria.

The Russian volume's editors now must come in for some criticism, as they appear to have included a letter that was never sent, without noting this fact. But in doing so they contributed significantly to exposing the USSR's real role in the crisis of June 1967.

## NOTES

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<sup>1</sup> V.V. Naumkin *et al.* (eds.): *Blizhnevostochnyy konflikt, tom II, 1957-1967, iz dokumentov arkhiva vnyeshney politiki Rossiyskoy Federatsii* (Russian: *The Middle Eastern Conflict, Vol 2, 1957-1967, from Documents of the External Policy Archive of the Russian Federation*). Moscow: Materik, 2003, pp. 577-578, doc. #263

<sup>2</sup> Moshe Zak: *40 shnot du-si'ah im Moskva* (Hebrew: *Israel and the Soviet Union – a Forty Years, Dialogue*). Tel Aviv: Ma'ariv, 1988, p. 334; Moshe A. Gilbo'a: *Shesh shanim, shisha yamim: mekoroteha ve-koroteha shel milhemet sheshet ha-yamim* (Hebrew: *Six Years – Six Days: Origins and History of the*

*Six-Day War*). Tel Aviv: Am Oved, 1968, pp.210-211; Avigdor Dagan: *Moscow and Jerusalem: Twenty Years of Relations Between Israel and the Soviet Union*. London: Abelard-Schuman, 1970, pp. 227-229.

<sup>3</sup> Naumkin, *op. cit.*

<sup>4</sup> One of the present writers has summarized her research findings on this topic in two papers. Isabella Ginor: "The Russians Were Coming: The Soviet Military Threat in the 1967 Six-Day War," *Middle East Review of International Affairs (MERIA) Journal*, Bar-Ilan University, Israel, Vol. 4. No. 4 (December 2000) <http://meria.idc.ac.il/journal/2000/issue4/ginor.pdf>; "The Cold War's Longest Cover-up: How and Why the USSR Instigated the June 1967 War," *MERIA*, Herzlia Interdisciplinary Center, Israel, Vol. 7. No. 3 (September 2003) <http://meria.idc.ac.il/journal/2003/issue3/ginor.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> Naumkin, *loc. cit.*

<sup>6</sup> Max Jakobson, Helsinki: personal communication to the authors, 17 March 2004.

<sup>7</sup> The Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations of April 18 1961, article 45, states:

"If diplomatic relations are broken off between two States, or if a mission is permanently or temporarily recalled:

(a) the receiving State must, even in case of armed conflict, respect and protect the premises of the mission, together with its property and archives;

(b) the sending State may entrust the custody of the premises of the mission, together with its property and archives, to a third State acceptable to the receiving State;

(c) the sending State may entrust the protection of its interests and those of its nationals to a third State acceptable to the receiving State." U.N.T.S. Nos. 7310-7312, vol. 500, pp. 95-239;

<http://fletcher.tufts.edu/multilaterals.html>.

<sup>8</sup> Muistiinpano (Finnish: memorandum) from M. Salomes, Foreign Ministry, Helsinki, to the President, Prime Minister, Foreign Minister and others, June 11, 1967. Obtained courtesy of the Finnish Embassy, Tel Aviv, April 14 2004. The writers wish to thank Mr. Semy Kahan for the translation of this and other Finnish-language documents. The original letter from the Finnish Embassy to the Israeli Foreign Ministry, requesting the Ministry's consent for Finland's appointment as the USSR's protecting power, dated June 11, is in the Ministry's archives. Israel State Archive, division N TS, box 4048, file 27. It was delivered on June 12, as recorded by the receiving official; box 4083, file 2.

<sup>9</sup> Naumkin, *op. cit.*, p.587, doc.# 269.

<sup>10</sup> Israel Foreign Ministry, memorandum to the Minister from Arie Ilan, Director of East European Division, June 13 1967.

<sup>11</sup> Finland, in view of its special relationship with the USSR, was indeed extraordinarily prompt in delivering the note at any time on the same day. The Netherlands, which undertook the parallel role representing Israel toward the USSR, took four days (June 16 to 20) to transmit the first Israeli note to Moscow. Dagan, *op. cit.*, p. 239.

<sup>12</sup> Naumkin, *op. cit.*, p.579, doc.#265, n. 1.

<sup>13</sup> Katriel Katz: "Yamim aharonim be-Moskva" (Hebrew: "Last Days in Moscow,") *Ma'ariv* (Tel Aviv,) June 3 1977.

<sup>14</sup> Michael. B Oren: *Six Days of War*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2002, p. 252.

<sup>15</sup> Evgeni Pyrlin: *Trudny I dolgiy put' k miru* (Russian: *The Difficult and Long Road to Peace*), Moscow: ROSSPEN (Rossiiskaya Politicheskaya Entsiklopediya), 2002, p. 67.

<sup>16</sup> Naumkin, *op. cit.*, pp.580-1, doc. #267.

<sup>17</sup> Gilbo'a, *op. cit.*, p.244.

<sup>18</sup> The selection of Finland for this purpose was not self-evident. During a previous rupture of diplomatic relations with Israel, in 1953, the USSR appointed Bulgaria as its protecting power; Deputy Foreign Minister Yakov A. Malik noted that a simultaneous break of relations by "friendly East European countries would not serve the purpose." Naumkin, v.1, #112, p.183 n.1. The fact that no Warsaw Pact member state was appointed in 1967 suggests that the break with Israel was pre-planned this time to include the entire bloc. Conversely, the fact that Romania, the only Pact member not to sever relations, was not appointed may confirm that its decision came as a surprise to Moscow; see below, p. 7.

<sup>19</sup> Naumkin, *op. cit.*, p.260, doc. #252.

<sup>20</sup> Naumkin, *op. cit.*, p.577, doc.# 263. Dagan gives an obviously erroneous and grammatically incorrect English translation of this phrase, influenced apparently by hindsight: "...the treacherous aggression by Israel against the neighboring Arab States, the United Arab Republic." [emphasis added]. Dagan, *op.cit.*, p. 227.

<sup>21</sup> Message from Premier Kosygin to President Johnson, June 5, 1967, 7:47 a.m. (EDT, that is, 3:47 p.m. in Moscow). *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1964-1968: Arab-Israeli Crisis and War, 1967* (Vol. XIX). Washington, DC: United States Government Printing Office, 2004. Doc. #156, p. 300. These and other details of the Soviet hotline messages were checked by the writers against the Russian-language originals in Johnson Library, National Security File, Head of State Correspondence, USSR, Washington-Moscow "Hot -Line" exchange 6/5-10/67.

<sup>22</sup> Mikhail P. Popov: *Tritsat' sem' let na Blizhnem Vostoke* (Russian: Thirty- Seven Years in the Middle East). Moscow, MGIMO, 2002, p. 105.

<sup>23</sup> Department of State incoming telegram 004387, Amman 4056, June 5, 1967, received at 5:28 a.m. Washington time.

<sup>24</sup> Naumkin, *op.cit.*, p.283, doc. #268.

<sup>25</sup> *Der Rede von L.I.Breschnev auf dem Juniplenum des ZK der KpdSU, Uber die Politik der Sowjetunion im Zusammenhang mit der Agression Israels im Nahen Osten, 20.06.1967* (German: *The Speech of L.I. Brezhnev at the June Plenum of the CP of the USSR in Connection with the Israeli Aggression in the Middle East*), SAPMO=NA ZPA IV 2/1/362. This document is quoted with the kind permission of Dr. Stefan Meining, Munich, who discovered it in the Stasi archives.

<sup>26</sup> Alexei Vasiliev: *Rossiia na Blizhnem i Srednem Vostoke: Ot messianstva k pragmatizmu*, (Russian: *Russian in the Near and Middle East: From Messianism to Pragmatism*. Moskva: Nauka, 1993, p. 80..

<sup>27</sup> Intelligence note #436 to the Secretary from the Director of Intelligence and Research of the State Department, June 5, 1967; Katz, *loc. cit.*, gives a similar description of Soviet broadcasts on that day.

<sup>28</sup> Michael. B Oren: *Six Days of War*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2002, p. 65; sources listed in p.346, n 10.

<sup>29</sup> Brezhnev, *loc. cit.*

<sup>30</sup> Rear Admiral V. Vasyukov: "The Navy and Assurance of the Country's National Security in Peacetime," *Morskoy Sbornik* (Russian: *Naval Digest*, Moscow), No. 1, 2003, January 15 2003. Translated in *Russian Military and Security Media Coverage* #3284 (25 Mar 2004), <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/RMSMC/message/3414> .

<sup>31</sup> Walter Laqueur: *The Road to War*. London: Penguin Books, 1969, p.281; Galia Golan: *Soviet Policies in the Middle East from World War Two to Gorbachev*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990, p. 65.

<sup>32</sup> Jakobson, personal communication.

<sup>33</sup> Raymond L. Garthoff: *A Journey through the Cold War: A Memoir of Containment and Coexistence*. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2001, pp. 149-151.

<sup>34</sup> Examples: An officer of the Soviet Navy then in the Mediterranean writes: "On June 4 we were given an order to bring the ship to full battle alert, for which we were given 12 hours." Fleet Admiral (ret.) Ivan M. Kapitanets: *Na sluzhbe okeanskomu flotu 1946-1992: zapiski komanduyuschego dvumya flotami* (Russian: *In the Service of the Ocean Fleet 1946-1992: the notes of the Commander of Two Fleets*). Moscow: Andreevski Flag, 2000, p. 175. The commanding officer of a strategic-bomber corps in Ukraine recalls that On "Sunday" [June 4], oral orders were given to deploy a "regiment" of bombers to vantage points on the USSR's southern fringe, "from where they could reach Sinai." Transcript of interview with Col.-Gen. Vasily V. Reshetnikov, Commander of the Second Corps of the Strategic Air-Force in 1967, BBC "Fifty Years War" collection, the Liddell Hart Centre for Military Archives, King's College, London .

<sup>35</sup> "In the '60's foreign intelligence received information about Israel's preparations for new aggression against Arab countries, including the date for it to attack Egypt and Syria in 1967. This intelligence was passed on to the leaderships of Arab countries, who, however, undervalued it and overvalued the military potential of their countries." <http://svr.gov.ru/history/stage09.htm> (Russian), n.d. The mention of an expected Israeli attack on Egypt as well as Syria indicates that this refers not only to the Soviet warning about Israeli "troop concentrations of the Syrian border" in mid-May 1967.

<sup>36</sup> Ivan Dedyulya: "Na Zemle Obetovannoy" (Russian: "In the Promised Land"), in V.N. Karpov (ed.): *Vneshnyaya razvedka* (Russian: *Foreign Intelligence*). Moscow: XXI Vek – Soglasiye, 2000, p. 229; in a previous article, Dedyulya states that "N" was given the specific task to report the timing of an Israeli

offensive. "Nash chelovek v Tel'-Avive" (Russian: "Our Man in Tel Aviv,"), *Russky Dom* #9 (1999,) [www.rd.rusk.ru/99/rd9/home9\\_12.htm](http://www.rd.rusk.ru/99/rd9/home9_12.htm) . "N" is not an initial, but the Russian equivalent of "X."

<sup>37</sup> See note 19.

<sup>38</sup> Evgeni Pyrlin: transcript of interview in the BBC "Fifty Years War" collection, the Liddell Hart Centre for Military Archives, King's College, London, p. 6.

<sup>39</sup> Solomon M. Schwartz: *Sovetskii Soyuz i arabo-izrail'skaya voyna 1967 goda* (Russian: *The Soviet Union and the Arab-Israeli War 1967*), New York: American Jewish Workers' Committee, 1969, p. 110.

<sup>40</sup> Evgeni Pyrlin: *Trudny I dolgiy put' k miru* (Russian: *The Difficult and Long Road to Peace.*), Moscow: ROSSPEN (Rossiiskaya Politicheskaya Entsiklopediya), 2002, p. 64-65.

<sup>41</sup> Intelligence note #436 (see note 25).

<sup>42</sup> Oren, *op. cit.*, p. 251

<sup>43</sup> Former Soviet Attache in Cairo, Sergei Tarasenko, *Novoe Vremya*, (New Times), (Russian), Moscow, 1997, #21, p.32-33, cited in Maj.Gen. Vladimir A. Zolotaryov *et al.*: *Rossiia (SSSR) v lokal'nykh voynakh I vooruzhennykh konfliktakh vtoroy poloviny XX veka*, (Russian: *Russia (USSR) in Local Wars and Military Conflicts in the Second Half of the XXth Century*), Moscow: Institute of Military History, Ministry of Defense of the Russian Federation, 2000, p.183

<sup>44</sup> Forty Years on Official Translator Looks Back on Russia-US Hotline Moscow Channel One TV in Russian 1700 GMT 6 Jun 03, 2003 [Report from "Vremya"]

<sup>45</sup> Naumkin, *op. cit.*, doc. #265, p.579 n 1: "To Com. Semyonov, V.S. Request approval. 7/VI. Shchiborin, A.D." "Confirmed. V. Semyonov."

<sup>46</sup> Richard B. Parker, *The Politics of Miscalculation in the Middle East*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993, p. 23.

<sup>47</sup> Katriel Katz: *Budapest, Varsha, Moskva: Shagrir el medinot mitnakrot* (Hebrew: *Budapest, Warsaw, Moscow: Envoy to Lands Unfriendly*). Tel Aviv: Sifriat Poalim, 1976, pp. 159-160; Zak, *op. cit.*, pp. 338-339.

<sup>48</sup> Pavel Akopov, transcript of interview in the BBC "Fifty Years War" collection, the Liddell Hart Centre for Military Archives, King's College, London, p. 16.

<sup>49</sup> Kapitanets, *op. cit.*, p. 174.

<sup>50</sup> Aleksandr Bovin: *XX vek kak zhizn'* (Russian: *The XX Century as a Life*). Moscow: Zakharov, 2003, p. 160.

<sup>51</sup> Viktor Sukhodrev, interview for Israel-Plus TV Channel documentary, Moscow July 2002, recording in authors' archive; "Forty Years on, Official Translator Looks Back on Russia-US Hotline," Moscow Channel One TV in Russian, 1700 GMT 6 June 2003. Translation quoted in Russian Military and Security Media Coverage (RSMSC) #2312 [13 June 2003], <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/RSMSC/message/2337>

<sup>52</sup> Sukhodrev, *ibid.*