

LA POLITIQUE SOVIÉTIQUE AU MOYEN-ORIENT, 1955–1975. By *Hélène Carrère d'Encausse*. Paris: Presses de la Fondation Nationale des Sciences Politiques, 1975. 328 pp. 68 F.

Since the appearance of Walter Laqueur's *The Soviet Union and the Middle East* in 1959, we have had no end of scholarly studies on this now popular subject, notably by Oles Smolansky, Jan Penaar, Robert Freedman, Alvin Rubinstein, and a number of Israeli specialists such as Galia Golan and Shimon Shamir. Mme. Carrère d'Encausse covers much the same ground, but her study is no mere repetition or balancing out of the research and interpretations of others. It is, in fact, both an original work and the best general survey we have of the whole period, from the famous "Czech arms deal" to the aftermath of the October War. She has done her own Sovietology, carefully going through the Soviet press and specialized periodicals and judiciously folding Western material into the mixture when appropriate.

The difficulties and weaknesses of the book are the same as those faced by any Western author. Do the writings of Soviet specialists on the Middle East reflect debates within the higher leadership before policy decisions are taken, the current line, or only the writers' conceptions (perhaps already outdated) of what the policy is? Does what is written for foreign or home consumption have much to do with the reality of Soviet policy? The Western analyst has to do as best he or she can, and here Mme. Carrère d'Encausse, because of her impressive background in both Soviet and Muslim affairs, comes out a bit ahead of her competitors. If there is a fault, it lies in reading too much into the evidence. For example, the shift of Soviet policy from Egypt to Syria and Iraq in the early 1970s: Was it the result of a conception that the Persian Gulf region with its oil wealth, rather than the eastern Mediterranean, had become the key to the Soviet future in the Middle East and an area of decision in global politics? Or was it a temporary adaptation to setbacks in Egypt, seeking compensatory gains elsewhere but not abandoning the conviction of Egypt's importance as the strategic key and leading actor of the Arab World? Or to take another point coincident with this change: Soviet support for participation of the local Communist parties in the governments of Arab states, a tactic that succeeded in Syria and in Iraq. Did it represent a basic change in Soviet strategy from support of third world regimes regardless of their political color as long as they opposed the Western imperialists, letting the local Communists pay the price? It is a familiar dilemma, one that plagued the Soviet government from the days of the Comintern. The question is really one of tactics, and tactics can change overnight. Another theme that permeates the entire twenty-year period is that the Soviets, always seeking to create an anti-imperialist front in one way or another, deceived themselves time and again by underestimating Arab nationalism and failing to see it as an actual or potential enemy and not just as a natural ally and ready-made instrument to be used against the West.

One virtue of the book is in showing continuity both in Soviet and Egyptian policy, with the result that their bilateral relations, no matter how cordial on the surface and despite tangible benefits for both parties, always suffered from the divergent interests of a global power and a state with regional interests only. For the Soviets, support of the Arabs in their conflict with Israel, which in the early years proved such an easy way to score points against the United States and ensconce Soviet influence in the Middle East, took on quite different proportions in the age of détente. The author's account of the October War and its aftermath illustrates the continuing Soviet dilemma. She sees Soviet policy not as a deliberate challenge to the United States and to détente but as essentially conservative and determined largely by events. Brezhnev was caught between ties to Arab allies he could not abandon and the desire to bring the crisis to an end in cooperation rather than confrontation with

the United States. The arguments on this point will go on, but unless those who hold a contrary view turn up some extraordinary new and convincing evidence, this interpretation should stand the test of time.

JOHN C. CAMPBELL
Council on Foreign Relations

WAR SURVIVAL IN SOVIET STRATEGY: USSR CIVIL DEFENSE. By *Leon Gouré*. Foreword by *Ambassador Foy D. Kohler*. Monographs in International Affairs. Miami: Center for Advanced International Studies, University of Miami, 1976. xxiv, 218 pp. Paper.

Soviet interest and activity in civil defense has recently become a subject of keen political and military concern—indeed, for some, a cause célèbre. Dr. Gouré has for many years been a leading authority on this heretofore esoteric field, and his recent volume is much to be welcomed. He addresses the subject from the standpoint of his—and the Miami Center's—broader concerns over Soviet political-military intentions and capabilities, as both this study and the foreword to it by former Ambassador Foy Kohler make very clear. At the same time, the book includes an extensive review of the copious and detailed Soviet open literature on civil defense. The availability, in an analytic summary, of this information to a readership of Soviet affairs specialists and more broadly of interested citizens is all to the good.

To this reviewer, the basic thesis underlying the study is unconvincing, and the conclusions as to broader Soviet policy intentions are unproven and in many cases unlikely. Too often, arguments are adduced on the basis of challengeable inference and then flatly stated as fact. For example, the author states that, “according to Soviet doctrine, the war survival of the Soviet Union will be *assured* [emphasis added] by a combination of a pre-emptive first counterforce strike . . . [various active defense measures] and civil defense” (p. 8). This statement is buttressed by a following sentence: “Thus, according to a 1974 statement by the Chief of USSR Civil Defense: while the armed forces will have as their ‘objective to prevent the use of destructive means against the rear’ . . . civil defense . . . will be responsible for assuring the ‘maximum weakening of the destructive effects’ of the surviving enemy’s strike force.” But public statements about an “objective” of the active role of the armed forces and “maximum weakening of the destructive effects” of enemy strikes in no way adds up to an unqualified conclusion that the Soviet leadership believes “the war survival of the Soviet Union *will be assured*”—not even the conditional tense of the verb!—by pursuing such means. Yet this is the nub of the question: Can Soviet civil defense measures, while evidently on a substantial scale and very much exceeding our own, really make a difference in the “Soviet ability to use military might as an instrument of Soviet foreign policy” (p. 3), and “bear importantly on Moscow’s strategic and risk calculations and on assessments of the probable outcome of a nuclear war between the USSR and the United States” (p. 3).

Dr. Gouré’s estimate is that the Soviet Union is, and for many years has been, spending about \$1 billion annually on civil defense, or about \$4 per person per year. (If true, incidentally, this is slightly *below* the per capita expenditure for civil defense of Sweden and West Germany, and far below that of Switzerland.)

One cannot do justice, in the confines of a brief review, to the arguments on various sides of such questions as: Why do the Soviet authorities devote substantial resources to civil defense? Does doctrine, or inertia, or bureaucratic politics, or international politics, or contingencies of war with the United States—or with China—account for intensified efforts, since the SALT Treaty in 1972 virtually ruled out