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Authority E012958By ASD NARA Date 9/9/03SECRET/EXDISDEPARTMENT OF STATE
Operations CenterMIDDLE EAST TASK FORCE
Situation Report # 57Situation Report in the Middle East as of 1200 EDT, 10/23/73S/S (3)
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Egypt has called for a Security Council meeting, claiming the Israelis have violated the ceasefire and are seeking to enlarge their bridgehead on the west bank of the Canal. The meeting, scheduled for 1200 EDT, has been delayed to give time for missions to receive their instructions.

Military Situation

Fighting has resumed along the Israeli bulge in the west bank of the Suez Canal although there are conflicting reports as to the level. According to an IDF spokesman, the Egyptians advanced eastward in the northern sector although there were no reports of firing. The central sector was reported quiet. In the southern sector, an Egyptian artillery barrage was followed by an armor attack on Israeli positions from the west and south. In earlier reports, IDF spokesman claimed there was artillery fire along the entire front.

According to Egyptian sources, Israel pushed enormous quantities of equipment across the Canal during the night near Ismailia and the Great Bitter Lake and succeeded in considerably strengthening its position on the west bank. Egypt claims Israeli planes bombed Egyptian positions west of the Suez Canal in violation of the ceasefire.

On the Syrian front there was heavy fighting in the area of Mt. Hermon. Numerous Syrian troops have reportedly entered Lebanon to avoid capture. A large air battle took place near Damascus in the morning of October 23. Syria claims 60 Israeli aircraft were involved of which 11 were

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shot down. The IDF said 10 Syrian planes were downed.

Soviet Resupply

Approximately 60 Soviet missions were flown October 22 raising the level of resupply missions to 800 since the Soviet airlift began on October 10. Approximately 10,000 short tons of materiel have been airlifted to the Arabs since the conflict began. On October 20 a Yugoslav ship reportedly unloaded over 800 tons of military equipment at the port of Tripoli, Lebanon, including an unknown number of tanks.

Estimated Casualties

DIA estimates casualties are as follows through October 22:

	<u>Arabs</u>	<u>Israel</u>
Personnel (KIA/WIA)	15,700	4,150
Tanks	1,950	875
Aircraft	412	119
Ships	30	1

During briefing for the Secretary when in Tel Aviv, the Chief of the IAF listed Israel's aircraft losses at 104. The most critical factor at this time is not aircraft but aircrews. The Israelis now have only 69-70 F-4 crews.

Ethiopia Cuts Diplomatic Relations with Israel

Ethiopia announced today that it is severing relations with Israel. Ethiopia's announcement is in accordance with Boumedienne's call to all African states to break relations with Israel.

Reaction to UNSC Ceasefire Resolution 338

On the front, Egyptian troops at all levels reportedly were bitter at Sadat's decision to conclude a ceasefire. Newsweek editor de Borchgrave reports having witnessed a mutiny among Egyptian troops in Kantara lasting 45 minutes in protest at Sadat's decision to conclude a ceasefire.

In Cairo Al Ahram reports that when Sadat received the U.S./Soviet draft and accepted the ceasefire, it was

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based on "full Israeli withdrawal from all occupied lands" and safeguarding of legitimate Palestinian rights. Al Ahram commented favorably that the undertaking by the superpowers of a special commitment to implement a ceasefire is a stand which neither the U.S. nor Israel had ever before accepted.

In Israel, the rightwing Likud opposition alliance has issued a declaration stating that the implementation of the UNSC resolution will not lead to peace but will endanger Israel's security. At the Knesset session scheduled to begin 10:00 a.m. EDT today, a vote may be taken on the GOI decision to accept the ceasefire resolution. Embassy Tel Aviv estimates the GOI will win the Knesset vote by only a small margin and the labor alignment will be in for some rough sledding in the weeks ahead.

In accordance with Libya's refusal to accept the ceasefire resolution, about 1,250 students picketed our Embassy in Tripoli in protest of the resolution.

APPROVED BY: 

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