

Authority **E012958**
By **ARO** NARA Date **9/9/03**

SECRET/EXDIS

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE
Operations Center

MIDDLE EAST TASK FORCE
Situation Report # 32

Situation Report in the Middle East as of 1200 EDT, Oct. 15, 1973

Military Situation

An IDF statement reports that in the early morning of October 15 both fronts were relatively quiet. The Israelis state that an Egyptian attack in the northern part of the Sinai line during the morning was thrown back by an Israeli counterattack. As of 2200 hours October 14, Egyptian sources claimed that the front line is 20 to 23 kilometers east of the Canal, but the Israelis state that the Egyptians are nowhere more than 10 kilometers east. An Egyptian source claimed that the Egyptian offensive on October 14 was intended to relieve pressure on the Syrians but had the secondary purpose of advancing toward the three principal passes in the Sinai. The Egyptians claim that they captured two forward Israeli airstrips but lost 76 tanks. Israeli military sources state that the Israelis knocked out some 280 Egyptian tanks on October 14.

Israeli spokesmen state that the Israeli Air Force is the "absolute initiator" of air operations on both fronts, and on October 15 attacked Egyptian airfields as well as enemy missile batteries and armor in the canal area. The Israelis also announced that they had bombed fuel depots on the Syrian coast and downed 5 Syrian and 3 Egyptian planes. An Egyptian source stated that Egyptian-piloted Mirages sent from Libya now total 36 and have been in action over Sinai. The press quotes the Egyptians as announcing they have shot down 9 Israeli planes on October 15.

According to Embassy Amman, the Jordanian brigade in Syria has not yet had any direct contact with the Israelis, and the deliberate staged movement of a Saudi unit of 1,000 to 1,500 men to the Damascus area suggests that the Jordanians and Saudi troop movements are primarily political in purpose.

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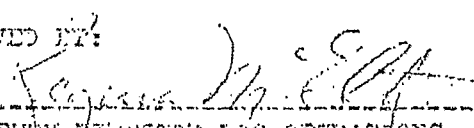
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Oil Situation

In Saudi Arabia oil off-take in the Persian Gulf continues at a normal rate, but ARAMCO officials and our Embassy in Jidda believe King Faisal will feel he will have to take "some" retaliatory action if the U.S. makes an announcement concerning U.S. military resupply of Israel. A press report from Baghdad states that the meeting of OAPEC to discuss using oil as an Arab retaliatory weapon has been postponed from Tuesday to Wednesday, October 17.

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APPROVED BY:


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