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SECRET/EXDISDEPARTMENT OF STATE  
Operations CenterMIDDLE EAST TASK FORCE  
Situation Report #55Situation Report in the Middle East as of 1800 EDT, 10/22/73

Egypt and Israel ordered their forces to cease fire as of 1252 EDT but press agencies report the ceasefire actually went into effect at 1312 EDT. At 1608 EDT, the IDF announced that the Egyptians had opened fire on Israeli forces at a number of locations. The Israelis claim that their forces hold a bridgehead on the west bank 32 kilometers deep and 40 kilometers wide, astride both the Cairo-Ismailia and the Cairo-Suez city roads. The Egyptians claim that the Israeli task force has advanced only 9.5 kilometers from the Canal and was surrounded in two small pockets. The Egyptians claim the Israelis have not cut any major roads. The Egyptians maintain bridgeheads in two enclaves on the east bank to a maximum depth of 10 kilometers.

In announcing the ceasefire, Cairo stressed the importance of Indian and French statements in the UNSC as casting a necessary illumination on the meaning of the UNSC ceasefire resolution. In the Cairo announcement Sadat said that the following were "significant considerations" during his study of the ceasefire question: (a) the Sadat peace plan making total Israeli withdrawal an absolute basis for political action; (b) the Sadat-Kosygin talks of Oct. 16-19; (c) assurances which Sadat received from Brezhnev Oct. 21; and (d) inter-Arab contacts. UPI quotes diplomatic sources in Cairo as saying that the elimination of the Israeli task force on the west bank of the Canal would be a vital prelude to political action.

In a London Observer interview Oct. 20, the editor of Al Ahran, Heykal, is quoted as saying that Sadat's offer of an international peace conference meant that the Egyptians and the Syrians were ready to sit at the same table with the Israelis and to sign a proper peace

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treaty with them. He added that Sadat's insistence on prior Israeli withdrawal from all occupied territories need not be taken too literally. What was important was that Israel demonstrate it was ready in principle to give back most of the land it won in 1967.

Israel did not agree to a ceasefire on the Syrian front in the absence of Syrian agreement to the UNSC resolution. The Syrian leaders are reported to be studying the resolution and UNTSO reports that in the area of OP's, firing has ceased for now on the Golan Heights. Iraq has rejected the ceasefire as has Libya. Jordan says it accepts the ceasefire but King Hussein has told our Ambassador that the Jordanian forces fighting in Syria come under Syrian command. The Ambassador argued that this was not acceptable and urged the King not to let the Jordanian Army become involved in the Syrian-Iraqi-Jordanian attack scheduled for the morning of Oct. 23. King Hussein has informed Ambassador Brown that the King telephoned President Asad at 0430 EDT and told him that the superpowers would consider any action October 23 as a ceasefire violation. The King said Asad replied he would consider this point. King Hussein expressed his view that although Asad has not formally accepted the ceasefire, he is moving in the right direction.

The Executive Committee of the PLO has announced that the Fedayeen would continue the fight against Israel. Damascus Radio has reported that Israel was shelling southern Lebanese villages but that there is no confirmation of this report. UNTSO has reported heavy machine gun and rocket fire on the Lebanese border the night of Oct. 21 and said the Fedayeen were responsible.

The EC Nine met Oct. 22 and the UK Foreign Secretary said there had been "pretty good unanimity" on Middle East policy and that the Nine would help in peace-keeping if necessary. Foreign Secretary Douglas-Home added that "arms limitation or an embargo will have to be part of a permanent settlement. Douglas-Home told the Commons that Britain would be willing to participate in any peace-keeping force which may be required.

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