

Priority MND 969032

By JW NARA Date 6/20/67

*EPD's files*



DEPARTMENT OF STATE

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BRIEFING MEMORANDUM

S/S MSP

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4/26/99*

*10/24/73* OCT 24 1973

TO : The Secretary

FROM: INR - Ray S. Cline

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Cease-fire Problems

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Even if the major combatants stop shooting, this cease-fire appears much more precarious than its predecessors.

Difficult Geography. With two Egyptian salients east of the Canal and one Israeli salient west of the Canal, in addition to possible Egyptian enclaves inside the Israeli salient, the cease-fire on the Suez front will be extremely difficult to police. Israeli violations of the October 23 cease-fire -- and possibly the October 24 cease-fire -- appear to have reflected an effort definitively to isolate the Egyptians' southern salient. With their forces on the east bank reportedly running short of supplies, the Egyptians will be under acute pressure to reopen their two main supply lines from the Nile Delta region to Suez and Isma'iliyyah through Israeli lines.

Insufficient Observers. To police the chaotic situation on the Suez and Golan fronts, UNTSO can muster about 200 observers. This force will have great difficulty in preventing a breakdown of the cease-fire unless all parties act in good faith. Given the political pressures in Cairo and Tel Aviv, efforts to encroach at strategic points may well continue.

Differing Motivations for Accepting the Cease-fire. The cease-fire intervened just as Israel appeared to be well on the way to fragmenting the Egyptian forces on the west bank and isolating those on the east bank. Apparently, Israel halted its victory drive only out of deference to Washington and has no real interest in letting Cairo get off "so lightly." With his army on the ropes, Sadat seems to have grasped at the cease-fire as a chance

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for his forces to catch their breath, to reorganize, and to integrate the materiel delivered by the Soviet re-supply effort, so that he will be in better shape for the next round.

The Syrians did not seem so eager for the truce, probably because Sadat acted without consulting them and because they enjoy a stronger defensive position than the Egyptians. However, the Syrian leadership is going along, even though a special problem is posed by its Iraqi "allies." Although the Iraqis performed poorly in the fighting, they have political designs on Syria, and their home territory is far enough from Israel so that they may toy with the idea of trying to embarrass Asad by sabotaging the cease-fire. Sabotage is certainly to be expected from the Palestinian fedayeen, who have nothing to gain from an end to the fighting.

Contradictory Interpretations of the Cease-fire.

Having turned the tide of battle, Israel seems determined to hold its present positions until all prisoners are exchanged, and until the Arabs have embarked on direct negotiations. Meanwhile, Sadat is telling his allies and his own people that he has Soviet assurances that the cease-fire is tied to early Israeli moves toward total withdrawal, prior to any diplomatic negotiations. Although his propaganda has concealed the magnitude of Israel's recent military successes, his armed forces already know the truth of the military situation, and reports suggest that they suspect the real nature of the cease-fire. The Arab world will soon realize that there will be no automatic Israeli withdrawal, and that Sadat's and Asad's glorious reassertion of Arab dignity has suddenly turned into another crushing defeat. Iraq, the fedayeen, and probably Qadhafi will not be shy about driving this message home.

At this point, Sadat at least will be in a very difficult political position. His alternatives may be reduced to resuming hostilities or stepping down, although he might have a way out if he can argue credibly that the imposition of irresistible pressure by the two super-powers produced the new situation.

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