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Sit rep
1:00 p.m.
DAG

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
8 October 1973

INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

MIDDLE EAST

(Situation Report Number 11
As of 1200 EDT)

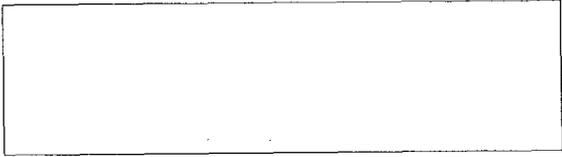
THE MILITARY SITUATION

GENERAL

1. The Israelis are counterattacking on both the Egyptian and Syrian fronts. The Egyptians still claim to hold the entire east bank of the Suez Canal, but acknowledge that they are under attack. An Israeli claim that they have crossed into Egypt at the northern and southern ends of the canal has not been positively confirmed, but heavy Israeli air activity near Port Said suggests that the Israelis have crossed the canal in the north. The Israelis are continuing to attack bridges across the canal.

2. The Israeli positions in the Golan Heights were attacked unsuccessfully by Syrian ground forces at two points during the night, and a large number of Syrian aircraft attempted to strike the Israeli positions but had little success. The Israeli Air Force struck Syrian airfields early this morning; and it then turned to provide close air support to Israeli ground forces attacking in the Heights. The Syrian radio has admitted that their forces there are under attack.

3. Both the Syrians and Egyptians launched air attacks this morning against Israeli forces in the Heights and along the canal, but apparently met with little success. The Israelis claim to have inflicted heavy losses on the Egyptians. The Israelis have been



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striking SAM sites in both Syria and Egypt since yesterday.

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THE SYRIAN FRONT

4. The Israelis have gone on the offensive in the Golan Heights area and are meeting with some success. According to an Israeli military spokesman, the Syrian aircraft that attacked Israeli positions in the Heights this morning achieved only "minor success," and a number of Syrian aircraft were downed in the raid. The Israelis further reported that Syrian forces launched two attacks at daybreak in the northern and central sectors but that these were successfully beaten back.

5. Israeli aircraft reportedly struck five Syrian airfields this morning in the Damascus area, later were reported providing intensive air support to Israeli ground forces attacking along the Heights. As of early afternoon Tel Aviv time (1100Z), more than 250 sorties--a very high number--appear to have been flown by the Israelis. An Israeli radio report this afternoon stated that Syrian forces in the Heights had begun to retreat.

6. According to an assessment this morning by the Jordanians, the Syrian thrust in the northern sector of the Heights was meeting with some success, but Syrian attacks in the central sector had been halted completely. The Jordanians also believed that the Syrians had suffered heavy losses from Israeli air strikes. The Jordanian view of the conflict is that the Syrians have met their strategic objectives, which were limited from the outset, and that they never intended to try to reoccupy the entire Golan Heights.

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TOP SECRET

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The Israelis claim to have isolated the tanks and infantry that the Egyptians put across into the Sinai and are now attacking them. Some of the Egyptian bridges across the canal were still usable this morning. The Israelis are continuing to attack these bridges with airstrikes.

8. The Egyptians admit an Israeli counterattack was under way this morning, but claim that Egyptian forces hold the entire east bank of the canal and are now penetrating into the Sinai. The lack of

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

10. Egyptian air activity began early this morning with an attack by 12 Egyptian aircraft against Israeli positions at Gidi and Mitla passes, but met with little success, according to the Israelis. This was shortly followed by another attack by 45 Egyptian aircraft against Israeli ground forces along the entire canal. The Israelis claim to have shot down 15 of the attacking planes, and the attack had only limited success.

11. Israeli air activity was concentrated in the northern area of the canal. Egyptian fighter response has been limited, and Tel Aviv still appears to have air superiority over the battle areas today. The Israelis do admit, however, that the Egyptian SAMs are causing difficulties. The Egyptians continued to fire SAMs at Israeli aircraft through the morning. The Israelis are concentrating on attacking SAM sites in the Port Said area.

12. The Israeli attack on eight Egyptian fighter fields yesterday has not prevented the Egyptians from using some of those fields. Fighter activity was seen out of Shubra Kit airfield, northwest of Cairo, which was struck yesterday.

[Redacted]

13. A French Embassy official in Cairo told a US diplomat this morning that some of the officers in Egyptian General Headquarters in Cairo are becoming concerned with the military situation. Officers of the rank of lieutenant colonel and lower feel that their forces have acquitted themselves creditably thus far, but cannot hold in the face of a massive Israeli counterattack. They cannot understand the optimism that seems to pervade the highest levels of the government. The officers reportedly feel they have done their job, and it is now up to the politicians to achieve a cease-fire and stabilize the situation on the ground. These officers also believe that if Arab forces are to be successful, King Husayn must immediately open a new front.

14. The attitude of the officers suggests that the Egyptian military did not plan for a long offensive or a deep penetration into Sinai. Their goal appears to be limited to establishing a foothold on the east bank.

JORDAN

15. President Asad finally asked King Husayn early this morning to intervene in the fighting, obviously hoping to divert some Israeli forces from the Syrian front. Asad claimed that Syria had achieved its strategic objectives in the Golan Heights and that its air power was basically intact. The Jordanians now expect the Israelis to gain the upper hand and are stalling for time. Jordanian Prime Minister Rifai believes Husayn will be able to hold off committing himself for another day or two, but he indicated that the Israelis' continued violations of Jordanian airspace were making this difficult to do. Rifai said that Jordan has no illusions about Israel's ability to destroy the Jordanian Army. He said, however, that Amman fears it will become totally isolated in the Arab world this time if it stays on the sidelines.

The Jordanians are obviously still hoping that a cease-fire will rescue them from their present dilemma.

SOVIET MILITARY ACTIVITIES

16. There have been no significant Soviet military developments since our last Sitrep. The bulk of the

Soviet Mediterranean Squadron remains off Crete. Evacuation flights to Aleppo in northern Syria continued during the morning hours of 8 October, but there have been no similar flights to Egypt since 6 October. Two TU-95 naval reconnaissance aircraft may be enroute to Conakry, but the Soviets have deployed TU-95s there before and there is no indication this deployment is related to the Middle East fighting. There is no evidence of unusual activity by any other Soviet forces.

SOVIET POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

17. Speaking at a luncheon for Japanese Prime Minister Tanaka today, Soviet party chief Brezhnev clearly placed continuation of the general process of detente ahead of Soviet support for the Arabs. He blamed Israel for initiating the fighting, but offered only sympathy for the Arab cause. He went on to say that "all countries and peoples of the area" should have guaranteed security, and he pledged that Moscow would continue to contribute toward insuring peace. In a conversation with US Embassy officers in Moscow today, a Soviet Foreign Ministry official also noted that the most important thing is to make sure that the present situation in the Middle East does not affect good US-Soviet relations. A similar line was taken by a Soviet official in Paris yesterday.

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OTHER ARAB STATES

24. There have been no reports of significant Arab contributions to the battle other than those noted in previous Sitreps.

25. So far Arab press coverage has not taken on a distinctly anti-US tone but the media are becoming increasingly sensitive to the movements of the US Sixth Fleet.

PRESS

26. Reports indicate that oil is continuing to flow normally from the Middle East. Only Iraq has taken action against US oil companies, nationalizing the interests of the two American companies in the Basrah Petroleum Company on 7 October. Iraq has since called on Arab oil producing countries to stop exporting oil to the US and other countries supporting Israel.