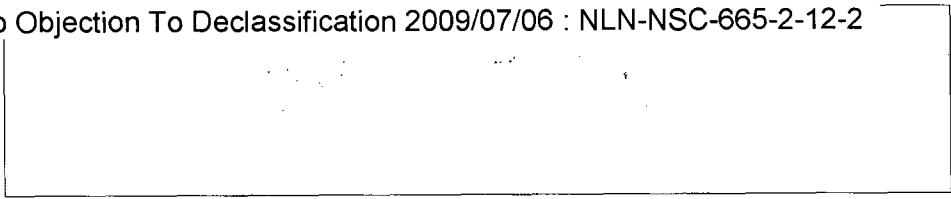


State Dept review complete for the entire document



CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
19 October 1973

INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

DIA review complete for the entire document

MIDDLE EAST

Situation Report Number 56
(As of 1630 EDT)

THE MILITARY SITUATION

GENERAL

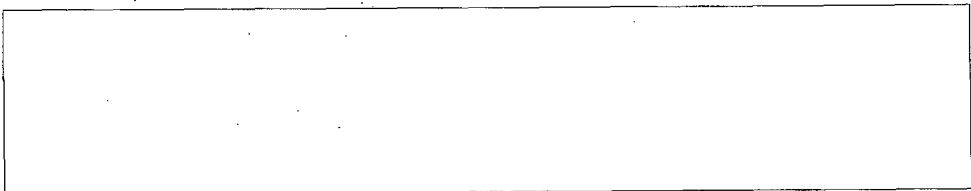
NGA review completed for pages 90-102

1. The large Israeli task force on the west bank of the canal attacked in three directions this morning according to the Israelis. A senior Israeli spokesman said the fighting may develop into the decisive battle of the war. One Israeli column is moving north toward Ismailia, a second column has moved to the southwest edge of the Great Bitter Lake, and the third column is attacking southwest toward the Cairo-Suez highway and railroad junctions in order to cut off Egyptian supplies to the canal front. The Israeli force, which now consists of over 300 tanks as well as mechanized infantry and paratrooper units, has blunted all Egyptian attacks.

MORI/CDF per C03326469

2. The principal mission of the force, according to the Israeli military, is to destroy Egyptian forces and SAM batteries. Three to four SAM sites had been hit by early afternoon. The Egyptian response thus far has been poorly coordinated and generally ineffective. Egyptian airstrikes have focused on the bridgehead rather than the attacking Israeli columns.

25X1



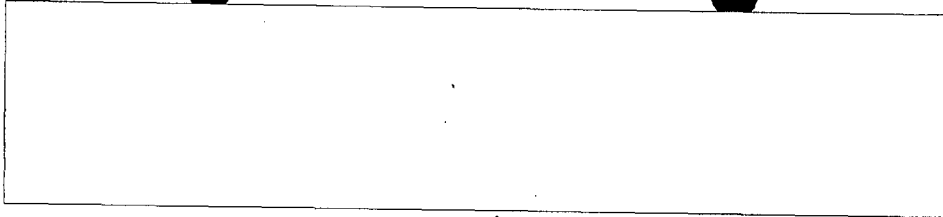
3. Fighting also continued to be heavy in the central sector of the east bank but few details are available. Tel Aviv claimed over 70 Egyptian tanks and 25 aircraft have been destroyed today. An announcement from Cairo described the fighting as heavy and admitted that the Israeli force on the west bank had not been "wiped out" and that enemy reinforcements were continuing to cross the canal.

4. On the Syrian front, no significant gains were registered by either side, but Israeli forces claim to have repulsed two attacks and destroyed 30 enemy tanks today.

THE EGYPTIAN FRONT

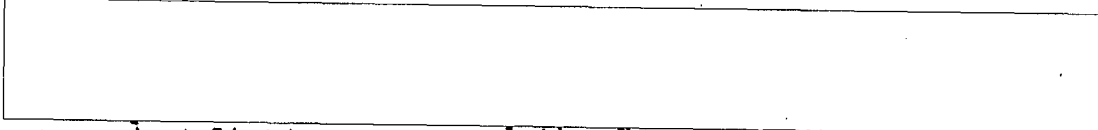
5. The Israeli force on the west bank of the canal launched major attacks this morning in three directions, according to an Israeli spokesman. One Israeli force consisting mainly of infantry and paratroopers moved northwest from Deversoir toward Ismailia. A second force attacked southwest toward the Cairo-Suez highway and railroad at a point some 35 miles from Cairo. This force is to block the movement of Egyptian supplies to the front. The third force struck south along the Great Bitter Lake and is now at the southwest edge of the lake. This force captured Fayid and Kasfareet airfields.

6. Egyptian counterattacks against the Israelis have not been effective and, according to Tel Aviv, Cairo is not employing its air force to best advantage. Egyptian air attacks are concentrated in the area of the canal crossing rather than against the advancing Israeli forces. The Egyptian response on the ground appears to be poorly planned, and in fact Cairo may not yet comprehend the magnitude or significance of the Israeli attack. Only one armored brigade of reservists has been detected moving against the Israelis.



7. Israeli military leaders say that the purpose of their force is to destroy enemy forces and "clean out" SAM batteries. By early afternoon, three or four SAM sites had been destroyed and the Israelis claim to have captured SAM equipment.

25X1



Egyptian fighters engaged the Israelis over the battle area and attacked in the vicinity of the bridgehead. At least six Egyptian MIGs were downed.

9. Fighting continues on the east bank, but few details are available. Cairo continues to describe the action as heavy and is making no claims of advances or victories. Tel Aviv, in contrast, is optimistic in its announcements of the fighting on both banks of the canal, claiming that its forces continue to destroy Egyptian forces and installations. The semi-official newspaper Al-Ahram warns its Egyptian readers that the war may be long.

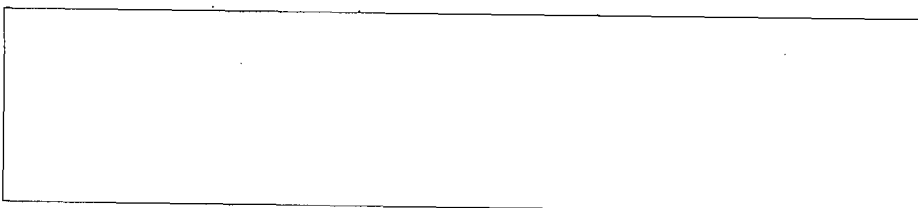
THE SYRIAN FRONT

10. Action on the Syrian front today consisted principally of tank attacks by Syrian, Jordanian, and Iraqi forces in the central sector. The fighting extended into territory controlled by the Israelis, but no major changes in the battle line have been noted. The Israelis claim to have destroyed up to 30 Arab tanks and two aircraft in repulsing the attack. Press reports from Damascus characterize today's attack as a major offensive aimed at pushing the Israelis off the Golan Heights. Official Syrian communiques simply said a major battle had been raging since early morning, but did not report any results of the battle. A [redacted] reports the fighting still underway late this evening.

25X1

25X1

11. [redacted]
the Jordanian brigade was to move north today from Al Harrah toward objectives in Israeli-occupied



25X1

territory. The Iraqis were to be the Jordanian
right flank. [redacted]
tank engagements in the area, but the Israelis
appear to remain in control of the Jordanian objec-
tives through the afternoon.

25X1

12. An Iraqi infantry battalion was involved
in the attacks this morning, according to an Israeli
military spokesman. [redacted]
the Iraqi forces do not plan or implement their
attacks well. As a result, Iraqi losses in previous
engagements included more than half of the tanks of
one brigade as well as an entire company of men.

25X1

13. Israeli air activity, although heavier than
yesterday, did not increase appreciably from the
morning's level. The Israeli aircraft appear to be
involved in both ground support and intercept
operations.

25X1

25X1

25X1

19. Syria seems to be feeling some urgency about pressing the US to agree to a satisfactory conclusion to the war. [REDACTED]

25X1

[REDACTED] Syrian Foreign Minister Khaddam summoned the Arab ambassadors on 17 October to complain that Syria is suffering from the bombing of economic installations and needs a more effective application of the oil weapon. The oil production cutback agreed upon that day is not sufficient, Khaddam said; what is needed is a 50-percent cutback, which he urged upon the Arab states as a

25X1

5

25X1

measure that would be "very effective" as political pressure. Khaddam implied that he believed such a cutback would only be necessary for a month.

EGYPT

25X1

20. An Egyptian [redacted] has told [redacted] that Egypt does not object to the US airlift to Israel so long as it does not exceed the Soviet airlift to the Arab states. Indeed, it would prefer that both resupply efforts be maintained because without them the war would end when existing equipment supplies ran out; Egypt regards a continuation of the fighting as desirable because the Egyptians believe that their greater human resources give them an advantage in a war of attrition. Soviet aid is needed and appreciated, [redacted] but the USSR is a "bad friend" for Egypt.

25X1

25X1

21. The [redacted] access to current thinking in Cairo is not known, and his exposition on the supply situation and the nature of wars of attrition may be somewhat oversimplified, but he probably is reflecting fairly accurately the attitude of the Egyptian leadership. The relatively restrained treatment of the US airlift in the Cairo media and President Sadat's minimal references to it in his speech of 16 October suggest that Cairo is not overly disturbed. Although clearly not happy that the US is aiding Israel, the Egyptians may feel confident enough that they can nonetheless sustain their war effort. They probably also believe that too much heavy-handed criticism from Cairo would close off any hope that the US will work for a peace acceptable to them.

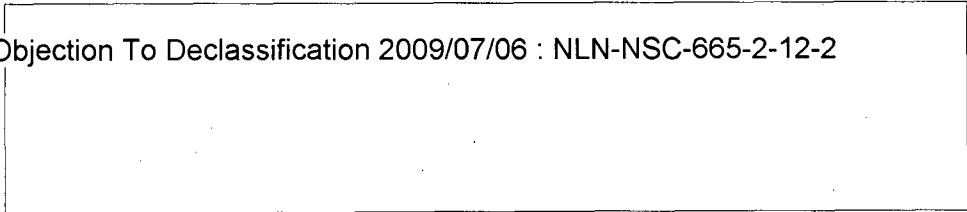
25X1

22. As for the Soviets, [redacted] did not elaborate on his view that they are bad friends, but it seems likely that the negative Egyptian attitude before the war has not been significantly altered by the Soviet effort to resupply Egypt.

25X1

[redacted] 25X1

25X1



FEDAYEEN

25X1

23. [redacted] are reporting clashes with Israeli forces along the northwest border with Lebanon. A fedayeen spokesman claims two artillery duels on Friday afternoon resulted in the silencing of the Israeli positions. [redacted] reports fedayeen ground units attacked an Israeli patrol and an Israeli artillery position. In the Golan Heights the fedayeen reportedly attacked Israeli supply convoys.

25X1

24. The clashes were reported soon after a spokesman for the PLO executive committee announced that the committee, in a meeting chaired by Yasir Arafat, had decided to escalate fighting on the Palestinian front "within hours." The spokesman gave no details, but the fedayeen may have decided to undertake a more active role in an effort to divert Israeli attention from the main fronts. [redacted]

25X1

[redacted] as of 18 October a unit of the Palestine Liberation Army was stationed in Beirut for possible use during the next few days.

25X1

25X1

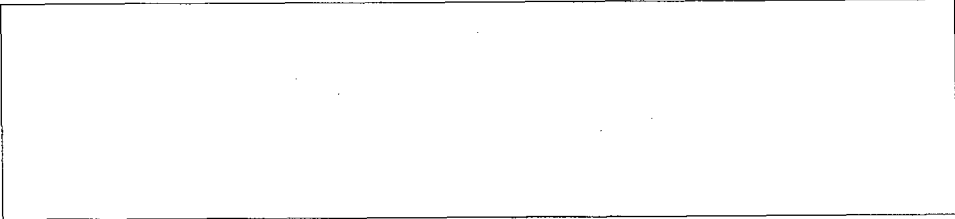
25. [redacted] has stated that the Palestinians were not involved in any way with the armed attack on the Bank of America. This tends to confirm information received by the US Embassy that the attackers were members of a Lebanese extremist group not associated with the fedayeen. [redacted]

many Palestinian fedayeen in Beirut believe that the bank attack may be followed by the first in a series of anti-US fedayeen operations. The fedayeen are said to be taking Syrian President Asad's announcement of the shooting down of a US observation aircraft on or about 17 October as proof of direct US military intervention. [redacted]

25X1

earlier that Fatah and Sa'iqah had formulated plans to kidnap US diplomats and businessmen after the release of a Syrian or Egyptian communique alleging direct US intervention.

25X1



25X1



25X1

26. [redacted] Saiga officials in Beirut, nettled by the Lebanese populations' indifference toward the Middle East conflict, are planning to set off terror bombs in Beirut.

LIBYA

27. Libya today raised the posted price of crude oil to \$8.92 a barrel, suspended exports to the US of crude oil and oil products, and cut back production by five percent. Libya has been exporting 11 percent of its crude oil production to the US; with only a five percent production cutback, Tripoli will have a surplus six percent to offer to any bidder with the proper financial and political qualifications.

SUDAN

25X1

28. [redacted]

[redacted] Khartoum has decided to send one T-55 tank regiment with crews to Syria. The Sudanese have asked Saudi Arabia for permission to send the tanks through Saudi territory.

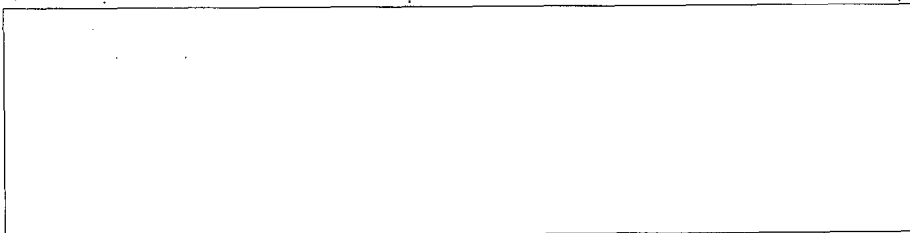
KHARTOUM TERRORIST TRIAL

29. The Sudanese magistrate presiding over proceedings against the Palestinian terrorists yesterday released two of the ten defendants on grounds of insufficient evidence linking them to the murders in the Saudi embassy. Acting Foreign Minister Musa reaffirmed to the embassy that the eight other Black September terrorists would be brought to trial. Pre-trial proceedings are scheduled to resume on 13 November.

25X1

30. Musa explained that the two Palestinians were released because they were not directly involved in the killing of the three diplomats. [redacted]

[redacted] Musa received a PLO representative last week who is said to have conveyed a



25X1

25X1

[REDACTED]

message from Arafat asking for the release of all of the terrorists to permit them to join in the Middle East war. Musa reportedly refused, but the release of the two accessories could represent a compromise reached between the Sudanese and the PLO.

31. Kuwait's release last week of the Palestinian terrorists involved in the Paris operation, ostensibly to allow them to go to the front, no doubt increased pressure on the Sudanese to make some similar gesture with regard to the Khartoum terrorists.

ALGERIA

32. The Algerian Army has requisitioned civilian equipment movers in the eastern part of the country,

25X1

[REDACTED] The Algerians who took over the movers indicated that they would be used to transport tanks. The type of trailer requisitioned can transport up to 65 tons, thus easily accommodating a T-55 tank weighing 40 tons. One Algerian battalion of T-55 tanks reportedly has already departed for Egypt, and two other battalions apparently are scheduled to follow.

MOROCCO

33. Although Moroccans continue to follow Middle East events closely, nothing resembling war fever seems to be developing, and the cities are calm. King Hassan seems to have decided to await the outcome of diplomatic efforts now underway before making any new moves. The general tone of the public media is sober, and there has been a marked downturn in material published about the role of Moroccan troops in the fighting. Rumors continue to circulate in Rabat that the troops suffered heavy casualties in the Golan fighting. The Jewish community is reported nervous, but there have been no reports of violence directed against its members.

25X1

Page Denied

Page Denied

25X1

ANNEX II

Turkey's Position on the Middle Eastern Conflict

1. Since the outbreak of the war, the Turkish Government's official position has been one of neutrality. Turkey has tried to avoid becoming a bridge either for Soviet aid to the Arabs or US aid to Israel. It has been under Arab pressure to take a more pro-Arab stand, but so far it has limited itself to largely token actions. It has:

-- reiterated its standard call for settlement under Resolution 242, but stressed the need within that resolution for evacuation of Arab territories seized by force;

-- stated publicly that joint defense installations in Turkey would be used for NATO purposes only;

-- sent a formal note to Jordan assuring it that NATO bases in Turkey would not be used to transport weapons to Israel.

Soviet Overflights

25X1

2.
that no unauthorized flights have taken place over Turkey since the hostilities began. The government has been dragging its heels in allowing the overflights the USSR has requested, but has now apparently granted permission for a limited number of flights under the Montreux convention.

3. On 15 October Moscow notified Turkey that it intended to send up to 30 aircraft to Beirut, Baghdad and Aleppo beginning 17 October, ostensibly to carry "technical equipment." Ankara asked the

B-1

25X1

25X1

Soviets to consider on the grounds that such flights would give rise to speculation that the planes carried more than technical equipment, thus violating Turkey's policy of neutrality.

25X1

Arab States

6. In the past year Turkey, primarily for economic reasons, has established closer ties with Arab states it has not been particularly friendly with in the past, especially Syria. Turkey is also heavily dependent on Middle East oil. Despite these factors, it has since the hostilities, fended off a request to allow Iraqi armor to transit Turkey on the way to the front and refused Syria permission for the crossing of a train. Turkey has allowed shipment of some Iraqi oil across southern Turkey. It has also given permission for some TU-22s and three helicopters to overfly Turkey to Iraq. Turkey argues that these aircraft had been ordered before the hostilities.

B-2

25X1