



CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY  
20 October 1973

INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

MIDDLE EAST

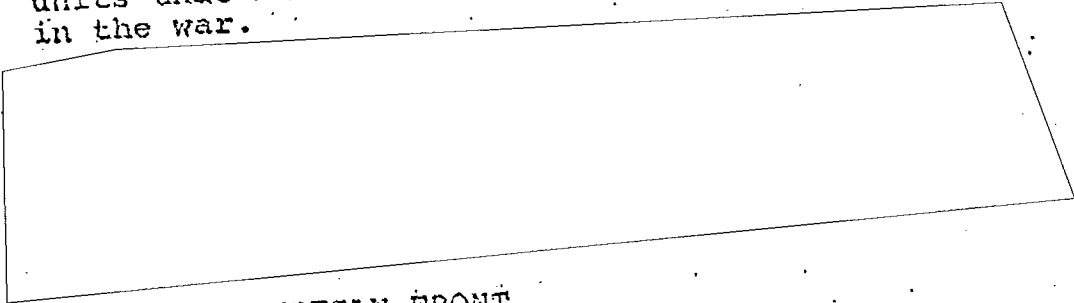
Situation Report Number 58  
(as of 0630 EDT)

THE MILITARY SITUATION

GENERAL

1. An official Israeli situation report this morning views today's battle on the west bank of the canal as "perhaps the key" to how long Egypt can continue in the war. No major ground actions were reported during the night but the fighting resumed at dawn. At last report, Israeli units had penetrated as much as 15 miles beyond their initial bridgehead at Deversoir. The Egyptians were reported to be marshalling reserves on the west bank as well as bringing back some combat units that had crossed to the east bank earlier in the war.

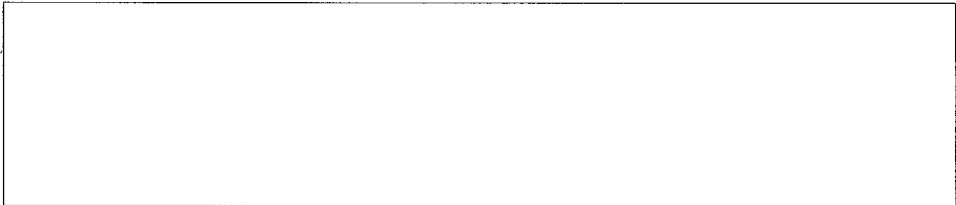
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THE EGYPTIAN FRONT

3. According to Israeli spokesmen the results of today's action on the west bank will determine

DIA review(s) completed.



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State Dept. review completed

how long the Egyptians will be able to fight. The Egyptians, after their initial indecision, apparently have recognized the seriousness of the situation and are marshalling forces to attack the Israeli columns.

4. The Israelis, at last report, had pushed north to a point west of Ismailia, southwest to the Cairo-Suez rail line and south to an airfield beyond Fayid. The Egyptians were reported to be bringing up a mechanized division as well as other forces that had been held in reserve on the west bank and to be bringing back an armored division from the east bank of the canal in the Suez City area. The Israelis expect the major action to be against their southern and southwestern thrusts.

5. No major ground actions were reported during the night, as both sides apparently prepared for today's action. Israeli spokesmen announced that sporadic artillery fire was exchanged during the night and the fighting had resumed at dawn. Earlier reports from the Israelis indicated that the Egyptians had turned around some of their artillery on the east bank of the canal to fire on targets on the west bank.

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6. The Israeli Air Force attacked late into the evening hours and resumed attacks on Egyptian ground positions on the east bank, Egyptian airfields, and Port Said, early this morning. As the morning progressed the air force began to concentrate on west bank targets. The Israelis expect heavy air engagements today as the Egyptian air defenses on the west bank were reduced by yesterday's destruction of ten SAM sites. The Egyptians are also expected to throw their air force into the battle for the west bank.

7. In other action over the course of the night the Israelis report naval attacks on Egyptian targets on the Mediterranean coast and commando raids

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on Port Al-Ghurdaqah. This port lies across the Red Sea from Israeli occupied Sharm ash Shaykh at the tip of the Sinai peninsula and has served as a base for Egyptian commando attacks into the Sinai.

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THE SYRIAN FRONT

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[REDACTED]

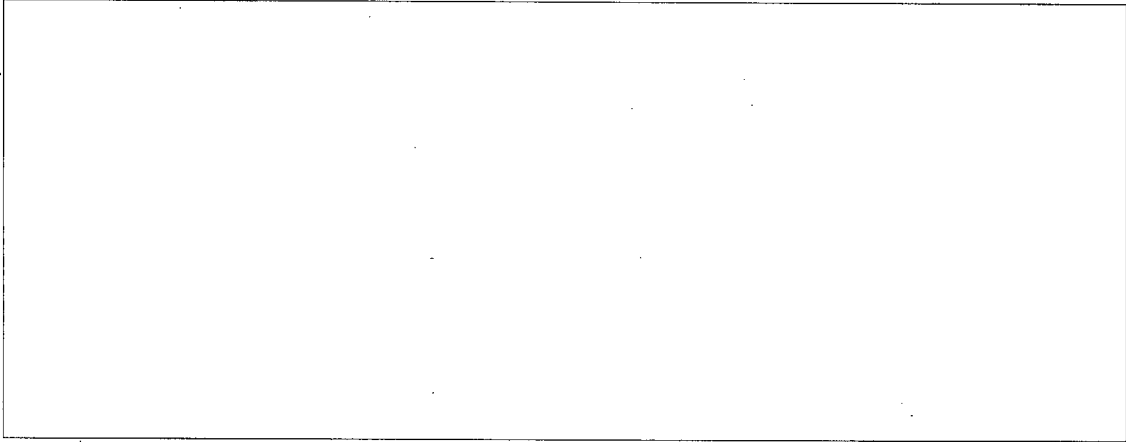
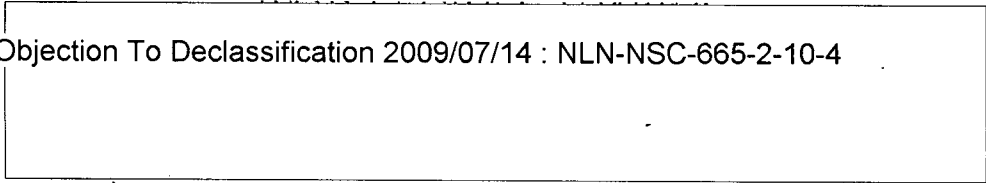
this morning some 30 Israeli tanks and several half-tracks operating north and south of Tell Aantar, the scene of heavy fighting yesterday. Syrian artillery is shelling the area. Moderate Israeli air activity has also been reported over southern Lebanon and northern Israel since early morning. An Israeli spokesman said at 1100 local time today that relative quiet prevails in the Syrian theater.

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10. Information continues to come in on yesterday's fighting. Syrian military spokesmen claim that 52 Israeli tanks, 17 halftracks and three artillery batteries were destroyed. They also report that "cruel battles" raged around the Golan Heights area last night, and claim the Arab forces were gradually sapping Israeli strength, [REDACTED] Jordan's 40th Armored Brigade destroyed or put out of action 30 Israeli tanks and seven armored missile carriers yesterday, while losing seven tanks and one water truck. Two additional Jordanian tanks were damaged but are repairable. The Israelis described yesterday's fighting as a holding action in which they repulsed a Syrian-Jordanian-Iraqi attack, destroying some 30 Arab tanks and two aircraft in the process.

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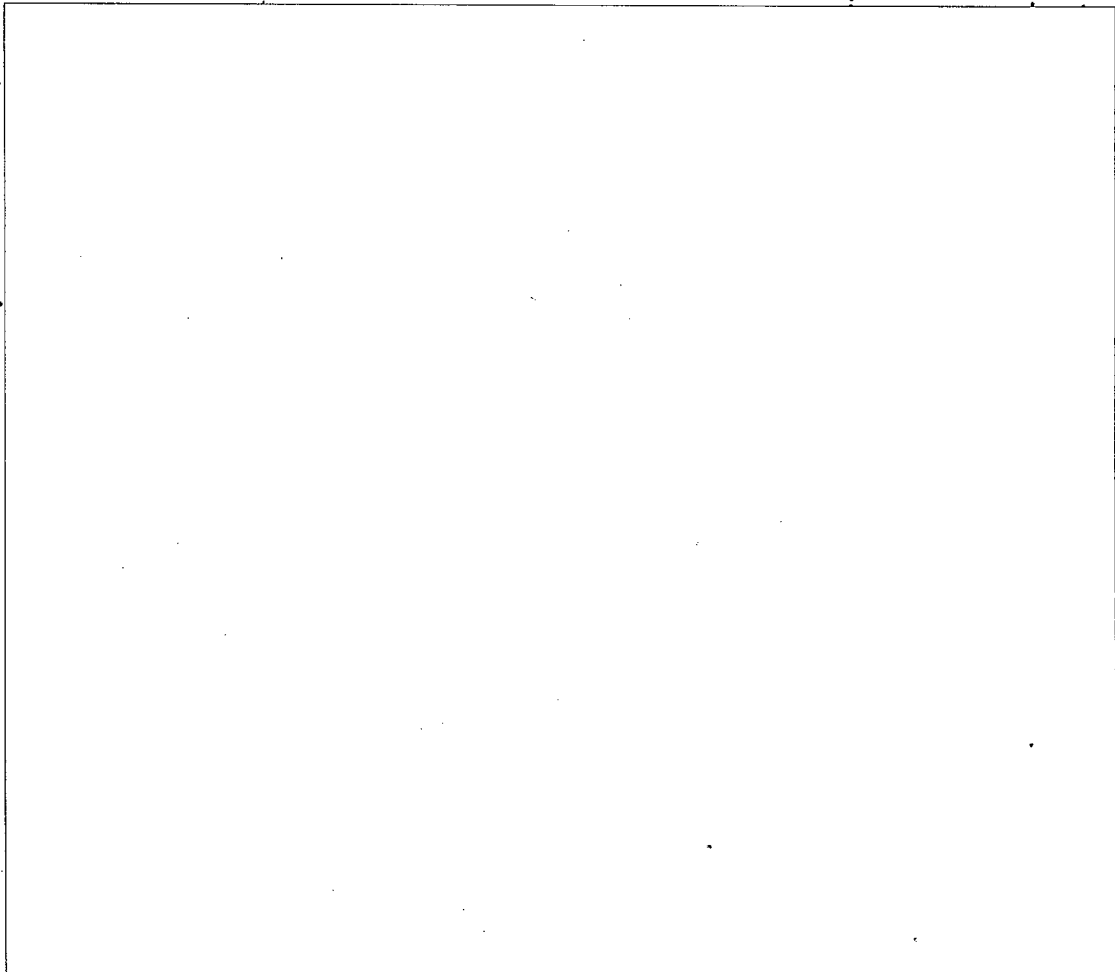
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12. In other reporting, the Iranian Military Attache in Jidda said yesterday that Saudi Arabia has sent about 5,000 men and a battalion of French-made armored cars to the Syrian front so far. [redacted]

[redacted] Syria had been able to maintain only two armored divisions in reserve as of 15 October, and that one of these divisions was subsequently committed to battle.

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EGYPT

19. The government is taking some precautionary measures to safeguard the Cairo population against possible military attack. According to a Cairo broadcast, civil defense, fire fighting, and medical services measures have been promulgated by the government. They include preparing the Teacher's Union building and hospital for possible use in a civil emergency.

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YUGOSLAVIA

25. Yugoslavia's support of the Arab cause, measured both in pledges of military assistance and strident verbal support, far exceeds that provided by any other East European country. Now as in 1967, Tito probably believes that the viability of the nonaligned movement, of which he is a founder depends on an effective military performance by the Arabs. He seems determined not to share another Arab humiliation and is maintaining close liasion with Cairo.

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26. Tito also recognizes the risks involved in this policy. He knows that most Yugoslavs want, above all, to avoid direct involvement in Middle East conflicts, but he apparently feels he can control any unrest that arises from domestic quarters. He also knows that his stance will produce new frictions with the West, and especially with the US. He apparently believes, however, that these differences will be only temporary.

27. Tito's intense personal involvement in directing his country's role in the war may, however, pose the ultimate risk, and this is to his health. At his advanced age and with a history of cardiac insufficiency, he could very well overstep the limits his doctors have placed on his activity.

#### SWEDEN

28. Sweden, although remaining basically pro-Israel, is uncharacteristically maintaining a low profile in connection with the latest Arab-Israeli conflict, according to a US Embassy report.

29. The government, mindful that Swedish per capita oil consumption is the highest in the world and that 55 percent of that oil comes from the Middle East, has equivocated and backed off from its normally staunch support of Tel Aviv. Prime Minister Palme is maintaining a wholly unaccustomed silence on the war, and Foreign Minister Wickman's statements have served only to cloud the issue. The new Israeli ambassador to Sweden also told US Embassy officials that he is having difficulty making contacts with the government and otherwise finding the going rough.

30. The embassy points out that the government's attitude reflects to some extent the Swedish public's ambivalent attitude and drift away during the past several years from solid support of Israel. This support has been steadily eroding among Swedish youth and leftists, including a growing group within the ruling Social Democratic Party,

who since the 1967 war tend to see the Arabs as more the underdog and Israel as the relatively stronger and somewhat "imperialist" power. This trend, the embassy believes, would either grow or diminish, depending on who ends up getting the upper hand militarily this time. The report points out, however, that the swing in public opinion away from Israel is not massive and the great majority still sympathize with Israel.

