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091 MID EAST (23 OCT 73)

23 October 1973

DCI BRIEFING FOR
HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE
10:00 A.M., 23 OCTOBER 1973

THE MIDDLE EAST

I. Mr. Chairman, the cease-fire that was to have begun yesterday has broken down on the Egyptian front. The Syrian front is still quiet.

A. Early this morning Israel ordered its forces to resume the fight against Egypt because of "incessant and continuous violations" of the day-old cease-fire.

B. Cairo responded by asserting that the Israeli move compelled it to "use force to strike" at the Israelis. Both sides have, in effect, officially admitted that fighting is continuing.

C. Fighting had died down on both fronts shortly after the effective time of the cease-fire yesterday, but resumed in the central sector of the Egyptian front an hour later. Tel Aviv claimed that the Egyptians had begun shelling Israeli positions near Ismailia, and that by late last

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evening fighting had spread to other areas. Cairo asserted that Israel fabricated the violations as an excuse to renew its own activity.

II. The United Nations Security Council resolution passed in the early hours of October 22, had been officially accepted by Israel, Egypt, and Jordan. Syria has still not committed itself, while Iraq quickly rejected the proposal, and was followed by Libya. There has been no official reaction from Saudi Arabia.

A. All Council members except China--which did not participate in the vote--approved the resolution.

B. There are three main provisions to the resolution:

--termination of all military activity within 12 hours (that is, approximately 1:00 P.M. EDT yesterday).

--immediate implementation of Security Council Resolution 242, in all its parts. (This is the 1967 cease-fire resolution which calls for, among other things, Israeli withdrawal to the pre-war 1967 boundaries.)

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--simultaneous opening of negotiations among all parties under appropriate auspices.

C. At best, yesterday's resolution provides only the basis for a cease-fire in place.

1. It contains no provisions for drawing or enforcing cease-fire lines.

D. Even if the present fighting is halted, there are some obstacles to effective implementation of the resolution. ~~For~~ Israel, Egypt, and Jordan, for instance, have attached some conditions to their acceptance of the resolution.

1. The Israelis say that any withdrawal must be contingent upon the 1967 cease-fire lines being replaced with secure and recognized boundaries defined in a peace treaty with the Arabs. Tel Aviv also specified that all prisoners of war must be immediately returned.

E. Egypt does not recognize these conditions.

Moreover, President Sadat

has said that his acceptance of the cease-fire and willingness to

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negotiate are completely tied to an Israeli withdrawal.

- F. Jordan's acceptance carried the caveat that its brigade in Syria would remain under Syrian command.

III. Let me briefly bring you up to date on the military situation at the time of the cease-fire. I will begin with the Egyptian front.

- A. The most significant development there was the establishment of an Israeli force on the west bank of the Canal.
- B. The Israelis crossed with a small force on Tuesday night, October 16. They steadily built up that force through a four-mile-wide bridgehead that you can see just north of Deversoir.
- C. Israeli armor fanned out in a series of damaging raids all through the shaded area on the map. The Israelis claim that this "enclave" was 19 miles deep, and stretched some 25 miles along the Canal at the time of the cease-fire.

- 1. There are Egyptian units within this area, bypassed in the Israeli advance,

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and they continued to fight until the cease-fire.

D. The Israelis also claim to have destroyed many of the Egyptian SAM sites--especially toward the north end of the Canal, and to have cut the roads between Cairo and Ismailia to the north and Suez city to the south.

E. Substantial Egyptian forces remain on the east bank. The Israelis acknowledge the two Egyptian-held areas shown on the map.

1. The Egyptians at one time had over 500 tanks and at least 40,000 men on the east bank, and had penetrated up to 16 miles in some places.

IV. On the Syrian front, Israel retook Syrian positions on Mount Hermon just before the cease-fire. For the most part, however, the situation on this front has been generally stable for a week.

A. Israeli forces that broke into Syria on October 12 soon met stubborn resistance--from well-prepared defensive positions--near Sasa, some 20 miles from Damascus.

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B. Another Israeli column advanced on Syrian and Iraqi forces to the south of Sasa, but likewise made no significant gains over the last week.

1. Both a Jordanian armored brigade and a Saudi Arabian force joined the battle in this area.
2. The Jordanian brigade entered Syria on October 13, and gradually worked its way to the combat area. Elements of a second Jordanian armored brigade crossed into Syria yesterday.

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3. The Saudi force reached the front on October 19.

V. Losses on both sides up to the time of the cease-fire were extensive.

A. We estimate that the Israelis lost a maximum of 4,750 men, as many as 140 aircraft, and possibly 875 tanks.

B. Comparable losses for the Arabs--mostly Egyptian and Syrian--total between 15,000 and 17,000 men, 395 aircraft, and close to 1,900 tanks.

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VI. The Soviet airlift continued on October 21, with flights divided about evenly between Egypt and Syria. Twenty-three Soviet aircraft were scheduled to depart for the Middle East on the 22nd, but by 4:00 A.M. today none had left their European departure points.

- A. Since the airlift began on October 10, we have detected a total of 823 flights. Of these, 366 were to Egypt, 323 to Syria, and 52 to Iraq. There were 82 whose destination could not be determined.
- B. We estimate that these flights have brought in over 10,000 tons of materiel.
- C. The Soviets have augmented these air deliveries with a substantial sealift. Since October 7, 19 suspect Soviet arms carriers have left Black Sea ports for the Middle East. There have been no departures since October 21, however. These 19 ships carried an estimated 44,000 tons of cargo.

VII: Since last week, the Soviet Mediterranean Squadron has been increased. It now consists

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of 20 major surface combatants, eight amphibious ships, and two minesweepers. There are also 16 submarines and some naval auxiliaries, so that the total is the largest Soviet naval force ever to operate in the Mediterranean.

A. The surface combatants are mostly at anchor, however, well away from Syria or Egypt.

1. Three Soviet ships--a cruiser, a destroyer, and a submarine tender--are near the USS Independence, south of Crete.

B. Two guided missile frigates--one that left Cuba last week, and one that left Northern Fleet waters on Saturday--may also be headed for the Mediterranean.

C. All 8 of the Soviet amphibious ships in the Mediterranean have called at the Syrian port of Latakia. They probably brought in armored vehicles, including tanks. (Three of them are large enough to have carried at least 26 tanks apiece, the others only 5 apiece.)

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VIII. It is not yet clear just what effect the UN resolution and the cease-fire will have on oil embargos and production cuts previously ordered or contemplated by Middle East countries.

- A. All of the Arab oil-producing countries have embargoed oil shipments to the United States. Iraq and Algeria have also cut off shipments to the Netherlands for allegedly siding with the Israelis.
- B. Most of the Arab countries---Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Abu Dhabi, Algeria and Qatar---have announced a 10 percent production cutback immediately to be followed by 5 percent per month reductions thereafter.
- C. The severity of the cutbacks will depend on how each government implements its policy. Saudi Arabia is the only producer thus far reported to have given its oil companies instructions on how to implement the cutback and embargo.
- D. The combined Saudi cutback and embargo, if not reconsidered in light of the resolution, will amount to a 25 percent decline from planned production by November 30.

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- E. The Saudi actions enforcing the US embargo and production cutback are more severe than expected, and probably will continue until the Saudis are satisfied with how the Security Council resolution is implemented.
- F. If other Arab countries follow Jidda's lead, Arab oil production by November 30 could be 4 million b/d less than it was before the war began. Western Europe, which receives about 60 percent of Arab oil exports, will bear the brunt of any cutback. Western Europe is dependant on Arab oil for 70 percent of its consumption.
- G. Japan relies on Arab oil for 40 percent of its needs.

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