

ARAB STATES - ISRAEL: After intensified fighting yesterday along the southern sector of the west bank, Israel and Egypt agreed to a new cease-fire to take effect at 0100 EDT. Damascus also announced its acceptance of the UN cease-fire resolution late last night. Syria conditioned its acceptance, as Egypt had, upon complete Israeli withdrawal from all occupied Arab territory.

The UN Security Council resolution approved last night was again cosponsored by the US and the Soviet Union; the resolution

--reaffirms Monday's call for a cease-fire and urges all parties to return to the positions they occupied at the time the truce became effective;

--requests that the Secretary General dispatch UN observers to supervise the cease-fire along the Egyptian front.

This first effort of the Council to enforce its much-violated cease-fire should bring UN observers quickly into place. It avoids, however, the difficult problem of where the cease-fire line should be drawn. Last night's stormy session also failed to address the questions of how to initiate peace negotiations and implement the ambiguous Resolution 242.

Yesterday's heavy fighting on the Egyptian front occurred near Suez, where the Israelis continued to push south despite stiff Egyptian resistance.

[Redacted]

[Redacted] If Suez were to fall, Egyptian forces in the southern sector of the Sinai would be cut off from their supply lines; the Israelis would also be able to block the return of Egyptian forces from the east bank.

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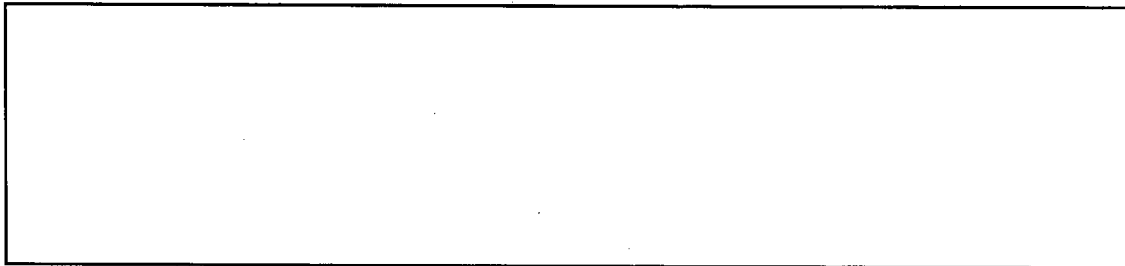
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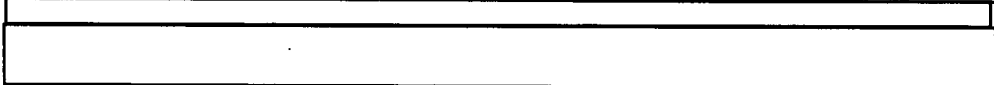
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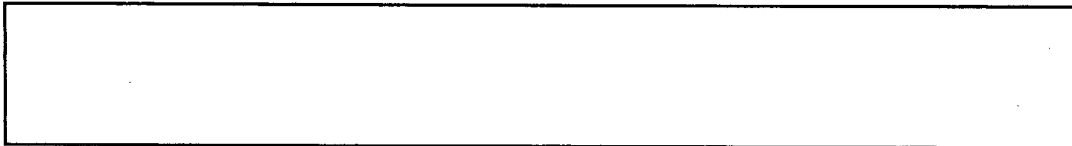
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Fighting on the Syrian front yesterday was limited to air strikes and artillery duels in the Mount Hermon area, where Syrian artillery was reported shelling positions lost to the Israelis. Damascus claimed 11 Israeli aircraft were shot down, while Tel Aviv said it destroyed ten Syrian fighters. Early this morning, the Israelis were shelling the ports of Latakia and Baniyas.



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Five additional Soviet merchant ships possibly carrying arms transited the Bosphorus for Middle East ports on 22 October. These ships are carrying a total of nearly 12,000 tons of cargo.

In a speech to the Knesset yesterday, Prime Minister Meir emphasized that Israel had accepted the cease-fire from a position of strength. She noted that Israeli forces on the west bank of the Suez Canal constitute a powerful base from which to launch future operations if they become necessary.

Meir stressed, as Tel Aviv always has, the necessity for direct negotiations between Israel and the Arabs, adding that there would be "no Israeli withdrawal until a binding peace settlement" is achieved. She said that the US had no plan to impose a settlement. Implied that she was drawing on conversations with Secretary Kissinger, she interpreted the US position to be that talks between

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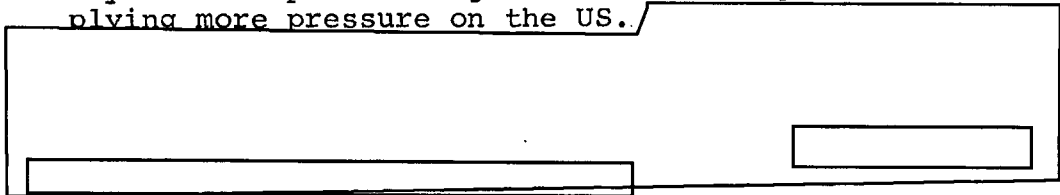
the parties to the conflict must accompany the cease-fire. The cease-fire, she said, might therefore become a "turning point in the region's history--one that could lead from bloodshed to peace."

Cairo reacted to the Meir speech by charging that it proved Israel's responsibility for the cease-fire violations. Egypt asserted that the US, as a sponsor to the cease-fire resolution, has a special responsibility for curbing Israel. The Egyptian statement cited Meir's references to US support as evidence that US military resupply was the main cause of Israeli aggressiveness.

Moscow issued a government statement yesterday placing blame on Tel Aviv for the breakdown in the cease-fire and threatening Israel with "the gravest consequences" if it continues its "aggression." The authoritative statement, although strongly worded, did not commit Moscow to any specific action. The statement may have been aimed at balancing Moscow's joint sponsorship with Washington of yesterday's UN Security Council resolution, which did not lay blame on either side for the renewed hostilities. It also puts Israel on notice that Moscow would view seriously any further Israeli incursions into Egypt or Syria.

The US Embassy in Jidda reports that senior Saudi officials want to minimize the damage the present crisis may do to US-Saudi relations, and that they view the cease-fire as an important positive step. If it is not followed by an Israeli withdrawal from at least some Arab lands, however, or if renewed fighting results in major Arab reverses, Saudi Arabia may feel compelled to join its Arab neighbors in applying more pressure on the US.

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AFRICA-ISRAEL: Ethiopia's diplomatic break with Israel yesterday is a major setback for Israel in Africa.

Ethiopia is the ninth black African country to sever relations since the beginning of the war in the Middle East; however, it is probably the most politically important of all sub-Saharan countries for Tel Aviv. The Israelis placed high value on the support of Emperor Haile Selassie, a leader of stature in Africa, a founder of the Organization of African Unity, and a strong voice for moderation throughout the continent.

Addis Ababa traditionally maintained strong ties with Israel, which has been second only to the US as a source of technical and military assistance for Ethiopia. Haile Selassie apparently decided, however, that he was becoming increasingly isolated from both the Arab and African camps and found it impossible to resist pressures from both.

Israel's position in Africa has been deteriorating for some time; eight countries broke diplomatic relations with Tel Aviv between March 1972 and 4 October 1973. Although 15 sub-Saharan countries retain such ties as of now, Tel Aviv clearly is losing ground at the UN and in other international forums.

Haile Selassie's decision may influence other important African leaders still on the fence, particularly Nigeria's General Gowon who is the current head of the OAU. Gowon has been under intense pressure from within his own government and from Arab states to break with the Israelis. Continued fighting and Israeli diplomatic rigidity regarding a settlement could convince him to follow Ethiopia's example. [REDACTED]

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