

APPROVED FOR RELEASE - CIA INFO DATE: 29-Aug-2012

25 October 1973

MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: The Cease-fire in the Suez Area: Who
is Fighting Whom?

The Military Situation

1. At the time the cease-fire went into effect, the Israelis claimed to hold an area on the west bank that extended inland roughly 13 miles from the canal and to a width of about 30 miles. The enclave was not completely secured, however, and Egyptian forces by-passed in earlier thrusts remained within the territory. The Egyptians claimed that the Israelis were limited to an enclave of about three to four miles from their bridgehead around Deversoir, with some penetrations extending out to a distance of seven miles. Because of the mobile warfare being fought in this area, much of the area was still contested and demarcation lines between opposing forces were unclear.

2. An hour after the cease-fire went into effect, Tel Aviv claimed the Egyptians began shelling Israeli positions near Ismailia.

This memorandum was prepared in the Strategic Research. Queries and comments addressed to

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Cairo meanwhile denied the Tel Aviv claims and asserted that Egypt was observing the cease-fire and that Israel was making false allegations as an excuse to break it.

3. An accidental reopening of the fighting could have come from troops moving around or regrouping in the dark, but the fixing of the area of violation near the city of Suez points to the area that is the most crucial to the military positions of both sides. The Israelis claimed substantial gains in this area the day before the cease-fire--gains that reportedly put their forces on the outskirts of Suez city. An Israeli military spokesman stated that the Israeli goal was to push through to the Gulf of Suez before the cease-fire was implemented, giving them control of the entire southern half of the west bank from Ismailia to the Gulf of Suez. By the end of the day preceding the cease-fire, however, the Israelis claimed to have only advanced about 3 miles--clearly short of their objective.

4. [redacted] Israeli forces in the southern sector from Ismailia to the city of Suez were ordered to continue fighting, but forces along the rest of the Suez front apparently were ordered to observe the cease-fire. By late evening of the 23rd Israeli forces had driven around Suez city and were heading for the coast.

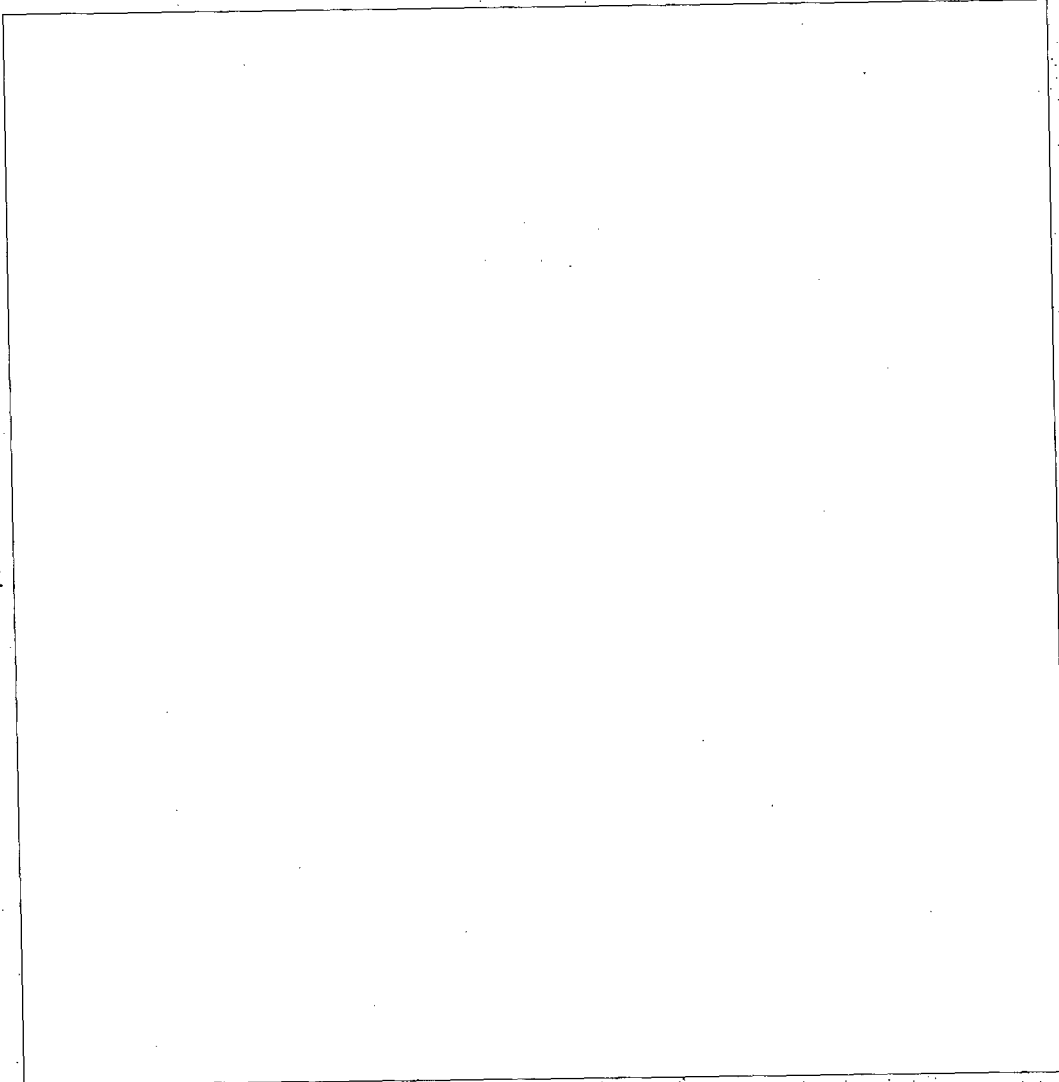
5. The next day a second cease-fire was arranged, but [redacted] fighting continued in the Suez city area up to and beyond the deadline. Nearly three hours after the cease-fire the Egyptian naval facility at Adabiyah, just south of Suez city, [redacted] was still under attack by Israeli armored units and that Israeli naval launches were tying up at the base's jetty. [redacted]

[redacted]

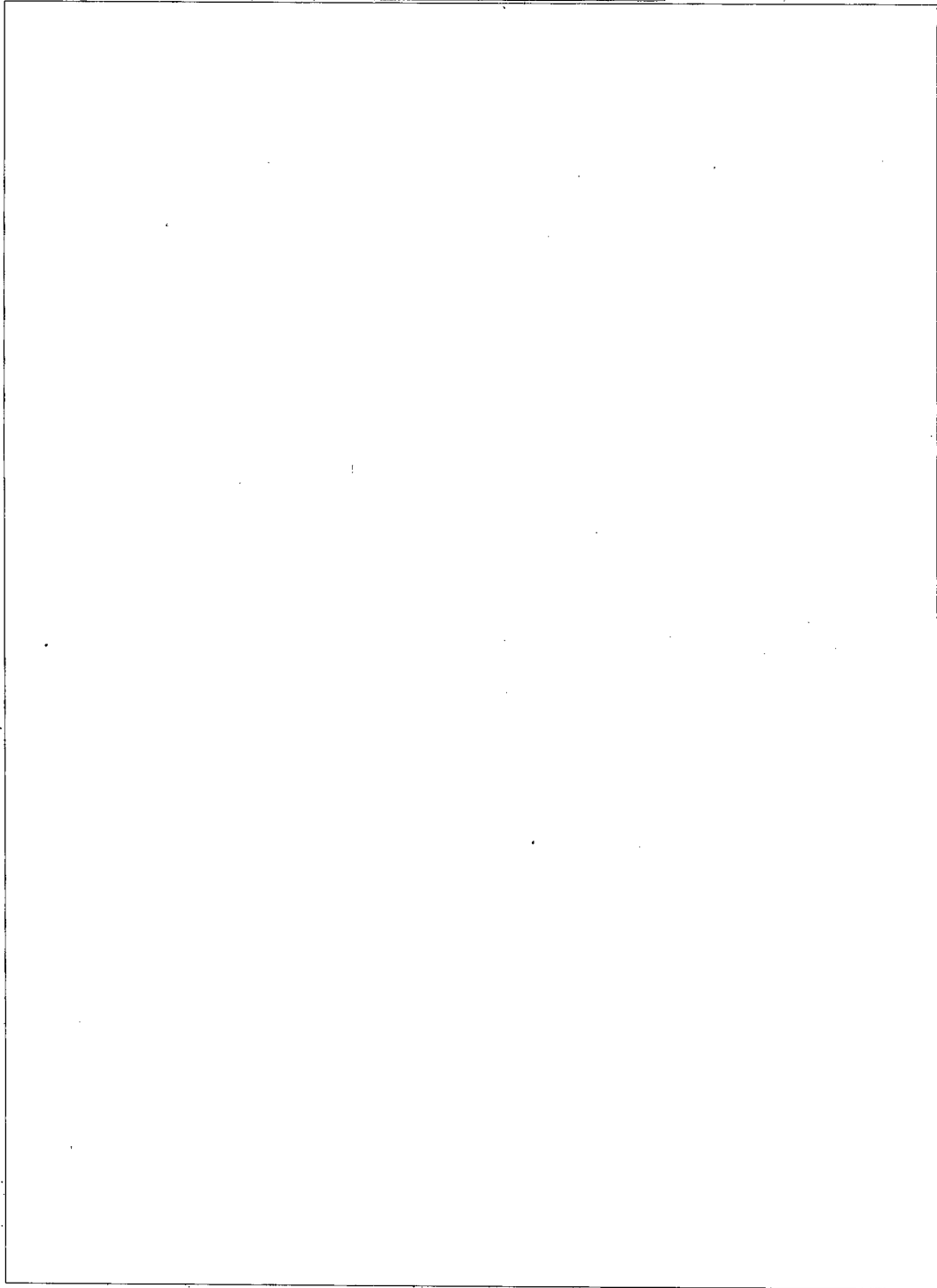
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6. The concerted Israeli effort to capture Suez and cut off the Egyptian 3rd Army in the two days following the original cease-fire deadline, casts doubt on Tel Aviv's claims that Egypt bears full responsibility for the cease-fire violations. Israel clearly had much to gain by the continued fighting and little to lose.



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