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LEADALL MIDEAST

IRAQ JOINS WAR

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BY REUTERS

(UNDATED)--IRAQ ANNOUNCED TODAY (WEDNESDAY) THAT ITS AIR FORCE HAD JOINED IN ATTACKS AGAINST THE ISRAELIS ON BOTH FRONTS IN THE MIDDLE EAST WAR AS ISRAELI JETS KEPT UP THEIR ASSAULT ON ARAB FRONT-LINE POSITIONS AND TARGETS INSIDE EGYPT AND SYRIA.

SEVERAL BIG CITIES IN SYRIA, INCLUDING HOMS AND THE PORTS OF TARTOUS AND LATAKIA, WERE REPORTED ATTACKED BY THE ISRAELIS FOLLOWING TUESDAY'S RAID ON DAMASCUS, THE SYRIAN CAPITAL.

BUT WHILE THE AIR WAR SEEMED TO BE INTENSIFYING, ISRAEL REPORTED THAT THE TANK BATTLES RAGING FOR THE PAST FOUR DAYS ON THE EGYPTIAN AND SYRIAN FRONTS HAD DIED DOWN.

THE U.N. SECURITY COUNCIL REMAINED DEADLOCKED OVER A FORMULA FOR HALTING THE FIGHTING AFTER A STORMY SESSION LAST NIGHT DURING WHICH THE RUSSIANS WALKED OUT IN PROTEST AGAINST THE ISRAELI RAID ON DAMASCUS.

IRAQ'S ANNOUNCEMENT THAT ITS AIR FORCE HAD BEEN THROWN IN TO SUPPORT THE EGYPTIANS AND SYRIANS CAME AS THE ISRAELIS APPEARED TO HAVE ESTABLISHED ASCENDANCY IN THE SKIES.

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THE OFFICIAL IRAQI NEWS AGENCY REPORTED THAT IRAQI PLANES CARRIED OUT 80 STRIKES ON ISRAELI TARGETS IN SUPPORT OF ARAB FORCES IN THE GOLAN HEIGHTS, ON THE SYRIAN FRONT, YESTERDAY. ON THE EGYPTIAN FRONT, THE AGENCY SAID, IRAQI PLANES MADE 10 RAIDS ON ISRAELI MISSILE SITES AND OTHER TARGETS IN SUPPORT OF ARAB FORCES SAID TO BE ADVANCING IN THE SINAI.

THIS WAS THE FIRST WORD OF IRAQI PLANE GOING INTO ACTION SINCE THE GOVERNMENT IN BAGHDAD ANNOUNCED ON MONDAY THAT IT WAS PLACING ITS ARMED FORCES AT THE DISPOSAL OF EGYPT AND SYRIA. BUT IT WAS NOT CLEAR WHETHER IRAQI GROUND TROOPS HAD ALSO JOINED THE BATTLES ON THE SINAI AND GOLAN HEIGHTS FRONTS.

A MILITARY SPOKESMAN IN TEL AVIV REPORTED THAT ISRAELI PLANES HAD GONE BACK INTO ACTION AT DAWN TODAY AGAINST ARAB TANK AND ARTILLERY POSITIONS ON BOTH FRONTS. THEY ALSO BOMBED AN EGYPTIAN RADAR STATION ON THE MEDITERRANEAN COAST AND AIRFIELDS IN THE DELTA REGION, AND THE PILOTS REPORTED HITS ON THEIR TARGETS, THE SPOKESMAN SAID.

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