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EO 12958
By: [signature] NARA Date 9/9/03

War

SECRET/EXDIS

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
Operations Center

MIDDLE EAST TASK FORCE
Situation Report #22

Situation Report in the Middle East as of 0600 EDT, 10/12/73

Military Situation

After a quiet night, fighting again resumed on both fronts October 12. At dawn the Israelis reopened their offensive against the Syrians, with heavy air activity reported and both sides claiming enemy aircraft losses. On the Suez front, an artillery battle was underway, suggesting a continuation of yesterday's static pattern.

The October 11 fighting closed on the Golan sector with Israelis highly pleased with the outcome. The main Syrian defensive line had been breached with an Israeli salient some 12 kilometers deep. The Syrian commander was faced with a choice of attempting to reinforce the line or drawing his forces back toward Damascus into new defensive positions. An Israeli military commentator last night suggested that the Israeli target would not be Damascus but Katana, an important military center 12 miles south.

Soviet resupply operations continued yesterday and, according to requests for overflight clearances, are expected to continue today, to both Syria and Egypt. Israel claimed that several flights of the large Soviet AN-22 were made into Egypt yesterday. The Israelis complain that the resupply into Syria has had a noticeable effect in restoring some of Syria's SAM capability.

According to the Israelis, 8 Kelt missiles were fired from 4 Egyptian TU-16's at targets in Sinai, little damage being caused. In what must have been a feat of marksmanship, two of these missiles were shot down by Israeli anti-aircraft gunners.

Israel publicly announced that some 35-40 Katyusha rockets were fired last night into Israeli civilian settlements by terrorists from the Lebanese border. Only one person was slightly wounded.

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Sitrep #22 (contd)

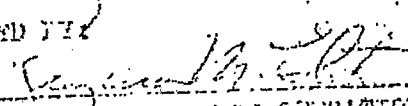
Damascus announced that a 4000-ton Soviet merchant ship was severely damaged in an Israeli air attack yesterday on Tartous port (there is some evidence the ship subsequently sank, but apparently without loss of life.)

Political Developments

The Syrians are pressing the Jordanians to send troops to Syria. King Hussain has promised to move an armored brigade to cover a segment of the Syrian line in the south, but believes he can stall the actual despatch of the unit until the evening of October 13. The Iraqi Foreign Minister arrived yesterday in Amman with a plea to support the Syrians, adding further to the pressure of the King. The Iraqi gave a gloomy account of the fighting in Syria, saying the Syrian front was in danger of collapsing, and expressing criticism of the Egyptians for not doing more to relieve pressure on Syria.

The Security Council met yesterday evening to hear Egypt and Israel exchange charges about attacks on civilian centers, Egypt claiming 500 killed in Israeli attacks on targets in the Delta. No resolutions were introduced and the Council made no progress on the question of a ceasefire.

The Department issued a prompt denial of the story put out in Cairo that U.S. carrier-based aircraft had strafed Egyptian positions. We termed the story a "mischievous and outrageous lie". This story and others now appearing that the US is resupplying Israel are beginning to produce some heat for us in the Arab capitals.

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