

DECLASSIFIED

Authority EO 12958
By PT NARA Date 8/22/03
SECRET/EXDISDEPARTMENT OF STATE
Operations CenterMIDDLE EAST TASK FORCE
Situation Report #66

10/26/73

Situation Report in the Middle East as of 1200 EDT,Cease-Fire

On the morning of October 26 the Egyptian Third Army attempted to break through surrounding Israeli forces, creating a new strain on the cease-fire. The IDF has announced that the Third Army is still attacking at 5 points along the Canal and is attempting to bridge the waterway from East to West. USDAO Tel Aviv reports that the Egyptian attack has been repulsed by the Israelis who were supported by Air Force units. IDF casualties were described as "not heavy." In the northern sector, the Second Army continues to observe the cease-fire.

The Lebanese front appears to have quieted down with the Lebanese Army and UNTSO reporting very few incidents of cross-border firing or other Fedayeen activity on the night of October 24 and throughout October 25. Following a policy meeting chaired by President Frangie, the Lebanese Army-- in contrast to its recent inactivity--is now patrolling in the border area...

An Egyptian spokesman has disclaimed responsibility for a reported attack on the Israeli tanker Sirius; the Egyptians maintain the ship struck a mine and the Israelis have now accepted this explanation. Reports from Israel suggest that the ship will probably sink.

There have been no reports of military activity on the Golan front.

SECRET/EXDISGDS - DECLAS Dec. 31, 1981

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UNEF

In response to our queries about availability of troops and logistical support for the UNEF, the following has come in from various posts: Norway has a force of 1300 earmarked for UN peacekeeping; it clearly appears to be interested in making at least part of them available. Sweden has committed a battalion to UNEF out of its forces on Cyprus. Thailand seems to want an invitation to participate and probably could contribute one infantry battalion. Denmark is prepared to respond to a UN request with a force of about 1,000 men. Indonesia seems favorably disposed and could probably provide an 8-900 man battalion. The Netherlands will respond favorably; they have 1300 men earmarked. Embassy Vienna believes Austria would be ready to help. Composition of the force is currently under consideration in the UN.

Brezhnev on Middle East

Speaking before the "Congress of Peace Forces" in Moscow, General Secretary Brezhnev noted the Egyptian call for Soviet and American participation in policing the cease-fire, recalled Soviet willingness to satisfy Egypt's request and the fact that "we have already sent such representatives" and expressed the hope that the USG "will proceed in a similar way." In his address, Brezhnev also said the USSR is ready to cooperate with all interested countries in normalizing the situation in the Middle East. Cooperation, however, cannot be fostered by "actions like the artificial inflammation of passions by means of spreading fantastic rumors of different kinds about the intentions of the Soviet Union in the Middle East."

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