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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
15 October 1973

INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

MIDDLE EAST

(Situation Report Number 40
As of 1630 EDT)

THE MILITARY SITUATION

GENERAL

1. Both fronts remained relatively quiet this afternoon. The Syrian front remains static, although Tel Aviv claims that its armor has driven back an Iraqi armored force in the central sector of the front.

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Both sides are consolidating their positions in Sinai after yesterday's fierce tank battles. An Israeli senior defense official claims that Egyptian forces made a small amphibious attack on an Israeli outpost along the Mediterranean coast this afternoon, but that the attack was repulsed.

THE SYRIAN FRONT

2. Ground action along the Syrian front was relatively light throughout the day with the action consisting mainly of artillery duels.

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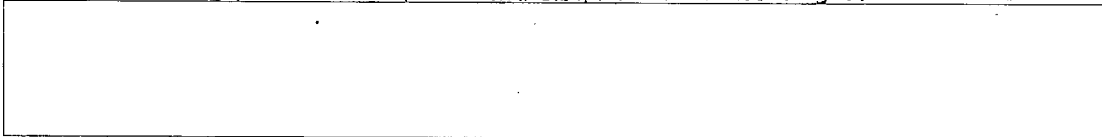
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Navy and State Department review(s) completed

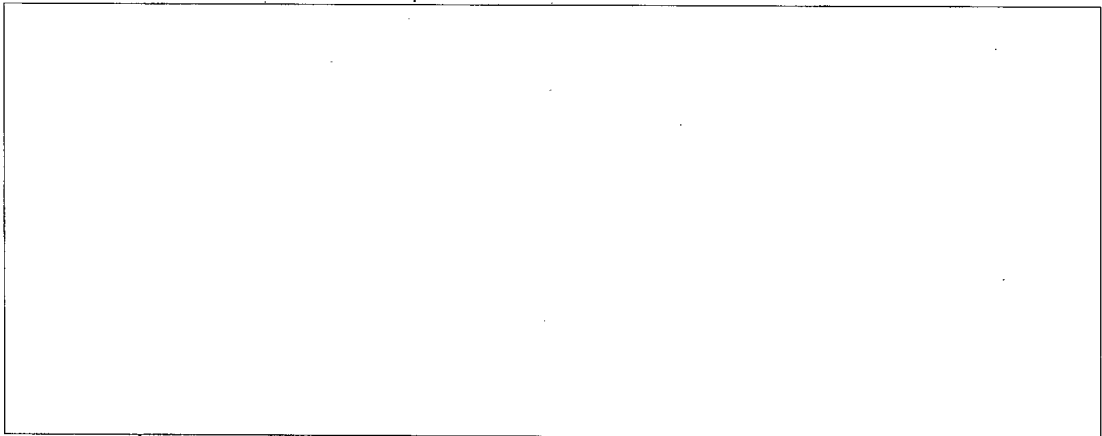


no Israeli air raids on Damascus this morning for the first time in seven days.

3. According to an Israeli military communique, Israeli ground forces have "broken through" Iraqi defense lines in the central portion of the Syrian front today, but the communique did not give details.

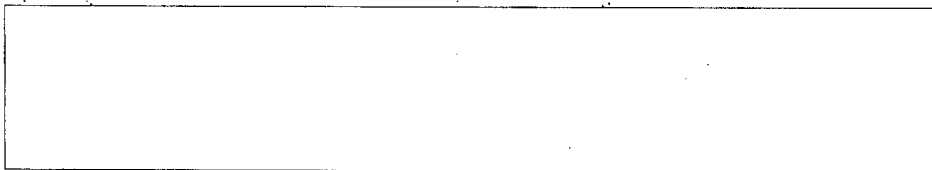


4. Iraqi oil officials in Beirut have confirmed that the Syrian oil refinery at Homs has been destroyed. The refinery was producing some 54,000 barrels of petroleum products a day, and the Iraqi officials claim that its loss has placed pressure on other Arab states, especially Lebanon, to supply petroleum to Syria.



THE EGYPTIAN FRONT

7. After a quiet morning, light ground activity apparently resumed this afternoon. According to an



Israeli defense ministry spokesman, Egyptian forces launched rocket attacks against Israeli positions along the canal early this afternoon and also conducted an amphibious attack behind Israeli lines in the Bay of Pelusium area along the Mediterranean coast. The attack was reportedly supported by four PT-76 amphibious tanks, but was repulsed. The Israelis also reported that three Egyptian helicopters had landed north of Ras Sidr on the Gulf of Suez and either landed or evacuated Egyptian personnel. Other Egyptian helicopters were driven off from Abu Rudays on the Gulf coast, according to the Israelis.

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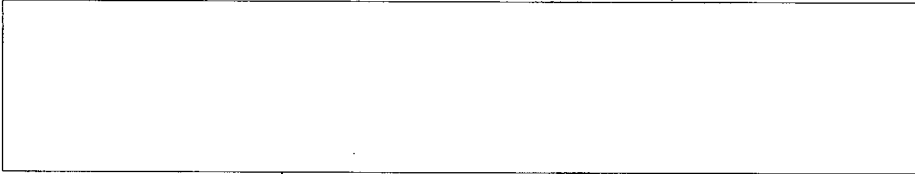
JORDAN

10. According to late press reports, the Israelis have observed what they believe to be a Jordanian tank column moving toward their lines in the southern part of the Syrian front. Although the Israelis have not reported any engagements, Jordan has announced a clash between their units and Israeli forces. Jordan claims to have destroyed six Israeli tanks.

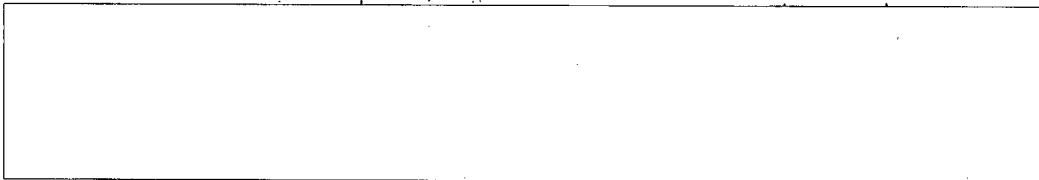
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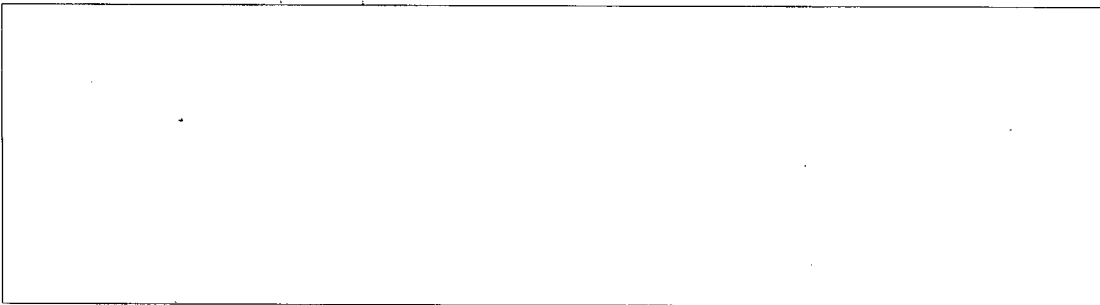


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SOVIET NAVAL ACTIVITY IN THE MEDITERRANEAN

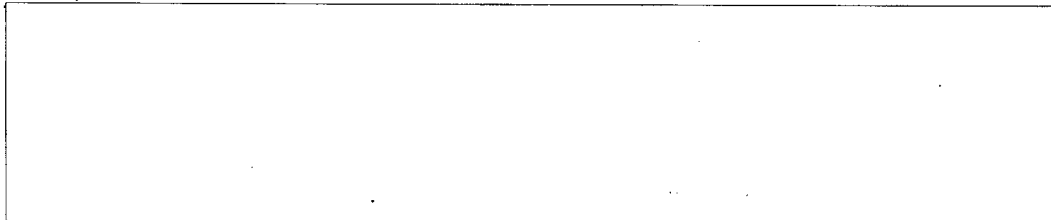


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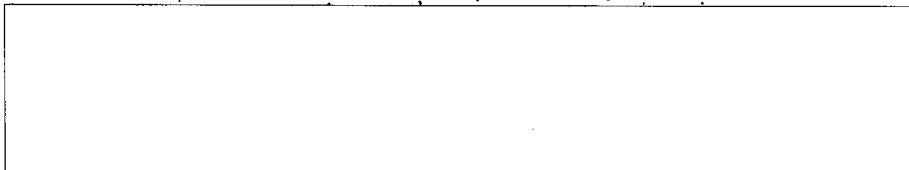
16. A guided-missile destroyer is still following the USS Independence south of Crete. A guided-missile frigate--the flagship of the Soviet Mediterranean squadron--and two auxiliaries are also supporting the surveillance activity.

OIL

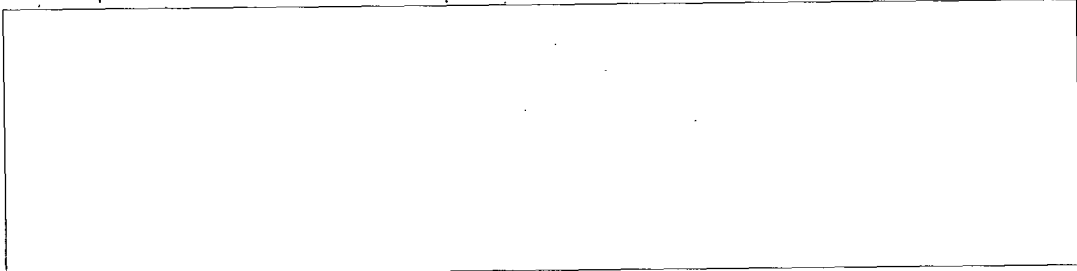
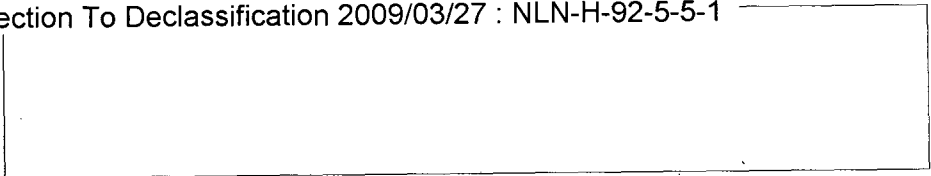
17. All of the major pipeline terminals in the eastern Mediterranean are now closed. The resulting loss to Western Europe is about 2 million barrels of crude oil a day or about 13 percent of normal consumption. Italy, Spain, and Austria are the countries most affected by the loss, and both Italy and Spain have instituted controls to prevent the outflow of petroleum products.



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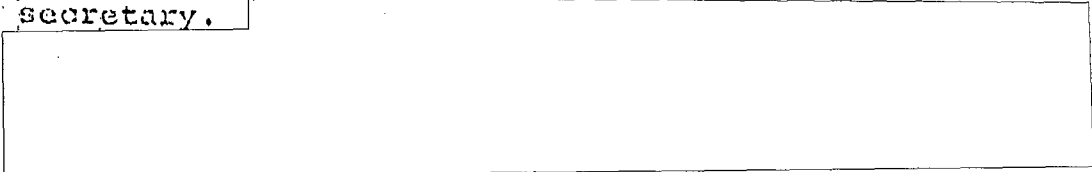


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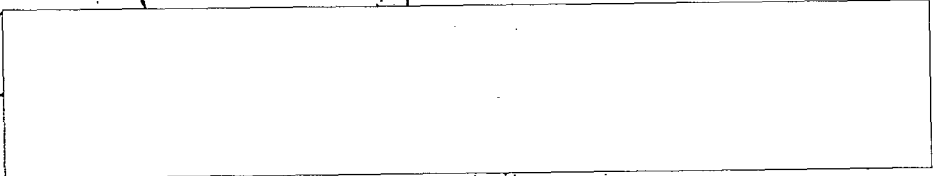
19. Prime Minister Bhutto will leave tomorrow for Iran, Turkey, and Saudi Arabia to discuss the current Middle East situation, according to an official announcement from Islamabad. Bhutto will have with him the Pakistani minister of state for defense and foreign affairs and the foreign secretary.



SOVIET PRESS

20. There has been no Soviet press reaction yet to the official US acknowledgement regarding arms resupply to Israel. Pravda and Izvestiya, however, today carried the first indirect reference to the USSR's role as arms supplier to the Arabs. The reference appeared in articles about Israeli Prime Minister Meir's press conference Saturday and it quoted her regarding the USSR's role in training and equipping Arab armed forces. During the 1967 war, no public mention was ever made about Moscow's military aid relationship with the Arabs.

21. TASS meanwhile has announced Algerian President Boumediene's visit to the USSR on 14-15 October. Boumediene met with the top three Soviet leaders, Defense Minister Grechko, and Foreign



Minister Gromyko. Though the communique indicated the two sides resolved "to assist in every way the liberation of all Arab territories occupied by Israel," it also characterized the talks as having been "frank," an indication that there were differences. En route home Boumediene stepped off in Belgrade where he conferred with Yugoslav President Tito.

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4. There have been no reactions from Cairo to the official US position, but an Egyptian spokesman issued a moderately worded statement today, probably before Marwan's return to Cairo, protesting continuing press reports that the US intended to resupply Israel. Noting that it is regrettable that the US does not distinguish between "those who are fighting to consolidate their occupation of usurped land and those who are fighting to liberate this land," the spokesman said that the "peoples of the world" had expected the US to uphold the principles of the UN charter, particularly the principle of the non-acquisition of territory by force. The US Interests Section notes that Cairo press coverage of US aid to Israel was less extensive today than in the 14 October editions, but Marwan's message from Faysal will undoubtedly provoke a new outburst of anti-US vitriol in tomorrow's press.

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6. Other Persian Gulf states have issued statements protesting the US resupply efforts, and the moderate oil producers indicated

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that they might be forced to take action against Western oil interests in order to safeguard their own positions. In this context, the Kuwaiti oil minister has stressed that he called the OPEC conference, now scheduled for Wednesday, as a pre-emptive gesture to keep the oil "weapon" out of radical hands; he and other

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moderates hoped before the US officially began the airlift that by stopping short of nationalizations or drastic production cutbacks they could aid the Arab cause and keep their domestic positions as well as maintain reasonably good relations with the US. The situation may now have changed.

7. An Israeli spokesman, in the meantime, in a possible effort to help get the US off the hook to some extent, announced today that the approximately 30,000 American volunteers who have asked to go to Israel will not be allowed to join the army, even in positions at the rear. He cited specifically in this regard American veterans of the Vietnam war, who have been widely rumored in the Arab world to be piloting Israeli and/or US Phantoms in attacks against Arab positions. The Israeli demurral will probably not deter Arab propagandists.

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