

ARAB STATES - ISRAEL: Egyptian and Israeli representatives are to meet again today at Kilometer 101 to continue yesterday's 3½-hour discussion concerning a mutual pullback of forces. Neither country has officially commented on yesterday's session, but Cairo's chief representative, General Gamasy, told reporters afterward that each side presented two alternative proposals for a pullback. He said "some" differences between the two sides remain, but noted: "We are still trying." Cairo domestic radio, meanwhile, broadcast a report on the meeting, citing UN General Siilasvuo's comment that the discussions were "beneficial."

Apparently in anticipation of difficulties at Thursday's military talks, Egypt had earlier:

--publicly accused Israel of obstructing implementation of the six-point agreement, and forecast that Thursday's talks would be "decisive";

--publicized a four-hour meeting Wednesday between President Sadat and his highest military advisers;

--taken foreign military attachés on a 14-hour tour of canal-front military positions in order to show Egyptian preparedness.

Egypt nevertheless completed, along with Israel, the exchange of prisoners, and its official spokesman expressed hope that an Arab-Israeli peace conference would begin "within the next few weeks."

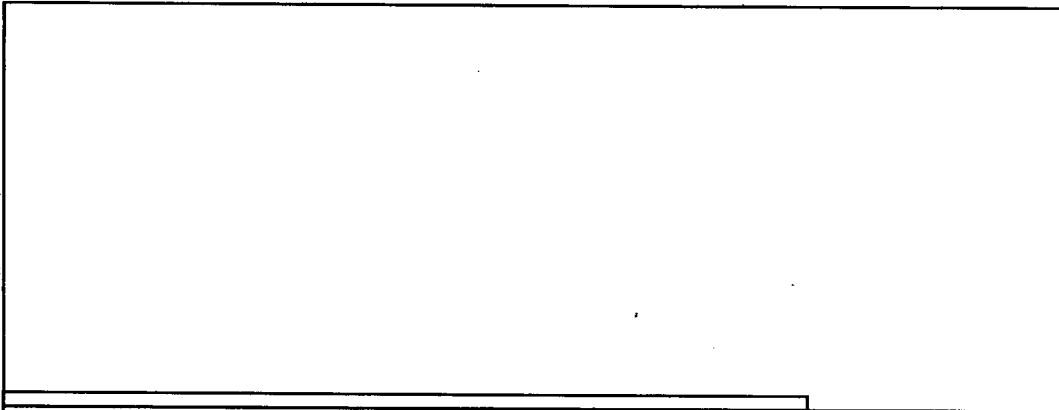
Syria, while expressing through Foreign Minister Khaddam its intention to attend a peace conference "if it is convened in accordance with our concept," appeared to be improving its military positions facing the Israelis. On 21 November UN observers reported that the Syrian Army was bringing more troops into an area northwest of Sasa. The observers said the Syrians, who had previously been anxious to have UN patrols along the cease-fire line west of Sasa, no

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longer wished a patrol in an area about six miles northwest of the town. The UN observers also noted that the Syrian chief of staff "probably will not permit continued mobile patrols"; such a restriction would significantly reduce UN coverage of the Syrian side of the cease-fire line, because all such patrols along the Sasa salient are mobile.



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Asked on 21 November if he expects military action in view of Israel's "obstinate" stand, Foreign Minister Khaddam, who visited Cairo last weekend, said only that Syria's battle with Israel embraces military, political, and economic means, which complement each other. Syrian President Asad is to make a one-day visit to Cairo today to meet with President Sadat. According to Egyptian press reports, Asad will then fly to Algiers to attend the Arab summit conference to begin on 26 November.

Both Syria and Egypt appeared confident that Cairo's position on how to deal with current issues would prevail at the Algiers conference. Iraq and Libya are the only countries not attending, and the possibility of lower level Libyan representation remains open. Egypt's semiofficial Al Ahram called on all Arab states to attend the conference, stressing the need to maintain solidarity and preserve the new Arab image achieved as a result of the October war.

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Meanwhile, the Organization of African Unity meeting in Addis Ababa adopted a resolution simultaneously hailing Egypt's "October war of liberation" and condemning Israel for its "act of aggression on 6 October." The resolution called on Israel to withdraw from all occupied Arab territories and urged that African states continue to withhold diplomatic relations from Tel Aviv until it does so.

The first Israeli test of the Bab al-Mandab blockade appears likely to occur around 6 December, when the Israeli-chartered tanker Stonehaven should arrive in the area on its way to Eilat with Iranian crude oil.

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