

HAK  
SCOWROFT  
HOWE

THE DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20505

*Peter - Info*

25X1



20 April 1973

MEMORANDUM FOR: Mr. Henry A. Kissinger  
Assistant to the President  
for National Security Affairs

SUBJECT: Egyptian Military Intentions

Our current assessment of the Egyptian-Israeli military situation remains that we do not believe that an outbreak of fighting along the Suez Canal is imminent. For some time, Sadat has followed a two-track approach of talking tough as a tactic to buttress his negotiating position and to keep up his image in the Arab world, while at the same time remaining prepared to search for a negotiated settlement. He may have begun to take his own talk more seriously, but we do not think he is at the point of decision on a military move against Israel.

Attached is a more detailed assessment. It also touches on some related dangers raised by the current activities of the other Arab states, the fedayeen, the Israelis and the Soviets.

James R. Schlesinger  
Director

Attachment

State Dept. review completed

25X1



ON-FILE NSC RELEASE INSTRUCTIONS APPLY

[Redacted]

TOP SECRET [Redacted]

Copy 1

25X1  
25X1

[Redacted]

20 April 1973

EGYPTIAN INTENTIONS AND RELATED DANGERS

We have received a number of reports that President Sadat is talking more seriously and more frequently of breaking the de facto Arab-Israeli cease-fire. There is also evidence of military activity on the Egyptian side that could be associated with a decision to renew hostilities with Israel.

25X1

[Redacted] Sadat has told Kamal Adnam, the Saudi intelligence chief, that fighting must begin sometime within the next few months. Sadat reasoned that this was the only way that the international community could be brought to intervene and procure for Egypt better terms than those the Israelis have offered so far.

25X1

[Redacted]

Military indicators have been fairly numerous, but to date not conclusive. They include

-- A movement of SA-6 surface-to-air missiles to firing sites within 20 miles of the Suez Canal. The most recent available photography shows four such sites.

-- The transfer within the past month of jet fighters from Libya (30 plus Mirages) and Saudi Arabia (10 Lightnings) to Egypt. Iraq is reported to have agreed to send similar aircraft.

-- Movement of TU-16 bombers from Aswan to the Cairo area in late March. These aircraft carry air-to-surface missiles, but we do not have evidence that the missiles themselves have been moved from Aswan.

25X1

[Redacted]

TOP SECRET

edule  
re)  
t)

TOP SECRET

25X1

- 2 -

-- Relocation and reactivation of various Egyptian air squadrons. Some of the shuffling may have been in anticipation of the arrival of the aircraft from Libya and Saudi Arabia.

-- [redacted] Soviet technical advisors have come or are coming to assist in readying Egypt's Soviet equipment. In February, a team of Soviets is known to have evaluated the operational status of this equipment; they found it in poor condition.

25X1

25X1

We do not find in these indicators a pattern of planning for any specific military operation at a specific time. [redacted]

[redacted] If Sadat intends, as we would expect him to if he has a serious purpose, both a ground action and an airstrike against Israeli targets across the Canal, we should see evidence of further preparation by air forces. Warning time, however, might be short. We probably would not see preparations by ground forces that might be used in an attack, because many units are already in place between Cairo and the Canal [redacted]

25X1

25X1

25X1

25X1

Sadat may be in the process of becoming more serious about the "logic" of military action against Israel. There is also, however, a strong element in his current approach of talking tough in order hopefully to strengthen his negotiating position. We do not think he has abandoned all hope for a negotiated settlement with Israel.

We are skeptical that Sadat has yet decided on a specific military operation at a specific time (although there are of course various blueprints on the Egyptian shelf). We believe that at a given time in the near future he would probably weigh the odds and decide against such a specific operation unless his political survival were at stake. His domestic situation is weakening, but he does not yet appear at the end of his rope; he can still find excuses to justify delay.

TOP SECRET

25X1

TOP SECRET

25X1

- 3 -

There are other factors than the military, however, that give cause for concern.

The Arab states and the fedayeen, each for their own purposes, are engaged in a campaign to raise tensions and sharpen feeling against the US. This campaign is likely to increase. It serves the same purpose as Sadat's talk and maneuvers: to force the US to reconsider its policy and extract concessions from Israel. We believe that Egypt is orchestrating this campaign as best it can. The campaign has in it the danger that it will carry even friendly Arab governments farther than they mean to go in threatening US interests. The new turn in Saudi Arabian oil policy is one immediate example of this; the Lebanese performance at the UN is another.

The Soviets may be helping this campaign, despite their priority interest in improving relations with the US as a prelude to the summit meeting. The signs are tenuous but suggestive:

-- A more militant tone in Soviet statements, in the UN and in a recent Swedish press interview with Kosygin.

-- Soviet diplomats taking the line with third countries--in the Middle East and Australia, for example--that Sadat is serious about military action. With US diplomats the Soviets have claimed that Sadat is unlikely to resume hostilities.

-- [redacted] the canard regarding US participation in the Israeli raid in Beirut came first from a Soviet journalist who fed it to fedayeen leaders. Soviet media have reprinted the Arab allegations.

-- [redacted] that Moscow has promised (but not delivered on schedule) more modern aircraft to Iraq, including TU-22 bombers.

TOP SECRET

TOP SECRET

25X1

- 4 -

The Soviets certainly would not urge Sadat to start fighting; they would counsel against such action, particularly if it appeared to be undertaken recklessly. Moscow nevertheless may calculate that tensions of the kind now developing will set the stage advantageously, from its standpoint, for summit discussions of the Middle East.

The Israeli leadership, even though it may have received an intelligence assessment on Sadat's situation that is similar to ours, may believe that Israel cannot afford to take a chance that Sadat will either delay or fumble when and if he acts. As Ambassador Dinitz has indicated, some top Israelis at least have read the indicators to mean that Sadat does intend to strike.

The Israelis have repeatedly made clear that they do not intend to follow Sadat's "logic." If the Egyptians make a move across the Canal, the Israeli reaction will be punishing. If the Egyptians or other Arabs appeared to be readying an air bombardment mission, and the Israelis were not certain that they could thwart it completely, the Israelis would very likely deliver a pre-emptive strike.

In sum, we do not believe that an outbreak of fighting along the Canal is imminent. We are entering a difficult period, however, in which both Israelis and Arabs will be unusually sensitive to US actions and policies regarding this area.

TOP SECRET

25X1