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By ARO NARA Date 9/9/03

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ZEN/AMEMBASSY SUVA BY POUCH
ZEN/AMEMBASSY BANJUL BY POUCH
ZEN/AMCONSUL CURACAO BY POUCH
ZEN/AMCONSUL MARTINIQUE BY POUCH
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S E C R E T STATE 208776

EXDIS MILITARY HANDLE AS SPECAT
INFORM CONSULS
E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: XX
SUBJECT: MIDDLE EAST SITUATION

1. FOLLOWING IS MIDDLE EAST SITUATION THROUGH EVENING
OCTOBER 20.

2. EGYPTIAN FRONT. FIGHTING WAS INTENSE ON BOTH BANKS OF
THE CANAL THROUGHOUT THE COMBAT DAY OCTOBER 20. THE
ISRAELIS CONTINUE TO REVEAL PUBLICLY LITTLE MORE THAN THAT
THEIR FORCES WEST OF CANAL ARE STEADILY ENLARGING THE IDF
BRIDGEHEAD TO NORTH AND SOUTH OF CROSSING POINT. ISRAELI

***** *WHSR COMMENT * * * * *

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OFFICERS BRIEFING ATTACHES AT MID-DAY (EDT) USED PHRASES SUCH AS "THE BEGINNING OF THE END" FOR EGYPT.

3. IDF APPARENTLY HAS SECURED NORTHERN FLANK OF THEIR BRIDGEHEAD TOWARD ISMAILIA, AND CLAIMS THAT IDF FORCES IN CENTER HAVE SECURED CAIRO-ISMAILIA ROAD AND HAVE EFFECTIVELY INTERDICTED ALL ROADS AND RAILROADS FROM CAIRO TO SUEZ CITY AND ISMAILIA. THE HEAVIEST FIGHTING, HOWEVER, APPEARS TO BE ON SOUTHERN FRONT OF THE IDF FORCES WEST OF THE CANAL. THESE FORCES, STALLED YESTERDAY IN THEIR DRIVE TOWARD SUEZ CITY BY AN EGYPTIAN COUNTERATTACK, OVERRAN ENEMY'S 4TH DIVISION HEADQUARTERS AND WENT ON TO ATTACK EGYPTIAN 3RD ARMY HEADQUARTERS NEAR JEBAL JAFRA. ISRAELI FORCES, AIR AND GROUND, STILL HAVE SAM AND ARTILLERY SITES AS TOP

PRIORITY TARGETS.

4. ISRAELIS NOW CLAIM THAT MUCH OF FIGHT HAS GONE OUT OF EGYPTIANS, MANY OF WHOM ARE FLEEING WESTWARD. IDF SAID THAT ENEMY OFFICERS ARE BEING CAPTURED, INCLUDING SOME GENERALS, BUT THAT TROOPS ARE LEFT ALONE IN THEIR RETREAT. REPORTS FROM CAIRO INDICATED THAT EGYPTIAN FORCES,

INCLUDING SOME SA-6 UNITS, SEEM TO BE BEING MOVED FROM EAST TO THE WEST BANK OF CANAL, PROBABLY TO HELP IN ATTEMPT TO CONTAIN IDF BRIDGEHEAD. SAME REPORTS INDICATE EGYPTIAN AIR LOSSES TODAY AS 14 MIGS'S AND THREE HELICOPTERS. AIR AND NAVAL ACTIVITY CONTINUED AT A HIGH LEVEL, WITH ISRAELI AIR, NAVAL, AND NAVAL COMMANDO ATTACKS ALONG NILE DELTA COAST AND ON RED SEA COAST.

5. SYRIAN FRONT. FRONT CONTINUES TO BE RELATIVELY QUIET. JORDANIANS ARE REPLACING THE LOSSES OF THEIR 40TH BRIGADE IN SYRIA, AND MAY BE DOING SO AT A HIGHER LEVEL THAN JORDANIANS HAVE SO FAR REVEALED. THE PRESSURE ON KING HUSSEIN TO COMMIT MORE FORCES IS GAINING STEADILY. JORDANIAN OFFICERS REPORTEDLY NOT HAPPY WITH IRAQI PERFORMANCE AND IDF OFFICER SAID THAT ON OCTOBER 19 SYRIAN AIR CONTROLLERS DIRECTED IRAQI JETS AGAINST JORDANIANS BY MISTAKE. IDF ALSO CLAIMED THAT A SYRIAN GENERAL WAS HANGED IN DAMASCUS THIS MORNING FOR "FAILURE IN BATTLE." A SAM-6 SITE IS REPORTED TO HAVE BEEN SET UP IN LATAKIA. ISRAELI NAVAL ACTION AGAINST SYRIAN COASTAL TARGETS CONTINUES.

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6. OIL AND MONEY FRONT. EMBASSY JIDDA HAS CONFIRMED PRESS REPORTS THAT SAUDI ARABIA HAS CUT OFF ALL OIL SHIPMENTS TO THE US. THE DECREE OF THE ROYAL DIWAN SAID THAT IN ADDITION TO A TEN PERCENT REDUCTION IN PRODUCTION, KING HAS ORDERED ALL EXPORTS TO US STOPPED BECAUSE OF THE STAND THE US HAS TAKEN IN THE MATTER OF INCREASED MILITARY SUPPORT FOR ISRAEL. PRESS REPORTS SAY ALGERIA ALSO HAS CUT OIL TO US.

7. EMBASSY KUWAIT REPORTS THAT ARAB CENTRAL BANKERS MAY MEET SOON TO DISCUSS USE OF ARAB FINANCIAL RESERVES AS A WEAPON TO WEAKEN DOLLAR- EMBASSY BELIEVES, HOWEVER, THAT GOK WILL NOT BEGIN TO ATTEMPT INTERNATIONAL FINANCIAL MANIPULATIONS, THOUGH PRIVATE ARABS MAY MOVE OUT OF DOLLAR HOLDINGS IN RESPONSE TO CRISIS AND TO WEAKNESS OF DOLLAR ON EUROPEAN MARKETS.

8. AMERICAN FRONT. THE PRESIDENT OF THE INTERNATIONAL LONGSHOREMEN'S ASSOCIATION SAID TODAY THAT A PLANNED BOYCOTT OF ALL CARGO AND SHIPS BOUND FOR SOVIET UNION HAS BEEN PUT OFF UNTIL TUESDAY TO GIVE SECRETARY KISSINGER A CHANCE TO END ARAB-ISRAELI WAR. RUSH
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