

EGYPT POLITICS
(continued from Page 1)

indicate that the Nixon Administration believed that the Big Four could play a meaningful role in cooling off the Mideast but that any imposed solution to the basic problem would fail.)

Militarily and economically, the clashes were a disaster for Egypt, military officials said. At least nine oil storage tanks containing about 27,000 tons of fuel at Port Suez were destroyed, a number of Egyptian ships at Fort Idrhim on the Gulf of Suez was hit and was set afire and a fertilizer plant near the oil refineries and Egyptian army bases, tanks and artillery positions

were seriously damaged. While Egypt reported only a few military casualties, including the death of chief of staff, Lt. Gen. Abdel Riad, one of the nation's more competent military leaders, Israeli officers said they believed Arab military personnel losses were heavy. The noted that the Egyptian Chief of Staff probably was not alone on his inspection tour of the front and that losses were also sustained among accompanying headquarters staff officers.

(A condolence note to the Egyptian Government from Moscow expressing sympathy over the death of Gen. Riad "and a number of other commanders," indicated that other staff officers were

killed with the Egyptian military leader.)

Egyptian shipping in the Gulf of Suez was a target for the first time, Israeli spokesmen said, as a reminder to Egypt that Israel had the power to blockade Port Suez and Fort Ibrahim and stop ships from carrying goods from the South. Egypt would have immense difficulties relying on land transportation as an alternative to this ship traffic.

Israeli losses were limited to four soldiers killed and about two dozen wounded. A Piper Cub spotter planes was downed by an Egyptian anti-aircraft missile, the first successful use of such Russian-made weapons along the waterway. The pilot was killed.

Construction of the Barlev Line, named in honor of Israel's Chief of Staff, Chaim Bar Lev, reduced losses as the series of concrete bunkers and underground fortifications protected Israel.

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