

## ALDAFERSWAR Loop Hole Vulnerability Problem and Its Impact on the Egyptian Military Forces

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### ABSTRACT :

Despite the large number of scientific topics and subjects . But no research or topic has been addressed on the nature of the relationship between Arab political leaderships and military leaders , especially the relation on October 1973 war , at a sensitive and confusing time . And the dangers that are resulted from this war that nearly toppled Cairo , the capital of Arab Egypt . Which is the problem of the loophole that was occurred during October 1973 war . As this period , the problem were largely obscured , alike during the rule of Al-Sadat , who his rule lasted until 1981 , Mubarak's reign , which lasted until 2011 . Though the fact that there are a number of books that dealt with this problem . But it did not explain the facts that occurred and happened , in addition to the Egyptian political leadership's ability to obscure and influence most Arab governments , or even the major countries , in not showing the facts that were occurred within October 1973 war and the problem of the gap in particular.

**Key words:** Loophole , Divers war , Egyptian military forces

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### Effects of Loophole Problem :

At the beginning of the war , the Egyptian army had (1700) tanks . Where it mobilized ( 1350) tanks of them towards the canal and another (100) tanks were distributed towards important areas near the Red Sea . While the rest (250) tanks were considered as a strategic reserve and when the war broke out , the second and third army had (1020) tanks in the east of the canal , in the west of the canal there were (330) tanks in the possession of the two divisions (21-40) which were charged to support the forces that crossed the canal and to face any Israeli penetration towards west of the canal <sup>(1)</sup>

Effects of the breaking began on 14 October 1973 . After the Egyptian army had lost (250) tanks within only a few hours as a result of evolving the attack . And at the end of that day , the Israeli army vanguards reached the edge of bank of the water channel . Then crossed to west of the canal . While losses of the Egyptian tanks

starting from the first day of the war till day of (14) were only fifty tanks <sup>(2)</sup> .

As the Israeli forces began to attack to the right of the (16) division of the second army and a large battle with tanks was taken place in order to open the road to the canal <sup>(3)</sup> .

So that the Israeli army could deliver the prefabricated bridge, equipment to the eastern bank of the canal .Where that was called the battle of opening the road (The Chinese Battle) . The Israeli forces has sustained heavy losses , but the American airlift bridge was compensating for those losses at the same time . <sup>(4)</sup>

During battle of the Chinese farm . There were special Israeli forces going through the narrow paths , sand dunes to the edge bank of the canal . They surveyed the road well , established strong check points to strike the second army and crossed simple forces to the west bank of the canal . Where they would formed as a core point for larger forces in the Divers war . The battle for the Chinese farm was a strong blow against the Israeli

army . But the results were arrival of (750) Israeli soldiers to the edge bank of the canal and they crossed to the west of the canal <sup>(5)</sup> .

Despite the losses , the Israeli army commanders regarded it as it was a battle for surprise the Egyptian army to achieve the goal , which is the divers war gap . Which is considered that battle of the Chinese farm was a tour for the Israeli military. The purpose for the gap is arrival of three Israeli armored divisions which away from Cairo (80) km . Such as besieging the second and third armies . And striking air defense missile platforms <sup>(6)</sup> .

And nearly within the 23<sup>rd</sup> day of the battle . The Israeli forces had surrounded the third army which its numbers (45) thousand soldiers and officers from all sides, also besieging the city of Suez after cutting the main road between them and Cairo, till port of Al -Adibiya in south of Suez . The process of cutting off the road to not supplying the third army with food and water . As the case from inhabitants of the city of Suez and its nearby cities <sup>(7)</sup> .

Because the stock they had was only sufficient for four days . So there was no way for them only death or surrender . Which foreshadowed a great disaster and genocide . Where Koldamaire had mentioned in her diaries intensity of the siege on the third army . As on one day and after The cease-fire . Al - Sadat asked Israel to bring in supplies and subsistence to the third Army . But Israel did not agree only after Al-Sadat agreed to open Bab Al – Mandab for one of the ships that carries weapons and foodstuffs to Israel . Where Al – Sadat had agreed directly to open the way before those ships . This states strength of control of Israel over battle . Such as it is merely clear form of the Egyptian stance

Re-control of the Israeli air forces in the west of the canal had began after the Israeli army destroyed most of the Egyptian Sam platforms missiles at west of the canal .Which had an important role to establish a protective shade for Egyptian army which were located in east of the canal <sup>(8)</sup> .

And after the 24<sup>th</sup> day of the battle , the Israeli forces of battle become to form as head of a bridge at Divers war of three divisions , such as had (300) tanks against to (2) Egyptian brigades . Where fighting against the Israeli forces in the west of the canal was not based on military science . Because of Al-Sadat's interference in the military plan and his political decision <sup>(9)</sup> .

Which it led to injuries large numbers of the Egyptian army like the dead , captured and wounded . Where the brigadier general Ibraheem Al – Refaee the commander of the 39<sup>th</sup> fighting collection and the brigadier general Ahmed Abboud Al-Zomor the commander of the 23<sup>rd</sup> mechanical division were among the victims <sup>(10)</sup> .

When the leader of a brigade in a battle was between the martyrs that states us the magnitude of losing and hardness of defeatism which that army had faced it . The Israeli bombing on the second and third army continued . Where Sharon had headed with his forces towards Al – Ismailia area , but the Egyptian commandos forces destroyed the bridges that were existed on the waterway that was separating between Al – Waferswar and Al -Ismailia areas . Where a battle took place between the two sides . Despite the disproportion of the two forces , but the Egyptian forces prevented the Israeli army to reach Al – Ismailia area . Which it was regarded as the source of drinkable water for cities of the Suez Canal<sup>(11)</sup> .

Major General Abdulmunem Wasel who was the commander of the third army had asked several times from Mr. Ahmed Ismail the minister of war to save Suez to be not taken over by the hands of the Israeli army , due to ease of the terrain , nature of lands between the Diverswar and the city of Suez . Where controlling over it means eliminating the third army .<sup>(12)</sup>

The response of Al-Sadat was to keep the third army in its place even if it was annihilated completely . This shows us the continuation of the political decision , its superiority over the military decision and indifference to the bad military situation on the battlefield . And the army commander would almost have fallen into captivity , but for his withdrawal difficulty at night with (30) officers and left the third army without leadership . As the officer of center of leadership of the third army had commanded the major general Abdulmunem Wasel to leave the advanced headquarters of leadership in order not to be captured , not to be gotten out via official Israeli television the matter that would cause as a moral setback for the Egyptian army .<sup>(13)</sup>

Al-Sadat used to issue his military commands in the days of the breaking , as if these commands were consistent with the minds of the Israeli leaders . Where it was begun on 13 October 1973 . When the west of the canal was emptied from the military reserve , through development of the attack and until the Israeli army crossed to the west of the canal<sup>(14)</sup> .

Where he gave his commands to close the breach at the east with only one brigade, which was the brigade (25) as it was mentioned earlier. Which it gave impression to the Israeli army commanders that the Egyptian leadership had lost the control. Where made Sharon to leave three armored brigades east of the canal only and to send two armored divisions to west at ALDAFERSWAR war as well as two parachute and commandos brigades<sup>(15)</sup>. The Egyptian army with the reserve forces were frozen by command of Al - Sadat in east of the canal. As he did not accept to maneuver with it or to send it to close the gap and did not comply with views of the military leaders. Such as the lieutenant general Saad Al-Shathely or the rest of the leaders. And he started to push every day with a small force in front of a large force of Israel for the purpose of extermination of the remaining Egyptian forces in the west of the canal<sup>(16)</sup>.

As the republican guards brigade which was joined to protect Cairo were sent with the rest of the fourth division. But the interference of Al – Shathely had prevented extermination of those forces, so that Cairo would not be fallen. Because the Israeli forces arrived at Kilo (101) which was only (80 km) far from Cairo.<sup>(17)</sup>

The leaders of the Egyptian second and third army had offered to Ahmed Ismail who was the minister of war, to establish reserve forces from the total of their both army and return them to west of the canal to protect the back of the two armies. But Al -Sadat refused when he knew the matter<sup>(18)</sup>. At that time the Israeli army was pushing the second army to north for the purpose of expanding the gap. The leaders of the Egyptian army, in addition to that lieutenant general Saad Al- Shathely had no authority to make military decisions. Where Al – Sadat was the one who ran the military operation, such as the major general Abdulmunem Wasel the commander of the second army had stated that he had secretly formed reserve forces for him, but Al-Sadat revealed this action and withdrew those forces under the command of the general leadership and he did not make to enter into any battle until the end of the war. Lieutenant general Saad Al- Shathely also tried to withdraw some anti-tank missile battalions secretly and without Al-Sadat's knowledge, but Al-Sadat later had known that and those battalions were frozen under the pretext of protecting Cairo<sup>(19)</sup>.

The minister of war was commanded by Al – Sadat to send commandos forces to face the

Israeli forces in west of the canal and such battles are considered lost. Where there is no comparison between the strength of the large armored vehicles and the strength of the medium thunderbolt (Commando forces). But heroism, bravery of the Egyptian soldiers in some places of the breaking had put an end to progress of the Israeli forces, as the case that was happened in Al -Ismailia and port of Al – Adibiya<sup>(20)</sup>.

The absence of reconnaissance led to weakness of planning of operations in the problem of the loophole, for example, brigade (116) was ambushed at a very far distance from the planned location, and before distributing its combat units, it clashed with the Israeli forces west of the canal that made to be incurred great losses<sup>(21)</sup>.

Where the lack of knowledge of the positions of the Israeli forces in the divers war and the size of their combat power to deal with them likewise pushing a parachute company to deal with a battalion of tanks in the west of the canal. This means that the Egyptian leadership does not want to believe that there is an Israeli breach in Divers war, despite of the reports of the Egyptian pilots who were fired shells from the west of the canal, in addition to the reports of officers, soldiers of Al-Sam missile bases who were exposed to bombing of Israeli tanks<sup>(22)</sup>.

Where the matter was occurred on 23<sup>rd</sup> day of the battle, where some Egyptian warplanes landed at Fayed Airport in west of bitter lakes. Where they founded Israeli aircrafts (C-130.) that special to transport were landed at the airport. Where it was controlled as well as Idaferswar airport.

And all these dangerous occurrences, but that the Egyptian leadership considered the breach point as a media operation and crossing of (7) tanks only to the west and it was dealt with aggressively. And until the number reached more than (400) tanks and there was no professional military deal with it by the Egyptian leadership. Where the matter that led to destruct (5) brigades of different classes, in addition to division<sup>(21)</sup> and division<sup>(22)</sup>.

As for the rest of the military divisions in the east, they were not exposed to any fighting except for the constant aerial bombardment of the Israeli air force<sup>(23)</sup>.

Where Al – Sadat had mentioned in his memoirs (( The gap was a reckless, naive operation that is condemned to failure. If I had filtered the breach point according to the set plan. It might made Israel would have lost (400) tanks

and ten thousand military dead. This was not from difficulty on us, but it is certainty. Whereas there was a big lake behind the Israeli army, five Egyptian brigades and there were Egyptian forces in front of it. Where all expectations indicated that if this battle was to take place, it would be the massacre of history<sup>(24)</sup>.

Al-Sadat justified himself about did not issue command to elimination of the breach point, because he did not want more blood, hatred and hostility. And sometimes he mentioned that he had given a pledge to Henry Kissinger the Secretary of State of the United States of America. If the matter was reversed and the situation was in the hands of the Israeli army, would its leaders take the same decision as Al – Sadat did? <sup>(25)</sup>. Al - Sadat's words are not considered practical or important from the military side. Rather, it is political talk that has nothing to do with the course of the battle. It clearly shows us the interference in military decisions and positions to diverting them to the account of the general political situation <sup>(26)</sup>.

The Egyptian leadership devised a plan to liquidate the loophole that was called (Shamel). But the military divisions and brigades were just addresses and names. As it was often a collection of the remnants of the forces that was destroyed, for example the fourth armored division of which only two out of four brigades remained <sup>(27)</sup>. And its commander was asked to break the siege from the third army, but lieutenant general Saad Al-Shathely corrected the matter and changed the division's direction towards protecting Al – Ismailia area, otherwise it would be completely destroyed, as well as the (23) armored brigade issued commands from the Egyptian leadership to destroy the Israeli force that was present in the gap on (17<sup>th</sup>) day and on (18<sup>th</sup>) the attack was executed, but with the strength of three regiments only, because one regiment was withdrawn from it and the artillery battalion was withdrawn and attacked without numerical integration or artillery support or air coverage <sup>(28)</sup>. Where it was fell into a tight ambush, it was completely destroyed, it and caught up with the other brigades that were sent out of service because of the gap, like brigades (25, 1, 4, 116, 118) <sup>(29)</sup>.

Where it was the last battles, it was regarded among the strongest battles in the war that took place between the (116<sup>th</sup>) brigade led by brigadier general Ahmed Abbod Al – Zomor, who was martyred as a result, as it was mentioned previously, besides to the Israeli armored brigade

led by general (Netka) and (116<sup>th</sup>) brigade was destroyed completely. The plan failed to liquidate the loophole, a war of attrition began led by thunderbolt and parachute soldiers alongside the popular resistance in Suez and nearby cities <sup>(30)</sup>. As it took responsibility for defending its cities after the Israeli army entered it. Where the people attacked the Suez general hospital, because there were weapons stores belonging to the wounded and martyrs of the Egyptian army. The guards tried to stop them, but those weapons which were Kalashnikovs and rocket-propelled grenades R.B. G7 were seized and taken by the people<sup>(31)</sup>. Great battles took place between the two parties, especially after the Egyptian flag was lowered from the building of the Suez governorate. The popular resistance was led by Al - Sheikh Hafedh Salama <sup>(32)</sup>. Who contributed to the general mobilization of civilians and raised the morale of the Egyptian army in Suez <sup>(33)</sup>. Which led to losses in the Israeli tanks that made them have to withdraw from Suez and impose a siege on it that lasted (100) days, such as withdrawal of the Israeli army on December 1974 <sup>(34)</sup>. And after continuation resistance of good men to the Egyptian leadership about the role of the popular resistance in Suez and with the support of the Egyptian thunderbolt, Al -Sadat had sent Hassan Al-Tahamy <sup>(35)</sup>. He was the leader of the popular resistance, but the people refused and insisted on Hafedh Salama as their leader <sup>(36)</sup>.

After the siege of the city of Suez. Moshe Dayan issued a command on the 24<sup>th</sup> day of the battle to move towards the port of Al - Adibiya in south of the city of Suez, because it was a strategic and vital place of importance. Sharon had led armored brigade (178), brigade of commandos by directly air American – Israeli support. These details were stated by Moshe Dayan before the real Granat Committee in the Israeli Knesset <sup>(37)</sup>. Where Sharon had told Dayan that the port had only a small force supported by some civilians, and upon the arrival of Sharon's forces, they were surprised by the Algerian army that was protecting the ports of Al-Adibiya and Al – Zaytiyah. To be more information that Al - Sadat had kept the Algerian army away from crossing to the east of the canal because it was late for the attack, so it was deported it to the port of Al-Adibiya <sup>(38)</sup>. Major battle took place between the Algerian army with the support of the Egyptian Thunderbolt forces and Sharon's forces. Which resulted in destruction of

(172) Israeli tanks and killing of (90) Israeli soldiers . Where the Israeli army commanders believed that the Algerians do not have modern weapons and are unable to stop the advance of Sharon's forces, but the surprise was great, as the Algerian army shot down a giant American (C-5 - Galaxy) plane, in addition to damage two other planes that they were managed to land at Al - Naqab airport . Where Moshe Dayan considered the battle of Al-Adibiya as a trap for the Israeli army, and the strongest battles in which it lost those numbers of soldiers and equipment . And helped to that shock Sharon's arrogance and failure to abide by the commands issued to him . Where he was commanded to withdraw but he refused and promised to crush the Algerian soldiers, but the opposite happened <sup>(39)</sup> . Which added to the tragedy. It is for the first time that the American air fleet lost that giant plane out of only six . And almost lost two more of the same type . These actions had made the President Nixon to declare a state of emergency in the US military and demand a detailed report on the causes of the accident . And it was found that a Soviet-made toxic missile was imported from Before Algeria, it was the cause of shot down that plane, despite the ferocity of the battle and Sharon's withdrawal , but the Israeli military leadership focused its attacks on the Algerian forces in the port of Al-Adibiya and Al - Zaytiyah areas . Where it made the commandos forces coordinate their work with the Algerian forces to repel all the Israeli attacks on the port of Al-Adibiya , killed others of the Israeli soldiers , capture of a number of soldiers and destruction the attacking tanks forces <sup>(40)</sup> . This means that the Algerian military forces were fighting as a result of taking military decisions in accordance with the situation of the battle and military position . It was not subject to political influences and interference . It worked in coordination with the thunderbolt forces, who were totally owed by these forces to lieutenant general Yaud Al-Din Al-Shathely , who had a major and influential role in establishing these forces . The evidence for the validity of what you say is the destruction that occurred between Israeli forces .

David Aliazzer who was the former chief of staff of the Israeli army had stated that : “ What happened to our forces in Al-Adibiya port was a result of underestimation , disdain for the number and equipment of the Algerian units <sup>(41)</sup> ” . Aharon Yariv who was the director of Military Intelligence during the October war, stated that the Algerian

army kept eighty Israeli prisoners and refused to return them after the end of the war. This confirms the validity of our analysis that the Algerian forces do not submit to the Egyptian political decision and the impact of Sadat's intervention, and that their acceptance of the exchange of prisoners came under their condition that there are no Algerian prisoners in Israel, but Al-Sadat insisted on returning the prisoners, which called on the Algerian leadership to agree, but on the condition that the one Israeli prisoner is for ten of the Egyptian prisoners <sup>(42)</sup> .

Al-Sadat had called on both the United States of America and the Soviet Union to send troops from their army in order to stop the advance of the Israeli army and return it to the limits of the 22<sup>nd</sup> day of the battle<sup>(43)</sup> . Which indicates exacerbation of the problem of the gap, instead of maneuvering in the Egyptian army, it started to replace occupation forces with other foreign forces . Which increased morale of the Israeli army was visiting of Koldamair on 30 October 1973 to west of the canal, it was briefed on the activities of the army and the progress made before and after the United Nations decision to cease fire in accordance with resolution No. 338. It did not pay attention to those decisions resolutions<sup>(44)</sup> . It demanded with the corpses of its soldiers who fell in the west of the canal, and instead of negotiating with Al-Sadat to lift the siege on the third Army or on the city of Suez, or at least asking for permission to send water and food to the besieged . But he ordered delivery of the bodies for free, this is a logical result of his ill-considered decisions and political evasion that resulted on the siege of <sup>(45)</sup> thousand soldiers in the east of the canal . Major general Ahmed Osama Ibraheem the commander of the thunderbolt in the Egyptian army during the battle, stated that : " Interference of policy in military operations which is a sin in all accounts that led to increase losses of Egyptian forces within very short period of time" <sup>(45)</sup> . Where the loss of the golden opportunity to liquidate the gap began on 17<sup>th</sup> day of the battle, due to the wrong tactics in the tank war and intervention of Al-Sadat that led to those losses and expansion of the gap and failure of the Israeli government to comply with UN resolutions <sup>(46)</sup> . Which called the Soviet Union to threaten to individual intervention to the battlefield after it felt the direct intervention of the United States of America in the war, as the warplanes were led by American pilots across the American air bridge directly from the American bases to the battlefield,

as well as the cold war <sup>(47)</sup> . Which was raging between the Soviet Union and The United States of America at its highest <sup>(48)</sup> .

And the United States of America considered the Soviet Union's intervention in the war, which would have a foothold in the warm waters and the Middle East <sup>(49)</sup> . Therefore, the United States of America stepped up of the position after it observed (8) giant Soviet warplanes (Kind of Antonov-22) at Budapest airport , the capital Hungary . As it moved the aircraft carrier (John F. Kennedy) from the Atlantic ocean to the Mediterranean sea , in addition to the presence of the sixth fleet in the Mediterranean in advance . The (82) air-loaded division, which has (15) thousand soldiers , was transferred to one of its bases in the Middle East , And declaration of a state of heightened alert in all its military bases around the world, which their number was approximately (160.000 soldiers) <sup>(50)</sup> . These procedures that were taken by USA as military measure as ready to big battle . And from the military point of view , Nexon who was the USA president had sent a message to the Soviet leadership , to state his rejection for any Soviet intervention in the ongoing war between the Arabs and Israel . So the world came to the brink of a third world war <sup>(51)</sup> . Due to the region's importance in the calculations of the strategic interests of the great powers <sup>(52)</sup> . But the rapid intervention by UN in the suitable time made no a collision event between the great powers .

#### Conclusion :

When Al-Sadat commanded to development of the attack . And he did not allow the Egyptian army leaders to intervene in this matter . He held the army commanders responsible for the failure to develop the attack, and for the resulting problem of the loophole . As when the war ended , Al-Sadat accused the military leadership of not addressing the problem of the loophole , with the offer that he did not agree to any solution to end the problem of the loophole . The chief of staff of the Egyptian army threatened to prosecute him militarily if he presented a solution to the problem . So the political decision was the cause of stop the military decision to put an end to the loophole problem and to get Egypt out from Israeli – Arab conflict . Where it made a crack in the Arab relations , after their relations were unified about this case since 1948 when it was concluded a permanent peace treaty with Israel in 1978.

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what Sadat decided in the past, which is not to return any force to the west of the canal, and Sadat believes that if he listens to the military leadership and shares these views, they will demand a lot

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