



**ECSS** EGYPTIAN CENTER  
FOR STRATEGIC STUDIES

INTERNATIONAL

# ZIONIST LIES

## ABOUT THE OCTOBER WAR

THE NARRATIVE  
AND THE RESPONSE



# The first lie:

The Deversoir breach turned the scales in Tel Aviv's favor

## Narrative:

The Deversoir breach was a decisive factor that led to the field defeat of the Egyptian army by encircling the Third Army, cutting the Cairo–Suez Road, and entering the cities of Ismailia and Suez..

## Response:

**The success of any military operation is assessed by the extent to which it fulfills its strategic or even operational objectives:**

- The concept of the breach originated in the “Braveheart” plan devised by Ariel Sharon in 1971, when he commanded the Southern Front.
- The “Braveheart” plan was based on a specific strategic objective: in the event that Egyptian forces crossed east of the canal, Israeli forces would cross westward to secure a negotiating position that would result in mutual withdrawals, thereby maintaining Israel’s control over Sinai. The Israeli military leadership rejected this plan at the time. Sharon was then relieved of his position and reassigned to the Ministry of Industry.
- In reality, the subsequent negotiations ended with the Egyptian forces retaining every inch of the territory Israel had captured east of the canal, while Israeli forces withdrew to Tel Aviv.
- Moreover, claiming that the breach constituted an Israeli victory disregards Israel’s historical pattern of never relinquishing territory except as a consequence of defeat. How, then, can the breach be regarded – by any military or strategic measure – as a victory for Israel?

### **Israel consistently confuses the scope of the battle with that of the war:**

- The battle of the breach was one of eight major battles on the Egyptian front during the October War, seven of which were won by the Egyptian army – the most significant being the battle that achieved full control of the Bar Lev Line and the crossing of the Suez Canal.
- The comparison is extremely telling between the two temporary bridges constructed by the Israeli army west of the canal and the 25 main, permanent bridges established by the Egyptian army toward the eastern bank, including 10 heavy bridges.
- From the moment Israeli forces began crossing west of the canal on the evening of October 15, they remained effectively confined within the breach pocket, unable to secure any tactically significant positions west of the canal.

### **The breach forces failed to achieve any operational objective:**

- They were unable to fully isolate the western and eastern banks of the canal.
- They failed to capture the cities of Suez and Ismailia, despite exploiting the ceasefire as a pretext for their advance.
- This failure effectively turned the gap into a point of attrition rather than a position of control.
- The Israeli forces narrowly avoided annihilation in the area of the breach, as the ceasefire prevented the execution of the “comprehensive” plan to eliminate it.
- All the different sources are well aware that the breach created an extremely fragile and grave tactical situation for the Israeli army, with two-thirds of its forces dependent on a supply line less than 5km wide in the Deversoir area, extending roughly 300 km from the first supply lines in Arish.

- That situation would have allowed Egyptian forces to sever the narrow, elongated supply route and, sooner or later, to annihilate – or at least besiege – the Israeli forces stationed west of the Canal. The Israeli leadership recognised this, as did Washington, which exerted heavy pressure to secure a ceasefire and to find a political exit that would permit an Israeli withdrawal first to the west of the Canal and then to Tel Aviv.
- Egypt maintained control over most of the territory it had recaptured east of the canal, while the Third Army continued to hold out until the ceasefire.

#### **Israeli statements regarding the breach:**

- “The Deversoir operation was a suicidal adventure. The Egyptians could have annihilated our forces within hours and inflicted thousands of casualties had their adherence to the ceasefire not been a mercy to our soldiers and officers.”
- **General Haim Bar-Lev, in an interview with Al HaMishmar newspaper, November 1973.**

## Sources

Military Battles on the Egyptian Front, by Gamal Hammad

The October 1973 War Between Facts and Lies, by Major General Dr. Muhammad Abdel-Khalek Qashqoush

# The second lie:

The Egyptian attack was not a surprise

## Narrative:

The Mossad and Israeli Military Intelligence received prior warnings about a possible simultaneous Egyptian-Syrian attack.

## Response:

- This narrative ignores the actual military and political realities of Israel's position regarding the crossing operation. Israel did not initiate any reserve mobilization before the day of the crossing, nor did it carry out its pre-planned preemptive strikes on either the Egyptian or Syrian fronts prior to the operation. In contrast, the Egyptian army succeeded in neutralizing Israel's counter-crossing measures, including the system of napalm pipes along the Bar Lev Line. Taken together, these facts confirm that the Israeli leadership and army were taken by surprise when the crossing began – whether or not they possessed fragments of information about it.
- This weak narrative seeks to undermine the importance and effectiveness of Egypt's strategic deception plan by conflating possession of information with understanding its true meaning and acting upon it. In reality, Egypt's comprehensive and multilayered deception led the Israeli leadership, military, and intelligence to be fully convinced that the Egyptian army would not go to war, even if some details about its preparations for the crossing were known.

**In September 2023, the then Israeli Chief of Staff, Herzi Halevi, stated during a ceremony marking the 50th anniversary of the October War:**

- “This was the most serious intelligence failure in the history of the state, and it shows that information has no value unless its meaning is understood.”
- “Before the war, there was no shortage of information about the enemy, its capabilities, or intentions. What we lacked was a deep understanding of the implications of that information, mainly due to overconfidence, underestimation of the enemy, intellectual rigidity, and the failure to question basic intelligence, operational, and strategic assumptions.”
- “The problem was not a lack of knowledge, but a lack of awareness.”
- “The Yom Kippur War stands as a living lesson in the danger of arrogance, the shock of strategic surprise, and the heavy cost of cognitive, political, and military failure.”

## Sources

Military Battles on the Egyptian Front, by Gamal Hammad

The Jerusalem Post

# The third lie:

## The superiority of Israeli tanks

### Narrative:

The Israeli armored forces regained their superiority and dominance on the battlefield during the middle and final stages of the October War.

### Response:

- The field integration between the air defense missile shield and the anti-tank teams that crossed to the eastern bank as part of the initial assault waves effectively neutralized both the Israeli armored forces and air power throughout the fighting.
- The Soviet-made Malyutka anti-tank missiles posed a major battlefield surprise to Israeli tanks and aircraft, thanks to the tactical skill of their operators.
- The Israeli armored forces suffered their greatest defeat in history on 8-9 October, during their main counteroffensive, losing more tanks in those two days than in all previous fighting.
- In the Battle of the Chinese Farm, between 14 and 17 October, Israel lost between 100 and 200 tanks.
- The U.S. airlift included tanks with their crews due to the severe losses suffered by Israel's armored divisions.

### Israeli tank losses:

- Egyptian estimates: 1,200 tanks destroyed and 1,000 damaged
- Israeli estimates: 870 tanks destroyed and 600 damaged
- Losses ranged between 45% and 49% of Israel's total armored strength in Sinai.

### Sources

Military Battles on the Egyptian Front, by Gamal Hammad

Steven J. Zaloga, Israel's Armor Might

# The fourth lie:

The Bar Lev Line fortifications withstood the Egyptian crossing

## Narrative:

Most Bar Lev Line fortifications fought effectively to prevent Egyptian forces from securing positions on the eastern bank of the Suez Canal.

## Response:

- The Bar Lev Line extended from Port Fouad in the north to Port Tewfik in the south, along a 160 km front with intervals of 10 to 12 km between positions. Israel spent approximately \$238 million on its construction.
- The line consisted of 16 major fortifications and 22 strongpoints, each comprising three defensive positions, making it the most fortified defensive line in modern military history.
- All fortifications and positions along the line fell under Egyptian control within the first three days of fighting, except for the Budapest fort located east of Port Fouad.
- By 13 October, all defensive points attached to the forts and strongholds had been captured, the last being the Port Tewfik position.
- All Bar Lev Line fortifications and strongpoints were either stormed by Egyptian forces or surrendered after being besieged.
- The forts of the Bar Lev Line did not prevent Egyptian infantry units from reaching the defensive tank emplacements behind the sand rampart.

**The garrisons of the Bar Lev Line failed to carry out their assigned missions, namely:**

- Providing early warning of a possible Egyptian crossing.
- Disrupting the crossing operations and preventing the construction of bridges.

## Sources

Military Battles on the Egyptian Front, by Gamal Hammad

# The fifth lie:

The Egyptian Army mistreated Israeli prisoners of war in violation of the Geneva Convention

## Narrative:

The Egyptian army treated Israeli prisoners of war in a degrading manner, in violation of international law and the Geneva Convention.

## Response:

- The Egyptian army adhered to international law and humanitarian principles. Prior to the October War, Egypt allowed Israeli forces to retrieve the survivors and bodies of those killed from the destroyer Eilat, which had been sunk by the Egyptian Navy in 1967.
- Following the surrender of the last strongpoint on the Bar Lev Line – the Port Tewfik salient – the Egyptian military command permitted the evacuation of critically wounded Israeli soldiers to Israel via the Red Cross by air.
- Egypt also allowed Colonel Asaf Yaguri, commander of the 113th Armored Battalion, along with other Israeli prisoners of war, to visit the Jewish synagogue in Cairo and to tour Egypt's major historical landmarks.
- Comparing these examples with Israel's treatment of Egyptian prisoners – particularly during the 1967 War – and the Israeli Air Force's targeting of civilian facilities during the War of Attrition, highlights the stark contrast in conduct between the two sides.

## Sources

Military Battles on the Egyptian Front, by Gamal Hammad

The October War 1973: Between Facts and Myths, by Major General Dr. Mohamed Abdel-Khalek Qashqoush

# The sixth lie:

## Israel won the October War

### Narrative:

Israel managed to reverse the battlefield balance in the final phase of the October War, turning the Egyptian crossing eastward into an Israeli crossing westward.

### Response:

- Victory and defeat in warfare are determined by the achievement or failure to achieve military objectives.
- Israel's goal was to retain control over Sinai, consolidate it as Israel's southern border, and prevent any Egyptian attempt to reclaim it.
- Egypt's objective was to cross to the eastern bank of the Suez Canal, capture the Bar Lev Line, and establish bridgeheads linking both banks in preparation for the first stage of the liberation of its occupied territory.

**The true measure of victory lies in the Egyptian army's success in accomplishing all its field objectives and maintaining superiority in most battles throughout the war, including:**

- Crossing the Suez Canal
- Destroying the Bar Lev Line and seizing its strongholds
- Destroying nearby Israeli reserves
- Repelling and destroying the main counterattack

- **The Battle of Suez**
- **The Second Deversoir Battle and the encirclement of Israeli forces within it**
- **The closure of the Bab Al-Mandab Strait to Israeli navigation**

## Sources

Military Battles on the Egyptian Front, by Gamal Hammad

The October War 1973: Between Facts and Myths, by Major General Dr. Mohamed Abdel-Khalek Qashqoush