

## From Israel

By Alfred Friendly Washington Post Foreign Service

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United Press International

Israeli tanks maneuver in the desert of southern Israel during Mideast tension.

# From Israel

## *Military Said to Expect Sudden Egyptian Attack*

This story was written in Damascus and filed from Beirut.

By Alfred Friendly

Washington Post Foreign Service

TEL AVIV, May 26—An authoritative source said today that Egypt has built up an indisputably offensive force along the Sinai border with Israel and that an attack could come momentarily.

The thinking of this source, which is said to reflect current thinking of the Israeli military, goes like this:

It is not that President

Nasser thinks he can win but can accomplish so much by the first strike that when, as expected, the Great Powers intervene, he will have won what looks like a triumph and will have proved Israel a paper tiger.

This source said that he feels an Egyptian offensive attack can be stopped only by an immediate declaration by the United States that an attack on Israel will be considered an act of aggression against the United States and some concrete gesture

that American force will be used in the event of an attack.

*News agencies reported these developments in Israel:*

Israel warned today that it would not wait indefinitely for an end to the Egyptian blockade of the vital Gulf of Aqaba and the withdrawal of the large Arab troop concentrations along its borders. "Israel is not willing to forego its vital interests,"

See ISRAEL, A11, Col. 4

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# Israeli Military Said to Expect Cairo Attack

one Foreign Ministry official said. "We must consider what to do if those maritime powers which have vital interests in the freedom of shipping do nothing.

"We don't believe there is a great deal of time," he said. But officials stressed that Israel was not issuing an ultimatum or setting a time limit.

## Tension Builds

The warning came as tension gradually heightened in Israel, surrounded on its borders by big Arab forces. The Israel Government appeared to be grimly marking time pending the return of Foreign Minister Abba Eban Saturday from Washington where he was meeting with officials to solicit American action.

Foreign Ministry officials said Israel wanted not just pressure on Nasser but action by the big maritime powers to ensure freedom of shipping in the Gulf.

The officials brushed off

as irrelevant suggestions for United Nations ships to patrol the Gulf of Aqaba or for a revival of the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO).

They said three conditions were required to restore the situation to normal. These were reopening of the Tiran Strait, de-escalation of forces on the border and cessation of guerrilla raids into Israel from Arab territory.

"Reopening of the Strait will be a key to the rest," the officials said. They placed great stress on the importance of Eilat to the Israel economy.

Sealing off the port for any length of time would harm Israel's entire development program and economic prospects, they said.

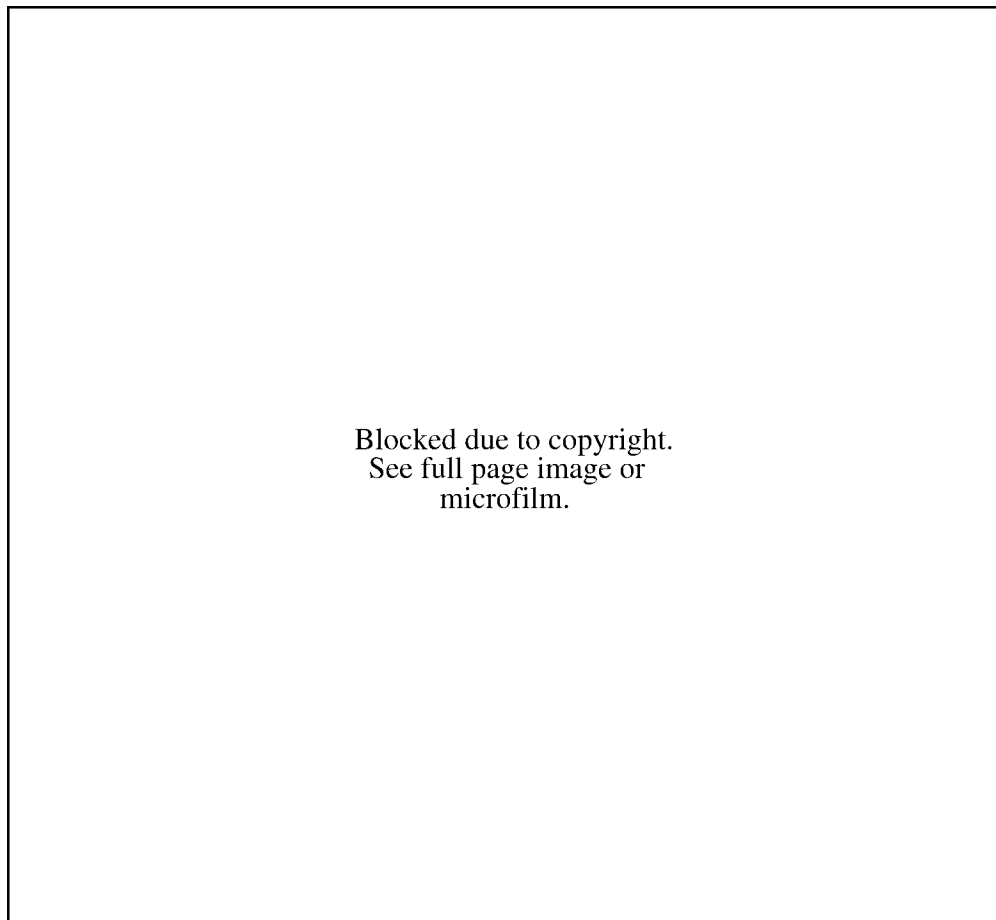
One project that might be jeopardized was a projected \$50 million Israel-American chemical complex in the Negev Desert. Another blow would be at the country's trade with Japan, which now runs at 055 million a year.

The warning also coincided with indications Israel's defense buildup was at a new height and that Israeli troops, tanks and planes were ready to strike.

One highly placed official said Syria has concentrated troops on Israel's northeast border. "It worries us," the official said of the Syrian move.

## Poised For Action

News men who visited the threatened border areas returned convinced the Israeli army, made up both of



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Associated Press

## Volunteers line up to give blood in Tel Aviv in case war breaks out.

bough regulars and reservists called back within the crisis flareup, was poised for action.

Army officers said confidently that Israel could again whip the Arabs as it did in 1948 and 1956. They admitted the price would likely be higher this time. If

the Israelis have gotten stronger, so have the Arabs.

Prime Minister Levi Eshkol and other top Israeli officials were in continuous consultation on the crisis amid mounting criticism from opposition quarters they were dragging their heels.

Some influential Israelis were even asserting privately that the government may have erred militarily by not striking back immediately after Egypt clamped on the Aqaba blockade and crushed troops to the Israeli frontiers.