



OPERATION 'KAVKAZ'

WORDS: TOM COOPER

Prior to Russia's latest adventures in Syria, Moscow's best-known military intervention in the Middle East was launched in Egypt, in spring 1970. The resulting confrontation with Israel lasted several months

Israel's victory in the June 1967 Arab-Israeli War, better known in the West as the Six-Day War, left the entire Sinai Peninsula up to the eastern bank of the Suez Canal under Israeli control. Determined to regain Sinai, Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser concluded that military action was the only option remaining.

A major effort to rebuild what at the time was the United Arab Republic Air Force (UARAF, the official title of the Egyptian Air Force from 1958-72) was launched before the ceasefire of 10 June 1967. Rightfully insisting that the Soviets caused the crisis leading to the

June 1967 war, Cairo demanded that Moscow compensate for its losses and replace them on a one-for-one basis. The Soviet government agreed, and two days later launched a three-week airlift involving nearly 200 Antonov An-12 transports.

However, Moscow would provide defensive materiel only, and refused to replace Tupolev Tu-16 and Ilyushin Il-28 bomber losses. Furthermore, while turning down all Egyptian requests for more advanced fighter-bomber types and surface-to-air missiles (SAMs), the Soviets insisted on deploying a large group of advisors, instructors and technicians to Egypt,

and re-organising and re-training the UARAF. By August 1967, nearly 2,000 Soviets were there, and these numbers rose through 1968 and 1969.

Egypt launched small-scale attacks on Israeli positions in Sinai in mid-July 1967. Gradually they grew in intensity and frequency, until President Nasser officially announced the start of the 'War of Bloodletting' — usually the 'War of Attrition' in the West — on 8 March 1969.

Nasser's strategy began to show signs of success. Concerned about a possible Egyptian military offensive across the Suez Canal (not contemplated by Cairo at that time), Israel's



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political leadership finally ordered Israeli Defence Force/Air Force (IDF/AF) attacks on military and industrial targets deep inside Egypt, with the intention of demonstrating its 'complete dominance' over the Egyptian military and undermining the credibility of Nasser's government. Israel's top commanders were curious to see whether escalating the war would prompt further military aid from the administration of US President Richard Nixon.

On 1 January 1970, F-4E Phantom IIs of the IDF/AF flew their first attack deep into Egypt. Further strikes followed during the next few weeks. Each usually involved two or three pairs of F-4Es, one of which flew a decoy mission to distract Egyptian Air Defence Command (ADC) from the actual target.

Exploiting the inability of Egypt's Soviet-supplied radars to locate and track targets flying below 300m (984ft), the Israelis operated along routes on which they were unlikely to be detected until about 40-45km (25-28 miles) from their objective. From that moment on, they could expect that the Egyptians would need between three and four minutes to scramble MiG-21 interceptors from nearby air bases, and then another two to four minutes to catch the Phantoms. In practice, while operating at low altitudes, the F-4E could fly faster than any of the MiG-21 variants then in service with the UARAF. This meant that the Israelis could withdraw to the east of the Suez Canal before the Egyptians were able to intercept them.

President Nasser flew to Moscow in late January 1970 to explain the new

situation to Soviet premier Leonid Brezhnev, and demand deliveries of improved arms. Obviously, explained Nasser, such new equipment would necessitate extended training for Egyptian crews. During their absence, he wanted Soviet personnel to come to Egypt and 'stand in' to defend the cities. Nasser countered Soviet arguments that this move would internationalise the war: the US had already done just that by providing advanced F-4s to Israel. The Soviet view that sending air defence troops to Egypt would require deployment of manned interceptors was met by Nasser's offer to provide three newly-constructed air bases.

The following morning, the Soviet leadership responded positively. Thus began Operation 'Kavkaz' (Russian for Caucasus), seen by Moscow as a strategic initiative in the context of the Cold War.

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'Kavkaz' was actually two operations: a major reinforcement of Egyptian air defence capabilities and the deployment of Soviet air defence assets to Egypt. Apart from the delivery of 100 MiG-21MFs, and improved S-75 and S-75M variants of the SA-2, Moscow agreed to sell Egypt SA-3 SAMs and ZSU-23-4 Shilka self-propelled anti-aircraft guns.

With regard to their own troops, the Soviets decided to dispatch the

reinforced 18th Special Purpose Air Defence Missile Division, comprising three brigades equipped with SA-3s. These consisted of one technical and six air defence battalions; each battalion had one SAM site, protected by a platoon of three ZSU-23-4s and six two-man teams armed with 9K32 (SA-7 'Grail') man-portable air defence systems.

Soviet flying units detached to Egypt included the 135th Fighter Aviation Regiment (IAP) with 40 MiG-21Ms and 60 pilots, and the 35th Independent Reconnaissance Aviation Regiment (ORAP) with 30 MiG-21Ms and MiG-21Rs, and 42 pilots. Commanded by Col K. Korotuyuk, the 135th IAP was stationed at Bani Suweif and Kom Awshim air bases from 1 February 1970 and assigned the task of air defence of a zone south-east of Cairo. Led by Col Yuriy V. Nastenko, the 35th ORAP was deployed to

ABOVE: Mikoyan-Gurevich MiG-21MF serial 8204 135th IAP, Soviet Air Force
TOM COOPER



ABOVE: One of the Soviet pilots assigned to the MiG-21M force in Egypt stands in front of serial 8341.

VIA ALBERT GRANDOLINI

BELOW: II-38 maritime patrol aircraft were based in Egypt with the 90th Independent Reconnaissance Aviation Squadron. Serial 4399 is pictured in a blast pen at Cairo West.

ALBERT GRANDOLINI COLLECTION

Soviet military aircraft deployed to Egypt, 1970

Soviet unit	Equipment	UARAF designation	Base
135th IAP/1st Squadron	MiG-21M	106 Fighter Brigade/60 Squadron	Bani Suweif
135th IAP/2nd Squadron	MiG-21M	106 Fighter Brigade/63 Squadron	Bani Suweif
135th IAP/3rd Squadron	MiG-21M	106 Fighter Brigade/65 Squadron	Kom Awshim
35th ORAE/1st Flight	MiG-21RF	108 Fighter Brigade/64 Squadron	Jiyanklis
35th ORAE/2nd Flight	MiG-21M	108 Fighter Brigade/68 Squadron	Jiyanklis
35th ORAE/3rd Flight	MiG-21M	108 Fighter Brigade/70 Squadron	Jiyanklis
90th ODRAE	An-12PP	90 Reconnaissance Squadron	Cairo West
90th ODRAE	Tu-16R	90 Reconnaissance Squadron	Cairo West
90th ODRAE	Be-12	90 Reconnaissance Squadron	Cairo West

The first Soviet-manned SA-3 sites became operational in mid-February 1970. Israel continued its attacks, but stayed well away from areas protected by these new arrivals. On 12 February,

F-4Es bombed the scrap metal processing plant at Abu Zambal, killing 68 civilians and injuring another 98. While the Israeli government stressed that this was a mistake, such accidents

began to be repeated. Two F-4Es bombed a school at Bahr al-Baqr on 8 April 1970, killing 46 children.

The next raid, on 13 April, almost ran into Soviet-flown MiGs for the first time. As soon as the Israelis recognised the presence of Soviet pilots, both Phantoms were ordered back, and all further raids deep into Egypt were cancelled.

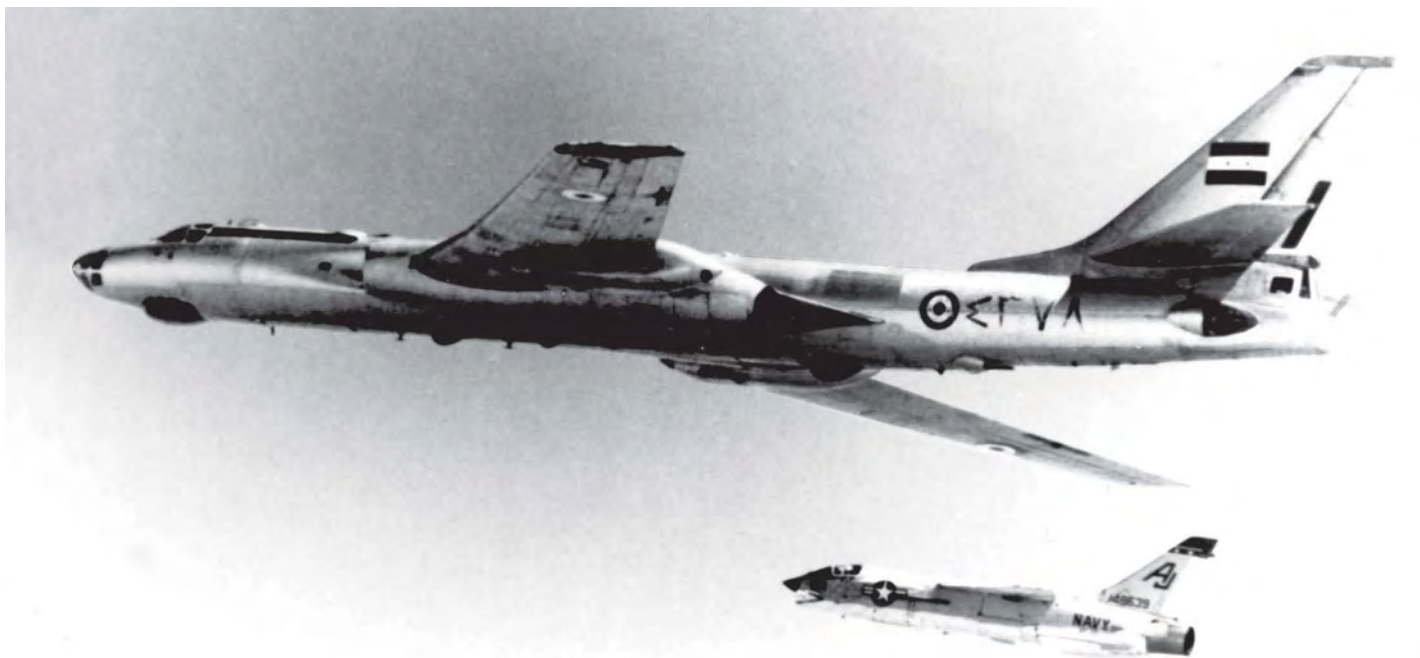
Three days later, Egypt flew a series of raids on Israeli positions in Sinai, while the ADC began constructing new SAM sites around 50km (31 miles) west of the Suez Canal. As soon as they were ready, it moved two SA-2 battalions closer to the waterway during the night of 24-25 April. A counter-attack by Israeli fighter-bombers the following morning was ineffective: the ADC thus began its 'creeping' advance towards the canal.



Additional Egyptian SAM battalions — followed by several Soviet units — were moved closer to Suez, while the UARAF returned the favour by attacking Israeli MIM-23 HAWK SAM sites. It was in the course of these re-deployments that the Soviets scored their first 'kill' of Operation 'Kavkaz'. On 15 May 1970, one of their SA-3 sites shot down a UARAF Il-28U on a training mission, killing two crew members.

The fighting saw new levels of intensity when, in retaliation for two Egyptian commando raids over the canal, Israel launched 100 air strikes against Port Said on 30 May. The ADC soon began moving 13 of its SA-2s into what became known as 'the SAM box', about 50-55km (31-34 miles) west of the Great Bitter Lake. These were supported by three Soviet SA-3s. The IDF/AF reacted by flying





reconnaissance sorties, but on 6 June 1970 two MiG-21s ambushed a pair of Phantoms detected while approaching low over the Mediterranean and claimed one shot down.

With all its assets ready, the ADC launched Operation 'Hope', expanding the box and increasing the number of SAM sites within it. At 10.30hrs on 1 July, two pairs of Israeli fighter-bombers were tracked while approaching the canal at 39,370ft and the ADC ripple-fired two volleys of three SA-2s each. This time, the IDF/AF prepared a powerful response. Shortly before sunset, 24 fighter-bombers attacked the three easternmost Egyptian sites. In a brutal exchange the ADC claimed five A-4 Skyhawks as shot down (two by SA-7s), while losing two sites knocked out and one damaged. One Soviet advisor was killed.

The second Israeli wave attacked decoy sites on the northern and southern flanks of the Egyptian position about half an hour later, but flew straight into a carefully-prepared ambush. One F-4E was downed by a Soviet SA-3 site under the command of Capt Maliauka from a range of 11.5km (7.1 miles), the crew ejecting. Nearby, the SA-3 sites commanded by Maj Komyagin hit a Phantom from 18km (11.2 miles) away, but a second missile self-detonated nearly 4km (2.5 miles) short of another target, which managed to escape.

The third Israeli wave had its leading Phantom damaged by two Soviet SA-3s and then shot down by a third, fired from the site commanded by Maj Kovalenko. Three pairs of Skyhawks delivered the final Israeli attack. While it failed to inflict any damage, the Soviets claimed one A-4 shot down.

The crews of 11 Egyptian SA-2 and three Soviet SA-3 sites re-deployed

their equipment the following night, so that by the morning of 1 July all the positions were completely different to those of the previous day. The Soviets launched at least four missiles on that date, but all missed their target — luckily enough, since they were fired at an EgyptAir Boeing 707 under way from Cairo to Luxor.

The Israelis re-appeared at around 16.30hrs on 2 July, when a group of 12 Skyhawks and Phantoms attacked an exposed Egyptian SA-2 site. It responded with three missiles — they missed, and the site was knocked out. Again, the remaining 10 SA-2 sites moved the next night, this time to the north, in the direction from which most of the Israeli attacks had come.

Thus, when the Israelis raided on 3 July, the four Skyhawks made an ineffective strike. Egypt declared that it had downed two, while the other two jettisoned their bombs and fled.

'It was lucky the Soviet missiles fired on 1 July missed their target, since it was an EgyptAir Boeing 707'

The same SA-2 site came under attack from four Phantoms around noon, but claimed one shot down and that the rest of the Israeli formation scattered and left the area. Other Israeli missions on that day, and on 4 July, remained fruitless: all hit decoy sites, while one of the aircraft involved was claimed as damaged by SA-7s.

Twenty-four Israeli aircraft attacked the remaining 10 Egyptian and three Soviet sites at around 15.00hrs on 5 July. The first formation of 14 Phantoms raced at low altitude towards the SA-3 site commanded by Lt Col Zavesnitsky, but lost one aircraft to an

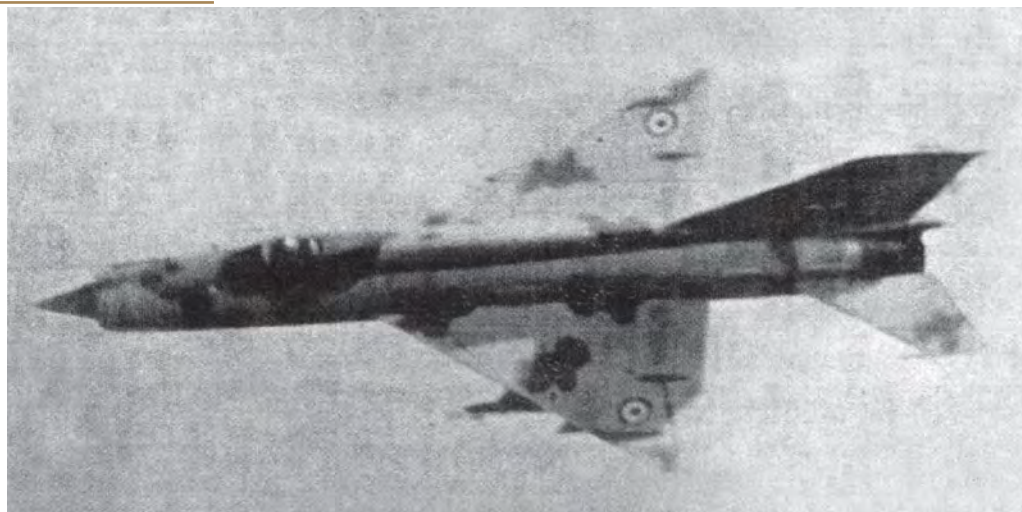
Egyptian SA-2 while pulling up after its bombing run. A further group of 10 Phantoms attacked two Egyptian SA-2 sites an hour later, but rapidly withdrew after encountering a terrific volume of anti-aircraft fire.

In total, Egypt and the USSR claimed 10 IDF/AF fighter-bombers shot down and two damaged between 30 June and 5 July, in exchange for three badly-damaged SA-2 sites, all of which were subsequently repaired. The IDF/AF admitted the loss of three F-4Es.

After this disaster, the IDF/AF ended its defence suppression effort, requesting the urgent delivery from the US of electronic countermeasures pods for its F-4Es.

The new pods and tactics were put to the test on 18 July 1970, by which time the ADC had moved all 13 SA-2 and three Soviet SA-3 sites to new positions. Meanwhile, the

ABOVE: An F-8J Crusader from the US Navy's Carrier Air Wing Eight, deployed to the Mediterranean aboard the USS Shangri-La in 1970, intercepts a Soviet Tu-16PP. Like all Soviet military aircraft based in Egypt at the time, it wore full UARAF markings, including roundels in six positions and serials (4378 in this case) applied in black on the rear fuselage, in digits the form of which Egyptians found 'funny'. US NAVY



ABOVE: Albeit of very poor quality, this image is a rare flying shot of a VVS (Voyenno-Vozdushnye Sily, or Soviet Air Force) MiG-21M from the 135th IAP over Egypt in 1970. Of interest is the relatively small size of the roundels (in comparison to 'genuine' MiG-21s operated by the UARAF), applied in six positions.

VIA GROUP 73

14 F-4Es were detected assembling at an altitude of 6,000m (19,685ft) over Sinai, dashing towards the canal and splitting into four groups. The Phantoms were covered by two flights of Mirages that flew along the canal on a north-south axis, one high and the other low, and a flight of Skyhawks equipped with jamming pods.

The initial Israeli strike group passed over the canal north of the ADC's box before turning left and attempting to hit it in co-ordination with the second group, which arrived directly from the east. The Phantoms' countermeasures jammed the Egyptian SA-2s and forced the Soviets to switch to their secondary operational frequency, but their bombs almost exclusively hit the decoy sites. The first SA-3 fired from Col Tolokonnikov's site detonated 50m (164ft) from the leader of the northern Israeli formation, causing the jet to crash minutes later. The eastern Israeli formation attempted to hit the decoy site near Tolokonnikov's position, but the lead F-4E was badly damaged by an SA-3 and forced to make an emergency landing at Refidim.

Around 13.41hrs, the SA-3 site commanded by Col Mansurov opened

most Russian publications confirm that one Egyptian and one Soviet SAM site were temporarily knocked out in exchange for two Phantoms shot down and one damaged.

Whatever the losses suffered by each side, the fact remains that the SAM box remained very much intact and operational. Both the US-made jamming pods and new Israeli tactics had proven ineffective: for the first time since June 1967, Israel had lost aerial superiority over the Suez Canal.

Defeated by the SAMs, and ignoring the fact that it was challenging a military superpower, the IDF/AF began searching for a different way of hitting back. This opportunity soon presented itself.

Following the success of the SAM sites, Soviet MiG-21 pilots became eager to engage the Israelis too. When Israel attempted to bomb Egyptian Army positions along the canal on 25 July, no fewer than 10 Soviet-flown MiG-21s scrambled from Bani Suweif. Faster than any of the variants operated by the UARAF, the Soviet MiG-21Ms took the IDF/AF by surprise. Long before any Israeli Mirage IIICJ interceptors could approach the

delayed by two minutes in scrambling and thus arrived much too late when the Egyptian formation was caught by Mirages scrambled from Refidim, shortly after crossing to the west of the Suez Canal. Afraid of committing his fighters into air combat under unexpected conditions, the Soviet ground controller refused to order them to attack. Soviet MiG-21 pilots ended up circling high above the slow Egyptian fighter-bombers, doing nothing as two were shot down.

Needless to say, Egyptian relations with their advisors — already strained by what the UARAF saw as the poor performance of supposed Soviet 'experts', and their lack of experience in modern air combat — did not improve after this Soviet failure. Furthermore, Israel was quick to recognise an opportunity to avenge the heavy losses of its Phantoms to Soviet SAMs. The Israelis were certain that, while Soviet-flown MiG-21Ms nearly matched the top speed and manoeuvrability of IDF/AF Phantoms and Mirages, their own pilots were in possession of better situational awareness and significantly better armament — the latter in the form of much-improved AIM-9D Sidewinders and Shafrir 2 AAMs.

Around midday on 30 July 1970, the IDF/AF executed a series of strikes on Egyptian positions along the Suez Canal. As soon as the formations returned, two F-4Es bombed an Egyptian radar site near the Gulf of Suez. Almost simultaneously, four Mirages crossed the canal in a westerly direction near Ismailia, mimicking a reconnaissance flight. After turning away towards the east, the same flight returned to Egyptian-controlled airspace 10 minutes later, crossing the Gulf of Suez near Ras al-Sudr.

The Soviet controller meanwhile scrambled a quartet of MiG-21s from Kom Awshim, led by Capt Kamenev. Advised of their approach, the Israeli formation turned in the direction of Cairo, dragging the Soviets in front of another Mirage flight and a flight of Phantoms, coming in at very low level. Eager to catch the four Mirages, four additional MiG-21Ms were launched from Bani Suweif, led by Capt Yurchenko, and the controller ordered that additional flights prepare for take-off.

Since they were intercepting most of the related radio orders, the Israelis ordered that their high-flying Mirage flight should turn and engage Kamenev's MiG formation at a range of 20km (12.4 miles) out. However, when the Mirages turned into them, the Soviets reacted by jettisoning their drop tanks, in turn disturbing the low-flying Phantoms that were already climbing below them. Instead of picking their targets from stand-off range with semi-active radar-homing AIM-7E Sparrow AAMs, the F-4Es were forced to engage in air combat, during which the less disciplined

'A classic dogfight developed between four Mirages, four Phantoms and eight MiG-21s. The latter stood no chance'

fire at the third group of Phantoms, which approached from the north attempting to bomb an Egyptian SA-2 site. The missile scored a direct hit. A minute later, the fourth group of Phantoms knocked out an Egyptian SA-2 site, and then hit Tolokonnikov's while it was re-loading missiles. A catastrophic conflagration killed eight Soviet soldiers and badly damaged the command post.

Overall, Israel claimed the destruction of four SAM sites and three damaged, at a cost of one Phantom shot down and another badly damaged. Egypt did not admit any losses, while

combat zone, the MiGs caught the slow Skyhawks, and Maj Salmikov damaged one with a single R-3S (AA-2 'Atoll') air-to-air missile (AAM).

Wanting another opportunity to ambush the Israelis, the HQ of the 135th IAP immediately requested that it participate in one of the subsequent Egyptian air strikes, providing top cover with its MiG-21Ms, forward-deployed to Inchas. It was flown on 27 July, when eight UARAF MiG-17s struck a MIM-23 site only 10km (6.2 miles) from Refidim. The Egyptians flew an effective attack but their top cover failed to appear. The Soviets were



ABOVE: Mikoyan-Gurevich MiG-25R c/n 0402 63rd ORAE, Soviet Air Force
TOM COOPER

Mirage pilots broke formation to engage individually.

A classic dogfight developed between four Mirages, four Phantoms, and four — then eight — MiG-21s. The latter stood no chance. Capt Yurchenko was shot down by an AIM-9D while attempting to attack two of the Phantoms. The leader of the flight from Bani Suweif was killed. Capt Yakovlev was then downed by another AIM-9D while fighting two Mirages. The pilot ejected, but his parachute opened immediately, and Yakovlev died of suffocation at 9,000m (29,528ft).

At least two other Soviets managed to fire several R-3S missiles against two or more Mirages in the seconds that followed, but only Capt Ivlev's came close enough to its hard-turning target to proximity-fuse, damaging an Israeli fighter and forcing the pilot to withdraw back to Refidim. Now the Phantoms returned to combat. Facing the MiGs head-on, two of them pulled an Immelmann manoeuvre high above and behind their opponents and then fired one AIM-9D each. The first missile destroyed the MiG-21M flown by Capt Syrkin. By the time the second Sidewinder hit, the pilot had already ejected.

Short on fuel, the four MiGs that were left attempted to make their way out of the combat area. Capt Zhuravlev, though, was pursued by one of the Mirages, and hit by another missile and then cannon fire while

heading for Helwan airport. Unknown to the Israelis, who had to disengage for lack of fuel, Zhuravlev was eventually forced to eject at very low altitude and was killed.

The GCI [ground-controlled intercept] station at Bani Suweif continued scrambling additional MiG-21s throughout this three-minute encounter, but the IDF/AF decided to disengage. When the smoke cleared, Israel claimed four 'Egyptian' aircraft as shot down, without disclosing the nationality of their pilots, while Egypt — understandably — denied any losses. The true identity of the downed MiG pilots was revealed by Israel to the specialist US press several days later, and confirmed by Egypt in 1972.

The battle ended with a clear-cut 5-0 victory for the IDF/AF. Although some of its fighters were damaged, and a few were very short on fuel by the time they returned to Refidim, none were written off.



Even so, the overall situation along the Suez Canal did not change. The skies over the crucial waterway were now under the control of the ADC's SAM box. This was confirmed on 3 August 1970 when an Egyptian SA-2 site near Ismailia opened fire on a flight of Mirages that approached at high altitude, claiming one as shot down. Israel attempted to hit back the

same afternoon, when 16 Phantoms approached the SA-3 site commanded by Lt Col Kutintzev. He ordered his crew to open fire, but technical problems prevented this. Instead, Col Popov's nearby site fired, knocking one Phantom out of the skies and capturing the crew. The same location claimed a kill against one of two F-4s that attempted to attack from the other side. After this success, the ADC felt sufficiently emboldened to move its entire SAM box to within 10km (6.2 miles) of the canal.

Alarmed by increasing Soviet involvement, Washington pressured Israel into accepting a temporary ceasefire. The emerging situation eventually enabled Egypt not only to increase the number of SAM sites along the Suez Canal to 30 and then 50, but also to begin final preparations for a counter-attack over the canal, eventually launched on 6 October 1973.

The Soviet intervention in Egypt of spring 1970 put paid to all the aims Israel had developed during the War of Attrition. Above all, it prevented the US from keeping the USSR out of the Middle East.

Egyptian control of the skies over Suez was clearly demonstrated on 17 September 1971 when, in retaliation for Israel downing a UARAF Su-7BMK under way along the canal on a reconnaissance mission, Egyptian SA-2s shot down an IDF/

BELOW: A VVS MiG-25R in the inhospitable surroundings of Cairo West during 1972. Egyptian national insignia was applied to the aircraft, usually in four positions and on the fins, though often incomplete. However, this photograph shows no national markings at all. They were often burned off during operational sorties over the Sinai, turning into black spots, and therefore were frequently overpainted.

EL-DJEICH ARCHIVE





ABOVE: A group of Soviet MiG-25R pilots wearing the pressure suits necessary to operate the 'Foxbat' at high altitudes.

EL-DJEICH ARCHIVE

AF Boeing KC-97G used for electronic reconnaissance, about 27km (16.8 miles) east of Ismailia.

The Soviets deployed four MiG-25R/RBs to Egypt in March 1971. Operated by the 63rd Independent Reconnaissance Aviation

to the Suez Canal. On 6 November 1971, two MiG-25RBs crossed Sinai from the eastern end of Lake Bardavil to Ras al-Sudr within less than two minutes. Subsequently, Soviet 'M-500s' — as the type was codenamed for the duration of its deployment in Egypt

could not pressure Israel into making concessions. Left without any other solution, Sadat tried to obtain offensive weapons from the USSR. Despite many promises, Moscow — keen to maintain the status quo and involved in negotiations with the US aimed at lessening Cold War tensions — failed to fulfil most of these.

Relations between the Egyptian military in general and the Soviet advisors in the country worsened continuously through 1971. The inevitable rift between Cairo and Moscow culminated on 16 July 1972, when Sadat informed the Soviet government that all 970 of the USSR's advisors and around 7,000 other military personnel present in Egypt must leave by the end of the month.



The Soviets did not entirely depart Egypt in disgrace. A few small groups of technical experts, primarily responsible for maintaining some of the advanced equipment the USSR did eventually deliver — including Tu-16 bombers equipped with KSR-11 anti-radar missiles — remained in-country until early October 1973. They went on to see only minimal involvement in the next major Arab-Israeli confrontation, the October 1973 war.

Except for controlling the Egyptian deployment of 'Scud' surface-to-surface missiles, the only direct Soviet contribution to Egypt's overall war effort on that occasion was a deployment of four MiG-25RBs and seven pilots from the 47th ORAP to Cairo West, starting on 14 October. These aircraft flew just four reconnaissance sorties in the following weeks, and whatever intelligence they collected was never shared with the Egyptians.



'The MiG-25s flew at speeds and altitudes beyond the reach of the IDF/AF'

BELOW: After members of the Soviet military left, Egypt was left to its own devices as regards the operation of equipment from the USSR. These four MiG-21Ms were pictured overflying Cairo in 1974.

PRESS ASSOCIATION IMAGES

Squadron (ORAE) from Cairo West, they began flying reconnaissance sorties over Sinai at speeds and altitudes beyond the reach of the IDF/AF.

On 10 October that year, a Soviet MiG-25 approached the Israeli coast of the Mediterranean at an altitude between 23,000 and 24,000m (75,459 and 78,740ft). It then accelerated to Mach 2.5 while turning south-west and proceeding along almost the whole Israel-Sinai coastline, from Acre

— made two flights over Sinai every month. The most spectacular took place on 16 May 1972, when two flew down the eastern side of the canal and the entire coast of Sinai to Sharm el-Sheikh. All Israeli attempts to intercept them failed.

Nasser died only a month after the ceasefire that ended the War of Attrition. He was succeeded by Anwar el-Sadat, who initially attempted diplomacy, but even Washington

