

Wargame Replay - Sinai by SPI - 1956 scenario

GEORGE NAP



Sinai – 1956

My first go at the game in decades. I am playing the 1956 scenario, which by all accounts is a walkover for the Israelis. Good for solo play, though, pretty much a race against time. I am not using any optional rules, the Jordanians will not enter the fray and the Egyptian OOB will be historic.

A few notes: I am allowing Egyptian infantry to occupy and transit rough hexes. I also allowed Israeli units taking the track to Sharm El-Sheik adjacent to the Gulf of Aqaba to use all movement points, otherwise the game is unwinnable for them based on the math of movement factors and halving of attack factors. (Israel must eliminate the unit in Sharm El-Sheikh to win). This allows a penultimate battle for Sharm El-Sheikh. The victory condition here is a little “gamey,” but I fully understand why it exists, as the Egyptians are unable to do much by fall back in this scenario. I also did not use the Arab command and control rules, which would have had units streaming off the board and no one to fight.

Turn 1

Israel: Attacks at Gaza and across the border to the south herald the Israeli offensive while the 202nd Mech crosses the border near Eliat. Forces within Israel proper head towards the Sinai, with both Syria and Jordan nonparticipants in this battle. Defenders are pushed back in all cases, no eliminations and even with advance after combat little headway is made.

Egypt: With few fatalities, time to build some defensive lines. The Camel regiment will head into the Sinai to contest any advance on Sharm El Sheik. The brigades in Suez will advance to form a mobile reserve, given the lack of N/S roads through the sand, they head for the area of Mitla Pass, but will have to split between operational areas, given the lack of roads. The coast road will be defended by what is there, the defenders having formed stacks which cannot be overrun. Hang on and delay will be our strategy.



Turn 2

Israel: Continued pressure in the north and a swing around the south. Gaza is cleared. Defenders are pushed back on the ridge at 2225, Israel allowing a retreat path to the 6th Bde to avoid doubling the defender.

Egypt: A slow retreat in the north, getting the reserves up. No attacks.



Turn 3

Victory conditions for this game are pretty simple, only Israeli goal A is in play, being the last to pass through or occupy all victory hexes (which are one hex away from crossing hexes) on the east side of the Suez, and somebody (probably two somebodies) have to eliminate the Egyptian regiment in Sharm-el-Shiekh.

The Israelis are also constrained by a ten brigade and two battalion sized units in the Sinai. Israeli units are in supply through turn 4. Right now it looks like the leg infantry will trail the mass of Egyptians and Palestinians down the coast road while the mech forces seek a breakthrough.

Attacks continue pressure in the center with a breakthrough tantalizingly close. However, the Egyptian 6th Inf Bde and 6th Inf Reg continue to frustrate efforts in the area around hex 2026. Israeli mech forces begin to swing south, having to detour back into Israel from the coast road to do so. No overruns this turn. (I think I should have sent the mech into the Sinai right from the start and have had the leg infantry protect the settlements and apply pressure on the coast road.)

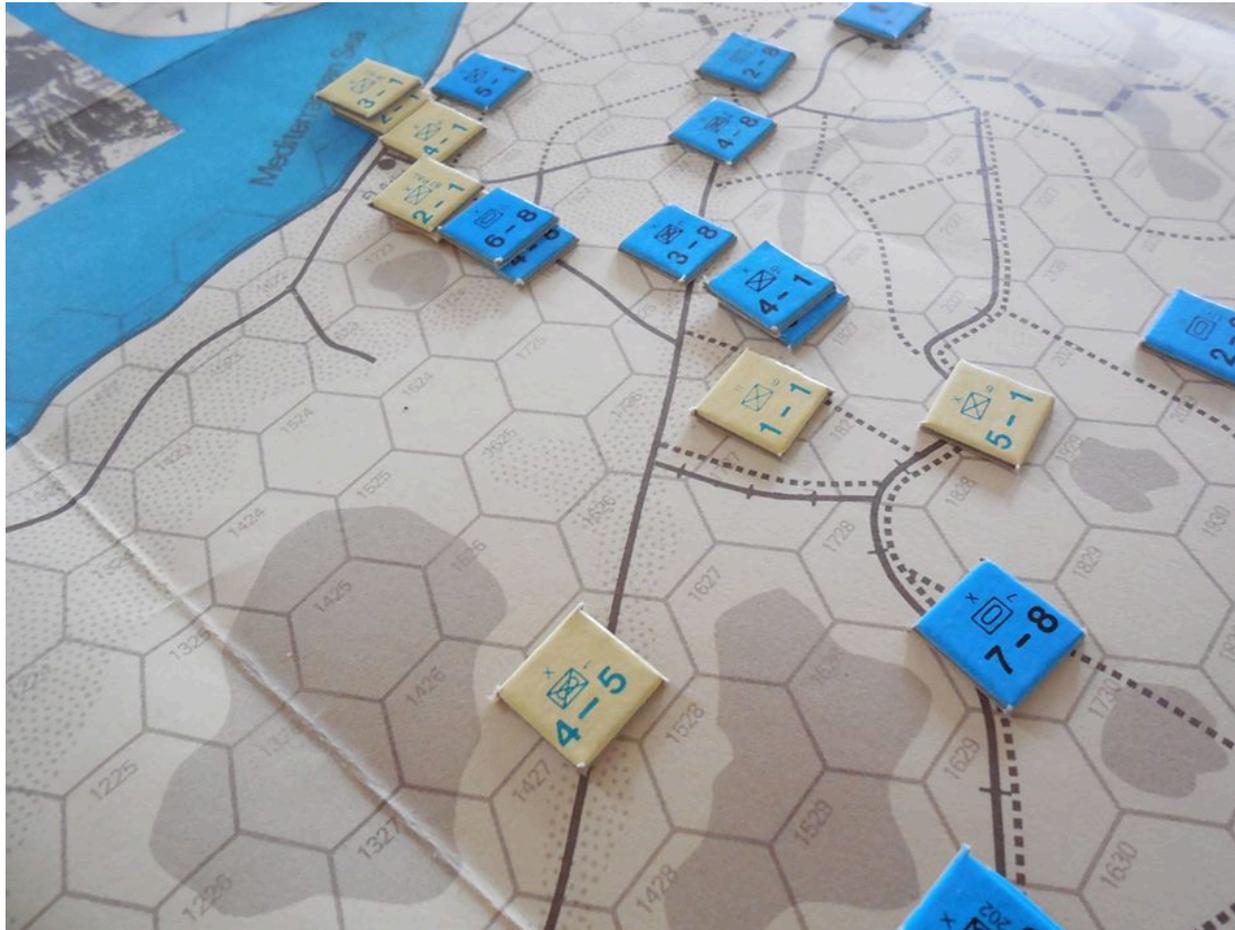
Egyptian forces continue to retreat, setting up defensive positions.



Turn 4

Last turn of automatic supply. Time to prove fore some weaknesses and disrupt the Egyptian ability to set up a cohesive defense.

Attacks finally dislodge Egyptian 6th Infantry regiment and force them out into the open. Israeli 27th Armor and Ax Mech attack 4/11 Inf and 3rd Ar Reg who cannot retreat due to ZOC from Israeli 3rd Mech (Israel will not waive ZOC) and probation from entering sand hexes in 1956 scenarios, so the Egyptians are doubled, the attack goes in at +4, a retreat result eliminates the defenders and turns rents a hole in the middle of the Egyptian defense.



It is impossible to repair the hole ripped in the Egyptian lines. The Israelis will be slowed somewhat by the lack of supply, but not stopped. The Israeli spearheads in the south are contained, but not eliminated and can continue to do damage. The brave 6th Inf Reg cannot find high ground and cannot move westward, being on a N/S track in a sand hex. The 6th Inf Bde takes to high ground in a bid for survival, but is pretty much out of the war. I swung too many armor and mech forces south and now cannot redeploy northward rapidly enough to cover the crossings, as there are no helpful N/S tracks in the Sinai in 1956. It may come down to holding hex 0831 and Sharm-el-Sheikh as long as possible. The 5th Inf Bde, 26th NG and 86th Palestinians attack, driving the 1st Israeli Inf Bde back in a meaningless victory.



Turn 5

Now that supply restrictions come into effect, Israel must be careful to not leave units exposed to contrary combat results, and also keep roads open. I made an error the first two turns not moving the Israeli supply unit forward, so the span of fully supplied action is lagging two turns.

Ax Mech and 27th Arm overrun the brave 6th Inf Reg, ululations rising from all over Egypt. An immense hole is rent in the Egyptian line which the rest of the Mech units move to exploit. The 6th Egyptian Inf Bde, surrounded, defends 1929, doubled with no retreat (Israel does not waive the ZOC's), but halved being out of supply is forced to retreat and is eliminated.

Advance after combat not possible as all attacking units were mechanized. The northern Egyptian foot infantry are pocketed, 3rd Mech and 7th Arm keep 1st Egyptian Mech from moving north by occupying 1328.

Egyptian infantry sets up around El Arish, but cannot attack, being out of supply (Arabs out of supply may not attack, per rule). Egyptian units stream across the Mitla Pass, attempting to defend 0831. It may all come down to Sharm-el-Sheikh.



Ignore the turn marker, this is turn 5, the number displayed on the die is what to look for.

Turn 6

The nice thing about solitaire and stream-of-consciousness writing is that sometimes you think of one thing and surprise yourself. I had been thinking long term about how long it will take to get to Sharm-el-Sheikh and eliminate the defenders. Given the non-bloody CRT the math seemed to favor an Egyptian delaying action (putting a significant force to defend the road(s) and holding the IDF at arm's length. There is nothing to prevent this, as Israeli goal A now includes eliminating the unit at Sharm-el-Sheikh. It seems "gamey" to me that the entire Egyptian army can choose to defend the way to Sharm-el-Sheikh, electing to fight out of supply but buy time while Israel can un unfettered on the map. Fortunately, I thought of this after the Egyptians had moved, so:

Uri armored battalion moves back into Israel, 202/2 para drops on 1445, cutting off the path to Sharm El-Sheikh. (I allowed the paras to emplane, although I had moved them to a rough hex and left them there, reality being what it is, I am allowing it to make it harder for me to implement a "gamey" Egyptian defense.

No attacks, two armored brigades begin the trek to Sharm El-Sheikh. 0626 is taken, the El Arish pocket is back in supply, but basically immobile and toothless as foot infantry, so are left to their devices.

Egyptian turn. All defensive moves. The camel form with the 99NG to bar 1233 from overrun. The heavies set up to defend 0831.

Turn 7

Israeli mobility is somewhat limited on the canal hexes, as they cannot move adjacent and take advantage of the road network. Egypt could hop over at Suez City, pop back across, retake victory hexes and hide again, so the hexes may have to be garrisoned, or Egyptian moves mirrored or Egyptian forces pushed south of the Suez City crossing.

Both northern crossing hexes are taken by Israel. The 7th Arm Bde moves south to limit the Egyptian defense (not being able to move in sand is a mobility killer for Egypt, cannot set up a no retreat attack, the Israeli unit has enough pure sand hexes to have solid flank protection.). 202nd and Ax mech attack the right flank of the Egyptian positions and are stymied by the camels and national guard.

Egypt: 2nd Mech prepares to cross to Suez City to allow a cat-and mouse game of victory hexes, while we prepare the defense of Sharm El-Sheikh. Some shuffling to put the 1st Arm in position. The El Arish pocket languishes.



Turn 8

We constrict the pocket around El Arish with an eye to reducing it once the 4th Inf Bde slogs out of the desert and arrives. Our mech column reaches the shores of the Gulf of Aqaba and will arrive in time to attack Sharm El-Sheikh starting around turn 13. The paras remain ensconced in their blocking positions on the rough at 1445. It will take at least two more turns to set up the assault on hex 0831, unless some favorable combat results unhinge the Egyptian right at 1233.

Egypt will cross the 2nd Mech to the west side of Suez, to force the Israelis to hold back a unit to guard victory hexes. 1st mech pulls to support the camels and the guard, leaving 1st Armored to defend 0831, using the Israeli prohibition from entering hexes adjacent to the canal to secure the left of the armored division.

Turn 9

It will be a devilish time battle to achieve a victory. I believe Israel will not win due to time, partially my mistake for not lighting off for Sharm El-Sheikh right away. Still playing it out to see what happens, rather than overly worrying about victory conditions.

Attack on the camels and NG fails to make headway. Ax mech has moved into position to support either the southern assault or an attack through Mitla pass.

Egyptian move. There is a danger around Mitla pass. The Israeli's can either rprovit to attack 1136, or hit the flank of the 1st Arm at 0932. With the prohibition on Arab mech moving through sand/track in 1956, the 1st Arm could be left without a retreat path, so they will have to retrograde. This will lead to supply being cut off for units in the Sinai, but the decision has been made to defend Sharm El-Sheikh and leave the Franco/Anglo presence to assure the sanctity of the canal blocking the path to Cairo. The camels, 99th NG and 1st Mech charge out of 1134, sending the Israeli mech reeling, the victory praised from minarets throughout the Arab world.



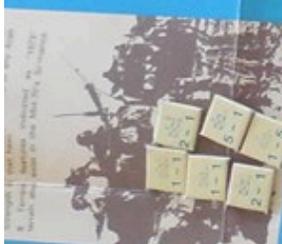
Turn 10

2nd Israeli Armor cuts supply to the Egyptian mech units south of Suez City in the Sinai. An attack on 1235 fails to make headway, but the Egyptians being out of supply cannot counterattack in their turn. In the El Arish pocket 4/12th reg and 87th Pal Bde are eliminated (doubled and halved with a +2 for terrain) defending 1723, which frees up the Yuri regiment for other duties.

Egypt: Time to begin moving our defense south. An attack by the Israeli mech west of Mitla can force a retreat by Egyptian 1st Armored and pocket the camels and associated units. We must be stubborn. We will set up a defense to delay these heavy formations. We cannot send assistance to the defenders of Sharm El-Sheikh as the way is barred by the Israeli paras and, being out of supply, we cannot attack them.



Symbol	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Blue square	NA									
Yellow square	NA									
Blue circle	NA									
Blue star	NA									
Blue dot	NA									
Blue line	NA									
Blue circle with dot	NA									
Blue square with dot	NA									
Blue circle with line	NA									
Blue square with line	NA									
Blue circle with star	NA									
Blue square with star	NA									
Blue circle with dot and line	NA									
Blue square with dot and line	NA									
Blue circle with star and line	NA									
Blue square with star and line	NA									



ISRAEL

GYPT

SINAI (EGYPT)

Gulf of Suez

Gulf of Aqaba

Mediterranean Sea

Suez Canal

Suez City

WILDA PAYS

EGYPT RESERVE

Turn 11

It all comes down to Sharm El-Sheikh, which will be a two turn process at a minimum, one to dispose of the defenders, one to dispose of the fortified town.

Yuri Bde moves along the coast road to defend one of the victory hexes. 8th Palestine and 4th Eg Inf Bde are eliminated by Israeli 1st, 4th and 10th Infantry as El Arish continues to be reduced. Attack on 1034 at -1 makes no headway. Attack on Egy 1st Arm at 0935 similarly fails.

Egypt. The Israelis will have to garrison 0831, also, limiting their ability to attack don the Gulf of Suez road. Had I retreated north, I am sure the Egyptian Army would have died in the sand, unable to retreat, or pulled across the Suez, unable to make much headway (with the “gamey” solution of using the hexes adjacent to the canal prohibited to the Israeli’s as unblockable assault assembly areas). We will pull the defense further south to limit Israeli advances and keep their mech units occupied. It all comes down to Sharm El-Sheikh, now.

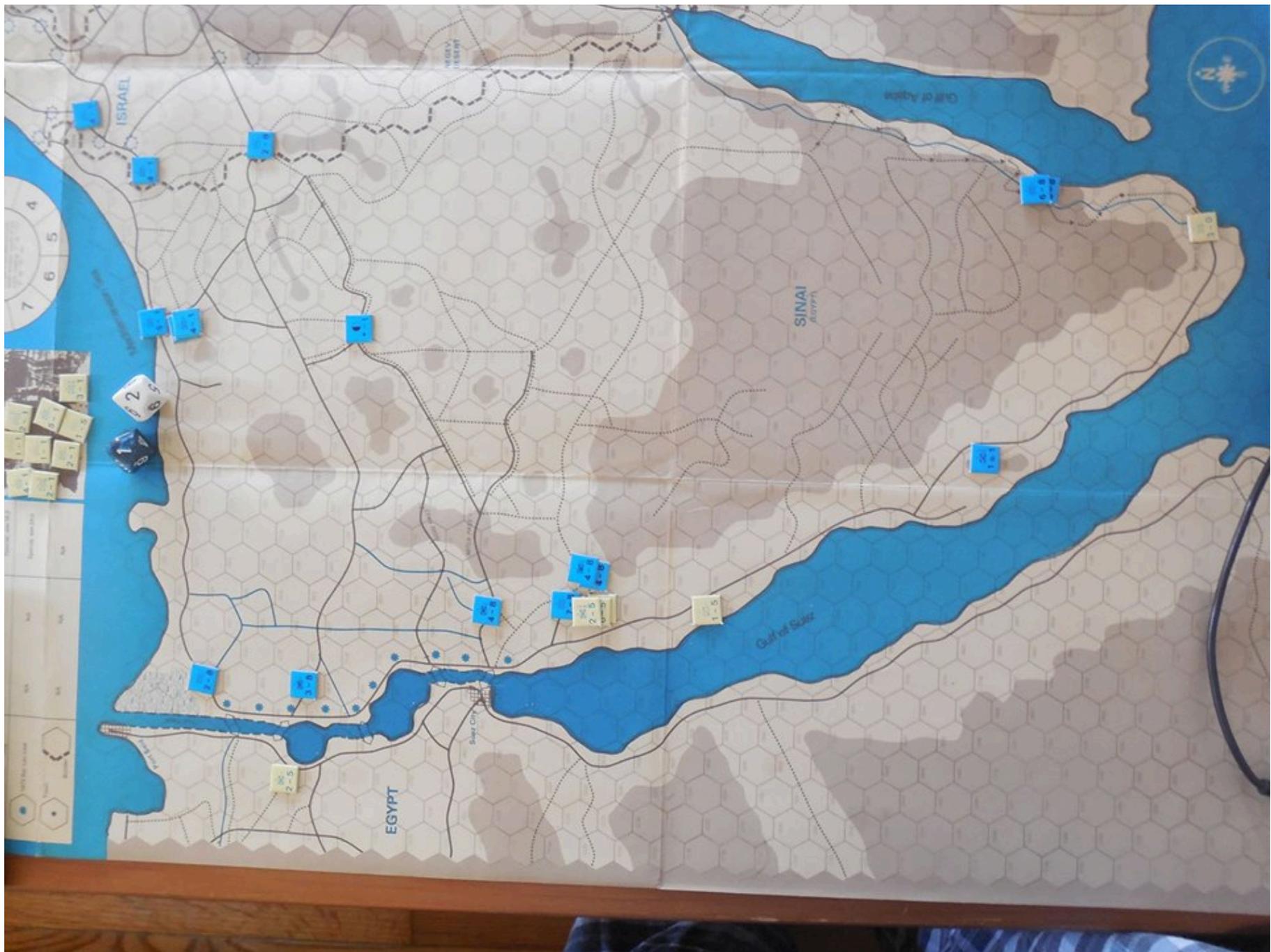


Turn 12

Leaving an open crossing at 0730. The Egyptian mech brigade west of the canal cannot attack 0831. It can attack the other two units at either +0 or -1, a last turn gambit, probably. (Have to devise a countermeasure.)

El Arish is fully reduced as the 26th NG dies fighting house to house. A +2 attack on 1st Arm and 1st Mech goes nowhere.

Egypt shuffles more defenders into 0934 to keep the Israelis from forcing a retreat and bottling up the forces south of there with one unit while reinforcing the victory hexes.



Turn 13

The Egyptian defenders at 0935 are forced south as Ay Mech joins the attack, the 202nd (main) occupies freeing up garrison forces for the victory hexes. Sharm El-Sheikh looms in to view.

The 2nd mech crosses at 0524 attacking Yuri at +1 and makes no headway.



Turn 14

A +0 attack on Egyptian 2nd Mech fails to make headway.



A +2 assault on Sharm El-Sheikh fails.



Turn 15

A +0 attack on the Egypt 2nd Mech in 0524 fails to make headway. The +2 attack on Sharm El-Sheikh forces a retreat eliminating the defenders fulfilling victory condition A and ending the game, but I will play out the last turn. (By game terms, this is a decisive Arab victory. VP's are based on 15 points for Israel fulfilling condition A – the only victory condition in this scenario and the only scenario where that condition includes Sharm El-Sheikh – with five points per game turn when this is accomplished prior to turn 12. I submit that it is not possible to take Sharm El-Sheikh that early, and to achieve just a draw, Israel would have to take Sharm El-Sheikh by turn 6 which is impossible based on movement factors of out of supply units trying to negotiate rough terrain tracked hexes, or trying to reach the coast road on the Gulf of Suez and fight their way down

that road. In this case, Israel only gains 15 victory points, I frankly do not see how they could have gained any more regardless of my actions.)

Egyptian 2nd Mech forces Yuri to retreat out of 0623, occupying the victory hex.



Turn 16

A +2 attack (two chances in three because 9th Isr Mech is never out of supply by rule) of success on the Egypt 2nd Mech in 0623 by 9th Mech and Yuri Arm Bde succeeds reclaiming the victory hex.

Note, even if I had sent the 9th mech to Sharm El-Sheikh, it would have still taken too long to get there to change the victory totals.



Egypt cannot counterattack at less than -1, so the war ends