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TRANSLATIONS ON NEAR EAST AND NORTH AFRICA

NO. 1865

'ABD-AL-NASIR'S SECRET PAPERS

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This report contains Parts 1 - 20 of a series on 'Abd-al-Nasir's secret papers.

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[Series: 'Abd-al-Majid Farid Publishes 'Abd-al-Nasir's Secret Papers]

[12-18 Jun 78 pp 31-35]

[Text] Part I: 'Abd-al-Nasir to Podgorny: We Have Decided To Pull Out of Nonalinement; It Is Unreasonable for Me To Stand Neutral Between Him Who Helps Us and Him Who Strikes Us; If We Ask You To Be With Us in Time of War, Then We Should Be With You in Time of War and Time of Peace; Zakariya Muhyi-al-Din: Soviet Participation in Air Defense Must Be Quick and Before Americans Get Wind of Anything; Member of Revolution Council Advised 'Abd-al-Nasir To Reach Agreement With Americans, Who Was He?

After 14 days of the 1967 war defeat, Soviet President Podgorny arrived in Cairo at the head of an official delegation to meet with President Jamal 'Abd-al-Nasir. Earlier, when 'Abd-al-Nasir announced his famous resignation on 9 June, i.e., 4 days after the start of the war, the Soviet political leadership contacted 'Abd-al-Nasir and urged him to change his mind on the resignation, pointing out that a high-level delegation would be visiting Cairo shortly to discuss the United Arab Republic's political and military situation in the wake of the defeat. It was understood from this cable from the Soviet leadership that the Soviet Union did not intend to abandon Jamal 'Abd-al-Nasir. I can say that this cable played a major role, though not the full role, in persuading 'Abd-al-Nasir to back down on his resignation.

Thus, the summit meeting between the former United Arab Republic and the Soviet Union took place only 2 weeks after the defeat in the June 1967 war. This meeting was different from all the previous meetings. The glorious days in which the banners of Nasirism had been flying in the area's skies and in which the long arms of Nasirism had reached everywhere were gone.

The banners of Nasirism were lowered and the arm of Nasirism was cut off. The deep change that affected Egypt under the impact of this defeat had also hit 'Abd-al-Nasir. He also changed. The 6 days which the war took added 10 years to 'Abd-al-Nasir's life all at once. Before the war, he had been suffering from diabetes. After the war, his suffering and the pains in his leg increased to the point where he could not stand on his feet for more than 5 minutes at a time. 'Abd-al-Nasir became inclined to say less and to be more silent and worried. We, all the ones around him, felt that he was eating his heart in anger, grief and pain. Even though he said very little, we were able to put our finger on the big wound in 'Abd-al-Nasir's heart. He was not affected as much by the military defeat as by the plotting of the former army men surrounding him and by the gloating of those whom he had considered friends.

What used to worry him and render him sleepless was that the defeat opened Egypt's sky and land before the enemy. Israeli aircraft were able to fly over Cairo at any time they wanted and in whichever manner they wished. Israel could strike any target on Egypt's map and throughout the front extending from the Suez Canal to the High Dam in Aswan. Moreover, it was in the power of any Israeli armored force to open its way from the Suez Canal to Cairo without facing any real resistance. I don't know if Israel was aware of these facts, but what I do know is that Israel behaved in the first few days following the defeat as if it were aware of these facts.

In those days, some change cropped up in 'Abd-al-Nasir's method of work. He became more eager to consult most of those around him, so much so that he summoned the retired high-ranking army officers and high-ranking officials who had left the service a long time before. He listened a lot and said little. However, what was causing him concern and anxiety was Egypt's open sky and the constant Israeli threat to demolish Egypt's major economic installations and bridges. Here is where the significance of the first summit meeting between him and the Soviets emanated. He waged the war with Russian weapons and before the war, he had no ally other than the Soviet Union, the socialist countries and the nonaligned countries. His relations with the United States had been severed. His relations with Britain were cool, with de Gaulle were ordinary and with more than one Arab regime, his relations were very bad. This is why 'Abd-al-Nasir attached great importance to Podgorny's visit. He wanted to fill the gap in his open sky and in his exposed land.

Podgorny arrived in Cairo accompanied by a Soviet delegation, most prominent of whose members was Marshal Zakharov, the Red Army chief of staff. The first meeting was held at the meeting hall in al-Qubbah Palace. Attending on the Egyptian side were Jamal 'Abd-al-Nasir, Zakariya Muhyi-al-Din, 'Ali Sabri, Lt Gen Muhammad Fawzi and Mahmud Riyad. Jamal 'Abd-al-Nasir and Podgorny sat face to face while the members of the Egyptian delegation took their places to the left of

'Abd-al-Nasir and those of the Soviet delegation took their places to the right of Podgorny. I took my usual place on such occasions, behind Jamal 'Abd-al-Nasir.

Despite everything, Jamal 'Abd-al-Nasir was at the peak of his energy. Podgorny also seemed to be very happy. He expressed on more than one occasion his gratitude for the warm reception he and his delegation were given and for the overflowing popular sentiments he personally felt in Cairo's streets. In this atmosphere began the summit talks between 'Abd-al-Nasir and Podgorny.

'Abd-al-Majid Farid

Three Topics

'Abd-al-Nasir: I fully welcome our friend President Podgorny and members of the distinguished Soviet delegation. I propose that our friend President Podgorny begin the discussion, considering that he is the dear guest of the people of the United Arab Republic.

Podgorny: I thank the fraternal Egyptian people and I thank you for this warm welcome. Let us get to the crux of the issue. We are certain that through joint cooperation between us, we will be able to overcome all the difficulties facing you at present. We have been eager to meet you and to talk to you before Comrade Kosygin's departure for New York and his meeting with Johnson where it is likely that three topics will be the subject of discussion:

1. The Vietnam issue and the solutions proposed for it.
2. The Middle East crisis and the issues connected with it.
3. Transcontinental missiles and defenses against them.

Even though Johnson does not wish to discuss the last topic, I expect him to bring up during discussion of the second topic the question of possible Arab concessions. On our part insofar as this issue is concerned, we will not support Israel's demands to keep the occupied territories. We also know from you that the holding of bilateral talks between the Arabs and Israel is practically impossible. Generally, we will not agree to any proposal so long as the Arabs disapprove of it. As for the first topic, concerning Vietnam, we received a cable from New York a few minutes before I entered the hall and I have understood from this cable that there is great hope of reaching some kind of solution to this problem, even if only in principle. This means putting an end to the air strikes in preparation for reaching the final solution. As for the initial discussion held with you personally, after my arrival in Cairo yesterday, I have cabled Moscow, concentrating on two points, namely: the issue of air defense and the issue of alignment and

nonalinement. I have also informed Moscow of the desire to introduce some ships of the Soviet fleet into the Mediterranean Sea. I believe that there is an initial approval of this issue. It is better for military men from both sides to begin discussing the details pertaining to this issue, such as supplying ships from ports, the joint measures when the ships are subjected to air attacks, etc.

Alinement and Nonalinement

(Here Podgorny asked the Soviet interpreter to explain clearly that the cable that he sent to Moscow covered the topics which 'Abd-al-Nasir had brought up during their meeting on the previous day and that were approved by the Egyptian leaders that he had met after his arrival at the airport.)

('Abd-al-Nasir smiled, and I learned from him afterwards, that he was aware of Podgorny's fears that the Egyptian leadership might not approve his demands unanimously. This is why 'Abd-al-Nasir told Podgorny: As you know, the other members of the Supreme Committee representing the Egyptian leadership who are not in this hall today also approve these issues which were discussed with them before your arrival.)

Podgorny: As for the subject of nonalinement, the Politburo in Moscow has welcomed what your excellency said about standing with the Soviet Union in the future. However, they have wondered in Moscow if it is useful to declare this now or to postpone such a declaration. The comrades in Moscow have also wondered about the reactions and the problems that may emanate from this. Moscow has asked me about the proposed forms for the relationship with you. Is it the old form or is it a new agreement and treaty? How do you visualize the future relations between us? Generally, Moscow fully approves this issue in principle. But there may arise as a result of this new relationship between you and us some problems insofar as your relations with some Arab countries are concerned, including progressive Arab countries such as Syria and Algeria. As for the issue of air defense, it is currently being studied at the Ministry of Defense in Moscow. Discussion of the details with the officials concerned will be initiated immediately after my return to Moscow. What is important is that we do believe that it is really necessary to help Egypt in the issue of air defense.

'Abd-al-Nasir: We Are Alined

'Abd-al-Nasir: Insofar as the issue of nonalinement is concerned, we are considered alined to start with. This is why we were subjected to the aggression in 1956 and then in 1967 and will be exposed to aggression as long as we proceed in this line. The Americans know this well. They wanted us to march with them but we refused because we saw that their policy supports colonialism. We know that the Americans will not leave us alone. But what is important for us is to find out where our

interest lies. Insofar as our relations with you are concerned, they have been lacking one thing, namely: military cooperation. During the battle days, our people were asking: Where are the Russians, our friends? I was aware that you could not be present militarily because no prior agreement was reached with you on the military arrangements necessary for such presence.

Concerning the future, I see that our enemies will always be the Americans. They are also your enemies. Therefore, we have to organize our cooperation because it is unreasonable for me to stand neutral between he who strikes me and he who helps me. Organizing cooperation between us requires profound thinking on our part because any action taken by Egypt will have broad reactions in the world. The outcome of the agreement between us will change the world balance of powers greatly. Even though we have not adopted this decision emotionally and even though it came as a result of deep study and discussion, I agree with you that such a declaration will have a big reaction in the Arab world, may cause divisions, and some countries, such as Saudi Arabia, Tunisia and Morocco, may declare their alinement with the United States. In fact, these countries are alined with America to start with. By the same token, there are in Africa countries that are fully alined with America even though they formally declare that they belong to the nonalined countries.

Podgorny: It is very difficult to find in this world a country that is 100 percent nonalined.

'Abd-al-Nasir: This is very clear to us. But if we ask you to be with us in time of war, then we must be with you in time of war and in time of peace. Now, we have to discuss how to organize our relations with you. We are prepared to conclude a secret or an open treaty. What is important is that it is clear to us now that our main enemy is the United States and that the only means to make the continuation of our struggle possible is for us to get allied with the Soviet Union. We have difficult days ahead of us and it is difficult for us to overcome them by ourselves. Therefore, we either succumb to the United States, as Thailand has done, and so they will give us economic aid, provided that we submit to imperialism, or we fight and struggle. Here we must agree with the Soviet Union. We are struggling against imperialism and we support national liberation. Before the battle, we were afraid that the Western press and media would accuse us of being alined but now nothing of the sort concerns us. We are ready to offer facilities to your fleet from Port Said to al-Sallum and then from al-'Arish to Gaza.

Podgorny: Mr President, I agree with every word you have said. I believe that together, we will find the suitable means to organize cooperation between us. The logic is strong, understandable and fully clear.

'Abd-al-Nasir: Concerning the air defense, I prefer it to be in the form of joint defense, i.e., Egyptian-Soviet defense. Our officers and troops will thus participate in the air defense and this will give them great experience through [contact with] your cadres that will join us. Another issue is that the Jews are now in the Sinai and we are preparing our defense line on the west bank of the canal. If afterwards the Jews fail to leave the Sinai peacefully, we will have to fight them to oust them from it. The operation of evicting the Jews from the Sinai is our responsibility and not yours. What we are asking you to participate in is the defense of the republic's territories.

There is another likelihood that must be studied jointly, namely that Israel may cross the Suez Canal to attack us and to move deep into the United Arab Republic. Facing this likelihood enters within the framework and the commitments of the joint defense between us. I believe that in such a case, Israel will be pushed to launch this attack by America when the Americans become certain of the connection between us and after the Soviet fleet ships enter the Egyptian ports. It is then that the Americans will lose their temper.

Naturally, we have in Egypt those who will oppose the agreement with you. We will also be subjected to a Western propaganda attack. This is natural. But it is a simple matter.

Zakariya Muhyi-al-Din: It is important for the operations arranging for participation in the air defense to be carried out as quickly as possible and before the Americans get wind of anything because they will definitely try to obstruct them.

'Ali Sabri: I also believe that it is important to study all the anticipated eventualities in the outside world and in the domestic situation when conclusion of the agreement with the Soviets is declared. There is no doubt that the reactions will be great, very great.

Podgorny: As soon as I return to Moscow, I will present all the points brought up by everybody. Generally and with utter appreciation, we express our thanks to you on this issue.

Approaching Syria and Algeria

'Abd-al-Nasir: I presented this issue to President al-Atasi, the president of Syria, and he said that they are discussing the issue. He asked us not to take any decision on it independently. I sent him a message on this issue yesterday. I have also explained the issue to Bouteflika, the Algerian minister of foreign affairs, and he was surprised at the outset. But I believe that they will be compelled to proceed in this line later because of the Moroccan king's and Bourguiba's position toward them.

Podgorny: This morning I received a cable from Moscow approving your statements with utter satisfaction, provided that we think together of all the domestic and external reactions. Generally, I believe that the issue of nonalignment is not as urgent as the issue of air defense. My comrades in Moscow have agreed to the need for Soviet participation with the greatest possible efforts to bolster the entire air defense of your republic. Even though the status of the United Arab Republic is well known in the entire world and even though nobody doubts that it will never accept subservience to any state whatsoever at any time, the presence of foreign military forces on the territories of a sovereign state is a sensitive issue in the domestic situation. Therefore, it is more befitting for the air defense to be Egyptian and that Soviet aid be advanced to it.

'Abd-al-Nasir: Insofar as the domestic situation is concerned, it is natural that a lot will be said, especially since the country has experienced a major shock in the battle. But our people in Egypt are a solid and deep-rooted people. They experienced shocks in the past and ultimately overcame them. At the same time, don't forget that we are in the phase of transformation from capitalism to socialism. This transformation has its enemies at home, [some of them] colleagues of ours who were with us in the revolution but who have left us and who have a different opinion presently. I saw one of them 3 days ago ('Abd-al-Nasir did not mention the name during the official discussion) and it was his opinion that we agree with the Americans in any way and that we leave Yemen to King Faysal. Naturally, there is a faction in the country that reiterates this view and that blames me personally for all that has happened because I undermined the relation with the Americans. At the same time, there is another inclination that urges the need for firm agreement and full cooperation with the Soviet Union. There is also a third inclination that demands full neutrality between the Americans and the Soviets. In my opinion, such words are abnormal. However, they will not go beyond being mere words because the Egyptian people are, as I have already mentioned, solid people and have the capacity to endure and fight. We are also distinguished in Egypt by the presence of complete national unity. Therefore, the domestic situation generally is guaranteed, especially since the measures taken a few days ago to deal with the laxity previously existing in the armed forces are decisive measures.

Of course we will hear some people in the country say: The British went out the door and the Soviets entered through the window. All this is mere rhetoric. But when we are actually supported by you and when complete cooperation is established between us, this will have a very good impact, both inside Egypt and in the Arab world.

China's Position

Podgorny: I have heard a radio report saying that China has declared that it is ready to offer you weapons.

'Abd-al-Nasir: China has actually contacted us and expressed its readiness to offer only light weapons. They have also denounced the cease-fire. Generally, the Chinese friends are unaware of the nature of the Sinai land and of some local conditions. (During Podgorny's presence in Cairo, the PRC ambassador to the United Arab Republic asked to meet 'Abd-al-Nasir and was received by 'Ali Sabri who was informed that China was ready to send light weapons and hand grenades only. The Chinese ambassador said that his country could not offer any kinds of aircraft or tanks.) This is why it is their opinion that the fighting should not be stopped and that we should withdraw to the delta and clash with the attacking Israeli forces in the villages. It is also their opinion that concentrating on defending Cairo and the major cities is not an important thing.

Podgorny: China is engaged in propaganda attacks against us everywhere, alleging that the Soviet Union has betrayed the Arabs, as it had already betrayed the Vietnamese. We are well aware of their propaganda and their moves. They are trying now to make us lose Syria and they are pushing it toward an unequal fight, regardless of the results expected of such a fight.

'Abd-al-Nasir: I believe that China is radical in its positions. It is thus serving the American plans.

Podgorny: We are supposed to forget local differences when faced with major catastrophes, but they insist on their radical positions toward us.

'Abd-al-Nasir: In the past, they also attacked Tito harshly.

Podgorny: They now describe him as the old opportunist. They have a new idiom, namely the new opportunist. I believe that when you declare the issue of nonalignment, they will call you the new opportunist.

'Abd-al-Nasir: It does not matter because we have become accustomed to all kinds of insults.

Podgorny: What is the Arab oil situation?

'Abd-al-Nasir: Some Arab countries are still delivering their oil to the Americans indirectly and declaring the opposite.

Mahmud Riyad: But Kuwait has actually stopped the delivery of oil to the United States and Britain, thus losing nearly 180 million pounds.

'Abd-al-Nasir: Iraq has also stopped pumping its oil. In Libya, work in the oil companies has stopped as a result of the Libyan workers' strike.

(At this point, the discussion turned to weapons and Lt Gen Muhammad Fawzi presented to Marshal Zakharov a list containing the United Arab Republic's demands of Soviet weapons. It was agreed that this issue be discussed by the military experts, i.e., by Marshal Zakharov and Lieutenant General Fawzi.)

Podgorny: I would like to stress that as soon as we return to Moscow, we will send all the equipment and weapons necessary for immediate use. As for the weapons and equipment requested for storage, they can be discussed by the special military committees.

(At this point, 'Abd-al-Nasir turned to the issue of the economic aid requested from the Soviet Union.)

'Abd-al-Nasir: Closure of the Suez Canal has denied us 9 million pounds in hard currency monthly, in addition to the value of the oil that we have lost as a result of the occupation of the Sinai oil fields. To face these economic difficulties, we have squeezed our budget to a great degree. Despite this, we will still have a deficit in hard currency. This is why we ask for your economic aid, especially for the importation of wheat, oils and some other raw materials. Naturally, the Americans a long time ago stopped importation of the Egyptian textiles that they used to pay for in hard currency.

Podgorny: It may be difficult to answer these demands immediately. However, we will exert utmost efforts to alleviate the burdens of your economic situation.

'Abd-al-Nasir: Especially wheat, because we need to import 2 million tons annually, in addition to what our land produces and which amounts to 1.5 million tons, keeping in mind that our annual consumption amounts to 3.5 million tons.

Podgorny: I hope that his excellency the president will rest assured that we will keep your requests before our eyes. I, and the delegation accompanying me, approve initially all your requests but the final approval will come to you shortly after our return to Moscow.

(With a movement that everybody noticed, Podgorny sneaked a quick glance at his watch.)

'Abd-al-Nasir: It seems that our meeting has taken a long time. In any case, we will adjourn our meeting until tomorrow. But before we do so, I would like to make it clear to President Podgorny that we are all eager to strengthen the relations and the ties with you. The political leadership of the United Arab Republic is ready to align itself with you against the imperialist camp, but on one condition. But generally, we have taken too long so let us postpone the discussion until tomorrow.

[19-25 Jun 78 pp 31-35]

[Text] Part II: Podgorny asks 'Abd-al-Nasir: Do You Want To Annihilate Israel Finally; 'Abd-al-Nasir: When War Begins, There Are no So-called Offensive Weapons and Defensive Weapons; Podgorny: One Should Always Beware of Journalists Because They Often Spoil Secrecy; 'Abd-al-Nasir: Jewish Tongue Is Always Held Back and Arab Tongue Is Always Loose; Podgorny: I Beg You To Prevent Chinese From Engaging in Propaganda Hostile to Us in United Arab Republic; 'Abd-al-Nasir: Propaganda That Is Influential Here Is Not China's Propaganda But Western Propaganda, Especially Among the Bourgeoisie

On the second day, Friday 23 June 1967, the official talks between Jamal 'Abd-al-Nasir and Podgorny were resumed. 'Abd-al-Nasir arrived at the meetings hall in al-Qubba Palace 15 minutes ahead of time. He was apparently relaxed for the first time since the Six-Day War defeat. His relaxed mood was apparent in the short conversations he had with us and which were interspersed with some jokes. Few of us understood the reason for 'Abd-al-Nasir's relaxed mood. 'Abd-al-Nasir felt after the previous day's meeting with the Soviet leaders that he was no longer alone in the battle and that the mere presence of the Soviet leadership in Cairo gave the masses in Egypt, and in the Arab world, a considerable charge of optimism.

At 0955, Podgorny arrived at the meetings hall in al-Qubba Palace accompanied by his comrades the members of the Soviet delegation. We also noticed that the Soviet leader, like 'Abd-al-Nasir, was apparently relaxed and joyous. He made two jokes while we were sitting around the negotiations table and 'Abd-al-Nasir laughed at them as never before. Naturally, everybody in the hall shared his laughter.

In this atmosphere of full optimism and joy started the second session of the negotiations.

'Abd-al-Majid Farid

Podgorny: At yesterday's session, his excellency the president invited me to start the discussion. I complied with his wish with pleasure. In this session, I invite him to start the discussion.

'Abd-al-Nasir: I want to start with an important topic. The enemy's latest blow has affected the armed forces' morale heavily. Therefore, a quick compensation of the weapons we have lost will have a heavy, and this time positive, effect on the morale of the army's officers and troops. Insofar as the air force is concerned, we received from you, immediately after the battle, 25 Mig-21 aircraft and 93 Mig-17 aircraft, even though some of these aircraft have a limited amount--ranging from 50 to 100 hours--of flying time left in them. I learned today from our military delegation, that agreement has been reached with you to supply

40 new Mig-21 aircraft. I would like to point out a technical point here, especially in the presence of Marshal Zakharov. The Mig has a short range when compared to the Mirage, the Mystere and the Vautour that Israel possesses and that can reach from their bases to Marsa Matruh (this was before America supplied Israel with the sophisticated Phantom aircraft). This means that the Israeli aircraft can reach the heartland of Egypt whereas our planes cannot reach the heartland of Israel. Therefore, we need a new kind of long-range fighter-bombers. Else, Israel will remain superior and capable of striking us while we are unable to retaliate.

Another issue concerning the air force is that you should send us as quickly as possible, by air and not by sea, a number of the needed Mig-21 aircraft so that they may participate immediately in the republic's air defense. I will be revealing no secret if I say that we now have a number of pilots without aircraft.

There is also a shortage in the weapons of the infantry divisions and it is essential that the weapons and equipment of these divisions arrive as quickly as possible. I would like to remind you of your cable and the cable of Premier Kosygin which were sent on 10 June after the announcement of my resignation and in which you asserted that the Soviet Union will hasten to arm our forces. Now, I will not conceal from you that I expect Israel to launch an attack against us after the conclusion of the UN General Assembly meetings. The question that I want to ask now is: What is the aid that you can offer us in such a situation so that the country may not fall in Israel's hands?

I have learned from Lieutenant General Fawzi that his talks with you this morning did not include the issue of your participation in the air defense operation, and you are leaving for Moscow tomorrow?

Is What Is Required Annihilation of Israel?

Podgorny: I don't currently have full information on the details of the agreement reached by Lieutenant General Fawzi and Marshal Zakharov (publisher's note: A meeting was held between the Soviet military delegation and the Egyptian military delegation independently of the leaders' meetings). But I would like to underline an important point, namely that we still stand by our promise to you concerning rearmament of the Egyptian armed forces. Despite the long distance between us, we will quickly send the necessary military aid by air, by sea and by any possible means. As for the type of aircraft, I believe that the military people will determine the suitable types so that your armed forces may be able to repel any new attack against them and even be able to launch a counterattack.

But there is a point in your statements that I want explained: Do you ask for more aircraft with the aim of annihilating Israel finally?

'Abd-al-Nasir: Let us ask ourselves: What is defense and what is offense? What are defensive weapons and what are offensive weapons? When war starts, there are no so-called offensive weapons and defensive weapons. What is important for us when we ask for aircraft and set their specifications is that we be able to strike all of Israel's airports when military operations begin. As I have already told you, Israel is capable of striking our airports up to Marsa Matruh.

Podgorny: I am absolutely with you. When war begins, there is no difference between offense and defense. This is why we have to exert together all efforts to make the Arab armed forces capable of performing the military duty required of them. As for the presence of a larger number of pilots than of aircraft, this is always better. In the Soviet Union, we have 2 to 3 pilots for every plane. Generally, we will meet your additional requests.

'Abd-al-Nasir: What has made me concentrate on some issues is that the days we are passing through are difficult days and that today's session is the last session before your departure tomorrow. A long time may pass before we meet again at the level of this joint political and military meeting. To sum up the dialog with you, two main issues have emerged: rebuilding the armed forces so that they may be able to perform the tasks required of them and bolstering, improving and strengthening our air defense day after day so that it may become stronger each day. We should not forget that Israel still has air control and that it is continuously receiving new aircraft and Jewish volunteer pilots. This is why they are still superior to us. We must exert utmost efforts to be ready to confront any new Israeli attack. Our situation is different from yours in the Soviet Union. We don't have the depth or the reserve available to you. We live on 5 percent of our territories. As for the shortage of pilots, it is a vital matter. It so happened during the 1956 operations that a pilot used to land one aircraft and proceed to fly another. We are aware that preparing and graduating combat pilots is difficult and time-consuming. This is why we have asked you for aircraft now and why we have also asked for pilots.

America Deceives Us

As for America's policy toward us, the statements of America never reassure me. America is always working to deceive and mislead us. We haven't declared our political position so far but the Americans know perfectly well what we will say, where we will head and what we will do. Yesterday, one of the American UN delegates met our delegate and told him: "You are correcting your mistake with another mistake." Generally, we don't believe their words or promises about Israel's withdrawal from the occupied territories. On the contrary, it is my estimate that Israel is likely to resume the attack against us after the 27th of the current month of June for a simple reason, namely that the Americans and the Israelis have not realized their objective yet.

No peace has been made with the Arabs and the stability wanted for Israel has not been achieved yet. They know that the UN emergency force cannot prevent the Arabs from moving once they overcome the shock they have been experiencing. It is my belief that the battle has produced opposite results and has pushed Egypt and Syria toward greater and greater alignment with the Soviet Union. Therefore, America now has two solutions: either attack us directly under any pretext or support Israel and push it to launch a new attack against us. This is why you should speed up bolstering and strengthening our defenses day after day and why you should meet our requests for Mig-21 aircraft. We should also have a new kind of long-range aircraft which we currently lack.

A final question: How will you help us if a new Israeli attack is launched against us these days? It must be taken into consideration that we cannot withdraw from our present positions and that we will stay in them until death. You withdrew to the Volga River. For us, there is no Volga. There are only 100 kilometers behind us before reaching the center of Cairo.

Podgorny: I am with you and I do not approve any further withdrawal. However, I do not expect any imminent Israeli attack against you.

I would like to ask about the position of the Israeli intelligence in Sinai. Israel has full information on Egypt. Does the Egyptian intelligence have information on Israel?

'Abd-al-Nasir: Israel has full information on Egypt through the Americans, French and Italians present in our country. Our country is a tourist country and we consider tourism an important economic resource that provides us with nearly 100 million dollars in hard currency annually. On the other hand, Israel is considered a closed country from the security and information aspect, in addition to the fact that the Jewish tongue is always held in check while the Arab tongue is always loose. This is why the information available to them about us is more than the information we have about them.

Beware of Journalists

Podgorny: But it is possible to adopt some measures that help confidentiality. For example, we prevent access to the borders except to the people concerned whereas we find that your canal area, which is a border and operations area, is still open to all.

'Abd-al-Nasir: The reason is that our country is small. But generally, we closed the canal area as of yesterday and entry into the area is prohibited except with permits. We have also completely prohibited the entry of foreigners to this area. Israel was carrying out daily air reconnaissance operations over the republic. But as of yesterday, we prepared a protective air umbrella over our lands.

Podgorny: Naturally, it is difficult to conceal everything but it is possible to work confidentially so that the enemy may not feel that you are preparing a quick revenge against him. Try to work silently until complete preparation is achieved. One should also always beware of journalists because they often spoil secrecy in their competition to report the news.

Zakharov: Concerning military preparation, you will receive in 2 or 3 days 40 Mig-21 aircraft with the assembling and installation workers, in addition to 6 Mig-21 aircraft of the type ready for training purposes. There are also 38 Sukhoi aircraft. Generally, you will shortly have a larger number of fighter planes than you had before the aggression. Insofar as armored vehicles are concerned, you will shortly receive 100 tanks. We are ready to send more armored vehicles the more tank crews become available to you. But we will not send tanks to be kept in warehouses. I have an important remark to make, namely the need for hard training because I believe that your forces have not had good training so far.

'Abd-al-Nasir: We need experts in organization and training because our forces did not carry out in the preceding period war training or actual maneuvers. Unfortunately, the confidence placed in the military command was more than the real situation merited. We need a large number of military experts, provided that their chief is in direct contact with me so that any difficulties may be overcome and solved immediately. I also hope that we will not have to pay their salaries.

Podgorny: I agree with your view because it is useless to rearm without precise organization and sufficient training. We will send you high-level technicians and they will work very actively and sincerely. We discussed the issue at length in Moscow and decided to send 1,000 to 1,200 experts from the level of general command down to all levels. Generally, their number will be determined according to your needs. Even though the issue of experts always creates sensitivities in such situations, the wisdom of both sides and good understanding and intentions can overcome such sensitivities.

Western, Not Chinese, Propaganda

Another issue I beg of you is to prevent the Chinese from engaging in propaganda hostile to us in the United Arab Republic because they are trying this everywhere, claiming that we plot with the imperialist forces, with America and with Israel.

'Abd-al-Nasir: Egypt is different from the other Arab countries. Here we have a single nation and a single people, unlike Syria and Sudan where there are numerous sects and tribes. Generally, the Egyptian people are not at all influenced by the Chinese propaganda. On the contrary, China is always protesting the publication of some reports

about the Red Guard in our papers. The propaganda that is influential here in Egypt is not China's but the Western propaganda, especially among the bourgeoisie.

Podgorny: Insofar as your weapon requests are concerned, we will speed up delivery of what has been requested. Be sure that we in Moscow are affected exactly as you are by this crisis. The concern you have is the same as the concern we have. What is more, we will not bring up the issue of residence and financial costs with you.

Your armed forces are incapable at present of engaging in any action and, therefore, we must have a period of calm during which we work quietly. You asked me what we would do if a new Israeli aggression is launched. First, I think that your armed forces are not sufficiently prepared so far to confront such an attack. Second, I believe that it is undesirable and unthought of that the Soviet Union take part in the war at present. What is important, therefore, is to shore up your capabilities as fast as possible so that you may prepare for facing any surprises. The enemy is close to you. He is at a distance of no more than 100 miles and you are concerned and cannot sleep. We are exactly like you, despite the long distance between us.

'Abd-al-Nasir: Concerning the political agreement between us, there are several proposals and each proposal has its merits and drawbacks. What is indubitable is that deep in our hearts, we are proceeding side-by-side with the Soviet Union. There is a full alliance between us. We have been compensated for the weapons and equipment lost in the war free of charge. We approve the form of connection that you choose on one condition, namely that the form selected will not affect our reputation and our leadership status in the Third World.

Podgorny: Naturally, this is a fundamental condition. I hope that you will be fully assured that we are very eager that the struggling position of the United Arab Republic in this part of the world remains unaffected.

Economic Situation

Zakariya Muhyi-al-Din (he was asked by 'Abd-al-Nasir to review the economic situation and the main requirements):

There is no doubt that the economic battle proceeds side-by-side with the military battle. From reviewing the economic capabilities of our republic in comparison with the population number and our defense and foreign commitments, it has become evident that these capabilities are very limited. Therefore, any emergency always affects our economy heavily. Our economy relies mainly on two important elements: agriculture and the canal revenues. Industry and tourism follow. In simple figures, we can explain our economic situation and what our economy relied on.

Exports from the agricultural sector used to bring us 170 million pounds in hard currency. We used to get nearly 100 million pounds from the Suez Canal sector and about 100 million pounds from industry and oil, keeping in mind that industry is always affected by the availability of the raw materials and semiprocessed materials that we import from abroad. We also used to earn 40 million pounds in hard currency from tourism and other sectors. This means that our total revenues amounted to 410 million pounds. Evaluating the new conditions after the war and after the closure of the Suez Canal, these revenues will drop to 290 million pounds only, i.e., the resulting deficit will amount to 120 million pounds. I will present to the economic official in the Soviet delegation a list of the needed essential commodities, such as wheat, flour, corn, sugar, oils and fats, in addition to some industrial requirements.

Podgorny: We know from our experience that economic needs increase after war. We have taken note of all your requests and we will discuss them in detail in Moscow and will then send you what we can. Moreover, representatives of the socialist states are supposed to meet in the coming days to coordinate their plans. We will discuss with them in this meeting the means to meet and coordinate the aid needed by you and by Syria.

'Abd-al-Nasir: In conclusion of our meeting with you, I would like to record our thanks, both people and leadership, for the Soviet support for us. The United Arab Republic's people are deep-rooted people and will never forget the friends that stood by them in the hard days.

Podgorny: In the name of the Soviet leadership, I express my thanks and appreciation to you and your people for the warm welcome, both the official and the popular welcome. We believe that the visit has been extremely successful and useful. We also feel great satisfaction for the bolstered and strengthened relation between our two countries. We are confident that it will be possible to eliminate all traces of the aggression and that the Israelis will not remain on your land. But we should not set a date for the next battle as of now, whether it is 1 month or 6 months. What is important is to let reason rule when adopting this decision so that we may not provide the opportunity for provoking the enemy before we are ready to face him.

Mr President, we will continue our consultations as long as we have tied our destiny together and, consequently, we will together solve all the problems, regardless of how big they are.

I have a final question: Doesn't the president believe that it is better if we visit Tito on our way back to explain to him the details of the political and military situation, even though we fear that he will get angry when we mention to him the issue of alinement and non-alinement? I will also review the general situation and the important

issues brought up here before the forthcoming meeting of the heads of the socialist countries.

'Abd-al-Nasir: I believe that it is better if you pass by President Tito and acquaint him with the gist of what has taken place in the meetings. Now, what is your opinion of what should be issued about our meetings? Should we issue a brief statement or a long joint communique?

Press Statement

Podgorny: I propose that no long joint communique be issued and that we be content with a short press statement, keeping in mind that this short press statement will cause a lot of speculation and questions in the world.

'Abd-al-Nasir: I agree to the issuance of a short press statement, provided that it is announced in both Cairo and Moscow at 1800, Cairo time, tomorrow, Saturday 24 June 1967.

Following is the verbatim translation of the press statement which was written in English:

N. F. Podgorny, chairman of the Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet, paid a friendly visit to the United Arab Republic at the invitation of Jamal 'Abd-al-Nasir, president of the United Arab Republic.

Chairman Podgorny was accorded an extremely warm welcome proving the friendly feeling that the United Arab Republic people harbor for the Soviet people. Podgorny expressed his profound gratitude for the warm welcome. N. F. Podgorny, chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme USSR Soviet, and Jamal 'Abd-al-Nasir, president of the United Arab Republic, held meetings and talks in an atmosphere of mutual fraternal understanding and of the traditional friendship that binds the two countries. During the talks, issues pertaining to the Middle East situation, especially issues connected with the Israeli aggression against the United Arab Republic and the other Arab countries and also the steps being taken to eliminate the traces of this aggression, were discussed at the meetings.

It has been noticed with great satisfaction that the visit of the chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme USSR Soviet, will serve strengthening and developing the cordial relations and the relations of friendship and cooperation between the two countries in the interest of the peoples of the Soviet Union and of the United Arab Republic and the interest of the peace and security of all peoples of the world.

[26 Jun-2 Jul 78 pp 31-36]

[Text] Part III: 'Arif and Boumediene in Moscow; Stormy Meeting Between Brezhnev and Boumediene; Kosygin: Revolutionism of Words Is Treason If Not Established on Actual Strength; Boumediene: America's Main Objective Is To Destroy Every Progressive Regime in Area; Brezhnev Interrupts Boumediene Angrily and Demands That Opinions be Recorded in Writing "for History's Judgment"; Soviet Leaders Ask Arab Leaders To End State of War With Israel

The blow that Israel and the anti-Arab forces dealt to Egypt and 'Abd-al-Nasir was not only severe but also stunning in its ferocity. What made its impact on the Arab and foreign public opinion still stronger is that the theater prepared for it was flooded in a sea of light that blinded clear vision. More than one skillful producer took part in coordinating and arranging the events so that the results may come in total contrast with the preludes. 'Abd-al-Nasir was lured to the battle without being prepared for it. Even unpreparedness, the imbalance afflicting the military command and even the fall of the Golan without a fight would not have led to the result that we reached if there had been some sort of foresight.

During the first hours of the defeat and immediately after, I heard someone say with pain in al-Qubbah Palace in Cairo: Had the Israelis stood on one side and the Arabs on the other side and then exchanged fire, then it is inevitable that the results would have been different, not by turning the defeat into a victory. It would have been possible for the defeat to be honorable and for the Israeli victory to be for a price.

The insinuations that the producers on the theater of events had spread were to the effect that the Arabs would be at the gates of Tel Aviv within hours of the sounding of the war trumpet. What increased these insinuations is the press conference that 'Abd-al-Nasir held just before the war and in which he said that should the war actually break out, Israel alone would have to bear its consequences and that if Washington took part in the fighting, the reply would be much stronger than Washington imagines. But matters changed when the first bullet was fired. The lights that blinded vision disappeared and the bitter facts appeared. The Israelis were the ones standing at Cairo's gates after only 6 days.

The blow was so violent that it shook the Arabs to the core. Everybody, even those who had disagreed with 'Abd-al-Nasir, realized that the defeat was not the defeat of 'Abd-al-Nasir alone but of all of them. This is why they headed for Cairo, asking and wondering: How did this happen? What is to be done and where to proceed? The theory saying that tragedies unite the Arabs and happy times divide them, was proven once more. 'Abd-al-Nasir put his hand on his wounded heart and received them all with a tearful smile and explained all the facts:

Egypt lost most of its weapons and equipment in the battle.

The first blow paralyzed the Egyptian air force and got it out of the battle finally. This was on the evening of 5 June, the first day of the defeat.

In this atmosphere, Presidents Nur-al-Din al-Atasi (Syria), 'Abd-al-Rahman 'Arif (Iraq), Houari Boumediene (Algeria) and Ahmad Muhammad Mahjub (Sudan) met in Cairo. This meeting was considered a mini-summit for the steadfast countries. In the first brief meeting, 'Abd-al-Nasir explained the domestic military and political situation, referring to his talks with Chairman Podgorny, who had visited Cairo, and to the Soviet readiness to rebuild the armed forces. 'Abd-al-Nasir suggested that the Arab countries bound to the Soviet Union by good relations exert pressure on Moscow to speed up fulfilling Egypt's military requests. Presidents Houari Boumediene and 'Abd-al-Rahman 'Arif volunteered to go to Moscow immediately and to talk to the Soviet leaders on behalf of the Arab presidents then meeting in Cairo. All agreed to remain in Cairo until 'Abd-al-Rahman 'Arif and Houari Boumediene return from Moscow in order to adopt the proper decisions in light of the talks with the Kremlin leaders.

The trip of the two presidents was shrouded in complete secrecy and the plane that took them from Cairo to a military base near Moscow was a Soviet-made plane. The two presidents disembarked from the plane and headed directly for the meetings hall. They were received at the military base by Brezhnev, Kosygin, Ponomarev, members of the CPSU Central Committee, and Defense Minister Marshal Grechko, in addition to the first deputy minister of foreign affairs and the head of the Middle East Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The meeting started at 2000 on 17 July 1967 and lasted 5 continuous hours. It was then resumed at 1000 on the following morning of Tuesday and lasted until 1400. All present took a light luncheon and then Boumediene and 'Arif boarded the same plane that had brought them to Moscow back to Cairo.

I must note here that I was not one of the members of the Iraqi-Algerian delegation which went to Moscow on this secret mission. However, I obtained the original copy of the meeting papers from one of the Arab ministers who was a member of the delegation and who attended the talks. This is the first time that the minutes of this historic meeting find their way to open publication. The dialog between the two Arab presidents and the Soviet leaders was hot and reached the point of boiling at certain times during the talks.

'Abd-al-Farid Majid

(Brezhnev welcomed the two Arab presidents and their companions with a few conventional words and then directly embarked on the issue.)

Brezhnev: We hope, gentlemen, that the talks will be useful to both sides. We are ready to hear you immediately, especially under these delicate circumstances.

'Abd-al-Rahman 'Arif: We carry to you, comrades, the greetings of the Arab presidents currently meeting in Cairo. We also carry the greetings of the free and struggling Arab peoples to the Soviet people and to the socialist peoples. The Arab peoples and the Arab presidents thank the Soviet Union for the fraternal acts it has carried out. They truly appreciate the good efforts, especially under these critical circumstances that are being experienced by the progressive Arab states. We also thank those who met in Budapest (the Eastern bloc group) for the results that they produced. This is another proof of the firm friendship that strengthens the Arab peoples and makes them feel that there are friendly peoples that stand with them in the struggle against imperialism. We are aware that imperialism and the countries that proceed in its bandwagon are trying to stress that all the plans and attempts made by the Soviet Union toward the issue will fail. We are aware that they are trying through this to create coolness between the Soviet Union and the Arab countries.

Gentlemen, the Arab presidents meeting in Cairo decided to send a delegation consisting of brother Boumediene and of myself to convey the facts to you so that you may know that the friendship between us will not be broken. I also hope that you will know that the Arab countries are more strongly bound to each other now than they were before. A proposal was made in Cairo last evening to invite the Arab foreign ministers to meet in preparation for a big Arab summit conference. We hope that maximum efforts will be continued at the United Nations to reach a solution suitable for the Arabs, with total disregard for what imperialism and its agents intend. Diplomatic solutions will naturally give us the time to prepare for the restoration of our rights. It is hoped that our friends in the Soviet Union and in the socialist countries will increase the supply of modern weapons and equipment to the Arab countries, as well as the supply of economic materials we need.

Real Situation

Brezhnev: I have a question to Comrades 'Arif and Boumediene: What is the real position of the Arab countries toward ending the current problem? Let us look at things as they are: The enemy is at a distance of 100 kilometers from Cairo, he is close to Damascus and occupies the Golan Heights that overlook Damascus. The course of the events has indicated that this aggressor had been preparing himself for this aggression seriously and for a long time. For example, Israel's population amounts to 2.5 million and its army amounts to 350,000 troops.

This means that 15 percent of Israel's population carry arms. Let us now study the balance of powers: They were superior in military tactics, in the use of the air force, of tanks and of airborne infantry and also in cooperation between the various sectors. This is in addition to the fact that they had also prepared their rear for the battle whereas this did not happen on the Arab side. Let us take the United Arab Republic for an example: Its population is 30 million whereas those who carried arms were only 1 percent. The same situation was in Syria. Is it reasonable for states to engage in war while in such a state? Some of our military commanders visited your countries and studied everything on the spot. It is possible for Grechko, our minister of defense, to tell you all the details. We say this not to hurt you and not to hold anybody responsible, but that it may be taken into consideration, keeping in mind that most of the military information we are talking about was talked about before by the military commanders in the United Arab Republic and in Syria.

Causes of Aggression

It is very important to know why the aggression took place, who prepared for it and what are its objectives. We in the socialist countries met twice in this short period. This is not easy because we do not meet, even for our own issues, so quickly. In these two meetings, we examined the issue not only generally but with all its details. We also discussed all the steps that Israel may take. The purpose of these two meetings was not propaganda but to engage in serious study. We agree with you that the U.S., German and British imperialism is the side that pushed Israel to commit this aggression. This needs no proof. The entire world has come to know it through the UN General Assembly discussions. But where are the roots of this issue? As a state, Israel has no weight insofar as the other countries are concerned because it lacks the economic mainstays and it lives on the aid that comes to it from the other side. If America stops loans and aid to Israel, it will die and vanish in a short period. So, why is America interested so much in Israel? The answer lies in America's ambition in the Arab area, considering that it contains 60 percent of the world oil reserves. Moreover, the United States makes millions in annual profit from this black gold. The aim of America and the West is to put the Arab peoples in their grasp, as they did in the past. But after the emergence of the progressive Arab regimes and after it became evident that the Arab peoples want to live free, independent and on the path of progress, imperialism found that this constitutes a danger to its interest and almost caused it to lose its control. This is why imperialism has been in need of Israel. A direct imperialist attack against the Arab countries is almost impossible but an attack through Israel will always give it the suitable solution. Imperialism has found the proper opportunity this time and so pushed the Israeli army from small to big skirmishes and then to a full scale war.

We have hardly slept for a whole month. How do we stop the Israeli army's march to Cairo or to Damascus? We received a cable to the effect that the Syrian Government will move to Aleppo and this is why they asked for a cease-fire. On our part, we have exerted pressure on the United States and the socialist countries have severed their relations with Israel. All these are serious steps and we have not taken anything like them in the past 10 years.

Ending State of War

The current situation: Insofar as the enemy is concerned, it is in his interest to remain in the lands he has occupied and that the United Nations take no resolution concerning the aggression. Therefore, it is not surprising for them to try to create differences between the Arab countries or between the Soviet Union and the Arab countries on the draft resolutions submitted to the General Assembly.

We must examine the facts as they are and must study them in detail because they contain positive aspects, as they contain negative aspects. The war started on 5 June. On 8 June, the Soviet Union started to send its aircraft to carry weapons to the United Arab Republic and to Syria through pro-Western air space. We have been able to make up for large parts of the weapons lost in the war through 544 air trips and 15 cargo ships. We have sent nearly 48,000 tons of military equipment. We have also sent experts to provide training on the use of the weapons and the equipment. They are now carrying out this task very actively and sincerely on the instructions of the party's Politburo and because they realize that our people want it.

Concerning the political solution, the socialist countries believe that if a resolution is taken for Israeli withdrawal from the occupied Arab territories, then a decision to end the state of war can also be taken, keeping in mind that we have consulted all the international law experts and they have said that ending the state of war does not mean recognizing the Zionist state. The political solution will give the Arabs the opportunity to prepare and to strengthen their defense capability. Gaining this time will give all the Arab countries the opportunity to advance militarily and economically.

You want to rebuild the Arab armies. This requires time and needs a large number of trained troops. When we fought Hitler and occupied Berlin, we had military forces amounting to 16 million fighters. But in your war with Israel, you did not have any numerical superiority. So, how could you triumph? We are very pained because we have put our reputation with yours and because we have found our latest aircraft and missiles in the U.S. research centers. Moreover, our latest tanks have been sent to West Germany. At the same time, we feel deeply hurt when we hear Israeli officers say that our tanks and aircraft that you left behind are the best kinds of weapons.

Need for Time

On the other hand, the imperialist forces have realized what they wanted, namely failure to reach a resolution at the United Nations. Imperialism is thus preparing the same circumstances that lead to new acts of provocation and then to large-scale military operations against Syria and against the United Arab Republic. The coming new operations mean the fall of the progressive regimes. If this happens and new regimes come, they will work to end everything and to recognize Israel. This means the loss of our reputation once again. We currently need some time for several reasons:

First, to strengthen the defense capability of the Arab countries. The socialist countries agreed in their latest meeting in Budapest to strengthen the Arab countries militarily, in the sense of supplying weapons, advancing loans, sending experts and reorganizing the armies according to the requirements of modern war, especially the air capability and the tank formations. Regrettably, our military experts say that most of your tank drivers do not currently have experience of more than 3 to 6 hours. This means that they do not have the combat capability to use the tanks in the battle.

Second, to prepare the people politically and to get them ready to struggle and to fully support their political regime and their government. This is considered fundamental for continuing the struggle in the future.

Third, to build a firm economic edifice because modern warfare requires the presence of a strong economy. Without such an economy, the battle cannot be continued for long.

Seven socialist countries recently expressed their readiness to advance the necessary aid to the friendly Arab countries and each of them is deciding now in detail what it can offer.

Another issue: You are asking us to undertake the responsibility of air defense and to send 50 Soviet pilots for air protection. Do you imagine that if this happens, all problems will be ended? This is an incorrect visualization. There are many difficulties in actual implementation. The orders of our officers and your officers will be confused and will be difficult to understand and then chaos in operations will appear.

Boumediene (interrupting Brezhnev): This is a technical and not a political problem.

Brezhnev: I understand this. But there is another aspect to the problem. The pilots cannot be used alone. Assisting units must take part with them or else it will become easy to shoot them down. This means that we will have to participate with our formations and our armies. What will

the reactions be in such a case? It is possible under this circumstance that the battles and the war will expand at a time when we find the communication line between us long. Moreover, this form of participation in the operations means that foreign forces will defend a country whose national forces have not been prepared yet. This is an incorrect form. This is why we presented the issue to our comrades in the socialist countries and discussed the entire current situation carefully. We have found that the best solution to achieve our main goal, namely to protect the safety of the progressive Arab regimes, is to follow the long-drawn path through strengthening these Arab states with whatever help they need, be it military, political or economic.

Inflexible Policy

Kosygin: Our party has been fighting imperialism for many years. This is why the easiest thing for us is to help you and to stand by you. We want the Arab states to be independent and strong. You brought up a political issue when you said that the Arab countries do not agree to end the state of war and that you consider this impossible. If we take your position and say what you say, what will be left? Nothing will be left but the continuation of war and the meaning of a continued war is that Israel will not withdraw and that it will be supported in this position by America, Germany and many other countries.

In this case, are you prepared for war? Have you discussed this matter in detail? On our part, we would like to adopt a position that would please our Arab friends and we would like to tell them: Go ahead, advance. But after calculating your present military forces and capabilities and after familiarizing ourselves with the reports of our military experts, we have reached the conclusion that this would be unrealistic. This is why I would like to tell you that you are following a policy that lacks flexibility. Such a policy cannot be used with imperialism. It can be used with us because we are friends. But it is our duty to also tell you things that may not please you or may not appeal to you. What is important is to be frank with each other because history will not forgive us in the future.

Revolutionism of Words...Treason

Boumediene: We have come here to talk frankly and to reach an understanding as friends.

Kosygin: I see that revolutionary slogans at present might be against the interest of the Arabs themselves. Take China, for example. [It asks you] to adopt a firm revolutionary stance and tells you: Begin the war and we will support you. Afterwards, you will have so many articles and so many meetings and nothing more. The revolutionism of words, if not established on actual strength, is treason. We must take some factors into consideration:

First, you should take the current opportunity and should work for the unity of the Arab countries, provided that you avoid any action which may obstruct this work and that you isolate all the persons who stand in the face of achieving this unity.

Second, regardless of how hard the conditions are, sternness must be used to eliminate all persons who stand against the revolution. Reaction and progressiveness must be separated.

Third, the current opportunity must be exploited to build a strong army, keeping in mind that building and bolstering an army require 2 years at least.

Fourth, you should not adopt a rigid policy toward imperialism. The necessary flexibility should be adopted. It is not important to end the state of war. What is important is to gain the time necessary to strengthen the armed forces and to bolster the regime. This will give you the ability and the faith to achieve your future plans.

Brezhnev: In this case, you will rely on your factions and your party and the people will understand your orders and your policy well.

Cold Heads

Kosygin: I believe that your big mistake is that you think that sending 50 of our pilots and 1,000 of our troops will bring you victory. This is an unsound visualization. You have said that this is a technical issue and not a political issue. However, I want to explain this issue well to you. If we send our forces to you, then America and Britain will inevitably send their forces to Israel. I don't mean by this that we are afraid but I mean that we should think well of the consequences before we escalate the situation. In the latest war against Israel, no forces (meaning non-Israeli forces) or aircraft took part with Israel. Why? The answer is because Israel was strong. We hear that some Arabs say that the Russians are afraid. But the truth is that we should think with cool heads. I want to say that the current political situation is encouraging, that many countries are on your side and that we are not only on your side but with you. I have learned that a meeting will be held shortly by the Arab foreign ministers. I wish that you would form a subcommittee of the conferees to discuss the oil issue. Try to split the imperialist ranks on the issue of oil by your supporting one country against another. The same goes for the economic concessions given to America and to the West in the Arab countries. Politically, you can create problems for them and you can use these problems a lot. Unfortunately, your thinking is confined at present to one issue, namely: Will the war continue or will it stop? If the Israeli forces do not withdraw now, who will be the victor? It is my opinion that your movement should be in another direction. There must be movement against imperialism and against Israel from a position of strength and not from a position of

weakness. The power is in your hands and you can move it any way you like through political flexibility.

In my latest talk with Johnson, I felt that he wanted to help Israel with all his strength but that he is afraid at the same time of losing the Arab world. Moreover, he ultimately doesn't want to sever his relations with the Arabs. This position must be exploited. Johnson knows that if he loses the Arab countries, he will also lose Africa. So you can, with political means, achieve big results. Talk to them (publisher's note: meaning America) any way you like. Words are not important. We never think that the present Arab defeat is also a future defeat. You should also not forget that political struggle does not mean final retreat and withdrawal and that there may be progress behind it.

'Arif: The question of ending the war means opening the Suez Canal for navigation and also means negotiating with them, and may be followed by peace.

Kosygin: Not at all. The negotiations can be carried out through the United Nations and if they don't withdraw, then the state of war will continue. In any case, I believe that you are closing the door for getting out of the crisis.

Boumediene: So, what is new in the discussion now is the issue of the UN resolution. The Middle East battle is not a simple battle. I have already said that it is one battle in a long series launched by imperialism against peoples. The hot battles in the world at present are well known. The most important of these battles is the Middle East battle for many strategic, economic and petroleum reasons, as well as other concerns. Regardless of how often it is said in connection with this battle that the Arabs are fanatic, the truth is that they are the victims of the aggression and that their lands are occupied. I do not want to talk about the defeat because no clear-cut battles have taken place and because the causes of the defeat are well known. We are nowadays in the role of the victim who has to pay the price. Let us review the UN issue. Will mere voting put an end to the serious problem present in the Middle East? Let us assume that the Arabs will accept to end the state of war. Will this mean an end to the problem and will it, very simply, mean Israel's withdrawal?

Kosygin: If they don't withdraw, the state of war will continue. We always stipulate the condition of Israeli withdrawal from the occupied territories.

Boumediene: It is my opinion that the problem cannot be judged this simply. Why? Because the Americans themselves have made their calculations and all their analyses on the basis that the winning card is in their hands and that they will not let go of this card so easily. They will not let go of this card until the problem is solved as they want it

to be solved. In our view, the Americans will not accept any resolution that does not reflect their viewpoint. Naturally, they can obstruct the passage of any resolution they do not want. America's main goal in the area is to destroy every progressive regime in (the Middle East).

Brezhnev: America, Britain and Germany were against the UN meeting. Despite this, the meeting has taken place and we have obtained many votes.

Boumediene: The issue is two-sided. The first side is what resulted from the 1948 war, or the so-called Palestinian issue, and the second side is what resulted from the 1967 war or the so-called aggression issue. America's policy is to end both sides of this issue finally in the interest of Israel and at the expense of the progressive regimes. America is now in a position of power and will not let the opportunity pass without fully exploiting it to topple the progressive regimes in the United Arab Republic and Syria first and then in Iraq.

Before Two Choices

Brezhnev: So, what is the solution? We are thinking in the same way. Theoretically, this is true. But the enemy is near you.

Boumediene: Two choices are before us: We either acknowledge the fait accompli and negotiate at the expense of the progressive regimes to keep the territories or we take firmer positions.

Brezhnev: What is the meaning of the fait accompli at the expense of the progressive regimes?

Boumediene: The problem is not the problem of voting on a resolution in the United Nations. The resolution may produce no results. Under the present circumstances, America is strong. Some Arab countries may offer continuous concessions and then it will be impossible for the governments of these countries to survive. Let us examine the proposed draft resolutions: There was first the Soviet draft and then matters developed and concessions started and we have now reached the issue of ending the state of war. I will not conceal from you that this is a serious matter. We respect the opinion of the legal experts you referred to in your talk but we believe that this means recognition of Israel. The Palestinian issue is sensitive and neither 'Abd-al-Nasir's government nor the Baghdad government can approve the proposed draft resolution. If this must be done, then new governments must come to approve these steps.

Brezhnev: These are statements that show that you can't have the desire to continue the struggle.

Boumediene: I have read the statement issued in the wake of the Budapest meeting. It was a strong statement. A reference was made in

it to the unity of the Arab countries. The question asked is: How can the contradictions be combined in a single unity?

Kosygin: We understand what you are saying and we are not forgetting, for example, that Morocco is causing you many problems on the borders.

Boumediene: And then you accuse Algeria of being radical. (Publisher's note: The statement issued by the Eastern bloc countries meeting in Budapest accused Algeria of being radical.) All these are projected questions and the options are difficult. We are also told to return to those in a position of power and to resort to tactics and to flexibility. How?

The Land and the Regimes

Kosygin: You talk about the facts as they are but you offer no solution to the problem.

Brezhnev: I have followed the problem since its beginning. However, I understand that if you continue to recognize the presence of the state of war, then this will lead to big problems. In my opinion, you should separate two issues: the first is how to eliminate the traces of the aggression and the second is how we should view the other problems afterwards. The important issue now is how to safeguard the progressive Arab regimes and how you should expel the enemy and keep your progressive regimes.

Boumediene: Comrade Brezhnev has mentioned the issue of how to eliminate the traces of the aggression. In my opinion, this can be done either through an understanding with our enemies according to the conditions they dictate or through following the path of struggle, regardless of how long it takes. This means we either choose the first or the second solution. If we opt for the second solution, namely struggle, then we must reach an understanding with each other on how to carry out the struggle. To put it briefly, I believe that there is a victor and a defeated party.

Brezhnev: Regaining land is not easy.

Boumediene: If land is the problem, then we can change our political position, regain the land and accept the American proposals and conditions. This will then result in the downfall of the progressive regimes. This is why I said at the outset that the choice is difficult.

Kosygin: How will you implement the second option?

Boumediene: I would like to first mention here the opinion of the people who sent us because you may find my opinion radical. We are in agreement to pursue all the diplomatic channels. But at the same

time, we will not neglect the struggle. The issue that both Syria and the United Arab Republic request urgently is that their defense capabilities be strengthened.

Brezhnev: 20 July 1967, i.e., 3 days from now, is the last date for the UN General Assembly meeting. You are free but the world will say that the Arabs are fanatic in their position.

Kosygin: Are you against the idea of ending the state of war, even after the aggressors return to the truce lines? What is more important to you: the land or ending the state of war?

Boumediene: This question cannot be answered with a yes or no. Our belief is that the problem will not end with a UN vote.

Kosygin: Then how will you solve this issue militarily at present?

Brezhnev: Generally, if any resolution is adopted by the General Assembly, the Security Council will implement it. There, we have veto power. Therefore, you should not fear the resolutions. Moreover, why do you exclude the possibility that the enemy will move once more and strike the three regimes with all his strength on the grounds that the state of war continues and the possibility that afterwards new governments will come according to the wish and will of America? We want you to be strong, and then talk any way you want. But now... (publisher's note: Brezhnev spread his hands without completing his phrase and what he meant was clear).

Boumediene: The choice today is a decisive choice. The problem is not a problem of a UN resolution. Ending the state of war must have a practical guarantee. This is something that the Americans will accept at the expense of the progressive Arab regimes. We want political backing and military support at present, keeping in mind that we have already received some weapons and that other weapons are on their way.

Brezhnev Gets Angry

Brezhnev (interrupting angrily): But you don't have trained troops and officers now. I suggest that our positions and opinions be put down in writing. History will judge in the future who is right and who is wrong. We are with you in the need to continue the fighting. But the conditions are inopportune now. We are now facing a fait accompli.

Kosygin: What is your opinion of de Gaulle's proposal on a meeting of the major powers? De Gaulle says it is the practical solution. We will not approve the proposal because you, the Arabs, have not approved it. If you agree, we will change our position. But who will guarantee America's position?

Brezhnev: Let us assume that a resolution calling for ending the state of war is issued. In such a case, the Security Council will be asked to study its implementation. It will be proposed there that UN observers and forces be sent to follow up implementation. The United Arab Republic will also be asked to declare the freedom of passage in the canal. We on our part will continue to send experts and weapons and, consequently, you will have time to complete your preparation.

Boumediene: Ending the state of war will lead to grave consequences.

Brezhnev (once again angrily): If we analyze your opinions well, we will find them either radical or leading to a new defeat.

Kosygin (trying to cool the heated atmosphere): If you want to strike Israel, then we are with you, but the current conditions do not help this.

Boumediene: Ending the state of war practically means capitulation. Do we understand that the Soviet Union's position is completely similar to what has been stated in the recent Budapest communique?

Brezhnev: Yes. We exchanged opinions in this conference with utter freedom and the opinion of all was almost the same. When we completed the exchange of opinions, we conducted an analytical study which produced the result declared in the communique. We did not enter the conference carrying a specific plan from Moscow. I want you to rest assured that we do not impose a certain opinion on the seven socialist countries. I also wish you to know that the general atmosphere in that conference called for optimism and not pessimism. Rather, there was clear hope that victory is yours in the future. Ending the state of war does not dictate the establishment of political relations between you and Israel.

Boumediene: Don't you see that Zionism controls America, Western Europe and Britain? This is why their opinion always reflects Israel's. We still see the world incapable of condemning Israel. We, the Arabs, did not start the war. Slogans were not the cause. The war of aggression was started and the Arab territory was occupied and yet the General Assembly refuses to condemn Israel and has recognized the fait accompli. The world then says that we are fanatic. This might have been true before 5 June but it became meaningless afterwards.

Brezhnev: Let us be realistic. Where were the 800 tanks and the 1,500 guns destroyed? They were destroyed at the borders. They were not destroyed in a battle. The Israelis succeeded in portraying you to the world as having prepared an attack against them and portraying themselves as having repelled the attack and then having pursued and defeated you. If we want to overcome the dilemma and to achieve victory, we have to think together calmly. In any case, this session has gone on for too long. Let us leave the calm thinking for tomorrow's session.

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[Text] Part IV: Brezhnev: What Difference Does It Make Whether Israel Uses Canal or Not; Kosygin: Johnson Presented to Us Plan To Resettle Palestinian Refugees; Boumediene: After Our Talk With You, a Feeling of Ambiguity Has Risen Within Me Regarding Soviet Position Toward Problem; After Boumediene's Return to Cairo, Mahjub Arrived From New York and Dropped a Bomb That Almost Ruined Nerves of Presidents in Attendance

The second session of talks held between Presidents Houari Boumediene (Algeria) and 'Abd-al-Rahman 'Arif (Iraq) and the Kremlin leaders was sharp and heated. The Soviets, as I learned later, believed that President Boumediene had come to Moscow completely and comprehensively adopting the Chinese viewpoint. Proceeding on this basis, the Soviets displayed their sentiments toward the Algerian president, at times by hints and at times through insinuation. For example, they said: "Your country (Algeria) is far from the battlefield. You the easterners [sic] are very zealous. What does it matter if Israel's flag passes or does not pass through the Suez Canal? What is the importance of formalities in the face of great accomplishments, such as the High Dam?"

Boumediene answered Kosygin angrily: "Your words are incomprehensible and ambiguous." Kosygin answered coolly: "My words are clear and understandable and if there is any ambiguity, then the interpreter is responsible."

It seemed at times during the talks that a convergence of views was almost impossible. The Soviets concentrated on the need to end the state of war and on preparation afterwards and said that protecting the progressive Arab regimes should come before liberation of the land whereas the Arab delegation believed that liberation of the land came first and foremost. When the clash reached this dead end, Kosygin said frankly: "We know that you are more sensitive on some issues. However, problems are not solved with emotions. 'Abd-al-Hakim 'Amir used to ask for whatever weapons he wanted and we used to give him the weapons without asking him about the means to use them and about training and organization in his forces. We were wrong to adopt such a position and the result has been the current situation that you see with your own eyes."

I was told in Cairo that at the end of the meeting, the nerves of all the conferees reached a high degree of tension. I was also told that the Soviet coolness provoked the Arab delegation and that the Arab fieriness provoked the Soviet delegation. The Arabs want a military solution and the Soviets seek a political solution. When the discussions reached another dead end, Brezhnev stood at the end of the meeting and said: "Now, gentlemen, we want to know specifically if you have come to convey to us your decisions just for the sake of information or

whether you will take the socialist camp's observations into consideration. We would like to know the answer to this question."

The clock showed 1000 o'clock, Tuesday 18 July 1967 (Moscow time), when the second meeting started at the Kremlin Palace. The weather in Moscow on that day was unusually pleasant and warm. Kosygin started the discussion immediately. He looked at his watch first and embarked directly on the issue without welcome and without courtesies, contrary to the established Soviet custom.

'Abd-al-Majid Farid

Kosygin: We are all aware that the problem is difficult but we are looking for a solution to it. We are more pained than the Arabs for the current situation.

Brezhnev: We are currently more preoccupied with the Arab issues than with any other issue. Iran's prime minister will visit us tomorrow. How was their position toward you?

Boumediene: Their position was generally good.

Kosygin: It may be proper of you to send cables of thanks to all the countries that have supported you.

'Arif: This has already been done. We have sent personal cables to all of them.

Brezhnev: I am not satisfied with yesterday's discussion. The position we heard does not indicate the presence of a clear picture. Moreover, we did not hear any solution. We know that your peoples are pained by what has happened. But listening to the opinion of peoples is not enough. Imperialism must be fought. Imperialism is sly and we must also be sly when confronting it. It is important to always know what is the most important thing. Struggle before independence is one thing and after independence another thing. For a month and a half, we have been talking and exchanging opinions with the leaders of friendly countries. We are all thinking of the interest of the Arabs. Those who voted for the nonaligned states draft resolution (publisher's note: One of the political resolutions submitted to the United Nations) were on the Arab side. But unfortunately, the draft resolution did not win a majority. This doesn't mean the end of the struggle. But we must find the right path. On our part, we have severed our relations with Israel and we are ready to go and fight with you. Sacrifice with results is acceptable but sacrifice without results is not.

Gromyko cabled us from New York today saying that the UN General Assembly will end its meeting without adopting any resolution. This is the worst thing because it means that Israel will have a free hand and that it will

be able to strike again. Regrettably, there is no Arab country that is prepared for defense now. In my opinion, the situation will be difficult. Comrade Boumediene, you are far from the battlefield and you may be seeing the general situation more clearly.

Kosygin: I would like to add another thing, namely that the General Assembly's session will end after tomorrow and nobody knows what the results will be afterwards. I beg you to think well. Your affairs are in your hands and we have no right to exert pressure on you. If you are persuaded by something, you can contact 'Abd-al-Nasir and Syria's president by telephone from here and explain the situation to them in minutes. The time is short and a definite answer must be reached. In Gromyko's opinion, the Israeli forces should withdraw first and then we should tie this to the issue of ending the state of war and free navigation in the Suez Canal. Actually, the freedom of navigation is a theoretical issue insofar as Israel is concerned because Israeli ships cross the canal under different flags.

Boumediene: Concerning this point, the passage of the Israeli flag through the canal means recognition of Israel.

Kosygin: This is a theoretical issue. The Germans were crossing our waterways when we were in a state of war with them. We accepted this because we needed such traffic economically.

Boumediene: Let us return to the main issue. Does Mr Kosygin see that the Palestinian problem must be solved, because this is the crux of the issue?

Kosygin: No. If you agree to all the other issues, the Palestinian issue would be presented separately. In my latest meeting with Johnson, I asked him: How do you view the solution to the Palestinian problem? He said to me: All countries must take part in solving the issue. We agree to receive a number of refugees in America and Canada agrees to accept some. The United States is ready to shoulder all the expenses. My answer to Johnson was: Such a proposal is like taking some Americans to live in Siberia, for example. It is an impractical proposal. I also told him that the crux of the issue is that the Palestinians want to return to their homeland and that his proposal is for delusion and will not be accepted by any Arabs. Generally, this issue, i.e., the Palestinian issue, should be on the UN agenda. Naturally, if we begin discussing it today, we cannot complete discussing it tomorrow.

Boumediene: After yesterday's and today's discussion, a feeling of ambiguity has risen within me personally regarding the Soviet position toward the problem.

'Arif: The survival of the progressive regimes demands that we achieve some gains for them. Don't forget that there is a hostile propaganda

campaign whose slogan is that these regimes are what have led us to this situation and to losing the battle. If we ultimately accept some things [concessions], the people themselves will rebel against these regimes.

(At this point, a Soviet official entered and handed a message to Ponomarev, member of the Soviet delegation. Ponomarev read the message, wrote down a few words on it and then handed it to Kosygin.)

Kosygin: We have just received a cable from Gromyko in New York saying that all the draft resolutions submitted to the General Assembly were turned down an hour ago because the Arab delegations rejected them and that another draft resolution has been submitted as a result of the contacts he made with some delegations. If the Arab delegations approve this resolution, it can be passed even though Israel is rejecting it. (Publisher's note: All draft resolutions submitted to the UN General Assembly at the time stipulated in one way or another ending the state of war with Israel.)

Ending State of War in Return for Survival of Regimes

Brezhnev: I want to again ask a question that I have already asked, namely: If Israel deals a new blow to the United Arab Republic, Syria and Iraq, what will the result be? In such a case, we will find ourselves in new problems, the progressive Arab regimes will fall and the issue will be then submitted to the Security Council. Can you imagine this picture? We in the socialist camp cannot accept this picture because it means war against the West and means the use of nuclear weapons whose results nobody can foretell.

Boumediene: In my opinion, a major war will erupt and nuclear weapons will be used in it for issues bigger than the issue of freedom of navigation in the Suez Canal or other issues [like it]. A major war will break out for issues threatening human existence.

Brezhnev: You do not want to recognize an end to the state of war even on paper and Israel does not want to withdraw. There are also the other problems, such as the freedom of navigation and others. We are looking for a solution, while the enemy, on the other hand, is looking for a solution. Under our present circumstances, we may accept a paper with the words "ending the state of war" in return for the survival of the progressive regimes and for continued struggle. On our part, we will help you militarily and the socialist countries will not stop their assistance to you. You, as military men, understand well that it is impossible to rebuild armed forces in 2 days, especially after the recent lesson. We received cables from Prague and Bulgaria yesterday. They are sending weapons and munition to you. The value of the weapons and military equipment received by the United Arab Republic recently has amounted to 258 million dollars. No conditions have been presented with them. Moreover, we are ready to send 2,000 of our best experts. But it

is not in our interest to keep them there for a long time. There must be fundamental reliance on your schools and your training centers. Podgorny and Marshal Zakharov, the chief of staff, were with 'Abd-al-Nasir 3 weeks ago. He told them that he does not have an army in the real sense of the word and that he is currently reorganizing the army. It is our estimate that you will need at least 2 years of constant work to launch an attack, provided that the morale is high and that there is the willingness to die and to sacrifice.

Grechko: The United Arab Republic's army has nearly 220,000 troops, 900 tanks, 300 aircraft, more than 1,000 guns and other weapons. All these weapons are in the hands of troops who cannot use them well. Nearly 60 percent of the troops are new because a large number of the officers and the trained soldiers have either been killed, taken captive or have left the service. There is a shortage of 35 percent in pilots and a shortage of 30 percent in tank crews. Generally, the army can now defend only against small forces and not against a big offensive. The air defense for the major cities is inadequate. Thus, the Egyptian is not ready for offense now, and not even for defense.

Let me turn to Syria. Its casualties amounted to only 20 people killed [sic]. However, they [Syrian forces] left 12,000 pieces of various weapons behind them. The Syrians are now capable of defense only, but they are not ready to launch an offensive.

Frankly, the balance of forces between the United Arab Republic and Syria on the one hand and Israel on the other hand does not permit an offensive against Israel at present. However, it is possible to achieve this with time. To prove my words, I will mention to you some recent data on the military capability in the three countries:

The number of the military forces in the United Arab Republic and Syria amounts to 350,000 soldiers and officers and in Israel, 300,000.

The number of brigades in the United Arab Republic and Syria is 34 and in Israel, 31.

The number of tanks in the United Arab Republic and Syria amounts to 1,450 and in Israel, 1,250.

The number of guns in the United Arab Republic and Syria amounts to 2,200 and in Israel to 2,700.

The number of aircraft in the United Arab Republic and Syria is 340 and in Israel 300.

Brezhnev: After this review, we say that there must be time to transform the quantity into a quality capable of fighting. In such a case, we guarantee military, economic and political victory. If you agree to

this, you will thank us one day. Let us discuss the issue objectively. What is important is that the people know their path and that they proceed on the path of progress. You easterners are zealous. But there must be a basis also. What does it matter if the Israeli flag crosses the canal or does not cross it? What is the significance of formalities in comparison to a monumental work in the country, such as the High Dam, a mammoth industrial project or a big agricultural project?

Boumediene (sharply and sarcastically): So in this case, if we get tractors they will be more useful to us than tanks?

Brezhnev: Yes, you will also get tractors and everything, but with logical and realistic thinking. The Arab countries have made big progress and important social reforms have been carried out in them because the revolution prepared the opportunity for this. Is it right to drop all this from our calculation? It is a crime against the revolution. What does it matter under these circumstances if a resolution to end the state of war is issued, provided that withdrawal of the Israeli forces precedes it?

Another point, I heard new statements made by Boumediene yesterday. You criticize the Americans, and so do we. You said that you will not talk to Israel but will talk with the Americans. This is something new to us. Israel is not enslaving you but America can.

Boumediene: Your words are incomprehensible and ambiguous.

Kosygin: The words are clear. The interpreter is responsible for any ambiguity.

Boumediene: What I want to make clear is that Israel is not the problem because Israel is in the hands of the Americans who are now in the position of power. We believe that ending the state of war will lead to accepting the terms dictated by Israel. Any policy that leads to recognizing Israel is unacceptable. We know that America does not allow attacks against Israel. We are defeated and our lands are occupied and yet we cannot get an international resolution condemning Israel. We do not recognize the introduction of changes on the world map, especially the Middle East map, by force. Ending the state of war will inevitably lead to recognition of the Israeli presence. This is something that is very difficult for Cairo and for the others.

Brezhnev: Let Israel withdraw and then interpret the resolution as you want and not as Israel wants. When you become strong, do whatever you want.

Boumediene: So the issue can now be summed up in that it is your opinion that a vote must be taken on a resolution, any resolution, regardless of whether it calls for ending the state of war or not and that the General

Assembly must emerge with a resolution. If we make our calculations on this basis, we will move ahead one step and the enemy will move ten steps. You also say, for diplomatic reasons and so that time may be gained, that we must come up with something, regardless of what it is. Frankly, I do not agree with you that the resolution, i.e., terminating the state of war, is a mere simple paper. If the problem is projected in this form, then we must examine the entire issue, meaning the entire Palestinian issue, so that it may be solved completely and so that peace may be consequently achieved. In this case, withdrawal from the occupied land becomes a part of all this [solution]. This is the analysis of all our brothers. Is approval of the draft resolution a temporary diplomatic solution or is it the beginning of other solutions to the problem?

Kosygin: It is a new beginning for the struggle.

Solutions Not With Emotions Only

Brezhnev: In fact, the issue is big and there are immediate goals and long-range goals. The forms of struggle change according to circumstances. We now believe that the major issues are the immediate ones, namely safeguarding the progressive Arab regimes. How can this be done? It can be done through terminating the state of war, through withdrawal of the Israeli forces and through gaining time to strengthen your defenses. Afterwards, you will become a real danger to them.

Comrades, we are very frank with you. If no resolution is taken at the United Nations and Israel launches an attack against Cairo in 2 weeks, what will the outcome be? This is not an unlikely possibility. What we are telling you now does not represent our opinion alone, otherwise we could be wrong. We have consulted with seven socialist countries and they have all reached the same opinion. We know that you are more sensitive on some issues but problems are not solved with emotions alone. Marshal 'Abd-al-Hakim 'Amir used to ask us for weapons and equipment and say that he had the necessary schools and cadres. We did not interfere with him. But it has become evident to us that we were wrong because we had not made sure of how the weapons were to be used and of what training was to be given on them before sending them.

Boumediene: The discussion has gone on for too long and we have understood your opinion. To conclude the session, I would like to assert to you in the name of the brothers meeting in Cairo that we will exert efforts and will preserve the friendship between us. At the same time, I would like to draw your attention to the fact that the relations with you are passing through delicate and critical circumstances and duty requires that we take this into consideration. Second, we have explained to you the viewpoint of our brothers in Cairo and when we return, we will give them a clear picture on your position in Moscow. Third, we stress the need for focusing on serious military training, along with strengthening the defense capability in both the United Arab Republic and Syria.

Fourth, 'Abd-al-Nasir stresses the urgent need to strengthen him with the means of defense--he talked with Podgorny on this issue--especially in regard to air defense in any form and in the manner that you deem fit and possible.

'Arif: If we accept the proposal to end the state of war and then Israel insists on being recognized and on the freedom of navigation, what will your position be?

Brezhnev: What will your position be in this case?

'Arif: Complete rejection.

Brezhnev: Therefore, we will reject with you. As for military aid, air defense experts are currently present in the United Arab Republic. As soon as they return home, we will adopt our decision regarding the requested aid. There is an old story about our military experts before the aggression that I want to recount. We had there 400 military experts and we had instructed them not to interfere except in what is requested of them. Our officers submitted a request to the military command in the United Arab Republic to see Sinai and to acquaint themselves with the forces distribution plan but their request was turned down.

A final issue I would like to present before you return to Cairo: You said that you came to convey to us the opinion of the Arab presidents meeting in Cairo, have you adopted final decisions or will you take what we have discussed here into consideration? In other words, have you come to convey to us your decisions just for the sake of information and is there no value to the observations of the socialist camp? We would like you to answer this question and tell us.

Boumediene: We will convey all that has been said in yesterday's and today's meetings to the colleagues in Cairo.

From Moscow to Mahjub's Bomb

Brezhnev (rising from his seat): The time is short. Come, let us have lunch quickly so that we may come with you to see you off at the airport.

(The two delegations left the meetings hall at nearly 1400, i.e., after 4 hours of heated discussion. After having a light lunch with the Soviet leaders at the dining hall in the Kremlin Palace whose wall is covered by historical portraits depicting Joseph's story in Egypt, all the conferees proceeded to Moscow's military airport where the Arab delegation boarded the special plane for Cairo. After 5 continuous hours of flying, the plane landed in Cairo and the delegation proceeded directly to the meeting hall where the Arab presidents were present. At the outset of his discussion, President Boumediene expressed his deep pain for the position of the Soviet leaders, saying: "Had I read the socialist camp

communique before my departure for Moscow, I would not have gone. They are afraid of direct friction with the United States and cannot bear to hear the slogan of the armed struggle." Muhammad Ahmad Mahjub (Sudan) had just arrived from New York where he attended the General Assembly meeting. Mahjub played a prominent role after the defeat in an attempt to bring the views of 'Abd-al-Nasir and King Faysal closer. Mahjub surprised the Arab presidents by throwing a political bomb at the meeting, a bomb that almost ruined whatever nerves were left.)

[10-16 Jul 78 pp 31-35]

[Text] Part V: 'Abd-al-Nasir Rejects Political Solution; Political Action Is One Thing and Political Solution Means Capitulation; We Will Continue Struggle; King Faysal Wants To Put Soviets in Column of Enemies and This Is Mistake That We Will Discuss With Him; King Husayn Is Proceeding Along Patriotic Line and We Will Support Him Even at Expense of Our Sustenance; Mahjub: Soviets Demand Nuclear Base in Egypt as Price for Their Aid; 'Abd-al-Nasir Declares Three Reasons for His Doubts in Soviet Position

During the 2 days that President Houari Boumediene (Algeria) and President 'Abd-al-Rahman 'Arif (Iraq) spent in Moscow, President Jamal 'Abd-al-Nasir was evidently concerned. But his concern was not, in my opinion, the concern resulting from fear but rather the type of concern that psychologists call the concern of anticipation. He had many things on his mind. He also had a plan of some kind that he had not revealed even to the people closest to him. But those who knew him and lived close to him, and I am one of them, realized this without knowing for certain the plan or plans being hatched by 'Abd-al-Nasir's mind at the time.

This is why 'Abd-al-Nasir's features relaxed when he was informed of the arrival and landing of the special plane carrying the two Arab leaders. I heard him say to those around him: At least we will now know the true opinion of the friends in Moscow.

Boumediene and 'Arif did not go to the guest palace for rest but headed directly for the presidential palace in al-Qubbah. To be specific, they headed for the meetings chamber where the Arab presidents were awaiting them. Exhaustion was evident on the faces of Boumediene and 'Arif when they entered the hall. I saw 'Abd-al-Nasir focus a long look at Boumediene's face in an attempt to read his features. At the time, the problems and difficulties of the defeat had begun to take form and to crystallize. 'Abd-al-Nasir, whose picture had risen above the masses who had marched out in demonstrations in Cairo, Baghdad, Beirut and Damascus on 9 and 10 June 1967 urging him to back down on his resignation, was quietly reviewing, examining, bringing people to account and not permitting any mistakes even by those most loyal to him. 'Abd-al-Hakim 'Amir had lost everything at the time and was preparing to leap on power.

Perhaps this was harder on 'Abd-al-Nasir's heart than the daggers of defeat. In those days, 'Abd-al-Nasir had to look in front of him and behind him and to sleep with one eye open. He had to make sure of what was happening in Egypt before aspiring to draw up what may happen outside Egypt. This is why he attached major significance to the visit of Presidents Boumediene and 'Arif to Moscow. One day before the return of the two presidents to Cairo, I accompanied 'Abd-al-Nasir on a short walk in the garden of his residence. He was preoccupied. I said to him: What is the matter, Mr President? It is a tribulation that will pass. He mumbled a few words from which I understood the following: What if the Soviets have an opinion different from what we have decided? The U.S. position is clear and frank. They seek to topple the regime and to destroy 'Abd-al-Nasir personally. But the Soviet position is not known exactly. Are they ready to go with us to the end of the road or will international calculations and circumstances force them to stop at a certain limit?

The meeting started in the presence of 'Abd-al-Nasir, Houari Boumediene, 'Abd-al-Rahman 'Arif, 'Abd-al-Karim al-Jundi on behalf of Syrian President Nur-al-Din al-Atasi who had been compelled to return to Damascus and Sudanese Minister Muhammad Ahmad Mahjub on behalf of President Isma'il al-Azhari who had also left Cairo for Khartoum. With the hall submerged in deep silence, President Boumediene started to speak.

'Abd-al-Majid Farid

Boumediene: Immediately upon arrival in Moscow airport, we headed for the meetings hall at the Kremlin Palace and started the meeting with the Soviet delegation which included Brezhnev, Kosygin, Grechko and Ponomarev, the Central Committee official in charge of the Arab area, and a number of their civilian and military aides. Our delegation was also joined by the Iraqi and Algerian ambassadors in Moscow.

'Arif: The discussions were long and included two sessions which lasted nearly 9 hours. The discussions revolved mainly on two issues: The Arab-Soviet relations and the possibility of their being affected under these delicate circumstances. We assured them of our eagerness for the continuation, and even for developing and improving, these relations. The second issue was connected with the political plans submitted to the United Nations. The discussion on this issue took a long time, especially the discussion on ending the state of war.

Boumediene: Before we boarded the plane that took us to Moscow, the Soviet ambassador in Cairo handed us the communique issued by the Budapest conference of the Eastern bloc countries. What drew my attention in this communique is the statement that Algeria has a radical opinion and that this opinion may cause problems to all the progressive Arab countries. I will say frankly that if I had read the communique before reaching the airport, I would not have personally gone to Moscow.

My impression from our meeting in Moscow is that the Soviets wish to pass a UN resolution on the issue at any price so that this issue may remain in the hands of the international lobbies, otherwise the responsibility for the entire problem will be transformed and placed solely on their shoulders. This is why they insisted several times during the discussions on the need for issuing the resolution, stressing that the situation will be serious if the UN meetings end without reaching a resolution. I also noticed during the dialog with them the presence of contradictions in their political analysis, considering that their analysis is always based on the political considerations that affect them. For example, they insist on fighting and firmly confronting domestic reaction in every Arab country. At the same time we find that they urge the need for a complete Arab alliance, regardless of the various inclinations found in the Arab society at present. They also dwelled heavily on the importance of passing the UN resolution, regardless of the provisions it contains on the passage of Israeli ships through the Suez Canal and the Gulf of 'Aqaba. I personally believe that the reason for their adoption of this position is their eagerness not to have the Soviet Union's reputation suffer a diplomatic defeat, in addition to their original position toward Israel as a state.

Military Supplies

As for the armament issue, they said that they have sent us so far large consignments of weapons and that they will continue to uphold this commitment. My personal feeling is that they will actually continue this, even though it is likely that there will be some delay in the delivery of the required weapons and equipment.

In the side meetings we had with Brezhnev, in addition to the two official meetings, we presented the issue of arming Sudan and Brezhnev agreed. As for our request concerning the dispatch of some technicians and complete crews for some weapons and equipment, especially for air defense in the United Arab Republic, they told us that there are numerous technical difficulties facing this request, including, for example, the difficulty of language communication between their personnel and the Egyptian officers and troops, in addition to the long communication lines between Moscow and Cairo for the Soviet units that would participate in the plan. But at the end of the discussion on this issue, they said that a technical military committee is currently in the United Arab Republic to study all the details with the officials concerned and that a decision will be shortly made on the issue in light of this committee's study.

Nuclear War and Peaceful Solution

In their discussions with us, the Soviets brought up the possibility of the outbreak of a nuclear war as a result of Soviet military presence in the United Arab Republic. My answer to them was that it is unlikely

that a nuclear war will break out as a result of problems concerning Cairo or Damascus only because a nuclear war will only erupt for causes much greater than this. The Soviets also assured us that it is practically impossible for us to carry out any military action against Israel in the next 2 or 3 years. Grechko explained this to us with the help of detailed maps and data on the Israeli-Arab front. This is why they find it necessary to resort to the political solution which will provide enough time for reconstruction and for preparing military action.

In their talks with me, they said that the policy followed by Algeria is wrong and dangerous to all the progressive countries. At this point, sharp discussions erupted between me and Brezhnev and Kosygin and I felt through these discussions that the Soviets fear direct friction with the Americans in this area. Moreover, they don't want to hear the phrase "armed struggle" at this time. This is why the proper solution at present, from their point of view, is the political solution. They are also against the annihilation of the State of Israel.

At the same time, they assured us that the socialist camp is ready to offer all the required aid, be it political, economic or military. To coordinate the required aid, they will meet in Belgrade next month.

'Arif: I asked them about their opinion in case the enemy decided not to withdraw after we recognize the State of Israel and they answered that they would support us in this case in rejecting this possibility. They said repeatedly that adopting the political solution will give us the time necessary for military preparation and that we will then be in a position of power to adopt whatever we deem fit. In his conversation with us, Brezhnev pointed out that when Lenin signed the well-known Brest treaty, he ceded the Ukraine while saying: A successful commander is the one who knows when to advance and when to retreat.

Mahjub, the Sudanese minister of foreign affairs (Mahjub had returned from New York after attending most of the UN General Assembly meetings there): We heard the same argument and the same opinion from Gromyko, the Soviet minister of foreign affairs, in New York. I believe that the Soviets want the Arabs to recognize the State of Israel. I must convey to the presidents and brothers meeting here what is being reiterated by delegation members in New York currently, namely that the Soviets demand a nuclear base in the United Arab Republic and the Arab countries as a price for offering effective aid to the Arabs. If we as Arabs hope to become a successful political force in the United Nations, we must all agree on a unified political line toward this issue because the differences in the positions of the Arab UN delegations are numerous.

'Abd-al-Nasir: I notice that the session has gone on too long and that the reactions have not been completed yet. I also notice that the two presidents returning from Moscow are tired. Therefore, I end this meeting by thanking the two presidents and their delegations for the great

efforts they have made and for the true Arab dialog they conducted with the Soviets in this decisive phase of the Arab nation's history. I propose that the session be resumed tomorrow, Wednesday, at 1000. Before we leave the hall, I would like to reveal to you frankly some doubts worrying me now:

First, it is evident that there is actually pressure by the Soviets to pass a resolution, any resolution, at the United Nations.

Second, it is likely that an agreement has been reached by the Soviets and the Americans on dealing with this issue. The reason for this suspicion on my part is three things:

A. They [Soviets] have said in their discussions with brother Boumediene: Do not be worried about talking with the Americans.

B. They have not informed us of what discussions took place in the meeting held between Johnson and Kosygin during the latter's presence in the United States.

C. Marshal Zakharov's agreement to participate in the air defense of the United Arab Republic was withdrawn 2 days later under the pretext of the presence of technical difficulties.

In any case, we must rest for a few hours and then we will meet at 1000 tomorrow.

(At 1000 on the following morning, Wednesday 19 July 1967, the presidents and the members met at the meetings hall of al-Qubba Palace to complete their discussions on the Moscow trip and to reach agreement on their new steps. 'Abd-al-Nasir was careful not to dwell on details in the discussions for reasons that I do not know. However, I believe that the reasons were connected with his desire not to reveal all his cards, especially since the meeting was not a summit meeting in the true sense of the word, i.e., not all the presidents were present and there were people deputizing for them. Following is a summary of the opinions of the presidents and the members who attended the meeting.)

Boumediene: As long as we are thinking seriously of a political solution, then I believe that we should not tie this solution to the UN General Assembly's current resolutions. We must study the political solution in its entirety and with all its details. If we find that this will lead us to liquidating the progressive regimes, then we must choose another path.

'Arif: It is obvious that the Soviets do not believe in fighting and in the inevitability of armed struggle in this case. They want to gain time. They do not want to fail at the United Nations and, at the same time, they don't want to lose their friends. I believe that these are

contradictory positions from the practical standpoint. We as Arabs, have to decide our position in the light of this and in light of the fact that the enemy is now standing on the borders of two Arab capitals and that he is likely to move on. Despite this, none of the UN member states will stand with us. So we have to gain the time necessary for maneuvering and preparation. As for the issue of recognizing Israel, it is a general Arab issue that does not concern the people meeting here alone.

Mahjub: I believe that the situation has become clear to us. We can either move militarily, and this may be a suicidal solution now, or we can move within the framework of a well-studied political solution. This requires getting the Arab nation together to find a reasonable political solution.

'Arif: I propose that brother Minister Mahjub visit all the Arab countries to discuss the issue with them in preparation for accepting the suitable political solution.

Deadend: A Fish and a Hook

'Abd-al-Nasir: Before I express the United Arab Republic's opinion on the fundamental issue, I would like to explain my visualization concerning an important point. I believe that the reason for the Soviet position toward Algeria and toward President Boumediene is that they imagined that Algeria's position is compatible with China's. Today, China attacked the commander of the Soviet fleet present in Port Said because he took a negative stance toward a military battle which took place 20 kilometers from where he is without his making a move to take part with our forces in the operation.

As for the main issue, I believe that there is a difference between political action and the political solution. It is my opinion that the political solution according to the Russian or American way is not a political solution but capitulation. Rather, it is a final liquidation of the issue. We must realize that when we say "a political solution" that a price of sorts has to be paid. Thus, the path before us is blocked and when the road is blocked, armed struggle becomes the only path.

I believe that the proposed Arab summit is a political action and we will not emerge from it with a political solution. We are now like a fish on a hook. This fish will have to either cut off the line or pull the fisherman to the sea or else the fisherman will pull it out of the sea to die.

We view the Soviet decision in the United Nations as unacceptable because we cannot agree to end the state of war, otherwise the defeat will be two defeats. However, this position should not prevent continuation of the political action which will end with the end of the UN

General Assembly meetings. The convocation of an Arab summit conference will help continuation of the political action in the area. But if there must be a political solution, then the shape of the solution that I imagine is that of a solution on some limited marginal issues and one that does not touch the fateful issues.

Let us try in this phase to mobilize every rifle and every voice on our side. Let us currently put aside the issue of the progressive Arab countries and the reactionary Arab countries. Let us avoid verbal battles that we do not need, at least until the Jews get out. Then whoever wants to say or do something can go ahead.

At the same time, we must work for armed struggle. When the Soviets find that we insist on armed struggle, they will find themselves forced to proceed along with us despite their constant fear that armed struggle on our fronts may ignite the entire area.

Sweet and Bitter

Finally, I have learned from brother President Boumediene that the Soviets talked a lot in Moscow about our military defeat and criticized bitterly the condition of the Arab armies which withdrew and left behind them weapons and equipment on the battleground. We, as a leadership, should not be greatly affected by what is said about us. We have actually been defeated and we are now drinking the bitter cup. True leaderships drink not only the sweet cup but also the bitter cup, if they are compelled to. Peoples' leaderships are not victory leaderships only. They are victory leaderships and crises and setbacks leaderships. As they accept the cheering of masses in victory, they have to also accept the masses' stabs in defeat. This is the law of life. As I have said, we do not refuse to drink the sweet and the bitter also. We say now that we will not capitulate. We will not surrender and there will come a day when the bitter cup will become empty and when we will again drink together the sweet cup.

(With these words, 'Abd-al-Nasir ended the meeting. After 2 days, he started continuous meetings with the political leadership in the United Arab Republic. 'Abd-al-Nasir had taken his decision and had chosen for his march two directions along which he wanted to proceed simultaneously. The first was to rebuild the armed forces immediately, and with Soviet weapons. He had issued his instructions for drawing up a strenuous short-term training plan so that the armed forces may become capable of defending the republic's territories in the first phase and then capable of launching the liberation war. To gain time, 'Abd-al-Nasir used the Jarring mission as a political action cover, without reaching the political solution.

After the defeat, King Husayn was the first to ask 'Abd-al-Nasir to issue an urgent call for a comprehensive Arab summit conference. King Husayn sent a number of West Bank and Jerusalem notables to Cairo to

urge 'Abd-al-Nasir to call for a summit conference. 'Abd-al-Nasir had been rejecting this, in reliance on the Soviet position. But after the Soviet position became clear, he decided to agree to the call for holding an Arab summit conference and to confront his Arab opponents while defeated as he used to confront them while victorious.

Summit Logic

At one of the meetings which 'Abd-al-Nasir held with the United Arab Republic's political leadership to discuss the conference issue, he said: In regard to the use of the oil weapon, I say that the operation of withholding the supply of oil to the countries which have cooperated with the enemy will be largely perfunctory. I said this to Podgorny during a bilateral discussion I had with him before he left Cairo. As for our position in Yemen, the disagreement between us and Saudi Arabia has gone on for several years. The Yemeni revolution is now established and it is difficult for the monarchic regime to return to San'a'. We had eight military brigades in Yemen when the 1967 war erupted. We were in the direst need for the return of these forces to take part in the war. However, I refused to bring back all of them and I have only withdrawn two brigades and some artillery units. The reason for my refusal to bring back all the forces is my fear that their withdrawal from Yemen will lead to Britain's procrastination in withdrawal from Aden. Even if our forces withdraw from Yemen, we have prepared a special military force to go to Aden on 9 January 1968 (the date of the British forces withdrawal) to protect and bolster Aden's independence. As for Saudi Arabia, the Kingdom of Morocco and Tunisia, they are coordinating positions against us. But the Tunisian people in particular are an Arab people and they have moved politically, staged demonstrations in the major cities and set fire to the U.S. Embassy, thus forcing Bourguiba to declare his readiness to help us.

As for Syria and Algeria, they utterly refuse to cooperate with the Arab reactionary forces and they are against any conference in which these forces participate.

In Amman, King Husayn is proceeding along a patriotic line and he is insisting on the convocation of an Arab summit. On my part, I will stand by King Husayn to bolster his deteriorating economy, even if at the expense of our sustenance, because I will not forget his stance toward us in the war.

As for Riyadh, there is another opinion which King Faysal has projected during his meeting with the Arab ambassadors. It has been Faysal's opinion that the Arabs must put the Soviets in the column of the enemies, with the United States and Israel. This is a faulty opinion and it must be discussed with him. This is the gist of the Arab situation. In any case, preparations must be made as of this moment to confront those who love us and those who hate us at a comprehensive Arab summit conference.)

[17-23 Jul 78 pp 31-35]

[Text] Part VI: 'Abd-al-Nasir at Khartoum Conference: Sinai Liberation Is Postponed and Great Concern Is for West Bank; I Believe King Husayn Should Reach Understanding With Americans and Agree With Them Over Restoration of West Bank; We Have Not Committed Treason and All There Is to Matter Is That We Have Tried and Failed and We Pledge Before History That We Will Not Negotiate With Israel and Will Not Relinquish Palestinian People's Rights; Americans Want To Humiliate Us and Plan To Enable Israel To Control Arab Area; King Faysal: Soviet Union Has Shirked Its Promises and Must Be Considered Treacherous, Deceptive and Criminal Also

Sudanese President [sic] Muhammad Ahmad Mahjub was a poet who engaged in politics. He had a good relationship with Jamal 'Abd-al-Nasir, despite their political disagreement and despite Mahjub's position toward the issue of unity between Sudan and Egypt in particular and the issue of Arab unity generally. 'Abd-al-Nasir viewed Mahjub as a man who engaged in politics in the manner of a modern versifier and this is why he used to enjoy Mahjub's company and relax in his presence. Mahjub was aware of the position he held in 'Abd-al-Nasir's heart and this is why he played a prominent role in preparing for the Khartoum conference. To achieve this goal, Mahjub moved from one Arab capital to another and finally confined his travels between Cairo and Riyadh in particular. In this respect, Mahjub can be considered the first to discover shuttle contacts before they were adopted by Henry Kissinger. During his travels between Cairo and Riyadh, Mahjub became aware of the vast disagreement between 'Abd-al-Nasir and King Faysal. At the outset, King Faysal expressed reservations on attending the summit conference. 'Abd-al-Nasir countered these reservations by refusing convocation of the conference altogether. He believed that the time was not suitable for the convocation of such a conference. However, Mahjub, who considered the holding of an Arab summit conference in Khartoum the goal of his life, did not feel tired or bored and continued to negotiate and negotiate until he was ultimately able to narrow the gap between the two Arab leaders and until his efforts were crowned with success.

Though Mahjub worked openly for holding the conference, King Husayn worked secretly for the same goal. The king of Jordan exerted big pressure on 'Abd-al-Nasir at a time when 'Abd-al-Nasir had a weak spot for King Husayn because of the latter's stance in the 1967 war. King Husayn played on a sensitive chord insofar as 'Abd-al-Nasir was concerned. Husayn knew that 'Abd-al-Nasir was very concerned for the future of the West Bank and Jerusalem. He also knew that 'Abd-al-Nasir had said at an official meeting: Let Israel stay in the Sinai 10 years or more. Ultimately, we will expel it and push it back behind the borders. But the West Bank and Jerusalem are a different matter. There, there is an Arab population concentration that has fallen under the Zionist occupation. More than a million Arab citizens have found themselves under the yoke of Israeli occupation and must be saved as quickly as possible, by any means and under any circumstances.

The truth is that 'Abd-al-Nasir feared the holding of an Arab summit conference after the defeat. He despaired of the possibility of reaching a unified Arab position and he believed that the convocation of the conference under the impact of the defeat circumstances would transform the meetings hall into a stage for the exchange of accusations, for oneupmanship and for gloating.

'Abd-al-Nasir had a view of the Arab situation after the defeat which he explained to Soviet President Podgorny in their private meeting on 22 June 1967 as follows:

First, the embargo on Arab oil supplies to the countries that instigated and assisted the Israeli aggression is expected to be largely perfunctory, that is if the oil countries approve the principle of stopping the flow of oil supplies until elimination of the traces of the aggression. (Moscow was attaching great importance to the need for adopting a unified Arab position to stop the flow of oil to the Western countries, or at least to some of them.)

Second, "the reason for the disagreement between Saudi Arabia and Egypt is our position toward the Yemeni revolution. But the revolution has now been established and it is difficult for the old conditions to return to Yemen. We had in Yemen eight military brigades and we were in direst need for them. However, I refused to bring back all of them and only withdrew two brigades and some artillery units. The main reason for refusing to withdraw the forces is my fear that Britain will procrastinate in withdrawing its forces from Aden in case we fully withdraw from Yemen. By the way, we have prepared, despite the difficult conditions we are experiencing, a special military force to go to Aden directly at the right time so as to protect it and to bolster its independence."

Third, "Saudi Arabia and Tunisia are coordinating against us and refusing to cooperate with us, even on fundamental matters."

Fourth, "Syria and Algeria refuse to cooperate with the Arab reactionary forces altogether. Consequently, they refuse to attend any Arab summit conference."

Fifth, "King Husayn is following a patriotic policy. On my part, I will stand by him and help him, even if at the expense of our sustenance."

This was the political map of the Arab world that 'Abd-al-Nasir explained to Podgorny, his guest. What made 'Abd-al-Nasir more convinced of the fruitlessness of holding an Arab summit conference was the information that 'Abd-al-Nasir had received about a meeting which King Faysal had held with Arab and Moslem ambassadors in Jiddah. King Faysal said the following verbatim at that meeting: "If we consider the United States and Britain partners in the aggression against us, then we must also consider the Soviet Union a partner in this aggression, especially since

it deceived us and pledged to help us. But when the aggression was committed, the Soviet Union shirked its promises and showed its true character. Consequently, the Soviet Union must be considered treacherous, deceptive and also criminal."

At the conclusion of the meeting with the ambassadors, King Faysal also said verbatim: "In any case, we will support our Arab brothers. But we must express our opinion frankly before anything else. Besides, what is the use of shutting the oil wells and how can the Arabs build their economy and enable their armies to overcome their setback when some of them do not possess enough resources to buy the loaf of bread?"

These words and this clear Saudi position made 'Abd-al-Nasir convinced of the fruitlessness of holding a summit conference. But because of the pressures exerted on him, he agreed to the convocation of the conference but decided not to attend it personally. 'Abd-al-Nasir gathered his colleagues the Revolution Command Council members and told them: "I have decided to entrust brother Zakariya Muhyi-al-Din to attend the conference on my behalf. There are for my decision three reasons that I would like to explain to you frankly. The first is that I do not want to expose myself to a political defeat after the military defeat. The second is that I will be faced at the conference by the feeling of gloating on the part of those against whom I stood in the battles of terror throughout the Arab homeland. The third reason, and I will say this with utter frankness, is that I am afraid of facing the man in the street in Khartoum."

'Abd-al-Nasir added nothing to this but we understood what he meant. 'Abd-al-Nasir was ready to endure anything and everything: the military defeat, the betrayal of the confidants and the gloating of friends. But he was not ready to hear popular shouts against him. As of the beginning of his political life, 'Abd-al-Nasir considered the Arab man in the street his real army. What would he be left with if this army were to abandon him?

When Mahjub, and later King Husayn, learned that 'Abd-al-Nasir did not wish to attend the conference personally, they were horrified because this meant dooming the conference to failure even before its convocation. If 'Abd-al-Nasir would not attend, then who could guarantee that King Faysal, King Hassan II or the other kings and presidents would attend? 'Abd-al-Nasir's personal presence was the key and without it the door to Arab understanding would remain closed. 'Abd-al-Nasir realized this fact and realized that he had to face what he feared in the Sudanese street immediately and without delay because it was better for him to know the sentence of the man in the street. When Muhammad Ahmad Mahjub learned of 'Abd-al-Nasir's decision, he almost danced for joy and considered that the dream of his life had been realized.

Four days before the date of the convocation of the conference, I went to Khartoum at the head of a political and administrative mission to supervise the preparations for the conference. To tell the truth, I was afraid of the consequences of the experience that 'Abd-al-Nasir would face at that conference. I was aware of the worries on his mind and I feared for him from another shock that would destroy him. But my concern disappeared gradually after my arrival in the Sudanese capital. The first thing I was eager to do was to tour the streets of Khartoum to find out the feelings of the Sudanese people at that time. What I saw in Khartoum's streets did actually please me. The signs welcoming 'Abd-al-Nasir were covering walls, windows and doors, including the walls of the U.S. Embassy in Khartoum. I felt reassured by the outcome of the tour and I cabled my feelings to Cairo.

On the day of the arrival of 'Abd-al-Nasir's plane in the Sudanese capital, I was awaiting him at the airport with a number of officials. Suddenly, the Sudanese minister in charge of receiving the delegations (I cannot remember his name) approached me and told me: 'Abd-al-Nasir's plane is now hovering over the airport. He added: Can the landing of 'Abd-al-Nasir's plane be delayed so that King Faysal's plane may land first? I was surprised by the request and asked the Sudanese minister: When will King Faysal's plane arrive? He said with some embarrassment: "In 10 minutes." I said to him: Why? What is the reason for taking this strange measure? You say that President 'Abd-al-Nasir's plane is now flying over the airport and King Faysal's plane needs 10 minutes to arrive. I cannot understand this. The Sudanese minister answered: "I hope you appreciate the situation. If we permit 'Abd-al-Nasir's plane to land now, the masses would follow him and the streets would be completely empty. Thus, we will find nobody to receive King Faysal. Should this happen, the king may be upset and his annoyance may be reflected on the possibilities of the conference's success."

I was convinced by the Sudanese minister's logic and agreed to delaying the landing of President 'Abd-al-Nasir's plane, taking full responsibility for the decision. When I explained the matter to 'Abd-al-Nasir on our way to the guest palace, he smiled and said: "Now I know why my plane flew over Khartoum airport for 15 minutes before it was permitted to land."

The moment of 'Abd-al-Nasir's disembarking from his plane at Khartoum was an unprecedented historic moment that I had never before experienced. All the arrangements which the reception committee had spent days making collapsed and all the barriers set up by the security agencies fell. The masses stormed the airport apron and formed a human cordon around 'Abd-al-Nasir and shouts rose cheering for the long life of the hero and of Arabism and demanding revenge against the United States and Israel. 'Abd-al-Nasir's motorcade proceeded slowly in Khartoum's streets amidst a tumultuous sea of human beings. The entire triangular capital emerged to receive 'Abd-al-Nasir, not knowing that it brought him out of the

atmosphere of defeat in which he had been living and without realizing that it gave him the strength to turn to the path of steadfastness, deterrence and resistance.

However, the popular atmosphere that 'Abd-al-Nasir experienced in Khartoum was different from the atmosphere he encountered inside the conference hall.

'Abd-al-Majid Farid

The Khartoum summit conference, later known as the three no's conference, started its work on 29 August. The Arab delegations were represented by kings and presidents: 'Abd-al-Nasir (United Arab Republic), King Faysal (Saudi Arabia), King Husayn (Jordan), 'Abd-al-Rahman 'Arif (Iraq), Prince Sabah al-Salim al-Sabah (Kuwait), Charles Hilu (Lebanon), 'Abdallah al-Sallal (Yemen), Prince Hasan al-Rida (Libyan crown prince), Isma'il al-Azhari (Sudan), Ahmad al-Shuqayri (PLO), Abdelaziz Bouteflika (Algerian minister of foreign affairs on behalf of President Houari Boumediene), Ahmed Benhima (Moroccan prime minister on behalf of King Hassan II), al-Bahi al-Adgham (Tunisia, on behalf of President Bourguiba). Syria was absent from the conference while Ibrahim Makhus, the deputy prime minister, was staying in Khartoum. Makhus was active when the conference was not in session but when the conference was in session, he used to sit quietly at the Grand Hotel terrace.

The day of 31 August was a turning point in the conference history because it was decided in the morning session of that day to continue pumping oil to the world, provided that the oil countries advance financial aid to the frontline states for military preparation and for economic steadfastness. The conference agreed unanimously that the oil countries would advance 135 million pounds (55 million from Kuwait, 50 million from Saudi Arabia and 30 million from Libya). A total of 95 million pounds of this aid were allocated for Egypt and 40 million for Jordan. After this decision, the visualization became fully clear and it became evident to all that the defeat united the Arabs. In the conference's evening session, all eyes and ears turned to Jamal 'Abd-al-Nasir to know what he may say after the adoption of the economic aid resolution.

'Abd-al-Nasir: We must take into our calculations two main points when we deal with the issue of political action, namely military preparation and economic steadfastness. There is no doubt that the resolution adopted in the previous session on economic aid will help us a lot to stand fast. We must also take into our calculations the fact that there is an agreement between the United States and the Soviet Union to solve the issue politically. This is what has been reflected in the Soviet-U.S. draft resolution which relied on two main points: Termination of the state of war and withdrawal from the occupied territories, in addition to other subsidiary issues such as the issue of Jerusalem and sea

navigation. On our part, we have rejected the draft resolution at the United Nations and the other Arabs have to define their positions now. I hope that it is understood to all that when we speak about political action, then this means that we will not only take but will also give. Here, we must discuss what we will give. In other words, what can we give? The international situation is different now than what it was in 1956. That year, both the United States and the Soviet Union agreed to stand up in the face of the tripartite aggression. But in 1967, both the United States and the Soviet Union have agreed on Israel's right to existence and to life. The two have also agreed on ending the state of war.

Political action is hard and requires firm struggle. Our political situation in Egypt has changed a lot since we adopted in this conference the resolution of economic aid for the frontline states. They thought in Washington that we would capitulate in 6 months but this aid will enable us to stand fast. The stoppage of our revenues from the Suez Canal after the aggression will not affect us a lot now. This is why I am constantly saying that our situation in Egypt is greatly different from that of King Husayn of Jordan because we can stand fast in Egypt for 1 year, 2 years or more, especially since we reached a solution to the hard currency problem with the resolution we adopted in the morning session. As for the populated areas in the occupied territories, such as al-'Arish, Rafah and Gaza, there is there heroic popular resistance against the Israeli occupation. This resistance continues despite the mass executions carried out a few days ago against the resistance men and despite the indiscriminate demolition of homes in Gaza Strip.

Concern for West Bank

Despite everything, we in Egypt are able to resist, struggle and reject any suspect offer that does not meet our demands. We in Egypt can wait until we complete our military preparation. We can then carry out the only action that Israel understands well, namely the liberation of land by force. This is why I am not concerned about Egypt's situation. But what concerns me is the situation in the West Bank. Here we must ask ourselves: Insofar as the West Bank is concerned, will the element of time be in our interest or not? I personally believe that it will not be in our interest at all.

I follow up in detail all that is happening in Israel now. The three parties that represent the epitome of radicalism in Israel have merged in one bloc under the name of the Likud Bloc. This bloc insists on keeping the entire West Bank and on not relinquishing a single inch of it. This is why we must move quickly and exert utmost efforts to regain the West Bank and Jerusalem with the means available to us at present because the West Bank and Jerusalem will not be regained if there is any delay.

Here we must also ask ourselves another question: Can the occupied territories be currently regained through a military solution? I believe that the answer to this question is clear, namely that this path is not open to us at present. Therefore, we only have one path before us at present--the path of political action for the restoration of the West Bank and Jerusalem.

When King Husayn came to us in Cairo, I was aware of the real problem of the West Bank. I have been suffering for the West Bank and for its people. My feeling and my pain for it are manifold; my pain for the Sinai because the West Bank is crowded with its Arab population which has now fallen into the grip of Jewish occupation at a time when we can do nothing for this population. The Sinai is almost unpopulated. Moreover, Egypt will not relent for a moment in its efforts to liberate the Sinai even if it has to offer tens of thousands of martyrs. But the Jewish ambitions in the West Bank are old and well known. The Jews call the West Bank Judea and Samaria and consider it a part of the promised land. This is why I have told King Husayn that he has the right to resort to all measures, except negotiating with Israel, to regain the West Bank and Gaza. I have also told him that we have no objection to his efforts to continue improving his relations with Britain and the United States for the same goal because I consider every day that passes on the Israeli occupation of the West Bank another step on the path of linking it to Israel. We must all realize that there is a vital and urgent matter, namely the restoration of the West Bank and Jerusalem as quickly as possible. To achieve this urgent goal, I have told King Husayn to take any measure that he deems fit, except for concluding peace with Israel or negotiating with it. I said these words to King Husayn in Cairo in the presence of the Algerian delegation and I am repeating them today in front of all of you in this hall because any delay in regaining the West Bank and Jerusalem will help to change their landmarks and turn them into a part of Israel ultimately. For the same reason, I concurred with King Husayn on the convocation of this conference and I agreed to attend it personally. We in Egypt are subjected to greater American pressure than that to which King Husayn of Jordan is exposed. However, we can, as I have already said, struggle politically and reject the U.S.-Soviet draft resolution. But we see no harm in accepting the Yugoslav draft resolution, considering that we are currently incapable of embarking on any military action and that we have no option other than political action open to us.

We Have Not Betrayed, Just Tried and Failed

We, gentlemen, tried to move militarily but were defeated. We tried to close the Gulf of 'Aqaba to Israeli navigation but failed. We spent 10 years in military preparation for liberation of the usurped land but were not ultimately able to achieve the goal we had sought. All these are facts that we are not ashamed to note because we have committed no treason. All we have done is that we tried and failed. But despite the

defeat, we stand here before you and before history and pledge before you and before history that we will not negotiate with Israel and will not abandon the Palestinian people's rights.

President Tito has informed me that he was ready to go to Moscow to reach agreement with the Kremlin leaders so that the Yugoslav draft resolution may replace the U.S. draft resolution but the Americans will not approve the Yugoslav draft resolution because it calls for restoring our occupied lands to us. The Americans will not accept it because they want to humiliate us and because they are planning to enable Israel to dominate the Arab area. It is my opinion that Tito's proposals will lead to an acceptable political solution. But the U.S. proposals will lead to surrender and humiliation. This is why we cannot accept these proposals. If we cannot reach agreement on a specific draft resolution here, then I suggest that King Husayn go to reach understanding with the Americans and to agree with them over restoration of the West Bank. I am ready to announce these words publicly because the United States is the party that can order Israel to lift its hands from the West Bank.

The Security Council will meet in September. The Russians are contacting us daily to inquire about our opinion. A decision must be taken now so that our decision may be clear to our friends. I personally believe that Tito's plan is an acceptable plan and we must express our opinion on it.

Fruitless Attempt

I will ask King Husayn now: Can you liberate the West Bank with military means? If the answer is positive, then I will go ahead with you, regardless of the consequences. But if the answer is negative, then we have been trying fruitlessly for 10 years to liberate the occupied Palestine. This may be what God in His divine wisdom has willed. In this case, we have to resort to the political solution until we become capable of resorting to the military solution.

I stress before you now that the liberation of Sinai is postponed now until God brings to pass that which is inevitable. As for the West Bank, there are no means to get the Jews out of it except through political action.

(After 'Abd-al-Nasir delivered his address, all attention turned to King Faysal. After 'Abd-al-Nasir, King Faysal was the only man who held in his hands the key to the conference success or failure. King Faysal spoke for the first time and everybody listened attentively to hear every word and to comprehend every gesture. King Faysal said with his low and deep voice: "Gentlemen, I propose that President 'Abd-al-Nasir's speech be the conference's working paper and the basis of the resolutions to be issued by the conference in the future."

King Faysal thus ended his words. This short and decisive phrase was tantamount to a birth certificate for the Khartoum conference. So the conference succeeded and here were Faysal and 'Abd-al-Nasir standing in the same line. This was the first surprise in King Faysal's speech, but not the last. His speech abounded with surprises. The Saudi king announced that he had been in contact with the Americans all the time, before and after the war, and pointed out that he had met with the U.S. ambassador immediately before his departure for Khartoum. When 'Abd-al-Nasir asked him what discussion had taken place between him and the U.S. ambassador, King Faysal said: "By God he did not tell me anything.")

[24-30 Jul 78 pp 31-35]

[Text] Part VII: 'Abd-al-Nasir: I Propose That King Faysal be Entrusted With Contacting Americans; King Faysal: I Feel Confusion in De Gaulle's Thinking, Considering That He Believes Jews Have Right to Palestine; al-Shuqayri: Liberation Organization Will Not Deputize Anybody Insofar as West Bank Is Concerned; King Husayn: I Am Not Ready To Listen to Anybody's Advice and Issue Is Not One of Oneupmanship or of Recording Stances; Bouteflika: I Believe That We Are Thinking With Mentality of the Powerless; What Is Price of Regaining West Bank Peacefully?

The conference's temperature rose after the address that Jamal 'Abd-al-Nasir had delivered in the preceding session and after King Faysal's brief comment on the address. King Husayn's speech was the direct cause for the tension. Ahmad al-Shuqayri, the PLO chairman, interfered and threatened to ultimately withdraw from the conference. It also became evident that the Algerian and Palestinian delegations clung to a certain plan whereas the other delegations were seeking a pragmatic solution amidst the international political currents and the entangled interests.

'Abd-al-Nasir tried to extinguish the fire that broke out in the conference hall but was not able to do so. However, he again tried to alleviate the highly volatile situation. When he failed this time, he let the discussion take its course after having contained the fire within a narrow circle that would not affect the positive results reached by the conference up to that moment. However, this position by 'Abd-al-Nasir did not prevent him from stressing repeatedly that political action at that stage was permissible as long as military action was impossible and that political action had to be coupled with three principles: no negotiations with Israel, no recognition of Israel and no peace with it. As a result of the conference's ultimate approval of these three affirmations, it came to be later known as the three no's conference.

The conference hall did actually turn into an arena for a war of words. The Jordanian delegation, led by King Husayn, and the Palestinian delegation, led by Ahmad al-Shuqayri, exchanged words which everybody, especially 'Abd-al-Nasir, considered as uncalled for. For example,

al-Shuqayri said violently: "Nobody here, no king, no president and not even the PLO, is empowered to conclude an independent settlement with Israel for the West Bank." King Husayn retorted impatiently: "I have not come here to listen to anybody's advice." 'Abd-al-Nasir remained silent but when the argument reached its final stage, King Faysal ended the session when he discreetly glanced at his wrist watch and then looked at Sudanese President Isma'il al-Azhari who was the conference chairman. Al-Azhari understood the gesture and hastened to adjourn the session.

'Abd-al-Majid Farid

(The session started with an address by King Husayn who praised President 'Abd-al-Nasir and described him as the representative of patriotism and loyalty in the Arab homeland. The king then embarked on the issue directly.)

King Husayn: The West Bank situation is extremely bad and difficult. Even if we rebuild our military forces, we will not be able to liberate the land in the near future. At the same time, if we leave the West Bank in Jewish hands for a long time, it will be difficult for us to regain it. The issue is not one of the West Bank alone. The future of Jerusalem does not only concern the Palestinians and the Arabs but also concerns the Moslems and the Christians. Since the cease-fire, the United Nations has issued several resolutions on Jerusalem but Israel has not observed any of the UN resolutions and has thus defied the entire world.

We stress that our people, whether in the West Bank or elsewhere, are one people and that certain elements must be provided for the West Bank to be restored, the most important being the cooperation of all of us and the degree of our ability to endure and to stand fast. If it is your opinion to accept Tito's plan, then I am with you because this plan is undoubtedly much better than others. But at the same time, we must hold some contacts with Western and Eastern countries to make our position clear and we must take into consideration that our unanimous agreement on one opinion concerning this issue will be of major importance and will gain us a large measure of international respect and support.

Before I conclude my word, I again express my thanks and appreciation to brother President Jamal 'Abd-al-Nasir for his frankness and loyalty.

'Abd-al-Nasir: During my meeting with some Arab presidents in Cairo last July, we sent a delegation comprising Presidents Boumediene and 'Arif to the Soviet Union to explain our positions to the Soviet leadership and to find out the Soviet position toward the issue. As for the United States, we have no contacts and our relations with it are very bad. This is why I believe that the Arab states and leaderships that have good relations with the Americans can contact them. I propose that

His Majesty King Faysal embark on such contacts and act on our behalf to explain our viewpoint on the issue, especially since the issue is before the Security Council currently. We all know that the United Nations is ultimately the Soviet Union and the United States. I also propose that brother al-Bahi al-Adgham (Tunisia) take part with King Faysal in these contacts. On our part, we will continue our contacts with the Soviet Union and with France. However, we have no contacts with Britain at present.

King Faysal: I have listened to the words of the brothers with utter appreciation and attention. Allow me to express my opinion with utter frankness. The goal, the wound and the catastrophe are the same [to all of us] and the only difference between us is in the means and the methods to be followed. This is why this meeting should not disperse without a unified opinion. Moreover, it should issue resolutions and plans that are clear and understandable to all. As for what His Excellency President Jamal 'Abd-al-Nasir has said about the issue of contacts with the Americans, I would like to be completely and utterly frank and clear. Before and after the catastrophe, we have been in almost daily contact with the Americans. I recently received a message from U.S. President Johnson and I answered it immediately. I told Johnson in my message that I, as a friend, advise the United States to condemn the Israeli aggression and to play a role compatible with its international weight for Jewish withdrawal from the Arab territories. I also told him that such a measure would be the least that we expect from a friendly and peace-loving superpower.

I also told General De Gaulle in a 90-minute conversation between us, when I met with him 3 days before the war in the presence of Dr Rashad Fir'awn, and we both explained to him the Arab right, their just cause and the brutal Jewish aggression against the Arab territories [sentence as published]. Unfortunately, we felt confusion in De Gaulle's thinking concerning the Arab right to Palestine. He believes that the Jews have a right to Palestine, that they have returned to their homeland and that the Arabs have to acknowledge and coexist with the fait accompli.

We have also contacted the British and held a meeting with the British prime minister at 10 Downing Street. We explained to him the Arab viewpoint and heard from him the British Government's position toward the [Palestinian] question.

Generally, we have not stopped exerting pressure on the Americans, the British and the French. I believe that it is necessary for each of us to exert as much effort as he can. I also believe that none of us should adopt an independent decision or position toward the issue.

Return to the Bank

'Abd-al-Nasir: I will return to the West Bank issue and say that if we have no military solution to liberate it at present, then King Husayn should seek to settle the issue with his experience, provided that this does not lead to recognizing Israel or to peace with it. As for my proposal that King Faysal contact the Americans, I hope that approval will be given to his majesty to hold these contacts in the name of the conference.

Faysal: I am in constant contact with the Americans and the American ambassador was with me only a week ago.

'Abd-al-Nasir: What was their opinion?

King Faysal: By God, the American ambassador told me nothing other than the five points contained in Johnson's plan.

Ahmad al-Shuqayri: The West Bank issue is a serious one. The pains to which our people are subjected shake all of us and make us fearful for the fate of the Palestinian issue. The PLO defined its position toward the issue in the six principles that it has distributed to the conference and that were formulated after deep thinking and calm study. We truly and sincerely feel that the Palestinian issue can be settled on the basis of these six principles. We agree with you on the need for the enemy's withdrawal from the Gaza Strip and the West Bank and on exerting utmost political efforts to compel the enemy to withdraw. We also affirm that the organization is posing no conditions or reservations. But the question we must ask ourselves is: What is the price that we have to pay? We all know Israel. I, with utter modesty, have had long experience with Israel and I know its goals and ambitions as a result of actual practices. I hope that it is understood to you that our position in the organization is not the result of obstinacy or extremism. The issue that should preoccupy us is the issue of the price that we will have to pay to restore the West Bank. We believe that if this price is exorbitant, then our accepting it will be a grave mistake. America's policy is to liquidate the Palestinian issue finally. The five points contained in Johnson's plan are an exorbitant price for the restoration of the West Bank. Are we ready to pay this high price for the West Bank? I, as an Arab citizen and as a chairman, refuse to pay this price and hereby declare that I do not agree. The Yugoslav plan seeks a final settlement and lasting peace in the area. I do not want to say more. However, I wanted to explain our viewpoint to your esteemed council. We have distributed to you the six principles drawn up by the PLO. These principles sum up the Palestinian viewpoint concerning the future of the issue. We ultimately reject any solution that leads to the final liquidation of the Palestinian issue.

'Abd-al-Nasir: I disagree with al-Shuqayri on the phrase that he has mentioned concerning the final settlement of the issue. A final settlement means sitting with Israel around the negotiations table. This is what the United States actually wants. It would have been easier for me not to speak. However, in the past we had only one catastrophe whereas we now have two: the 1948 catastrophe and the 1967 catastrophe. This is why I have said that we are ready to pay a price for restoring the West Bank. All of us together cannot regain the West Bank militarily. So, should we leave it in Israel's hands? What can be done at present? What is the alternative?

I could have remained silent and I could have spoken about the Sinai only. But I will repeat what I have already said, namely that the West Bank is much more important to me than the Sinai, even if they [the Israelis] remain in the Sinai for 10 years. I have said that we must pay a price for the West Bank--and I naturally mean a reasonable price--as long as we cannot regain it militarily. We must not forget that one-half of Palestine was lost in 1948 and the other half in 1967. If our goal at present is to regain the West Bank through political action, then the price must be paid.

King Husayn has had relations with the Americans who were supplying him with weapons and I believe that they are eager to maintain their relations with him. This is why I have said my words very clearly and frankly. Naturally, there will be a price but the price is not the liquidation of the issue. The price may consist of strengthening King Husayn's relations with the Americans and of King Husayn moving closer to them. Even though the truth is always bitter, we have to accept it because we are facing a major catastrophe at present and we have to exert efforts to overcome it.

The issue is very simple and clear. There are two paths and no third: political struggle and military action. When we are incapable of military action, we have to struggle politically. Though we have opted for political action due to our circumstances, I disagree with al-Shuqayri in his description of President Tito's plan as a liquidation of the Palestinian issue. There is a difference between political action and liquidation of the issue. If we do not hasten to act positively in order to restore the West Bank, the land occupied by the Jews will gradually turn into Israeli land.

I say in conclusion that we have to struggle politically until the right time comes for restoring our rights by military action.

Algeria's Position

Mahjub (Sudan): I would like to deal here with three points, namely: First, it is possible to accept a political solution, provided that the Palestinian issue is not liquidated. Second, agreement to end the state

war means that Israeli ships will cross the Suez Canal. It also means our recognition of Israel. Third, the economic resolutions approved by the conference will enable us to stand fast and will give us the opportunity to speak from a position of power.

Bouteflika (Algerian minister of foreign affairs): Algeria's position toward the Palestinian issue is well known. As for the Yugoslav plan, I find that some of its provisions are suitable and others are not. May I ask: Why hasn't President Tito submitted this plan to the Security Council? Why hasn't the plan reached us through our permanent UN delegates? Why did President Tito present his plan during his tour in the Arab area?

This plan fulfills a wish in Jacob's heart. The East and the West have met together between its lines. Because Tito's plan is the plan of a friendly country that has always supported us, we should not remain silent toward it. Silence means acceptance. We must reply now and tell our friends clearly that we do not agree to any plan that undermines the essence of the Palestinian issue. Israel now wants peaceful coexistence and this cannot be done except by eliminating the state of tension prevailing in the area. The elimination of this state can only be realized through the Arab states' recognition of Israel.

Another aspect that I would like to point out is that certain states in the area have been subjected to a violent aggression and are facing enormous external and internal pressures. These countries are suffering more severely than other countries that are remote from the stage of events, such as Algeria. This is why it is being said that it is not proper for those who are thousands of kilometers away from the battle to offer advice to those who are in the battlefield and who endure the hardships and pressures of occupation, regardless of how useful and valuable the advice of the former may be. This is true. But as long as the issue is projected as a pan-Arab issue fundamentally, then we must have an opinion.

I believe that we are thinking with the mentality of the powerless. How I wish the plan we are studying tonight were an Arab plan and not a Yugoslav, an American or a Russian plan. What is surprising is that the Americans do not recognize the PRC whose population amounts to 700 million and exert pressure on us to recognize Israel before solving any problem in the Arab area.

I have heard tonight that Jordan and the other Arab countries cannot embark on any military action and that this is why they are seeking a political solution. It is well known that any political solution calls for give-and-take. Consequently, if the political solution for the West Bank comprises giving and taking, then the danger lies in the fact that we may follow the same method insofar as the Sinai and the Syrian heights are concerned.

We are now extremely perplexed because even though we agree on the goal, we are in disagreement regarding the means. Moreover, we have not yet found the way for restoring the occupied territories without abandoning the Palestinian issue. If we now approve the principle of give-and-take in political action, it is still not clear to us to what degree the taking and the giving will go.

Moroccan Proposal

Benhima (Morocco): I thank President 'Abd-al-Nasir and congratulate him for his frankness. I also congratulate the entire conference for its serious debate and discussions. It has become obvious to all of us that it is impossible to regain the Arab territories through war. Moreover, President 'Abd-al-Nasir has graciously put the West Bank ahead of the Sinai. At the same time, King Husayn has answered that no distinction should be made between the two soils. In fact, all the discussions that have taken place in this conference have been positive.

It is true that we are far from the battlefield and that our land is not occupied. However, we believe that the Jewish occupation of the West Bank threatens all the Arabs and undermines their dignity. This is something that we do not at all accept. In conclusion, I declare our full approval of all that President 'Abd-al-Nasir has said and of what King Husayn has stated. I also propose that King Faysal be given full powers by the conference to contact the Americans and to exert pressure on them to solve the issue politically within the framework of the basis approved by the conference until we become capable of liberating Palestine militarily.

Ahmad al-Shuqayri: The PLO approves the exertion of utmost efforts for solving the issue. But at the same time, it deputizes nobody.

King Husayn: There is no doubt that our position will be strong if we can agree unanimously on one opinion. We must not forget that the issue is, as I have already stated, the issue of all the Arabs and the issue of Arab existence. We cannot reach an acceptable solution to this issue through individual contacts by me or by others. The issue will always remain the issue of all of us. Within this framework, I am ready for any assignment and ready to shoulder any responsibility. But some people (publisher's note: meaning al-Shuqayri) must understand that the issue is not one of oneupmanship or of recording positions. We have heard al-Shuqayri speak about the six principles. Let us, gentlemen, review the resolutions of the first Arab conference. There was a specific assignment for al-Shuqayri.

Another question: I would like to know who has written these six principles and who has made the decision on them?

I have heard a lot of words tonight and I hope that it will not be understood from these words of mine that I am angry on account of my personal dignity. The issue is much bigger than this. It is the dignity of all our Arab sons and citizens. The issue is not the issue of some party's priority over another. The issue is that Jordan has now become the advance shield in the face of the danger and I am speaking on this basis and from this starting point.

Finally, I approve any opinion you deem fit or any duty you specify but I am not ready to listen to anybody's advice.

'Abd-al-Rahman 'Arif: The issue is not this kind of issue. It is a pan-Arab issue and an issue for Palestine, otherwise Algeria would not have come to the battlefield across thousands of kilometers and Egypt, Iraq and others would have not offered thousands of their sons as martyrs.

Al-Shuqayri: Palestine's issue is the issue of all of us. This is true. But nobody is empowered by us to accept a solution for the issue, not King Husayn and not the Liberation Organization. If you want the organization to be a mere listener, then there is no reason for our presence here and we are ready to withdraw from the conference immediately. But before I leave this hall, I want to stress to you decisively on behalf of the PLO that no king or president is empowered to solve the Palestinian issue. If such a person exists, then this is a serious transformation in a national issue that concerns not only the present generation but that is also the responsibility of future generations.

Tumultuous Discussions

(Publisher's note: At this point, a tumultuous discussion broke out and Ahmad Mahjub, 'Abd-al-Rahman 'Arif and Ahmad al-Shuqayri took part in it. 'Abd-al-Nasir remained silent and preoccupied himself by exchanging whispers with some members of his delegation. King Faysal turned a deaf ear to this noisy debate and started to twirl the hems of his flowing black robe.

Finally, 'Abd-al-Rahman 'Arif and Mahjub were able to calm down the debate and an atmosphere of quietness was restored to the hall. At that moment, King Faysal was looking at his wrist watch openly and then at Isma'il al-Azhari, the conference chairman. Al-Azhari understood the meaning of the gesture and threw a quick look at the big clock hung at the wall of the meetings hall. The arms of the clock showed 0200 of the morning of 1 September. Al-Azhari then adjourned the session.

The Khartoum conference then held one more brief session which voted on the resolutions. The Khartoum conference thus ended. To 'Abd-al-Nasir, this conference was the last link in his test of the ground under his feet after the defeat. 'Abd-al-Nasir emerged from the Khartoum conference with a complete plan for the future. He had secured weapons from

the Soviet Union and financial support from the Arabs. He had also placed at the head of the armed forces a new command whose goal was to rebuild the military structure, benefiting from the numerous and fatal mistakes of the past.

'Abd-al-Nasir had to play all the cards in his hand to gain time in the first place, to win over the world public opinion in the second place and to rearm and retrain the army in the third place. While calling for a political solution, he was also raising the slogan of: What has been taken by force cannot be regained except by force. While he was exerting pressure on the Soviet leadership to meet his weapon requests, he did not close the doors in the face of the American contacts which became active immediately after the defeat in their demand for reestablishing the relations with Cairo. Not only this, the Americans also made at the time an offer to Egypt to dig a new canal in the Egyptian territories to replace the Suez Canal and to be run by them.

In the midst of the sea of offers, the Romanians submitted the strangest request to 'Abd-al-Nasir. Romanian President Ceausescu made an offer to 'Abd-al-Nasir to arrange for him to meet with the Israeli leaders in Romania secretly.

What was 'Abd-al-Nasir's reply to the Romanian president's offer and what was his position toward the American offers?)

[31 Jul-7 Aug 78 pp 31-35]

[Text] Part VIII: 'Abd-al-Nasir Refuses To Resume Relations With the United States; America Wants To Impose Surrender on Us and Stipulates That We Meet With Jews Face to Face; America Wants To Impose on Us a Settlement Outside Framework of Security Council Resolution 242; We Disagreed With Soviets Over Soviet-American Agreement From Which Washington Withdrew Quickly and Soviet Union Admitted That America Deceived It; Only Path Before Us Is Steadfastness, Preparation for War and Beginning Fedayeen Operations Behind Enemy Lines

Today is not like yesterday.

All that is happening on the Arab arena now is in total conflict with what was happening on the Egyptian arena after the 1967 defeat. Even in the abyss of his defeat, President 'Abd-al-Nasir refused to give a single inch of the land or make any concessions.

After the 1967 defeat, the heated war between 'Abd-al-Nasir and the Americans came to a halt. But the cold war erupted and its flames reached the sky. After the defeat, Israel came to believe that 'Abd-al-Nasir would take the initiative to contact Tel Aviv in one way or another. An Israeli leader was even quoted as saying: "We are awaiting a call from Cairo."

America also came to believe that 'Abd-al-Nasir had learned the lesson of the defeat well and that this is why he would turn back, unrobing himself piece by piece, and that he would expel the Russians from Egypt, would turn away from the socialist line, would completely open the country's doors in the face of Western capital generally and American capital in particular, would shed his Arab skin and would isolate himself within his borders, devoting his efforts for development, tourism and to providing services.

When Washington realized that it was illusioned and that its calculations were inaccurate, perhaps as a result of the frigidity of the computers on which political calculations depend or perhaps as a result of the failure of these computers to understand the firm Arab mentality embodied by Jamal 'Abd-al-Nasir in one of the honorable phases of the Arab history-- when Washington realized this and became certain that 'Abd-al-Nasir would not contact Tel Aviv, or at least contact Washington, it sought to contact him. The first contact between Cairo and Washington took place when 'Abd-al-Nasir was celebrating the last phase of the completion of the High Dam in Aswan. 'Abd-al-Nasir was very happy at the time and he made his famous speech in this celebration in which he said: "I thank God that I have lived to see the High Dam turn into a tangible reality for the prosperity of the Egyptian people." At that particular time, the Americans contacted 'Abd-al-Nasir requesting resumption of the diplomatic relations. But to resume the relations, 'Abd-al-Nasir stipulated that "America formulate a clear position toward the Palestinian issue."

All events ascertain that Washington despaired of the possibility of a change in 'Abd-al-Nasir's policy and so it resumed the plotting to overthrow his regime. 'Abd-al-Nasir was aware of this fact and was ready for all eventualities. He warned of the American plotting in one of the cabinet sessions in 1969 when he said: "America will spend in 1969 a sum ranging from 15 to 20 million pounds on some opposition elements at home so as to overthrow the regime."

When an Israeli attack was launched against Beirut airport on Christmas Eve in 1969, 'Abd-al-Nasir summoned the Egyptian Council of Ministers to a special session in which he said: "This operation proves that Israel is the party that exerts pressure on America and not vice versa."

Perhaps the last attempt made to tame 'Abd-al-Nasir was the one carried out by Ceausescu, president of the Socialist Republic of Romania. Ceausescu offered at the time to arrange for a secret meeting between 'Abd-al-Nasir and any Israeli leaders he wanted in Romania or in any other place selected by 'Abd-al-Nasir. 'Abd-al-Nasir turned down the offer and told his Council of Ministers that America and Israel were exerting utmost efforts to liquidate the Palestinian issue and that they were trying with all means to transform the issue into an Egyptian-Israeli, Syrian-Israeli and Jordanian-Israeli issue.

Historians should consider the struggle between America and 'Abd-al-Nasir the saga of the age. He was behind every revolution against the Americans in the Third World: in Africa, in Asia and in Latin America. To the ill fortune of the Arabs and the Third World, America was able to inflict defeat on him. But in his resistance, he did not capitulate, did not kneel and did not ask for forgiveness.

'Abd-al-Nasir's story with the Americans is a bloody tragedy. What is more, it is a tragedy that deserves to be told to future generations. I will try hard to explain some of its aspects by recounting some of this tragedy's major events.

'Abd-al-Majid Farid

The year 1968 abounded with internal events in Egypt: The student strikes, the 30 March declaration, the so-called Marshal 'Amir case, trial of those responsible for defeat in the army and in the air force, the worker strikes in Hulwan, Zakariya Muhyi-al-Din's resignation from his post as prime minister and the political organization elections which took place from bottom to top. Internally, 'Abd-al-Nasir's sole concern was to rebuild the political structure from within. When he achieved this, he devoted his efforts to military rebuilding with one goal on his mind, namely to liberate the land according to the slogan that he had raised: What has been taken by force cannot be regained except by force.

American Interest

On 18 February 1968, the Council of Ministers held a meeting under the chairmanship of Jamal 'Abd-al-Nasir. The session was set aside to hear a report from Mahmud Riyad who was minister of foreign affairs at the time. Riyad reviewed the latest developments in the political situation, explaining in detail the mission of Dr Jarring, the UN secretary general who was entrusted with this famous mission at the time. The most important content of Mahmud Riyad's statement was its conclusion which said that Jarring's mission would end nowhere. Riyad also said: "It is evident that America is extending its protection to Israel and to Israel's invasions also. It so happened recently that when the issue of Arab ownership in Jerusalem was brought up and when Jordan tried to present this issue to the United Nations, America exerted direct pressure on Jordan not to bring up this issue. The Jordanian Government responded to the pressure and did not bring up the issue at the United Nations."

'Abd-al-Nasir: We have noticed recently an increasing American interest in the area generally and in Egypt in particular. The reason for this might be the rising status of the Soviets here in the Middle East. An American has recently told me that the U.S. administration spends 30 billion dollars with utter naivete in Vietnam to prevent the spread of

communist influence in Southeast Asia while letting the Soviets gain a prominent position for a cheap price in the Middle East. On our part, we can benefit from the American interest in us and in the area to gain more time for political movement. All this is for the sake of military preparation. Mahmud Riyad has told me that they (meaning the Americans) have expressed their willingness to abandon the conditions they had stipulated to resume the relations with us but I find that the time is not right for resuming the relations with America. The Americans want to return to the area at any price and they understand that they cannot return except through us. They have recently spent 10 million pounds fruitlessly in Sudan. This is why they suddenly contacted us while I was in Aswan, insisting that the relations between us be resumed. Their insistence reached the point where they had already prepared the communique to be issued in the wake of the declaration of the resumption of relations. However, I refused and my only condition to approve the resumption of relations was that the United States adopt a clear position toward the Palestinian issue.

Generally, I assure you and I repeat my assurance that Israel will not withdraw from our land as the result of U.S. pressure on it and not as a result of UN efforts. It will withdraw when we become capable of carrying out military action to expel it from the occupied land.

Soviet-American Agreement

At the Egyptian Council of Ministers session held on 7 April 1968, this issue came up in the discussions. 'Abd-al-Nasir reviewed the situation in the area generally and focused on the U.S. position in particular.

'Abd-al-Nasir: It is evident from the American position that they insist that we meet with the Jews. Regrettably, the same talk has reached us through the Soviets. It is obvious to us from this that America and Russia have agreed to submit a joint plan to schedule implementation of the Security Council resolution. The Russians exerted pressure on us originally to accept a political solution out of their belief that our armed forces will not be able to arm and organize themselves before 3 years. But all the Arab countries turned down the American-Soviet plan.

In the wake of this rejection, the relations between us and the Soviet Union became tense. Mahmud Riyad then went to Moscow and explained to them our position. America then refused to submit the joint plan to the United Nations. The Russians imagined that the American-Soviet draft resolution would be actually implemented and that the Jews would withdraw from the occupied land. When 'Ali Sabri went to Moscow, Brezhnev told him: It is important that you accept the peaceful solution plan at present so that you may prepare militarily. We will continue arming and supporting you. What is important is that the Soviets recontacted the Americans to reach an understanding with them on the joint resolution. The Americans withdrew their previous approval of two points:

First, no withdrawal to the 5 June lines.

Second, the Arabs and the Jews must meet in the presence of some mediator.

I have received a message from the Soviet Communist Party Central Committee saying that they [the Soviets] have lost hope and that the Americans have misled and deceived them.

The fact is that our fundamental goal from abiding by and marching along the political solution path is to gain time for military preparation and to persuade the Soviets to supply us with all the required weapons. I would like to repeat again that as long as the Jews cannot sign a peace treaty with us, Israel will not consider that it has won the war. The Zionist strategy is to force a settlement (publisher's note: 'Abd-al-Nasir used the English phrase "to force a settlement").

I told the British ambassador when I met with him recently, knowing that he was pushed by the Americans, that we in Egypt totally refuse to sit around a table of direct negotiations with Israel because such a table would be a capitulation table and not a negotiation table.

What is important is for us to be militarily prepared and this is why we need time. It is my opinion that the time is not important as long as we are going to meet with the people and explain to them all aspects of the problem and as long as our domestic front is stable. The Americans have again tried to resume political relations with us and I have told them anew that they have to declare a just political position toward the issue. But they have refused. The reason for their persistence is that they want, through resuming relations with Egypt, to get an entry permit with which to enter all the Arab countries. But we will not make this possible for them.

Cancellation of Brezhnev's Trip

Dr Safi-al-Din Abu-al-'Izz (minister of youth): Can we know the reason why Brezhnev will not visit Egypt, even though the visit has been announced?

'Abd-al-Nasir: From the Soviet viewpoint, they have said that if Brezhnev comes to Egypt and nothing is achieved at the military or political level, then they--meaning the Soviets--will lose internationally. This is why they have been content with sending the deputy chairman of the Council of Ministers at this stage. Generally, I find that we are the ones who need their aid and who make requests to them. This is why I propose that we go to them.

Dr Hafiz Ghanim: What is the possibility of the success of Jarring's mission?

'Abd-al-Nasir: It is my estimate that Jarring's mission will not lead to an honorable agreement insofar as we are concerned. I also estimate that he will continue for a year and a half, i.e., 18 months, and that he will reach nothing ultimately. In fact, we are in need of this time to prepare our armed forces. As for the reply to the issues presented by Jarring, I have told him:

Concerning the right of survival, we in Egypt need this right as Israel needs it.

Concerning the borders, there are no problems between us and Israel in the first place because the Egyptian borders are well known and have been fixed for hundreds of years.

Concerning passage in the Gulf of 'Aqaba, we reserve our right to submit this issue to an international court.

Concerning passage in the Suez Canal, we agree to such passage, provided that Israel implement the UN resolutions on the Palestinians.

Concerning demilitarized zones, we agree to such zones, provided that they are on both sides of the border.

Concerning the presence of UN emergency forces, we agree to this presence, provided that the forces are also on both sides here and there.

Jarring then went to Israel and they refused to implement the Security Council resolution. They also rejected another plan submitted by the British calling for Israel's withdrawal to a distance of only 20 kilometers from the Suez Canal.

Generally, it is my opinion that we must benefit from Jarring's mission to gain time for military preparation. We must also carry out fedayeen operations in the occupied territories at this stage. I have agreed with the military commander of Fatah Organization on aid and coordination. I have information indicating that the Jews are very disturbed by the fedayeen operations in the occupied territories--operations which cost them nearly 15 people killed weekly. This hurts the Jews a lot.

Outside the Framework of the UN Resolution

After all these political contacts, I have an observation to make on all that is happening now. I find that the Americans want to make us proceed along a path other than that of the Security Council resolution. The resolution does not call for a joint meeting or joint negotiations between us and the Jews. I believe that the Americans, by proceeding with the steps in the manner in which they have planned for, want to lead us to Israel's main demand. This leads us to the need to review

the American plans against us. These plans have passed through three stages:

First stage: The military defeat was to destroy the entire regime and to replace it by a pro-American regime. One of the reasons for my stepping down on 9 June (publisher's note: reference to the time when President 'Abd-al-Nasir announced his resignation on 9 June 1967) is that I cannot agree with the Americans. Of course, they later remembered the events of 9 and 10 June and our masses' determination (publisher's note: Sweeping popular demonstrations spread throughout Egypt and the Arab world urging 'Abd-al-Nasir to withdraw his resignation and to proceed on the path of steadfastness and liberation).

Second stage: It was their estimate that we would run out of money in December and would be unable to provide the wheat with which we make bread for the people. But the Khartoum conference resolutions were a shock to them and we acquired the economic aid which enabled us to get through this stage.

Third stage: This is the last stage in which the Americans turned to efforts to overthrow us internally through domestic instability. I estimate that the Americans will spend 15 to 20 million pounds next year on some domestic elements to achieve this goal. This is why I believe that we will have some internal troubles next year before we start military operations and this is why it is necessary to get a good grip on the country during this period.

Socialist Union Executive Committee

The Socialist Union Supreme Executive Committee was the top of the Arab socialist political organization [Arab Socialist Union]. Its members were elected in the wake of the 30 March declaration. The committee consisted of eight members, excluding President Jamal 'Abd-al-Nasir. The members were: Anwar al-Sadat, Husayn al-Shafi'i, 'Ali Sabri, Dr Mahmud Fawzi, Dr Kamal Ramzi Istinu, Dr Labib Shuqayr, 'Abd-al-Muhsin Abu-al-Nur and Diya'-al-Din Dawud. (Publisher's note: I was appointed secretary general for this committee and attended all its meetings until I entered the military jail in May 1971.)

At the Executive Committee meeting which was held on Monday, 28 October 1968, President Jamal 'Abd-al-Nasir spoke about events of the hour. He said:

I have received a message from the Soviet Union, delivered to me by the Soviet ambassador in Cairo, about new developments in the political negotiations between the Soviets and the Americans. Before I speak about the contents of the message and the proposed reply to this message, I would like to outline my plan for current dealings with the Americans and for talking with them.

It is my opinion that we should make let the Soviets enter into negotiations and conflicts with the Americans. Thus, instead of having the conflicts between Egypt and the Americans, they will be between the Americans and the Soviets. Naturally, when the Americans and the Soviets, as superpowers, get together around the negotiation table, they use a language different from that used between a major power and a small country, especially on the issue of a political settlement.

Now, concerning the message I have received from the Soviet Union, it is obvious that the Soviets are afraid that we will push our military forces into a new military operation at present and before they are capable at the human, training and morale levels. If these forces are defeated again, the Soviets will have a major problem on their hands in this area. I have reassured the Soviets on this issue and I have told them that we will not become embroiled in a major war before we are fully certain of our military ability to embark on it. This is why we always stress to them the necessity to arm us fully. Regrettably, we have not yet completed our mechanical military capability to move eastward after crossing the canal.

As for the topics and proposals contained in the Soviet message, I suggest that our reply contain the following:

First, concerning the holding of joint negotiations with Israel, it is impossible for us to embark on such a step.

Second, concerning passage in the Suez Canal, this issue must be tied to the issue of the Palestinians.

Third, concerning secure Israeli borders, I will repeat to them what I have already said, namely that we cannot relinquish a single inch of land.

Fourth, concerning the problem of Jerusalem, it can be discussed and debated but Jerusalem cannot be relinquished.

Fifth, concerning termination of the state of war, I will repeat to them that terminating the state of war is firmly tied to full Israeli withdrawal and that we will not end the state of war with the Israelis as long as they remain on a single inch of our land.

Sixth, concerning the referendum among the Palestinians living outside Palestine and the possibility of their not wishing to return, I believe the opposite. It is my estimate that they will reject the no-return proposal.

Generally, we will continue on our part encouraging the Soviets to go ahead with the political discussions and negotiations with the Americans,

provided that we stress our aforementioned opinion on taking advantage of this period to complete our military preparation.

Long Discussions

Dr Mahmud Fawzi brought up the issue of the long discussions taking place between the Soviet and U.S. ministers of foreign affairs at the United Nations and pointed out the danger of permitting a long debate with Abba Eban, the Israeli minister of foreign affairs. Dr Fawzi suggested that it would be better at the time not to specify a solution for the Palestinian problem, except for Jerusalem, so as to reach solutions for withdrawing the Israeli forces from the occupied Arab territories. He said that this should be done on the basis of the element of time and that we should always ask ourselves: Is the element of time in our interest or their [the Israelis] interest?

'Abd-al-Nasir: The main issue concerning the element of time is the degree of our domestic capability, the degree of our cohesion, the degree of our ability for economic development and whether we are able to move as a state insofar as the industrialization programs, the new cultivable lands, the investments and our full plan are concerned. Is it a real plan or just a plan on paper? Only on this basis can the element of time be calculated in our interest or our disfavor.

They count the time in a different manner. It is in their favor on the basis that they expect the domestic front to experience an explosion and to collapse.

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[Text] Part IX: America and Britain Want To Isolate Egypt From Arabs; 'Abd-al-Nasir to Socialist Union: I Will Tell You Frankly That I Have Been Hoping for Peaceful Solution Even Though Armed Forces Reject Such Solution To Preserve Their Dignity and Egypt's Dignity; There Are in Soviet Union Leaderships That Say There Is Nothing But Peaceful Solution and There Are Members of Soviet Communist Party Politburo, in Addition to Minister of War Grechko, Who Believe That There Is no Solution Other Than Military Solution; Anwar al-Sadat: Fundamental Issue Is Summed Up in Following: Are Egyptian People Ruled From Abroad or Not? Americans Insist on Ruling Our People From Abroad; Beirut Airport Operation Has Confirmed That Israel Exerts Pressure on America and Not Vice Versa; 'Abd-al-Nasir Admits He Lost Control in Egypt as of 1962

Jamal 'Abd-al-Nasir believed decisively that Egypt is a part of the Arab nation and that Egypt's Arab stance was not an innovation and not a whim, that Egypt's true interests were Arab interests and that the Arab interests were Egyptian interests. He always said and reiterated to those around him that Egypt's Arabism is Egypt's destiny and that it is

impossible to escape destiny. On the basis of this principle, Egypt must always play its role within the framework of this reality.

He also used to say and reiterate that the sole goal of the imperialist forces is to oust Egypt from the Arab arena and to put it far from the problems of the Arabs and of Arabism so that Egypt may retreat to within itself to deal with its own problems, regardless of the conflict between this approach and the Arab interests. He also used to say that the imperialist forces want Egypt to devote itself to tourism, hotels and public services and to forget the Arab people's problems and wounds. He always used to say that if Egypt does this, it will doom itself to everlasting isolation, thus gaining neither this world nor the hereafter.

According to this understanding and on the basis of this starting point, 'Abd-al-Nasir was eager, even in his defeat, to act without being affected by the stabs of the friends before those of the enemies. This appears clearly in discussions of the situation by the Socialist Union Supreme Executive Committee meetings and the Council of Ministers meetings. I will try to present some of these discussions.

'Abd-al-Majid Farid

On Tuesday, 12 November 1968, the Arab Socialist Union Executive Committee held a meeting in which it discussed the issue in continuation of the long discussions conducted in previous sessions.

'Abd-al-Nasir: It seems to me that the activity of Jarring, the UN mediator, is useless. I had previously estimated that his activity in the area would last for 18 months, considering that Israel's policy has proceeded and continues to proceed as planned, namely to force a settlement in their favor (publisher's note: 'Abd-al-Nasir again used this phrase in English). On our part, we have offered the maximum concessions possible on pressure from Jordan and for the sake of the West Bank. We cannot make any further concessions. (At this point, Dr Mahmud Fawzi interloped to talk about the expected length of the time to solve the issue, about the possibility that Israel may be able to use nuclear heads in 1970 and about the expected hopes from the new U.S. administration under President Nixon, considering that Nixon was required to settle the Vietnam and Middle East issues. Dr Fawzi then asked whether it was possible to think seriously of the resumption of Egyptian-U.S. relations, especially that matters would improve here and there. Dr Fawzi talked about this possibility of improvement, citing a highly placed official of the Pan-American Petroleum [Company]--an official who expected the production of large quantities of oil from the Egyptian western desert. Dr Fawzi noted that this would be reflected in a gradual growth of the Egyptian economy, in addition to the fact that financial indicators pointed out this expected improvement, even if only in simple phenomena, such as the considerable rise in the value of the Egyptian pound in the Beirut free market.)

Political Price

'Abd-al-Nasir: We should never forget that Israel's goal has been and will continue to be to force us to consider the issue an Egyptian-Israeli issue and not an Arab-Israeli issue. This view is unacceptable to us. As for restoring the relations with America, there must be a basis for the restoration of these relations. How can we restore them when America has not approved the principle of withdrawal to the 5 June lines? The discussions on this issue must be examined with the other Arab countries, including Mauritania.

Dr Fawzi, there must be a political price for restoring our relations with America. Since February, they have been demanding and insisting on restoring the relations. But at the same time, they have not responded to our terms. Therefore, it is my opinion that we should proceed deliberately and should see what Nixon will do after forming his administration next January. Naturally, we are continuing the political dialog with them through Ashraf Ghurbal (publisher's note: Ashraf Ghurbal was head of the Egyptian Affairs Bureau in America).

What is important is to ask ourselves two questions. First question: Can we make more concessions than we have already made? Second question: Can we accept the statements made by Israel?

I told the Russians when they talked to us about the political solution that there are two issues that cannot be relinquished. First, we will not abandon or cede a single inch of our territories. The second issue is restoration of the Palestinian rights.

'Abd-al-Muhsin Abu-al-Nur (Socialist Union Supreme Executive Committee member): I believe that the Jews will not capitulate except by war or when they feel that we are militarily strong. Therefore, popular and military mobilization must continue because they are the only path.

Dr Labib Shuqayr (Socialist Union Executive Committee member): Any further concessions mean creating a domestic tremor for the regime. The Jews are fully aware of this. The issue is not in Israel's hands alone. It is also in America's hands. It is in America's interest that the issue take a long time and that our regime fail through offering successive concessions. Therefore, a peaceful solution is impossible and there is no way other than military confrontation.

'Abd-al-Nasir: Military confrontation is not easy. I will tell you frankly that I have been hoping for a peaceful solution, even though our armed forces reject such a solution to preserve their dignity and Egypt's dignity. I told them (publisher's note: meaning the armed forces) that war is not for the sake of war but that it is a means to achieve the strategic political goal.

Another point is that the Jews do really want to expand but they know my opinion on this issue very well and they know that I will never approve this [their expansion]. I have received a message from a member of the Tuqan family in the West Bank. Moshe Dayan has said in private statements that they know the price of every Arab leader in the area and in the countries adjacent to them [Israelis], except for 'Abd-al-Nasir whose price they have not found out yet.

Still another point is that the military in Israel have been heavily touched by arrogance, in addition to Nixon's statement in which he has said that the United States of America will always be eager to keep Israel superior to its Arab neighbors.

We should not forget that Britain and America want and exert efforts to confine us within our borders in Egypt and that they seek to turn the Suez Canal into an international naval corridor. America and Britain have been trying since 1955--after the evacuation agreement--to achieve this goal with all means. They have also been trying to keep us within the Egyptian borders.

Maneuvers Are Needed

Husayn al-Shafi'i: Insofar as the element of time is concerned, I believe that this element should be used in our favor as a means of maneuvering and not for giving further concessions. But we must innovate a political maneuver to screen the present waiting period which is being used for full military preparation.

'Abd-al-Nasir: The issue of maneuvers is not subject to discussion. Maneuvers are of course needed and the Russians have spoken about them repeatedly. But what is important is that no contracts have been concluded for the weapon and equipment requests on which I agreed with the Soviet Union last July. It seems to me that the issue of Czechoslovakia (publisher's note: reference to entry of the Warsaw Pact forces to Czechoslovakia to overthrow Dubcek's regime) has somewhat affected their relations with us. I still believe this even though Brezhnev and Grechko have told Murad Ghalib, our ambassador in Moscow, that the Soviet Communist Party Politburo approved all our requests. I have also been informed that the Russians have told Murad Ghalib, our ambassador, that the Russians have now become confident that Egypt will thoroughly use the Soviet weapons sent to it.

Our military situation at present is good and I can say that we can cross the canal. But we cannot move eastward after the crossing. We should not forget that the Jews are trained well on offensive combat and that training our forces on this kind of combat needs a long time that may last 1 or 2 years. There are Soviet leaderships that say there is no solution other than the peaceful solution whereas there are members in

the Soviet Communist Party Politburo, as well as Marshal Grechko, who believe that the only solution to the problem is the military solution.

There is another topic connected with Soviet loans. The installment on all the weapon deals until 1971 amounts to 106 million rubles, in addition to the High Dam installment which amounts to 60 million rubles.

I will return to the military confrontation issue to say that it is a difficult issue which requires long preparation. In this confrontation, we should also not forget to protect our vital targets which amount to nearly 1,000 targets at present.

Al-Sadat and America

Anwar al-Sadat (Supreme Executive Committee member): Insofar as making further concessions is concerned, I believe that it has become clear that there is no place for any talk about making such concessions. The way I see it, the American problem with us started in 1965, specifically during Johnson's term when Johnson started to harass us and to withhold aid from us. Generally, the operation against us was politically planned and decided upon in America and was enthusiastically carried out under Johnson and is being carried out less enthusiastically under Nixon. This is why we cannot study restoration of the relations with America under this general atmosphere. This does not mean that we should embark on insults with Nixon. But what is important is for us not to be deceived by their words. They must display actions, and not just words, on their part.

The fundamental issue is summed up in the following:

Are the Egyptian people ruled from abroad nor not? The Americans are again insisting on ruling our people from abroad, as they did in previous years. No, this battle is a fateful battle and we must stand fast to the end.

Concessions mean the end and disappearance of this regime. They also mean that the people will be again ruled from abroad.

Let us examine what has happened to us in the 15 months since last June [June 1967]. I personally was in a dazed state for 21 days. But then I found that we gradually proceeded to the stage of steadfastness and then moved to the fedayeen battle in the occupied territories (publisher's note: meaning the occupied Sinai territory), the gun battle, the air battle and the naval battle. This battle is our destiny. It is obvious to anybody with two eyes that after the last one and a half years, we are proceeding toward victory, God willing, that we must endure and that we must get together with our people and explain to them our situation and how to stand fast.

Husayn al-Shafi'i: There are some people who are concerned for the regime, for the revolution and for their armed forces and who believe that we should not move until we are fully prepared.

'Abd-al-Nasir: Naturally, this is clear and understood. But there is another factor that we should not forget, namely that it would be a big mistake on our part if the Jews remain where they are without any disturbance. It is my opinion that 1 month from now we should work seriously in the occupied territories and also inside Israel. We should let patrols go there, stay 2 or 3 days and then return. We will thus embark on continuous attrition operations against them.

Dr Labib Shuqayr: If the situation cools down, it will be in the interest of the Jews and if it heats up, it will be in our interest. If the issue remains heated, the Arab peoples will remain hot and, consequently, it will be difficult for any Arab government to withhold the determined financial aid at this time. There is another factor, namely that we are superior to the Jews in numbers and we have not put this factor into good military use in our previous confrontations with them.

'Abd-al-Nasir: I have already given my answer insofar as the human element is concerned, namely that this element requires a firm base (publisher's note: 'Abd-al-Nasir used the phrase "firm base" in English) from which to operate. This is what we have begun to prepare gradually. The second thing is that for us to translate the human element into work and production, we need money. There is also a final point concerning the human element. Our Egyptian terrain generally does not provide infantry fighters with the needed protection. Our terrain is not like the Vietnamese or the Algerian terrain. In Sinai, for example, the combatant has to carry with him weapons, ammunition, water and all the food and water he needs because Sinai generally is an unpopulated and barren desert where infiltrators can be detected easily, unless they are in small numbers.

Beirut Operation

(Another example of 'Abd-al-Nasir's stances and statements became evident in the Council of Ministers session held on Sunday, 29 December 1968. On that date, the Egyptian Council of Ministers held a session to discuss the raid carried out by Israel against Beirut Airport on the previous day, 28 December.)

'Abd-al-Nasir: This Israeli operation gives us numerous and big indications. Lebanon considered itself under the American protection, and it may be really so. However, this American protection has not prevented Israel from carrying out a military operation against Beirut Airport--an operation which has inflicted on Lebanon enormous losses amounting to nearly 40 million pounds. What has happened in Beirut may be carried

out through a surprise operation against Egypt, in Hulwan area for example. Therefore, we must prepare ourselves and our protection must cover all the vital targets in our country. It is obvious from the Beirut operation that Israel is the party that exerts pressure on America and not that America is the one exerting pressure on Israel.

Mahmud Riyad (minister of foreign affairs): There is no doubt that the raid against Beirut Airport confirms that the peaceful solution is not expected, even impossible. A peaceful solution means that Israel is to evacuate the land whereas Israel is trying to expand at the expense of Arab land. It is also evident that America always seeks to enable Israel to maintain its current military superiority over the Arabs and this is why it has armed Israel with more Phantom aircraft. As for ending the state of war with Israel, I have conducted a full study on the consequences of ending the state of war and on the many benefits that Israel will reap from ending this state of war--benefits that include ending the Arab boycott. This means that Israel will gradually turn into the Switzerland of the East. Israel possesses the experience and the technology and can attract foreign capital. Moreover, America has an interest behind its support for Israel. You know this interest well and there is no place for discussing it now. All this means that there will be no political solution.

'Abd-al-Nasir: The information we have confirms that Israel has become desperate over reaching an understanding with us (publisher's note: 'Abd-al-Nasir used the word "desperate" in English), that the fedayeen activity is causing them [the Israelis] a lot of trouble and that their failure to reach an understanding with the Palestinians is also causing them a lot of concern. Ben Gurion's strategy is, as I have already mentioned, to force a settlement (publisher's note: 'Abd-al-Nasir used the phrase "to force a settlement" in English). This is what Israel has not been able to achieve and this is why it is worried and desperate.

As for Gromyko's recent visit, he briefed us on the latest Soviet contacts with the Americans. He also proposed that the Soviets embark on new activity within the framework of the peaceful solution and of the Security Council resolution, in addition to a timetable for implementing the resolution and to Israel's withdrawal from the territories it occupies. In my opinion, the plan contains nothing new. It is also the opinion of the Soviets that Mahmud Riyad present this new plan to Jarring, the UN representative. However, I asked Gromyko that the Soviets present the plan to the Americans because I am certain that Israel will refuse to withdraw. I am certain that there is no leader in Israel capable of adopting this plan, especially since their elections will take place next year, i.e., 1969. Added to this is the fact that I am certain that the Americans will reject such a plan. Should this happen, the Soviets will be angered and enraged and will then provide us with the required weapons, will respond to us and will exert efforts to meet all our requests.

Another topic that I would like to present to you is that Ceausescu, president of the Republic of Romania, had previously contacted us concerning Israel. He contacted us again in recent days suggesting that an unofficial meeting be held between us and Israel, even if secretly, in Romania. Naturally, this offer is rejected because we are committed at the Arab level not to hold any independent contacts with the enemy, in addition to the fact that it is likely that the Jews will exploit such a contact even if it takes place secretly in Romania.

Fragmenting Problem

America and the Jews have been trying again and again, and even insisting, on transforming the problem into an Egyptian-Israeli, Syrian-Israeli and Jordanian-Israeli problem so that it may not continue to be an Israeli-Arab problem. The American attempts against us continue and they are taking various forms. A major American firm recently offered to carry out a big project in Egypt calling for opening a new navigation canal extending from Port Tawfiq to the town of Rummanah on the Mediterranean Sea. This firm has an Egyptian [sic] who had been previously arrested and whose name is M. 'Ayn (editor's note: Publisher has only provided the initials of the name mentioned by 'Abd-al-Nasir). The project was sent to me through 'Abd-al-Latif al-Baghdadi (publisher's note: Revolution Command Council member). But I have naturally turned down the project because they want to establish a state within the state through this project.

Dr Tharwat 'Akashah (minister of culture): Can we know the reason for the delay in delivering the requested Soviet weapons and what is the Soviet position toward supplying us with weapons and military equipment?

'Abd-al-Nasir: The reason for the delay in delivering the equipment and weapons requested from the Soviet Union is the Soviet preoccupation with the Czech problem, considering that they have been compelled to form new Soviet units so that their fundamental defense may not be upset and so that their military commitments toward Eastern Europe may not be shaken. This, naturally, is in addition to the financial burdens resulting from our numerous and successive requests. The army officers who visited Moscow recently have returned here to say that the Soviets promised them to send all the requested weapons and equipment. I believe that there is an internal disagreement in the Soviet leadership on the Middle East. Moreover, the Americans have played games with them and have deceived them. This is why we find that the Soviet leaders are at times firm and at others soft with the Americans. We also find them to be at times optimistic and at others pessimistic.

As for Gromyko's latest visit to us, I believe that the main reason for his coming here has been the result of the fact that our army officers have been engaging in daily discussions and debates with the Soviet

experts, making known their resentment for the non-delivery of the weapons and the equipment the Soviets had promised me. I also believe that Gromyko came to reassure himself about the domestic political situation in the wake of the student demonstrations that were staged recently in al-Mansurah and Alexandria.

(Another example): At the meeting held by the Arab Socialist Union Supreme Executive Committee in its headquarters on the 11th floor of the union premises in Corniche al-Nil on Monday, 30 December, Jamal 'Abd-al-Nasir explained to the committee members the Soviet plan presented by Gromyko. The plan is summed up fundamentally in terminating the state of war, provided that the termination becomes effective when the Jews withdraw completely from all the territories they occupied.

Secure Borders Trick

The first phase of the plan calls for Israel's withdrawal to a distance of 40 kilometers east of the Suez Canal. A month later, Israel is to withdraw its forces to the 5 June line. Agreement is then to be reached on the two issues of the Palestinians and of passage in the Suez Canal and in the Gulf of 'Aqaba, with the assertion that the Gulf of 'Aqaba is an international waterway open to all.

'Abd-al-Nasir: Naturally, my opinion, which I have already stated, is that we should not submit the plan ourselves because this may be considered a starting point for further concessions. I have suggested to the Russians that they submit the plan. I believe that what is more important than these plans is our domestic rebuilding and military preparation. The chief Soviet expert has told me that the new planes will be delivered to us at the beginning of next year. The Jews are currently in a state of anxiety and wrath and they want to do anything. Their military operation against Beirut Airport indicates a degree of rashness. On our part, we will begin the fedayeen operations in the Sinai as soon as we complete providing protection to our vital targets. We will then start striking immediately. Of course we will be hit at the same time. The Jews say they want secure borders. When we ask them what these borders are, they say: We want to negotiate with you directly. Unfortunately, Israel has been evoking terror in the Arab world after the Beirut operation. In the face of this, we must be patient and must endure. War is war. We must strike and be ready to endure counter blows.

(Despite the ferocious war between 'Abd-al-Nasir and America and despite the enormous pressures to which the Egyptian regime was subjected at home and abroad, 'Abd-al-Nasir did not let up for a single moment in strengthening both the Arab front and the domestic front. In his meetings with the Council of Ministers and the Arab Socialist Union Supreme Executive Committee, whose details will be published later, 'Abd-al-Nasir revealed

serious Arab and Egyptian secrets. He admitted, for example, that he had been powerless in Egypt since 1962 and that the army command was against establishing a strong political organization on the grounds that the army should be the only support for the revolution. 'Abd-al-Nasir also said that he received an offer through a West Bank notable to the effect that the Jews were ready to offer 'Abd-al-Nasir big concessions, provided that he sit with them around the same table. The Egyptian Council of Ministers meetings also revealed an Arab secret, namely an offer made by King Faysal concerning the Oman coast emirates.)

[14-20 Aug 78 pp 31-35]

[Text] Part X: 'Abd-al-Nasir Reveals Secret of Coup Against Him in 1962; Bloodless Coup, Led by Marshal 'Amir, Was Staged Against Me in 1962 and I Refused To Face Plotters Because Outcome Was not Guaranteed; People Imagine I Was Capable of Anything But Truth Was not so; Army Was in One Place and Country Was in Another. If We Want To Guarantee Future, There Must Be Only One Authority; We Will not Sit With Israel and Sign [Peace Treaty] With It as Long as I Live; We Are Determined not To Capitulate Until Others Replace Us, Rule and Capitulate; Americans Asked King Husayn To Liquidate Fedayeen Action

On the evening of Sunday, 18 February, President Jamal 'Abd-al-Nasir summoned the Council of Ministers to hold an urgent meeting to review the Arab position. At the time, the Arab position was shaky and was engulfed by disagreements on all sides. 'Abd-al-Nasir believed that the continuation of such an Arab position would expose his plan to numerous obstacles. He asked Mahmud Riyad, the then minister of foreign affairs, to sum up to the Council of Ministers the outcome of his trip to a number of Arab countries. Riyad responded to 'Abd-al-Nasir's wish and explained to the Council of Ministers what he had seen in the Arab countries on the spot and without being trapped by illusions. Riyad said that Syria was at the time the obstacle in the face of any joint Arab action and that he had heard violent criticism of Syria's position in Lebanon, Jordan and Iraq. Riyad said that Bahjat al-Talhuni (the then Jordanian prime minister) had told him that Jordan had offered full cooperation with Syria and that the Syrians had refused such cooperation and even considered Jordan a traitor to the Arab cause. Mahmud Riyal also said that the Syrians on their part had complained about Iraq's failure to send military forces to the Syrian front. However, the Iraqis told Riyad that the Syrians had distributed among the Iraqi forces leaflets calling for the overthrow of the Iraqi regime. Riyad did not forget to praise the good preparedness he had felt in Kuwait in regard to forming a Kuwaiti air force that would take part in future battles against Israel. Riyad concluded by saying that the most important goal to be focused on at that stage was the establishment of the eastern front through cooperation between Jordan, Syria and Iraq. Riyad also said that Saudi Arabia had demonstrated its readiness to make available whatever was requested of it for the battle. He said: Mr President, they want to

improve the relations with us. I explained to King Faysal Egypt's position toward the Arab Gulf emirates in detail and I assured him that Egypt's primary concern is the ouster of the British from these emirates and, consequently, the stability of the emirates. In reply, King Faysal made a proposal on the emirates calling for the establishment of a union between them and Saudi Arabia so as to create a political entity whose chairmanship would be assumed by the emirate shaykhs alternately, as is the case in Malaysia. Faysal described this solution as a solution that guarantees the Arabism of the Omani coast and that protects it from the Iranian ambitions. Mr President, King Faysal expressed his readiness to recognize Southern Yemen and to provide it with economic aid. At the same time, he has expressed his extreme concern over the Syrian and Algerian aid to Northern Yemen.

Financial Pressures

At the Council of Ministers session held on 24 March, 'Abd-al-Nasir said in comment on the Arab situation in light of the statements made by Mahmud Riyad:

There is a possibility that some Arab countries will stop paying their share toward the economic aid determined by the Khartoum conference as the result of political pressure from America. This is why I have asked Hasan 'Abbas Zaki (the minister of economy) to secure the largest amount possible of hard currency to face such a situation and so that we may continue our steadfastness. I have information indicating that America is exerting strong pressure on Libya (publisher's note: Libya was still under the monarchic regime) to stop paying its part of the aid.

On 25 March 1968, 'Abd-al-Nasir summoned the Council of Ministers to hold a special session in light of the developments in Jordan and in light of the well-known Israeli attack against the village of al-Karamah. At the outset of the session, 'Abd-al-Nasir said:

I learned from Lieutenant General Fawzi about al-Karamah battle 1 day before it took place and I conveyed to Jordan the information available to the Egyptian intelligence agency. We asked the Soviets about the validity of the information and they confirmed it and said that the aim of al-Karamah operation was to drive Jordan away from Syria. When Israel started the operation, the Jordanian forces did not confront the attacking forces. But the fedayeen entered the battle. The Jordanian army then participated. Fatah commander (publisher's note: 'Abd-al-Nasir did not mention the name of this commander) was personally present in al-Karamah village. He supervised organization of the resistance operations and then withdrew from the village shortly before the attack.

Al-Nabawi al-Muhandis (minister of health): Is there a possibility for arming Jordan from the Soviet Union?

'Abd-al-Nasir: King Husayn's position is very difficult. If he asks for Soviet weapons, America will punish him by moving Israel against him. Moreover, rearming the army with new weapons requires 5 years. Added to this is the fact that King Husayn cannot conclude a separate peace treaty with Israel for numerous reasons. This is why King Husayn's position is difficult, as I have already said.

At the Socialist Union Supreme Executive Committee meeting which was held on Monday, 28 October 1968, Dr Mahmud Fawzi asked a question about what was being raised concerning the status of Jerusalem and what was being said about internationalizing it. Answering Dr Fawzi's question, 'Abd-al-Nasir said:

It is true that King Husayn cannot reach an independent agreement with Israel. However, he wishes he could. Moreover, the West Bank does not approve King Husayn's proposals and they [West Bank people] are capable of confronting his plans. Our brothers in the West Bank have sent me several messages asking us not to move militarily until we complete our military preparation.

Dr Mahmud Fawzi: Mr President, how do you view the Soviet Union's position toward the Palestinian resistance?

'Abd-al-Nasir: I had previously taken Yasir 'Arafat with me to Moscow secretly. They promised him there to help and to arm the fedayeen. This, as far as I know, was the first contact between the Palestinian resistance and the Soviet Union.

Begging for Aid

On Tuesday, 12 November 1968, the Socialist Union Supreme Executive Committee held a meeting in which Jamal 'Abd-al-Nasir reviewed in detail the position of some Arab countries and their contribution to the battle.

'Abd-al-Nasir: There are a number of Arab governments that turn their back to the problem. Kuwait, for example, refuses to pay the difference in the price of the pound sterling for its share of the aid. Saudi Arabia refuses to take part in a summit conference so as not to get involved in new financial commitments. They [the Saudis] have also refused to exert any political pressure on the Johnson administration and they have started to attack us indirectly. Libya acted improperly toward Husayn al-Shafi'i when he visited it. Their conduct in Tripoli was far from polite. Kuwait has also refused to provide King Husayn with any financial aid whereas Abu Dhabi has given him 17 million pounds, Libya 5 million pounds and Saudi Arabia has promised him 15 million pounds. We here in Egypt can under no circumstances follow King Husayn's path or adopt his method. I cannot accept that Arab participation turn into pure begging.

In reply to the comment of Dr Ramzi Istinu, the Supreme Executive Committee member, on the Arab situation and on the need for self-reliance, the Egyptian president said:

'Abd-al-Nasir: The presence of such an Arab situation does not mean that we should despair and surrender. We must resist and must continue the fedayeen action in Palestine. The military preparation must continue. I have agreed with Salih Mahdi 'Ammash, the Iraqi minister of war, to increase the size of the Iraqi army present on the eastern front so as to protect the Palestinian fedayeen in case King Husayn turns against them and demands that they be expelled from Jordanian territory. King Husayn has learned that Yasir 'Arafat went with me to Moscow secretly. Therefore, I expect King Husayn to act toward the fedayeen in an abnormal way. We must speak about peace publicly and work for war secretly. We should not reject the political action, but at the same time we must refuse to go to Geneva for Jarring's negotiations. We must hold discussions with the Russians and must exert pressure on them to complete preparing our armed forces for the war.

Military Situation

The military situation was at the time 'Abd-al-Nasir's main preoccupation, if not his sole concern. In one of the Council of Ministers sessions held in February 1968, 'Abd-al-Nasir asked Lt Gen Muhammad Fawzi, the armed forces commander, to review the military situation in full. Lieutenant General Fawzi did. When he reached the 1967 war, he said:

We had been expecting this war but the armed forces were not ready for it for the following reasons:

First, the main effort of the armed forces was directed toward the Yemeni front.

Second, in the period preceding the war, the armed forces abandoned their military duty, namely combat and defense, and devoted themselves to other duties outside their military sphere.

Third, commands of the armed forces became numerous and those commands clashed with each other, a matter which made preparing the forces for combat practically impossible.

Lieutenant General Fawzi noted the combat capability of the Egyptian soldier and cited as an example Ra's al-'Ushsh battle which took place between a small Egyptian force and armored Israeli forces. The battle lasted 6 full hours at the end of which the Egyptian force defeated the Israeli forces and achieved its goal. Lieutenant General Fawzi also reviewed the Soviet military aid and said that the Egyptian forces reached 70 percent of their size before the 5 June battle and that the Soviet weapons were supplied to us at no cost.

Lieutenant General Fawzi described the Egyptian army situation on 5 June. He said: The combat capability of the Egyptian army did not exceed 30 percent and there was no reserves system. The picture has now changed and the responsibilities have been defined in all the army commands. The issuance of the new conscription law has provided the armed forces with a new type of educated troops. It has also been decided to keep division commanders, operation commanders, unit commanders, the war staff corps and the chief of staff in their positions for no more than 3 years.

Reviewing the plan to develop the air force, Lieutenant General Fawzi said:

Trained pilots are now being prepared on the basis of 1.5 pilots per plane, i.e., three pilots for every two planes. After completion of the military preparation plan, the war between us and Israel will not take only hours or days but will be a violent, ferocious and long-drawn battle. The fact that the Jews cannot withstand long-drawn battles must be taken into consideration. They are not prepared for such battles. This is another element to be added to the elements that create the possibility of victory for us. As for the navy, I can say that Egypt now has full control on the sea. Concerning the size of the armed forces with which we must enter the battle against Israel, these forces are well-studied and are available. However, I insist on the need to move militarily within the framework of joint Arab action and under a unified military command. In this case [sic] the Syrian land forces cannot be relied upon but Syria's air force can be depended on. As for the Iraqi forces, they can be relied upon to protect and support the eastern front. Unfortunately, we lost nearly 13,000 ordinary and halftrack vehicles. We now need such a number of vehicles to enter a war in the Sinai.

Army and Popular Organization

At the Council of Ministers session held on Monday, 25 March 1968, 'Abd-al-Nasir explained at length and with utter frankness the circumstances and the conditions under which he lived before and after the 1967 war. He said:

'Abd-al-Nasir: I cannot forget the first days that I went through after June 1967. I felt great and indescribable bitterness. There is no doubt that what happened in 1967 has affected all of us psychologically, morally and materially. I had to meet numerous presidents, visitors, journalists and even gloaters. We went through difficult circumstances and we faced plots against us. I was responsible for reviewing all that was happening on the domestic front and for the foreign contacts being held. I wished in those days that I had actually stepped down from power and from the position of responsibility. It was my constant estimate that the days we would encounter would be very difficult internally and externally because our enemy is strong and because he has the

organizations, is ready to act against us and possesses all the money he needs to destroy us.

When I assumed power on 11 June, I was in such an extremely bad state that I sent my family outside Cairo and kept my gun next to me to use it to the last moment and until the last bullet. On that day, I asked about the number of tanks remaining in Cairo and they told me that there were only seven tanks. Despite this, I started proceeding with the military commands on the difficult path--the path of rebuilding the armed forces anew. I used to speak to Lieutenant General Fawzi before going to bed every night and used to call him at 0600 in the morning to review with him the situation of the forces and of the commands and the name of the commander responsible for every position. If I had not resorted to this method, things would have gotten out of control.

Another issue that I faced was the fact that some military commands were opposed to strengthening our political organization. Their objection was based on the grounds of a then prevailing theory to the effect that the army is the revolution's sole support and should continue to be so and that strengthening the political organization would place the regime under strange contradictions. Now all these things have ended. What Husayn al-Shafi'i mentioned in today's session is true--namely that a bloodless coup was staged against me in 1962 and was led by Marshal 'Amir and some commands. This is true. At the time, I refused to face the plotters because the results were not guaranteed and nobody knew what would happen in the country. I always avoided such situations so that matters may not get out of control. If you review the past, you will know who initiated the phrase "the centers of power" and who called for revolutionary purity.

I said these words before 1967 and I was referring to many things of which you were not aware. People imagine that I was capable of anything but the truth was not so. This is why I said after the setback that our country should have an open society. In fact, a real change has been made in the armed forces that have now become a part of this country. A real change has also been introduced into the general intelligence that have now become a part of the country. The change also affected numerous circles in the government agencies.

Another point is an old problem existing before 1967. The army was on one side and the country on another. If we want to guarantee the future, then there must be a single authority in this country and this cannot be achieved unless the army becomes a part of this country. How? I have not found a solution to the problem so far. I believe that when the General National Congress and the Central Committee are formed, the army must be represented in them. Here we face another problem, namely the impossibility of conducting elections in the army. In any case, the army should not be against the political organization and the political

organization should not be against the army because they both form the two wings of the same authority.

Russian Pilots

On 7 April 1967, the Council of Ministers held a session to discuss military affairs.

'Abd-al-Nasir: May I inform you that Podgorny agreed during his presence in Cairo to send a number of Soviet pilots. But the Soviets later turned down the request and did not agree to send pilots. Afterwards, they again agreed that we use the Soviet pilot experts we have here in Egypt, numbering 56. We are still exerting pressure on them to send a larger number of pilots but they have not agreed to the requested increase yet. I will not be divulging a secret to you when I tell you that in recent days we were living under the threat of the Jews being able to reach Cairo in a period of 4 to 6 hours. This is why I persisted in requesting the Russian pilots. I was also seeking another thing, namely to make the Americans feel that the Soviets have entered the area on their own. This is an extremely important psychological factor insofar as the Americans are concerned--a factor which they take into very serious consideration.

Our forces are now in a good position. But we cannot go on the offensive because of the superiority of Israel's air force and armored forces. Moreover, we are experiencing a severe shortage in vehicles and half-tracks to be able to go deep into Sinai. We have begun to form two military divisions and the Soviets have agreed to arm them fully. I would like to also inform you that some crossing equipment and instruments have already been delivered. As for supplying us with new aircraft, the Russians have promised to discuss the request and I believe that they will approve it.

I may go to Moscow after convocation of the National Congress on 23 July to persuade the Soviet leadership to approve the new weapon requests. I would like to stress one fact to you, namely that there is no source other than the Soviet Union that can supply us with the necessary weapons, equipment and munition for two reasons:

We don't have the liquidity to purchase all these weapons from Western markets.

There is no country other than the Soviet Union that can supply us with this volume and this quality of weapons.

Generally, we are moving forward in military preparation. But there are critical days ahead of us and we must stand fast and must prepare to achieve victory. But to go and sit with Israel and sign [a peace treaty] with it, is something that we will never accept and that will never happen as long as I live.

At another meeting held by the Council of Ministers on 5 May 1968, Jamal 'Abd-al-Nasir announced the Russian approval to place 120 Russian pilots in Egypt under the Egyptian command.

'Abd-al-Nasir: This number of pilots will give us the opportunity to devote the efforts to train the required number of Egyptian pilots. On the other hand, I have intentionally declared Egypt's official support for the Palestinian fedayeen so as to strengthen them in the face of the reactionary forces and because the Palestinians themselves have made this request. I would like to also tell you that the element of time has turned against Israel and that the Israelis are losing 15 Israeli lives weekly as a result of the fedayeen action.

Two days ago I met secretly with a West Bank leader who told me that he had met Eshkol, the Israeli prime minister, and Abba Eban, the minister of foreign affairs. They told this leader that they are ready to make concessions that the Arabs do not expect, provided that they meet with us for negotiations to solve the issue.

At the Council of Ministers session on 31 October 1968, Lieutenant General Fawzi informed his colleagues the ministers that four Israeli Mirage aircraft were shot down that week and that 100 240-millimeter missiles were destroyed in their bases in the Sinai. Fawzi also said that the officers and the troops regained their confidence and that the enemy became aware that he was facing military forces capable of positive movement and action.

On Monday, 4 November 1968, the Socialist Union Supreme Executive Committee held a meeting in which 'Abd-al-Nasir spoke about the importance of forming the popular army to protect the major targets in Egypt.

'Abd-al-Nasir: We must speed up preparing the popular army. The Russians have promised me to arm this army whose number will amount to 1 million fighters. Our army is currently capable of crossing the canal and of taking positions in the territory immediately east of the canal. But our ability to march deep into the Sinai is still limited due to the unavailability of the vehicles and the halftracks needed for this purpose. What is important now is that we cross and stand fast and that it be clear to all that this is our resolution and that we are determined not to capitulate until others replace us, rule and capitulate [sic]. We will not agree [to capitulate]. This is what I said in 1956 and what I am still saying and repeating.

American Position

There are those who believe that the solution is in the hands of the Americans. I have heard that one of the Revolution Command Council members who left us (publisher's note: 'Abd-al-Nasir did not mention the name of this member) has said these words. These are empty words.

Why should we go too far? I had told King Husayn to go and kiss the hand of the Americans to save the West Bank. Despite this, nothing has happened and they have not given him the West Bank. I have received information today indicating that the Americans have asked King Husayn to liquidate the Palestinian fedayeen action and that they have prepared the plans necessary for this liquidation. I believe that it is necessary to make the Americans feel that their Middle East interests are threatened and that their current policy will escalate the Soviet influence in the area.

'Abd-al-Muhsin Abu-al-Nur (Supreme Executive Committee member): I would like to ask why we here cannot coexist peacefully with America and why we should close the door of such coexistence at any time?

'Abd-al-Nasir (with emotion): Never. There will be no coexistence. The former member of the Revolution Command Council says that as long as 'Abd-al-Nasir is in power, the Americans will not reach agreement with him. With others, it is possible. I would like to tell that member that the Americans are sympathetic to Israel in the first place and the two sides have common interests. We have a clear example in King Husayn. He is not socialist and he does not follow our system. Despite this, the Americans have not reached agreement with him and have not returned to him a single inch of his territory.

The fundamental issue to us is patience and steadfastness. As for the issue of King Husayn and the Palestinian fedayeen, I consider this a very important issue because if King Husayn strikes them, I will enter into problems with him. The Palestinians have promised me not to interfere in Jordan's domestic affairs and I have asked them not to involve themselves in the problems of the Arab countries and to concentrate their efforts on operations inside Israel.

What is important to us now is to examine our vital targets and to prepare trained forces of the popular army [to protect these targets].

'Abd-al-Muhsin Abu-al-Nur: There are now 10,000 volunteers fully trained in combat under the command of 'Abd-al-Majid Farid and there is full coordination between 'Abd-al-Majid Farid, Lieutenant General Fawzi and Sha'rawi Jum'ah.

On Tuesday, 12 November, 'Abd-al-Nasir talked to a session of the Supreme Executive Committee which met in the presence of all its members, except for 'Ali Sabri who stayed home because he was indisposed, about the importance of military discipline.

'Abd-al-Nasir: What happened in 1967 was the result of the lack of discipline among our armed forces since 1962. During the 1967 military operations, an order was issued to an armored division to withdraw west of the canal and then other orders were issued to it to advance east of

the canal. There was a flaw in the air force command. I urged the need to change this command several times, but to no avail. What is sad is that the military command assured me before the 1967 battle that it was fully capable of achieving victory.

At another meeting of the Supreme Executive Committee on 30 December 1968, 'Abd-al-Nasir addressed an important question to the members: Should we remain silent on the front or should we start moving? Answering his own question, 'Abd-al-Nasir said:

I believe that it is politically wrong for us to remain silent. We must start the military operations gradually. Let us start with carrying out commando operations against the enemy's vital targets. This means that we will move from the position of negative defense to that of positive defense. I am confident that the people will accept the sacrifices, provided that there is retaliation on our part against the enemy if he tries to launch military operations against us. I say that the people were right when they said after 1967 "we want a free government because life has become bitter." It is natural for such a thing to happen after the defeat. I would like to say that the sun will shine on us again, but only after some time and after great efforts are exerted. I also hope that you will assure the masses that the day will come, God willing, in which our armed forces will cross to the eastern side of the canal to expel the enemy from the Sinai. The battle this time will not be a battle of 6 or 7 days but will be a decisive and final battle in the area.

[21-27 Aug 78 pp 31-37]

[Text] Part XI: Minutes of 'Abd-al-Nasir's Meetings With Tito, King Husayn and 'Abd-al-Rahman 'Arif; 'Abd-al-Nasir: Egyptian People Want War and Reject This Kind of Peace; 'Abd-al-Nasir: Syria and Saudi Arabia Are Obstructing Joint Arab Action Despite Our Support for Saudi Position on Arab Gulf; Tito: Kosygin Told Me Moscow Rejects American Vacuum Theory and Soviets Will Remain in Area Until Clear National Power Appears; King Husayn: Americans Contacted Me Under Pretext of Saving Jarring's Mission and Advised Me To Conclude Separate Peace Treaty With Israel; 'Abd-al-Nasir: Syrians Asked To Form Joint Command With Us and I Told Them That Joint Command Should Be Between Them, Jordan and Iraq

Even though Jamal 'Abd-al-Nasir was preoccupied with domestic affairs and concerned with rebuilding the armed forces and reforming the political organization in a manner that would give and guarantee it the freedom of movement, he did not stop for a moment following up foreign affairs and meeting world leaders whenever he had the opportunity to explain to them his viewpoint on the situation, to try to exert pressure on the friends, to maneuver against the enemies and to exert efforts in every direction to foil the American-Zionist plan for the Middle East.

'Abd-al-Nasir used to meet with those with whom he felt comfortable, benefiting from the dialog with them. He also used to meet with the same desire with those with whom he felt uncomfortable because he considered the dialog necessary, even if at the expense of his personal emotions and nerves. He used to be annoyed by meeting with certain people but he always was the model of the courteous host and of the speaker who listens well.

Those in whose presence 'Abd-al-Nasir felt annoyed did not even once notice his true feelings. Josip Broz Tito, president of the Republic of Yugoslavia, was the world leader closest to 'Abd-al-Nasir's heart. Tito's experiment in Yugoslavia was one of the few experiments from which 'Abd-al-Nasir benefited and which he used as an example. Tito was Marxist to the bone but he followed an independent policy far from Moscow's line. He was the only leader in the socialist camp who defied Stalin while the latter was at the peak of his strength and might. Tito did not hesitate a moment in his defiance and remained steadfast in the face of all pressures. Stalin went and his successors came. Those successors went to Belgrade, the capital of Yugoslavia, and addressed Tito with the phrase "great comrade." They thus wiped out Stalin's accusation of Tito as being "a rebel against the Marxist-Leninist principles."

For this and other reasons, Tito's experiment in Yugoslavia attracted 'Abd-al-Nasir's interest and got his admiration. The Yugoslav leader set up his system on two bases: the public sector and the private sector. He succeeded in establishing a balance between them so that neither may dominate the other.

More important than all this is the fact that 'Abd-al-Nasir had confidence in Tito's foresight, his sound judgment and his deep understanding of what was happening around him in the entire world. In fact, Tito was the engineer of the camp of the nonaligned and of the positive neutrality countries. Nehru was this camp's philosopher and Jamal 'Abd-al-Nasir was the third of the trio. Despite the difference in age and in experience, 'Abd-al-Nasir was able to achieve prominence in this field because he emerged from the geometrical circles and triangles and from the philosophy books with the Third World policy and put this policy to actual implementation. This was one of 'Abd-al-Nasir's outstanding qualities.

On his part, Tito also admired 'Abd-al-Nasir. He admired 'Abd-al-Nasir's courage, honesty and youth also. One day Tito said to 'Abd-al-Nasir while sitting on the beach in the Yugoslav island of Brioni: "Believe me, I envy you. You are younger and you will live to see the fruit of your works." Josip Broz Tito did not know the future and did not realize that fate was hiding a sad end for 'Abd-al-Nasir. Tito did not know that he would live to walk in the funeral of the young Arab leader.

Generally, the sessions between 'Abd-al-Nasir and Tito were always characterized by utter frankness. Their meeting which we are divulging now took place under extremely complex circumstances: Israeli intransigence, American plots at home and abroad and an Arab situation characterized by ambiguity and instability. Tito had arrived in Cairo after a long tour in the Far East countries where he had met Kosygin who was also visiting the Indian capital. 'Abd-al-Nasir was eager to hear the Yugoslav leader's opinion on the situation, especially on Indira Gandhi's position vis-a-vis the Middle East. At this meeting, Tito exposed the true Saudi moves in the Red Sea area. We will later show that the story of the Horn of Africa which has recently imposed itself on the world is an old story whose first threads were woven 10 years ago.

'Abd-al-Majid Farid

First Meeting: 'Abd-al-Nasir and Tito

(The meeting took place on 5 February 1968 in the city of Aswan. 'Abd-al-Nasir wanted to put his friend Tito in the picture of what was happening in regard to the Middle East crisis. This is why he started the conversation.)

'Abd-al-Nasir: We have started since last August moving positively to confront the Israeli aggression. We attended the Arab summit conference in Khartoum and it became evident to us at the conference that it would be better for us not to cut off the oil flow, provided that the oil countries advance financial aid to us and to Jordan as confrontation states. We thus obtained financial aid in foreign currency amounting to 95 million pounds, even though we have lost as a result of the war the equivalent of 180 million pounds in hard currency. However, the volume of the aid allocated for us will help us greatly to stand fast and to confront Israel. If we add to this aid the loans and the commercial credits advanced to us by the Soviet Union and by the socialist camp and the French and Italian loans, then we would realize that we will double our share of hard currency. However, we continue to be in need of another sum of money to purchase the raw materials and semiprocessed materials necessary for our plants. Generally, I believe that the results of the Khartoum conference encourage us to continue to stand fast and to struggle. Insofar as the United Nations is concerned, our minister of foreign affairs, as your excellency knows, carried out political movement of which you have already been informed. I am interested here in presenting some observations to you:

First, the position of Goldberg, the American delegate, is 100 percent identical to Israel's position.

Second, after we approved the so-called American-Soviet plan [draft resolution], America withdrew its approval of the plan.

Third, America's aim at the present stage is to freeze the situation and to leave it unsolved.

Fourth, America and Israel are fully aware that we are not ready militarily at present. This is the reason for the Israeli arrogance and indifference.

As for our armed forces, we have now reached a state which enables us to defend Egypt. But we are not ready for an attack to liberate the land because of the shortage in pilots. Meanwhile, America has strengthened the Israeli air forces with more squadrons of modern aircraft. Israel insists on the need that we sit and negotiate with it directly and it believes that it will achieve this goal as long as we are not capable of liberating the land by force.

The most significant problem we have with the Soviets on the issue of weapons is our need for a new kind of modern aircraft. The aircraft we currently have are Mig-17's, Mig-19's and Mig-21's and Sukhoi-7's. These aircraft are considered short-range aircraft and cannot reach all the Israeli targets. For example, the Mig-17 can only reach the Israeli borders and the Mig-21 can only reach the southern part of Israel. The Sukhoi is a long-range aircraft but its combat capability is limited. On the other hand, we find that the French-made Israeli aircraft can reach most of our airports while the American Skyhawks can reach every inch in our country. This is why we have asked the Soviet leadership for a long-range fighter-bomber. We also asked for expertise and help in training. They have actually sent us army, naval and air force experts. It pleases me to stress that cooperation between these military experts and our officers is perfect.

In the sphere of Arab political movement, we have proposed the holding of a new Arab summit conference with the aim of mobilizing the Arab nation's military and economic resources against Israel. But the Syrians reject the idea. Moreover, the Saudis are opposed to holding such a conference so that they may not be involved in new financial commitments. Insofar as the Syrians are concerned, they refuse to cooperate with Saudi Arabia and Jordan. Concerning our relations with the Saudis, they are lukewarm due to the traces of the Yemen war. This is the case even though we agreed at the Khartoum conference to withdraw our forces from Yemen, and this has actually been done. The Saudis have refused to recognize Qahtan al-Sha'bi's government in Aden. It is important for me to point out a significant matter here, namely that we did not withdraw our forces from there until we became certain that the British left Aden and Southern Yemen.

At the same time, we have informed Saudi Arabia that we support its position in the Arab Gulf and will advance to it any aid requested to counter Iran's ambitions there, even though Saudi Arabia had previously entered agreement with Iran against us within the framework of the

Islamic Alliance. But the situation changed after Britain's decision to withdraw its forces from the area and disputes immediately surfaced between Saudi Arabia and Iran. Insofar as these disputes are concerned, we support Saudi Arabia, as a fraternal Arab country, against Iran.

Concerning the issue of freeing the ships trapped in the Suez Canal, we had already moved to facilitate the operation of freeing them. We did so at the request of the countries whose flags these ships fly. I have received from Mr Brown, the British secretary of foreign affairs, four messages on this issue. But when we took the first steps to carry out the operation of freeing the ships, the Israeli forces confronted us and opened fire from the east bank on those engaged in the operation. So we decided to halt the operation.

(Publisher's note: 'Abd-al-Nasir had responded to pressure from Mr Brown, the British secretary of foreign affairs, to free the trapped ships which numbered 13 and most of which flew the British flag. The true reason for 'Abd-al-Nasir's response to Mr Brown's request was the fact that the British secretary had adopted a neutral position at the United Nations and had refused to succumb to the American pressure for absolute support for Israel. The man was subjected to severe attacks by the British press. The SUNDAY TELEGRAPH said that the secretary of foreign affairs misbehaved and the OBSERVER described Brown's policy as defying reason.)

Tito: I would like to know the oil situation in Egypt after the 1967 war.

'Abd-al-Nasir: We have lost the Sinai oil, valued at nearly 6 million pounds annually. But we now have a new source which will give us nearly the same quantity. As your excellency knows, the Israelis attacked the oil refinery in Suez and this is why we have begun to refine our oil in Aden's refineries.

(After reviewing the outcome of his tour in the Far East countries, including India, Pakistan, Afghanistan and Cambodia, President Tito said:)

Tito: I have generally noticed that these countries sympathize with the Arab cause, despite the American pressure on some of them. For example, Mrs Indira Gandhi is subjected to severe pressure from the rightist wing in the Indian Parliament. I also met Comrade Aleksey Kosygin in India and we had a discussion on the Middle East crisis. Kosygin told me that they have decided in the Soviet Union not to permit the Americans to replace the British in the Middle East area, regardless of the rumors circulated when the British withdrew from Aden. Kosygin assured me that the Soviets will remain in the area until a clear national power emerges in it, that what the Western circles are reiterating about vacuum in the area and about the need to fill this vacuum is nothing but imperialist terminology and that the Soviet Union will not permit anybody from outside the area to fill the vacuum.

Kosygin also assured me that the Soviet Union and the other socialist countries will stand by, help and support these peoples. He added that the nonaligned countries must also support the area's peoples. As for the Saudi policy toward [Northern] Yemen and Southern Yemen, I believe that it has become evident that this policy is directed and supported by foreign forces with the aim of getting hold of the southern key of the Red Sea and of controlling this sea.

'Abd-al-Nasir: Did Kosygin deal in his discussion with you with the proposed political solution for the Middle East crisis?

Tito: I understood from my talk with Kosygin that the Soviets are planning on the basis that no acceptable political solution can be reached unless the United Arab Republic is strong militarily. We must not forget that you are now enjoying the sympathy of a large number of countries as a result of Israel's intransigent stance. This is why I believe that when reaching a political solution becomes impossible, the world will then understand why you have chosen the other solution.

Second Meeting: 'Abd-al-Nasir and Husayn

(On 6 April, King Husayn arrived in Cairo at the head of a high-level political and military delegation. This was the first official visit paid by the Jordanian monarch after al-Karamah battle which took place on 21 March 1968 and in which the Palestinian resistance forces took part side by side with the Jordanian army.)

Husayn: I have come to you for consultations on what should be done in this stage, especially since important political developments have taken place recently. Your message to us on 21 March 1968--the day of al-Karamah battle--was the first Arab message we received. This is why we are always proud of you, of your struggle stances and of your vanguard role. There is in Israel now an inclination that insists on keeping all the Arab territories occupied by Israel in the 1967 war. There are also those who are calling for completely occupying our territory so that there may be nothing but secure desert between them and Iraq and another secure desert between them and Saudi Arabia.

Bahjat al-Talhuni: We have received a message from Hikmat al-Misri, a West Bank resident (publisher's note: al-Misri is a Palestinian who was speaker of the Jordanian Chamber of Deputies in 1956 and one of those who accompanied President al-Sadat after [sic] his visit to Israel in November 1977). The message confirms the information on the possibility that Israel will launch a new military operation east of the Jordan River after which Israel will force King Husayn to accept a local Palestinian government consisting of some Palestinians living in the West Bank and cooperating with the occupation authorities.

'Abd-al-Mun'im al-Rifa'i: It is noticed that Israel's political movement has begun to veer away from the content and provisions of the Security Council resolution. It has turned down the proposal we made to Jarring, the UN representative, that a provision be added to the resolution stating that (the parties concerned are prepared to implement the resolution). The Americans came to us in Amman yesterday and advised us not to cling to this provision so that matters may not become complicated. It is naturally clear from this that Israel has territorial ambitions in the Arab land. We believe that Jarring will terminate his mission and take the issue back to the Security Council.

'Abd-al-Nasir: The important issue is not Jarring's proposals but whether we should agree to meet with the Israelis directly or indirectly somewhere and what the effect of such agreement will be after we have publicly rejected such a meeting. Insofar as the United Arab Republic is concerned, I will reply and say that we cannot agree to such a direct or indirect meeting. Don't forget that I have gone along with you only on the formula of the resolution received by Jarring, despite the opposition of Algeria, Iraq, Sudan and Saudi Arabia. I adopted this position of mine for the sake of the continuation of the political movement.

I again say that we must now discuss whether we should agree to go to Rhodes or Geneva. On our part, we reject this proposal. Concerning America, I imagined that it would adopt toward you a position different from its position toward us on the basis that there is personal hostility between me and the Americans. Their behavior toward you was supposed to be compatible with your position as their friends.

Our people here in Egypt want war and reject this kind of peace, even though I imagined that they have become tired of and annoyed by the many wars and by the heavy burdens thrown on their shoulders. Our people have become very sensitive and the general situation has become very difficult.

Recently, we moved on the domestic front, the 30 March declaration was issued, a referendum was conducted and elections were held. We will continue the political movement until we prepare ourselves for the military battle. The Khartoum conference gave us an aid of 95 million pounds for steadfastness. Here, we should ask ourselves: If we agree to what America is planning and Israel is proposing, wouldn't this be a justification for the Arab countries to stop paying this aid? We here in Egypt need this aid to stand fast, even though we have raised our taxes to approximately 250 million pounds. Moreover, our military budget has reached 300 million pounds. The demand on which Israel insists is direct negotiation. Will your domestic situation withstand such a thing? Insofar as our situation is concerned, I will tell you frankly that we cannot withstand this.

Mahmud Riyad: I asked Jarring a frank question during his latest visit, namely: What will our delegate who will go to Cyprus or to Geneva for

the proposed negotiations sign? After a long discussion with him on the details of the answer to this question, Jarring became certain that our delegate will sign in such a case a capitulation agreement. Jarring admitted to me that the United States sent him a special envoy a few days ago to express to him Washington's annoyance with the possibility of the failure of his mission. The envoy also told him that the Israeli cabinet includes 13 ministers with moderate inclinations and only five ministers who do not approve the return of a single inch of occupied Arab territories and that Eshkol, the prime minister, is unable to adopt a decisive position on this issue in the Council of Ministers because such a step may topple his cabinet. I told Jarring that we had heard almost the same words from the Soviets through their ambassador in New York.

As for adding or deleting some words and phrases in Jarring's proposals, we have covered long strides in this respect so as to gain time and to please the world public opinion. The question projected now is: Is continuation of the game of words and phrases useful? Will it guarantee a delay in the likely attack against Jordan? Is it in our interest that Jarring take the issue back to the Security Council on the basis that this will prevent Israel from embarking on a military act?

Husayn: In this regard, the Americans contacted me yesterday under the pretext of saving Jarring's mission from failure and advised me to conclude a separate peace treaty with Israel. My reply to them was that this issue cannot be discussed because it has not been mentioned in the Security Council resolution.

As for the occupation of Jerusalem, we feel, after examining the international position, that we have no support on this issue from the Moslem countries, except for a few. Moreover, the Russians have informed me that they are ready to support us politically. They have also promised to supply us with Russian weapons in case all our attempts to acquire weapons from Western sources fail. We are now trying to obtain some Western weapons and munitions from some fraternal Arab countries so as to make up for the shortage we are experiencing. Regrettably, no military coordination has been made on the eastern front so far and the Syrians reject any coordination with us. In fact, the degree of feeling for the issue in the Arab world varies and if we continue to be in the Arab world as we presently are, then the initiative will always remain in the enemy's hands. We need coordination between us on many issues and we need a unified position toward the issue of Jerusalem and toward the issue of UN observers on the borders.

Syria and Iraqi Army

'Abd-al-Nasir: I had said what you have just said in a public speech and I also said that there is no common Arab plan and no Arab coordination. I believe that many Arab countries want to stay away from becoming involved in new commitments. The Syrians have asked for a joint

command with us and I told them that the joint command must be between them, Jordan and Iraq and that utmost use must be made of the capabilities of the Iraqi army. Naturally, there are suspicions between them and Iraq because of partisan affairs. But we must exert maximum efforts for the creation of the eastern command. We must also be patient to overcome the domestic problems we are experiencing. But to agree to negotiate with the Jews directly or indirectly is something that is not acceptable.

The Americans asked us last February to resume the relations with them and we said sorry. We will not resume the relations with them until they make clear their position toward the Arab cause, even if only by a statement on the Arab rights. But they refused to do so and we have refused [to restore the relations].

Al-Talhuni: What will the position of the United Arab Republic be in case of an Israeli attack against us?

'Abd-al-Nasir: I asked Lieutenant General Fawzi on the day of al-Karamah battle to assess his situation and to determine what we could do militarily on our part. Fawzi's reply was that we would be ready to open fire all along the front half an hour after the order is issued. I consulted with Riyadh before issuing an order to Lieutenant General Fawzi. Riyadh advised me that such a military step would have far-reaching effects on the political movement and that it would be better not to embark on it at the time. But if what is intended is the degree of our forces' readiness to cross the canal to the eastern side, then our forces still need time to complete their preparation. They also need nearly 20,000 ordinary and halftrack vehicles which cost approximately 60 million pounds.

Al-Talhuni: What will the political position be?

'Abd-al-Nasir: I have already told King Husayn that we will divide the loaf of bread into two halves: one half for you and the other for us. We will continue to support you, regardless of what happens. It pleases me to tell you that I find the picture today different from what it was yesterday. Even my personal spirits and morale have improved greatly since your last visit to me at the end of 1967.

It is my opinion that the Americans are playing a very despicable game and want to sell all of us as Arabs. Even the Russians have despaired of the possibility of achieving a political solution. On our part, we believe that we have offered the utmost we can to achieve a political solution.

Husayn: What will the situation be if Israel approves Jarring's plan?

'Abd-al-Nasir: In such a case, the contact will take place between our delegates and Jarring, provided that we are represented by the Arab

delegates to the United Nations. We have Dr al-Quni there. Moreover, there should be no document to sign. In other words, I refuse to meet with Israel directly or indirectly. What we agree to is only a meeting with our official delegates to the United Nations.

Lieutenant General Khammash (Jordanian chief of staff): It is true that the fedayeen operations are very important and have a very positive impact against the enemy. However, these operations are currently confined to the Jordanian front. This gives Israel the pretext to launch military operations against Jordan, especially since Israel is deploying 75 percent of its forces on the Jordanian front, five brigades on the Egyptian front and only two brigades on the Syrian front. During al-Karamah battle, Israel withdrew an armored brigade from Bi'r al-Sab' [Beersheba] which joined the other brigades in the attack against Jordan. It is well known that Israel has eight armored brigades and...

'Abd-al-Nasir: Sorry to interrupt you, but I want to make sure of the number of the armored Israeli brigades.

Lieutenant General Khammash: My information confirms that the enemy has eight armored brigades.

'Abd-al-Nasir: The reason for my question is that the Soviet intelligence had previously informed Marshal 'Amir that Israel has eight armored brigades but the previous general command refused the Soviet information and insisted on its private information which was to the effect that Israel has only five brigades. Unfortunately, that command drew up its plan on this basis. In any case, let us return to what you were saying.

Lieutenant General Khammash: Insofar as armament is concerned, we in Jordan prefer to acquire Western weapons because our troops, who are fundamentally trained on these weapons, can use them immediately.

'Abd-al-Nasir: After this military and political review, I would like to say again that as long as we do not sign a peace treaty with Israel, then Israel has not won the war. What is important is for us to be patient and not to despair. Israel's strategy since Ben Gurion's days has been intended to force a settlement on us. As long as we have not concluded any treaty with it, then Israel has not achieved its goals. An eastern front and a western front must be created and we must move on both fronts simultaneously. I find it necessary that we hold an Arab summit conference in which we declare unanimously that the Arab land is sacred and that we will not relinquish a single inch of it. This means that we will mobilize all the Arab armies and all the Arab money to liberate the Arab land. We say that we are 100 million Arabs but the fact is that this is untrue for a fundamental reason, namely that there is no Arab political plan and no Arab military plan. This issue requires that

we meet in a summit conference, agree and draw up a plan and a program. It is unacceptable that we remain silent and evasive.

As for the fedayeen, I propose that you get together and coordinate with them. I know the Palestinians belonging to Fatah. They are good people and it is possible to coordinate with them. At the same time, there are those who incite the fedayeen and who tell them that King Husayn will arrest and destroy them. Therefore, you must reassure them and establish confidence between you and them. You should choose some trustworthy officials to contact them. The condition for selecting such officials must be that the Palestinians trust them. Those who are trying to sow sedition between you and them must be kept away. I hope that you will avoid creating trouble for them and that you will not pursue them. (Publisher's note: The information at 'Abd-al-Nasir's disposal at the time indicated that the liaison officers between King Husayn and the Palestinians were suspected of being in contact with the U.S. Central Intelligence.)

The last thing I would like to say in our meeting today is that we should not surrender to despair. We must also avoid weakening the Arab position.

Third Meeting: 'Abd-al-Nasir and 'Abd-al-Rahman 'Arif

(On 10 February 1968, Iraqi President 'Abd-al-Rahman 'Arif arrived in Cairo directly from Paris after an official visit to France and after meeting with French President Charles de Gaulle. 'Arif wanted to acquaint 'Abd-al-Nasir with the outcome of his talks in Paris before returning to Baghdad.)

'Abd-al-Rahman 'Arif: We realized as of the first moment of our talks with de Gaulle that he is subjected to pressure from the Zionist forces in France. But he is determined to proceed with his new policy to win over the Arabs. De Gaulle assured us that France is ready at present to help the Arab countries according to the need of these countries and that France's new policy is not established on sentiments but has been formulated on the basis of France's interest.

De Gaulle in his statements touched on the need for Israel's withdrawal from the occupied territories, provided that the two sides discuss the border problems between them and the issue of maritime navigation later on. But in the following session, members of the French delegation interfered in the discussion and withdrew this clear provision, making proposals only for a provision on peace in the area generally. When we raised the issue of the Arab Gulf, De Gaulle avoided wading into this issue and it was obvious that he is tied to Iran by firm relations. He was content with stressing the need for consultations on the Gulf issues with Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and the other countries overlooking the Gulf.

De Gaulle expressed France's readiness to provide all the requested requirements and aid, including weapons and military equipment. To demonstrate his goodwill, he ordered that the schedule for delivering the Mirage aircraft for which an agreement had been concluded with Iraq be amended so that three aircraft may be delivered monthly instead of two.

In a personal discussion with me, De Gaulle told me that he was sure that Israel would defeat the Arab armies on the basis of the information he had on the quantity and quality of the weapons possessed by Israel. De Gaulle pointed out that we, as Arabs, must unify our political viewpoint because Israel has a single opinion on every issue whereas the Arabs have more than one. He said that if we develop a single viewpoint, then this would help France, considering its international weight, to play a major role in the Middle East issue.

General De Gaulle complained of the international Zionist forces' control of the French information media. De Gaulle said that the reason for this may be the isolation of the Arab countries and their failure to use the right method for getting in touch with the European public opinion.

Isma'il Khayrallah (Iraqi minister of foreign affairs): When we met with the French minister of foreign affairs, he summed up for us the political aspect of the Middle East problem in a few clear words. He said: Don't forget that solving this problem will always depend on the relationship between the Soviet Union and the United States of America. The solution will come in the light of the relations between these two major powers.

'Abd-al-Nasir: I thank you for passing by us to exchange views on the current situation. It is my opinion that important military and political developments have taken place between the 1967 war and the present. Insofar as the military situation is concerned, the position of our armed forces has become better than what it used to be before the aggression. For example, we had two full divisions in Yemen and we have now returned them to the Egyptian front. We also had five other divisions which we have rearmed and retrained, in addition to rebuilding all our armored forces. We have also developed the military conscription system and this has enabled us to use a large number of troops graduated from universities and [higher] institutes to operate the modern equipment and vehicles, the radar systems, the air defense weapons and the submarines. We have recently adopted a decision to increase the number of divisions and to arm the added divisions. We now have Soviet experts who came in response to our request to train the forces on operations. What we fundamentally lack is to supply our armed forces with vehicles and with halftracks.

We are now capable of defending Egypt but we cannot launch an attack in the Sinai. The air forces and the air defenses have improved a lot since

1967. But we are still experiencing a shortage of pilots. We have also asked the Soviets to supply us with new long-range aircraft.

Politically, we have not rejected the Security Council resolution to assure the world that we do not obstruct the efforts being exerted to establish peace in the area. Through the political moves and through Mr Jarring's visits, I have become generally certain that the issue will not be settled at the present time for a main reason, namely that Israel knows that we cannot launch an offensive to liberate the land. Consequently, we have no alternative other than the political movement. The Americans are exerting efforts on their part to keep the situation in the area as it is at present. They believe in Washington that the Arab masses will become more impatient and anxious, that they will inevitably move against their governments with time and that explosions would erupt within the Arab regimes opposed to the American policy in the area. This is why I propose that all kinds of pressures be exerted on the Americans to make them feel that their current position will have the gravest consequences on their interests in the area.

Soviet aid is still flowing to us. The Soviets had previously agreed with 'Ali Sabri to provide us with 100,000 tons of wheat. We have recently asked them to send us another consignment amounting to 200,000 tons. We have also received other commodities valued at approximately 65 million pounds.

We have asked for holding an Arab summit conference. But Syria has rejected the holding of such a conference. Moreover, Saudi Arabia does not want this conference to be held for various reasons. Unfortunately, the military position on the eastern front is very poor. Syria cannot stand alone. Jordan lost all its aircraft in the war. Therefore, all the resources available in Iraq, Syria and Jordan must be mobilized to bolster the eastern front so that when the next battle starts, Israel will be forced to fight on two fronts and not just one. We must be sure of the ability of our armed forces before we start the battle because, unfortunately, we did not appreciate Israel's actual strength in the previous war. Let it be known to all that we cannot withstand another defeat from Israel.

I wish, as De Gaulle has said, that the Arabs were a single front and that they had a single opinion. Tito visited me 5 days ago and advised us to work on the domestic front, especially among the workers and the educated, so that the Americans may lose hope in creating any internal change.

I believe that there is great importance for your visit to France and your talks with De Gaulle. We must seek with utmost efforts to link the French interests to the Arab interests. I know that France will need nearly 200 million barrels of oil in 1980 and that it hopes to rely on Iraq and Algeria to supply this quantity free of the U.S. middlemanship and interference.

[28 Aug-3 Sep 78 pp 31-35]

[Text] Part XII: 1969, Year of Hardships and of Enormous Tasks; 'Abd-al-Nasir Decides on War of Attrition; World Bank Experts Work and Gather Accurate Information for American Intelligence; We Must Work To Intensify Situation With Israel, Regardless of Wish of Americans and Soviets; Americans Will Not Leave Us Alone Unless We Follow Completely Rightist Policy and Then They Will Find in Egypt Politicians and Intellectuals To Philosophize Their Policy; We Must Rid Ourselves of All Bourgeois Acts and Appearances and Must Prevent Gifts for Top Officials, Including Gifts of Mangos and Grapes

For 'Abd-al-Nasir, 1969 was the year of hardships and enormous tasks. Immediately after the setback, it was 'Abd-al-Nasir's evaluation that he would be able to strike the enemy and to move him far away within 1 year. But with the onset of 1969, 'Abd-al-Nasir became certain that his evaluation was some sort of a dream. The reasons obstructing the realization of this dream were numerous and diverse.

The process of rebuilding the armed forces took longer than had been estimated, despite the sincere intentions and the serious and persistent efforts. The reason is that when Lieutenant General Muhammad Fawzi started the process of military rebuilding, he began from scratch. The army had not only lost its equipment but had also lost its morale. Before that, it had lost its discipline. At the outset, the situation required engaging the enemy in small battles to prove that the myth of its superiority was nothing but a myth. The situation also required scattered crossing operations, confronting the enemy in the Sinai desert and capturing some of his personnel. Even though those operations had little impact on the enemy's army, their psychological yield for the Egyptian army was great. At one time, an Egyptian patrol consisting of five members captured an Israeli officer with the rank of colonel after killing the enemy members who were with him. The Israeli colonel had been hit by a bullet in the left side of his chest but he made it to the western bank near Ismailia. However, his fear was bigger than his wound. On his way to the hospital, he was trembling and kept on repeating one phrase over and over: "I have not committed any crimes against the Arabs, I have not committed any crimes against the Arabs." The prisoner finally died in the military hospital, despite the extraordinary care given to him. The Egyptian command was eager to keep him alive. All the physicians were unanimous that the Israeli colonel did not die from the bullet that had hit him in his left shoulder but of fear because he had never imagined that he would fall prisoner in the hands of Egyptian soldiers. All information had assured him that Egypt's army had been crushed and had become no more than a memory in history's museum.

The story of the captured Israeli colonel continued to be the talk of the Egyptian soldiers on the canal bank for a long time and was a

reason for boosting their morale and for their volunteering enthusiastically to cross to the east.

After the June defeat, 'Abd-al-Nasir had to sleep with an open eye and a half closed eye. American plots to topple him became active at home and the American agents worked actively in every place to draw the big fish from the sea when everybody was certain that the hook had been bitten. This is why 'Abd-al-Nasir agreed to assume the premiership personally so that there may be no gap from which any of the forces lurking for him could penetrate.

The year 1969 was not only the year of the war of attrition which was actually the fourth war between the Arabs and the Zionists but was also the year of the open American plot known as the Sisco plan--a plan which carried a solution to the Egyptian problems separately.

Sisco's plan crowned a series of signals and insinuations which had preceded it and paved the way for it. Those signals consisted of a number of air raids that hit the regime's prestige in the heart, namely the raid against the Naj' Hammadi barrages, the raid against the radar station south of Suez, the concentrated raids all along the canal front and the annihilation of hundreds of Egyptian workers who worked desperately to set up the wall of missiles under brutal air raids around the clock.

But because the rule says that every action has a reaction equal to it in momentum and opposing it in direction, the reactions came quicker than some people had imagined. The reactions came from outside Egypt, from inside Egypt and from within 'Abd-al-Nasir himself. The reactions came from Sudan with the May revolution, from Libya with the 1 September revolution and then from Egypt when the barrels of 100,000 guns were opened suddenly to pour their blazing hell on the enemy's army, thus declaring the war of attrition. The reactions then came from the heart of 'Abd-al-Nasir when the man suffered a heart attack on a certain evening. The physicians made him lie in bed without moving and without standing on his ailing feet for nearly 7 weeks.

But what was going on in 'Abd-al-Nasir's head before he fell sick at the end of the year? How was he thinking and how did he work? What was preoccupying his mind and keeping him awake during the year of troubles, plots and enormous tasks?

'Abd-al-Majid Farid

(At the Council of Ministers session on 26 January, 'Abd-al-Nasir said:)

We have ahead of us a critical period before we can solve the problem in our area through the political movement and through military action. We are in dire need of persistent efforts in the domestic front, especially efforts to solve the people's problems because I fear that a feeling of

aimlessness and of loss of hope will creep into the people's hearts. We are really in need of the World Bank's aid but we will not permit its experts or members who visit Egypt to tamper with our economy or to go beyond the point of security in regard to the information that they demand because I have learned from Hijazi (Dr 'Abd-al-'Aziz Hijazi, the minister of the treasury) that the World Bank delegates are asking for numerous and detailed statements from the ministries and the establishments. Most of these delegates work for the American Intelligence Administration (AIA) and gather the information required for it with utter accuracy. As of today, we must be careful in supplying information. To organize this issue, I believe that Amin Huwaydi should regulate the process of supplying foreigners, be they experts or World Bank representatives, with information and data within the limits permitted by the country's security. I also believe that they should not be allowed to visit the companies and the establishments before they acquire a permit for this purpose.

Generally, I don't believe that the World Bank will offer us aid at the present time, except within narrow limits. Moreover, the bank will not fulfill its promise and send us the water condensation plant it had promised us.

(At the Council of Ministers session on 16 February, 'Abd-al-Nasir said:)

Concerning the domestic front, utmost efforts must be exerted to wipe out corruption and to bring every official, regardless of his level, to account. There are rumors in the country about the conduct of some officials in the trade and economy sectors (the words were addressed to Hasan 'Abbas Zaki, the minister of economy). The rumors say that enormous commissions are being paid to some high-ranking officials in these two sectors. I believe that the leaderships should not be left in these sectors for long periods and must be changed from time to time. We must also examine the deals and transactions carefully and constantly because we should not open for people ways and paths that lead them to corruption and deviation. Unguarded property teaches stealing. It is unreasonable that we, being in the stage of socialist transformation, should permit some people to amass enormous fortunes, 300,000 or 400,000 pounds, and then also let them get away without paying taxes. This means that we are pushing our society backward and that we ourselves are destroying what we have accomplished.

Heating Up Situation

I will now move to foreign policy. We must understand that both America and the Soviets fear military confrontation. This is why neither of them want to heat up the political and military situation in our area. We should see where our interest lies and work for it.

Naturally, Israel is currently reassured that we are unable to provoke a war with it because of our lack of fighter pilots, lack of military vehicles and of halftracks that enable us to move quickly and of the unavailability of sufficient equipment to enable us to cross the canal. But this shortage will be made up for in the coming period, beginning next month, with the delivery of new Soviet equipment and weapons and with the arrival of new military aircraft. It is my opinion, regardless of the wish of the Americans and the Soviets, that we must work this year to intensify the situation with Israel and to escalate the commando operations in the Sinai because such operations have special importance in the constant attrition of the enemy's forces and morale. In the face of such operations, the enemy will be forced to keep large numbers of its forces under arms. This is in total conflict with its principles and capabilities. Let us continue in escalating the commando operations as long as we now rely on a strong defense line west of the canal. Let us continue this plan until we are militarily able to cross the canal and to launch major operations.

(At the Council of Ministers meeting on 15 April, Mahmud Riyad, the minister of foreign affairs, informed the Council of Ministers that the first quadrilateral meeting had been held in New York to discuss the proposed solutions for the issue by the representatives of the four major powers--America, the Soviet Union, Britain and France--and that the French delegation proposed at the first meeting the issuance of a declaration to be called the "declaration of principles and intentions" whereas the American delegation tried to steer clear of the text of the provisions of the Security Council resolution with the aim of pushing the Arabs toward greater concessions. At the same time, the Israeli Government is trying to bring up the so-called issue of the Egyptian borders of 1906 which extend from al-'Arish to Ra's Muhammad.)

Answering him, 'Abd-al-Nasir said: All this is wise politically. We must continue our military preparation. We started a few days ago at the armed forces general command preparing the complete plan for eliminating the traces of the aggression. For the coming weeks, I have agreed to adopt some urgent military steps at the front. Lieutenant General Fawzi will sum up these steps for you now.

Lieutenant General Fawzi: The president has approved an urgent plan for the front. The mainstays of the plan are summed up in the following:

First, exerting more efforts for bloody clashes between our forces and the enemy forces, provided that we seek in all operations to kill the biggest number possible of enemy personnel and provided that the Israeli individual is given priority over weapons and equipment because losses in lives cause great disturbance to the enemy command.

Second, expanding reconnaissance against the enemy territory by land, sea and air.

Third, injecting all our field units with the atmosphere [spirit] of the battle and (exposing our officers and soldiers to bloodshed) so that none of our forces will be permitted to take part in future operations without having actually faced and fought the enemy.

Fourth, pushing our patrols as deep into the Sinai as possible so as to shake the confidence of the Israeli forces in the ability of the Bar-lev fortifications to prevent the Egyptian patrols to get behind their lines, provided that this is accompanied by escalating use of the psychological warfare means against them (publisher's note: At times during this period, we had more than 20 patrols behind enemy lines).

Fifth, insofar as the air force is concerned, our pilots should always exploit the proper opportunities for dogfights against the enemy aircraft.

Intellectuals Philosophizing Their Policy

(At the same Council of Ministers session, Dr Sayyid Jaballah, the minister of planning, presented the broad lines for the next development plan. Commenting on the plan, 'Abd-al-Nasir said:)

The plan should not seek shrinkage because of the war conditions. But at the same time, it should not rush into uncalculated expansion and should take into account a fundamental consideration, namely that the Americans continue to work against us and will not leave us alone unless we follow a completely rightist philosophy. The Americans will then find in Egypt politicians and intellectuals who will philosophize the policy that they want at the political and economic levels.

(At the Council of Ministers on 18 May, 'Abd-al-Nasir said:)

The Americans are trying these days to make us believe that they have reached a secret agreement with the Russians on the Middle East problem. But it has become evident to me from my conversation with the Soviet ambassador today that this is untrue and that what the Americans are reiterating is machination on their part with the aim of muddying our relations with the Soviet Union. The ambassador reiterated to me the Soviet promise of 1967 that the Soviets will not agree to any solution to the issue unless we approve it in advance. I have received new information about increasing activity by the American intelligence inside Egypt and about a serious attempt on their part to contact some officers of the armed forces.

Repeating his instructions to the ministers at the end of that meeting, 'Abd-al-Nasir said: We must continue to work day and night to prepare the state for war. You must not forget that Israel wants us to despair and we must work ceaselessly to make them despair of achieving their goal.

(On 8 June, 'Abd-al-Nasir said at the Council of Ministers:)

It has become obvious to us that America's position, whether at the United Nations or in the international quadrilateral committee, is deteriorating gradually from bad to worse and has finally reached full partiality for Israel and complete agreement with Israel's views, reiterating constantly that it is necessary that we negotiate directly with Israel.

Gromyko will arrive among us the day after tomorrow. It is my opinion that we should continue our policy that seeks continued dialog between the Americans and the Russians directly until the Russians realize that it is impossible to reach a peaceful solution. They will thus be compelled to continue to supply us with military equipment and weapons and with all our other requests.

Answering a question by Minister Dr Hilmi Murad on the possibility of direct contact with the Americans to change their political line toward us, 'Abd-al-Nasir said: Such a contact will achieve nothing because Israel is considered a satellite (publisher's note: 'Abd-al-Nasir used the English word "satellite," meaning that Israel turns in America's orbit) and America will not abandon it. Despite this, we recently sent Dr Mahmud Fawzi to America to open a political dialog with them and I have also sent a cable of congratulations to Nixon. But for us to enter into dialog with them to make concessions and to engage in bargaining, this is something that I will never do, especially since it is clear that America believes that the opportunity is right at the present time to achieve Israel's ambitions in the Arab territories. America also believes that the opportunity is right to get rid of our political system and, consequently, to achieve victory for itself and for Israel.

Dr Hilmi, a dialog with the Americans now will not be beneficial and will rather harm us. They have already offered us a 13-provision plan but, unfortunately, it contains numerous concessions in return for some food-stuffs and some wheat shipments. This is unacceptable. I can see no hope in the Americans until they become fully certain of our ability for steadfastness and confrontation. Another thing, only when the Americans become certain that they cannot change our regime will the dialog with them be beneficial.

As for West Germany, its cooperation with Israel is expanding and it is trying to deceive us with a 50-million pound loan. This is why I will recognize the Democratic Germany and will announce diplomatic representation with it after you approve the plan attached to the papers of today's session (publisher's note: Approval was actually given in this session to the proposed resolution).

Sisco's Plan

(At the Council of Ministers session on 26 July, 'Abd-al-Nasir said:)

Sisco, the assistant U.S. secretary of state, presented this week a new plan for the Middle East issue consisting of 14 provisions which contain fundamentally the following:

First, Israel shall withdraw from the lands it occupied, but not to the 5 June lines and only to positions agreed upon by Israel and Egypt, provided that Israel's secure borders are outlined on maps approved by both sides.

Second, all the areas from which Israeli forces withdraw shall be demilitarized.

Third, UN forces shall be stationed in Sharm al-Shaykh, keeping in mind that the Sinai shall be demilitarized and that the Tirana Strait shall be an international strait.

Fourth, the state of war between Egypt and Israel shall be terminated as soon as the agreement documents are deposited at the UN Secretariat.

Fifth, the parties concerned shall agree on a schedule to clear the canal and on scheduling withdrawal of the Israeli forces.

Sixth, Gaza area shall be demilitarized and its administration shall be temporarily under UN care.

Seventh, all ships shall be guaranteed the right of free passage in the naval waterways of the Suez Canal and the Tirana Strait, provided that no reference is made to the Constantinople Agreement (publisher's note: this is because Article 10 of this agreement gives Egypt the right to defend and close the canal in a state of war).

Eighth, the Palestinian refugees of 1948 shall have the right to return to Palestine or to be resettled where they live within the framework of an agreement setting the number of refugees permitted to return annually, provided that measures are taken so that the first group may arrive 3 months after conclusion of the agreement.

Ninth, Egypt shall undertake to establish peace with Israel and to eliminate all forms of hostility toward it as soon as it signs the new agreement.

Tenth, the agreement to be signed shall be an Egyptian-Israeli agreement. Other agreements shall be simultaneously concluded with the other Arab countries concerned, meaning a Jordanian-Israeli agreement and a Syrian-Israeli agreement.

(The plan was submitted to the session held on 28 July by the Socialist Union Higher Executive Committee under the chairmanship of Anwar al-Sadat who deputized for Jamal 'Abd-al-Nasir. Numerous discussions took place regarding the plan and the committee members agreed unanimously--in the absence of the president--to reject the plan. Commenting on the provisions of the plan, Dr Mahmud Fawzi, the committee member and the president's assistant for foreign affairs said:)

This plan needs no comment or analysis because everything it contains is bad. I believe that the best answer to the plan is to escalate our efforts at home in regard to military preparation and to the steadfastness of the domestic front, insisting on proceeding on the path of struggle. I will not forget the words of the U.S. secretary of state when I met him during my recent visit to Washington and asked him to submit reasonable proposals to the Arabs. He said: "Don't forget that you lost the war and that you have to pay the price." The formula of the Sisco plan has been prepared with utter cunning. The plan stipulates that more than one subsidiary issue be settled in a final manner through direct negotiations between Egypt and Israel, such as the issue of secure borders and of the number of Palestinian refugees to be permitted to return annually.

Making his comment at the conclusion of the meeting, Anwar al-Sadat, the committee member and its deputy chairman, said: "I agree with every word and every analysis made by Dr Fawzi regarding this bad plan."

Eliminating Bourgeois Appearances

(President Jamal 'Abd-al-Nasir expressed his opinion on the Sisco plan at the Council of Ministers session held on 10 August when he said:)

The 14-provision Sisco plan is not much different from the American plan preceding it. They all seek our surrender to the Americans and to Israel. This is why I see that there is no way before us but to try and to struggle with all our efforts in the following three fields:

First field is the military field. We should continue our plan to rebuild our armed forces and to raise their combat capability, provided that we avoid during the stage of preparation escalating the military action against the enemy, except after careful calculation of the results and the potentials of every escalation and after taking into consideration that the U.S. Phantom aircraft will reach Israel in the coming month of September. But in the same month we will receive from the Soviet Union the new missiles for the air defense network, especially the missiles to deal with aircraft flying at low altitudes and inflicting heavy losses on our forces and positions.

The second sphere is the domestic sphere. I consider this sphere the most important because it will bolster our domestic front and strengthen its steadfastness. This relies mainly on political action among the

masses and on good performance by the government agencies so that we may gain the people's confidence. This requires us to exert efforts to get rid of all the bourgeois actions and appearances present in the country, requires that we bring into utterly strict account all cases of laxity and deviation, that we subject everybody to inspection and customs when entering or leaving ports or airports and that we ban gifts to high-ranking officials, including the gifts of mangos and grapes distributed by the Ministry of Agrarian Reform.

The third sphere is the Arab sphere. We should exert efforts for a comprehensive Arab movement in which every party will shoulder a specific responsibility in the battle, particularly the frontline states, including Iraq.

The challenge facing us is very big and there is no place for a peaceful solution. Moreover, winning a military battle against Israel requires big effort and coordination.

As for America, even though we realize that it is 99 percent in Israel's bosom, we should maintain Mu'awiyah's hair intact in dealing with it, even if only for the remaining 1 percent and in a manner similar to the weak contact existing at present between Israel and the Soviet Union.

Islamic Movement

(On 31 August, 'Abd-al-Nasir said:)

You remember my words in the previous session about the need for us to move in all spheres. This is why we will participate in the Islamic conference which will be held in Rabat next month. I believe that as long as this conference is going to discuss the Israeli aggression and the burning of al-Aqsa Mosque, America will stand against it. As for us, we have supported this Islamic movement since the beginning of the revolution, as is evident in the book "The Revolution's Philosophy." Our objection was against the Islamic alliance which America was seeking to form as part of its movement to create alliances turning in its orbit. As for the Arab movement, the Arab ministers of foreign affairs failed in their latest meeting and Saudi Arabia has not agreed to the holding of an Arab summit conference. But we will not stand idle. A mini-summit will be held here in Egypt tomorrow and Syria, Jordan and Iraq will take part in it. There is also talk about Sudanese participation after the success of the Sudanese revolution which erupted 3 months ago.

(But despite all the big problems and the enormous concerns, 'Abd-al-Nasir did at times find in the sea of events moments pleasing the heart. His first meeting with the Sudanese revolution leaders was tantamount to a real holiday and a personal victory for him against those who tried to besiege and break him finally. At this first meeting, 'Abd-al-Nasir told Babakr 'Abdallah, the Sudanese revolution representative: "You must open

your eyes well and must understand that Sudan's annual budget is 100 million pounds whereas the budget of the American intelligence is 2 billion pounds yearly. Plots against revolutions and revolutionary governments will continue. What is important is that we maintain our self-restraint." 'Abd-al-Nasir's happiness with the four-state summit which was held in Cairo was boundless. In this conference, 'Abd-al-Nasir declared that Egypt's army will number 1 million men in the near future. He then warned of the position of the Egyptian isolationists who call for liberating Sinai only. 'Abd-al-Nasir also revealed at this conference important secrets and terrible facts.)

[4-10 Sep 78 pp 31-35]

[Text] Part XIII: 'Abd-al-Nasir Advised Palestinians To Postpone Their Clash With King Husayn To Secure Their Continuation; 'Abd-al-Nasir Asks Moslem Countries for Actual Aid and not for Struggle With Words; After Quadrilateral Conference for Creation of Eastern Front, 'Abd-al-Nasir Suffered First Heart Attack; 'Abd-al-Nasir to al-Atasi: Mobilization of All Political Currents in Syria Is Important and Requires Quick Action; What Is Secret Agreement That 'Abd-al-Nasir Signed With Syria in 1969?

The eastern front conference which was held on 1 September was the cornerstone of the Arab movement in 1969. This conference was preceded by several meetings between 'Abd-al-Nasir and King Husayn, 'Abd-al-Nasir and Salih Mahdi 'Ammash and 'Abd-al-Nasir and Dr Nur-al-Din al-Atasi. Ultimately, the conference was an important step on the path of establishing the eastern front. But these meetings had been preceded by another meeting between 'Abd-al-Nasir and representatives of the Sudanese revolution. It was an emotional meeting that pleased 'Abd-al-Nasir and filled his heart with joy. 'Abd-al-Nasir's meeting with Babakr 'Awadallah, the deputy chairman of the Sudanese Revolution Council, was the first official meeting between 'Abd-al-Nasir and the Sudanese revolution and it came only 2 months after the inception of the revolution. 'Abd-al-Nasir had received the revolution with great optimism and with greater hope that this revolution would stand with him and would wage with him the war of Arabdom against imperialism and neocolonialism. For these reasons, he opened his arms and embraced the delegation members, welcoming the representatives of the heroic Sudanese people. The words with which 'Abd-al-Nasir opened his talks with the delegation fully expressed the feelings in his heart and his soul.

'Abd-al-Majid Farid

'Abd-al-Nasir started by saying:

'Abd-al-Nasir: In my name and in the name of the people of the United Arab Republic, I welcome you in your capacity as representatives of the Sudanese revolution and as symbols of the sublime principles it declared 2 months ago. The 25 May revolution is an extension of the 23 July

revolution and is a positive contribution toward besieging colonialism and its ambitions in the Arab world.

[Babakr 'Awadallah] We have come to you because we realize that the unity of pains and hopes binds the two parts of the valley and that the unity of destiny compels us to meet as brothers and to place before you our position in an open book so that we may together achieve our goals on the path of unity and socialism. We have not come here to be tied to you by documents and agreements or by superficial means because what is between us is much greater than this. We believe that it is a pity that you should import wheat when we have hundreds of thousands of feddans of cultivable land and that it is a pity that we should have millions of members of the Arab people in Sudan and not participate positively with your people in their armed struggle against Zionism and colonialism.

'Abd-al-Nasir: We are always prepared to meet any demand you have. Do not forget that the easiest step in a revolution is the eve of the revolution because the real problems begin after that eve. I also hope that you will realize that it is impossible for all the people to support you because when you raise the slogan of socialism this means that you will prevent some people from exploiting others. In other words, you will immediately define your friends and your enemies.

Every revolution is an act against the interests of imperialism and colonialism. We must understand that the colonialism that is facing us and facing you possesses enormous strength and mighty tools. A simple example is that your budget in Sudan amounts to nearly 100 million pounds whereas the budget of the U.S. intelligence amounts to nearly 2 billion pounds, i.e., twentyfold your budget. We must also understand that plots against revolutions and revolutionary governments will continue. We have been exposed to numerous plots since 1952. What is important is that you maintain self-control. As for unity between Egypt and Sudan, there is a fact that cannot be obliterated, namely that actual unity exists between us. This unity is established on a number of firm mainstays and our actions and yours can be considered nothing but a further consolidation and entrenchment of this unity. As long as we both believe in the same causes and goals, then we will march together on one path.

Babakr 'Awadallah: It is true that unity is not documents and provisions. It is a reality and a tangible translation of this reality is needed. Positive steps must be taken to replace the previous negative stances. We want to do good deeds for Sudan and for Egypt by binding them together.

'Abd-al-Nasir: I believe that the practical steps should be studied immediately through joint meetings by the two sides. 'Abd-al-Majid Farid can organize this process.

Advice to Palestinians

Babakr 'Awadallah: There is another issue that I want to present to you. We have had information for a month about the presence of an imperialist plan to liquidate the Palestinian people's liberation movement.

'Abd-al-Nasir: I do actually feel concerned about this issue. America stands behind this plan. America has revealed its true face in Lebanon. Moreover, new and suspect appointments have been made in Jordan, especially in the Ministry of Defense, the chief of staff and in some commands. On my part, I always advise the Palestinian leaderships to postpone their clash with the Jordanian authority and to try to reassure King Husayn as much as possible because the postponement of such a clash means the continuation of the entity of the Palestinians. It even bolsters their position and their capabilities.

(The meeting with the Sudanese brothers was followed by the meeting with the Syrian comrades in arms. The meeting between 'Abd-al-Nasir and Nur-al-Din al-Atasi was one of the preparatory meetings that 'Abd-al-Nasir had held before convocation of the quadrilateral conference in Cairo. This preparatory meeting with al-Atasi resulted in signing a political agreement between Syria and Egypt which produced the "battle's political command." It was agreed to keep this agreement secret. Its most important provisions were:

First, the command is to be formed immediately of the president of Egypt, the president of Syria, the two ministers of defense and the two ministers of foreign affairs.

Second, this command is to appoint a military commander who will be responsible for the military planning for the battle. Priority in planning and in preparation is to be given to the air forces and air defense.

Third, this agreement shall not conflict with any other agreements that may be reached at the level of the eastern front or at the Arab level.

After signing the provisions of the agreement, the following brief conversation took place between 'Abd-al-Nasir and al-Atasi:)

'Abd-al-Nasir: Some people may attack this agreement. However, the political situation is more important than this, especially since Israel will not withdraw from the occupied territories in months or in a year. This is why the matter requires joint planning. The issue to us is an issue of life or death.

Another subject is the importance of mobilizing all the political currents in Syria. This issue requires quick action on your part and I hope that you will not consider this an intervention on our part in your domestic affairs.

Al-Atasi: There is absolutely no sensitivity on this matter because we believe that bringing this issue to completion constitutes a guarantee for all of us. We will exert all the efforts we can with all the domestic forces to achieve what is required.

'Abd-al-Nasir: The latest UN discussions and the strike against Lebanon reveals to us clearly the American position of hostility to all the Arabs. Golda Meir will be going to them [Americans] on 23 September. Moreover, next year there are senatorial bi-elections [sic] in America. President Nixon needs the Jewish votes. If we can implement today's agreement, Israel will be in a big dilemma in a year or two because it will be forced to fight on two fronts simultaneously. We must also exert pressure on the Russians to give us more aid and so that a larger number of their experts may take part in the air defense. In conclusion, it is very important not to let this agreement displease Iraq or to make it a source for Iraq's annoyance, especially since Iraq will participate with us in a quadrilateral conference on the eastern front and since it must be encouraged and reassured with all the means.

War Is Only Means

('Abd-al-Nasir's meeting with King Husayn at al-Qubba Palace on 31 August was the last of his side meetings before the big quadrilateral conference which was held on the following day, 1 September. President 'Abd-al-Nasir was forced to interrupt his talk with King Husayn and postpone the meeting to go to Cairo Airport to receive Nur-al-Din al-Atasi, the president of Syria. 'Abd-al-Nasir was enthusiastic for the quadrilateral meeting. He believed that Israel's defeat would be realized if Israel were forced to fight on several fronts simultaneously. He also believed that the opportunity was right for the creation of a strong eastern front including Iraq, Syria and Jordan. All these issues were submitted to the quadrilateral conference. But before entering the conference hall, the following conversation took place between 'Abd-al-Nasir and King Husayn in the side meeting that was held 1 day before the conference:)

'Abd-al-Nasir: We do not want war for the sake of war. We want a peaceful solution, but on conditions, namely the return of the Palestinians to their lands and the return of our occupied territories to us. But when there is no way to achieve our goals by this means, war becomes the only means. We in Egypt put our hands in King Husayn's hand without reservations and without conditions until we liberate the occupied land and Jerusalem.

King Husayn: Insofar as the political solution is concerned, I am with you and on one essential condition, namely restoration of the lands occupied by the enemy and the return of the Palestinians to their lands. This is why we should coordinate our positions fully. What is important is that we maintain as much self-control as possible and not allow Israel to drag us into a battle whose time and place it has planned.

The next battle should be our battle. We should choose its time and its place.

'Abd-al-Nasir: Our military position is very different now than what it was after the battle. You remember that at that time our people were determined to continue to stand fast and to struggle. But the situation of our forces was very bad. Rifles were not available for all the troops. But now we have rebuilt and rearmed the armed forces. We now have half a million fighters and we are exerting efforts to raise this number to 1 million fighters. There are two essential factors that must be present for a peaceful solution to be achieved:

First, Arab unity and Arab solidarity. America gives big importance to Arab solidarity and fears the future results of such solidarity.

Second, our military forces. Israel will reconsider its calculations if she becomes certain that we are able to stop and repel her.

But if we cannot achieve our goals through a peaceful solution, then the military solution is inevitable for eliminating the traces of the aggression. It must be clear to all that eliminating the traces of the aggression means liberation of all the occupied territories. There are in Egypt some isolationist voices that call for liberation of the Sinai only. We must enter the next battle with a unified command and must compel Israel to fight on all the fronts. I would like to reassure you that we now have an anti-aircraft defense that is thirtyfold what it used to be before the 1967 war. It is our opinion that it is not beneficial now to bring up the issue of Iran at the conference, keeping in mind that I have expressed my readiness to Iraq to send some naval units to the waters of al-Basrah and some bombers to strengthen their air capability.

King Husayn: Concerning the problem of Iran, we have exerted big efforts to pacify the situation in Shatt al-'Arab area. I will ask 'Abd-al-Mun'im al-Rifa'i, the minister of foreign affairs, to put a complete picture of the situation at the disposal of brother Mahmud Riyad, your minister of foreign affairs.

Struggle With Words

'Abd-al-Nasir: One last thing, we have agreed with Syria to unify our air and naval forces. I would like to make to you a remark now on the Islamic conference which will be held in Rabat in a few days. This group of countries is supposed to contribute to us through the actual participation of its armed forces or to offer us financial aid. But for these countries to struggle with words alone, this is unacceptable.

(At this point, the meeting between 'Abd-al-Nasir and King Husayn ended and the quadrilateral Egyptian-Syrian-Iraqi-Jordanian conference began

in an attempt to set up the eastern front--the dream of 'Abd-al-Nasir and of all the Arabs which, very unfortunately, was never realized in a positive manner.

The quadrilateral conference was held at the beginning of September 1969. Participating in King Husayn's delegation were 'Abd-al-Mun'im al-Rifa'i, the minister of foreign affairs, and Maj Gen 'Ali al-Hiyari, the minister of defense. Dr Ibrahim Makhus, the minister of foreign affairs, and Maj Gen Hafiz Hafiz al-Asad, the minister of defense, took part in the Syrian delegation. For Iraq, Lt Gen Salih Mahdi 'Ammash attended on behalf of President Ahmad Hasan al-Bakr who was sick and Lt Gen Hardan al-Tikriti participated. The Egyptian delegation was led by President 'Abd-al-Nasir and included Anwar al-Sadat, Husayn al-Shafi'i, Dr Mahmud Fawzi, Mahmud Riyad, the minister of foreign affairs, Lt Gen Muhammad Fawzi, the minister of war, and Dr Hasan Sabri al-Khuli as members. After welcoming the members of the delegations who sat around the square table in the main meetings hall in al-Qubbah Palace, President 'Abd-al-Nasir said:)

'Abd-al-Nasir: I propose in the light of my initial contacts with the gentlemen chairmen of the delegations that the conference agenda be as follows:

First, define the strategic goal of our coming plan.

Second, an analytical study of the political situation at present.

Third, formation of a political command for the military forces participating on the various fronts.

If there is no objection to the topics proposed for the conference agenda (nobody objected), permit me to start the discussion. It is evident to all of us that the political solution has not achieved for us our goals. This is why we need time to complete our military preparation and this requires us to unify the military command of all the fronts so as to guarantee full coordination and to force Israel to fight on all fronts. We have contacted the Arab countries to participate in the unified military command but some of them, such as Libya, Morocco, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, have not agreed for various reasons. Concerning the foreign ministers conference which started recently, unfortunately, it will not reach any positive resolutions and we must make a quick step as political commands of the countries participating in the battle to draw up our strategic plan very clearly and to review all the positive and negative aspects in full. Now, I propose that we move to discuss the military situation (after approval of the proposal, Lieutenant General Fawzi read the military report to the conference).

Salih Mahdi 'Ammash: It is obvious from the report that the most important negative aspect is the inadequate preparation of the air forces needed for the eastern front.

'Abd-al-Nasir: I would like first to greet the Iraqi revolution and the eagerness of its leadership to participate in the eastern front, even though Iraq has no borders with Israel and even though there are no Iraqi territories occupied by the enemy. Iraq could stand idle and, as the proverb says, "with an ear of clay and an ear of dough." But they have come to the conference to participate positively in the planning and the preparation for the battle. It is my belief that the next battle will be a battle of life or death to Israel because Israel realizes that we are preparing for this battle seriously. Practically, we can mobilize 2 million troops. Egypt now has one-half million troops under arms. Insofar as tanks are concerned, there are 2,500 tanks on the eastern front and 1,500 tanks in Egypt, thus bringing up the total to 4,000. This is a figure that surpasses the number of tanks that the enemy has.

Another issue that I would like to touch on is that there is no call at present for oneupmanship or for the attempt to hunt for the mistakes of the others because we are passing through a decisive stage concerning the future of the entire nation.

There are also questions that require definite answers. Can the air operations be intensified at present? What is the meaning of America's supplying Israel with long-range bombers? Why isn't there an air defense for Baghdad and for some of our vital targets? We have stood fast for two and a quarter years since the defeat and we can stand fast for 2 more years, but on the condition that our goal be fully clear and that we plan to move from the position of defense to that of offense on all the fronts. We must also decide something in regard to the deterrence policy because it is a political and not a military process and we must decide this thing now.

Salih Mahdi 'Ammash: I repeat President Ahmad Hasan al-Bakr's apologies for not attending this important conference because of his illness. We in Iraq understand the seriousness and importance of this stage and we join you on the need for a clear vision and for defining the complete plan because the battle with Israel is a long battle with strong dimensions. I propose that the plan be divided into two phases: The phase of steadfastness and then the phase of liberation and of elimination of the source of the permanent aggression against us. We must rid ourselves of the regional sentiment when discussing the issue of the unified command. For example, should the eastern front be penetrated and should the enemy reach, God forbid, Damascus or Amman, then this should be no reason for Syria or Jordan to withdraw from the war. The battle should continue to the end.

'Abd-al-Nasir (teasing): I believe that the time is too late for us to discuss the issue of enemy entry to Damascus and Amman. Therefore, I suggest that the session be adjourned until 1800 tomorrow, provided that our meeting be preceded by a meeting of the ministers of foreign

affairs to draw up a comprehensive appraisal of the political situation and to present this appraisal to us in tomorrow's session.

(The second session started on the evening of 2 September in the same place. Mahmud Riyad presented the political report prepared by the ministers of foreign affairs. The ministers of foreign affairs proposed in the report addressing an appeal from the conference to all the Arab leaders urging them to actually participate in the next battle.)

'Abd-al-Nasir: Concerning what has been mentioned in the report on the element of time and the solutions available to the enemy, I believe that the enemy will not move now to occupy Damascus or Amman because he is now in a more convenient position and because he is eager to maintain the status quo, with a specific cease-fire agreement and with severe deterrence operations when necessary.

Hardan al-Tikriti: I believe that Israel's current policy is to destroy the Arab armed forces wherever they may happen to be!! This is why Israel will not permit our armed forces to grow. This compels us to determine the time in which we stop the military race between us and them. We should also not forget Israel's superior ability to arm itself which exceeds our ability as Arabs.

'Abd-al-Nasir (aroused by Hardan's words and doubts): So, what is to be done? As long as we cast doubts on our Arab capabilities, what is the suggestion?

Al-Atasi: I do not believe that the armament race is the only decisive factor between us and Israel because there is a more important factor, namely the human element.

Salih Mahdi 'Ammash (trying to contain the effect of Hardan al-Tikriti's words): I do not think that Hardan is unaware of the impact of the human element. What he meant by his words is that America will always stand with Israel and will prevent the Arabs from becoming superior to her.

Jamal 'Abd-al-Nasir: Another factor is time. Is it in our favor or in Israel's favor? In my view, I believe that the factor of time is in our favor because we will reach equality in armament with the enemy at some point in time. At this point, we can launch the offensive. Moreover, all the combatant forces should be placed under one capable command that is in control. Simply, the issue is that we have certain forces and we should use them in the best manner possible.

Lt Gen Muhammad Fawzi (reading the military report prepared by the ministers of defense--a report summed up in three important points, namely):

First, the phase of steadfastness and of insuring the security of the domestic fronts.

Second, exhausting the enemy forces and carrying out deterrence operations.

Third, offensive on all fronts to liberate the land.

Salih Mahdi 'Ammash: The report is very good theoretically. But what is important is how to implement it practically. It is also important to guarantee implementation followup. This is why I propose the formation of a followup council attached to the general commander's office.

'Abd-al-Nasir: The report of the ministers of defense asserts that the effective factor in the battle is the air force and the air defense. Even though the total number of aircraft in the four Arab countries exceeds that which Israel has, there are difficulties that prevent reaching the required air challenge. This is why I propose that the air forces be unified immediately in preparation for unifying the combatant armed forces.

King Husayn: I welcome this step and I propose that the command be the right of the state with the biggest air forces.

(The proposal was approved by King Husayn, President al-Atasi and Lt Gen Salih Mahdi 'Ammash. But Lt Gen Muhammad Fawzi expressed a reservation on the proposal and affirmed that it will remain theoretical and impossible to implement until April 1970, i.e., the date set for completing the construction of the air bases on the eastern front. The meeting was then adjourned till the following day.

The final session was held at 1800 on 3 September. Numerous side meetings were held before this session. The session did not last long and a new delegation, namely the Sudanese delegation led by Maj Gen Ja'far Numayri, the Revolution Command Council chairman, took part in this session. Lieutenant General Fawzi summed up the conclusions reached by the ministers of defense and asserted that the only point on which agreement was not reached was the point on the need to bolster the local reserves on the Jordanian front.)

Lt Gen Hafiz al-Asad: We are ready to offer the Syrian sixth armored brigade which is currently present in al-Mafraq area for this purpose.

Salih Mahdi 'Ammash: I do not approve moving the Syrian sixth armored brigade which is in al-Mafraq area because this area is vital and its loss will separate the Syrian front from the Jordanian front.

King Husayn: I suggest that we leave the task of deploying the reserves on all fronts to the general commander.

Ten Resolutions

'Abd-al-Nasir (addressing his words to Lieutenant General 'Ammash): I, you and all those present here are considered politicians, regardless of the fact that some of us have a military background, and must let the military commanders decide on military matters. In conclusion, I would like to present to you the resolutions approved by this conference, provided that the drafting committee formulate them later on:

First, the conference approves the appraisal of the political situation submitted by the ministers of foreign affairs.

Second, the conference approves the appraisal of the strategic position presented to the conference by the ministers of defense.

Third, the conference ratifies the strategic goal on which it has agreed, namely carrying out interception operations to destroy the enemy forces and to reach the 5 June 1967 lines.

Fourth, the conference approves "the present task" of the joint forces, namely to secure the defense on the current line on the eastern and western fronts and to intercept and destroy any enemy force that tries to attack this defense line.

Fifth, the conference approves the size of the armed forces of the Arab countries participating in the conference as stated by the appraisal of the ministers of defense.

Sixth, Lt Gen Muhammad Fawzi shall be appointed general commander and shall be given full powers to achieve the goals stated in these resolutions.

Seventh, formulation of the interception plan shall begin immediately to achieve the strategic goal and a timetable for implementation shall be drawn up.

Eighth, the member countries pledge to speed up the wheel of implementation to prepare and train the armed forces required of them to carry out the plan, with special recommendations for completing the demands of the air defense and of the air forces.

Ninth, efforts shall be exerted to complete the air bases on the eastern front on schedule.

Tenth, a meeting of the participating leaders shall be held once every 4 months and of the ministers of defense or the chiefs of staff once every 2 months.

(The leaders approved the resolutions which were given to the drafting committee to write them in their final form.)

Mahdi 'Ammash: Isn't it possible for Sudan to participate with an additional reinforcement for the forces allocated for this plan?

Numayri: We do actually feel the importance of our participating in this plan. But since the revolution succeeded 4 months ago, we have found a big flaw in the preparation and armament of the armed forces. This is why we immediately started reorganizing and rearming these forces with the aid of the Soviet Union and the United Arab Republic. We hope that in 2 years our forces will reach the size and the standard that will enable us to send big forces to actually participate in the battle.

'Abd-al-Nasir: In conclusion of our works, I believe that our meetings have been positive and that they have resulted in mobilizing all our resources for the battle. I also greet in your name the step taken by the Sudanese revolution to attend this conference, even though Sudan is far from the battlefield. We hope that in the near future all the other Arab countries will renew their capabilities for this national battle. We also hope that the number of countries participating with us will increase in the next meeting.

I thank all of you for honoring your country and I wish you in the name of the people of the United Arab Republic all success and victory, God willing.

(Both King Husayn and President Numayri answered his address with proper words, wishing President 'Abd-al-Nasir and the people of the United Arab Republic victory and prosperity.)

First Heart Attack

(The quadrilateral conference thus ended. After seeing off the leaders, 'Abd-al-Nasir felt extremely fatigued. The man had been moving from problem to problem since the day of the defeat and until the day when he managed to enable the army to stand on its feet again and until he was able to enter with this army a ferocious war of attrition which inflicted on the enemy enormous losses that exceeded all his losses in the previous battles.

Then came the quadrilateral conference which was held to mobilize all the efforts and to coordinate all the positions. 'Abd-al-Nasir, who had lived on his nerves since the eve of the defeat and until the day when the quadrilateral conference ended, suddenly felt while sitting behind his desk as if a sharp dagger was sinking in his chest and penetrating his back in a spot between the lungs. When the physicians were

summoned, they all decided that 'Abd-al-Nasir was suffering from a sharp heart attack and that he had to rest completely and to get away from work totally, and even stay in bed for 7 full weeks.

Perhaps his physical condition improved somewhat but his psychological condition got worse. He wanted to know every small and big detail in the armed forces. He hoped not to die before scoring victory against the enemies. He believed that the fruits were ripening and that the harvest day was approaching and he insisted that the battle not be delayed a single day behind its schedule.

Even though the masses believed the story that 'Abd-al-Nasir had influenza, all those around him and everybody in authority knew the truth. Long and tense weeks passed in which 'Abd-al-Nasir left the domestic matters to be supervised by a committee of his aides. But he did not stop for a moment contacting the military commanders and familiarizing himself with the latest reports coming from the front.

Another surprising thing was the relationship of 'Abd-al-Nasir's sickness with the important and fateful Arab events. Perhaps the reason for this was that 'Abd-al-Nasir was not the kind of official who separates his person from the events taking place around him and not the kind who views the events with the spirit of a referee supervising a game between two teams. 'Abd-al-Nasir was of a different kind. He himself used to turn into a part of the events, affecting them and being affected by them. He did not stop until a direct hit penetrated him and hit his heart.

History repeated itself in 1970 when 'Abd-al-Nasir fell at the end of September also after getting through another Arab conference that was held for the sake of the Palestinians. However, his big heart that had endured a lot did not withstand the shock this time and stopped beating.

The great man died, leaving our world for God's vast realm. But before he died, he had an open and frank meeting with King Faysal during which each of them revealed his cards on the table. The two men spoke frankly. But what did 'Abd-al-Nasir say and what did King Faysal say?)

[11-17 Sep 78 pp 31-35]

[Text] Part XIV: After an Estrangement Lasting 7 Years, Interesting Meeting Between Faysal and 'Abd-al-Nasir; 'Abd-al-Nasir: We Have Refused to Have Organizations Following Us Like al-Sa'iqah Follows Syria; Faysal Objects to AL-AHRAM and to Haykal and 'Abd-al-Nasir Blames Zakariya Nil; 'Abd-al-Nasir: America Has Offered Us Separate Solution and if Egypt Falter, Entire Issue Will Come to End; Egypt Has Accepted Peaceful Solution While Continuing To Wage a Ferocious War Whereas Syrians Call for War and Their Guns Are Covered With Rust

Physicians permitted 'Abd-al-Nasir to resume his work as of 1 November. His first political activity after his recovery was in the Council of Ministers session on 12 November. Physicians forbade him completely from smoking even though he had been smoking 60 cigarettes daily before. Before entering the meeting hall that day, the ministers agreed among themselves not to smoke during the session out of concern for his health. Sometime after the meeting started, 'Abd-al-Nasir found out about the agreement and insisted that the ministers smoke as usual.

At the first meeting, 'Abd-al-Nasir summed up, after an absence of 2 months, the political situation to the ministers in light of the latest information he had familiarized himself with. He said: The American position of partiality to Israel has not changed. Today, the Americans presented a new proposal to Ashraf Ghurbal (the temporary representative of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Washington) containing the same basis and suggestions they had already presented, adding to them only the point that they recognize Egypt's international borders. It is clear from all sources that America still insists on putting our area under its influence and control. This is why it is planning to change the current Egyptian regime, and also the regime in Syria, hoping that it will reach understanding easily with the new regimes.

As for the Soviets, they have finally reached the conviction that the Americans are no help for reaching a peaceful solution and this is why they will begin to prepare and arm our forces so that they may become an offensive power. Moreover, the experts that they now have in Egypt are exerting big efforts in training the armed forces, especially the pilots whose numbers have increased and whose combat capability has been enhanced.

As for the war of attrition, our continuation of this war has greatly affected the morale of the Israeli forces. These forces have been forced to change their policy of deterrence operations and have entrusted these deterrence operations to the air force instead of the ground forces. There is another advantage that we have gained from the war of attrition, namely that our forces have become accustomed to the enemy and our soldiers are now facing and clashing with the enemy soldiers and are living a normal daily life amidst the clamour of the battle and the sounds of grenades and raiding aircraft. We are now capable of moving a fully equipped and armed infantry division across the Suez Canal and to clash with the enemy under hard war conditions.

As for the Soviet armament contracts, they are proceeding well. The contracts concluded in 1969 are equal to those concluded between 1955 and 1968. Today, our forces have reached 30,000 officers and one-half million soldiers.

Addressing the session, Engineer Sayyid Mar'i congratulated the president on his recovery and informed the council that agricultural

production was increased in the year despite the war conditions, that cotton production increased by 1.5 million qintars and that corn production increased by 40,000 ardabbs.

At the conclusion of the session, 'Abd-al-Nasir spoke about his plan of movement in the Arab sphere to benefit from all the resources for the battle. He said that he held contacts with the Libyan and Sudanese revolutions and that both wish to embark on unionist steps with Egypt. Syria asked to join this unionist step but Libya expressed its fears of the Syrian Ba'th Party. This is why it was agreed to postpone Syria's participation in the talks until the Libyan regime's fears are eliminated.

'Abd-al-Nasir also informed the Council of Ministers that contacts had been held with King Faysal and that the Egyptian-Saudi relations were on their way to improvement. King Faysal also announced his acceptance of the invitation which Minister Hasan 'Abbas Zaki had carried to him and which the king accepted immediately. The visit was set for 18 and 19 December and the political talks were to start immediately upon the king's arrival.

This visit had special significance because it came after a period of lukewarm relations preceded by a period of open hostility which culminated in the Yemen war in which Saudi forces fought alongside the royalist forces against the forces of the new republic. Moreover, the visit came directly before the convocation of the Rabat Arab summit conference--a conference in which, the political circles had speculated, the Arab situation would explode as a result of the presence of numerous political problems, especially between Saudi Arabia and Egypt.

Despite all this, 'Abd-al-Nasir believed in the need for the unity of the Arab ranks to confront the common enemy. He was eager for King Faysal's visit to succeed so as to block the path in the face of all the plots seeking to broaden the disagreement and to scatter the Arab ranks. This is why he gave me, in my capacity as secretary general of the Socialist Union in the capital, specific instructions on the need to give King Faysal a warm popular welcome. We were able to do so after a long and heated debate with our political cadres. The picture of King Faysal standing in the convertible car next to 'Abd-al-Nasir and greeting the masses of Cairo, all of whom came out to greet Egypt's great guest, drew the attention of many people. The king was pleased by the warm and eventful reception which opened the way for frank and open talks between the two sides.

The talks of the two leaders lasted throughout 18 and 19 December. The joint communique issued at the end of the talks can truly be considered a turning point in the Arab relations.

The first minutes of the first meeting between the two delegations were truly critical and decisive. The members of the two delegations sat facing each other. A short period of silence which felt like years passed. Dialog between the two sides had been cut off for 7 years, there had been between them a hot war in which blood was shed and lives were wasted and during which plots were hatched by each side against the other side. Perhaps the silence was due to the fact that neither side knew where to start and what were the bridges to be disregarded, those to be stopped at and those to be crossed to reach the other side. It seemed to me while sitting in my place behind 'Abd-al-Nasir that the silence would continue forever. But 'Abd-al-Nasir suddenly broke the silence and said:

'Abd-al-Majid Farid

'Abd-al-Nasir: Once again I welcome his majesty the king and his delegation, expressing to you our sincere wish for the success of this meeting and for reaching a common understanding on the issues of concern to us and to you. We have been trying on our part to improve the relations with you since 1967. Our people have welcomed this, as they demonstrated to you today when they gave you this eventful reception because they feel that we have abnormal relations with you and that the Arab interest requires the return of these relations to their normal path, especially since the Egyptian-Saudi relations have been firm and have been dominated by pure fraternity throughout the ages.

There is no doubt that this meeting and your visit will block the path in the face of all those who benefit from the disagreement. We also believe that the visit will have its far-reaching effects, not only in our two countries but in the entire Arab world. Even though the Yemen war harmed the relations between us, it has ended now and there is no longer any justification for the relations between us not to improve and grow.

I again welcome brother King Faysal and the brothers accompanying him and I implore God that our meeting will be beneficial to both our countries and will be one of the factors for the success of the Rabat summit conference which will be held in days.

Third Team

King Faysal: I thank you for your welcome. I also thank your noble people. I would like to say that all you have said about the relations between us is correct and that the disagreement between us is an abnormality. Since the days of King 'Abd-al-'Aziz, the relations between us were normal and strong. What happened afterwards is abnormal. I always say that whenever there is disagreement between two sides, a third party must be behind this disagreement.

It is our hope that the relations will return to their previous condition. We consider this an essential and an inevitable thing that each of us must try to achieve because the national and Islamic interest of both countries requires us to be one hand and one body. Officials in both countries, before individuals [sic], should try to create the proper conditions for achieving this goal. We beseech God to help us in our endeavor. God accepts only good common work.

'Abd-al-Nasir: The truth is that the conditions we experienced in recent times, most important being the Yemen war in 1962, have greatly affected the relations between us and turned them toward a path which neither we nor you had planned. On our part, we consider the Khartoum meeting of 1967 a decisive date in the relations between us. Since then, my instructions have been clear and frank to all our agencies not to intervene in the domestic affairs of any Arab country and to concentrate their efforts to fight Israel in all fields. I sent Minister Hasan 'Abbas Zaki to you to explain to you our new policy in all spheres. But brother Hasan 'Abbas Zaki informed me after his return of the fears and doubts you still have concerning the activity of some agencies. I told Zaki to tell you that any person deviating from my instructions in this regard will be tried by me before you. I hope that an important fact will not be disregarded, namely that there will always be individuals who try and will continue to try to muddy the relations between us.

King Faysal: Actually, we still have some residues. Moreover, there are some people who are trying to broaden the disagreement between us. But these attempts must be stopped in the interest of both countries. For example, some people were arrested in the kingdom recently. When interrogated, these people claimed that they were in contact with Egyptian persons and agencies. They admitted this in writing.

I and my colleagues in the kingdom have been at a loss as to what to do with them. Should we try them? They will admit in the courts that they have contacts with Egyptian persons and agencies. This may harm the relations between us. Should we sentence them secretly without a trial? Should we pardon them and let them go free?

The truth is that we remained at a loss and did not know what to do with them. Finally, we preferred not to make a decision on their case and to keep them under detention. There is also a small group of communists and these people also reiterate that they have contacts with Egypt and other countries. I have postponed making a decision in the case of these people also. I wish I could avoid bringing up these issues but perhaps bringing them up will be of benefit to both sides.

'Abd-al-Nasir: I would like to point out to you a fact that we do not conceal, namely that we have no party branches outside Egypt and that we have not agreed to establish regional leaderships [for the Arab

Socialist Union] outside Egypt, unlike some Arab parties such as the Ba'th Party.

King Faysal (interrupting with emotion): The Ba'th Party...may God destroy the Ba'th Party.

Sami Sharaf and Suspect Contacts

'Abd-al-Nasir: Even insofar as the fedayeen organizations are concerned, we have refused to have organizations following us, as is the case of al-Sa'iqah organization which follows Syria and receives its instructions from it.

King Faysal: As long as we are talking frankly, we have documents that incriminate a person who works with you of suspect contacts with individuals in the kingdom. This person's name is Sami Sharaf and it is said that he acts upon your personal orders.

'Abd-al-Nasir: I am ready to conduct an investigation on the issue. However, I would like to assure you that we are not presently engaged in any hostile activity in your country or in any other Arab country. We must now take a step forward in our bilateral relations, otherwise fears and suspicions will continue to control us.

('Abd-al-Nasir dealt with this issue at a meeting of the Higher Executive Committee held after the visit. The meeting was held on 12 January 1970. 'Abd-al-Nasir was speaking about the outcome of the Rabat conference and about the non-serious participation by some Arab countries in the mobilization required for the battle. He said: Concerning Saudi Arabia, I believe that King Faysal's visit to our country last month was for the purpose of throwing dust in the eyes because they are still plotting against us. We have recently gotten hold of some documents that prove that the Saudi royalist regime is still plotting against us. As for what King Faysal said during his talks with me about our plotting against him and for his citing the fact that some persons were arrested in Saudi Arabia and admitted that they were in secret contact with an individual working in my office, namely Sami Sharaf, this is true. However, this happened in 1963 and 1964 when we were fighting in Yemen and each of us was engaged in hostile activity against the other. Such contacts were normal. The contacts to which the king referred had actually taken place in Copenhagen, the capital of Denmark, between Sami Sharaf and some Saudi officers who were not happy with the royalist regime in Saudi Arabia. In 1965, I broke my office's connection with this issue and gave instructions that whatever concerns Saudi Arabia be entrusted to the General Intelligence Directorate as part of its ordinary activity.)

Haykal and Zakariya Nil

King Faysal: There is another issue about which I would like to talk frankly to you, namely what some of your information media, especially AL-AHRAM and Haykal, its chief editor, publish. Haykal is said to be your official spokesman. This is not my personal estimate but what the world press and radios and some heads of state and prime ministers reiterate.

'Abd-al-Nasir: AL-AHRAM is one of the Egyptian papers. It does not reflect my personal opinion. The Arab section [world] page often publishes the opinions of Zakariya Nil, the person in charge of this section, which are very different from my personal opinions.

Prince Nawwaf ibn 'Abd-al-'Aziz: May His Excellency the president permit me to repeat what His Majesty the king has said about AL-AHRAM having a special status with you. For example, it is the one paper in the world to beat all the information media to the news of our visit to you.

'Abd-al-Nasir: The fact is that the paper representing our government is AL-JUMHURIYAH. AL-AHRAM is a single [sic] paper and its chief editor (Haykal) is the most active journalist in Egypt. He spends 12 hours in his office daily. As for the news of the visit, our Ministry of Foreign Affairs is the party responsible for the mistake because it was its duty to issue a press statement and to distribute this statement to the world information media. Generally, not all that is published in the press reflects firm facts. For example, the press is speaking these days about rapprochement between us and South Yemen whereas there are differences between us and them at present.

King Faysal: I believe that the relations will improve from now on and that we will live up to the good opinion of the masses that received us when we proceeded together from the airport to al-Qubbah Palace.

'Abd-al-Nasir: Your Majesty, we are both responsible for eliminating any lukewarmness that may crop up in the relations between us. I am confident that the exchange of visits will help a lot in improving the relations. If His Majesty has no objection, we will adjourn the meeting until tomorrow.

(The session was adjourned until 1800 on the following day. Publisher's note: Before the convocation of the second session, King Faysal summoned me to his upper floor in al-Qubbah Palace. At the moment of my arrival in the king's private suite, he had with him a number of Saudi brothers of whom I remember Shaykh Ahmad 'Abd-al-Wahhab, the chief of the royal protocol, and Minister Hasan 'Abbas Zaki who was accompanying the [Saudi] delegation. After a short period, King Faysal indicated with utter decorum his wish to speak with me privately. When those present left

after asking to be excused, King Faysal told me that there were two extremely important issues that he wanted me to present privately to President 'Abd-al-Nasir, considering that the hearts had been cleared of ill feelings and that good intentions had prevailed. "I would like to warn the president of the 'Ulawaites rule in Syria because the Islamic history affirms that the 'Ulawites are treacherous by nature and that they work only for their personal interest. Religiously, they are not considered true Moslems." When I wanted to discuss some of the king's statements, he said: "When you come to us in the kingdom, I will let you read some of the numerous Islamic volumes I have in my library." The king added: "The second issue is 'Abd-al-Nasir's relationship with the Russians. These people are atheists and 'Abd-al-Nasir's continued relationship with them will harm him gravely. The Russians do not wish him or Egypt prosperity and success." He then reminded me of the story of the Soviet ambassador when he insisted on meeting 'Abd-al-Nasir on the eve of the aggression and assured 'Abd-al-Nasir that Israel did not intend to carry out any military action. After listening to his majesty, I said that America also participated in deceiving 'Abd-al-Nasir until the last moment. My conversation with the king ended at this point because it was time for the second session.)

Egypt Falters and Issue Ends

(The second session started at 1000 in the morning. Tempers had calmed after the previous frank and open session between the two sides. The discussion went beyond the relations between the two countries and entered directly into the political and military issues and into the issues expected to be brought up at the Rabat conference.)

'Abd-al-Nasir: We talked yesterday about the bilateral relations very clearly and frankly. I believe we attained a degree of complete understanding [sic]. Therefore, we shall move on today to the fundamental issue and I had asked Mahmud Riyad to discuss the issue initially with brother 'Umar al-Saqqaf.

'Umar al-Saqqaf: It is obvious from a review of the issues proposed for presentation to the Rabat conference that you exclude the peaceful solution and that military action and the means of preparing this action are the projected issue.

'Abd-al-Nasir: When we approved the Security Council resolution in 1967, we were hard pressed for time in order to be able to rebuild our armed forces. For the sake of the truth and of history, Jordan and Egypt were the only two countries to approve the peaceful solution and the Security Council resolution. Today, we are the only country engaged in daily fighting in a bloody and unprecedented war of attrition.

America offered us a solution to fragment the issue and to confine it, insofar as we are concerned, to Sinai alone. But we have rejected it

because if the issue were purely Egyptian, it would be easy to liberate the Sinai. But as long as the issue is at the pan-Arab level primarily, we must accept comprehensive Arab action with all its commitments. We here in Egypt have paid a lot because of the war. Many of our installations and targets have been destroyed. We have more than 400,000 evacuees and thousands and thousands of our sons have been martyred.

Again for the sake of the truth and of history, I tell his majesty the king that if Egypt falters in this issue then the entire issue will come to an end.

Syrian Guns Covered With Rust

We know that we are the people who have to pay the heaviest and to sacrifice the most. But, unfortunately, there is no such a thing as a peaceful solution. When we go to the Rabat conference and declare mobilization of all the Arab forces for the battle, this does not mean that we will go to war tomorrow or the day after. This is simply because there are military matters that require some time, such as the preparation of fighter pilots. We now have in Egypt 400 aircraft but we do not have 400 fighter pilots. Meanwhile, Israel faces no such problem.

Agreement must also be reached on the strategic plan to be achieved. We want from the Rabat conference the minimum degree of Arab solidarity. We are not going to this conference to create troubles for the others or to enter into battles against anybody. However, Syria has declared that it rejects any peaceful solution and talks about the armed struggle whereas rust covers its guns and relative calm prevails on its front and whereas it has not fired a single bullet against the enemy so far.

We, as Arabs, succeeded in the Khartoum conference because we faced the reality and acted accordingly. Were it not for the aid determined by that conference, we would not be able to stand fast until the moment, considering that we suffer losses that greatly exceed the aid determined for us. In addition to losing the canal revenues, we have also lost 170 million pounds from the industrial sector, not to mention the costs required to provide the evacuees with the bare essentials. But we have not asked that the aid given to us be increased and will not ask this of you or of others. War is not an easy thing and the date of the battle cannot be set now because determining this date depends on the growth of our air force. Moreover, the Arab military mobilization to be decided upon by the Rabat conference is what will determine our ability to launch the war and what will set the date of the battle.

King Faysal: I do not believe that the issue of the peaceful solution or of setting the date of the battle will be brought up at the conference. All that can be discussed there is how to achieve Arab military mobilization and the responsibility of each state in such a mobilization.

'Abd-al-Nasir: I have learned that there is a Libyan plan and a Sudanese plan concerning Arab mobilization. As for us, we have no specific plan. We only have ideas. I have also learned that there is a Tunisian plan that confines military mobilization to the Palestinians only.

King Faysal: This would have been reasonable in 1948, but not now--even though King Sa'ud was one of the advocates of this opinion in the past.

Fates Lurking

(At this point, numerous discussions took place on the issue of the unified Arab command and on the powers of the general commander to move and use the forces of the various states. At the end, King Faysal and 'Abd-al-Nasir stressed the need for constant contacts and for the exchange of visits at all levels. 'Umar al-Saqqaf then read the joint statement drawn up by the two countries' ministers of foreign affairs. The statement was approved and it was agreed to broadcast it simultaneously from Cairo Radio and Riyadh Radio.

Thus, a page of disagreement between Egypt and Saudi Arabia--a disagreement which at times reached the point of bloodshed--was turned over and it seemed to everybody that 'Abd-al-Nasir was getting closer to realizing his big dream of mobilization and liberation of the land. But fates were planning something else. 'Abd-al-Nasir's days on this earth had drawn close to their end. Less than 9 months after this meeting, 'Abd-al-Nasir departed forever. But before his departure, he was able to fill the world and to preoccupy the minds of people. His last 10 days were critical and eventful. The Arabs were at a crossroad and close to the abyss but he was able to control the situation and to steer matters toward the good of the nation.

Many are the secrets and the unknown things with which those days abounded. In a short moment, he disappeared and departed from among us. But we later discovered that it was a horrible moment because we lost in it the greatest man we have known in life. But what happened during 'Abd-al-Nasir's last days?)

[18-24 Sep 78 pp 31-35]

[Text] Part XV: Two Meetings With al-Qadhdhafi and Numayri; Al-Qadhdhafi Was Apprehensive of Dealing With Soviets and 'Abd-al-Nasir Advised Him That His Doubts Were Misplaced; Numayri Rejected Idea of Immediate Unity, Preferring a Single Front Because It Includes All Nationalities; 'Abd-al-Nasir Told al-Qadhdhafi That He Decided To Cross [Canal] in 1971 and Asked That Delivery of Mirage Aircraft Be Made Speedier "Because We Cannot Wait Until 1973"

We reviewed in the previous parts the events in Egypt and in the Arab homeland after the defeat and found 'Abd-al-Nasir, along with the

Egyptian people and all the Arab people, facing the setback with determination to struggle and with the resolution to rebuild, especially in regard to military preparation. 'Abd-al-Nasir raised the slogan of the "battle continues" and even sought the battle, declaring the fourth war against Israel in 1969. It was a bitter war of attrition which inflicted more losses on the Jews than the three previous wars.

Then came 1970, a year which concealed in its folds numerous events and surprises, the first of which being that the Arab people here and there imagined after the success of the Sudanese and Libyan revolutions at the end of 1969 that their aspirations for unity would be realized in 1970. But the meeting which took place in February 1970 between 'Abd-al-Nasir, Mu'ammarr al-Qadhafi and Numayri made it clear that the creation of the desired unity was a great goal but not an easy one to achieve and that the establishment of unity without broad popular preparation and conviction would make it, as 'Abd-al-Nasir said, a feeble unity created to be fought completely. It also became evident that it was necessary to take an essential step before the creation of unity, namely to establish a united Arab political movement. But the lack of this preparatory step did not prevent Mu'ammarr al-Qadhafi and 'Abd-al-Nasir from deciding on full coordination between their two countries in all spheres.

This year also concealed in its folds the Rogers plan--a plan over which the Egyptian and Arab peoples' opinions clashed between support and opposition. 'Abd-al-Nasir approved the plan as a tactical step without abandoning his strategic goal. He even considered the plan a key to the situation for achieving his strategic goal, namely to cross [the canal] and eliminate the traces of the aggression, whereas others viewed the plan wrongly and considered the tactical step a strategic step for the establishment of security and peace. Thus, the strategic goal was lost while we kept running breathlessly for tactical steps.

When the end of that year approached, black winds heralding evil and aggression blew in the face of the Arab nation. Those were the winds of the black September which were preceded by the famous meeting between 'Abd-al-Nasir and King Husayn at Ra's al-Tin Palace in Alexandria on 21 August. At that meeting, the king displayed his sweeping wrath at the Palestinian organizations, making threats and warnings. But 'Abd-al-Nasir realized what the king was aiming at and warned him not to go too far in his reactions against the Palestinian organizations because of the faulty acts of some of their members. But unfortunately, less than 1 month after the meeting, the Jordanian winds blew contrary to 'Abd-al-Nasir's wishes and contrary to what the king had promised.

The events of that year were concluded with the biggest event of all--the death of 'Abd-al-Nasir who had tried ceaselessly and at the expense of his nerves and his heart beats to stop the shedding of Palestinian blood that had started to flow on the banks of the Jordan River.

'Abd-al-Nasir died after he had seen off the amir of Kuwait, the last guest of that Arab conference--the black September conference which was held at the Cairo Hilton Hotel for 7 days. The heart attack hit him suddenly while standing before the special Kuwaiti plane that had come to take the amir of Kuwait. He almost fell to the ground but he tried with all the will and determination he had to stay on his feet until the door of the plane of the guest amir was closed. He was not able to walk on his feet afterwards and asked Ahmad 'Abd-al-Hayy, his accompanying secretary, to bring his car to where he was standing so that he could get into it. He maintained his self-control and remained proud, as was his habit. Ten minutes later, he arrived at his residence in Manshiyat al-Bakri, took off his clothes with difficulty and slept on his bed very calmly. He then departed far away to the unconsciousness of death. He was a leader in his life and God was generous to him in his death.

There have been numerous and conflicting rumors about 'Abd-al-Nasir's death. Was it a natural death or did he die poisoned or with something else? What I know by virtue of my position in those days is that 'Abd-al-Nasir died of a heart attack and that men had no hand in God's divine decree.

However, there is another rumor that has been confirmed by more than one source to the effect that during his trance between 1530 and 1800, he regained consciousness for a few moments and asked about an important news report he wanted to hear from Cairo Radio at 1700. Some people say that this news report was to be to the effect that 'Abd-al-Nasir had given instructions while on the threshold of death as to who was to succeed him as president of the republic, as he had done when he stepped down from the presidency on 9 June 1967!

All this has now become tales and anecdotes. What is more important is that the leader died and the hopes were lost with him. After him, the forces were fragmented and Arab prestige was shaken because of his absence. There is no doubt that the wheel of history will turn again and again before another national hero--a hero embodying the aspirations of his people and sacrificing the dearest things he possesses to achieve those aspirations on the path that we have chosen, the path of freedom, struggle, socialism and unity--rises among us.

'Abd-al-Majid Farid

'Abd-al-Nasir's meeting with Mu'ammarr al-Qadhdhafi and Ja'far Numayri took place at the meetings hall of al-Qubbah Palace at 1200 on 12 February. Each of the three had with him a delegation of ministers and experts compatible with the topics to be presented to the meeting which included the July revolution, the 1 September revolution and the 25 May revolution.

Happiness was clear on 'Abd-al-Nasir's face while he was embracing the leaders of the two revolutions in the reception room before entering the meetings hall. 'Abd-al-Nasir saw in al-Qadhdhafi, as he said in a private Egyptian meeting, the sincere leadership around which there were no suspicions--pure, chaste, not yet tarnished by machinations of domestic or foreign policy and ambitious in his Arab aspirations and ready to sacrifice for them but still lacking in experience. It was also 'Abd-al-Nasir's opinion that his advice to Mu'ammar would not be of great benefit because only practical experience, with its errors and its hitting the mark, would polish him and turn him into an Arab leader. Despite this, 'Abd-al-Nasir never hesitated to answer in detail any question addressed to him by al-Qadhdhafi, explaining to the latter in detail all aspects of the question. At the same time, Mu'ammar al-Qadhdhafi used to view 'Abd-al-Nasir the way a student views his teacher and the way a bedouin views his tribe's leader. He was ready to carry out immediately whatever 'Abd-al-Nasir advised. He did not hesitate to respond to 'Abd-al-Nasir, except once when 'Abd-al-Nasir pointed out to him the importance of improving his relationship with the Soviet Union and of meeting with one of the Soviet leaders, considering that the Soviet Union was the major power supporting the Arabs and supplying them with weapons and aircraft. Opposing 'Abd-al-Nasir for the first time, Mu'ammar said: "Mr President, ask me for anything else, except this request because I see in their ideology beliefs that are in conflict with Islam and with God's book. Mr President, these people are atheists."

Complexes and Residues

As for 'Abd-al-Nasir's opinion of Numayri, it is, in short, that 'Abd-al-Nasir saw in him at the time the leadership capable of dealing with the various Sudanese sects. But at the same time, 'Abd-al-Nasir had the feeling that there were complexes and residues left in Numayri's personality by the events and crises occurring between Egypt and Sudan in preceding years. This is why some time had to pass before those complexes could solve themselves without artificiality or compulsion. It would then be easy to reach understanding with Numayri or with the other Sudanese leaderships.

I will now return to recounting what took place at the meetings hall. The discussion was started by Mahmud Riyad, the United Arab Republic minister of foreign affairs, who had conferred with the Sudanese and Libyan ministers of foreign affairs at a preparatory meeting prior to the presidents' meeting. The ministers proposed at the meeting formation of joint committees of politicians and experts from the three countries in the various fields, such as agriculture, education and industry. President Numayri opposed the proposal, explaining that the committees method is slow and unfit for certain spheres, such as the military sphere. This is why Numayri proposed that all issues pertaining to the battle be submitted to a higher military committee

consisting of the ministers of defense and the chiefs of staff. The following dialog took place:

Al-Qadhdhafi: I approve this proposal, provided that the decisions of this higher military committee become effective within 2 weeks of issuance, unless any of the states object before the end of this period.

Numayri: Another issue that I would like to deal with is the issue of the cohesion of the popular councils and organizations and the need to mobilize them so that they may wage the battle with the military forces. There is also the issue of joint coordination in the information sphere.

(Publisher's note: Both 'Abd-al-Nasir and Mu'ammarr al-Qadhdhafi approved Numayri's proposal. Al-Qadhdhafi added that something practical could be started in the information field by setting certain hours for simultaneous broadcasting from the radios of Cairo, Tripoli and Khartoum.)

Al-Qadhdhafi: Concerning the popular mobilization issue, I believe that it has become necessary to establish a single political organization in Egypt, Libya and Sudan so that it may confront the various ideological currents here and there. We will thus actually begin the path of unity. I propose that the socialist union be the required single political organization.

Numayri: I personally agree in principle to the creation of the single political organization. But we may differ in naming it in each country.

Unity and Authority

'Abd-al-Nasir: I believe that before deciding on such a single organization, we must define our goals behind establishing it because in case our aim is unity, our approach toward it will take a certain form. But if our goal is to establish some sort of an alliance, of cooperation or some form of commonwealth, then the approach will be different and will be according to the type of the required relationship. It is my opinion that the Arab unity crisis will always be a crisis of dispute over and struggle for power. It is also my opinion that no Arab unity should be established until unification of the political organizations, i.e., till after establishment of the single Arab movement. Numerous examples have preceded us on this path. We see that the Soviet Union is formed of several republics and governments but it has a single political movement, namely the Communist Party.

Moreover, there is another question regarding formation of the political organization: Should its formation start from top or from bottom? Practically, almost all political organizations are formed from top. The Communist Party started with a few thousand at the top and then moved down gradually to the broad base containing large numbers. While

forming the political organization, we should distinguish the intelligent method of organization from the stupid method of organization. An intelligent organization is one that does not permit opportunists to join its ranks whereas a stupid organization permits anybody to join its membership. Despite this, circumstances may at times compel adoption of the stupid organization method. For example, we were forced in Egypt to follow this path at one time and to accept in our organization even members of other organizations.

Numayri: I believe that we are still moving at present within the phase of forming the conviction among the Arab people in Egypt, Libya and Sudan of the importance of their common interest. We have not yet surpassed this phase.

Al-Qadhdhafi: I agree with President 'Abd-al-Nasir that we must decide now what our goal is. Is what is required unity, federation, a bloc or something else? If our goal is in fact unity, then it is our duty to begin immediately with the step of forming the single political organization in the three countries. At this point I would like to ask President Numayri: Does Sudan approve at this stage establishment of the single party?

Numayri: The political organization fit for Sudan at present is the "single front" which will comprise all the nationalities, including southern Sudan. In such a case, the front will be strong and united.

Major 'Awad Hamzah (from Libyan delegation): I do not agree with President Numayri that creating the organization in the form of a "front" will make it a strong political organization.

'Abd-al-Nasir: I also believe that the front will not fuse the various nationalities. Moreover, any nationality within the front feeling at any time that the front constitutes a danger to it will break away from this front and turn against it immediately.

Minister Faruq Abu 'Isa (member of Sudanese delegation): I believe that it is more suitable that the proposed organization be established in phases, especially since there are fundamental differences between us in numerous fields, such as the economic field, the cultural field and others. What is important now is that each revolution in each of the three countries strengthen itself by forming the political organization that suits its local conditions, provided that these organizations are transformed gradually into the single political organization.

'Abd-al-Nasir: I would like to stress before the colleagues a fundamental principle concerning unity, namely that unless Arab unity is established on the basis of broad popular conviction, it will be a feeble unity created to be fought completely. For example, there are between us and Sudan numerous problems and complexes dating back to the time of

Muhammad 'Ali and of King Faruq that require to be dealt with and settled before we talk about the unity of Egypt and Sudan. This is why I believe that we should not try to fabricate an unnatural relationship before preparing the way for unity. Otherwise, we will be contributing toward further complication of matters. Consequently, I propose that we move now according to what the ministers of foreign affairs decided in regard to forming the required preparatory committees. On my part, I will assign Hasan Sabri al-Khuli a political secretary to follow up the decisions of these committees.

(Publisher's note: Both Mu'ammār al-Qadhafi and Numayri approved this step, provided that the following step be studied after 4 months in the next tripartite meeting proposed to be held in Khartoum on 25 May, the Sudanese revolution anniversary celebrations.)

Revolution and Stability

It was evident to the participants in the tripartite meeting that President Numayri was not ready to accept any form of unity or of union between the three countries. This is why Mu'ammār al-Qadhafi asked 'Abd-al-Nasir to meet with him immediately after President Numayri's departure so that they may discuss the creation of the supreme political leadership of the United Arab Republic and Libya immediately, provided that Numayri join it whenever he was ready for it.

The requested bilateral meeting was held on Saturday, 14 February, at the same hall in al-Qubbah Palace. 'Abd-al-Nasir took the opportunity of this meeting to present to Mu'ammār al-Qadhafi and his colleagues sincerely and truthfully the experience of the 23 July revolution and its actions throughout the 18 years of its life, whether action in the domestic sphere or the foreign sphere. 'Abd-al-Nasir made this presentation, along with his personal opinion of what revolutionary steps may be implemented within the framework of the conditions and the local society of Libya.

Colonel Mu'ammār began the discussion, reassuring 'Abd-al-Nasir of Libya's domestic stability after the revolution's success and explaining to him that the Libyan people generally were fully attached to the Revolution Command Council and that the Arab Nationalists working in Libya before the revolution were different from their counterparts in the other Arab countries because, according to al-Qadhafi, they were unionists and not people with Marxist inclinations or people belonging to other factions hostile to 'Abd-al-Nasir at the time. As for the Ba'thists present there, they were followers of the Syrian Ba'th. [He said]: In view of the Egyptian-Syrian rapprochement at present, they cause no fears. The only dangerous elements may be the radical elements of the Moslem Brotherhood. Generally, we have declared national unity in Libya and have also declared that "there will be no partisanship as of today." Even though

there are good elements in the two aforementioned parties, there is no place for their movement or activity in our country at present.

I would also like to assure you that we are not middle-of-the-road people, as brother Numayri said in his conversation with you 2 days ago. We also believe that the adoption of unionist steps at present is the most suitable thing and that the present time is the most suitable time.

'Abd-al-Nasir: I will start with the issue of protecting the revolution and of its stability. To think of protecting the revolution in a practical manner, you must first define who the revolution's friends are and who its enemies are, keeping in mind a fundamental consideration, namely that the enemies cannot turn into friends and that some of the friends may take the side of the enemies. You must pay attention to reforming the economic situation and to avoid the creation of any economic recession in the markets. You should also keep in mind the importance of permanent financial liquidity. As for your foreign relations, the major powers, especially the powers having political or economic interests with you, will try to exert efforts to get close to you. America will exert efforts to contain you so as to protect its strategic and economic interests. As for the Soviet Union, it will work to support and back you, as it has done with us. Of course, this position by the Soviet Union toward us is not out of love for our black eyes but because we are working to liquidate Western colonialism in the area.

People will ask you about the meaning of the socialism that you have declared and they have the right to this question. It is my personal opinion that socialism in Libya means, on the basis of your economic and social situation, nationalizing only the banks and the insurance companies, provided that you start to create a new public sector whose size will increase year after year because your conditions are different from ours. Moreover, you don't have the size and the form of the sector that we had [sic].

They will also ask you about the unity that you have declared. It is also my opinion that you should explain to them that unity will be built fundamentally for the interest of the Libyan people and of the Egyptian people.

Al-Qadhdhafi: What is your opinion regarding the foreign trade and the import and export policy?

'Abd-al-Nasir: It is my opinion that it is necessary to be deliberate and to proceed gradually and slowly on the issue of foreign trade.

Why Are You Afraid of Them?

[Al-Qadhdhafi] And what about the relationship with the Soviet Union?

'Abd-al-Nasir: I don't know why you are afraid of them. In our experience with them, they have not tried to recruit Egyptians for the Communist Party even though they were present in large numbers in the armed forces and for several years in the High Dam area in Aswan. Brezhnev asked me during my latest visit to Moscow about the reason why you display aversion in your relations with them at the present time. Personally, I was not able to explain your position. However, I believe that time and actual practices will demonstrate to you who the friends are and who the enemies are. It will also become clear to you who are those who support the Arabs and who are those who are reliable.

Al-Qadhdhafi: Fine, and what is your opinion of the relationship with China?

'Abd-al-Nasir: Our relationship with China is good. They also sent us a cable of support after the battle. However, it was only words which did not turn into aid or tangible positive stances, whether economically or politically. Moreover, China insists that we refrain from befriending the Soviet Union. Is this sensible? My words do not mean that your relationship with China should be bad. Rather, you should maintain a generally good relationship with it. Another point in the issue of your foreign relations, you must know that dealing with the small countries does not always provide us with all our requirements. This is why transactions have to be made with the major powers from time to time. For example, we have to import modern military equipment from either America or the Soviet Union or at least with the approval of one of them.

Al-Qadhdhafi: The truth is that I am apprehensive of dealing with the major powers, considering that these powers always have an interest behind their dealing with us.

'Abd-al-Nasir: This is normal. You have to have relations with the major powers. However, try to be with more than one side and more than one state so as to guarantee an international balance and so that all may compete to establish good relations with you.

Al-Qadhdhafi: A final question about the battle: Will you leave its date undetermined and until when? What is the impact of its date on the Mirage deal that we, in Libya, have concluded with France [sic]?

'Abd-al-Nasir: The date of the battle depends completely on the presence of air [force] equality, otherwise the battle will become a suicidal battle to us. As for the Mirage deal, you must try to amend the contract so that aircraft delivery may be in 1971 instead of 1973 because we cannot postpone the battle until that year. We must begin the battle and cross the canal in 1970 or 1970-71 at the most.

Al-Qadhdhafi: As soon as I return, I will hold urgent contacts with France to amend the Mirage aircraft contract so that the aircraft may be delivered at the required times.

(Publisher's note: Both 'Abd-al-Nasir and Mu'ammār al-Qadhdhafi agreed to hold another meeting at the end of March either in Cairo or in al-'Adm, Libya, to discuss two important economic issues, namely: The proposal to issue unified currency, in addition to the local currencies of Egypt and Libya, and the customs fees between the two countries. Dr Labib Shuqayr, member of the Higher Executive Committee, was assigned to prepare a detailed study on these two issues.)

You Have Fathi al-Dib

Al-Qadhdhafi: Another thing, Mr President. Can you lend us one of the Egyptian T-34 tank battalions designated to cooperate with the infantry, along with its crews, without affecting the front?

'Abd-al-Nasir: I believe that it is possible to send you the requested battalion without affecting the front. I will agree with Lieutenant General Fawzi on this. There are two final points before this meeting ends: First, I would like to assure all of you that we are ready in Egypt to offer you any aid, including military aid. You have Fathi al-Dib (publisher's note: Minister of state at the presidential office whom 'Abd-al-Nasir had sent to Mu'ammār al-Qadhdhafi to act as the liaison at that stage between Egypt and Libya). He has my clear and definite instructions to meet all your requests, whatever they are. But I have one remark to make on this issue because we have a slight complex as a result of our previous experiences in offering Egyptian aid to friendly countries. It is that we will not send any aid or Egyptian experts or personnel except at your personal request. The second point is that the sooner you explain your policy, whether in the political or economic sphere, to the people, the lesser you make the revolution's enemies. You will even draw to you a large sector of the people whom the revolution's enemies are trying to mislead and exploit.

After these sincere words, the two presidents embraced and the meeting ended on the grounds that there would be another meeting between the two revolutions shortly.

After that frank meeting in February 1970, successive meetings took place between Mu'ammār al-Qadhdhafi and the Revolution Council on the one hand and 'Abd-al-Nasir on the other, both in Egypt and in Libya. Moreover, tens and even hundreds of joint meetings were held between the ministers and their counterparts in the two countries to exchange opinions in all spheres. The ministers and military experts of the United Arab Republic tried to offer all the experience they had gained in the preceding 18 years to their brothers in Libya with utter sincerity and loyalty. In

the month of June, al-Qadhdhafi toured some Arab countries to advocate the "pan-Arabism of the battle" and to determine the contribution required for the battle. He agreed during his tour to hold an Arab summit conference in Tripoli on 20 June to be attended by the heads of state of Jordan, Syria, Iraq, Sudan and Algeria, in addition to the presidents of the United Arab Republic and Libya.

The conference was in fact held in Tripoli from 20 to 23 June and was attended by King Husayn ibn Talal of Jordan, Syrian President Nur-al-Din al-Atasi, Iraqi President Ahmad Hasan al-Bakr, President Jamal 'Abd-al-Nasir, (Kaed Ahmed) on behalf of Boumediene, chairman of the Algerian Revolutionary Council, and Maj Ma'mun 'Awad Abu-Zayd as representative of President Ja'far Numayri, chairman of the Sudanese Revolution Command Council. Ten days before the conference was held, to be exact, at the end of his tour in the Arab countries, Mu'ammarr al-Qadhdhafi came to Cairo on 10 June with Bashir Hawwadi and 'Umar al-Muhayshi, the Revolution Command Council members, and Salih Buwaysir, the minister of foreign affairs, to discuss with 'Abd-al-Nasir the agenda of the forthcoming conference and to explain their viewpoint of the Arab situation after their recent visit. The meeting was held at the meeting hall in al-Qubbah Palace, as usual, and the following dialog took place:

'Abd-al-Nasir: I welcome you in your land, expressing to you our happiness to meet with you after your big tour in the Arab homeland. We here support the efforts being exerted by Colonel Mu'ammarr to achieve unified Arab action.

Al-Qadhdhafi: I thank you for the reception and I will try to present some observations concerning my recent visit.

First, I have felt from the meetings held during the recent trip that there is generally a crisis of confidence among us. If we can subdue and overcome it, we will reach firm grounds on which we will be able to solve the problems that face us and to stand with you in your forthcoming battle.

Another point concerns the Palestinian resistance. I have noticed in all the Arab countries dissatisfaction with the Palestinian fedayeen action. But at the same time, nobody denies the success of some fedayeen operations, especially the operations whose impact on Israel is demonstrated by the Israeli reactions and the retaliatory operations that follow them. But it is unacceptable that most of the fedayeen action be confined to mortar and rocket shelling from the Jordanian or the Lebanese borders because such shelling can be easily done by the guns and rockets of the regular armies stationed on the borders. Despite our observation, we feel greater optimism than we had before our tour.

'Abd-al-Nasir: What is important for us and for the battle is the creation of the eastern front. As a result of your tour, do you think that

there really is an eastern front? Lieutenant General Fawzi imagined, in his capacity as a military man, that the creation of the eastern front is possible as long as the proper plan is drawn up and the various phases and dates are set. But I told him that this issue is not just a military issue and that it is fundamentally a political issue. This is why we have clashed in verbal battles that have delayed the creation of this front. For example, is the battle a defensive or an offensive battle? Is it a pan-Arab or a regional battle? I personally cannot understand the debate over an offensive or a defensive battle when we have not regained the territories occupied by the enemy.

As to whether the battle is pan-Arab or regional, then let us all ask ourselves in the forthcoming conference what we have prepared for the battle since the 1967 operations. Insofar as we are concerned, we had an army consisting of 170,000 fighters and we now have an army of 540,000 fighters, i.e., more than one-half million highly trained fighters. Meanwhile, do you think that anybody has helped us prepare this large number of armed forces? The answer is no. This is why we have been forced to raise taxes in our budget by 400 million pounds because the financial aid we receive in accordance with the Khartoum summit resolutions, whether from you, Saudi Arabia or Kuwait, is channeled fundamentally to make up for our economic losses as a result of the closure of the Suez Canal and the occupation of the Sinai oil resources by the Jews. Israel's basic aim is to exert efforts to fragment the eastern front politically so that it may not turn into a military reality having a definite impact on the forthcoming battle. This is why one of the most important issues which the forthcoming Tripoli conference must deal with is the issue of exerting efforts to prevent achievement of the Israeli goal of fragmenting the eastern front.

We are also hearing nowadays words about the so-called "defeated leaderships of 1967." What do these words mean? What is the meaning of reiterating them here and there? Lieutenant General Fawzi tendered his resignation to me but I have turned it down and asked him to tender it to the Arab kings and presidents at the forthcoming Tripoli conference. I imagine that it is not Lieutenant General Fawzi who is meant by these words and that the one who is actually meant is me personally. I believe that none of us has forgotten one of the lessons of World War II. Stalin and Zhukov remained in Moscow even though the attacking German forces reached within several kilometers of where they were. Numerous other commands withdrew during the battles at the beginning of the war and those same commands led the final victorious battles. Lieutenant General Fawzi is an excellent military commander. I know him well. He served with me in Palestine in 1948. I also taught him at the Staff College when I was an instructor there. Even though he was one of the military commanders in 1967, he was not permitted any actual military command action in 1967. When I appointed him general commander after the marshal ['Abd-al-Hakim 'Amir], I told him from the outset that he would

undertake the responsibility of building and preparing the armed forces for combat. But command of the military operations during the war will be entrusted to another military commander. (Publisher's note: It was 'Abd-al-Nasir's intention immediately after the 1967 defeat to entrust Lt Gen Muhammad Fawzi with the process of building and preparing the armed forces and of restoring their entity and discipline, especially since he was known for his military firmness, for his full abidance by the military rules and traditions and for his superior ability for implementation and followup. 'Abd-al-Nasir intended to entrust command of the military operations to Lt Gen 'Abd-al-Mun'im Riyadh who was known for his intelligence and for his military capability in planning and managing military operations. This is why he appointed Muhammad Fawzi general commander and 'Abd-al-Mun'im Riyadh chief of staff. This planning by 'Abd-al-Nasir was no secret to either man. The issue of the general commander of the Arab armies was brought up at the Arab conference held in Tripoli on 20 June and the text of the fourth resolution of the conference was as follows: "The conference has agreed to appoint General Muhammad Fawzi to the post of general commander. He shall be assisted by a joint chief of staff from the states signing this agreement.")

Iraq and Iran

Al-Qadhdhafi: Mr President, I shall have great hope in the Arab countries and we must overcome the issue of the presently existing crisis of confidence in any way possible, even if we have to exert some pressure here and there. I also have great hope in the possibility of mobilization for the battle and for victory. There are other conditions and words said on this issue but I wish to mention them to you in another narrow [sic] meeting and not in a meeting like this that will go on record. Another thing I want to mention is that I have visited the Iraqi front facing the Iranian borders and I have seen with my own eyes the large Iraqi forces deployed there because Iran is deploying across them three armies extending from Khanaqin to al-Basrah. It is my opinion that endeavors should be made and pressures should be exerted on Iran to reduce its concentrations on the Iraqi borders so as to enable Iraq to participate to a larger degree in the battle.

Mahmud Riyadh: Concerning this issue, the Soviet Union has tried at our request and after contacts with the brothers in Iraq to exert efforts in this regard. Podgorny brought up the issue during his recent visit to Iran. The Iranians expressed their willingness to withdraw from the borders, provided that Iraq begin negotiations with them immediately. But the Iraqis have stipulated as a condition at the same time that Iran refrain from abrogating the Gulf joint borders treaty. I also know that Jordan is trying to mediate between Iran and Iraq. But the Iraqis have refused the mediation on the grounds that their position is much better than Iran's, both politically and militarily.

'Abd-al-Nasir: A discussion had actually taken place between the Iranian minister of foreign affairs and Foreign Minister Buwaysir at the Islamic summit conference in an attempt to restore the relations between them and us. We had no objection. But I stipulated as a condition approval by the Iraqis. The Iraqis objected and so I objected and did not agree to restore the relations between us and Iran. It is my opinion that you can play an important role between Iran and Iraq to free the largest number possible of the Iraqi forces to participate in the eastern front or at least to become the strategic reserve for this front. Brother Mu'ammr, I hope that you will not view the conflicts happening in the Arab world as "treason" inasmuch as they are old conflicts that have accumulated, along with their traces, for years. We in the United Arab Republic hope that Mu'ammr al-Qadhdhafi will succeed in his efforts to melt these conflicts so that we may succeed in the major battle, God willing.

The meeting ended and 'Abd-al-Nasir rose from his seat and proceeded toward Mu'ammr al-Qadhdhafi to hold his hand and they both walked out of the hall.

[25 Sep-1 Oct 78 pp 31-35]

[Text] Part XVI: How 'Abd-al-Nasir Accepted Rogers Plan; Americans Presented Plan Directly To Drive Wedge Between 'Abd-al-Nasir and Soviet Union; Abba Eban Told Western Journalist That Israel's Concern Was To Topple 'Abd-al-Nasir Personally Because Egypt Would Subside as Indonesia and Ghana Did After Fall of Sukarno and Nkroma; Explanatory Paragraph in Rogers Plan on Palestinians Has not Been Translated and Has Been Retained in Its Original Form in English; Rogers Proposed That Ambassador Jarring Issue Statement To Be Endorsed and To Include Jordan in Initiative

The Rogers initiative, delivered to Mahmud Riyad, UAR [United Arab Republic] minister of foreign affairs, on 20 June 1970, was tantamount to a strange political step that 'Abd-al-Nasir had never before encountered. Since 1967 and until that time, such political proposals were submitted to the bilateral meetings between U.S. and Soviet UN representatives and then presented to 'Abd-al-Nasir through the Soviet Union which means that Egypt's movement for political solutions had never, until that time, taken place behind the back of the Soviets. Consequently, there had been no opportunity for driving a wedge or for sowing division between 'Abd-al-Nasir and the Soviets or for arousing Soviet doubts in regard to 'Abd-al-Nasir's movement. This is why the Soviets had no excuse not to respond or even to delay meeting 'Abd-al-Nasir's economic or military demands.

But in June 1970, the situation changed suddenly and the ball was thrown directly into 'Abd-al-Nasir's court. He had to move and had to examine his calculations carefully before pushing the ball again, especially in

regard to his ally that had stood with him for several years by that time. I mean the Soviet Union.

'Abd-al-Nasir's movement at the domestic level started with the distribution of the text of the initiative to his colleagues the members of the Higher Executive Committee so that they may study it in preparation for a major meeting with them. 'Abd-al-Nasir then instructed that the text be supplied to the ministers for the same purpose. He also tried to fathom the opinion of some popular political leaderships and of some people in the field of information. At this point, an important question emerged before 'Abd-al-Nasir: What would be the reaction of the Soviet friends toward the American initiative, especially that the initiative will be presented to them through a new channel, i.e., through 'Abd-al-Nasir himself? This is why 'Abd-al-Nasir hastened to go to those friends. He left Cairo for Moscow on 29 June, i.e., 4 days after he had received the text and the explanations of the initiative, so as to exchange viewpoints with his ally and so as to reassure himself personally on an issue that had been greatly preoccupying him, namely the degree of the willingness of the Soviets to continue to support him and supply him with weapons in case he approved the initiative. At the same time, he was convinced that America was a fateful ally of Israel and that every previous step made by America toward the Arabs, especially toward Egypt, had been a suspect and not a well-meaning move.

'Abd-al-Nasir stayed in the Soviet Union for 18 days, from 29 June to 17 July, after which he returned to Cairo, having familiarized himself personally with the most important elements that may affect his decision and with all aspects of the issue so as to answer the questions that would rain down on him from members of the Higher Executive Committee, the ministers or members of the National Congress whom he was to face on 23 July. Immediately upon his arrival, he held two important meetings before declaring his decision: The first with the Socialist Union Higher Executive Committee on the day following his return, i.e., 18 July, and the second with the Council of Ministers on 19 July.

Before I dwell in detail on 'Abd-al-Nasir's statements and conversations at these meetings and others which were held during this period, I would like to point out that the main factor dominating 'Abd-al-Nasir's thinking in this period was the military factor and 'Abd-al-Nasir's desire to prepare all the proper resources and conditions for the armed forces. Since June 1967, he had been struggling ceaselessly for 36 months to rebuild these forces and to complete their combat capability so that they may cross the canal and restore the Sinai to Egypt. This is why he viewed the Rogers plan as an accessible tactical opportunity to push the surface-to-air missile wall to the canal's western bank in preparation for implementing the plan to cross to the Sinai.

He had become aware through the war of attrition battles that were intensifying day after day at the time that he was unable to complete

building the SAM missile bases under the stream of violent Israeli air raids that were pouring their bombs and their machinegun fire day and night with an average intensity equal to that of the air raids in the Vietnam war. Moreover, those Israeli air raids had inflicted grave losses on the operations to build the missile bases--losses that had exceeded 4,000 martyrs.

This is in addition to the fact that the missile crews needed nearly 3 months to complete their training at the special training centers in Egypt and the Soviet Union.

Generally, the U.S. initiative provoked heated debates inside and outside Egypt and arguments started everywhere on peace and war. It was the opinion of 'Abd-al-Nasir and of the political leaderships supporting him that there was no harm in moving politically to establish peace in the area, provided that the following fundamental mainstays are made available to the process of building the peace:

First, the mainstay of international balance between the East and the West.

Second, the mainstay of the Arab political status, in the sense of the UAR's ability to continue its political influence in the Arab world and to retain the recognition of its pioneer status in the area.

Third, the mainstay of the military capability so that the enemy may realize that in case the efforts to establish a just peace fail, he would be exposed to grave losses in a ferocious military battle, especially losses in personnel, and this is something that is against the Israeli conviction.

Fourth, the mainstay of retaining the price of recognizing Israel as a state in the area in return for a just peace to the last moment possible.

Even though all these mainstays were actually available to 'Abd-al-Nasir, he was not very optimistic regarding this American step as a result of his previous experiences with the American plans. This is why he agreed to the initiative only as a tactical step, and not as a strategic one, aimed at achieving air superiority in the area of the next military battle through moving the wall of Egyptian-Soviet missiles to the canal's western bank during the cease-fire period.

At the same time, Israel faced an element of pressure which made Israeli Prime Minister Golda Meir announce on 26 July: "We are ready to observe the cease-fire and we call on the UAR and the other Arab countries to cease their fire." This element of pressure was the fact that the Egyptian missiles were shooting down Israeli Phantom aircraft raiding the canal zone in unprecedented numbers and to the degree whereby the

world press called that week "the week of the falling Phantoms." The Israeli air force also lost a number of highly trained and skilled pilots, some of whom fell prisoners in the hands of the Egyptian forces.

The operation to build the missile wall, to raise its combat capability and to move it to the canal waters completely dominated 'Abd-al-Nasir's thinking and actions. 'Abd-al-Nasir exerted all the efforts and determination he had to build that wall and to supply it with the latest Soviet missiles. He also used all the political skills he possessed to persuade the Soviets to deliver the required number of missiles and to send Soviet crews to fight on Arab territory for the first time in the history of the Soviet Union. That stubborn wall enabled our valiant Egyptian forces to cross the canal and to destroy the Bar-lev line in 1973 under an air control that was a major reason for the big victory.

'Abd-al-Majid Farid

How could 'Abd-al-Nasir approve an American initiative?

Before I answer this question, I would like to present to the reader five statements made by 'Abd-al-Nasir at the Council of Ministers at that time so that the reader may become familiar with the facts and the factors that surrounded 'Abd-al-Nasir before he officially declared the UAR's decision toward the plan on 23 July.

The first utterance was made on 25 January at the Council of Ministers when 'Abd-al-Nasir said: "I have learned recently of a conversation between Abba Eban, the Israeli minister of foreign affairs, and a moderate Western journalist who is close to him and this conversation explains to a great degree the position and intentions of Israel and of the United States toward us. The journalist asked about the reason why America and Israel are focusing on me ('Abd-al-Nasir) personally. Abba Eban said: We are exerting extremely concerted efforts to overthrow 'Abd-al-Nasir because we are convinced that the situation in Egypt will subside and will turn in our favor after his fall as matters subsided in Indonesia after Sukarno's fall and as they also subsided in Ghana after Nkroma's fall. Some American circles (publisher's note: I believe that it is most likely that he meant the Central Intelligence Agency) censure us for our negative position at present and for our failure to carry out positive action in Egypt. They have asked us to focus our efforts in the coming period on whatever may lead to overthrowing 'Abd-al-Nasir personally."

Second, on 8 March, 'Abd-al-Nasir said at the Council of Ministers: "We want to develop our dealings with the Soviets so that their bond with us may become like America's bond with Israel. This requires us to embark on a step on this issue. It is evident that America is trying to oust Russia from the Mediterranean Sea at any cost. This is why the Soviet

Union is now compelled to stand with us and support us. Russia's bond with us will enable us to draw up a new strategy."

The third statement was made at the Council of Ministers on 11 April when 'Abd-al-Nasir said: "We have finally agreed to meet Sisco (the U.S. assistant secretary of state) and to talk to him so that we may prove to all that we speak to both the East and the West.

"Sisco has asked me that the discussions on the issue be held with them directly and not through the Soviet Union, as is the case currently. I told him that the reason we have chosen this method is: We don't trust you as a result of your positions that are always biased toward Israel. You are also asking us for concessions whereas we made enough concessions in Egypt when we approved Security Council Resolution 242."

The fourth statement was made at the Council of Ministers on 19 July, i.e., after 'Abd-al-Nasir's return from his Moscow trip and his agreement with the Soviet leadership on approving the Rogers plan.

'Abd-al-Nasir said: "I have already told the Americans: We do not want direct discussions with you because you are a major power and we cannot outdo you and the party that can outdo you is the Soviet Union. Moreover, you will use the statements made in the direct discussion with you to drive a wedge between us and the Soviets whereas they are the ones who are supporting us politically and economically and the ones who supply us with all the weapons and aircraft we ask them for.

"Our strategy relies on the Soviet Union fundamentally. Therefore, we must continue to have an understanding with them and the continuation of relations with the Soviets is essential. But to say that we must rely on ourselves and on our intrinsic resources in the face of the U.S. science would be idle talk that may be useful for the books of the Ministry of Education."

In the same session, i.e., on 19 July, 'Abd-al-Nasir also said: "Our latest movement and our approval of the Rogers plan has its advantages and its drawbacks. There are Egyptians who will oppose the plan and others who will support it hesitantly. We said long ago that the Americans are the ones who can solve the issue."

Text of Plan

Now I will turn to the text of the plan submitted by William Rogers, the U.S. secretary of state, and delivered to Mahmud Riyad, the minister of foreign affairs, in the form of a verbal message [sic] conveyed by Donald Burgess, the official in charge of U.S. interests in Cairo, to Salah Jawhar, the ministry's under secretary, at 0930 on 20 June 1970.

"Verbal message to His Excellency Mahmud Riyad, the minister of foreign affairs, 19 June 1970:

"I have read carefully the statement by President 'Abd-al-Nasir on 1 May and the observations you made afterwards to Mr Burgess. Mr Sisco has also submitted to me a detailed report on the talks that he held with President 'Abd-al-Nasir and with you and we have given serious thought to what could be done in regard to the Middle East.

"I acknowledge that the situation has reached a serious point and I believe that it is in our common interest that the United States maintain and develop relations of friendship with all the area's peoples and states. We hope that it will be realized that this can be accomplished and we are ready to perform our part. We look to the other parties concerned, especially to your government which has an extremely important role to perform, to move with us to exploit this opportunity which, if lost, we will all suffer and will truly regret it. With this spirit, I appeal to your government to study very carefully the ideas that I will present in the following:

"We are extremely concerned with lasting peace and we wish to assist the parties concerned to achieve this peace.

"We have submitted serious and practical proposals for this purpose. We have also advised all the parties of the need to accept a compromise and to create the atmosphere in which peace becomes possible. We mean by this last point reducing the intense tension on the one hand and clarifying the positions on the other hand so that the Arabs and the Israelis may have some confidence that what will be attained will preserve their fundamental interests.

"It is our opinion that the most effective means to achieve a settlement would be for the parties concerned to begin working under the supervision of Ambassador Jarring to reach the detailed steps necessary for the implementation of Security Council Resolution 242.

"Abba Eban, the Israeli minister of foreign affairs, has stated recently that Israel is willing to make concessions when the talks begin. At the same time, Egyptian participation in these talks will lead to overcoming to a large degree the Israeli doubts that your government is really seeking to reach peace with Israel.

"I am aware of the problems facing you in regard to direct negotiations. We have explained at the outset that we do not propose that such arrangements be put into implementation from the beginning even though we believe--and this depends on the progress made in the discussions--that the parties will find it necessary to meet at a certain point if peace is to prevail among them.

"With these ideas in mind, the United States presents these proposals so that the UAR may study them:

"A. That both Israel and the UAR agree to resume a cease-fire, even if only for a limited time.

"B. That Israel and the UAR (and Israel and Jordan also) agree to the following declaration to be issued by Ambassador Jarring in the form of a report to Secretary General U Thant:

"The UAR (and Jordan) and Israel have informed me that they agree to:

"A. Having agreed to and expressed their desire to carry out Resolution 242 with all its provisions, they will appoint their representatives to the discussions to be held under my supervision in accordance with the procedures and in the place and at the time I may recommend, while taking into consideration, whenever convenient, the procedural methods preferred by the parties on the basis of the previous experiences they have had with each other.

"B. The goal of the above-mentioned discussions is to reach an agreement on the establishment of just and lasting peace among them, based on:

"1. Mutual recognition by the UAR (and Jordan) and Israel of the sovereignty, territorial integrity and the political independence of the other party.

"2. Israeli withdrawal from territories occupied during the 1967 conflict in accordance with Resolution 242.

"C. To facilitate my mission to achieve the agreement stipulated by Resolution 242, the parties concerned will observe closely as of 1 July and until the beginning of October at least the Security Council resolutions concerning the cease-fire. (Text ends)

"We hope that this proposal will meet the approval of the UAR. We also hope to get Israel's approval. Until then, I am confident that you share with me the opinion on the need to exert utmost efforts to keep these proposals confidential so that the chances of their acceptance may not be affected.

"I am addressing a similar message to Minister al-Rifa'i. I hope to receive your reply at the earliest possible.

"With my best wishes."

Yours sincerely,

William Rogers

In his meeting with Salah Jawhar, the under secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Burgess added some important explanations concerning the plan's provisions:

First, the cease-fire will cover both the ground and the air so that the UAR and the Soviet Union may refrain from changing the military situation existing in the western canal zone, meaning that no surface-to-air missiles or any new military installations should be set up (he meant by this that the Egyptian missiles should not be permitted to move eastward till the Suez Canal waters), provided that Israel undertakes a similar commitment in a similar area east of the canal.

Second, the UAR should take into its consideration that according to this plan, the United States is asking Israel for important political concessions, especially in regard to:

Agreeing to enter into indirect negotiations.

Agreeing to the principle of withdrawal before negotiations because the United States is aware that there can be no peace without withdrawal and no withdrawal without peace.

Third, in regard to Israel's request for more U.S. aircraft, the United States has decided not to exceed the limit it committed itself to in the contracts concluded originally with Israel during the period in which the American peace initiative is being discussed (i.e., the United States will not exceed the 50 Phantom aircraft agreed upon in 1968 and the 100 Skyhawk planes agreed upon in 1969).

But Burgess added while dealing with this point a warning from his government that in case Egypt refused the initiative or failed to observe the cease-fire, his government had already prepared precautionary arrangements that would permit compensating Israel in the future for the aircraft it loses in case the situation required such action. He also added that he hoped that this point would remain undisclosed because America did not want to discuss at the time the issue of its military aid for Israel publicly.

Fourth, that his government presents this initiative directly to the UAR out of its desire to avoid any misunderstanding that could result from transmitting the initiative through a third party (he meant by this the Soviet Union, considering that the discussions and the proposals were transmitted by the Soviets earlier).

About Palestinians, Without Translation

As for the opinion of the Americans concerning the issue of the Palestinians within the framework of the initiative, Mr Burgess explained this opinion in another discussion with the under secretary of the

Ministry of Foreign Affairs on 25 June. No Arabic translation has been supplied for his statements on this issue in order to maintain the accuracy of the expressions used [following paragraph published in English]:

(U.S.A. recognizes that the Palestinians are an interested party whose concerns must be taken into account in any settlement. Resolution 242 provides for a just solution for the problem of Palestine refugees. And their legitimate interests are protected by the language in our proposals according to which these parties would undertake to carry out Resolution 242 in all "its parts.")

In conclusion of 'Abd-al-Nasir's statements on the Rogers initiative, I will note what he said in the Higher Executive Committee on 18 July:

"I am confident that the Egyptians are smart and it is my opinion that if the initiative is presented to them precisely on 23 July, they will understand quickly that our acceptance of the initiative would pressure the Americans and put them in the corner (publisher's note: he used the word 'corner' in English). This is in addition to the fact that we will get from the Soviet Union in 3 months twice the number of SAM-3 (surface-to-air) missiles along with Egyptian crews trained in the Soviet Union and in addition to the Soviet crews that we have and that will be deployed in the heartland to bolster our air defenses. Thus, our missiles will have reached the canal bank and our military position will have improved a lot in 3 months."

Announcement of Initiative

On 23 July 1970, 'Abd-al-Nasir announced the U.S. initiative before the Arab Socialist Union National Congress. A heated discussion then took place between him and the congress members who had lived for 3 years with their brothers and sons in the villages and the cities preparing for the battle and hearing its drums beat day and night. This is why it was not politically easy to get the approval of the congress members for this step.

At dawn on 4 August, the fire was ceased, the guns went silent and the aircraft disappeared. But only a few days passed when implementation of the initiative started faltering because Israel discovered that by approving the initiative, it had committed a mistake for two reasons:

First, the initiative withheld from it the delivery of new U.S. aircraft (Phantom and Skyhawk aircraft), thus exposing its strategy to a serious position, namely undermining its military superiority over its Arab neighbors while 'Abd-al-Nasir continued to strengthen his military forces, especially the air force and the air defense units.

Second, that 'Abd-al-Nasir exploited the cease-fire stipulated by the initiative in favor of his military front as of the first week by

secretly moving the Egyptian (surface-to-air) missile wall to the canal bank. Tens of American protests and Israeli objections did not prevent him from implementing the phases of his plan which, the Israeli military had begun to realize, sought to provide local air control over the eastern and western canal zones, i.e., the battlefield.

This is why Israel launched a rabid propaganda campaign at the international level throughout a period of 2 months and until the day of his death to portray 'Abd-al-Nasir as a man who did not approve the initiative as a man of peace but as a man of war and revenge and so that he may launch his next battle for which he had been preparing for a long time. Perhaps 'Abd-al-Nasir's words to the Council of Ministers on 7 September, i.e., 1 month after beginning implementation of the initiative, are the best reflection of the political position toward Israel at the time:

"Israel has been directing a violent propaganda campaign against us which started a few days after its approval of the initiative. The Israelis are declaring everywhere that we have failed to abide by what was agreed upon in regard to refraining from making any change in the military conditions during the cease-fire period. They accuse us through their rabid propaganda campaign of having moved our missiles forward and of having built many new missile bases. We have answered them and the Americans that we reorganized our armed forces in the canal area within the limits of the preparatory period permitted by the initiative. As for the construction of bases, we have told them that they come under the same interpretation--'maintenance and repair of positions'--that America has permitted the Israeli forces stationed east of the canal. I have entrusted the minister of information (Muhammad Hasanayn Haykal) who is in charge of domestic and foreign information to prepare a complete plan to answer their campaign against us at the present time and to follow up this campaign continually.

"I suspect that the real goal of the Israeli propaganda campaign, which is supported by the United States, is to prepare the international atmosphere for responding to a new Israeli request calling for allowing international observers to conduct inspections in the battlefield to make sure of implementation of the initiative's provisions. Naturally, we will not approve such a proposal under any circumstances. I also do not find it unlikely that Israel seeks to get the UAR condemned to the degree whereby it is internationally entitled to carry out a new military operation against us."

"Generally, we are in a good position militarily and Israel cannot attack us and cross the canal now. We are also prepared now for any commando operations against the missile sites. We received on 7 August the new missiles (SAM-3) on which Egyptian crews were trained in the Soviet Union. The electronic equipment to jam the radars of the Phantom

aircraft has also reached us with these missiles. At the same time, the information we have gathered assures us that the Israelis are tired politically and militarily. In a statement he made recently inside Israel, Abba Eban said: 'The Israeli air force began to deteriorate and this is why we accepted the cease-fire.'

Thus, I believe that I have presented to the readers a quick film [sic] on the story of the Rogers plan which gained a reputation at the time that other and much better plans did not gain. The reason for this reputation was 'Abd-al-Nasir's response which had not been expected at either the international or Arab levels and also the Arab reaction opposed to 'Abd-al-Nasir's step.

Most of the Arab countries which attacked the initiative and opposed 'Abd-al-Nasir at the time feared that the initiative would obstruct restoration of the occupied Arab territories and would be a direct cause for failure to regain the Arab people's rights in Palestine, especially since the initiative was American and since 'Abd-al-Nasir was more capable than others of knowing the American ill intentions toward the Arabs.

The Arab reactions against the plan were not surprising to 'Abd-al-Nasir because he had expected them since he received the initiative in June. However, he always took into his consideration that those suspicions would evaporate as soon as the Arabs became certain that he was truly serious in preparing for the liberation battle. This is why he said after the rabid Israeli propaganda campaign which rose against him a few days after Israel approved the initiative:

"You may hate something that is good for you. It is true that the Jewish campaign is annoying us a lot internationally but I consider it the biggest proof to our Arab brothers who have expressed their fears and doubts in regard to my acceptance of the initiative."

In a conversation he had on 18 July with Dr Labib Shuqayr, member of the Arab Socialist Union Higher Executive Committee, on the expected Arab reaction to the initiative, 'Abd-al-Nasir said:

"I have no objection to the Palestinian resistance's attack against the initiative but I believe that when the resistance assumes power in Jordan or in other places, it will have a different position because it is now speaking without responsibility and without consideration for any other factors. I also know that the Americans, and perhaps the Russians, believe that it is better for the Palestinians to shoulder the responsibility so as to face the reality and act accordingly."

At the same meeting, 'Abd-al-Nasir explained his evaluation of King Husayn's expected movement concerning the initiative, saying:

"King Husayn will not approve the initiative publicly but he will send his approval to the Americans. On the following day, the world press agencies will quote U.S. sources on the king's acceptance of the initiative.

"Regarding the expected Arab reactions against the initiative, it is my opinion that matters should not be pushed toward Arab tension in any manner. Arab tension will weaken us ourselves and it is in our interest before the world not to enter into a battle with any Arabs because should this happen, the world will leave Israel alone and channel all its political and information activity toward the issue of the Arab disagreement and toward the benefits it may reap from this disagreement in the future."

As for details of the Soviet position before and after the initiative, I will, out of eagerness for accuracy on this important strategic issue, devote a special part which will include: What did the Soviets tell 'Abd-al-Nasir in Moscow when he presented the American initiative and what was the effect of the initiative on the Egyptian-Soviet friendship? This part will also include a new idea by 'Abd-al-Nasir to settle the issue outside the framework of the American initiative and the details of a meeting that 'Abd-al-Nasir had with one of the Warsaw Pact leaders a month after the start of the initiative.

[2-8 Oct 78 pp 31-35]

[Text] Part XVII: 'Abd-al-Nasir and Soviets After Rogers Plan; Soviets Objected to Acceptance of Plan Because It Projected America as Being Eager for Peace; Soviets Told 'Abd-al-Nasir: It Would Have Been Better for You in This Case To Have Accepted Peace Plan That We Presented to You; 'Abd-al-Nasir: America's Plans Don't Exclude Syria From Solution and It Is Enough for Syria To Declare Its Acceptance of Security Council Resolution To Be Included in Settlement Issue; Negotiating With Israel While Its Forces Are Still on Our Land Is Considered a Kind of Capitulation; President of Hungary to 'Abd-al-Nasir: There Are Foreign Forces That Are in Contact With Some Palestinian Resistance Leaderships and We Also Suspect That U.S. Intelligence and China Are Playing a Role Inside Resistance Organizations

I have already pointed out that as soon as he officially received the U.S. initiative and the explanations concerning its provisions, 'Abd-al-Nasir immediately went to his Soviet friends on 29 July [sic] 1970. He stayed there for 18 days because his strategy was built fundamentally on the Soviet military and political support that he was getting. Moreover, he was not ready at the time to arouse disagreement and suspicions between himself and the Soviets, especially since America, his traditional enemy, was lurking for him.

He presented the initiative to the Soviet leadership and dialog between the two sides took place in four sessions, each of which lasted long hours. The Soviets objected to the principle of accepting an American plan and told him: It would have been better for you to accept in this case the Soviet plan that we had presented to you.

Out of my eagerness to reflect accurately the moments of this delicate historical period, especially in regard to the important strategic issue of the Egyptian-Soviet friendship, I will devote this part in its entirety to the position of 'Abd-al-Nasir and of the Soviets toward this initiative through two meetings:

First, 'Abd-al-Nasir's meeting with members of the Arab Socialist Union Higher Executive Committee upon his arrival from Moscow on 18 July 1970 to explain to them the Soviet position toward the initiative and his position toward the Soviets.

Second, 'Abd-al-Nasir's meeting with Pal Losonczi, the president of the Hungarian People's Republic and one of the Warsaw Pact members, in Cairo on 29 August 1970, i.e., a few days after acceptance of the initiative.

'Abd-al-Majid Farid

After this long absence in Moscow, 'Abd-al-Nasir was eager to meet with his colleagues the members of the Higher Executive Committee to present to them the outcome of his visit and the topics that the Russians had brought up during the long dialog between them in Moscow.

The meeting was set for 1930 on 18 July 1970 at the meetings hall in al-Qubbah Palace. All the members were eager to come a long time before the session to exchange views with each other before sitting down with 'Abd-al-Nasir at this important meeting. 'Abd-al-Nasir arrived smiling and relaxed. After exchanging greetings with the members, he started his discussion with the topic most sensitive to them and the one they were most eager to hear about, namely the Soviet position toward our needs--especially in regard to armament and military equipment--after being informed of the American initiative. 'Abd-al-Nasir said:

The Soviets have approved 95 percent of our requests for new aircraft and missiles, helicopters and trucks, provided that we pay the price of some of these items, such as trucks, with hard currency. The rest will be paid for on soft terms as usual (publisher's note: The Russians used to demand that the cost of certain items and equipment produced by their plants for civilian consumption, such as vehicles, be paid in hard currency. Military weapons and equipment, such as tanks and aircraft, was paid for in accordance with the old and comfortable agreement). I have also been able to get their partial approval for Russian pilots to take part with our Egyptian pilots in air sorties. As for the surface-to-air

missiles, they had agreed only 1 day before my arrival that some of them, along with our missile crews, be moved to the eastern side of the canal, even though they were not very comfortable with this issue at the first session.

The Russians have also agreed to deliver modern electronic equipment to jam the Jewish ground radars and the radars with which the Phantom aircraft are equipped. Within a few days, a number of Soviet scientists will arrive to study the scientific aspects resulting from the use of the new equipment on the spot. This means that they have approved nearly 95 percent of our requests, most of which will be delivered in 1970, i.e., this year.

This is how the Russians deal. I know that they like to move slowly and to deliver what is requested piece by piece so that they may make the Americans swallow the matter gradually and without being aware of it in order not to touch off the situation. This is insofar as the military aspect is concerned. As for the political aspect, I have talked to them very frankly and told them that it would be better for us to approve the American initiative now because it doesn't in fact contain any new conditions. Moreover, we, and you (the Soviet Union) with us, are being exposed at present to big international pressure on the grounds that we want only war and that the Jews want the peaceful solution. Therefore, when we approve the initiative, it is as if we are answering all this planned campaign. Moreover, the provision on ceasing the fire for 3 months means abolition of the 1967 cease-fire resolution which calls for an endless cease-fire. Consequently, resuming the fighting in 3 months would be legitimate.

The cease-fire period will also help us to build the new missile sites that we have been futilely trying to build since December 1969 under the pressure of ceaseless air raids. This has caused our missiles in the front area to be in the open at present and not inside fortifications to protect them from air raids.

In fact, when I presented the issue to the Russians, they objected and said: Why are you approving an American plan whereas we had already submitted a peace plan to you that you rejected? They also said that this means that the entire world will say America is the one working for peace and that with such approval, we would be giving America a prominent international position!

After these statements, a long dialog took place between me and them and it culminated with my telling them that the fact at present is that we either approve or reject and that there is no compromise. We must also not forget that if we reject the initiative now, we will give America the convenient justification to supply Israel with more modern weapons and aircraft. I believe that the issue of approval or disapproval will

be ultimately the same from a practical standpoint. However, our approval of the initiative in front of the world will beset America and Israel also. After long hours of discussion, the Russians agreed. But they asked me not to declare my acceptance of an American plan but of a plan for a peaceful solution. I did not agree with this opinion and explained to them why I didn't, considering that I will stand before the National Congress members and before all the people on 23 July to make known the reasons why we approve the American initiative. This requires me to explain the issue at length and in detail to persuade these people. I also talked with the Russians about the American campaign aimed against us and that is intensifying day after day. Nixon followed by Rogers, by Kissinger, by Sisco, by Fulbright and by Mansfield and the daily statements by the Israelis about their being in real danger as a result of the Russian armament in Egypt, etc. require us to launch a quick political movement to counter them.

Syria not Excluded

Burgess, the official in charge of the U.S. interests in Cairo, asked to see me on the night of 28 [June], i.e., the night of my departure for Moscow, but I did not meet him. So, he met with Mahmud Riyad, the minister of foreign affairs, and informed him that the time is now very suitable for seeking a peaceful solution, that America is the only state that can exert pressure on Israel and that he hopes that we will let America have the freedom of choosing the suitable method. He also said that should the opportunity be lost this time, there will be complications in their relations with the entire area and with the Soviet Union also. He added that their plans do not exclude Syria and that it would be enough for Syria to declare its acceptance of the Security Council resolution to be included in the settlement issue. As for what (we) always raise in regard to the Palestinian rights, it is not difficult to include the Palestinians in the solution procedures in one form or another. As for withdrawal from the occupied territories, the U.S. opinion on this issue is based fundamentally on the principle of nonacquisition of territories by war, as stipulated by the Security Council resolution. This is why they are searching with Israel for a suitable formula to achieve this principle in one form or another, with the likelihood of including Israel in the settlement of the situation in Gaza and Jerusalem. In regard to Jerusalem, they have already proposed that it remain undivided, provided that both Israel and Jordan take part in its administration. As for the West Bank, they believe that slight changes should be made on its borders.

In light of all this information, I believe that I should face the people on 23 July and fully analyze to them the political situation, pointing out to them that the Americans are now demanding implementation of the Security Council resolution which we approved in 1967. The Americans are also declaring their disapproval of the usurpation of territories by war and aggression. The initiative contains no new provisions

different from the Security Council resolution which calls for establishing a just and lasting peace. I will then point out that our charter calls for establishing a just and lasting peace in the Middle East. This is why I propose that the initiative be approved, without ignoring the Palestinian people's rights, provided that implementation of the initiative include the following:

First, withdrawal of the Israeli forces from the territories they occupied in the latest conflagration.

Second, terminating all calls for and conditions of war and recognizing the sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence of each of the area's states.

Plan for Propaganda

Dr Mahmud Fawzi: I believe that the plan is presented in the form of propaganda and not in an objective manner. As for the cease-fire, why should we fear it as long as we are going to exploit it in our interest?

'Abd-al-Nasir: The cease-fire needs observers and this requires the presence of observers. We have no objection, but only after having moved our missiles forward.

Mahmud Fawzi: In this case, our air defense will have reached the canal bank. Consequently, the day we have enough missiles and a sufficient number of personnel trained on them, it becomes possible to cross the canal.

'Abd-al-Nasir: During the period of the initiative, during the coming month of August specifically, we will receive the new SAM-3 with their full equipment and with the crews trained in the Soviet Union.

Mahmud Fawzi: Then from the military angle, we will benefit and will bolster our capabilities. Another point I wish to draw attention to is that it should not be understood from what we will announce about the initiative that we agree and that we say yes and no at the same time. This kind of declarations will be exploited by those who want us to reject the initiative, especially since there is an international feeling, particularly in America, that 'Abd-al-Nasir is against the American initiative.

'Abd-al-Nasir: In fact, I believe that the plan was presented in the area originally for a propaganda gain. But we will surprise them and approve it. I will explain to the people, especially to the Arabs, why we are approving it, particularly since there are Arab countries that will describe the plan as "liquidationist and capitulationist solutions." It is my opinion that such words will lead us to no result. What will

force them [Americans and Israelis] to reach a positive solution is another thing, namely the degree of Russian participation with our military forces in Egypt, which means that the likelihood of reaching a just peaceful solution is always comparable with our ability to involve the Russians in the Egyptian front (publisher's note: He then said in English to the limit of their commitments).

The Russians are now present with us, their missiles are next to ours and their pilots with ours. Naturally, the Russians do not accept to be defeated militarily. This is why I believe that our success in making the Soviet troops participate with us is considered of greater value than any military deterrence operation because the Americans fear very much this form of Russian presence in the area. Only for this reason will they be compelled to think seriously of reaching a peaceful solution without giving Israel major concessions or gains.

'Abd-al-Muhsin Abu-al-Nur: There are actually several international advantages to approving the initiative. But I believe that numerous difficulties will face us at the Arab and domestic levels.

'Abd-al-Nasir: We should not forget that the period of 3 months during which the fighting will cease will help us greatly to achieve military control over the canal area, thanks to the large numbers of new missile battalions and to the continued presence of the Russian air defense units in the heartland. Even though the Russian units were scheduled to return to their country immediately upon the arrival of the Egyptian crews trained in Russia, I have asked the Russians to keep their units in their positions so that the Egyptian crews may get additional missiles and may move them secretly to the canal bank.

The Russians have approved my request and we will have twice the number of the missile battalions that we presently have. The Russian units will stay with us for 6 more months. Considering that it is not expected that a solution will be reached during the current year, we will be able to replace the Mig aircraft engines by new engines.

At the same time, we will show the world that we want peace and that Israel wants expansion. We will offer the practical proof of our position by accepting the peace initiative as we accepted the Security Council resolution before.

Sa'd Zayid (Sa'd Zayid was not a member of the Higher Executive Committee but 'Abd-al-Nasir had asked the members to agree that Minister Sha'rawi Jum'ah and Minister Sa'd Zayid attend this meeting by virtue of their general supervision of the organization and movement of the Socialist Union): Mr President, what will the situation be if Israel rejects the American initiative?

'Abd-al-Nasir: In this case, it would be easy to pressure America politically. I believe that it will then be possible to stir the Arab oil producing countries to exert such pressure. I remember well a recent statement by Moshe Dayan in which he said: "I am ready to carry out any military action against the Arab states, except in two cases: First, in the case of the presence of Russian units in Egypt and, second, in the case of real American pressure on us."

Concern With Information

'Ali Sabri: Mr President, I am afraid that after approval of the initiative, a feeling that we are reluctant to enter the battle will creep into the hearts of people in Egypt. This is where the role of information emerges. Careful review must be made of the way things are published domestically, especially things published about the initiative.

'Abd-al-Nasir: I will first explain to the people that there is no new solution, that there is no peace initiative and that what is presented to us is a procedural plan. I will also explain to them that if we reject this plan, we will be faced by enormous military aid to Israel. Generally, our approval of the initiative will be a major information surprise. A detailed analysis on our political movement will appear in AL-AHRAM pointing out that the submitted plan contains nothing new.

In regard to press reports, it is also my opinion that it is improper to publish the details of what we have gotten from the Soviet Union and that it is sufficient to point out generally that we have gotten all we requested, keeping in mind that 11 Soviet ships will reach us next month loaded with Egyptian troops trained on the new missiles, and with them all their missiles and equipment. The Russians have requested that they be unloaded at night but I believe that it is better for us to unload them at daytime so that people may see them.

Labib Shuqayr (Higher Executive Committee member): What will the situation be insofar as the Palestinians are concerned?

'Abd-al-Nasir: Our acceptance of this plan does not at all mean any concessions insofar as the occupied territory is concerned or any undermining of the Palestinian people's rights. There will not be any backing down on our previous positions and principles. All that there is to it is that as long as there is a peace attempt, then we are peaceful.

'Abd-al-Nasir thus ended his presentation to the Higher Executive Committee members on the issue of the initiative and on the Soviet position toward this initiative. The second meeting that I wish to dwell on for further explanation of this issue is 'Abd-al-Nasir's meeting with one of the Eastern bloc leaders after his approval of the American initiative.

There is no doubt that 'Abd-al-Nasir's approval of the American initiative left a cloud and some apprehensions in the atmosphere of the Egyptian-Soviet relations despite the public statements by both sides and despite 'Abd-al-Nasir's trip to Moscow and his long stay there--a stay which lasted more than 2 weeks--before announcing his approval of the initiative. Political observers cast a lot of doubts and made many whispers about the deterioration of relations between 'Abd-al-Nasir and the Soviets, and even between 'Abd-al-Nasir and the entire Eastern bloc. This is why the visit of Comrade Pal Losonczi, one of the Eastern bloc and of the Warsaw Pact leaders, to Cairo on 29 August 1970 came as a major slap to the gloating imperialist forces and to the elements allied with them that disseminated those apprehensions and rumors, especially since the meeting took place in the same month in which implementation of the initiative started. Moreover, the guest brought along with him a large delegation of the members of the Hungarian Communist Party and Government.

The meetings took place at al-Qubbah Palace on 29 August 1970 and the dialog between the two presidents was that of friends.

'Abd-al-Nasir: I welcome you in your country. In the name of the UAR people, I express to you our deep appreciation for the Hungarian people's and government's support for us after the 1967 [sic] and our full appreciation for the Hungarian Communist Party which declared its solidarity with and support for our struggle and for all our rights.

Losonczi: Our friendship for you is established on firm common principles between us. This friendship between us was established and our relations have been bolstered since 1956 when the imperialist forces attacked both our countries. I and my colleagues will not forget the popular reception accorded us by the masses of Cairo and we will try to convey its warmth to our masses and our political leaderships in Hungary (publisher's note: The president of the Hungarian People's Republic and the party and government delegation accompanying him were given upon arrival at Cairo airport an eventful popular reception, in addition to the official reception, in accordance with the tradition established at the time for giving popular receptions to the heads and delegations of the Arab, friendly and socialist countries).

'Abd-al-Nasir: I believe that we should begin reviewing the political issues with a review of the Middle East issue and where it has reached so far on the basis that this issue affects directly most of the other political issues. We will then review the situation in Africa and discuss the bilateral relations between the two countries in all spheres, even though I believe that they are proceeding normally and that there are no problems or troubles between us.

(The guest president approved the meeting agenda proposed by 'Abd-al-Nasir and asked him to begin with the Middle East issue.)

Electronic War

'Abd-al-Nasir: Concerning the Middle East issue or, to put it more precisely, the problem of the Israeli aggression against the Arabs, we cannot exclude America from this aggression because it supplied Israel with weapons, aircraft and bombs and gave it the latest equipment before the aggression. America has also supplied the Israeli forces with the latest electronic equipment discovered by scientific research, such as the equipment for electronic reconnaissance and for electronic jamming. It is natural that America would continue supplying Israel with the latest equipment after the aggression, including a new consignment of electronic equipment that was delivered to Israel in recent months.

Israel has always sought expansion and has not concealed its ambitions to acquire more Arab territories. When the Security Council resolution was issued after the 1967 aggression, Israel refused to implement it and to withdraw from the territories it occupied. Mr Jarring, the UN general secretary's representative in the area, continued to rove the area here and there futilely for a year and a half.

For the sake of history, we have been able with the aid of the Soviet Union to rebuild our armed forces, to stand fast and not to capitulate.

Israel now wants direct negotiation with us while it is occupying our lands. This kind of negotiation when the enemy forces are still on our land is considered some kind of surrender. At the same time, America every now and then makes statements reflecting the Israeli viewpoint. The United States is constantly declaring that it will guarantee Israel's military superiority over its Arab neighbors so that Israel may always be able to occupy Arab territories. Even in recent months, America has been again focusing on the need for maintaining Israeli superiority in the area. This is why it has supplied Israel with 50 Phantom aircraft and 100 Skyhawk aircraft since the 1967 battle, not to mention the large number of tanks and of modern weapons.

Israel is constantly demanding implementation of the cease-fire called for by the Security Council resolution of 1967 whereas it ignores the withdrawal for which the resolution simultaneously called. We felt that the situation was getting more complicated because freezing Jarring's mission and ceasing the fire were tantamount to no more than entrenching the position that Israel wants and that serves the imperialist interests. The armament race between us and Israel has been going on since 1967. The border battles and the air battles, in which Israel used electronic methods to jam the radar equipment and to confuse the missiles, making use of the lessons of the American battles in Vietnam, also continued. The air war between us at that time was not equal because our pilots were entering the battles blindfolded as a result of the jamming operations, contrary to the position of the Israeli pilots. But the situation

has changed now that we are able to engage in jamming operations with Soviet electronic equipment. In the first battle in which we used this equipment, the Israeli aircraft fled as soon as our aircraft appeared.

The Western press has recently said that were it not for the cease-fire in accordance with the Rogers plan, the area would witness an electronic war unparalleled in any other war before. We have also seized a modern American electronic apparatus installed in one of the Phantom aircraft that we shot down 4 days before the cease-fire.

Brother and friend, I have told you all these details to demonstrate to you America's position and its alinement with Israel. Despite this, I sent an appeal to President Nixon on May Day this year and he answered it with the recent Rogers plan.

Traditional Position

Israel has always rejected the word "withdrawal" and has reiterated instead the phrase of "secure and recognized borders" to every political figure that has visited it. Such figures find these phrases proper and reasonable but if they examine a little more deeply what is meant by these phrases and if they follow up the statements and ambitions of the Israeli official, they would find that Israel means by these phrases expansion in the Arab land.

When the Rogers plan was submitted to us as a new attempt to implement the Security Council resolution and its provision on withdrawal from the Arab territories, we accepted the plan on this basis. The information available to us indicated that Israel did not approve the plan and that America itself presented it for the purpose of local consumption and for propaganda, thinking that we would not approve it. But our approval has been a major surprise.

Our acceptance of this plan underlines our eagerness for just peace in the area. But Israel is still obstructing the course of implementing the various phases of this peace. Generally, we will wait the 90-day period called for by the plan (publisher's note: In accordance with the plan, the 3-month cease-fire was to last from 4 August to 3 November 1970) without violating the conditions and provisions of the plan, even though I am confident that Israel will ultimately demand expanding its borders to include Gaza, Jerusalem, Hebron Bethlehem and other West Bank towns. This is why we are not optimistic and why we will work during the cease-fire period more seriously than before in preparation for the future and for the possibilities of the next period.

As for the Arab reactions to this plan, most of the Arab countries have rejected it, as they had previously rejected the Security Council resolution. The Palestinian resistance has also opposed it because its

implementation means liquidating the resistance and raising big question marks regarding its fate and future. Here is where the PRC entered as a new factor in this issue when it contacted the resistance and supplied it with a limited quantity of weapons and munitions. The PRC is also trying to persuade the resistance politically that a secret accord has been concluded by America and the Soviet Union to divide the world, including the Arab area, between them. Regrettably, such words are finding response from some Palestinian leaderships. With this cheap price, China can realize its goals in the area through these elements in the Palestinian resistance.

In the Arab East, there is a big dispute between King Husayn and the Palestinian resistance. This conflict has reached the limit of a struggle for power. This is why the problems and crises between them are going on and escalating. Unfortunately, a degree of disagreement has recently cropped up between the UAR and the resistance but we are on the way to completely settle and end this disagreement.

This, briefly, is the political and military situation of the Middle East issue.

President of the Hungarian People's Republic: I thank you for this political explanation. I would also like to mention to you our opinion on the Middle East issue. We in Hungary considered Israel's aggression against you an aggression against all the progressive countries. There is no doubt that Israel cannot achieve superiority over its Arab neighbors by itself. But things changed as a result of the American support which is established on the interests of the American capital. This is why we adopted a definite position toward the aggression, why we severed our relations with Israel as an aggressor state and why we fully denounced the aggression and completely supported the Arab peoples' struggle, declaring this support at home and abroad.

We understand that America had hoped for the downfall of the progressive Arab regimes in the wake of the battle. But the days following the battle proved that these regimes did not and will not fall. We in Hungary were certain of this, especially in regard to the UAR with its status and its history of struggle.

We believe that the problem now, and after 3 years of steadfastness, has reached a point which makes it necessary to change the method of movement, but on one fundamental condition, namely guaranteeing withdrawal from the Arab territories without the use of the phrases of "secure borders" and "recognized borders" because such phrases have twisted meanings, in addition to the condition of repatriating the Palestinian refugees and finding a just solution for the Palestinian people.

Regrettably, America understands the balance of powers in the Middle East on the basis of the concept of balance in favor of Israel whereas there

should be a real balance in the area. The American intelligence has become aware that the UAR is stronger than what it used to be in 1967. This is why America has been compelled to present the Rogers plan as a result of your position of steadfastness and struggle. We also believe that acceptance of the Rogers plan by all the parties concerned means acceptance of the UAR's opinion, namely working to implement the Security Council resolution in full.

As for the general Arab situation, we are aware that Jordan, Sudan and Libya are the only countries supporting you in connection with the plan. However, we are confident that the number of your supporters will increase day after day. As for the Palestinian resistance, we are aware that there are foreign forces that are in contact with some of its leaderships. We also suspect that the U.S. Central Intelligence, in addition to the PRC, are playing an important role inside the resistance organizations. This Arab position does not help unity of the Arab ranks in the face of your enemy. Moreover, it is a position that greatly satisfies America.

Joint Communique

'Abd-al-Nasir: What do you suggest should be issued on our meeting in terms of information?

President of the Hungarian People's Republic: I propose that a joint communique be issued pointing out our joint political positions, including the support for the Arab peoples and the Indochina peoples.

I will now turn to explaining our political positions toward the other issues. In Africa, we support the struggle of the African peoples to achieve their rights. We also try as much as we can to support them materially. We have nearly 500 experts in the African countries. We also set aside large numbers of seats in our universities for African students.

From your private conversation with me on your policy in Africa during dinner last night, I find no big differences in our viewpoint toward most African issues. I hope that we will continue to exchange views on these issues. We are also confident that all the African countries will triumph shortly in their struggle and will live as progressive independent states.

'Abd-al-Nasir (smiling): I fear that we have taken all your time for our issues and problems in the Middle East and Africa and that we have not heard anything about the conditions in Hungary.

President of the Hungarian People's Republic: We are living under complete stability. The Hungarians are exerting serious efforts to implement the five-year plan which will end this year. We have been able to

increase the national income by 40 percent. Industry and agriculture have also realized most of their objectives. We are presently preparing the measures to begin the new five-year plan which will increase the national income by 43 percent. This plan also seeks to absorb all the unemployed. It also offers numerous facilities to the peasants and will increase the individual income by 28 percent.

We are now busy organizing the general congress of the Hungarian Workers Party which will be held after 2 months, in November. Our policy in the various spheres will be submitted to this congress.

Mr President, you have not visited Hungary so far, even though you have visited numerous other countries. This is why I hope that you will accept an invitation in my name and in the party's and government's name to visit Hungary at the earliest chance possible.

'Abd-al-Nasir: It pleases me to accept this invitation but I hope you will permit me to postpone its date till after the Israelis leave our territories because we are compelled at present to exert ceaseless central efforts out of our eagerness not to see any negligence occur at the domestic or foreign levels in this decisive period of our history.

President of the Hungarian People's Republic: There remains nothing for us to discuss except one topic, namely the bilateral relations between our two countries. In this sphere, we are prepared to proceed to develop and enhance the relations to the utmost because we consider the UAR a long-time friend of the Hungarian People's Republic. This is why we are determined to support your struggle and the struggle of your people with all the resources we possess. I have forgotten to inform you during my review of the general political situation that we in Hungary will support fully the forthcoming nonalignment conference. In conclusion, I repeat my thanks and the thanks of my colleagues to you and to the UAR people for the official and popular reception we have been accorded in your country.

The meeting ended and with it ends the review of the American (Rogers) plan in which all the reactions resulting from the plan have been recorded and analyzed and all the traces emanating from it have been explained.

Now I believe that the parts that I have already presented from "'Abd-al-Nasir's Secret Papers" in the foreign sphere are enough to give the Arab reader a live picture of 'Abd-al-Nasir's struggle and of his political movement through his meetings with the international leaderships. We have also come to know the way he dealt with numerous and complex political problems. But for 'Abd-al-Nasir's picture to become complete in the mind of every reader, it is necessary for the reader to become acquainted with examples of his meetings and discussions on domestic

politics. After a review in this respect, I have not found a deeper or clearer example than the meeting that took place immediately after the defeat with the members of the Socialist Union Higher Executive Committee--the highest authority in the country--on Thursday and Friday, 3 and 4 August 1967. The meeting included frank admissions made by 'Abd-al-Nasir for the first time and expressing his opinion and his criticism of his regime, as well as his visualization of the method of rule in Egypt in the future.

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[Text] Part XVIII: 'Abd-al-Nasir Admits: 'Abd-al-Hakim 'Amir Nominated Shams Badran To Succeed Me on 9 June and Shams Badran Considered Himself President of Republic; 500 Officers Staged Sit-in Strike in Protest of Dismissal of 'Abd-al-Hakim 'Amir Who in Turn Retreated to 'Isam Khalil's Apartment; There Must Be Fault in Present System and This Fault Must Be Corrected or Else Future Will Be Very Dangerous; Marshal 'Amir Asked Me After Defeat That He Go to America To Have Discussions With Americans Because Russians Are Traitors; Zakariya Muhyi-al-Din: Open System Is Best for Us; System Has Deteriorated to Degree Whereby We Are Afraid To Speak and To Say Truth; Higher Authority Must Be Freed of Fear and Then We Can Free Country of Fear; There Must Be Real Opposition, not Theatrical Opposition, in Country; What Led Us to Failing To Say Truth or To Rejecting Criticism Will Lead Us to Dark Future

The Socialist Union Higher Executive Committee was the highest authority in the regime in the last 4 years of Jamal 'Abd-al-Nasir's era. At the outset, it was formed by appointment until the 30 March 1968 declaration which stipulated that all levels of the political organization be elected. Thus, this committee was then formed by election from among members of the Central Committee.

At the outset and during the appointment phase, the committee consisted of the president and the Revolution Command Council members remaining in the regime with him, in addition to the prime minister. So the committee included 'Abd-al-Nasir, 'Abd-al-Hakim 'Amir, Zakariya Muhyi-al-Din, Anwar al-Sadat, Husayn al-Shafi'i, 'Ali Sabri and Prime Minister 'Aziz Sidqi.

After the 1968 elections, the committee consisted of 'Abd-al-Nasir, 'Ali Sabri (who got 134 votes, the highest number of votes), Husayn al-Shafi'i (130 votes), Dr Mahmud Fawzi (129 votes), Anwar al-Sadat (119 votes), Ramzi Istinu (112 votes), Diya'-al-Din Dawud (104 votes), 'Abd-al-Muhsin Abu-al-Nur (104 votes) and Labib Shiqayr (80 votes). The outcome of the elections and the number of votes each of the winning committee members got left behind deep psychological effects which resulted in consequences and complications from which 'Abd-al-Nasir suffered a lot. I personally attended all the meetings of this committee since its formation and until

the death of 'Abd-al-Nasir in my capacity as secretary of the Socialist Union Higher Committee.

By reviewing this committee's meetings to present to the readers a live picture of 'Abd-al-Nasir's political movement at the domestic level, I could find no meeting as lively and as mature as that of Thursday, 3 August 1967, which lasted until Friday, 4 August. The meeting was held under extraordinary political circumstances which made it a special Higher Committee meeting for the following reasons:

First, it was the first Higher Executive Committee meeting after the defeat of June 1967. Considering that this committee was the highest political authority in the country before and after the aggression, it shouldered in its entirety the major responsibility for what had happened.

Second, the committee was meeting after 9 and 10 June, i.e., after the insistence of the Egyptian people on maintaining 'Abd-al-Nasir's leadership and on continuing the battle as a result of the absolute confidence they developed in 'Abd-al-Nasir after he had led the struggle for 15 years. This sweeping popular support, which surprised the entire world and for which some political commentators are still unable to find a clear explanation, was intended for 'Abd-al-Nasir personally and not for the regime or for its executive or political committees. The popular support of 9 and 10 June was tantamount to a carte blanche signed by the Egyptian people for 'Abd-al-Nasir to save them from the defeat and return them to the years of triumph.

Third, the committee was meeting for the first time with six members in view of the absence of the seventh, namely Marshal 'Abd-al-Hakim 'Amir who had shared with them the responsibility and the meeting throughout the preceding period. His absence had a psychological impact on the members, especially when they entered the meeting hall and got ready to sit down in their seats and looked at the vacant seat to the right side of 'Abd-al-Nasir which was that of 'Abd-al-Hakim 'Amir.

The meeting was set for 1500 on Thursday, 3 August, at the meeting hall of the Higher Committee, located on the 11th floor of the Socialist Union building on Corniche al-Nil. I noticed while sitting with the committee members in the salon adjacent to 'Abd-al-Nasir's office that the members were sitting in complete silence as if the bird of ill omens was hovering above their heads. There were no smiles, and even the ordinary words they always used to exchange before the appearance of the committee chairman vanished.

'Abd-al-Nasir came and exchanged a few words with the members, contrary to his custom before previous sessions, and signaled them to move to the meeting hall to begin the session.

It was a heated session. I remember its words and I remember the reactions of the chairman and of the members during the long hours of the session which continued until the middle of the night. The discussion was not completed so the session was resumed on the following day, Friday. No agenda had been drawn up for this session, unlike previous ones. However, it was known from its timing after all the events encountered by Egypt that it was a session for general evaluation--a session by the highest political leadership in the country to discuss what had happened, how it had happened and where to proceed.

It is my opinion that had 'Abd-al-Nasir's words that night found attentive ears, had they found those who would bring them to the light and had they found their way to implementation, many things would have changed in Egypt since that time. But what happened was an enormous and fearful explosion whose noise drowned the sincere thoughts and the sound opinions expressed that night, even though they were the thoughts and opinions of 'Abd-al-Nasir.

'Abd-al-Majid Farid

'Abd-al-Nasir opened the session by embarking on the issue directly and without any preludes. He said:

We are discussing today the most important issue. This is why I have asked 'Abd-al-Majid Farid (the committee secretary) not to prepare any proposed agenda. What we will discuss is much more important than all other issues, namely an evaluation of the system of government that we are following, because I believe that by following up and carefully analyzing the events that have taken place recently, it becomes evident to us that we have had no sound system. We have had no sound system (publisher's note: 'Abd-al-Nasir used the English word "system"). To make my words clear, I will review the events that have recently taken place in our country with more detail.

You all remember that we attended a meeting of the armed forces general command in the city of Nasr shortly before the start of the military operations. I told the military commands that attended the meeting that the political information available to us affirmed that the enemy would begin his major offensive by seizing Sharm al-Shaykh and cutting off the Gaza Strip. However, the armed forces general command assessed its position on the basis that it totally excludes the possibility of an all-out enemy attack against this front and that even should such an attack take place, then the command totally excludes the coastal route as a major axis of the attack. This is why the command concentrated its forces in the south and left the northern sector near Rafah and Gaza weak.

Zakariya Muhyi-al-Din: We do really remember the discussion held with the general command's operation staff on that day after it had become

evident from the command's plan that the area of al-'Arish and its vicinity was weak and that the command agreed after persistent urging to reinforce al-'Arish area with an armored brigade and to bolster the likely penetration zone near al-Shaykh Zuwayd with Sa'd al-Shadhili's force.

'Abd-al-Nasir: Regrettably, I later learned from 'Abd-al-Hakim 'Amir on Friday that he had ordered the return of the armored brigade to Nakhil and Sa'd al-Shadhili's force to the south on the grounds that their estimates were that the major battle would take place in the south.

I also told the armed forces general command at that meeting, and in front of the army and air force commanders, that it was my estimate that the war would take place on Monday (5 June) and that it was most likely that the first blow would be dealt to our air forces. Lt Gen Sidqi Mahmud (the air forces commander at the time) became annoyed and said that such a possibility would cause us great confusion!

As you know, the war did actually start on Monday and the operations did start with the air blow against all our air forces. Moreover, the major attack took place in the northern sector and al-'Arish fell. The enemy then moved along three axes, one of which was the coastal route. It found no military units to oppose its advance, considering that the general command had excluded the possibility of any enemy movement along this route.

Let me return to the first days of the war, which I followed from my office. I did not enter the general command or interfere in any military instructions as of Monday, 5 June, until Thursday, 8 June!

(Publisher's note: 'Abd-al-Nasir's nonintervention in the general command's decisions or instructions goes back to an old story whose roots date to the time after the breakup of the union with Syria in 1961. At the time, 'Abd-al-Nasir requested at a meeting of the Presidential Council (the then highest political authority in the United Arab Republic)--in light of the misconduct of a large number of the military commands during their presence in the northern region (Syria), a misconduct which the secessionists exploited to harm the union and to advocate secession amidst the ranks of the Syrian forces, in addition to other flagrant examples of bad choices made by a number of military commands--that appointments to military positions be ratified by a decree from the Presidential Council and not be left to a personal decision by 'Abd-al-Hakim 'Amir, the general commander. 'Abd-al-Nasir also requested at the same meeting that a number of the high-ranking commands whose failure in the preceding period had been proven be replaced and that the main criterion for the selection of military commands be military capability and not political aspects or the degree of loyalty to the general command! At the end of his address, I handed out to the Presidential Council members a draft resolution containing the proposal made by 'Abd-al-Nasir

at the outset of the session. As soon as 'Abd-al-Hakim 'Amir read the resolution that stripped him personally of the authority to appoint the major military commands and that empowered the Presidential Council to make such appointments on the recommendation of the general command, he flew in 'Abd-al-Nasir's face for the first time and criticized the resolution sharply, denouncing any intervention in the powers of the armed forces general commander. Some of the Presidential Council members tried to calm down the intensity of the sharp discussion which went on futilely to the point where 'Abd-al-Nasir was finally compelled to leave the meeting, assigning 'Abd-al-Latif Baghdadi to head the session. Matters then developed inside the armed forces because Marshal 'Abd-al-Hakim conveyed what had taken place inside the Presidential Council hall to the high-ranking officers and a feeling emerged among the military commands that there was a political plan to intervene in the army affairs and to strip the military commands, including the general commander, of power. 'Abd-al-Nasir also learned later that some sort of an unofficial poll was being secretly conducted among the military commands dealing with their loyalty at the point of the expected confrontation to determine whether it was loyalty for 'Abd-al-Nasir or for 'Abd-al-Hakim 'Amir, the general commander. It was natural for 'Abd-al-Nasir to realize the degree of confusion prevailing among all the military commands. This is why he considered the matter extremely serious and directly undermining the regime's security. He feared that a military coup would take place, as he feared that a bloody clash would erupt between the army and the civilian political forces. So he was compelled to bend his head before the storm and agreed to mediation and to reconciliation with 'Abd-al-Hakim 'Amir to save the regime. He was also compelled to abandon his proposal and to capitulate to 'Abd-al-Hakim 'Amir's demand, namely that he, in his capacity as the armed forces general commander, continue to be the authority with the sole right to appoint the military commands at all levels. 'Abd-al-Nasir also made another concession that was not announced at the time, namely that he would refrain from making contacts with the army through some of his aides who were originally officers of the armed forces so that his only inlet to the armed forces would be the door of 'Abd-al-Hakim 'Amir, the general commander. As of that moment, 'Abd-al-Nasir lost contact with the armed forces. He also lost actual touch with what was happening within the armed forces, except to the degree and in the manner presented to him by Marshal 'Abd-al-Hakim 'Amir. Also as of that time, the relationship between 'Abd-al-Nasir and Marshal 'Amir never regained the degree of understanding and coordination prevailing between the two men previously. Many criticized this negative stance by 'Abd-al-Nasir and blamed him severely on the grounds that he had at the time, i.e., in the early 1960's, enough leadership and popularity to enable him to present his disagreement and his conflict with Marshal 'Amir to the entire people while being fully certain that the people would back and support him. But to assess 'Abd-al-Nasir's stance correctly, we must take into consideration all the factors and circumstances surrounding him and influencing him to adopt that negative decision.)

'Amir Nominates Shams Badran

Let me return to 'Abd-al-Nasir's statements to the Socialist Union Higher Executive Committee when he said:

I did not visit the general command from Monday, 5 June, until Thursday, 8 June. On that day, Shams Badran, the minister of war, asked me to go immediately to the general command headquarters because 'Abd-al-Hakim 'Amir was in a state of total collapse and had asked his private secretary to bring him (Sianor) pills which are suicide pills. This is why I went to the general command headquarters and actually found 'Abd-al-Hakim in a state of total collapse. I tried to soothe him, assuring him that I was personally responsible for what had happened and that I would step down as president. I then asked him about the person whom he thought was fit to assume the presidency of the republic after me and he said that he thought the fittest person for this position was Shams Badran.

I learned a few days later that after I left the command headquarters, 'Abd-al-Hakim held a long meeting with Shams Badran to reorganize the state and its civilian leaderships. They both contacted some political figures and ministers and asked them not to announce their resignation after my stepping down so that they may cooperate with the new president of the republic.

On the afternoon of the following day (9 June), I contacted 'Abd-al-Hakim by telephone before announcing the statement of resignation and informed him that I had thought well and found that Zakariya Muhyi-al-Din was the fittest to assume the position of president of the republic after me. Here is where the problem of Shams Badran started. He considered himself president of the republic as of 2300 on Thursday until the time I announced my resignation on the afternoon of Friday, 9 June. He also considered that by my nominating Zakariya Muhyi-al-Din for president of the republic, I encroached on his legitimate position and dismissed him. While I was announcing my statement from my office in al-Qubbah Palace, Shams Badran contacted Muhammad Ahmad, my secretary, and asked him to inform me that I should not continue to deliver the rest of the statement. This was, of course, unimaginable. Two days later, Shams Badran contacted me by telephone and told me that there was a group of about 500 army officers gathered around Marshal 'Amir's residence in Hilmiyat al-Zaytun and at the general command headquarters, that they insist on the reinstatement of 'Abd-al-Hakim as general commander and that they ask me to make a decision on the issue immediately. I told him that I would make a decision the next day. On the following day, he called me and I said to him: Shams, you know my opinion of the general command. If we sincerely want to correct the situation, we must select a veteran military commander, provided that 'Abd-al-Hakim stay as the first vice president of the republic only. I have tried personally to bring the marshal to my office at home to explain matters to him. I enlisted the help of Salah

Nasr to bring him because he was not at his home but at the apartment of one of the officers loyal to him ('Isam Khalil's apartment). However, he has refused to come. In the 1430 newscast of today, I announced the appointment of Fawzi (Lt Gen Muhammad Fawzi) to the post of general commander and then ordered him to arrest the striking and opposing officers.

'Amir Accuses Russians of Treason

I then met 'Abd-al-Hakim and futilely tried to persuade him that it is not logical for him to stay general commander after the military defeat and that he should be content with being the first vice president. He rejected my arguments completely and left in anger for his town in al-Minya. He then contacted Haykal (Muhammad Hasanayn Haykal, the minister of information) from there and conveyed to him his denunciation of all my actions. Shams Badran then came to my home and told me that the general situation was getting worse day after day, that the whole country was against me and that the only solution was to reinstate 'Abd-al-Hakim 'Amir in his old position in order for the conditions to stabilize.

Two days later, I met Badran another time after having arrested the officers of the secret organization that he had set up in the armed forces, most of whom were officers that graduated with Badran in 1948. I said to him: Shams, I gave you my confidence but, regrettably, you have worked for your interest and the marshal's interest behind my back. If you had been truly sincere and loyal in forming the organization inside the army, you would have informed me at the time of the form of this organization and of the names of its members. But you have not been honest. Generally, I have ordered the arrest of all members of the organization. He started to tremble and became very confused. Last Monday, the marshal came to my home and our general conversation was friendly. However, he suggested that he go to the United States to reach an understanding with the Americans and that the Russians are traitors. I did not comment on these unbalanced statements and just told him: We will think of it.

Zakariya Muhyi-al-Din: This is naive, groundless and undebatable thinking.

'Abd-al-Nasir: The reason I have recounted this story in detail is that I want to highlight an important issue, namely: considering that all these actions have been committed by the people closest to me and by the commands closest to the regime, what could be perpetrated by others? What has happened requires discussing and deep thinking. I and 'Abd-al-Hakim were the two people most closely bound to each other. Still, 'Abd-al-Hakim has acted in this manner. Shams Badran's group of 1948 and others were preparing themselves to take over the country. We conclude from the entire story that the closed system will ultimately lead to a hereditary system. Therefore, we now have two duties:

First, to seek a new system for ourselves.

Second, to determine the major faults existing in the country at present and look for ways to correct them.

It is said in the country these days that we are eating each other and that the system is eating itself. This way, the future will be very dangerous. This is why it is my opinion that we should exert immediate efforts to change the system we are following because there must be faults in it. It is well known that struggle for power always takes place at the top in the single-party system. We have numerous examples in the world, the latest being what happened in China and this is a very clear example. I believe most of us don't have more than 10 years to live, especially me with my sickness and with the pressure and the efforts I am exposed to. This is why I believe that it is necessary to change our system so that the new system may not permit a politically unenlightened or ignorant person or clique to rule the country which has given us absolute and boundless trust. Naturally, the change that I mean does not touch our socialist inclination because, in fact, we have almost completed our socialist application in most of the sectors, excluding the contracts sector and the trade sector. Our work will then be concentrated on the development plans that we are drawing up and on following up their implementation.

'Ali Sabri: What is important in our future movement is that we safeguard the gains and accomplishments we have achieved.

'Aziz Sidqi: As long as we are evaluating matters in this meeting, I hope that we will make the picture very clear in regard to the public sector and the private sector, the spheres of each of them and the relationship between them.

Systemless System

Zakariya Muhyi-al-Din: I want to present my opinion with some detail, especially since I have felt from the president's statements today that the picture is now clearer in his mind than ever before. I consider 9 June a historic day and, at the same time, a day of a major transformation in the 23 July revolution. What the president has just said is considered foresight and deep thinking that will lead us to the path of the peace that we seek for this country. At the same time, nobody denies that the revolution has realized numerous gains and accomplishments in the past 15 years.

As for the issue of the system to which the president has referred, it is well known that a closed system has a certain method of rule and the open system also has its special method. I believe that our exercise of government has been along the lines of neither the open system nor the closed system but somewhere between the two. We have accomplished a lot at the level of the government apparatus but we have not succeeded in making major strides in the popular apparatus.

Zakariya Prefers Openness

If we reexamine the conditions of our country, we would find it geographically difficult for us to follow the closed system. So, the open system is the better one for us, especially since the open system permits the individual to develop his own personality which is the base of society. When we decide to follow the open system, we can determine the method of insuring the individual in this society, regardless of whether there is one, two or more parties. We can also insure society's security by delineating the limits of this security in the text of the constitution.

Another point concerning the economic aspect is that we will not be able in the public sector to provide full employment to all citizens. This is why we should permit the private sector to engage in broader activity so that it may take part in shouldering the responsibility of providing employment in our society. This sector will also be a reserve for the employment of those dismissed from the public sector.

As for the issue of "paralysis," it is an inevitable thing from which all societies suffer, regardless of whether the system is open or closed.

Insofar as the people's working forces are concerned, no group of the people should feel that it is unequal in rights and duties to the other groups. I mean by this the national capital group because it is exposed to constant attacks by the Socialist Union leaderships--attacks which make this group insecure and, consequently, make society insecure. A final point on production and on the importance of its continuation is that we should provide production with all the guarantees so that it may move ahead with all its capabilities. We must stress that the criterion of revolutionary work is production and more production. The gist of my words is that I believe that our system should be an open system and that our elections should be open and not guided.

'Abd-al-Nasir: Of course you remember March 1964. The elections were fully open and security measures were guaranteed for all citizens. There wasn't a single detainee. We even released the convicted Moslem Brotherhood members. Despite all this, you know what happened.

'Ali Sabri: I believe that the issue of democracy is not confined to the security measures because national security measures have not constituted an obstacle to the realization of democracy in any country.

Zakariya: I didn't mean by my words the security measures you are talking about but rather the administrative measures that affect the citizen's source of living, such as the faulty administrative actions, the custodianship orders and the measures by the committee to liquidate feudalism.

'Ali Sabri: Those measures were adopted in accordance with the revolution's social criteria alone. The fault committed in the committee to liquidate feudalism is that the committee failed in the application of some cases to take into consideration the principles and rules we had set for this committee's work. I also believe that the National Assembly shoulders the responsibility because it could be of greater help.

Anwar al-Sadat: In fact, we cannot say that the custodianship measures and the measures to liquidate feudalism were wrong. There were mistakes in some individual cases but not in all the cases. Unfortunately, the mistakes committed in these limited cases created a general feeling of fear.

Husayn al-Shafi'i: This issue is really sensitive and the mistakes committed in it have been linked to the people's confidence in the regime as a whole. I know of certain examples where rights were violated in the application of the resolutions of the committee to liquidate feudalism. The security force entrusted to implement the resolutions also committed such foolish mistakes that they evoked hostile reactions and bitter criticism of the authority.

'Abd-al-Nasir: For the record and for history, none of you has ever before mentioned to me any remarks or made any criticism of the committee to liquidate feudalism or of the actions of Marshal 'Abd-al-Hakim, except for 'Aziz Sidqi, the prime minister.

Zakariya: Personally, I was content to convey my observations to 'Abd-al-Hakim immediately. I did not want to bother you. Generally, we are all considered responsible for the mistakes committed in that period.

Fear of Speaking Out

'Abd-al-Nasir: So, we have all made a mistake. I wish, as the famous Soviet story goes, we would say the truth for 3 minutes. Imagine that we are the highest political authority in the country (Higher Executive Committee) and we were only seven members and yet did not speak out and did not tell the truth at the right time and when the chairman of the committee to liquidate feudalism, 'Abd-al-Hakim 'Amir, was sitting with us on this seat. This means that the system deteriorated and fell gradually to the point where we felt afraid to speak out and to tell the truth. On my part, I will admit with frank criticism that I made a mistake when I abandoned supervision over the army in 1962 and thus lost contact with what was happening in it. My purpose at the time was to reassure 'Abd-al-Hakim of me personally. But I consider this a mistake on my part.

Zakariya Muhyi-al-Din: For history, I also want to say that my remarks to the marshal did not touch on the bases and the principles. Moreover,

none of us objected to the revolutionary measures adopted by the revolution. The custodianship was decided in 1962 and we are now in 1967. All the observations I made to the marshal were concerned with application only. You ask me why I didn't speak about those mistakes 2 or 3 months ago. This is of course wrong, but the reason was, regrettably, that the personal relations between us had a great impact and a special sensitivity.

'Aziz Sidqi: What is important now is the actual situation. I propose that we provide the right for appeals against the decisions of the committee to liquidate feudalism before a special court. Such a measure will comfort the people a lot. I also propose the introduction of some amendments on the current system so that it may always show us the free and frank opinion without fear and without hypocrisy.

'Abd-al-Nasir: It is my opinion that the current system has gone the limit and that there must be a new system. I personally have certain proposals on this issue:

First, that we personally, as the highest political authority, free ourselves of fear and then free the entire country of fear.

Second, if we truly want to provide security and peace, as you have said, then we should allow the presence of opposition in the country. In the creation of such opposition, I do not imagine that we should say that Zakariya should represent a certain inclination and 'Ali Sabri should represent another inclination opposing the first and we will thus have government and opposition. If we do this, we would be creating theatrical opposition. The real opposition is to bring those who really oppose us at present, such as Baghdadi and Kamal Husayn, both of whom were with us before and both of whom approved the charter, and allow them to form an opposition party and to issue a newspaper expressing the party's opinion. On our part, we should reorganize our ranks and create the Socialist Union party and then terminate the parliamentary session and hold new elections in December this year on the basis of two platforms for the two parties. Whichever party wins the elections will take over government whereas the other party will form the opposition, provided that the army and the police remain as professional agencies.

I believe that if we carry out this proposal we will cure the country of all the ailments existing among us and each of us will be freed of the fear that has spread among us, beginning with the highest to the lowest authority. I am against the one-party system because the single party often leads to the creation of the dictatorship of a certain group of individuals.

My last words on this issue is that if we do not change our present system, we will proceed along an unknown path and we will not know who will take over the country after us. What has caused us to be ashamed

of telling the truth and not to accept criticism will lead us to a dark future.

At this point, 'Abd-al-Nasir looked at his watch and found that its arms had crept beyond the midnight point. He also noticed from the faces of the members their desire to postpone the discussion for another session so that they may have the opportunity for calm thinking and deep analysis of such an important question, namely: How should the country be ruled in the future? This is why 'Abd-al-Nasir asked all the members to get ready to express their opinion on his definite proposal and expressed his readiness to listen to any other proposals in a special session to be held on the evening of Friday, 4 August.

What were the reactions of 'Abd-al-Nasir's colleagues to his definite proposal?

Was it agreed to form a new opposition party?

How did the debate between 'Abd-al-Nasir and his colleagues proceed?

What was the final decision?

[16-22 Oct 78 pp 31-35]

[Text] Part XIX: 'Abd-al-Nasir's Disagreement With His Colleagues; Zakariya Muhyi-al-Din: If Other Party Arises, It Will Dug Up Past and This Will Be Followed by Defamation of Country's Leadership Body; 'Abd-al-Nasir: Defamation of Leaderships Is Being Done in Homes and It Is Better to Have It Done Outside Them; Sidqi Sulayman: Any Individual Who Would Accept To Head Opposition Under These Conditions Is Mad; Anwar al-Sadat: I Do Not Approve Process of Opening Up Through Two Parties Because It Will Be Tantamount To Opening Door to Dogs That Want To Tear Regime to Pieces; 'Ali Sabri: There Is no Fear of New Experiment as Long as 'Abd-al-Nasir Is Present But Danger Lies in What Comes After 'Abd-al-Nasir; I Do not Demand That Flowers Blossom so That They May Be Distinguished and Gathered But I Have Sworn not to Bargain and to Say My Opinion Frankly, Even If at Expense of My Own Neck

The Higher Executive Committee members were surprised by the words and arguments of 'Abd-al-Nasir at the meeting of Thursday, 3 August (1967), which lasted 6 hours. 'Abd-al-Nasir was harsh in criticizing his regime, despite the gains and accomplishments it had made and despite the fact that the military defeat which had shaken the foundations of the United Arab Republic and the lofty reputation of 'Abd-al-Nasir was not 8 weeks old yet. At the end of the session, 'Abd-al-Nasir's colleagues became certain, contrary to what they had imagined, that 'Abd-al-Nasir's personality was not shaken, that his revolutionism was still firm in his soul and that the harshness of the defeat and of its events enabled him to gain the wisdom of an experienced politician who believed in

reforming fundamentally what was damaged by actual practices and believed in frank, biting and merciless criticism, beginning with himself and ending with his colleagues who shared with him power in the previous period. But did his colleagues, the six members of the committee, respond to him? Did they approve his proposal to change the closed system of government that the 23 July revolution had followed for 15 years into an open system relying mainly on the presence of real opposition and not of folkloric [sic] opposition? This is what the following few lines will answer through the discussion that took place between 'Abd-al-Nasir and his colleagues the members of the Higher Executive Committee at the session of Friday, 4 August, which was held as an extension of Thursday's session. 'Abd-al-Nasir was exposed at the time to a strong propaganda campaign by the world imperialist forces that were portraying him as a military dictator lying in wait for democracy and always obstructing its growth and its progress whereas we found him on Thursday, 3 August (preceding part) as the man eager for and the man seeking democracy. We found him stressing in his discussion that the system had committed mistakes and that it was necessary to replace it by a new system. He also stressed more than once the need for frank evaluation of the preceding phase and the need to determine the mistakes and to bring those responsible to account, from top to bottom.

Some of his colleagues tried to mitigate his judgment on his regime, proposing some reforms. But he got upset with them and said that the system could not be reformed through the introduction of some changes. He said: People will not believe us if we engage in a "touch-up" operation. Moreover, we should not permit the presence of a system that gives the opportunity to an individual or to a group to control and ruin the country. The committee members were not able to fully comprehend 'Abd-al-Nasir's words in the session that lasted until 0200. It was difficult for them to determine the future course in a few hours, as Zakariya Muhyi-al-Din said. This is why they asked for a day's respite to discuss his proposal and express their opinions. Not a single colleague supported him and his proposal was not backed up by any of his colleagues for numerous reasons that varied from member to member. History will remain a witness and a judge of 'Abd-al-Nasir's words and the words of his colleagues in that historic session.

'Abd-al-Majid Farid

The second session of the Higher Executive Committee was held on Friday in the same hall and was attended by the same members who attended the first session. 'Abd-al-Nasir started the discussion, repeating the proposal he had made on the previous day (Thursday) to transform the closed system into an open system permitting real opposition and eliminating the paralysis, pointing out that the personal relations between some leaderships had somewhat affected the system of government and that the example of 'Abd-al-Hakim 'Amir was not a distant example. He then said:

'Abd-al-Nasir: It is my opinion that the Socialist Union should form a party, provided that another party representing the opposition is allowed to be formed. This political format will not prevent the occurrence of conflicts inside our Socialist Union Organization. But the conflicts will be of a different nature because of the presence of another party competing with the Socialist Union. As I said yesterday, we should let Baghdadi and Kamal Husayn form the opposition party, provided that we give this party the resources and facilities granted to the Socialist Union, including the right to issue a newspaper speaking for their party. It is my opinion that they are [good] men and will act like men because they have been with us since the start of the revolution.

As for the social concept of the regime, it will be in accordance with the concept of the party that will win the coming elections which can be held in December after dissolution of the current session of the National Assembly in November.

Zakariya Muhyi-al-Din (He pulled out a small notebook from his pocket and used the help of what was written in it to present his opinion. He was the member who participated most heavily in debating 'Abd-al-Nasir's proposal, bringing up numerous details): I have thought long of the words that the president said to us yesterday. I will try, with the help of the quick study I have made, to comment on the projected proposal. I understood yesterday, and also from what the president has reiterated today, that there will be two parties, one of them the Socialist Union, which will abide by the charter. Some issues which will be affected by the presence of two competing parties, each of which is lying in wait for the mistakes of the other, appear to us here:

First issue is the economic aspect of our economic system that has developed gradually and in a special way throughout 10 years of growth and development. Some problems appeared during application and these problems now require to be dealt with fundamentally. It is required to reexamine a number of economic projects, especially in regard to production and to profits, as well as in regard to the excess labor employed in them. It is my estimate that these projects should be approached within the framework of economic rules. Efforts must be made to provide all that is required to insure stability for the higher administration of these projects.

Another economic aspect is the need to raise savings to 25 percent, considering that they have not exceeded 13 percent so far [percentage not specified]. This is considered insufficient to deal with the annual population growth in our country.

Another aspect is the failure to increase the volume of our exports by the degree required to meet the large import demands.

Second issue is our foreign policy after the aggression, the issue of the best policies that we should follow to achieve the greatest degree of our domestic goals and the issue of whether we should permit joint projects with the participation of foreign capital or not. Should we encourage the participation of Arab capital so as to raise the volume of annual growth from 6 to 8 percent and to limit wage raises so they may not exceed 2 percent?

All these issues, whether in the political or the economic sphere, require a quick decision and some of them require to be dealt with in a fundamental manner. I fear that the domestic political factors and the partisan oneupmanships in the presence of two parties may affect the selection of the correct solutions. Here, a new opinion emerges in regard to the major economic projects, namely: Can we give these projects the quality of independence from the supervision and intervention of partisan ministers? But in such a case, to whom would these projects and their establishments be accountable? Would it be the National Assembly, the government or a special council formed of both parties?

'Abd-al-Nasir: Zakariya, whoever takes charge of government will be responsible for the success of all the establishments. He will also be responsible for their failure. In other words, any failure in managing the establishments will lead to the downfall of the government. But to form a special council of the two parties to supervise the establishments would be unimaginable.

Don't forget that the goal of any party is always to gain power and that the other party would be lying in wait for the first party's mistakes in action. So, how can you say that the opposition party can participate with the government party in a single council to supervise the economic projects? Whoever is in government will be responsible and will be the party to supervise and direct in all fields, including the economic projects.

Digging Up Past

Zakariya Muhyi-al-Din (with evident emotion): I did not intend to make an imaginary offer through my statements. What I wanted is to highlight some of the problems that will face us as a result of the presence of two parties, such as the problems of oneupmanship and vituperation. As I have already said, each party will be lurking for the mistakes of the other party, regardless of their impact on the country's public interest, with the fundamental aim of instigating the people and winning them to its side--mistakes on issues such as dismissal of excess labor and as limiting wage increases, etc.

I also expect the other party to dig up the past and this may be followed by defamation of the country's leadership and of the state presidency!

'Abd-al-Nasir: This means that we are afraid and we should not make a move. Why? The leaderships of the other party participated with us in the past in all the steps taken by the regime. As for defamation of the leaderships, it is being done at present but inside homes. It is better to have it done outside them.

Zakariya Muhyi-al-Din: There are numerous other issues that will emanate from a change in the form of the system, the first being the need to amend the constitution and the question of whether the state will become a presidential republic, or parliamentary republic or a presidential republic with some changes. Will the major leaderships always be changed with the change of the ruling party--leaderships such as the governors, the directors of establishments, under secretaries and company chairmen? I ask myself: What is more important than this? What are the basic goals over which the two parties are expected to disagree? What is the social structure of the supporters of each party? Can the ruling party amend the charter or does this require agreement to a certain degree by the two parties?

'Abd-al-Nasir: It is assumed that all these questions will be answered when the new constitution is discussed and that the answers will be fully clear in its various chapters and provisions.

Zakariya Muhyi-al-Din: My final question is: Is it right to change the country's political structure while the Jews are still occupying the eastern bank of the Suez Canal?

'Abd-al-Nasir: If Zakariya has completed his review and finished all his questions, then we can hear another opinion?

Opposition Is Madness

Sidqi Sulayman (the prime minister) [sic]: My opinion of the president's words is that it is impossible for an opposition party to emerge in our country at present because the sole objective of the opposing party will be to attain power. It is also a matter of fact that you will find all the devious and opportunist elements rallying around the other party. In this present situation, are we ready psychologically to accept partisan vituperation? What will the effect of such vituperation have on the main state agencies, especially on the armed forces? Another main point on this issue is that the presence of the president of the republic at the top of the ruling party makes it practically impossible for the opposition party to attain power. The presence of President 'Abd-al-Nasir in particular, with all the popular asset he commands, makes it actually impossible for the opposition party to attain power.

(At this point, Husayn al-Shafi'i got into the discussion and proposed that the president--so as to avoid the obstacle mentioned by Sulayman

Sidqi--be above the two parties and not considered as belonging to either. But he then asked: How can this be done in a presidential system?) Sidqi Sulayman then went on to say: I believe that what can be done now is to introduce some changes and some touch-up on the present system, such as accepting criticism, eliminating fear, making it possible to appeal any sentence before a judiciary authority and clearly defining the relationship between the Socialist Union and the government. A final comment: Any person who accepts to be leader of the opposition party under the present conditions is a mad man.

Husayn al-Shafi'i: In fact, since the president has crystallized his statements in the form of a definite proposal for change in the system, the issue with its various dimensions has become difficult because it is easy to talk about the negative aspects that appeared during application but it is very difficult to proceed from the reality of these negativities to a new system. It may be fundamental to develop a system in which the opposition is present. However, this issue raises numerous questions and reactions, the first being: If the Socialist Union represents the alliance of the working people's forces, what does the other party represent, keeping in mind that any party must represent a certain concept or class?

If the two parties are in agreement over the charter, then what are the goals of each of them? But if the charter is amended, then the Socialist Union will have a lesser chance than the other party. We all remember that the National Congress members cheered a lot when you mentioned the phrase of restoring Palestine, the religious aspects, the abolition of some privileges given to certain leaderships, etc. This is why the other party will try to play with slogans in order to engage in oneupmanship over the principles and foundations of the Socialist Union.

I agree with brother Zakariya Muhyi-al-Din in connection with the economic questions that will result from the presence of two parties. I will end by saying that I do not imagine that our system should be changed before elimination of the traces of the aggression.

Al-Sadat and Openness

Anwar al-Sadat: I will go back with my words to 9 and 10 June when the Egyptian people emerged with their deep national feeling and insisted on clinging to the current situation. Every citizen came out with the impression that 'Abd-al-Nasir is a reflection of the picture of struggle and that 'Abd-al-Nasir is an expression of his desire for steadfastness. It is also my estimate that the entire regime fell on 9 and 10 June but that the masses reinstated it, demanding only the return of 'Abd-al-Nasir as president. This means that all the other agencies of the regime, including the National Assembly, have fallen. This is why I consider that the bickering and the discussions that have taken place in the

National Assembly in the past 2 weeks are of no value. However, they give us the indication of how bickering will be while the enemy is still entrenched on our lands and while his forces are still deployed at a distance of 100 meters from our forces. This is in addition to the black picture left behind by 'Abd-al-Hakim 'Amir's abnormal actions.

I will again ask: Is it reasonable to change our system and to form two parties while the enemy is still present on our lands? What is more important now is to mobilize the entire country against the enemy. This is why I do not agree with President 'Abd-al-Nasir's proposal to form two parties, until after elimination of the traces of the aggression. There is no objection if we all step down from power and have new leaderships replace us. But dividing the country under the present situation through the presence of the proposed opposition is unacceptable because our people are well and loyal and trust this man (pointing at 'Abd-al-Nasir very emotionally). We are all confident that 'Abd-al-Nasir, the leader, is capable of leading us to the shore of safety.

Openness (meaning by this the open system) may be required. But now there are things that can be done quickly. Let us change our system a little at present. Let us look for all the existing mistakes and work to correct them. Let us hold new elections for the National Assembly in accordance with new concepts and rules. But to permit the system of opposition before elimination of the traces of the aggression and to divide the country is impossible. I have full confidence in Jamal 'Abd-al-Nasir and I do not approve the process of opening up through the two parties because it will open the door for the dogs that want to tear the regime to pieces!! Let us form a new National Assembly and permit criticism within its framework. But I do not approve the creation of opposition till after we eliminate the traces of the aggression, provided that we concentrate our efforts at present on the battle because the battle is our destiny, whatever this destiny. Many peoples have struggled and won hard battles, as happened in the valiant Leningrad.

To conclude my words, I repeat that there is absolute confidence in President Jamal 'Abd-al-Nasir. The question of two parties is improper because the new party will rely on oneupmanships. For example, the leader of the new party may stand to raise the slogan that we hand over Yemen to the enemies, regardless of the country's general interest. This is why I do not approve the two parties.

'Ali Sabri (arrested by al-Sadat in the 15 May case and sentenced to death but the sentence was then mitigated in 1971 to a life-imprisonment term. He is still imprisoned in Turrah jail in Cairo): Insofar as the past is concerned, it is my opinion that our system has not been as closed a system as that of a communist party. At the same time, it has not been as open as the systems found in Europe. As for the proposal to form two parties, it is well known that parties are fundamentally

established according to class affiliations. Therefore, if the Socialist Union is established on the basis of the socialist concept, then the other party must be established on the basis of a different philosophy and of a new class. Even if we say that abidance by the charter is a fundamental condition, this condition is still not enough because it is always possible to deviate from the spirit of the charter in specific application and the country may thus take a different direction.

It is my opinion that there is no fear of the new experiment as long as 'Abd-al-Nasir is present. But the danger lies in what will come after 'Abd-al-Nasir because a class struggle will erupt in this case and will continue for a long time. Moreover, forces supporting the socialist transformation and other forces opposing it will also emerge. This is why I believe that there should be openness and there should be a greater measure of democracy but not by way of the two-party system.

'Abd-al-Muhsin Abu-al-Nur (one of those involved in the 15 May case. He was sentenced to a 15-year prison term of which he spent 5 years in Turrah prison and was then released for health reasons): When searching for the new system, we must take into consideration that we should not allow a person or some type of organization to come and destroy and completely annihilate this enormous edifice that has been built by Jamal 'Abd-al-Nasir. There is no doubt that we must proceed on the path of forming an opposition but we want an opposition that builds and does not destroy and an opposition that corrects any deviation, whatever it may be. I also believe that we should proceed on the path of opposition in phases, beginning at present with opposition inside the Socialist Union, provided that the union's leadership remains in the hands of Jamal 'Abd-al-Nasir because the system did actually fall on 9 June but the masses insisted on Jamal 'Abd-al-Nasir's leadership so that he may remain the safety valve for all of us. This is why I propose that wings be formed within the Socialist Union--a supporting wing and an opposition wing. I do not approve the formation of two parties because we will not eliminate the traces of the aggression with the two-party system. Rather, in this case there will be a heated battle between the two parties and the people will be preoccupied with its news and their attention will be diverted from the fundamental battle.

Where To Proceed?

'Abd-al-Nasir: I disagree with all of you because the opposition cannot be fabricated, otherwise, it will be distorted opposition. The main reason that has made me nominate Kamal Husayn for the opposition is the fact that he is opposed to us at present. As for opposition within the party, it is always present. But it is an internal opposition between the party leaderships and the people take no part in it. Take the Chinese party for example. It has recently become evident to us that there was opposition between Mao Tse-tung's faction and Liu Shao-chi's faction. But it

was an opposition within the party. Even in our present meeting, there are various and conflicting inclinations. For example, Zakariya Muhyi-al-Din has a view that is opposed by 'Ali Sabri with a different view. There is no objection to this. What is important is for the leaderships not to backbite each other because we the high-ranking officials in the system are the ones who have caused the system to crack because each of us destroys what the other does whereas we should all feel the unity of destiny at all the levels.

I ask myself now: Where are we proceeding with this old system? Before the June (1967) aggression, I met with Anwar al-Sadat, the National Assembly speaker, and told him that there are numerous issues that are difficult to solve within the framework of the present system, that our system must be open and that there must be opposition. We must also open the door for the newspapers to write openly because I believe that our revolutionary purity has suffered heavily after 15 years. Even intellectual unity between us is nonexistent. If there were another party and real opposition, there would be challenges facing us and facing each of our colleagues. Such challenges would make each of us refrain from talking about his colleagues and avoid destroying their work. In such a case, Kamal-al-Din Husayn or the other party would be lurking and ready to pounce on such a colleague and on the other colleagues in his party. I feel that we have all failed in the responsibilities entrusted to us. Moreover, sensitivity among us has reached the point where we are afraid to criticize each other at meetings. I believe that the only solution is for us to create a real "challenge" in the real sense of the word, to hasten to correct the mistakes that have been committed and to reorganize the agencies and branches of the Socialist Union so that the union may be able to deal with the new challenge facing it.

Let Flowers Blossom

The issue, in all simplicity, is summed up in two ways and no third to them:

First, to follow the single-party system and I believe that it is too late for us to form a sound single party in accordance with whose principles and programs we proceed with utter discipline.

Second, to follow the system of political struggle and survival of the fittest and the strongest. The political atmosphere of the Revolution Council at the outset of its formation was a healthy atmosphere when the discussions among the members were most intense and when the final decision was for the majority. But matters later developed and the state broke down into several undeclared parties: 'Abd-al-Hakim's party, Zakariya's party, al-Sadat's party, 'Ali Sabri's party, etc. 'Abd-al-Hakim wanted to build up himself, using the army. Zakariya wanted to build himself, using the police. Al-Sadat wanted to build himself,

using the National Assembly and 'Ali Sabri wanted to build himself, using the Socialist Union. The system thus fell apart. Every group of us wanted to get rid of the other group. This is why I proposed the presence of real challenges so that it may become obvious to all that any destruction action from within the system will cause the entire system to fall on all our heads. I may be responsible for the lack of coordination or the lack of collective participation in building our political organization, the Socialist Union. In any case, this is what has happened. Our enemies have not been able to destroy a single brick in our internal structure despite all the efforts they have exerted whereas we, the ones responsible for building, have destroyed it gradually. This is why it is impossible to continue as we used to be before 1967. If it becomes evident to us that our new rivals are better and firmer than we are, then let us declare with utter moral courage that we are leaving so that we may be replaced by others who are more eager than ourselves to serve the people and to serve the country's interest. Our selection of the open system will require a lot of change, otherwise the system will remain mere words and the people will view it with no confidence and say that we have raised this slogan only for the flowers to bloom so that it may be easy to distinguish them and pick them up, as the Chinese proverb says.

I am sorry that I have been harshly frank in this session. But the reason is that I swore to myself on 9 June not to deal with the political issues through bargaining or through balances. I also swore to fight for my principle and to say my opinion frankly, even if at the expense of my own neck.

Impact of Defeat

Sidqi Sulayman: I believe, Mr President, that we are discussing the issue under the impact of psychological pressures resulting from the military defeat and that we are diagnosing our ailments and prescribing the cure for them in an abnormal period. I believe that if we had triumphed in the military battle, our comments on our present system would have been that it is the best system. It is my opinion that all existing problems are the result of the lack of coordination. Let us begin with a clear definition of the rights and duties of all and let us then bring everybody to account according to the degree of his abidance.

'Abd-al-Muhsin Abu-al-Nur: The duties and the powers are defined, such as the powers of the governor, the Socialist Union secretary and the security director. Yet, the conflicts between them persist and cause damage for a very simple reason, namely that the three of them do not feel that they are under the same tent and that whatever hits one of them will also hurt the others.

Husayn al-Shafi'i: I believe that it is difficult to create the "challenge" and the required opposition before elimination of the traces

of the aggression. This is why I propose that the current phase be built on the basis of actual control and of reorganizing the process of constructive criticism at all levels.

'Ali Sabri: I still fear that the formation of another party will mean a new philosophy and a new class. I wish we had implemented the philosophy we had already declared, namely "the democracy of all the people."

'Abd-al-Nasir: The democracy of all the people means that we are responsible for building every citizen politically in a sound manner. It also means that we should not let one class dominate another class, whatever it may be, at any level.

Zakariya Muhyi-al-Din: I believe that there is danger in implementing the new proposal before elimination of the traces of the aggression. Moreover, the experience of the Socialist Union so far is worth continuing, provided that the union and its agencies are reorganized. As for the formation of political wings inside the Socialist Union, it is not right to do this until after the elections from bottom to top are held.

Another point is: Why should we involve Jamal 'Abd-al-Nasir in local partisan struggle if it is decided to adopt the two-party proposal when Jamal 'Abd-al-Nasir has a national status at the level of the entire Arab nation? I still adhere to the opinion which I expressed at the outset of the session.

The discussion between the president and the members went on for hours and hours that night but reached no final decision. But it became obvious to 'Abd-al-Nasir from the debate among the members and the opinions that attacked his proposal that they did not welcome his proposal and that they believed that the proposed plan would open numerous political gaps against the entire system. They were also unanimous that there was danger in any change in the system before elimination of the traces of the aggression and before liberation of the land on which the enemy was entrenched. At the same time, 'Abd-al-Nasir rejected more than a single interpretation on the part of the members to divert his proposal from its goal and from its original course. He also refused to be content with the creation of opposition inside the Socialist Union, as he rejected the creation of symbolic opposition and called it distorted opposition, insisting that he swore on 9 June not to deceive his people, whatever the reasons, because the people had given him their absolute confidence and entrusted him with their destiny and future with no strings and no conditions attached.

There only remains in my presentation of 'Abd-al-Nasir's Secret Papers the last round of his struggle in 1970--the round in which the blows multiplied until September 1970 when the fatal blow hit and caused him to fall lifeless.

The month of September itself has a long story with 'Abd-al-Nasir because it was the month of troubles and of heated crises which shook 'Abd-al-Nasir deeply.

On 28 September 1961, the United Arab Republic was shattered through Syria's secession. It was a shock to him that left its impact in the sugar level in his blood for the rest of his life.

On 14 September 1967, he lost his dearest colleague through Marshal 'Abd-al-Hakim 'Amir's suicide. The death of his life-long friend had a deep impact on his soul and on the degree of his confidence in those surrounding him. He could not imagine that 'Abd-al-Hakim 'Amir would ever plot against him personally. Still, after 'Amir's death, he lost his appetite for food for several days because he constantly saw the picture of 'Amir sitting and sharing food with him.

On 9 September 1969 when he had utmost confidence in the ability of the new armed forces to confront the enemies, the Israeli forces achieved extraordinary success in a commando operation near al-Za'faranah area on the Red Sea coast. The Israeli forces inflicted heavy losses on the Egyptian armed forces, killed the Red Sea governor and managed to carry with them to their territories by helicopter a modern radar system.

On 10 September 1969, he suffered a heart attack that confined him to bed for several weeks. That attack was considered the final warning to his exhausted heart.

On 16 September 1970, there were the black September events and the massacre of the Palestinians in Jordan which was followed by other massacres, the latest being the current massacres in Lebanon.

On 28 September, God's will was done and his heart stopped and his motion ceased.

[30 Oct-5 Nov 78 pp 31-36]

[Text] Part XX: Final Blow in Last Round; Dialog With 'Abd-al-Nasir Coordinated by King Husayn and 'Abd-al-Mun'im al-Rifa'i; 'Abd-al-Nasir to King Husayn: Peaceful Solution Is Still Far and Americans Are Liars; Palestinian Leadership Ordered Its Branch in Cairo to Escalate Attack Against Us, Imagining That We Are Afraid To Confront It; King Husayn: Job's Patience Has Been Slogan of Our Policy for Long Time, But Patience Has Limits; Day on Which Fighting Erupted in Amman, 'Abd-al-Nasir Wanted to Go to Jordan Personally; Mu'ammarr al-Qadhdhafi Was Arab Leader Most Strongly Opposed to King Husayn's Participation in Last Conference in Cairo; Hours Before His Death, 'Abd-al-Nasir Cast Final Look at Cairo and Said to Me: 'Abd-al-Majid, Is It Right for Me not to See Cairo's Beauty Until Tonight; This Is First Time in My Life That I See This

Magnificent Scene; In Manshiyat al-Bakri, a Person Is Dead and not Alive

The moment to say farewell to the dear readers of AL-DUSTUR has come after my having lived with them for 20 weeks, presenting to them part after part and reviewing to them a true picture of an important period of our Arab nation's history. I hope that I have presented to them, and especially to our dear Arab youths, the real struggle positions of Jamal 'Abd-al-Nasir, their leader, in a manner free of the faulty stories and tales that some have told in their memoirs of that period. Despite the malicious and the tendencious, 'Abd-al-Nasir's personality was a unique personality that became clearer and greater whenever exposed to the fire of hot moments which fused it and made it brighter and shinier. I thank God that I was eager from the first moments I started working with our Arab leader at the end of 1959 and until his death in 1970, a period of 11 years, to record with my own pen and in my diary all his statements and whispers in all his political moves and meetings, whether inside or outside Egypt, out of my certain awareness that I was living in immortal moments of our Arab nation's history--moments that our youths would want me to one day convey to them so that those moments may act like a torch for their future struggle on the path of victory, God willing.

Some people may wonder about the reasons why I have published this series at this particular time. To answer the question, the following must be made clear:

First, the purpose of publication has not been a mere attempt to record the history of a rich period of Egypt's and the Arab nation's history, despite the importance of such a record, and not to expose the falsehood and lies of the constant distortion campaigns to which the era of 'Abd-al-Nasir's rule is exposed. Regardless of the embellishments and the deception to which these campaigns resort, the masses will continue to have their memory and the people their conscience. In addition to all this, the aim of publication is to expose the ugly crime being currently committed against the history of Egypt and of the entire Arab nation.

Second, the timing of the publication of this series in the present period of deterioration that is being experienced by our Arab nation is in itself intended to be a political act that puts the Arab masses face to face with the truth, not only the truth of the past but also of the present time. Though numerous aspects of Nasirism have been explained so far, the facts that have been published are liable to shed more light on the foreign policy and on our position toward our fateful issue. Moreover, rules and principles that are still the fittest and the soundest can also be concluded in regard to dealing with our foreign issues and our domestic issues.

Third, we have never believed that the state--in the sense of the regime-- is an independent goal, especially if devoid of its popular meaning. Our faith that the state is ultimately nothing but the reflection of the will of the masses is what gives us the right to publish the facts noted in the series because these facts are the property of the masses before anybody else.

It is a given fact that what has been published in the preceding parts does not represent all of 'Abd-al-Nasir's secret papers because these papers are numerous and varied. What has been published is connected with a definite period of time which was distinguished particularly by the political and military movement that followed the 1967 battle. The turn of the other papers will come at the right time so that they may play another role that is no less important than the role of what has been published in these parts.

In conclusion, I apologize for those who have been hurt by the words of the series which have dealt with some kings and presidents and with some leaderships in and outside Egypt. But true history is my witness and I have sworn not to change a single letter in it or to falsify it with a single word. We will all vanish but our genuine history will remain immortal to the end of time.

Long live our Arab nation, a single rank that must inevitably heal;

Long live our Arab nation, a common struggle that must inevitably gush forth;

Long live our Arab nation, a glorious future that must be inevitably realized.

'Abd-al-Majid Farid

('Abd-al-Nasir returned to Cairo on 17 July 1970 after spending 18 days in the Soviet Union. He returned to face his Arab people with an American initiative, presenting to them a new political line different from the information line that he had been mapping out and directing for a period of 3 successive years. Even though he accepted the initiative as a tactical step, it was difficult for the Egyptian man in the street to distinguish what is tactical from what is strategic. This is why I saw 'Abd-al-Nasir preparing anxiously and solemnly before facing 1,600 members and youths of the Socialist Union leaderships at the National Congress hall on 23 July. He was asking many questions about the expected reactions to the announcement of the initiative. I saw him on the day of his major speech reviewing the speech and selecting its words and phrases with such care that I had never seen him resort to in his previous popular speeches. Those days were difficult for 'Abd-al-Nasir psychologically. He lived those days amidst tempestuous waves of

anxiety and conflicting emotions. Those close to 'Abd-al-Nasir lived the same anxious moments, being aware of the danger of such emotions to his health. This is why we were all happy when we learned that he finally agreed to take the advice of the Egyptian physicians supervising his treatment and the advice of the Soviet physicians who had examined him during his last visit to Moscow and to give himself a 2-month vacation after his second speech in Alexandria on 26 July so as to regain his health and to give his tired heart a chance to regulate its beats in order to continue on the path of struggle and to proceed on the path of the hard strife he was expecting in the following year, the year of the crossing.

But fate had no mercy for him and his Arab responsibility would not leave him alone. The Arab reactions rejecting his decision and denouncing his approval of the Rogers initiative mounted. King Husayn then came to 'Abd-al-Nasir in the city of Alexandria to interrupt his medical vacation and to present to him his problems and his troubles, thus throwing new responsibilities on his shoulders.

Hardly 4 weeks had passed on this meeting when 'Abd-al-Nasir suffered the fatal blow that left him lifeless. It was the blow of the events in Jordan which flared up on 16 September 1970 and whose fires did not subside till a few hours before his death on Monday, 28 September.

Because of the importance of that last meeting between King Husayn and 'Abd-al-Nasir, I will dwell on it with some detail. Political observers have been unanimous that the meeting could not be separated from the momentous events that followed it in Jordan and that were called the "black September" events.

There have been conflicting opinions on the words said and the issues brought up in that meeting. Some people have considered them a notification and a warning from King Husayn to 'Abd-al-Nasir whereas others have considered them a warning to and an exposure of King Husayn. But what events and the pages of history recorded later on attest that King Husayn was the one who carried out his warning, who implemented his plan and who, at the same time, left a feeling among most of the Arabs that he had presented his steps in the "black September" to the leader of Arabdom before carrying them out and the feeling that this leader had not objected to the degree to prevent him from proceeding to carry them out!

Instead of proceeding to recount and comment, I will let the words of the discussion of the meeting answer truthfully that baffling question.)

The meeting was held at the main conference hall in Ra's al-Tin Palace in Alexandria on 21 August 1970. It lasted nearly 3.5 hours. 'Abd-al-Nasir started the discussion as usual by welcoming his guest in his

name and on behalf of his people, expressing appreciation for the king's constant efforts to come to Egypt for consultation and for the exchange of opinions. He then said:

'Abd-al-Nasir: We in the United Arab Republic will not forget Jordan's stance in June 1967 when you entered the war with us, even though I did not wish at the time to involve the Jordanian army in the war. Had circumstances permitted me in those days, I would have rejected the participation of your forces in the operations, as I had done in 1956. Generally, we will not forget this move on your part and we are fully aware of it in Egypt. Jordan took part in the war for our sake as we took part in it for Syria's sake. Practically, therefore, Jordan entered the battle for the sake of Syria. But it seems to me that the brothers in Syria have now forgotten this for you. However, we affirm that our people in Egypt will not forget what the Jordanian people suffered for their sake.

King Husayn: We entered the 1967 war only to fulfill our duty and to fulfill what the Arab responsibility, which is a single responsibility, dictates to us. We in Jordan appreciate your leadership and your patriotic stances which reflect sincerely the feelings of every true Arab. What is important now is to exert our utmost efforts and to enhance our mutual trust. I will present to you our political and military problems so that we may reach the right solution together.

'Abd-al-Mun'im al-Rifa'i, Jordanian minister of foreign affairs (publisher's note: It was evident from King Husayn's nod to 'Abd-al-Mun'im al-Rifa'i to take part in the discussion and to ask his prepared questions that there was prior agreement between them to open the dialog in this manner): We in Jordan lack a clear vision insofar as the present situation is concerned. Even though we have advanced some paces on the path, we still have some questions and we want a degree of clarity insofar as they are concerned. Has a political agreement been recently reached by Russia and America? Does the Soviet Union have a visualization on how to solve the problem? In light of the answer to these two questions, I believe that we, as Arabs, can determine our future political steps because it is evident to us from the policy and positions of America, of the Soviet Union and even of all the major powers that they are not serious in reaching a political solution even though a month has passed since we announced our approval of the Rogers plan. This is why we in Jordan recently stopped our information line concerning the initiative. It is also evident to us that the problem is not subject to our will alone and that it is subject to numerous other forces that we have become unable to define our Arab policy.

'Abd-al-Nasir: Of course, the issue is very complex and is not easy to solve. However, the basis of the problem is the fact that there is Israeli military superiority and, at the same time, there is Arab

division. For example, if we calculate the size and the strength of the Arab armies, we find that we are superior to Israel. But we are several armies and several commands whereas they are a single army and a single command, in addition to the fact that there are those among us who do not want to contribute to or participate positively in the battle on the pretext that Palestine is the responsibility of the Palestinians alone. Generally, our strategic plan in Egypt at present is to exert efforts to eliminate the traces of the aggression and to liberate the occupied Arab territories while not ceding a single inch of this territory, including Jerusalem. Our plan is also to work for implementation of the Security Council resolutions concerning Palestine. Insofar as military preparation is concerned, we are working to build up our forces so that they may reach 1 million combatants. Our forces will, in fact, amount to three-quarters a million combatants in December. This is why crossing the canal and liberating the Sinai is not only our goal but also our duty.

As for political action, some have attacked my latest political move, asking: How can we accept the existence of Israel? We should keep in mind that we, as Arabs, had previously approved the existence of Israel in the 1949 treaty. I told you (addressing King Husayn) before to go to America and to entreat Johnson to return the West Bank to you. But America ignored you because it was busy with something more important, namely the wish of Israel, its ally, to annex more Arab lands.

It is my opinion that the success of the peaceful solution is still very far. The Americans are liars. Yet, we accepted the latest political initiative for a major reason, namely to complete our military preparation and to end the arrangements necessary for our military plan because we will ultimately fight. The Socialist Union Higher Executive Committee, then the Central Committee and then the National Congress approved this initiative after a long debate and out of full conviction. Naturally, my confidence in the United States is weak but it is likely, even if only by one-half percent, that there is an international game that may influence solving the problem in our interest. As for brother 'Abd-al-Mun'im al-Rifa'i's question regarding the likelihood of the presence of an agreement between Russia and America on our issue, the answer is no. There is no such agreement. We also record with utter appreciation the aid that the Russians have given us and also their positive military participation with us. This is why we have decided in Egypt that once we overcome this crisis, we will erect a "memorial" for the Soviet people to commemorate their help and their open backing for us.

Regarding the second question of brother al-Rifa'i, namely: Do the Russians have a visualization for solving the problem? The answer is that the Russians are now moving according to the dialog with us and after our approval of every step. Moreover, the Russians reject what we reject and approve what we approve.

As for the final question, namely: Is there a solution on which we have agreed with the Russians? The answer is also no. We may be in agreement with them on the importance of the peaceful solution but each of us views this solution from his own angle. We believe that the peaceful solution is very remote, that we have to stand fast more and more firmly and that the Americans must feel that they do not have a completely free hand in the Arab position. As for the liberation of Palestine, I do not believe that it will be done in 6 days or in 6 years! Who will do the liberating from the river to the sea and in how many years? These are things that must be explained to our masses with utter frankness. I believe that we now have the duty of eliminating the traces of the aggression and of regaining the Arab territory occupied by the Jews. We can then engage in underground struggle to liberate the Palestinian soil, to liberate Haifa and Jaffa.

Disagreement With Resistance

Concerning the Palestinian resistance's position, I have met with the resistance leaderships and told them: You have the right to reject the Rogers plan and to reject the peaceful solution even if all the Arab countries approve them because it is your right as Palestinians to do so. As for the Voice of Palestine radio station, it was not my intention originally to shut it down despite their daily radio attacks against us, especially the Cairo radio. But what happened is that we intercepted a cable sent from their command to their branch in Cairo asking the branch to escalate their attacks against us from Cairo radio and to intensify their insults and vituperation against us, imagining that we would be afraid to confront them. Of course this was a faulty visualization and a miscalculation on their part. I will again say that it is their right to reject the initiative and to reject any peaceful movement. This is why I entreat King Husayn not to attack them or to do anything against them. I also hope that he will prevent some Jordanian officials from acting convulsively against the Palestinian organizations because the only beneficiary from such a situation is the enemy, Israel.

Your Majesty the king, I hope that you will be patient with them, even if they go wrong, for the sake of your people and the sake of the Palestinian people. Do not forget that Prophet Job was an inhabitant of the Jordan River. This is why I believe that you will be able to settle matters with them wisely and sensibly, despite the presence of some radical Palestinians. But at the same time, there are numerous balanced elements among them. Generally, I hope you will always hold consultations on this issue because I consider it an Arab issue at present. You must also select Jordanian leaderships that enjoy the confidence of the Palestinians, such as Dr Nabulsi. What is important is that we continue the dialog on this issue and that we refrain from becoming emotional and from taking the wrong steps. I will always be ready to receive any envoy you send to consult with him on the resistance

issues. Brother Faruq Abu-'Isa, from the Sudanese revolution [the Sudanese Revolution Command Council], has informed me that he met with the Central Committee of Hawatimah's faction and that their discussion with him was reasonable and constructive. My final recommendation on this issue is that you approach it through political action and not through police action. This does not mean failure to take a negative stance toward the bad or opportunistic Palestinian elements. However, this requires you to embark on a vast political movement. I am sorry that I have talked to you about your domestic affairs. But I have done so because any blow in your country will cause numerous reactions on our front.

King Husayn: Concerning Job's patience, this has been the slogan of our policy for a long time. But undoubtedly, there are limits to patience. The presence of all the resistance organizations on our soil has transferred to our country all the conflicts existing in the Arab world. Moreover, peddling the slogan of "from the river to the sea" is a tendentious act whose aim is to torpedo whatever Arab resources we continue to possess for the liberation of our lands. It is noticed that the action against us by the resistance members is escalating day after day and that these elements are trying to sow doubt and confusion in our ranks, even inside the ranks of the Jordanian armed forces. But God be thanked, the military units are still healthy so far. The provocations committed by the resistance members against the Jordanian Government are endless. If your time permits, I can recount to you numerous anecdotes and provocations to which our local authorities in the cities and the villages are exposed daily. Just for example, the resistance vehicles drive in the cities and on the roads without carrying any identification marks and it is thus impossible for the local authorities to carry out their duty when an accident occurs or when an innocent civilian is killed or injured. Another anecdote that took place recently is that some resistance members opened their submachinegun fire inside a bakery in Amman because the owner refused to give them priority over others in the distribution of bread, etc.!

'Abd-al-Nasir: I have already spoken a lot to the resistance leaderships on the need to refrain from engaging in acts of provocation against the local Jordanian authorities. In fact, they were aware of the effects and consequences of such provocation. But unfortunately, there are those among them who actually want the provocation and there may also be among them hostile forces that plan intentionally to sabotage the political situation in Jordan. Generally, these matters can be discussed again without our having to reach the degree of convulsion, provided that the interests of all the parties are taken into consideration. Before the session ends, I beg to repeat what I have asked you for during my discussion with you today, namely that you resort to patience and wisdom. I am confident that God will ultimately give us victory in our battle against Israel after having been patient and having worked hard and

seriously for 3 successive years. I also believe that the Arab situation is improving day after day. We are ready for greater military coordination with you. I have given Lieutenant General Fawzi all the necessary instructions to directly carry out this coordination to the degree that you demand.

The session ended with these words. But it was evident from 'Abd-al-Nasir's words and from his personal approach toward King Husayn before and after the meeting that he was afraid that the Jordanian authorities would engage in retaliatory acts against the Palestinian organizations present in Jordan. Once with good words and once with harsh phrases, 'Abd-al-Nasir tried to prevent the confrontation or to prevent the attack against the Palestinians. But the events were more decisive than the words and faster than the wishes.

Hardly 3 weeks had passed on this meeting when Jordan's events erupted. In fact, the history of those events goes back months before this date. This history dates back to February of the same year when the differences between the Palestinian resistance and the Jordanian authorities began to surface. 'Abd-al-Nasir intervened with all his weight and prevented King Husayn from acting violently against the resistance. But the calm did not last long and the differences did not disappear for long because the situation erupted again in June 1970. An armed confrontation took place between the two sides and hundreds of people were killed or wounded as a result. The situation subsided only after the meeting which took place between King Husayn and Yasir 'Arafat. But the fingers of both sides remained on the trigger.

Nearly 2 weeks after King Husayn's meeting with 'Abd-al-Nasir in Alexandria on 21 August, the atmosphere became charged again. The king considered that he had cleared his conscience by informing the leader of Arabdom in their last meeting that patience had its limits and that he would act in the manner that the situation permits. The king and his aides insisted on full control over every inch of their territory, asserting that their hosting the resistance people does not give the latter the right to take part in government or to exercise powers outside those of the Jordanian Government, including the right to carry weapons in the streets of the Jordanian cities and far from the border areas.

The Arab League Council held an emergency meeting to discuss the explosive situation on the Jordanian arena and formed a special committee for this purpose. The committee went to Amman on 7 September. Despite the efforts exerted by the Arab League committee, the situation intensified suddenly and King Husayn issued his decree on 16 September declaring martial laws and appointing Maj Gen Muhammad Dawud as the head of a military cabinet. On the following day, 17 September, the brutal attack of the Bedouin forces against the Palestinian camps and training centers

started. Those forces destroyed and annihilated whatever got in their way, pursuing all those closely or remotely affiliated with the Palestinian resistance. It was one of the brutal massacres of the sad Arab history.

The situation deteriorated quickly, first in Amman and then in northern Jordan. The number of the killed and the wounded rose to several thousand and there were tales and positions to which the heart of every true Arab bled. I saw 'Abd-al-Nasir solemn and sad and with tears almost flowing from his eyes, especially after I had given him one of the cables sent by our embassy in Amman describing the tragedies and the number of the innocent martyrs and victims. At the outset, 'Abd-al-Nasir wanted personally to go to Amman to stop this massacre but the tense situation with Israel was lurking for him. So he sent Lt Gen Muhammad Sadiq, the chief of staff, on his behalf to Amman to ask King Husayn to put a stop to the massacre and to explain to him the dangers of liquidating the Palestinian resistance, asserting that this massacre served the American-Israeli plan in the area. But Lieutenant General Sadiq's efforts went to waste and the fighting did not stop. Finally, 'Abd-al-Nasir could find no way but to invite the Arab kings and presidents to come to Cairo immediately for consultation and to save the deteriorating situation.

Final Week

The final week of September 1970 was full of events and emotions. It also drew the curtain on 'Abd-al-Nasir's final days with a sad end in which the hero died and the entire Arab nation wept. For a careful review of the events of that week, I will try to recount the details of 'Abd-al-Nasir's movement and the developments of the Arab situation in that week hour by hour and day by day.

Sunday, 20 September: The Jordanian army continues its shooting.

The situation became critical for the Palestinian resistance in Amman as a result of violent tank shelling of the Palestinian concentrations.

The fall of thousands of Palestinians dead.

An appeal from Yasir 'Arafat to the Palestinian resistance forces to stop shooting.

Telephone contacts between 'Abd-al-Nasir and Mu'ammarr al-Qadhafi on the serious situation in Amman.

A message from 'Abd-al-Nasir to King Faysal carried by Husayn al-Shafi'i asking the king to come to Cairo quickly to discuss the situation.

Two cables from 'Abd-al-Nasir to King Husayn to stop the brutal attack of the Bedouin forces against the Palestinians.

Monday, 21 September: King Husayn orders a cease-fire after receiving 'Abd-al-Nasir's message. He issued his orders from his office in his palace in front of Lieutenant General Sadiq and the UAR ambassador in Jordan ('Uthman Nuri).

The moral and material situation in Amman is painful and the ghost of U.S. collusion with Israel is becoming clear gradually.

Destruction in Amman and black smoke rising from many of its buildings.

Battles extend to northern Jordan and King Husayn accuses Syria anew that its forces entered the northern part of his country.

As of 1800, the presidents began to arrive in Cairo in response to 'Abd-al-Nasir's appeal. The first to come was Mu'ammarr al-Qadhafi, then Nur-al-Din al-Atasi, al-Bahi al-Adgham, the Tunisian prime minister on behalf of President Bourguiba; and then President Ja'far Numayri at midnight.

As soon as these presidents arrived, meetings between them and 'Abd-al-Nasir started and went on till long after midnight.

Tuesday, 22 September:

Yasir 'Arafat estimates the victims under debris in Amman at 20,000 people killed or wounded.

A fearful picture of Amman on the sixth day of fighting and the battles in northern Jordan enter a serious phase.

Meetings between 'Abd-al-Nasir and the Arab presidents at al-Qubbah Palace last all day long. The leaders arriving in Cairo today--namely, Amir Sabah al-Salim al-Sabah, President Charles Hilu, President Salim Rubayyi' and Judge 'Abd-al-Rahman al-Iryani--took part in the meetings.

Meetings interspersed by telephone contacts with King Husayn by 'Abd-al-Nasir and a number of the conferring presidents.

It was decided to send to Amman a delegation representing the Cairo meeting headed by President Numayri and including as members al-Bahi al-Adgham, Shaykh Sa'd al-'Abdallah al-Salim and Lt Gen Muhammad Sadiq to contact King Husayn and Yasir 'Arafat to put an end to the fighting.

'Abd-al-Nasir's meetings and contacts with the Arab leaders and his contacts with Amman continued until an early hour of the morning of Wednesday.

Wednesday, 23 September:

Violent tank battles around Irbid in which the air force takes part. President al-Atasi brought up the possibility of the entry of the Syrian forces to take part in the battles in northern Jordan.

Nixon discusses the development of events in Jordan with the congressional leaders. America prepared nearly 10,000 troops to intervene in Jordan on demand. (President Nixon later wrote in his memoirs that the United States came closer to military intervention in the Middle East at that time than at any other time.)

Soviet warning to Washington not to interfere in Jordan's events.

Return of Numayri and his delegation from Amman without reaching a decisive solution.

King Faysal's arrival in Cairo and his joining the Arab meeting which was held at the main conference hall at the Hilton Hotel where the Arab kings and presidents heard a report on President Numayri's mission. The meeting continued until 0200.

Thursday, 24 September:

Despite the affirmations made by the Jordanian Government on ending the fighting, shelling continues in Amman and Irbid is threatened by another massacre.

Resignation of Brig Gen Muhammad Dawud, the head of the Jordanian military government, while in Cairo after being convinced by his married daughter in Beirut that it is not right for anybody to use him to annihilate the Palestinians.

King Husayn meets with the U.S. ambassador and the Sixth Fleet in the Mediterranean declares a state of maximum alert.

Arrival of Sulayman Franjiyah, the new Lebanese president, to participate in the important Arab meeting.

Conference decides that the situation is serious and sends President Numayri to Amman once more, accompanied by a big delegation including Husayn al-Shafi'i, Rashad Fir'awn and Sa'd al-'Abdallah al-Sabah as representatives of their heads of state. Faruq Abu-'Isa, al-Bahi al-Adgham and Lt Gen Muhammad Sadiq go with them.

Bilateral meetings between 'Abd-al-Nasir and the kings and presidents continue until 0200.

Friday, 25 September:

Delegation returns from Amman after getting a cease-fire agreement which did not last more than a few hours.

Yasir 'Arafat arrives in Cairo with the members of Numayri's delegation, masked in the dress of a Kuwaiti citizen.

Numayri and 'Arafat presented to kings and presidents an evaluation of the serious situation that was intensifying by the minute. The meeting lasted until 0400.

'Abd-al-Nasir explained to conferees that he had become certain that what was happening on Jordanian arena was the result of planning by the CIA and the Israeli intelligence, with the help of some suspect local elements, and that the American Sixth Fleet and the Israeli forces were actually ready to intervene immediately.

'Abd-al-Nasir sends an urgent message to King Husayn at 0430 revealing to him the American-Israeli plan and affirming that continuation of the Jordanian attack against the Palestinians is considered an actual participation in this plan and throwing this historical responsibility on his shoulders.

Discussion on Situation

A discussion was held between 'Abd-al-Nasir and the Arab kings and presidents before the dispatch of this cable, considering that some of them--especially Col Mu'ammarr al-Qadhdhafi--believed that it was impermissible to contact King Husayn as a result of his position toward the Palestinian issue. But 'Abd-al-Nasir, whose heart bled every half hour when I read to him the cables sent by our embassy in Amman on the bloody events there, insisted on the need for positive action to stop the fighting instead of continuing the discussion and the debate in the air-conditioned Hilton hall. When one of the Arab leaders suggested that 'Abd-al-Nasir send Egyptian forces with other Arab forces to occupy Jordan, he said: "I have already sent our forces to Yemen and we have lost there more than 10,000 martyrs and Israel is still occupying our lands. I am not ready for a single Egyptian soldier to be martyred on the Jordanian soil. Whoever wants to send his forces there is welcome to do so." After a long discussion between the Arab kings and presidents, 'Abd-al-Nasir asked me to send an urgent cable in their name to King Husayn demanding that the shooting be ceased immediately and that the Palestinians and the Arab families whose blood is shed and whose honor is violated every hour be given security.

Saturday, 26 September:

Amman battle enters its 10th day.

Fighting continues in northern Jordan but resistance controls most of its towns.

Nixon announces that Jordan will be compensated for its losses in the fighting with the resistance, declaring that Jordan is to be given 5 million dollars as urgent aid.

Resolution by Arab kings and presidents holding King Husayn responsible for the bloody events taking place in Jordan.

President Numayri announces in an international press conference in Cairo carried live on the air all the details of the meetings and the consultations he had held and also the resolution of the Arab kings and presidents to hold King Husayn responsible and to convey the facts to the Arab masses.

King Husayn contacts 'Abd-al-Nasir at noon and informs him that he wishes to come to Cairo to explain his position to the Arab kings and presidents. 'Abd-al-Nasir delayed the answer until after presenting the matter to the conferees.

King Husayn again contacts 'Abd-al-Nasir at 1800 for the same purpose.

Heated discussions take place between the Arab kings and presidents over the issue of calling King Husayn to Cairo. The discussions continued for more than 4 hours. Colonel al-Qadhdhafi led those who refused to invite King Husayn because he considered him personally responsible for what was taking place in Amman and therefore refused his participation in the conference of the Arab kings and presidents. Meanwhile, Jamal 'Abd-al-Nasir headed the other side, pointing during his discussion of the issue to his wrist watch and saying that the minutes that passed while the Arab kings and presidents were involved in their discussion without reaching a positive measure to stop the shooting, the number of martyrs and of victimized women and children was increasing and that in view of the fact that it was impossible to send Arab military forces to invade Jordan and to put an end to the fighting, the only solution was to call King Husayn to Cairo to compel him to actually end the fighting in their presence. Shortly after midnight, a resolution was issued by the Arab kings and presidents approving King Husayn's coming to Cairo and providing for them to hold a major meeting on the following morning to be attended by King Husayn and Yasir 'Arafat.

Sunday, 27 September:

At 1100, King Husayn arrived in Cairo airport where he was met by 'Abd-al-Nasir even though Col Mu'ammarr al-Qadhdhafi had objected to

'Abd-al-Nasir's going to receive him at the airport. But 'Abd-al-Nasir received him personally in accordance with the Arab traditions of hospitality and because he was master of the house.

The Arab kings and presidents met at 1300 in the presence of King Husayn and Yasir 'Arafat. At the outset of the meeting, they requested that the meeting be confined to the kings and the presidents, without the representatives or the crown princes. Those people left the hall. 'Abd-al-Nasir requested that I ('Abd-al-Majid Farid) stay with them to follow up the discussion and the resolutions to be issued.

The discussion was heated and King Husayn was subjected in it to numerous embarrassing words, especially from Yasir 'Arafat. King Faysal tried to calm down the atmosphere of the discussion and asked that the guns carried by each of King Husayn and 'Arafat be given to me ('Abd-al-Majid Farid) so that the shooting may not be transferred from Jordan to the Hilton.

After more than 5 hours, the conferees reached an agreement stipulating:

First, that shooting in all the battlefields be stopped immediately.

Second, that the Jordanian army and the resistance men be withdrawn from all the cities before the sunset of the same day.

Third, that a committee headed by al-Bahi al-Adgham, the representative of the Tunisian president, go to Jordan on the next day (Monday, 28 September) to follow up implementation of the agreement.

Announcement of Agreement

At 2100, an open session was held in the same hall and was attended by all the members. Representatives of the international and local press and broadcasting stations were also invited to attend the signing of the agreement by all the kings and presidents, including King Husayn and Yasir 'Arafat. 'Abd-al-Nasir came out of the hall delighted and laughing loudly in a merry conversation with some of his colleagues the members of the conference. He then headed for his suite in the 13th floor of the hotel where he spent almost an hour with members of the UAR delegation, exchanging a conversation with his colleagues Anwar al-Sadat, Husayn al-Shafi'i and 'Ali Sabri. He also agreed with Muhammad Hasanayn Haykal, the minister of information, on an information plan concerning the agreement. He then sat next to his Zenith [transistor] radio that accompanied him all the time and tried to listen to what the world broadcasting stations were saying about the events in Jordan after the signing of the agreement.

'Abd-al-Nasir was able to stem the shedding of the Arab blood that was flowing on the banks of the Jordan River, both Palestinian and Jordanian

blood. He also foiled the opportunity of the Americans and the Israelis to intervene directly in the issue, unlike what happened years later in similar events on the soil of the fraternal Lebanon.

Before leaving his suite, he came out to the balcony on the 13th floor of the Hilton Hotel and looked at the Nile flowing by night between Cairo and al-Jazirah, with the lights of Cairo and al-Jizah shining on its banks. I was standing next to him and I saw his eyes smile and fill with pride in this beautiful country. He looked at me and said: "This is the first time in my life that I see this magnificent view. Compared to this place, a person in Manshiyat al-Bakri (where 'Abd-al-Nasir was living in a modest home) is dead and not alive. Is it right, 'Abd-al-Majid, that I should not see Cairo's beauty until tonight?" He was kind and happy. Despite 'Abd-al-Nasir's smiles in those moments, I was fully aware that he had been exposed to a nervous exhaustion beyond man's endurance in the 7 preceding days. He had not slept on those nights till after 0300, and at times 0500, and started his meetings at 0900 of the same morning.

He talked to me when I was the only Egyptian with him during the closed meeting of the kings and presidents. He talked to me during the recesses for which he asked the conferees every 2 hours so that he could walk for a few minutes whenever the pain in his legs became severe as a result of sitting motionless for long hours. I felt from his words that he was blaming himself for the momentous events that had taken place in Jordan. He said: "Were it not for the 1967 defeat, what has happened in Amman and Jordan would not happen and were it not for that defeat, thousands of innocent people and children would not have been killed." I tried to change the subject, to underplay the events or to deny any responsibility by him personally, but the account of the soul and the voice of his conscience were much harder on him than to be softened by my words.

At 2200, he left the hotel for the airport to see off Col Mu'ammr al-Qadhdhafi. Before leaving the hotel door, he asked to shake hands with the hotel employees and workers to thank them for the service that they performed for Egypt's guests during the days of the conference.

'Abd-al-Nasir returned from the airport to his office in Manshiyat al-Bakri and stayed there until the call for dawn prayers in order to follow up on the preparations necessary for the success of the supervision committee called for by the agreement and to provide all its financial and material requirements. Shortly before midnight, Khalid 'Abd-al-Nasir, his eldest son, stopped by the office. This was unusual because his children would often pass by his office at night without stopping by, preferring not to disturb him. But this time Khalid missed talking to his father who had been absent for a whole week at the Hilton conference. 'Abd-al-Nasir, the father, put aside all the papers in front of him and stopped his telephone contacts to ask Khalid about his

situation in the university, about his studies, about the affairs of his brothers 'Abd-al-Hamid and 'Abd-al-Hakim and about Huda and Muna. It was not a conversation but a final farewell of which neither the father nor the son was aware.

Farewell Day, 28 September

All countries expressed interest in the Cairo agreement, except for Israel which sowed doubt in the provisions of the agreement, hinting that it was impossible to implement practically. In Cairo, the necessary arrangements were begun for the work of the higher committee for supervising implementation of the agreement. This committee consisted of a military subcommittee, a political subcommittee and a subcommittee for aid. Al-Bahi al-Adgham, the committee chairman, went to Amman and set up radio communications with Cairo and then started to carry out his task in Amman. The sounds of machineguns and grenades started to disappear from the quarters of Amman gradually. 'Abd-al-Nasir left his office near dawn and ascended to the upper floor in his house to sleep for a few hours before going to Cairo airport at 1000 to see off President Franjiyah, then King Husayn, then King Faysal and then Ja'far Numayri, with half an hour separating the sendoff given to each of them. He returned to the airport again at 1530 to see off the amir of Kuwait. During the farewell ceremony, he felt a sudden attack of dizziness, heavy sweating and a general feeling of collapsing and of not being able to walk or even to stand on his feet. But he forced himself and insisted on standing tall, as representative of the Egyptian people, until the guest's plane started moving. At that moment, 'Abd-al-Nasir had consumed all the strength he had and asked his accompanying secretary, Fu'ad 'Abd-al-Hayy, to bring the car to where he was standing so that he may throw his exhausted body on its seat. He reached his residence in Manshiyat al-Bakri in a state of extreme exhaustion. A number of physicians came and examined him and declared that he was having a serious heart attack as a result of a clot in the main [al-taji] heart artery. The physicians tried aids to save his heart, including an apparatus to regulate the heartbeats. But at 1815, God's will was done. His soul rose to its Creator, content and blessed. 'Abd-al-Nasir died but the history of his struggle will remain alive and immortal forever.

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