

July 18, 1967

**Memorandum of a Meeting between Houari
Boumédiène, Abd al-Rahman Arif, Leonid I.
Brezhnev, and Alexei Kosygin**

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Summary:

Arif and Boumedienne talked to Brezhnev and Kossygin about the Six-Day War and discussed with them the possibilities for the Arab countries. The first possibility is to negotiate with the US and Israel and the second, to continue fighting, regardless of the cost. The Algerian representatives favored the second option, suggesting that otherwise an overthrow of the progressive Arab governments would be likely. Brezhnev and Kossygin argued, however, that a political solution would be more appropriate and that the main goal at the present time should be to strengthen the armies of Syria, Jordan and the UAR, and to support these countries in every respect.

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[Translator's note: This is a German translation of a Russian-language information from the CPSU Central Committee sent to GDR leader Wal-ter Ulbricht.]

Highly Confidential!

I n f o r m a t i o n

On 17th and 18th July [1967] [Houari] Boumédiène and [Abd al-Rahman] Arif had two extensive talks with Comrades L[eonid] I[lyich] Brezhnev and A[lexei] N[ikolayevich] Kosygin and other Soviet comrades. They took overall 9 hours.

Boumédiène and Arif stated they had to come to inform about the decision made at the meeting of the five Arab heads of state. The basic idea behind this decision is that the Arab states have to continue the fight against Israel. Boumédiène and Arif declared at the beginning of our talks that the leaders of the Arab countries cannot agree to the termination of the war against Israel. Therefore, they are categorically against including a provision into any United Nations draft resolution which talks about an end of the state of war with Israel.

Boumédiène mainly conducted the talks. Arif limited himself to brief words of introduction and individual remarks. Boumédiène expressed himself in the sense that in the current situation there are two options for the Arab countries:

- First option: An agreement with the aggressor and U.S. imperialism standing behind Israel, what will inevitably result in the liquidation of the progressive regimes in the Arab countries;
- Second option: The continuation of the fight, regardless of all losses and sacrifices.

Boumédiène underlined that the Arab countries have to choose the second option and to continue the fight. How, and in what form "the fight is supposed to be waged", how one wants to withstand a potential resuming of war operations from the side of Israel and the U.S. standing behind it - to these and many other concrete questions asked by our side, Boumédiène was not able to provide an answer. His main argument, which he repeatedly made and explained in his long-winding statements, was his assertion that the recognition of the State of Israel is completely unacceptable to all Arab countries.

"I am saying it openly", Boumédiène stated, "that everything leading to the recognition of Israel is completely unacceptable to us. And if we have to wait for a thousand years, we are not going to relinquish our rights".

Boumédiène declared repeatedly that the adoption of resolutions in the United Nations will in fact give nothing at all to the Arabs; and that Israel will not comply with these resolutions, but demand that its conditions are to be met, which are the recognition of Israel, free navigation in the Suez Canal, et cetera. Boumédiène claimed that any phrase in a draft resolution for a special session of the U.N. General Assembly talking about an end of the state of war with Israel, will be de facto the first step for the Arab countries to next recognize the State of Israel, to launch direct negotiations with it, and to declare themselves willing to accept whatever international guarantees of the existence of Israel, et cetera. Boumédiène repeated persistently that the acceptance of a provision concerning the termination of the state of war will allegedly lead to the overthrow of the progressive regimes in the Arab countries.

Boumédiène and Arif emphasized in their statements that the Arab countries are assuming, with their decision to continue the fight, that this decision will not in any way affect their relations with the Soviet Union and the other socialist countries, as well as their friendship and close cooperation.

L. I. Brezhnev and A. N. Kosygin informed Boumédiène and Arif in detail about the meeting of the leaders of the seven socialist states in Budapest [Convened on 11 and 12 July 1967, with participation from the Soviet Union, Czechoslovakia, GDR, Poland, Hungary, Bulgaria, and Yugoslavia. Romania was not invited] and provided a thorough analysis of the current situation.

An extensive and long discussion was held with Boumédiène and Arif. It was persistently explained to them that in the current situation one has to seek a political and not a military solution regarding overcoming the consequences of the Israeli aggression. The adoption of a resolution in the United Nations with the demand

for a withdrawal of the Israeli forces from the occupied territories, as well as a provision over the termination of the state of war, would allow the Arab countries, and the socialist states supporting them, to continue with an active political struggle towards the overcoming of the consequences of the aggression, and especially so for the withdrawal of Israel's forces from the occupied territories of the Arab states.

It was underlined that this is now in our opinion the main task. The withdrawal of forces from the occupied territories would substantially reduce the real danger of a resumption of war operations by Israel. It would provide a breathing space necessary for the restoration of the fighting ability of the armies of both the UAR and Syria. According to statements by Arab leaders themselves - [Gamal Abdel] Nasser and others -, as well as by unanimous assessment by Soviet military leaders who have visited the UAR and Syria, the armies of those countries cannot just conduct no more offensive operations whatsoever. Much more, they could not guarantee their own defense in case of a resumption of war operations by Israel. In order to restore the fighting strength of the UAR and Syria between one and a half and two years will be required. If the U.N meeting will not adopt any resolution because of the resistance by the Arab states, this will alleviate the option for a resumption of war operations by Israel, which can lead to the fall of Cairo and Damaskus and the conquest of the Suez Canal.

All that was openly explained to Boumédiène and Arif during the talks. A characterization of the situation of the armies of the Arab countries based on facts was presented by the Defense Minister of the USSR, Marshal [Andrei] Grechko.

L. I. Brezhnev and A. N. Kosygin emphasized in their statements that the position they have taken is the unanimous opinion of the socialist participant countries at the meeting in Budapest. It was declared that the participants in this meeting are feeling deep sympathy with the Arabs in their struggle for overcoming the consequences of the aggression. They have decided to provide the Arab countries with any aid and support. They will not allow that the imperialists will achieve their main goal, namely the elimination of the progressive regimes in the Arab countries. At the end, the hope was expressed that the unanimous opinion of the socialist countries, regarding the appropriateness of an acceptance of a resolution, will be again reviewed by the leaders of the Arab countries, when it comes to their final decision over positions of their delegations in the United Nations General Assembly; based on the understanding that the resolution will contain a provision on the withdrawal of the Israeli forces and the termination of the state of war (while considering the last draft by the Latin American countries). It was highlighted that the [U.N.] session will end its working period on the 20th of July, so that a swift final decision-making is necessary.

As result of the talks we had, Boumédiène and Arif somewhat refrained from their initial position; which had excluded the acceptance of a provision by the General Assembly regarding the termination of the state of war.

Boumédiène and Arif stated they will immediately inform President Nasser and the other Arab leaders about all considerations of the Soviet leaders. They will consult again and come up with a final decision.

Right after the talk, Boumédiène and Arif flew back from Moscow to Cairo at 16:00 hours.

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