

December 20, 1963

Record of Premier Zhou Enlai's Calling on President Nasser

Citation:

"Record of Premier Zhou Enlai's Calling on President Nasser", December 20, 1963, Wilson Center Digital Archive, PRC FMA 107-01027-08, 63-80. Translated by Stephen Mercado. <https://wilson-center-digital-archive.dvincitest.com/document/165432>

Summary:

Zhou and Nasser discuss domestic conditions inside of Egypt, the Sino-Indian border war, and the possibilities for a nuclear weapons free zone in Africa and the Middle East.

Credits:

This document was made possible with support from Henry Luce Foundation

Original Language:

Chinese

Contents:

Translation - English

Secret Document 17

Foreign Ministry File

Record of Premier Zhou Enlai's Calling on President Nasser

(Premier has yet to review and approve)

- (1) United Arab Republic (UAR) domestic situation
- (2) Jewish issue
- (3) Nuclear-weapon-free zone issue
- (4) Disarmament issue
- (5) Sino-Indian border issue
- (6) Loan issue
- (7) Situation in some African countries, elsewhere

Time: 10:30 a.m., 20 December 1963

Place: Cairo Presidential Palace

Interpreter: Ji Chaozhu

(After a brief exchange of pleasantries, Nasser introduced the UAR's domestic situation.)

Nasser: Small merchants are a big problem. We have established more than 200 consumer cooperatives. We are nationalizing 15 large stores, which originally belonged to Frenchmen, British or Egyptians.

Zhou: Apart from state control, do you still have the free market?

Nasser: We do. Some small shops are private. Two to three percent of the wholesalers do not participate in cooperatives. However, the prices are all fixed by the government.

Zhou: There will always be small merchants. They are good in communication and exchanges between urban and rural areas. However, they also easily engage in speculation and profiteering, which is their bad aspect. Therefore, working on private merchants is a long-term task.

Nasser: Indeed, trade work is not easy. Industry must be easier than trade. This is due to trade affecting many persons, affecting prices, and possibly producing a black market. Therefore, we must be very careful.

Zhou: We also have this problem. Ninety percent of our domestic trade is nationalized. Free trade is only around 10 percent, and now this figure is likely smaller. However, free markets cannot all be replaced at once. They can only be eliminated gradually. If a good is plentiful, then the free-market price can be more or less the same as that of the state-run market's price. However, if some agricultural products and industrial products grow scarce, or demand for them increases, then free-market prices will rise. We have arrested and punished some speculators, but they will always exploit loopholes, and our society is also so large.

Nasser: This is a big problem, and these people are also very clever.

Zhou: Yes. For their livelihood, they are always striving by every possible means to

reap more profits.

Nasser: We are in a major international transport route, with many people coming and going. The common people are also accustomed to buying in the marketplace whatever they can. Although there are deserts on both sides, there is often contraband, much of which comes via Libya or Beirut in Lebanon. After we produced some new products, we halted their import from abroad, but among these products there remains contraband. In 1954, we established two public-private joint ventures, 50 percent state-run and 50 percent private, to manage domestic and foreign trade. In 1956, we established a company to manage pharmaceuticals. As a result, several major pharmaceutical companies around the world refused to sell us medicines. In the past we had to import each year 10 million pounds of medicines. We ourselves were only producing one million pounds of medicines. In 1959, we nationalized the trade in pharmaceutical imports, but before nationalization our military stockpiled six months' worth of medicines. As a result, when foreign companies refused to sell us medicines after our country's nationalization, we announced in regard to any company refusing to sell us medicines that we would henceforth not buy anything more from them. As a result, they all immediately sold us the medicines. Our drug prices have now fallen 25 percent, but we are still able to make money. Now we have annual production of 12 million pounds of medicines. Everything must proceed step by step.

In terms of domestic measures, we have decided to implement in the rural areas a policy of collectivization. Last year, we decided to implement cooperative markets in the rural areas, but some farmers would rather deal with private merchants than cooperatives, because they can more freely obtain loans from private merchants. The private merchants have also been a bit more flexible than the cooperatives, because cooperatives have various rules and regulations. We are now taking various measures to make the cooperatives more convenient for the farmers.

Zhou: Does the state now control the management of foreign trade and exchange control?

Nasser: This is so in respect to medicines, which we have now nationalized. We recently arrested some private merchants and foreign-trade officials with whom they were colluding.

Zhou: To persist in nationalization is a difficult task. It would not do to rush it.

Nasser: It is a very difficult problem.

Zhou: After your agricultural irrigation system is up and running, apart from having a good foundation, you will still be able to export some things, right?

Nasser: But our population is also increasing. We would rather grow cotton, rice, and sugar cane than to grow wheat.

Zhou: You also grow vegetables, right?

Nasser: Yes. There are also fruits. But we are not exporting much fruit. We export some mandarin oranges and grapes, but the common people are against exporting grapes, because they will then not be able to buy them in the market or the price will be high. Our middle class is very numerous. They are accustomed to being able at any time to buy fruit. We export 20,000 to 30,000 tons of mandarin oranges and export some bananas, but we mainly export rice, sugar, and cotton.

Zhou: The proportion of your urban population is very large, right?

Nasser: Cairo has a population of 4 million. Half the population is urban.

Zhou: Your labor force is sufficient, isn't it?

Nasser: It is sufficient. Last year, however, there arose a situation of local labor force insufficiency. We originally estimated the labor force sufficient for building some small-scale irrigation and drainage systems, but last year the labor force in the Delta was insufficient, so we are now engaging in mechanization in the four governorates.

Zhou: With the development of industry, the labor force needs to increase, but if we mechanize, then we can decrease the manpower taken from the rural areas. At present, with the development of your industry, commerce, transport and shipping, administration and management, education, and military, has your employment issue been resolved?

Nasser: The skilled workers are all employed. We have also established 25 worker training centers. The people now have a different view of labor. They used to regard labor as something shameful. People would prefer to sit in the office for less money and were unwilling to engage in physical labor. But last year, on a visit to a factory, I met a high school graduate. After having received a year's training at a training center, he came to work at the factory. His salary was respectable, 14 pounds a month. I told him that when I was a second lieutenant, my salary was only 12 pounds a month. They enjoy 25 percent of the corporation's annual profits, among which 10 percent is given them in cash. However, the cash amount cannot exceed 50 pounds. Five percent is a service item. Ten percent is a service item for workers across the country.

Zhou: Does this include labor insurance?

Nasser: No. Labor insurance is 8 percent for workers and 10 percent for business owners. We can use this money for investment. The bank now has 39 million pounds. Last year, it earned 3 million pounds. Now we are also engaged in unemployment insurance funds. This type of labor insurance applies to all factories and companies, including private ones. Enterprises with fewer than 10 employees can be private.

Zhou: Does your middle class, apart from those business owners and merchants, still have some who do not have an occupation and live on what they had originally accumulated?

Nasser: Yes. There are also some who rely on land rents and property income. However, in 1952 we limited the amount of land that each person could own to 200 acres, and by 1961 we limited it to 100 acres. By the 1970s, we will limit it to 100 acres per family. In May 1962, we adopted our Charter and made provisions in these areas. Have you seen this Charter? If you are interested, I can give you a copy of it. (Nasser rang the buzzer to summon someone to deliver to the Premier copies of the Charter in the original Arabic as well as in English and French translations.)

Zhou: Thank you.

Nasser: After Syria broke away in 1961, we realized that we could not cooperate with reactionaries, so we confiscated the assets of more than one thousand families. Our previous policy was to unite the various classes and peacefully resolve the contradictions between the various classes, so some reactionaries joined our ranks. They pay lip service to socialism but, in fact, are waiting for an opportunity to oppose

us. Therefore, we now do not let them participate in our political organization, the [Arab] Socialist Union (ASU). Those affected by our policies of land reform or nationalization cannot now participate in this organization. The thousand families whose assets were confiscated cannot participate in this organization. In total, 100,000 persons cannot participate. They represent 7,000 households.

Zhou: Your scope of attack is still a narrow one.

Nasser: We have confiscated the assets of the great feudal lords and the royal family. Some of them had from 20,000 to 30,000 acres of land. We also confiscated the assets of foreigners and nationalized them. Among the assets we nationalized were British, French, Italian, Swiss, and Lebanese ones, as well as those of foreigners from other countries. We have reached an agreement with Lebanon. We have agreed to return in kind within 10 years 60 percent of the nationalized assets, but without interest payments. We have also nationalized Belgian assets. They had a great many assets in Cairo in the past. From the airport to the area where I live now, it was all their property.

More than 170 years ago, Muhammad Ali brought all the land under his control and redistributed it. After the British came, they distributed the land to those who supported them. At that time, five of every 1,000 persons owned 50 percent of the nation's land.

Our Charter guarantees the rights of workers and peasants. We stipulate that more than 50 percent of the members of the ASU and the National Assembly must be workers and peasants. Our definition of workers is anyone, other than management, who works in an enterprise. In the past, there were two branches in an enterprise. One was a union for workers engaged in physical labor. The other was one for engineers and staff. Four years ago, we combined these two unions into a single one.

Our definition of peasants is as follows: those who work on the land and own or rent less than 25 acres of land.

The reality is that workers and peasants are 73 percent of the ASU's members. This is because we do not let certain capitalists and feudal lords join.

Zhou: Does the national bourgeoisie have its own organization?

Nasser: No. The reason is because they can all join the ASU. The ASU represents workers, peasants, soldiers, intellectuals, and the national bourgeoisie.

In the past, engineers, doctors, lawyers, and teachers had their own unions. They were unwilling to participate in the workers' unions, but now they are all willing to do so because they are good for them and because in this way they can participate in our organization as workers.

Our enterprises are managed by an eight-member board of directors. The chairman is appointed by the government, four members are appointed, and the remaining four members are elected by the workers. The board is led by various government ministries. For example, industrial enterprises are led by the Ministry of Industry, banks are led by the Ministry of the Economy, and so on. The ministries can reject the resolution of a board of directors.

Zhou: Did some of the old society's intellectuals and engineers not leave, or was it merely some aristocrats?

Nasser: Nobody left, not even the aristocrats. Only Farouk, his wife, and their children left. Farouk later divorced his wife, who requested that we allow her to return, which we did. After returning, she later married a doctor. The mother of the former queen also wrote to me, asking to return. We agreed to that as well. Those women do not share the lineage of the royal family. We give a salary to those members of the royal family who now remain here. Some also have work. Egyptians all have a strong sense of their native land and are unwilling to leave their fatherland, [un]like Lebanese and Syrians, who live all around the world.

Zhou: Jews are even more present all around the world. Does the UAR have Jews?

Nasser: We did in the past. Many of them left in 1948. When they launched the war of aggression in 1956, others left, going to the United States, Australia, and Israel. At present, the UAR still has 11, 000 Jews. They all are destitute people. They enjoy all the rights of citizenship.

Zhou: Are there no Jews who believe in Islam?

Nasser: At the time Islam first began to spread, there were then some Jews who expressed faith in Islam for the sake of their own selfish interests but who continued to believe in their hearts in Judaism and still educated their offspring in Judaism. Therefore, after two or three generations, they all went back to Judaism.

Zhou: They are really tenacious in their traditions and customs. Even though they are scattered all over the world, their traditions have been preserved.

Nasser: They are always a minority. In the beginning, they were in the region of Iraq. They called themselves the children of Israel. Later they arrived in Egypt. Moses, who was born in Egypt, later led the Jews out of Egypt. They stayed for 40 years in the Sinai Peninsula. Afterwards, they reached Palestine and were later driven out of there.

Zhou: They wander around every part of the world. China also has them. In ancient times, some Jews came to Kaifeng in China. That was over a thousand years ago, but at present there are still a hundred households. They have all intermarried with Chinese, look completely the same as Chinese, they are the same as Chinese in how they live and work, but they still maintain their traditions and speak some words of Hebrew. However, they have no contact with Jews in the outside world.

Nasser: I very much hope that the current situation in Israel develops no further because, if they divert the waters of the Jordan River, war may erupt. Syria is particularly concerned with this issue. In fact this is not an issue of Israel itself but one of those who support Israel, just as Taiwan is not an issue of Chiang Kai-shek but one of those who support him.

Zhou: Correct. If it were only a question of Israel, then the issue would be resolved. This is a long-term issue. The reason is that in establishing a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Africa, if it does not include all the Arab countries, does not include Israel, and the nuclear powers offer no guarantee, then the African nuclear-weapon-free zone will have no guarantee. Do you find my thinking right or not?

Nasser: In Israel there is a large atomic reactor capable of producing plutonium (?) [question mark in original text, suggesting a portion is missing]. Plutonium is material for atomic bombs. We, too, have a small reactor.

Zhou: I don't know whether this point of view is correct or not. If West Asia and Israel do not participate and the nuclear powers give no guarantee, then an African nuclear-weapon-free zone will have no guarantee.

Nasser: Right. Israel obtained France's help and that of all the Jewish scientists in the Western countries.

Zhou: Nothing specific was raised at the Addis Ababa conference regarding the Africa nuclear-weapon-free zone.

Nasser: That is because we have to reach an agreement at the meeting.

Zhou: This is a good start, but one must consider some specific situations that one may face. For example, there is the establishment in Latin America of a nuclear-weapon-free zone. If the United States does not evacuate its military base from Guantanamo, does not evacuate its Caribbean military bases, and the nuclear powers give no guarantee, then Latin America's nuclear-weapon-free zone will have no guarantee. Therefore, each specific region has its own complicated problems.

Nasser: We have announced our viewpoint on this issue. There is now a decrease, not an increase, in military bases around the world because their nuclear submarines can play the role of bases.

Zhou: Only in ceaselessly opposing and putting pressure on them will we be able to make them reduce their military bases.

Nasser: Particularly their nuclear submarines and their 6th Fleet.

Zhou: Lebanon also welcomes the 6th Fleet. We should make high demands. We demand the complete prohibition and thorough destruction of nuclear weapons and a halt to the outbreak of nuclear war. Asian and African countries should adopt some concrete steps in order to realize their demands and press the West, in particular the United States, to retreat. Our objectives are identical. It is very important that we expose their trickery. At present they are speaking of disarmament. In fact, they are engaged in military expansion. The great powers should take the lead if they talk of disarmament. For Asian and African countries, their forces for self-defense are still not strong enough, and if their forces for self-defense are not strong enough, then there is no guarantee of their independence. If you withdraw your troops, then Israel will be among you. How will it be if Israel does not disarm?

Nasser: Our point of view is clear. We do not accept disarmament in the Middle East. Because of Israel's existence, justice is violated, so we cannot carry out disarmament. Before disarmament, the colonies must be liberated. Because of South Africa, Africa, too, cannot carry out disarmament. South Africa has a powerful police force. Even if it cut its military, it can still slaughter Africans.

Zhou: Disarmament should first of all be an issue of the great powers, and they should take the lead. The colonies and semi-colonies of Asia, Africa, and Latin America must obtain their independence or complete independence and thus must strengthen their forces for self-defense. They certainly must obtain equal status. Only this way will they be able to consider disarmament. Only after resolution of the issues of Israel and Taiwan will it be possible to consider disarmament. Therefore, discussing disarmament requires discussing the concrete. One cannot simply discuss general principles but must deal with it in making distinctions.

Nasser: Our position in this regard is very clear.

Zhou: Yesterday we discussed the issue of relations between China and India. The present situation is that it seems we are unable to find a way to hold a meeting between China and India. We are prepared at any time to hold talks without conditions. Furthermore, I have said many times that I can even go again to Delhi and have talks with Nehru. However, we cannot simply attend to India's dignity and not consider China's dignity. The talks cannot have any preconditions. Our side has not put forward any preconditions. If the six countries of the Colombo Conference, or Your Excellency, see some new opportunity for talks, please inform us. We will consider it. Such exchanges of view outside the public view will be beneficial to promoting bilateral talks. For our part, we can guarantee that we will not provoke India. We are willing to establish peaceful and friendly relations with India and Pakistan. We will not make any trouble in that regard, nor engage in provocation, because it is incompatible with our system and policy.

Nasser: We will once again attempt to promote negotiations between the two sides.

Zhou: This effort should not be made public. The reason is that, if made public, it would bring about various public opinions, create some unnecessary troubles, and inevitably harm one side or the other.

Nasser: I agree.

Zhou: It is more important, as I said to Prime Minister Ali Sabry, to make India feel that going on this way is to its own disadvantage. It would be bad for us to speak this way to India, because it would seem that we were looking down on them. However, as a friend to both sides, the UAR can call their attention to it.

Nasser: We have tried to do so. Ali Sabry has also made such an attempt, but our impression is that they are not willing at present to negotiate. They feel that they have failed and have been humiliated.

Zhou: Not only that, but they continue to accept foreign military aid, which is unfavorable to their overall economic development and politically disadvantageous to them. The influence of the United States grows increasingly large. India's international status is in decline. They are sinking ever deeper, and it is very difficult to pull them out of it.

Nasser: Therefore, we need to try to find a solution. The main problem for them is that they have demanded to establish in the Western Sector some civilian posts similar to those of China. At the beginning, they demanded the return of their 43 posts. We have studied this issue in detail. In the past four years, India has made some mistakes and has become isolated in Asia. We have tried to make India not feel isolated. At the Colombo Conference, we supported India's standpoint. There are many reasons for this. We see that all countries are opposed to India, and we are very anxious. If this goes on, what will become of India? Perhaps it will adopt a closed-door policy. Perhaps it will join the Western camp, which would affect solidarity in all of Asia and the non-aligned concept. We have put forward our proposal in an attempt to reach a compromise. We recommend that India return to its position held prior to 8 September, which differs from the Indian demand, because India's proposal is to return to its position of 8 September. They attach great importance to Ladakh, where they have their demands and China has its demands. I simply wish to ask whether or not you can make a concession to India on a particular issue. Of course, this would not violate China's dignity.

Zhou: Before the border clash, India had two advantageous opportunities to negotiate. In the formal talks with Your Excellency, I also mentioned these two

opportunities. One was in 1960, when with complete sincerity we went to resolve the issue. At that time, considering Nehru's domestic influence, he could have resolved it. Although Vice Premier Chen Yi accompanied me, he did not participate in the talks. This was out of respect for Nehru and to let him have the opportunity to consider the issue alone, which would be a bit more convenient.

Another opportunity was in July and August of last year. At that time, India was in an advantageous position. It had already invaded and occupied China's 43 posts in the Western Sector. In the Eastern Sector, it has occupied that triangular area. The Indian military map that we seized shows that they have drawn two lines there.

Nasser: Your meaning at the time was to carry out negotiations while maintaining the status quo at that time?

Zhou: Yes. Therefore, at the time it was in their interest to negotiate.

Nasser: That is to say, negotiate on the basis of the actual line of control at the time?

Zhou: At the time we did not demand that India pull back prior to negotiations, but they had a misconception and committed a first error, that is, of continuing to advance. They committed a second error of declaring publicly that they would "clear" us.

Nasser: I was not aware of these facts. I have only understood what has happened after the conflict and have studied some maps.

Zhou: Nehru later arrived in Ceylon and told Ceylon's prime minister that India would drive us out. Ceylon's prime minister expressed his concern that he was afraid it would cause a major conflict. Nehru said that it was no matter and that India would quickly drive us out. We sent him several letters from July to September; he ignored them. We gave him three chances in all; he let them all slip away. The first was in 1960, the second was in July 1962, and the third was from July to October. The letters that we gave him all proposed temporarily maintaining the status quo and conducting unconditional negotiations. Late, we took the initiative to cease fire and carry out another series of measures, all in consideration of India. Many of the measures even greatly exceeded the demands of the Colombo Proposals in our regard. We have asked that the Chinese and Indian sides withdraw 20 kilometers from the actual line of control and break off contact. We do not want to have armed conflict.

As for the border issue, in 1954, 1956, and 1957, he only raised the issue of the McMahon Line. At that time, we said that the line was illegal, but we did not cross the line and we waited for a resolution. The McMahon Line's treaty was at the time signed by the foreign secretary of British India and a representative of the Tibetan regional government behind a representative of the Chinese central government. None of the successive Chinese central governments has ratified this treaty, so it is not legal. We have not crossed this line, thereby expressing our amicable attitude. The McMahon Line's western end is parallel. If India has something to dispute regarding the triangular territory that it has drawn up, then it can resolve it through negotiations. Why should it send armed forces into it? It went in and we, in our own defense, naturally also went in.

As for the Western Sector, fundamentally there is no treaty at all. Regarding that Indian map, it has frequently changed, and Nehru himself in the Parliament has said that this area is ambiguous and unclear. It is the map of the Encyclopedia Britannica, and the Survey of India's map has many times had changes to its lines drawn for this area. Our map, too, has had some changes but has basically been consistent. Yet, we

are still willing to negotiate a settlement.

India understands that we can make concessions in the Eastern Sector because we have resolved the border issue with Burma. Because of this, in 1958 India suddenly proposed that China's Aksai Chin is a part of Ladakh.

I previously told His Excellency Rifaat that, before the Opium War, China was an expanding feudal empire. Some places that China had previously invaded were not counted. The situation from after the Opium War until Liberation must be counted but also must be treated differently. With treaties, even unequal treaties, we maintain the status quo and wait to conclude new treaties through negotiation. In the absence of a treaty, a treaty must be negotiated through negotiation. Aksai Chin is completely China's territory. India's submitted documents only show that there were some Indian and British travelers there, but they have no administrative or garrison records. How can we agree to let India enter into these areas and recognize their right to be there? However, in consideration of India's dignity, we made two concessions in this regard. The first is that we have pulled back 20 kilometers all along the line to prevent conflict. Our second concession is to have vacated the area of conflict, the 43 strong points that India invaded, and the dozen strong points that we built for our own defense. Not only did the troops not go in, but civilian administrators also did not go in. The Middle Sector's Wuji and the Eastern Sector's Chedong and Longju are also this way. We cannot make any more concessions.

However, Prime Minister Nehru has always ignored the consequences and always made rash promises, which has left him no room for maneuver and made him very passive.

Nasser: Nehru's position in India is not very strong.

Zhou: He actually has more political experience than us. But in the Parliament he speaks as he pleases and without foundation. So how can we show consideration for his face? And if before the negotiations all his demands are satisfied, what then is there left to negotiate? Therefore, whether it is the position before 8 September, or the position on that day of 8 September, or the position of 20 October, none of it can be recovered. His Excellency Ali Sabry understands our position. I gave him a memorandum. I think that Your Excellency the President also saw it. However, after Prime Minister Ali Sabry talked with Nehru, he considered it inappropriate to pass the memorandum to Nehru. One can clearly see how firmly India has rejected negotiations.

Nasser: Nehru sees this issue as his personal problem and feels personally hurt.

Zhou: The UAR's leadership is also a leadership group. But Nehru has made no arrangements in this regard.

Nasser: It is completely him alone.

Zhou: He has not trained anyone in the Congress Party.

Nasser: If something should happen to Nehru, there is nobody who can replace him. He once said that he would drag out the border issue for another four or five years, which means that he would leave this issue for his successor.

Zhou: They say that India is democratic and that this is democracy. They trust too much in British democracy. For the benefit of a few groups, they waste a great deal of time in the Parliament. The Indian monopoly bourgeoisie has developed.

Nasser: Yes. Therefore, we are anxious to convince Nehru to agree to negotiate.

Zhou: We can maintain contact. We can wait. We will not create a tense situation.

Nasser: What greatly concerns us is the easing of tensions between your two countries and the resumption of good relations. This is very important for Asian-African solidarity and world peace.

Zhou: There remains the loan issue. Does Your Excellency the President see us concluding an agreement this time, or handling it in the future through diplomatic channels?

Nasser: Thank you very much. We are thinking to send a delegation. We can also sign an agreement this time.

Zhou: We already have a draft that we can pass via Vice Minister Huang Zhen to His Excellency Fawzi for the foreign ministers of our two countries to sign. This agreement cannot be made public. The reason is that the figure is too small. I am sorry.

Nasser: We can sign such an agreement. We do not wish to give the impression that our welcome to you has to any purpose other than strong friendship. I also agree to have this agreement signed by the foreign ministers of our two countries. We also hope to expand trade between our two countries.

Zhou: When your trade and economic delegation comes next year, they can take a look and see what your needs are and what we can offer you.

Nasser: We are now attempting to build a textile industry.

Zhou: You can also take a look at various types of industrial equipment.

This time I am also going to visit some countries in North Africa, West Africa, and East Africa, namely Algeria, Morocco, Ghana, Mali, Guinea, and Sudan. What do you think I should pay attention to?

Nasser: Algeria is now in a period just following independence. There is still unemployment there. They are carrying out social reform and have had some achievements. Their people are intelligent and strong. The problem is that their economy is still linked to France. They are now taking some measures to stop the flow of foreign exchange into France.

Zhou: Has there been any new developments in the issues between Algeria and Morocco?

Nasser: No. The problem now is that relations between the UAR and Morocco are more critical than those between Algeria and Morocco. After Morocco rejected our mediating the dispute between Algeria and Morocco, [Ahmed] Ben Bella asked us to provide military assistance. We sent some aircraft and tanks. We have thus seriously offended Morocco.

If the African countries demand the restoration of their old borders, it will cause chaos throughout all of Africa. The old borders are the result of the colonialists having

divided up Africa. We and Sudan also have border issues. They have drawn political and administrative borders. However, we do not dispute... (?) [ellipsis and question mark in original text].

There is no problem with the economy in Ghana. It exports cocoa, aluminum ore, and such. Each year it earns 90 million pounds sterling. [Kwame] Nkrumah is a bit nervous. He proposes African unification and calls for the establishment of a federation, but he is a bit too impatient.

We African countries are actually only beginning to know one another. At this past Addis Ababa conference, there emerged the issue of which language would be the official language. Some persons proposed using English and French. We proposed using several of Africa's major languages and proposed that we could provide various facilities in Arabic. Sierra Leone called it linguistic colonialism. However, what would you consider English and French? After that it was agreed to use English, French, Arabic, and Amharic as official languages of the Charter.

Guinea and Mali are considerably underdeveloped. We are providing them some loans and assistance.

Sudan's people are good people. We regard the people of Sudan as our brothers. For a long time, they and we were one country. Later, we agreed to Sudan implementing self-determination in order to drive the British from Sudan. Britain always divided us into two countries for fear that we would come into contact with Central Africa. In the past the British most opposed our using African languages in broadcasts. We are now broadcasting in 27 African languages. The British are furious.

We support national liberation movements, which sometimes creates some trouble for us. A little while ago, after French colonies gained their independence, the French did not let some nationalists come to power but had some pro-French persons come to power. This caused misunderstanding between the governments of these newly independent countries and us. Such was the case of Cameroon. Later, their leaders visited us, which eliminated the misunderstanding.

We and these countries must make many visits to one another and promote mutual understanding.

Zhou: Your Excellency's resolute opposition to imperialism requires you to pay attention to your personal security.

Nasser: Yes. In 1954 they attempted to assassinate me. That was in Alexandria, at a rally of 250,000 persons. The assassin fired six shots at me, hitting persons to the left and right of me but not hitting me. At that moment there was panic in the crowd, but I continued speaking, and the assassin was arrested by us. Later, Britain tried to buy an Egyptian military officer with 160,000 pounds sterling and have him launch a coup d'état, but this officer handed over the money to me. The Saudi king once used two million pounds sterling to buy a Syrian military officer to assassinate me, but this officer too handed over the money to me.

Zhou: So long as you are engaged in a progressive undertaking, the enemy will not hesitate to resort to the basest means.

Nasser: Our country's people are a good people. They feel that their lives have changed for the better. Workers' livelihoods are guaranteed. The peasants have obtained land. Therefore, our society is secure. However, we still have to pay attention.

Ben Bella was not paying enough attention. I told him so several times. After his foreign minister was killed, he finally paid attention.

I really pay attention when I fly. When the airplane is on the ground, it is always guarded by military officers. All of the luggage must be carefully inspected, including my own, and the luggage never goes with me on the same flight but is placed in a separate airplane. Ben Bella had a problem when he left Tunisia this time. There was a foreign reporter on his plane. A Swedish reporter left her purse there and left. Perhaps there was no problem. There still has been no final determination. However, Ben Bella changed to another plane.

At any rate, the imperialists, colonialists, and reactionaries know that we Asian and African countries influence and promote one another, so they are always plotting against us. Saudi Arabia each year spends one million pounds sterling on assassinations.

[...]