

April 30, 1958

**Transcript of the Negotiations between the Soviet
Leadership and the Leadership of the UAR**

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Summary:

The two sides first discuss the aggression of the USA, England, and France towards the Arab nations over natural resources. The two sides then discuss bilateral relations and affairs in the Middle East.

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN THE SOVIET LEADERSHIP AND THE LEADERSHIP OF THE UAR

30 April, 1958

Secret

On 30 April, the President of the UAR, Gamal Abdel Nasser, and officials accompanying him were received on behalf of the CPSU Central Committee by representatives of the Soviet government N.S. Khrushchev, K.E. Voroshilov, A.I. Mikoyan, A. Mukhitdinov, and A.A. Gromyko.

From the Soviet side, the negotiations were also attended by the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Cde. V.A. Zorin, the USSR Ambassador to the UAR, Cde. E.D. Kiselev, and Head of the Middle Eastern Department of the USSR Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Cde. G.T. Zaitsev.

From the UAR side, the negotiations were attended by President Gamal Abdel Nasser, Vice-Presidents Abdel Latif el-Baghdadi and Akram al-Hawrani, Minister of Education Kamal ed-Din Hussein, Minister of Foreign Affairs Dr. Mahmoud Fawzi, State Minister for the Presidential Affairs of the Republic Ali Sabri, Minister of Municipalities and Provinces of the Syrian Region of the UAR Ahmed Abdel Kerim, Director of the General Information Service Colonel Salah Mohamed Nasr, and UAR Ambassador to the USSR Mohammad A. al-Kuni.

Below is the official record of the negotiations:

N.S. Khrushchev greets Nasser and those accompanying him and says that usually guests present their thoughts first, and that we are ready to hear you out.

Nasser, on behalf of the UAR delegation, thanks for the warm hospitality and says that they are very pleased to meet with the leaders of the Soviet government.

Although the delegates were very tired yesterday, he adds, nevertheless last night they exchanged their views on issues raised during their initial visits and are ready to continue conversations.

N.S. Khrushchev notes that the delegates were obviously not tired enough, since they found an opportunity to exchange views.

Nasser says that the delegates were indeed very tired from the road, but nevertheless they considered it necessary to exchange views on issues that had arisen during the previously held conversations. During the exchange of views, the members of the delegation, according to Nasser, were divided into two groups. Addressing Cde. Khrushchev, Nasser says: some people understood your words to mean that supposedly the only reason we are cooperating with the Soviet Union is so that we can negotiate some kind of assistance from the Americans. Others argue that you wanted to say that we are not pursuing any selfish interests in cooperating with the Soviet Union and that we desire to develop real friendship between the Soviet Union and the UAR.

In order to avoid different interpretations of this, we would like to return to this issue and clarify your point of view.

N.S. Khrushchev says that those who concluded that our statements meant that we consider the friendship between the USSR and the UAR sincere, are right in their conclusions, and those who made a different conclusion are wrong, and they must be condemned. If you were not Muslims, Comrade Khrushchev notes, then the one who misinterpreted our words regarding our friendship could have been punished in accordance with the Georgian custom. In Armenia and Georgia there is a customary punishment for whoever disturbs the order at the [dinner] table: a large horn of wine is poured for him, and he must drink all of this wine.

We said yesterday, Comrade Khrushchev continues, that the Soviet Union provides material assistance to underdeveloped countries, without any political, military or other conditions that infringe on the sovereignty and national dignity of these countries, while the British, French and American colonialists cannot even admit the idea that help may be provided without any conditions. They measure everything to their own yardstick and believe that if the Soviet Union establishes friendly relations with underdeveloped countries, then it allegedly pursues some selfish goals in these countries. They understand only the wolf law of the imperialists. They seek to prevent the establishment of our relations with other countries and are trying to make their

own proposals to these countries. We, of course, have nothing against Arabs getting things from the United States. You yourself are well aware of the difference between a true friendship and dictatorship. If they give you something you need, then you need to take it. We have a very good proverb: you are lucky if you get a tuft of hair from a mangy dog. Let this be at least a small reimbursement for what they took from you during their reign in your country.

The Soviet Union is pursuing selfless friendship with the Arabs. It is not interested in getting anything from these countries. The Soviet Union has everything it needs. We may only need coffee and citrus fruits, but we can do without them: we can replace coffee with tea, and citrus fruits with apples.

Nasser says: We don't even have coffee.

N.S. Khrushchev notes: But there is good coffee in Yemen.

Nasser says that the UAR has oranges, but in small quantities.

N.S. Khrushchev continues: If we take other countries, the US for example, they are pumping oil out of Arab countries; and England and France - oil and cotton. During our negotiations in London, Eden told us that if the Arab countries did not give England oil, it would go to war against them. We then told him, if you start a war in the Near and Middle East, then we will not be indifferent. There were moments in our negotiations when we told the British that, if the negotiations tomorrow went the way they were going today, we would stop them and return to Moscow. We told Eden, Macmillan and Lloyd that the Soviet Union is not afraid of any threats, nor is it afraid of war.

Everyone knows that when England, France and Israel were preparing to attack Egypt, we published statements with a warning. Everyone also knows about our statement after England, France and Israel attacked Egypt. And you know what the result was from these statements? England, France and Israel were forced to cease military operations against Egypt within 24 hours. These statements were an ultimatum. The governments of England, France and Israel realized that they cannot joke with us in this case.

You also know that we sent several letters to Eisenhower. This was an ultimate political move. The US tried to portray itself as the patron of the Arabs. We knew that this was hypocrisy, so we offered them to undertake a joint action against the British and French aggressors. Of course, we knew who we were writing to and that they would not fight for the Arabs, but we wanted to show the Arabs who their friends and enemies were.

We are only seeking cordial friendship, peaceful coexistence and a joint struggle against colonialism.

Further, moving on to issues of economic cooperation, Comrade N.S. Khrushchev notes that these issues should be resolved on a mutually beneficial basis. Buy from us and sell to us what you consider profitable and useful, says Cde. Khrushchev. We can trade with you on the following principle - we will buy as much as we sell. We cannot trade with you in dollars. We do not have dollars, and we get by just fine without them and successfully develop our economy. As for the colonial powers, they understand friendship with Arab countries in their own way. They want the Arabs to give them oil, cotton, to provide their territory for military bases, and if the Arabs do not want to do this, then they declare that they will fight against them. This is the fundamental difference between the policies of the colonial powers and the Soviet Union. Now you will have to decide who is a selfless friend and who is pretending to be a friend, but is ready to take the last skin off you.

This is precisely what I had in mind when yesterday we talked about the relations between the UAR and the USSR. Therefore, we need to condemn those who thought badly about our friendship with the Arabs.

Nasser thanks N.S. Khrushchev for the clarifications and says that the UAR welcomes the friendly policy of the Soviet Union towards the Arabs and the assistance that the Soviet Union provides to the Arab countries. According to Nasser, he repeatedly stated this in both the local and the foreign press, as well as in his interviews on the American television. But when the friendly relations between our countries started to develop, Western powers, says Nasser, tried to sow doubts among us on this issue.

England stated at the time that, if Egypt signed an agreement with the Soviet Union on the supply of weapons, it would stop supplying us with weapons. We then responded to the British that we were not afraid of any threats. They tried to intimidate us saying that Soviet experts would engage in communist propaganda, but we soon became convinced that the Soviet experts were not engaged in any propaganda, but were exclusively attending to their duties, and we were very pleased with them. Undoubtedly, at first we had a certain wariness, but we soon became convinced that this wariness was unfounded.

The Western powers wanted to ensure at all costs that Egypt remained under their influence, but we unequivocally rejected such a policy. We have repeatedly stated to representatives of the Western powers that the Soviet Union is providing us with selfless assistance, but they constantly continued to insist that the Soviet Union had some other goals.

Based on the experience of our friendly relations, we have become convinced of the sincerity of the Soviet government's policy towards the Arabs. We are very pleased to note that there was not a single incident that could complicate our relations in any way. During the period that Soviet weapons were supplied to [Egypt], I met with more than 100 foreign journalists. All of them asked me provocative questions, and each time I stated that the Soviet Union was engaged in an honest and sincere cooperation with us. This is our assessment of relations with the Soviet Union. These relationships were new for us compared to relationships with other countries. Now our people are convinced that this cooperation is sincere and selfless. In this you and I agree, and there is no need, Nasser jokingly declares, to punish either of us with a horn of wine.

Next, Nasser moves on to the discussion of the situation in the Middle East. He says the UAR's main goal is to achieve full independence and end the remnants of colonialism. This is the goal of all the peoples of the Arab East. Naturally, the imperialist states, which maintain quite a strong position in the Middle East, resist the implementation of this goal. They seek to keep Arab countries in a dependent position. Since the First World War, the Middle East has been a zone dominated by England, and after the Second World War, the United States takes on a dominant role. We, of course, do not want the dominance of one state over us to be replaced by another. We are being vigilant in order to prevent the rise of American influence.

You know very well that the Middle East occupies a very important strategic position. In addition, there are large oil reserves in the area. We fully agree with Mr. Khrushchev's statement regarding the goals pursued by the imperialist powers in the Middle East. They seek to strengthen their dominance and create military bases. The imperialists receive oil from this region at very cheap prices and even, one might say, for free, which is why the Arab countries are rebelling against unequitable agreements with the Western powers.

Western powers are trying to drag Arab countries into all sorts of aggressive pacts, but Syria and Egypt have resolutely opposed joining aggressive blocs. However, there are Arab countries such as Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya and Saudi Arabia that pursue policies that are beneficial to the colonialists. The battle against imperialism, the struggle for national independence and to overcome the consequences of colonialism are now unfolding in the Middle East. This is not an easy fight.

In January 1955, Nasser continues, I met Eden. He was the Minister of Foreign Affairs at the time. The purpose of Eden's visit to Cairo was to convince us that Egypt should join the Baghdad Pact. He then explained the necessity for us to join the pact by the need to repel a possible attack from the Soviet Union. Eden then outlined for us the Soviet Union's plans to seize various areas of the Middle East. We told him that we would defend ourselves, and if the USSR really attacked us, we would ask you for help, but if the Western powers attacked us, then we would ask the Soviet Union for help. Negotiations with Eden ended without result. After this, Eden went to Baghdad and signed the so-called Baghdad Pact there, and 5 days later Israel attacked Gaza.

The existence of Israel poses a constant threat to the Arab countries. Israel is abundantly supplied with weapons by the Western powers, and we know that Israel's goal is to create a state that would stretch from the Nile to the Euphrates. The Western powers constantly use Israel to organize all kinds of provocations against us, and these provocations have become more frequent after we refused to join the pacts.

A whole series of conspiracies were organized against Egypt and Syria. However, we continued to pursue our policy. In order to turn the neighboring Arab states, as well as the population of our countries, against us, the hostile propaganda campaign has intensified against Egypt and Syria. This propaganda campaign is currently carried out by 10 powerful radio stations located in Cyprus, France and some Western-leaning Arab countries, such as Iraq and Lebanon. These stations spend the whole day slandering our cooperation with the Soviet Union.

At present, the Middle East is one of the most important areas, and this is clear to the Soviet leaders. If the colonial powers had succeeded in overthrowing national governments, as they sought to do in Syria and Egypt, they would have dealt with all patriotic forces in the Middle East.

After the aggression of England, France and Israel failed, we made every effort to win over the Arab countries to our side. It must be said that at first we managed to win Jordan over and achieve the annulment of the Anglo-Jordanian agreement on the presence of British troops in Jordan. England then stopped financial assistance to Jordan, and Syria and Egypt, as well as Saudi Arabia, wanting to alleviate its situation, committed themselves to paying Jordan 14 million pounds sterling annually. However, the Americans managed to win over the King of Jordan to their side. He carried out a coup and, as a pretext for this coup, declared that there was a conspiracy against him, organized with the support of the Soviet Union. After this, Jordan came under the influence of the United States.

A large number of hostile elements is concentrated in Lebanon, whose government has joined the "Dulles-Eisenhower Doctrine". They are fighting against Syria and Egypt. These elements freely receive weapons and prepare all kinds of provocations and terrorist acts. A number of weapons arsenals created by these elements have been discovered in Syria.

The unification of Syria and Egypt into one state had a positive impact on the entire Arab East. During our arrival in Damascus from Lebanon, which has a population of 1,200,000, 700 thousand people arrived in Damascus to welcome us. This shows what a huge impact the unification of Syria and Egypt had on Lebanon, and suggests that the Lebanese people are dissatisfied with the policies currently being pursued by the Lebanese government.

Before the King of Saudi Arabia's trip to the United States, he followed us politically, but upon returning from the United States, he changed the course of his policy and moved away from us. The United States, with the help of its agents in the Middle East, sought to make Saud the leader of the Arab East, trying at all costs to isolate us from other Arab countries, but Saud himself ended up in a position of isolation.

We are aware, says Nasser, that the imperialist powers will create difficulties for us in every possible way and organize provocations. They will use Israel, Iraq and Jordan for these purposes, but we believe that our policy is based on Arab nationalism and the support of the people. Our main goal is to preserve independence, and we believe that our resistance against all kinds of blocs and the policy of positive neutrality that we pursue serves the interests of the world. We have no other way than to follow this policy, which is supported by the Arab people. But we are aware that we will have to have many battles with the colonialists, who see in our national liberation movement a threat to the oil monopolies.

Our cooperation with the Soviet Union is an important factor in repelling all kinds of imperialist attacks. This cooperation will provide us with the opportunity to win, it has broken the monopoly of the Western powers on the supply of weapons to the countries of the Middle East. The establishment of economic cooperation with the USSR allowed us to repel the economic blockade. This cooperation has helped and will help us thwart all kinds of conspiracies and provocations organized against us.

We are aware that our victory will not be easy, especially given the interest that the imperialist powers are showing in the Middle East. It is possible that in the future they may take military action against us.

In this regard, Nasser says, I want to emphasize that the situation in the Middle East is very tense. The people of Jordan are opposed to the existing government. A strong movement for the creation of a national government can be expected there at any moment. If such a government is created as a result of a popular movement, it will

ask us for help and it will be difficult for us to stay away. But then Iraq and Israel will come to the aid of the reaction. This situation can arise at any time. Western powers can take advantage of this situation and push Israel to cross the borders of Jordan. This will lead to a war with Israel, and the Western powers may support Israel by sending volunteers from other countries, and, in particular, France and the USA.

A no less difficult situation is emerging in Lebanon. Opposition parties could turn against the existing government and ask for our help, and the Western-leaning Lebanese government could seek help from the US government, which has the 6th Navy nearby.

This is our forecast for the future. Consequently, the United Arab Republic is in a position where it has to fight in a whole host of areas.

Yemen decided to unite with the UAR as a federation. England considers this a threat to its interests. It is already very concerned that we are visiting Moscow, and is strengthening its military presence in Aden and transferring its troops there. In addition to all this, England is bribing the tribes. Saudi Arabia and America are also involved in this matter. We know that recently they have spent about \$20 million for these purposes alone. Perhaps there will be an armed conflict with England. This collision may drag the UAR into a war.

Iraq is no less difficult. There, elections are scheduled for May 5, which could cause violent clashes as the government seeks to maintain control and the national forces seek to change the situation in the country, oust Nuri Said and try to create a national government. England is taking all measures to maintain the government it desires. We will also be forced to take a definite position on this issue. Consequently, the struggle continues in Iraq on two fronts. Attempts are being made to put an end to the government based on the imperialist powers. And on the other hand, there are forces seeking to prevent the formation of a government that could carry out national policies.

Sudan has a vacillating position. Western powers are trying to win it over to their side and strain relations with the United Arab Republic. We are now facing many problems in our relations with Sudan.

The situation in Libya is also very difficult. There are foreign troops there, and it cannot exist without financial assistance. England is threatening to stop its financial allocations Libya, and the Libyan government has now turned to us with a request for assistance. The USA is trying to oust England from there and seize its positions.

There are still French troops in Tunisia. The United States is playing a game with Bourguiba in order to oust France from there and take its position. Bourguiba opposes the policy of the United Arab Republic, and is against the policy of neutrality. He wants to create an army, but so far he has only 3,000 soldiers.

There are also occupation forces in Morocco. The King of Morocco has now been invited to Washington. He believes that the United Arab Republic is now fighting with the kings and is seeking protection in Washington.

The situation in Algeria is extremely difficult. There is a real colonial war going on there. The United Arab Republic provides all possible assistance to the national movement by supplying weapons, training officers, sending people, etc. France seeks to wipe out all life in Algeria from the face of the earth. Until now, we have supplied the liberation army with weapons through Tunisia, Morocco and Libya. Morocco currently does not allow weapons to be transported through its territory. Previously, the King of Morocco collaborated with us in terms of supplying weapons to the Algerian liberation army. But now, after the trip to America, he is categorically against the transport of weapons through Moroccan territory. Previously, Spain turned a blind eye to the supply of our weapons to the Algerian national liberation army. Now Spain is inviting us to reach an agreement on this issue with Morocco. As a result, arms supplies to Algeria are encountering great difficulties. We can only supply weapons through Libya for now. But these deliveries only work for the eastern part of Algeria, while supplies for the western part of Algeria encounter great difficulties.

Previously, the Algerian army received everything it needed from the population, apart from the weapons. Now the French are burning settlements, destroying crops, expelling people, and the population of Algeria is experiencing enormous difficulties. As a result, the Algerian army must not only supply itself, but also supply the

population with food. If the liberation movement in Algeria is successful, it will be impossible for the French to create a bloc in North Africa, and it will be very difficult for them to carry out their plans in the Sahara. However, if the national liberation movement in Algeria is suppressed, then the Western powers will be able to create a North African bloc, annex these countries to NATO and, of course, a new situation will arise in Sudan.

This is the situation in the Middle East in a nutshell. I have taken the liberty of going into this detail to show that a fierce battle is going on in this area.

N.S. Khrushchev thanks Nasser for the deep and informed analysis he presented on the situation in the Near and Middle East and North Africa.

Nasser says that if it is of interest, he could go into more detail about the situation in Africa. Throughout Africa there is now a growth in the national liberation movement, as, for example, in Cameroon, Somalia, Rhodesia and other countries. But the United Arab Republic's ability to maintain relationships with these areas is hampered because representatives of the colonial powers prohibit its people from traveling to these areas.

N.S. Khrushchev once again expresses his great gratitude for the very good and thorough analysis of the situation in the Middle East made by Nasser, and says that, although we are considered omniscient everywhere, we do not know much about the situation in this region. Your assessment of the situation and conclusions correspond to our general understanding. This makes us happy because we see that we have no differences in this assessment, and it brings us even closer. We believe that our policy should be clear to you. We are wholly on the side of those who are fighting for their independence, and we help achieve this independence in every way possible.

We highly appreciate the role of the United Arab Republic as an exponent of the will of the Arabs, and believe that the UAR enjoys well-deserved authority among peoples fighting for their independence. This means that the UAR expresses the desire of the people in this regard.

Our sympathies are with you, and we are proud of our friends who are waging an irreconcilable struggle for the national liberation of the peoples of Africa.

We fully share your point of view with respect to the difficulties that you are experiencing, in terms of ensuring the independence of both the UAR and Yemen. We agree that now your opponents will organize all kinds of provocations against the United Arab Republic. Now we need to make every effort to show restraint and not succumb to provocations. History works for you, not for the colonialists. Colonialism is collapsing under the blows of the national liberation movements. Now we need to gather strength and exercise caution. At the same time, it is necessary to resolutely fight against the colonial countries. We are on your side, although we do not have any material interest in this.

However, being patient does not mean giving in to pressure to any extent. This means not giving in to provocations, but choosing the moment to attack your opponent that is most beneficial to you, and not to the enemy. You need to show composure, but you are a young people, and youth is characterized by ardor. I ask you to understand this not as a lesson; we say this because we ourselves have to carry out policies in a very difficult environment.

Cde. Voroshilov notes that youth is a great advantage.

N.S. Khrushchev jokingly notes that in the words of Cde. Voroshilov one can feel the envy of the elderly, He suggests that all specific issues that may arise should be discussed later. At this time, says Cde. Khrushchev, I would like to once again express my gratitude for the overview that the President prepared. This overview will help us better understand the situation.

In conclusion, Cde. Khrushchev invites members of the delegation to lunch.

Nasser thanks Cde. N.S. Khrushchev and accepts his invitation.

The conversation was recorded by Cde. G.T. Zaitsev.

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