

April 20, 1968

Letter, L. Brezhnev to Gamal Abdel Nasser

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Summary:

Brezhnev states his satisfaction with the USSR's and India's shared fight against imperialism. He ensures that the USSR is committed to deterring American and Israeli interference throughout the Middle East.

Credits:

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Russian

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Translation - English

Dear Mr. President and dear friend!

We have carefully considered the considerations that you expressed in conversations with our Ambassador in connection with the development of the situation in the Middle East and also in the United Arab Republic. Noting with satisfaction the high degree of agreement in assessing the emerging situation and prospects, we have seriously and very carefully considered your wishes for the further deepening of that friendly, one might say fraternal, cooperation that has developed between our countries during the long struggle against the common enemy - the imperialism, for freedom and independence of peoples, and for social progress.

First of all, I would like to say that we are sympathetic to the course that the United Arab Republic is pursuing under your leadership at the current difficult and crucial moment. Further strengthening of the independence and defense capability of the country, its development along the progressive socio-economic path chosen by the people, the broadest mobilization of the masses, and above all, the working people, in order to organize defense and repulse the aggressors, as well as the forces of internal counter-revolution, are absolutely necessary prerequisites for the fastest liquidation of the consequences of the Israeli aggression and achieving the necessary political settlement in the Middle East.

We have [always] considered and still consider it our duty to contribute to the creation of such a situation in the Middle East whereas the American imperialists and their puppet, Israel, could not interfere with the independent and progressive development of the countries in this region. You are absolutely right that it will specifically be a political settlement in the Middle East that will be capable of creating the most favorable conditions for such a development, and that it will be guaranteed and will only last if the Arab states, and above all the United Arab Republic, are strong enough, have strong armed forces among other things, so that the ruling circles of Israel are forced to reckon with this and abandon their annexationist plans.

We are pleased to accept your high assessment of the results of our mutual friendly cooperation in rebuilding of the UAR army and strengthening the country's defense capability. If before the June imperialist aggression of 1967 Aswan was the main field of our cooperation, then in the present situation the center of gravity has undoubtedly shifted to the plane of cooperation in building combat-ready Armed Forces of the UAR. Of course, it takes time to achieve the necessary results, and this once again underlines the importance of appropriate political and diplomatic actions in order to further isolate the aggressors internationally, which we spoke about during the consultation with the UAR Foreign Minister in Moscow.

To His Excellency

Mr. Gamal Abdel Nasser

President and Prime Minister of the United Arab Republic

Cairo City

[Handwritten: "The letter signed by Cde. Brezhnev was forwarded to the addressee via the MFA (Cde. Gromyko) on 22-04-1968."]

[Signed: "Vakurov"]

As you know, we have recently taken political and military-political actions in support of the O.A.R., Syria and Jordan in order to curb the aggressive actions of Israel. Report of Marshal A.A. Grechko about his trip to the O.A.R. reinforced our conviction that the work [you have] already begun with the participation of Soviet military advisers to strengthen the armed forces of O.A.R., and the activities currently underway in the country under the leadership of the Arab Socialist Union, to draw the broadest masses of the people into the defense of the country and to curb the reactionaries, will bear fruit. Now, we have taken a new decision - to meet the wishes that you expressed, Mr. President, with respect to sending Soviet military pilots to the United Arab Republic. During the year of 1968 we will send a group of Soviet military pilots to the United Arab Republic in addition to those already working in the O.A.R. as military advisers.

We also take into account your wishes regarding additional deliveries of certain types of military equipment, and they will also be positively considered when determining the inventory of weapons for equipping new military units in the U.A.R.

We are grateful to you for allowing our warships to enter your ports when necessary. Also, as you know, this provides an additional benefit of keeping in check the aggressive tendencies of Israel.

We have considered your request for the use and filling the capacity of the Alexandria shipyard, including by Soviet orders. In order to work out specific joint proposals on this issue, we propose to send, with your consent, at a time convenient for you, a group of Soviet specialists in the field of shipbuilding, which will be headed by one of the leading officials of the State Committee for Foreign Economic Relations. Of course we proceed from the premise that our common efforts are aimed exclusively at ensuring peace in the Middle East. As you have repeatedly said about this, Mr. President, the Central Committee of the CPSU and the Soviet government, by agreeing to provide new Soviet military assistance to the U.A.R., proceeds from the provision agreed by both parties that this assistance will be used exclusively to strengthen the defense capability of the U.A.R. in order to protect its sovereign rights and interests, as well as the progressive gains of its people.

All these measures can have a sobering effect on the extremist circles of Israel and their imperialist patrons overseas. And this, in turn, will undoubtedly contribute to the achievement of an early political settlement in the Middle East, which, as we understand, is an urgent immediate task that reflects our mutual desires.

I want to emphasize that my comrades and I fully understand the efforts of the government of the United Arab Republic aimed at taking steps together with friendly Arab states to strengthen the unity of the Arab countries and peoples on the anti-imperialist platform and in the struggle to eliminate the consequences of Israeli aggression.

For its part, the Soviet Union intends to continue, both in the UN and outside of it, the struggle for a political settlement in the Middle East, keeping in mind the just and legitimate rights and interests of the Arab states and peoples, for the sake of a speedy implementation of the aforementioned Security Council resolution, including, above all, the withdrawal of Israeli troops to the line that existed prior to 5 June, 1967.

Marshal A.A. Grechko and Ambassador S.A. Vinogradov told us about your intention to visit the Soviet Union in May or June of this year and to personally exchange views on issues of mutual interest. We will be very glad to welcome you in the Soviet Union and I believe that such a meeting of ours will undoubtedly be useful.

My comrades and I send you and your associates greetings and best wishes for success.

Sincerely,

L. Brezhnev

Moscow, 20 April, 1968