

July 6, 1968

Minutes of the Discussions between Cdes. L.I. Brezhnev, A.N. Kosygin, N.V. Podgorny and UAR President Nasser, 6 July 1968

Citation:

"Minutes of the Discussions between Cdes. L.I. Brezhnev, A.N. Kosygin, N.V. Podgorny and UAR President Nasser, 6 July 1968", July 6, 1968, Wilson Center Digital Archive, RGANI, f. 80, op. 1, d. 602, ll. 113-143. Contributed by Sergey Radchenko and translated by Angela Greenfield. <https://digitalarchive.umd.edu/document/300530>

Summary:

Brezhnev and Nasser discuss the relationship between their two governments and brainstorm ways to sustain Soviet-Egyptian cooperation. Special attention is given to combating Western imperialism and increasing Soviet military aid to Egypt.

Credits:

This document was made possible with support from Blavatnik Family Foundation

Original Language:

Russian

Contents:

Translation - English

Secret Copy № 2

MINUTES

OF THE DISCUSSIONS BETWEEN CDES. L. I. BREZHNEV, A. N. KOSYGIN, N. V. PODGORNYY AND UAR PRESIDENT NASSER

6 July 1968

Nasser Dear friends, first I would like to thank you again for the Soviet Union acting on our side with all determination during those difficult days which we experienced, and for that great aid which was given us in various areas.

We spoke yesterday of the need to strengthen the friendly relations between our countries. I would like to clarify this question so that you do not perceive our position with respect to the Soviet Union as a temporary, transient phenomenon. The Soviet Union has its interests and we pursue our own interests. We have repeatedly asked you to give us aid in satisfying our interests so that we can hold out in battle, and defend our liberty and our socialist choice. We, I and my colleagues in the leadership, are convinced that the Soviet Union is our natural and only friend and ally. That is why we should define our relations on all questions and discuss the prospects for the development of our relations in the future absolutely clearly. We don't want the matter to seem such that we are coming to you in difficult days for us and asking [you] to give us aid in one question or another. We are striving for a comprehensive strengthening of the ties of friendship with the Soviet Union in all areas. We have made a socialist choice, the path of the development of socialism. We rejected Communism as an unacceptable path in our conditions. We think that there is a definite difference between socialism and Communism, which is mainly with regard to religion. You know that religious fanaticism occurs in our country. One could say, attacks on Communists are a direct consequence of religious fanaticism. As I have said, we have chosen the path of the development of socialism, the path of handing over all the means of production to the control and ownership of the people. This and the other socialist principles have found their reflection in the Charter of National Actions. Naturally, such a position does not suit the Americans. Even when offering us aid and loans they have insisted that these loans not be used in the socialist, state sector. That is why I again call for the establishment and strengthening of such ties which exist between us and the Soviet Union. This is the only path which lies before us. How to accomplish this in practice, to achieve an even greater strengthening of our relations, this is also the main question which we should discuss. It is not a matter of us coming to you to ask for weapons, tanks, to give us moral and political support, and to [give] support in the Security Council. Why do you give us such significant aid? Because we take the progressive positions of fighting imperialism and vigorously support the national liberation movement. I think that the time has come when we should make our relations more friendly, open, and frank.

It can be said that we are pursuing a policy of non-alignment. But we have vigorously taken your side and therefore we should also fall into the line of struggle together with you. As I have said, we are accomplishing socialist reforms in our country; in other words we are at the stage of the development of socialism.

Therefore there is no way the Western countries can be on our side. Essentially, we have been entered in the lists of enemies of the West since 1955, and since this same year we are considered your friends. This is a natural course and development of history. The question of our relations with the Soviet Union is the most important and main question of our conversations. I think that we should have a clear idea of the prospects for their development in the future, bearing in mind that all the remaining questions, including the question of the liquidation of the consequences of the Israel aggression, will be solved in the light of Soviet-Egyptian relations.

L. I. Brezhnev Mister President, does anything trouble or worry you in our relations?

Nasser No, but we want there to be no restraint in our relations. We want our relations to be built on the basis of that fact that we are travelling the same path as the Soviet Union. I again repeat that there is nothing that worries us in our relations. But I and my colleagues constantly discuss and think how our relations will develop in the future. We do not want to act in such a role that we are constantly asking you for something. You give considerable economic and other aid to many countries. Possibly some countries did not merit such aid and have turned out not to be faithful to the

idea of friendship with the Soviet Union. We understand that such a position of some countries might exert an unfavorable psychological effect. It is necessary to talk about this with complete frankness. As concerns us, we would like for our relations with you to be constructed on the same foundations as they are constructed with any socialist country. I do not think that at this stage our relations are at such a level.

At this point in our relations an element of a certain restraint and certain sensitive aspects exist.

N. V. Podgorny How do you, Mister President, picture what needs to be done for closer relations to be established which do not arouse any doubts?

Nasser Let's take your relations with the GDR, for example; they cannot be compared with those relations which exist with us. Or the relations of the Soviet Union with Hungary. They are considerably stronger and closer than relations with us. All these countries are in one socialist commonwealth. You consider us a simply friendly country. I think that our tasks are to move these relations to a higher level, using the existing opportunities for this. When Cde. Podgorny was in Cairo I told him of our readiness to conclude a mutual defense agreement with the Soviet Union. Cde. Podgorny replied that it would be advisable to continue to pursue a policy of non-alignment. However, in reality, does a policy of non-alignment exist in practical implementation? The Americans take a hostile position with regard to us; they are in solidarity with the other Western countries in this. Such a state of affairs will exist until we travel the path of progress, the path of the development of socialism, and giving aid to the national liberation movement. Therefore a policy of non-alignment is only a slogan, a front. For example, what kind of policy of non-alignment can there be in Africa, when all the progressive countries should fight against the attempts of imperialism to impose their dominance on the African countries [?]

We think that in defining our relations we should proceed from the position that the UAR is completely on your side. In almost every conversation with the Soviet Ambassador in Cairo I return to that question of how will our relations be constructed in the future. I am firmly convinced that they should not have a temporary or transitional nature. I think that they should constantly develop and strengthen.

L. I. Brezhnev We will speak with you as with a friend, as with a brother, possibly very briefly, but with a full feeling of responsibility, briefly, but succinctly. We want to say to you that our policy of friendship with the UAR and with the other Arab countries is not from considerations of momentary advantage, and does not depend on whether you are pursuing a policy of non-alignment at the present time, or any other policy. It also does not depend on those individual caprices which sometimes take place, for example, in Syria or Algeria. I again repeat that, if we are talking about your people, about you personally, and about the other Arab peoples, then our policy is not in any degree from considerations of momentary advantage, and we will explain why. You know that our policy is determined by the teachings of our leader Vladimir Il'ich Lenin. For already more than 50 years our Party has acted as the ruling party, and all this time the leaders of the Party and state have been travelling this path with the people. Our policy ensues from the implementation of the Leninist teaching about the development of socialism and Communism in our country. This is our internal matter; as concerns our foreign policy with respect to other peoples and countries, both in the Program of our Party as well as in the decisions of Party congresses, in particular the recent 23rd Party Congress, we invariably set the same policy, the policy of fighting imperialism, fighting for peace, all-round support of national liberation movements, the independence and sovereignty of each country, and firstly we give support to those peoples and parties which are travelling the path of progress and the development of socialism. This is what determines our relationship toward your country. If one of us would seek to change this path this would mean that we were changing the entire principled policy of our Party and state. In this event he would have to be answerable to the entire Party and country. I stress again that our attitude toward you was determined long before the Israeli aggression. We view the UAR and the entire Arab world very broadly. We understand that the Middle East is a very important region in which a large population lives and which has been subjected to exploitation and oppression from ancient times. The wealth of the Arab peoples has been plundered by the imperialists. Poverty and illiteracy and a whole series of other factors peculiar to imperialist society dominate in these countries. You have managed

in your country to accomplish a revolution and get a progressive leadership to come to power. You have also managed to inspire the masses of the people in support of your progressive policy. We not only rejoiced at this, we knew and assumed that this was the beginning of a great economic political, ideological, and diplomatic struggle. We took this into consideration, inasmuch as [we] ourselves experienced [this] and had been in an analogous situation. When the Revolution occurred in Russia and all the hostile forces opposed us, 14 countries sent their forces to the north, south, and east of Russia to strangle Soviet power. They tried to strangle [us] economically and with famine, and the United States did not recognize us for about 15 years.

Thus we realize that any country which embarks on the path of progress should be ready to wage a serious struggle against imperialism, and that we should give such a country any aid in accordance with the provisions of the Program of our Party. World politics are quite complex. A group of so-called non-aligned countries has appeared. Frankly speaking, we would like these countries to be aligned. But we regard the specific conditions of these countries with complete understanding, thinking that perhaps conditions are still not ripe to them to move to positions of alignment. However, inasmuch as these countries are pursuing an anti-imperialist policy, we consider that they are playing a positive role in the international arena. Without doubt, in each group of the non-aligned countries there are individual shadings and certain peculiarities. Some of them are travelling a bolder path and taking more decisive measures in terms of a socioeconomic restructuring of their countries. On the other hand, other countries exist which are not seeking to aggravate their relations with imperialism. All this does not alienate us from these countries, but nevertheless forces [us] to pay attention [to them]. There were, for example, also such moments in your activity. Frankly speaking, we as leaders understood them better than our people and the Party. For example, I have in mind the period when communists were put in prison in the UAR. We understood what was the matter. As Communists, we did not reconcile ourselves to this but, as I have already said, we understood this process better than the Party and the people. At one time we spoke with you about this question in a friendly manner. I cited this as an example demonstrating that in the activity of individual leaders there have been some moments which were not in accord with our views.

But in these conditions we have put our friendship and the need for its preservation above these temporary moments. It is during this very period of which I have been speaking that the most important economic agreements were concluded, in particular about the construction of the Aswan High Dam, and an exchange of visits occurred at all levels. Thus, we did not abandon our friendship with the Arab peoples and were confident that they would understand and be convinced that the Soviet Union is their real friend, but its policy with respect to them is not out of considerations of temporary advantage. The head of the Soviet government, the head of the Soviet state, and the CPSU CC General Secretary are present at our discussions right now, and in our name I again want to assure you that our friendship is not something temporary, it is being built for all time but, as they say, friendship and love demand reciprocity. The fact that you raised this question to us yourself demonstrates that you are striving for such reciprocity, but as is well known reciprocity is not obtained by request. We came to give you aid at those critical minutes during that tragedy which occurred last year. We had no hesitation in this regard, there were no debates. We did everything that was in our power to save the situation. We understood that the matter was not a simple military clash between the armies of Israel and the Arab countries, but an occupation of territories. This aggression was a great risky venture [*aventyura*] directed against all the Arab peoples, against the progressive [Middle] East [*Vostok*]. After Vietnam this is the second clash between imperialism and the progressive East.

Speaking to you as a brother, as a man, you have given us much work at this time. We have all been working night and day. Not just the MFA, but we ourselves have written cables and summoned an ambassador to the telephone. We roused President Johnson [out of bed] at 2 a.m. One day we gathered the leaders of all the socialist countries in Moscow by telephone and decided to break diplomatic relations with Israel. All the socialist countries except Romania, which also took part in the Conference, broke diplomatic relations with Israel. Romania took a bad position, essentially holding to a pro-Israeli course. We wouldn't want to raise the question of

our material expenditures right now, but the fact remains that we sent you 575 heavy[-lift] aircraft with weapons.

A. N. Kosygin Essentially an airlift was organized.

L. I. Brezhnev If we had a shadow of a doubt or disrespect for you the Soviet government would never have acted that way. This was a direct demonstration to imperialism, not to the Jews, as one might think, but to all world imperialism. In spite of any differences which existed among the Arab leaders, no one could have questioned the fact that the main goal of the Israeli aggression was undermining the progressive forces of the Arab countries, throwing them back 100 or possibly more years, and restoring colonialism in this region. We don't want to indulge in an analysis of the reasons for the Arabs' defeat in the war right now. We should draw the appropriate conclusions from one fact. If the Israelis approached almost to Cairo without having any organized resistance before them and did not go further, then this still meant something. This was the direct result of the political actions of the Soviet Union and the socialist countries, the result of our struggle with the largest imperialist predators, the Americans and the British. This is what stopped Israel and prevented the seizure of Cairo and Alexandria. Our side essentially presented an ultimatum to imperialism. This ultimatum could have also meant the possibility of the start of events in Europe.

At the same time I want to stress that if we had foreseen the development of events in the Middle East in that period, if they had not been a surprise to us, then the course of events might have been different. All these events essentially happened on one day, and we found out about them from the press.

Thus, we have sufficient confirmation of our friendship. It would be wrong to imagine that you are going through a crisis right now and this explains the strengthening of our relations. First of all, we need to apply much more effort with the goal of eliminating the consequences of the Israeli aggression, and this alone opens up broad prospects for us to develop and strengthen our relations. I would like to direct your attention to the fact that the ideological development of the people has great importance in these terms. All the means of propaganda - the press, radio, and television - should be aimed at accomplishing this goal, the goal of the ideological development of the working class, the intellectuals, youth, etc.

There can be no doubt of our friendship. Both in our public statements as well as in the decisions of our Party congresses it is stated absolutely clearly that we hold to one course, the course of friendship with and the support of progressive regimes. When we do this of course we count on reciprocity from your side. You mentioned in particular the differences between Communism and socialism, and religion. But this should not trouble you. The time will come, the level of culture of peoples is rising, and there will be an end to religious fanaticism. We also have a large quantity of believers in our country. We think that this is not a problem.

A. N. Kosygin We have many representatives of the clergy

L. I. Brezhnev Our Patriarch, for example, has been awarded two orders.

A. N. Kosygin When I was in Leningrad during the Great Patriotic War I was convinced that the clergy was quite patriotic.

L. I. Brezhnev A second question to which we attach great importance and which we think will raise the level of our relations is the achievement of unity on the most important questions of principle. I do not have in mind such questions, for example, as some differences which exist with the Syrians. I mean such questions of principle as the attitude toward American imperialism as a world policeman, and others. It seems to us that in the last year we have developed good relations and we act as a united front in the United Nations, and regularly exchange confidential information.

And, finally, trade and economic and technical cooperation have great importance in the matter of developing and strengthening our relations. We are of the opinion that you have not yet used all the opportunities for their development. We understand that you are in a difficult situation and therefore we seek to give aid free of cost or aid calculated for long periods, long-term credits, etc. We understand that possibly this weighs you down morally, but we see your sincere desire for our relations to be built on an ever-stronger mutually advantageous foundation.

Frankly speaking, we understand your striving to formalize our relations in some form

of an agreement. We will probably come to this. But we should look and correctly assess the nature of the current international situation and the alignment of forces. If we conclude a treaty then we would aggravate the situation in the Middle East and complicate your situation. On the other hand, this treaty would not introduce anything new in the nature of our relations. The imperialists know practically every detail of our relations, possibly to each aircraft and tank which we have delivered to you. It is hard to hide anything in this world.

The lack of a treaty does not give the imperialists the right to speak about the existence of any military bloc, and in the event a conflict arises our aid, provided there is a treaty, would be viewed differently and might even lead to war. Our peoples would not gain anything from this. We should not be ashamed of openly speaking of our friendship [or] about the all-round cooperation between us. Let all the world know that the Soviet Union stands behind the Arabs with all its might morally, politically, and in other respects.

We think that many opportunities exist for a further expansion of our relations. We should not limit ourselves to an exchange of visits by just military or economic delegations. Let representatives of scientists, young people, workers, and intellectuals, come to us. We will give them every possible attention and afford [them] the opportunity to familiarize themselves with the life of our people and with our achievements. This practice needs to be turned into a constantly operating factor in our relations so that ever more agitators and propagandists in favor of friendship with the Soviet Union appear among the Arab people. Why not, let's say, think about producing a joint Soviet-Egyptian film. It would be possible to expand the translation and distribution of Arabic and Soviet literature in our countries, respectively. We could expand the contingent of students studying in Soviet higher educational institutions, bearing in mind that personnel are one of the most important sectors of work in any country.

A. N. Kosygin We could increase the number of students we send to the UAR.

L. I. Brezhnev Let the right to study in the Soviet Union become a privilege of the less well-to-do classes, a privilege of children, workers, peasants, and the working intellectuals. These people will return to you as real capital. Militarily our Ministry of Defense has great abilities for training personnel for the Egyptian army. We should take into consideration that even when there is a settlement of the Mideast conflict the need for an army will remain. This is not the last clash with imperialism, there might also be clashes on a larger scale. The development of an army is a big matter requiring great expenses. For our part we spend about 25% of our national income for the army.

I think that we will charge our comrades, the Ministry of Culture, the MFA, and other ministries with drawing up a detailed plan to accomplish those measures of which I have been speaking.

It is also necessary to recognize that neither you nor we have exhausted all the opportunities to realize economic and technical cooperation. For our part we have applied the maximum effort to study these opportunities and to determine the directions in which our cooperation ought to be developed in the future in order for our aid to be more effective.

In a few words we have formulated our positions with respect to the development of friendship with the United Arab Republic. We would like for you to forever dispel all doubts of the prospects for their development. In the process it is necessary to display constant vigilance and with joint efforts put an end to all attempts by the imperialists, first of all the US, directed both against the Arabs as well as against the Soviet Union.

Taking advantage of the fact that we are talking with you face to face we would like to say that our policy, our firm conviction is that it is necessary to overcome all that bitterness which the barbarity and lawlessness committed against the Arab world has left deep in the people, and apply the maximum effort to achieve a political solution of the Middle East crisis. We understand all the nuances of your bitterness and your resentments very well. We cannot share [*razdelyat'*] them. But we are confident that justice is on the side of the Arabs, and that in the final account the truth will triumph. You understand that to agree with the idea that what was taken away by force should

be returned by force would mean a resumption of the war. There is no doubt that if Israel is trying to consolidate the situation created after the June 1967 aggression permanently, this might change the situation. Nevertheless, we should agree, or rather come to an agreement so that in spite of all the complexity of the problem of a political settlement, it is necessary to set ourselves the task of mobilizing all the opportunities to achieve a settlement in peaceful ways. When this is done it is necessary to take into consideration that world public opinion has condemned Israel as the aggressor. The number of different leaders and countries in the world increasingly condemn the Israeli aggression and are thus coming on the side of the Arabs. Israel has exposed itself to the entire world as an inveterate aggressor, as a puppet of imperialism. On the other hand, the progressive regimes in the Arab countries have been preserved. Unfortunately, complete unity between Syria, Iraq, Jordan, Algeria, and others has not been achieved on a number of questions, but even in these circumstances, with the existence of all these differences in the Arab people, the idea of Arab unity is increasingly strengthening.

Such Arab leaders as Atassi, Boumediene, and others might be capricious, but against the background of the Israeli aggression the Arab peoples see their only power in strengthening unity. This is also confirmed by what you told us yesterday about the powerful demonstrations in Tunisia. Accordingly, strong aspirations for unity have potentially been formed in the working class and in the workers of the Arab countries which need to be used in every possible way. As they say, it is necessary to shed much sweat and spend much effort in order to plow one hectare of land. You need to show more patience to achieve a complete understanding of all the problems.

A factor of no little importance which the American imperialists cannot fail to take into consideration is the failure of the war in Vietnam. A sort of unbroken chain has been created: the imperialists know that the Vietnamese are fighting with Soviet weapons, and that they enjoy our moral and political support. The imperialists also know that the Arabs in the Middle East are fighting with Soviet weapons, and that they enjoy our complete support. The 22 November 1967 Security Council resolution, although not a completely good one, was adopted under the pressure of the Soviet Union, the socialist, and other countries. Its adoption was the result of our power and might. The Americans wanted to subjugate the Arab countries, but were forced to agree with the resolution calling for the withdrawal of the Israeli troops. The resolution is not being implemented at the present time because Israel thinks that it is to their advantage to play for time and engage in political bargaining. A maximum of caution needs to be displayed in this bargaining. As they say, disputes are different, some end in a verbal squabble, others in a stabbing. Undoubtedly, the army is a quite important factor in the matter of achieving a settlement of the Middle East crisis. Both you and our comrades know how things are in the Egyptian army. You have done colossal work in increasing its combat capability. This is very gratifying. You have a hundred times more to do and not only from the point of view of supplying the army with equipment, although this also has great importance. It is necessary to keep in mind that the factor of fear and panic created in the June 1967 days was still preserved in the army. This factor needs to be overcome, and much time will be required for this.

I think that we have no need to discuss in detail questions which are connected with the supply of weapons; our ministers of defense and their representatives can meet and come to agreement about everything that might arise in this respect.

We highly value that attention which you are devoting to the senior officials of the army, promoting young capable officers to senior posts. We ask you not to be offended, but it is a fact that the top brass of the army was demoralized, which was devastatingly reflected in the morale of the soldiers and officers. As I was saying, the development of an army is a complex matter, and that is why we have set a goal of turning the Egyptian armed forces into a powerful defensive army capable of creating such a blocking force through which not a single Jew could cross. While it is still not ready to conduct large and complex maneuvers the main thing is to create a blocking force for the Israeli army.

We will continue to seek ways for a peaceful settlement of the Middle East crisis and in connection with this we intend to exert certain pressure on the United States of

America. We are also using our friends in the socialist camp in this direction, prompting them to seek appropriate methods to exert pressure on the Americans. We will give instructions to our embassies in Africa and other countries so that they pursue work among the leaders of these countries with the goal of achieving a political settlement of the problem. We do not want to conceal that we have certain levers of pressure on the United States. The Americans understand that we have great strength and avoid pursuing matters to [the point] of the possibility of an outbreak of war with us. As concerns this stage, then it is necessary to take into consideration that an election campaign is going on in the US at the present time. As is well known American Jews exert great pressure on the political life in the country. Senator Kennedy also wanted to play on this, but you know how that ended. We have exchanged opinions, but have not made a final decision about what specific forms we should adopt to pressure the United States. The Americans are interested in holding negotiations with us on various questions. We are continually using these negotiations in favor of Vietnam and the Arab countries.

When Minister of Foreign Affairs Riad came to us the last time I had instructions to talk with him. I asked Riad to pass to you in our name so that you not make mistakes and not seek at this stage a solution of the problem of the elimination of the consequences of the Israeli aggression by military means. We stressed that we would do everything in our power to turn the Egyptian army into a powerful defensive, and then an offensive, army. We advised you to strengthen the domestic front in the country and not yield to the pressure of reactionary forces trying to achieve a rapprochement with the US. One could fall into a dangerous trap here. Yesterday you named us timeframes during which you were ready to still wait for a solution of the problem of a settlement of the Middle East crisis. You said that you were ready to wait a year. But can one guess what will happen in a year?; events develop so rapidly that no one knows what there will be in a year.

You said that there should be such relations between us like, for example, exist between us and Hungary. But, take Yugoslavia, which is a socialist country; it takes part in the work of Comecon as an observer, with which we exchange friendly visits, etc. We also have no mutual defense treaty with Yugoslavia. But this does not prevent us from trading with them, holding consultations, or exchanging information. As you know, Tito is often in Moscow. In presenting these considerations to you I am striving for you to understand that we are your true friends, that our policy is not one of temporary advantage.

Perhaps my comrades wanted to add something.

N. V. Podgornyy I would like to say a few words in elaboration of what Cde. Brezhnev said. When I was in Cairo you, Mister President, frankly presented your views on questions of the further development of relations with the Soviet Union and the further pursuit of the UAR policy of non-alignment. For our part, we also frankly presented our own views on these questions. It seems to me that we then came to a common opinion that at this stage, as Cde. Brezhnev said, it would be inadvisable to formalize our relations in any contractual framework like there exists between the socialist countries. Our relations are actually constructed on these very foundations of which you have spoken.

As concerns our cooperation in the military sphere, as Cde. Brezhnev said, we are applying every effort and will give all possibly aid so that a powerful and reliable army is created in the UAR. One could say that you have achieved great successes in this direction over the past period. This can be judged from that information which we have received from you, as well as from that information which we have from our advisers. Evidently not everything has yet been done, but much has been done. You said correctly that your army is still a defensive army, but you have sufficient forces so that Israel does not try and provoke you or to test your might. We agree with you that Israel might repeat the aggression in the area of Jordan.

As I have already said, we agree that it is necessary to think about a second stage of the development of the army, about turning it into an offensive [army]. Obviously, paramount importance will be given to this question by the UAR leadership and the President himself. We for our part will give you all possible aid in this area. Right now it is hard to determine when we can create such an army. However, it is absolutely obvious that at this stage our main task is to seek a way for a peaceful political

settlement of the Middle East crisis. I think that you also agree that we do not yet have all the resources and abilities to solve the problem by peaceful means.

L. I. Brezhnev During the exchange of opinions with your comrades we had an idea which we wanted to offer by way of discussion. Possibly along with strengthening the army and increasing its combat capability it would be advisable to create a citizen militia in the rear, in factories, arming it with small arms, rifles, automatic weapons, and machine guns. In this event you would have a regular army and a citizen militia which might number a million men. On the one hand, this force would make a formidable impression on Israel and, on the other, be your reliable support. Of course, when this is done it is necessary to carefully weigh to exactly whom the weapons are to be given. As I stressed, I raised this idea in the first discussions, and probably it is better for you to think about it and decide how to put it into effect.

Nasser We just came to the same conclusion, but we do not have a sufficient quantity of weapons

L. I. Brezhnev A solution can be found to this question.

A. N. Kosygin If you do not object I would like to add a few words. As we understood you, you are for a political settlement. I would like to stress that as long as your army is insufficiently armed and insufficiently trained to conduct combat operations it might be to the advantage of the Americans and the Israelis to push you and provoke [you] to begin combat operations. It is not excluded that the US and Israel are building their plans in the expectation of this. There is also a second side in this question. We understand that your people are demanding you conduct active operations with the object of liberating the occupied territories. We understand that your people might think that their leaders and you in particular are pursuing insufficiently offensive tactics, which causes certain feelings in you. But we should carefully weigh all the reasons. The first, military, path would be recklessness. To agree with it would all the same mean to take on the design of a complex machine, without knowing its design data. The only path which we can choose should be a sure thing. Therefore we think that you should turn to your people with such words that they would understand that the Soviet Union, which is your reliable friend, stands behind you. Cde. Brezhnev spoke in detail about those measures which could undertake in terms of strengthening it [Translator's note: SIC, no doubt meaning the army], that our policy is not one of temporary advantage. Our relations are permanent, steadfast, and have achieved such a level when it is hard to imagine that they could be disrupted. You should have a program of capturing and orienting the thoughts of the people in the direction you need. You should boldly and firmly pursue the idea that the Soviet Union is giving you all possible aid in strengthening the army, that your army is constantly increasing its strength. You should create a second army, I mean a citizen militia, which would include all the leading progressive representatives of your people. They should be armed, but under your complete control, since hostile reactionary elements will do everything to use it in their interests. This militia should be armed not only with combat weapons, but also with appropriate ideas. These ideas are mainly that the United Arab Republic is travelling the path of solidifying cooperation with the Soviet Union. Loyal and reliable people should be placed at the head of this militia who believe in the policy of strengthening friendship with the socialist countries. When the Jews find out about the creation of such a militia which, as Cde. Brezhnev said, might number up to one million men, the Jews will then tremble. Of course, you should not orient those people who join the militia that already tomorrow they will already be sent to the front. This militia should be used both against domestic as well as foreign enemies.

I think that your visit to the Soviet Union and the report about the results of our conversations in Moscow and, in particular, the communique which we have drafted, will help orient the people and direct their efforts to develop a strong Egypt and create a powerful military and economic potential. I think that those ideas of which we have been speaking and which will find their reflection in the communique will to some degree distract the minds of those people who favor a military solution to the problem of eliminating the consequences of the Israeli aggression.

Permit [me] to say a few words about our military matters. We think that instead of part of the IL-28 aircraft promised you we will give [you] the more modern MIG-21's. We will also give [you] pod guns for all the MIG-21s, which have not had them before

now. We also propose to give you new weapons which we have given no one. I mean a manual arrow [*ruchnaya strela* – SIC], which shoots down aircraft flying at low altitude. We will also give you small rockets to fight tanks.

Nasser Do you mean the Chayka rockets which we have?

L. I. Brezhnev No, we mean the small rockets which are a small apparatus that is served by a group of five men. They are embedded in the ground and hit a target at a distance of two kilometers. We have not given anyone such a type of weapon.

A. N. Kosygin The rockets of the Grad type which we propose to give to you have proven themselves very well in Vietnam. These rockets are mounted on GAZ-69 trucks, but can be dismantled and transported on [soldiers'] shoulders. These rockets can be called acting like mortars. The Americans also like these rockets very much.

Nasser I read about this in Newsweek.

L. I. Brezhnev These rockets have proven themselves very well in guerilla warfare conditions. I think that we can send part of these rockets to the Palestinian guerillas through you. But when this is done it is necessary that they not fall into enemy [hands].

A. N. Kosygin Do you imagine that these rockets are essentially manually-[operated] guns [*pushki*] which strike at a 15-18 km [range]?

Nasser Saigon was shelled with these rockets?

L. I. Brezhnev Yes.

A. N. Kosygin Besides this, we propose supplying you with armored personnel carriers, command vehicles, etc. As concerns tactical operations against Israel then I think that the representatives of our general staffs should foresee some possible workarounds so as not to hit the Israelis right in the forehead like, for example, we did in the operation on the Perekop Peninsula during the Civil War.

In conclusion, I would like to say that we are pleased with the development of our relations. We, too, do not feel any concern for you. We are convinced that your cause is just and that it will prevail.

Nasser Thank you, dear friends and brothers, for the views which you have expressed just now. I would like to dwell on some questions which will not take much time.

First of all, when I spoke of the development of relations between our countries I did not mean that we entertained any doubts with respect to their development in the future. However, one thought constantly comes into the head - why we are demanding that the Soviet Union give us more and more aid; on what grounds are we doing this? I have repeatedly said and I ask you to talk about the requests to you. This is what I had in mind by mutuality. Our fate is tied to the Soviet Union; you are a great power, we are a small country, but I want you to form the firm conviction that we come to you with our requests not only in difficult times for us. Our friendship is eternal.

L. I. Brezhnev We would never entertain such a thought.

Nasser You know those feelings which the Egyptian people feel toward the Soviet Union. When the Israeli aggression occurred, we saw who stood on our side and who was against [us]. When Cde. Podgorny came to Cairo I asked for 40 MIG-21 aircraft. These aircraft arrived in 48 hours. Is this not confirmation of your friendship? Neither my closest colleagues, Anwar Sadat and the other leaders, nor all the people will ever forget this. The command of the army also knows about this. Thus, we feel no doubt with regard to your friendship, [but] we fear that possibly you doubt us. I have said before and I repeat right now that the close relations of friendship which tied us before the aggression strengthened during the aggression, and they will strengthen even further in the future. We are travelling along such a path along which there is no return. We are forever connected to you on this path. As concerns the question of concluding an agreement, I did not mean an immediate conclusion of any agreement on defense. I understand this would make an unfavorable impression in international terms, and possibly a policy of non-alignment will be more useful. Bourguiba also pursues a policy of non-alignment, but he acts on the side of the Americans and possibly every day brings down [Translator's note: the next four pages are unreadable from this point]... in fact there is actually no free press.

A. N. Kosygin Are Lebanese newspapers circulated in the UAR?

Nasser No, we have prohibited the circulation of Lebanese newspapers in the UAR, but they have a wide circulation in Iraq, Saudi Arabia, and other Arab countries. However, there are newspapers which are specially created and financed with the purpose of conducting propaganda directed against the Soviet Union. Countless money is spent on anti-Soviet propaganda in the Arab world. For example, reactionary forces widely propagandize the idea that the Soviet Union is putting serious pressure on me to appoint Ali Sabri as General Secretary of the Arab Socialist Union. Ali Sabri actually is a socialist, a man of progressive convictions. We have many people, many reactionary elements who believe in these assertions. Even when not long ago I met with the leaders of student organizations they asked me this question. As I have already said, the embassies of the Western countries in Cairo are doing much work in this direction. For our part, in my public statements and during my meetings with representatives of the military command, students, etc. I constantly say and stress that our friendship with the Soviet Union is [one or two words illegible] on foundations of sincerity and unselfishness. However, conservative [the following page is illegible] had to go around and hold conferences in many military units in order to explain that it is I, and no one else, who asked for the arrival of the Soviet advisers, that I had repeatedly raised this question to the Soviet leaders, and that only after repeated requests did the Soviet leaders agree to send their advisers to our army. It is true that in the army, especially in the Air Force, there are officers who spoke out against cooperation with the Soviet personnel. Just a week ago I retired one important officer who occupied a big post in the Air Force, who declared that he did not want to cooperate with the Soviet advisers. This is the result of malicious propaganda, the result of the class distinctions which exist in our society.

We have done much work at the present time in the matter of reorganizing the army. However, as before, we are experiencing a great need for such types of military equipment as artillery prime movers, tracked vehicles, vehicles, etc. We also need to bring some of our military units up to strength. At the same time I want to add that if my receive the quantity of equipment we need this will not mean that we will immediately rush into battle. Any initiation of combat operations on our part can only happen after receiving the agreement of the Soviet Union, only when you tell us that all the possibilities for a peace settlement have been exhausted, and that we need to move to combat operations. We will wait patiently, feeling a complete confidence that we will in the final account be victorious.

As concerns our Air Forces, they are still weaker than Israeli aviation. Israel has superiority in the air inasmuch as their aircraft have a longer radius of action than ours; for example, the Skyhawks can reach any point of our territory. The Mirage aircraft has a radius of action of 550 km. At the same time the MIG-21 aircraft has a radius of action of 250 km, and SU-7B aircraft also has a limited radius of action. Taking this into consideration, we would like to have aircraft with a longer radius of action in order to strike any point of the territory of Israel. This is what concerns the question of armaments. As I already said yesterday, your advisers can more clearly determine our needs in armaments together with us. [We] will be able to talk about this in more detail during the conversations of the representatives of our general staffs.

With respect to the question of a political settlement, as I have already declared, we are taking a new position in this question and I think there is no need to dwell on it again.

I would like to raise one question with you about the Palestinian guerillas. As I have said, the leader of the Palestinian organization Fatah came to Moscow with me. I would like for one of the senior Soviet comrades to meet and talk with him. He has already been in Moscow two days, but no one has yet met with him.

L. I. Brezhnev We have been busy all these days, but we will think on this question.

Nasser Psychologically, this can exert an unfavorable effect on him.

L. I. Brezhnev In your opinion, what is the nature of the discussion we should have with him?

Nasser Of course, he will ask about weapons. As you have already said, in the event of your agreement these weapons can be sent through us.

In any event, he should return from Moscow with complete confidence in the power of

Soviet-Arab friendship. He and his comrades in Fatah are those people to whom the future belongs.

L. I. Brezhnev Do you think that the development of a guerilla movement will bring benefit, or possibly on the contrary damage and complicate the position of Jordan?

Nasser Both are possible.

L. I. Brezhnev Are you confident of these people?

Nasser Yes, I am 100% confident of Yasser Arafat.

L. I. Brezhnev Inasmuch as he has come to Moscow we will think on what level to receive him.

Nasser Even Faisal wants to lure him away to his side and, as you know, the Americans stand behind Faisal.

We have not yet discussed some economic questions, but I think that if there is no objection from your side Riad could discuss them with those comrades of yours whom you appoint.

L. I. Brezhnev Good.

Nasser In conclusion I would like to again stress one very important question with which our entire army and all our country tie their hopes; it is the question of turning our army into an offensive army. The shortage of prime movers, vehicles, and transports is sometimes regarded such that the Soviet Union is striving for the UAR to have only a defensive army. As you know, guns without prime movers do not have any value. Permit me to again assure you that we will not take any risky steps even in the event we receive this equipment.

I again thank you for the useful exchange of opinions.

[The last paragraph and the summation, containing the participants' and interpreters' names, is illegible]

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MINUTES

OF CONVERSATIONS BETWEEN CDES. L. I. BREZHNEV, A. N. KOSYGIN, N. V. PODGORNYY AND UAR PRESIDENT NASSER

10 July 1968

L. I. Brezhnev How were your comrades' conversations at the various echelons? I hope they are satisfied with the conversations which were held.

Nasser Yes, of course. Our chief of the General Staff talked with A. A. Grechko, and he had a number of questions which needed to be decided. Therefore I am leaving him here and he will discuss all the questions of interest to us with Marshal A. A. Grechko.

L. I. Brezhnev Right, let the Minister [SIC] stay, we will house and feed him and let [him] stay with us for another year.

N. V. Podgornyy And we will pay [his] salary.

Nasser No, we need him in Cairo. I think that he won't stay long. As I have already said, he met with Marshal A. A. Grechko, but nothing definite has yet been decided. After the conversation please give instructions to A. A. Grechko and confirm everything that you told me to our Chief of the General Staff.

L. I. Brezhnev Last evening [one word illegible] Politburo. I talked [the following page is illegible]...

N. V. Podgornyy Yes, that equipment of which we were speaking will be given to you: both the pontoon bridges, other crossing equipment, pipelines for supplying mechanized units with fuel, and other kinds of equipment.

A. N. Kosygin We will also think about tractors.

L. I. Brezhnev All business questions connected with the solution of the problem of technical supply will be solved.

Nasser Right now we will work on converting and turning our army from a defensive to an offensive [one]. Time and equipment will be needed for this.

N. V. Podgornyy Time will be needed to solve this question. A year was needed for the army to be able to maintain a defense, but even more will be required to solve the

question of turning this army into an offensive army. I think that obviously not all defense questions have been solved.

L. I. Brezhnev We wouldn't like to anticipate events, but we think that we will please you by making allocations for equipping your army. I want to again repeat that the main thing is personnel, the personnel, the personnel. It is necessary to persistently conduct training of people, hold maneuvers, and gunnery. This should be everyday work. In the course of this training teach people, I mean the military people, to fire en masse. The military should become accustomed to this. And this is absolutely necessary. My own experience also confirms this fact.

Nasser After the catastrophe which occurred on 5 June we will need more efforts to restore the fighting spirit of the army. When the British were conducting combat operations against Rommel they also had to solve this problem since the troops and Rommel himself were surrounded by an aura of invincibility. But I think that the presence of good equipment in the troops will raise their fighting spirit.

A. N. Kosygin The main thing is to master the equipment which you have or will have. To master it not only in the static position, but in motion.

Nasser I visited the maneuvers which an armored division conducted which imitate an offensive battle; these maneuvers showed definite progress in the mastery of the equipment by the troops.

L. I. Brezhnev It is important that the officer personnel enjoy love and respect in the army and among the people. Of course, I do not mean the creation of those conditions of entitlement which the officers had previously.

Nasser There is discipline in the army right now.

L. I. Brezhnev Even in peacetime we have various forms of giving rewards to soldiers and officers. For example, we have a number of distinctive badges, "Excellent Tank Crewman", "Gunner", etc. Maybe it is also worth instituting such a badge in your army, too; if there are five or six men in a company or battalion who have such distinctions, then they will be an example for the rest. We have such a practice that once a year on the Great October Socialist Revolution holiday we give awards to a small part of the officers of our army for excellent training of personnel [or] for successes achieved in the mastery of combat equipment. This group is a small percentage in relation to the rest, but the fact of the distinction is a useful stimulus in their work.

A. N. Kosygin One of the means of rewards which we use is promotion to the next military rank.

L. I. Brezhnev Yes. we do this once a year. The political bodies of the army have colossal importance in peacetime and wartime. We are strengthening these bodies and attach great importance to them. Our principle of the development of the armed forces is the strict and firm implementation of the principle of undivided authority [*yedinalichie*]. A junior officer is subordinate to the senior, and an order has been obeyed unconditionally. I could not pay attention to your regulation, I don't know it, but we have a regulation, the foundation of the entire army. It is approved by the government, and therefore it is binding for the army and the people. The political workers in the army do much work, they explain the importance of important orders given to the commanders, hold individual and group conversations daily, and cheer up and raise the soldiers' mood. Even in a combat situation the political workers inform the soldiers, and keep them informed of what is going on in the country. In the difficult conditions of combat operations information comes through the political workers to the soldiers so that they do not lag behind the life of the people, and are aware of the questions of the domestic and foreign policy of the Soviet state. This system has operated among us for a long time, we have many educational institutions, there are separate political institutions, and also various courses and departments in military academies which train political workers for the army. I can also say about myself that when I served in the army, that the political officer of the company gathered us for 15 minutes, talked about what was going on in the world, and in 20 minutes of information we were aware of the main questions which troubled our people and our country. In wartime the political worker does an enormous amount of work: from explaining orders to supplying the troops with shells; being concerned for the wounded he is sort of the spirit [*dusha*] between the commander

and the soldier.

Nasser Tell [me], are political workers officers?

N. V. Podgorny Yes, of course, officers, even to [the rank] of general.

L. I. Brezhnev There are political officers at all levels of the army even to the General Staff, where there is a general responsible for the political work.

A. N. Kosygin Earlier we called them commissars.

L. I. Brezhnev Then, we removed the name of commissar in order to confirm undivided authority in the army, but during the war [we] were forced to introduce it again.

N. V. Podgorny A good name - commissar.

Nasser We are working in this direction right now. We have such bodies called moral orientation, but these personnel are not yet active.

L. I. Brezhnev Personnel need to be trained, of course; it is useless to send an untrained person to this work, but with trained personnel in the course of work in the army during an exchange of experience trained personnel grow into key personnel who are useful to the army. In the army a political worker is closer to the line of fire during a battle than the commander. The commander directs the battle, communicates, and is in the rear by the nature of the work. The political worker is on the front line all the time, develops heroism among the troops, carries word of mouth to the ranks of soldiers, and this is useful for the cause.

N. V. Podgorny Political workers raise conscious discipline and strengthen the fighting spirit of the army.

A. N. Kosygin For the country as the whole they are [a] second [pair] of eyes.

L. I. Brezhnev These are the Party bodies in the army. When we say that enormous efforts and years are needed to create an offensive army, then for such an offensive army it is necessary to have a staff of political workers. If your army had such political workers then the catastrophe of 5 June might have been avoided. Political workers might have stopped the disorderly retreat and called upon the soldiers to do their duty.

A. N. Kosygin In addition, incorrect orders issued to the units would have reached the leader.

Nasser Our soldiers did not flee. An order was given to retreat, and these orders came from the command. We had a political staff in the army which had a special nature and was subordinate to Shams Badran. When a plot was organized against me the political staff of the army played the main role. It pursued an incorrect line and acted against us.

A. N. Kosygin Tell us, do you have such a staff in the army right now?

Nasser Not right now. The majority of people who worked in this staff are in prison right now. They wanted to make a coup. An open conflict occurred between Amer, Badran, and the rest of the army last July.

L. I. Brezhnev These facts again demonstrate the necessity of creating and strengthening the political staff.

N. V. Podgorny Of course, it is impossible to create this staff right away. But it is necessary to pursue work in this direction, little by little, step by step. During the war all our strong personnel were thrown into political work in the army. Secretaries of rayon committees and oblast' committees, even to secretaries and CC members of our Party, were sent there. A commander can be trained in an educational institution in a definite period. Political workers should have much greater life experience, a political worker should be in the masses and be able to work with people. Our best people were sent to this work at the most difficult time. It is natural that they should have certain rights. For example during the War a political worker was a member in our Military Council. He could protest a decision adopted by the Council if he thought that such a decision went counter to the line of the Party and government.

Nasser We cannot introduce outside [*inorodnye*] personnel into the army right now.

L. I. Brezhnev It is necessary to create an educational institution, and people who graduate it will receive a military rank and enter the army as military men.

Nasser Before certain events we had a bitter battle between the Arab Socialist Union and the army.

L. I. Brezhnev This is the greatest danger for the state.

Nasser Whoever headed the army feared a party.

N. V. Podgorny There were periods in our history when commanders did not like political workers, thinking that they diminished their rights.

A. N. Kosygin These people said that the presence of political workers in the army violated the principle of undivided authority.

Nasser Before the catastrophe of 5 June the army was isolated from the people. It was, if one can say so, a state within a state.

A. N. Kosygin Yes, like a privileged caste. We have a unity of the army and the people, it is the source of its strength.

L. I. Brezhnev Conscripted into the army goes with honors, entire collectives solemnly escort people into the army and when they return from the army to the factories, to the collective farms, they are considered the best personnel. Young people receive great benefit from being in the army. They leave as good specialists, accomplished and disciplined.

Nasser I understand this question well, and we are solving it. Of course, a certain time is necessary for this. The unjustified privileges which previously existed in the army are being eliminated right now. For example, the military went beyond the budget without coordinating with the Council of Ministers. The officers strived for luxury and all their behavior had political overtones. We have removed many such officers from the army, and many are in prison right now or in retirement. We are maintaining a course of ensuring iron discipline in the army. It needs to be noted that our Chief of the General Staff is a very disciplined person. It can be said that after the work done at the present moment the army has agreed to establish iron discipline. Of course, there are still people who want to return to the old state of affairs. We are removing these people from the army.

A. N. Kosygin But in order to replace these officers it is necessary to train new personnel capable of successfully solving the tasks with which they are faced.

L. I. Brezhnev We consider it a positive factor that you are strengthening the Arab Socialist Union. At the last hour of our conversations let's confirm our desires to search for a political settlement of the crisis, our desire to solve this by peaceful means, and to search for an opportunity and method for its solution. This does not preclude conducting work to strengthen the army; time is on our side, and a certain time is needed to solve the question of restructuring the armed forces. We understand that our mutual contacts are helping strengthen mutual understanding and friendship between our two countries, and helping strengthen the position of the UAR; we will strive to strengthen and develop the political, economic, and other relations between our countries. We hope that from time to time our delegations will regularly come to you, not only at a high level, and we will greet your comrades here. It seems that both we and you need to think about and pursue work to increase the ideological struggle with our enemies. It is necessary to set the radio, television, and the press right in this regard.

A. N. Kosygin We will take into consideration the comments you have made with respect to the imperialist propaganda from Beirut.

Nasser The imperialists are doing much work right now in all of our region. For example, the Americans and British, along with the reactionary regimes of Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and Tunisia, are pursuing subversive activity against the progressive countries.

L. I. Brezhnev In several days our Minister of Defense A. A. Grechko will make a visit to Algeria. The visit has been somewhat delayed in connection with the preoccupation with a number of questions, but this visit will take place. Grechko will probably meet with Boumediene, and we think that such a visit will be useful from all points of view and will at the same time be a political demonstration.

A. N. Kosygin We are presented with the very serious questions of uniting the Arab world and if you have any suggestions concerning this question then give them to us. This question needs to be coordinated in order for us to be able to help you.

Nasser I think it is not worth raising this problem right now.

A. N. Kosygin When such a question arises inform us so that we know what to do about this question, for it is an important question.

L. I. Brezhnev Tell us, has the communique been coordinated?

Nasser Yes.

L. I. Brezhnev The communique covers our position on many questions completely enough and it provides you a large platform for speeches to the people after [your] return to the UAR.

Nasser I want to repeat that the supplies of Soviet weapons will be an additional political factor strengthening our system and the army. The armed forces clearly imagined that I came to the USSR for this. At one time I handed over all military matters to Amer, and I believed in his integrity and fidelity. This was a painful question. After 5 June I told him about the causes which led to the catastrophe. Amer did not agree with me. After 5 June I had to remove him. The soldiers of our army are not cowards. The command gave an order to retreat. Of course, it was difficult for me to decide the question with Amer this way. We lived with him for 30 years like brothers. There [was] no sign, unexpected moments come.

A. N. Kosygin This was hard to imagine; honestly speaking, we didn't expect such a development.

Nasser You even get flustered when you think about it. A whole group of people had gathered around Amer; they aroused his unfounded suspicions and said that the Soviet Union was placing reliance on Ali Sabry, pushing him forward, drafting secret summaries for him from the intelligence directorate with such information. He lost [his] reason. Right now I keep the army in my hands and think that it is necessary to create a professional army and not grant unjustified privileges; two or three percent enjoy these privileges, and they cause a feeling of discontent among the rest. We need an offensive, maneuverable army. Our Chief of the General Staff is staying here for some time. Of course, he can not remain long because he is needed in Cairo.

A second question which I would like to ask concerns my treatment. I want to ask what your doctors told you and what were the results of the examination.

L. I. Brezhnev This morning the doctor watching over me said that the doctors have a good idea of the method of treating you and there is a need for treatment. They pleased me, and I have still not yet shared with my comrades, reporting that there is no danger yet, but nevertheless there is a need to be treated. The doctors said that there are elements narrowing the [blood] vessels, and besides this there is an inflammation of the nerve roots.

A. N. Kosygin This is not strange. Radiculitis is a "fashionable" disease right now.

L. I. Brezhnev So it's necessary to listen to the doctors and do what they recommend. If you had come to us our doctors would have solved this problem. We believe in our medicine, it has proven its superiority in the entire world. Our best people looked at you and they have given a well-founded conclusion.

A. N. Kosygin The doctors who examined you are reliable people. And if they say anything, they say it responsibly.

Nasser They devoted a great deal of attention to me, so much attention that I didn't even expect. The doctors recommended I stop smoking, and so I quit. This was a hard decision.

L. I. Brezhnev Yes, smoking negatively affects the blood vessels, it narrows them.

N. V. Podgorny I also have some leg pain; come, we will be treated.

Nasser Last month I was in very serious and poor condition. This is what convinced me to quit smoking. The doctors recommended I be treated in Tskaltubo. They said that a 24-day stay there eliminates an illness.

L. I. Brezhnev After the War we saved tens of thousands of people from illness at this resort.

Nasser I can't leave the country right now. I think that I will be able to come for treatment in August, after the end of the party congress. I will have less work during this period.

A. N. Kosygin The radiological sources in Tskaltubo are very helpful and work wonders

with the nervous system.

L. I. Brezhnev This is the only place, not just here, but in the whole world.

Nasser Yes, it is necessary to rest. I have worked 16 years without a vacation.

N. V. Podgorny All in good time. You always have to do something for the first time, to be sick, to be treated, to rest.

Nasser The doctors said that the entire upper part is good, the "motor" is also good.

L. I. Brezhnev We welcome you in our country for any reason, but twice for this reason.

A. N. Kosygin There is a comfortable little house there, we will install telephones and supply communications with Cairo and you will feel at home in a dacha.

Nasser Thank you.

L. I. Brezhnev The public opinion of the entire world is riveted to your visit to our country. Friends are commenting kindly on this visit. Enemies are trying to introduce any elements of suspicion, and in this atmosphere it is very important to seek the correct coverage of the visit, and not to give enemies an opportunity to say that they arranged for an attack on Israel tomorrow. It is natural that the coverage of the visit should correctly indicate an increase of friendship and an achievement of agreement about the broadest cooperation in all spheres. This will influence Israel and world public opinion. If the visit receives one-sided coverage then they will begin to whine, shout, and spread anti-Soviet propaganda, and strive to drive a wedge between the USSR and other peoples. We rely on you in this question.

Nasser Cde. Brezhnev, your speech and yours, Cde. Podgorny, have had a great response in the Arab world. Previously the Arabs thought that you were striving to impose a political settlement on us at any price; now they see that this is not so. Your speech was a good confirmation of this. It could be said that my visit is a balanced visit. There is no capitulation to Israel here and no immediate attack.

L. I. Brezhnev I spoke to graduates of the military academies and at the instruction of the Politburo I also mentioned the Middle East problem in my speech and in it I presented our position.

N. V. Podgorny We have the President of India with us now, and we have talked with the Indians that they need to exhibit greater activity in the settlement of the Middle East problem, but right now they are taking a somewhat passive position.

Nasser They have many problems of their own right now.

N. V. Podgorny This is true. But each country has its own problems.

L. I. Brezhnev Please understand me correctly, but we would like to discuss the question of recognition of the GDR right now so that you look at this question and what can be done to implement and decide it. The GDR has held a popular vote for a constitution, which received the full support of the people. This was yet one more blow to the FRG and the enemies of peace and security in Europe and in the entire world. In this new situation what views have you formed and what solution of the question can be found?

Nasser I would like to express two ideas about this question. Right now the Arab countries, with the exception of three, do not have diplomatic relations with the FRG. If we recognize the GDR then in this event all the remaining countries will restore their relations with the FRG; even Algeria is interested in this for reasons of trade and certain interests in the Common Market. Such a situation might develop that only two countries - I mean Syria; they would recognize East Germany, and 12 - West [Germany]. Rather, they had diplomatic relations. Right now the FRG has relations with Libya, Tunisia, and Morocco. The decision to break relations was adopted by the Arab League and there is a certain resolution on this question. The Arab countries discussed this question at the last League meeting. They do not want to establish relations with the GDR right now; I mean diplomatic relations, after they broke diplomatic relations with the FRG.

The second thing I would like to note in this connection is the possibility that the FRG will increase its aid to Israel in retaliation for our adoption of the decision to establish diplomatic relations with the GDR, and any movement on this question from our side would prompt a corresponding reaction from a majority of the Arab countries; it would

be a pretext to restore diplomatic relations with the FRG. In addition, if we go beyond the bounds of the Arab League resolution then it might become a pretext and possibly be used by reactionary countries to halt financial aid to us. You know that reactionary countries – Saudi Arabia, Libya, and Kuwait – give us this aid.

L. I. Brezhnev This question needs to be followed and kept in sight. I think that we will hold discussions on this topic. Frankly speaking, the question of recognition of the GDR has great international importance, considering the questions of European security and the tasks of strengthening the socialist commonwealth, and also the tasks of strengthening our positions with you.

Here are all the questions. We consider your visit very useful and productive. It will be covered in the press in such a tone. We will talk to our people and the Party this way. We wish you good health and cheer, to be the same courageous fighter you have been. At one time, at a difficult time we raised the slogan: victory will be ours. However difficult it was for us we believed in this and were victorious. If you pursue a correct political course, strengthen relations with friendly countries, with us, with the other countries of the socialist camp, the victory of the Arabs will be assured. Policy is a great force in the modern epoch. The facts of world politics, the upheavals experienced by America, Britain, and France confirm the correctness and justice of the conclusion that capitalism has no future. The future is for socialism, for liberty and independence, the future is for peace, and not for war. We wish you the biggest and greatest successes on this path. We say this to you and your friends since they are your companions-in-arms and very much depends on them. These are not ceremonial words, but the words come from the depth of [my] heart.

Nasser I express to you deep appreciation for the aid and support which you are giving us. We consider you brothers and highly value those efforts which you apply to the solution of our problems. We have tired you, these were lengthy conversations, and we took very much of your time. In August I am going right to a health resort right away. It's necessary to forget politics for a time.

L. I. Brezhnev You will be able to rest very well. Tskhaltubo is not far from Tbilisi. Look at the Caucasus and the Black Sea coast.

Nasser I'll take [my] wife and three children. At my place they love to run and be moving. Are there opportunities for this there?

A. N. Kosygin Yes, there is everything you like. This is a good and comfortable resort. Moreover, Tbilisi is nearby and they can go there anytime.

Nasser Right now the chief of the general staff is waiting outside the door Could you not confirm for him the same thing that they told me[?]

Abdel Moneim Riad. I have already had a conversation with A. A. Grechko.

A. N. Kosygin Oh, he has a big suitcase.

A. M. Riad The most important question is aircraft with a long radius of action. I have in mind bombers.

L. I. Brezhnev We told the President that our military are working to please you on this question. In order for aircraft to fly far, it is necessary to have them. With respect to other equipment about which we have been talking with you, like crossing equipment, pontoon structures, missiles against low-flying targets, "little ones" [malyutki] – we will give you all these. There was a Politburo meeting at night on domestic matters, not because something extraordinary happened. There simply wasn't another time. We also need to solve our own problems. I talked with A. A. Grechko. He told me that they are working on these questions in light of these instructions. He is asking for several days to solve and work up the details of this matter since the supplies of the "little ones", GRA [expansion unknown], and some other kinds of weapons depend on production. It is also necessary to study where to get the crossing equipment and what equipment it is more advisable to offer you. So, all these questions will be solved.

In conclusion L. I. Brezhnev, A. N. Kosygin, and N. V. Podgorny thank Nasser and bade him farewell.

L. I. Brezhnev But we still have time, and we can talk on the way to the airfield.

[The following] took part in the conversations: from the Soviet side - L. I. Brezhnev, A. N. Kosygin, N. V. Podgorny, A. A. Gromyko, and S. A. Vinogradov; from the Arab [SIC]

side - Gamal Abdel Nasser, Anwar Sadat, and Mahmoud Riad.
The conversation was translated by V. V. Posuvalyuk.
The conversation was recorded by A. I. Kuz'min.