

June 15, 1955

**Intelligence Brief Submitted by Hassan Tuhami,
Head of the Intelligence Branch at the President's
Office, to Gamal Abd al-Nasser**

Citation:

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Summary:

President Nasser discusses with the Russian ambassador a possible arms deal between the USSR and Egypt due to Egyptian fear of Israeli aggression backed by Britain and the United States.

Original Language:

Arabic

Contents:

Translation - English

Top Secret
The visit of the Russian Ambassador (12:30 21 May 1955)
As a result of the Israeli aggression, mounting tension on the borders, and the intelligence which was elucidated in the memo submitted on 11 June 1955, which pointed out that Britain and America were behind the Israeli move, the president called upon the Russian ambassador to Cairo at 12:30 on 21 May 1955 and told him the following:
1. Egypt wanted to crush the Israeli interference, which was an Anglo-American tool used to exert pressure on the Arab army and to blackmail Egypt into capitulating to certain demands. In order to convince the ambassador [Nasser] said that his government was willing to accept military aid from the Soviet Union.
2. The president asked the Russian Ambassador to submit before the Soviet government the request to export weapons to the Egyptian military in order to stop Israeli aggression now and in the future.
3. The Russian Ambassador said that his government was ready to supply Egypt with jets, bomber planes, and tanks, in exchange for Egyptian rice and cotton. This had not happened before, as the Soviet Union exported its weapons [only] to communist countries, but it would do so for Nasser...
The future arms deal with the Soviet Union and the Egyptian position between East and West:
1. Russia has already shown its willingness to export weapons to Egypt in exchange for raw materials in April of the preceding year (1954), through a representative of the Foreign Ministry in the Kremlin (during the presentation of credentials of the Egyptian ambassador to Moscow).
2. (The Bandung conference) - During the Bandung conference the President met with Zhou Enlai, who was willing to assist Egypt in its struggle against Israel. Zhou Enlai was willing to supply the Egyptian army with weapons from China, Moscow, or Czechoslovakia - we believe that Zhou Enlai contacted Moscow and reached an agreement on this with officials there.
3. During an interview with the Russian ambassador agreed, on behalf of his government, to supply the Egyptian army with weapons, including planes and tanks. This is a change in the traditional Russian policy - which means that the ambassador had instructions from Moscow to answer the way he did and that his government has already made its decision.
4. If we receive the weapons from Russia our argument should be that this was done according to a semi-commercial agreement. This is an important issue for Russia because it does not want to appear as a Cold War superpower which encourages [other nations] to arm themselves to war. If this is the case, my personal assessment is that this process will take three or four months if Egypt starts moving forward immediately - during this time a visit to the Soviet factories should take place in order to decide what kind of weapons Egypt could ask for. Later, we should negotiate prices with Russia.
5. During this time American policy will change and our assessment of this [future] change appears in this clause. The relations with Russia will not be detrimental to Egypt. On the contrary, the Russian weapons will give it [Egypt] a better bargaining position - the US will take concrete steps to supply Egypt with weapons, and the connection with Russia has the power to make the US correct its policy towards Egypt. The US would speed up its efforts to improve its relations with Egypt fearing that the relations between Russia and Egypt might develop further...