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**Summary:**

Todor Zhivkov reports on his recent visit to the Syrian Arab Republic and the Arab Republic of Egypt.

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JOINT MEETING  
OF THE BCP CENTRAL COMMITTEE, THE STATE COUNCIL,  
AND THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS

(After the break)

CHAIRMAN PENCHO KUBADINSKI [1]:

Comrade Todor Zhivkov has the floor to present the report on his visit to the Syrian Arab Republic and the Arab Republic of Egypt.

TODOR ZHIVKOV [2]:

Comrades,

Our visit to the Syrian Arab Republic and the Arab Republic of Egypt has been adequately covered by the media.

Actually, at both places we were given warm welcome and it will not be an exaggeration to say that we were awarded the special honors given only to representatives of great and friendly nations. Since you are familiar with the press coverage, I am not going to give you a detailed account of our visit. I also do not plan to go into details about the situation in the Middle East because last October at the Central Committee session we thoroughly analyzed the situation and discussed the activities of our Party within the activities of the international communist movement. [...] Therefore, in my presentation today I will outline only the issues that were not covered in the media.

As you well know, here at the Central Committee of the Party and the Council of Ministers we have established a tradition to be regularly briefed on the major activities of our Party and Government on the international arena and within the international communist movement.

What was the political situation in Syria and Egypt like at the time of our visit?

The latest events are proving that our assessment of the situation has been correct — the whole region is moving in a direction favorable for the advancement of socialism and progressive development. We were also correct to predict that despite all his doubts and indecision, the President of the Arab Republic of Egypt Sadat [3] is pursuing anti-imperialist policy. This is very important because Egypt, the biggest Arab country, plays an important role in this region's national liberation movement and the struggle against imperialism.

Our October session conclusion that Syria has the most progressive regime in the region also proved right. Keeping in mind the current political dynamics, we are convinced that Syria still has the most stable progressive regime.

However, some new factors have started influencing the Arab East, including Egypt and Syria.

What are these factors?

1. The trust of the Arab governments in the Chinese leadership and Chinese foreign policy agenda has been seriously undermined by the US-China rapprochement, expressed through the increased incidence of shared positions in the UN and the recent visit of Nixon [4] to Beijing. Some of the Arab leaders are simply disappointed.

2. The war between India and Pakistan and the creation of the new state of Bangladesh clearly had an important impact on that region. We must point out that the imperialist propaganda, together with its agents and domestic reactionary forces, in an attempt to provoke anti-Indian and, ultimately, anti-Soviet Union sentiments, did their best to present the conflict as a religious war. Fortunately, they did not achieve their goals. On the contrary, the war between India and Pakistan and the creation of Bangladesh had a positive impact on the situation in the region. Undoubtedly, these events must have convinced the Arab people and especially the progressive regimes in Syria and Egypt that despite its close cooperation with the Chinese leadership, the US is not all-powerful.

3. The new UN resolution regarding the Israeli aggression is even harsher than the previous one, adopted by the Security Council. Undoubtedly, that is a success for Egypt and our policy.

4. Another extremely important event, which continues to affect the developments in the region, was the congress of the Lebanese Communist Party, which actually turned into a forum of the Arab national liberation movement. Representatives of the Ba'ath Party of Iraq and Syria and the Arab Socialist Union of Egypt attended the Congress. Delegates of all the communist and progressive parties in the Arab East also took part. The Petition approved by all the communist and progressive parties represented at the Congress is a very important document because it was drafted through the united efforts of all anti-imperialist forces in the Arab East.

In the course of those events, the President of Libya Qadhafi [5], a notorious anti-Communist, became extremely isolated. His efforts to influence both Sadat and Assad [6] failed. Actually, in a Communiqué signed between the Soviet Union and Egypt, there is a special provision denouncing both anti-Communism and anti-Sovietism. There is evidence that Qadhafi has been trying to persuade Assad to make some changes in the Syrian legislation that will ban the Communist Party and impede the creation of the People's Front (called there the United Front), where communists also participate. He also tried to convince Assad to put all political forces into a single party —something similar to the Arab Socialist Union and to what he is now trying to organize in Libya. However, Qadhafi's plans failed and he became isolated.

What was the domestic environment in Syria and Egypt prior to our visit?

In Syria, there were serious efforts underway for the creation of the United Front in which the communists participate. For the first time in the history of the communist movement in the region, the creation of the United Front with the communists is under way. Comrades, you are well aware of the importance of this phenomenon not only for Syria but also for the Arab East and Africa. Clearly, this will have a positive impact on the future developments in the entire region.

The Syrian government continues to pursue policies directed toward progressive economic and social development of the country. Syrian government has been preparing the country for local elections, scheduled to take place on 3 March 1972.

What was the political situation in Egypt during our visit?

The most important events for the last couple of months have been the two visits of President Anwar Sadat to Moscow, where he had meetings with comrade Brezhnev and rest of the Soviet leadership. The first visit took place in the end of October last year and the second in early February this year. The last visit had a tremendous impact on Sadat. While earlier we were somewhat biased against him, now he seems different — he has changed his views. Obviously, his political views have evolved. He

has become wiser and more tactful. He has started to analyze the international problems and the situation in the Arab East. For example, at our official meeting he linked the problems of their struggle with the European security, the European Conference, our victory in Europe, etc.

On the eve of our visit there, the reactionary forces in Egypt intensified their efforts to impede the progressive development of the country by reorienting its political course towards reconciliation with the US and other imperialists. Meanwhile, the left Nasserists, supported by the Marxists, continued to pressure Sadat. In other words, Sadat is under constant pressure both from the reactionary forces and from the left, the Nasserists and Marxists, who were previously divided into many wings and factions.

Just on the eve of our visit to Egypt, a new Committee, headed by the Chairman of the Council of Ministers Sedki [7] was created. Sedki is business-oriented person, considered the father of Egypt's industrialization. We believe that he has grasped the importance of the integration with the Soviet Union and the socialist camp. At a meeting with comrade Tano Tzolov, Sedki sincerely expressed the willingness of his government to pursue policies of integration with the socialist countries. He had also declared that they are interested in cooperation first and foremost with the Soviet Union and then with Bulgaria. He even suggested joining COMECON.

As you might have heard, there were big student demonstrations in Egypt just prior to our visit there. At my personal meeting with Sadat, he explained that these protests were organized mainly by Maoist and other extremists. However, I think that he oversimplified the problem.

Comrades, those were some of the latest political development in the region prior to our visit.

What goals did we set for our visit?

I would like to assure you that when we are on official visits abroad we are not improvising or acting as tourists. On the contrary, we have our agenda and our goals that have been discussed and approved by the Politburo.

What were our goals for the visit in Syria and Egypt?

Some of the biggest problems in the Arab East today are:

- overcoming the Israeli aggression
- providing support to the progressive development of the countries that had chosen to follow this path
- not allowing the national liberation movement to be defeated

However, it is obvious that the main problem is the situation created as a result of the Israeli imperialist aggression. This problem is in the center of the Syrian and Egyptian policy agenda and has a very strong impact on the overall development of these countries. Significant part of the national income (they said up to 80%, but most likely that was an exaggeration) is invested in building of their military capabilities and in war preparations.

Therefore, we were not able to avoid that problem. Besides, we went there with a clear understanding that we would have talks on our future positions regarding the problem. Certainly, we are very well aware that this work will be done not by us — it will be done by the Soviet Union. Keeping in mind that the Israeli troops are the ones that occupied the Arab territories thus making the current situation is extremely

volatile, we all have a clear position how the conflict should be resolved

Our position is that the problems should be resolved by political means. At the same time, as we pointed out to our Arab friends, we are not pacifists. We know that the war can break out at any time and we have to be prepared. However, a war should be waged only when all the political means have been exhausted.

The comrades, who accompanied me in the delegation, had meetings with their respective counterparts. I have already mentioned the meeting of comrade Tano Tzolov with the Chairman of the Council of Ministers of Egypt. In addition, comrade Tano Tzolov and comrade Tellalov [8] had a meeting with the leadership of the Arab Socialist Union where the Chairman and all Secretaries were present. We signed a special Protocol for cooperation between the two Parties. Comrade Abadzhiev [9], comrade Petar Tanchev [10], comrade Nedev [11] and the other comrades had meetings with their respective counterparts. Comrade Mladenov [12] had a meeting with the Minister of Foreign Affairs. However, it should be kept in mind that in those countries it is the Presidents that formulate the policy and make the decisions. Therefore, the talks with the Presidents of Syria and Egypt were the most important. We knew that these will be the most important and, in the same time, the hardest meetings.

How did we approach the problem of a finding solution to end the Israeli aggression?

This problem was approached from different perspectives in Syria and Egypt. As it is well known, the leadership of the Ba'ath Party in Syria, and Assad in particular, pursue an extreme policy — they do not approve the neither the Security Council Resolution, nor the last UN resolution. Actually Syria abstained when the latter was voted. In general, Syria does not recognize even the right of existence of the state of Israel. Even at the official meeting between the two delegations, Assad directly said: "Each country has Jewish population; there are Jews even in our country. Let them live there. Why should we create a separate state?" We had many conversations about that problem. But the most important conversation took place during my tête-à-tête meeting with Assad, where only our official interpreter was present, as how it should be.

We tried to explain sincerely our position to Assad. It was a long conversation. Actually, I told him, "See, Mr. Assad, I visited one of your textile factories, then I visited some agricultural regions; I also visited the dam on Euphrates River. However, I did not see anywhere that your rear is prepared for war. What kind of war are you going to wage, if your rear is not prepared?" I gave him an example with the Vietnamese. I pointed out that they have been fighting the war, combining military, political and diplomatic means. The strength of the Vietnamese leadership was based on that policy and, as a result, they succeeded in gaining the support of the world public, including the support of the progressive forces in the US. "You, on the other hand, have isolated yourselves," I said. "You cannot prepare yourselves for war using only slogans. If you want to be prepared for war, serious work should be done. In Bulgaria, we are not raising slogans for war because we live in a region where the situation is different. Nevertheless, we are preparing our country for war and we are quite serious about it. I can assure you that if we have to face the hardships of a war, our enemies will not be able to put the whole country out of service. They can destroy the Central Committee, they can put it out of service using some powerful nuclear bomb. In our country, however, we know which regional Party committee will assume the responsibilities of the Central Committee if the latter is disabled. If this committee is destroyed, a second regional committee will assume the responsibilities, then a third, etc. The situation with all defense lines is quite similar.

Let us take another example — the international organizations. You do not use the forum presented by the UN. You abstained when the last declaration on the Middle

East was discussed in the UN General Assembly. You do not take part in the discussions at the international organizations and consequently the work has to be done by us. The preparation of the domestic front is to some extent a political task. What are you doing about it?"

I gave him many other examples. I pointed out that the main task should be the unification of the Arab people in their struggle against Israel, as a part of the war preparations. In that regard the situation has worsened since the end of the war.

Assad seemed to be very shaken by this extreme position and he did not try to seriously defend himself.

We are positive that Assad will ponder upon our sincere conversation. I am not saying that he will reverse his position, but surely he will keep thinking over and over what was said on that matter.

Sadat has already realized that the war preparations should be combined with pursuit of political solution, or at least that was my impression from our private meeting. However, I would like to point out once again that this evolution was achieved mainly as a result of the work of the Soviet comrades. During our conversation with Sadat we did not discuss that issue in details, because there were other problems that I am going to present now.

What was our general impression?

We spent four days in each country and certainly, our impression is somewhat inconclusive. Besides, as an official delegation, our program was prepared beforehand and there were plenty of protocol events that could not have been avoided.

Our impression was that Egypt and Syria are not yet ready for war — neither militarily, nor in terms of the general preparedness. However, they have achieved a lot, and they continue to prepare themselves. The Egyptian and Syrian armies are not the same armies that fought the war. This causes many troubles to the imperialists nowadays.

Second, they have almost agreed with the concept and the policy pursued by the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact members, that first of all a political solution should be sought because the political means have not been exhausted yet. We have a broad range of means on our disposal and we have to use them before waging a war. They have already understood that. We saw it clearly in Egypt and we also saw the gradual policy shift in the Syrian leadership.

Our second major task was to assure them in our support for internal stabilization of both Egypt and Syria. The stabilization of the regimes in both countries is an important precondition for the further development of the movement for national liberation in the whole Arab East and for the elimination of the Israeli aggression.

The strengthening the domestic front has different dimensions in Syria and Egypt. What is the situation in Syria?

As I have already pointed out, the Syrian regime is the most progressive one. Our impression was that Assad's team is not bad. Most of the people are intelligent and support Assad. Unlike in Egypt, the Syrian leadership is united. They have adopted and pursued more decisively some leftist measures: they are creating a United Front; they have been following appropriate social and economic policies; they have been

building their government institutions on democratic basis, etc. Our task was to express assertively our support for Assad's determination to pursue this type of policy. Therefore, at the official meeting between our delegations we tried to do that both directly and indirectly. At our private meeting with Assad however, we had a sincere conversation about the importance of the cooperation with the communists in the United Front and about the replacement of the undemocratic practices with democratic ones, including the creation of local governments, directly elected by the people.

Assad was very interested in the situation in our country. He was interested in the political role played by the Fatherland Front and the Bulgarian Agrarian People's Union (BAPU). We presented detailed information on that matter. Talking about BAPU, I tried to suggest that they improve their relations with us [the communists] and cooperate with us sincerely - the same way we are working with them.

Certainly, I am presenting now only the essence of our talks. At the meetings, we approached that problem from many different angles, trying to persuade the Presidents and the other government officials that they should continue to follow the path of progressive development and bring the revolution to an end.

Assad did not disagree with our assessment of the situation in Syria. Throughout the conversation he also kept asking about the situation in Bulgaria.

As for the cooperation with the communists, at our private meeting he told me the following: "We are working with the Communist Party and we will continue to do so. However, there are people in this Party who are enemies of the Soviet Union. Since they are enemies of the Soviet Union, they are our enemies as well." He referred to the internal split in the Syrian Communist Party and mentioned the people who challenged the leadership of Bakdash [13]. The Party is still united but the situation is very problematic indeed. We are aware of that. Most alarming is the fact that the rivalries within the leadership of the Communist Party have already trickled down to the local organizations and the ordinary party members. The situation is particularly alarming in Damascus. Many people have tried to strengthen the unity of the Syrian Communist Party and even we once dispatched comrade Tellalov with the same task.

Together with comrade Abadziev, we had a meeting with the leadership of the Syrian Communist Party — their Politburo. Only four of their Politburo members were present at the meeting because the other three of them, headed by Bakdash, were on a visit to the Soviet Union. They stated that the Party was united these days. Indeed, they have some differences on the new Party program but these should be resolved soon and the unity of the Party would be preserved. We also emphasized the importance of preserving the unity of the Party.

Later, I informed Assad about the outcome of these meetings because he would be informed anyway. Both in Egypt and in Syria the officials were very curious to know everything from our other meetings and [I believe that] actually many of our conversations were intercepted. I do not mean to say that this was done by the Presidents and the leadership. It was done by the agencies responsible for these activities. This is why I informed Assad in details about our meeting with the Communist Party Politburo. This is all I wanted to say about the domestic front in Syria.

What about the situation in Egypt?

The situation in Egypt is much worse. Sadat's team is not united — it is very heterogeneous. We approached the visit to Egypt with embarrassment because the

people we used to work with before have all been imprisoned. We did not know what would happen, whether we would be able to establish contact and have sincere conversations. However, not only did we succeed to establish contacts, but the whole distrust melted down. Before we arrived they had decided that only Sadat would be present at the official meeting, plus one of the Vice-Presidents and some other less important people. As a result of my preliminary meetings with Sadat (I certainly did not raise the issue directly), and as a result of our official statement at the reception (if you read it carefully, you will see some important details about that), they decided to change their attitude toward our delegation. On the next day their delegation was also at high level. The delegation included Sadat, both Vice-presidents, the Chairman of the Council of Ministers, the Minister of People's Defense, and the First Secretary of their party.

What is the recent situation with Egypt's internal front? As I have already mentioned, Sadat's team is very heterogeneous. The First Secretary of the Party is connected with the feudal establishment in the country. He owns 6-7 thousands decares of land. The Minister of People's defense is also an owner of 5-6 decares of cultivated land.

The internal struggle in Egypt is very intensive because the imperialist forces and especially the US are very well aware of the importance of Egypt. If they succeed to take Egypt on their side, this will have strong implications throughout the Arab East and will affect the national liberation movement in the whole region. This is why the struggle for Egypt is merciless and it is led on all possible fronts. As the reactionary forces are getting stronger, the agents of the imperialism are working harder to exercise strong pressure on Sadat. They will eliminate Sadat very soon. However, for now they would like to use Sadat and therefore push for changes under his leadership. At a later stage they would like to replace him with someone else.

Therefore, the main issue that we discussed at our private meeting with Saddat was their revolution. I pointed out that Nasser's achievements will be recorded in history. I told him, "Together with you and his other brothers-in-arms, Nasser made the July Revolution and led Egypt on the path of progressive development. This revolution however, Mr. Sadat, has to be completed in the fields of economy, government affairs, selection of cadres. The agrarian reform should be also completed. The Revolution should not be impeded. But today it does not make any progress. Obviously, you and your colleagues have been commissioned by history to complete the Revolution." I went as far as telling him that the main front today is not the one against Israel but the internal one, because if it breaks down the struggle against Israel will be also unsuccessful. The strengthening of the domestic situation in the Arab Republic of Egypt is the most important goal today. I pointed out that if they want to accomplish this however, they will have to rely on the progressive forces.

Our task was to prove our confidence in Saddat; to prove our confidence in his capabilities to lead the progressive forces, to continue the July Revolution and thus to prepare the Egyptian people for a war. He told me, "Brother Zhivkov, I am aware of the importance of all that. I would like to assure you, our Bulgarian and all other friends, that you should not worry. We will defend this front." He informed us that one of the main points of discussion at the forthcoming extraordinary session of the Congress of their Party will be the work for strengthening the internal front and he will present a report on that matter. (They have decided that this Congress will operate until the end of the war and it will hold sessions whenever necessary. It will convene every four years thereafter).

Our third major task was to find a proper way to emphasize the necessity for strengthening of the unity of the progressive forces all over the Arab world. Right now, thanks to the Israeli aggression, there are good prospects for unification of these forces.

In order to accomplish this goal, we raised this issue many times at the talks with the Presidents. The same issue was being brought up at the meetings of the other comrades with their respective counterparts.

What can I say about the Syrian view on that matter?

I asked Assad about Qadhafi and Libya in general. I told him, "All your countries are united in a Confederation. However, while Syria and Egypt are governed by progressive regimes, the regime in Libya is built on anti-Communist and anti-Soviet basis". He answered: "It is true that he is an anti-Communist. However, comrade Zhivkov, do you think it will be better if he were to be excluded from the Confederation? We consider his staying in the Confederation beneficial because now we are able to influence him and we are actually doing exactly that. He is not allowed always to do whatever he wants. We hope that with time our positive influence on Qadhafi will grow stronger and stronger."

From our private conversations became clear that Assad and probably the whole Syrian leadership were deeply concerned about the situation in Egypt. They were afraid that if the regime in Egypt collapsed, Syria would become isolated because it would remain the only country in the region with a progressive government. They were also concerned that if Egypt reaches a compromise with Israel under American pressure, this will put Syria in isolation. Besides, the economic situation in Syria is somewhat worse than that in Egypt.

What is the opinion of the Egyptian leaders regarding strengthening the all-Arab unity?

During our talks, Sadat expressed his concern on several problems. Actually, the Egyptian Minister of Foreign Affairs at his meeting with comrade Mladenov expressed similar concerns. What were these concerns? They were deeply troubled by the events in Greece and the establishment of a military base by the Sixth American Fleet. They were also worried about the events in Cyprus and Malta. The new situation that has been developing in the Mediterranean region will have a direct impact on Egypt and on the Arab countries in general. Further, the Americans are trying to unify the African countries against Egypt. Recently, Boumedienne [14] established close connections with Morocco and Tunisia and even succeeded in creating rebel units on their territories. Sadat stated bluntly that Boumedienne only pretended to be a left-wing fighter and revolutionary. Actually he has become an American proxy. Algeria recently received a loan of \$1.2 billion from the US, under extremely good conditions. In addition to a natural gas pipeline, the Americans have built there a gas liquefaction plant.

I initiated a talk with Sadat about Sudan, pointing out the importance of Sudan for Egypt. I told him, "I am not aware of your intentions regarding Sudan. I do not know whether you are planning to integrate Sudan in the Confederation in the future. However, Sudan plays a crucial role for consolidation of the progressive regimes in the Arab East, especially considering the preparations for a possible war against Israel". He informed me that the situation in Sudan has been very troublesome. Our visit to Egypt coincided with the dismissal of the Sudanese Vice-President who was also the Minister of People's Defense. Sadat said that earlier he had received a help request from the Revolutionary Council, warning that the situation had become worse and that the fate of the Revolution in Sudan had been under question. He informed us that while he was not able to go there because of the forthcoming Congress, he managed to send the Minister of Foreign Affairs. The Minister informed him, that Nimeiry [15] had fallen under American and Chinese influence. The Chinese have promised him to supply Sudan with weapons and MIG-19 jet fighters, which they produce under Soviet license. Sadat told me, "He is incompetent, inexperienced and thinks that he will be able to consolidate his power with American and Chinese

support". However, he completely agreed with my assessment on the importance of Sudan for Egypt.

That was my overview on the issue of the all-Arab unity. I have informed you of how the Syrian and Egyptian leadership approached the issue and especially what the views of the both Presidents were.

Our fourth major task was to explain the vital importance of the cooperation with the Soviet Union and the socialist camp. In the same time, we tried to expose the Chinese policy toward developing countries and the national liberation movements around the world. At the official meetings with Assad, Sadat and the other governmental officials, we presented in details the assistance provided by the Soviet Union to us after the establishment of the people's government. We explained that in addition to the assistance in the scientific field, the Soviets have given us loans, dispatched experts, etc. I also said, "Previously, the Soviet experts worked on every level in the Bulgarian administration. There were experts in the economic sector, in many factories, in the Ministries. There were many experts in the Ministry of the Internal Affairs. In the Defense Ministry the Soviet experts were present down to the last military unit. Today however there is not a single Soviet expert. We do not need them anymore because we educated and trained our own experts. Our experience proved once again the principle of the Marxism-Leninism that a backward country can catch up with the developed countries by following their steps with a faster pace. My point is that due to the decisive support of the Soviet Union, Bulgaria was able to develop at such a high rate."

Both in Syria and Egypt we openly presented our position that the current Chinese policy is inconsistent and often even treacherous. We gave them the example of the Chinese tactics regarding Vietnam where they constantly created problems. We presented the initial Chinese position and then explained why they changed it later. We did our best to explain in details the disastrous elements of the current Chinese policy, which focuses mainly on breaking the unity of the progressive forces in Syria and breaking the unity of the national liberation movements in the Arab East, Asia, and Latin America.

Comrades, you are aware that in their official statements, Assad and especially Sadat talked clearly, broadly and openly about the importance of the Soviet Union. After his last visit to the Moscow, Sadat gave a very good interview. In his statements during our visit in Egypt, he once again spoke very positively about the Soviet Union. He emphasized the importance of the Soviet assistance.

In Syria Assad also pointed out the importance of the Soviet friendship. He mentioned that they have been cooperating very well with the Soviet Union and will continue to do so in the future.

What did we see in these countries?

We saw the advance of the October Revolution. We felt the enormous impact of the Soviet Union on the transformation around the world and in that region in particular. In Egypt, the Asuan Dam is almost completed and it will begin operation soon. This is a historic event. The same can be said for the construction of the Dam on the Euphrates River in Syria. Both dams have been designed by Soviet experts, built with Soviet loans by Soviet constructors. There are 900-1000 Soviet workers at the dam on the Euphrates River. We had a meeting with their manager.

What does this mean for both countries?

As a result of the construction of the dam, the problem with the electricity supply in

Egypt will be resolved. The irrigated land will increase by 1/3. There is no land without irrigation in Egypt. Actually, Egypt is the Nile River. Without the Nile the country will cease to exist. The construction of those dams is a historical event indeed both for electricity and for agriculture. The dam on the Euphrates River will irrigate 8 million decares. On this land they harvest two, sometimes even three crops on average.

In general, today the advance of the Great October and the advance of the Soviet Union can be seen everywhere. I do not even want to go into both countries' military. Obviously, all those transformations will have positive impact on the public opinion. We were received wholeheartedly indeed. Certainly, we are aware that this reception was not directed only to us, even though Bulgaria has earned great respect there. Even the Minister of Agriculture, who accompanied us, told me, "Comrade Zhivkov, although I had some expectations, I did not expect that your influence in Egypt was that strong." I answered, "It is not my influence what you see. People are awakened by the July Revolution and they expect you to complete the Revolution." Those people did not go out to see us. I saw the TV documentary about our visit. It is a pity that it did not cover the enthusiastic crowds welcoming us. Actually, that was my fault because I cut down 50% of the journalists. Among the radio and TV journalists there was only one cameraman. He could not cover everything. By the way, I realized that the number of journalists should not be reduced. There should have been at least two cameramen to capture the popular mood that day.

In our official statements and speeches we talked about our relations with the Soviet Union in the same manner we were doing it in Bulgaria. The same goes for China.

As far as the bilateral relations are concerned, I must point out that both Syrian and Egyptian officials expressed their willingness and motivation to develop bilateral cooperation. Our program for economic cooperation was fully approved by both countries. Certainly, at the official meeting this program was only briefly outlined. However, later it was presented in details by comrade Tano Tzolov at his meeting with the Chairman of the Council of Ministers of Egypt. In Syria the program was presented in details by comrade Petar Tanchev and comrade Nedev at the Ministry of Economy. Both countries expressed willingness for cooperation in all fields, especially in economy and trade.

We now have extremely favorable conditions for development of our bilateral cooperation with both Egypt and Syria. Immediately after our official talks in Egypt their officials instructed all the respective institutions to start planning broad cooperation with Bulgaria. We saw the change while we were still there. There was a group of Bulgarian managers who told comrade Tzolov that the negotiations with their counterparts were going pretty well.

Comrades, our agriculture is highly respected in Syria, Egypt and in the region as a whole. They opened and finished each meeting with the issue of agriculture. They described our agriculture in such a nice way that we were left speechless. They told us, "You have made a great leap in the field of agriculture." And I answered, "We are hearing both from friends and enemies that our agriculture is doing pretty well. However, we are never satisfied. Now we are preparing a CC BCP Plenum, which once again will cover the agriculture." My point is that our agriculture is highly respected. They told us many times that they were ready for broad cooperation in the field of agriculture.

When I visited Egypt for the first time, I was supposed to visit mainly some historical sights, a factory and a scientific institute. My impression from the agricultural regions was somewhat superficial. This time however we visited regions where new land was cultivated. We visited the Nile delta, which traditionally has been the strongest agricultural region. Then, at my meeting with Sadat, the Vice-President and the Prime Minister, I told said, "Your agriculture is crying for socialism, collectivization,

specialization and mechanization. If you decide to follow this path, in the near future there will be no better agriculture in the world than yours." Comrades, believe me, the conditions there are wonderful. I told them, "In our country we are creating artificially in greenhouses these conditions that you here have naturally. We are investing huge amounts of money, we are building greenhouses and still we can harvest just one crop. Your agriculture is a natural greenhouse — it is affected neither by drought, nor by hail and frost. On average, you harvest two crops annually, sometimes even three. You have excellent conditions for complex mechanization. You can plan your production with only small surplus or deficit. In Bulgaria, like in the every other country except Egypt, this is impossible." When I visited Cairo for the first time, I remember that some precipitation was just starting to fall. People were very happy and started to cheer: "Rain, rain." I was thinking, "You should come to Bulgaria to see what real rain is." There were some diseases on the plants in Egypt, but they were aware of the problem and knew how to deal with it.

At the meeting, all three of them said in one voice: "It was very good that we appointed Kabali for a Minister. He spent two years in your country and he will be able to introduce your experience in our agriculture." However I warned them, "You should not start immediately with agricultural complexes because farmers are conservative people. They want to see, touch and feel the innovation. If they don't feel it in their stomach, nothing can persuade them. You have taken however the right way — the way to cooperation and socialist development of agriculture". They again answered as one, "We agree, we are ready for broad range of cooperation. We would like to sign an Agreement with you". Later Sadat told me, "Comrade Zhivkov, you do not have to build greenhouses in your country. You should come here and cultivate as much land as you want". When comrade Valkan Shopov [16] visited Iran, he had a meeting with the Prime Minister who told him, "We sent people to study agricultural development in some socialist and some capitalist countries. They reported that Bulgarian agriculture is the best. And we decided to introduce your experience. We would like to establish cooperation in the field. Let us sign an Agreement for cooperation for the next 15-20 years."

Comrades, we had a discussion in Politburo about that. Since our agriculture has earned such a good reputation in the Arab East and since those countries are willing to cooperate with us, we should examine once again the possibilities for increased production of agricultural machinery. For example, when I was in Egypt they asked us to construct two poultry farms. If we construct them and if they operate well, which is exactly what we should do, can you imagine how this cooperation will spread out across the entire Arab East and Africa? We should also consider the possibility to provide assistance in certain types of machinery. First, we have to develop the technologies for them, either alone or in cooperation with others. For example, we have specialized in the canning industry. Since we have enormous technological capacity, we can export machines and equipment for preserving their produce. We have even greater expertise in irrigation systems. Certainly, we don't have to limit our economic cooperation with these countries only to agriculture. In the proposed Program we plan to establish broad range of cooperation. They generally agreed.

Comrades, the current levels of trade with Egypt and Syria are unsatisfactory — neither in terms of sheer volume, nor in political terms. Trade is done somehow chaotically — people go there, offer their products and sale them. There is no overarching concept. Therefore, we decided in Politburo to come up with a concept. We recently dispersed our efforts to many other countries. Apparently, in the Arab East we have to concentrate on Egypt and Syria. As for the other countries, we should cooperate as much as we can. In Asia we have to concentrate on India and Bangladesh, etc. We are now working on these issues, directing our integration, economic cooperation and trade to specific regions in the developing world.

(...)

We evaluate our visit to Egypt and Syria as successful and, to some extent, useful and profitable.

Comrades, our Party and the general public have already been informed about our visit. Therefore, my report here was meant only for the people present at this meeting.

With that, I would like to end.

Thank you for your attention.

/continuous applause/

CHAIRMAN PENCHO KUBADINSKI:

Any questions regarding comrade Zhivkov's report?

No, there none.

The joint meeting is asked to adopt the following resolution:

RESOLUTION

of the BCP Central Committee,  
the State Council, and the Council of Ministers,  
of the PR of Bulgaria

The Central Committee of the Bulgarian Communist Part, the State Council, and the Council of Ministers of the PR of Bulgaria have acquainted themselves with the report presented by comrade Todor Zhivkov, First Secretary of the BCP Central Committee and Chairman of the State Council of the PR of Bulgaria, regarding his visits to the Syrian Arab Republic and the Arab Republic of Egypt,

AND ADOPTED THE FOLLOWING RESOLUTION:

Endorse and highly appreciate the results achieved from the talks, meetings and negotiations held between comrade Todor Zhivkov and the attending comrades with Presidents Anwar Sadat and Hafiz El Assad and with the other Egyptian and Syrian Party and State leaders.

Express their confidence that the visits have created favorable conditions for further development of the Bulgarian-Egyptian and the Bulgarian-Syrian friendship and cooperation.

Confirm once again our position to support the struggle of the Arab people for elimination of the consequences of Israeli aggression on the basis of full and unconditional implementation of the resolutions adopted by the Security Council and the General Assembly.

Condemn the US policy encouraging the militaristic circles in Israel and express the determination of the PR Bulgaria to continue in the future to provide its fraternal assistance to the peoples of the Arab countries in their just struggle for national independence and peace.

Recommend to the relevant Party and State institutions, as well as to the public organizations to continue their active work for comprehensive development of our relations with the Arab Republic of Egypt, Syrian Arab Republic and the other Arab countries; for development of the relations between the Bulgarian Communist Party and the Arab Socialist Union in Egypt and the Arab Socialist Party Ba'ath in Syria, for the sake of their common goals in the struggle against imperialism and for peace and social progress.

I would like to ask the comrades who agree with this draft to vote. Is there anyone who disagrees? No, there is no one. Anyone to abstain? No, none. The resolution is approved.

Allow me on your behalf to extend my gratitude to comrade Todor Zhivkov for his excellent report. We are deeply convinced that each one of his visits abroad is an important contribution to the cause of Bulgaria and to the cause of peace and socialism in the whole world. Let us wish him health and strength to continue in the future to present our country abroad in the same manner.

/continuous applause/

With that, our joint meeting is over.

In ten minutes, the meeting of the Central Committee of the Party will begin. Only the CC members and candidate-members should stay.

1 . Kubadinski, Pencho (1918 -1995) Member of CC BCP Politburo (1966-1989), Deputy Prime Minister (1962-1974), President of the Fatherland Front (1974-1989)

2 . Zhivkov, Todor (1911 - 1998) First Secretary (1954 - 1981), Secretary General (1981 - 1989) of the CC BCP, Prime Minister (1962 - 1971), Chairman of the State Council of Bulgaria (1971 - 1989). Under home arrest (1990 - 1996).

3 . Sadat, Anwar al (1918 - 1981) Vice-President (1964 - 1966, 1969 - 1970) and President (1970 B 1981) of Egypt. Assassinated by an Islamic extremist.

4. Nixon, Richard Milhous (1913 - 1994) - The 37th President of the USA (1969 - 1974)

5. Qadhafi, Muammar Abu Minyar al-, Col. (B. 1942) Leader of Libya since 1970.

6. Assad, Hafez al, Gen. (1928 - 2000) Minister of defense and commander in chief of the air force of Syria (1965-1970); Leader of Syrian Ba'ath Party, President of Syria (1971 - 2000).

7. Sedki, Aziz (B. 1920) - Prime Minister of Egypt (1972-1973).

8. Tellalov, Konstantin (B. 1925) - Secretary of the CC BCP for International Relations (1972-1976), Bulgarian Ambassador to Canada (1976-1978), Venezuela (1978-1980), Guyana (1981-1982), and Representative to the UN in Geneva (1982-1988).

9. Abadjiev, Ivan (B. 1930) - First Secretary of the Dimitrov's Union of the Communist Youth, CC BCP Candidate member, Ambassador to Romania (1974-1976), Ambassador to Tunisia (1976-1983).

10. Tanchev, Petar - Chairman of the Bulgarian Agrarian and People's Union (BAPU).

11. Nedev, Ivan (1918- ) Minister of Foreign Trade (1971-1977), Ambassador to Poland (1977-1980).

12. Mladenov, Petar (1936 - 2000) - Minister of Foreign Affairs of Bulgaria (1971-1989); Member of Politburo (1974-1989), Secretary General of Central Committee of the Bulgarian Communist Party /from April 1990 Supreme Council of the Bulgarian Socialist Party/ (Nov 1989 - June 1990), President of Bulgaria (Nov 1989 - June 1990).

13. Bakdash (Bagdash), Khalid (1912 -1995) - Syrian Communist Party functionary since 1930s and Secretary General of the Party since mid 1950s until his death. The Communist Party became the second largest legal political party in Syria and an important element of the National Progressive Front after 1972.

14. Boumedienne, Houari [Mohammed Ben Brahim Boukharouba] (1927 - 1978) One of the leaders of FLN, Defense Minister (1962 - 1965), and President (1965 - 1978) of Algeria.

15. Nimeiry, Gaafar, (B. 1930), Major-General - Prime Minister (1969-1976; 1977-1985); Chairman of the Revolutionary Command Council (1969-1971) and President (1971-1985) of Democratic Republic of the Sudan.

16. Shopov, Valkan (1924- ) - First Secretary of the BCP regional committee in the city of Dobrich, Ambassador to Luxemburg (1979-1983).