

May 30, 1967
**Report on the talks of Josif Tito with UAR Ambassador
Abuzeid in Vanga**

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Summary:

Tito and Ambassador Abuzeid discuss events in Egypt and the Middle East.

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Serbo-Croatian

Contents:

- English Translation

Notes

About the talks of the President of the Republic with the Ambassador of the UAR Abuzeid in Vanga, May 30th 1967.

General Secretary of the President of the Republic Comrade Vladimir Popovic was present.

Ambassador Abuzeid relayed President Nasser's greetings to the comrade President and in his name thanked him for the support that the President of the Republic, the government and peoples of Yugoslavia provided to his country. He also informed the Comrade President that the UAR Minister of Defense asked for emergency help from the USSR that they promised when he was in Moscow.

Comrade President was interested in the current situation in the Middle East.

The Ambassador responded that the situation has somewhat improved. The government of the UAR has requested that the UN Security Council holds a meeting. The government of the UAR believes that the real source of the crisis should not be searched for in the Gulf of Aqaba, but in the aggressive actions and in the presence of Israel itself. The UAR will convey all the problems that have accumulated since 1949 to the UN Security Council.

The imperialists were not counting on the solidarity of the Arab states. They believed that the UAR would be isolated. However, the UAR received support from all the Arab states except Libya.

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Even though the situation is somewhat better, the danger is not over. The United States still insists on the freedom of navigation in the Gulf of Aqaba. The western states are taking the same position. France has up until now been neutral, and President Nasser saluted that in his press conference. President Nasser is only asking the United States to be neutral.

Comrade President was interested in knowing whether the Gulf of Aqaba was closed.

The Ambassador said yes. The other night one tanker (it seems it was Liberian) tried to get through the Strait of Tiran. However, because the UAR artillery delivered a warning shot, that tanker turned around.

The question of the Palestinian refugees will also be brought up along with other problems to the Security Council by the government of the UAR.

Comrade President said that the international situation is much worse today than it was two years ago. The Fascist government in Greece rejected the agreement between Greece and the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRJ) on local border traffic. Greece has also concentrated its troops on the Albanian border. According to some reports, some troops have been directed toward the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. When he was told that, Comrade President said that he does not intend to send even one policeman to the Greek border.

The Ambassador noted that it started with Greece, but that the intention is to achieve domination of the entire Mediterranean. Then, he was interested in the relations between the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and Albania.

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Comrade President answered that with Albania we only have good economic relations. The trade in goods accounts for approximately 5 million dollars. Albania is under Chinese influence. However, we could not be indifferent to any threats posed to Albania. We would not allow aggressive action against Albania. Perhaps our relations with Albania will improve; we do have a common enemy.

The Ambassador noted that such an improvement would also be in Albanian interests even though the Albanian leadership might not understand that.

Then the Ambassador gave thanks for Yugoslavia's delivery of corn to his country. Until now, the UAR has received 20,000 tons of corn and is still to receive an additional 30,000 tons. Regarding trade between the two countries, there are difficulties. Central banks are creating difficulties for Yugoslav companies.

Comrade President promised to look into that. While answering the question posed by the Comrade President regarding the harvest, the Ambassador said that the harvest in the UAR was very good this year, even though last winter was particularly harsh. They are especially expecting a good cotton harvest. The good harvest is of great importance to the UAR because they are no longer receiving US wheat. The UAR has received some wheat from the USSR, and it also purchased certain quantities from Argentina, Mexico and Greece.

When asked about Nasser's health, he said that he feels just fine. At the press conference, one of the journalists asked him how he feels compared to how he felt in 1956.

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President Nasser answered: "much better". In any case, the internal situation in the UAR is excellent. The UAR is ready for war as well as for peace. Of course, the UAR does not want war.

Comrade President pointed out the great success of Nasser when he managed to successfully mobilize all the Arab states, except Libya. This is not only about Israel, but about the whole imperialistic plan in that region. Because the UAR is the largest and the strongest Arab state, the imperialists would like to force it to capitulate. If the UAR backs down when faced with their threats and accepts their ultimatums, that would be a horrific defeat. President Nasser has realized that.

Comrade President switched the attention to the events in Greece. Because this is also about seeking to surround Yugoslavia, which remains a thorn in their side. That is not only a threat to Yugoslavia but also to other states on the Mediterranean Sea. The putsch plan was concocted a long time ago. It was in the drawer. It is a NATO plan. Of course, the small member states of NATO, such as Norway, Denmark and others, had nothing to do with it. That was the American NATO plan. The plan has clearly succeeded because every military unit knew exactly what to do. Every commander knew it. And they were trained by Americans.

All of this really upset the small Scandinavian states and now they see what sort of company they are keeping. They see what can happen to anybody who is not ready to follow the imperialist orders.

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We have to be careful in regards to the imperialist plans. We need to secure ourselves. It is a priority to achieve that via political explanations. This is not about explaining what has already happened, but about explanations of what the imperialists are seeking to do next. We need to look into the future. We need to expose them on time. The world public plays an increasingly more important role.

Yugoslavia is for peace, of course, Comrade President continued. She is fighting for peace and does everything to prevent a war. That is what the UAR and the non-aligned states are doing. But the imperialists should not understand that as a sign of weakness, as something that gives them a

license to do whatever they please. We need to draw the line and say: Further you cannot!

Comrade President expressed his satisfaction with President Nasser's skillful approach and the fact that he did not allow them to deceive him. His action is now purely defensive and not aggressive in character. It would not be correct to not leave the remains of the 1956 aggression and not to establish the situation that existed before. Contrary to the imperialist side, which remains a thorn in the body of the Arab world, the UAR is devoted to the peaceful solution of the current tensions. As far as Israel is concerned, it has become clear now that it cannot do anything without the United States. Israel has its boss – the USA.

Ambassador agreed with the Comrade President. He added that the aim of the UAR troop presence is not war. The UAR wants peace, but

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Peace that is based on justice. By concentrating troops, the UAR is seeking to prevent aggression.

Comrade President noted that it was clear to us what was going on. In case of aggression on Syria, how could the UAR allow Israel to enjoy the protection of the peacekeeping troops of the UN! President Nasser acted correctly by asking for the withdrawal of the UNEF [United Nations Emergency Force]. It is good that the UN General Secretary U Thant quickly understand what was going on and ordered the withdrawal of the United Nations troops. For our part, we have already released such an order regarding our continent. U Thant is resented by the western states for doing that. On the other hand, President Nasser did the right thing by asking for the emergency evacuation of the Canadian contingent of the UNEF. Canada is guided by pro-American politics, which is enemy politics regarding the UAR.

Comrade President also mentioned the incident of the UN airplane carrying General Riki. The pilot of the plane was Canadian. Our people think that he informed the Israelis and that is why the plane was intercepted by the Israeli hunter planes. Also aboard Riki's plane was a higher-ranking officer of the UAR. Had the plane been forced to land, the Israelis would have probably kept him and released others. That, of course, is an assumption.

Comrade President praised U Thant's report. The Secretary General has obviously had to express his regret, but the gist of the report was good.

President Nasser also made a clever move by bringing up all the Israel-related problems from the United Nations Security Council.

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The Ambassador answered that by saying that it is the goal of the UAR, to extend the discussion. The government of the UAR wants to reduce the threat of war.

Comrade President highlighted that a very difficult situation would arise if the Israeli troops got into Syrian territory while the UN troops were still in their positions. History will credit President Nasser.

As far as the Strait of Tiran is concerned, Comrade President said that these are the territorial waters of the UAR. No international agreement regulating the navigation through the Strait exists. That is a weak point of the imperialists. The UAR is only fighting for the respect of its own rights. Israel is still in a war-like state against the UAR. Israel damaged the UAR but has never compensated them for that. It is absurd that it is Israel now insisting that the UAR allows weapons to arrive through their territorial waters which will be used against the United Arab Republic by Israel.

Then Comrade President pointed out that President Nasser has many great concerns. He is happy

that President Nasser will come to our country on vacation this August.

The Ambassador hopes that the situation will improve by then. Other than that, President Nasser really needs a vacation.

Comrade President also touched upon the news about the conflict between Ethiopia and Sudan. He said that he will find out what is going on there by asking Emperor Haile Sellassie. It seems like somebody is maneuvering there too to cause trouble.

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The Ambassador noted that some have been claiming that the UAR is seeking good relations with Somalia because President Nasser wants to dominate the Red Sea.

Comrade President added that it is clear where this is coming from. The British do not want to leave the Gulf of Aden.....

As far as some unsolved questions are concerned, it is better to seek their solution later. Otherwise, we could have further escalations. It is necessary to talk; personal contacts are needed. We need to see what is a priority and what is not.

The Americans have got themselves into a dead end in Vietnam, Comrade President continued. Things are not going the way they planned despite the huge number of forces they have thrown into Vietnam and the high number of casualties they are suffering. The Americans are therefore interested in "cooking up a stew" in other places, which would allow them to further escalate the situation in Vietnam.

At the end Comrade President said that he is convinced that President Nasser will know, just as he knew before, to assess the situation well and to succeed in keeping what he accomplished, and returning what he has lost. That will increase the respect toward the UAR as a peace-loving state both among friends as well as among other states.

Comrade President politely asked the Ambassador to send his warmest regards and wishes to President Nasser.

Submitted to comrades:

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Highly classified archives of the President of the Republic