

**June 17, 1967**

**Attachment, 'Preliminary Findings Regarding the  
Reasons for the United Arab Republic's and the Arab  
States' Defeat**

**Citation:**

"Attachment, 'Preliminary Findings Regarding the Reasons for the United Arab Republic's and the Arab States' Defeat", June 17, 1967, Wilson Center Digital Archive, National Archives Prague/UV KSC Predsednictvo 1966-1971/02\_, sv. 37, aj. 37, b. 28. Obtained by Jan Koura and translated for CWIHP by David Růžička.

<https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/144973>

**Summary:**

Detailed Czechoslovak report explaining the United Arab Republic's defeat in the Six-Day War.

**Original Language:**

Czech

**Contents:**

Translation - English

2400

[Attachment IV] /a

Preliminary findings regarding the reasons for the United Arab Republic's and the Arab states' defeat and some motives for measures within the sphere of military policy seen from the perspective of military experts.

[...]

#### 1. Reasons for the United Arab Republic's military defeat

The United Arab Republic's and the other Arab states' military defeat was a result of the following main reasons:

a) Israel used and exploited the element of surprise perfectly. Not only the Arab and socialist countries and their intelligence services were surprised by the crisis leading to an armed conflict, but apparently, even the capitalist countries - with the exception of the USA and Great Britain;

b) During the period prior to the aggression, joint action was achieved among the Arab states due to the threat of an Israeli attack; yet, there were no further military-political measures taken, neither has a power concentration of the forces been achieved that would correspond to the overall options the Arab states had;

c) Neither prior to the aggression nor during the course of the warfare has there been a joint political command nor a joint military command and apparently, there was also no joint operational plan;

d) Severe insufficiencies occurred within the country's operational preparation for war and in evaluating the adversary's power and the options of one's own forces, in the operational preparation of the commanders, within command organization and in the management of operations during the conflicts.

e) The armed forces haven't been ordered to be on the necessary level of combat readiness, with the air force's extraordinary measures of combat readiness having been abolished shortly before the assault.

Ad a) The element of surprise worked especially well because in spite of the fact that both sides had been watching each others military activity

- Israel's possible response towards the military-political measures taken by the Arab states, especially the blockade of the Gulf of Aqaba or the threat of Israel being surrounded by armed forces has not been sufficiently evaluated;

- The motives and the significance of personnel shifts within the Israeli government and Israel's consultations with the United States and Great Britain haven't been properly paid attention to;

- The intelligence didn't discover that Israel was preparing for an imminent attack.

Due to the military measures gradually taken by both parties, intelligence evaluated the situation as serious, the possibility of a conflict emerging was not excluded, yet it was presupposed that it would not break out and that the superpowers would manage to prevent a war clash and make both parties to opt for a diplomatic solution.

The reason why the Czechoslovak military intelligence didn't discover Israel's real intentions and the time when the attack would start is to be looked for among these factors:

The Middle East region wasn't regarded as an important area as far as intelligence services are concerned, which was especially due to the Czechoslovak military intelligence's main focus and also due to limited personnel and budget. Although it had been pointed out that it was important to monitor this area as one of the possible sources of war, one relied especially on information from allies. The Czechoslovak People's Army has sent its own personnel merely to the United Arab Republic and to Algeria. There are no Czechoslovak People's Army military intelligence bodies in the other Arab states (According to our information, there has been only Soviet and Polish intelligence personnel in Israel). Taking into consideration the friendly relations the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic has towards the Arab states, there had no intelligence network been built up against the United Arab Republic and Algeria, and information was collected from other areas, from unaware informants and some from official representatives from the United Arab Republic.

- There are currently 174 Czechoslovak military and civil experts working as teachers of the Military Technical College. As far as their character is concerned, these workers correspond to the specialist and political requirements. Their management was split up between the military academy, the three administrations - the Ministry of National Defense administration and the Ministry of National Defense/Main Technical Administration, and they weren't assigned any task of gathering news or influencing the construction of Arab armed forces. The Arab side intentionally limited the experts' activities only to educational issues, rejecting individual initiatives from our experts labelling these as interference into internal affairs;

- Specialists from the United Arab Republic and the Syrian Arab Republic that had been taught even several years within the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic and who were, apart from the education, also influenced by intelligence information, haven't been assigned to higher posts that would correspond to the specialist education they acquired after their return to the United Arab Republic, and this in turn made it more difficult to make use of their specialist qualities and political influence;

- Due to the main focus of intelligence services, the intelligence's technical equipment (radio survey) was oriented to the Central European war area; whereas the Mediterranean or the Middle East had not been monitored with these means prior to the outbreak of the conflict;

- Taking into consideration the intelligence focus and due to limited staff, the Mediterranean has neither been systematically monitored even within the information sector and information was processed only when needed.

Before the aggression started, information on military measures was being handed over mutually among the Warsaw Pact member countries. Apart from the general findings regarding a growing danger that was proven by the intelligence administration, there were two reports gathered via own resources and sent on 3.6.1967 that were signaling a deteriorating situation as well as the threat of an imminent aggressive act (from the military police in Algiers and Cairo), yet due to the mode of action for communication with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs valid for Saturdays and Sunday, and due to the fact that there was no special alert signaled, the General Staff/Intelligence Service received this information with delay (5.6. at 9.00 (CET), which was 2 hours after the conflict had started)

Lately, the issue whether military intelligence in the Middle East area was necessary and important, had been scrutinized with some places expressing their doubts regarding its usefulness and whether it was justified.

Ad b) In spite of the fact that the Arab states' activities were united on a basic level, there apparently was no joint operational intent nor were there alternative plans for implementation. Although the Arab states had the option of creating a vast manifold superiority of power on all fronts, the Arab ground forces ready for combat at the time when the war operations started and those from Israel were in a 1:1 ratio, tanks and artillery merely in a 1,4:1 ratio. The other Arab states' forces intended to support were deployed too late, slowly and in an insufficient quality.

Ad c) The insufficient political leadership manifested itself clearly especially through the inconsistent approach when adopting the call from the Security Council to cease fire.

Ad d) The command within the United Arab Republic Army was split into independent units (ground forces, military, navy and air force) and individual regions; the General Staff's coordinating effect was significantly toned down.

The command had no sufficient communication line so that e.g. the ground forces on the Sinai Peninsula hadn't been informed on time about the start of the air campaign and were surprised by the Israeli troops attacking. This fact contributed to an overall unorganized character of combat activities. Also the soldiers' being generally hardly able to manage more sophisticated combat technology had a negative impact and consequently, it wasn't possible to sufficiently use the options they had.

The course of action demonstrated that the Israel Armed Forces Command carried out all operational actions necessary to prepare for war, brought the armed forces into full combat readiness and lead the operations with all modern means; surprising attack, gaining air superiority, decisive attack by the ground forces including paratroops, destroying the main grouping of Arab troops and a perfect material and

technical supply system.

Ad e) Especially within the air force, the gross negligence of combat readiness became evident, as the previously maintained combat readiness was recalled on 4.6. in the evening.

## 2. Intelligence activity during the conflict

When the aggression started, the intelligence administration of the Czechoslovak People's army very rapidly activated all its forces and means in order to carry out extraordinary tasks resulting from the situation:

- It extended its activities of radio survey to the Mediterranean and the Middle East (catching the American 6th Fleet's radio communication, the air traffic service, broadcasting from Israel and the United Arab Republic);

- In order to manage the extended scope of information tasks, it assigned a sufficient troop number for the operation, yet at the expense of its basic activities that were in the center of intelligence interest;

- The Intelligence Service proposed the other Warsaw Pact countries intelligence administrations (with the exception of Romania) proposed to mutually exchange important news. The first report listing the D-1 situation was sent in the early morning hours D-2; the Czechoslovak Intelligence Service received the first summarizing report from the allies on 15.00 D-2. The Intelligence Service depended exclusively on its own resources throughout the course of D-1. Apart from daily reports, the Intelligence Service didn't receive any other more important information throughout the whole course of the armed conflict - with the exception of two reports from Warsaw. On the other hand, important reports were handed over even in addition to regular reports and the most significant findings were discussed with the USSR and GDR intelligence administrations and with the supervisory general in the Polish army;

- The cooperation with the Ministry of the Interior was outlined in D-1 and carried out since D-2 through regular exchange of reports. The reports from the Ministry of the Interior were handing in military-political information and to a lesser extent information about the state of affairs of operations.

In spite of the limited number of reports from reliable sources and in spite of having to use data from press agencies to a large extent, the Czechoslovak People's Army's command has been sufficiently provided with qualified information from D-1 onwards and gradually, informing the troops in a differentiated manner has also been provided for. The fundamental intelligence aim, i.e. monitoring the adversary's activity in the area of the Central European war area was thus gradually being fulfilled simultaneously in the adequate scope.

Conclusions and some proposals for measures

### a) Within the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic

- becoming entirely aware of the place and the influence of military factors when creating an effective aid concept for developing countries that would entirely correspond to the general line adopted by the countries of the socialist block and furthermore, the specific aims and conditions of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic were reflected to a maximum extent; providing for the Ministry of Defense's actively participating in setting up a concept regarding the developing countries, especially in crisis areas;

- focus especially on the aid for the United Arab Republic and the Syrian Arab Republic within Middle East. Yet fundamentally changing the hitherto practice where carrying out this duty mainly pertained to the Ministry of Foreign Trade. Providing for the army and the military experts having sufficient influence within the Ministry of National Defense on the use of the military aid in favor of progressively building up armed forces, and also fulfilling intelligence service tasks. Improve the political, specialist and information preparedness of military experts and significantly improving their management;

- experience has demonstrated, that within crisis areas (Southeast Asia, Arab World, Cuba etc.) we can't rely on coalition intelligence and, if national interests require us to do so, we have to be able to independently provide for this information for the leadership within the party and within the governmental bodies and for the

command. To do so, it's indispensable to:

- actively operate directly in the crisis areas (in the Middle East, also directly in Israel) and reevaluate the methods of work of all intelligence services, including the provision of fast response and timely communication carried out along the Ministry of Foreign Affairs communication line;
- establishing one's own information network in all countries where intelligence bodies are (or will be) located - especially in the United Arab Republic, in Syria, Algeria and Cuba in order to raise objectivity and operational readiness; amend the organization of radio survey to enable it to monitor basic networks in crisis areas;
- as far as information within the Ministry of National Department/General Staff is concerned - provide for a permanent and qualified evaluation of the findings from the area of potential sources of war and thus, preventing irregularities or improvisations in this sense;
- establishing a centralized information and conceptual body for several departments would profoundly help in putting through most of the listed measures - the idea to establish such a body has already been proposed by the military administration;
- insist on sending our technical personnel together with upcoming military technology deliveries so that this personnel provides for the delivered technology being perfectly mastered by the Arab commanders and soldiers and also to provide for our technology demonstrating its superb technical parameters;
- putting more emphasis on the political and information attitude when selecting military experts to be sent to the developing countries and to provide for them being managed centrally by the Ministry of National Defense;
- provide for a joint approach of the Ministry of National Defense, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Foreign Trade and the Ministry of the Interior towards the developing countries and the foundation of this would be the political concept of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic regarding these areas. Thus especially military technology aid cannot be carried out purely on a commercial basis;
- as far as political intelligence is concerned (referring to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of the Interior), stressing the area of military considering its importance within foreign policy in general - which is of particularly high importance in developing countries. When sending diplomatic workers to developing countries where soldiers exert key state functions, focusing on their preparation and also on military issues with the aim to establish and maintain contacts with these officials more easily.

b) The course of events during the conflict in the Middle East demonstrated that socialist countries:

- Are not sufficiently aware of the situation within the area in question in spite of showing effort in the progressive Arab states;
- Their sufficient influence on the military and foreign policy that would correspond to their engagement within these countries isn't provided for;
- They have neither joint plans nor joint proceedings for preventing and facing crises within these areas which is why they are not able to properly react and prevent a development unfavourable to them.

That's why following appears necessary within the scope of socialist countries

- Providing for an as profound and as objective multilateral awareness of the relationships within the crisis areas as possible - through a permanent monitoring and a coordinated use of all sources applied by the socialist countries (including military intelligence) in question, providing for an appropriate influence on the military and foreign policy within these countries through an operational exchange and joint procedure;
- Set up a joint analysis of experience resulting from the Arab-Israeli conflict;
- Work out a joint action plan for preventing and facing crises using non-military and military means. This task is to be solved within the Political Advisory Committee of the Warsaw Pact Countries.

## An Overview

Of the hitherto deliveries and aid for Arab states in the period 1956-1966 and a comparison of the technology the Arab states had from the socialist countries with Israeli technology

Overall volume of deliveries and aid provided to the Arab states with the period 1956-1966:

□□□	
□□□□	
Type of material	
amount / unit	
UAR	
SyAR □□□	
□□□□	
Infantry weapons	
pt.	
40 500	
□□□	
□□□□	
Artillery	
pt.	
250	
□□□	
□□□□	
Tanks and self-propelled cannons	
pt.	
414	
36 □□□	
□□□□	
Jets	
pt.	
270	
30 □□□	
□□□□	
Value in CZK trade parity	
CZK Mio. trade parity	
1 500	
500 □□ □□	

## Overview of flight personnel training

### a) For the United Arab Republic

The following numbers of people have been hitherto trained in the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic

71 MIG-15 pilots

16 pilots for the IL-28 bomber

6 pilots for the L-29 jets

3 weapons officers

15 navigators for the IL-28

15 board marksmen  
119 technical personnel  
27 other command specializations - air-force

Apart from this, the following number has been trained in the United Arab Republic thanks to the Czechoslovak experts:

35 MIG-17 pilots  
78 technical personnel  
123 other specialists (doctors-specialists, command - air-force)

b) For the Syrian Arab Republic

18 L-29- pilots  
53 servicemen-specialists  
37 other specialists

Apart from this, the following number has been trained in the Syrian Arab Republic thanks to the Czechoslovak experts:

11 Chipman-pilots  
9 flight trainers  
55 technical IL-29 personnel  
48 other specialists (including paratroopers)