Text of Nasser's Speech Reviewing Course of War and Announcing His Plan to Re...
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Text of Nasser's Speech Reviewing Course of War and Announcing His Plan to Resign as President

CAIRO, June 9 (Reuters)—Following, in translation from the Arabic, is the text of President Gamal Abdel Nasser's broadcast today:

Brothers, we have been accustomed together in times of victory and in times of stress, in the sweet hours and in the bitter hours, to speak with open hearts and to tell each other the facts, confident that through this means alone we can always find our sound direction however low the light.

We cannot hide from ourselves the fact that we have met with a grave setback in the last few days. But I am confident that all of us can in a short time overcome our difficult situation. To do this we shall need much patience, much wisdom and moral courage, and ability for devoted work.

Brothers, before that we should look at what happened in order to follow developments and the way they proceeded until they reached this stage.

We all know how the crisis began in the first half of last May. There was an enemy plan to invade Syria, and the statements by his politicians and his military commanders declared that frankly. The evidence was ample.

The sources of our Syrian brothers and our own reliable information were categorical on this.

Even our friends in the Soviet Union told the parliamentary delegation which was visiting Moscow early last month that there was a calculated intention. It was our duty not to accept this in silence. In addition to its being a question of Arab brotherhood, it was also a matter of national security. Who starts with Syria will finish with Egypt.

So our armed forces moved to our frontiers.

Following this came the withdrawal of the United Nations forces, then the return of our forces to the Sharm el Sheikh position which commands the Tiran Strait and which the Israeli enemy used as one of the results of the tripartite aggression on us in 1956.

The passage of the enemy flag in front of our forces was intolerable and so were other matters connected with the most precious aspirations of the Arab nation.

Estimates 'Were Precise'

Our estimates of the enemy's strength were precise. They showed us that our armed forces had reached a level of equipment and training at which they were capable of deterring and repelling the enemy.

We realized that the possibility of an armed clash existed, and we accepted the risk. There were several factors before us, nationalist, Arab and international. These included a message from President Lyndon Johnson of the United States which was handed to our ambassador in Washington on May 26 asking us for restraint and not to be the first to open fire. Otherwise we would face serious consequences.

The same night the Soviet Ambassador asked to see me urgently at 3:30 A.M. and told me that the Soviet Government strongly requested we should not be the first to open fire.

On the morning of last Monday, June 5, the enemy struck. If we say now it was a stronger blow than we had expected we must say at the same time, and with assurance, that it was much stronger than his resources allowed.

Also, British aircraft raided in broad daliyght positions on the Syrian and Egyptian front, in addition to operations by a number of American aircraft reconnoitering some of our positions. The inevitable result was that our land forces, fighting a most violent and brave battle in the open desert, found that their air cover was inadequate in face of decisive superiority.

It can be said without fear or exaggeration that the enemy was operating an air force three times its normal strength.

This was also faced by the forces of the Jordanian Arab Army, which fought a valiant battle under the command of King Hussein who, to be just, and honest to him, adopted a fine attitude. I confess that my heart bled as I followed the battles of his gallant army in Jerusalem and other positions on the western coast [of the Dead Sea] on a night in which the enemy and the powers plotting with him massed at least 40 aircraft to operate over the Jordanian Army.

It was clear from the very first there were other forces behind him which came to settle their accounts with the Arab nationalist movement.

Tells of 'Surprises'

There were significant surprises:

1. The enemy we expected to come from the east and north came from the west. This showed he had facilities beyond his own resources and exceeding the estimate of his strength.

2. The enemy attacked, at one go, all the military and civil airfields in the United Arab Republic. This meant he was relying on something more than his normal strength to protect his skies from any retaliation from us. The enemy was also fighting on other Arab fronts with other assistance.

3. The evidence of imperialist collusion with the enemy is clear. It sought to benefit from the lesson of the former open collusion of 1956, this time concealing itself cunningly. What is now established is that American and British aircraft carriers were off the enemy's shores, helping his war effort.

There were magnificent and honorable battles.

The Algerian people and their great leader, Houari Boumediene, gave without reservation to the battle.

The Iraqi people and their loyal leader, Abdel Rahman Arif, also gave without reservation.

The Syrian Army fought heroically, supported by the forces of the great Syrian people and under the leadership of their nationalist government.

The peoples and government of the Sudan, Kuwait, Yemen, Lebanon, Tunisia and Morocco adopted honorable attitudes.

'Attitude of Manhood'

The peoples of the entire Arab nation, without exception throughout the Arab homeland, struck an attitude of manhood and dignity, an attitude of determination, an attitude of insistence that Arab rights will not be lost nor will they dwindle, and that the war in defense of them continues whatever the sacrifices and setbacks along the road of the inevitable and definite victory.

There were great nations outside the Arab world which gave us moral support which cannot be estimated, but the conspiracy was bigger and stronger. The enemy's concentration on the Egyptian front, to which it pushed all its main force of armor and infantry, was backed by an air superiority the dimensions of which I have already described to you.

The nature of the desert did not permit a full defense, particularly with the enemy's air superiority. I realize that the development of the armed battle may not be favorable to us. I tried with others to use all resources of Arab strength. Arab petroleum played its part. The Suez Canal played its part. And there is still a major role required of Arabs everywhere and I am fully confident [we] will be able to perform it.

Fell Back to Second Line

Our armed forces in Sinai had to evacuate the first defense line and fought their terrible battles with tanks and aircraft along the second defense line.

Then we responded to the cease-fire resolution following assurances in the recent Soviet draft resolution to the Security Council and following declarations by the French Government that no one could achieve a territorial expansion as a result of the recent aggression, and in view of international public opinion, particularly in Asia and Africa, which watches our position and feels the ugliness of the world-dominant powers which pounced on us.

We now have several urgent tasks before us. The first task is to remove the remnants of this aggression against us and adopt, with the Arab nation, an attitude of firmness and steadfastness.

In spite of the setback, the Arab nation with all its energies and resources, is able to insist on removing the remnants of the aggression.

The second task is for us to learn the lesson of the setback.

In this connection there are three vital facts:

1. The destruction of imperialism in the Arab world leaves Israel with its own strength alone. Whatever the conditions and however long they may last, the abilities of the Arabs are greater and more effective.

2. The reorientation of Arab interests in the service of Arab rights is a primary safeguard.

The U.S. Sixth Fleet was moving with Arab petroleum. There are Arab bases which were forcibly, and despite the will of the peoples, placed at the service of aggression.

3. What is now needed is a unified voice by the entire Arab nation. That is a safeguard for which there is no substitute in these conditions.

We now reach an important point in this soul-searching by asking ourselves: Does this mean we do not assume responsibility for the consequences of this setback?

I tell you truthfully that I am ready to assume the entire responsibility. I have taken a decision with which I want you all to help me.

'Return to the Ranks'

I have decided to give up completely and finally every official post and every political role and to return to the ranks of the public to do my duty with them like every other citizen.

The forces of imperialism imagine that Abdel Nasser is their enemy. I want it to be clear to them that it is the entire Arab nation and not Gamal Abdel Nasser.

The forces hostile to the Arab nationalist movement always try to picture it as Abdel Nasser's empire. That is not true, for the hope for Arab unity began before Gamal Abdel Nasser. It will remain after Gamal Abdel Nasser.

I have always told you that it is the nation which survives. Whatever his [Mr. Nasser's] contribution to the causes of his homeland, he is but an expression of a popular will and is not the creator of that will.

In accordance with Article 110 of the Provisional Constitution, promulgated in March, 1964, I have asked my colleague, friend, and brother, Zakariya Mohieddine, to take over the post of President of the Republic and to carry out the constitutional provisions.

Consequently, and after this decision, I place all I have at his disposal in dealing with the critical situation through which our people are passing.

I am not thereby liquidating the revolution. The revolution is not the monopoly of one generation of revolutionaries. I am proud of the contribution by this generation of revolutionaries.

It has brought about the evacuation of British Imperialism and the independence of Egypt. It has defined its [Egypt's] Arab character, fought the policy of zones of influence in the Arab world, led the socialist revolution and brought about a profound change in the Arab way of life.

It has affirmed the people's control of their resources and the product of their national action.

'Recovered Suez Canal'

It recovered the Suez Canal and laid down the bases of industrial build-up in Egypt, built the [Aswan] high dam to turn the arid desert green.

It has extended generating power networks all over the northern Nile Valley and extracted petroleum resources after a long wait.

More important than all of this, it has placed the workers in the leadership of political action. They are always the source for new leaderships carrying the banner of the patriotic and nationalist struggle phase after phase, building up socialism and winning victories.

My confidence is unlimited in this leadership alliance of national action—the peasants, the workers, the intelligentsia and the nationalist capitalism.

Its unity and cohesion and the creative interaction within the framework of this unity is able to achieve, through earnest and firm action, as I have said more than once, a gigantic miracle for this country so that it may be a force for itself, the Arab nation, the national revolution and world peace based on justice.

Glorious Heroism of Troops

The sacrifices made by our people, their civic spirit throughout the crisis, the glorious heroism inscribed by the officers and men of our armed forces with their blood, will remain an eternal flame in our history and a great inspiration for the future and

The people were magnificent as usual, noble as usual, having faith, and truthful and loyal.

The members of our armed forces were an honorable example of the Arab man everywhere. They defended the grains of sand in the desert to the last drop of their blood. In the sky, despite the enemy superiority, they were legends of sacrifice and courage, going honorably to do their duty as nobly as they can. This is the hour of action and not the hour of sadness.

It is an attitude of lofty ideals and not of egoism or sentiments of the heart. My heart is with you and I want all your hearts to be with me. May God be with all of us, a hope in our hearts, light, and a guidance. Peace and the mercy of God be upon you.

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