

July 18, 1967

János Kádár's speech at a HSWP Political Committee meeting on military support for 'friendly' Arab countries in 1967

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Summary:

In this speech, János Kádár supports giving aid to "friendly" Middle East Countries, however he requests that more information be obtained from the recipient countries and that the aid be divided into "prompt assistance" and "long-term assistance."

Original Language:

Hungarian

Contents:

Translation - English

Comrade JÁNOS KÁDÁR:

I support Comrade Fock's proposal but I would also like to make a few comments.

The first thing I would like to take into account regarding this aid is that in such a situation the problem, the trouble for the country involved is that actually they cannot assess what they precisely need in terms of military technology and in other areas. This is why we have this request, which is quite like a "circular" which includes a few headwords addressed to different countries, asking everybody for money without knowing the situation. There is no way to know how this can lead to any effective assistance. I raised the following at the meeting: first of all we need to provide assistance for them to assess their actual needs, and if they are unable to do that, perhaps the Soviet Union could help them since they know exactly what these countries really need.

The next issue concerns our negotiating methodology and the document we submit. I would like to propose that if we decide to submit a document to the Politburo and the Council of Ministers we should help them comprehend the situation by not including anything in this document that does not belong there. This appendix will mean nothing whatsoever to the Council of Ministers. This is not the business of the Politburo or the Council of Ministers. It's the business of military officials. The best negotiating method is to say: here is the amount we propose as non-refundable military aid, or this is the amount we propose as long-term loan ... etc. And if they want to give some kind of additional information they can include the kinds of military equipment they need, and that's it. And we used to discuss these issues confidentially, and if they are not the business of the Politburo or the Council of Ministers, then these bodies simply should not be burdened with these issues.

My other comment: we should use the method suggested by Comrade Fock, that is, we should separate military, technological aid and other types of economic assistance. I would also set up two groups. One of them would include prompt assistance (supply of medication and food), while the other would include long-term assistance for recovering production, etc.

Another comment: I always propose - on the basis of certain experience - that we should not fully exhaust all our resources. First of all, as far as the parties in question are concerned, we are always likely to get into a situation in which they come up with a new list when they have assessed and have a better idea of their needs. Therefore, we need to set aside some of the equipment and money we have. And if there is a fight against the imperialists somewhere else, we should be able to help over there too. So we need to assess our available resources, that is, what we really can afford without endangering the financial situation of our country and the normal operation of our administration, but we should not fully exhaust all these resources. It is always better to give less than expected now than having to say later: we agree with your request but we are unable to fulfill it.

I also want to refer to the resolution adopted by the seven socialist countries at their conference held last week. First of all, we are concerned directly with the three Arab countries that fell victim to the aggression, and Jordan can be excluded here on two counts: one of them is a military issue, the other one is related to material, economic aid. Jordan must be excluded because they have western relations and they want to ask the western countries for military and economic aid. So, Jordan should be reckoned with only in terms of medical aid in connection with red cross issues. As for Iraq, for which, incidentally, the resolution is right, we can also forget about providing aid for now. To our knowledge, Iraq was not directly involved in the aggression and didn't participate in the fights either, so we should primarily focus our work on Syria and Egypt.

I have the following comment on implementation: I wonder how strongly we are urged to respond now. I would say that if they put pressure on us regarding this topic we should issue a communication but we should wait in connection with issues that are not so urgent. I would definitely put off the military aid. Here, we need to "conspire" with the Soviet Union. We need to say that this is the situation, we have not responded yet, and they should say what they think. Or, if you will, we can expand the range of participants in the consultation, because the actual suppliers were two socialist countries. So the military specialist should look for an opportunity to sit down and review the question as to what should be provided for Syrian and Egypt.

The most pressing issue is the supply of medical aid and it would also be good if we could give them some food too. As for the other types of economic aid, we should not delay the Belgrade conference any longer. We should urge for organizing it as soon as possible.

So, the Council of Minister should be authorized to give the Arabs some kind of a preliminary answer on the basis of what we discussed here by designating some blanket sum and the type of aid. Going forward I would propose consultations and more organized action.

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