

June 21, 1965

**Minutes of the Third Meeting between Premier Zhou
Enlai and President Nasser**

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Summary:

Zhou Enlai, Gabal Abdel nasser, and Abdel Hakim Amer discuss the coup against Ben Bella, the new leadership in Algeria, and the Second Asian-African Conference.

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Foreign Ministry File

Summary of Third Conversation between Premier Zhou Enlai and President Nasser
(Premier has not yet reviewed)

Time: 9:30 p.m., 21 June 1965

Place: President's residence, Cairo

Summary

1. Amer introduced the circumstances of his contact with Algeria's new leaders;
2. Nasser spoke of the need to support Algeria's new leaders, that one cannot be emotional about it;
3. Both sides agreed to work to promote the holding of the Asian-African Conference as scheduled.

Nasser: Amer had long talks with Boumedienne and Bouteflika. They spoke mainly of what I have already told you. They pledged Ben Bella's safety. They also pledged to conduct as before with us a policy of cooperation. They ask that the conference be held as scheduled. They will send Bouteflika here tomorrow to have discussions with us. It is quite clear that there is no foreign influence to this incident.

Amer: Algeria's military is united. On overthrowing Ben Bella, their view is completely unanimous. The military is loyal to Boumedienne. In Algeria not a single member of the cabinet has resigned. The ministers continue to do their work. There has only been the arrest of one or two of Ben Bella's ministers. Yesterday evening there were some demonstrations, around 150 military cadets, but they had no effect at all. It now appears that there is no serious resistance to the new regime. After the passing of a momentary shock, there could be some resistance. But the military is united, so there will not be any change. When the incident took place, Ben Bella's bodyguards joined Boumedienne's side.

Nasser: Yesterday, when I spoke to you, the information I provided you was not exact. It was not that Ben Bella did not want his bodyguards to resist, but that Ben Bella's bodyguards abandoned him. When, four days ago, there were persons who reported to Ben Bella, he said that Boumedienne would not dare.

Premier Zhou: Why is there still no proclamation from the revolutionary council's members?

Amer: I do not know. There are probably 30 or so members. They have already proclaimed Boumedienne as president of the revolutionary council.

Nasser: Morocco is quite pleased regarding the present situation. This is because Ben Bella's influence among the people of Morocco is great. The Tunisian people also like Ben Bella. Ben Bella could with Tunisia reach agreement, but Boumedienne cannot do so.

Amer: When I went this time, reporters wanted me to make a statement, but I refused because I was only going in order to understand the facts.

Nasser: I think that we must support Algeria's new regime. We believe that Ben Bella is over ([in English] Ben Bella is over). We also counsel them to be on their guard

against the infiltration of foreign elements. We know these men are all nationalists and we know that we must support them. We cannot be emotional about it. Our people are extraordinarily sympathetic to Ben Bella and they extraordinarily like and respect him. There are some who are suspicious of US activity in Algeria and suspect them of coming to isolate the United Arab Republic. The United States has already acquired relations with Algeria's new regime, expressing their willingness to work with them and give them assistance. The United States is now raining curses down upon Ben Bella. So, under these circumstances, we must support Algeria's new government. The first step is to recognize them. But we believe that there is no need to formally recognize them.

Premier Zhou: We also feel that it is not necessary to do so formally.

Nasser: We can say that there is no need to do this, as we have diplomatic relations. We need to cooperate with them so as not to give outside forces the opportunity to interfere.

Premier Zhou: This is quite correct.

Nasser: This morning Asian and African countries of the British Commonwealth published a letter to Algeria, asking for a postponement of the Asian-African Conference. We have decided that our foreign minister is going tomorrow. At the foreign ministers meeting we can discuss the issue of postponing the summit.

Premier Zhou: Our view is not to put it off.

Nasser: Right. If we put it off, it is then quite possible it will not take place.

Premier Zhou: We also can push for scheduled conferences of Asian and African leaders in London.

Nasser: Bouteflika's visit this time is mainly for showing unity between our two countries. You, too, will have the opportunity to see him.

From the first we thought that this incident would occur, but we did not think that it would happen before the Asian-African Conference. Ben Bella got rid of those around him one by one. I repeatedly urged Ben Bella and Boumedienne that they reconcile.

Amer: When Boumedienne visited Moscow, Ben Bella switched to a new chief of the general staff without consulting Boumedienne. Upon Boumedienne's return from Moscow, this new chief of the general staff apologized to Boumedienne, saying, "This is not my fault. It is Ben Bella who insisted on appointing me." Ben Bella thus lost two persons.

Premier Zhou: Chairman Mao said that a leader chooses his cadres, but that the cadres also choose their leader. This is an issue for both sides.

Nasser: You are so right. We need to be patient now. This is not a problem of personal honor.

Premier Zhou: There are some leaders of African countries who have good relations with Ben Bella. So, we should advise them that the important thing is to support Algeria.

Nasser: We are going to do this.

(Premier Zhou then spoke of the circumstances of Asian and African development in 10 years, explaining that the situation is great and encouraging Nasser. Both sides agreed in the end to strive to have the Asian-African Conference held as scheduled, deciding therefore to hold tomorrow formal talks to discuss issues of the Asian-African Conference's foreign ministers meeting.)

[...] [ellipse in original]