

Report from Minister of Defense for arms delivery to Syria, 30 September 1969

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Ministry of People's Defense

Minister's Office

Sofia, 30 September 1969

TO THE PRIME MINISTER OF PR BULGARIA

Comrade Todor Zhivkov

REPORT\*

from the Minister of people's defense

of the People's Republic of Bulgaria

Army General Dobri Dzurov

REFERENCE: Rendering free armaments aid to the Syrian armed forces

Comrade Zhivkov,

On 7 September this year, I received a government delegation from the Syrian Arab Republic, headed by Hadidi Murad, visiting on the occasion of the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the socialist revolution in Bulgaria.

During the talks, Hadidi Murad presented in detail the situation around the guerrilla movement against Israel, pointing out the activities of Baath-led organization Saika, which comprised 6 000 men. He requested that we deliver armament for these men, in accordance with our resources.

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\* Handwritten resolution by Todor Zhivkov: *I agree.*

The answer was that issues related to granting free assistance are dealt with by the Central Committee of BCP and the Bulgarian government, and assistance can be rendered not to a particular organization, but to a country or armed forces. It was stated that the issue will be addressed and responded.

After the departure of the Syrian government delegation, its member Ibrahim al Ali – member of the leadership of the Syrian people's army – remained in our country and he requested a new meeting to receive the response to their questions.

Comrade Telalov – chief of CC BCP Foreign Policy and International Relations department – was briefed on the request of the Syrian government delegation regarding rendering free aid to the guerrilla organization Saika. Even though the capabilities of the Ministry of defense are extremely limited, Comrade Telalov was informed that, if permission was received, small quantities of armament could be delivered, as a symbol of the solidarity of our country with the struggle of the Arab peoples. Comrade Telalov gave instructions to inform Ibrahim al Ali that the issue of assistance for the Arab guerrilla organizations is being investigated, and only after a decision has been taken by the CC BCP it will be possible to have a discussion; however for the time being assistance could be granted only to the Syrian army.

At the second meeting with the member of the Syrian government delegation Ibrahim al Ali, in the spirit of Comrade Telalov's instructions, a reply was given to the questions asked. The assistance to the Syrian army by the Bulgarian army was announced. The Syrian representative requested that the assistance be sent as soon as possible.

In relation with the above mentioned, I propose that the Council of Ministers approve the following resolution:

1. The Ministry of people's defense shall deliver free armament aid to the Syrian army, according to the enclosed list 1.
2. The Ministry of foreign trade – "Kintex" shall arrange transportation of the armament, the financial resources shall be provided by the Ministry of finance.

*[Translated by Greta Keremidchieva]*