

Ben Bella: Algeria

BEN BELLA

o us leaders of the Algerian revolution, the Manifesto of the 121 rang out like a thunderclap, as it did for many Algerians. That stand protected us, I must admit, from some unlovely feelings, such as hatred. The struggle for liberation was terrible. We were bruised and wounded by colonialism. The manifesto reminded us that the French people could not be reduced to the war that was hitting us. Some French people had taken our side under terrible conditions. The French people was also a great people, bearing a rich history and a genius of its own. We were no longer alone. They were not traitors — the opposite. They expressed the best of France. We knew it, and that was why it moved us. These men and women were rising up against something they considered abominable.

We must remember the obstacles of the era. The long walk to independence was not easy. The war did not unfold in a continuous manner. Forceps were required for the delivery. It was very difficult. There were periods that were hard, with abrupt stops and steps forward. But the

collective action of autumn 1950 showed that something was happening in France. The manifesto was a step toward the end of colonialism. Those 121 intellectuals, our lawyers and the 'suitcase-carriers' [of the Jeanson network] became more than our friends, they became our family. They embodied that raising of consciousness, that Omega Point that Pierre Teilhard de Chardin spoke of, where human beings reach the highest degree of spirituality. We admired them, we loved them, we knew that it was difficult for them. They confirmed to us that humanity was present everywhere and we shouldn't despair for it.

I was in prison at the time of these events. But I have known this solidarity, too. I remember being transferred to a prison near Saumur. The Organisation armée secrète (OAS) had plans to liquidate us in our cells. We knew about

them. I will not say what our lawyers did to help us, which must remain a secret. But I can say that we prepared our escape to avoid this attempt. In the end, it wasn't necessary.

I remember the suitcase-carriers and the lawyers with feeling. They were the best of the French, the best of the Algerians.

AHMED BEN BELLA

Leader of the Algerian National Liberation Front (FLN); first president of Algeria (1962) deposed by colonel Houari Boumediène in June 1965. President of the Movement for Democracy in Algeria (MDA).

remier Zhou:1) once again analyzed the outlook for the development of the situation in Vietnam and clarified our position of uncompromising opposition to US aggression and support for the Vietnamese people's struggle; 2) exposed the truth of the Soviet Union's false anti-imperialism and real surrender on the Vietnam issue; 3) explained our point of view and attitude on the principles that we should follow for the Second Asian-African Conference, the basis for the work during its preparatory period, and the issue of the Soviet Union's inability to participate in the conference; and 4) further clarified our position regarding the United Nations.

Ben Bella: 1) explained the reason that Algeria conveyed U Thant's proposal to China; 2) explained Algeria's position in support of the Vietnamese people and proposal to sound out a resolution of the Vietnam issue; 3) introduced the recent state of affairs in Africa, such as the situation in Congo (Brazzaville), relations between Algeria and Morocco, the Nouakchott Conference convened on 10 February, and the attitude of Tunisia, Morocco, and Libya regarding the issue of arming Israel; and 4) asked regarding our point of view on the function of the United Nations, the position of the Soviet Union on the Vietnam issue, and the results of Kosygin's visit to Vietnam.

(Exchange of greetings omitted)

Ben Bella (hereafter simplified as Ben): May we now start our work? If you agree, I would like first to raise issues of which the Premier spoke yesterday. First of all, I would like to explain the situation behind our desire to convey U Thant's proposal to China. United Nations Secretary-General U Thant, through our country's representative at the United Nations, requested that our country convey to you his proposal. We have already told you the content of the proposal. The reason that U Thant requested that our country convey it is that he and some other countries think that our country has a favorable impression of China's policy (Premier Zhou interjected: This is correct.). At that time, we decided that we had the obligation to convey this to China. It is for you to decide as to the attitude you adopt. I have told your ambassador that Algeria's position is not neutral and that Algeria stands on your side and on the side of the Vietnamese brothers. I have also said that, if you think that this proposal is no good, we can express to U Thant our refusal to convey it. We simply convey this to you. Letting you know may be useful. We think it necessary to speak clearly of matters.

Now I would like to say a few words about the issue itself. We, too, feel that an unconditional ceasefire is inconceivable, as it would be tantamount to destroying the morale of the fighters of the National Front for the Liberation of Southern Vietnam and allowing the imperialist conspiracy to prevail. For the resolution of this issue, we think that there may be two ideas. One is as Your Excellency the Premier said yesterday: the idea of having four steps or four phases. We think that it also possible to envision adding a phase. We do not think that the situation's development will stop at the fourth phase but could develop to a fifth phase, leading to world war. We also believe that US imperialism could not obtain victory in a world war, but a great war could take place and the world would suffer destruction. Moreover, in the fifth phase, after much fighting there will still need to be a ceasefire, because in war it would be impossible to go on fighting ceaselessly. By that time, a ceasefire would already be simple. If we do not want the situation to develop to the fifth phase, then attempting a ceasefire in the second or third phase ceasefire requires having a proposal for a resolution. Of course, when conceiving

a proposal, we must take into consideration the victory of the National Front for the Liberation of Southern Vietnam. We wish to cite our own example, which, of course, is not exactly identical.

We did not achieve total military victory in Algeria's struggle against France. We only contained the French forces. Because of this we considered compelling France to accept a resolution and such a way also would have let us obtain power. We arranged a ceasefire. Following the ceasefire, we established a Provisional Executive. This Provisional Executive was not a revolutionary organization. Later, to enable the victory of the Revolution, it was necessary to establish a revolutionary regime and abolish the Provisional Executive and the Provisional Government of the Algerian Republic [GPRA]. The GPRA at the time was unable to resolve the issue of the Algerian Revolution's destiny. My reason for speaking a bit about this is to make clear our talk. Our conclusion is that, whatever the development of the war, whatever phase it reaches, the fourth phase or the fifth phase, in the end the National Front for the Liberation of Southern Vietnam must obtain power. Certainly, we cannot exclude imperialist scheming. Imperialism may exploit this or that country, going so far as U Thant's proposal. If you have any proposal, you can tell us. We simply want, at a certain time, when Algeria can play a role, to play a useful one. We are not neutral. We have an obligation to play a role. What is important is that, no matter what, we must always enable the armed forces of the National Front for the Liberation of Southern Vietnam to survive and obtain power. We forever stand on the side of the National Front for the Liberation of Southern Vietnam.

Our attitude is the same as yours, we think it necessary to listen to the views of the National Front for the Liberation of Southern Vietnam. We stand on their side. As for the outlook for the war in Vietnam, we do not think that the United States will be able to resolve the issue with one or ten divisions. First of all, it is because the National Front for the Liberation of Southern Vietnam is determined to fight. If people in one country are determined to fight, no force can stop them from gaining liberation. Such was Algeria's situation at the time. During the war, France had 800,000 troops in Algeria, not 500,000, with 200,000 in the Department of Algiers alone. Algeria lies only 800 kilometers away from the French city of Marseille (it takes only an hour to fly there by jet aircraft). However, the Algerian people were determined to fight to rid themselves of colonial rule. We believe that the Vietnamese people are determined to fight. Whether one, two or three US army divisions, whether the war develops to the third, fourth or fifth phase, nothing can stop the Vietnamese people from gaining victory and power. This is our view on the future of south Vietnam.

As we are frank with one another, I propose to raise this question: Supposing that the United States continues to take steps to enter into the third phase, going into north Vietnam, expanding the war, and even occupying north Vietnam, do you not know the attitude and action that the Soviet Union may take? What were the concrete results of [Alexei] Kosygin's visit to Vietnam?

I first raise this issue. Later, we also have to discuss some minor issues.

Zhou: I thank Your Excellency the President for frankly telling us your point of view. We have no misunderstanding regarding your conveying to us the proposal of U Thant. We fully understand that the President's position is well-intended and cooperative. We decided before visiting Europe that we would afterwards visit Algeria and discuss some issues, so we did not respond to Your Excellency by telegram regarding U Thant's proposal. What is regrettable is that there was no change in the time that we had decided for visiting Romania, but Comrade [Gheorghe] Gheorghiu-Dej passed away. As a result, the visit turned into attending his funeral.

As for the background to U Thant's proposal, I do not intend to add to the speculation. This is conceivable. Perhaps this is something he himself put forth, or someone else agreed with it. This is not important. Recently, U Thant expressed his desire to visit China and the Democratic Republic of Vietnam if China and Vietnam both agreed. At present, international relations are tense, complicated, and delicate. Therefore, there are bound to be some persons who want to conduct various activities. There is nothing strange about this. For example, recently, the British prime minister, too, proclaimed that he wanted to send former foreign secretary [Patrick] Gordon Walker, who lost his seat in parliament [in 1964], as an envoy of the British foreign secretary to visit Hanoi and Beijing. At present it is quite natural to conduct activities in taking this or that position. With the development of such events, such activities will surely increase. Of course, among these is one that the United States needs, which is to probe for the United States. I already talked about this point yesterday. As we understand it, the United States is still not prepared to fight a major war. Therefore, at every step it will extend its tentacles and probe. Therefore, we will explain a bit more clearly the background to our Algerian brothers and Algeria's leaders so that when they run into such a situation they can handle it. Whether it is U Thant or other persons probing, there is a fundamental issue that requires explanation. 1) Just as Your Excellency the President has said, we must respect the determination and stance of the Vietnamese people. The National Front for the Liberation of Southern Vietnam has representatives in our country. We maintain regular contact with them. 2) Any activity related to the Vietnam issue first of all requires seeking the views of the government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam and the Vietnam Workers' Party. This is our

position. Algeria's leaders readily understand this. In the past, the GPRA had representation in Beijing. We regularly sought their views. We later learned that there was a struggle between your revolutionary faction and the GPRA. We were relatively late in learning of this. After the President returned to Algeria, the GPRA issue was resolved. It was at this time that an Algerian youth delegation arrived in Beijing. Mao Zedong received them and said to them that in the past we had received many Algerian delegations, many of which later turned into rightists or bad elements. We gradually are coming to understand these situations. We fully trust President Ben Bella. In late 1963, Marshal Chen Yi and I came here to visit. Your Excellency the President and other brothers told us in detail of the situation and made us understand more clearly your situation at that time. Algeria is far from our country. In the past our understanding of the development of many situations insufficient, nor did we seek more ways to understand it. This a shortcoming in our work. Of course, objectively, too, there are certainly difficulties. Vietnam is a neighbor of China. We have a relatively clear understanding of Vietnam. We have an obligation to introduce the situation to all of you brothers here.

The most important expression of the determination of the Vietnamese people is the National Front for the Liberation of Southern Vietnam's statement of 22 March. This statement, with greater focus and concrete words, expressed the Vietnamese people's determination to firmly oppose unconditional ceasefire negotiations.

Your Excellency the President just said that Algeria stands on the side of the Vietnamese people and opposes unconditional ceasefire negotiations because unconditional ceasefire negotiations are tantamount to striking the morale of the Vietnamese fighters and allowing the imperialist conspiracy to prevail. We are in agreement on this issue. The Vietnamese people do not want to yield in the face of the bayonet and bombing. The President now proposes to study the possible development of the situation in Vietnam, believing that the development of the war will not change according to the will of US imperialism, that the war will not stop at the fourth phase, and that it may develop to the fifth phase -- world war. Of course, this possibility cannot be excluded, even though the United States is still not prepared.

I wish to speak clearly. The so-called four phases are not plans that the United States has already prepared, but a type of estimate, conceived from the worst possibility so as to adopt the necessary measures. We are brothers and friends. We are willing to speak frankly to you of our ideas. The United States to this day still says that it has no intention of expanding the war to China. In early March this year at the Warsaw meeting between China and the United States, the US ambassador told our country's ambassador that the United States was not prepared to expand the war in Vietnam, let alone thinking to expand the war to China. Why does the United States every time have

to make such a statement and make public statements? Its objective is to isolate Vietnam. We responded to the statement of the National Front for the Liberation of Southern Vietnam. At that time it was expressed in the form of a newspaper editorial. The response of the United States was very intense. However, [Dean] Rusk still said that, although China responded to the statement of the National Front for the Liberation of Southern Vietnam and expressed its willingness to send people to help south Vietnam, would the Communist Party of China in the end send a volunteer army? The United States is always at a loss as to China's intent. Rusk deliberately said that with the intent to make the Vietnamese people lose hope and to make south Vietnam yield to the US threat. Therefore, at present what we certainly can say is that what the United States can do now is to take the first step of sending three divisions to south Vietnam, of which two are US divisions and one is a division put together from vassal countries, have them go protect cities, airfields, ports and such, and transfer the puppet troops to go fight the armed forces of the National Front for the Liberation of Southern Vietnam.

Yesterday, I also spoke a bit about the United States having three options in bombing north Vietnam: The first is the bombing of more than 20 targets in the Democratic Republic of Vietnam that are near south Vietnam. Among them are military bases, ports, depots, and such. At present, the United States has already carried this out. The second option is the bombing of eight industrial targets, including Hanoi and Haiphong. The third option is the bombing of 100 targets throughout Vietnam. At present the United States is taking action in three respects: sending troops to south Vietnam, bombing north Vietnam, and imposing a maritime blockade. All this falls within the first phase. As for the second phase and the fourth phase, which we speculate could develop, it is not a plan that the United States has already prepared. But the development of the situation has to do with China. At the same time the National Front for the Liberation of Southern Vietnam has expressed its determination and will. Therefore, we cannot but conceive of it. If we do not conceive of it, then we are not the brothers of the Vietnamese people. If we do not tell our Algerian brothers about what we have conceived, that would be wrong. If we met and we did not tell you about the situation, then if later such situations arose, you would not be prepared. We thus have this tentative idea in four phases, starting from our own position. We cannot drag in even more aspects or make even broader considerations. We have not only devised a tentative idea, but also made preparations, letting the United States know that what we are saying is not empty talk. In this way we may make the United States have even more misgivings when it wants to take action. At present, the United States each time it takes a step must then examine it. In 1950, it had not been a year since the liberation of our country. The United States then instigated a war in Korea. At the same time, the United States sent the 7th Fleet into the Taiwan Strait and declared the Taiwan Strait to be under the "protection" of the United States. However, we issued a warning, saying

that if the United States crossed the 38th parallel and approached the Yalu River on China's border, our country would be unable to ignore it. Not only this but, through the Indian ambassador [to China, M.M. Panikkar], we also told the United States that we stand by what we say. However, the government of the United States simply did not believe what we said, because we had just gained liberation. The result was that our country's volunteer army crossed the Yalu and the United States was utterly surprised. After three and a half years of war, the United States failed and had to cease its fire. This went beyond the expectation of the United States. This is a reason for the so-called unwillingness of the United States to recognize China. In this Vietnam incident, we have given advance warning that we cannot ignore it if the United States were to expand the war into north Vietnam and all of Indochina. We have said that we have already prepared well for it, and we stand by what we say. However, the government of the United States deliberately played down the significance of our statement. They said that what we said was unreliable. Therefore, we think it necessary to tell the leaders of friendly countries our position: we are in fact well prepared. From our perspective, the United States at present has only four phases. After reaching the fourth phase, there are two possibilities. The first is turning it into a world war. The second is that the United States [text indistinct] China, cannot but seek a solution. As for the President's mentioned fifth phase, I have already said that this cannot be excluded. The reason is that the United States is different from France. The United States is more powerful than France. It is attempting to dominate the world. In the United States, there is no one like [Charles] De Gaulle, someone capable of resolving to withdraw from south Vietnam. However, another possibility is one that the President can see. That is to say, whether in the second or third phase, the United States must meet and discuss matters with China. In each phase it must take into consideration the Chinese factor. Today's China is no longer the China of the 1950s. We can also explain to the president that if the United States wants to expand the war and fight with China, we are determined to take full responsibility and absolutely not ask other countries, in particular socialist countries, to jointly assume responsibility. As early as 1958, when we made the decision to bomb Jinmen [Quemoy], Mazu [Matsu], and other islands, we informed Soviet Foreign Minister [Andrei] Gromyko. At the time, we knew that [John Foster] Dulles engaged in brinkmanship. He would not let us cross the Taiwan Strait. He was concerned that, after liberating Jinmen and Mazu, we would right away liberate Taiwan. In fact, we had no such plan. However, Dulles instead had Chiang Kai-shek withdraw from the coastal islands, attempting to cut off the Taiwan Strait from the Chinese mainland in order for the United States to completely control Taiwan and establish a so-called independent political entity. Our intent in bombing Jinmen was to pin down Chiang Kai-shek's troops on these islands in order to take the opportunity to publicize his preparing to "counterattack" the mainland. At the time the Soviet Union sent Foreign Minister Gromyko to China to negotiate the issue. We told him about the entire situation, that we

were only hitting the coastal islands, not going beyond the limit of China's territorial waters or territorial air space, nor were we provoking the United States. At that time, we also understood that the US Department of Defense had ordered the US Navy and Air Force not to enter China's territorial waters or territorial air space or to carry out provocations. Therefore, there was no possibility of something triggering a greater clash occurring. However, at that time we also prepared for the worst. If the United States attacked China, what would we do? We told Gromyko that if the United States forced war upon us, we alone would take responsibility for it. Despite China and the Soviet Union's alliance relationship, we would not ask the Soviet Union to send troops. We think that doing it this way would be good. China hinders the United States. The Soviet Union is even more powerful and its voice is greater. The Soviet foreign minister felt that our attitude was both prudent and resolute, and he was greatly moved. As for this matter, I asked him whether or not he still remembered it when I went last year to the Soviet Union to participate in the October Revolution Day. He said that he still remembered it. I also told him that we still continue to support this position. In February this year, Kosygin visited Vietnam and Korea, stopping by China along the way. Once again I raised this matter, explaining that, even if the United States struck China, we would not ask the Soviet Union to take part in the war. This would be of greater benefit to the people of the world's various countries in their task of struggling against imperialism, in particular against US imperialism. Today, I formally and solemnly tell this to Your Excellency the President. Therefore, speaking from our perspective, the possibility of the fourth phase develop to the fifth phase is excluded. We absolutely will not on our own initiative expand the war. There is a common saying in China: It takes two to have a quarrel.

The United States goes around spreading the propaganda that, if the United States attacks China, the Soviet Union will not enter the war because the Sino-Soviet conflict is too severe. The objective of the US propaganda is to make the Chinese people afraid that the Soviet Union would not enter the war and that China would lack the means to fight alone against the United States. Our position is that we absolutely will not provoke the United States. Taiwan is Chinese territory, yet we have not gone to fight. In Warsaw, the Sino-American ambassadorial-level talks have been going on for 10 years. Therefore, on our part, there fundamentally is no possibility of provocation. If the United States, placing its hope on the possibility of the Soviet Union not entering the war, has a major fight with China, then the United States must accept responsibility for all the consequences. We have spoken clearly of our determination. We are willing to envisage the worst and tell our friends about it. We envisage the United States possibly adopting only four steps. We also must block the outbreak of a world war. The President has mentioned that the war, whatever the phase to which it develops, cannot be fought forever and, in the end, it will be necessary to negotiate. This is correct. Algeria fought

for seven and a half years and ultimately engaged in negotiations, France withdrew its military, and Algeria achieved victory.

Yesterday, I previously said: First, we do not carry out provocations. Second, we do not completely oppose negotiations. We need not wait until the incident develops to the fourth phase to seek negotiations but should at each phase seek negotiations. The National Front for the Liberation of Southern Vietnam has already proposed negotiating conditions. They are: halt the US wrecking of the Geneva Accords, withdraw all the US military and weapons from south Vietnam, and let the Vietnamese people themselves resolve their own issues. The United States has proposed opposite conditions, calling first of all for a ceasefire, which is tantamount to forcing the Vietnamese people to lay down their arms so that the United States may exercise long-term control over south Vietnam and forcing north Vietnam to cease its so-called "invasion," which is to say that north Vietnam would not be able to help the Vietnamese people. The logic of the United States is: the actions of the Vietnamese people are due to north Vietnam's help and invasion. First of all, the ceasefire's conditions simply can only benefit US imperialist control and disadvantage the south Vietnamese people's struggle.

On the initiative of Prince Sihanouk, at the Conference of the Indochinese People, held in Phnom Penh, the National Front for the Liberation of Southern Vietnam went so far as to express its attitude toward the issue of the south Vietnamese regime. It indicated that it could not recognize the south Vietnamese puppet regime, a tool of US imperialism to slaughter the south Vietnamese people. The National Front for the Liberation of Southern Vietnam is the representative of the south Vietnamese people. At present it has not yet announced the establishment of a provisional government. It envisions, other than the National Front for the Liberation of Southern Vietnam, striving for the participation of more patriotic persons in order to establish in the future a coalition government. Of course, in the future coalition government the National Front for the Liberation of Southern Vietnam must occupy the dominant position. Such a possibility follows the war's development day by day. The conditions are maturing with each passing day. This is our fundamental point of view regarding the issue of south Vietnam. It is fundamentally close to the President's point of view. As for supporting our south Vietnamese brothers, our position is identical. As for the conditions and timing of the negotiations, they are still not mature because the United States does not accept the just demands that the National Front for the Liberation of Southern Vietnam has issued. Unconditional implementation of ceasefire negotiations now would simply dampen the morale of the National Front for the Liberation of Southern Vietnam's fighters and allow the US conspiracy to prevail. The National Front for the Liberation of Southern Vietnam is not at the present time anxious to organize a provisional government. It is prepared to fight for a time, continue to win in the struggle, rally more

patriotic persons, and make the bogus regime further isolated and thus more easily overthrown. It is different from Algeria in this respect. Algeria very early established a provisional government and conducted negotiations with France.

Just now the President asked about the attitude of the Soviet Union. I am willing to say frankly that the Soviet Union has a fundamental point of view, that we do not agree with it, and that our two sides have disputes. The Soviet Union believes that the United States is fearsome. We say that there is no use in being afraid. The more you are afraid, the more ferocious is imperialism. The Soviet Union fears the United States starting a major war and engaging in nuclear warfare. Speaking of it, this issue also is quite contradictory. The Soviet Union's leaders have said that nuclear warfare would destroy the world and that in the end there would be no winner or loser. If so, then why would the United States also want to fight a nuclear war? The ruling group in the United States are monopoly capitalists who seek maximum profit. If they started a nuclear war, the world's industry would be destroyed, the world's labor force would be lost, and the international market would also be destroyed. Where is the maximum profit in that? Therefore, the United States itself also fears a nuclear war. It simply wants to scare people with nuclear warfare and thereby blackmail them and rule the world.

The Soviet Union fears any minor war developing into a major war. However, based on the 20 years following the end of the Second World War, this has not been the situation. The Chinese civil war did not trigger a world war. New China was born from it. Nor did the Korean War turn into a major war. The Indochina War in the end resulted in an agreement. Nor has the Algeria struggle or the Cuban revolution become a world war. At present, the Taiwan Strait confrontation has not given rise to a major war and Africa's many armed struggles have not given rise to a world war. Due to the Soviet fear that any minor war would turn into a world war, the Soviet Union has been very anxious regarding national liberation struggles, has feared that the people in various countries would rise and carry out armed struggles, and has feared people's revolution. Its logic is to fear the United States, fear fighting, fear any minor war turning into a nuclear war, and so fear national liberation struggles and revolution. Their conclusion is that the United States and the Soviet Union cooperate to resolve the world's issues, including arms reduction and nuclear testing. The issues of arms reduction, nuclear testing, and the United Nations, even those regarding UN troops, have fully demonstrated this point. The United States has seized on the weak point of the Soviet Union and used war to threaten it. Regarding any proposal of the Soviet Union, the United States attaches not importance to it, knowing that the Soviet Union's central issue is peaceful coexistence. On the issue of south Vietnam, the Soviet Union protested to the United States and demanded the withdrawal of US troops. The US ambassador to Moscow immediately sent it back. Thus, does the United States despise the Soviet Union. It is difficult for us,

as a socialist country and ally, to regard such a situation. China's power is much inferior to that of the Soviet Union, but a Chinese article, such as the editorial that we published on 25 March, attracted the attention of the United States. The United States can send back the Soviet Union's official protest. I will first speak of the background and then talk about the attitude of the Soviet Union on the issue of Vietnam and about the results of Kosygin's visit to Vietnam.

Kosygin this year visited Vietnam and Korea and passed through China. We helped them out. We also had several talks with him. He indicated a desire to help Vietnam. We said, the more the better. He told us on his return from Vietnam that the Soviet Union wanted to give Vietnam weapons, including surface-to-air missiles, weapons for two regiments, anti-aircraft machine guns, artillery, light tanks, communications equipment, and MiG-17 aircraft. We told him that when the Soviet Union helped Vietnam, we could assist with transportation. All they have to do is give us the shipping list and, once the materials arrived at the border, we would immediately transport them. However, when Kosygin returned to Moscow, the first thing he did was to propose negotiations with the United States. He previously asked the view of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam's government. Vietnam's Prime Minister Pham Van Dong answered him on the spot, saying that Vietnam did not agree to negotiate under bombings and the bayonet and would absolutely not yield before imperialism. Later, the Soviet Union asked us. At that time, not knowing the attitude of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, we indicated our desire to ask the Vietnamese side their view. This was on 16 February. However, the Soviet Union, without taking into consideration the Vietnamese side's opposition or waiting for China's reply, contacted the French government on 23 February. The Soviet Union's ambassador to France later told our ambassador to France that the French government's attitude was the same as that of the Soviet government, that is to say, in regard to unconditional ceasefire negotiations. Therefore, we cannot but criticize the Soviet Union for their not taking into consideration the Vietnamese side's view. It was wrong for them to contact France. Vietnam, too, was opposed to it. The Soviet foreign minister visited Britain and there proposed the "condition." According to the internal state of affairs, the "condition" is that the United States has to halt the bombing of north Vietnam, not that the United States withdraw its troops. The Soviet foreign minister held a press conference. A reporter asked him about the Vietnam negotiations. Gromyko replied that they depended on the relevant parties. The reporter followed by asking who the relevant parties were. Gromyko replied that negotiations depended on the United States and north Vietnam. This is tantamount to placing the US aggressors and the Vietnamese people in the position of warring parties. Rusk was very pleased to hear it, immediately accepting the statement and saying that the United States accepted negotiations if the "Viet Cong" agreed to an unconditional ceasefire. That is to say, the United States understands very clearly the Soviet Union's

internal state of affairs. Originally, Kosygin went to Vietnam and promised to help Vietnam, and Vietnam clearly said that it could not accept negotiations. Once Kosygin left Vietnam, the first thing that he said was that the Soviet Union wanted to negotiate and only as a second step would it give its shipping list [of aid materials] to Vietnam and China. This was already near the end of February. The Soviet Union at that time also suddenly wanted to send troops to Vietnam to manage the missiles. Everyone here can envision the Cuban situation. Cuba's surface-to-air missiles, too, until now have been unable to shoot at US aircraft because control of the missiles has been in the hands of Soviet military equipment personnel. China's surface-to-air missiles can all strike U-2 aircraft because we ourselves control them. We have already shot down four U-2 aircraft. Vietnam has not requested that the Soviet Union send troops, but the Soviet Union wants to send 4,000 men. Vietnam is against it. We, too, are against it. As of the end of March, the Soviet Union finally cancelled the troop dispatch and decided to send the missiles and arms in early April. The Soviet Union proposed to us that we agree immediately to help with their transport. At present the foreign press is reporting that the Soviet Union will send surface-to-air missiles. The United States government has declared that, if the Soviet missiles hinder the operations of US aircraft, it will cause a severe incident to the detriment of the Soviets. The United States wants to scare the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union, having decided not to send troops, is opting instead to send 260 trainers. In fact, Vietnam already has a regiment in the Soviet Union learning how to use the missiles. It is entirely possible that the Soviet Union will not send trainers. Therefore, we must also see whether or not the Soviet Union sends the missiles. When we have definite results from this time forward, we can inform you of them via Ambassador Zeng Tao.

When the Soviet Union handed us a list of aid to Vietnam, we learned that the Soviet Union would send an additional 12 MiG-21 aircraft to China. Vietnamese will not pilot the MiG-21 aircraft. Nor has Vietnam made a request for them. In fact, what use are the 12 aircraft? If they are for protecting China's border, they can sell them to us. The Soviet Union wants to send the aircraft and 500 military personnel to China and, in effect, wants to control our country's Kunming airport. The Soviet Union says that this is for training Vietnam's air force personnel. The Vietnamese brothers say that, if they want to train, they can train in the Soviet Union, where it would be a little more peaceful. The Soviet Union has also said that in Kunming it would be possible to protect Vietnam's political center, Hanoi. Flying from Kunming, however, the MiG-21 aircraft could only reach the Sino-Vietnamese border, with the other half of the flight distance to Hanoi still remaining. They think to control China this way, but they cannot. It therefore wants to send 4,000 men to Vietnam and 500 to China with the objective of scaring the United States and achieving its negotiating objectives. The Soviet Union, using the excuse of wanting to safeguard the future supplies to Soviet military personnel sent to

Vietnam and China, wants to develop two air corridors in our territorial air space. This, too, is for the purpose of showing the United States and thereby bring about negotiations. If it were for the purpose of military operations, why did they not discuss it in advance with the Vietnamese and Chinese sides? Kosygin never mentioned it while he was in Vietnam and China, slipping it into the aid list. This is called smuggling. When we discussed it with Vietnam, Vietnam was very surprised. Afterwards, both Vietnam and China refused it. We told the Soviet Union not to send troops or aircraft here, but that we could help transport other military supplies.

We are willing to tell you everything. During our discussions in Vietnam, the Soviet Union also let us know that they were about to ship 70 14.5 mm anti-aircraft machine guns and 18 SAM-3 anti-aircraft systems. Your defense minister knows the possible extent of these figures. The Soviet Union has also said that they want to use 45 Antonov An-12 aircraft to transport the materials immediately. You already know how many tons are involved. The objective of their wanting to use 45 transport aircraft is for informing the United States. In fact, we not only provide such an amount, but we can provide more than that. We have told the Soviet Union not to send aircraft and that the use of rail transportation can be kept secret. At that time, we immediately allocated 100 12.7 mm anti-aircraft machine guns and 66 SAM-3 systems. Nor does Vietnam agree with the Soviet Union's way of doing it. We disagree with the Soviet Union going behind the back of Vietnam and China in taking action. The Soviet Union never gains the agreement of countries concerned, immediately taking action to scare the United States. If it fails, the Soviet Union will immediately turn 180 degrees and yield. The Soviet Union did this with the Cuban brothers. We have told the Soviet Union that the aid materials should be transported through China's railways, that we can transport them as soon as they arrive and in whatever amount. By the end of March, the Soviet Union had cancelled the dispatch of troops, and the arms had only just arrived at the Sino-Soviet border. This shows that the general arms shipment was delayed a month. However, the Soviet Union has spread the word among many socialist countries and nationalist countries that China was not letting the Soviet Union's military aid go through. The fact of the matter is what I have just said now. What Vietnam and China oppose is the Soviet Union sending aircraft and troops to conduct a military show of force. We do not agree with the Soviet Union's desire to control China and Vietnam or make a military show of force to the enemy, or with its acting in advance without consulting us.

There is also the situation of the Soviet Union carrying out activities in Asian and African countries, socialist countries, and international organizations and wishing to engage in a joint statement to "support Vietnam." We have said that when an international organization wants to issue a statement in support of Vietnam, it must

respect the views of the National Front for the Liberation of Southern Vietnam and of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam. It should also be based on the following two documents: 1) The resolution of the international conference, held in Hanoi at the end of November 1964, to help the Vietnamese oppose US imperialist aggression and safeguard peace. Socialist countries, Asian, African and Latin American countries, and organizations of the world peace movement all participated in this conference. The adopted resolution expresses steadfast support for the Vietnamese people's just struggle and makes no reference to peace talks. At that time, Vietnam also did not agree to the reference to peace talks in the document. 2) Not long ago, Prince Sihanouk proposed the resolution of the Conference of the Indochinese People. In short, it raised the issue of the Indochinese people uniting against imperialism, referring separately to north and south Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia, as well as specifically mentioning the conditions under which to conduct negotiations.

We feel that all friendly countries supporting Vietnam must respect the Vietnamese side's views, because only Vietnam itself understands at what opportune time and under what conditions it can conduct negotiations. Now the requirement is for friendly countries to support them in their struggle, so that they can support their morale and strike the vanguard of the US aggressors. Instead of engaging in a joint statement, various countries and work units can express their own will.

In order to speak clearly about the facts and for the sake of mutual understanding, my talk took a very long time. This is completely an internal conversation.

Ben: Your Excellency the Premier's talk is very useful to us. Now, I will talk a bit about the issue of Congo (Brazzaville). Before [Fulbert] Youlou fled the country, Congo (Brazzaville) friends told us that Congo (Leopoldville) was making threats and that the situation in Congo (Brazzaville) was quite serious. They asked us for emergency military and financial help. They not only asked for help from Algeria, but from Mali, Guinea, and the United Arab Republic, and possibly from Ghana as well. They made an appeal for the provision of two billion old francs, equivalent to four million dollars, in financial assistance. There are many worrisome problems in Congo (Brazzaville), a large number of refugees have fled Congo (Leopoldville), and the social problems are extremely serious. As for military affairs, I have sent a delegation to Congo (Brazzaville). We are doing everything in our power to do what we can to help. As for financial assistance, Algeria lacks foreign exchange. In spite of our having tried thinking of every possible method, it is hard to satisfy them and it is hard for other African countries to provide assistance. I wonder whether you would be able to do something in this respect. Do you have an ambassador in Congo (Brazzaville)? (Premier interjected: We have sent an

ambassador.). We think that they are worthy of help. This concerns the present regime in Congo (Brazzaville), whose opposition to imperialism in Africa is a positive factor. I am telling you frankly about this situation. You can make direct contacts via your ambassador.

Zhou: We have provided financial and military assistance. I did not know that Youlou had fled. This incident is serious.

Ben: It happened while you were travelling. According to reports, Youlou has appeared in Leopoldville.

Zhou: This makes the situation more complicated. As for the issue of financial assistance, I will return to Beijing and discuss it. Whatever the decision, we will convey it via our ambassador to Your Excellency the President.

Ben: (After a moment of silence) That is no problem at all.

Zhou: Shall we talk a bit about the Second Asian-African Conference?

Ben: Ah, the Foreign Minister has reminded me. Let us talk a bit again about relations between Algeria and Morocco. Recently, we have done our best to improve relations with Morocco. It is not that we fear Morocco, but that we are proceeding from an overall strategy. The example of Algeria's Revolution is enough to bring about change in Morocco. However, if relations between Algeria and Morocco are tense, this could make Morocco turn to US imperialism. A relaxation in relations with Morocco, of course, cannot be at the expense of our revolutionary principles, interests or territorial sovereignty. We have told the Moroccan side that Algeria and Morocco can entirely develop their bilateral economic relations. Some days ago, we made several attempts to meet with Hassan II, who has always made harsh border demands. Recently, Hassan took the initiative to propose a meeting with me on 28 March. However, an incident took place in Morocco. In two days, Hassan II executed 14 persons and arrested two or three hundred. The 14 executed persons were revolutionaries who had come from Algeria. They had nothing to do with the demonstrations in Morocco. This is a new political factor. We think that it would not do in this situation to have the meeting. Meeting now would be tantamount to applauding them and giving Moroccan patriots the mistaken impression that we agreed with Morocco's regressive domestic policy. We have nothing to do with their domestic problems. The original plan for my meeting with Hassan was for resolving the border issue. This can only be done in a clear atmosphere. At present, it is out of the question.

I shall speak some more about several situations in Africa:

1. Sudan: Recently, imperialism has goaded southern Sudan to oppose the northern part of the country, doing its utmost to exploit Sudan's tribal and religious difference. Many countries, such as Ethiopia, serve the imperialist conspiracy. We want to help the Sudanese friends ease the differences between southern and northern Sudan so that they may avoid exploitation by the imperialists.

2. Uganda: There, the forces of imperialism are relatively strong. There are still many British there. Uganda still has a positive attitude on the Congo (Leopoldville) issue. Uganda, which was recently attacked by [Moise Kapenda] Tshombe, wants our help. We have an obligation to help them.

At present in Africa there has now emerged a new factor. The United States, beyond making use of Tshombe, also wishes to find other junior partners, and in particular wants to find tools from among the nations of the former French "Community." Recently, at the Nouakchott Conference, the Ivory Coast's [Felix] Houphouet-Boigny turned into a junior partner of the United States. The United States wishes to bring together the Ivory Coast, Nigeria, Chad, and Upper Volta and assemble a new political group. They accounted for a majority at the Nouakchott Conference and represented an orientation. Among those representing another orientation are Mauritania, Congo (Brazzaville), Cameroon, and Senegal (Senegal's opposition to the Ivory Coast is due to the personal enmity between [Leopold Sedar] Senghor and Houphouet-Boigny.). They are under the influence of France.

Unfortunately, Ghana has made mistakes on many issues. Ghana's proposal at the conference, made via Upper Volta, was openly rejected and condemned, weakening Ghana's prestige. Ghana thus also violated the joint position of Ghana, Guinea, and Mali at the trilateral conference in Bamako.

It is important here to emphasize that Tunisia, Libya, and Morocco have adopted a position different from that of the Arab countries on the issue of West Germany's arming of Israel. The three countries are greatly influenced by imperialism. The United States has also put pressure on them. Their domestic economic difficulties and the aid that West Germany has provided them have also played a role. From the start, politically they had a fundamental contradiction with us. Their position on the West German issue has exacerbated this contradiction. I am telling you some of the situation for your reference.

Next, let me raise an issue concerning the United Nations. Is this organization useful, or not? On this issue, I would like to hear your view, which would be helpful to us.

Zhou: Thank you very much for giving us an introduction to many situations.

Now I would like first to ask about the situation in Dahomey. It is said that there are two factions in that country. Which side does Algeria endorse?

Ben: We do not know enough about the specific situation. In general, Dahomey is relatively closer to Ghana. Dahomey's president once publicly stated that Dahomey's position was closer to that of Ghana. Surprisingly, Dahomey's prime minister in the end participated in the Nouakchott Conference. However, we believe that this country can still be won over and we continue to adopt a positive attitude toward it.

Zhou: I have had a diplomatic representative in Dahomey. Originally, talks on how to establish diplomatic relations reflected those between China and the Central African Republic. In the Central African Republic, our diplomatic representative entered and the Chiang Gang's diplomatic representative was driven out. However, Dahomey is muddying this issue. The attitude of Dahomey's president is relatively clear. He agreed to establish diplomatic relations with China. However, Dahomey's prime minister has suggested that the Chiang Gang's diplomatic representative could stay, creating two Chinas. According to internal information, it is the United States that wants Dahomey to do this.

Speaking of the United Nations issue, I said yesterday that it must be divided into aspects: ours and that of the Asian and African countries.

We are not recognized by the United States and, because of US obstruction, cannot join the United Nations. Now there are more countries in favor of restoring China's legal rights in the United Nations. The United States will certainly carry out the "two Chinas" conspiracy. This means that if two thirds of the countries endorse China, the United States can agree to China joining the United Nations but at the same time will want the Chiang Gang to remain as a unit. Would this not account for what has happened in Dahomey? Of course, we believe that in the end there will be a conclusion there. If Chiang Kai-shek's representatives does not leave the United Nations, I cannot go there. In the world, new regimes are representing their countries all the time. So it is with the revolutions in both Cuba and Egypt. The special approach in regard to China clearly is the work of the United States. We do not readily join the United Nations because we absolutely do not accept the "two Chinas" plot. Outside of the United

Nations, we have the right to criticize the United Nations and express our views. Our criticism is focused against the United States, not against other countries. Asian, African and other countries support the restoration of our legitimate seat at the United Nations. We are always grateful for that. This is an entirely different matter from our criticism of the United Nations and opposition to “two Chinas.”

On the other hand, we think that at present the Asian, African and socialist countries of the United Nations should adopt a critical attitude toward the United Nations. We endorse the criticism of Asian and African countries against the United Nations, demand the correction of the United Nations’ errors and the breaking of the United States’ monopoly. Algeria’s representative at the United Nations has issued criticism, and we endorse it. Various Asian and African countries have called for an increase in seats and rights for Asian and African countries in various UN organizations. We support them. What we do not endorse is control of the United Nations by the two great powers: the United States and the Soviet Union. The 19th General Assembly of the United Nations, precisely, was controlled by those two countries. We understand Mauritania and Algeria’s having abstained from voting on the adoption of the resolution on Albania. We not only oppose the monopoly of the two great powers but oppose as well France’s proposal for a monopoly of the five great powers.

Now I would like to take this opportunity to talk a bit about points of view on the Second Asian-African Conference. Before we convene the conference, we will come again. First, I will talk about some of the major views:

1. The postponement issue. We have complete confidence in Your Excellency the President’s explanation. We earlier told [Amar] Ouzegane our point of view, but we only asked him to seek President Sukarno’s view as it was he who initiated it. Now the problem has become exacerbated. We fully support convening the conference at the end of June. When I go to Jakarta to participate in the First Asian-African Conference’s 10th anniversary celebration activities, I would also like to explain it to the Indonesian side.

2. The Second Asian-African Conference. It must be based on the principles of the first conference, that is: (1) seeking common ground while putting aside differences and (2) consensus. At the time of the First Asian-African Conference, there was much contention among the Asian and African countries. I recently met [Ahmad] Shukeiri in Beijing. He was at that time the deputy leader of the Syrian delegation. He also clearly recalled that at the time there were two views on the Palestinian issue. Burma’s U Nu had established diplomatic relations with Israel. India had established semi-diplomatic relations with Israel. Both countries joined Ceylon and Pakistan (at that time

pro-American) in not endorsing support of Palestine. Four of the five countries that sponsored [the First Asian-African Conference] did not endorse it. Shukeiri met the Chinese delegation. Only then did we learn from him about the Palestinian issue. At that time, we not only assumed our obligation in not recognizing Israel, but also in giving support to the Palestinian people. In the final meeting an agreement was reached. On the issue of opposing imperialism and colonialism, we cooperated with [Gamal Abdel] Nasser and arrived at the 10 principles of peaceful coexistence. At the time, after many twists and turns and by seeking common ground while putting aside differences, consensus obtained good results. We feel that, this time as well, we should abide by this principle to exclude a great deal of trouble. Bilateral or multilateral disputes can be discussed outside the conference. Do not put them on the agenda of the Asian-African Conference. Asian and African countries have many points in common and can reach agreement. As I mentioned last time, the purpose of the conference is to oppose imperialism, oppose colonialism, and safeguard world peace. In addition, there is also much to do to make concrete the Ten Principles of Bandung.

The Second Asian-African Conference can do more in respect to developing economic cooperation among Asian and African countries on the basis of equality and cooperation for mutual benefit. If China has any proposal on the issue of economic cooperation, we will certainly first consult in advance with Algeria's leaders. Prior to the Asian-African summit, there will also be the foreign ministers' meeting. This is the first issue that I would like to discuss.

The second issue, the agreement foreign ministers' meeting in Jakarta, is the basis for work during the preparatory period. If countries have new proposals, they can only propose them at the foreign ministers' meeting. At present I have not thought of any issues to raise. At the summit, if we have any issues to raise, we will discuss them in advance with our Algerian brothers.

The third issue is that of Soviet participation in the Asian-African Conference. This issue was originally settled at the Jakarta foreign ministerial-level preparatory meeting. At that time the meeting did not reach an agreement, which is to say that the proposal for Soviet participation was not passed. This is to be resolved based on the convention of the First Asian-African Conference. India early proposed that the Soviet Union is not an Asian country and that the part of the Soviet Union in Asia is only one part of its entirety. Nor has the Soviet Union joined the Afro-Asian Bloc in the United Nations. Therefore, the countries that sponsored the First Asian-African Conference did not agree to invite the Soviet Union to participate. At the time, Nehru announced it to the entire world that. You can look it up in the press. At that time, the Soviet Union raised no objection. Nor did the Soviet Union's ambassador in Beijing inform me that they wanted

to go. Some countries have been against the Soviet Union, but we have spoken in defense of the Soviet Union. In the end the meeting did not reach an agreement, so the Soviet Union will not participate. President Nasser, Premier Ali Sabry and Shukeiri all can testify to it.

Based on the convention of the first conference, it is quite natural not to have the Soviet Union participate in the second conference. There will also be benefits to the Soviet Union's not participating this time. This is because this way the socialist country disputes, particularly those between the Chinese and Soviet parties and the two countries, will not be brought to the conference. When I visited African countries at the end of last year and at the beginning of this year, whether public speeches or communiques, none mentioned the issue of Sino-Soviet differences. This time, due to the Vietnam issue, for the first time in bilateral talks we bring the relevant situation to the conference table. If the objective of the Soviet Union's participation in the conference is to support the countries of Asia and Africa in opposing imperialism, this can be undertaken without Soviet participation in the conference. Conversely, if it were to bring controversy to the meeting, that would only weaken the meeting, which would be detrimental to the Asian-African Conference. We do not fear controversy with the Soviet Union but do not wish to bring that controversy into the meeting. The Soviet Union last year finally informed us for the first time that the Soviet Union's government was not prepared to request participation in the Asian-African Conference. Since the Soviet Union stated this, we have not raised this issue for quite a long time. Now Algeria is the official host, so we would like to be very frank in telling Your Excellency the President that this is our present attitude. We would like to hear Your Excellency the President's comment.

Ben: Our comment is very simple. Your Excellency the Premier's talk is very much to our benefit.

As the Asian-African Conference's official host, we must serve the conference and abide by its principles. We hope that the Asian-African Conference reaches consensus. We are striving for this. Of course, not all issues can be resolved, nor consensus be reached in every respect.

We also agree that the conference should center on opposing imperialism, opposing colonialism, and safeguarding world peace. We hope that the Second Asian-African Conference assumes more responsibilities and obligations than the Second Conference of Non-Aligned Countries on the issues of opposing imperialism, opposing colonialism, and further supporting national liberation movements.

We also approve the principle of the Jakarta foreign ministerial-level preparatory meeting's agreement.

Regarding the issue of the Soviet Union's participation in the conference, Algeria's position is clear. We take note that the Soviet Union previously gave us a diplomatic note stating that, if the Soviet Union's presence would be detrimental to the conference, it would be better that the Soviet Union not participate in it. We are not prepared to take the initiative in opposing the Soviet Union's participation. Nor will we take the initiative to propose that the Soviet Union participate in the conference. We hope that the Soviet Union will not participate.

Zhou: We clearly understand your attitude.

Zhou: I hope that Your Excellency the President will give me an hour alone with you to talk a bit about it.

Ben: Very good. I will completely listen to your view.

(The two sides settled on 6:00 p.m. for one-on-one talks.)

he Algerian army made me a man," declared Nelson Mandela as soon as he landed in Algiers on May 16, 1990, choosing the country that had introduced him to armed resistance as his first stop on his diplomatic tour after being released from prison in South Africa. Barely out of the plane and still inside Boumediene Airport, the revolutionary figure spoke of the influential time he spent in the training camps of the Algerian National Front of Liberation (FLN) in 1962, where, alongside fighters from the FLN's armed wing, he learned about the ideology — and practicalities — of leading a war of liberation. Mandela would reflect fondly on his time with the FLN in his 1994 memoir, "Long Walk to Freedom," despite it being the main reason he would be branded as a "terrorist" when arrested and sent to prison that summer.

Mandela's recollection of Algeria's support for the African National Congress (ANC) testified to the crucial but forgotten role the country played in Africa's decolonization throughout the 1960s. At the start of the decade, the newly born North African state was signing its independence after winning what The New York Times called "the cruelest colonial war of the modern epoch." As many as 1.5 million Algerians died in the eight-year conflict, instigated by the FLN with independence as its central aim. The war itself was riddled with guerrilla warfare and war crimes; the political turmoil it caused in France forced the undoing of the Fourth Republic.

But the successful armed struggle for independence enabled Algeria to position itself as the spearhead of African liberation and the champion of pan-African unification. A foreign policy focused on providing material and political support to every African liberation movement propelled Algeria to the forefront of a nascent postcolonial order overflowing with optimism and idealism for a new Africa — free, anticolonial and revolutionary.

“Well before we won independence, our country was conscious of its responsibility toward the peoples engaged in struggles against colonialism like we were,” Ahmed Ben Bella declared in his first public address as prime minister of the independent state of Algeria during the Nov. 1, 1962, celebrations held to mark the anniversary of the FLN’s insurrection. His speech was punctuated by thunderous troops marching, the sheer number of which garnered a telling comment from Tunisia’s foreign minister: “There are arms enough in this country to supply all of Africa.”

Within a year, Ben Bella had successfully supplied such cross-continental material support. His first action was to transform Algiers into a host city welcoming any liberation movement, guerrilla group, anti-fascist organization, opposition party or exiled revolutionary seeking refuge, training or help. By the end of 1963, more than 80 organizations found safe haven in the capital city, including representatives from colonized countries across the continent: Namibia seeking independence from Germany; South Africa from Dutch settlers; and Angola, Mozambique and Cape Verde from Portugal. All were given villas and official buildings — vacated by the French a year prior — to live in and work from, a monthly stipend and passports to travel to international conferences for diplomatic work, as well as weapons and supplies to train their militants. Seven hundred South African freedom fighters were training in Algerian camps to learn the FLN’s guerrilla-style warfare, 60 Congolese cadres were interning in the FLN’s government to learn about revolutionary politics, and all officers from the Canary Islands’ independence movement were training in Algerian military schools. The capital city that had been destroyed by French troops during the 1957 Battle of Algiers was now sheltering every aspiring revolutionist and exiled militant. In its streets brewed radical, subversive theories and hope for a new order led by a free, united Africa. Stephane Hessel, a French diplomat stationed in Algiers, would explain this utopia in his memoir: “Dissidents from every authoritarian regime in the Southern Hemisphere flocked to Algiers to devise the ideology that came to be known as ‘Third Worldism.’ It rejected the inertia of Western civilization and counted on the new youth of the world, who sought to liberate themselves once and for all.”

Home to some of the most famous revolutionary fronts in the world, from the ANC to the Black Panthers, Algiers was baptized the “Mecca of Revolution” in 1967 by Guinean nationalist militant Amilcar Cabral who, speaking with a journalist, declared: “Take your pens and write: Muslims go on pilgrimage to Mecca, Christians to the Vatican, revolutionaries to Algiers.”

Algeria's bloody efforts to wrench itself from French control became a clarion call to so many movements, which saw their own struggle reflected in its fight for independence. "The situation in Algeria was the closest model to our own," wrote Mandela in his memoir, "in that the rebels faced a large white settler community that ruled the indigenous majority."

Algeria's unwavering dedication to African liberation followed its 132-year struggle against French occupation and colonization. In 1830, France invaded Algiers to distract public opinion from the failing Bourbon monarchy and a divided, roiling country. After 41 years of war, France declared Algeria a metropolitan department, reducing natives to second-class subjects devoid of any citizenship status while French settlers moved en masse to what they deemed their new territory. The resulting order was upended when the FLN launched a series of violent attacks across Algeria on Nov. 1, 1954, after decades of thwarted legal resistance.

The seed of Algeria's radical solidarity with other colonized states was planted during the next seven years of war by the FLN's prime theorist, Frantz Fanon, an Afro-Caribbean former psychiatrist living in Algiers. Fanon, who was born in the French overseas department of Martinique, had been responsible for the psychiatric care of patients distressed by the French army's routine use of torture and the consequences of a century of subjugation. He used the Algerian experience to theorize liberation: To him, Algeria was demonstrating to the world that independence could be seized only by force, never gifted.

To publicize the Algerian cause across Africa, Fanon led the FLN's delegation to join heads of African nations at the All-African Peoples' Conference, hosted by Ghana, in 1958. There, he included Algeria in a long list of African countries choked by the hand of Euro-American imperialism. Fanon upheld Algeria as a "guide territory" where "the rot of the [colonial] system ... the defeat of racism and the exploitation of man" was at stake. In his 1964 book, "Toward the African Liberation," he eloquently described the FLN's pan-African mission: "Having carried Algeria to the four corners of Africa, we shall return with all of Africa towards African Algeria, towards the north, towards Algiers, continental city, and launch a continent upon the assault of the last rampart of colonial power." By the time independence was declared, the FLN's liberating action against a colonial state, which had reportedly displaced 2 million Algerians into surveillance camps and killed 1 million people, had won the country admiration, moral authority and a long list of supporters among African heads of state. Because Algeria had gained recognition as the first African country to win its independence by means of force, it became natural for the FLN to advocate for the country's responsibility to help other African nations win back their freedom.

In every speech, Ben Bella would highlight Algeria's "duty toward our African brothers," defining brotherhood not by blood or ethnicity but by degree of revolutionary zeal and the commonality of a history of suffering under colonialism. "The Africans expect a great

deal from us. We cannot let them down,” Ben Bella stated in a public address, explaining that “Africanism [is] deeply embedded in the [Algerian] popular consciousness.”

To achieve Africa’s unity, mending the ideological divide that split the continent was a first necessity. While radical states like Algeria, Sudan, Congo-Brazzaville and Guinea believed in a pan-African project achieved through revolutionary means, more conservative states still had ties to Western governments and were distrustful of revolutionary rhetoric. To rally them, Algeria promoted the use of force as a tool of liberation. As ardent defenders of armed resistance, the FLN argued for the necessity of violence as underlined by Fanon in his final study of the Algerian war, “The Wretched of the Earth”: Occupation being a violent phenomenon imposed through violent means, the colonized had no choice but to take back the initial violence and force it upon the occupying powers in order to break it.

Through Fanon’s philosophy, the FLN successfully rallied supporters of nonviolent resistance to its cause, like Ghanaian Prime Minister Kwame Nkrumah, whose commitment to nonviolence dwindled after the FLN’s visit in 1958. Similarly, following his initial time in Algeria, Mandela concluded that “South Africa ruled by the gun could only be liberated with use of force,” despite years of having believed that peaceful liberation was possible. Colonialism “understands only the language of force and violence,” Ben Bella would explain. “We tell our South African brothers that hunger strikes and demonstrations will get you nowhere.”

With the African political limelight increasingly occupied by radical states, the continental city of Algiers established as the mecca of revolutionaries, and the FLN military camps full of African resistance figures, the pan-African unity and revolutionary solidarity Algeria had dreamed of leading was taking shape. One event in April 1963 would propel it to greater heights — the creation of the Organization of African Unity (OAU). The new intergovernmental institution was the first of its kind, designed as a continental equivalent to the United Nations, free from Western influence and oversight. A month later, the largest African Union festival was organized to celebrate the founding of the OAU, which opened its doors in Addis Ababa. The choice of Ethiopia as a host was immensely symbolic: It was the only country in attendance that was never under the yoke of colonialism. The festival welcomed 32 African countries and upheld culture and art from every corner of the continent to give concrete expression to African unity and identity.

There, Algeria took the stage, front and center, and for Ben Bella, it was time to talk of blood. “We have spoken of a development bank. Why haven’t we spoken of a bank of blood to come to the aid of those who are fighting in Angola and elsewhere in Africa?” the Algerian president declared in one of his many flamboyant speeches. “We have no right to think of eating better when people fall in Angola, Mozambique, in South Africa. But we have a ransom to pay. We must accept to die together so that African unity does

not become a vain word.” He continued, “Let us all agree to die a little ... so that the people still under colonial rule may be free.”

Impassioned and charismatic, Ben Bella never missed an opportunity to take the mic and call for collective responsibility. Yet his enthusiasm was not without a patronizing tone and risked giving rise to a cult of personality. Struck by the talk of martyrdom and the belligerent imagery conjured, one attending journalist recorded, “I do not think that I have ever had such a profound sense of African unity as when I listened to Ben Bella, tears in his eyes, visibly moved, urging his listeners to rush to the assistance of the men dying south of the equator.”

Melodramatic as they were, the speeches from the Algerian contingent did produce tangible measures — the OAU festival concluded with the creation of a Liberation Committee and an African Battalion tasked to come to the aid of revolutionary and liberation movements in need of weapons, money or militants. The committee’s role was to coordinate support among states and consolidate newly won independence by fostering cooperation across the continent.

Through the committee, Algeria started to advocate for African solutions to African problems. In 1963, Ben Bella blocked British military aid meant to be sent to Tanganyika (now Tanzania) to resist armed mutiny and provided arms to Prime Minister Julius Nyerere instead. The goal was to maintain sufficiency within the continent and avoid being indebted to the West.

While Ben Bella rebuked Western states for their interventions in Africa, he did not hesitate to come to the aid of Latin American and Middle Eastern movements. He defied the embargo to meet with Cuba’s Fidel Castro, welcomed a delegation of the Venezuelan National Liberation Front, inaugurated an embassy and an African-American center for the Black Panthers in central Algiers, and opened the first office abroad for Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat’s Fatah.

These actions quickly attracted the ire of the American press. To The New York Times, Ben Bella was bordering on hubris — the paper painted Algeria as being “proud to the point of arrogance,” criticizing the government’s constant need to “meddle in the affairs of others.” The criticism did not stop Algeria from continuing to export its support for radical movements internationally, choosing to let its diplomatic ties with America and Britain fray and leaning toward non-Western countries instead. It was a decisive choice in the context of a Cold War that drew lines between pro-Soviet and pro-Western blocs. But transnational revolutionary solidarity and unity was a heavy demand to ask of a continent the size of Africa. Although the first half of the 1960s brimmed with limitless possibility and galvanizing talks, application of the policies set in place by the OAU was lukewarm at best. Conservative African states continued trading with Portugal and South Africa despite the embargo enforced by Algeria, and too many did not meet their mandatory financial contribution to the Liberation Committee. Meanwhile, liberation movements began to grow frustrated by conservative states’ efforts to constrain their

activities and the Liberation Committee's constant oversight. To some, the committee had become a stifling authority rather than the intended facilitating institution. During a decade when a new international order was rapidly taking shape, African states' had to prioritize consolidating their own statehood. Ghana's idea of African federalism was shut down soon after being promoted — a weakening of the nation-state was not a price African countries were ready to pay to establish pan-African unity. Simultaneously, African solidarity was used as a tool to serve national sovereignty. The FLN's own colorful speeches about Algeria's duty and responsibility toward colonized peoples conveniently fed into the country's heroic myth of resistance, one forged in this period to heighten nationalism and delineate national identity. In 1963, Ben Bella summoned and used revolutionary pan-African fervor to cement its borders and discredit Morocco's territorial claims after the monarchy launched a military offensive to gain control over a portion of Algeria's Sahara region. To garner the African community's overwhelming sympathy and support, the Algerian government made a case highlighting Morocco's alliances with the United States and France. "This aggression is a battle between progressive republic and conservative monarchy, between revolution and imperialism," proclaimed Ben Bella. Morocco's King Hassan II was thus isolated and was one of the only African heads of state who did not attend the OAU's festival in Addis Ababa.

Domestically, Ben Bella's international appeal and Algeria's leadership role in Africa came with dire consequences. Kabyle separatist movements paid the price of a policy that upheld a unified national identity at all costs and that refused to accept ethnic diversity and the culture of the Amazigh people indigenous to Algeria. Many Algerians criticized Ben Bella as a hubristic president who preferred fixing the world's problems instead of focusing on Algeria's grim socioeconomic realities.

Ben Bella's dream of Algeria as the social leader of the "Third World" was brought to an abrupt end in June 1965 after his right-hand man, Houari Boumediene, orchestrated a military coup against him. The event triggered outrage across Africa. The heads of many states had woven threads of affinity with the outspoken and charismatic Ben Bella, and his ouster was regarded as an unforgivable betrayal. Following the coup, the ties that held radical African countries together unraveled and the diplomatic relations with revolutionary leaders soured.

Boumediene, in his first address to the nation, did attempt to reaffirm Algeria's principle of unconditional support to revolutionaries: "The riches of the third world have served the interests of the rich nations. It is time for those nations to understand that economic colonialism — like political colonialism before it — must vanish." Yet the personal relationships that Ben Bella had forged never fully transferred to Boumediene.

Throughout the 1960s, the "country of a million martyrs" proved its dedication to anticolonial solidarity by giving substance to African unity and support to liberation movements. But unifying the continent and holding it together proved to be an ambitious

project that failed to take into account the inner divisions and contentions of Africa's nascent independent states. By the beginning of the 1970s, domestic upheavals and the demands of a growing capitalist order got the better of Algeria's revolutionary idealism and its left-leaning, radical foreign policy.

The last gasp of utopia in Algiers came with the 1969 Pan-African Cultural Festival, which brought together singers, artists and intellectuals from every African country and diaspora to perform in the name of African unity and revolutionary consciousness.

There, dissidents and revolutionaries from the continent mingled with the likes of poet and author Maya Angelou and the Black Panther leader Stokely Carmichael in between sets by famous Tuareg musicians and Nina Simone.

On a hot July night, the South African singer Miriam Makeba took to the stage at the main stadium to perform some of her greatest anthems to freedom. Makeba, who had become stateless after South Africa revoked her citizenship for criticizing the regime and calling for an arms embargo at the U.N., had been granted Algerian citizenship several years earlier. "I am honored to have the nationality of a country that did so much for the liberation of Africa," she said at the time.

As the heat settled and the crowd buzzed, Makeba raised the microphone to her lips; her strong, pure voice rang out as she sang, in the Algerian dialect, "Ana hourra fi al-Jazair, watani, umm al-shaheed" — "I am free in Algeria, my homeland, the mother of martyrs

When Algerian premier Ahmed Ben Bella traveled to the United States to attend the United Nations General Assembly session in October 1962, the State Department asked what he would most like to do during his time in New York City. Ben Bella replied that he would like to meet Martin Luther King, Jr. As King's former advisor Clarence B. Jones remembers, the State Department called King's office in Atlanta, and King's secretary in turn called Jones to arrange the visit with King,

which was held at the home of the Algerian Ambassador to the United Nations in Riverdale, New York. During the two-hour meeting between the Algerian Ambassador, Ben Bella, King, and Jones, King and Ben Bella found common cause, endorsing each other in a subsequent press conference. Ben Bella—who, Jones recalls, “was encyclopedic about his knowledge of the civil rights movement in the United States”—declared segregation a cancer, asserting that the United States would lose its “moral and political voice” in the world should it allow discrimination to continue. King, meanwhile, claimed solidarity with Algerian anticolonialism, stating, “The battle of the Algerians against colonialism and the battle of the Negro against segregation is a common struggle.” Some questioned why King would link Algerian independence with the civil rights movement, observing that Algeria’s violent revolution clashed with King’s nonviolent philosophy and that Algeria’s neutralist foreign policy deviated

from American interests. In the context of such criticisms, King's support for Algeria demonstrates his willingness to challenge Cold War-era norms and presages his later, and more famous, opposition to the Vietnam War.

At first glance, the American civil rights movement had many tactical differences with Algeria's armed revolution. Although King's earlier visits to newly independent Ghana in 1957 and Nigeria in 1960 went smoothly, King's meeting with Ben Bella proved to be more controversial because of the Algerian Revolution's brutal nature. The conflict, which spanned from 1954–1962, resulted in an estimated 1.5 million Algerian lives lost due to war-related causes, twenty-five thousand French soldiers killed, and both sides accusing the other of widespread civilian torture. One letter writer found King's approval of Ben Bella irreconcilable with the stated aims of the civil rights movement because the movement was struggling

for “democracy and equality for all citizens,” while Ben Bella had only “substituted a new brand of dictatorship for the evil of French colonialism.” Conservative columnist William F. Buckley also questioned why “Dr. King, prince of peace, is attracted to the drastically different approach of Ben Bella—the man who sanctioned every atrocity in the encyclopaedia of terror to win his own way.” Similar to how city leaders in Albany, Georgia, accused King of being an outside agitator stirring up dissension while ignoring the second-class status of Albany's black citizens, onlookers condemned Algeria’s methods without considering its goal of self-determination amidst oppressive colonial violence.

Also, Algeria’s foreign policy, much like that of North Vietnam, raised suspicion from Cold War America. Days before meeting with King, Ben Bella spoke at the United Nations and announced Algeria’s commitment to anticolonialism, an

independent Palestine, and a neutralist posture in Cold War affairs. Buckley observed that Ben Bella's statement focused on Africans but ignored Eastern European nations "suffering under the colonialism of the Soviet Union," suggesting that Algeria's titular neutrality was disguised anti-Americanism. During his trip to the Americas, Ben Bella also visited Cuba and declared friendship with Fidel Castro, leading the Kennedy Administration to reconsider its offer to send foreign aid to Algeria. Earlier in 1962, Ben Bella had also pledged one hundred thousand troops to aid Egypt in a potential war against Israel, which led one correspondent to object that Ben Bella's statement criticizing the United States was "singular hypocrisy." Some Americans viewed these actions as tantamount to supporting communism. Months later, Alabama governor George Wallace raised King's meeting with Ben Bella, calling the Algerian leader "a Communist in my opinion" to suggest that King was also a Communist by

association. Similar to the 7 April 1967 *New York Times* editorial claiming King neglected Vietnamese culpability and was “whitewashing Hanoi” by opposing ongoing American intervention in Vietnam, these critics dismissed King’s sympathy with anticolonial movements through an alternative narrative that painted Algeria as dangerous and a threat to American interests.

While King conceded that he had tactical differences with Ben Bella, he maintained his general assertion that worldwide liberation movements coincided with domestic civil rights concerns. To one critic, King privately clarified that his meeting with Ben Bella “was in no way designed to indicate support of his views but rather as an opportunity to share with the Premier some of our ideas on Democracy, non-violence and the world community.” In his press release about the meeting, King also claimed that Ben Bella supported tactical

nonviolence in America and “expressed the wish that their fight for independence might have been nonviolent,” which minimized the differences between the movements as differences in circumstance. Accepting the violence in Algeria served as King’s tacit admission that nonviolence was not universally applicable.

However, King maintained that the movement remained inextricably tied to anticolonial struggles happening across the globe. For one, Ben Bella’s claim that the United States must address racism at home, along with similar statements from other world leaders, put pressure on the federal government to appear friendly to civil rights to maintain its global standing. Otherwise, King observed, “The price that America must pay for the continued oppression of the Negro is the price of its own destruction.” King acknowledged the value of this international scrutiny and recognized that the

African-American freedom struggle benefited from worldwide support.

Beyond the practical benefits, the movements also found common cause because the forces opposing them were similar. A month later, King stated at the American Negro Leadership Conference on Africa, “As long as segregation and discrimination exist in our nation, the longer the chances of survival are for colonialism and vice versa, for the very same set of complex politico-economic forces are operative in both instances.” King highlighted “the choice between political expediency and that which is morally compelling” operating both in international affairs and in domestic discrimination. He criticized military intervention on behalf of Cold War allies practicing colonialism, observing that “the current struggle to win the minds of men and nations to the free world will not be

won militarily” but instead through supporting freedom movements seeking self-determination.

This commentary would appear later in King’s famous 4 April 1967 “Beyond Vietnam” address. There, King again decried America for choosing economic and political expediency over morality. He charged that the United States served “the role of those who make peaceful revolution impossible by refusing to give up on the privileges and the pleasures that come from the immense profits of overseas investments.” Instead of pursuing military intervention in North Vietnam and elsewhere, the United States “must with positive action seek to remove those conditions of poverty, insecurity, and injustice, which are the fertile soil in which the seed of communism grows and develops.”

By meeting with Ahmed Ben Bella, King demonstrates his willingness to use his influence to address world affairs years prior to receiving his 1964 Nobel Peace Prize. While endorsing Algeria gave yet more ammunition to King's critics, it provided the civil rights movement with valuable support from a prominent world leader. Moreover, King's claim that the movement was inextricably linked with worldwide liberation suggests that King was already uneasy with the Cold War consensus in 1962. The United States' ill-fated political alliances with reactionary heads of state and its costly military expeditions would continue to draw funding and attention away from domestic matters in the coming years. Supporting Algerian liberation in 1962 suggests why King felt that "my conscience leaves me no other choice" but to speak out against Vietnam in 1967, despite the much greater personal and political cost to oppose that endeavor.

Your Imperial Majesty, Mr. President Excellencies, It is one o'clock and my speech will be brief I shall content myself with stating in a few words, the position of my Government and of the Algerian People. First I should like to say how symbolic our meeting at Addis Ababa is and I thank His Imperial Majesty and the Government and people of Ethiopia for having afforded us the opportunity of receiving this warm welcome, which enhances the feeling that we all belong to one big family, all confronted with the same problems. I consider it my duty to spare you the long speech I had prepared. I am simply going to tell you what we in Algeria think of the essence of these problems. In so far as African unity is concerned, a committee is now meeting to sketch out, before we separate, the broad outlines of this unity and in particular, to prepare a draft charter. I stress that Algeria subscribes in advance to all the conditions, to all the reasons, to all the justifications that committee will adopt. But it is my duty to say, on behalf of the

Algerian People and on behalf of one million five hundred thousand martyrs fallen on the field of honour, that this Charter will remain a dead letter unless we take concrete decisions, unless we lend unconditional support to the peoples of Angola, of South Africa, of Mozambique and others, unconditional support which these peoples still under the colonialist yoke are entitled to expect from us. It is my duty to say that if concrete decisions in this sense are not taken, the Charter we are gd. It is my duty to say again that all the, fine speeches we have heard here will be the strongest weapon against this unity. H.E AHMED BEN BELLA PRIME MINISTER OF ALGERIA PAGE 015 OF 147 AFRICAN UNION FOUNDERS There has been talk of a development Bank. Why have we not talked of setting up a blood bank? A blood bank to help those who are fighting in Angola and all over Africa. Obviously problems arise before these decisions can be put into practice. We, for our part, would like to study them. I should also like to state

that since February, that is since Angola Day, ten thousand Algerian volunteers have been waiting for a chance to go to the assistance of their brothers in arms. Yes, there are problems, particularly in the peripheral countries, where the crisis areas are to be found. These problems must be solved, or this calamity symbolized by the fascism of Salazar may be perpetuated. Are we going to allow ten million men to insult each day three hundred million Africans? This we no longer have a right to accept. We must ask ourselves the question: what we shall do now to prevent a repetition of these insults in Angola, Mozambique, South Africa and elsewhere in Africa? At these crisis points, African unity must take the form of effective solidarity with these who are still fighting for their liberty. I assure you that this is so, and I speak, from experience, since for seven and half years we fought in Algeria against the strongest and most stubborn imperialism. Today, we are discussing Africa's economic problems. I very much

fear that everything we are proposing to do in this domain may be reduced to straightforward agreements enabling us to feed our peoples better. We have no right to think of -filling our bellies when our brothers are still dying in Angola, Mozambique and South Africa. Although there are problems, in particular with regard to the security of countries such as the Congo and Guinea, which border on the crisis areas, it is our duty to examine them and to ensure that our solidarity with these countries is effective. Thus the day that Portugal attempts to undertake a further evil action, such as that against Senegal or the Congo, in Guinea or against any other African country, it will find the whole of Africa - united opposing it. These peripheral countries must know that they owe a ransom to African unity. A ransom had to be paid for Algeria's liberation. It is because Tunisian brothers died at Sakiyet-Si- Di-Youssef, because Moroccan brothers died at OUIDA, because Egyptian brothers died at PORT-SAID, and

because Libyan brothers and others lost their lives that Algeria is free. For I must state here that it was because of the unconditional support afforded us by Egypt that the latter fell victim to the tripartite aggression. It is thanks, too, to support from our brothers in Guinea, Mali, Nigeria and other countries that Algeria was able to free itself. Thus, African brothers agreed to die a little so that Algeria might become an independent State. So let us all agree to die a little, or even completely, so that the peoples still under colonial domination may be freed and African unity may not be a vain word.