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Department of State

TELEGRAM

1969-9-24, Nasser, Problems

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S E C R E T SECTION I OF 2 CAIRO 2310

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MC

1. APPRECIATE STATE 160348. DEPT HAS GIVEN US A TALL ORDER. WHAT FOLLOWS CONTAINS, PERFORCE, A LOT OF HUNCH AND SUBJECTIVITY. WE HAVE ALSO TRIED TO KEEP OUR ANALYSIS AS BRIEF AS POSSIBLE. PLEASE ASK US TO SPELL OUT ANY PORTIONS WHICH READERS MAY FIND OVERLY ELLIPTIC.

2. STATE OF THE REGIME. BY ANY SET OF WESTERN CRITERIA, THE NASSER REGIME SHOULD HAVE LONG SINCE DISAPPEARED, BUFFERED TO DEATH NOT ONLY BY THE DISASTROUS JUNE 1967 EPISODE IN THE ARAB-ISRAEL WAR BUT ALSO BY EGYPT'S BUILT-IN AND PERHAPS INSOLUBLE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC PROBLEMS. BY THE MORE EXOTIC CRITERIA OF THIS AREA, HOWEVER, THE NASSER REGIME IS DOING QUITE WELL. TO THE GREAT MAJORITY OF EGYPTIANS, NASSER CONTINUES TO PERSONIFY THEIR MOST IMPORTANT ASPIRATION - DIGNITY.

3. MALAISE AT THE TOP. THE DEPARTURE OF ALI SABRI FROM A REAL POWER POSITION HIGHLIGHTS TWO DEVELOPMENTS. FIRSTLY, THE ALMOST FATAL DISAPPEARANCE OF ANY ASPECT OF COLLEGIALLY IN THE NASSER REGIME. THE ORIGINAL REVOLUTIONARY COMMAND COUNCIL OF 1952, THE PROCESS OF POLICY-MAKING BY A SMALL BODY OF ELITE AROUND AND WITH NASSER BOUND BY CLOSE PERSONAL LOYALTIES AND A COMMON PURPOSE, THESE HAVE JUST ABOUT GONE. NOW IT IS NASSER ALONE AT THE TOP DEALING WITH A GOVERNMENT AND A MILITARY ESTABLISHMENT COMPOSED OF DISMISSABLE TECHNOCRATS. THERE ARE NO LONGER ANY BUFFERS OR BUILT-IN CHECKS AND BALANCES AGAINST ARBITRARY ACTION. THIS MEANS HIRINGS AND FIRINGS AT THE CABINET AND MILITARY COMMAND LEVEL COME MORE FREQUENTLY.

4. FAILURE OF ASU. ALI SABRI'S DEPARTURE ALSO MARKS A TACIT

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