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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE

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1969-5-22, Nasser, Israel, War?

RNA-23, May 22, 1969

To : The Acting Secretary.

Through: S/S

From : INR - Thomas L. Hughes *Thomas L. Hughes*

Subject: UAR: Nasser, in a Bind, May Strike Out Against Israel

As the UAR enters next month the third year of the post-June war stalemate with Israel, Nasser finds himself beset by growing demands in Egypt and throughout the Arab world for a resolution of the situation. Faced with the lack of demonstrable progress toward a political solution, Nasser is re-evaluating his policy alternatives. This paper analyzes the pressures on the UAR leadership and suggests possible courses of action, including limited military operations, that the UAR might take over the next several months.

ABSTRACT

Nasser's actions in the next few months are likely to be of critical importance for Egypt. His justification for further inaction will probably prove increasingly unsatisfactory to Egyptians and Arabs elsewhere. His call for "steadfastness" in anticipation of an acceptable political solution is encountering a growing credibility gap: his demand for patience while Egypt recoups its military strength has been, if anything, undermined by his claims of increasing preparedness.

After two years on a diet of anxiety, frustration and unredeemed promises, the Egyptians are a vexed and troubled people. Gone is the sense of self-assurance which the Revolution had imparted in the years prior to the June war and in its place is despair and a general malaise. Most Egyptians probably agree that the first priority of the regime should be the resolution of the Arab-Israeli impasse which they tend to regard as the primary obstacle to a lessening of their burdens.

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