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Intelligence Note

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1968-12-3, Nasser, Students,

Speech

December 3, 1968

To : The Secretary
 Through: S/S
 From : IIR - Thomas L. Hughes TH

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE
 DIRECTOR OF INTELLIGENCE AND RESEARCH

INR-939

Subject: UAR: Nasser's Speech Takes Aim at Student Discontent But Misses the Mark

President Nasser's December 2 statement on the recent student riots probably will not serve to improve the internal Egyptian situation. The hour-long presentation, delivered before an extraordinary session of the Arab Socialist Union (ASU) National Congress and broadcast nationally, may boost the confidence of the faithful, but it will not placate student and other elements who are dissatisfied with regime policies. There is much that is familiar and repetitious in Nasser's remarks. Nevertheless, the speech is of interest not only because of the context in which it was delivered but also because of Nasser's defensive tone; his recognition of the malaise within Egypt; his apparent inability to comprehend the causes of student discontent; and his failure to address himself squarely to moderating that dissatisfaction.

POL 23-8 UAR

Apologia for the 30 March Reform. Most of Nasser's speech, including a

rambling discourse on the reforms that had been undertaken since last spring, recapitulated the regime's efforts since June 1967 to institutionalize "gradual and scientific" change. He emphasized the need for patience to allow time for the desired changes to occur. The intent of this catalog was clearly to demonstrate that the regime has sponsored many improvements and to defend its record against its detractors

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Nasser occasionally attempted to refute charges, some of which were shouted during the student riots, that there had been little progress toward extending civil liberties, lessening press censorship or increasing participation by youth in national life. His answer in every case was to point to the regime's record. It

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