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NO.

1968-5-10, Nasser, ASU, Russian

HANDLING INDICATOR

TO : Department of State

INFO : AMMAN, BEIRUT, CAIRO, LONDON, PARIS, TEL AVIV, USUN

FROM : Amembassy MOSCOW

DATE: May 10, 1969

SUBJECT: Pravda on ASU Difficulties

REF :

In Pravda May 7, Cairo correspondent Primakov broaches the current status of the Arab Socialist Union (ASU), noting a number of persistent weaknesses. (The article, "Battle on the Way", was also summarized in some detail in the English-language TASS file.)

Primakov's line is that despite considerable progress, the ASU has yet to become a party and many "objective" and "subjective" difficulties remain. Among these, he cites "the positions of the army leading nucleus" and the presence of "reactionary elements". In this context, the author also notes the unwieldy ASU membership (seven million of a population of 30 million, or one out of almost every two adults). The existence of an "aspiration toward the formation of a party within the ASU" is therefore viewed approvingly by Primakov.

Omitted from TASS's summary is Primakov's criticism of the "theory" that progress should be subordinated to the needs of national unity arising from the Arab-Israeli conflict: "This theory works in favor of exploiting, counter-revolutionary elements." The author then goes on to attribute to an ASU member the opinion, also omitted by TASS, that "counter-revolutionary elements made use of the passivity of the ASU in organizational and political work in 1968 to attempt to take back that which had already been won by the revolution."

Primakov also points to economic policy as being a focus of bitter struggle between "progressives" and "reactionaries". The latter are castigated for attempting to exploit the present "situation" to attack the state sector of the economy. Criticism is also leveled at the "expansion, even in wartime conditions, of the production of goods other than prime necessities."

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