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To : The Secretary
Through: S/S
From : INR - Thomas L. Hughes *TH*
Subject: UAR Referendum Does Not Solve Basic Problems

President Nasser will interpret the outcome of the May 2 referendum as a massive endorsement of his no-peace policy toward Israel and of his domestic program. Of the 7.3 million votes cast, 99.989% supported Nasser's March 30 program which gives first priority to rebuilding UAR military strength for an eventual confrontation with Israel should political action fail to obtain Israeli withdrawal from Arab territories occupied last June. The referendum is to be followed over the next two months by elections for new local, provincial, and national bodies of the Arab Socialist Union (ASU), the regime's political mass movement. Nasser hopes the elections and other promised political reforms will restore the waning confidence in the regime. The Arab-Israeli conflict, however, limits the extent to which he can accommodate growing popular demands for basic changes in the UAR political system.

Nothing to Offer but Blood, Sweat, and Sacrifice. Nasser's several speeches on behalf of his March 30 program underscore his basic dilemma: he can take no initiative toward peace with Israel without damaging his prestige at home and in the Arab world, but is unwilling to gamble on military action at this time.

Nasser cannot offer the Egyptian people any hope of a political solution to the Arab-Israeli impasse, having ruled out Arab-Israeli negotiations so long as Israel occupies Arab territory. He has expressed pessimism that political action through

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