

Sum
Note - 24

DECLASSIFIED
Authority 11/11/04
By MC NARA Date 7/26/04

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

1968 - Nasser, Elections, ASU

April 1, 1968

To : The Acting Secretary
Through: S/S
From : INR - George C. Denney, Jr. *A.C.D.*

Subject: Nasser's New Year's Resolution: Arab Socialist Union Elections Now, A Constitution Later

President Nasser has promised the Egyptian people broad political and constitutional changes--most of which would be implemented only after a solution of the present Middle East problem has been achieved. In a televised address on the occasion of the Muslim New Year (March 30), Nasser reaffirmed his desire for a political settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict, but stressed that the UAR must also be prepared for resumption of hostilities. Therefore, he indicated, the struggle to regain the territory occupied by Israel since June 5 must continue to have absolute priority over meeting demands for political freedom and reform at home.

In order to alleviate domestic political unrest, Nasser has proposed a referendum on May 2 to approve early elections at the local, provincial, and national level for the regime's political mass movement, the Arab Socialist Union (ASU). An ASU National Congress will be entrusted with drafting a new permanent constitution and with electing a Central Committee, theoretically the UAR's highest policy-making body. Nasser evidently hopes a revitalized ASU will strengthen his political base and enable him to pursue more effectively his foreign policy objectives. However, the elections could set off new demands for more far-reaching political changes now. They might also become

100 12 6 UPR
NR 100 10 6 UR
NR 100 27 ARAB-ISR

DECLASSIFIED BY 6514

⑤

This report was produced by the Bureau of Intelligence and Research. Aside from normal substantive exchange with other agencies at the working level, it has not been coordinated elsewhere.

CONFIDENTIAL

GROUP 5

EXEMPTED FROM AUTOMATIC
DOWNGRADING AND
DECLASSIFICATION