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President Nasser's Program for Political  
and Economic Reform

In the weeks immediately prior to the June 1967 war, President Nasser was riding high in the Middle East. The efforts of the U.S. and other Western powers to lift the blockade of Eilat had gotten nowhere. Most Arab States were rallying to the UAR's side: Jordan had signed a defense pact, Kuwait had sent troops to Egypt, an Iraqi force was on the way to Jordan, and there was mass enthusiasm within Egypt for the confrontation with Israel. Then -- within four days -- the Egyptian Air Force was destroyed, the Egyptian Army battered and routed, and the entire Sinai Peninsula was in Israeli hands.

The past year has been traumatic for all the Arabs and perhaps most of all for Nasser. The decisive Arab defeat by Israel was followed by shock, rage, despair and bitter humiliation. Egypt, on the brink of, if not actually in, bankruptcy, was thrust into an even more precarious financial position with the loss of her major sources of foreign exchange: the Suez Canal, the oil fields of Sinai and tourism.

Changes in the Arab Socialist Union (ASU), the single legal political party of the UAR, along with a major government shakeup, began after Egypt's defeat in the June war, following widespread charges that the party had let Egypt down in the crisis. In a major speech on 30 March 1968, Nasser announced a program for comprehensive political, social and economic reforms for the UAR, to be instituted primarily through the reorganization of the ASU. Nasser submitted this program to a popular referendum on 2 May. The massive, stage-managed endorsement given the referendum was then touted as a vote of confidence in him and his regime: out of 7.3 million votes cast, 99.98 percent were favorable! However, there is more than a little question as to the genuine enthusiasm for the 30 March program among the usually apathetic Egyptian masses. Despite the small number of "no" votes on 2 May, the program has aroused little enthusiasm among students, professionals, and other middle class elements. These groups consider Nasser's proposals meaningless and question whether the UAR should accept a prolonged period of economic austerity and the risk of a new war. They are also dissatisfied with Arab socialism and believe the plans for the ASU are too heavily weighted in favor of uneducated workers and peasants. They are concerned that continued dependence on the Soviet Union strengthens the influence of the radical leftists within the regime. Even the workers have grievances involving labor-management relations in the public economic sector as well as demands for more housing and lower taxes. The UAR military resent being made scapegoats for the June defeat, their loss of prestige and privileges, and the authority exercised by Soviet military advisers.

The ASU, originally designed to generate mass enthusiasm for Cairo's chosen policies, has been a continuing disappointment to the regime. As was the case with earlier mass movements Nasser tried to create, the ASU

failed to attract true mass support and was not a reliable instrument for political control and manipulation. Disorderly demonstrations by workers and students in February were the largest and most serious hostile demonstrations since the regime came to power and reflected growing public impatience with Nasser's domestic and foreign policies.

In his 30 March program, Nasser promised the Egyptians broad political and constitutional changes, most of which would be implemented only after "removal of the consequences of the aggression." His major concession to the spirit of political unrest abroad in Egypt was the selection of ASU cadres by election rather than appointment. Candidates for election, however, are tightly controlled by the Nasser-appointed Provisional Committee to supervise the elections. None of the proposed reforms is really new: the National Assembly has been fitfully drafting a permanent constitution since 1964; the proposed elections for the National Congress, which would in turn elect the powerful Central Committee, are no more than a call for approval of procedures promised in the 1962 National Charter.

The 2 May referendum has thus created an illusion of political unity and reform which does not appear to be supported by facts. It may give rise to a momentary euphoria that can be exploited propagandistically both at home and abroad. The problems Nasser faces, however, are no different than they were before 2 May. The survival of the regime will ultimately depend on its ability to provide solutions for at least some of the vexing political and economic problems that have been responsible for the continuing public discontent. Nasser hopes the elections and other promised political changes will restore waning confidence in his 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.

In the meantime, he has called for continued austerity, national unity and resistance to what he describes as Israeli and imperialist psychological warfare tactics intended to divide and dispirit the Egyptian people. The mood of cautious optimism following the Khartoum Conference last September has been steadily eroded by the lack of progress in implementing the UN Security Council Resolution of 22 November 1967 or in achieving a UN or Big Power-mediated settlement. In the face of increasing Israeli intransigence and incessant Soviet propaganda exploiting the difficulties, the Arabs interpret what they believe to be U.S. failure to use its influence upon Israel to be conclusive evidence of a U.S.-Israeli-imperialist conspiracy. A classic example of this is the 4 June 1968 Izvestia article by V. Kudryavtsev, "The Smoldering Coals in the Near East," a copy of which is attached.

## Egypt



Nationalism is more than ever the dominant theme in Egyptian political life this spring. The consciously expressed concern not to be engulfed in any alien system either of imperialism or of international Communism is insistent and genuine. Soviet military experts are in Egypt only "for specific tasks and for specific periods," writes editor Mohammed Hassanein Heikal in *Al Ahram*. They will not be allowed to dominate the state, but, he explains, Egypt is in great need of specific aspects of military training, which Soviet technicians are now providing.

In fact, a Russian version of a Military Assistance Group such as the United States has long deployed in Asia now exists in Egypt. It involves an estimated 4000 officers and engineers. They have come along with the simpler, mostly defensive Russian weapons which have restocked Egyptian arsenals since last summer. When it became apparent that a peasant army could not master the intricacies of sophisticated weapons, and that their officers showed a fatal lack of understanding and initiative in desert warfare, Egypt appealed for basic training as well as arms.

### Russia in warm water

The Russian presence is pervasive but not conspicuous. Egypt's defeat provided the opening for the Soviets to move into the planning of defense; for the easy negotiation of landing rights for Russian planes at Cairo West, Alexandria, Luxor, and Aswan, and for port facilities for the Soviet fleet at Alexandria

and Port Said. Russia has reached the warm water at last. It is in the Mediterranean to stay.

Economic bonds between Moscow and Cairo are also strong. Trade between them has reached an annual figure of \$243 million. Among the items coming into Egypt are 300,000 tons of wheat and much industrial equipment. From Czechoslovakia and East Germany, Egypt has ordered a total of thirty complete flour mills. From the Egyptian side, cotton, rice, textiles, and agricultural products will be exported to the Soviet Union.

Russians have been the all-important partners in the Aswan High Dam, from which cheap power now reaches as far as Tahrir Province, north of Cairo. The High Dam is nearing completion, holding back some 40 million cubic meters of water and altering the society and economy of the Nile region completely. The High Dam Ministry estimates that the dam has already saved \$150 million by preventing flood damage. Much planning has accompanied the dam's building. Development of a new diversified industrial complex at Aswan awaits funds. This is being done under the auspices of the Regional Planning of Aswan office, under the governorate of Aswan. It has had as consultants experts on small industry from the Ford Foundation and is now receiving further help from the UN Development Program.

Meanwhile, newly irrigated land reclaimed from the desert already produces two cotton crops or three cereal crops where only one crop was possible after normal Nile floods. Altogether the dam will increase Egypt's arable land by one sixth and its agricultural output by one quarter.

### Tough line

In spite of the enormous Soviet financial investment in Egypt over the last ten years, political relations between the two nations are undefined. There is no mutual defense treaty, although in the shock of defeat last summer President Nasser wanted one. Without Moscow's material and political support the effects

of the defeat would have been catastrophic for Egypt. Given these, Cairo can maintain a tough line in relation to Israel and reassert some of its influence in the Arab world. That influence survives. In recognition of it the Israelis publicly say that no peace treaty without Nasser's agreement would be worth having.

Soviet diplomats find it impossible, however, to influence Cairo's decisions directly on the Palestine question. They failed to win acceptance of a moderate solution last summer at the UN. They remain unable to alter the government's position on the Suez Canal, or on its hope of re-establishing diplomatic relations with Washington. Rather cautiously they have been comparing Nasser's "bourgeois" regime with that of the more radical Boumedienne in Algeria. *Pravda's* Igor Belyayev in a long article in February wrote: "Even in nationalist Egyptian circles there are fairly open proponents of an all-around rapprochement with the United States. These people try to convince themselves that only the Americans are in the position to solve the Middle East crisis. . . . A very perfidious design is hidden in such claims. It is a question of the most genuine capitulation before imperialism. Carry out the design of the American Lobbyists in Cairo, and the U.S. would be able to rely on those changes which would favor its monopoly capitalism and reduce to naught the gains of the Egyptian revolution."

The *Pravda* article reflects a general concern among the Egyptian hierarchy that their posture of non-alignment will be impossible to maintain unless better relations with the West are cultivated. It was for this reason that they were so eager to restore relations with Great Britain last fall. They tried energetically, and have succeeded in retaining their oil contracts with two U.S. companies — Pan American in the Red Sea region, and Phillips Petroleum in the western desert. Within a year of the formation of a joint company with Pan American the Morgan field has reached a production of 100,000 barrels a day, thus offsetting the loss of the Sinai

fields captured by Israel. This oil is now being processed at British Petroleum's refinery at Aden, pending the complete restoration of the Suez refineries damaged in October. This spring Egypt's third productive field at El Alamein will add 30,000 barrels a day.

Official interpretation of the value of these finds emphasizes their political aspect. As the government spokesman, Dr. Mohammed H. El-Zayyat, put it, more Egyptian oil will help Egypt to resist pressure from any side, to remain independent. In terms of money, oil income helps to rescue Egypt from the near bankruptcy brought on by Suez Canal closure and loss of tourism.

### Political traffic

These economic developments add a new dimension to Egypt's future. It ceases to be a have-not country and can anticipate means of carrying out its ambitious industrial plans. Planning is now in the hands of Dr. Abdel Moncim Kaissouny, one of the country's ablest financial figures. His re-emergence in the cabinet is a sign of the regime's desire to re-establish itself in the international financial marketplace. One of the most promising projects under discussion between Egyptian planners and a British engineering firm is for a large oil pipeline to bypass the Suez Canal. The pipeline would have an initial capacity of 50 million tons a year and would link the Gulf of Suez with Port Said or Alexandria. It is asserted that use of the line would be less expensive than enlarging the Suez Canal to take giant modern tankers.

Aside from the technical advantages of a new pipeline, its construction would diminish the symbolic importance of the canal. Nationalization of the canal made President Nasser a hero in the Arab world in 1956. It has always carried a heavy freight of political traffic. It was for this reason that Israel fought to use it. The amount of Israeli flag-shipment which could use it is small, but the sensitivity of both countries on this issue is acute.

Thus when Egypt started under United Nations auspices to survey the canal in January in order to

free fifteen ships blocked there since consulted at every step. When it became obvious that Egypt could physically clear the canal at its northern end without Israeli interference, because Israel does not occupy the eastern bank on the last five miles at the northern end, Israel protested. This put it in the position of denying clearance of the blocked ships for its own political reasons. No amount of reasoning or reassurance by United Nations officials and observers that this was to be a onetime operation, not a reopening of the canal to traffic, could budge Israel. Egypt then stopped all attempts to free the ships. It could simply wait until the nine countries involved as owners of the ships exerted more pressure for clearance.

### Cairo's credit

In this case Egypt was in the position to claim that a technical service was in the general interest and therefore above politics. This has been a familiar argument in Israel for many years — when swamps in demilitarized zones in the north adjoining Syria were drained, for example, to make them productive. But on the canal, where Israel now patrols the eastern bank for all but the northern five-mile stretch, the Israelis remain transfixed by the prospect of joining in its traffic at last.

On the Egyptian side, it has taken considerable persuasion by international interests to convince Egyptian planners that it is in their best interest to establish an alternative to the canal. They have accepted the idea and begun to shift their interest to it, encouraged by international petroleum companies in the Arabian Gulf. But before any new large projects can be carried out in Egypt, it will be necessary to re-establish Egyptian credit standing. The government has been trying to reschedule its large debts to foreign commercial banks. Most important is regularization of its standing with the International Monetary Fund, with which it is in default in the amount of some \$50 million. European commercial banks have been

more responsive to Egyptian requests than have American banks. Ever since the Yemeni war and its threat to the stability of the Arabian peninsula, American institutions have been increasingly cool to Egyptian appeals for funds.

### The men from Moscow

At this stage Egyptian planners must therefore reckon without American help in any field except education. The American presence on the Egyptian scene has never been so slight. Today the small contingent of diplomats who staff the American Interests Section of the Spanish Embassy stick to their technical tasks. They observe the novel activities of a whole new breed of Soviet diplomats who ornament the Cairo social scene. The Russian ambassador, Serge Vinogradov, has become the most sought-after and honored guest at state functions. He is backstopped by about a thousand Russians speaking good English and Egyptian Arabic. The women of the contingent have dropped the uncaring styles of the past for the latest European modes. On the surface they have replaced the banished Europeans of another age.

Mr. Vinogradov has easy access to President Nasser, and likes to appear as the President's mentor. Still, government decisions so far have not followed an all-out anti-Western line. And within the Egyptian official family there is known to be much anxiety at the preponderant role assumed by the men from Moscow.

The generation of technocrats which keeps Egypt from civil chaos grew up under British and French tutelage. Their leaders studied at London School of Economics and the Sorbonne or at Harvard. They are at home in the Western world, are nostalgic for contact with it, and angry that much of it refuses to see the justice of their position on Arab unity under Egypt, and on Israel. They are also weary of responsibility in a hectic period of revolution; and some of them have found a way out by joining international services via the United Na-

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tions. Today it is possible for more of these elite to leave if they choose. Late in the fall of 1967 the government decided that Egyptian families could emigrate legally, taking with them their household possessions and some cash. There has been an exodus of both Christians and Muslims in the last six months. Many go to Canada, some to the United States. They represent a new kind of loss for Egypt, of educated and skilled professionals, discouraged with their position and anxious for the future. If the tide of such emigration increases, it will be a sign that the regime can no longer offer real hope to the educated class.

Dr. Kaissouny has underscored the lack of educated manpower in a report on employment prospects up to 1975. He predicts a shortage of candidates for managerial and technical posts of some 30,000 by 1970. The supply of intermediate technical trainees will be short 160,000 candidates. The implications for development of the economy are obvious.

Egypt has not yet dealt with the great technological gap exposed by its military defeat last summer. But Russian advisers have not spared feelings in putting much of the military failure down to lack of training. Dr. Kaissouny is saying that there will be as fatal a gap in preparation for industrialization if technical education is not improved and increased.

Much United Nations technical help has been sought by the government in this field. UNESCO and the International Labor Organization have helped to set standards and teach teachers of vocational training. There has been help on training for civil aviation, for railway workers, and for industrial management. The UN Development Program is concentrating on aiding projects for draining irrigated land, a necessity as more acreage comes under perennial irrigation from the High Dam. It is also advising on mineral development of the Aswan region and on new industries which can be developed as the power grid begins to extend across the country.

Such help adds up in the overall development effort. But what strikes the Western observer is the shortage

of education for industry in a country which envisions salvation through industrialization. This shortage, plus an artificial one caused by the removal of many talented managerial people for political reasons, threatens the country's economic future. There is as yet no mobilization of talent, much of it still available in the country. The Israeli war does not seem to have had the Sputnik-like effect it might have had in directing energies to Egypt's technical deficiencies.

#### High cards, paper votes

As time passes without a resolution of the political impasse with Israel, Egypt's terms have not softened. Cairo has made what it considers its best offer. This is for demilitarization of both sides of the Sinai frontier after withdrawal of Israeli forces; submission of the Tiran strait question to the International Court, with open passage meanwhile; return of Palestinians to their land in the West Bank, at least, in exchange for Israeli passage through the canal; and negotiations through the Mixed Armistice Commission, which continues to exist in spite of Israel's ten-year boycott of it. The Egyptians believe they have taken "a giant step" in admitting Israel's right to exist. They say they have been talking directly with Israel through the MAC since 1949, that this is the best way for negotiations to be held, and that they cannot concede more. They do not claim Gaza but are concerned with its refugee population, of whom some 12,000 single males are being sheltered on a small dole in Egypt. There is no work for them, and only a few are qualified for university training.

Even if President Nasser were disposed, on practical grounds, to settle with Israel at peace talks, he could not forfeit his long-standing position as the champion of the Palestinian cause. There are doves in Egypt who would like to see an accommodation so that Egypt could concentrate on its own affairs. But they are cornered by the arguments that Israel really represents the United States, and that a settlement means accepting a new form of

Western imperialism in the region. The Russians play skillfully on this theme, and Washington, preoccupied with the Far East, has so far failed to clarify any Middle East policy.

The inevitable return of the whole impasse to the Security Council promises little relief for either side. In the long run the Arabs have high cards. But in the short run, Israel, with its strong Western political support and brilliant advocacy, may have the votes. They are paper votes, however, and will not force the direct talks Israel says it wants.

#### Opening doors

Any conventional interpretation of last summer's Arab defeat would have predicted Nasser's downfall, Egypt's economic collapse, and perhaps the West Bank and Jordan working arrangements with Israel. None of the seers would have guessed that the two oil monarchies under chronic attack from Cairo, Saudi Arabia and Libya, would be sending Egypt a cash subsidy to keep it going all year; or that all the NATO countries of the Mediterranean basin would stand behind the Arabs and keep open the door to the East which Moscow so eagerly rushed to close.

Looking at Egypt today it is possible to see either peace or war ahead. The new Russian weaponry may be largely defensive and may provide the backdrop of defensive power needed before any government can approach a settlement with Israel. The Russians clearly favor a settlement but do not have the power to influence it politically. Somewhat inconsistently, the Egyptians and all other Arabs greatly overestimate the influence of the United States on Israel. It is no exaggeration to say that we have never had less influence in Tel Aviv. This leaves any peace efforts right where they are now, in the hands of the patient and discreet Dr. Gunnar Jarring. If he fails to find an acceptable channel of communication for both sides, the storm signals will go up again all along the Mediterranean shores.

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# Chronology of Egyptian-Soviet Relations

1936 Anglo-Egyptian treaty virtually ends British protectorate in Egypt, but gives Great Britain reserved rights including right to station forces in Egypt; control of foreign affairs.

1939-45 World War II. Axis forces defeated in western desert. Direct intervention in Egyptian affairs by British military. Soviet liaison officers in British Middle East supply center, Cairo.

1948 Egyptian Army shares defeat of other Arab armies in Palestine. Gamal Abdel Nasser and other officers begin planning revolution and reforms.

1952 Revolution of July 19. King Farouk abdicates. Free Officers group takes power. Sympathy from Washington and good relations with the United States; indifference from U.S.S.R. Tension with Britain.

1954 Nasser rejects association with Iraq, Turkey, and "northern tier" states in Western-sponsored Baghdad Pact. He negotiates withdrawal of British forces from Suez Canal zone, after period of guerrilla warfare there.

1955 United States and Britain temporize on arms sales to Egypt. February raid in Gaza by Israel, allegedly against bases of terrorist fedayeen. Nasser concludes arms deal with Czechoslovakia and begins rapid expansion of relations with Moscow.

1956 Secretary Dulles withdraws offer of United States financial aid to Aswan High Dam. Tension with West. July: Nasser announces nationalization of Suez Canal Company. Egypt begins to operate the Canal itself. July-October: Secret Anglo-French-Israeli military preparations. November: Israel invades Gaza and Sinai; British and French land in Canal Zone. UN Security Council orders ceasefire after Soviet warnings. December: British and French withdraw.

1957 Israel withdraws forces from Sinai and Gaza after heavy UN and United States pressure. Rapid consolidation of Soviet-Egyptian relations. Egypt and most other Arab states reject Eisenhower doctrine of United States help for anti-Communist defense.

1958 February: Union of Syria and Egypt, at Syrian request, after Communist gains in Syria. Nasser becomes President of the United Arab Republic. May-September: Civil war in Lebanon between supporters of pro-Western President Camille Chamoun and Nasser elements. United States Marines land in Lebanon; Moscow threatens but does not intervene. July: Iraqi officers led by Abdel

Karim Kassem overthrow Hashemite kingdom in Iraq, establish pro-Nasser republic. British forces land in Jordan to protect King Hussein. Soviet-U.A.R. agreements for construction of Aswan High Dam.

1959 New Soviet aid accords with U.A.R. American-U.A.R. relations improve; resumption of United States aid.

1960 Soviet-U.A.R. relations cooler, mainly over suppression of Egyptian Communists. New Soviet policy of support to "national revolutionary regimes," even when non-Communist.

1961 Breakup of United Arab Republic, as Syrian Army officers lead successful secession movement. Wide measures of nationalization and socialization in Egypt.

1962 End of Algerian war for independence, after strong Egyptian help for Algerians. Soviet aid to Algeria, formerly channeled through Cairo, now goes direct. September: President Nasser backs revolution in Yemen; Egyptian troops land there; Yemen civil war begins.

1963 March Baath (Arab socialist) Party seizes power in Syria. Unsuccessful talks on tripartite unity of U.A.R., Syria and Iraq in Cairo, on initiative of Iraqi and Syrian Baathists.

1964 Soviet-U.A.R. relations at high point; visit of Premier Khrushchev to Egypt in May. Moscow recognizes Egypt's "separate path toward socialism." U.A.R. opposes American policies in Vietnam, Congo.

1965 Arrests of both pro-Soviet and pro-Chinese Communists and Moslem Brotherhood in Egypt for plots against Nasser regime. Discontent reported in Yemen expeditionary force after many victories by opposing royalist tribesmen. August: President Nasser agrees with King Faisal of Saudi Arabia to end intervention in Yemen; accord never applied.

1966 May: Visit of Premier Alexei N. Kosygin to Cairo. Soviet aid and support continues. Soviet diplomacy encourages Cairo-Damascus rapprochement. September: Israel chief of staff reportedly threatens invasion of Syria to change regime and halt Arab terrorism. November: U.A.R.-Syria defense pact. Vice-President Amer visits Moscow for military talks. Soviets renew wheat sales to U.A.R. as American easy-term food sales end.

1967 January Many visits by Soviet specialists in industry, electric power, petroleum, land reclamation. New projects discussed.

February-March Increase of Arab terrorist raids against Israel from Syrian and Jordan territory. Foreign Minister Gromyko visits Cairo, March 29-April 1.

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April 7. Heavy Israeli land on Syria.  
May 9 UN Secretary-General says he is unable to confirm from own sources Arab and Soviet accounts of Israeli mobilization against Syria.

May 14 Egyptian forces begin to move into Sinai.

May 16 Egyptian military command orders UNEF troops out of Sinai and Gaza border areas facing Israel.

May 17 Marshal Amer issues alert orders to Egyptian armed forces.

May 18 Cairo asks for total withdrawal of UNEF. U Thant agrees to request.

May 21 Egypt calls up reserves. President Nasser tells Air Force officers he will blockade Gulf of Aqaba.

May 25 Cairo Radio says Arabs "firmly resolved to wipe Israel off the map."

May 27 Soviets proclaim "support for just position of the U.A.R., Syria and the other Arab states who are opposing imperialist pressure."

May 30 King Hussein flies to Cairo, signs defense pact with Nasser.

May 31 Soviet naval reinforcements begin moving through Turkish Straits into Mediterranean. Some sail toward Egypt. U.S. Sixth Fleet moves.

June 3 United States asks Egypt not to fire first; supports "territorial integrity of all Middle East states."

June 4 Soviets ask Egypt not to attack; warn that Soviet military help is unlikely unless big powers become involved. President Nasser agrees. Iraq joins U.A.R.-Jordan defense pact.

June 5 Israeli Air Force strikes; destroys Egyptian Air Force on ground. Israeli armor moves into Sinai, fighting in Jerusalem. Soviet Government statement accuses Israel of aggression, demands halt in fighting and withdrawal.

June 6-9 Egyptian defeat in Sinai. Jordanian Army crushed, accepts ceasefire. President Nasser accepts cease fire; offers

After riotous demonstrations in Cairo and other Arab capitals.

June 11 Soviets break diplomatic relations with Israel.

June 19 Premier Kosygin's UN speech calls for Israeli withdrawal but does not question Israel's right to exist as a state.

June 21 Soviet Communist Party's Central Committee rejects Chinese charges that Soviets betrayed Arabs.

June 21-24 Soviet President Podgorny visits Cairo with Marshal Zakharov, chief of general staff. Large-scale Soviet replacements of lost war material begin, on airlift through Yugoslavia and Algeria to Cairo.

June 24-25 Johnson-Kosygin talks at Glassboro, N.J.: Mr. Kosygin says no accord on withdrawal of Israeli troops.

July 9 Soviet naval vessels begin visits to Port Said, Alexandria.

July 13 Egyptian military delegation to Moscow.

July 15-Aug. 10 Many exchanges of visits between East bloc and Arab leaders.

Aug. 14 Yugoslav President Tito visits Egypt, reportedly with Mideast peace plan.

Aug. 28 Sergei Vinogradov replacing Dmitri Pojadiaev as Soviet ambassador to Egypt.

Aug. 29-Sept. 1 Khartoum Arab summit conference. End of anti-Western oil embargoes. Acceptance of Nasser-Hussein plan to seek political rather than military solution. Moscow shows approval despite Syrian boycott; Algerian reservations.

Sept. 4 Foreign Minister Mahmoud Riad visits Moscow. Another Soviet flotilla arrives at Port Said.

Sept. 23, 27 Heavy artillery clashes along Suez Canal. Severe damage and casualties in Ismailia.

Oct. 4 Nonessential civilians being evacuated from Suez Canal zone.

Oct. 20 Soviet-made missiles sink Israeli destroyer Eilat.

Oct. 24 Israeli artillery destroys two Suez oil refineries.

CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR  
18 May 1968

# Winds of reform stir in Egypt

By John K. Cooley  
Staff correspondent of  
The Christian Science Monitor

Beirut, Lebanon

President Nasser has embarked on a sweeping program of reform in the United Arab Republic.

If completed, it could bring more change than Egyptians have known since their 1952 revolution.

A May 2 referendum vote of nearly 100 percent in his favor has strengthened Mr.

Nasser's hand. Now he is committed to implementing his "March 30" program.

Mr. Nasser announced this program in a speech on March 30. He described it as a "new revolution." He told Egyptian ministers at a Cabinet meeting in Cairo May 5 they must carry it out to meet the people's expectations.

Mr. Nasser has presented the program at home and abroad as a strengthening of the home front against an ultimate new confrontation with Israel.

Careful observers of his policies think it is also an effort to rebuild a sound base

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forts ultimately bring about some kind of peace settlement with Israel. Egyptian public opinion presently is poorly prepared for this.

Since last June's defeat by Israel, Egyptians have been steadily calling for change. This came to a dramatic climax in February.

Students and workers rioted in the streets of Cairo and other Egyptian cities. They demanded an end to police and military rule, better job opportunities, public liberties, academic freedom, and many other things.

### **New constitution planned**

In speeches before the May referendum, Mr. Nasser assured his people these things would come. He also promised to rebuild the nation's strength for the expected next major test with Israel.

The March 30 program provides for reforms in the political structure and the civil service. Ultimately—once Israeli troops are no longer occupying the Sinai Peninsula—Egypt is to get a new constitution.

Military reform began almost immediately after the defeat. Highest-ranking officers and many others, including members of the once all-powerful secret police and intelligence services, have gone on trial for negligence, corruption, and other charges.

Soviet advisers in Egypt are trying to mold its armed forces into an effective fighting force.

The March 30 reforms begin in the Arab Socialist Union (ASU). This is Egypt's ruling political organization and its only legal one. Only its card-holding members—more than seven million of them—voted in the May 2 referendum.

Previously the ASU was entirely state-controlled. Its leaders and cadremen were appointed by the government. Now they are to be elected. The polling will be supervised by a special committee to be appointed by President Nasser.

The ASU is to elect a 1,500-member national congress to review progress and map future moves. The congress will have a six-year mandate.

### **Elections ordered**

President Nasser May 9 ordered the new ASU elections for the first week in June. The national congress will hold its first meeting on July 23—16th anniversary of the 1952 revolution.

Its first task will be to elect a president of the ASU, who is expected to be President Nasser. The president will head the central committee, to be elected by the congress,

and also an 11-man executive committee selected from the central committee's members.

Mr. Nasser, remembering repeated past failures of the ASU to show much dynamism, is rolling up his sleeves to take personal charge. He has set up an office in Cairo's ASU headquarters.

This is rather as though President Johnson or Vice-President Hubert H. Humphrey had taken personal charge of efforts to revamp the Democratic Party from top to toe.

Unlike the American leaders, Mr. Nasser faces many clandestine foes. They are determined, though perhaps relatively small in numbers. One is the ultrareligious Moslem Brotherhood. There is also a faction of pro-Chinese Communists who resent Mr. Nasser's policies and object to Soviet influence. Other fringe, extremist groups want his overthrow.

### **Question of definition**

Some of these joined the popular demonstrations in February. There is no known evidence that any has even a toehold in the armed forces. Without military support, they stand no chance of toppling Mr. Nasser.

Cairo's carefully read daily, Al Ahram, reported May 6 that the ASU henceforth will be open to all Egyptians. This implies that a long-delayed choice between a "mass" and an "elite" party has been made in favor of the former alternative.

Al Ahram also said that clear definitions would be made of "workers" and "farmers." Under Egypt's 1962 National Charter, these two categories are entitled to 50 percent of seats in the new 1,500-member ASU National Congress. The Charter said workers and farmers must make up half the membership of all "popular" organizations, including the National Assembly, or parliament.

There were many complaints. Critical editors and publicists asked how many members of the Assembly are really "workers" or "farmers."

Mr. Nasser in a speech May 1 defined a farmer or peasant as "one who owns no more than 10 feddans (about 10 acres)." Egypt's legal upward limit on land holdings per individual is 100 feddans.

A farmer also must have farming as his sole source of income, Mr. Nasser said, and live in a rural area.

A worker is "one who works with his hands or mind, and lives off the income resulting from this work."

In a Western country, the "mind" category might be taken to include a stockbroker or investment banker. In Egypt, it definitely does not.

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### Disillusionment spreads

Since the June, 1967, defeat, profound disillusionment has spread among the former "revolutionaries" of 1952—the military managerial class which collapsed as a political force when the Israeli Army swept into Sinai June 5.

The ASU is intended to provide a new class of young leaders to replace the old ones. But while its reorganization goes forward, political reform is beginning.

All of Egypt's 11 district governors are being replaced. So are leading executives in the state-run companies.

Ex-Army officers appointed as district governors or company directors during Mr. Nasser's sweeping campaign of socialization in 1961 will be the first to go.

Judges, engineers, and others with technical and professional qualifications are likely to replace them—just as such men were given leading Cabinet posts to replace ex-officers earlier this year.

IZVESTIYA, Moscow  
4 June 1968

### ARAB POLITICAL REGIMES MUST BE STRENGTHENED

[Article by V. Kudryavtsev: "The Smoldering Coals in the Near East"]

An acquaintance with the current situation in the Near East leaves one with the first impression that no great changes have taken place there. Israel occupies captured territory as before, gradually appropriating it or securing it for itself as is being done, for example, in the Arab quarter of Jerusalem. On the cease-fire line, especially along the Jordan River, the Israeli militarists are provoking armed incidents, keeping their Jordanian neighbors in a state of tension. The 22 November resolution and the subsequent decision of the Security Council are being sabotaged by the Israelis, who are frustrating G. Jarring's mission.

The tense situation in the Near East is evidence that in this region of the world the coals of military danger which were kindled by imperialist aggression are still smoldering and at any time the fire could flare up if measures are not taken to at least localize it.

But this is merely a first impression. Processes are under way in the Near East which are completely antithetical to those which Israel tried to evoke by its aggression last year. A return to the situation which made the Israeli aggression on 5 June successful is no longer possible.

If one is to view the Near East situation in the light of the international situation, one is able to assert that with the present balance of power which lies in progress' favor, no imperialist action in the world can bring its authors any real success, if one understands that temporary gains are discounted. Israel must draw conclusions from the American aggression in Vietnam, making, of course, the necessary adjustment for the scale of aggression and Israel's location in the world. American imperialism now has occasion to give more thought to pulling out of the Vietnam swamp to avoid undermining even further and to no avail the severely depleted prestige of a great power. It would not harm the Israeli ruling circles to give serious thought to this. The Israeli aggression was not just dreamed up as an action calculated to "round off" the frontiers by capturing part of the territory of neighboring countries. It was to have frustrated those revolutionary processes which are taking place in the Near East. The main goal of the aggression was to overthrow the progressive regimes in Arab countries and to weaken generally the national liberation movement of the Arab peoples, in

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order to secure the oil interests of the monopolies. Nothing came of this, as everyone knows. The progressive regimes turned out to be stronger than imperialist intelligence had thought, while the liberation process continues with new strength. In the south of the Arabian Peninsula, the People's Republic of South Yemen has already come into being since the beginning of the Israeli aggression. After the withdrawal of the UAR's armed forces, the Monarchist forces did not achieve success in the Yemen. And although the struggle took place under conditions which were very difficult for the republicans, the forces of progress have already shown their viability.

The failure of the UAR in the course of military action was provoked to a certain extent by domestic policy reasons. The most important of these, in our opinion, was the fact that the social foundation of the Egyptian revolution no longer answered the purposes and tasks which the UAR is pursuing in realizing radical socioeconomic transformations.

A proportion of the participants in the 1952 revolution which achieved, along with the whole nation, the liquidation of foreign domination in Egypt, did not have in mind going so far as to make socialist transformations in the country their task. The deviation of these people from the present goals of the revolution is supported by those treaties which the reaction organized against the policy of President Jamal Abd an-Nasir. In this respect the Egyptian reaction objectively joined forces with the Israeli aggressors by acting against the UAR's progressive regime.

One must give President Nasir's policy its due, for he has already been taking steps for more than a year to involve the popular masses in the administration of the state. However, the measures undertaken before the commencement of the Israeli aggression turned out to be inadequate. The people, used to thinking that the army solves all matters, turned out to be on the sidelines during the aggression. At the same time, the mass demonstrations of 9 and 10 June last year in support of President Nasir's policy showed that the people had matured politically and were demanding active participation in the affairs of state.

Consequently, to liquidate the consequences of the Israeli aggression, it is essential to strengthen the political regimes and put them on a mass social footing.

This is why these consequences can and must primarily be eliminated by political means. It is not fortuitous that Israel is trying all the time to provoke new military action, because it can still reckon on some kind of success, if only temporary. The prospect of strengthening progressive regimes in Arab states is dangerous for Israel, for then it would have to have dealings directly with the Arab peoples.

From all accounts this task is already fulfilled in the main, and the UAR Government, under Nasir's leadership, has been able to undertake measures for developing the country's progressive course. The "30 March program," which was supported by the overwhelming majority of the people during the referendum on 2 May, envisages the radical reconstruction of the administrative apparatus, at the center of which lies the reorganization of the Arab Socialist Union (ASU), transforming it to all intents and purposes into the leading force of the state. The realization of the reforms which were approved in the referendum has begun and will insure the involvement of the broad masses of the people in the administration of the country.

The UAR's example, which is there for all Arab countries to see, shows that liquidation of the results of Israeli aggression depends basically on strengthening the progressiveness of the regime and on its reliance on a broader social basis. It is not fortuitous either that the ruling circles of Israel chose Jordan as the basic target of their provocation, since they consider it to be the weakest link in the anti-imperialist front of Arab countries. But even here, Tel Aviv has suffered disenchantment, since people in Jordan have begun to understand the perfidious policy of the imperialist powers better and to adopt a high regard for anti-imperialist Arab unity.

The failures of military provocation can, of course, intensify in Israel the desire to create a certain "Israeli-Palestinian federation" or some other sort of group which would help Israel to take root in the economy of Arab countries. Such a turn of events

is all the more likely, for during the year since the commencement of aggression, the isolation of Israel in the world arena has increased significantly. Even those European circles which initially believed the cries of Tel Aviv propaganda about the "Arab threat" to the existence of Israel and to the effect that Israel, by its actions, was defending the safety of its frontiers are convinced of the Israeli ruling circles' aggressiveness.

Israel's isolation will increase, not diminish. The fact is that Israel is needed by the imperialist countries, particularly the United States, as a base for aggression in the Near East and as a counterpose to the Arab countries so that the oil monopolies can plunder the riches of these countries. While Israel and the Arab countries remain hostile to each other the United States can count on the role of the third, the winning side.

However, people in the United States would not at all want to spoil relations with the Arab world because of local Israeli interests and would not want to lose valuable markets in the Near East. Israel is valuable to the United States as a cudgel against the Arab national liberation movement. Israeli pretensions to establishing political and economic hegemony in the Near East have been greeted in the United States without special satisfaction. Taking into account the possible development of events in the Near East and also public opinion in the capitalist countries, the United States, although only in words, was still forced to condemn the Israeli ruling circles when they went to extremes, such as happened on 2 May 1968 in Jerusalem. Washington had to consider feeling in the Catholic circles of the United States and Western Europe and also in the Moslem world, which had been provoked by the unpardonable actions of the Israeli invaders in Jerusalem, which is a sacred place not just for the adherents of Judaism.

Time is working against the Israeli aggressors in the changes, at present little noticed and gradual, but nevertheless very important, that are taking place in the Arab East. By refusing to begin implementing the UN decision which recommends a political settlement of the Near East crisis and the unconditional withdrawal of occupying forces from captured Arab territory, Israel is only sinking deeper into the mire which it created by the June aggression. Incidentally, some Israeli political figures are beginning to understand this. Although in the course of recent stormy debates in the Israeli Government the supporters of the "harsh line" have won, nevertheless it has become clear that it is growing more difficult to keep to this line. There are people in the country who consider that the challenge which Israel is making to the United Nations is bringing them harm, and that Israel's foreign policy must be more realistic.

The Arab countries have done much to insure the success of G. Jarrings' mission and to realize the Security Council's decision of 22 November of last year. Their wise stand throws even deeper into the shade the aggression by Israel, whose ruling circles continue to conduct the country along a suicidal path.

The Soviet Union thoroughly supports the Arab countries' readiness to liquidate the consequences of the aggression by political means. This is the only sensible way which will lead toward normalization of the Near East situation.

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# ТЛЕЮЩИЕ УГЛИ НА БЛИЖНЕМ ВОСТОКЕ

**В. КУДРЯВЦЕВ,**  
политический обозреватель  
«Известий»

**П**ЕРВОЕ впечатление, остающееся от знакомства с текущей обстановкой на Ближнем Востоке, таково, что там никаких больших перемен после июньской войны не произошло. Израиль по-прежнему оккупирует захваченные арабские земли, исподволь осваивая их или закрепляя за собой, как это делается, например, с арабской частью Иерусалима. На линии прекращения огня, особенно по реке Иордан, израильская воюющая провоцирует вооруженные инциденты, держа в напряжении иорданского соседа. Резолюция от 22 ноября 1967 года и последующие решения Совета Безопасности саботируются израильской стороной, которая срывает миссию Г. Ярринга.

Напряженная обстановка на Ближнем Востоке говорит о том, что в этом районе мира углы военной опасности, созданной империалистической агрессией, продолжают тлеть и огонь может возникнуть в любое время, если не будут приняты меры хотя бы к его локализации.

Но это только первое впечатление. На Ближнем Востоке происходят процессы, совершенно противоположные тем, которые пытался вызвать Израиль своей прошлогодней агрессией. Возврата к обстановке, которая сделала возможной успех израильской агрессии 5 июня, сейчас уже не может быть.

Если рассмотреть ближневосточные события в свете всего международного положения, то можно утверждать, что при нынешнем соотношении сил в пользу прогресса ни одна империалистическая акция в мире не может принести ее авторам какого-либо существенного успеха, если, понятно, не считать временных выигрышей. Израиль должен был бы извлечь уроки из американской агрессии во Вьетнаме, сделав, разумеется, известную скидку на масштабы агрессии и на место Израиля в мире. Американскому империализму приходится сейчас больше думать о том, как бы выбраться из вьетнамской трясины, не подорвав еще больше и без того сильно утраченного престижа великой державы. Израильским правящим кругам не вредно было бы серьезно поразмыслить над этим.

Израильская агрессия была задумана не просто как акция, рассчитанная на «округление» границ путем захвата части территории соседних стран. Она должна была сорвать те революцион-

ные процессы, которые происходят на Ближнем Востоке. Главной целью агрессии было свержение прогрессивных режимов в арабских странах и общее ослабление национально-освободительного движения арабских народов, с тем чтобы обезопасить нефтяные интересы монополий. Из этого, как известно, ничего не вышло. Прогрессивные режимы оказались прочней, чем думала империалистическая разведка, а освободительный процесс продолжается с новой силой. На юге Аравийского полуострова уже после начала израильской агрессии возникла Народная Республика Южного Йемена. В Йемене после отвода вооруженных сил Объединенной Арабской Республики монархистские силы не добились успеха. И хотя борьба там идет в очень сложных условиях для республиканцев, силы прогресса уже показали свою жизнеспособность.

Неудачи Объединенной Арабской Республики в ходе военных действий в известной степени были вызваны внутриполитическими причинами. Главной из них, по нашему мнению, является то, что социальная база египетской революции уже не соответствовала тем целям и задачам, которые ОАР преследует, осуществляя коренные социально-экономические преобразования. Часть участников революции 1952 года, добившись со всем народом ликвидации иностранного господства в Египте, не намеревалась заходить настолько далеко, чтобы ставить своей задачей социалистические преобразования в стране. Отход этих людей от нынешних целей революции подтвержден теми заговорами, которые организовала реакция против политики президента Абделя Гамаль Насера. В этом отношении египетская реакция объективно смыкалась с израильскими агрессорами, выступая против прогрессивного режима в ОАР.

Надо отдать должное политике президента Насера, который уже не один год проводит мероприятия по вовлечению народных масс в управление государством. Однако мероприятий, проведенных до начала израильской агрессии, оказалось недостаточно. Народ, привыкший, что все дела решает армия, во время агрессии оказался как бы в стороне. В то же время массовые демонстрации 9 и 10 июня прошлого года в защиту политики президента Насера показали, что народ вырос политически и требует активного участия в делах государства.

Следовательно, для ликвидации последствий израильской агрессии необходимо укрепить политические режимы, подвести под них массовую социальную базу. Вот почему ликвидировать эти последствия можно и должно прежде всего политическими средствами. Не

случайно Израиль все время пытается провоцировать новые военные действия, поскольку сейчас он еще может рассчитывать на какой-то хотя бы временный успех. Для него опасна перспектива укрепления прогрессивных режимов в арабских государствах — тогда ему придется иметь дело непосредственно с арабскими народами.

Вполне естественно, что основной задачей правительства ОАР было как можно скорее ликвидировать брешь, образовавшуюся в обороне страны после 5 июня 1967 года. Судя по всему, такая задача в основном уже выполнена, и правительство ОАР под руководством Насера смогло приступить к мероприятиям по развитию прогрессивного курса страны. «Программа 30 марта», поддержанная подавляющим большинством народа во время референдума 2 мая, предусматривает коренную рестройку административного аппарата, в центре которой находится реорганизация Арабского социалистического союза (АСС), превращаемого фактически в руководящую силу государства. Начавшиеся осуществление реформ, одобренных в ходе референдума, обеспечит привлечение к управлению страной широких народных масс.

Пример ОАР, находящийся перед глазами всех арабских стран, показывает, что ликвидация последствий израильской агрессии зависит в основном от укрепления прогрессивности режима, от его опоры на более широкую социальную базу. И не случайно израильские правящие круги основным направлением своих провокаций избрали Иорданию, которую они считают наиболее слабым звеном антиимпериалистического фронта араб-

ских стран. Но и здесь Тель-Авив постигло разочарование, поскольку в Иордании стали лучше разбираться в коварной политике империалистических держав, усваивают ценность антиимпериалистического арабского единства.

Неудачи военных провокаций могут, конечно, усилить в Израиле стремление к созданию некоей «израильско-палестинской федерации» или изкой-либо другой группировки, которая позволила бы Израилу внедриться в экономику арабских стран. Такой поворот событий тем более возможен, что за год, прошедший после начала агрессии, значительно усилилась изоляция Израиля на международной арене. Даже те европейские круги, которые вначале поверили крикам тель-авивской пропаганды об «арабской угрозе» существованию Израиля, в то, что Израиль якобы обеспечивает своими действиями безопасность границ, убеждаются в агрессивности израильских правящих кругов.

**И**ЗОЛЯЦИЯ Израиля будет усиливаться, а не уменьшаться. Дело в том, что Израиль, будучи империалистическим

державам, прежде всего Соединенным Штатам, как база агрессии на Ближнем Востоке, как противовес арабским странам, дающий нефтяным монополиям возможность грабить богатства этих стран. Пока Израиль и арабские страны находятся во враждебных отношениях, США могут рассчитывать на роль третьей, выигрывающей стороны.

Однако в США вовсе не хотели бы портить отношения с арабским миром из-за израильских локальных интересов и лишаться богатых рынков на Ближнем Востоке. Израиль ценен для США в качестве дубинки против арабского национально-освободительного движения. Израильские претензии на установление политической и экономической гегемонии на Ближнем Востоке встречаются в США без особого удовольствия. Учитывая возможное развитие событий на Ближнем Востоке, а также общественное мнение в капиталистических странах, США, хотя и на словах, все же вынуждены осуждать израильские правящие круги, когда они зарываются, подобно тому как это было с военным парадом в Иерусалиме 2 мая 1968 года. Вашингтону приходится считаться с настроениями в католических кругах США и Западной Европы, а также в мусульманском мире, вызываемыми беспардонными действиями израильских захватчиков в Иерусалиме, который является святым местом не только для людей, исповедующих иудаизм.

Время работает против израильских

агрессоров, поскольку на Арабском Востоке происходят порою малозаметные, но очень важные перемены. Не желая приступить к выполнению решений Организации Объединенных Наций, рекомендующих политическое урегулирование ближневосточного кризиса, безусловный вывод оккупационных сил с захваченных арабских территорий, Израиль лишь глубже погружается в трясику, созданную им самим июньской агрессией. Кстати, это начинают понимать и некоторые израильские политические деятели. Хотя в ходе недавних бурных дебатов в израильском правительстве победу одержали сторонники «жесткого курса», однако стало ясно, что проводить его становится сложнее. В стране есть люди, считающие, что вызов, который Израиль бросает ООН, приносит ему вред, что его внешняя политика должна быть реалистичней.

Арабские страны сделали многое, чтобы обеспечить успех миссии Г. Яржинга и претворить в жизнь резолюцию Совета Безопасности от 22 ноября прошлого года. Их разумная позиция еще сильнее оттеняет агрессивность Израиля, правящие круги которого продолжают вести страну по пути самоуничтожения.

Советский Союз всецело поддерживает готовность арабских стран ликвидировать последствия агрессии политическими средствами. Это единственный разумный путь, ведущий к нормализации обстановки на Ближнем Востоке.

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