

RELEASE IN FULL

CONFIDENTIAL

December 22, 2011

For: HRC
From: Sid
Re: Egyptian Politics and Security

SOURCE: Sources with access to the highest levels of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, The Supreme Council of the Armed Forces, and Western Intelligence and security services.

1. During the morning of December 21, 2011, sources with access to the highest levels of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood (MB) stated in secret that Supreme Guide Mohamed Badie and his advisors, including Mohamed Mursi, leader of the MB's Freedom and Justice Party (FJP), are making contingency plans to deal with any effort by the ruling Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF) to use ongoing pro-democracy violence as an excuse to delay the transfer of power to a civilian administration and parliament during 2012. Badie is maintaining secret contact with SCAF leader Field Marshall Mohammed Hussein Tantawi in an effort to protect the MB position. According to these knowledgeable sources, the SCAF officials tell the MB in these private sessions that liberal/secular parties are pressing their protests to an unacceptable, dangerous level. The relationship between the SCAF and the MB is always cautiously tense, and the extreme violence of recent days has only served to increase this tension. However, both sides agree that it is in their common interest to maintain communications and work to reduce the level of violence.

2. For their part, Badie and his advisors are in contact with the liberal/secular leaders, but acknowledge that their influence on these forces is limited, at best. In the interest of maintaining their working relationship of these individuals, the MB leadership carries on a level of contact with the Egyptian Revolutionary Socialist Party, but is currently frustrated by their inability to persuade the leadership of this party, and other secular groups, to reduce the level of violence in Tahrir Square, and across the country. Badie is particularly displeased with Islam Loffti and the New Egypt Party (Egypt Current Party), who continues to accuse the MB of working on behalf of the military. Loffti, a former Muslim Brother, is very hostile toward the MB, and has urged his followers to reject any discussion with the MB regarding the current situation. The MB officials repeatedly warned the pro-democracy leaders that the SCAF will use increasingly aggressive tactics, including deadly force to subdue violence in Tahrir Square, and at other locations besieged by the demonstrators.

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3. Looking at the current political situation in Egypt, the MB leadership expects this level of violence to increase until the parliamentary elections are complete in mid-2012, and debate over the new constitution begins. Badie believes that the struggle between security forces and the demonstrators will result in an increasing number of fatalities, a fact, which, in the end, he also believes will work to the benefit of the MB and the other Islamic parties. These groups expect to gain control of up to seventy five percent of the seats in the new parliament. As fighting between the pro-democracy demonstrators and the military intensifies, the MB led parliament will appear to be a stable, reasonable alternative to the military and the demonstrators.

4. (Source Comment: According to extremely sensitive sources, Badie and FJP leader Mursi see the latest outbreaks of violence as the result of the frustration felt by the members of the liberal/secular parties over their poor showing in the first two rounds of parliamentary elections. By the same token, Badie and the MB oppose in the strongest terms calls from these secular parties to move up the presidential elections to as early as January 2012. The Brotherhood believes that such a move would give more power to the presidency, while they expect the current system to leave parliament as the dominant power in the country. Their polling has shown the MB that they and their allies will control forty to fifty percent of the seats in the new parliament, with the Salafist al Nour party controlling up to thirty percent of the seats. These two groups are working to resolve traditional differences; however, they expect that Islamist parties will hold at least seventy five percent of the seats in parliament, allowing them to dominate the drafting of the new constitution and the government that results. Under this plan, even if a well known figure like former International Atomic Energy Agency Director-General Mohamed El Baradei or Arab League Secretary-General Amr Moussa is elected president they will serve primarily as a figurehead.)

5. In the opinion of these knowledgeable individuals, senior advisors to Badie believe that the SCAF and the military are serving the MB's purpose by taking steps that will eventually weaken the restless secular/liberal pro-democracy advocates, while setting the stage for the MB, through the FJP, to appear to be a reasonable alternative political force. They believe that these steps will enhance the MB's ability to establish an orderly government, and make the transition to an Islamic state more acceptable to the rank and file of the military, foreign governments, and international businesses. The MB intends to go to great lengths to work with these foreign officials and businessmen, and reassure them that they can function in the new Egyptian Islamic state, if they adapt to the specific laws and principles that will govern political and economic activities in the new regime.

6. (Source Comment: According to an extremely sensitive source, Badie and the leadership of the MB are completely focused on establishing what they describe as a moderate Islamic state which can work with the West, as well as the other nations in the Middle East. They believe that Egypt will be the business, cultural, and educational center of the Muslim World. In their opinion Western banks and business interests will recognize the importance of working with the new Egyptian government, and will adapt accordingly. At the same time Egyptian policy toward Israel will continue to evolve, with the new Islamic state distancing itself from the Israeli government, while support for the Palestinian Authority will increase. In this regard, this knowledgeable individual pointed out that Egyptian security forces have already adopted a more tolerant attitude toward Hamas, particularly along the border with Gaza.)

7. In the opinion of these individuals, SCAF commander, Field Marshall Mohammed Hussein Tantawi and his senior staff advisors will begin to remove themselves from the political scene during late 2012 and 2013, to be replaced by the current corps of officers at the rank of major and below, who, along with the rank and file of the army, strongly support the idea of an Islamic state, with a lower level of liaison and cooperation with Israeli security forces. This individual adds that military and security cooperation with the United States and Western Europe will depend on how those countries adapt to the concept of increased Islamic dominance in Northeast Africa. MB polling shows that the junior army officers believe their most valuable future ally will be Turkey.