

RELEASE IN FULL

CONFIDENTIAL

February 14, 2012

For: HRC
From: Sid
Re: Internal friction, Egypt, MB/SCAF

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. Over the weekend of February 11, 2012 representatives of the leaders of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood (MB) held secret meetings with representatives of the highest levels of Egypt's Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF), to discuss statements made by MB spokesmen criticizing the current administration, which operates under the authority of the SCAF. According to sources with access to the leadership of both the SCAF and the MB, the SCAF commander, Field Marshall Mohammed Hussein Tantawi, was extremely angry over these statements, and demanded an explanation from MB Supreme Guide Mohamed Badie. In the opinion of this individual, Tantawi believes that he and the MB leadership have an understood agreement to avoid making destructive statements as the transition to civilian government moves forward. In return the military will not interfere with the activities of the MB, allowing them establish themselves as the dominant civilian party, while protecting the status and position of the military in Egyptian society.

2. During these discussions, the MB representatives stated that they had been put in a position of speaking out against the administration of Prime Minister Kamal el-Ganzouri, or risk losing their position of legitimacy among the civilian political parties. According to this individual, the MB representatives assured the SCAF officers that these statements were not aimed at Tantawi, but rather at el-Ganzouri. They added that maintaining the established transition schedule is acceptable to the MB, although they would not object to Tantawi appointing a new interim government replacing el-Ganzouri, whom they believe is incompetent. This individual added that, in reply, the SCAF representatives warned that the MB must take care and avoid trying to work on both sides of the question of transition to civilian government. They also noted that reporting from the General Intelligence Directorate (GID) indicates that the

secular/liberal parties would be further inflamed by the appointment of another interim government backed by the military.

3. Accordingly, in the opinion of this source, Tantawi is inclined to stay with el-Ganzouri through 2012, while counting on the loyalty of elite Special Forces and intelligence paramilitary units to act as bulwarks against the spreading civil unrest and violence. According to this source, the MB leadership is concerned that the failure of el-Ganzouri's regime is complicating the unstable and often violent political situation throughout the country. This is particularly true given the frustration of the secular/liberal parties, who feel they are being isolated and left out of the process to establish a new, civilian government.

4. (Source Comment: In the opinion of this individual, both sides agreed that they must continue to communicate and work together. Despite their differences, the SCAF and the MB believe that the stable transition to civilian government depends on them. At the same time, the MB understands the need for the SCAF and the security forces to regain control of the security situation in the country; however, they are taking care to avoid being identified with these operations. For their part the SCAF is intent on protecting their interests under a civilian government. Speaking in an aside, one of the SCAF officers reminded the MB representatives that Tantawi has repeatedly warned that the military will support the transition to civilian government, unless the SCAF fails to receive serious guarantees that their position in Egyptian society is protected and that officers and troops will not be held to account legally for actions taken in reestablishing order during the outbreaks of unrest in 2011-2012.)

5. According to this individual, Badie and the MB leaders were relieved that the SCAF reaction to the criticism of el-Ganzouri was not more pronounced. They agreed amongst themselves that they must take care to avoid making statements, or taking actions that can be interpreted as threats by the commanders of the SCAF. One senior Brother pointed out that, with the opening of the new parliament, speakers from the MB's Freedom and Justice Party (FJP) and others may feel free to criticize the military. Accordingly the MB leadership agree that the FJP leader, and speaker of the house, Saad Al-Katany, must exercise a degree of discipline over the FJP deputies, while moderating, as much as possible, the public statements by their coalition partners from the salafist al-Nour party regarding the military.)