

RELEASE IN PART B6

From: sbwhoep [redacted]
Sent: Monday, February 14, 2011 8:49 AM
To: H
Subject: H: Today's Egypt intel and more on 2/11. Sid
Attachments: hrc memo egypt intel 021411.docx; hrc memo egypt intel 021411.docx

B6

CONFIDENTIAL

February 14, 2011

For: Hillary
From: Sid
Re: Latest intel report and more on events of 2/11

13 February:

After taking steps to dissolve the Parliament and suspend the Constitution, Egypt's Minister of Defense, Field Marshall Hussein Tantawi stated that the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF) intended to keep Prime Minister Ahmed Shafik in his position, overseeing the day to day activities of the Egyptian Government bureaucracy. Tantawi and the other members of the SCAF will concentrate on restoring order and using the resources of the Army to distribute food and essential supplies around the country, following the demonstrations in late January and Early February that led to the fall of President Hosni Mubarak. The SCAF will also monitor the development of new political parties, and their current plans are to call for national elections to take place in September 2011.

The most important factor in this transition to a new government is the drafting of a revised constitution, ending the state of emergency that was put into place by Mubarak after the assassination of his predecessor, Anwar al-Sadat, in October 1981. Tantawi stated privately that he expects that once the members of the pro-democracy movement have organized into political parties, they will begin to press for rapid passage of a new constitution and early elections. Tantawi emphasized in the strongest terms that there would be no elections before September 2011, adding that if the drafting of the new constitution turns out to be as complicated as he expects, elections could be delayed until September 2012. He added that elections would not be delayed beyond that date.

Tantawi and his colleagues on the SCAF are also considering the future of Mubarak's Vice President, Omar Suleiman. At present they are divided on whether or not to allow him to remain in the government, with General Sami Annan, the Chief of Staff of the Army, pressing for his dismissal. Tantawi on the other hand believes Suleiman's international contacts and his knowledge of Egypt's security and Intelligence community make him valuable. They agree that until his future is decided Suleiman will keep a low profile.

(Source Comment: Suleiman presents challenges for the SCAF. The members of the Council are concerned that as the head of the intelligence and security services Suleiman has collected derogatory information on many senior government and military officials--information that he could use to embarrass the new government if he believes he has been ill treated.)

In regards to Mubarak's future, Tantawi and the SCAF will not support any efforts to arrest and try Mubarak for corruption or misuse of his office. On the other hand, they plan to support pro-democracy efforts to look at other members of Mubarak's cabinet and prosecute any individuals found to be involved in corrupt activities.

12 February:

Throughout the day on 10 February Army General Hassan al-Roueine, the Commander of the Cairo military district, reported to his superiors on the SCAF that his sources watching the demonstrators were reporting that on 11 February the student leaders of the demonstrations planned to try and enter the Presidential Palace, the Parliament building, the old Royal Palace in Alexandria, and other government buildings. Al-Roueine added that his troops would have to use force to protect these buildings, and this would lead to violent confrontations that would destroy the relationship between the soldiers and the Egyptian people.

Minister of Defense Field Marshall Hussein Tantawi, Armed Forces Chief of Staff Lt. General Sami Annan, and other leaders of the SCAF met with Mubarak and Vice President Omar Suleiman in an effort to persuade the President to step down, and place authority in the hands of the Armed Forces Council. The Army Officers also wanted to preclude Suleiman (an Air Force General) from succeeding Mubarak. The discussions were heated and revolved around Mubarak's desire to depart with honor, and a guarantee that any new government would not seize his possessions and personal funds. In the end a compromise was reached that would allow Mubarak to move to his home in Sharm el-Sheikh, where he could be protected, and maintain the title of President, while Suleiman managed the transition to a new government, under the control of the SCAF.

Following Mubarak's address to the nation during the night of 10 February, al-Roueine's sources reported that the speech had confused the issue by leaving the demonstrators with the impression that the President was maintaining control of the country. Again, al-Roueine warned that violent encounters between demonstrators and troops could occur on 11 February. Suleiman received similar information from his intelligence sources. Al-Roueine repeated the warnings from 10 February that the troops, who are conscripts, would not fire on the crowds for any extended period of time, and they could be faced with an Iranian style uprising if these confrontations began. He also cautioned that his commanders had informed him that mid-level Army officers were increasingly sympathetic to the demonstrators.

Early on the morning of 11 February Vice President Suleiman, and General Annan warned Mubarak of the problems anticipated later that day. Annan also assured Mubarak that King Abdullah of Saudi Arabia would guarantee that he would have a significant personal fortune, even if foreign banks attempted to freeze his personal accounts. (Note: Switzerland froze Mubarak's personal bank accounts shortly after he stepped down.) Annan also told Mubarak that the SCAF would protect his honor and reputation. Annan added that he would stay in Sharm el-Sheikh with Mubarak until the situation stabilized, and guarantee his security (Note: According to one source Annan also wanted to ensure that Mubarak did not change his mind and attempt to retain power at the last minute.) With this in mind, Mubarak agreed to allow Suleiman to announce his departure.

According to these sources the military—in particular the Army—has preserved their role as the most important institution in the country, with Defense Minister, Field Marshal Mohammed Hussein Tantawi as the most powerful individual. Suleiman's status remains unclear but well informed sources say that Egypt is returning to

the 1952 model of ruling the state via a council of army officers. The question now is to what extent the military elite will share power with its civilian counterparts.

Whether the military stays true to its commitment to hold elections as scheduled in September 2011 remains to be seen. If elections are held, however, the military must have a political vehicle in place to counter opposition forces, particularly the Muslim Brotherhood.

The fate of the ruling National Democratic Party (NDP) thus lies in question. Without the NDP, the regime will have effectively collapsed and the military could run into greater difficulty in managing the country on a daily basis.

While the SCAF will serve as a provisional government, it will likely want to retain as much of the ruling NDP bureaucracy as possible, incorporating elements of the opposition to manage the transition. Sustaining its hold over power while crafting a democratic government will be the biggest challenge for the military as it tries to avoid a complete regime change while also dealing with a potential constitutional crisis.

The SCAF is also watching the pro-democracy forces to get a clear picture of how many and what types of political parties emerge from this process. In the meantime, they plan to call on the good will of the population toward the troops to restore order. The most difficult task will be the return of police officers to the street, since they were involved in the most violent confrontations with the pro-democracy demonstrators.

(Source Comment: Some Egyptian political figures – including some senior military officers--are referring to this change of leadership as a military coup, while others see it as the regime—and the Army-- preserving their positions of leadership under a system put in place by Mubarak's mentors, Gamal Abdel Nasser and Anwar al-Sadat, during the 1952 officers revolt against King Farouk. Some younger army officers are calling for a "Turkish solution," where the Army takes power in a crisis, acting as the guarantor of civilian democracy.)