

## A portrait of Hosni

# MUBARAK

and the Egyptian government, as taken from Wikileaks State Department cables.

### Key:

YYYY-MM-DD TT:TT

SECURITY STATUS

CABLE NO.

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An excerpt from a State Department cable pertaining to Egypt, with **important details highlighted**.  
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[Link to original cable](#)

2005-06-15 16:04

CONFIDENTIAL

05CAIRO4534

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Speculation that EGIS Chief Omar Soliman would be the most likely candidate for the VP job comes as no surprise. **Soliman, one of Mubarak's closest advisors, has had an increased public profile in recent years** with his role as Egypt's point man on the Israeli Palestinian conflict. Though he does not have a domestic constituency per se, **he enjoys a reputation for being uncorrupt, in stark contrast to many, if not most, ministers and ruling party figures**.  
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[Link to original cable](#)

2006-05-16 15:03

CONFIDENTIAL

06CAIRO2933

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Mubarak remains deeply engaged in regional issues and continues to play an indispensable role on Israel/Palestine and Sudan, while helping also on Iraq, Syria, and Lebanon. **He clearly hopes that his elder statesman value, combined with the implicit threat of the Muslim Brotherhood's rise, will temper foreign pressure for more and faster democratic reforms**. The succession overshadows all other political issues.

Mubarak's current (and presumably final) six year term will end in 2011, but many observers expect the transition sooner. **The public fears that Mubarak's domestic machinations are calculated to establish Gamal as his successor. Gamal remains coy and now avoids the limelight**. No real contenders stand in his way ( Amre Moussa is the only often-named alternative -- and the existing legal framework clearly favors his candidacy. **It is not yet clear that the Egyptian military establishment ( Mubarak pere's traditional base ) will tolerate the pharaonic succession of decidedly un-military Gamal**. And the idea of Gamal's succession remains unpopular with the press and public, on principle.

**Mubarak also has genuine influence over Bashir and Qaddafi** and, if you see him, you may wish to urge him to press these contacts on cooperation.

[Link to original cable](#)

2007-04-04 17:05

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07CAIRO974

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In a recent meeting with poloff, XXXXXXXXXXXX parliamentarian XXXXXXXXXXXX discussed presidential son Gamal Mubarak's possible succession of his father, and opined that **Gamal increasingly views Minister of Defense Mohamed Hussein Tantawi and EGIS head Omar Suleiman as a threat to his presidential ambitions**. XXXXXXXXXXXX alleged that Tantawi recently told him, in confidence, of his deepening frustration with Gamal.

On March 29, XXXXXXXXXXXX noted to poloff his assessment that the recently approved constitutional amendments package is largely aimed at ensuring Gamal Mubarak's succession of his father, and "a more controllable, stable political scene when he does take the reins." **Opining that "Gamal and his clique" are becoming more confident in the inevitability of Gamal's succession, and are now angling to remove potential "stumbling blocks,"**

XXXXXXXXXXXX said that speculation among Cairo's elite is that there could be a cabinet reshuffle as soon as May or June, in which Minister of Defense Tantawi and/or EGIS head Omar Suleiman would be replaced. **"Those two are increasingly viewed as a threat by Gamal and those around him," and thus Gamal is reportedly pushing Mubarak to get them out of the way, so they "could not pose any problems" in the event of a succession.**

XXXXXXXXXXXX speculated that "hitches" to a Gamal succession could occur if Mubarak died before installing his son: "Gamal knows this, and so wants to stack the deck in his favor as much as possible now, while Mubarak is firmly in control, just in case his father drops dead sooner rather than later."

[Link to original cable](#)

2007-10-30 05:05

SECRET

07CAIRO3155

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Mubarak, who turned 79 in May, **remains a symbol of stability in the Middle East**. As ever, he sees Egypt's interests on the most critical regional issues -- terrorism, Iraq, Israel-Palestine, Sudan, Iran -- as largely congruent with ours. But his reluctance to lead more boldly on these fronts and on domestic reform has diminished his and Egypt's influence.

Stung by the advances of the Muslim Brotherhood (MB) in the 2005 parliamentary elections (where MB-affiliated candidates won twenty percent of the seats in parliament) and reflecting popular reaction to regional political turmoil, **Mubarak has retreated from many of his earlier promises on political reform**. Meanwhile, former opposition presidential candidate Ayman Nour remains sick and imprisoned. **Government detentions of democracy activists continue, and this year the government has begun to clamp down on free speech by prosecuting editors, journalists and bloggers**. Mubarak now makes scant public pretense of **advancing a vision for democratic change**.

[Link to original cable](#)

2008-12-30 TT:TT

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08CAIRO2572

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On December 23, April 6 activist XXXXXXXXXXXX (C) XXXXXXXXXXXX described how he tried to convince his Washington interlocutors that the USG should pressure the GOE to implement significant reforms by threatening to reveal information about GOE officials' alleged "illegal" off-shore bank accounts. He hoped that the U.S. and the international community would freeze these bank accounts, like the accounts of Zimbabwean President Mugabe's confidantes. **XXXXXXXXXXXX said he wants to convince the USG that Mubarak is worse than Mugabe** and that the GOE will never accept democratic reform. XXXXXXXXXXXX asserted **that Mubarak derives his legitimacy from U.S. support, and therefore charged the U.S. with "being responsible" for Mubarak's "crimes."** He accused NGOs working on political and economic reform of living in a "fantasy world," and not recognizing that Mubarak -- "the head of the snake" -- must step aside to enable democracy to take root.

[Link to original cable](#)

2009-03-31 14:02

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09CAIRO549

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**President Mubarak and military leaders view our military assistance program as the cornerstone of our mil-mil relationship and consider the USD 1.3 billion in annual FMF as "untouchable compensation" for making and maintaining peace with Israel**. The tangible benefits to our mil-mil relationship are clear: **Egypt remains at peace with Israel, and the U.S. military enjoys priority access to the Suez Canal and Egyptian airspace**. We believe, however, that our relationship can accomplish much more. Over the last year, we have engaged MOD leaders on developing shared strategic objectives to address current and emerging threats, including border security, counter terrorism, civil defense, and peacekeeping. Our efforts thus far have met with limited success.

Decision-making within MOD rests almost solely with **Minister of Defense Field Marshal Tantawi**. In office since 1991, he consistently resists change to the level and direction of FMF funding and is therefore one of the chief impediments to transforming our security relationship. During his tenure, the tactical and operational readiness of the Egyptian Armed Forces (EAF) has degraded. But he **retains President Mubarak's support, and so he and the top brass will most likely stay in position until Mubarak leaves the scene**.

[Link to original cable](#)

2009-05-19 12:12

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09CAIRO874

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**President Mubarak is the proud leader of a proud nation. He draws heavily from his own long experience in regional politics and governance as he assesses new proposals and recommendations for change**.

his most notable problem is a hearing deficit in his left ear. **He responds well to respect for Egypt and for his position, but is not swayed by personal flattery**. Mubarak peppers his observations with anecdotes that demonstrate both his long experience and his sense of humor.

**...he survived at least three assassination attempts, maintained peace with Israel, weathered two wars in Iraq and post-2003 regional instability, intermittent economic downturns, and a manageable but chronic internal terrorist threat. He is a tried and true realist, innately cautious and conservative, and has little time for idealistic goals**.

Mubarak has no single confidante or advisor who can truly speak for him, and **he has prevented any of his main advisors from operating outside their strictly circumscribed spheres of power**. Defense Minister Tantawi keeps the Armed Forces appearing reasonably sharp and the officers satisfied with their perks and privileges, and **Mubarak does not appear concerned that these forces are not well prepared to face 21st century external threats**.

**Mubarak is a classic Egyptian secularist who hates religious extremism and interference in politics**. The Muslim Brothers represent the worst, as they challenge not only Mubarak's power, but his view of Egyptian interests. As with regional issues, Mubarak, **seeks to avoid conflict and spare his people from the violence he predicts would emerge from unleashed personal and civil liberties**. In Mubarak's mind, **it is far better to let a few individuals suffer than risk chaos for society as a whole**. He has been supportive of improvements in human rights in areas that do not affect public security or stability.

[Link to original cable](#)

The next presidential elections are scheduled for 2011, and if Mubarak is still alive it is likely he will run again, and, inevitably, win. When asked about succession, he states that the process will follow the Egyptian constitution. Despite incessant whispered discussions, **no one in Egypt has any certainty about who will eventually succeed Mubarak nor under what circumstances**. The most likely contender is **presidential son Gamal Mubarak** (whose profile is ever-increasing at the ruling party); **some suggest that intelligence chief Omar Soliman might seek the office, or dark horse Arab League Secretary-General Amre Moussa might run**. Mubarak's ideal of a strong but fair leader would seem to discount Gamal Mubarak to some degree, given Gamal's lack of military experience, and may explain Mubarak's hands off approach to the succession question. Indeed, he seems to be trusting to God and the ubiquitous military and civilian security services to ensure an orderly transition.

Israeli-Arab conflict: **Mubarak has successfully shepherded Sadat's peace with Israel into the 21st century, and benefitted greatly from the stability Camp David has given the Levant: there has not been a major land war in more than 35 years**.

[Link to original cable](#)

2010-01-06 14:02

CONFIDENTIAL

10CAIRO47

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As the 2010 parliamentary and 2011 presidential elections approach, **President Mubarak continues to resist taking steps that could weaken his hold on power, and significant political reform has had little traction**.

[Link to original cable](#)

2010-02-09 14:02

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10CAIRO179

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While Tehran's nuclear threat is also a cause for concern, **Mubarak is more urgently seized with what he sees as the rise of Iranian surrogates ( Hamas and Hezbollah ) and Iranian attempts to dominate the Middle East**.

[Link to original cable](#)