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ACTION NEA-11

INFO LOG-00 ADS-00 INR-10 SS-00 SCL-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00
H-01 NSCE-00 NSAE-00 HA-09 L-03 AMAD-01 TRSE-00
PM-10 PA-01 OMB-01 INRE-00 USIE-00 SP-02 SNP-01
C-01 PRS-01 P-02 T-01 /056 W

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R 270813Z SEP 88
FM AMCONSUL ALEXANDRIA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7807
INFO AMEMBASSY CAIRO
USCINCCENT MACDILL AFB FL

RELEASED IN PART
B1, 1.4(D)

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 08 ALEXANDRIA 01250

DEPT ALSO FOR INR/B
USCINCCENT FOR POLAD

E.O. 12356: DECL: OADR
TAGS: PINS, SOCI, PREL, PINR, EG
SUBJECT: ALEXANDRIA'S SECOND-ECHELON SHAYKHS (PART I)
-- GIVING BREADTH AND DEPTH TO THE TREND

- REFERENCES:
- (A) ALEXANDRIA 1251
 - (B) ALEXANDRIA 0158
 - (C) 87 ALEXANDRIA 1854
 - (D) ALEXANDRIA 0334
 - (E) ALEXANDRIA 0604
 - (F) ALEXANDRIA 0823
 - (G) ALEXANDRIA 0884
 - (H) ALEXANDRIA 1019
 - (I) STATE 108915
 - (J) ALEXANDRIA 0906
 - (K) ALEXANDRIA 1249 (OVERVIEW)

1. CONFIDENTIAL - ENTIRE TEXT.

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INTRODUCTION

2. REFTTEL B GIVES A PROFILE OF ALEXANDRIA'S "GREAT

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE
REVIEW AUTHORITY: ARCHIE M BOLSTER
DATE/CASE ID: 10 MAY 2007 200605566

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SHAYKHS," FOUR ISLAMIC LEADERS WHO HELP RENDER EGYPT'S SECOND CITY A TRUE CENTER OF THE ISLAMIC TREND IN POLITICS, ECONOMICS, AND SOCIAL MORES. WHILE THESE FOUR MEN WIELD ENORMOUS POLITICAL AND MORAL INFLUENCE, IT LIKELY IS LESS WELL-KNOWN FIGURES WHO GIVE REAL BREADTH AND DEPTH TO THE ISLAMIC TREND IN ALEXANDRIA.

3. WHILE WE HAVE LABELLED THESE MEN "SECOND-ECHELON" FIGURES, WE BY NO MEANS INTEND TO BELITTLE THEIR IMPORTANCE. THEY ARE NOT MERELY "WARD HEELERS;" SOME HAVE ENORMOUS FINANCIAL ASSETS, SOME HAVE LITERALLY THOUSANDS OF ACOLYTES, ALL ARE VIEWED CLOSELY AND WARILY BY THE POWERS THAT BE, ALL ARE WORKING ASSIDUOUSLY FOR AN ISLAMIC EGYPT. THE PROMINENCE OF THESE MEN IN ALEXANDRIA CONTRASTS SHARPLY WITH THE SCENE IN CAIRO, WHERE THERE SEEM TO BE FEW ISLAMIC LEADERS BETWEEN THE "STOREFRONT MOSQUE" LEVEL AND SUCH "GREAT SHAYKHS" AS ABDURRAHMAN, KISHK, SHA'ARAWY, AND SALAMA.

4. REFTEL (A) HIGHLIGHTS TRENDS AND THEMES DISCERNIBLE FROM A STUDY OF THESE MEN AND THEIR ACTIVITIES. THIS CABLE SEEKS TO PROVIDE DATA ON THE SECOND-ECHELON FIGURES' BACKGROUNDS, FOLLOWINGS, GEOGRAPHICAL BASES, AND IDEOLOGICAL MOORINGS. END INTRODUCTION.

WADGY GHONEIM: RISING IN THE EAST

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5. AVOWED MUSLIM BROTHER WAGDI ABDEL HAMID GHONEIM, AN UNSUCCESSFUL LABOR PJY SRFU IN THE 1987 PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS, IS ONE OF THE ISLAMIC CURRENT'S RISING STARS IN ALEXANDRIA; HE HAS CONCENTRATED HIS EFFORTS QUITE HEAVILY IN THE HUGE, LOWER-MIDDLE-CLASS SIDI BISHR AND ABU QIR SECTIONS OF THE EASTERN END OF THE CITY, ALTHOUGH HE HAS DEVOTEES IN SEVERAL SECTORS OF THE CITY. SINCE THE DETENTION OF FELLOW ACTIVIST, MOHAMMED ABDEL MONEIM IN AUGUST 1988 (SEE PARA 21), GHONEIM HAS BEEN SPOTTED LEADING PRAYERS AND DELIVERING SERMONS IN WESTERN ALEXANDRIA, TOO. HE ALSO HAS A STRONG FOLLOWING IN BEHEIRA GOVERNORATE, WHERE HE LIVED, WORKED, AND PROSELYTIZED FOR MANY YEARS.

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6. GHONEIM LIKELY WAS INSTRUMENTAL IN THE ORGANIZATION OF THE ILL-FATED EID AL-FITR PRAYER SERVICE IN ABU QIR IN MAY (REF G). WE ALSO HAVE HEARD THAT HIS DISCIPLES PROVOKED THE SECTARIAN TENSIONS EVIDENT IN SIDI BISHR IN MARCH (REF D).
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7. DESPITE THIS GEOGRAPHIC FOCUS, HOWEVER, GHONEIM AIMS TO REACH THE BROADEST POSSIBLE AUDIENCE; LIKE MANY BETTER-KNOWN SHAYKHS, GHONEIM HAS ADOPTED THE CASSETTE AS A MEANS OF SPREADING THE WORD. THIS TACK APPARENTLY IS PROVING RATHER SUCCESSFUL -- WE KNOW THAT SOME OF GHONEIM'S TAPES ARE AVAILABLE ON THE MARKET IN THE GULF AS WELL AS IN EGYPT.
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8. THE MESSAGE PROPAGATED BY GHONEIM IS BLUNTLY ANTI-CHRISTIAN, ANTI-JEWISH, AND ANTI-WESTERN. OBSERVANT MUSLIMS ARE ADMONISHED TO AVOID WESTERN CLOTHES, WESTERN MUSIC, EVEN TO AVOID SHAKING HANDS WITH NON-MUSLIMS. CHRISTIAN BELIEFS ARE MOCKED IN

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A CRUDE FASHION -- FOR EXAMPLE: GHONEIM, IN ONE

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TAPE, SNARLINGLY ASKS HOW ANYONE CAN WORSHIP A SAVIOR WHO HAD BODILY FUNCTIONS AND ODORS. GHONEIM ACCUSES THE GOE OF FAVORING THE CHRISTIAN MINORITY BY ALLOWING THE BUILDING OF FIFTY NEW CHURCHES PER YEAR (A FIGURE THAT WOULD SURPRISE SEVERAL LOCAL PRIESTS WHO CANNOT EVEN OBTAIN PERMISSION TO REPAIR, FOR EXAMPLE, CAVED-IN ROOFS). GHONEIM ALSO CHARGES THAT COPTS ARE USING MONASTERIES AND CONVENTS TO HIDE ARMS THAT EVENTUALLY WILL BE USED AGAINST MUSLIMS. THE INCREASINGLY OBVIOUS PROBLEM OF DRUG ABUSE IS DEPICTED NOT ONLY AS A STRAYING FROM GOD'S ESTABLISHED RULES, BUT AS THE RESULT OF A ZIONIST-AMERICAN CONSPIRACY AGAINST THE ISLAMIC "UMMA."

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9. GHONEIM, IN A PITCH THAT HAS DEEP RESONANCE FOR ALEXANDRIANS IN ALL CAMPS, BLAMES POLLUTION OF THE MEDITERRANEAN ON THE STRAYING FROM GOD REPRESENTED BY THE US-EGYPTIAN RELATIONSHIP. (COMMENT: WE HAVE LONG MAINTAINED THAT THE SEWAGE ISSUE, DESPITE OUR LACK OF CONTROL OF THE BASIC ISSUES INVOLVED, AND DESPITE DISTORTIONS OF THOSE ISSUES, PRESENTS A POTENT WEAPON TO THOSE WHO WISH US ILL, BOTH ON THE LEFT AND, IT SEEMS, THE RIGHT. SEE REFTEL (J) FOR RECENT DISCUSSION OF THE ISSUE WITH THE DELTA'S MOST PROMINENT SECULAR LEFTIST. END COMMENT)

10. GHONEIM'S PRIMARY CONSTITUENCY APPEARS TO BE RECENT IN-MIGRANT'S FROM THE COUNTRYSIDE, WHOSE LACK OF EDUCATION RENDERS HIS CRUDE, INFLAMMATORY PITCH CREDIBLE. GHONEIM HIMSELF, HAVING MOVED TO ALEXANDRIA FROM DAMANHOUR ONLY A FEW YEARS AGO, MAY BE DESCRIBED AS AN IN-MIGRANT -- BUT THE USUAL "MAGNET" OF ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY DOES NOT APPEAR TO BE THE MOTIVATING FACTOR IN GHONEIM'S CASE.

[REDACTED] HAS DECLARED TO CONSUL GENERAL THAT HE "BROUGHT" GHONEIM FROM DAMANHOUR, WHERE HE WAS A CLERK AT THE ELECTRICAL AUTHORITY, TO ALEXANDRIA, WHERE WE BELIEVE HE WORKS IN [REDACTED] CONSTRUCTION FIRM. GHONEIM ALSO MAY HAVE TEACHING DUTIES IN THE AL-AZHAR INSTITUTE IN THE SMOUHA DISTRICT, EVEN THOUGH HE OFTEN HAS BEEN KNOWN TO BELITTLE THE AL-AZHAR

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ESTABLISHMENT AS "PUPPETS."

11. GHONEIM'S TAPES ALSO DEMONSTRATE A TENDENCY TO
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WRAP HIMSELF IN THE ROBES OF MARTYRDOM. HE SPEAKS
OFTEN OF THE TIMES THE AUTHORITIES HAVE ARRESTED
HIM FOR CARRYING THE STANDARD OF ISLAM -- DURING
SADAT'S SEPTEMBER 1981 CRACKDOWN, FOLLOWING SECTARIAN
TENSIONS IN EASTERN ALEXANDRIA, AND APPARENTLY DURING
'ID AL-FITR THIS YEAR.

KHALED DAUD: WORKING THE WEST

12. THE EMINENCE THAT WAGDY GHONEIM IS ACHIEVING IN
THE EASTERN SLUMS OF ALEXANDRIA IS BEING REPLICATED
AND EVEN SURPASSED IN WESTERN ALEXANDRIA BY KHALED
DAUD. LOCAL PUNDITS CLAIM THAT FORMER TICKET-MATES
GHONEIM AND DAUD WORK CLOSELY TOGETHER; THAT
THEY CONSCIOUSLY HAVE DIVIDED THEIR TERRITORIES IN
ORDER MORE EFFECTIVELY TO ORGANIZE. KHALED DAUD HAS
SHOWN THAT HE HAS THE ASSETS AND WILL TO BE EFFECTIVE.
HE IS THE OWNER AND DIRECTOR OF THE LARGE, SUCCESSFUL
"AL-MEDINA AL-MUNAWWARA" CONSTRUCTION COMPANY; WE HEAR
THAT THOSE "GAMAAT" ATTEMPTING TO PROVIDE HOUSING FOR
THEIR FLOCK TEND TO FAVOR DAUD'S, WHICH
EMPLOYS NO WOMEN AND SELLS ONLY TO MUSLIMS.

13. THE VERY PAUCITY OF INFORMATION ON DAUD'S BACK-
GROUND LIKELY BESPEAKS MODEST ORIGINS, LENDING
CREDENCE TO REPORTS THAT DAUD GOT HIS FINANCIAL AND
PROFESSIONAL START BY SPENDING SEVERAL YEARS IN
SAUDI ARABIA. DAUD APPARENTLY LEFT A LUCRATIVE
TEACHING JOB IN THE KINGDOM TO RETURN TO AID IN
EGYPT'S ISLAMIC REAWAKENING. PREDICTABLE WHISPERS
THAT DAUD'S ACTIVITIES ARE FINANCED BY SAUDI MONEY
FOLLOW NATURALLY (WHETHER FROM SAG OR PRIVATE SAUDI
SOURCES, THE RUMORS NEVER SPECIFY).

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