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ACTION NEA-11

INFO LOG-00 ADS-00 INR-07 SSO-00 AMAD-01 INRE-00 ONY-00
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FM AMEMBASSY CAIRO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9421
INFO AMCONSUL ALEXANDRIA
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RELEASED IN PART
B1, 1.4(D), B6

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 03 CAIRO 09981

DEPARTMENT ONLY FOR NEA/EGY, INR/DB, INR/NESA

E.O. 12356: DECL: OADR
TAGS: PGOV, ASEC, PINS, EG, SA, IR, PK, AF, AG, UR
SUBJECT: CONVERSATIONS WITH A MEMBER OF "THE ISLAMIC
GROUP": (I) IDENTITY AND LEADERSHIP

REF: A. CAIRO 9476
B. CAIRO 5506 (AND PREVIOUS)
C. CAIRO 8608

1. SECRET - ENTIRE TEXT.

2. SUMMARY: A YOUNG LAWYER OF "THE ISLAMIC GROUP" (OR
"JIHAD", AS IT IS CALLED BY THE GOVERNMENT) ASSERTED
THAT HIS WELL-ORGANIZED GROUP NUMBERS SOME 150,000 -
200,000, IN ADDITION TO THE "SMALL NUMBER -- 1500 --
DETAINED SINCE APRIL 1." GROUPS SUCH AS JIHAD,
AL-NAGUN MIN AL-NAR, TAKFIR WAL HIJRA, ETC., EITHER NO
LONGER EXIST OUTSIDE PRISON WALLS OR HAVE FEW
FOLLOWERS. INSTEAD, AL-GAMA'A AL-ISLAMIYA, OR THE
ISLAMIC GROUP, AND THE MUSLIM BROTHERHOOD, ARE THE ONLY
SUCH ISLAMIC GROUPS ACTIVE ON THE NATIONAL LEVEL. THE

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GROUP DIFFERS WITH THE MB BOTH IN MEANS AND "SOME
OBJECTIVES." SMALLER GROUPS EXIST ON THE LOCAL LEVEL,
BUT LACK THE KIND OF CORRECT RELIGIOUS GUIDANCE
PROVIDED BY "THE GROUP'S MUFTI OR PRINCE", DR. 'OMAR

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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE
REVIEW AUTHORITY: ARCHIE M BOLSTER
DATE/CASE ID: 09 MAY 2007 200605566

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ABDURRAHMAN, WHO WAS JAILED IN FAYOUM ON APRIL 7.

OPERATIONAL LEADER, HOWEVER, IS [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] EXPECTED TO BE RELEASED FROM PRISON SHORTLY AFTER HIS DETENTION WITHOUT CHARGES SINCE LAST DECEMBER. [REDACTED] HAD BEEN A MEMBER OF THE GROUP'S 11-MAN "CONSULTATIVE ASSEMBLY" WHEN HE WAS IMPRISONED IN SEPTEMBER, 1981, FOR SEVERAL YEARS; THE OTHER TEN LEADERS REMAIN IN PRISON OR WERE EXECUTED. THE ISLAMIC GROUP IS NEITHER "SECRET" NOR "VIOLENT", HE CLAIMED; HIS MOTIVE IN INFORMING US ABOUT HIS GROUP WAS TO PRESENT A "TRUE" PICTURE IN THE FACE OF GOVERNMENT MISREPRESENTATION OF THEM. (REF A SUMMARIZES THIS AND ADDITIONAL MESSAGES REPORTING IN GREATER DETAIL THE ISLAMIC GROUP'S RELATIONS WITH THE GOVERNMENT AND WITH FOREIGN COUNTRIES.) END SUMMARY.

B1, B6

BACKGROUND

3. SETTING AND BIO: IN REPEATED RECENT CONTACTS, SEVERAL AT THE EMBASSY, [REDACTED] RELATED TO EMBOFFS HIS VIEWS AS A FOLLOWER OF 'OMAR' ABDURRAHMAN, AND THUS A MEMBER OF "THE ISLAMIC GROUP" (REF B), WHICH THE GOVERNMENT CALLS "AL-JIHAD".

[REDACTED]

HE HAS BEEN IMPRISONED AND TORTURED SEVERAL TIMES.

4. MOTIVES: [REDACTED] CLAIMED THAT HE WAS INFORMING US ABOUT HIS GROUP AS A RESULT OF A "CHANGE IN THINKING" WITHIN THE GROUP. THEY WERE CONCERNED ABOUT THE "RADICAL AND VIOLENT IMAGE" OF THE GROUP PRESENTED BY THE GOVERNMENT. (A CA. JANUARY 1989 BOOKLET WHICH [REDACTED] GAVE US, TRANSMITTED SEPARATELY, SIMILARLY ASSERTED THAT ITS PURPOSE WAS TO PRESENT THE TRUE

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PICTURE OF THE GROUP IN THE FACE OF STEPPED UP
GOVERNMENT OPPRESSION.) [REDACTED] SAID [REDACTED] HAD
PERSUADED THEM THAT U.S. DIPLOMATS WERE "SINCERE", SO
THEY DECIDED TO PRESENT THIS "TRUE PICTURE" DIRECTLY TO
US. [REDACTED] HAD TOLD US SEPARATELY
THAT [REDACTED] HAD OPINED THAT THE GOVERNMENT WAS NOT
PERSECUTING THE MB BECAUSE THE U.S. WAS "SUPPORTING"
THE MUSLIM BROTHERHOOD AGAINST THE MORE RADICAL ISLAMIC
TRENDS. ON THIS WIDELY-ACCEPTED CONSPIRATORIAL
PREMISE, THE "ISLAMIC GROUP" MAY BE MAKING ITS OWN BID
FOR OUTSIDE SUPPORT. POLOFF WARNED [REDACTED] THAT THE U.S.
SUPPORTS EGYPT AND THE GOVERNMENT OF EGYPT, AND
SUPPORTS ITS STABILITY AND STRENGTH. THE U.S. DOES NOT
INTERVENE IN INTERNAL AFFAIRS NOR SUPPORT ANY GROUP OF
ANY SORT AGAINST THE GOVERNMENT OF EGYPT. STATEMENTS
BELOW ARE [REDACTED] UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED.

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WHO ARE THE "ISLAMIC GROUP?"

5. MEMBERSHIP AND ORGANIZATION: [] ASSERTED THAT THE GROUP NUMBERS ABOUT 150,000 - 200,000; THUS THE 1500 JAILED SINCE APRIL 1 IS A SMALL NUMBER. MOREOVER, EACH MEMBER HAS A LARGE FAMILY, AND THE FAMILY NATURALLY SHARES HIS BELIEFS AND SUPPORTS HIM. THERE ARE MEMBERS IN EVERY GOVERNORATE. THE MEMBERS ARE UNIFIED IN A SINGLE IDEOLOGY, THOUGH THERE ARE DIFFERENT "STYLES" OF ACTION FROM REGION TO REGION.

[] PASSED A THICK SHEAF OF PHOTOCOPIED HANDWRITTEN PAGES EXPLAINING THE GROUP'S IDEOLOGY; ALSO BEING TRANSMITTED SEPARATELY.) NONETHELESS WE ARE ONE, ORGANIZED GROUP: A MEMBER IN THE NEW VALLEY (EXTREME
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S.W. EGYPT) CAN DIRECTLY CONTACT A MEMBER IN THE SINAI (N.E. EGYPT) THROUGH THE ORGANIZATION. (COMMENT: THOUGH PRESSED, [] REFUSED TO ACCEPT A DISTINCTION BETWEEN "SYMPATHIZERS", SUCH AS FAMILY MEMBERS, AND GROUP MEMBERS WHO WERE COMMITTED AND READY TO TAKE ACTION AGAINST THE ESTABLISHED ORDER. WE SUSPECT THAT A VERY LARGE PROPORTION OF THE 200,000 CLAIMED MEMBERS WOULD FALL INTO THE "SYMPATHIZER" CATEGORY, AND DO NOT REPRESENT AN ISLAMIC REVOLUTIONARY VANGUARD. MOREOVER, [] BIAS OBVIOUSLY IS TOWARD INFLATING THE NUMBERS OF THE GROUP. END COMMENT.)

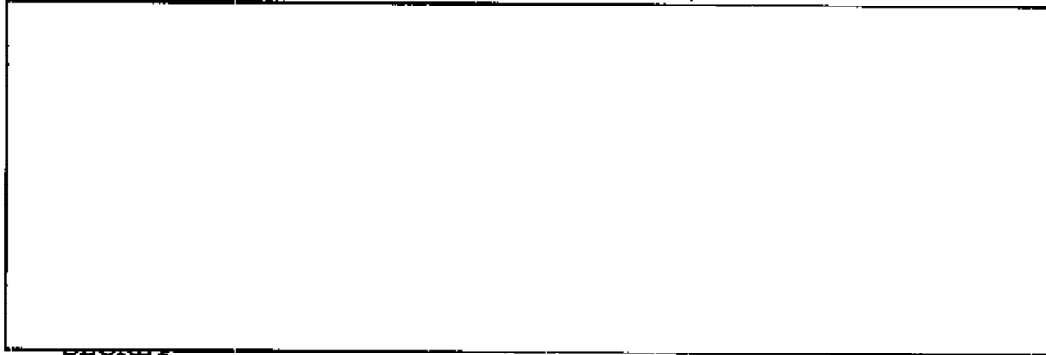
6. LEADERSHIP: 'OMAR 'ABDURRAHMAN IS OUR "MUFTI" (GIVER OF RELIGIOUS LEGAL JUDGEMENTS) OR "AMIR 'AAM" (GENERAL COMMANDER OR PRINCE), BUT OUR "OPERATIONAL LEADER" ("AMIR AL-HARAKA") IS [] (SEE REF B FOR [] REPORT OF 'ABDURRAHMAN'S INVOLVEMENT IN RIOTS IN FAYOUM APRIL 7 AND SUBSEQUENT ARREST.)

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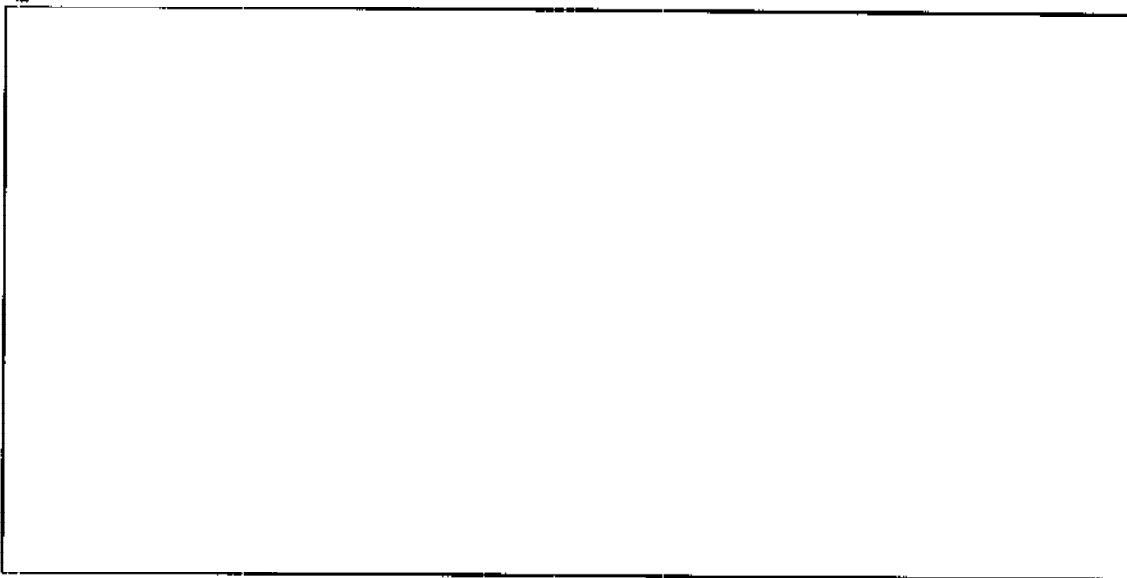
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[REDACTED] WAS ONE OF THE ELEVEN ORIGINAL MEMBERS OF OUR CONSULTATIVE ASSEMBLY (MAGLES AL-SHURA), ALL OF WHOM ARE EITHER IN PRISON OR WERE EXECUTED. THE SHURA COUNCIL, IN APPROXIMATE ORDER OF RANK, WAS COMPOSED OF:



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8. "THE GROUP" VS. OTHERS: AL-JIHAD, AL-TAKFIR WAL HIJRA, AL-NAGUN MIN AL-NAR, AL-TAWAQQUF WAL TABAYYUN (WHO ARE REALLY THE SAME AS AL-NAGUN) ARE EITHER NO LONGER IN EXISTENCE, OR HAVE FEW MEMBERS OUTSIDE PRISON, AND THEN ONLY ON A LOCAL BASIS. THE ONLY ISLAMIC ORGANIZATION ON A NATIONAL LEVEL IS THE ISLAMIC GROUP. THE MUSLIM BROTHERHOOD (MB) IS A NATIONAL ORGANIZATION BUT THEY ARE PART OF THE GOVERNING ESTABLISHMENT. WE REJECT THE CONCEPT OF "TAKFIR" (NOTE: CONDEMNING OTHERS, SUCH AS THE GOVERNMENT, AS INFIDELS) AND THUS ALSO REJECT THE IDEA THAT WE MUST

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SHUN INFIDELS (NOTE: THE IDEA OF HIJRA, OR FLIGHT, OR
'UZLA, ISOLATION FROM SIN). WE REJECT VIOLENCE, BUT

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ONLY STRIKE BACK WITH FORCE IN SELF-DEFENSE. THE
GOVERNMENT PINS THE NAME "JIHAD" ON US, AND BLAMES US
FOR ATTACKS ON CHURCHES, BUT NONE OF OUR MEMBERS WERE
INVOLVED IN A SINGLE ATTACK AGAINST CHRISTIAN INTERESTS
ANYWHERE IN EGYPT.

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9. DIFFERENCES WITH THE MB: WE DIFFER WITH THE MB'S

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TACTICS AND SOME OF THEIR OBJECTIVES. OF COURSE, WE SHARE THE GOAL OF IMPOSING ISLAMIC LAW IN EGYPT, BUT WE SEEK THE PUBLIC INTEREST IN CALLING FOR AN ISLAMIC REGIME, WHEREAS THE MB'S GOALS ARE PRIMARILY PERSONAL INTERESTS AND PROPERTY INTERESTS. WE ALSO REJECT THE GAMES THEY PLAY WITH THE REGIME; THEY ARE EVEN PUTTING FORWARD TO THE GOVERNMENT MB CANDIDATES AS CABINET MINISTERS. THEY HIDE THEIR OBJECTIVES; WE ARE OPEN ABOUT OURS. WE DO NOT COOPERATE WITH THEM. FOR EXAMPLE, THEY HAD MEMBERS ON THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF
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THE LAWYERS' SYNDICATE, BUT WE, NOT THEY, WERE THE ONES WHO PROVOKED THE CRISIS THERE (IN JANUARY). THE "ISLAMIC" COMMITTEE OF THE LAWYERS' SYNDICATE THAT IS PREPARING FOR THE UPCOMING SYNDICATE ELECTIONS [REDACTED] WE HOPE WE WILL HAVE THREE CANDIDATES IN THOSE ELECTIONS. (COMMENT: THE TWO "ISLAMIC" MEMBERS OF THE PREVIOUS SYNDICATE BOARD WERE MB. END COMMENT.) WE WILL NOT COOPERATE WITH THE MB IN THE SHURA COUNCIL ELECTIONS.

10. OTHER GROUPS: LOCAL GROUPS OF ISLAMIC YOUTH EXIST AROUND THE COUNTRY. BECAUSE THEY LACK PROPER RELIGIOUS GUIDANCE, THEY DO CRAZY THINGS; THEN THE GOVERNMENT GIVES THEM SOME NAME AND FALSELY ASSOCIATES THEM WITH US. FOR EXAMPLE, "AL-GHURABA'" ("THE ALIENS" -- CITED IN A PRESS REPORT ABOUT FAYOUM) IS A GROUP OF TEN OR FIFTEEN YOUTHS WHO ARE NOT CONNECTED TO US; HOWEVER, SOME OF THE PEOPLE INVOLVED IN BOMBINGS AND INCIDENTS IN FAYOUM ARE/ARE GROUP MEMBERS. ONE TIME WHEN I WAS IN JAIL, I MET THE KIDS WHO BOMBED VIDEO CLUBS A FEW YEARS AGO. THE BOYS WERE TEN TO FIFTEEN YEARS OLD. I ASKED THEM WHY THEY DID SUCH A CRAZY THING IN THE NAME OF ISLAM. THEY TOLD ME THEY "WANTED TO DO SOMETHING FOR ISLAM", AND CAME UP WITH THIS IDEA ON THEIR OWN. THIS SHOWS THEIR LACK OF PROPER RELIGIOUS GUIDANCE. WE SHOW VIDEOS, INCLUDING SPORTS AND ENTERTAINMENT VIDEOS IN OUR MOSQUES. WHY SHOULD WE BOMB VIDEO CLUBS? (COMMENT: [REDACTED] PAMPHLET, HOWEVER, LISTED THE SEIZURE OF PORNOGRAPHIC MATERIALS AS AMONG THE GROUP'S "CONDEMNING OF THE EVIL AND ORDERING OF THE GOOD" ACTIVITIES." END COMMENT.)

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11. IDEOLOGICAL INFLUENCES: SEYYED QUTB, ESPECIALLY HIS BOOK "MILESTONES ON THE ROAD," IS THE ISLAMIC THINKER TO WHOM WE ARE CLOSEST. THE MB HAS STRAYED FROM HIM LONG AGO, BEGINNING WITH THEIR IMPRISONMENT IN 1964. OTHERS THAT ARE CLOSE TO US ARE

12. SUBSEQUENT MESSAGES REPORT [REDACTED] DESCRIPTION OF THE GROUP'S RELATIONS WITH THE GOVERNMENT OF EGYPT AND WITH FOREIGN COUNTRIES.

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