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INFO	LOG-00	NP-00	AID-00	A-00	CA-02	CCO-00	CG-00
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	SRPP-00	DS-00	EB-00	FAAE-00	FBIE-00	VC-00	H-01
	TEDE-00	INR-00	INSE-00	IO-00	L-00	VCE-00	MMP-00
	M-00	AC-01	NRCE-00	NSAE-00	NSCE-00	OCS-03	OMB-01
	OPIC-01	PA-00	PM-00	PRS-00	ACE-00	P-00	SCT-00
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 CAIRO 003303

E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/12/2005  
TAGS: KISL, PGOV, PTER, EG  
SUBJECT: EGYPT'S MUSLIM BROTHERS - PART I: HISTORY AND  
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(D).

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SUMMARY

1. (C) THIS IS THE FIRST IN A TWO PART MESSAGE DISCUSSING EGYPT'S MUSLIM BROTHERHOOD. PART 1 OUTLINES ITS HISTORY AND STRUCTURE, PART 2 OF THE MESSAGE WILL DISCUSS THE BASES FOR THE MB'S POPULARITY AS A POLITICAL FORCE IN EGYPT TODAY. EGYPT'S (ILLEGAL) MUSLIM BROTHERHOOD, FOUNDED IN 1928, IS A PART OF THE COUNTRY'S HISTORY AND ITS PRESENT POLITICAL LIFE. THE ORGANIZATION'S HISTORY IS CHECKERED WITH ATTEMPTS TO PARTICIPATE IN THE GOVERNMENT AS WELL AS VIOLENT ATTEMPTS TO OVERTHROW THE GOVERNMENT. THE MB IS THE ORGANIZATION FROM WHICH THE VIOLENT ELEMENTS, THE GAMA'A ISLAMIYYA, THE

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 EGYPTIAN ISLAMIC JIHAD AND THE VANGUARDS OF CONQUEST  
 SPLINTERED.

2. (C) DESPITE GOVERNMENT ATTEMPTS TO STIFLE THEIR POLITICAL ASPIRATIONS, 17 MUSLIM BROTHERS WERE ELECTED IN FALL 2000 AS INDEPENDENT CANDIDATES TO THE NATIONAL PEOPLE'S ASSEMBLY AND IN FEBRUARY THEY CAPTURED ONE-THIRD OF THE SEATS ON THE BOARD OF EGYPT'S LAWYERS SYNDICATE. TODAY, THE AGING MB LEADERSHIP IS HESITANT TO TURN OVER THE REINS TO YOUNGER MEMBERS, CAUSING WHAT SOME VIEW AS AN INTERNAL RIFT. YOUNGER LEADERS ARE THOUGHT TO REPRESENT A MORE CONTEMPORARY AND LIBERAL TREND, REFERRED TO AS "DOVES" WHILE THE OLDER LEADERS ARE THOUGHT TO BE SOMEWHAT SCLEROTIC "HAWKS." DUE TO THE SECRET NATURE OF THE DELIBERATIONS OF THE MB SHURA (CONSULTATIVE) COUNCIL, WE CANNOT PREDICT WHO WILL SUCCEED THE CURRENT AGED SUPREME GUIDE MUSTAFA MESHOUR. END SUMMARY.

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 AN HISTORIC PERSPECTIVE  
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3. (U) THE MUSLIM BROTHERHOOD (MB) IS PART OF EGYPT'S HISTORIC AND CURRENT POLITICAL LANDSCAPE. DESPITE ITS ILLEGAL STATUS THE MB IS A SIGNIFICANT FORCE IN CURRENT EGYPTIAN POLITICAL LIFE. FOUNDED BY SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHER SHIEKH HASSAN AL BANNA IN ISMAILIA IN 1928, THE ASSOCIATION OF MUSLIM BROTHERS WAS THE FIRST WIDE-SCALE, ORGANIZED, INTERNATIONAL ISLAMIST MOVEMENT. SINCE ITS FOUNDING IT HAS REMAINED A SEMISECRET ORGANIZATION, WITH A CELLULAR ORGANIZATION AND A FOCUS ON ATTRACTING YOUTH. SOME YOUTH GROUPS WERE KNOWN TO BE PARAMILITARY. THE MB HAS A NETWORK OF SOCIAL, EDUCATIONAL AND ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES AND ENTERPRISES. TITHING ("ZAKAT") OF MEMBERS ALSO HELPS TO FINANCE THE ORGANIZATION.

4. (U) IN ADDITION TO PLAYING A PART IN RESISTING AND FINALLY ENDING THE BRITISH OCCUPATION OF EGYPT, IN 1948 THE MB DEFINED TWO ORGANIZATIONAL OBJECTIVES: IMPLEMENTING AN ISLAMIC SOCIAL SYSTEM AND CONTRIBUTING TO SOCIAL SERVICE IN EGYPT. FOR A PERIOD IN BETWEEN WWII AND CONSOLIDATION OF THE MILITARY REGIME IN 1952, KING FAROUQ PERMITTED THE MB TO FUNCTION AS A POLITICAL PARTY TO COUNTER THE POWER OF THE WAFD PARTY. IN 1948, MB VOLUNTEERS PARTICIPATED IN THE WAR FOR PALESTINE. UPON THEIR RETURN TO CAIRO, THEY WERE ACCUSED OF PLOTTING AGAINST THE MONARCHY WITH THE INTENT OF ESTABLISHING A THEOCRATIC REPUBLIC. PRIME MINISTER MAHMOUD EL NOQRASHI STRUCK FIRST, ISSUING A DECREE DISSOLVING THE MB,

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IMPOUNDING ITS ASSETS AND ARRESTING ITS MEMBERS. TWENTY DAYS  
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LATER, A YOUNG MB MEMBER ASSASSINATED NOQRASHI. IN EARLY  
1949, THE MB SUPREME GUIDE EL BANNA WAS MURDERED, IT WAS  
RUMORED, BY GOVERNMENT AGENTS.

5. (U) AN INTENSE PERIOD OF UNDERGROUND ACTIVITY FOLLOWED.  
A NEW SUPREME GUIDE, HASAN EL HODEIBY TOOK OVER AS HEAD OF  
THE ORGANIZATION. IN 1951, THE COURT LIFTED THE BAN AND THE  
MB WAS PERMITTED TO RECOVER SOME OF ITS ASSETS AND RESUME  
OVERT ACTIVITIES AFTER THE WAFD PARTY WON THE ELECTIONS AND  
FORMED A NEW GOVERNMENT. SHORTLY AFTER THE REVOLUTION, A  
1953 DECREE BANNING POLITICAL PARTIES WAS DEEMED NOT TO APPLY  
TO THE MB ON THE GROUNDS THAT IT WAS NOT A POLITICAL PARTY.  
NONETHELESS, IN 1954, NASSER INVOKED THE DECREE, DISSOLVING  
THE MB, WHICH WAS PLOTTING HIS OVERTHROW AND ROUNDED UP  
THOUSANDS OF MBS. SIX MB LEADERS WERE TRIED, CONVICTED AND  
EXECUTED; 7 WERE SENTENCED TO LIFE IN PRISON.

6. (C) IN 1960, MB DISSENTERS, LEAD BY SAYYED QUTUB, OPENLY  
ADVOCATED THE USE OF VIOLENCE TO OVERTHROW NASSER'S "APOSTATE  
REGIME." ONCE AGAIN, MASSIVE ARRESTS OF MB LEADERS AND  
MEMBERS TOOK PLACE. AFTER NASSER'S DEATH IN 1970, SADAT  
RELEASED A NUMBER OF JAILED MBS AND THE MAINSTREAM  
ORGANIZATION RENOUNCED VIOLENCE AS A TACTIC. BOLSTERED BY  
ITS RELATIONSHIP WITH SADAT, THE MB IN 1977 ASKED THE  
ADMINISTRATIVE COURT TO LIFT THE 1954 MILITARY DECREE BANNING  
IT. THE COURT REFUSED TO OVERTURN THE BAN AND IN 1992 AN

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 03 CAIRO 003303

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TAGS: KISL, PGOV, PTER, EG

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STRUCTURE

APPEAL (STILL UNRESOLVED) WAS FILED WITH A HIGHER COURT.

7. (C) THE MB CARRIED WITH IT TRADITIONS OF IDEALISM AND  
VIOLENCE, PIETY AND TERROR, WHICH HAVE BEEN DIFFICULT TO  
DISENTANGLE AND SEVER. AS THE ORGANIZATION TRIED TO MODERATE  
ITS POSTURE IN THE 1970'S, MILITANT ISLAMIC FACTIONS

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INCLUDING THE GAMA'A ISLAMIYYA, EGYPTIAN ISLAMIC JIHAD AND  
VANGUARDS OF CONQUEST SPRANG FROM ITS RANKS. SINCE THE  
ATTACKS UPON TOURISTS IN CAIRO AND LUXOR IN 1997, EXTREMIST  
ISLAMIST GROUPS HAVE BEEN SEVERELY CRIPPLED BY THE SECURITY  
SERVICES AND POPULARLY DISCREDITED. LUXOR SEEMED TO DEEPEN  
THE DIVIDE BETWEEN THE MB AND ITS EXTREMIST OFFSPRING. AL  
HAYAT REPORTED THAT FOLLOWING THE ATTACK IN LUXOR, THE MB  
LEADERSHIP WARNED ITS MEMBERS TO HAVE NO CONTACT WITH THE  
ATTACKERS WHO HAVE "NO RELIGION AND NO CONSCIENCE."

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THE MB TODAY  
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8. (C) FOR FIFTY YEARS, SUCCESSIVE EGYPTIAN REGIMES HAVE  
ATTEMPTED TO SUPPRESS OR ELIMINATE THE MB, YET THE MOVEMENT  
SURVIVES. AN ILLEGAL ORGANIZATION SINCE 1954, MB LEADERS ARE  
PERPETUALLY IN AND OUT OF JAIL AS THE GOVERNMENT ATTEMPTS TO  
CONTROL OR SHUT DOWN MB ACTIVITIES, THE MOST OBVIOUS OF WHICH  
CONTINUE TO BE APPLYING AN ISLAMIC SOCIAL SYSTEM AND  
DELIVERING SOCIAL SERVICES. THEY PARTICIPATED IN THE  
PEOPLE'S ASSEMBLY AS SOCIALIST LABOR PARTY MEMBERS IN THE  
1980S. IN COORDINATION WITH THE SLP, THE MB WON 37 SEATS IN  
THE 1987 LEGISLATURE. THEIR PROMINENCE CALLED INTO DOUBT  
THEIR COMPETENCE, WITH ONLY DR. ESSAM EL ARIAN RECOGNIZED AS  
A SERIOUS PARLIAMENTARIAN. THE MB BOYCOTTED THE FOLLOWING  
ELECTIONS UNTIL THE FALL 2000 ELECTIONS. IN SEPTEMBER 2000,  
DURING A RARE SHOW OF STRENGTH AT THE FUNERAL OF MB SECRETARY  
GENERAL IBRAHIM SHARAF, SUPREME GUIDE MUSTAFA MESH HOUR  
PREDICTED THAT THE MB WOULD ESTABLISH AN ISLAMIC STATE IN  
EGYPT BY THE YEAR 2030.

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9. (C) THE ASSOCIATION OF MUSLIM BROTHERS IS HEADED BY A SUPREME GUIDE, ASSISTED BY A GENERAL GUIDANCE COUNCIL, RESPONSIBLE FOR FORMULATING POLICIES AND RUNNING THE GROUP'S ACTIVITIES, AND BY A SHURA OR CONSULTATIVE COUNCIL. WE KNOW LITTLE ABOUT THE DECISION-MAKING BY THE MB LEADERSHIP WHOSE MEETINGS ARE CLANDESTINE. LIKE A NUMBER OF EGYPTIAN POLITICAL PARTIES, THE MB IS TODAY HEADED BY ELDERLY LEADERSHIP. THE ORGANIZATION FACES THE CHALLENGE OF MAKING WAY FOR THE YOUNGER GENERATION, REPRESENTED BY LEADERS IN THEIR 40'S AND EARLY 50'S LIKE DR. ESSAM EL ARIAN AND DR. IBRAHIM ZAAFARANI OF THE DOCTORS' SYNDICATE, AND JOURNALIST SYNDICATE LEADER SALAH ABDEL MAQSUD.

10. (C) THE MB SUPPORTED ABOUT 40 CANDIDATES WHO RAN AS INDEPENDENTS IN THE 2000 ELECTIONS FOR THE PEOPLE'S ASSEMBLY (LOWER HOUSE OF PARLIAMENT). OF THE 444 ELECTED SEATS, 17 WENT TO MUSLIM BROTHER INDEPENDENTS. EIGHTY PERCENT OF THE MBS ELECTED ARE UNDER THE AGE OF 45. THE VAST DIVIDE BETWEEN AGED AND YOUTH MEMBERS WAS PERHAPS MOST PRONOUNCED IN 1996 WHEN YOUNG MB LEADERS JOINED WITH OTHER NON-MB POLITICAL CENTRISTS TO SEEK APPROVAL FOR A WASSAT (CENTER) PARTY. WASSAT WAS NOT APPROVED BY THE GOVERNMENT'S POLITICAL PARTIES COMMITTEE, BUT THE YOUNG MB'S REBELLIOUS ACTIONS LED TO A RIFT WITHIN THE MB STRUCTURE. ACCORDING TO ONE ISLAMIST EXPERT, "FOR THE FIRST TIME IN RECOLLECTION, MB LEADERSHIP AND ITS CENTRALIZED ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE CAME UNDER FIRE FROM RANK AND FILE MEMBERS." THE PRAGMATIC, DYNAMIC YOUNG MBS INCLUDING EL ARIAN, MAQSUD AND ZAAFARANI, IMPRISONED FROM 1995-2000 WERE INCAPABLE OF PULLING THE ORGANIZATION BACK FROM THE BRINK OF DISCORD AND DEMORALIZATION. WASAT  
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SYMPATHIZERS REMAIN OUTSIDE THE MB MAINSTREAM TODAY. THE GOVERNMENT'S METHOD OF COPING WITH THE POPULARITY OF YOUNGER MB LEADERSHIP CONTINUES TO BE DETENTION, TRIAL, AND IMPRISONMENT. IN NOVEMBER 2000, 15 MBS, MOST OF THEM PROFESSIONALS ACTIVE IN THE SYNDICATES AND POTENTIAL CANDIDATES FOR THE PEOPLE'S ASSEMBLY, WERE SENTENCED TO 3-5 YEARS IN PRISON FOR MEMBERSHIP IN AN ILLEGAL ORGANIZATION AND RELATED CHARGES.

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HAWKS AND DOVES -- A GENERATION GAP  
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11. (C) MOST LEADERS OF THE MB TODAY APPEAR TO FALL INTO

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EITHER "HAWK" OR "DOVE" CAMPS. SUPREME GUIDE MESH HOUR REPRESENTS THE OLD GUARD, THE MORE "HAWKISH" LEADERSHIP, REVOLUTIONARIES REARED DURING THE COLONIAL PERIOD, SOME ACCUSED OF VIOLENT ACTS. TODAY, HE CLAIMS, THE GOVERNMENT FEARS THE FACT THAT THE MB IS A "WELL-ORGANIZED ENTITY" RATHER THAN AN ADVOCATE OF VIOLENCE. SOME OBSERVERS BELIEVE BOTH THE GENERATION GAP AND THE DIFFERENCE IN VIEWS AND TACTICS HAVE BEEN SOURCES OF CONTENTION BETWEEN THE HAWKS AND THE DOVES WITHIN THE ORGANIZATION. ACCORDING TO AL AHRAM WRITER OMA YMA ABDEL-LATIF, THE HAWKS INCLUDE MESH HOUR, MB SPOKESMAN MAHMOUN EL HODEIBI, ABBAS EL SISSI AND MAHMOUD EZZAT IBRAHIM, SOMETIMES MENTIONED AS A POSSIBLE SUCCESSOR TO

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MESH HOUR. OTHER HARD LINERS INCLUDE ABDEL MONEIM ABDUL FUTUH, SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE PHYSICIANS' SYNDICATE; MOHAMED EL SAYED HABIB, FORMER MP AND PROFESSOR AT ASSIYUT UNIVERSITY; AND MOHAMED MAHDI AKEF, FORMER HEAD OF THE ISLAMIC CENTER IN MUNICH.

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12. (C) DR. ESSAM EL ARIAN, ASSISTANT SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE PHYSICIANS' SYNDICATE REPRESENTS THE YOUNGER, DOVE GENERATION OF LEADERS. ALSO INCLUDED IN THIS GROUP ARE SEIF EL ISLAM EL BANNA, SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE LAWYERS' SYNDICATE AND SON OF THE MB FOUNDER; IBRAHIM EL ZAAFARANI SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE PHYSICIANS' SYNDICATE IN ALEXANDRIA AND SALAH ABDEL MAQSOUD OF THE JOURNALISTS SYNDICATE. POLITICAL SCIENCE PROFESSOR IMED SHAHEEN BELIEVES THE YOUNGER GENERATION HAS A "NEW VISION." BRED ON THE CAMPUSES, THEY ARE "POLITICIANS" RATHER THAN "REVOLUTIONARIES." ZAAFARANI TOLD POLOFF LAST FALL THAT THE MB DOES NOT CONDONE VIOLENCE AND HE INDICATED HE WANTED TO OPEN A DIALOGUE WITH THE U.S. ESSAM EL ARIAN EXPLAINED TO AL AHRAM IN OCTOBER 2000, "... THE BROTHERHOOD WAS NEVER INVOLVED IN ANY ACT OF VIOLENCE (NOTE: PRESUMABLY, IN HIS EXPERIENCE)... WHEN (THEY) WERE PUT ON TRIAL, THEY WERE NEVER ACCUSED OF USING VIOLENCE... WE ARE AGAINST ALL FORMS OF VIOLENCE..."

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SECRECY AND SUCCESSION  
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13. (C) ASKED ABOUT CONCRETE PLANS FOR SUCCESSION TO AVOID A POWER VACUUM, EL ARIAN TOLD AL AHRAM NEWSPAPER, "ALL MATTERS ARE UNDER CONSIDERATION BY THE (MB) SHURA COUNCIL." ACCORDING TO STATUTES SET BY ITS FOUNDER IN 1928 AND REPORTEDLY AMENDED IN 1992, A CANDIDATE FOR THE POST OF SUPREME GUIDE MUST BE FROM THE 120-MEMBER SHURA COUNCIL. MB CHAPTERS OUTSIDE EGYPT WILL ALSO HAVE A SAY IN SELECTING THE NEW LEADER, ACCORDING TO ARIAN. SPECIFICS AND CRITERIA FOR CHOOSING A NEW LEADER ARE NOT CLEAR. MB SPOKESMAN EL HODEIBI  
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ADMITTED TO AL AHRAM IN MARCH THAT, "CONVENING THE (SHURA) COUNCIL WOULD IN ITSELF LEAD TO ARREST." THE GOVERNMENT CONSIDERS MEMBERSHIP IN THE MB SHURA COUNCIL A CRIMINAL MATTER, ACCORDING TO MB SOURCES.

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COMMENT  
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14. (C) DUE TO THE MB CODE OF SECRECY CONCERNING ITS DELIBERATIONS AND PLANS AS WELL AS EGYPTIAN GOVERNMENT ANGST WITH MB ELECTORAL ACTIVITIES AND RECENT GAINS BOTH IN THE PARLIAMENT AND THE LAWYERS' SYNDICATE, MB MEMBERS HAVE BEEN HESITANT TO SPEAK WITH EMBASSY OFFICERS ABOUT THE MB. WE HAVE BEEN UNABLE TO ASCERTAIN THE LIKELY SUCCESSOR TO MUSTAFA MESH HOUR, NOW 80 YEARS OLD. GIVEN THE ORGANIZATIONAL

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STRUCTURE AND SPLIT WITHIN THE POLITICAL CAMPS, SELECTION OF THE NEXT SUPREME GUIDE WILL LIKELY REPRESENT A STRUGGLE BETWEEN THE HAWKS AND THE DOVES. GIVEN THE UNCERTAINTY ABOUT WHO IS ACTUALLY ON THE SHURA COUNCIL, WE CANNOT PREDICT WHICH SIDE IS LIKELY TO WIN, ALTHOUGH ACADEMICS FAMILIAR WITH THE MB INDICATE MESHOUR'S SUCCESSOR WILL LIKELY COME FROM THE "DOVE" GENERATION.

15. (C) DESPITE ITS INTERNAL CHALLENGES, THE SPECTER OF GOVERNMENT SURVEILLANCE, AND ARREST OF ITS MEMBERS, THE MB ENJOYS A DEGREE OF POLITICAL POPULARITY AMONG EGYPTIANS, WHICH WE WILL EXAMINE IN THE SECOND CABLE IN THIS SERIES.  
KURTZER

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