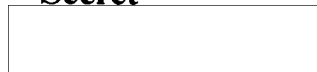




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Egypt After Mubarak: The Succession Question



An Intelligence Assessment

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LDA 87-10728
February 1987

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Egypt After Mubarak: The Succession Question

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An Intelligence Assessment

This paper was prepared by [Redacted]
Office of Near Eastern and South Asian Analysis,
and [Redacted] Office of Leadership
Analysis. It was coordinated with the Directorate of
Operations. Comments and queries are welcome
and may be directed to the Chief, Arab-Israeli
Division, NESA, [Redacted]

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February 1987*

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**Egypt After Mubarak:
The Succession Question**

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Key Judgments*Information available
as of 2 January 1987
was used in this report.*

Egyptians are starting to ask whether President Mubarak will run for reelection when his term expires in October 1987. Although he is healthy and appears unlikely to step down before then, the burdens of office weigh heavily on Mubarak and his family, and he may be looking for a graceful way to exit. In addition, there is always the possibility of accidental death or assassination, and mounting social and economic pressures could, with little warning, provoke a crisis capable of forcing Mubarak from office.

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Defense Minister Abu Ghazala is the most likely candidate to succeed President Mubarak. Abu Ghazala is highly popular with the armed forces for his aggressive championing of military interests, and he is generally respected for displaying leadership qualities that many Egyptians believe Mubarak lacks. His decisive suppression of the police mutiny in 1986 enhanced his political standing.

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In the near term, Mubarak is unlikely to name Abu Ghazala vice president and de facto heir apparent. Abu Ghazala almost certainly would refuse the vice-presidency unless he were allowed to keep his defense portfolio—the foundation of his power. Mubarak probably fears this would concentrate too much power in Abu Ghazala's hands and detract from his own stature as president. In any case, Abu Ghazala is well positioned to assume the presidency whether he is named vice president or not.

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The longer Mubarak remains in office, however, the less are Abu Ghazala's chances of succeeding him. Abu Ghazala could fall from power before Mubarak—who is healthy and virtually the same age—leaves office. Although the two men have a generally good working relationship, past strains between them could recur. The Defense Minister's military support is likely to erode if he becomes increasingly unable to protect the standard of living of the officer corps from the effects of economic reform. In addition, his close ties to the United States could also hurt him, especially if US-Egyptian relations cool.

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Should Abu Ghazala stumble, new contenders almost certainly would emerge from the senior military ranks. In general, Egyptians are not ready to accept a civilian as president, and none of the prominent civilians in the

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regime possess the requisite support or national stature to spark enthusiasm. Deputy Prime Minister Wally is a possible long-shot civilian contender. A more likely alternative, however, would be the general serving as Armed Forces Chief of Staff—either Lieutenant General Oraby, the incumbent, or his most likely successor, Lieutenant General Salah. [redacted]

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Whoever the leading contenders are, the Egyptian military will play a key role in selecting the next president. In most circumstances, senior officers will in effect choose Mubarak's successor by informally conveying their preferences to members of the government and the ruling party. [redacted]

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Close relations with the United States will remain a cornerstone of Egyptian foreign policy under any likely successor, but only to the extent these ties serve Egyptian interests. Although leading contenders recognize Cairo's continuing need for US aid, ties could loosen if the new president were obliged to put distance between himself and Mubarak's policies to protect his own position. Relations with Moscow are likely to improve slowly and without fanfare or dramatic breakthroughs. Egyptian ties to the Arab states also will expand, and the peace treaty with Israel—despite lingering mistrust—will remain intact. [redacted]

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Neither the Islamic right nor the secular left has much chance of taking power except as the result of a severe domestic crisis or a military coup. Nor do these fringe elements possess the strength and credibility to have much impact on the presidential selection process. A government of either extreme would probably substantially reduce Egypt's reliance on the United States. Relations with Israel would almost certainly worsen, although probably not to the point of war. [redacted]

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Egypt After Mubarak: The Succession Question

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The Setting

President Hosni Mubarak is in good health at 58 and appears unlikely to leave office before the end of his term in October 1987. Nonetheless, there is always a possibility of accidental death or assassination. Islamic fundamentalism is spreading in Egypt, and Muslim extremists like those who murdered Anwar Sadat have been contained but not eliminated by Egyptian security forces. Moreover, mounting social and economic pressures could, with little warning, generate a political crisis capable of forcing Mubarak from office. 

With the presidential election less than a year away, Egyptians are starting to ask whether Mubarak will seek a second term. The burdens of office and frustrations of wrestling with Egypt's worst economic crisis in modern times appear to weigh heavily on Mubarak and his family. In recent months he has publicly hinted that he has withstood enough pressure, and he may be looking for a graceful way to exit. His refusal to anoint a successor has only added to growing uncertainty about his intentions. 

Mubarak and the Vacant Vice-Presidency


Mubarak's appointment of a vice president before the election could indicate his intention to step down, but he is unlikely to do either. In any case, he almost certainly will not decide his future course for at least several months. Rumors and reports have circulated for years that Mubarak was about to name a vice president, and virtually all of them identified Defense Minister Mohamed Abu Ghazala as the most likely choice. Mubarak, however, has consistently denied these rumors, and we believe several factors would weigh against such a selection in the near term.

 Mubarak may plan to wait until economic reform measures are in place to avoid associating a potential successor with an unpopular belt-tightening program. He probably




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Mubarak, Abu Ghazala, and Chief of Staff Oraby at Sadat's tomb. 

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would prefer that his successor be chosen by constitutional means, although he is under no illusions about Abu Ghazala's strong support in the military. 

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The strength of Abu Ghazala's potential candidacy poses a dilemma for Mubarak and also may underlie his reluctance to appoint a vice president. We believe Abu Ghazala is too influential either to be appointed vice president—and thus gain even more power as "heir apparent"—or to be passed over by Mubarak's

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appointing someone else. Mubarak almost certainly values Abu Ghazala's support for the popularity he enjoys within the military. Making him vice president as well as Defense Minister, however, would concentrate too much power in Abu Ghazala's hands and would detract from Mubarak's stature as the leader of Egypt. [redacted]

Abu Ghazala, for his part, is highly unlikely to accept the vice-presidency if it means a relegation to figure-head status. [redacted]

[redacted] he would accept the appointment only if he were allowed to keep his defense portfolio and direct control over the military, where his power and personal preferences lie. [redacted]

[redacted]

In any case, in the event of Mubarak's demise, Abu Ghazala's ability to assume control and accomplish a smooth transition would not require the title of vice president. His dual position as Defense Minister and deputy prime minister places him after the President in the military chain of command, guaranteeing him a central role in any crisis. [redacted]

Succession Politics: Choosing a New President

The military—the backbone of any regime in Egypt—will have a major say in selecting the next president. Although it has no formal constitutional role in the succession, the military functions as the omnipresent, behind-the-scenes power broker—a role reinforced in the public mind by the Army's rapid suppression of the police mutiny in February 1986. We believe civilian politicians would stand little chance of electing their own candidate in the face of military opposition. [redacted]

If Mubarak leaves the scene without formally designating a successor, we expect senior officers to let the constitutional succession run its course, but the successor approved by this process will be their choice. If

Constitutional Provisions

Under the Egyptian Constitution, a new president must be nominated by a two-thirds vote of the People's Assembly one week before the incumbent president's term expires. The nominee must then be approved by a majority of the electorate. If the presidency becomes vacant in midterm, its powers are assumed temporarily by the speaker of the People's Assembly—currently Rifaat El-Mahgoub—or, if the Assembly has been dissolved, by the head of the Supreme Constitutional Court. The temporary president, who is ineligible for a full term, oversees the nomination and election of a new president—a process that can take no longer than 60 days from the date of vacancy. [redacted]

As for the vice-presidency, the Constitution stipulates that the president "may appoint one or more vice presidents and may determine their powers and relieve them of their posts." The only formal duties assigned to the vice president—if there is one—are to assume the presidency temporarily should the president be indicted or become unable to perform his duties. [redacted]

Although the Constitution does not make the vice president an automatic successor to a fallen president, in both successions since 1952, the vice president was quickly elected to the top job. Mubarak himself was groomed by Sadat to be his successor, and he acquired considerable power during his six years as vice president. In contrast, Mubarak has never appointed a vice president. He has claimed publicly on several occasions that he is in no hurry because he does not want to appear to choose a successor in circumvention of constitutional and democratic processes. [redacted]

Mubarak loses power in a political or economic crisis, the armed forces almost certainly would take a more direct role in the selection process. In either case, Abu Ghazala's undisputed control of the military would permit him to engineer his own nomination through the People's Assembly. [redacted]

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Neither the ruling National Democratic Party (NDP) nor the People's Assembly is likely to play a major independent role in the selection. The NDP is a creation of the president, not the reverse, and it is subject to presidential domination. Although we would expect the NDP to nominate a candidate, this action would only formalize a decision already reached through informal consultations outside party councils. The People's Assembly, which has an overwhelming NDP majority, is largely a rubberstamp.

[redacted]

Civilian Actors

The chances of a civilian president coming to power in the near term are slim. Intellectuals and politicians probably would grumble about the imposition of another military president, but we believe most Egyptians are not ready to accept a civilian. Embassy reporting suggests public opinion tends to view civilian politicians as corrupt and self-interested in contrast with the popular respect for the military as self-sacrificing defenders of the nation. Egyptians are even more likely to feel comfortable with a military president if they believe their country faces a troubled or uncertain future.

In any case, there are virtually no civilians on the current scene with stature comparable to Abu Ghazala's who are capable of sparking enthusiasm.

[redacted]

Although civilian members of Mubarak's Cabinet and inner circle would play a part in the selection process, we believe that in his absence their influence would be uncertain. Prime Minister Sidqi and presidential adviser Osama El-Baz, for example, are two of the most important figures in formulating and executing Mubarak's policies, but neither has independent support. Sidqi, moreover, is new to politics and is not known to harbor presidential ambitions.

Egypt's Islamic extremists and secular opposition parties lack the strength to have much impact on the presidential selection process. The more conservative and established Muslim Brotherhood, however, might

carry some weight in the choice of a president and could attempt quietly to influence the selection by deploying its considerable financial resources. We believe the organization has members in the military who meet clandestinely, although the Brotherhood cannot attract a steady supply of recruits in the armed forces. The Brotherhood is unlikely to gain legal status as a political party in the near term. Even if it did, we believe it would seek the same unofficial tolerance from the new leadership that it has enjoyed under Mubarak in return for helping to undercut the more radical Islamic groups.

[redacted]

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Abu Ghazala: Strengths and Weaknesses

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Despite the lack of an official designation, Abu Ghazala is the most likely candidate to succeed Mubarak.

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[redacted] he is by far the strongest potential contender, on the basis of his leadership of the armed forces and his long and intimate involvement in policymaking at the highest levels. Since August 1982 he has been deputy prime minister and [redacted]

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[redacted] has become one of Mubarak's two most trusted advisers, with responsibilities that extend well beyond his defense portfolio. In our view, Mubarak considers the Defense Minister to be his de facto political heir.

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Abu Ghazala's main support lies in his immense popularity in the officer corps.

[redacted] he is admired by all services as a decorated hero and an able administrator, but his popularity rests primarily on his aggressive championing of military interests within the government. He has given top priority to improving pay and fringe benefits for servicemen and focused on maintaining a high level of spending on the military to protect it from the effects of austerity.

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The Defense Minister's reputation for forceful and decisive leadership enhances his political standing. In this, he benefits by comparison with popular impressions of Mubarak as an honest leader

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Youssef Wally: A Potential Civilian President



Youssef Wally—who serves concurrently as deputy prime minister, Agriculture Minister, and secretary general of the NDP—might in time muster enough military and political support to become the first serious civilian contender for the presidency. One of Egypt’s fastest rising political stars, Wally has become one of President Mubarak’s most trusted advisers in recent years. Despite some political setbacks, we believe he has used his NDP position effectively to build a network of contacts and supporters by dispensing patronage, and he has close ties to several ministers in the current Cabinet.

[Redacted]

We believe he recognized that the prime ministership would do little to increase his influence while making him vulnerable to dismissal as a scapegoat for government failures.

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Wally initially met Mubarak and entered the governing elite in January 1982, when he was appointed Minister of State for Agriculture and Food Security (then the highest ranking position in the Ministry). He impressed Mubarak with his hard work and effectiveness in both the Agriculture Ministry and National Democratic Party and won promotions to Minister and NDP assistant secretary general in 1984, and deputy prime minister and NDP secretary general in 1985.

[Redacted]

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US Embassy officials say that Wally is favorably disposed toward the United States, and has worked constructively with them on a wide range of bilateral issues. They also note that since joining the Cabinet he has been one of the staunchest government proponents of cooperation with Israel, especially in the fields of agricultural research and trade.

[Redacted]

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Wally, who is about 57, holds a doctorate from the Faculty of Agriculture of Cairo University. Before entering the government, he was a professor and served as an adviser to the Agriculture Ministry.

[Redacted]

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who is incapable of managing the country or solving its problems. Embassy and [Redacted] suggests that Egyptians from all walks of life believe Abu Ghazala would make a far better president than Mubarak because he displays those qualities of shrewdness, strength, and imagination that Egyptians have come to expect in their leaders. [Redacted]

We believe Abu Ghazala’s power has increased significantly during the past year. His central role in putting down the police riots reemphasized the critical

importance of Army support for the regime and earned him the gratitude of a frightened populace. He has exploited public concerns about the faltering economy by expanding the military’s role in economic activities, including land reclamation, road and bridge construction, and food production. [Redacted]

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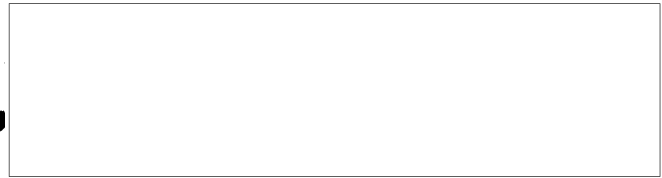
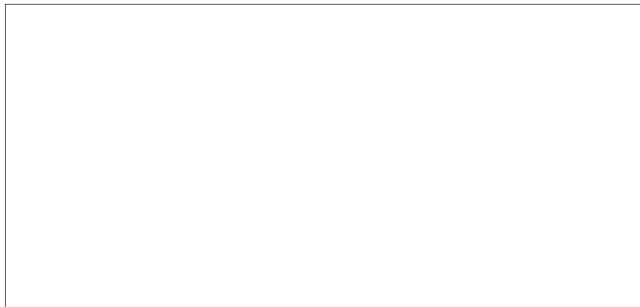


President Mubarak and Defense Minister Abu Ghazala

Handicaps

Despite these advantages, several factors could undercut a presidential bid, and, in our view, the longer Mubarak stays in power, the less Abu Ghazala's chances are of succeeding him. Abu Ghazala's military support is likely to erode if, as we expect, officers begin to believe he can no longer protect their standard of living against the pressures of economic reform. military personnel of all ranks are feeling the pinch, and complaints are mounting. Junior and noncommissioned officers have been especially hard hit and are forced increasingly to take illegal second jobs to make ends meet. Although military officers generally recognize the need for austerity, they believe military programs and perquisites should be exempted from severe spending cuts and look to Abu Ghazala for support.

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Abu Ghazala's association with the United States— dating from his years as an attache—also may become a liability, particularly if US-Egyptian relations cool. Last year, for example, he was accused by the opposition press of complicity in the US interception of the Egyptian plane carrying the Achille Lauro hijackers. Such stories play on Egyptian sensitivities about overly close ties to Washington. Abu Ghazala's stature has been enhanced in the past by his ability to secure military aid and high-technology hardware from Washington.

military officers increasingly resent their overwhelming dependence on the United States for arms aid and advice. We believe this dependence will increase as the Egyptian defense budget shrinks.

Finally, Abu Ghazala could lose his front-runner's position by having a falling-out with Mubarak before the President leaves office. Although we believe their working relationship is generally good, strains between them have often circulated in the past.

indicates he also was critical of Mubarak's handling of the Achille Lauro hijacking in October 1985.

Although the Defense Minister remains loyal to Mubarak, we believe friction over the handling of any new crisis could boil over and cause Abu Ghazala's dismissal.

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The Military Succession

If Abu Ghazala should stumble, another member of the senior military would most likely become Mubarak's successor. We believe the general serving as Armed Forces Chief of Staff when Mubarak leaves office would have the best chance of becoming the new president. The present Chief of Staff and the generals in line for his position are generally well disposed toward the United States but less so than Abu Ghazala. [redacted]



Ibrahim El-Oraby [redacted]

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Lt. Gen. Ibrahim El-Oraby, 55, has been the Armed Forces Chief of Staff since 1983. A blunt, no-nonsense workaholic, he owes his appointment as much to his distant relationship with Defense Minister Abu Ghazala as to his competence. The two men respect each other professionally but do not get along. According to US Embassy reporting, Mubarak appointed Oraby in order to prevent the development of a Defense Minister-Chief of Staff coalition that could threaten his position. [redacted]

Although he has expressed appreciation for US assistance to Egypt and stressed his commitment to a long-term strategic relationship with the United States, we believe he harbors reservations about close military ties to Washington. He can be blunt in disagreeing with aspects of US policy. He believes US backing for Israel is at the expense of Egyptian and Arab interests. He recently told senior US officials, however, that Egypt's peace with Israel is "permanent," despite lingering suspicions on both sides. [redacted]

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Oraby has come to dominate the day-to-day management of the military, with Abu Ghazala devoting increasing attention to his duties as deputy prime minister. Although respected for his military knowledge, Oraby has been widely criticized within the officer corps for his [redacted]

Lt. Gen. Ahmad Salah Abdel Halim, 55, is close to Oraby and favored to succeed him as Chief of Staff, according to Embassy and [redacted] Salah, who is probably Mubarak's favorite among Egyptian generals, was promoted to his current rank and named special assistant to Abu Ghazala in June 1986 after serving three years as Chief of Operations. We believe this promotion and reassignment were calculated by Mubarak to position Salah for eventual appointment as Chief of Staff. Such an appointment would continue Mubarak's practice of placing his own man in the military's number-two position to counterbalance Abu Ghazala. [redacted]

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[redacted] hardnosed efforts to improve discipline, and association with unpopular austerity measures. He has impressed US officials as a forceful, competent, and confident officer. [redacted]

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Oraby is likely to retire within the next 18 months. In early 1986 he told a US official that he would soon have to step aside and make room for a new generation of younger generals. He also said he does not aspire to any other government position because he does not like working with civilians—"they don't take orders." According to [redacted] Oraby strongly believes the Egyptian Army must stay out of politics, although it should play a key role in countering Islamic extremism. [redacted]

Salah is highly respected and supported by his fellow officers, who regard him as Egypt's best Chief of Operations since the 1973 Arab-Israeli war. They also prefer his low-key, diplomatic style to that of the more volatile Oraby. [redacted]

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Active involvement in the US-Egyptian military relationship has given Oraby considerable experience in dealing with US officials, with whom he feels at ease.



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After Salah, *Maj. Gen. Mahfouz Abdel Hamid Hamdy*, 53, would be the most likely candidate for Chief of Staff. Hamdy succeeded Salah as Chief of Operations last summer. [] have described him as well read, knowledgeable about international affairs, and highly respected within the military. Before assuming his current position, he served three years as defense attache in Paris, where [] he was deeply involved in the procurement of military equipment for the Egyptian armed forces. []

Alternative Scenarios

In our judgment, only a general breakdown that threatened prolonged disorder would prompt Abu Ghazala and the other military commanders to mount a coup against the Mubarak government. Although such a collapse is not likely in the near term, the onset of austerity is almost certain to spark at least some domestic violence. If unrest led to a collapse of civilian authority, the military would be left in de facto control of the government, but Mubarak could remain as a figurehead. If the public continued to blame Mubarak personally for Egypt's policy failures, the senior commanders probably would ask him to step down and almost certainly would name Abu Ghazala to replace him. []

An even less likely possibility is that Abu Ghazala would attempt to avoid the presidency. Knowledgeable observers say he complains that his duties as deputy prime minister take too much time from military affairs. Had he hungered for Mubarak's job, the serious police riots in 1986 would have given him the opportunity to seize power, as many Egyptians expected. If disorder forced Mubarak's removal, Abu Ghazala might assume control of the government as a caretaker but arrange his return to military duty once order was restored and a new president chosen. As Defense Minister and Commander of the Armed Forces Abu Ghazala enjoys more real power and prestige than anyone except Mubarak without having to shoulder the President's burdens and endure public criticism. He may also fear that as president he would lose the close contact with the military that he thoroughly enjoys and exploits as the major source of his power. []

Egyptian Policy Outlook and Implications for the United States

A government led by Abu Ghazala would continue the substance of Mubarak's policies, in our view, but with a firmer, more results-oriented style. Abu Ghazala appears to believe that a strong economy is the key to peace and security and has often demonstrated impatience with Egypt's slow economic growth. If he took power, Abu Ghazala would search for alternative policies that offered hope of stimulating economic development, but we know of no specific ideas he may have beyond applying a stronger hand at the helm. Imposing economic austerity measures without provoking popular protests will remain difficult, but the credibility and popular respect Abu Ghazala enjoys probably would have an ameliorating influence. []

Abu Ghazala's well-known dislike of civilian politicians probably would prompt him to increase military representation in the government—at least initially—through Cabinet appointments and his own staff in the office of the presidency. [] Major figures in the Mubarak hierarchy, such as El-Baz, with whom Abu Ghazala has crossed swords in the past, and Foreign Minister Abdel Meguid, for whom [] the Defense Minister has little respect, probably would be replaced with trusted military aides. []

Foreign policies also would closely parallel those of Mubarak. Abu Ghazala's frequent disparaging remarks about the Soviets suggest that, as with Mubarak, experience in Soviet military schools left him with a negative attitude toward the USSR. Nonetheless, he is willing to do business with Moscow, including purchasing Soviet-made arms. Abu Ghazala's comments also reveal strong distrust of both Israel and Libya. We do not believe, however, that his accession to the presidency would increase the chance of armed conflict with either of those powers. Peace with Israel remains popular even within the military, [] and Embassy reports, and abrogation of the peace treaty would be highly unlikely. []

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Close relations with the United States almost certainly would remain a cornerstone of Egyptian foreign policy under Abu Ghazala, whose pro-American reputation generally is deserved. Nonetheless, he is first and foremost a nationalist and would be unlikely to support US policies that conflict with Egypt's interests or place his political position at risk. [redacted]

[redacted] he favors closer military ties to Washington in order to benefit from Western technology, and we believe he would expect continued military and economic aid as the price of his support. Public opinion, however, could force him to put distance between himself and the United States. [redacted]

If Abu Ghazala does not succeed Mubarak, the new president almost certainly will be someone who reflects the preferences of the Egyptian military and who generally adheres to current policy. Such a successor could be expected to follow a generally moderate foreign policy but with less of a pro-American tilt than Abu Ghazala might be prepared to accept. Any successor—except perhaps Wally—would have less personal commitment than Mubarak to the Camp David accords and less interest in improving relations with Tel Aviv. Nonetheless, correct ties would be maintained, and the peace treaty would remain intact. The steady improvement in relations with the Arab states would continue, and ties to Moscow probably would be strengthened, if only to serve as a lever against the United States. [redacted]

The new president's policies would partly depend on the circumstances under which he assumed power. If Mubarak lost his office in an atmosphere of failure and recrimination, we would expect the next president to put distance between himself and Mubarak's policies. Relations with the United States could cool in reaction to Mubarak's heavy reliance on Washington for Egyptian military security and economic development and for achieving a Middle East peace settlement. [redacted]

Policy changes would be significantly greater if either the Islamic right or the secular left took power.

Neither type of regime—especially a leftist one—appears likely in the near to medium term, but there is a chance that an extremist group could gain power either because of a severe domestic crisis or a military coup. A government of either extreme would almost certainly reduce Egypt's reliance on the United States and downgrade ties to Tel Aviv, although not to the point of war. [redacted]

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Appendix

Defense Minister Abu Ghazala

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Field Marshal Mohamed Abu Ghazala is the most dynamic member of President Hosni Mubarak's government. Hard-charging and self-assured, Abu Ghazala gives the impression of a man who thoroughly enjoys his job. His public activities receive prominent play in Cairo's newspapers, and he still enjoys popular acclaim as a result of the Army's effective suppression of police riots during February-March 1986. In recent years he has gained a wealth of experience in nonmilitary matters as his duties as deputy prime minister have come to absorb an ever increasing amount of his attention. He recently complained to a [redacted] that he has little time to devote to his first love—the Army. [redacted]



Mohamed Abu Ghazala [redacted]

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Abu Ghazala's reputation as an action-oriented decisionmaker stands in sharp contrast with Mubarak's popular image as well intentioned and decent but ineffective. Such perceptions have fueled Cairo's rumor mill, which for several years have reported dissension between the two men. We concur with the Embassy's judgment that Mubarak and Abu Ghazala, although occasionally differing over specific issues, enjoy a fairly harmonious working relationship born of mutual professional respect, a similar world view, and a shared disdain for theorizing and bureaucratic infighting. [redacted]

Egypt's sovereignty and increases its foreign debt. In some circles he is disparagingly called the "American Minister." [redacted]

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Although a staunch Egyptian nationalist, Abu Ghazala is closely identified with and intensely committed to the US-Egyptian relationship. His forceful arguments for bilateral cooperation clearly demonstrate his belief that US assistance to Egypt is a sound investment in Egypt's security. US diplomats say that this American connection is a "double-edged sword" for Abu Ghazala. On the one hand, he is credited, especially within the military, with the ability to win US approval for the sale of advanced military equipment critical to Egypt's military modernization program. On the other hand, he is criticized in the opposition press because of the widespread perception that US-Egyptian military cooperation infringes on

Abu Ghazala is comfortable with Americans. In discussions with US officials, he often refers to his tour in Washington as defense attache (1976-80) as his "best four years." He is generally candid in meetings with Americans—a trait he admires and knows Americans also value. He has demonstrated good faith in his dealings with US officials by sticking to the agreements he makes, and, on those occasions when he is required to reverse himself, he fully explains the circumstances behind his changed position. Although he likes to drive a hard bargain, he is flexible and willing to compromise to obtain his objective. [redacted]

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The blunt Defense Minister uses some of his harshest invective when discussing the Soviet Union. He has described the USSR as a "predatory state" and the Soviets as "shiftless bastards." His intense dislike of that country appears to date from his four years of study there. Like many Egyptian officers of his generation, he studied in the USSR at the Combined Arms School for Division and Higher Commanders. [redacted]

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[redacted] Since returning to Cairo he has become more subdued out of concern for his public image in Egypt. He is not known for strong religious convictions. His wife, however, follows traditional Islamic practices, and Abu Ghazala has made efforts to be seen visiting mosques and meeting with religious shaykhs. [redacted] he lives in an unostentatious apartment near his military headquarters. [redacted]

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Abu Ghazala graduated in 1949 from the Egyptian Military Academy, where he and Mubarak were classmates but apparently had little personal contact. He is a veteran of the 1967 and 1973 Arab-Israeli wars and served as artillery commander of the 2nd Field Army during the latter conflict. Following his tour in Washington he was appointed Chief of Staff and Commander of the Army. In 1981 Anwar Sadat elevated him to Armed Forces Commander in Chief and Defense Minister. He has twice been promoted by Mubarak, who named him a field marshal in April 1982 and four months later appointed him deputy prime minister. Abu Ghazala is 57. [redacted]

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