

ACTION SP-00 **REVIEW AUTHORITY: Archie Bolster, Senior Reviewer**

INFO LOG-00 EEB-00 AF-00 AID-00 AMAD-00 CIAE-00 INL-00
DNI-00 DODE-00 DOTE-00 PERC-00 DS-00 EAP-00 DHSE-00
OIGO-00 FAAE-00 VCI-00 DIAS-00 H-00 TEDE-00 INR-00
IO-00 LAB-01 ARMY-00 MOFM-00 MOF-00 M-00 VCIE-00
NEA-00 DCP-00 NSAE-00 ISN-00 NIMA-00 PA-00 GIWI-00
ISNE-00 DOHS-00 FMPC-00 IRM-00 SSO-00 SS-00 NCTC-00
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FM AMEMBASSY CAIRO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0804
INFO ARAB ISRAELI COLLECTIVE
WHITE HOUSE NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL WASHINGTON DC

RELEASED IN PART
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S E C R E T CAIRO 000431

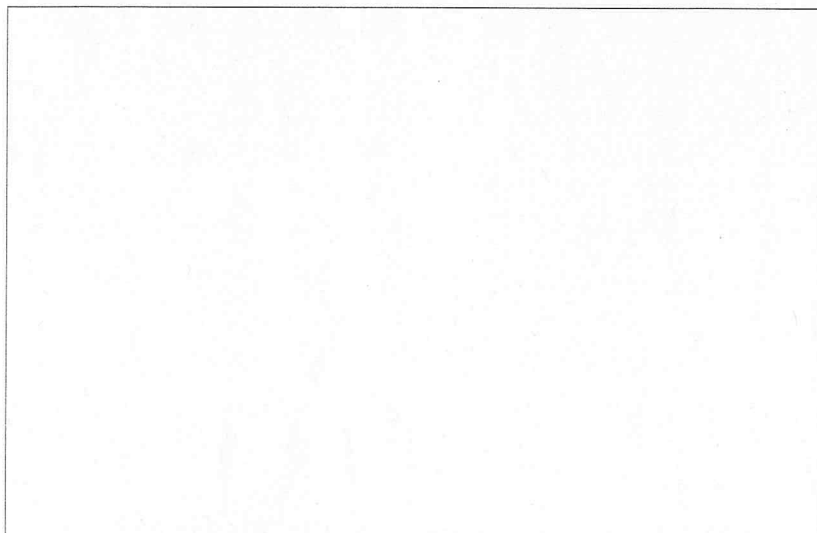
SIPDIS
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Classification Extended on : 09/24/2012 ~ Class: SECRET ~ Authority:
DSCG 11-1 ~ ☐ Declassify on: 04/15/2030

E.O. 12958: DECL: 2020/04/15
TAGS: PREL, PGOV, PHUM, KISL, EG
SUBJECT: Egypt: Engaging with Islamist Groups

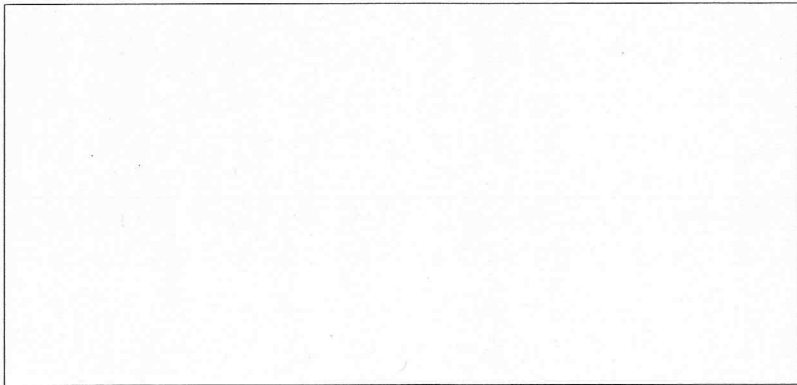
REF: 10 STATE 27277; 10 CAIRO 383; 10 CAIRO 353; 10 CAIRO 197
10 CAIRO 119; 09 CAIRO 2183; 09 CAIRO 2011
09 CAIRO 1493 AND PREVIOUS; 08 CAIRO 1484; 08 CAIRO 1315
08 CAIRO 611; 08 CAIRO 562 AND PREVIOUS; 08 CAIRO 448
07 CAIRO 2683 AND PREVIOUS; 07 CAIRO 2147; 07 CAIRO 1361
07 CAIRO 795 AND PREVIOUS; 06 CAIRO 6963; 06 CAIRO 6902
06 CAIRO 6474; 06 CAIRO 4577; 05 CAIRO 5210; 05 CAIRO 3941
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CLASSIFIED BY: Margaret Scobey, Ambassador; REASON: 1.4(B), (D)

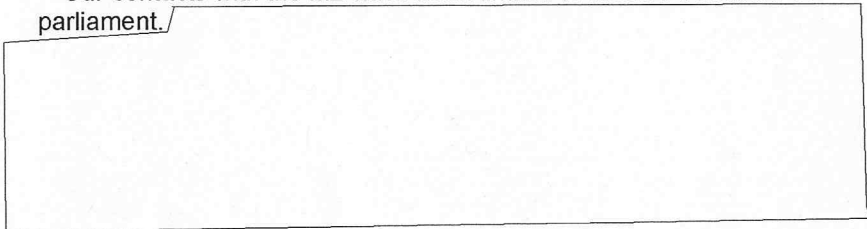


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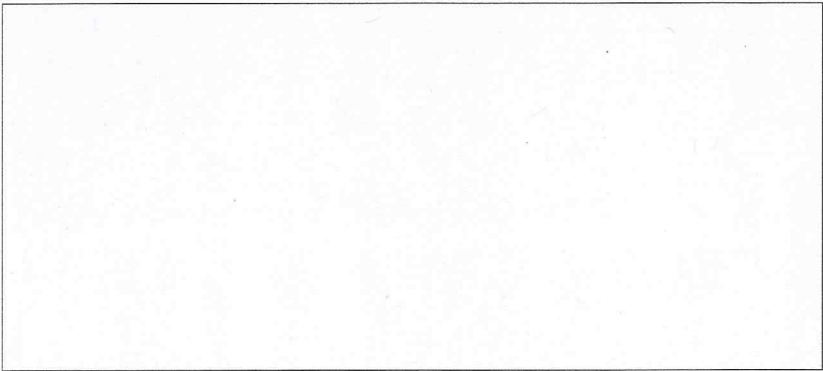


-- Our contacts with the MB have been limited to elected members of parliament.



The Muslim Brotherhood

2. (C) The Muslim Brotherhood (MB) is the most politically active and high-profile "Islamist group" in Egypt. Founded in 1928, the group has since 1954 been treated by the GOE as an illegal organization. In practice the GOE has often largely allowed the group to operate its social and charitable programs while blocking or restricting its access to the political system. From time to time the government has undertaken campaigns of arrests and suppression when MB political activities have been deemed more threatening. Over the past several years, the GOE has upped the pressure on the MB and its leadership, carrying out hundreds of arrests and seeking to dry up its financial support. The MB has participated in elections since 1987, and in 2005 won 88 seats in the lower house of parliament, the People's Assembly. In recent years, the application of the ban against its activities has been enforced with large numbers of arrests, usually focused on the MB's election-related activities.



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MB: Political Activities

4. (C) The MB is the only significant Islamist political group active in Egypt and enjoys substantial political influence outside of government institutions.

[REDACTED], the MB won 88 of the 120 seats it contested in the 2005 parliamentary elections, or around twenty percent of the 454 seats. Other opposition parties combined won just 12 seats in total. Independents not affiliated with the MB won another 22 seats, the remainder went to the ruling NDP. Increased government pressure following the 2005 elections led to a poor showing in the 2007 Shura Council elections (the MB ran 19 candidates but won no seats). Following wide-scale arrests in 2008 and significant pressure on their candidates, the MB boycotted the 2008 local council elections. The MB has announced it will run 18 candidates in the June 2010 Shura Council elections.

[REDACTED]

6. (C) The MB has joined forces with other opposition forces in the past, including forming a coalition with the Al Wafd party in the

1980s, but did not work with other opposition forces in the 2005 and 2007 parliamentary elections or 2008 local elections. However, recently the MB has begun to reach out to other opposition groups meeting publicly with the leftist Tagammou party. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] MB [REDACTED] told us April 14 that he plans to meet with Al Wafd party leaders in late April. [REDACTED]

On April 6 MB Secretary General Mahmoud Hussein confirmed in a media interview that the MB is formally a part of the National Front, with Khatatni acting as its representative. On April 14, [REDACTED] told us that the MB is ready to participate in National Front endorsed "street action" [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] MB spokesman Essam El Eryan said publically on April 12 that the MB does endorse the seven demands set out by the National Front, including changes to Article 76 of the constitution which sets out requirements for presidential candidates. Eryan also said that the MB does not intend to nominate its own presidential candidate in 2011 and may or may not formally endorse an opposition candidate. [REDACTED]

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[redacted] According to an article posted on Ikhwanweb (the MB's official English language website), as of March 30 there were 368 members detained. (Note: This number included the three released members of the GB. End Note) This number also includes Deputy Supreme Guide Kharyat El Shater, convicted in 2008 in a military court for belonging to a "banned" organization that seeks the overthrow of the Egyptian government. Several MB members detained with Shater were released in January 2010 after serving their

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sentences. Shatter's appeal (along with 17 other MB members) before the Egyptian Military Court of Appeals was rejected in late 2009. Recent press reports (March 30) indicate that an Egyptian Administrative Court ruled that MB detainees in military prisons should be released on good behavior (a common practice) after serving three-quarters of their sentences. This group would not include Shater who is serving a seven-year sentence.

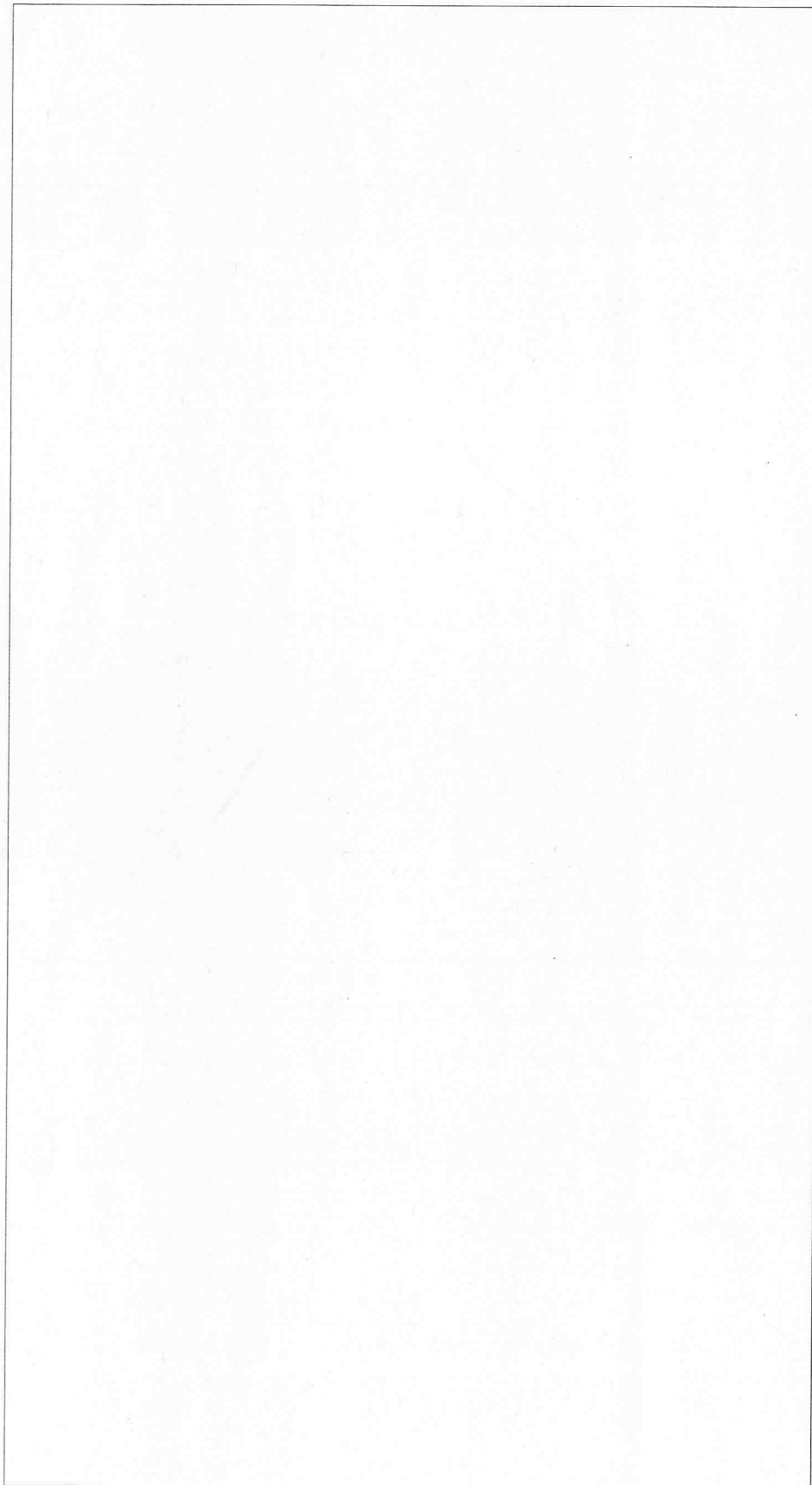
MB: View of Violence

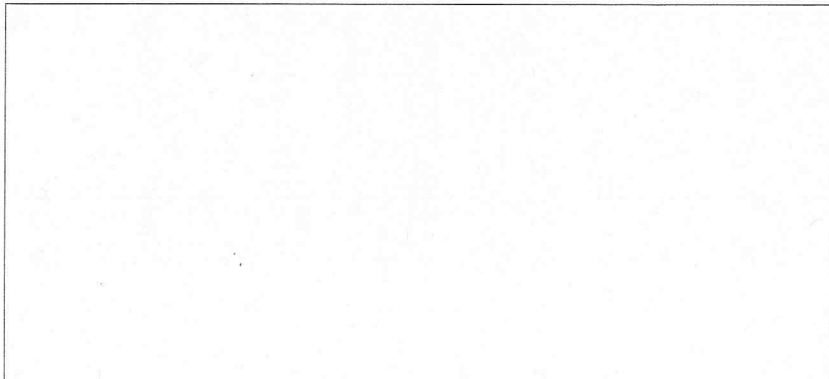
8. (C) The MB has continued to underline its own renunciation of violence in the domestic context. In January 2010 the new Supreme Guide Mohammed Badie reaffirmed the MB was a non-violent movement that posed no threat to the GOE. In the speech Badie suggests the MB prefers "gradual reform" though "peaceful and constitutional struggle" based on dialogue and not "coercion," adding the MB rejects "violence in all its forms by either governments or individuals" including "sectarian violence."

[redacted] The
2007 MB election platform noted the right to "resist the Zionist Anglo-American occupiers" in Palestine and Iraq.

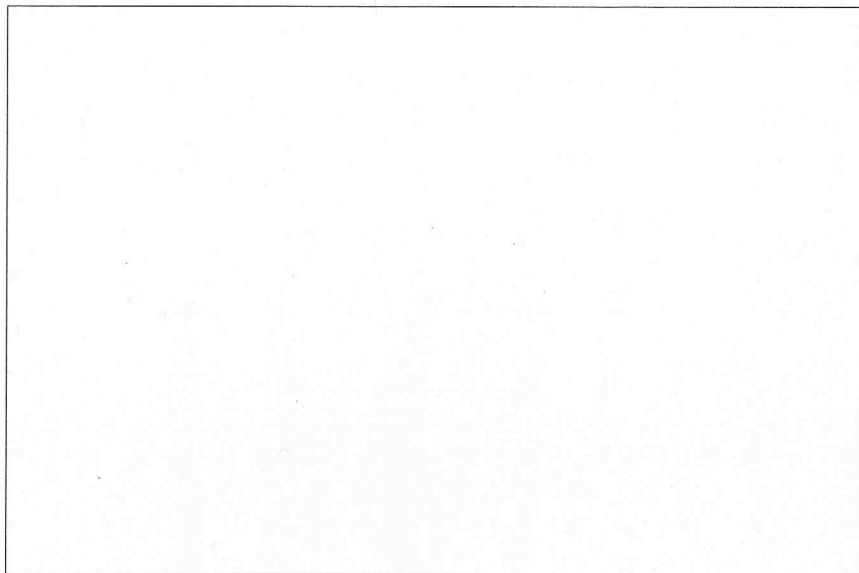
[redacted] following the 9/11 attacks, then-Supreme Guide Mustafa Mashhur joined a group of other Islamic leaders in a statement published in the Arabic-language newspaper Al-Quds Al-Arabi on September 13, 2001 in which the group condemned the attacks "in the strongest terms" calling them "against Islamic norms."

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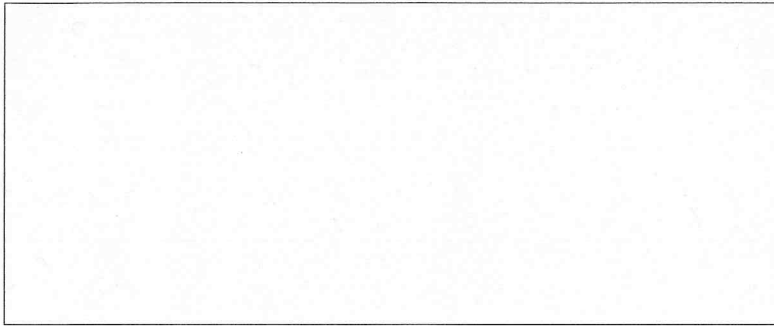


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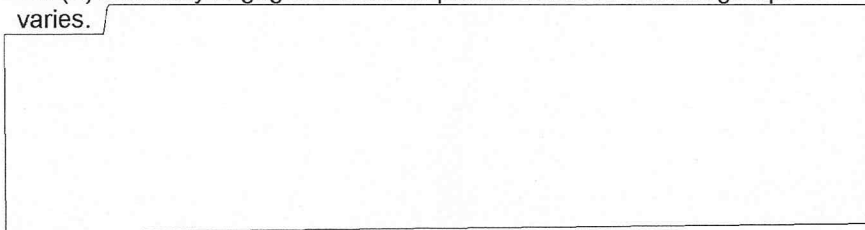
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U.S. Engagement with Islamist Groups

18. (C) Embassy engagement with representatives of Islamist groups varies.



History of U.S. Engagement with the MB in Egypt

20. (S/NF) In the last ten years the Embassy has had limited engagement with members of the MB.

[redacted] In 2005 limited outreach to the MB halted following statements made by Secretary Rice in an interview with ABC news during her June visit to Cairo in which she suggested that the USG does not meet with the MB because the U.S. "respects the laws of Egypt."

[redacted] Following a December 2006 statement by newly elected MB Guidance Bureau member and MB parliamentary bloc leader Saad Katatni indicating a desire to begin a dialogue with Western governments, including the U.S., a decision was made to resume contacts with MB parliamentarians.

21. (S/NF) Resumption of more regular contact with MB-affiliated independent members of parliament began with a 2007 meeting between Katatni and Representative Steny Hoyer on the margins of an Ambassador-hosted event for the visiting Codel. In early 2009 the DCM hosted an event for members of the People's Assembly Foreign Affairs Committee, including Katatni and one other MB-affiliated MP. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] There has been no contact to date with members of the Muslim Brotherhood outside of members of parliament. [REDACTED]

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Way Forward

[REDACTED]

SCOBET

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