



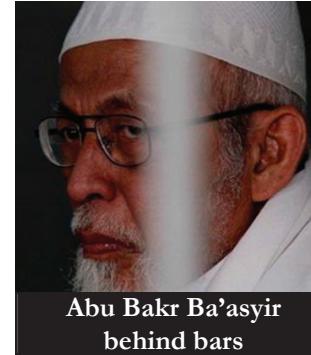
Terrorism Monitor

In-Depth Analysis of the War on Terror

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Abu Bakr Ba'asyir
behind bars

SENIOR LIBYAN AL-QAEDA LEADER CALLS FOR ISLAMIC STATE AFTER QADDAFI

An al-Qaeda media front has released a statement from a senior member of the core command regarding the goals of the Libyan revolt. Shaykh Jamal Ibrahim Ishtawi al-Misrata (a.k.a. Atiyyatullah) delivered a sharp critique of Mu'ammar al-Qaddafi in the ten minute, 44 second videotape featuring audio and a still photo of the Libyan native of Misrata (Global Islamic Media Front, March 26). [1]

Al-Misrata begins his message with a dose of anti-Qaddafi invective, calling the Libyan leader a taghoot (one who rules without recourse to Islamic law), an “ignoble hallucinator who has embarrassed us in front of the whole world,” a “pharaohic lunatic” and a “scumbag [who] has ruined the image of Libya and its people.”

The Libyan al-Qaeda member addresses his “Muslim brothers in Libya” in a series of six messages:

- Al-Misrata begins by acknowledging the failure of Libyans to stand up earlier to the Qaddafi regime and views the youth revolution in Libya as “a means of forgiveness for all or at least some of our neglect, our remaining silent, our desertion and failure and acceptance of humiliation and degradation... [and] the participation of some in Qaddafi’s detestable regime.” Al-Misrata suggests repentance to Allah as the means of wiping away these “errors, transgressions and deadly sins.”

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• Al-Misrata predicts the post-Qaddafi era will inevitably be a time when Islam comes to dominate Libya. He hopes that people will realize this and work toward it, as Islam is “making a comeback... whether people like it or not.” For this reason, al-Misrata calls for the implementation of a new Islamic constitution for Libya that will have Shari'a as the sole source of legislation.

• If any new Libyan state is unable to immediately welcome the “mujahid vanguard” due to political considerations, it should at least avoid harming the mujahideen in any way or allying itself against them with the “enemies of Allah.”

• The people of Libya must maintain their unity and brotherhood. Uniting in Islam is the best way to do this.

• Al-Misrata calls on Libyans to keep forgiveness and tolerance in the forefront of their dealings with former regime members, with the exception of the “cronies and aides of Qaddafi” and those who committed “the most grotesque forms of crime” against Islam.

• The al-Qaeda leader concludes with a warning to “the enemies of Allah, whether America or others” to desist from “acts of aggression or interference” with Libya; otherwise they will face the wrath of the “Army of Allah.”

Notes:

1. For the video, see [youtube.com/watch?v=jkaNL2ZVg6g](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jkaNL2ZVg6g).

SALAFIST SHAYKH HUSSEIN BIN MAHMUD ON THE LIBYAN UPRISING

A Salafist view of the Libyan revolt has been offered in two interviews with a noted militant ideologist and contributor to prominent jihadi forums who uses the pseudonym of Shaykh Hussein bin Mahmud (Dar al-Murabiteen Publications, February 22; February 25).

Shaykh Hussein describes the Libyan insurrection against Mu'ammar al-Qaddafi's regime as a jihad, saying its aim is to “oust this idiot in order to spare the blood of Muslims and save their dignity.” The shaykh claims that jihad in Libya is now an obligatory duty

(fard 'ayn) for every capable person in Libya as well as Muslims in the neighboring countries of Egypt, Algeria, Chad, Sudan and Niger.

As well as moving on Sirte and Tarabulus (Tripoli), the shaykh urges the rebels to move on the southern desert city of Sabha, a Qaddafi stronghold and a strategic point connecting coastal Libya with the African interior. To succeed in Libya, Shaykh Hussein suggests the rebels take control of all government institutions and media outlets, capture and sentence to death Qaddafi's sons, form a transitional committee from tribal leaders, scholars and military officers and avoid trusting the West or the rulers of other Arab countries. As for Qaddafi, “I wish they slaughter him in the largest ground of Tripoli publicly in front of the cameras.”

Asked about a fatwa issued by Qatar-based Muslim Brother and TV preacher Yusuf al-Qaradawi that permitted Libyans to kill Qaddafi, Shaykh Hussein mocked the influential cleric's ruling: “I heard the statement of Qaradawi. A few years back, he used to visit [Qaddafi] and smile in his face and now he is giving the fatwa to kill him! He visits many Arab rulers and sits with them and praises them! And we say to him: What if the people of all the [Arab] nations go out against the rulers, will you give fatwa to kill them?”

The shaykh notes that the reputations of Tunisia's Zine El Abidine Ben Ali, Egypt's Hosni Mubarak and Libya's Mu'ammar al-Qaddafi have been destroyed in recent months, revealing their true nature as apostates, infidels and blood-spillers. Shaykh Hussein, however, sees the inspiration of Osama bin Laden behind the revolts in the Arab world: “Wasn't Shaykh Osama saying all this for almost three decades and he was thrown out as a Kharijite [i.e. a heretic] and a takfiri and hypocrite? What is the difference? He incited the people to go out and the people have gone out! What is the difference?” The shaykh maintains that only violent resistance can complete the revolution: “The youth did not die for Hosni to go and his party to stay...”

Shaykh Hussein points out that Libya's unconventional government structure (the Jamahiriya) has created a problem for the West in trying to identify an appropriate candidate to rule Libya “according to their desires.” Whereas in Egypt and Tunisia the ruler was removed and the government stabilized, there is no government in Libya outside of Qaddafi. In Egypt and Tunisia, this process has resulted in rule now being back in the hands of the former government.

In his second message, Shaykh Hussein elaborated on the theme of Jewish/Israeli support for Qaddafi's regime, specifically identifying the Israeli security firm Global CST as the contractor responsible for supplying mercenaries to the regime. Now it has become clear that the mercenaries "are working for the Jewish government, so these people should be killed and tortured the severest of tortures in accordance with the sayings of Allah Almighty."

Shaykh Hussein refers here to unverified reports carried in the Iranian and Arab press that Israeli security firm Global CST received approval from the head of Israeli intelligence and Defense Minister Ehud Barak to provide Qaddafi with 50,000 African mercenaries. The reports allege the Libyan side of the contract was handled by Abdullah Sanusi, Libya's intelligence chief and brother-in-law of Qaddafi (Press TV, March 2). Global CST, or Global Group, was founded in 2005 by Major General Israel Ziv and carries out "security and commercial large-scale projects" in South America, Africa and Eastern Europe, according to its website. No evidence has been provided to support the allegations.

Since the rebellion in Libya began, Qaddafi has asserted al-Qaeda was behind the violent unrest, a claim Shaykh Hussein says is designed to force the rebels to denounce Bin Laden and al-Qaeda, thus ending their hope for Islamic rule in Libya. The al-Qaeda ideologist condemned a double standard that discourages al-Qaeda fighters from entering the fray in Libya: "It is permitted for [Qaddafi] to bring his disbelieving Africans to kill Muslims, and it is prohibited for the Muslims to come with the mujahideen to help them!"

Trial of Indonesia's Abu Bakr Ba'asyir a Test of Indonesia's Counterterrorism Resolve

By Jacob Zenn

Reputed Jema'ah Islamiya leader Abu Bakr Ba'asyir told the Jamestown Foundation in 2005 that "the highest deed in Islam is jihad" (see *Spotlight on Terror*, December 16, 2005). After being arrested in August 2010, the Indonesian cleric is now on trial, facing charges under Indonesia's Anti-Terror Law of 2002 for "inciting a terrorist act" and "trafficking in weapons and explosives for the purpose of conducting terrorism," both of which carry a maximum penalty of death. He faces an additional charge of "supplying funds for terrorism," which carries a jail term of between three and 15 years. Ba'asyir has portrayed the charges against him as illegitimate, saying he is "being tried for defending Islam," so that in the case of a guilty verdict, it will be the secular Indonesian government – and not his movement – that loses credibility. Ba'asyir calls the case a "fabrication... engineered by America," but he acknowledges and even openly admits to the substance of the charges (AFP, August 9, 2010).

In justifying the setting up, funding, and arming of mujahideen in an al-Qaeda-style terror camp in Aceh, Ba'asyir says, "The paramilitary training is recognized by Shari'a, and I say the religious teachings should not be violated." In admitting to the charges, Ba'asyir says he was "following orders from Allah that Muslims perform i'dad [physical training for armed conflict] as ordered by God to deter Islam's enemies" (*Jakarta Globe*, March 8).

An acquittal would damage Indonesia's reputation as a reliable partner in the war on terror and undermine what President Obama called Indonesia's "progress in rooting out terrorists and combating violent extremism" (*Jakarta Globe*, November 10, 2010). Indonesia already disappointed America and Australia when it acquitted Ba'asyir in 2005 on seven of eight terrorism charges for the bombings of the Marriott Hotel in Jakarta in August 2003 and nightclubs in Bali in October 2002 (*Sydney Morning Herald*, March 3, 2005).

Now the stakes are even higher. The terrorist cell Ba'asyir is accused of sponsoring in Aceh – known as "al-Qaeda in the Veranda of Mecca" or "al-Qaeda in Aceh" – was

probably his attempt to establish an al-Qaeda front in Southeast Asia. According to Indonesian police, the cell was planning to use squads of suicide-bombers and gunmen to attack foreign embassies and Western targets similar to those carried out in Mumbai in 2008 and to assassinate Indonesian government officials, including President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono (*Jakarta Globe*, November 10, 2010). If Indonesia does not sentence Ba'asyir to a serious prison term with 130 witnesses testifying that he founded the terrorist camp, it is doubtful that the United States and its allies will feel confident about future extraditions of Indonesian terrorists such as 2002 Bali bombings suspect Hambali, who is now in detainment at Guantanamo Bay (*Jakarta Globe*, February 21). The extradition process is already under pressure due to Jakarta's practice in issuing sentence remissions for terrorist suspects extradited to Indonesia (BBC, March 4, 2009).

Furthermore, an acquittal for Ba'asyir runs the risk of turning Ba'asyir into even more of a celebrity among his followers and could serve as a propaganda platform for Ba'asyir, who spreads in Southeast Asia the same ideology as AQAP's Anwar al-Awlaki. Both are articulate, non-combatant religious figures who advocate for militant Islam and feed off of anti-American sentiment in the Islamic world. Recalling al-Awlaki's suggestion: "Whenever you see the word terrorist, replace it with the word mujahid," Ba'asyir used a live broadcast from the courtroom to say: "Those they call terrorists are holy warriors who are keen to defend Islam and Muslims from the pharaoh America, Australia and their allies" (*The Age* [Australia], February 25). [1]

On the other hand, if Ba'asyir is convicted, the court must be sure to present the evidence against him transparently so the Indonesian public believes the sentence is not the result of foreign pressure or internal political vendettas. Indonesia ended 32 years of dictatorial rule in order to become a democracy in 1998 – in a protest movement similar to those in the Arab World now – and the Anti-Terror Law, which criminalizes preparatory acts of violence, resembles the anti-subversion laws that targeted the political opposition during the Suharto era and in Mubarak's Egypt. A trial perceived as legitimate will help dispel the anti-Muslim conspiracy theories proffered by Ba'asyir and show that religious leaders can be held accountable for conduct in violation of the law. Anything less than a legitimate trial will turn Ba'asyir into a victim, or "martyr," even among mainstream Indonesians, and possibly enhance his appeal.

If there is a guilty verdict, Ba'asyir's supporters may respond with violence. Within a one week period in mid-March as the Ba'asyir trial was already underway, a series of "book bombs" targeted the leader of the Liberal Islamic Network, a former officer of the elite counterterrorism unit Densus 88, the chairman of the Pemuda Pancasila (Pancasila Youth) organization and an Indonesian rock musician known for songs protesting religious extremism (*Jakarta Globe*, March 18). A deputy spokesman for the Indonesian National Police announced on March 23 that the IEDs concealed in the books had forensic connections to Jema'ah Islamiya church bombings in Sulawesi in 2006. The book bombs are part of a larger wave of attacks against those Ba'asyir has reportedly called "non-believers" - including anyone who is not a mainstream Muslim and officials who do not support the creation of an Islamic state. Ba'asyir insists that these individuals "should be killed and their property seized" (CBS News, February 14). This year there have been attacks against the Ahmadi community and Christian churches in Temanggung. [2]

The trial underway in Indonesia is about more than determining Ba'asyir's fate. It is also a test of Indonesia's willingness to prove that it can play a leadership role in the war against terror and that its judicial system has the ability to prosecute a terrorist leader despite pressure, intimidation and a potential backlash from extremist militants in the country.

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Note:

1. Al-Awlaki's comments taken from the video "Constants of Jihad," in which al-Awlaki translates and interprets a well-known Arabic-language book by the late Saudi jihadist Yusuf al-Ayyiri (d. 2003) that promotes fighting in the name of Islam.
2. Ba'asyir believes the United States is using the Ahmadiya sect to destroy Islam. The Ahmadiya originated in the Indian subcontinent in the 19th century and is considered heretical by most orthodox Muslims for its insistence that Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (1835-1908) was the Mahdi. The movement has had notable success in expanding to Indonesia.

Picking Up Where the Red Army Faction Left Off: Tales from the German Jihad

By Raffaello Pantucci

The shooting deaths in early March of two American servicemen at Frankfurt airport as they awaited a plane taking them to Afghanistan was an event that seemed to hearken back to the 1970s, when left-wing groups like the Red Army Faction (RAF) targeted American soldiers stationed in Germany. More in tune with the times, however, Arid Uka, the 21-year-old Kosovar responsible for the killings, appears to have been an individual living on the fringes of Germany's growing Salafist scene (*Der Spiegel*, March 3). While abnormal in its success, Uka's shooting was part of a jihadist scene in Germany that has been growing apace for some time.

Just over a week after Uka's action in Frankfurt, a court in Berlin convicted Filiz Gelowicz of "supporting foreign terrorist groups" (AFP, March 9). Filiz is the wife of one of the German jihad's more notorious members, Fritz Gelowicz, who was sentenced to 12 years in prison as part of Germany's largest terrorism trial since the days of the RAF (*Der Spiegel*, March 4, 2010). Gelowicz was incarcerated for his role in a plot directed by the largely Uzbek Islamic Jihad Union (IJU) to carry out a bombing on a U.S. military target in Germany. His wife Filiz confessed to sending money to German terrorist networks in Waziristan, though she was accused of being a key online supporter of German jihadists fighting in Waziristan (AP, November 5, 2010; *Der Spiegel*, February 22, 2010).

The group is part of a larger community of German jihadists who have developed a close relationship with the IJU and the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) and who were eventually allowed to establish their own organization called the Deutsche Taliban Mujahideen (DTM). According to German terrorism specialist Guido Steinberg (formerly of the German Chancellery and now at the German Institute for International and Security Affairs), the DTM is largely a propaganda vehicle founded by the IJU in 2009 in response to the growing number of German jihadists who had been arriving in Waziristan seeking to fight alongside the group. This view was seemingly confirmed by the published memoirs of late DTM member Eric Breininger

(a.k.a. Abdul Ghafar al-Alamani), a German convert to Islam who had been fighting alongside the IJU when his leader came and asked him if he wanted to join a group of Germans who had recently completed their training and were going to join the Taliban as a sub-group called the DTM. [1] Breininger was killed on April 30, 2010, in a firefight in Waziristan with Pakistani soldiers (*Der Spiegel*, May 3, 2010; see *Terrorism Focus*, January 28, 2009). He was not the first from the group to have fallen in the region; a number of DTM members had already been killed in battle and Turkish-German Cüneyt Ciftci (a resident of Bavaria) became Germany's first known Islamist suicide bomber when he carried out an attack against U.S. forces in Afghanistan in March 2008 (*Der Spiegel*, March 27, 2008).

But while this group seems to have largely managed to find its connections to jihadists in Waziristan by themselves, others have instead been directed through other networks tied to al-Qaeda. An example of this may be found in the experience of Bekkay Harrach (a.k.a. Abu Talha al-Alamani), a Moroccan-German whose death was announced by fellow extremists on Islamist forums in January (BBC, January 20, 2011). Harrach was a longtime extremist who had supposedly pursued jihad in the West Bank, Iraq and finally Waziristan. He was directed to the training camps in Waziristan by long-time German Lashkar-e-Taiba and al-Qaeda supporter Aleem Nasir. Harrach was featured in videos released under the banner of As-Sahab, Al Qaeda's media wing, as well as ones linked to the IJU. His death, however, appears to have occurred fighting alongside the IMU (for more on Harrach, see *Terrorism Monitor*, October 1, 2009).

Others who ended up with the group were drawn to Waziristan only after first connecting with American Islamist Anwar al-Awlaki in Yemen. Mounir and Yassin Chouka, Moroccan-born brothers who grew up in Bonn, were initially drawn to Yemen for jihad and claim to have met with al-Awlaki and an individual claiming to be a former bodyguard of Osama bin Laden. According to their account, after spending some time there with the cleric and his network, the brothers were told the region was very dangerous for foreigners and were instead directed to Waziristan, where they were warmly welcomed. Jihadist groups in Waziristan were at that time actively seeking to recruit entire families. Enthused by this, the brothers set off, arriving in 2008 in Waziristan to join the IMU – a group they claimed not to have heard of before. [2]

Other German jihadis drawn to Yemen have instead chosen to stay there rather than go to Waziristan. In March a court in Yemen convicted Yemeni-German Hans Harmel of being involved in forming an armed group to conduct terrorist acts (*Yemen Post*, March 5). The details of his case are unclear, but there are other reports of some German nationals showing up at Yemeni schools and training camps. The growing German Salafist scene is likely feeding both the Yemen and Waziristan networks. According to Steinberg, there are some 4000-5000 Salafists in Germany at the moment and “this is particularly worrying because all the German individuals who went to join al-Qaeda, IMU and IJU in Pakistan first attended Salafist mosques.” [3]

It is in many ways the threat as expressed by gunman Arid Uka that is of greatest concern to German authorities. While it is unclear whether he was linked to existing networks – according to neighbors he knew another recently repatriated German in his building who had been caught fighting in Waziristan– his attack does not appear to have been directed by others and he appears currently to be a “lone wolf” extremist (AP, March 3). There have already been other cases of “lone-wolf” extremists lurking on the periphery of the German radical scene, including Cameroonian convert Kevin S., who had met one of Fritz Gelowicz’s co-conspirators and threatened to carry out an attack through an amateurish YouTube video when he was arrested, and Turkish-German Adnan V. who was convicted in February of trying to build a bomb, telling others about it online and posting extremist videos online (Deutsche Presse Agentur, February 8). While officials suggest there are about 220 citizens who have trained or are training in jihadist camps, only ten of the 120 who have returned to Germany are in jail. Faced with both al-Qaeda/IMU trained militants and self-radicalized German nationals operating outside the normal networks, German authorities remain uncertain as to the exact extent of a clearly growing threat.

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Notes:

1. Translation summary can be found at: <http://www.jihadica.com/guest-post-the-story-of-eric-breininger/>.
2. An English summary of their account can be found at: <http://ojihad.wordpress.com/2011/02/13/german-jihadi-brothers-met-anwar-al-awlaki/>.

3. Raffaello Pantucci: “Terror in Germany: An interview with Guido Steinberg,”
<http://www.icsr.info/blog/Terror-in-Germany-An-interview-with-Guido-Steinberg>.

Egypt's Internal Security Service Collapses in a Storm of Charges and Revelations

By Andrew McGregor

Trapped somewhere between revolution and counter-revolution, Egypt’s Ministry of the Interior is facing internal collapse amidst a disastrous leak of intelligence files, mysterious fires in records facilities, suggestions the ministry was running false-flag terrorist operations, a loss of judicial immunity and a dramatic deterioration of discipline and morale. The charges come as many Egyptians fear elements of the security services are inciting political and social chaos as the first phase of a counter-revolution.

As the protests in Egypt grew in strength in late January, Interior Ministry police disappeared from the streets after killing at least 300 demonstrators while Ministry prison guards released thousands of prisoners, leading to a predictable crime wave that angered many Egyptians. The police were ordered to return to work by new Prime Minister Essam Sharaf, but large numbers of police and security officials have failed to return to their jobs. Many fear for their personal safety in a climate where the police and security men no longer enjoy immunity. Some point to the fate of a policeman in the upscale

Cairo suburb of Ma'adi, who was severely beaten and his vehicle set on fire after shooting a bus driver during a dispute, an act that would have once gone unchallenged (BBC, March 29).

Most important for Egypt's national security and international counterterrorism efforts is the fate of the Mabahith Amn al-Dawla (State Security Investigations Service – SSIS). Once a relatively small department of the Ministry of the Interior, the SSIS grew steadily under the presidencies of Anwar al-Sadat and Hosni Mubarak, and benefited enormously from the wide latitude that governed their activities after the implementation of the 1981 Emergency Law, which is still in effect. Protecting the regime eventually became the agency's unofficial mandate (*al-Masry al-Youm*, March 9). The SSIS interfered with the development of political parties, human rights groups and trade unions while approving the appointment of newspaper editors and even imams. The Muslim Brotherhood and various Salafist groups came under close scrutiny. The SSIS enjoyed close relations with the FBI, which offered SSIS members training at its Quantico headquarters, and with the CIA, from whom the SSIS received prisoners for interrogation under the U.S. rendition program.

Protesters Seize Ministry Documents

In early March, protestors acted to stop what they believed was the wholesale destruction of secret documents detailing illegal activity by the SSIS:

- Protesters entered the main headquarters of the SSIS headquarters in Nasr City (a Cairo suburb) on March 5 through an open side door and found shredded documents and torture devices while the army stood back. Some protesters were able to demonstrate how the instruments were used based on personal experience. Despite urging from the army, the protesters refused to leave until representatives of the attorney-general's office arrived at 9PM to receive documents, tapes, computer hard drives and shredded paper collected in the building (*al-Masry al-Youm*, March 6).

- Demonstrators in Alexandria entered the local SSIS building on March 4 as SSIS agents were shredding and burning documents. Official reports said 21 security officers were assaulted by demonstrators and had to be escorted out by the army (Middle East News Agency, March 4).

- A fire in the SSIS headquarters in 6th of October City (a satellite of Cairo) on March 5 damaged or destroyed many files and documents. Protesters forced entry to the building after observing fire-fighting vehicles being turned away by state security officers (Ahram Online, March 7). Prosecutors in 6th of October governorate later charged 67 SSIS officers with burning state documents and public property (Ahram Online, March 8; *Bikya Masr*, March 8).

- On March 6, roughly 2,000 civilians demonstrating at the Lazoghly (downtown Cairo) SSIS headquarters for reform of the security services and access to the building to prevent destruction of documents by the police were attacked by 200 men in plainclothes wielding a variety of knives, swords and gasoline bombs (BBC, March 6). The army fired into the air to disperse the demonstrators and arrested 29 individuals, all of whom were later released (*Bikya Masr*, March 7, March 8).

State security buildings in Assiut, Minya, Marsa Matrouh, Suez City and al-Arish were also occupied by demonstrators on March 6 (*Bikya Masr*, March 7). Since then, the files taken from the security offices have begun appearing on Facebook pages, opening the secrets of the long-feared internal security services to all Egyptians.

Meanwhile the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces has appealed to Egyptians to return the files to authorities, citing concerns for national security. Though many fear the documents may disappear after their return, it is also impossible to verify their authenticity or use them in prosecutions so long as they remain in private hands. Indeed, by breaking the chain of evidence, the protesters may have unwittingly made the documents useless in judicial procedures.

Materials collected at the security offices showed the regime had thoroughly infiltrated the democratic and Islamic opposition, explaining their relative ineffectiveness in recent years. Included were hacked emails, accounts of opposition meetings, transcripts of private phone calls, lists of SSIS agents planted in opposition groups and even logs specifying in advance how many votes candidates would receive in parliamentary elections (*al-Masry al-Youm*, March 6). [1]

Although the main Facebook site for publishing these documents has a rule against publishing the names of informers contained in the records, other websites have been less scrupulous. [2] The Egyptian media has been banned from publishing details of any of the documents found in Ministry offices.

New Interior Minister Mansur al-Essawy argued, despite the evidence, that it would be illogical for officers to destroy documents they need in their investigations. Essawy claimed that such destruction did not matter in any case, as the originals were kept in the main branch of the SSIS (*Bikya Masr*, March 7).

The SSIS and the Church Bombing in Alexandria

Eight of the documents suggested SSIS involvement in the January 1 al-Qiddisine (“Two Saints”) church bombing in Alexandria that killed 21 Copts and wounded nearly 100 more Copts and Muslims. One document addressed to the Interior Minister and dated December 2, 2010 referred to the bombing as “Mission no.77” and contained details of the church layout and a plot involving the use of a known Islamist to organize the attack.

Shortly before the bombing occurred, the heavy police presence around the church (deployed in response to threats against Coptic institutions) suddenly melted away. The long list of dead and wounded at the entrance to the church, where police would be expected to be found, contained not a single member of the security services. This ignited street protests by the Coptic community. The release of the document alleging SSIS guidance of the terrorist operation brought Copts into the streets once more.

Then Interior Minister Habib al-Adly announced the ministry had “conclusive evidence” that the church had been struck by a 19 member cell led by Ahmad Lofti Ibrahim of the militant Gaza group Jaysh al-Islam (Army of Islam) (BBC, January 23; *al-Ahram*, January 25). The small Salafist group issued a prompt denial of any involvement in the bombing. Gaza’s Hamas government expressed surprise at the allegations and called on Egypt to share intelligence on the matter: “Hamas is leading a resistance against the Zionist occupation inside Palestine and will never allow it to move outside Palestine. Egyptian and Arab security is one of our top priorities. We consider the Arab nations our strategic depth and we would not accept anyone to touch their security” (*al-Jazeera*, January 23; AP, January 23).

Al-Qaeda deputy leader and native Egyptian Dr. Ayman al-Zawahiri denied any al-Qaeda connection to the Alexandria church bombing. Instead, he laid all responsibility for the attack at the feet of Pope Shenouda III and the leadership of the Coptic Orthodox Church, accusing them of spreading the belief that “the Muslims have occupied Egypt and must be driven out as they were kicked out of Spain” (AP, February 25).

Since the fall of Hosni Mubarak, sectarian clashes have dramatically increased. In one street battle in the Manshiyet Nasr shantytown on the edge of Cairo hundreds of Copts and Salafist youth battled until the army intervened by firing on the combatants. Many Egyptians believe these clashes continue to be instigated by state security services (*Bikya Masr*, March 9; *al-Dostour*, March 10). Copts have also taken to the streets to protest reports of attacks by the army on the 5th century St. Bishoy Monastery in Wadi al-Natrun and the Monastery of St. Makarios of Alexandria in the Fayoum Oasis. The ruling military council has said these actions were necessary to remove newly built walls around the monasteries (AP, February 25).

The Sharm al-Shaykh Bombings – A False Flag Operation?

Some of the documents allegedly seized from the 6th of October headquarters appeared to implicate the former president’s son, Gamal Mubarak, and former Interior Minister Habib al-Adly in a “false-flag” terrorist operation designed as retribution for a business dispute – the July 23, 2005 Sharm al-Shaykh bombings in which over 80 people were killed and 200 wounded in the coordinated attacks on two hotels and a market. According to the documents, the bombings against properties owned by Egyptian businessman Hassain Salim were organized by Habib al-Adly. One of the documents says the dispute was based on Gamal Mubarak’s anger with Hassain Salim after the latter reduced his commission in a \$2.5 billion gas deal with Israel. [3] A message appeared after the bombings on jihadi internet sites claiming the attacks on behalf of the “Abdullah Azzam Brigades,” though in practice local Bedouin were blamed and pursued by the security services. A document addressed to the Interior Ministry and entitled “Order 231” gave details of the planning of the attacks. The document is dated June 7, 2005 and is signed by several state security agents (*al-Dostour*, March 10; *Afrol News*, March 9; *Der Spiegel*, March 9).

The Trial of Habib Ibrahim al-Adly

Though there are many allegations against al-Adly, the former Interior Minister was initially charged only with money laundering and unlawful acquisition of public money. Nevertheless, his first appearance in court was accompanied by demonstrators outside the court demanding the death penalty, saying his prosecution on relatively minor charges was insufficient (AFP, March 4). Since then, it has been announced that al-Adly and four other senior security officials (including former SSIS chief Major General Hassan Abdelrahman, public security head Major General Adly Fayed, Cairo security chief Major General Ismail al-Shaer and former assistant to the Interior Minister Major-General Ahmad Ramzy) would also face charges related to the killing of demonstrators (Ahram Online, March 11; *Bikya Masr*, March 13). Al-Adly's trial is scheduled to begin in Cairo Criminal Court on April 24.

There are also demands for hundreds of other Ministry officials to be prosecuted for various crimes. Egyptian human rights organizations have compiled a list of 74 SSIS officials (including four Interior Ministry generals) and 264 other police and prison officials responsible for torturing detainees and presented it to the Attorney General (*al-Wafd*, March 10).

Emptying the Prisons

During the security breakdown that preceded Mubarak's resignation, thousands of prisoners are believed to have escaped prisons run by the Interior Ministry. Efforts are now underway to find the fugitives or convince them to turn themselves in. As many as 300 of the escapees may be members of organizations such as al-Qaeda, Hamas or Hezbollah.

The Interior Ministry's prison affairs department announced they had released 904 political prisoners and 755 criminal prisoners from February 1 to March 12 (Ahram Online, March 12). Authorities quickly changed their minds about one release; Muhammad al-Zawahiri, brother of the al-Qaeda deputy leader, was rearrested on March 19, only three days after being freed by the army along with 59 other convicted Islamists who had served 15 years or more of their sentences (*al-Masry al-Youm*, March 21). Among those released earlier were Abboud and Terek al-Zomor, convicted in 1984 for their role in the assassination of President Anwar al-Sadat (Ahram Online, March 11). Abboud al-Zomor and many other Salafists were accused of using intimidation to press for

a "yes" vote (preferred by the ruling military council) in the March 19 referendum on constitutional changes (Ahram Online, March 31).

A New Security Service: Renamed or Reformed?

In taking his new role, Interior Minister Mansur Essawy pledged that he would work to restore security and reduce the role played in Egyptian life by the security services (al-Jazeera, March 7). Essawy is regarded as an unpopular choice within the ministry, which he left ten years ago (Ahram Online, March 23). The SSIS was formally disbanded on March 15, though Essawy has stated many former employees will be rehired for the new National Security Division that will replace it. The Division's chief will be appointed by the Interior Minister rather than the president, as was formerly the case with the SSIS (Ahram Online, March 17). Hopes for a complete break with the past were dashed when Essawy said the state security apparatus "cannot be dissolved," though he pledged it would restrict itself to counterterrorism and national security issues (Middle East News Agency, March 12; *Bikya Masr*, March 12). On March 20, al-Essawy appointed a 39-year police veteran, Hamed Abdallah, as the first director of the National Security Department (*al-Masry al-Youm*, March 20).

Morale within the Interior Ministry is crumbling with many police taking to the streets to demonstrate for better pay and the restoration of their immunity from prosecution – many fear being brought to trial for their role in abuses committed during the Mubarak regime. A senior Ministry official told a Cairo daily: "Officers go home and decline to come to work; they switch off their mobiles and do not take calls on their home landlines... Hundreds of police officers have already resigned; they just don't want to be part of the ministry anymore" (Ahram Online, March 23).

Calls for reform and even prosecutions have come from inside the Interior Ministry as well. A new group known as the "Honorable Policemen" has warned elements within the Ministry are perpetuating political and social disorder as part of a growing counter-revolution. The group is preparing a list of corrupt police officials for presentation to the Attorney General (*al-Masry al-Youm*, March 30).

Other officers have protested outside their own buildings demanding better wages and working conditions. Existing pay scales almost ensure a culture of corruption

within the security services. Another mysterious fire began in the personnel department of the downtown Cairo Interior Ministry headquarters as policemen protested outside on March 22. Among their demands was the return of Mahmoud Wagdi as Interior Minister (Ahram Online, March 22; BBC, March 22). An Interior Ministry veteran, Wagdi was appointed by Mubarak on January 31 and was replaced by al-Essawy on March 5. Brigadier General Safwat al-Zayat has claimed the criminal and sectarian violence that swept Egypt after the army's decision to sack al-Wagdi and former Prime Minister Ahmad Shafiq was designed to prove the army was incapable of running the country (Ahram Online, March 7).

Conclusion

Greater unrest may follow if Egyptian authorities try to reduce the bloated size of the Interior Ministry, now estimated to have over 1.7 million employees, making it over three times as large as the Egyptian military. The question of whether to continue recruiting policemen through conscription will also need to be addressed, as will the question of how to bring the new security service under effective civilian control and oversight.

The Mubarak regime may have been a victim of its own success in pursuing a long and often brutal campaign against Islamist extremism in Egypt. With nearly all the armed opposition either dead, imprisoned or in exile, Egypt's stability and lack of external enemies led to new demands for economic liberalization, the repeal of the Emergency Law and the introduction of a more legitimate democratic process. Fueling or even igniting religious and sectarian tensions in Egypt may have provided just the right amount of manageable instability to allow Mubarak to maintain a corrupt administration while posing as the lone bulwark against Islamist violence. These activities also appear to have offered cover to large-scale corruption within the regime. The implosion of Egypt's Interior Ministry and its national security service provides a cautionary warning to those who assume the "War on Terrorism" is being fought on the same terms and for the same ends everywhere.

Notes:

1. Video of the break-ins at the security headquarters and documents allegedly found therein can be found at: <http://leaksource.wordpress.com/2011/03/06/amn-dawla-leaks-egyptian-security-force-files/>.
2. Video of the break-ins at the security headquarters and documents allegedly found therein can be found at: <http://leaksource.wordpress.com/2011/03/06/amn-dawla-leaks-egyptian-security-force-files/>.
3. For the document, see: <http://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=189709627734695&set=a.189709567734701.40006.189457437759914&theater#!/photo.php?fbid=189709594401365&set=a.189709567734701.40006.189457437759914&theater&pid=449895&id=189457437759914>.

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