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RELEASE IN FULL

From:

Sullivan, Jacob J <SullivanJJ@state.gov>

Sent:

Saturday, June 2, 2012 1:07 PM

To:

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Subject:

Fw: Embassy Cairo Mubarak Verdict Reaction Sitrep - June 2, 2012 - 1745

FYI

From: Abbaszadeh, Nima

Sent: Saturday, June 02, 2012 12:36 PM **To**: Sullivan, Jacob J; Macmanus, Joseph E (S)

Cc: S_SpecialAssistants

Subject: Embassy Cairo Mubarak Verdict Reaction Sitrep - June 2, 2012 - 1745

From: Storsve, Alison B

Sent: Saturday, June 02, 2012 12:01 PM

To: SES_DutyDeputies; D(B); D(N); P; S_SpecialAssistants; PA FO Group

Cc: SES-O_SWO; NEA-FO-DL

Subject: Embassy Cairo Mubarak Verdict Reaction Sitrep - June 2, 2012 - 1745

Colleagues,

Please find below Embassy Cairo's initial readout of local reaction to the Mubarak verdict. The Embassy notes reaction has been largely negative, and the verdicts, exonerating all but Mubarak and his former interior minister for the deaths of demonstrators in 2011 and dismissing corruption charges due to the expiration of the statute of limitations, might solidify support for Muslim Brotherhood candidate Morsy in the June 16-17 presidential election runoff.

Thank you, regards,

Alison Storsve
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(SBU) The June 2 verdicts in cases against former President Hosni Mubarak, his sons Alaa and Gamal, former Minister of Interior Habib Adly, and other Mubarak associates have provoked widespread shock and condemnation among opponents of the former regime and political activists; it is not yet clear whether this outrage is widely held in Egyptian society. For critics, the verdicts – exonerating all but Mubarak and Adly for the deaths of demonstrators in 2011 and dismissing corruption charges due to the expiration of the statute of limitations – cast doubt on just what the January 2011 revolution accomplished, and may be instrumental in solidifying support (in the form of protest votes) for the Muslim Brotherhood's Mohammed Morsy in presidential election runoffs, scheduled for June 16 and 17. As of 1700 today, only a few thousand demonstrators had collected in Cairo, Alexandria and elsewhere, but these numbers may grow as the heat (temperatures exceeded 100 degrees today) dissipates.

Reaction Negative

(U) Reaction to the verdicts, in which the former President and his last Minister of Interior were sentenced to life in prison for their "complicity in crimes of murder" but not convicted of charges of exploiting their positions due to the expiration of the 10-year statute of limitations, has been swift and largely negative. The Muslim Brotherhood (MB) issued a statement calling the verdict "shocking to the families of the martyrs," and accusing certain "bodies" of hiding evidence in the case. The statement added that "the verdict means that only the head of the regime and the Minister of Interior have been toppled; the rest of the entire regime still exists." In a phone call with Egypt's Mehwar channel on June 2, one-time liberal presidential candidate Ayman Nour said he would now endorse the Freedom and Justice Party's Mohammed Morsy in the upcoming presidential runoff, and called on others to do the same. Through its spokesman, the Salafist Nour Party called the outcome of the trials "shocking" predicted the verdict would "certainly" be to the advantage of Morsy, adding that people could now see which of the two remaining presidential candidates would protect the revolution. Former presidential contender Mohamed el-Baradei said the verdict was proof that efforts by the former regime to "abort" the revolution were onging. "The old regime is trying itself," he said. Former presidential candidate Abdel Monem Aboul Fotouh said the verdicts, including the acquittal of Mubarak's sons were "an acquittal of the authority of the corruption and oppression that still rules Egypt." Egypt's April 6 movement said the rulings were a call for a "second revolution" in the Egyptian street. For his part, presidential candidate Ahmed Shafiq said the verdict proved no one was above the law, adding: "Those rulings certainly disprove any claims that a presidential candidate can reproduce a ruling system that has ended."

Protests Beginning

(U) As of the afternoon of June 2, political forces and activists, including former presidential candidate Hamdeen Sabbahy, had called for protestors to meet in front of Cairo's Supreme Justice Court and in Tahrir Square that evening. The MB also called for protests. Several thousand protestors have already arrived in Tahrir Square chanting slogans against the verdict, and all entrances to the square have reportedly been blocked to vehicular traffic. Thousands of demonstrators have rallied in Alexandria, and other areas of the country were also participating in the protests, according to international news sources.

Former President Transferred to Prison

(U) For the first time since his ouster, former President Mubarak was transferred to prison (Cairo's Torah Prison), where local and international news sources report he tearfully resisted departing the helicopter he was transported in, and may have suffered a heart attack or other serious health crisis upon arrival there. According to local television station Al Nahar TV, Mubarak's sons, Alaa and Gama, will remain in detention to undergo another trial, in which they were accused of profiteering in the Egyptian stock market.

Legal Experts: Strong Grounds for Appeal

(SBU) Local and international TV commentators, as well as Embassy legal contacts, believe that Mubarak and Adly have strong grounds to challenge their convictions. Experts observed that, in the absence of direct evidence that Mubarak or Adly ordered security forces to fire on protestors, the court based its conviction on the argument that Mubarak and Adly should have intervened to stop the violent response to demonstrations. This may be too weak to stand up to appeal.