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Egyptian Intifada reveals Washington's true Zionist colors

By Adam Morrow and Khaled Moussa al-Omrani at veteranstoday.com

CAIRO, Feb 3, 2011 (Veterans Today) – Fed up with the political repression and economic malaise that have been central features of President Hosni Mubarak's 30-year-rule, the Egyptian people have hit the streets in the hundreds of thousands for the last ten days to demand Mubarak's removal from power.



After a week of hemming and hawing, the Obama administration on Wednesday declared that Egypt's transition to a new government "must begin now." But many of the Egyptians at the forefront of the ongoing protests reject Washington's stated support for political change, saying that the US — despite its democratic pretensions — has no real desire to see an end of the Israel-friendly regime in Cairo.

"Washington's stated support for 'political reform' in Egypt is intended for media consumption," Abdelhalim Kandil, prominent Egyptian opposition figure and active demonstrator, told Veterans Today. "Regardless of what it says publicly, the US — along with its best friend in the region, Israel — is keen to see the Mubarak regime remain firmly in power."

On January 25, popular demonstrations originally organized to protest police abuses and official corruption quickly snowballed beyond anyone's expectations. Thousands of protesters — tens of thousands in some areas — turned out across the country to demand free elections and the termination of Egypt's draconian Emergency Law. In addition to these political grievances, demonstrators also demanded relief from crushing inflation and rampant unemployment.

"The vast majority of those participating in the demonstrations are ordinary Egyptians fed up with the political and economic status quo," Sarah Ramadan, 20-year-old political activist from Cairo, told Veterans Today.

For the next nine days, demonstrations staged countrywide grew in size and intensity, with the biggest being held in Cairo's centrally-located Tahrir Square. As security forces used increasingly violent methods to quell the protests, offices of Mubarak's ruling National Democratic Party (NDP) — along with many local police stations — were burnt to the ground in provinces across Egypt.

On Friday evening, the Egyptian army was deployed on the streets of Cairo, Alexandria and Suez. But despite the imposition of government curfews, demonstrators remained on the streets, vowing to step up their protests until their demands for Mubarak's ouster were met. Hundreds of protesters have been killed so far and thousand injured in violent clashes with police. Exact casualty figures, however, remain unavailable.

On Saturday, Mubarak dismissed his government — which had been dominated by a clique of unpopular business tycoons — and appointed a new prime minister. In a first since becoming president in 1981, Mubarak also appointed a vice-president, fulfilling a longstanding demand of the Egyptian opposition. The new VP, General intelligence chief Omar Suleiman, would be tasked with "holding dialog" with various opposition forces, the president said.

In a televised address on Wednesday night, Mubarak stressed his commitment to the nation's "security and independence" so as to "ensure a peaceful transfer of power in circumstances that protect Egypt and the Egyptians." He went on to say he would not seek a sixth term as president in upcoming elections slated for later this year, and promised to amend articles of the constitution that regulate the electoral process.

"I will entrust the new government to perform in ways that will achieve the legitimate rights of the

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people and that its performance should express the people and their aspirations of political, social and economic reform and to allow job opportunities and combating poverty, realizing social justice," Mubarak stated. "In this context, I charge the police apparatus to carry out its duty in serving the people, protecting the citizens with integrity and honor with complete respect for their rights, freedom and dignity."

The promises, however, failed to satisfy demonstrators, leaders of whom say they want nothing less than the removal of Mubarak and anyone associated with his longstanding regime.

"We will not stop demonstrating until our demands are met," Mahmoud Adel al-Heta, a 23-year-old political activist and protester, told Veterans Today. "These demands include the immediate departure of the Mubarak regime; the formation of a popular committee mandated with drawing up a new national constitution; the holding of free and fair presidential and parliamentary elections; and the immediate formation of a transitional government."

Shortly after Mubarak's address, US President Barack Obama — under intense pressure to make a show of support for Egyptian democratic aspirations — issued a statement in which he said that Mubarak "recognizes that the status quo is not sustainable and a change must take place." He added that political transition "must be meaningful, it must be peaceful and it must begin now."

"Furthermore, the process must include a broad spectrum of Egyptian voices and opposition parties," Obama added. "It should lead to elections that are free and fair. And it should result in a government that's not only grounded in democratic principles but is also responsive to the aspirations of the Egyptian people."

But many of the Egyptian activists at the center of the storm showed contempt for Washington's tepid show of support, saying that the US commitment to Egypt's "stability" — and, by extension, Israeli security — far outweighs its commitment to Egyptian democracy.

"The Obama administration's stated commitment to democracy pales in comparison to its commitment to Israel's wellbeing," said Kandil. "Washington has always pretended to support democratic reform in Egypt, but it will never bring serious pressure to bear on the ruling regime, which represents a vital aspect of Israeli security."

"US administrations come and go, but US Middle East policy remains the same, and the chief aspect of that policy is ensuring Israel's perpetual domination over the region — not fostering democracy in the Arab world," he added. "The Zionist lobby's extensive control over US policymaking, coupled with the Zionist ownership of most US media, has led to a situation in which successive US administrations end up putting Israel's interests before those of the US itself."

A number of other Egyptian demonstrators who spoke to Veterans Today echoed this view.

"Despite statements by the White House that appear to support our uprising, we're fully aware that the US has an interest in keeping the Mubarak regime — or something else very much like it — in control of Egypt," said Khaled al-Sayyed, a 22-year-old protester who has participated in the Tahrir Square demonstrations for the last ten days, told Veterans Today. "We are also aware that Washington's primary concern is the security of Israel, which the Mubarak regime has faithfully served for the last 30 years. We therefore completely reject any US interference in Egypt's domestic affairs."

"At the end of the day, the US supports the Mubarak regime because the 'stability' of Egypt — the biggest country in the Arab world — is in Israel's interest," concurred Adel al-Heta. "Everyone knows that Washington's declared support for democracy in the Middle East is only for show."

Egypt has had diplomatic relations with the Zionist state since the signing of the Camp David peace accords in 1979. Since then, the US has provided Egypt with some \$28 billion in development aid and a further \$1.3 billion in annual military assistance, making Egypt the second largest recipient of US largesse after Israel. The only other Arab country to have official relations with the Zionist state is the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, which signed its own peace deal with Tel Aviv in 1994.

In return for the kindness, the Mubarak regime has continued to implement a number of policies advantageous to Israel, despite widespread public opposition. These include assisting Israel in its four-year-old siege of the Gaza Strip — which has subjected the strip's 1.5 million people to humanitarian catastrophe — and selling Egyptian natural gas to Tel Aviv at prices lower than those at which it is sold to the poverty-stricken Egyptian public.

Many observers believe that free elections in Egypt would likely yield a dramatic reorientation of Egyptian policy vis-à-vis the self-proclaimed Jewish state — one much more in line with public opinion.

"Despite the peace treaty, most Egyptians continue to see Israel as an enemy due to its continued

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
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occupation and theft of Palestinian land and its homicidal policies against the Palestinians," said Kandil. "A democratically-elected Egyptian government would, in accordance with the will of the Egyptian people, oppose Israel and support the Palestinian resistance — and Washington knows that."

Even before the uprising in Egypt, public statements emanating from Israeli officialdom indicated Tel Aviv's approval of — and support for — the Mubarak regime.

To cite one recent example, certain Israeli officials expressed satisfaction with the results of Egypt's parliamentary polls late last year, in which Mubarak's ruling NDP won 97 percent of the national assembly in elections widely recognized as having been rigged. At the time, former Israeli ambassador to Egypt Eli Shaked described the NDP's electoral victories as "positive from an Israeli point of view."

Shaked explained: "I prefer this kind of non-democratic Egypt ruled by moderate, sensible people rather than an Egypt ruled by radical fundamentalists like the Muslim Brotherhood. It is not to the benefit of Israel to have this kind of regime in Egypt. We should pray for Mubarak to live until he is 120 years old."

<http://www.almazryaloum.com/en/news/ex-israeli-envoy-hails-ndp-suppression-islamists-analysts-fear-popular-backlash>

Notably, on January 28 — as demonstrations in Egypt entered their fourth day — Binyamin Ben-Eliezer, a member of Israel's Knesset and former defense minister, likewise expressed support for the beleaguered Egyptian president, playing down the threat posed to the Mubarak regime by the rapidly burgeoning uprising.

"I have no doubt that the situation in Egypt is under control. The [Egyptian] intelligence services, which are sophisticated, expected this after what happened in a different situation in Tunisia," he was quoted as saying by Israeli daily The Jerusalem Post. "[Mubarak] is allowing people to let off steam. He hasn't used police. It's all under control. I believe in complete faith that it won't be a problem."

"Our relations with Egypt are strategic and intimate. Both of our leaderships have an interest in quiet and peace even if it is a quiet peace," Ben-Eliezer, considered the Israeli politician closest to Mubarak, added. "The peace of Egypt has passed many tests of survival and many crises, and today it is just as much an Egyptian interest as it is ours."

<http://www.jpost.com/DiplomacyAndPolitics/Article.aspx?id=205576>

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, meanwhile, has instructed his ministers to refrain from commenting publicly on events in Egypt. But on Monday, reports emerged that the Israeli Foreign Ministry had directed its diplomats in the US, Canada, China, Russia and Europe to impress upon their host nations the importance of Egypt's stability.

"We are closely monitoring events in Egypt and the region and are making efforts to preserve its security and stability," Netanyahu had been quoted as saying one day earlier.

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/africaandindianocean/egypt/8293536/Egypt-crisis-Israel-rallies-to-support-of-Egyptian-regime.html>

According to Kandil, such gestures of support for Mubarak on the part of Israeli officialdom "reveal the Mubarak regime's extreme importance to Israeli strategic interests." He went on to recall statements by Ben-Eliezer last year in which the latter referred to the Egyptian president as "a strategic treasure" for Israel.

The regime's apparent intimacy with Israel, meanwhile, has not been lost on protesters. "Oh Mubarak, Oh Mubarak, they're waiting for you in Tel Aviv," they could be heard chanting in Cairo's Tahrir Square. "I had to speak to him in Hebrew because he didn't understand Arabic."


Most recently, on Thursday afternoon, Iranian satellite news network Press TV reported that a group of demonstrators in Cairo had "captured a member of the Israeli General Staff Reconnaissance Unit" who was attempting to infiltrate the demonstrations. While the network showed amateur video purportedly taken of the event, this remains unconfirmed.

As of press time on Thursday evening local time, the anti-Mubarak demonstrations were still going strong, despite fresh violence that saw at least five protesters killed in Tahrir Square — and thousands injured — within the last two days. Nevertheless, demonstrators plan to redouble their efforts, and even larger protests are expected after Friday prayers tomorrow at noon.


"Egypt's Intifada we will continue until our demands are met," said al-Sayyed, "first and foremost of

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