

THE FUTURE OF EGYPT

What Mubarak and the generals face

The assassins who took Egyptian President Anwar Sadat's life intended to eliminate all those Egyptian leaders currently or potentially opposed to the Muslim Brotherhood. In particular, Vice-President Hosni Mubarak, Sadat's appointed heir, who escaped injury, was a prime target.

Whether Mubarak survives the coming months rests with the Egyptian military. At present there is a question whether there may be solid support for Mubarak within the ranks of the generals. Mubarak was Sadat's designated liaison between the military—the bedrock of Egyptian stability—and the Presidential Palace.

Just how forceful Mubarak will be in enforcing stability in Egypt is not yet known. He has already announced that he will uphold the policies of Sadat and has imposed martial law for one year, putting a ban on all demonstrations. This is the first indication that Mubarak may be equally or more ruthless in putting down the extremists in the Muslim Brotherhood and its allies in the Egyptian left than his predecessor.

Less than 24 hours after Sadat's death, the People's Assembly voted Mubarak as Egypt's next President, and unanimously agreed to hold a national referendum on Oct. 13, to accelerate the constitutional timetable that specifies elections within 60 days after the departure of a President from office. Shortly before the Assembly voted to hold early elections, the Egyptian General Staff issued a statement of unanimous support for Mubarak, himself a former Commander of the Egyptian Air Force, who has long been considered a representative of the armed forces command in the government.

The question of the military

One principal threat to Mubarak is the dissident exiled Egyptian Gen. Saad Shazli, a hero of the 1973 Mideast war, who had broken with Sadat over Egypt's treaty with Israel. The well-informed French journalist Paul Marie de la Gorce reports in *Le Figaro*, Oct. 6, that Shazli is the leader of a cell of the Egyptian army of militants who support the Libyan dictator, Muammar Qaddafi, and are either members of or sympathetic

to the Muslim Brotherhood. It is out of this network that Sadat's assassins emerged.

Both Shazli and the influential Egyptian journalist Mohammed Heikal, who is now under house arrest, are principal threats in polarizing the Egyptian military and opening the door to chaos. The top brass, however, have shown no indication that they will break with Mubarak, though Heikal is known to have cultivated ties with certain influential soldiers.

Heikal and other prominent critics of Sadat are reported to be engaged in intense, closed-door talks with Mubarak to return their freedom and give them greater say in Egyptian politics. Egyptian elites such as Heikal are known to have the ability to foment street violence both through the Muslim Brotherhood and Egyptian trade unions.

And Ramsey Clark, the former Attorney General who had marched in Teheran's streets in 1978 in support of Khomeini, and to this day defends the Ayatollah's regime, is, according to a New York source, gearing up his left-wing networks to challenge Mubarak. Clark is working with French President François Mitterrand, French Justice Minister Robert Badinter, and the British Labour Party's Michael Foot and Anthony Wedgwood Benn, along with the Jesuit-linked World Council of Churches.

Father John B. Taylor of the World Council of Churches told a European reporter that the murder of Sadat was only the "first phase" in the collapse of the Egyptian "house of cards." He predicted mounting civil unrest which will destroy the "remaining institutions and the entire state apparatus" created by Gamal Abdul Nasser.

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