



Egypt Profile



Arab Republic of Egypt

Geography

Area: 1,001,450 sq. km. (386,000 sq. mi.); approximately equal to Texas and New Mexico combined.

Cities: *Capital*--Cairo (pop. estimated at 16 million). *Other cities*--Alexandria (6 million), Aswan, Asyut, Port Said, Suez, Ismailia.

Terrain: Desert, except Nile valley and delta.

Climate: Dry, hot summers; moderate winters.

People

Nationality: *Noun and adjective*--Egyptian(s).

Population (July 2007 est.): 80,335,036.

Annual growth rate (2007 est.): 1.72%.

Ethnic groups: Egyptian, Bedouin Arab, Nubian.

Religions: Muslim 90%, Coptic Christian 9%, other Christian 1%.

Languages: Arabic (official), English, French.

Education: *Years compulsory*--ages 6-15. *Literacy*--total adult 58%.

Health: *Infant mortality rate* (2006 est.)--31.33 deaths/1,000 live births. *Life expectancy* (2006 est.)--71 years.

Government

Type: Republic.

Independence: 1922.

Constitution: 1971.

Branches: *Executive*--president, prime minister, cabinet. *Legislative*--People's Assembly (444 elected and 10 presidentially appointed members) and Shura (consultative) Council (176 elected members, 88 presidentially appointed). *Judicial*--Supreme Constitutional Court.

Administrative subdivisions: 26 governorates.

Principal political parties: National Democratic Party (ruling). *Principal opposition parties*--New Wafd Party, Liberal Party, National Progressive Unionist Grouping

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(Tagammau), and Nasserite Party.
Suffrage: Universal at 18.

Economy

GDP (2007 est.): \$118-120 billion.

Annual growth rate (2007 est.): 7.2%.

Per capita GDP (2007 est.): \$5,400.

Natural resources: Petroleum and natural gas, iron ore, phosphates, manganese, limestone, gypsum, talc, asbestos, lead, zinc.

Agriculture: *Products*--cotton, rice, onions, beans, citrus fruits, wheat, corn, barley, sugar.

Industry: *Types*--food processing, textiles, chemicals, petrochemicals, construction, light manufacturing, iron and steel products, aluminum, cement, military equipment.

Trade (FY 2005): *Exports*--\$27.4 billion: petroleum, clothing and textiles, cotton, fruits and vegetables, manufactured goods. *Major markets*--EU, U.S., Middle East, Japan. *Imports*--\$40.48 billion: machinery and transport equipment, petroleum products, livestock, food and beverages, paper and wood products, chemicals. *Major suppliers*--EU, U.S., China.

PEOPLE AND HISTORY

Egypt is the most populous country in the Arab world and the second-most populous on the African Continent. Nearly all of the country's 79 million people live in Cairo and Alexandria; elsewhere on the banks of the Nile; in the Nile delta, which fans out north of Cairo; and along the Suez Canal. These regions are among the world's most densely populated, containing an average of over 3,820 persons per square mile (1,540 per sq. km.), as compared to 181 persons per sq. mi. for the country as a whole.

Small communities spread throughout the desert regions of Egypt are clustered around oases and historic trade and transportation routes. The government has tried with mixed success to encourage migration to newly irrigated land reclaimed from the desert. However, the proportion of the population living in rural areas has continued to decrease as people move to the cities in search of employment and a higher standard of living.

The Egyptians are a fairly homogeneous people of Hamitic origin. Mediterranean and Arab influences appear in the north, and there is some mixing in the south with the Nubians of northern Sudan. Ethnic minorities include a small number of Bedouin Arab nomads in the eastern and western deserts and in the Sinai, as well as some 50,000-100,000 Nubians clustered along the Nile in Upper (southern) Egypt.

The literacy rate is about 58% of the adult population. Education is free through university and compulsory from ages six through 15. Rates for primary and secondary

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education have strengthened in recent years. Ninety-three percent of children enter primary school today, compared with 87% in 1994. Major universities include Cairo University (100,000 students), Alexandria University, and the 1,000-year-old Al-Azhar University, one of the world's major centers of Islamic learning.

Egypt's vast and rich literature constitutes an important cultural element in the life of the country and in the Arab world as a whole. Egyptian novelists and poets were among the first to experiment with modern styles of Arabic literature, and the forms they developed have been widely imitated. Egyptian novelist Naguib Mahfouz was the first Arab to win the Nobel prize for literature. Egyptian books and films are available throughout the Middle East.

Egypt has endured as a unified state for more than 5,000 years, and archeological evidence indicates that a developed Egyptian society has existed for much longer. Egyptians take pride in their "pharaonic heritage" and in their descent from what they consider mankind's earliest civilization. The Arabic word for Egypt is Misr, which originally connoted "civilization" or "metropolis."

Archeological findings show that primitive tribes lived along the Nile long before the dynastic history of the pharaohs began. By 6000 B.C., organized agriculture had appeared.

In about 3100 B.C., Egypt was united under a ruler known as Mena, or Menes, who inaugurated the 30 pharaonic dynasties into which Egypt's ancient history is divided--the Old and the Middle Kingdoms and the New Empire. The pyramids at Giza (near Cairo), which were built in the fourth dynasty, testify to the power of the pharaonic religion and state. The Great Pyramid, the tomb of Pharaoh Khufu (also known as Cheops), is the only surviving monument of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World. Ancient Egypt reached the peak of its power, wealth, and territorial extent in the period called the New Empire (1567-1085 B.C.).

Persian, Greek, Roman, and Arab Conquerors

In 525 B., Cambyses, the son of Cyrus the Great, led a Persian invasion force that dethroned the last pharaoh of the 26th Dynasty. The country remained a Persian province until conquered by Alexander the Great in 322 BC, ushering in Ptolemeic rule Egypt that lasted for nearly 300 years.

Following a brief Persian reconquest, Egypt was invaded and conquered by Arab forces in 642. A process of Arabization and Islamization ensued. Although a Coptic Christian minority remained--and remains today, constituting about 10% of the

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population--the Arab language inexorably supplanted the indigenous Coptic tongue. For the next 1,300 years, a succession of Arab, Mameluke, and Ottoman caliphs, beys, and sultans ruled the country.

European Influence

The Ottoman Turks controlled Egypt from 1517 until 1882, except for a brief period of French rule under Napoleon Bonaparte. In 1805, Mohammed Ali, commander of an Albanian contingent of Ottoman troops, was appointed Pasha, founding the dynasty that ruled Egypt until his great-great grandson, Farouk I, was overthrown in 1952. Mohammed Ali the Great ruled Egypt until 1848, ushering in the modern history of Egypt. The growth of modern urban Cairo began in the reign of Ismail (1863-79). Eager to Westernize the capital, he ordered the construction of a European-style city to the west of the medieval core. The Suez Canal was completed in his reign in 1869, and its completion was celebrated by many events, including the commissioning of Verdi's "Aida" for the new opera house and the building of great palaces such as the Omar Khayyam (originally constructed to entertain the French Empress Eugenie, which is now the central section of the Cairo Marriott Hotel).

In 1882, British expeditionary forces crushed a revolt against the Ottoman rulers, marking the beginning of British occupation and the virtual inclusion of Egypt within the British Empire. In deference to growing nationalism, the U.K. unilaterally declared Egyptian independence in 1922. British influence, however, continued to dominate Egypt's political life and fostered fiscal, administrative, and governmental reforms.

In the pre-1952 revolution period, three political forces competed with one another: the Wafd, a broadly based nationalist political organization strongly opposed to British influence; King Fuad, whom the British had installed during World War II; and the British themselves, who were determined to maintain control over the Canal. Other political forces emerging in this period included the communist party (1925) and the Muslim Brotherhood (1928), which eventually became a potent political and religious force.

During World War II, British troops used Egypt as a base for Allied operations throughout the region. British troops were withdrawn to the Suez Canal area in 1947, but nationalist, anti-British feelings continued to grow after the war. On July 22-23, 1952, a group of disaffected army officers (the "free officers") led by Lt. Col. Gamal Abdel Nasser overthrew King Farouk, whom the military blamed for Egypt's poor performance in the 1948 war with Israel. Following a brief experiment with civilian rule, they abrogated the 1923 constitution and declared Egypt a republic on June 19, 1953. Nasser evolved into a charismatic leader, not only of Egypt, but the Arab world, promoting and implementing "Arab socialism." He nationalized Egypt's economy.

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Nasser helped establish the Non-Aligned Movement of developing countries in September 1961, and continued to be a leading force in the movement until his death in 1970. When the United States held up military sales in reaction to Egyptian neutrality vis-à-vis Moscow, Nasser concluded an arms deal with Czechoslovakia in September 1955.

When the U.S. and the World Bank withdrew their offer to help finance the Aswan High Dam in mid-1956, Nasser nationalized the privately owned Suez Canal Company. The crisis that followed, exacerbated by growing tensions with Israel over guerrilla attacks from Gaza and Israeli reprisals, resulted in the invasion of Egypt that October by France, Britain, and Israel.

Nasser's domestic policies were arbitrary and frequently oppressive, yet generally popular. All opposition was stamped out, and opponents of the regime frequently were imprisoned without trial. Nasser's foreign and military policies helped provoke the Israeli attack of June 1967 that virtually destroyed Egypt's armed forces along with those of Jordan and Syria. Israel also occupied the Sinai Peninsula, the Gaza Strip, the West Bank, and the Golan Heights. Nasser, nonetheless, was revered by the masses in Egypt and elsewhere in the Arab world until his death in 1970.

After Nasser's death, another of the original "free officers," Vice President Anwar el-Sadat, was elected President. In 1971, Sadat concluded a treaty of friendship with the Soviet Union, but a year later, ordered Soviet advisers to leave. In 1973, he launched the October war with Israel, in which Egypt's armed forces achieved initial successes but were defeated in Israeli counterattacks.

Camp David and the Peace Process

In a momentous change from the Nasser era, President Sadat shifted Egypt from a policy of confrontation with Israel to one of peaceful accommodation through negotiations. Following the Sinai Disengagement Agreements of 1974 and 1975, Sadat created a fresh opening for progress by his dramatic visit to Jerusalem in November 1977. This led to President Jimmy Carter's invitation to President Sadat and Prime Minister Begin to join him in trilateral negotiations at Camp David.

The historic Camp David accords were signed by Egypt and Israel and witnessed by the U.S. on September 17, 1978. The accords led to the March 26, 1979 signing of the Egypt-Israel peace treaty, by which Egypt regained control of the Sinai in May 1982. Throughout this period, U.S.-Egyptian relations steadily improved, but Sadat's willingness to break ranks by making peace with Israel earned him the enmity of most other Arab states.

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Domestic Change

Sadat introduced greater political freedom and a new economic policy, the most important aspect of which was the *infitah* or "open door." This relaxed government controls over the economy and encouraged private, including foreign, investment. Sadat dismantled much of the existing political machine and brought to trial a number of former government officials accused of criminal excesses during the Nasser era.

Liberalization also included the reinstatement of due process and the legal banning of torture. Sadat tried to expand participation in the political process in the mid-1970s but later abandoned this effort. In the last years of his life, Egypt was racked by violence arising from discontent with Sadat's rule and sectarian tensions, and it experienced a renewed measure of repression.

From Sadat to Mubarak

On October 6, 1981, Islamic extremists assassinated President Sadat. Hosni Mubarak, Vice President since 1975 and air force commander during the October 1973 war, was elected President later that month. He was subsequently confirmed by popular referendum for four more 6-year terms, most recently in September 2005. Mubarak has maintained Egypt's commitment to the Camp David peace process, while at the same time re-establishing Egypt's position as an Arab leader. Egypt was readmitted to the Arab League in 1989. Egypt also has played a moderating role in such international fora as the UN and the Non-Aligned Movement.

Since 1991, Mubarak has overseen a domestic economic reform program to reduce the size of the public sector and expand the role of the private sector. There has been less progress in political reform. The November 2000 People's Assembly elections saw 34 members of the opposition win seats in the 454-seat assembly, facing a clear majority of 388 ultimately affiliated with the ruling National Democratic Party (NDP). Opposition parties continue to face various difficulties in mounting credible electoral challenges to the NDP. The Muslim Brotherhood, founded in Egypt in 1928, remains an illegal organization and is not recognized as a political party (current Egyptian law prohibits the formation of political parties based on religion). Members are known publicly and openly speak their views, although they do not explicitly identify themselves as members of the organization. Members of the Brotherhood have been elected to the People's Assembly and local councils as independents, and most recently scored a major victory in 2005 parliamentary elections, winning 20% of the seats, thus forming the largest opposition group.

GOVERNMENT AND POLITICAL CONDITIONS

The Egyptian Constitution provides for a strong executive. Authority is vested in an

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elected president who can appoint one or more vice presidents, a prime minister, and a cabinet. The president's term runs for 6 years. Egypt's legislative body, the People's Assembly, has 454 members--444 popularly elected and 10 appointed by the president. The constitution reserves 50% of the assembly seats for "workers and peasants." The assembly sits for a 5-year term but can be dissolved earlier by the President. There also is a 264-member Shura (consultative) Council, in which 88 members are appointed and 174 elected for 6-year terms. Below the national level, authority is exercised by and through governors and mayors appointed by the central government and by popularly elected local councils.

Opposition party organizations make their views public and represent their followers at various levels in the political system, but power is concentrated in the hands of the President and the National Democratic Party majority in the People's Assembly and those institutions dominate the political system. In addition to the ruling National Democratic Party, there are 18 other legally recognized parties, whereas in 2004 there were only 16 other legally recognized parties.

The November 2000 elections were generally considered to have been more transparent and better executed than past elections, because of universal judicial monitoring of polling stations. On the other hand, opposition parties continue to lodge credible complaints about electoral manipulation by the government. There are significant restrictions on the political process and freedom of expression for non-governmental organizations, including professional syndicates and organizations promoting respect for human rights.

Progress was seen in the September 2005 presidential elections when parties were allowed to field candidates against President Mubarak and his National Democratic Party. In early 2005, President Mubarak proposed amending the constitution to allow, for the first time in Egypt's history, competitive, multi-candidate elections. An amendment was drafted by parliament and approved by public referendum in late May 2005. In September 2005, President Mubarak was reelected, according to official results, with 88% of the vote. His two principal challengers, Ayman Nour and No'man Gom'a, took 7% and 3% of the vote respectively.

In March 2007, Mubarak introduced several constitutional amendments that would increase presidential powers and, more significantly, ban any political parties based on religion, race, or ethnicity. The amendments were put to a popular referendum and, despite low voter turnout and boycotts by opposition groups, passed with 75.9% approval.

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Egypt's judicial system is based on European (primarily French) legal concepts and methods. Under the Mubarak government, the courts have demonstrated increasing independence, and the principles of due process and judicial review have gained greater respect. The legal code is derived largely from the Napoleonic Code. Marriage and personal status (family law) are primarily based on the religious law of the individual concerned, which for most Egyptians is Islamic Law (Sharia).

Principal Government Officials

President--Mohamed Hosni Mubarak

Prime Minister--Dr. Ahmed Nazif

Minister of Foreign Affairs--Ahmed Aboul Gheit

Ambassador to the United States--Ambassador Nabil Fahmy

Permanent Representative to the United Nations--Ambassador Maged Abdel Fattah Abdelaziz

Egypt maintains an **embassy** in the United States at 3521 International Court N.W., Washington, D.C., 20008 (tel. 202-895-5400). The Washington consulate has the same address (tel. 202-966-6342). The Egyptian Mission to the United Nations is located at 304 East 44th Street, New York, N.Y. (tel. 212-305-0300). Egyptian consulates general are located at: 1110 Second Avenue, New York, N.Y., 10022 (tel. 212-759-7120); 1990 Post Oak Boulevard, Suite 2180, Houston, TX, 77056 (tel. 713-961-4915); 500 N. Michigan Avenue, Suite 1900, Chicago, IL, 60611 (tel. 312-828-9162); and 3001 Pacific Avenue, San Francisco, CA, 94115 (tel. 415-346-9700).

NATIONAL SECURITY

Egypt's armed forces, among the largest in the region, include the army, air defense, air force, and navy. The armed forces inventory includes equipment from the United States, France, Italy, the United Kingdom, the former Soviet Union, and China. Equipment from the former Soviet Union is being progressively replaced by more modern American, French, and British equipment, a significant portion of which is built under license in Egypt. To bolster stability and moderation in the region, Egypt has provided military assistance and training to a number of African and Arab states. Egypt remains a strong military and strategic partner of the United States.

ECONOMY

With the installation of the 2004 Egyptian parliament, the Government of Egypt began a new reform movement, following a stalled economic reform program begun in 1991, but moribund since the mid-1990s. In the past year, the cabinet economic team has simplified and reduced tariffs and taxes, improved the transparency of the national budget, revived stalled privatizations of public enterprises and implemented economic

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legislation designed to foster private sector-driven economic growth and improve Egypt's competitiveness. Despite these achievements, the economy is still hampered by government intervention, substantial subsidies for food, housing, and energy, and bloated public sector payrolls. Moreover, the public sector still controls most heavy industry.

In sectoral terms, agriculture is mainly in private hands, and has been largely deregulated, with the exception of cotton and sugar production. Construction, non-financial services, and domestic marketing are also largely private. The Egyptian economy, however, relies heavily on tourism, oil and gas exports, and Suez Canal revenues, much of which is controlled by the public sector and is also vulnerable to outside factors. The tourism sector suffered tremendously following a terrorist attack in Luxor in October 1997. The tourism sector feared a repeat of the downturn in tourist numbers when terrorists attacked resorts in the Sinai Peninsula in 2004 and 2005. So far, however, the sector has not suffered as greatly as expected.

The U.S. has a large assistance program in Egypt and provides funding for a variety of programs in addition to some cash transfers. A portion of U.S. assistance to Egypt under the 2003 Iraq war supplemental appropriations was provided in the form of bond guarantees, which were contingent upon Egyptian compliance with a series of economic conditions. Egypt met the conditions and in September 2005 issued \$1.25 billion in 10-year bonds that were fully guaranteed by the United States. To support the Middle East peace process through regional economic integration, the United States permits products to be imported from Egypt without tariffs if they have been produced in Qualified Industrial Zones and 11.7% of the inputs of these products originate from Israel.

Agriculture

Approximately one-third of Egyptian labor is engaged directly in farming, and many others work in the processing or trading of agricultural products. Nearly all of Egypt's agricultural production takes place in some 2.5 million hectares (6 million acres) of fertile soil in the Nile Valley and Delta. Some desert lands are being developed for agriculture, including the ambitious Toshka project in Upper Egypt, but some other fertile lands in the Nile Valley and Delta are being lost to urbanization and erosion.

Warm weather and plentiful water permit several crops a year. Further improvement is possible, but land is worked intensively and yields are high. Cotton, rice, wheat, corn, sugarcane, sugar beets, onions, and beans are the principal crops. Increasingly, a few modern operations are producing fruits, vegetables and flowers, in addition to cotton, for export. While the desert hosts some large, modern farms, more common traditional

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farms occupy one acre each, typically in a canal-irrigated area along the banks of the Nile. Many small farmers also have cows, water buffaloes, and chicken, although larger modern farms are becoming more important.

The United States is a major supplier of wheat, corn, and soybean products to Egypt, almost all through commercial sales. Egypt is, in fact, traditionally the U.S.'s largest market for wheat sales. U.S. agricultural sales to Egypt average \$1 billion annually. U.S. food assistance programs to Egypt ended in 1992 as Egypt became more prosperous. Egypt continues to receive modest food assistance through the World Food Program and from France.

"Egypt," wrote the Greek historian Herodotus 25 centuries ago, "is the gift of the Nile." The land's seemingly inexhaustible resources of water and soil carried by this mighty river created in the Nile Valley and Delta the world's most extensive oasis. Without the Nile, Egypt would be little more than a desert wasteland.

The river carves a narrow, cultivated floodplain, never more than 20 kilometers wide, as it travels northward toward Cairo from Lake Nasser on the Sudanese border, behind the Aswan High Dam. Just north of Cairo, the Nile spreads out over what was once a broad estuary that has been filled by river deposits to form a fertile delta about 250 kilometers wide (150 mi.) at the seaward base and about 160 kilometers (96 mi.) from south to north.

Before the construction of dams on the Nile, particularly the Aswan High Dam (started in 1952, completed in 1970), the fertility of the Nile Valley was sustained by the water flow and the silt deposited by the annual flood. Sediment is now obstructed by the Aswan High Dam and retained in Lake Nasser. The interruption of yearly, natural fertilization and the increasing salinity of the soil has been a manageable problem resulting from the dam. The benefits remain impressive: more intensive farming on millions of acres of land made possible by improved irrigation, prevention of flood damage, and the generation of billions of low-cost kilowatt hours of electricity.

The Western Desert accounts for about two-thirds of the country's land area. For the most part, it is a massive sandy plateau marked by seven major depressions. One of these, Fayoum, was connected about 3,600 years ago to the Nile by canals. Today, it is an important irrigated agricultural area.

Natural Resources

In addition to the agricultural capacity of the Nile Valley and Delta, Egypt's natural resources include petroleum, natural gas, phosphates, and iron ore. Crude oil is found

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primarily in the Gulf of Suez and in the Western Desert. Natural gas is found mainly in the Nile Delta, off the Mediterranean seashore, and in the Western Desert. Oil and gas accounts for approximately 12% of GDP. Export of petroleum and related products (including bunker and aviation sales) amounted to \$2.7 billion in fiscal year 2003-04.

Crude oil production has been in decline for several years, from a high of more than 920,000 barrels per day (BPD) in 1995 to less than 662,000 BPD as of April 2006. To minimize the growing domestic demand of petroleum products, currently estimated at 25 million metric tons per year, Egypt is encouraging the production of natural gas. Over a 5-year period, production of natural gas increased by approximately 75% to reach about 3.3 billion cubic feet per day (BCFD) by the end of FY 2003/04. Currently, gas accounts for almost 50% of all hydrocarbon usage in Egypt.

Over the last 22 years, more than 230 oil and gas exploration agreements have been signed and multinational oil companies spent more than \$27 billion in exploration companions. As of 2005, crude oil reserves were estimated at 3.7 billion barrels, and proven natural gas reserves were estimated at 58.5 trillion cubic feet (TCF) with probable additional reserves totaling another 40-60 TCF. Texas-based Apache Oil Company is the largest American investor in Egypt, with a total investment of more than \$2.8 billion since 1996.

Egypt's excess of natural gas will more than meet its domestic demand for many years to come. The Ministry of Petroleum has determined that expanding the Egyptian petrochemical industry and increasing exports of natural gas as its most significant strategic objectives. As of September 2005, three liquefied natural gas (LNG) trains had been in operation. The first is in Damietta on the eastern side of the Delta and started exporting in early 2005. It is headed by the Spanish electric utility, Union Fenosa. The second LNG project is located at Idku on the western side of the Delta and started exporting in 2005. The first train started in April 2005, and the second in September. British Gas (BG) Group and the Malaysian state oil company Petronas are the major investors. Another project that will utilize gas for export and domestic consumption is the Mediterranean Gas Complex in Port Said where the Italian company AGIP and BP are the main shareholders. This facility will have a total cost of about \$315 million and went on line in late 2004.

Egypt and Jordan established the Eastern Gas Company to export natural gas to Jordan, and then later to Syria and Lebanon. In summer 2003 Egypt began exporting gas to Jordan via a new pipeline from El Arish on Egypt's north Sinai coast to Taba on the Gulf of Aqaba, and then underwater to the Jordanian city of Aqaba. Gas exports to

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Jordan generated gross revenues of approximately \$60 million in 2003/04 and are currently reaching \$85-100 million.

Transport and Communication

Transportation facilities in Egypt are centered in Cairo and largely follow the pattern of settlement along the Nile. The main line of the nation's 4,800-kilometer (2,800-mi.) railway network runs from Alexandria to Aswan. The well-maintained road network has expanded rapidly to over 21,000 miles, covering the Nile Valley and Delta, Mediterranean and Red Sea coasts, the Sinai, and the Western oases.

Egypt Air provides reliable domestic air service to major tourist destinations from its Cairo hub, in addition to overseas routes. The Nile River system (about 1,600 km. or 1,000 mi.) and the principal canals (1,600 km.) are important locally for transportation. The Suez Canal is a major waterway of international commerce and navigation, linking the Mediterranean and Red Seas. Major ports are Alexandria, Port Said, and Damietta on the Mediterranean, and Suez and Safraga on the Red Sea.

Egypt has long been the cultural and informational center of the Arab world, and Cairo is the region's largest publishing and broadcasting center. There are eight daily newspapers with a total circulation of more than 2 million, and a number of monthly newspapers, magazines, and journals. The majority of political parties have their own newspapers, and these papers conduct a lively, often highly partisan, debate on public issues.

Egyptian ground-broadcast television (ETV) is government controlled and depends heavily on commercial revenue. ETV sells its specially produced programs and soap operas to the entire Arab world. In addition to Egyptian programming, the Middle East Broadcast Company, a Saudi television station transmitting from London (MBC), Arab Radio and Television (ART), Al-Jazeera television, and other Gulf stations as well as Western networks such as CNN and BBC, provide access to more international programs to Egyptians who own satellite receivers.

ETV has two main channels, six regional channels, and three satellite channels. Of the two main channels, Channel I uses mainly Arabic, while Channel II is dedicated to foreigners and more cultured viewers, broadcasting news in English and French as well as Arabic.

Egyptian Satellite channels broadcast to the Middle East, Europe, and the U.S. East Coast. In April 1998, Egypt launched its own satellite known as NileSat 101. Seven specialized channels cover news, culture, sports, education, entertainment, health, and

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drama. A second, digital satellite, NileSat 102, was launched in August 2000. Many of its channels are rented to other stations.

Three new private satellite-based TV stations were launched in November 2001, marking a great change in Egyptian government policy. Dream TV 1 and 2 produce cultural programming, broadcast contemporary video clips and films featuring Arab and international actors, as well as soap operas; another private station focuses on business and general news. Both private channels transmit on NileSat.

Radio in Egypt almost all government controlled, using 44 short-wave frequencies, 18 medium-wave stations, and four FM stations. There are seven regional radio stations covering the country. Egyptian Radio transmits 60 hours daily overseas in 33 languages and three hundred hours daily within Egypt. In 2000, Radio Cairo introduced new specialized (thematic) channels on its FM station. So far, they include news, music, and sports. Radio enjoys more freedom than TV in its news programs, talk shows and analysis.

FOREIGN RELATIONS

Geography, population, history, military strength, and diplomatic expertise give Egypt extensive political influence in the Middle East and within the Non-Aligned Movement as a whole. Cairo has been a crossroads of Arab commerce and culture for millennia, and its intellectual and Islamic institutions are at the center of the region's social and cultural development.

The Arab League headquarters is in Cairo, and the Secretary General of the League is traditionally an Egyptian. Former Egyptian Foreign Minister Amr Moussa is the present Secretary General of the Arab League. President Mubarak has often chaired the African Union (formerly the Organization of African Unity). Former Egyptian Deputy Prime Minister Boutros Boutros-Ghali served as Secretary General of the United Nations from 1991 to 1996.

Egypt is a key partner in the search for peace in the Middle East and resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Sadat's groundbreaking trip to Israel in 1977, the 1978 Camp David Accords, and the 1979 Egypt-Israel Peace Treaty represented a fundamental shift in the politics of the region--from a strategy of confrontation to one of peace as a strategic choice. Egypt was subsequently ostracized by other Arab states and ejected from the Arab League from 1979 to 1989. Egypt played an important role in the negotiations leading to the Madrid Peace Conference in 1991, which, under U.S. and Russian sponsorship, brought together all parties in the region to discuss Middle East peace. This support has continued to the present, with President Mubarak often intervening personally to promote peace negotiations. In 1996, he hosted the Sharm El-

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Sheikh "Summit of the Peacemakers" attended by President Clinton and other world leaders. In 2000, he hosted two summits at Sharm El-Sheikh and one at Taba in an effort to resume the Camp David negotiations suspended in July of 2000, and in June 2003, Mubarak hosted President Bush for another summit on the Middle East peace process. Throughout mid-2004, Egypt worked closely with Israel and the Palestinian Authority to facilitate stability following Israel's withdrawal from Gaza, which occurred in August and September of 2005. Prior to this Egypt and Israel reached an agreement that allowed Egypt to deploy additional forces along the Philadelphi Corridor in an attempt to control the border and prevent the smuggling of weapons.

Egypt played a key role during the 1990-91 Gulf crisis. President Mubarak helped assemble the international coalition and deployed 35,000 Egyptian troops against Iraq to liberate Kuwait. The Egyptian contingent was the third-largest in the coalition forces, after the U.S. and U.K. In the aftermath of the Gulf war, Egypt signed the Damascus declaration with Syria and the Gulf states to strengthen Gulf security. Egypt continues to contribute regularly to UN peacekeeping missions, most recently in East Timor, Sierra Leone, and Liberia. In August 2004, Egypt was actively engaged in seeking a solution to the crisis in the Darfur region of Sudan, including the dispatch of military monitors. Following the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks on the United States, Egypt, which has itself been the target of terrorist attacks, has been a key supporter of the U.S. war against terrorists and terrorist organizations such as Osama bin Ladin and al-Qaeda, and actively supported the Iraqi Governing Council, as well as the subsequent government of Prime Minister Allawi. In July 2005, terrorists attacked the Egyptian city of Sharm El Sheikh. In the same month, Egypt's envoy to Iraq was assassinated.

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