

Egypt buries Mubarak with military honours

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● The funeral was carried live on local television channels

AFP | Cairo

Egypt's President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi paid his respects yesterday at the military funeral of former leader Hosni Mubarak, whose three decades of strong-arm rule ended in 2011.

The presidential office declared three days of mourning for the veteran head of state dubbed a modern-day "pharaoh", who died aged 91 in a Cairo military hospital Tuesday after years spent in relative seclusion.

Mubarak's mixed legacy is that of an autocrat who ran a police state, employed emergency powers and rigged elections, and of a guarantor of stability who battled Islamist militants and kept close ties with Western powers.

The funeral focused not on Mubarak's political legacy but on the military career of the Soviet-trained fighter pilot who commanded Egypt's air force during the 1973 war with Israel.

A military helicopter delivered Mubarak's coffin, which was draped in an Egyptian flag and then mounted on horse-drawn carriage at Cairo's Mosheer Tantawi mosque.

Sisi led the military procession, flanked by the state's top religious and political figures.

Officers carried Mubarak's war medals and cannons fired a 21-shot salute before the coffin was later lowered into the ground in the family cemetery in Heliopolis in east Cairo.

Sisi, who did not address the ceremony, shook hands with Mubarak's mournful sons Alaa and Gamal, who were recently cleared of corruption charges.

Dozens of Mubarak supporters came to mourn, among them Tharwat Hassan, 59, an office manager from Menufiyah, the governorate Mubarak hailed



Egyptian President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi (C) and the sons of former president Hosni Mubarak, Alaa (2nd R) and Gamal (R), attend Mubarak's funeral ceremony. Inset, Hosni Mubarak



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MOHAMED AMIN, A COLUMNIST FOR THE BIGGEST PRIVATELY OWNED DAILY, AL MASRY YOUN

bodiment of the state."

'Dignity and arrogance'

"Mubarak in God's hands," read the front-page headline of state newspaper *Al-Ahram*, with a black stripe cutting across a photograph of the veteran ruler.

The funeral was carried live on local television channels, where prominent commentators praised Mubarak's legacy in glowing tones.

The former air force chief and vice president became head of state in 1981 after Islamist militants assassinated his predecessor Anwar Sadat during a military parade.

Mubarak, who was sitting next to him, was wounded. He would survive several more attempts on his life, including in 1995 when militants sprayed his motorcade with bullets at a roadblock in Ethiopia.

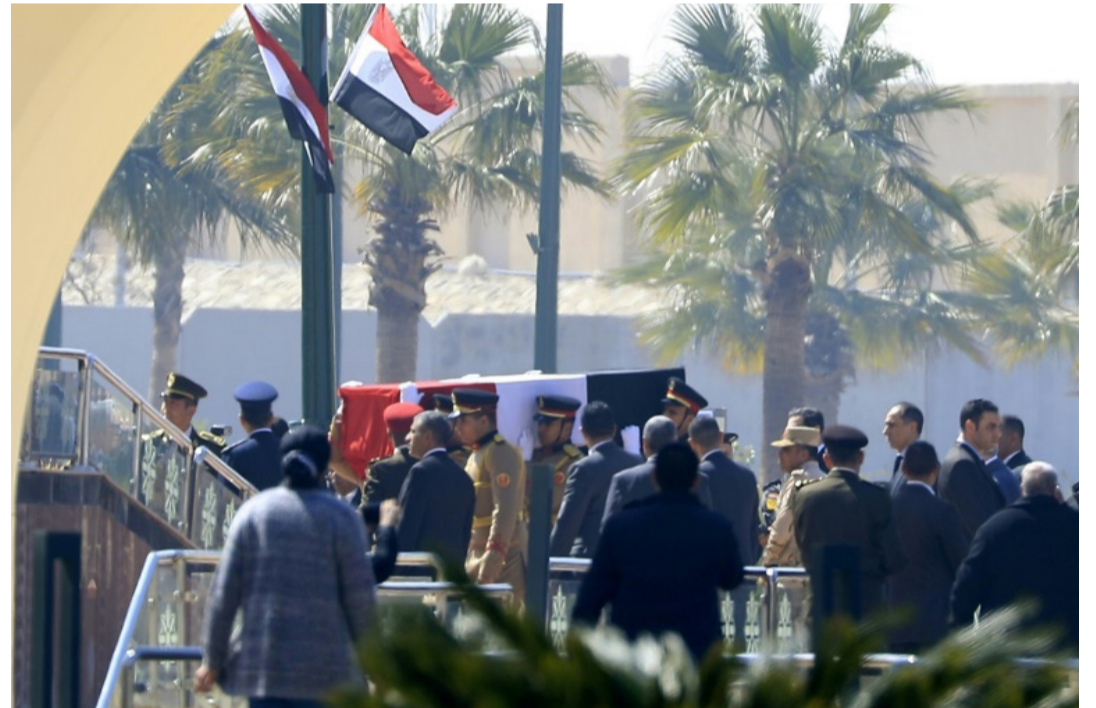
As Mubarak went on to lead the North African country, he relied heavily on the armed forces and security services to ensure stability and security, while promoting close ties with the United States and keeping Egypt's

peace with Israel.

The mass protests that eventually brought down Mubarak were an explosion of popular anger against his police state

and the corruption and nepotism that to many marked his rule.

Mubarak then spent years in detention for his role in the deaths of hundreds of protesters



Egyptian honour guards carry the coffin of former president Hosni Mubarak before his funeral ceremony at Cairo's Mosheer Tantawi mosque in Cairo.

but was freed in 2017 after the convictions were overturned.

In the post-Mubarak years, Egypt was torn by political turmoil -- bloody unrest in the streets, the short-lived rule of Islamist president Mohamed Morsi, and his 2013 ouster by Sisi, another military man, who reimposed strict police powers.

Mubarak's full-honours military funeral contrasted with the low-key burial of Morsi, the Muslim Brotherhood president.

Morsi died last year after a heart attack and was buried quietly at night with no fanfare, as Egyptian media derided his single year in office.

Mohamed Amin, a columnist for the biggest privately owned daily, *Al Masry Youm*, wrote that "you can agree or disagree with the departed president, but one thing is for sure: Mubarak never betrayed his country".

He compared Mubarak's fate with those of other autocratic Arab rulers in Libya, Yemen, Iraq and Tunisia, writing that "his end was unlike Kadhafi, Ali Abdullah Saleh or Saddam Hussein. He didn't seek asylum like Ben Ali.

"He said he would live here and die here. He pushed on with his dignity and his arrogance."

Just call me Harry, prince says as royal exit looms

Edinburgh

Prince Harry asked to be introduced as just "Harry" at an event on Wednesday, kicking off a final round of public engagements before he and wife Meghan step back from their royal duties.

The Duke of Sussex, a grandson of Queen Elizabeth II, will stop using "His Royal Highness" from the end of March when the couple stop being working royals.

But at a conference in Edinburgh for his sustainable tourism project Travalyst, it emerged he was already adopting a more informal approach.

"He's made it clear that we are all just to call him Harry, so ladies and gentlemen -- please give a big, warm Scottish welcome to Harry," host Ayesha Hazarika said in her introduction.

The 35-year-old prince has faced accusations of hypocrisy for using private planes while



Harry used his remarks in Edinburgh to warn of the risks of huge increases in tourists at key locations

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advocating action to combat global warming but he insists he mostly travels via commercial flights.

He used his remarks in Edinburgh to warn of the risks of huge increases in tourists at key locations, which he said could cause pollution, overwhelm local communities and drive out wildlife.

As sixth in line to the throne, Harry's announcement in January that he and his wife wanted to step back from their royal positions rocked the monarchy.

The pair revealed plans to split their time between Britain and Canada, after complaining about media intrusion and expressing a desire to be financially independent.

Harry arrived in Edinburgh by train on Tuesday evening without Meghan or their baby son Archie.

On Friday, he will be in Lon-

don to meet US rock singer Jon Bon Jovi, who is recording a special song for the prince's Invictus Game Foundation for military veterans.

They will meet at Abbey Road Studios, where The Beatles recorded most of their albums and where Bon Jovi is also recording his song with a choir made up of wounded veterans and serving personnel.

In a BBC interview this week about the event, the singer quipped that following his exit from frontline royal life, Harry should be known as "the artist formerly known as Prince".

The musician Prince took this title after eschewing his name in favour of a symbol.

Harry and Meghan will join the queen on March 9 for a Commonwealth Day service at Westminster Abbey, which is expected to be their last official appearance as working royals.