

PIONEERING

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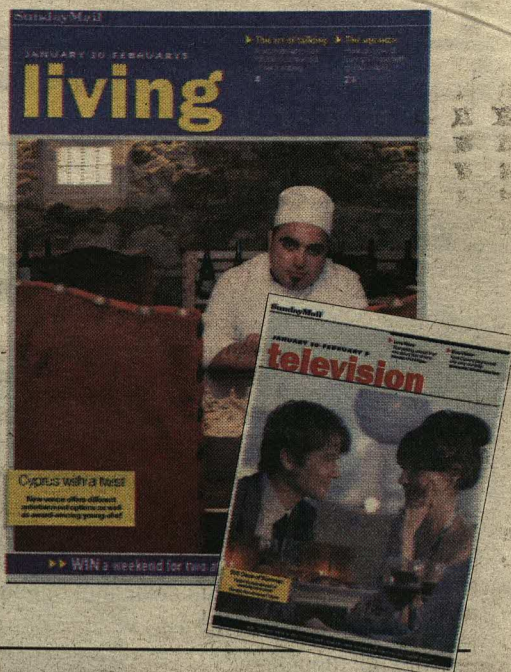
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INSIDE

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LIVING page 30

Egypt's Mubarak clings to power

- First vice president in 30 years
- Crowds continue to defy curfew
- Dozens dead, thousands injured

By Patrick Werr and Alison Williams

THOUSANDS of angry Egyptians defied a curfew yesterday for the second day in a row and stayed on the streets to push their demand that President Hosni Mubarak resign.

The army had warned that anyone who remained on the streets after 4pm (1400 GMT) would be in danger, but as the deadline passed, protests continued in central Cairo and the port city of Alexandria, witnesses said. Soldiers took no immediate action. They seemed relaxed and some protesters chatted with troops mounted on armoured vehicles, the witnesses said.

On the fifth day of unprecedented protests against Mubarak's 30-year rule, it looked increasingly as if the army held the key to the nation's future.

The president ordered troops and tanks into Cairo and other cities overnight and imposed a curfew in a bid to quell unrest as the death toll yesterday rose to 72 since the protests began. Medical sources said at least 1,030 people were injured in Cairo alone, while the BBC reported that around 2,000 had been injured during protests in the major cities.

Government buildings, including

the ruling party headquarters, still blazed yesterday morning after being set alight by demonstrators who targeted symbols of Mubarak's rule. As well as Cairo and Alexandria, clashes have also occurred in Suez, site of the strategically important canal.

In an effort to appease the protesters, Mubarak yesterday dismissed his cabinet and said he would listen to demands for reform.

Mubarak, 82, picked his intelligence chief and confidante Omar Suleiman as vice president, a post Mubarak occupied before taking the top job and which has never been filled in 30 years of his rule.

Suleiman, 74, has long taken a close role in key policy areas, including the Palestinian-Israeli peace process, an issue seen as vital to Egypt's relationship with its key ally and aid donor the United States.

State TV showed Suleiman being sworn in as the vice-president.

It was not clear if protesters would welcome a move that keeps control in the hands of the military and security institutions. "He is just like Mubarak, there is no change," a protester told Reuters outside the Interior Ministry, where thousands were protesting, moments after the appointment. "We are not demanding a change of



Egyptians gather next to a tank in Cairo's Tahrir Square, helping to protect Cairo's museum (background) from looters as smoke billows from the headquarters of the ruling National Democratic Party (AFP)

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