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From: Abedin, Huma <AbedinH@state.gov>
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To: NEWS-Mahogany
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Subject: France's Hollande formally anointed by Socialists (AP)

PARIS - (AP) France's Socialist Party has formally anointed Francois Hollande as its candidate for presidential elections in six months, culminating a weeks-long process of primaries.

The 57-year-old Hollande is expected to be the top rival to conservative President Nicolas Sarkozy _ who has not yet declared his candidacy but is expected to do so.

Socialist Party leader Martine Aubry told a party convention Saturday that "the change we want now has a name, Francois Hollande."

Hollande defeated Aubry by a large margin in an Oct. 16 vote for a Socialist candidate after three rounds of debate.

Among the five others defeated by Hollande was his former companion, Segolene Royal, mother of his four children _ who challenged Sarkozy in 2005 elections.

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