ARAB UPRISINGS

Egypt's Political Reset

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POMEPS Briefings 20

PROJECT ON
MIDDLE EAST POLITICAL SCIENCE

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The Project on Middle East Political Science

The Project on Middle East Political Science (POMEPS) is a collaborative network which aims to increase the impact of political scientists specializing in the study of the Middle East in the public sphere and in the academic community. POMEPS, directed by Marc Lynch, is based at the Institute for Middle East Studies at the George Washington University and is supported by the Carnegie Corporation and the Social Science Research Council. It is a co-sponsor of the Middle East Channel (http://mideast.foreignpolicy.com). For more information, see http://www.pomeps.org.

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How should analysts understand the combination of the June 30 massive popular mobilization and the July 3 military coup against then-President Mohamed Morsi? Should these events be understood as a continuation of the January 25 revolution, a second revolution, a straightforward military coup, or a restoration of the Mubarak-era order? Does the blame for the failure of Egypt's first popularly elected presidency lie with Morsi and the Muslim Brotherhood, with a recalcitrant opposition, with a resistant state, or with the deep problems that any transitional leadership would have confronted? Can a pathway toward a democratic order still be found?

Egypt's Political Reset, the latest in the POMEPS Arab Uprisings Briefing series, collects 16 *Middle East Channel* and *Foreign Policy* essays by academics grappling with these issues since June 30. The essays range widely across a diverse range of interpretations and analysis. They include historical comparisons and cross-national comparisons alongside close examinations of the Egyptian police, the military, the state, and the Muslim Brotherhood.

The level of analytical disagreement and intense public contestation over the interpretation of these events has been quite striking. It is not simply a question of listening to Egyptians: no more of a consensus on these core questions exists in Egypt than in the academic or analytical communities. Many Egyptian activists, academics, political analysts, and politicians have been at great pains to convince outsiders that their efforts represented a revolution and not a coup. The abuses of democratic process by the Morsi government and the massive numbers in the streets as an alternative measure of the popular will, they argue, outweigh Morsi's claimed electoral legitimacy. Morsi's own mistakes and refusal to compromise, and the escalating risk of civil war, forced the SCAF's hand. The June 30 rebellion, in this view, should be seen in the same light as the January 25 revolution, with a mobilized street rejecting the imposition of a new authoritarianism by unaccountable elites.

Skeptics are more impressed by the July 3 coup and the restoration of the Mubarakist state. They see little cause to celebrate the military overthrow of Egypt's first elected president, no matter how miserable his performance in office. The military removing an elected president, suspending the constitution, and arresting leaders of the former government are the very definition of a coup. Nor are many of the supposedly distinguishing features of Egypt's experience unique -- coups are often preceded by popular mobilization and happily received by opponents of the former regime. Coups do sometimes lead to the restoration of democracy, but the record of authoritarian regimes in the Middle East delivering on their promises to cultivate civil society and prepare society for real democracy is not strong.

Events since the coup offer highly mixed signals for what might be coming. Optimists are cheered by the appointment of a relatively technocratic government which includes key liberal icons such as Mohamed ElBaradei and promises of early elections and rapid constitutional reforms. In addition, many of those hostile to the Muslim Brotherhood are enthusiastic about the crackdown on the group regardless of whether it leads to democratic reforms. Others are troubled by the wave of pro-military nationalism in the media, reports of coordination between protest organizers and the military ahead of June 30, the ongoing mobilization by pro-Morsi forces, the severity of the July 8 attack on a pro-Morsi demonstration, the support for the new government by anti-democratic and anti-revolutionary Gulf regimes, and the seeming return of many features of the old Mubarak regime.

Egypt's uprising and coup have laid bare deep questions about the meaning of democracy and the sources of legitimacy in its emerging political order. The popular mobilization around the rejection of the Brotherhood's abuse of state power suggest the continued potency of a mobilized Egyptian public … at least when its grievances align with the preferences of the military and elites. But what does this mean for the construction of a new political consensus in the midst of deep polarization and the absence of any democratically legitimate political institutions? While the ballot box may not be the only source of democratic legitimacy, it is a crucial one. Democracy cannot simply mean "rule by those with whom the analyst agrees." Nor is it possible to build a genuinely democratic order around the exclusion of the Muslim Brotherhood, in spite of its political mistakes and the intense hostility it now generates among many Egyptians. Competing mobilizations in the streets are a poor substitute for elections as a mechanism for determining levels of popular support.

The essays in *Egypt's Political Reset* cover a wide range of these intensely debated issues. It might usefully be read with the March 2013 POMEPS Brief *The Egypt Policy Challenge*, which compiled the suggestions by more than a dozen top analysts on how the United States might most efficiently support democratic change in Egypt. That phase of Egypt's tortuous transition has ended, for better or for worse, but what will replace it remains very much in doubt. We hope that the essays collected in *Egypt's Political Reset* help to navigate these complex and difficult questions.

Marc Lynch, Director of POMEPS
July 23, 2013

Downfall in Cairo

By Marc Lynch, July 3, 2013

General Abdel Fattah al-Sisi's announcement of the removal of Egyptian President Mohamed Morsi, suspension of the constitution, and early presidential elections has brought Egypt's latest political crisis to its endgame. The massive crowds in the street will welcome the military's intervention deliriously, while all will await the potential response of enraged Muslim Brotherhood supporters.

Nobody should celebrate a military coup against Egypt's first freely elected president, no matter how badly he failed or how badly they hate the Muslim Brotherhood. Turfing out Morsi will not come close to addressing the underlying failures that have plagued Egypt's catastrophic transition over the last two and a half years. The military's intervention is an admission of the failure of Egypt's entire political class, and those now celebrating already probably know that they could soon rue the coup.

This new uprising certainly upends what U.S. policymakers considered to be their best efforts to support a shaky democratic transition. Few in Washington are sorry to see Morsi go. But few believe that this process, a mass uprising culminating in a military coup, will restore stability or lead to a more democratic outcome. The Muslim Brotherhood performed atrociously in power, but the real problem was always the weakness and illegitimacy of the political institutions. If the coup and uprising solve the first at the expense of the second, then the political reset will fail.

One of the many ironies of recent days is that for all the anti-American anger among Egyptian protesters, their efforts seem set to empower the military. And of course it is the military, not the Muslim Brotherhood, that remains America's closest ally in Egypt. The United States has not publicly supported the coup, but the coup could ultimately provide Washington with more opportunities to effectively engage. But for that to help matters, Washington is going to have to do a much better job than it did in 2011 and 2012 in pushing the military toward respecting the rights of the popular forces that now embrace it and toward a rapid restoration of civilian rule and brokering of a meaningful political consensus.

U.S. officials have over the last few years consistently, and correctly, focused on supporting a democratic process in Egypt without supporting any specific political force (including the Muslim Brotherhood, despite what too many Egyptians now believe). Barack Obama's administration wanted to see democratic institutions take hold, with the Muslim Brotherhood included in the political process, but ultimately not dominant. That's why so many U.S. officials grew so deeply frustrated with the opposition for its seeming unwillingness or inability to organize for democratic politics, and with the Muslim Brotherhood for its unwillingness or inability to reach out to the opposition in order to build political consensus.

Success for the U.S. approach of supporting the democratic process would have meant seeing the Brotherhood punished at the ballot box for its political failures. Imagine if the forces that came out in the streets on June 30, in the demonstrations that precipitated Morsi's overthrow, had instead turned out in the same numbers to vote against the Brotherhood's parliamentary candidates. Such a parliament would have created the first genuine balance of power among elected institutions in Egyptian history and denied Morsi his recourse to exclusive electoral legitimacy. But an acceptable new election law bogged down between the Brotherhood's ham-handed ambition and Egypt's political dysfunction. Whether there could have been an electoral path toward checking Morsi's power this year has become one more counterfactual that will never be tested.

While its focus on supporting a democratic transition was correct and should be sustained, there's no doubt that the United States made many mistakes in Egypt over the last few years. One of the most frustrating was its failure to effectively communicate its policy or engage more broadly

across Egyptian society. The wave of anti-American sentiments in the streets today, expressed most vividly in the posters denouncing Ambassador Anne Patterson, bear witness to those failures. True, it would never have been easy for Washington to defend its positions within Egypt's intensely polarized and hyper-charged media environment. But the administration could have tried harder to listen to Egyptian voices and engage their concerns -- and to more consistently and publicly express its concerns about human rights, civil society, and tolerance.

The most prevalent, and damaging, myth enabled by this failure to communicate is that the Obama administration backed the Muslim Brotherhood and Morsi. That was never the case. It may not have been visible through the fog of Egypt's political polarization, but there was never a great relationship between Washington and the Brotherhood, and certainly no alliance. The United States accepted the Muslim Brotherhood's democratic participation and Morsi's electoral victory because it correctly viewed its inclusion in the political game as necessary to any meaningful Egyptian democracy. But accepting the Brotherhood's political participation was not one of America's mistakes in Egypt; indeed, that very participation will be essential in whatever new political leadership emerges -- and in making sure that Morsi resists the powerful pressures to seek revenge that could trigger Mubarak-era repression, political bans, or worse.

Washington worked with the Muslim Brotherhood as an elected leadership and was right to do so, but that never translated into the kind of deeper alignment that many suspected. It's true that Morsi's help in securing a cease-fire during the short-lived Gaza conflict in November 2012 won some grudging respect in Washington, because it seemed to demonstrate that his pragmatism would outweigh his ideological preferences. But the enduring suspicion of the Muslim Brotherhood in Washington gained traction as Morsi and his party failed in power. And any goodwill that Morsi had won in Washington this past winter was quickly squandered by his constitutional power grab, reports of human rights abuses, and the law ruling against foreign NGOs. Meanwhile, in Cairo, Egyptian protesters were infuriated that Patterson met with Brotherhood Deputy Supreme Guide Khairat el-Shater for three hours on the eve of the crisis. But the real problem was not the meeting, but that she was unable to persuade Shater and the Brotherhood to make the real concessions that might have prevented this crisis.

What now? There remains a very real, urgent risk of major violence and further political or even state collapse, of course. But even if the worst is avoided, Egypt faces a real risk of becoming trapped in an endless loop of failed governments, military interventions, and popular uprisings. The very idea of democratic legitimacy has taken a severe beating, and the coming constitutional reforms and new elections will not pass easily. Building real consensus behind genuinely democratic institutions has to remain the guiding light for U.S. policy and the Egyptian political class, no matter how difficult this appears.

That means finally establishing political rules and institutions that can end the pervasive uncertainty and fear that have dominated the entire transition. Egypt's transition has been profoundly handicapped by the absence of any settled, legitimate rules of the game or institutional channels to settle political arguments. The procedural and substantive legitimacy of every step in the transition has been deeply contested, from the initial March 2011 constitutional referendum through the constitutional assembly and elections. The Supreme Constitutional Court's dissolution of parliament on the eve of the presidential election left the new government with no legitimate legislative branch other than the weak Shura Council for which few had bothered to vote.

Many in Washington (including me) had hoped that the passage of a constitution, however badly flawed, would finally end the pervasive uncertainty and allow the consolidation of normal politics and effective governance. Obviously, it didn't, in large part because of the Brotherhood's reckless power grab to force through a document that enjoyed no consensus. The primary focus now should be on finally finding such a consensus on the path forward, whether through constitutional amendments

or a national "round table" of the major political forces and societal groups. Without such a consensus and a clear pathway toward new elections, the patterns of political dysfunction will just continue to replay endlessly even as the faces and positions change.

Can that be achieved? Certainly, recent experience is not promising. The Egyptian military has already proven its own inability to effectively run the country, and military coups are rarely a viable pathway toward democracy or stability. The opposition has proven its ability to mobilize the streets around big focal-point issues like deposing Morsi, but remains as deeply internally divided as ever and has no common policy agenda. The Muslim Brotherhood has lost a lot of support but still commands a significant base that will feel deeply aggrieved, disenchanted with formal politics, and fearful for its personal safety. Other Islamists are playing their cards close to the vest, likely hoping to benefit from the Brotherhood's failure, but have not likely abandoned their ideological goals. And the mobilization that led to June 30 has heightened polarization, mutual demonization, dehumanization, and fear.

Washington can't do much to shape Egyptian politics right now, even if it tried. I remain deeply skeptical that the military coup will be a pathway to democracy or that the Egyptian military will be able to navigate the political waters any better today than it did in 2011. But Washington should use what influence it has to find ways to ensure that the political reset does not just repeat and entrench the mistakes of the past two and a half years -- or make them worse.

On Egypt, the truth is the greatest victim

By H.A. Hellyer, July 12, 2013

One could have written "in Egypt," the truth is the greatest victim: but in truth, the level of misinformation with regards to coverage on Egypt, be it written in Egypt or abroad, is incredible. Over the last week, it has become clear that time-honored analysts on Egyptian affairs could spend their entire day simply issuing clarifications on misleading, or simply wrong, media. Such misinformation is not coming from simply one source, or from one "side" of the political divide -- but all sides, for various reasons, and with magnificent intensity. What is striking is that the clarifications would not necessitate much in the way of research -- it would only require a limited amount of familiarity with Egypt over the past three years. Instead, overnight, it seems that commentators and analysts who wrote and published virtually nothing on Egypt in the past year (let alone the past three) have become noted authorities -- with more often than not, abysmal results. In the process, truth itself, on Egypt is the greatest victim.

As noted, there is no "one" side in this discussion that escapes unscathed. The pro-Mohamed Morsi camp, whether in Egypt or abroad, is pushing a narrative of the past year which is truly bizarre -- at its best, it promotes Morsi as a model democrat, who did nothing to deserve the animosity that so many in Egypt feel against him, even after having backed him and the Muslim Brotherhood in presidential and parliamentary elections. His failings, if any, are limited to incompetency, aggravated by his opponents' willingness to see him fail, and perhaps some

rashness. The extra-legal decree, suspending judicial review; the constitutional writing process and referendum; nepotism; the crackdown on media personalities and activists who were opposed to him; the toleration of and acquiescence to sectarian and violent incitement; all of that is somehow swept under the rug, as though it was unimportant to the "larger" democratic project. After all, he won at the ballot box, so the rest is at best collateral damage, and at worst, didn't happen. Quite.

On the flip side are much, if not all, of the anti-Morsi camp, who do not fail to remind us all of the above. That's all well and good, but when it comes to pointing out the structural issues that Morsi would have had to face down, they minimize it entirely. Indeed, for the past year, the narrative in much of this camp has been that the "deep state" of Hosni Mubarak collapsed then, and that Egypt was essentially a clean slate. That, of course, is a fallacy -- the "deep state" and former Mubarak networks did not collapse. They simply took a beating, which is why they failed to mobilize around parliamentary elections properly; but by the time presidential elections came around, they had regrouped, and struck back, leading to such a split decision between Morsi and Mubarak's last prime minister, Ahmed Shafiq. To underestimate their power is foolhardy -- but, alas, it seems that even the Muslim Brotherhood itself did that.

The narrative over the June 30 protests is equally polarized. For the pro-Morsi camp, the protests were essentially engineered, the numbers did not reach very substantial proportions, Morsi had at least as much support from the population to remain in office, and no matter what he had done, his forceful overthrow was assured. For his opponents, the mobilization was entirely organic, the numbers exceeded 33 million, and Morsi rebuffed every single attempt to compromise. In reality, parts of both narratives actually reveal the truth. The protest movement plugged into an existing swell of anti-Morsi sentiment, due to popular dissatisfaction with his performance -- and then the movement was aided and assisted by many different parts of society which gave it amplification in the media, as well as providing financial assistance. But amplification did not mean it was not already there -- Egyptians at large were unhappy with Morsi's rule. They almost definitely did not reach 33 million on the streets -- but we are talking millions, and probably over 15 million did. Pro-Morsi protesters could not claim to have brought out even half that amount. Finally, Morsi did have the chance -- actually, several chances -- to defuse the situation, right up until the end, and even stay in office. It was still in his hands -- and he refused to do so, thinking that he would be able to hold on, regardless of popular pressure, as well as the organized forces against him.

The same can be said about the last week. Pro-Morsi campaigners insist that the Muslim Brotherhood is non-violent and has no weaponry, and they focus all attention on the killings that took place at the pro-Morsi sit-in in front of the Republican Guard, at the hands of state forces. On the other side, anti-Morsi commentators argue that the Brotherhood is essentially a militia; that the sit-in was armed; and that the Brotherhood tries to redirect attention to the deaths that have taken place elsewhere at the hands of pro-Morsi activists. The media in Egypt is primarily imbued with the latter, with little nuance -- the international media and pro-Morsi outlets in the region are generally concerned only with the first narrative.

Again, reality lies in between, and with elements of both. The Muslim Brotherhood undoubtedly has weaponry -- such was evident when the headquarters was attacked during the uprising. However, there is really no evidence that heavy weaponry was at the sit-in -- at best, according to eye-witnesses and civil rights groups, the weaponry was mediocre and much of it homemade. Certainly, it would be difficult for anyone to justify the break up of a sit-in, resulting in dozens of casualties, with the level of firepower used by the army. One suspects that privately the state agrees, and that this was a mistake arising from a tense situation and probably Morsi-supporters resisting arrest -- but we will probably never hear that line in any state broadcast. At the same time, the reality is that on top of this tragedy, many civilians have been attacked, and killed, by pro-Morsi forces around the country in the past week -- and the killings are often sectarian.

Of course, recognizing the truth of both narratives, at the moment, is unthinkable. Sins of omission, as well as commission, are rife -- either due to unfamiliarity with Egypt altogether, or clearly partisan agendas. Objective media is, unfortunately, rare indeed.

The importance of that kind of coverage and analysis cannot be overestimated at such a crucial time -- not simply because good information is rare to come by, but because so much poor disinformation is so utterly common. On Egypt, right now, truth really is the greatest victim. It is a victim worth rescuing, and right now, it seems that the best source of information is going to be direct access to eyewitnesses of particular controversies, as well as civil rights and human rights organizations.

That small, but imperative, community of advocates has never been more important than it is now: civil rights organizations such as Human Rights Watch in Egypt, with the untiring efforts of the likes of Heba Morayef, as do the likes of the Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights, headed by Hossam Bahgat, remain critical. They will probably be smeared as "un-Egyptian" -- but what could be more patriotic than calling your rulers to account, according to the law, especially considering these organizations have done similarly under Mubarak, Tantawi, and Morsi? Their reporting of abuses never stopped -- and it is not likely to now. These advocates will be lone voices, for a time: but in the future, Egypt is likely to regard them as having saved a not so insignificant part of the Egyptian truth.

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Blame Morsi

By Michael Wahid Hanna, July 8, 2013

Let's make this abundantly clear: No one should be pleased with the division and bloodshed playing out in the streets of Cairo right now, particularly as military repression escalates. But let's also make this abundantly clear: One man bears the ultimate responsibility for the crisis of leadership -- Mohamed Morsi.

With Morsi now arbitrarily detained by the military following his July 3 ouster and Egyptian security forces indulging in violent, reckless repression, the former Egyptian president and his Muslim Brotherhood movement have legitimate grievances regarding their unjustifiable treatment. But let's not forget how we got to this grim point. On the night of June 30, in the face of unprecedented, nationwide mass mobilization and protest, Morsi was politically wounded, his legitimacy undermined, his ability to govern Egypt irreparably damaged. In response to the bottom-up, grassroots campaign that brought millions out into the streets, critical sectors of the state bureaucracy openly abandoned the president, leaving him with an illusory and nominal grip on power. He faced a country dangerously polarized, its social fabric fraying. At that moment, Egypt had fleetingly few options for avoiding the grim possibility of civil strife -- and all of them resided with Morsi.

Despite inheriting intractable political, economic, and social problems, when Morsi ascended to power on June

30, 2012, he had choices -- and he chose factional gain, zero-sum politics, and populist demagoguery. In a system without functioning checks and balances, those choices generated increasing levels of polarization, destroying trust and crippling the state. These decisions were a reflection of his hostility to criticism and his and the Muslim Brotherhood's denigration of the opposition's role in Egyptian society. In the period prior to this year's June 30 mass protests on the first anniversary of Morsi's swearing-in, when concessions and compromise might have found an orderly way out for Egypt, Morsi instead grudgingly offered airy promises and hollow gestures.

The fateful, misguided decisions made throughout his tenure and in the run-up and aftermath of the June 30 protests have now put Egypt on the cusp of civil strife and violent conflict. An intransigent, isolated president chose to ignore reality and set the country on the course for an undeniably unfortunate military intervention into civilian politics. While Morsi and the Muslim Brotherhood will undoubtedly now assume their more familiar role as victims, significantly aided by the brutality and stupidity of a repressive Egyptian security sector, the primary responsibility for Morsi's ouster and Egypt's perilous state resides with the deposed president and his Brothers. None of this was inevitable.

This is not to suggest that the Brotherhood should now be ostracized, persecuted, or forced underground. The Muslim Brotherhood is an organic and deeply rooted religious, social, and political movement with a robust and resilient base. It must be a part of Egypt's future. But its part in Egypt's recent past has been an unmitigated disaster.

Morsi's fatal final decisions confirmed his insular, factional worldview, which prioritized the Muslim Brotherhood before the nation. Simply put, he failed to comprehend that his secret society had no monopoly on Egypt and that their electoral victories were not an unlimited mandate. The Muslim Brotherhood believed that the series of elections throughout 2011 and 2012, which represented in many ways the last elections of Hosni Mubarak's era, bespoke something essential about Egyptian society and the Brotherhood's place within it.

These traits -- bullheadedness, insularity, and paranoia -- were on vivid display as Egypt careened toward June 30, but they had manifested themselves repeatedly over the course of the Brotherhood's short, unhappy time in power.

Morsi's 369 days in power were typified by a lack of reform, which alienated activists and reformists; a lack of reconciliation, which blocked any potential outreach to members of the former regime; and narrow, monopolistic governance, which alienated all political forces -- including his erstwhile Islamist allies, particularly al-Nour Party, which abandoned Morsi during his final hours. This reckless approach to power spurred alienation, paralyzed governance, and resulted in repression and discontent -- and opposition grew.

The bill of particulars is damning and dates back to the immediate post-Mubarak period, when the Brotherhood chose to pursue a formalistic procedural transition that saw elections alone as democracy, while ignoring substantive reform of a failing system. The narrow window for confronting Mubarak's police state and crony capitalism would have required a modicum of solidarity among the forces that propelled the uprising against Mubarak. But in the first of a series of betrayals, the Muslim Brotherhood set out on a course to retool Mubarak's authoritarian state and co-opt its tools of repression, with the Brotherhood itself in the helm.

Not only did the Muslim Brotherhood help craft and endorse the interim military ruler's flawed transitional road map, which was filled with gaps and omissions, but the Brotherhood immediately set about stigmatizing its opponents on the basis of crude religious and sectarian demagoguery. Reformist and activist forces that sought to challenge the emerging political order were tarred and treated as obstacles in the Brotherhood's pursuit of factional gain. Hence was set in motion a substance-free transition whose sole defining feature was a grueling series of elections.

Despite this lack of trust, many reformists chose to support Morsi in his campaign against Ahmed Shafiq, the former Mubarak regime stalwart, for fear of immediate authoritarian relapse. These grudging supporters were coaxed by a series of promises regarding inclusive governance, including pledges to select a diverse group of advisors and a diverse group for the country's constitutional drafting body. This gamesmanship proved decisive in Morsi's narrow electoral victory.

Those guarantees, consecrated in a formal document almost a year ago, were almost uniformly unfulfilled, setting the stage for a turbulent period of creeping authoritarianism, gross mismanagement, and deepening polarization. With limited checks and balances, Morsi sought to neuter the judiciary while beginning a concerted, and ultimately futile, effort at institutional capture of various state institutions. Most damning in this vein were the efforts to come to a modus vivendi with the Brotherhood's former torturers in the unreconstructed police, whose abusive, unaccountable practices continued. All the while, Morsi and his government were praising the police force and giving its members raises and promotions. It is disturbingly ironic that this police force is now engaged in an effort to repress the Muslim Brotherhood and its supporters into acquiescence.

Legislatively, Morsi's government pushed forward restrictive legislation on various fronts, including laws impeding independent labor organizing and interfering in the operation of nongovernmental organizations. His government did little to curtail a spike in prosecutions of speech crimes, including blasphemy cases and those related to insulting the presidency. Further, the criminal justice system was corrupted and used as a political tool in the wake of the extralegal appointment of a handpicked prosecutor general.

That appointment was accomplished through Morsi's dictatorial November 2012 constitutional declaration that temporarily immunized him from any judicial oversight and set the stage for the contentious adoption of a slipshod document as the country's foundational text. For many, this was the final act in institutionalizing Egypt's political crisis. The acute polarization made even basic governance impossible and furthered the country's economic crisis -- with rapidly rising unemployment helping to activate opposition within previously quiescent sectors of society. Opposition to Morsi was no longer geographically limited or defined by class; instead it was broadly dispersed geographically, representing a wide spectrum of Egyptian society, including the urban poor and various rural constituencies.

Finally, this mushrooming discontent took to the streets in protests that exceeded in size and scope of those that toppled Mubarak in January and February 2011. The warning signs were there for all to see, except perhaps for the blithe, hubristic leaders of the Brotherhood.

While the Tamarod ("Rebel") campaign was an extraordinary feat of creativity and organization, its success was predicated primarily on the outrage and frustration building throughout Egyptian society at the increasingly authoritarian, monopolistic, and incompetent administration of Morsi. With no immediate constitutional mechanism for impeachment, millions took to the streets calling for him to go, some hoping that public pressure would force him to resign, others pushing for a military intervention.

With this resounding show of no confidence and the fragile security situation in the country on June 30, the possibility of violence was high. But at that pivotal juncture, Morsi still had options. He, and he alone, could have dialed down the rhetoric and avoided the bloodshed that was to come. Instead, his reckless nonchalance ensured that compromise solutions would not be forthcoming. So Egypt was left with the inevitable: a military ouster and a spiraling street war.

An honorable exit for Morsi would have been a recognition of reality. A crippled executive with a tenuous grip on authority who could not govern effectively -- even at the peak of his popularity -- was no longer in a position to fulfill his role. A negotiated safe exit would have also preserved the Muslim Brotherhood's political gains and

ensured its participation in the design of the transitional stage and upcoming elections. Such an exit would have also reversed its disastrous decision to renege on previous pledges and contest the presidential election, thereby relieving the organization of the enormous strain of governing Egypt during this tumultuous period.

Such a decision would have required Morsi to undertake a thorough assessment of his errors and an objective appraisal of the country's current dynamics. As difficult as such steps would have been, they were Egypt's only way out. Instead, the country has chosen one poison over the other.

But in the end, no functional political order can emerge, let alone a democratic transition, without the free, fair, and full participation by the Muslim Brotherhood. With Morsi now incommunicado and presumably filled with rightful indignation at his fate, he can still help bring Egypt back from the brink. To do so, however, will require him to be a real leader and make a painful concession -- placing his country's future first.

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Echoes of Nasser

By Steven A. Cook, July 16, 2013

It was October 26, 1954, and Gamal Abdel Nasser was regaling a crowd gathered in Alexandria's Manshiya Square. A Muslim Brother named Mahmoud Abdel Latif squeezed through the crowd and fired eight shots at the Egyptian leader, all of them missing. Perhaps Abdel Latif was a poor marksman or perhaps, as many have since wondered, the assassination attempt was staged -- whatever the case, Nasser went on to finish his speech to the thunderous approval of his audience. The extraordinary boost in popularity that the failed assassination attempt gave Nasser and his military comrades provided the regime with wide latitude to crush the Muslim Brotherhood: In Cairo, activists soon destroyed the Brotherhood's headquarters, while near the Suez Canal, regime supporters sacked Brotherhood-affiliated businesses.

Nasser used the "Manshiya incident," as it came to be known, to justify repression of the Brotherhood. Three days after Abdel Latif missed him, Nasser denounced Supreme Guide Hassan al-Hudaybi; the press, meanwhile, warned darkly that the Brotherhood's paramilitary organization -- al-jihaz al-sirri ("the secret apparatus") -- sought to topple the regime.

For the remainder of the Nasser era, the Brothers were either underground or imprisoned. This rendered the Islamists a non-factor in Egyptian politics for the next two decades -- but the showdown in 1954 between Egypt's generals and the Muslim Brotherhood would have a profound impact on Egyptian politics for decades to come.

It's possible to read too much into the comparisons between 1954 and 2013. No one in today's Egypt has tried to assassinate anyone -- at least not yet, thankfully. General Abdel Fattah al-Sisi is not Nasser, though he seems to be coming into his own. But even taking into consideration the vast differences, the political dynamics of July 2013 are eerily similar to October 1954, which does not bode well for Egypt's stability, not to mention its democratic development.

After the attempt on Nasser's life, the Muslim Brotherhood's leadership was rounded up and placed before kangaroo courts. A "people's tribunal" presided over by officers Salah Salim, Hussein Shafei, and future President Anwar Sadat sentenced the supreme guide and eight others to death, though the verdicts were all commuted to life sentences. An additional 1,100 Brothers were also jailed, while another 1,000 were incarcerated without being charged.

But while Nasser and the military could repress the Brothers and shatter their political power, they were unable to erase entirely the principles and ideas that animated the organization. Within Egypt's prisons, debates raged between the Brotherhood's rank-and-file and leadership about the identity of their enemy, and from where legitimacy to govern stems.

It was during this time in prison that Sayyid Qutb, the one-time minor Ministry of Education official who had become the head of the Brotherhood's propaganda section, began laying the groundwork for a more radical and uncompromising Islamism. During his imprisonment, he revised his eight-volume magnum opus In the Shadow of the Quran and excerpted much of it in his 1964 Milestones Along the Way, which he wrote specifically for a Muslim Brotherhood vanguard who sought his guidance during their imprisonment. Milestones would become an inspiration for generations of extremists.

The growing extremism of Brotherhood members of that era carries a grim suggestion of what could be next for Egypt -- but more relevant is the narrative that developed among the Brotherhood's mainstream as a result of their experiences in the 1950s and 1960s. After his arrest, Supreme Guide Hudaybi's primary concern was the survival of the Brotherhood: He first tolerated Qutb's activism for that reason, though ultimately distancing himself from the Islamist firebrand and his radicalized followers over a variety of doctrinal and political issues. What's more, the Islamists's prison experience helped crystallize their view of the Egyptian military elite as a politically corrupt, irreligious, and fundamentally illegitimate regime.

For Nasser and his fellow Free Officers, bringing down the Brotherhood -- which had been an ally of sorts -- was critical to consolidating their power and advancing their political agenda. In the process, however, they helped create a dedicated and widely influential opposition. The ensuing struggle between the Muslim Brothers and the Egyptian state -- despite moments of accommodation -- has been one of the major pathologies both destabilizing Egyptian politics and used to justify the authoritarian nature of the political system for six decades now.

In the aftermath of the July 3 military intervention and the subsequent crackdown on the Brothers, the same risks for Egypt's political maturation are evident today. In a sad replay of history, Prosecutor General Hisham Barakat has issued arrest warrants for a who's who of high profile Brothers: Supreme Guide Mohamed Badie; his predecessor, Mahdi Akef; and such well-known figures in the West like Essam el-Erian. The charges include spying, killing protesters, inciting violence, possession of weapons, and breaking out of prison. Meanwhile, former President Mohammed Morsi remains in military custody -- not so far charged with a crime, but out of the political game nonetheless. There are also lawsuits seeking the dissolution of the Brotherhood's Freedom and Justice Party.

The Brotherhood's determination to resist such moves adds a new and potentially dangerous factor to Egyptian politics. In fact, these efforts to undermine the movement may actually give it new life at a moment when it is at its weakest. A narrative of victimhood that runs from October 1954 to July 2013 is a powerful mechanism of mobilization for the Brothers's base: The organization is already talking about a "culture of oppression," and can add this latest episode to their narrative about the injustice of contemporary Egyptian politics.

The only hope, according to some supporters of the coup and leading members of the new government, is "to bring the Muslim Brothers into the political process." Even if these kinds of declarations were not dripping in hypocrisy -- the same figures just spearheaded an effort to forcibly remove the Brotherhood from the process -- the Brothers's

best strategy is to stay outside the political game and agitate against what they believe to be the fundamental illegitimacy of it. This will only add further instability to Egyptian politics, auguring more force, more arrests, and ultimately, authoritarian measures to establish political control.

There's always the risk that repression may produce splits and radicalized offshoots of the Brotherhood, but the longer-term consequences of July 3 are likely political. The precedent of pushing an elected president from power -- no matter how contested the election or unpopular the president -- suspending the constitution, and potentially banning political parties sets a dangerous precedent for Egypt's future. Morsi and his colleagues were intent on creating institutions that enhanced their power, which makes them no different from political and economic elites the world over. But what happens the next time a group of people determine they do not like their political chances? The July 3 military intervention could grow into a dangerous precedent for using authoritarian measures to alter Egyptian politics.

Morsi and the Brotherhood proved to be incompetent in government, but the real problem going forward may be the ease with which Egyptians believe they can disregard the political rules of the game. This will ultimately make it easier for authoritarians to rig the political system in their favor, all in the name of order and stability. As those who follow Egyptian history well know, it's happened before.

Even as many welcomed Sisi's move against Morsi and the Brotherhood as a way forward for Egyptian politics, the echoes of the past are ever-present. Egyptians might want to keep in mind that in October 1954, Egypt's generals rewrote the British-era military regulation as part of their effort to ensure their power after the confrontation with the Brotherhood. The revision expanded the powers of the military and became the forerunner of the Emergency Law of 1958 -- a symbol of tyranny that survived until Hosni Mubarak's era, and which provided a legal veneer for his crackdown on Islamist and non-Islamist opponents alike.

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The Resurgence of the Egyptian State

By Daniel Brumberg, July 8, 2013

Whatever you call it, the toppling of President Mohamed Morsi and the Muslim Brotherhood was first and foremost about a resurgent Egyptian state. This huge entity is what both the military and millions of anti-Morsi protesters were most afraid of losing. On July 3 Egypt experienced a *Sudden Blow by State Actors Seeking to Save the State* -- precisely what this French term *coup d'etat* is meant to convey. But whether a reinvigorated Egyptian state will achieve the aims its professed *democratic* proponents seek remains to be seen. As the escalating violence in Cairo and other cities sadly shows, Egypt now faces a protracted conflict that could usher in a political system far more closed than the one that the January 25, 2011 revolt tried to topple.

I came to appreciate the centrality of the state issue after reviewing an interview that I conducted years ago with

Algeria's former defense minister. The key instigator of the 1992 coup that ended Algeria's short-lived democratic transition, the retired general recounted his strange meeting with Ali Belhadj, the deputy leader of the Islamic Salvation Front. "Belhadj was dressed in military fatigues and had just returned from a huge demonstration to mobilize Algerians in a 'Jihad' against the Western-led coalition confronting Iraqi troops in Kuwait. What was this foolishness?" The conclusion that the minister drew was that the FIS was endangering the very existence of the Algerian state.

It is now clear that within months of Morsi's election, Egypt's generals had reached a similar conclusion about the Muslim Brotherhood (MB). The military's worries were not confined to the hemorrhaging economy or to Morsi's assertion of nearly unlimited constitutional powers. More fundamentally, the generals saw a security panorama fraught with dangers. The latter included the growing activism of jihadi groups in Sinai, and the associated efforts of religious preachers to impose Islamic law in that vast terrain. Their fears crystallized in early June when, following threats by Egyptian politicians to use Ethiopian rebels to sabotage the building of a Nile damn, Morsi asserted, "all options are open." He then appeared at a rally during which a Salafi preacher called for a jihad or holy war in Syria. Promising that the Egyptian "nation, leadership and army will not abandon the Syrian people," Morsi not only implicitly endorsed the call for crusade -- he said nothing after the Salafi preacher branded Shiites "infidels." The subsequent killing of four Shiite worshippers in a town close to Cairo fed the generals' fears that the MB was stoking the flames of sectarian conflict that could spread throughout Egypt -- a country that has some two million Shiites.

That Morsi provoked these concerns with such irresponsible abandon is not surprising. One thing that the MB never fully grasped is the nature of state power. In fact, it has long been an article of faith the state is not a distinctive entity with its own properties, exigencies, and identity. Rejecting this "Western" notion, MB theoreticians see the state as a means toward an end: a vessel that must reflect, teach, and protect the shared religious values of the *umma* or Muslim community. So long as the state does these things with justice and fairness it is good. When the state fails at these goals, it is illegitimate and must be replaced by leaders dedicated to spreading Islamic morality. This changing of the guard can be achieved in many ways, including democratic elections.

Yet if this particular vision of the state has long guided the MB's actions, it is another thing all together to suggest that by summer 2013 the "Ikwanization" of the state was approaching a point of no return, thus leaving no alternative other than a bold strike by both the army and by the millions of protesters who worried that a religious cult had seized their homeland. While this "body snatcher" fear was genuine and politically potent, the Egyptian state (not to mention society) was far from being captured by Islamist kidnappers posing as democrats. By July, the Ikwan had largely bungled the state capture project by taking actions (some of which are mentioned above) that manifested their ineptitude.

That incompetence belies the image that some U.S. "experts" painted of a Bolshevik-like mass movement capable of unsurpassed discipline and mental control. While it aspired to such ends, the Ikwan's single political success was to use the Islamist majority in the newly elected parliament to impose a new and highly authoritarian constitution. But absent an equally successful drive to capture state institutions, this was a pyrrhic victory. Paradoxically, the failure of the Ikwan to achieve the level of state capture that its rivals feared partly stemmed from the movement's long-standing wedding of ideology to pragmatic tactics. Rather than calling for a suicidal attack on the state, the Ikwan had always preferred practicing accommodation and peaceful coexistence with those state forces most capable of repressing its movement. Egypt's MB carried this praxis into the era of the 2011 Arab Rebellions through a process of trial and error that allowed it to make some limited headway against the state, but at a substantial cost.

For example, the MB appointed 10 out of 27 governors but then provoked a backlash when it tried to place a

former jihadist as governor of the Luxor Province. The MB attempted to intimidate the media but could not capture it -- a point humorously illustrated by (among other things) Bassam Youssef's relentless castigating of all sacred cows on his TV show. Similarly, the Ikwan made some headway into the Ministry of Culture, but its efforts to influence the monster bureaucracy of social and economic (mis) management only made a dent. Most crucially, it failed to seize the two institutions most critical to its statist mission: the judiciary and the military. In the first case the MB beat a hasty retreat after its clumsy bid to lower the retirement age of judges. In the second, Morsi's appointment of the relatively young General Abdel Fattah al-Sisi -- whose religious and populist sensibilities he assumed to be close to his own -- did not secure Sisi's love or cooperation. Indeed, the limits of the MB's accommodationist strategy were amply demonstrated by the expanded institutional prerogatives that its new constitution handed to the military. These concessions were not sufficient to produce even a whisker of the "bearded military" that some Egyptian secularists feared. On the contrary, the MB's stillborn *entente* with the military was a precondition for the July 3 *coup d'etat.*

The timing of that coup was closely (although not exclusively) tied to the mass rebellions of June 30 and the days beyond. The return of the state is not something the military alone desires, but something for which millions of Egyptians -- and many civil society activists in particular -- also yearn. As in all countries, civil society in Egypt not only requires a functioning state, but also laws, institutions, and economic resources, all of which are a precondition for its very existence.

Still, the assumption of secular leaders that a new *entente* with the military will eventually yield the legal and constitutional infrastructure for transforming mass politics into organized civic and political institutions may prove a pipe dream. The military may have learned some lessons over the last two years, but risking its uncertainties of democracy is probably not one of them. Indeed, as the MB's followers respond to their humiliation and the possibility of their exclusion from the political arena -- something the Tamarod leaders have in fact demanded -- the security apparatus will extend the net of repression, a prospect that bodes very badly for the very forces that supported the June 30 protests.

Despite such bleak prospects, there are many within the ranks of the liberal opposition who believe that giving up on democracy is a price worth paying if it means saving the state. U.S. policy makers should not underestimate just how terrified many Egyptian intellectuals, professionals, and business people are of the MB and their core ideology. They see the MB as nothing more than religious fascists and Morsi as a bumbling stand-in for an Egyptian "Hitler" who controls the Ikwan, and who sees the ballot box as a ticket to seizing state power.

The above analysis of the failures and limitations of the MB's statist strategy suggests just how overdrawn and misleading this analogy truly is. It does not have anything comparable to the organized mass following, mesmerizing ideology, or tens of thousands of trained shock troops that the Nazis used to capture the German state. Still, the fears generated by the MB's growing political power are not only real, they have echoes throughout the region, as ongoing conflicts between secularists and Islamists in Turkey and Tunisia amply show.

The good news is efforts by Islamists to conquer state institution face an uphill battle. Indeed, they can be challenged, stymied, or turned back even in a context of democratic governance or in the more volatile arena of unfolding transitions. Turkey's Taksim Revolt has put Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erodgan and his AKP allies on notice that a form of majoritarian rule that imposes a religious project on Turkey's secular middle class is unacceptable. In Tunisia, Ennahda leader Rached Ghannouci has pushed his party to embrace the politics of consensus even as its more radical members advocate a hegemonic project.

As for Egypt, state resurgence might have been accomplished without toppling a democratically elected president or shutting out the MB. The advocates of these

actions argue that midnight was fast approaching. But had the protesters and military used their leverage to offer a compromise that would have allowed this thoroughly discredited president to hobble along in office one more year, the energy generated by millions of protesters might have been organized to contest parliamentary elections as early as October, 2013 -- or to discredit any inept efforts by the MB at electoral fraud. Despite growing security challenges, nothing in the story of the MB's fumbled state-grabbing effort suggests that the coalition of liberals, leftists, and disgruntled Salafists who demanded Morsi's head will compel the state to give them the political freedoms they need to translate mass protests into effective (much less democratic) politics, or to prevent Egypt from slipping into the abyss of violent internal conflicts. If such conflict ensues, we can only hope that it does not take Egypt down the path the Algeria once followed.

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Egypt's wide state reassembles itself

By Nathan J. Brown, July 17, 2013

In all the tumult of the past month's events, one ephemeral development stands out in my mind as emblematic of the long-term processes at work in Egyptian politics. Less than a week before the June 30 demonstration calling for an end to Mohamed Morsi's presidency, I participated in a panel discussion with Egyptian political analyst Amr El Shobaki at the Bada'il Center, a research institute he heads in Cairo. Shobaki brought up the Balkanization of the Egyptian state, the term that I had once used to describe the way that various parts of the state apparatus operate autonomously and successfully insist that one from their ranks head the relevant ministry. (The minister of justice is always a judge; the minister of defense a senior general; the foreign minister a senior career diplomat; the minister of religious affairs a senior scholar from the official religious establishment; and so on). Shobaki made clear that he found the process troubling. Two weeks after this discussion, Shobaki unhappily demonstrated his own prescience when the state university faculty successfully blocked his candidacy for the ministry of higher education, insisting that a minister come from their own ranks.

The Egyptian leviathan is difficult to control for some poorly understood reasons. The concept of the "deep state" does provide some guidance, though the term's usefulness has been exaggerated. But the bigger problem for any kind of accountable governance in Egypt over the long term may not be the state's depth so much as its girth.

Is there a deep state?

The term "deep state," is a Turkish export, though it has cousins elsewhere (such as "le pouvoir" in Algeria). Talk of the deep state has spread in Egyptian discussions since the 2011 uprising to refer to the group of senior officials or critical institutions that collectively manage the entire political system -- senior military officers, the security apparatus, intelligence agencies, and sometimes judges and some senior bureaucrats.

Did the Egyptian deep state bring down Morsi and is it now running the country? Sort of.

There is no doubt that the judiciary as a whole came to regard Morsi as an enemy; that the military was a dominant (though hardly sole) actor in the downfall of Morsi; and that the security apparatus played a dirty game against him. Any reader of al-Watan would see telltale signs of the security establishment's attitude from numerous bizarre stories about the Brotherhood, and its printing of leaked transcripts of sensitive conversations in which General Abdel Fattah al-Sisi seems always to face down his interlocutors, whether Morsi or U.S. Ambassador Anne Patterson, with stirring assertions of manly determination and Egyptian patriotism.

But while these are powerful self-governing institutions, and while acting President Adly Mansour's July 8 constitutional declaration shows deep footprints of the deep state in its clauses, what strikes me is how much these various parts of this powerful phantom dislike each other. I have heard senior judges complain of the "state of baltagiyya (thugs)" to refer to the abusive security apparatus; others have voiced disgust at the use of military judges to try civilians. Judges tend to have a bit of disdain for their colleagues deemed too close to the intelligence and security apparatus. For its part, the military has shown its own disdain at ordinary policing and seems more interested in keeping itself unsullied than in hatching plots with its alleged co-conspirators. I have previously cast doubt on the idea that the Supreme Constitutional Court has acted as an agent of the old regime.

So yes, there is a deep state. But it might be a bit shallower and is certainly much less coherent than many of those who use the term imply. And while it is influential, there is much in the state that eludes its tight grip.

Balkanization within the state apparatus

Shobaki was not the only person to come under fire for having emerged as a ministerial candidate from outside the ranks of the institutions he was supposed to oversee. A new minister had the justice portfolio pried out of his grip (and given a new portfolio for transitional justice and reconciliation) because, although he was a judge, he was from the administrative courts rather than the regular judiciary, some of whose members complained for that reason. Kamal Abu Eita similarly drew fire when appointed minister of manpower. Abu Eita would seem to have all the qualifications -- he is a trade unionist from the union representing tax collectors. But that union was formed outside of (and in opposition) to the officially sponsored trade union federation, making him an alien to those who claim to speak officially for workers.

And Balkanization extends far beyond the choice of ministers. Family ties within personnel of state institutions, overlaid with residential and socializing patterns, make it common to come across an official body that appears to be halfway between a bureaucracy and a caste. Someone taking a stroll along the Nile in Cairo would see a succession of clubs for the families of each of these bodies, some with puzzling names that only a mammoth bureaucracy could generate (like the Club of the State Cases Authority).

To understand the political significance of these phenomena, it pays to look backward at the way that authoritarianism matured in Egypt under Presidents Anwar Sadat and Hosni Mubarak. In the 1970s, Sadat inherited a system that was tightly controlled by the security apparatus, military officers peppered official positions, only one political party was permitted (and owned all press), and restrictions on political organization and speech led little room for dissent. But the system seemed to be on the verge of losing its grip; worse, some of those parts of the state apparatus provided a platform for Sadat's rivals. Over the course of the 1970s, the sole political party was disestablished; a nominally multiparty system was allowed to form (with what eventually became the National Democratic Party dominating the political system and ownership of the press transferred to a newly-created upper house of the parliament); opposition newspapers were permitted; the Muslim Brotherhood was allowed to re-emerge -- discouraged from formal political activity but providing a counterweight to leftist groups, especially on college campuses; the military gradually edged out of its political role; security services reined

in; and a limited measure of judicial independence was restored. In the 1980s, most of these trends were deepened under Mubarak.

The course of this limited liberalization was uneven, and Egypt's leaders periodically bared their full authoritarian teeth (most notably in 1981 when Sadat launched a wholesale crackdown on dissent across the spectrum or in the 1990s when Mubarak used harsh tools against Islamists).

But the overall institutional effect of this evolution was clear: the Egyptian state was no longer micromanaged from the presidency. Of course, the presidency was still in a central position and, when push came to shove, had ways to override any law or procedure and impose its will. But push rarely came to shove, and critical state institutions were allowed a very considerable degree of internal autonomy. The presidency managed the state apparatus by appointing individuals to key positions (such as the prosecutor general or the chief editors of state-owned press), co-optation (doling out higher salaries, plum appointments, or other benefits to key individuals or institutions), and fostering institutional duplication (with an array of courts to use if one proved unreliable; overlapping security services, and so on).

The result was a strong sense of corporate identity among many state actors but there was also some tension within many of them between those eager to get along for personal or institutional reasons and those who chafed at what they saw as the cheapening or corruption of their cherished institutions. The emergence, for instance, of the "independence trend" among the judiciary, or an association of dissident religious scholars within al-Azhar were two of the most visible public manifestations of this tension.

Thus it was during these years that the "Balkanization" of the state took place. Each part of these assemblages of states-within-the state developed its own (often ossified) leadership, doling out benefits within its part of the state in order to cement ties of loyalty.

Everyone above the fray

The reach of the Egyptian state goes far in many directions. In economics, state-owned enterprises, regulations, and controls are still strong even after decades of liberalization efforts. In culture, the state sponsors much production; in media, state-owned or managed enterprises are still powerful; in religion, Egyptians are taught, pray, and are adjudicated in structures operated by various state organs.

And all of these structures have come not only to value their internal autonomy but to see themselves as representing the higher interests of state or the welfare of the people. The military openly proclaims itself to be loyal to Egypt (and pointedly not to the political leadership as an elaborately produced video after its July 3 coup made clear). The police have worked with surprising (though perhaps temporary) success in recent weeks to reassert their position as guarantors of public security. Al-Azhar sees itself not simply as propagating the most appropriate interpretation of Islam but also as the conscience of, and advocate for, the society. Judges represent impartial application of the law, securing the rights of the weak. The diplomatic corps operates within its sphere to advocate for the interests of state in the international realm.

All these institutions see themselves as above politics, and sometimes for good reason. Some do have a strong sense of professionalism and integrity, and the political realm has only offered interference, domination, and instability. They welcome public oversight as much as airline pilots yearn to hand the controls to their passengers.

Egyptian politics has become frustrating and fickle for such actors. And the limited autonomy that these institutions achieved over the past decade only deepened after the 2011 overthrow of Mubarak. Not only is the hand of the presidency no longer weighing heavily on their shoulders, but some institutions (such as the leadership of al-Azhar, the Supreme Constitutional Court, public prosecution, and the armed forces) have managed to secure legal and institutional changes that could make them virtually self-perpetuating bodies, no longer merely autonomous but

virtually independent of any oversight.

But the problem for Egypt is that if so much state activity is to be insulated, politics (and the organizations, movements, and parties that populate political and civil society) is squeezed very much to the side. The width of the state leaves little room for the people.

Frankenstein's monster with no Dr. Frankenstein

In the aftermath of the 2011 uprising, I expected two battles to be set off by the Balkanization of the Egyptian state. First, there would be a contest over these institutions' autonomy or even independence, as each sought to throw off the yoke of the presidency but also found a reinvigorated political scene and stronger parliament eager to remold the state. Second, I expected a battle within each of these institutions, as younger or reform-minded members pushed against a senior leadership often closely associated with the old regime.

In fact, both these battles took place, but it is not clear that they resulted in much change. As mentioned above, some institutions have obtained more autonomy and are anxious to preserve it. The Brotherhood dominated lower house of parliament (which met from January to June 2012), the Morsi presidency (June 2012 to July 2013), and the briefly active upper house of parliament (with legislative authority from December 2012 until July 2013) each made forays at controlling some state bodies (the judiciary was one target; state-owned media saw changes in the senior ranks; the Ministry of Religious Affairs was made more Brotherhood-friendly turf) while working to placate or negotiate with others (such as the military, al-Azhar, and the security apparatus). Close to two and a half years after Mubarak's forced departure, the Egyptian state is more Balkanized than it was under Mubarak.

And the second battle -- over reform within each institution -- has been a dud. In the formation of the new cabinet, there was strong evidence of pressure within the ranks of certain ministries for or against particular candidates -- probably more pressure from below than ever existed in the Mubarak years -- but no evidence of any strong reform drive. Perhaps this will be a long-term generational struggle rather than a sudden burst of reform. And there has been some slow change at the top of some institutions, sometimes induced by retirement. But the burst of youthful energy on full display in Egyptian public squares sporadically over the past two and a half years has yet to be felt in the dark corridors of many Egyptian state organs.

Of course, social and political actors not anchored in the state are hardly irrelevant to Egyptian politics today -- in the period after June 30, elements of the wide state have had to bargain seriously with a host of non-Islamist forces. But that is the most that can be said right now.

Earlier, of course, the Brotherhood made itself a forceful presence (far less than much of the talk of "Brotherhoodization" of the state implied) but its foray in the direction of remolding state institutions now seems to have been fully blunted and many of its changes swiftly reversed. In the current negotiations over amending the constitution and the formation of the cabinet, there are strong signs of bargaining among a host of political actors (the formal party scene as well as newer mass movements), but it is not yet clear that social and political actors outside the state have had much effect.

The promise of constitutional reform, for instance, has begun with an offer only of amendment (rather than wholesale redrafting). The interim constitutional declaration seems to suggest that certain clauses protecting the military and the judiciary may be off limits and initial drafting will be dominated by judges nominated by their colleagues and law professors selected by state universities. Only then will political actors have their say and the people be allowed to vote. Just as occurred with the 2012 constitution, the process of amending that document is one of the Egyptian state constituting itself.

Egyptian political actors may gradually find ways to translate their seats at the table into real influence over outcomes, but it is difficult to see that process resulting in serious reform as long as political life is so polarized and atomized. And

in the mean time, as I wrote a year and a half ago, "the odd result may be that just as Egyptians are beginning to realize truly democratic parliamentary and presidential elections, those positions with strong democratic credentials may be losing some of their authority to the forces of bureaucratic autonomy and professional expertise."

And I should add that many of Egypt's political actors are hampered in any quest for coordination by their tendency to betray the same attitude of so many state actors -- to identify their goals and interests with the interest of the entire country. Seeing themselves as representing all the people (or at least the good ones), their rivals become not simply mistaken or adversaries but public enemies in an environment where too many Egyptians seem motivated by a desire to liquidate the hateful and pulverize the intolerant.

At best, this leads all actors to overlook how much over the years authoritarian practices have been woven deeply into Egypt's governing structures, laws, and patters of political behavior and how much the institutional framework of political life in Egypt is working against them. And at worst, those same actors do not ignore those practices but strive to exploit them against their enemies.

On June 30, a popular uprising occurred. But the aftermath reeks less of revolutionary than restorationist enthusiasm. The Egyptian state today resembles nothing so much as the various parts and organs of Frankenstein's monster attempting to assemble themselves -- but doing so without the assistance of Dr. Frankenstein and working not inside a secretive laboratory but instead in Tahrir Square, before a sometimes cheering crowd.

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How Morsi could have saved himself

By Tarek Masoud, July 19, 2013

Shortly after Mohamed Morsi's ouster as president of Egypt, his ambassador to the United States -- in a remarkable display of political flexibility -- appeared on American television to explain that his boss had been overthrown because he "failed to be the president of all Egyptians." This notion, that Morsi was removed because he pursued a narrowly Islamizing agenda and failed to include liberals in his cabinet, has become something of the conventional wisdom. For example, Thomas Friedman chided the former Egyptian president for having ruled in a "majoritarian" fashion, running roughshod over his liberal opponents, Islamizing the state, and putting the squeeze on critics like the satirist Bassem Youssef. In this telling, what we saw on June 30 was a replay of what we saw on January 25, 2011 -- a revolution by liberals intent on establishing a free and democratic Egypt.

Though there is some truth to this narrative, June 30 was less a revolution than a counter-revolution, carried out not by the photogenic young people who made Tahrir Square a household name two-and-a-half years ago, but by the orphans of the regime that those young people had overthrown. Morsi's sin was not that he sought to Islamize the state -- Hosni Mubarak had done a pretty good job of

that himself, and the temporary constitution issued by the new interim government includes all of the sharia-talk that liberals supposedly found so objectionable. It wasn't even that it tried to exclude liberals like Hamdeen Sabahi and Mohamed ElBaradei from governing. According to Sabahi himself, Morsi offered him the vice presidency shortly after coming to power last year. And although ElBaradei has just been named vice president for international affairs, it's safe to assume that the number of protesters who took to the streets to put this widely (if unfairly) maligned man in government is vanishingly small.

No, the sin of the Muslim Brotherhood was not that it failed to work with liberals, but that it failed to work with the old regime. For almost the entirety of its time in power, the Brotherhood has demonstrated a remorseless, unyielding obsession with rooting out Mubarak's National Democratic Party (NDP) from Egypt's political life. The extent of the obsession was on full display in one of the last speeches of Morsi's presidency. Before a crowd made up of equal parts dignitaries and rowdy Muslim Brothers from the provinces, he railed against the remnants of the ancien regime -- commonly called the fulul -- and then took a few minutes to tell an unflattering story about a man named Kamal el-Shazly, who was Mubarak's parliamentary enforcer -- and who has been dead since 2010. This odd detour into what is now ancient history reveals the extent to which Morsi and his Brothers viewed as Egypt's primary problem as not the crumbling of its economy or the decay in public order, but the continued presence of Mubarak's allies and appointees in almost every corner of the state apparatus. "One year is enough," the president declared, suggesting that the gloves were soon to come off and a full-blown purge was in the offing. In the end, he was the one who was purged.

The Brothers were not alone in their obsession with the NDP. During the 2011 revolution, the youth of Tahrir made a grand bonfire of the ruling party's headquarters, and in the months after January 25, 2011, practically all of Egypt at least paid a healthy lip service to the need to banish the fulul. Though the NDP made a game attempt to regroup in the weeks after Mubarak's resignation, these attempts were cut short in April 2011, when a court dissolved the NDP and ordered the state to seize its assets, ruling -- in a questionable bit of legal reasoning -- that the fall of the regime "by necessity entails the fall of the instruments through which it wielded power."

But the dissolution of the old ruling party was not enough for the Brotherhood; its ashes had to be scattered to the winds. And the military, concerned only with maintaining its narrow prerogatives, assented. Prior to the 2012 presidential elections, the Islamist-dominated legislature amended the law on the exercise of political rights. That law lists several categories of people who do not have the right to vote or run for office -- prisoners, the mentally ill, the bankrupt. Islamists added a fourth, almost comically specific, category: "Everyone who has in the ten years prior to February 11, 2011, worked as president of the republic or his vice president or prime minister or president of the dissolved NDP or its secretary general or was a member of its political office or general secretariat." The bill was rejected by the courts, clearing the way for Mubarak's last prime minister, Ahmed Shafiq, to run for president. If the Brothers took a lesson from Shafiq's surprisingly strong showing in that election -- he lost to Morsi by only a couple of percentage points -- it was not that the satraps of the old regime must be accommodated, but that they must be crushed.

Thus, once Morsi won the presidency, the Brotherhood and its Islamist allies made another, even more audacious, run at excluding the NDP. And this time, in order to prevent the courts from overturning their handiwork, they enshrined the old ruling party's political exclusion in the constitution itself. Article 232 of the charter that passed in December 2012 (and was suspended in July 2013) declared: "Leaders of the dissolved National Democratic Party shall be banned from political work and prohibited from running for presidential or legislative elections for a period of 10 years from the date of the adoption of this Constitution." The article helpfully defines NDP "leaders" as "everyone who was a member of the Secretariat of the Party, the Policies Committee or the Political Bureau, or was a member of the People's Assembly or the Shura Council during the two legislative terms preceding the

January 25 revolution." It's not surprising that the most intense protests against the Brotherhood began after the passage of the constitution, as NDP-affiliated businessmen and NDP-affiliated television personalities began ginning up the popular anger that exploded on June 30, 2013.

The tragedy of Morsi's presidency, then, is not that he underestimated the ability of the fulul to play the spoiler, but that he overestimated his own ability to confront them. Mubarak's party may have slinked away in the months after February 11, 2011, but it had not disappeared. After all, you couldn't rule for as long as Mubarak did without building a large coalition -- the vast countryside and the hulking bureaucracy are littered with card-carrying members of the deposed ruler's big tent. Morsi's constant talk of purge may have satisfied his supporters, but it could only convince the regime's former cronies that they had no place in the new Egypt.

The disaster that befell Egypt on June 30 -- and make no mistake, the unseating of a legitimately elected ruler at gunpoint cannot be anything other than a disaster -- could have been avoided had the Muslim Brotherhood taken a lesson from its Muslim brothers 5,000 miles away, in Indonesia. In 1998, that country's strongman, Suharto, who had ruled since 1967, was forced to step down by protests remarkably similar to those that brought down Mubarak. But whereas Egyptians tossed their dictator in jail and tore up his ruling party, Indonesians pursued a different, gentler path. Suharto -- a man every bit as corrupt as, and considerably more brutal than, his Egyptian counterpart -- was allowed to live out his days in luxury, and his old ruling party, Golkar, was not only allowed to persist (reliably capturing about 20 percent of the vote in legislative elections), but has been included in every post-Suharto cabinet but one. Indonesians may not have satisfied their powerful desire for justice, but their willingness to forgo retribution and work with supporters of the old regime is what allowed that country's nascent democracy to take root despite its endemic poverty and vast ethnic diversity.

It's not too late, however, for Egyptians to learn the lesson of Indonesia. Now that the old regime and the Muslim Brotherhood have once again traded places, will Mubarak's resurgent orphans extend to the Brotherhood the kindnesses that were not extended to them? Given the dramatic campaign against the Brothers in the Egyptian media, the arrests of Brotherhood leaders, and the brutality meted out to Brotherhood protesters, the answer is likely no. But until Egypt's two old regimes -- the Brotherhood's and Mubarak's -- reach a modus vivendi, the future promises only more revolution and counter-revolution. It's not clear how much more the beleaguered masses can take before they begin to yearn for the grim stability offered by a be medaled general.

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The Brotherhood revives its Mehna narrative

By Khalil al-Anani, July 15, 2013

The removal of Egypt's President Mohamed Morsi has opened a new chapter in the Muslim Brotherhood's long-lasting anguish and ordeal (mehna). Brotherhood leaders and members are not only angry and irritated because they lost power through a military coup, but they have also developed grievances against the army and media as well as liberal and secular opponents, which might last for years.

When I spoke with some Muslim Brotherhood (MB) members over the past week they showed a lot of bitterness toward Colonel Abdul Fattah el-Sisi, the army chief, who according to them has "betrayed" Morsi. Indeed, a few hours before Morsi's ouster, a close advisor to him told me: "The military is in our pocket." Obviously, he was emphatically wrong. What was striking, at least to me, was that none of the people with whom I spoke have shown any regret or attribute any blame to their leaders over Morsi's removal.

However, the crucial question is: How do the MB leaders and members perceive the current crisis and what does it mean to the movement's coherence and solidarity? Surprisingly, it does not seem that the Brotherhood leadership is very bothered or worried about the current confrontation with the army. Indeed, it's quite the opposite. The movement leaders view this confrontation, at the minimal, as crucial to restore public support and safeguard its internal integration and coherence. It is the only way that the MB can dodge many disputes and divisions over who should be held accountable for the movement's mistakes over the past year. Moreover, the Brotherhood's history tells us that the movement thrives under repression. The movement expanded massively and gained political clout under former President Hosni Mubarak despite the systematic repression and exclusion of its members.

Ironically, since it came to power the MB has lost a lot of its credibility and appeal particularly after Morsi's terrible mistakes over the past year. However, and unlike many might think, the current crackdown against MB leaders would do nothing but enhance their public support and improve their image. The MB has a remarkable record of playing the "victimization" card to broaden its social constituency and network. This was clear after the massacre last week in front of the Republic Guard building in Cairo, which left around 50 MB members dead and 435 injured. Over the past week, I've met with dozens of Egyptians who decided to join the MB's sit-in in Rab'a El-Adawiyya in Nasr City. When I asked one of them why he was there, he forcefully answered: "to protect my vote and defend the oppressed [MB]."

Moreover, the current media campaign that aims to demonize the MB, and portray them as "terrorists," seems useless and could be counterproductive. It provides the MB with a "free service" to increase its support and sympathy among the Egyptian public. Not surprisingly, many Islamists who aren't affiliated with the MB have decided to join the protests against the military. Indeed, they fear if the MB lost this battle, they would be the next targets of the police state, which according to them, came back to life after the June 30 protests more powerful and hostile to Islamists. When I asked a member of Ansar Al-Sunna group, a purely religious movement with no interest in politics, why he joined the MB protests, his answer was: "to protect my religious freedom." Therefore, many of those who join the MB's protests now are driven by fear of the return of Mubarak's brutal state, which repressed them for three decades.

While the MB leadership realizes that reinstating Morsi is pure fantasy and unrealistic, the crucial question remains: why then they keep protesting? The answer is twofold: to avoid internal disputes, accountability, and maybe splits, and to ensure that the MB's political and social activities would not be suspended in the future. For the MB, protesting is seen as the survival code at this stage. Moreover, protesting would secure the MB the media

coverage it desperately needs in the light of the closure of its satellite channel, Misr 25, and other religious networks since the military coup on July 3.

During crisis time, the MB as a social and ideological movement tends to turn inward in order to maintain its unity and solidarity of members. It invokes that tribulation or mehna as a shield to protect the movement from divisions and splits. Indeed, it is the only way the MB could survive the current crisis.

According to a senior MB leader, although the demand of reinstating Morsi might not seem realistic, it is crucial to secure members' support for the leadership during these critical times. "Now we have a strong cause that could bind members and leaders together which could prevent internal quarrels and blame particularly among the youth," he said to me. The MB has extraordinary ability to morph anguish into a tool that keeps its structure and organization solid and effective. The more you press the MB, the less it can be prone to fragmentation and fissures.

Therefore, with time MB's protesting in Rab'a El-Adawiyya square, turns to be a goal per se. It is a functioning mechanism that keeps members aligned with the movement's leadership and cause. Moreover, any retreat could open the door for many questions within the MB: why the movement lost power quickly and disgracefully? Who from the movement's leaders should be held accountable for this? And was it the correct decision to run for presidency in 2012 in the first place?

In addition, keeping the protests and momentum in the streets could secure the MB a place in the future political game. The Brotherhood is still highly obsessed with the past, particularly the 1950s and 1960s when its leaders and members were hounded, arrested, tortured, and executed. MB members believe that if they left the squares they would lose an important card that could improve their position on the negotiation table with the military and the new order. In other words, the MB does not want to pay the price for its mistakes and still count on its mehna tactic. Not surprisingly, the MB rejects the political process and roadmap that was proposed by the military and the interim President Adly Mansour as it does not have any assurances about its political future.

It would be naïve to believe that the MB is finished or that political Islam in Egypt came to an end after the downfall of Morsi as some accounts are arguing. It is important to remember that Morsi's regime has gone but its patron still exists. Moreover, the MB is more than a political party, it is a rooted social movement with a large and devoted constituency. And it still has the most well knit organization and structure in Egypt. Furthermore, the MB has a secret and underground network that can vividly operate and adapt with such an oppressive environment.

To sum up, it might be true that the political project of the MB was defeated when it fell short in addressing Egypt's many problems, yet as a religious and social movement, the MB will remain as long as Egypt has a highly conservative and religious society.

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Premature obituaries for political Islam

By Fawaz A. Gerges, July 16, 2013

Following the Egyptian military's ouster of the Islamist-led presidency of Mohamed Morsi, commentators have been quick to declare the end of the era of the Islamists. Such hasty conclusions, however, fail to consider deeper questions, such as: Are we witnessing the beginning of the end of religiously-based parties, or is this the failure of Islamists to govern effectively and inclusively? How much harm has the Muslim Brotherhood's first experience in power inflicted on the Islamist movement throughout the region? What have we learned about the Islamists' conduct and practice while in office? Does the toppling of the first democratically elected (Islamist) president in Egypt's modern history undermine the democratic transition?

To begin with, mainstream Islamists of the Brotherhood variety have survived decades of persecution, incarceration, and exile by military-led authoritarian regimes. And they will most likely weather the latest coup that has swept away Morsi. Despite concerted efforts in the last six decades by secular strongmen like late Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser to weaken and isolate their religious rivals, the Islamists' close-knit networks and asabiya (group loyalty) have allowed them to withstand the brutal onslaught of secular authorities and grow their organization.

In my interviews with the Islamist rank-and-file over the past 20 years in Egypt and elsewhere, it has become clear to me that religious activists are nourished on a belief in the movement's divine victory and they are willing to endure sacrifice, hardship, and loss to bring about that desired end. Decades of persecution that drove the Islamists underground have left deep scars on the Islamists' psychology and imagination. As a result, they often view the wider society as intrinsically hostile to their cause. The Egyptian military's ouster of Morsi will reinforce this siege mentality and the sense of victimhood and injustice among the Muslim Brothers and their followers.

If history is our guide, in the short and midterm, Islamist leaders will prioritize unity and solidarity of the organization as opposed to critically evaluating their performance in government and drawing out critical lessons. They will bury their heads in the sand and accuse the world of conspiring against them. The Muslim Brothers have already begun to mobilize thousands of followers, a task made easier by a strongly held belief that the Islamists are defending constitutional legitimacy against a "fascist coup" by the military. As one of the most powerfully organized social and political movements in Egypt and the region, the Brotherhood can rely on its power base, which represents between 20 to 30 percent of the electorate, to remain a force to be reckoned with either at the ballot box or in the streets.

Although the Islamists will remain key players in the countries most affected by the large-scale Arab popular uprisings and the Middle East at large, their brand has been damaged. As the former deputy supreme leader of the Brotherhood (second-in-command), Mohammed Habib, put it, the Brotherhood has lost not only the presidency but also its moral case, its claim that it stands above the political fray and that it knows what it takes to resolve the country's economic and institutional challenges. The Islamists' yearlong governance experience exposed a conceptual deficit, a poverty of policy programs, and an authoritarian streak reminiscent of their secular counterparts. Political Islam has failed on the level of both theory and practice. In the eyes of a critical segment of the lower and middle class co-opted by the Islamists after the removal of President Hosni Mubarak, Morsi and the Brothers have been tried and found wanting. They have failed to deliver the local public goods.

More than a year after gaining power, the Islamists' mismanagement of the economy laid bare their celebrated claim that they are skilled managers, administrators, and merchants and that they are better equipped to provide social services and jobs than their secular authoritarian

predecessors. They proved to be as incompetent, lacking original ideas and managerial and administrative skills, as those whom they replaced.

Far from improving the economy, the Islamists' muddled style of governance has actually exacerbated a structural crisis and caused more hardship and suffering among the poor and the dwindling middle class. On the first anniversary of Morsi's presidency, millions of protesters, some who had voted for the Muslim Brotherhood, filled the streets demanding his resignation. He alienated not only the liberal-leaning opposition but he has also angered millions of Egyptians because of his economic mismanagement. The Muslim Brothers and other Islamists made a catastrophic mistake by not developing a repertoire of ideas about governance, particularly the political economy. In the past decade when I (and others) pressed Islamists about their political-economic programs, they retorted by saying that was a loaded question designed to expose them to public criticism; they would release their programs once they were allowed to participate in the political process. The Islamist movement suffers from a paucity of original ideas, a huge body with a tiny brain.

Public dissatisfaction with Morsi goes beyond poor economic performance and centers on his authoritarian ways and his systemic effort to entrench Islamist rule. The Islamists have not made the transition mentally from an opposition group to a governing party. Although they won a solid majority in the parliamentary and presidential elections, they have acted as if the whole world is pitted against them, a mind-set that caused them to overreach and thus monstrously miscalculate.

Instead of delivering on his promises, such as building a broadly based inclusive government and al-nahda, or renaissance, Morsi went to great lengths to monopolize power and place Muslim Brothers in state institutions. There is a widespread belief among Egyptians of all walks of life that Morsi tried to ikhwanat misr (make Egypt in the Brotherhood's image) and subordinated the presidency to the Brotherhood, a fatal error, to a proud country that calls Egypt Umm al-Dunya (the mother of the world).

There is no denying that Morsi, a pliant functionary and a safe choice for the Brotherhood, is heavily responsible for the Islamist debacle. Morsi was his own worst enemy, deaf and blind to the gathering storm around him. He mastered the art of making enemies and blunders, and turned millions of Egyptians who voted for him into bitter enemies. He was the wrong man to lead Egypt, the most populous Arab state, at this critical revolutionary juncture.

Morsi's Islamist-led administration did indeed inherit a country that was politically polarized and financially bankrupt. From the outset, he faced stiff resistance to his presidency from state institutions, including the police and the security forces, and the entrenched interests of the old guard. Similarly, the liberal-leaning opposition never allowed Morsi a honeymoon period. Seculars and liberals deeply mistrusted the Islamists from the outset and they viewed them as an existential threat to the secular identity of Egypt, which motivated them to call on the military to topple a democratically elected president and subsequently embrace it -- a non-democratic act. The Islamist-nationalist fault line that emerged in the mid-1950s still exists and the culture wars are still raging. This divide now has been invested with cultural and civilization-based overtones. Writing in Al Hayat, an Arabic-based newspaper, Adonis, a prominent secular poet and a vehement critic of the Islamists, argues that the struggle between Islamists and secular-leaning nationalists is more cultural and civilization-humanist than political or ideological; it is organically linked to the struggle over the future of Arab identity, the Arab future.

Given the odds, Morsi was bound to disappoint and eventually fail. Egypt's problems grew under his watch; social and economic conditions worsened and political divisions deepened.

Regardless of the criticism leveled against Morsi, there was nothing unique about the Islamists testing the limits of their newfound power, falling into the trap of blind political ambition. The question is not whether Islamists are liberal or born-again democrats (they are neither), even though now they are portraying themselves as the

champions of constitutional legitimacy. Their worldview and socialization ensure that they will most likely preside over conservative, illiberal democracies.

Nevertheless, Islamists, including the ultra-conservatives, have stressed a commitment to institutionalize democracy and to accept its parameters and rules. That is good news because liberalism does not precede democracy -- it is the other way around. Once institutions and democratic political practices are enshrined, then the debate on individual rights and minorities, and the role of the sacred in the political can be managed through freedom of expression and change of majorities in parliament.

The military's removal of Morsi undermines Egypt's fragile democratic experiment because there is a real danger that once again the Islamists will be suppressed and excluded from the political space. The writing is already on the wall with the arrest of Morsi and the targeting of scores of Brotherhood leaders. This does not bode well for the democratic transition because there will be no institutionalization of democracy without the Brotherhood, the biggest and oldest mainstream religiously based Islamist movement in the Middle East.

The fallout and reverberations will transcend Egypt to neighboring Arab and Middle East countries. Throughout the region, Islamists are anxious that the popular tide may have turned against them. After the large-scale Arab uprisings from 2010 to 2012, there was a widespread perception among Arabs that the Islamists were a winning horse, unstoppable. That inevitability has been turned upside down after millions of Egyptians protested against the Islamist-led administration of Morsi and his subsequent ouster. Ikhwan (the Muslim Brothers) is a toxic brand that could contaminate political Islam and debilitate it.

As the central Islamist organization established in 1928, the failure of the Muslim Brotherhood's first experience in power will likely taint the standing and image of its branches and junior ideological partners in Palestine, Jordan, Syria, and even Tunisia and Morocco. Hamas is already reeling from the violent storm in Cairo and the Muslim Brothers in Jordan are feeling the political heat and pressure at home. The Syrian Islamists are disoriented and fear that the tide has turned against them. The liberal-leaning opposition in Tunisia is energized and plans to go on the offensive against Ennahda. Even the mildly Islamist Justice and Development Party (AKP) and the Gulen Movement in Turkey are watching unfolding developments in neighboring Egypt with anxiety and disquiet. Nevertheless, it would be foolish to pen the obituary of the Islamist movement.

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The Man on Horseback

By Robert Springborg, July 2, 2013

Pity the man on horseback. Egypt's defense minister, General Abdel Fattah al-Sisi, is all saddled up, but he knows not where to ride. On July 1, he delivered an ultimatum giving the civilian government 48 hours to "meet the demands of the people" or the military would step in and implement a "road map" for the country's future.

The military's soaring popularity would seem to provide Sisi with sufficient leverage to force the Muslim Brotherhood president, Mohamed Morsi, to bend to his will. The armed forces now boast an approval rating of 94 percent, according to a Zogby poll conducted from April to May. This is a remarkable change of fortune and a high-water mark for the military's popularity: Approval had been in a steady slide following the February 2011 ouster of President Hosni Mubarak as a result of Field Marshal Mohamed Hussein Tantawi's clumsy and ill-fated leadership of the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF). By contrast, support for Morsi has been in steep decline, falling from 57 percent to 28 percent, according to the Zogby poll.

But what does the general plan to do with his newfound leverage? Lest there be any misunderstanding that he aspires to the classic "officer on horseback" role of running the state directly, his spokesperson "clarified" within hours of the July 1 declaration that the military had no intent of seizing power in a coup d'état -- raising the question of how, then, it would implement its "road map" to political recovery. The experience of the SCAF, after all, had carried a clear lesson to the officer corps that direct political action is best left to others.

This ambiguity over the military's precise role and objectives could of course be purposeful, intended to keep its opponents off balance. More likely, however, it reflects Sisi's real dilemma of how to use his powers without undermining them -- and even the country he claims to be saving. The potential costs of a coup, however it is dressed up, are substantial: Egyptians take pride in their country's long history of at least nominal constitutionalism, and a military takeover would be at least *a*-constitutional, if not outright unconstitutional. No doubt the military high command is concerned that a profound violation of even the rather dubious Egyptian Constitution could come back to haunt it, both politically and legally.

A full-fledged coup would also risk the military's vital relationship with Washington. U.S. President Barack Obama's administration has been consistent and outspoken in its opposition to direct military rule since Mubarak's fall, even though it has been willing to accept a pretty thin civilian fig leaf. U.S. officials have reportedly warned the Egyptian generals that a military coup could result in the cutting of all U.S. aid to the country.

The military's coercive power is also too blunt an instrument to use in the political arena, especially against those as well organized as the Islamists. The street-level organization of the Muslim Brotherhood alone is now further reinforced by penetration and at least partial control of some state entities, including the Interior Ministry. Unlike in 1954, when Gamal Abdel Nasser and his officer colleagues met virtually no resistance when they rounded up Brotherhood activists, the military would certainly face a different situation today. Deploying heavy weapons against civilians would cross so many red lines it is basically unimaginable, while deploying troops would invite myriad problems when the military's civilian opponents are spread over the length and breadth of the country. And the Brotherhood, mindful of its past struggles with the military, would be far more likely to fight back.

As for the military's widespread popularity, that too is potentially ephemeral. An essential ingredient in the military's high standing has been its political neutrality, which it would find difficult if not impossible to square

with direct rule. Even more challenging would be actually guiding the ship of state, which is going off an economic cliff as the political drama unfolds. Much of Morsi's unpopularity is due to the economic crisis and its various manifestations -- all of which would remain were the military to seize power, and none of which can be quickly resolved.

The military is well aware that it can't count on the loyalty of the crowds that cheered the army helicopters that buzzed over Tahrir Square Monday, July 1. Among the secular opposition, distaste for military rule is widespread -- and indeed is the very factor that caused many to vote for Morsi in the second round of the presidential election last year when he faced off against his military-backed opponent, Ahmed Shafiq. While the secular opposition would welcome the military pushing the Brothers out of power, such support would quickly dissipate if the military then sought to rule.

The question of "to coup or not to coup" is made even more difficult by the internal politics of the military itself. Sisi, after all, was appointed by Morsi and is himself an Islamist in outlook, as demonstrated by his writings and statements while attending the U.S. Army War College. Under his leadership, the ban on Brotherhood members entering Egypt's military academy has been lifted, and at least one close family member, his nephew, is an activist in the organization. For the armed forces commander, an ignominious collapse of the Egyptian Islamist project -- with its negative ramifications for Arab Islamism more generally -- would be difficult to countenance. Clearly, he would like Morsi and his Islamist supporters to get their act together and provide effective governance.

While Islamism enjoys support within the officer corps, it also has its opponents. More important than political leanings, however, are officers' institutional loyalties and their self-image as ultimate defenders of the nation. Sisi thus risks losing the support of his own officers if he seems to be sacrificing the good of the nation for the cause of Islamists. He can only cut them so much slack before his position becomes untenable.

In sum, Sisi confronts a grave political crisis that could degenerate into profound violence were he to make the wrong move, or perhaps even if he made no move at all. He cannot count on the loyalty of the Egyptian Army if he decides to give the Brothers much more time to come to terms with their opponents and manage the country effectively. And he cannot count on Washington's support if his actions are effectively portrayed as anti-democratic or if they precipitate a breakdown in order. Sisi may seem like he has Egypt in the palm of his hand, but the truth is far different. Pity the man on horseback as he contemplates the challenging ride ahead.

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Reforming the Egyptian police?

By Dina Rashed, July 8, 2013

The second wave of the Egyptian uprising that led to the ouster of Mohamed Morsi, the country's first democratically elected president, took many by surprise. Besides its massive size and scope, the June 30 demonstrations revealed a significant change in the police's handling of anti-regime protests. Unlike their vicious reaction to peaceful demonstrations in January 2011, the Egyptian police have been more cooperative -- even welcoming -- to the countrywide anti-Morsi demonstrations. The change in police behavior is not the result of security sector reforms but rather a better reading by the police of the domestic balance of power.

When pro-democracy activists took to the streets in January 25, 2011, they knew they were facing a brutal police that had been the repressive arm of the regime for decades. In fact, it was this very repression that encouraged many to join protests against former President Hosni Mubarak. Fueled by a long record of human rights abuses, the uprising was against police impunity as much as it was against Mubarak's corruption; there is no doubt that the eruption of protests on Police Day was no mere coincidence. But contrary to activists' expectations, the Ministry of Interior's repressive machine broke down after the first few days of the 2011 uprising.

Over the past two and half years, Egypt has taken some steps toward establishing a democratic system including holding free parliamentary and presidential elections, and legitimizing banned political parties. But the vital step of reforming the Ministry of Interior (MoI) and its police force has lagged behind. Except for changing the name of its intelligence unit from State Security Investigation to National Security and the color of police uniform, little can be claimed about a serious restructuring of the MoI. Despite the numerous conferences and initiatives dedicated to this end, efforts faltered because several political forces pulled in different directions. The quest for a new MoI reflected a competition among the military, members of the ancien regime, the Muslim Brotherhood, and human rights activists to reshape the state's institution of law and order. Meanwhile police officers failed to formulate a unified vision for the future of their institution, and at times their preferences collided with the interests of these four groups.

In the wake of Mubarak's ouster, the military emerged as the strongest and most cohesive state institution. Bearing the responsibility of governance at a time of surmounting challenges, it tried to provide security through its military police (MP), yet its direct engagement with society came with a heavy price tag. The MP lacked the proper training for civilian policing and complaints about its abusive detaining measures aired as early as the first weeks of the transitional period. It also lacked detailed information about criminals' networks and their activities -- knowledge that is readily available for the MoI. Unwilling to lose its credibility and public trust, the military took measures to improve the performance of the MoI while keeping it under its aegis. It agreed to improving the material benefits, training, and equipment of the police, but resisted calls to form independent syndicates for police officers. Encouraged by national calls for reform, some low and mid-rank officers proposed initiatives such as the General Coalition of Police Officers in the early months of the transitional period. They believed that an independent syndicate would be the best venue to express their grievances and protect their rights. Fearing contagion into its rank and file, the military firmly blocked the official recognition of police syndicates. Fragmented and still suffering from the collapse of their institution in 2011, MoI officers could not but accept the wishes of the big brother.

Unlike the military, the MoI suffered from limited professionalized and internal institutional imbalances under Mubarak. This reflected in an imbalanced distribution of benefits and services for the institution's personnel. Many low ranking police officers and personnel

below officer rank compensated for their low income by using the power of the badge to get free services from citizens, especially in the more impoverished quarters of the country. But perhaps the most serious problem has been the close association between some corrupt officers and members of the ancien regime and criminal networks. It may be common practice for police forces to use outlaws as informants, but in Mubarak's Egypt, the affiliation developed into an employee-employer relationship; thugs were hired by some MoI officers to do Mubarak's National Democratic Party's bidding. In the process of protecting the frail regime, and as plans of grooming Gamal Mubarak for the presidency went ahead, services of criminals were appreciated and sought after. On officers' demand, thugs targeted and attacked opposition leaders and their supporters especially during election seasons. As subcontracted agents of violence, criminals forged partnerships with some MoI officers. To a great extent, these security officers helped nurture and reproduce the very elements they were supposed to fight. In fairness, many officers within the MoI had rejected this approach, but there was little they could do especially since the Mubarak ruling elite seemed unbothered by this development. With Mubarak's fall, a subtle conflict has emerged within the MoI between officers pushing for reform and those working to maintain the status quo. The entanglement of financial interests has made these business-violence networks more resilient than expected and has complicated the development of internal reform initiative.

On its side, the Muslim Brotherhood (MB) endorsed rhetoric that called for a complete overhaul of the MoI but took few effective steps in that direction. Though these calls corresponded with those of human rights groups, the MB leadership seemed more interested in reshaping the MoI to guarantee a cooperative relationship with its members and political allies. From the beginning of the transitional period, the MB and its Freedom and Justice Party made attempts to take part in the state's instatement of order. They offered to deploy some of their members into the country's congested streets as aides to traffic police. They also called for the appointment of a minister of interior from outside the MoI, and the hiring of non-police academy graduates as police officers. The MoI rank and file adamantly refused all these proposals seeing these demands as attempts to penetrate the police force rather than professionalize it. Officers have argued that the MoI has enough human resources to provide security, positing that the way to improve the quality of policing is through reorienting the security missions and objectives and not by outsourcing new personnel. Furthermore, officers engaging in initiatives such as Officers But Honorable (OBH) and Officers Against Corruption (OAC) complained that their suggestions to improve accountability, rules of promotion and retention, and training received little attention by the MB's ruling regime. Facing difficulties in penetrating or controlling the MoI, the Morsi administration sought a different route by introducing a bill to privatize security in February. The bill was to legalize private security providers and allow them to be bear arms around private properties. Both police officers and human rights activists objected to the proposal. They feared it would legitimize and expand private militias especially in light of the influx of massive quantities of arms from Libya and Syria to Egyptian territories and their availability in the black market. The MB's reform suggestions resulted in widening the gap between Morsi's administration and the MoI.

On another level, human rights groups have criticized the performance record of the MoI for years. Since the mid-2000s, activists have spoken not only about the MoI's infringement upon political rights of dissidents, but also abuses against un-politicized citizens in police stations. Human rights groups have called consistently for the reorientation of the MoI's missions emphasizing the priority of societal security over political security. They have argued that the state's confrontation with militant Islamists in the second half of the 1990s impacted police performance by making them more violent when dealing with average citizens. Whereas some officers responded favorably to human rights demands, the majority of the officer corps felt that these criticisms were unfounded. As serious efforts to bridge this gap lacked, major disagreements with regards to models of policing, measures of efficient policing, the use of violence in

enforcing law and order, and accountability of officers prevented a more collaborative effort by the two sides.

As protests against and for Morsi continue, the MoI body remains factionalized; it includes groups with different political inclinations and few reasons to defend the ousted president. Given the limited reform undertaken by the Morsi administration, there is no doubt that some elements are still loyal to the ancien regime, but there are many others who oppose Morsi's policies on their own merits. In addition to those who feel they have not received enough institutional backing despite promises to do so, there is a substantial group who are troubled by the presence of militants within Morsi's support base. These officers are not necessarily loyal to the Mubarak regime, but had engaged in a long violent battle with radical groups in Upper Egypt and still perceive its members as terrorists and enemies of the Egyptian nation-state. To them, the re-emergence of these militant figures in pro-Morsi rallies and over satellite television shows is a troubling development. And militants' implicit threats to use violence against Morsi's opposition only increase doubts about their respect for democracy. Notwithstanding their different political inclinations, officers agree that the most important lesson of January 2011 is that defending an unpopular regime is a wrong bet. They also learned that the autonomous military made a different decision and has enjoyed relatively higher public support and trust.

There is no doubt that the first and foremost goal for MoI officers now is to regain societal respect but that goal may be harder to realize given the delicate situation in Egypt now. Images of police officers giving out water bottles to anti-Morsi protesters are challenged by images of the violent disbanding of pro-Morsi protesters around the premise of the presidential guard. The road to building a more cohesive and professional MoI may be longer than expected.

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Cashing in after the coup

By Shana Marshall, July 18, 2013

Rarely is there a single discrete event that provides the ultimate test case for understanding the interests at play in U.S. foreign policy decisions. When the Egyptian military placed former President Mohamed Morsi under house arrest after he allegedly failed to agree to a referendum on his presidency, this was a coup d'état. It was also as close to a smoking gun as any theorist of International Affairs could ever hope to witness -- robust evidence that U.S. military assistance is aimed primarily at generating private corporate profits, not influencing Egypt's military leaders or maintaining regional stability.

The July 3 coup d'état may have been accompanied by unprecedented popular support, but our normative rejection of coups as a legitimate method of resolving political conflict is based on a consensus that the armed forces should always be subordinated to an elected civilian leadership and never acquire the status of an institutionalized political actor. This is the basis for the U.S. law that requires the cessation of aid to countries where the military has played "a decisive role" in deposing a "duly elected head of government ... by coup d'etat or decree." Which is to say that all aid must be suspended regardless

of whether that head of government is removed through widespread military violence or merely spirited away in the custody of the armed forces. The events that took place in Egypt meet this definition without question. The fact that defense equipment financed with U.S. military aid continues to flow to Egypt in the immediate aftermath of Morsi's removal is a flagrant violation of this edict, and the bill just put forth by House Republicans that keeps Egypt's $1.3 billion in military aid intact but excludes the $250 million in economic aid traditionally dispensed alongside it is nothing short of outrageous.

Of course, the U.S. legal code and norms of global governance -- and the ordinary human beings that such rules and regulations are meant to protect -- are not actually the pillars of Washington's military aid policy. In reality, private sector defense firms are the only actors whose interests are served by continuing U.S. military aid to Egypt, and arguments to the contrary do not stand up to even the most superficial critique. The claim that a halt to military aid would jeopardize the cold peace between Israel and Egypt is ludicrous, as decades of carefully orchestrated U.S. military aid to both countries has produced a perpetual arms buildup in which Israel always maintains the upper hand. Egypt's military decision-makers would never go to war with a better-armed Tel Aviv; the rationale that led to that action in previous decades -- to bring Israeli leaders to the negotiating table over the Sinai -- no longer exists. And any observer of the Palestinian-Israeli peace process can tell you that Arab leaders' vague claims of military support in favor of the Palestinians is pure posturing. Transitioning the aid packages in both countries to consist of economic assistance as opposed to military assistance would therefore not threaten the stale peace that exists between the two countries. It would, however, fundamentally alter the nature of military procurement in both countries, as each would likely seek out cheaper alternatives to U.S. weapons. Such alternatives are more abundant than ever before -- partially owing to decades of outsourced production and joint ventures between U.S. and foreign producers.

Nor has Egypt's military aid package somehow rationalized the armed forces' procurement strategy. The Egyptian military is required by law to spend its roughly $1.3 billion in aid each year to purchase weapons made by U.S. manufacturers -- some as likely to end up gathering dust in a warehouse as to see any use in combat operations or training activities. The 2011 contract for 125 new tanks from General Dynamics will add to an Egyptian arsenal that already exceeds the number of tanks in all of Latin America and Sub-Saharan Africa combined. Those additional F-16s scheduled for delivery in the coming weeks are impressive when they're flown in formation over crowds gathered in Tahrir, but less impressive when one considers that many of Egypt's neighbors possess either more advanced aircraft, anti-aircraft missile systems that can reliably engage the F-16, or superior command and control platforms. Egypt's 2009 aid-financed purchase of armed coastal patrol boats to guard the Suez Canal against piracy is one of the few recent sales of U.S.-built equipment with an objective tactical justification. But Egypt's military planners are savvy enough that they would purchase these even absent U.S. military aid, since nearly one-third of the state's revenue is generated from canal traffic. In fact, when the military is spending its own funds it does purchase these items. In 2011 Egypt purchased four additional patrol boats for use in the canal -- it just bought a cheaper version from Turkey instead. Similarly, when Egypt needs aircraft for training purposes, it buys the wildly popular (and very cheap) K-8 trainer produced by China and Pakistan. Clearly Egypt's military does not need to be incentivized to buy the right equipment ... it just has to be incentivized to buy American equipment. And apparently the only way to guarantee that outcome is by flooding Egypt's Defense Ministry with U.S. taxpayer dollars.

U.S. military aid seems no longer designed to secure leverage or influence over Egypt's powerful generals. (Either that, or Washington policymakers have a lackluster understanding of those generals' preferences). What the military likely wants is a viable domestic defense industry with the hope of building export markets. And given Egypt's 1,100-plus collection of the regionally popular M1 series tank -- a variation of which is in service in Iraq, Morocco, Kuwait, and Saudi Arabia -- the best way to please the generals

would be to assist in Egypt's efforts to sell surplus tanks. In fact, the military chief of staff under former President Hosni Mubarak explicitly requested U.S. permission to sell some of these tanks to Iraq in 2010, a move that the embassy staff in Cairo supported. But reselling Egyptian tanks to Iraq doesn't make money for General Dynamics or its legions of subcontractors and suppliers.

In the fall of 2012, the Iraqi Army took delivery of the final tranche of 140 M1 series tanks. These came not from Egypt's surplus store of tanks, but from General Dynamics's U.S. factories -- at probably twice the price per unit. Small wonder the leverage that U.S. policymakers are supposed to get over Egypt's generals in exchange for billions of dollars in taxpayer funded military aid never seems to materialize. Because the generals know the continuation of their aid package depends not on maintaining rapport with elected officials in the United States, but on the lobbying efforts of defense firms that cash in on contracts with Cairo.

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Another Egyptian constitutional declaration

By Zaid Al-Ali, July 9, 2013

On July 8, Adly Mansour, Egypt's new interim president who until recently was a member of the country's Supreme Constitutional Court, issued yet another "constitutional declaration." This comes after a year of failed leadership by former President Mohamed Morsi, the historic June 30 demonstrations, the intervention by the military, the ultimate dethroning of the president and the ensuing violence, much of which has left Egypt deeply polarized. The question today is whether this new declaration will contribute to lessening tension in the country, or whether it will become a new point of contention much like all the preceding chapters in Egypt's troubled transition to democracy.

All segments of society should proceed carefully to avoid further deterioration. That will require a recalibration of objectives, interests, and methods as well as a good understanding of what has happened over the past few years and what, in particular, has gone wrong. Amongst other things, those parties and individuals who are driving this new transition process need to make a serious effort to understand the flaws of the 2012 constitutional drafting process so as not to repeat those same mistakes. In particular, they should consider the following:

1) The entire framework for the constitutional drafting process was not the product of a negotiated or a common understanding between political forces of what direction the country should be heading in or even what the new state should look like. It was imposed by the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF) in March 2011, and was not amended by Morsi when he had the chance in June 2012. The result was a vision for the country that was heavily anchored in existing Egyptian constitutional and legal traditions, an outcome that was highly inappropriate in the context of a social and political revolution. As a legal document, it was also poorly drafted, which led to a number of unnecessary complications. As a result, Egypt's transition process was exemplary in its lack of vision and its illiberalism.

2) The process that the Egyptians did follow was deeply flawed. The six-month timeframe was not sufficient to reach a negotiated solution. Also, the interim constitution itself was so lacking in detail on how the Constituent Assembly should be composed that this ended up being a major point of contention and caused the process to stutter in its early days. Finally, the Constituent Assembly's own internal rules of procedure (which ultimately were highly majoritarian) created an environment in which small political and social groups felt that their views did not matter.

3) The final decision by the Muslim Brotherhood's Freedom and Justice Party (FJP) to finalize the draft constitution in November 2012 despite the fact that all non-Islamists had withdrawn from the process was a fatal blow to the constitution's and to the party's own credibility. Although the details of what happened require a longer treatment elsewhere, some of the FJP's negotiation tactics achieved the opposite of trust building; its counterparts were so surprised by the party's actions that they shunned all future offers to negotiate a solution. The FJP was not the only culprit of course, but having been the ruling party at the time, it has responsibility for what transpired.

Interim President Adli Mansour's new constitutional declaration purports to be an interim constitution, setting the rules for the function of the state over the next few months. It also explains in part how the new constitution will be drafted and when future elections should take place. With the new text, what, if anything, have the country's new authorities appeared to have learned from the mistakes of the past? The answer is: not much. Rather than a negotiated and consensual document, this constitutional document was once again drafted in secret by anonymous and unaccountable figures who were motivated by a desire to protect narrow interests rather than design a credible plan to achieve a democratic future for the country. Already, several political parties and the activists behind the Tamarod campaign have complained that they were not consulted during the drafting process and say that they were surprised by the declaration's contents.

As expected, the text is in keeping with Egyptian constitutional tradition. That should not come as a surprise as it was written by some of the more traditional and conservative elements from within the Egyptian state, including its most senior judges. As with Egypt's previous constitutions, the declaration is not very good on fundamental and political rights. In particular, it contains a number of classic "clawback clauses" (i.e. old fashioned provisions that purport to grant rights, but in fact achieve the opposite). In particular, article 7 supposedly guarantees freedom of expression, but only insofar as the law allows citizens to express themselves freely (very worrisome given that the interim president has granted himself the authority to pass legislation entirely on his own; see below). Article 10 supposedly guarantees freedom of assembly, but says that certain conditions have to be satisfied, without specifying what conditions. Although this type of vague formulation might have been acceptable in the 1950s (and even that is debatable), today it simply does not pass the minimum threshold of credibility for a modern constitution. What this means is that anyone who was hoping that some of the wisdom developed in Latin America, Africa, Europe, etc. will make its way to Egypt's new constitutional text over the coming period will be disappointed.

In addition, the declaration grants the interim president many of the powers that both the SCAF and Morsi had sought to grant themselves, and which caused so much controversy at the time. Amongst other things, the interim president now has virtually unlimited executive and legislative power and can appoint and dismiss ministers virtually at will. In practice, his authority will necessarily be limited through political pressure from a number of directions, but the declaration allows very wide discretion that would not usually be considered appropriate and that is certainly open to abuse. In addition, the declaration is very brief on states of emergency. It does not indicate the reasons for which an emergency can be declared, what the process is for making such a declaration, and what powers are granted after a declaration is made. Finally, and rather surprisingly, despite the fact that the declaration imposes very short and strict timeframes for the constitutional referendum and the parliamentary elections, no timeframe

is imposed at all for future presidential elections (article 30).

Naturally, given the coalition of forces that supported the military's intervention against Morsi, there are also a number of other winners in the declaration. These are:

1) The Salafi Nour Party, which managed to protect the wording that it fought to include in the 2012 constitution on Sharia (article 1).

2) The military, which also maintains all of the guarantees and institutional independence that it had been granted by the 2012 constitution.

3) Judges, who will play a critical role in proposing changes to the constitution, to a far greater extent than would otherwise have been normal or acceptable.

Most importantly perhaps, the constitutional declaration's provisions on how the transition process should be managed and how the constitution should be amended are also flawed. In particular, it is impossibly short:

1) A committee of experts will have one month to suggest changes to the 2012 constitution.

2) The new Constituent Assembly will have two months to prepare a final draft.

3) A referendum will have to be organized within one month of the draft's completion.

Altogether that is a three-month deliberation process, followed by one month of national debate, which altogether is around half the time that the Constituent Assembly had in 2012. Some observers have noted that the constitutional declaration deliberately does not envisage an entirely new drafting process and that the new assembly should work off the 2012 constitution, but that will not make much of a difference given that the drafters of the 2012 constitution were themselves heavily inspired by the 1971 constitution. The problem with the short timeframe is not that drafters need more time to come up with precise formulations of the ideas that are on the table; the problem is that there is still yet no consensus on what those ideas are, or even where the table is. The assembly, or rather the country, needs far more time to engage in a deliberate and national debate on what their state and society should look like, and the authors of the new constitutional declaration have once again robbed them of that opportunity.

Articles 28 and 29, on how the committee of experts and the new Constituent Assembly will be composed, are perhaps the most surprising provisions of all, given how important they should have been and how short they are on detail. To begin with, article 28 states that six of the 10 experts on the committee should be judges. What this essentially does is create a channel through which these individuals will be able to heavily influence the rewriting of the 2012 constitution. Given how traditional and conservative Egyptian judges can be, and given how much controversy there is around their working methods in the country, article 28 has already raised a number of eyebrows. One can only hope that progressive and professional individuals will be chosen for this important task.

Article 29 provides some indication as to how the Constituent Assembly will be composed. The assembly will be made of up 50 members, who are supposed to represent all components of Egyptian society. There are also some examples of which organizations are entitled to be represented in the assembly (political parties, trade unions, religious institutions, etc.), but it does not state how these organizations will select their representatives, or how many representatives each will be entitled to. Some of the questions that this leaves open include: how many of the 50 members will be from the political parties? How many members will each party be entitled to have on the assembly? How will each party's weight be measured? On the basis of the previous parliamentary elections? Surely not, given the context, but if not, then what will be done? Also, how will the assembly be making its decisions? By majority vote or through consensus? What will happen if the assembly does not reach an agreement? The simple answer to all of these questions is that we have no idea.

Finally, the article states that youth and women will make up at least 10 out of 50 members. One of the reasons for which the 2012 Constituent Assembly was criticized was because it was so poor on youth and gender; it seems that the new assembly will not improve on its predecessor even in that respect, even though it would have been a very easy and obvious thing to do.

One final point is that the declaration provides no indication as to how the electoral laws will be drafted or even who will be responsible for overseeing those elections (article 30 states that the electoral commission will be responsible for overseeing the referendum but makes no mention of the parliamentary or presidential elections). This is a major point of contention, given how difficult and controversial the process of drafting electoral laws was during the first half of this year. The 2012 constitution provided that all electoral laws should be approved by the Supreme Constitutional Court before they enter into force; that was a very cumbersome process but it did lead to significant debate on the electoral law's content which might have pushed it in a positive direction. Today, we have no idea how the laws will be drafted or if there will be any mechanism to ensure that it will not be stacked against particular political forces. That is the type of detail that would have been helpful to reassure opponents of the new transition process at this early stage.

Many of the country's political forces are already clamoring for the new declaration to be amended. I wish them every success, but there is a deeper problem at play here than just which words will be put on paper. Ultimately, they will have to overcome the deeply conservative and narrow mentality of a whole generation of people who are working against genuine progress in the country. That is a challenge that every revolution has to overcome, and Egypt is no exception in that regard.

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Post-Soviet lessons for Egypt

By Alanna C. Van Antwerp, July 2, 2013

After a little over two years of questioning whether Egypt could be a new example of the Turkish model of governance, the more appropriate question after the last few days would be whether Egypt is on track to replicate the Kyrgyz model. Millions of mobilized Egyptians in the streets and military ultimata may indeed succeed in bringing President Mohamed Morsi down from power, and they have strong reasons for wanting to do so. However, the means used may come back to haunt those activists who think they are ushering in a better political order -- at least that is what the experience of other countries teaches us.

Millions of citizens came out into the street across Egypt on June 30, protesting the Muslim Brotherhood and calling for Morsi to step down from power because many of the goals of the revolution -- police reform, social justice, an improved economic situation -- have not been achieved. Many rightly argue that the revolution was not only or even primarily about free and fair elections, and they are correct, although opposition to Gamal Mubarak's inheritance of his father's position was certainly one thing that protesters sought to prevent.

And yet, despite the legitimacy of the opposition's anger, the dissatisfaction with the way in which many hated

elements of the Egyptian "deep state" remain intact, and opposition to various neoliberal economic policies, demands for Morsi to step down rather than calls for the implementation of immediate and specific policy changes may be driving Egypt down a different, dangerous path. A comparative look at the divergent trajectories taken by some of the so-called "Color Revolutions" indicates that attempting to -- and succeeding in -- forcing Morsi to leave office ahead of the end of his term could set Egypt on a perilous course fraught with heightened political violence, societal polarization, continued instability, and increasing authoritarianism.

During the 2011 Egyptian revolution, many journalists and academics drew comparisons between the mass mobilization sweeping across North Africa and the Levant and the wave of "Color Revolutions" that swept across Eastern Europe and the Balkans from the late 1990s to the mid 2000s. These comparisons were easy to draw, particularly in viewing the protests in Tunisia and Egypt. Not only were the visual images of the two sets of uprisings similar, with protesters occupying central squares and setting up tent cities, but the tactics young activists employed in Egypt closely mirrored those used by the Serbian activist group *Otpor* in their own protests against former Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic in 2000. In fact, this was no accident; *Otpor* students, through the Serbian Center for Applied NonViolent Action and Strategies (CANVAS), had provided training in nonviolent tactics, protest strategy, and organizational discipline to Egyptian activists in the lead up to the Egyptian uprising, just as they had trained the *Pora* youth movement in the Ukraine and the *Kmara* movement in Georgia.

However, despite the superficial similarities linking the mass mobilization in Ukraine and Serbia to that of Egypt and Tunisia, there were significant differences between the more "successful" Color Revolution countries -- those that continued on a trajectory of democratic reform, economic growth, political stability, and rule of law -- and Egypt and Tunisia. Instead, the way in which Zine El Abidine Ben Ali and Hosni Mubarak were forced from power more closely mirrors the political transitions of Color Revolution countries that were instead wracked with continued instability, economic decline, and political violence.

As described in an in-depth scholarly examination of the Color Revolutions by Valerie Bunce and Sharon Wolchik, the mobilization that led to a democratic transition in Ukraine and Serbia revolved around elections as a symbolic and temporal focal point and were centered around preventing an authoritarian leader -- Milosevic in Serbia and Leonid Kuchma in the Ukraine -- from carrying out electoral fraud or refusing to concede office to the rightful winner of those elections. As such, the political opposition, civil society organizations, and youth activists engaged in a process of cooperation and consensus-building in the months leading up to the elections in both countries. When both countries' presidents did attempt to rig the outcome of the elections, the broad, cohesive opposition was ready to stage demonstrations that forced Milosevic and Kuchma to concede that they lost the elections and to step down from power, allowing the rightful winners to take office. Since then, the political and economic environments of Serbia and the Ukraine -- as well as those of Romania, Bulgaria, Slovakia, and Croatia, the other "Color Revolution" countries in which the political oppositions mobilized in order to force an authoritarian leader to accept fair election results -- have shown a marked improvement in nearly all democratic indicators, as measured by Freedom House's *Nations in Transit Project*.

Georgia's Rose Revolution (2003) and Kyrgyzstan's Tulip Revolution (2005) are often included within the group of Color Revolutions. However, in contrast to events in Bulgaria, Slovakia, Croatia, Serbia, and the Ukraine, the political transitions in Georgia and Kyrgyzstan differed in critical ways. In both of these countries, mass demonstrations forced Georgian President Eduard Shevardnadze and Kyrgyz President Askar Akayev from power; however neither of these figures were on the ballot at the time. The demonstrations coincided with fraudulent parliamentary elections and yet demonstrators focused on forcing the two presidents out of office rather than demanding the realization of fair parliamentary

electoral results. In addition, in neither country were demonstrations led by a broad, cohesive political opposition united with civil society groups (though Georgia's opposition was more united than Kyrgyzstan's), and the protests were not about enforcing and protecting the democratic process. Instead, the demonstrators stormed government buildings, causing Shevardnadze and Akayev to flee their respective countries, leaving both without a clear, elected, legitimate political successor.

The different way in which regime change occurred in Georgia and Kyrgyzstan had several negative implications for the post-mobilizational politics of both countries. Unlike the improvements in democratic indicators that the other Color Revolution countries have shown, democracy indicators for Georgia and Kyrgyzstan actually worsened after the toppling of Shevardnadze and Akayev.

First, both countries witnessed heightened levels of political mobilization and violence in the years following the toppling of Shevardnadze and Akayev. While a degree of heightened civil society activity is the norm after a regime transition, the level of popular mobilization in Georgia and Kyrgyzstan has been destabilizing and is used as a substitute for dialogue and consensus building. In Georgia, the post-uprising period has witnessed significant popular mobilization, a mechanism of attempted political change used by the opposition in nearly every year since the Rose Revolution. This mobilization is in many cases organized by members of parliament, and in many cases has led to violence, most recently in May 2011. The opposition similarly used popular mobilization in Kyrgyzstan as a weapon in 2006, 2007, and 2010, with protesters and police engaged in violent clashes, and with public officials and parliamentarians targets of assassination attempts. In 2010, demonstrators once again stormed parliament and forced then-President Kurmanbek Bakiyev to resign.

A second negative outcome in the post-mobilizational politics of Georgia and Kyrgyzstan has been the lack of consensus and crippling political polarization. As leadership change occurred in both countries as a result of mass mobilization rather than mobilization focused on securing fair electoral results, in neither country had the political opposition engaged in a process of cooperation and consensus-building in the run-up to the mobilization. As a result, decision making has been stalled and the majority parties in parliament in both countries have shown no willingness to cooperate with the opposition, leading, in the case of Kyrgyzstan, to the forced resignation of the government in 2007 and the establishment in 2008 of a "shadow parliament."

Finally, a critical difference between the successful Color Revolution cases and Georgia and Kyrgyzstan, where leaders left office as a result of protest, not elections, is the degree of institutionalization of the democratic process in post-mobilizational politics. With the ability to look back upon the last 10 years of Georgian and Kyrgyz politics, it is apparent that the use of protests to force leadership turnover sets a precedent for instability and extra-institutional change that is detrimental to democratic consolidation. As scholars have long pointed out, the institutionalization of democratic processes depends on a shift in political culture so that actors routinely attempt political change through democratic institutions rather than through informal channels and anti-system tactics. However, in Georgia and Kyrgyzstan, there has been a tendency to dissolve government or attempt to force leaders from power, rather than legislating reforms or waiting for terms to end and holding new elections. In several occasions, the Georgian opposition attempted to force the new president, Mikheil Saakashvili, from power through protests, as did opposition leaders in Kyrgyzstan. In turn, the political leadership in Georgia and Kyrgyzstan increasingly used repression to stifle dissent and opposition, rather than channeling it through institutional avenues.

In viewing the previous 10 years of politics and downward trends in various democracy indicators of Georgia and Kyrgyzstan, Egypt's current political crisis is cause for alarm. The similarities are there: Mubarak was forced from power by massive protests around serious societal grievances, rather than rigged elections, leaving the country with no clear successor. Young activists led the protests, not

the formal political opposition, which has instead remained fractured, with the National Salvation Front following the current protest movement rather than leading it, as Issandr El Amrani argues. Political mobilization has remained elevated since the revolution, and average citizens have already expressed shock and dismay at the unprecedented Egyptian-on-Egyptian street violence witnessed in December 2012 and as recently as yesterday. While Morsi has clearly made huge errors over the last year, not the least of which was the dismissal of parliament, the mass protests calling for Morsi's resignation, rather than a unified opposition coalescing around specific policy demands, leads Egypt down a dangerous road. Forcing Morsi from office could cement the practice of forced regime change and the dismissal of the democratic process whenever politics gets hard and messy.

All of this is not to criticize the Egyptian revolution or to say that Mubarak should not have been forced from office; nor is this to say that protesters don't have legitimate grievances with Morsi and the Muslim Brotherhood. Morsi's slim margin of victory in the elections in June 2012 do not grant him or his supporters free rein to ram through policy initiatives cloaked in thinly veiled expressions of majoritarianism. As for the opposition, however, Morsi did win the election, and while free elections were certainly not the only goal of the revolution, democratic governance and fair elections are presumably at least one of them.

The crippling problems that Egypt is facing -- economic collapse, continued police brutality, extreme political polarization, and the fearsome challenge of wresting power away from the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces -- will not be magically solved by a new president. Should Morsi step down rather than institute sweeping reforms that address these issues, this sets a dangerous precedent for Egypt's future, one that may mirror the years of instability, authoritarianism, and corruption that Georgia and Kyrgyzstan have experienced, and which hindsight grants us the ability to observe.

The threat of attempting to force Morsi from power is not about Morsi himself, or any other individual, despite the extreme personalization of Egyptian politics that Nathan Brown recently described. This is instead about the institution of a democratically elected executive, the institutionalization of the democratic process, and about the way in which Egypt's political factions are able to build consensus around how to address highly contentious issues. If political leaders cannot find a way to do this, then mass demonstrations to force a leader from power will likely become not the exception used to deal with one authoritarian leader, but the annual tool used against any future president. Perhaps this is acceptable to the protesters filling Tahrir Square; but a quick look at Kyrgyzstan and Georgia indicate the dangers that lie in wait.

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The odds are good for Egypt

By Michael Albertus and Victor Menaldo, July 18, 2013

The recent ouster of President Mohamed Morsi by the Egyptian military cast a dark shadow on Egypt's fledgling democracy. The president was displaced on July 3, just days after he failed to satisfy an ultimatum put forth by the country's top generals. The interim president Adly Mansour, appointed by the leaders of the military, has already blunted some of the damage and put forth an ambitious timetable to return the country to democracy.

Egypt's political crisis has been interpreted in two sharply conflicting ways. Opponents of the coup lament the irreparable damage it does to Egyptian democracy. Not only has the constitution been suspended as a result of military intervention, triggering a crackdown of the Muslim Brotherhood, but Egypt's first freely and fairly elected leader has been toppled, setting a perilous precedent and unleashing violence that threatens to derail the return of elected rule.

The coup's supporters, by contrast, argue that it will help set the stage for a stronger democratic future by offsetting illiberal aspects of the constitution such as the exclusion of secular groups from power and restrictions on free expression. Indeed, they point to the fact that the new transition plan puts Egypt on a fast track to new elections.

These conflicting interpretations are stark: Democracy is rarely cultivated in a Petri dish overnight, but it is also rarely doomed once an experiment in self-rule has begun. History instead suggests that new democracies often muddle through, meandering fitfully to a stable democratic future. Therefore, while democracy in Egypt has suffered an unfortunate short-term setback, it is not destined to fail.

Egypt's circumstances are not unique. Between 1875 and 2004, there have been 117 transitions to democracy across the world based on the conventional definition of procedural democracy: (1) the chief executive is elected; (2) the legislature is elected; (3) there is more than one political party; and (4) an incumbent has lost power and transferred it peacefully to a new leader. Of these transitions, 25 were quickly overturned by military coups in a manner similar to Egypt. In these instances, the military frequently intervenes to rectify what it perceives to be a critical flaw in the democratic design and sets the stage for a return to a more sustainable democracy.

The good news for Egypt is that some of these stillborn transitions have given way to quick returns to elected rule. In nine of 25 cases, there was a return to democracy within five years. Examples include Peru, Argentina, Burundi, and Guinea Bissau. In these cases, military leaders have held free and fair elections quickly after overthrowing civilian governments, effectively "resetting" democracy in a manner more favorable to the military or civil society groups allied with them. Some of these "second-chance" democracies experienced further backsliding (e.g., Argentina) before eventually consolidating and shedding the most extreme legacies of politicized constitutional engineering.

Even the more delayed returns to elected rule give reason for hope. In 20 of the 25 cases of stillborn transition (including the nine cases mentioned above), there was a return to democracy within 15 years. These include Ghana, Pakistan, and Thailand. Although democracy is far from perfect in these countries, it has survived setbacks similar to those in Egypt today.

The bad news is that a few stillborn transitions have instead yielded a return to prolonged dictatorship. In five cases, democracy was either dramatically delayed (Nigeria and South Korea) or permanently shelved (Burma, Sudan, and Uganda). And in these cases, civil strife, violence, and repression have been ubiquitous features of the political landscape. Hard-line elements within the military pushed for a greater focus on domestic security. If elections are held at all, it is under conditions of severely circumscribed

competition that excluded popular groups and in which pro-military incumbents are all but guaranteed victory.

This begs the question about what determines whether countries are able to recover after a coup that resets democracy. A basic data analysis reveals that there are several "structural" factors that, while far from deterministic, play an important role in whether a stillborn transition segues into a quick return to democracy or instead represents a renewed lapse into dictatorship. Countries located in regions with a greater number of neighbors that are democratic are more likely to return to democracy at a quicker pace after a coup, as are those countries with open economies.

In other words, reclusive states in bad neighborhoods face steep obstacles in returning to elected government. Similarly, very poor countries are less likely to return to democracy, as are those that have a legacy of a large repressive apparatus under dictatorship. States with a history of financing large militaries and police forces employed to maintain order and quash dissent, rather than invest in education and infrastructure, are less likely to witness protest movements or the rise of a middle class that can help push for a return to democracy.

Political factors also play an important role in the return to democracy after a stillborn transition. These factors are ultimately the result of deliberate choices made by incumbents and the opposition and therefore suggest that the key players in Egypt are not simply passive victims of the structural factors impinging upon their ongoing political development. These include both popular mobilization associated with a revolution that ousts an authoritarian regime, and constitutional design to create a blueprint to new, democratic institutions.

If the initial foray into democracy was the result of a revolution that brought down a long-lived authoritarian regime, then mobilized popular groups are much less likely to melt back into political irrelevance. The classic example is France. And if the initial democratic experiment was guided by a constitution blatantly engineered by outgoing autocrats, then elites are more likely to countenance a return to elected government after a coup that resets the political game. This has happened in the recent history of Pakistan and Nigeria. Both of these factors help explain why governments return more quickly to elected rule after a "reset" coup.

Besides the obvious downside of being in a region suffused with dictatorships, several important factors for Egypt are rather propitious: it has a higher income per capita than most countries that quickly return to democracy after "reset" coups, and it has a relatively open, albeit declining, economy.

On the political side, the news is mixed. The revolution that overthrew Mubarak emboldened civil society, which, as witnessed by the protests that catalyzed Morsi's overthrow, will not easily fold in the face of continued repression or trumped-up "emergency rule." As in other historical cases, this bodes well for the reestablishment of elected government, as witnessed by the military's unwillingness to rule directly as it did immediately after Mubarak's overthrow.

Regarding constitutional design, the Muslim Brotherhood's constitutions surely contributed to democracy's false start. It rammed through a document with little support outside of hardcore Islamists and in the process threatened powerful interests. This set the stage for the current turmoil.

This time the military will most likely impose a more secular constitution beforehand with more reliable limits on executive authority. As in other cases of more heavy-handed constitutional engineering such as Chile or Turkey, this should bolster the prospects that democracy -- though a far less populist version -- will endure this time around.

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