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Position Paper

After the Presidential Elections: Egypt at a Crossroads



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The second, and final, round of the Egyptian presidential elections was held on 16 and 17 June 2012. The two candidates competing in this round were those that got through the first round: the candidate of the Freedom and Justice Party, the political arm of the Muslim Brotherhood, Dr. Mohammed Mursi; and a candidate representing the former regime of Prime Minister Mubarak, Air Force Commander Ahmed Shafiq. By dawn on Monday 18 June 18, Mursi's campaign announced that he had won the election, with over a million votes more than his rival candidate. Shafiq's campaign did not recognise the defeat and the commander's spokesmen announced that their candidate was the one who had won. As the hours of the day passed, media and legal organisations that had followed the election results confirmed Mursi's victory.

The official announcement of the election results was delayed, but the available figures indicate that Mursi had overcome his opponent by more than 800 000 votes after the inclusion of the votes cast by Egyptian expatriates which were largely in his favour. Although these figures were based on the results announced by polling sub-committees, it is not unlikely that they would be slightly different from those of the final official announcement, which would take into account the complaints and objections submitted by the competing candidates' campaigns. The voter participation rate in this run-off round was around fifty percent (approximately 26 of the 51 million eligible voters); a higher percentage than that recorded in the first round, which did not exceed 46 percent. Though this increase indicates that the Egyptian electorate did not become infected with a kind of electoral fatigue, it also significantly indicates that the intensity of the electoral competition and the ability of the candidates' campaigns and their supporters to mobilize voters.

Egyptians' hopes that the presidential elections would conclude the long and arduous process of the transfer of power from that of the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces to that of a civilian president presiding over a free and democratic regime, however, diminished rapidly after the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces began its counter-attack against the forces of revolution and change. The counter-attack aimed to maintain the Council in the seat of power and authority in the country.

This is an initial reading of the second round of the presidential election and its results, the challenges facing the transition of power process, and the potential clash between the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces and the political forces expected to stand behind the new president, first and foremost among them the Muslim Brotherhood.

The Electoral Process: The Mutual Fear

The elections were held in a political atmosphere marked by great tension, weighed down by the results of the first round. Vigorous efforts were made after the announcement of the results of the first round to rally the revolutionary forces and the democratic parties, as well as the main presidential candidates who had lost in that round, behind Mursi. They were additionally motivated after the size of the support enjoyed by Shafiq and the financial means available for his campaign had become clear to them all. The divisions that marred the Egyptian political arena since the parliamentary elections of January 2012, however, have continued unabated. Former presidential candidate and former leader of the Muslim Brotherhood, Abdel Moneim Aboul Fotouh, dragged his feet in announcing his reluctant support for Mursi; while the other leading candidate who had lost in the first round, Hamdeen Sabahi, refused to support either of the remaining candidates. It seemed that Sabahi was waiting for a miracle that would lead the Constitutional Court to cancel the election rule that it should be repeated, or maybe for the outbreak of a second revolution that would reset the presidential competition back to the beginning. Mursi offered Aboul Fotouh and Sabahi serious offers of appointments as Vice-President, but both declined the offer. Another significant candidate was Amr Moussa, who had come in fifth in the first round. There were slim hopes that he would throw his support behind Mursi, but it appears that in the last days of the election campaign he had become convinced that Shafiq would emerge victorious, and Moussa therefore took measures to express a conciliatory position towards him, despite the fact that Moussa's overwhelming defeat in the first round came at the hands of Shafiq and not any other candidate.

A number of other liberal figures, such as Osama Ghazali Harb, Saad Eddin Ibrahim, and the liberal Free Egyptians Party in addition to a number of leaders of the Wafd Party and the Leftist Assembly Party did not hesitate in expressing their candid support for Shafiq. Also lining up behind Shafiq were all of the state's media, as well as a majority of the country's private newspapers and television stations. The greatest support for Shafiq, however, came from a variety of expected sources, namely: the network of members of the dissolved National Democratic Party from across the country; a broad sector of wealthy businessmen with well known tight connections to the former regime; the state security apparatus community with its vast experience in the management of elections; and the people in the institutions of local and municipal level government, with their direct contact with voters and knowledge of the traditional social map of the governorates and the rural areas. There was no doubt that Shafiq was the preferred candidate for the state apparatus, including the military establishment and the bases of the former regime, both those currently within the state and governance apparatus and those outside it.

On the other side, the Islamic movements and leaders—whether in the widespread Salafist movement or in the Muslim Brotherhood and the more traditional Islamic societies such as al-Jam'iyya al-Shar'iyya and Ansar al-Sunnah—sided with Mursi. Mursi's campaign also received support from a broad sector of active young people who had worked on Aboul Fotouh's campaign, and a few of those who had worked in Sabahi's. Mursi also received support from the April 6 movement, and *Hizb al-Tayyar al-Masri* (the Egyptian Current Party), composed of young Islamic revolutionaries, and a number of the smaller revolutionary groups. The Muslim Brotherhood's organizational machine worked in unprecedented ways in all parts of the country to support Mursi, the last of its candidates to have entered the electoral race, and the one with shortest election campaigns of all the candidates.

The discourse adopted by Mursi in the second, and largely truncated, round of the election was more patriotic and conciliatory vis-à-vis the other political forces and currents as compared to that of the electoral campaign of the first round, which was characterized by clearly Islamist language. The Islamist figures who had accompanied Mursi at many of the stops in his campaign during the first round were completely absent in the second round. It is certain, however, that Shafiq's campaign was politically superior to that of Mursi. Advising Shafiq, known for his lack of political knowhow, were a number of professionals who knew how to influence the diverse components of the Egyptian electorate. At some moments in his campaign, Mursi had to rush to catch up to some of the promises made by Shafiq to the poorest and most debt-ridden sectors of the electorate, such as small farmers, workers and urban poor.

What hurt Mursi was the weakness of his campaign, in the face of the media that was overwhelmingly biased in favour of his rival, to counter the fierce media campaign against the People's Assembly. As a result of the media campaign, the Assembly (Egypt's democratically elected parliament) was firmly entrenched in Egyptians' consciousness as the Assembly of the Islamists in general, and the Muslim Brotherhood in particular; despite the Council's achievements in the field of legislation during the few months leading up to the presidential election. What did help Mursi, however, was the growing sympathy with him after Constitutional Court issued its decisions on Thursday, June 14, 2012, ruling that the ineligibility law (determining who was eligible to run for the presidency) and some articles of the electoral law that had been passed by the Assembly were unconstitutional. The two court decisions created a popular feeling that Mursi (and the entire political process) were being exposed to a blatant attack by elements of the old regime and the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces. This helped win a large group of undecided voters over to Mursi's side. The defiant speech delivered by Mursi on the evening of the same day (June 14) had a major impact on public opinion, strengthening his position as the presidential candidate representing the revolution and its last hope in standing up and confronting a rejuvenation of the former regime.

Mursi's campaign also evidenced an extraordinary ability to organize and manage an electoral campaign, especially in the selection of public and media engagements as well

as meetings with particular sectors of the population. The campaign also dealt with the results with a high degree of professionalism that was apparent in its being able to ascertain the total number of votes cast for each candidate in the vast majority of polling stations before 4 am on the morning of June 18, 2012. The Mursi campaign also took a number of tactical measures when the results became apparent, including the early announcement of his victory followed by making public the records of votes cast from the polling stations to the press and interested parties.

Reports have also emerged claiming that there was direct rigging and fraud involved in the elections, as well as indirect foul play that manifested in the former regime's agents using "political money" in a wide and intensive way. The more direct fraud was carried out, according to the reports, through means of manipulation that would be difficult for those monitoring the elections to detect, such as repeated voting by the same individual, manipulation of ballots, and casting ballots in large numbers at once into the ballot boxes. The election law passed by the revolution's People's Assembly committed the committees supervising the polling stations to count the votes in the vicinity of the polling station in the presence of representatives of the candidates, and to deliver a copy of the records of the vote counts to these representatives. These conditions were identical to those sent to the main polling stations and the High Election Commission. These procedures rendered the rigging process difficult to guarantee, in the sense that the people attempting to manipulate the election results could not have known, not even approximately, what the difference would be in terms of votes cast for the competing candidates.

The Results: A Confirmation of the Trends of the First Round of Elections

The 27 governorates of the Republic of Egypt can be divided into five electoral groups:

The first group includes the six major governorates: Cairo, Giza, Dakahlia, al-Sharqiya, Alexandria and Beheira, each of which comprise a voting bloc ranging from 6.5 million votes (Cairo) to 2.2 million votes (Beheira). The total number of voters in these six governorates adds up to almost half the number of eligible voters in the entire country.

The second group includes six other governorates: Gharbiya, Minya, Qalyubia, Sohag, Monufia, and Asyut with the number of voters ranging from 2 to 2.9 million voters.

The third group comprises four governorates: Kafr El-Sheikh, Qena, Faiyoum and Beni Suef with each containing a voting bloc ranging from 1.4 to 1.9 million voters.

The fourth group includes four other governorates: Aswan, Damietta, Ismailia and Luxor each of which have between half a million and one million voters.

The fifth group is that of the seven remaining governorates, namely: Port Said, Suez, Red Sea, South Sinai, Marsa Matrouh, New Valley and North Sinai. These governorates each have less than half a million voters.

The conflict between the two competing parties intensified over the votes in the first two groups, without either candidate being able to achieve a major breakthrough. Shafiq achieved a victory in three of the six major governorates, including that of Cairo, the governorate with by far the largest group of voters. These were the same three governorates in which he had achieved supremacy over Mursi in the first round, two in which he had won more votes than any other candidate. Mursi also won in three of the six major governorates, two in which he had won more votes than any other candidate in the first round, and the third (Alexandria) in which he had won more votes than Shafiq. The major achievement for Mursi was his decisive victory in Alexandria, where the improved performance of the Muslim Brotherhood's electoral machine and the support of the city's large Salafist bloc had a tangible effect. The second surprise was the failure of Shafiq to achieve a major victory in Cairo, which he had hoped to give him around one million votes more than his rival, a failure that materialized despite the Cairene voter turnout being higher than the fifty-percent average recorded for the whole country. Shafiq surpassed Mursi by around half a million votes, a difference that Mursi was able to compensate for by sweeping the vote in smaller Giza where he had taken

about half a million votes more than Shafiq. But Cairo, with its large Christian voting bloc that may amount to one million votes and its large and diverse social and political currents, remains a serious obstacle to the political Islamic forces; indeed, not Cairo alone, but also the Cairene part of the Giza governorate as well.

In the second group, Shafiq's biggest win by far was in the Gharbiya governorate, where the difference in favour of Shafiq was more than 600 thousand votes. Shafiq also achieved a major victory in the province of Monufia, which has maintained a close association with the state and government apparatuses since the era of President Sadat. In this governorate, Shafiq took around half a million votes more than his rival Mursi. Shafiq also won, albeit with a much smaller margin, in the Qalyubia governorate adjacent to Cairo. Mursi, meanwhile, won in the three other governorates in the second group, achieving his biggest win in Minya in which he took nearly 400 thousand votes more than those of his rival. In the end, however, what tipped the scales in Mursi's favour was his victory in most of the governorates in the third, fourth and fifth groups.

In terms of geographic distribution of support for the two candidates, a factor of no less significance, Mursi won in seventeen governorates, including the vast majority of the governorates of the Sa'id (southern part of Egypt) from Cairo to Aswan, as well as the Mediterranean coast from Marsa governorate to Northern Sinai. Indeed, Shafiq was only able to take one governorate in the long line of Sa'id governorates, namely Luxor, and only one other along the Mediterranean coast, Port Said. The geographical distribution map of the election results would show that Mursi's victory was not based solely on his victory in the marginalized governorates; for the coastal governorates that voted for him are not usually considered among the marginalized governorates. On the other hand, working in Shafiq's favour in catching up to his opponent was the bias of the agricultural governorates of the Nile delta and Cairo towards him, as well as the Christian that favoured him in all parts of the republic.

It may be too early to offer a sociological profile or analysis of the voters who casts their ballots in favour of each candidate. Some of the early indicators, however, show that social factors were not entirely decisive in the behaviour of voters. For while the population of the Sa'id that largely voted for Mursi is on average poorer, the majority of the votes for Shafiq in the Cairo governorate came from the poorer popular neighbourhoods of the capital. The vote in Cairo's middle class neighbourhoods was largely split between the two presidential candidates.

In general, it appears that the majority of the votes that were cast in Aboul Fotouh's favour in the first round went to Mursi in the second round; while Mursi took a lower proportion of the votes cast for Sabahi, and a much smaller proportion of the votes that had initially gone to Amr Moussa. Most of the votes obtained by the latter in the first round went to Shafiq in the second, in addition to a lower proportion of the votes that had, in the first round, been cast in Sabahi's favour, and very small fraction of the votes that had gone to Aboul Fotouh. It is likely that a significant portion of Sabahi's supporters had abstained from the vote, but the campaign to boycott the elections was an overall failure. It may be that the substantial increase in the voter turnout in the second round, as compared to the first round, was largely composed of the votes cast by the sectors of the population supportive of the Salafist movements. The division between the Salafist sheikhs during the first round of the presidential elections had partly resulted in Salafist supporters refraining from voting in the first round.

Also in general, it may be concluded that the election results do not reflect the execution of a coherent elections strategy that targeted specific population groups by either of the candidate's campaigns; for in the end, neither of the candidates managed to achieve a significant breakthrough in the second round in which there was a change in the voting patterns in the different governorates as compared to the first round. This is, perhaps, a good explanation of the small size of the margin by which Mursi's victory was achieved.

The Continuation and Expansion of the Military's Control

Before, during and after the second round of the presidential election, five important and highly significant decisions were issued by the Constitutional Court and the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces.

The first of these was the Constitutional Court's ruling that was issued just two days before the start of the elections. In its decision, the Court ruled that the law of ineligibility was unconstitutional. As a result of this ruling, Shafiq was allowed to continue as a candidate in the presidential elections, in spite of a law passed by the People's Assembly that deprived senior figures of the Mubarak regime of their political rights. Furthermore, the very legality of the electoral commission's action of referring the law to the Constitutional Court in the first place was itself considered extremely doubtful.

The second decision was even more controversial. This was the Constitutional Court's ruling in which it declared several articles of the law governing the election of the People's Assembly to be unconstitutional. Indeed, the very fact that the Court gave itself jurisdiction to declare the means by which the People's Assembly was elected was particularly controversial. The Constitutional Court did not use the term "dissolve" in the operative part of its ruling, or even in its deliberations, but the impression that the Court entrenched was that it wanted to dissolve the Assembly elected by 28 million Egyptians.

Military and police forces surrounded the People's Assembly's to prevent the elected parliamentarians from returning to the building. Within two days of the verdict, Field Marshall Tantawi, head of the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces sent Dr. Mohamed Saad Katatni, speaker of the People's Assembly, informing him of the Constitutional Court decision, clearly suggesting that the Supreme Council considered the parliament have already been dissolved. But Katatni, supported by a large number of parliamentarians, senior retired judges and constitutional lawyers, continues to hold that the Assembly was not dissolved, and that the Constitutional Declaration governing the transition phase does not give the right to dissolve the Assembly to any part of the executive branch, let alone to a judicial body that is not supposed to have any authority over the highest legislative body of the state. The meeting held between Katatni and the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces on June 17, 2012 did not result in a solution that was satisfactory to both parties.

The third of the highly significant decisions was that issued by the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces on the evening of June 17, 2012. A few hours after the process of counting the votes cast in the second round of the elections, the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces issued a constitutional declaration that complemented the declaration already in effect. The starting point of the new constitutional declaration was that the People's Assembly had already been dissolved. It transferred all of the People's Assembly's legislative and oversight powers to the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces that would retain these powers until the elected president assumed his position at the end of June, and until such time as a new People's Assembly was elected. In this way, the Council ensured that the new president and his government would not be able to issue any new laws, including those pertaining to the budget, without the approval of the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces. In a relatively vague article of the new constitutional declaration, there is an implication that the elected president would be denied his position as supreme commander of the armed forces, at least until a new constitution has been drafted and adopted.

In addition to this, the new constitutional declaration gives the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces the right to form a constituent assembly to write a new constitution within a week of the existing constituent assembly (which was chosen by the People's Assembly before its work was stopped) being unable, for whatever reason, to carry out its task. Under the new constitutional declaration, the President, the President of the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces, the prime minister, the head of the judiciary, or a fifth of the members of the Constituent Assembly have the right to object to any constitutional text agreed upon by the Constituent Assembly, in which case the text is to be referred to the Constitutional Court whose ruling on the matter is to be considered final and binding.

The effect of these two articles of the new constitutional declaration is that the elected Constituent Assembly is now at the mercy of the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces, and that any impediment or judicial objection to its work will lead directly to the dissolution of the elected constituent assembly altogether. Furthermore, the rules adopted by the People's Assembly regulating the voting and decision making processes that govern the work of the constituent assembly in the event of disagreement among its members on a text no longer have any use worth mentioning given that the new constitutional declaration gave the right to objection to so many parties, including any fifth of the members of the Constituent Assembly itself.

On June 14, 2012, the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces issued a decree through which it formed the National Defence Council, a body whose formation was stipulated in the constitutional declaration issued on March 30, 2011. It is remarkable that the decree did not catch the attention of many people except several days after it was published in the Official Gazette. The decree states that the National Defence Council is to be composed of the president, who is the Council's head, and sixteen other members, eleven of whom are to be from the military, and including the Minister of Defence. The Council's decisions are to be taken by an absolute majority; and the Council's mandate is the consideration of matters relating to the security and safety of the country.

The idea of forming a National Defence Council was an issue that had the consensus of all of the political forces. These various forces had envisioned the Council being the institution that would organize the partnership between the civilian and military authorities in the decision making process as it pertained to matters of national security and defence. The way in which the Council was set up by the new constitutional declaration, with a majority representing the military establishment, suggests that the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces intends to have complete control over the country's strategic decision making apparatus.

The Supreme Council of the Armed Forces also issued a decision amending decision number 56 which it had issued in 2011. The amendment calls for the formation of a committee within the President's office called to deal with matters relating to finance and personnel. The new committee is to be headed by General Abdul Momin Fouda and to include four other members. Although the Supreme Council's has emphasized that General Fouda will not be the head of the President's office, it is clear that the most likely effect of the decision is that it will force the president of the republic to seek refer to this new Committee when making any decision concerning the finances or staff of the office, and to obtain the approval of the majority of the committee's members in order for any of these decisions to take effect. Indeed, the decision cannot be understood except in the context of an attempt to reduce the powers of the president even in relation to the institution of the presidency itself; particularly its finances and its staff. In other words, the president will not be able to appoint advisers or assistants without the consent of the committee which will be composed of individuals appointed by the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces.

In the end, and because the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces has reserved for itself the legislative powers of the state, the next president of the republic will not be able to pass laws by decree. Rather, any bill the he or his government will plan to turn into legislation will have to be referred to the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces for approval. This means that the decisions of the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces, including those relating to the formation of the National Defence Council or Office of the President, will remain in force, and the president will be unable to change them until the Supreme Council loses its legislative powers after the election of a new People's Assembly. Furthermore, because there is a ten day period separating the official announcement of the presidential election results and the inauguration of the new president into office, we cannot be certain that the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces is not planning to issue new and significant decisions before the new president assumes office.

A Possible Collision: Prospects and Issues

One of the most important implications of the presidential election, if the electoral commission does declare the victory of Mohamed Mursi, is that it will have signified an end to the state of political exclusion of the Muslim Brotherhood that has been the Egyptian government's policy over the past eight decades. This exclusion has emptied politics of its meaning in Egypt, bringing about varying and frequent periods of internal conflict and violence. The major political force in the country now returns as a participant in the building of the new republic. On the other hand, Mursi's victory may spare the country the risk of the former regime returning to power, and also spare it the impact of a Shafiq victory in terms of popular reaction and the concomitant loss of stability.

At the same time, however, the election showed that the country and its various political forces, particularly the Muslim Brotherhood's Freedom and Justice Party, lack the necessary infrastructure for the exercise of politics in a free, democratic and pluralistic political atmosphere. The new Egypt lacks free and professional centres or companies that can conduct public opinion polls; it lacks a real pluralism in its media, which is currently divided between that which is state owned, and that owned by the big businessmen with very close ties to the former regime; and it lacks a diversified base of capital, a base that would be capable of supporting the varying orientations of the different political forces.

Because Egyptian political life after the revolution has suffered from the collapse of the necessary consensus between the political forces required to bring about the transition to democracy, the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces has been well placed to take advantage of great opportunities to strengthen its political position and role. The popular movement had succeeded bending the Supreme Council to the popular will in the great week of protest (18 to 25 November 2011), when the Sharaf government was toppled and the Ali Silmi document with it. The victory of the Muslim Brotherhood and the Salafists in the legislative elections of January 2012, however, caused the departure of many of the liberal and secular forces and personalities from the revolutionary consensus, and sent the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces in search of ways to counter the Islamists' large popular base. At the same time, the Brotherhood committed a series of errors in the context of its relations with revolutionary groups of youth and liberal and secular political forces. These errors contributed in widening the rift between the different political forces. Once the formation of the first constituent assembly was announced, the state of disagreement and polarization between Islamists and other political forces came to the fore.

What the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces is in the process of carrying out today is not only the manifestation of an attempt to take precautions against Mursi's assumption of the presidency; it is also a counter offensive against the popular movement itself. This counter offensive is aimed at maintaining the military's control of the state and government apparatuses, both directly and indirectly, for as long as possible, or at least until the Supreme Council is satisfied that its position and constitutional prerogatives are safeguarded. Therefore, the handover of power set to take place on June 30, 2012 will be just the beginning, and not the end, of the road to building a civil, free and pluralistic republic. It is clear, however, that the fate of all of the contested issues pertaining to the country's future hang in the balance, especially after the million person demonstration in Tahrir Square on the evening of Tuesday June 19, 2012. These issues include:

1. The constitutional declaration in both of its parts which has been rejected by the Islamists and the revolutionary forces, and opposition to which was the main banner under which the million demonstrators in Tahrir Square rallied on Tuesday June 19, 2012.
2. The fate of the People's Assembly, a majority of the members of which still hold that no party has the authority to issue a decision affecting its dissolution.
3. The powers of the president-elect, especially in the face of the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces' measures and attempts to enforce its will upon the resources of the state and its government.

4. We should not overlook the possibility, even if it is still slight although it cannot be ruled out altogether, that Egyptians will wake up one morning to a surprise announcement by the electoral commission that it was Shafiq and not Mursi who won the elections, and that the commission will have found one way or another to legitimize such an announcement. There are some indicators that suggest that this may happen, such as the delay in the announcement of the election results, the indication by Shafiq's campaign that it is counting on the objections submitted to the electoral commission to tip the scales in its favour, and the Supreme Council's issuance of a statement on the eve of the announcement of the election results warning that it will face any chaos with an iron fist and calling on all parties to accept the election results to be announced by the commission. These were all messages directed at the Muslim Brotherhood and the revolutionary forces supporting them.

For all of these issues to be raised at one at one time, and only days after the end of the presidential election, means that Egypt is at the doorstep of a bitter confrontation between the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces, joined by state institutions and the judiciary loyal to it on the one hand, and the Muslim Brotherhood, and beside them in varying degrees, the groups revolutionary youth, the Salafist forces, and some of the liberal forces and personalities. This confrontation could lead to a rapid explosion in the political arena, especially if Shafiq is announced as the victor of the presidential elections, or to a series of crises for many months to come that may extend for more than a year. In the end, it will be up to the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces to make significant concessions for the construction of a civil, free, and democratic state. After this, the struggle would continue at a slower pace, and for several years, to finally bring about a total liberation of the state from military control and domination. The other option is that Supreme Council of the Armed Forces carries out a foul military coup after realizing that the masked military coup it has been carrying out since the second week of June has not achieve the dual objective of maintaining the Supreme Council's political predominance while maintaining stability at the same time.

Awaiting the Historic Compromise

For Egypt to take the path of a transformation to freedom and democracy, several issues have to be taken into consideration. These include:

1. The elected president must take office and assume his role by the end of June 2012; for whatever pressures and schemes seek to limit his powers, the presence of an elected president of the republic in office from where he can stand by the popular movement, and against the schemes seeking to entrench the military's control over the government and the state, is of paramount importance in calculations of the balance of power.
2. What has become clear after weeks of debate on the advanced standing of the Muslim Brotherhood candidate for the presidency is that the Muslim Brotherhood are the only ones who have the capabilities and the sources of power necessary to confront the power of the military and the remnants of the former regime, both within the country and abroad. Without the Muslim Brotherhood, the military junta would have taken complete control over the entire country without a viable or effective challenge from the other political forces. Therefore, in the current balance of forces, the Brotherhood will led by necessity and the other forces will accept their leadership also by necessity.

3. If, between one stage and another, the Muslim Brotherhood is able to mobilize the youth groups behind clear and specific revolutionary goals, it will not be difficult to bring the non-Islamic political parties to follow, just as happened in Tahrir Square on the evening of Tuesday June 19. The Brotherhood, however, will have to make strenuous efforts to bring about a consensus across the entire spectrum of the political arena, so long as the consensus is not at the expense of the fundamental demands of the revolution. On one level, it is necessary for the Muslim Brotherhood not to lose the revolutionary public again and, on another level; they must accept that at this stage no single political party or movement can singlehandedly rule the country.
4. The Muslim Brotherhood will have to define clear strategic goals for the popular movement and political forces working within it. These goals should provide the minimum requirements for the transformation of the country into a civil, free, democratic state while also being realistic and achievable goals. The Brotherhood will must avoid negotiating substantial concessions on these goals. Any concession made on any of the major issues (such as those outlined above), even if the Brotherhood or any of the other political forces see them as tactical concessions for now, will be extremely costly in the future. Such concessions would postpone the process of the democratic transition in the country on the long run, and may lead Egypt into a similar situation as that of Turkey after the 1980 coup, or the current situation of Algeria.
5. One of the particularly sensitive issues emanating from the specificity of the Egyptian situation is that it is in dire need of its army, and of its army's cohesion and strength. It is necessary therefore to avoid turning the conflict with the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces into conflict with the armed forces as a whole, or into an unbridled campaign to discredit, and thereby alienate, the military. The conflict between the revolutionary democratic forces in Egypt and the military has not come near the conflict with the forces loyal to the regime in Syria. The strategic objective of the revolution in Egypt should be a transformation of the role of the military from that of the guardian of the country to that of a partner in building a free and democratic system of government and the reform of the institutions of the state.
6. The core overall issue is that the leaders of both the Muslim Brotherhood and military recognize that Egypt has changed, and that the process of change will continue whether this continuation proves extremely costly or less so. Such a recognition will be necessary in order for the Brotherhood to engage in the battle to achieve the goals necessary for the continuation of the transition process, and it will also be necessary for the Supreme Council to back away from its positions before they lead the country into an explosive crisis and bloody strife.

The most likely scenario to be expected, and perhaps the best for Egypt, is that this crisis, the most entrenched since the overthrow of Mubarak, will end in a negotiated deal between the Brotherhood and the military establishment. These are the two main forces in the country, and all the talk of a third force is not supported by the facts on the ground. Only these two forces can mobilize large segments of the population and have the ability to organize and act, regardless of the different sources of this power, and the means used each of them to employ it. Even if we accept the decisions of the Supreme Council are calculated to protect and maintain the former regime, and the Council does not modify or back down from these decisions except under pressure, we are still faced

with the reality that the candidate affiliated with the former regime received enough votes to make his share of the popular vote almost equal to that of the Muslim Brotherhood. Both parties must arrive at a deal that is satisfactory to the majority of the Egyptian people. Such a deal must hold on to the victories of the revolution and allow for these gains to grow greater over the few coming years. The deal must also reassure the military establishment that the Muslim Brotherhood, and the other forces of revolution, do not aim to undermine the Egyptian state, and that these forces are not committed to a vendetta for crimes committed in the past.

Reaching such a deal will require the taming of the will of the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces, and its unilateralism in determining the future of the country; and that the Council accepts the Muslim Brotherhood as an integral partner.

When it comes time to negotiate this deal, the Brotherhood will face the challenge of working with sufficient clarity of vision to maintain the largest sector of the revolutionary forces and the revolutionary street on their side. If the Brotherhood loses those who stood with them in the presidential election and its aftermath, they will have aborted the entire process of change. In such a situation, they will have ended up as easy pickings for the counter attack that will be launched by the military establishment and the former regime; an attack that lurks not too far away, but just around the corner.

**Translated by Afro-Middle East Centre*

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