



EGYPT: RENEWED CRISIS AND NEW CHALLENGES

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Although the term Arab Spring has no Arabic origins, millions of Egyptians hoped that their country with the new situation could find its way and face the enormous economic and social problems accumulated during the period (1981-2011). However, mismanagement of national issues, shrinking the geostrategic position of Egypt as the largest Arab and African country, poverty, unemploymentⁱ, human rights abuses, corruption, the virtual absence of a middle class and immigration were the reasons that led Egyptians to Tahrir Square and toppled the regime of General Mubarak.

The elections that brought President Mursi in power in June 2012ⁱⁱ with 51.85% of the votesⁱⁱⁱ are the first free democratic elections in the modern history of Egypt since the overthrow of the

monarch Farouk in 1952. However, the former military leaders Nasser, Sadat and Mubarak (1952-2011) were imposed by the armed forces^{iv}.

The new Islamic government of the Muslim Brotherhood tried seriously to solve the chronic problems of the poorer classes, but the efficiency and effectiveness of the government was slow due to many obstacles, mainly the deprivation of financial resources and the lack assistance from third countries. The resistance offered by the Mubarak regime's institutions, the devaluation of the role of the military leadership from the new government in shaping the political life of Egypt^v, the failure of the Muslim Brotherhood to reassure other political parties of the opposition mainly Christians in the context of national reconciliation, efforts to politicize the state with inclusion of the Muslim Brotherhood members at key points, the doctrinal gap between the Muslim Brotherhood and the Salafists Islamists^{vi}, the losing battle with the media, the marginalization of the youth who revolted and toppled Mubarak, the opening moves to Iran and the attempts to change the Muslim Sunnis to Shia by Egyptian factions friendly to Iran, were the reasons that led to the suspension of the operation of a new constitution^{vii} and the replacement of Mursi by the Former head of Supreme constitutional Court Adli Mansour^{viii} through a military coup

The new crisis caused the dichotomy of the Egyptian public opinion between supporters of Mursi as a legitimate leader and dissidents. In this case the participation of a large proportion of Christians against Mursi was intense^{ix}

The participation of foreign powers in collaboration with internal factions to overthrow Mursi is obvious. Countries like Israel, several Western countries, the U.S.A did not directly condemn the overthrow of the democratically elected government. This indicates that controlling Egypt continues to be part of their colonial policy and the army with this move proves to be the guardian of secular values and western orientation

Moreover, Western countries collaborated with the perpetrators of the military coup and they did not give time and the benefit of the doubt to the Islamic government to complete its work. The U.S.A considered the overthrow of Mursi as protection of democracy^x and announced bilateral military exercises offering legitimacy to an unelected new leadership^{xi} Here is a contradiction in the U.S. policy concerning Middle East because they did not support the Syrian people efforts to overthrow Assad in the name of democracy.

Furthermore, the friendly Arab countries to the United States such as Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and UAE boosted directly the economy of Egypt with 12bn. \$ after the overthrow of Mursi^{xii}. So a serious rift was revealed between the Salafists of Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and UAE on the one side and the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood on the other because of doctrinal differences and the new approach between Tehran and Cairo.

The coup against Islamist Mursi could influence the stability and security of Egypt as the 'future' elected leaders could be overthrown by the military leadership, whenever the latter disagree as regards the applied national policy.

Also, the victory of the moderate Islamist Mursi ideologically disarmed al-Qaeda and the jihadists because it showed to the world that there is a future for political Islam with a peaceful and democratic manner. Thus, the removal of democratic Islamist government can push several Salafists to leave politics and resort to armed struggle for the conquest of power. Moreover, the international efforts to curb the hardliners by attracting them to the moderate Islamic political model prevailing in the countries of the Arab Spring will be reduced

The opposition forces, who never accepted the rise of Islamists to power, made a tragic mistake when they cooperated with the remnants of dictatorship against the democratic system to govern, endangering the Egyptian future. Although the Muslim Brothers have a large base and a strong influence on society they will try to comply with the democratic institutions and will struggle to stay in the political landscape, using their constitutional legitimacy as a weapon. But in this case some isolated incidents of violence could not be excluded such as a possible civil war among followers of the Muslim Brotherhood and the supporters of the various opposition forces could cause the collapse of the democratic system and lead Egypt to political anarchy and uncertainty, coupled with the emergence of the phenomenon of “Firearms”^{xiii}

The close relations between the Egyptian army and the United States and the quarrels among the different political forces could give the advantage to the army to rule the country in order to put an end to political instability.

The potential failure of the Islamic government to satisfy the social and economic demands of the entire Egyptian society could lead to its rejection under Constitutional conditions. In that case, people could give a fatal blow to the Muslim Brotherhood, dethroning it in a democratic way and not via military coup.

In conclusion, the respect of minority rights is an important factor of stability and growth. Also, the combination of non-intervention of foreign powers in the internal affairs of the country, the national dialogue under the road map and the compliance of all political parties in the process of democratic functions, is the ideal solution for the future of Egypt

Endnotes:

ⁱ http://www.cemmis.edu.gr/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=220%3A2011-03-01-15-59-00&catid=76%3Agnomes&Itemid=95&lang=el#_edn4

ⁱⁱ Mursi was a candidate of Freedom and Justice party of the movement “ Muslim Brotherhood”

ⁱⁱⁱ http://www.bbc.co.uk/arabic/middleeast/2012/06/120624_egypt_election_result.shtml

