

The Overthrow of Mubarak

Trading One Form of Oppression for Another?

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The chaos that has been unfolding in Egypt since late January has most Americans confused especially in light of growing doubts about the part that the Obama administration may have played in fomenting or encouraging the furious anti-Mubarak uprising that brought hundreds of thousands of protestors into the streets of Cairo, Alexandria, Suez and other regions in Egypt.

This White House has either not learned, or chooses to ignore, the lessons of the Islamists' skilled subversion of other pro-democracy movements. David Horowitz wrote recently in the *Jerusalem Post* that reported overtures by this White House to Egypt's Islamists whose outlook conflicts utterly with the democratic agenda "make no sense, and suggest a frighteningly superficial understanding of the Muslim Brotherhood's intentions and potential achievements."

Horowitz adds there is no evidence the Obama administration has worked with potential leaders in Egypt to minimize the chances of such a subversion re-occurring nor has there been any indication this administration will oppose an ongoing alliance with an Egyptian government in which an unreformed Islamist movement has a role. He writes that the White House seems instead to be actively encouraging a transitional outreach to the Muslim Brotherhood.

A Look Back

If we go back about 90 years in Egyptian history, we can begin to see how Egypt has come to the point where a takeover by radical Islamists is now a distinct possibility.

Following World War I, there was hope in Egypt that the nation could develop into a modern, tolerant society. Their revolution of 1919 united the country's Muslims (called Moslems in those days), Christians and Jews around their slogan, "Liberty, Equality, Brotherhood."

The Egyptian constitution, adopted in 1923, established a secular society under a constitutional monarchy. It took Western democracy as a model and established equal status for women, acknowledged Jews as an accepted part of public life, and included Jews as members of parliament. There was considerable sympathy for the Zionist movement at that time because the government wanted to maintain good relations between the three most prevalent religious groups of the region: Muslims, Jews, and Coptic Christians.

Flash forward to 2011: *Today, the Jews are gone, the Coptic Christians are viciously persecuted, and there is unprecedented turmoil in the streets of Cairo. What happened in those 88 years?*

Let's step back again in time to March 1928. The charismatic Moslem leader, Hassan al-Banna, has founded the Moslem Brotherhood in Egypt. It promotes world domination by Islam, the restoration of the Caliphate, and the complete subjugation of women.

Ten years pass. The Moslem Brotherhood has been a miserable failure, attracting only eight hundred members in its first decade. However, its fortunes will soon change. *Adolph Hitler has come to power.*

The War Years

A branch of the Nazi party is established in Cairo, and the Egyptian government is told that if it does not begin to implement certain repressive policies toward the Jews, Germany will boycott Egyptian cotton. The government caves, and a defamatory press campaign and discriminatory policies toward Jews are launched. Germany rewards Egyptian compliance by becoming the second largest importer of Egyptian goods. The Nazis stage mass marches and tout Germany's economic progress, which impresses the Egyptian populace. Gamal Abdel Nasser, who would become one of Egypt's most famous leaders, becomes a loyal Nazi ideologue (and would remain so for the rest of his career).

The Third Reich pours men, money, weaponry, and propaganda into the Moslem Brotherhood. The Reich encourages angry members of the Brotherhood to vent their hostility on the Jews instead of on women. By the end of the War, the Brotherhood has swelled to a million members, and hatred of Jews has become central to mainstream Arab culture. Ayatollah Khomeini listens to the daily broadcasts of Nazi propaganda from Berlin, as do most Arabs with access to a radio. It is the most popular programming in the Middle East.

For the next seven decades, the anti-Semitism programmed into Arab culture by the Third Reich will be the main organizing force of Middle East politics.

Back to the Future: 2011

As Egyptians clogged the streets of Cairo in one of the largest demonstrations of organized political dissent in that nation's history, Middle East "experts" from the Right and the Left called publicly for the Obama administration to dump Egyptian President Mubarak. Some recommended that Mubarak be forced to step down by the suspension of all economic and military assistance to Egypt.

Caroline Glick, writing for the *Jerusalem Post* ("Clueless in Washington," Jan. 31, 2011) pointed out that if the biggest problem was the character of the Mubarak regime, the suspension of U.S. support and pressure for Mubarak to step down immediately would make sense. She stated that the character of the protesters is "a bigger problem than the character of the regime they seek to overthrow." She elaborated by citing results of a Pew Opinion Survey of Egyptians from June 2010:

- 59 percent said they back Islamists; only 27% said they back modernizers.
- 50% of Egyptians support Hamas; 30% support Hezbollah; 20% support al Qaida.
- 95% would welcome Islamic influence over their politics.

On social issues, the polling showed:

- 82% of Egyptians support executing adulterers by stoning.
- 77% support whipping and cutting the hands off thieves.
- 84% support executing any Muslim who changes his religion.

What all this indicates, Glick says, is that if the regime falls, the successor regime will not be a liberal democracy. Mubarak's military authoritarianism will be replaced by Islamic totalitarianism. The U.S.'s greatest Arab ally will become its greatest enemy. Israel's peace partner will again become its gravest foe.

In with the Army, Out with Mubarak

At this writing, Egyptian Vice President Omar Suleiman has announced that Hosni Mubarak has stepped down as president of Egypt and handed his powers over to the Higher Council of the Armed Forces. The announcement over state TV was greeted with ecstatic cheers by the protesters assembled in Cairo's Tahrir Square and other city centers on the 18th day of their demonstrations for Mubarak's ouster.

The announcement marked the end of Mubarak's 32-year rule of Egypt. *DebkaFile* [Israeli] intelligence reports that in fact a military *coup d'état* took place, giving Mubarak no option but to resign. An army aircraft then flew him out of Cairo to Sharm el-Sheikh. The high army command is now in charge of administering the nation. Any civilian stepping into the presidential office would have to cooperate with the army.

According to the Egyptian constitution, the President's powers pass to the Speaker of Parliament for a transitional period lasting between 60 days and two years. It is not clear whether Suleiman will stay on as Vice President or take his seat on the High Army Council alongside Defense Minister Field Marshal Mohamad Tantawi, head of the Council, and the Chief of Staff Gen. Sami Al-Anan.

It is very difficult to forecast how large a part the radical Muslim Brotherhood will play in the governance of Egypt, going forward. If the Pew Opinion Survey referenced earlier in this article is a reliable indicator, developments in Egypt over the next few months could move toward Islamist rule and Sharia Law. There is also a high probability that the treaty that has existed between Egypt and Israel for the last 30+ years will be repudiated, resulting in ramped-up hostilities toward Israel. A host of other issues between Egypt and the U.S. will be affected, depending on the volatility of the region, and on the foreign policy of the current administration in Washington—two factors, unfortunately, that are impossible to predict, given the uncertainties and lack of coherent direction in either.

Sources:

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