

# Did the US Co-opt OWS in Order to Legitimize Egypt's Flawed Elections?

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Although Occupy Wall Street protesters have so far resisted attempts by the Democratic Party to co-opt their movement, a New York City "General Assembly" was bamboozled by what may be a State Department and/or NED initiative aimed at granting legitimacy to Egypt's flawed election process.

According to [a November 16 story in Ahram Online](#) and links collected by blogger Benjamin Doherty (at [bitly.com/bundles/bangpound/4](http://bitly.com/bundles/bangpound/4)), OWS in New York City agreed to send a delegation of election monitors to Egypt after a mysterious activist flew in from Washington with a proposal in hand. The New York City OWS swiftly approved the initiative at a November 10 "General Assembly" in Zuccotti Park and allocated \$29,000.

Maria Dayton, the apparent author of the proposal, boasts of connections to the U.S. State Department, the National Endowment for Democracy, and Freedom House on her LinkedIn profile (since deleted but preserved by Doherty, at [cld.bangpound.org/2G423i2t2R2f2q1q331K](http://cld.bangpound.org/2G423i2t2R2f2q1q331K)).

Each of these institutions has a longstanding history of subverting and co-opting popular movements in the interests of U.S. foreign policy.

Dayton represented her proposal to OWS as a request from "Egyptian civil society groups."

But many Egyptian revolutionaries are shocked by the initiative and are wondering who is behind it. See, for example, the ["Statement by Comrades from Cairo in Response to OWS Proposal to Send Election Monitors."](#)

According to the Ahram Online story:

The Occupy Wall Street movement was reportedly invited to observe the elections by "Egyptian civil society groups" and a founding member of the April 6 Youth Movement, Asmaa Mahfouz.

However, aside from one signed letter from Mahmoud El-Sawy at the Horeyya Coalition, there appears to be no direct and confirmed communication from Egypt to the General Assembly.

"Monitoring the elections is, at worst, legitimising the military junta's grasp over the Egyptian process, at best it's naïve," says Ranya (not her real name), one of the authors of the Egyptian letter to OWS. "I think people were swept up with eagerness."

Unbeknown to the OWS movement, this comes at a time when activists are

considering boycotting the Egyptian elections because, as Comrades in Cairo explained in their letter, these elections can only produce a “puppet parliament.”

There is, of course, no indication that the persons who happened to be present at the November 10th Zuccotti Park “General Assembly” of OWS were conscious of government machinations behind the proposal, or that they intended to do anything subversive of the Egyptian people’s struggles. But the U.S. State Department and the Egyptian junta can be expected to seize upon OWS “monitoring” as lending legitimacy to the upcoming elections, no matter how flawed the process or disappointing the results.

*Jacob Levich, who lives in New York City, has written for [MRZine](#) on military issues and tweets as [@cordeliers](#).*

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