

Egypt's Elections and the Stillborn Revolution

Islamists and the US make strange bedfellows

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Like many who supported the people's uprising in Egypt, there are resounding questions and disbelief in my mind following the country's presidential election results of June 18, which saw the presidency of the nation go to the Muslim Brotherhood. How could a party that was curiously silent and largely absent during the uprising—and whose religious political platform and indeterminate relations to with the US seem to place it outside of the interests and desires of post-revolutionary Egypt and Egyptians—come to power in its aftermath? Any way one looks at it, something is not right in the cradle of the "Arab Spring."

While the US and its allies are often presented in western mainstream media as fighting Islamists, it seems that, these days, Islamists and the US make strange bedfellows. Or, could it be that this has always been the case? While the US is perceived as at odds with or in opposition to "Islamic extremism" or "fundamentalism," its main Middle Eastern targets for the last decade or more—save for the anti-imperialist regimes of Iran and certain factions within Lebanon—have been secular regimes that do not cooperate (or ceased to) with imperial, annexation and destabilization agendas for the region; the regimes of Saddam Hussein, Muammar Gaddafi and, more recently, Bashar Al Assad come to mind. The intention here is not to defend these men—nor condemn them, especially not from the hypocritical perspective of "humanitarian intervention," which functions against the backdrop of centuries of imperial plunder and blood shed in the region—but to point out that what these rulers and their regimes share/shares (at least at some point during their political existence) is/was an unwillingness to cooperate with (or a defiance of) the western imperial agenda.

As Egypt reluctantly ushers in a new, Islamist president (assuming of course that there is not another uprising as a result of these elections) one must ask how the Brotherhood came to win an election in the aftermath of a revolution they barely supported? Perhaps the party may have had to make accommodations to the US-backed military junta that has ruled Egypt since the lack-luster ouster of Mubarak. One has to go beyond seeing so-called Islamists as a threat to the west or as de facto anti-imperialists. For if the pro-US regime of Saudi Arabia (and other Gulf countries) has taught us anything, it is that pro-imperial collaborators/clients come in all ideological shades and can be among the most extreme or "fundamental" in their so-called religious beliefs (which, in reality, are most likely predominantly exploited as a means to control and lord over others).

What is needed in post-revolutionary Egypt (and indeed in all regions of the world) is broad-based anti-imperialism and anti-imperialist political struggle. Rather than opposition to western imperialism, many so-called Islamist political parties or entities are willing to ally with imperial forces against their own people and region for the sake of political, economic,

and/or religious. It remains to be fully seen where the Egyptian Brotherhood falls along the spectrum of imperial collaboration and duplicitous and retrograde religiosity. However, their recent meetings with senior US officials [1] do not engender trust and do not bode well for any truly revolutionary people within Egypt. If recent claims that the Brotherhood plan to rethink Egypt's Camp David Treaty with Israel [2] are true, one could cynically speculate that—given the party's recent meetings with (or briefings by) the US and given Israeli's long standing desires to re-occupy the Sinai [3]—this could possibly be a joint strategy (by Israel, Egypt and the US) that would allow Israel to make a (new) grab for the Sinai; thus giving it exactly what it wants.

It may be too early to say. But what one can say is that for the US and Israel, and their NATO allies, conservative religious client regimes make just as useful clients (if not more so) as secular collaborators, offering the (convenient) false polemic of the West versus Islam. For the Egyptian people's uprising, the only thing worse than a religious government, would be one that is also (either secretly or openly) allied with imperial forces and the Egyptian military. With the recent elections in Egypt, the "Arab Spring" may have entered an even darker Arab winter.

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Notes

[1] <http://bikyamasr.com/44923/egypt-senior-us-officials-meet-with-muslim-brotherhood/>
<http://cnsnews.com/news/article/sen-john-kerry-expected-meet-muslim-brotherhood-presidential-candidate>

[2] <http://ca.news.yahoo.com/egypts-morsi-rethink-israel-pact-build-iran-ties-093641370.html>

[3] <http://www.jpost.com/DiplomacyAndPolitics/Article.aspx?id=275088>
<http://www.jpost.com/DiplomacyAndPolitics/Article.aspx?id=240015>

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