

Egypt - The Peoples' Voices

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Global Research, February 05, 2011

5 February 2011

Region: [Middle East & North Africa](#)

"Civil disobedience is not our problem. Our problem is civil obedience. Our problem is that people are obedient all over the world in the face of poverty and starvation and stupidity, and war, and cruelty" : Howard Zinn (1922-2010.)

Arguably never has a momentous event, its triumphs and blood soaked tragedies, been so instantly transmitted across the globe, panicking governments, bent on quelling it, inspiring millions with similar aspirations to Egypt's populus, into "can do" and unstinting support mode, with, literally, a vengeance.

The first act of Egypt's regime was to put an end to this extraordinary avalanche of people to people's freedom of information - and pull the plug. It failed. The internet generation is a young people's domain. Like wildfire, instructions instantly flew around the net, informing those with contacts in Egypt, the prefixes which would circumvent the cut off. "Anonymous", a "hacktivist" group, promptly brought down systems still working in Egypt - those of government offices.

Al Jazeera also reported: "After internet services were disconnected in Egypt, protesters were prevented from speaking to the world. But thanks to John Scott Railton, a Los Angeles based student, who took upon himself the task of uploading messages on micro blogging site twitter (information is still making its way online.) He started making calls and posting messages on a twitter account he created for the Egyptian protests."

Vodafone was reportedly pressured by the Egyptian government to send pro-Mubarak texts to all its subscribers in the country. Gathering by the global net traffic about this, it may well cost the company dearly.

The immediacy of information, and the reason for governmental panic (surely mirrored, especially in those great democratic bastions, Washington and Whitehall, already mooting limiting the internet - or worse - and the delusionally self-styled "only democracy in the Middle East", Israel) can be seen by trawling the messages. Power can no longer mask reality. No spin can obscure message deluge, traversing the globe, by the second.

Just few of these, near randomly garnered from friends and contacts in Egypt, late yesterday and early today, are an example of the passion, defiance, courage, hope - some will say naivety - in eloquent brevity. They are written as sent:

* " CAIRO Right now its all calm and the crowd is holding the square chanting WE WILL NOT LEAVE ... tomorrow is The Friday of Departure !!"

* " We are not leaving - we are ready to die here - Please tell the world to pray for us."

- * " We do not want help from obama or any one we will take our freedom by our self."
- * " heavy gunfire heard in Tahrir Square."
- * "Friend's neighbor's family just received corpse of their son, arrested a few days ago."
- * Lawyer : "Israel has offered to place 'all its capabilities' at the hands of General Omar Suleiman, the recently appointed Vice President of Egypt, for the 'protection of the regime of Egypt.' Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu suggested intelligence personnel undertaking specialist operations to bring an end to demonstrations."
- * "Man with a camera wearing a blue "Press" vest, being beaten on the street. The army stepped in and fire shots in air to disperse the crowd, the man was led away."
- * "Two Al Jazeera reporters have just been attacked on their way from airport to central Cairo - more updates soon."
- * " Shahira Amin resigned from Nile TV because of their coverage of the protests - she spoke live to Al Jazeera. She was the deputy head of the station."
- * " Come what may, I am here with the people.... I am not scared." Shahira Amin (Egyptian TV reporter)-Deputy head of NILE TV station resigned in protest of the biased pro-govt reporting. She is now in Tahrir square. She said: "I refuse to be part of the propaganda machine."
- * " ... a British freelance journalist in Cairo, says foreigners have had to go into hiding: 'Anyone who is a journalist has been attacked, and if you're a foreigner the same problem is happening. I have now had to move into hiding, keeping away from windows, keeping away from any of the action and reducing my visibility online.' "
- * " From Jack (who is cautious reporter): 'Al Arabiya reporting from Cairo that a foreign journalist has been beaten to death. I am not going out there to confirm it.' "
- * " this is people's power. This democracy from below. This is the most beautiful thing i have ever seen in my life."
- * " there is now replacement for the front teams that finished defending the frontline."
- * " the injured treated here by volunteering doctors. We took 6 oct bridge too. Thugs retreating .."
- * " at Abdel Moneim Riyadh sq. This is the frontline now. A mini clinic set up by the Barricades."
- * " Protesters and army watched as a man stood on the bridge, got paid, got out rifle, shot a protester in the head and walked away."
- * " Urgent, urgent, urgent. Democracy activists need medicines, first aid, water, food, direct access to media, please advertise and demand action, not empty words. Thank you." By-pass numbers for circumventing the block were posted back again, instantly.
- *" Please spare a thought for the people of Gaza.The border has been closed now for five

days.”

* ” Tomorrow’s demonstrations against the Israeli Separation Wall in the occupied West Bank villages of Bil’in, Ni’lin, Nabi Saleh and Al-Ma’sara will be in solidarity with the Egyptian people. Those demonstrations usually take place after Friday prayers.”

* ” Mubarak armed goons have kidnapped Aljazeera’s producer, Mysa khalaf al-tawil (daughter of dear friend Kamal). Mysa just arrived in Cairo two days ago to help in the coverage for the channel. I urge all of you if you can help to obtain her release or to provide information that could help in locating her. Please spread the message and inform me if you learn anything. Add this to the list of crimes for the Mubarak regime. It is personal now.”

” By the way the energetic and hard-working Aljazeera’s producer, Mysa Khalaf Al-Tawil is an American citizen. Will the US government work hard to obtain her release? If she was kidnapped by Revolutionary Guards in Iran, the US government would have ordered a bombing campaign against Iran by now.” (i)

* “Christians protecting Muslims in prayer during protests.”

* “Gunfire in Tahrir Square.”

* “Many Judges involved in demonstration ..”

* Of the charge by arms wielding “opposition” (later found to have police identity cards on them) who streamed through the Square on horses and camels:

“Those horse and camel cavalry will never stop the power of the people. Sound of the people is God (sic) sound.”

* “I swear to God there are more than twenty people dead.”

* Tweeted: “soldier ostensibly crying, being comforted by a demonstrator who has a stethoscope round his neck.” There are several, so far, non-verifiable reports, that this is the young soldier so conflicted between loyalty to the people and his profession that he sat atop his tank and put his gun in his mouth, but was persuaded to instead, jump down.

* ” URGENT, EGYPT: URGENT help needed for a 1st aid station by Tahrir Square-pass to anyone you know in Cairo who can help-Mohamed Mahmud at Bab El Louq near Tahrir is in URGENT need of Alcohol, Betadine(antiseptic), Water(mineral), Plastic gloves, garbage gloves, plastic dishes, cotton, any old tshirts, anti-biotics, painkillers, Shaash (gauze). If you have contacts please call or text +2 012-240-6441”

* ” Mubarak supporters are storming Cairo hotels looking for journalists.”

* ” Between 8 and 12 human rights lawyers arrested at Hisham Mubarak Law Centre.”

* ” Sandmonkey” is possibly Egypt’s most famous blogger : “Breaking news: @Sandmonkey arrested by state security. They called his father & claimed he has revolution leaflets #Egypt.” (ii)

* ” want to see ‘the land of the free and the home of the brave’? Go to Egypt. 2 million already at Tahrir Square – knowing that what happened yesterday (of knives and bullets ...)

can happen again”

* ” Imam talked about Christ and Mohammed, their teachings and relating it to oppression. I came across two nuns.”

” Eslam Bakir born March 1, 1989 degree: BA of Arts in European Culture, 2010 killed January 25, 2011 while demonstrating for his people’s freedom Rest in peace, brave young man.”

(25th January was Day One of the extraordinary, spontaneous, resistance.)

* ”Message to PJ Crowley: . @PJCrowley US can prevent a massacre by Egyptian army which depends solely on US for funds – pull funding now or US will be responsible.” (PJ Crowley: Assistant Secretary, US Bureau of Public Affairs.)

* ” Rabbi Michael Lerner : ‘We hope that Egyptians will hear the news that they have strong support from many in the Jewish world. We are not waffling like Obama – we want the overthrow of Mubarak, the freeing of all political prisoners, the redistribution of wealth in a fair way, trials for those who perpetrated torture and other forms of injustice, and the democratisation of all aspects of Egyptian life.’ ” (iii)

* Early Friday, the: “Day of Departure”: “Tahrir Square has free food and drinks, a bandstand with live music, dedicated medical staff and a sense of community which Mubarak’s opponents say makes them proud of their country for the first time in decades.”

* ” actually one of the mothers just kicked the ass of one of the guys of tried to stop us from joining the protests!!”

* ” ‘The US won’t dictate a foreign country’s policy.’ Damn, don’t let the people of Iraq, Afghanistan & Pakistan hear that #Egypt.”

On Thursday, that canny, journalistic, Middle East political barometer, Robert Fisk, referred to Egyptian leader Hosni Mubarak not as President, but “President.” The writing, seemingly, is at least visible on Cairo’s walls, ancient and modern.

The man he dubbed Lord Blair of Kut Al Amara (site of the spectacular British defeat in Iraq in 1916) lurking as “Middle East Peace Envoy”, in Jerusalem, has not failed in his seemingly, near medically delusional assessments, now of Egypt’s murderous leader. He is, declared Blair: “Immensely courageous and a force for good.”

Thursday: “An American correspondent: ‘While Egypt burns, our “president” makes us “proud” This morning on air talking about prayer and the nature of Christianity – all while anxiously awaiting the arrival of Jennifer Lopez and hubby to watch the Super Bowl with him. Words fail.’ ”

One can only echo Fisk, again, who watching the “pro-Mubarak demonstrators”, one with bright red eyes and all seemingly motivated by something more than fresh air: “What are they on?”

i. Updates: Angry Arab News Service : www.angryarab.blogspot.com

ii. <http://www.sandmonkey.org>

iii. <http://tikkun.org/index.php?topic=rabbilerner>

See also : Barricades – live at: <http://bambuser.com/v/1380337>

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