

Egyptian Revolution Derailed, Contained

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A fourth wave of the Egyptian revolution seems inevitable, until the revolution changes the regime or the regime emerges victorious, pending another revolution.

The January 25 revolution in Egypt, which removed the former president Hosni Mubarak from power in 2011 and, in its second wave, overwhelmed the first anniversary of his elected successor Mohammad Morsi on June 30, 2013 with millions over millions of anti – Muslim Brotherhood protesters until the military intervened to remove him in turn three days later, is now entering its third stage without yet being completed, fulfilled or finished.

In a statement issued on July 27, 2013, US Secretary of State John Kerry grasped the fact that the Egyptian revolution has not yet run its course; “Its final verdict is not yet decided,” he said, “but it will be forever impacted by what happens right now.” He described the situation prevailing “now” as a “pivotal moment for Egypt .”

Years ago, John C. Campbel, in “Foreign Policy,” had described the Middle East as “a house of containment built on shifting sands,” from the perspective of the United States, and his description still applies today, no better than to the current state of affairs in Egypt, where the state has become more like a house of cards.

So far, Egypt ’s revolution was more a “regime exchange” than a “regime change.” The old pro – U.S. market economy centers of power had merely rotated power among the liberal “remnants” of the Mubarak regime and the conservatives of his opposition led by the Muslim Brotherhood, with the military playing the role of the arbiter. For example, the Sawiris family billionaires who were milking them are coming back now after they were replaced by the billionaire and MB leader Khairat al-Shater and his ilks during the Morsi era. They were thus far successful in derailing and containing the revolution, which has changed nothing of the old regime, neither internally nor externally.

This rotation of power has so far proved an effective mechanism in containing the revolution and derailing it away from evolving into a new order. The political polarization along these lines is another mechanism; Mazda Majidi on July 20 wrote on the Web site of the U.S. Party of Socialism and Liberation: “A long confrontation with the military on one side and Brotherhood supporters on the other could yield a situation where the people in the streets right now will be sidelined,” and consequently their revolution aborted.

Washington D.C. is adapting to this “regime exchange” in order to prevent a “change in the regime,” which the successive US administrations have nurtured as a strategic asset to both the United States and its Israeli regional ally since the Camp David accords of 1979.

Answering his question whether the removal of Morsi was a U.S.-engineered coup, Majidi

wrote that “Washington would have had no incentive to orchestrate a military coup to overthrow the Muslim Brotherhood (MB);” Morsi “worked well with the U.S.,” “played a key role” in brokering a truce between Israel and Hamas in late 2012,” and in the conflict in Syria, he and the MB “were solidly behind the U.S. effort to overthrow the Syrian state;” accordingly, “Washington could live with Morsi, but it obviously has no problems with Egypt’s military,” who are the most committed to the strategic ties with the U.S. and the best guardians of the peace treaty with Israel.

Maintaining or discarding those ties and that treaty will undoubtedly be the most vital dividing line externally between fulfilling the Egyptian revolution and derailing it away from disturbing the regional balance of power and status quo, which both the U.S and the Israeli beneficiaries thereof have nurtured during the past more than three decades as their “holy cow.”

No surprise, therefore, that the internal threats to this status quo have become the concern of the U.S. and Israeli allies, but Israel in particular. Israeli leaders seemed on alert to preempt this threat. On July 26, President Shimon Peres said in an Al-Hurra TV channel: “What is politics if it can’t provide people with bread?” Backed by US Republican Senator Rand Paul, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is now urging the West to adopt a new “Marshall Plan” for the Egyptian economy.

Within this context monitors could interpret the U.S. refusal to label the Egyptian military latest intervention on July 3 as a coup, lest the Barak Obama administration become obliged by law to cut the U.S. aid to Egypt . Similarly Qatar , which had sponsored the Morsi -led MB government, would not withdraw its (\$7b) support to Egypt . The same applies to the (\$12b) prompt financial support extended by Saudi Arabia, UAE and Kuwait within (48) hours of the latest “exchange” of power in Egypt, which, in view of the U.S. strategic alliance with the three countries, could not have been promptly forthcoming without a U.S. “green light,” according to anti - American analysts.

Any U.S. Israeli “Marshall Plan,” however, will only be another mechanism to maintain and reinforce the status quo and will not change the regime in Egypt , let alone bringing in a new regime.

Beneficiaries of the status quo are keen to prove to the revolting masses that their revolution has thus far made their bad situation worse: Economically, significant capital fled abroad, Egypt’s debt is a staggering 88 percent of its GDP, tourism collapsed, agriculture hit hard, foreign investment declined, labor unrest spread, unemployment on the rise, inflation soars, economic growth plunged, public finances deteriorated, value of Egyptian pound fell, purchase power of salaries eroded, half of Egyptians live at or below poverty line, etc., and personal safety and public security have become a daily headache, with the harassment of women becoming a social phenomenon.

And in the name of democracy, according to Jon Lee Anderson, writing in The New Yorker on July 5, “the devils long contained in Egypt ’s national Pandora’s box having been loosened from their chains,” so “as if everything in Egypt must now be performed by the mob, for the mob, in full view of everyone.”

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