Egypt’s Coup & Future of Democracy in Post Arab Spring Middle East (2015)

Shams uz Zaman, Mr.
FĂTETELE DEMOCRAȚIEI
impact în plan geopolitic
NOTE
Autorii sunt direct responsabili de alegerea și prezentarea datelor conținute în articole, de autenticitatea și originalitatea acestora, cât și de opiniiile exprimate. Formulările și prezentarea materialelor nu reprezintă întotdeauna poziția revistei Geopolitica și nu angajează în niciun fel responsabilitatea redacției.
Reproducerea integrală sau parciale a oricărui material scris sau ilustrativ din această publicație este interzisă în lipsa unui acord scris din partea editorului.
Redacția revistei nu-și asumă responsabilitatea pentru conținutul materialelor prezentate de sponsori.

Comenzi și abonamente la:

Editura Top Form
Abilitată de Comisia pentru Științe Militare, Informații și Ordine Publică, Categorii Edituri A2, poziția 16, București, str. Turda 104, sect. 1,
Tel: 0314 298 400; 0722 207 617; 0722 704 176
www.geopolitic.ro; editura.topform@yahoo.com; editura.topform@gmail.com, geopolitica.magazine@yahoo.com
CONȘILIUL ȘTIINȚIFIC

ACADEMIA ROMÂNĂ

academician Dan BERINDEI
academician Constantin BĂLĂCEANU-STOLNICI

ACADEMIA OAMENILOR DE ȘTIINȚĂ

Anghel ANDREESCU
Viorel BUȚA
Teodor FRUNZETI

Constantin ONIŞOR
Ionuț PURICĂ
Gheorghe TOMA

Gheorghe VĂDUVA
Constantin VLAD

INTERNATIONAL BOARD

Abdulrahman AL RASSI - Ambasador Extraordinar și Plenipotențiar al Regatului Arabiei Saudite în Rusia
Alam ANWAR - Centre for West Asian Studies, Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi, India
Zeljko BIJELJAC - Geographical Institute „Jovan Cvijic”, Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts, Belgrade, Serbia
Alex BERCA - SUA
Christian BOLIVAR - Chilean Army War College, Santiago, Chile
Maurizio BONI - Headquarters NATO Rapid Deployable Corps, Italy
Michele BRUNELLI - Università degli Studi di Bergamo, Italy
Come CARPENTIER DE GOUDRON - World Affairs Journal, New Delhi, India
Michel CHOSUDOVSKY - Centre for Research on Globalization (CRG), Montreal, Qc. Canada
Dimitrios DALAKLIS - World Maritime University, Malmö, Sweden
Nicholas DIMA - Selous Foundation for Public Policy Research, USA
Sevdalina DIMITROVA - National Military University "Vasil Levski", Veliko Tarnovo, Bulgaria
Serhiy DZHERDZH - NATO-Ukraine Civic League, Ukraine
Viacheslav DZIUNZDIUK - National Academy of Administration, Ukraine
Joseph E. FALLOON - New York, USA
Tiberio GRAZZIANI - L'Istituto di Alt Studi in Geopolitica e Scienze Ausiliarie (IsAG), Roma, Italia
Jaroslav GRYZ - National Defense University and University of Finance and Management in Warsaw, Poland
Mara S. GUBAIDULLINA - Al-Farabi Kazakh National University, Almaty, Kazakhstan
Serji HAKMAN - Universitatea Cernăuți, Ukraine
George (Sam) HAMONTREE III - Florida, USA
Radu HERVIAN - Drake Institute for Social Studies, Philadelphia, USA
Leonard HOCHBERG - Mackinder Forum, USA
Jean-Baptiste HUMEAU - Université d'Angers, France
Karolina ILIESKA - University St. Kliment Ohridski-Bitola, Faculty of Economics, Prilep, R. Macedonia
Slobodan JANKOVIC - Institute of International Politics and Economics, Belgrade, Serbia
David A. JONES - Institute of Warsaw, Poland
Theode KAHL - Institute for Romance Languages, Wien, Austria
Dincho KARAMUNCHEV - Geopolitics Consulting LTD, Bulgaria
Vladimir KARYAKIN - Russia's Institute for Strategic Studies, Russia
Swapnil KISHORE - IDC Herzliya - International School, Israel
Yana KOROBKO - International Advisory Council of the Institute of Peace and Development, Canada
Tamarava KOVAČEVIĆ - University of Novi Sad, Serbia
Anatoliy KRUGLASHOV - Yuriy Fedkovych Chernivtsi National University, Ukraine
Matthew Kwasiborski - American Institute on Political and Economic Systems, USA
Dorin LOZOVANU - EGEA, Rep. Moldova
Sohail MAHMOOD - Preston University, Islamabad, Pakistan
Armando MARQUES-GUEDES - Direcção-Geral da Política do Mar, Lisbon, Portugal
Satoshi MORISHIMA - Middle East Cultural Research Institute, Tokyo, Japan
Iva MULAJ - Institute for Economic Policy Research and Analyses, Pristina, Kosovo
Claudio MUTTI - Rivista Eurasia, Italy
Elman NASIROV - Academy of Public Administration under the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan
John O'LOUGHLIN - University of Colorado, USA
Amanda PAUL - European Policy Centre (EPC), Brussels, Belgium
Charles PENNAFORETE - Universidade Paulista, São Paulo, Brasil
Donila PIPA - Faculty of Law, "Vitrina" University, Tirana, Albania
Daniel PIPES - Middle East Forum, USA
Benjamin POHOSYAN - Institute for National Strategic Studies - MOD, Armenia
Walter POSCH - Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik, Berlin, Deutschland
NATIONAL BOARD

Constantin ANECHITOAE - Universitatea „Ovidius”, Constanța
Cristian BARNĂ - Academia Națională de Informații, București
Dumitru BORTUȚ - SNSPA, București
Cristian BRAGHINĂ - Universitatea din București
Anna-Eva BUDURA - Universitatea „Ovidius”, Constanța
Dumitru CODIŢĂ - Asociația de Drept Internațional Umanitar
Olvia COMȘA - Centrul de Inginerie și Tehnologie Obiective Nucleare
Dan DUNGA CIU - Institutul de Relații Internaționale al Academiei Române
George ERDELİ - Universitatea din București
Călin FELEZEU - Universitatea „Babeș-Bolyai”, Cluj-Napoca
Tasin GEMIL - Institutul de Turologie și Studii Central-Asiatic, Cluj-Napoca
Ștefan GEORGESCU - Universitatea „Andrei Șaguna”, Constanța
George GRIGORE - Universitatea din București
Cornel GRIGORUȚ - Universitatea „Ovidius”, Constanța
Constantin HLIHOR - Universitatea Creștină „Dimitrie Cantemir”, București
Ioan IANOS - Universitatea din București
Alexandru ILIEȘ - Universitatea din Orașea
Nicolae IORDAN-CONSTANTINESCU - UFB, București
Vasile NAZARE - Asociația de Geopolitică „Ion Conea”
Florin PINTESCU - Universitatea „Ștefan cel Mare”, Suceava
Nicolae POPA - Universitatea de Vest, Timișoara
Nicolae RADU - Academia de Poliție „Al. I. Cuza”, București
Nicolae ROTARU - Academia Națională de Informații, București
Dănuț-Radu SĂGEATA - Institutul de Geografie al Academiei Române
Vasile SIMILEANU - Academia de Studii Economice, București
Laura SITARU - Universitatea din București
Rodica STĂICULESCU - Universitatea „Ovidius”, Constanța
Cristian TĂLĂNGÂ - Universitatea din București
Tiberiu TĂNĂSE - Universitatea Creștină „Dimitrie Cantemir”, București
Cristian TRONCOTĂ - Universitatea „Lucian Blaga”, Sibiu
Răzvan ZAHARIA - Academia de Studii Economice, București
EDITORIAL
Corneliu VLAD
Minunata lume democratică a individului şi a banului .................................. 09

RESTITUIRI
Mihaii EMINESCU
Mult-iubitul şi prea-pătimitul meu Neam Romănesc .......................................................... 12
Constantin RĂDULESCU-MOTRU
Psihologia poporului român ........................................................................................................ 15

INTERVIU
Cleopatra LORIŢIUI
Interview avec S.E. Saker MALKAWI,
Ambassadeur de Royaume Hashémite de Jordanie ................................................................. 17
Monica MUTU
Interviu cu Vladimir SERTUN .................................................................................................... 20
Gabriela PETRE
Interview with Ursula PENSA ................................................................................................ 24

GEOPOLITICĂ
Paraschiva BĂDESCU
Geopolitica și democrația ........................................................................................................... 28
Christophe BOUTIN
La nation, condition nécessaire du dialogue des civilisations .................................................. 35
George HĂLĂRESCU
Deficitul de democrație al guvernării globale .................................................................. 37
Anghel ANDREESCU
Securitatea și/sau vulnerabilitatea determinate de globalizare ............................................. 45
Octavian SERGENTU
Modelarea geopolitică din perspectiva ideologică = un eșec al democrației?! .................. 49
Marius VĂCĂRELU
Statele eșuante și statul de drept: când legea determină geopolitica ....................................... 68
Nicholas DIMA
România și națiunile în era geo-politică și eco-politică globală ............................................... 76
Iulian LĂZĂRESCU
Fluvial Dunărea - axă europeană a diversității și unității ................................................................ 83

GEOSTRATEGIE
Dimitrios DALAKLIS
The Geopolitical Dimensions of the Ukrainian Crisis ............................................................... 91
Cristian BARNA
Acțiunile Statului Islamic în Irak și Siria: spre un califat islamic sau o marotă ideologică? .................. 100
Adina-Elena CINCU
Statul Islamic (SI), grupare teroristă cu aspirații statele ........................................... 105

Anghel ANDREESCU
Confruntarea dintre viitorul califat mondial și SUA, asistată de viitorul
Imperiu Euroasiatic și China ........................................................................................................ 119

George Sam HAMONTREE III
The Dynamics of Fighting Terrorism in Saudi Arabia’s Backyard ........................................... 124

Răzvan MUNTEANU
Relațiile turco - israeliene într-un mediu strategic aflat în mișcare ........................................ 128

STUDII DE CAZ

Mădălina Virginia ANTONESCU
De la „Noua relație între marile puteri” la „Guvernarea globală”:
Conceptul de „Bună Guvernare Globală” din perspectiva Chinei ........................................... 133

Anna GUSSAROVA
Facets of Democracy - the Geopolitical Effects: Kazakhstan Perspective ................................... 140

Öybek MAHKMUDOV
The Problems and Perspectives of Implementations of the External
and Local Geopolitical Models in Central Asia ............................................................................ 146

Pawan AGRAWAL
India-Centric Jihad Operations ...................................................................................................... 154

Joseph E. FALLON
Three Geopolitical Threats to Saudi Arabia .................................................................................... 157

Shams uz ZAMAN
Egypt’s Coup and Future of Democracy in Post Arab Spring Middle East ................................. 165

Aslam KHAN
Why Peace is a Distant Dream in Northern Nigeria? ............................................................... 172

Mohamed TROUDI
Les élections tunisiennes:
de l’euphorie de la victoire aux nombreux défis a relever ................................................. 180

***

North Korea Human Rights: a Global Perspective ..................................................................... 187

CULTURĂ ȘI CIVILIZAȚIE

Dumitru BORȚUN
De la paradigma confruntării la alianța umanismelor.
O abordare epistemologică a conflictelor ideologice ................................................................. 197

Ioana RIEBER
Idea de democratie între Platon și Fukuyama ............................................................................ 206

Dragoș Nicolae APOSTOL
Scurtă introducere în geopolitica dreptului.................................................................................. 214

Cleopatra LORIȚIŢIU
Lecții de democrație: marginalii de interpretare
și provocări în spațiul libertății de expresie .............................................................................. 233

Petre MATEI
Puterea geopolitică a logos-ului în spațiul islamic ................................................................... 240
GEOISTORIE

Cristina ALEXANDRESCU
Evoluția și învăluția drepturilor afganelor de-a lungul secolului al XX-lea

Rajmonda BELULI, Orest KOKONESHI
The Impact of Democratization at the Labour Market of Albania in the Transition Period (1990-2008)

EVENIMENT

Monica MUTC
RĂZBOI ȘI PACE: EUROPA DE EST (Geopolitica Club Café - mai 2015)

Bianca Ioana LELUȚIU
Lansarea Departamentului de Francofonie din cadrul CCERPA

***
Institutul Național de Cercetare- Dezvoltare Aerospațială „Elie Carafoli”:
INCAS București

***
AQUAPROJECT SA

SEMNAL EDITORIAL
EGYPT’S COUP AND FUTURE OF DEMOCRACY IN POST ARAB SPRING
MIDDLE EAST

Shams uz ZAMAN, M.Phil*

Abstract
The initial optimism that a democratic regional order would emerge as a consequence to the sweeping Arab Spring in Middle East and Africa has gradually faded away. The revolutionary, but generally peaceful and smooth, changeover from long autocracy of Mubarak was again quickly reversed by the Egyptian military and lately been endorsed by the US and EU. The reaction from the Brotherhood, which had been a mainstream political party, was mixed. As the violence and terrorism take over the Egyptian political landscape, there is little hope that Egypt would return to normal. Military takeover in Egypt marks the end of Arab Spring along with the peaceful transition from despotism to democracy. The dream of democracy coming to Middle East is virtually dead making radical militants the biggest beneficiary of the military takeover and sectarian divide.

Introduction

Egyptian society had been in a transition since Muhammad Bouazizi set himself on fire in December 2010 on the street of Sidi Bouzid, Tunisia thus triggering Arab Spring across the region. The long military rule of Mubarak finally came to an end after the sit-ins and revolution at Tahrir Square, which largely remained peaceful but finally paved the way for first democratic government in Egypt. This democratic embrace was a roller-coaster ride for the Egyptian society because the military was back in power just after one year of the democratic rule. The Egyptian society was not accustomed to democracy and wanted the situation in Egypt to change overnight which brought the newly elected government of Muslim Brotherhood under immense pressure at the domestic front at a time once it were struggling to improve reputation abroad. Bureaucratic hurdles, mostly created by sympathizers of Mubarak in military, and a hostile media which never wanted to miss an opportunity of taking a critical view of the newly elected government, made it almost impossible for the inexperienced Muslim Brotherhood to keep up with the expectations of masses. Under these circumstances, President Morsi started appointing handpicked people of selected appointments and introduced changes to constitution aimed at grabbing more decisive powers which finally creating circumstances for his ouster by the opportunist military which had always enjoyed an unhindered rule with the help of brute force against its own people.

The military coup in Egypt has only strengthened the narrative of radicals that the peaceful change in Muslim societies is not possible through dialogue and electoral process and the violent revolution has become the only choice.¹ Unfortunately the US and EU has played right into the hands of radicals and extremists by supporting the military dictatorship in Egypt and elsewhere in greater Middle East.² This unqualified support for the military rule by some states in western hemisphere and also by

* The author holds M.Phil degree in Strategic and Nuclear Studies from National Defence University Islamabad and frequently writes in newspapers and research journals.
the regional monarchies like Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Kuwait and Jordan has helped Islamic State and other non-state actors to attract more recruits from across the globe including Asia, Europe and North America.

**Egyptian Political Landscape: From Farouk to Mubarak**

Egypt was conquered by Ottomans from Mamluks in 1517 which remained part of the Ottoman Empire till the defeat of Egyptian Army at the hands of French General Napoleon in 1798. The defeat of Napoleon at the hands of British Empire brought Egypt under the influence of Britain. Despite that French played an important role in the development of Egypt, especially the Suez Canal, it was mainly British which controlled Egyptian economy and politics under the Pasha’s Dynasty. Although Egypt by that time had become semi-autonomous province of Ottoman Empire, but the British influence didn’t wane due to weakening of the Ottomans. It was corollary of the British and French imperial rule that set the foundation stone of Muhammad Abduh’s Islamic reformism, the culmination stage of which was witnessed in the emergence of first modern Pan-Islamic movement, ‘The Muslim Brotherhood’ in 1928. However, the message of Brotherhood lacked appeal initially as Egyptians’ experience with Ottomans was not very encouraging. Frustrated, Brotherhood started an armed resistance movement against the imperialist powers and was soon branded as terrorist organization by the Egyptian military which was the most powerful entity in Egypt under the influence of British Raj.

Since the abdication of throne in 1952 by King Farouk, the last ruler from Pasha Dynasty, who was blamed for the military defeat in 1948 against Israel through a coup staged by the Free Officers Corps of Egyptian military, the reins of power have stayed with the military command, which runs the only real political party in Egypt. General Naguib, the first leader after Farouk, was ousted by another military officer Gamal Abdel Nasser in 1954. Nasser was diehard nationalist who firmly believed in Pan-Arab secular ideology. Egypt not only witnessed a nationalization process in the country but also developed closer relations with Soviet Union. The humiliating defeat of Egyptian military in 1967 and its subsequent rapprochement with Israel at Camp David under Saadat without seeking durable solution to the Palestinian problem disillusioned the masses faith in Pan-Arabism. Muslim Brotherhood avenged Camp David by assassinating Saadat only to bring another ruler from the kin. Mubarak three decade rule was no better than his predecessors once it came to excesses, committed by Egyptian military, gross human rights violations and denial of political and religious freedom. Corruption, nepotism and stagnant economy disillusioned the general public who thus sought for an alternative. Muslim Brotherhood, which had renounced the violence in the 1970’s after joining the mainstream political arena consequently provided an alternative. However, its radical thoughts were a sign of danger for many Egyptian who adored the secular ideology nurtured by the military over the decades.³

It is interesting to note that the idea of secular or liberal as prevailing in the West is fundamentally different in most of the Islamic societies. Liberalism as understood in the west emerges from the John Locke’s belief in universal human rights, freedom of thought and religion, equality and respect for other’s life and property. This however is not the case in Eastern Muslim societies where word “liberal” is synonyms to elitist lifestyle, fondness for women and wine, repulsion for religion and

claim for a status of “above the law”. Like for example, Pakistani military dictator General Musharraf was often referred to as a “liberal dictator” who always claimed to be above the law and violated basic human rights, committed extra-judicial killings and forced disappearances. He was termed liberal only because of his lifestyle despite that he had no other quality for qualifying him to be a liberal. Egyptian military dictators, namely Nasser, Saadat, Mubarak and Sisi are no exception to this general and flawed interpretation of liberal in Muslim societies.

Egypt faced a long and draconian era of gross human rights violations, forced disappearance and torture of social, political, religious and human rights activists. Egyptian military used rape as a tool of oppression against the women activists and family members of the political and religious dissidents while military, under dictators like Saadat and Mubarak, remained completely immune from prosecution in any court of law. The past trend has continued unabated under General Sisi, with even more severity and frequency, whose rule appears to be just an extension of Mubarak’s reign.

**The Seeds of Democracy: From Tahrir Square to Muhammad Morsi**

Egyptian public was galvanized by the chain of events which resulted in massive street protests in Tunisia and culminated in overthrow of Zine El Abidine’s two decades autocratic rule. Egyptian people saw a hope of ousting Mubarak in a similar fashion whose military rule extended over three decades. In wake of the strict control enjoyed by the military over print and electronic media, along with the national political process, there was little hope that Egyptians would be able to muster enough strength to coerce Mubarak out of power. However, using an extremely unconventional method of social media, the Egyptians filled the streets to successfully rid the dictator from power. Jubilant Egyptians saw their destiny in their own hands aiming to reconstruct Egypt according to their own choice through a democratic process.

Being the oldest party, and having faced persecution and bans over all those years, Muslim Brotherhood was the most organized and disciplined party which consequently won sizable majority in elections. Contracting alliances with other political parties Muslim Brotherhood finally formed the government with Muhammad Morsi, the first democratically elected president of Egypt in more than 6000 years of Egyptian history. Like many other Muslim nations Egyptian society remains divided along multiple fault lines, most notable are religious versus the secular, rich versus the poor and socialist versus the capitalist. This accession to power by Muslim Brotherhood stunned the liberal and secular activists which had played an extremely important role in mobilizing the crowds around Tahrir Square. Their predominant fear was, that as a consequence of Muslim Brotherhood accession to power, Egypt risks becoming a theocratic state on the pattern witnessed in Iran. Their hostility for

---


the democratically elected Islamic government right from the outset was thus an obvious consequence.

**Sisi’s Conspiracy and the End of the Dream**

Violence is something which was not a new phenomenon for the Muslim Brotherhood in the initial days of its formation. However progressively, as the Brotherhood faced persecution, sanity prevailed and Brotherhood joined the political arena which was entirely dominated by the military. Being an organized party, military had always considered Brotherhood a dangerous political rival, especially due to its anti-authoritarian stance. Muslim Brotherhood’s democratic model was not premised purely on the philosophy of western political thought which gives the collective wisdom of society the absolute mandate for legislation. Rather the Brotherhood’s ideology was based on the thoughts of its founding fathers, namely Syed Qutub and Hasan al-Banna, which allowed consultative process with the divine parameters. The notion that the Muslim Brotherhood envisioned of a religious theocracy was not accurate, rather the political model of Muslim Brotherhood is similar to that of Justice and Development Party (AKP) in Turkey and Jamat-e-Islami in Pakistan. These parties present a model of progressive democratic Islam, which is neither based on the notion of absolute freedom as is the case in European and American democracies, nor is a type of religious or monarchical theocracy as witnessed in Iran and Gulf Sheikdoms.

However, neither the military nor the rich leftist elite of Egyptian society (also called as the deep state) had anticipated the coming of the Brotherhood. The state media, which was still being controlled by the remnants of Mubarak regime, the civil society - which was in shock after having lost the mandate - and Mubarak’s aides in the military were all putting the pressure on the newly elected Morsi’s government by asking it to deliver quickly which they had been promising during the election campaign. It was unrealistic to ask from the first democratically elected government to deliver just in less than a year which the military dictators failed to deliver in six decades. Meanwhile the media which was concocting and spreading absurd conspiracy theories hatched by the military - like for example US behind Muslim Brotherhood’s accession to power - succeeded in discrediting Morsi’s reputation amongst public eyes, especially those who always saw the US behind everything going wrong in the Middle East. One of the most absurd theories published by the media and circulating amongst the Egyptian secular elite was of Al-Qaeda and Hamas being the brainchild of the President Jimmy Carter’s ex-national security advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski aimed at dominance of Middle East by other means. It has become a fashion in the Middle East to blame everything going wrong on the US and West while ignoring own failures.

The newly elected government of Brotherhood faced multiple domestic challenges including restoration of law and order, deteriorating security situation, weak economy, a strong anti-democratic military corruption and nepotism in the bureaucratic ranks etc. One of the most fundamental challenges to the legitimacy of the Brotherhood was building its reputation internationally. Most states in the Western Hemisphere, including that of US were initially reluctant

---


to accept the government of Muslim Brotherhood but subsequently, due to economic interests, had to endorse the will of Egyptian people.\(^9\) This acceptance of the democratic process didn’t go well with the military, deep state and the liberal left. Consequently, immediately after the new government started opening the corruption cases against the deposed dictator Mubarak and its aides, the leftist elite and military, in coordination with intelligence agencies and media, contracted a secret alliance against the newly elected government. This alliance ultimately paved the way for the premeditated uprisings thus providing excuse for the military to intervene and stage the coup against the first democratically elected government in Egypt’s history. Most notable was the support of the Gulf monarchies in this coup including states like Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates and Jordan which feared that a democratically elected government in Egypt threatens their dynasties at home. Besides providing financial assistance to Egyptian military, these monarchies also sought tactic support from US and even Israel.\(^10\) Almost one year after taking the oath, President Morsi was put behind the bars by his own handpicked army chief and current Egyptian dictator, General Sisi, and Muslim Brotherhood was declared a terrorist organization. With the demise of the elected government the dream of Egyptian people also came to an end.

There were some follies also committed by the Morsi’s government which contributed in prompting the military to intervene. Like for example, Morsi, seemed inspired from the Turkish model of Recep Tayyip Erdogan who effectively decreased the influence of military from Turkish politics and implicated hundreds of military officers on conspiracy related charges against the elected government. However, the Erdogan’s government had first gained the confidence of general public by strengthening the economy, improving public and private sectors and by carrying out large scale developmental works. Nothing of such kind was on the credit of Muslim Brotherhood’s government and therefore once the government sought for sweeping powers through constitutional reforms,\(^11\) the military and civil society got alerted subsequently toppling the elected government.

**The Looming Tower of Islamic State**

When the Muslim Brotherhood intended to revoke the violence, there were disagreements within the organization. One group supported joining in the mainstream political discourse while other favoured to continue with the armed struggle. Pro militancy leaders, which most prominently included the current Al-Qaeda leader Ayman al-Zawahri, considered that such political activity is not permissible in Islam and thus would constitute as an effort in futility. The other group, which believed that armed struggle would result in innocent deaths and thus would be counterproductive, ultimately won the argument and Brotherhood became a political party although inspired by religious ideology. Zawahri’s faction thus split away from the Muslim Brotherhood to form a new armed militant group ‘Egyptian Islamic Jihad’, which was subsequently merged in Al-Qaeda after the end of Afghan war.

Brotherhood’s four decades long struggle finally succeeded in bringing it to power, which effectively defeated the extremists’ and militants’ argument that change within Islamic societies can only be

---


brought through violent means. Other Islamic parties in Egypt like Nour Party and Freedom and Justice Party have reconciled with the military after these could no longer withstand the reign of terror unleashed by Sisi against all those who opposed and challenged his dictatorship. Amongst victims were journalists, government servants, human right and political activists and religious figures. Those having soft corner for the Brotherhood were the top most victims of the military oppression. Even the leftist liberals, who had provided military with the opportunity to intervene, also became the victims of military’s reign of terror. Sisi is keeping the grip on to power with the help of handpicked judges and security officials from Mubarak’s regime thus prosecuting prominent figures in kangaroo courts, even sentencing them to death or life imprisonment. The common citizens are not even luck to make it to the court before military executes them without a trace.

At the same time problems like energy shortages, dwindling economy, unchecked corruption and nepotism, absolute no accountability on excesses committed by police and military etc have disillusioned large segments of Egyptian youth who see no future in Egypt. Consequently, they are left with only two options of either settling abroad or joining the terrorist outfits and militant organizations within or outside Egypt. The rising wave of terrorist attacks by a new militant group formed after the 2011 military coup, Ansar Bait al-Maqdis, believed to have been formed by defected military officers and Muslim Brotherhood activists have killed scores of military and police officials since Sisi’s takeover. The group has pledged its allegiance to the IS (Islamic State) and has become an attractive alternative for the disillusioned Egyptian youth.

Unfortunately the US and EU support has helped General Sisi to strengthen his grip on the power while continuing to unleash his reign of terror on Egyptian general public with complete impunity. The military regime had been involved in mass scale apprehensions, torture, rape, extra-judicial killings, forced disappearances and cover up of these brutal acts. The foreign support strengthens the Islamists rhetoric that western promise to spread democracy in the region is only an eye wash as both US and EU not only maintains close relations with the dictators and dynastic Sheikhdoms, but all the human rights violations and brutalities are purposely ignored due to vested interests. This lack of support for the political democratic parties, citing concerns over Political Islam, vis-à-vis continuous support for autocratic rulers who practice the most puritanical version of Islam illustrates of double standards and hypocrisy which only strengthens the extremists’ narrative. Khaled Abou El Fadl, highlighting this duplicity, puts it this way: “Perhaps political Islam should be defined as any form of expression of Islamicity for purposes not consistent with the pro-Western military regimes and oil sheikhdoms in the region.”

Conclusion

As Egypt gradually drifts towards a civil war on the pattern seen in Syria and Iraq, the prospects of democracy in the region appear to be extremely grim. The unqualified US and EU support for autocratic regimes in the Middle East has further complicated the situation. The systematic attacks on Islamic Holy personalities under selective expression of the freedom of speech only compound the situation driving more young Muslims to heed the calls of extremist organizations most notably the Islamic State. The sectarian rivalry between Shiite and Sunnis has already polarized societies along sectarian, ethnic and tribal fault lines particularly in states like Syria, Iraq, Yemen, Egypt and Bahrain. The spectre of violence in Middle East is likely to surge in coming months and years. The onus of responsibility for the creation and popularity of Islamic State primarily rests with Iran and Hezbollah which gave an otherwise popular uprising in Syria a sectarian colour thus inviting Sunnis from all over the world to join IS. The sectarian war which now has spilled over from Iraq and Syria to states like Yemen and Lebanon etc is likely to expand further destabilizing other states in the region resulting in more anarchy and terrorism in foreseeable future.