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The current situation in Egypt has created new challenges for the U.S. and needs careful calculations for proper progress. On one hand the U.S wants stability in the country, while on the other hand it supports democracy, which will ultimately empower suppressive Islamic regimes and threaten the U.S. interests in the area.

At the moment there are three powers that claim legitimacy in Egypt, these being: the Army, the Islamist-led parliament, and the young revolutionists of Tahrir Square. *Each of these factions believes that it is the legitimate power.*

The Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF) feels as though they are the ones who made the revolution successful, as they supported the population against Mubarak. The young revolutionists of Tahrir Square believe that they are the ones who created the revolution and thus they must have a share in power (currently they have less than three percent representation in the Parliament). The Islamists believe that they are the only legitimate power, as they have risen through the ballot elections.

Among these groups *the army is still the only force that has held long and relatively stable relations with the U.S. and thus can protect its interests in the area.*

Unfortunately, the Military's nonchalant attitude, and lengthy trial, of Mubarak and his family among many other terrible decisions has created a strong wave of antagonism against the SCAF among the population. Despite this, for a multitude of different reasons, the Military still enjoys an immense amount of popularity within the country.

The Islamists that dominate the new Egyptian parliament have not clarified their position on major issues, *such as the peace treaty with Israel.* In fact, in the recent anniversary of the January 25, 2011, revolution, the Muslim Brotherhood (MB) members were shouting slogans that were supportive of the Nazi ideology. These include: "

Hitler Basha Alha Zaman...El-Sohuni Lazem Yethan

" which means "Hitler

Basha

(an Arabic word of praise) said it (correctly) in the past...any Zionist must be humiliated." The context of these slogans was to commend Hitler's actions against the Jews.

If the moment arises when the Islamists seize all the power, i.e., control the military, intelligence, and police, it will be extremely difficult to stop them from transforming the country to be similar to Iran or even worse. The existence of the Military in a position to have full control over the armed forces is the best option for the U.S. to protect its interests in this vicinity (despite the mistakes of the SCAF). If the U.S. lets the army down and pressures them to hand the power completely over to the civilians, it will be risking its foreign interests. In this case it is likely to face a more vicious, religiously-based fascism replacing the Military suppression of the population. It would be significantly easier to deal with the latter than with the former.

The third group, the young liberal revolutionists, are very passionate about democracy, however, they lack the necessary experience needed to rule the country and do not have apparent leaders. Many of them divert their energy only against the Military and completely ignore the Islamist threat upon the nation. In addition, these youth have yet to gain the support of a large majority.

The U.S. needs to have a distinctive strategy to deal with these groups, *showing support for the army as long as they maintain the secularism of the country and protect U.S. interests in the region.*

On one hand the U.S. should show respect to the Islamists, and on the other hand it must be very clear that the Islamists cannot get any support from the U.S. if they do not clarify their current ambiguous position on respecting the previous international commitments of the country, including the peace treaty with Israel. *The U.S. needs to ask the MB leaders to clarify their position from the recent pro-Nazi slogans that were used by their members in Tahrir Square on the recent anniversary of the revolution.*

It will be completely irresponsible to use American tax-payer dollars to support a regime led by people who encourage pro-Nazi slogans.

At the moment the MB is facing several challenges. These include:

1. *Possible confrontation with the Military* if the MB insists on not giving the Military certain

privileges in the new Egypt.

2. *An impatient population* that will expect the Muslim Brotherhood-led parliament to bring a fast solution to the already declining economy.

3. *Salafi groups* who will insist on a very strict interpretation of Islam. For example, the Salafi groups have already started to object to accepting loans from international banks, as they see it as *Rebba* (usury) which is "*Haram*" or forbidden in Islam.

4. *The young revolutionists* who accuse them of betraying the revolution. In fact, in the recent demonstrations the revolutionists physically attacked members of the MB, raised their shoes against them (a very insulting thing to do in the Arab culture), and cursed them loudly in public prayer which was joined by thousands.

5. *Divisions within the Brotherhood*, as several young members have begun to feel that their leadership was losing their moral character. For example, the daughter of Akram AL-Sheer (a leading member within the MB) had a fight over the phone with the *Murshid* (supreme guide) of the MB and decided to resign from the organization after he hung up the phone.

All these factors have put the MB in a situation where they cannot fail in bringing rapid economic success for the country; otherwise, the above powers will unite against it and end their political dream to rule the country.

The U.S. should use this moment to its benefit, as the MB is starting to worry that they may not be able to solve the current economic problems of Egypt. Recently, the MB began to say that no single faction in the society can solve the problems in the country by itself. This has been said to escape from being entirely responsible if the economy falls even steeper after they come to power, as their failure will abort their dream to prove that "Islam is the solution."

The current situation gives the U.S. an advantage over the MB, as the group will not risk Egypt losing billions of dollars in U.S. aid and other forms of support. Losing such a large monetary amount can significantly threaten their political future and risk the concept of Islamic revival. In fact, *one of the most effective ways to tame the MB is to notify them that if they work against U.S. interests or break the former commitments of the country, the U.S. aid that typically goes to Egypt will go to Israel instead*. This will place the MB in a situation where any decision that they may initiate against U.S. interests will turn out to be beneficial to whom they consider to be their worst enemy, Israel.

In addition, The U.S. needs to direct the various human rights organizations, which are

supported by U.S. federal money, to have a strong humanitarian arm that plays a more social role within society. This could include food banks to distribute low-cost food to the poor and supporting their creation of small projects. The organizations in Egypt that are supported by the U.S. must give more care to such humanitarian efforts, so that secularists and liberals can defeat the Islamists in the next elections - rather than putting their main focus on standing against the Military. The latter approach pushes the Military toward the Islamists and risks bringing full power to the more suppressive Islamists, who will overpower the population in the name of Islam.

In conclusion, *the current complex situation in Egypt needs a U.S. strategy that puts its interests as a priority and deals with the current realities*. The U.S. needs to back the Military in having full control over the armed forces (as long as they keep the US interests in the region), to use the power of U.S. aid to Egypt to influence the MB, and to direct the U.S.-financed organizations in the country to give more care to humanitarian, rather than political, efforts.

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Some twenty-five years ago, Dr. Hamid recognized the threat of Radical Islam and the need for a reformation based upon modern peaceful interpretations of classical Islamic core texts. He provided a fresh and theologically valid interpretation for the *Qur'an* to counterbalance the radical teaching. As the *Daily Express* (UK) mentioned "Dr. Hamid has predicted the attacks on the twin towers, Madrid and London." After September 11, Dr. Hamid boldly decided to speak out through western broadcast and print media. He has appeared on shows spanning the spectrum from CNN to Fox News, and his articles and op-ed pieces have appeared in publications such as the *Wall Street Journal*, the *New York Daily News*, and the *Jerusalem Post*. Some of Dr. Hamid's Op-Eds were also selected at *Real Clear Politics*. He has been a guest speaker both within the U.S. and internationally, before audiences such as the U.S. Congress, Director of National Intelligence, the Pentagon, the National Prayer breakfast, and the European Parliament. He is the author of the author of *Inside Jihad: Understanding and Confronting Radical Islam* (2008), which is available from Amazon Books

How the U.S. Should Deal with the New Egypt

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