

Will Egypt's Secular Ruling Class be Replaced?

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In the span of the last year, the people's revolution in Egypt shook its political foundation irreversibly. Mobark's dictatorial autocratic secular regime with its handpicked house of representative is gone. The national police force that used to suppress religious and liberal political descent is badly beaten and demoralized by the sweeping popular revolt. Now, the only institution that prevents Egypt plunge into total revolutionary anarchy is the armed forces. So far, the people of Egypt In their quest for political transformation from an autocratic secular dictatorial regime to a democratically elected government were lucky. During last year's revolution a unity of uncompromising ideological political forces converged with singular aim to dislodge Mobark from power. Mobark's regime could not withstand such a national steadfast popular movement which was praised nationally and worldwide.

The distinct behavior of police and armed forces amid the revolution to bring down Mobark's regime left national armed forces in a favorable term with revolutionary forces. What played the crucial role in bringing down the revolutionary fever and preventing Egypt to fall into total political chaos was the declaration of House of Representative election. Although this great political maneuver by Egyptian regime drained considerable amount of steam from blind revolutionary movement, dictatorial forces of revolution, who were planning realistically like Islamist and imaginarily like leftist, continued their attack to the last institution of law and order in Egypt, armed forces, that was holding secular regime defensive lines. The declaration of election dates for House of Representative and office of presidency commenced the process of Egypt's orderly democratization.

Though not surprising, the House of Representative election results, which took place in three stages, demonstrated what kind of regime democracy will impose on Egyptian people. The Muslim Brotherhood won 47% of House 498 seats, more extremist Islamist Salfist organized in Al Nour party won 25%, and seculars Wafd and Egyptian block each won 9%. It isn't hard to see the existence of a fragile political balance which could easily tilt toward Islamist extremist. It appears after the election the political forces calculations for survival seem to be easier. What is paramount for the current political balance, which is the root of democracy, is the survival of armed forces institution and it is reasonable for pro democracy seculars and moderate Muslims to support military firmly.

It is true that the armed forces of Mobarak's era, to a certain degree, are corrupt and the remaining government under protection of army has the same problem of corruption. But the corruption in Egypt and similar government with a different nature is a given fact which could be fluctuated with diverse elected governments. To save the Egyptian nation from chaos of revolution and domination of Islamist extremist, which all indication point to strong possibility of such outcome, the survival of army is as the matter of planting and nourishing the root of democracy or capitulating to Islamist's extremist. The Islamist moderates, and secular liberals' thrive or suppression in the hand of Islamist extremist is tied to army's destiny and endurance.

For any analyst of revolutions it is unimaginable not to consider comparisons of revolutions. In the case of Egypt the comparison lead us to Iranian revolution. In the course more than two years of Iranian revolution that at the end brought Islamo Fascist to power, there was not a suggestion of free and fair Mjals election and the installment of a new government by that Majles. If there was such election and government the unity of divergent political forces against autocratic dictatorial secular regime of the Shah would have fractured, and as the political process progressed the schism amongst these united political forces would had widened. Also, this political infighting would relieve the armed forces from responsibility of confronting revolutionary bellicose for keeping security and order. The collapse of the national armed forces that followed by looting of armories give birth to Islamist Militia which annihilated liberals and seculars political forces. The other implication of formation of Islamist extremist Militia after disintegration of Iranian secular armed forces was the greatest replacement of a country ruling class in the modern history. In the hind side it appears how easy it was for advanced secular Iranian society to prevent the Islamist to takeover political power in Iran. However, the Iranian people political destiny was not to be such.

But now we are in a bigger dilemma since we are trying to predict future of an ongoing revolution with many variants. Now, it sees divergent extremist political forces like Islamist and leftist united in classical behavior to overrun military by popular uprising. These revolutionary forces in their endeavor to annihilate the last bastion of law and order pursue interruption of political democracy. The recent House of Representative election demonstrated the Egyptian people aspiration toward electoral process. The upcoming presidency election under watchful eyes of army if it takes place, it further firms up democratic process and weakens chance of Islamist dictatorial regime. It appears main political moderate forces in Egypt including the army are trying to establish a comparable regime like the Republic of Turkey.

The recent puzzling development in relations with ruling Egyptian military council attempt to try American democracy activist in Egypt in spite of US government strong protest and the US Congress involvement raises many questions. What makes ruling military council to pick a fight with the US and jeopardize the \$1.3 billion yearly aid that mostly goes to military? Does the military council choose to go down the road of anti-Americanism to signal the end of its friendship with US and beginning of the animosity? Or is it only a political maneuver by military to attract support of American and free world haters, the same way Khomeini did by occupying American embassy in Tehran. Also, there is a possibility of a genuine discord in the part of military council with the US. So far in Egypt, the political reality is the continuation of struggle amongst pro-democracy and military with revolutionary elements, and even the existence of newly elected House of Representative could not calm it down. The political development prior to presidential election will affect the nature of politics in Egypt, and it leads us to speculate the political paths that Egypt will take and continuation of secular ruling class or its replacement.