The Pot Boils Over: Egypt's Ongoing Arab Spring

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Introduction

On December 16, 2010, Zine al-Abidine Ben Ali, dictator of Tunisia, seemed utterly untouchable. He had ruled for 23 years through intimidation and force, and by all appearances, would continue to do so until his death. On December 17, a 26 year old street vendor named Mohamed Bouazizi, frustrated and humiliated by constant harassment by police, doused himself in paint fuel and self-immolated in front of the municipal building in Sidi Bouzid.[1] One month later, Ben Ali had fled, driven out by street protests, and a new government was struggling to form.[2] Twenty-four days later on February 10, President Hosni Mubarak stepped down as ruler of Egypt, following 18 days of peaceful protest.[3] The peaceful and anticlimactic falls of the dictators sent shockwaves through the Middle East, leading to unsuccessful attempts to follow the Tunisian and Egyptian examples and civil wars.

The rapid collapse of the long reigning dictators, especially Mubarak, shocked Western observers and experts as well.[4] Indeed, Western analysts and news agencies failed to take note of Tunisia's discontent until it was nearly over. The assumption had always been that if the dictators came down, particularly Mubarak's thirty year old regime, it would be extremely violent. His downfall by popular opinion, and not force of arms, paved the way for the Muslim Brotherhood to take power in the November 2011 parliamentary elections[5] and win the presidency when Mohammed Morsi won the June contest. On the surface, then, Egypt appears to be experiencing an unexpected democratic rebirth.

However, a closer inspection reveals that despite holding elections, Egypt's politics can hardly be called democratic in a Western sense. Clear factional divides and rivalries seek to claim power at the expense of their rivals. Despite the relative calm over the past year, discontent continues[6] even with government efforts.[7] Within the government, the actual power dynamic between the President, Parliament, and courts is unclear.[8] Each body has its own agenda and is actively seeking to thwart the other's ambitions. In addition, elections have taken place, but an open question exists as to whether parliament has real power given Morsi's failed power grab[9] and pushback from the courts.[10] Despite hopeful signs from the protestors who support actual democracy[11] and opposition groups reaching out across ideological lines,[12] division and conflict still seem to be the rule for political discourse.

This paper will examine the Egyptian political scene in an effort to explain what is happening now and what can be expected to happen. It will begin by examining the actions of the primary visible factions in Egypt's politics, specifically the Muslim Brotherhood, the courts, and the army. It will then examine the relationship between these factions and attempt to determine the likely course of Egyptian politics. It will be shown that the army holds the real power in Egypt, and that its support is ultimately what will determine who actually rules. The essay's conclusion is that, despite the old regime being toppled, the actual structure of Egyptian politics has not changed from Mubarak, and despite appearances, it remains a military dictatorship.

Importance of Visibility

By nature, politics is a secretive business. The actual horse-trading and deal-making that goes on, for example in US Congress, is rarely discussed while very little light is ever shown on the day-to-day process of governing. However, all that pales in comparison to the nearly pathological secrecy that masks the leadership and internal workings of

Egypt's political parties and factions. It is important to remember that Egypt has been a very repressed and secretive society for a very long time, and the thirty years of Mubarak have only reinforced that trend. Opposition to the regime was met with violent repression and survival meant silence. This does not create a civil society or promote the political discourse that is critical for democracy to thrive. Instead, it creates a strongly tribal mentality where one protects those who are well known to him or her against any kind of threat. In a police state, the best way to protect against the largest other, the state, is to keep any political action secret. Once this goes on as long as it has in Egypt, it is no longer consciously thought about and simply becomes business as usual.

As a result, finding reliable information on the internal structure or composition of the political factions in Egypt becomes nearly impossible. Faced with the possibility of police crackdowns, a donor record was not kept, nor was the actual leadership clear. The spokespeople and elected officials may be obvious, but behind them are shadowy figures that only appear in passing mentions or occasional press releases. Even the army has shades of this, with the departmental heads and top commanders being well known, but their subordinates remaining mysterious. Thus trying to make predictions based on political ties and ideology will be a complete speculation with no basis in data. The only option left is to examine the actions that have been taken and attempt to distill a pattern or ideology for each faction, because actions are visible and provide a more accurate glimpse into the faction's mindsets than guessing intentions.

Muslim Brotherhood: Many Voices, One Name

For decades the greatest challenge to the Egyptian establishment has been the Muslim Brotherhood. Founded as a Muslim outreach organization and charity in 1928, the Brotherhood has agitated for implementation of sharia law in Egypt since the monarchy and was the principle opposition to the government since 1954.[13] Despite its longevity and popularity, the Brotherhood appears to be united only by opposition to the government and an Islamist platform. Disagreements over the methodology, political participation, and the identity of the movement have been a consistent feature of the Brotherhood's existence.[14] Now, the Brotherhood appears to not be the monolith that Mubarak feared, but it is rather an amalgamation of many opposition groups that banded together under the Brotherhood's banner for survival and are now struggling for leadership in the new government.

Ideological Rifts

Ever since becoming politically active, the Muslim Brotherhood has dealt with more rifts. For example, a radical member tried to assassinate President Gamal Abdel Nasser in 1954, which led to condemnation from the leadership and repression by the state.[15] As the younger generation becomes increasingly discontent with the aging leadership, this rift has gotten wider over time.[16] Many of the young members have come to believe that the leadership is no longer in tune with the country or their own organization and have either been co-opted by the system or have become stuck in old ideas. In addition to the generational gap, extensive ideological disagreements exist, slowly fracturing the Brotherhood from within, such as the breakaway radical Hizb al-Wasat party.[17] However, despite the splintering and dissatisfaction, the Brotherhood held together throughout the dictatorship and emerged as the largest political party following Mubarak's overthrow.

Freedom and Justice

The political arm of the Brotherhood has become the Freedom and Justice Party (FJP).[18] Despite opposition from top leadership that doing so would be counterproductive for the group's charity and education goals, the party was formed in May 2011 with the intention of promoting economic growth and sharia law.[19] The rapid rise of the FJP and its apparent cohesion before parliamentary elections began is a direct result of being part of the Muslim Brotherhood. Without access to the Brotherhood's communication and fundraising network it is unlikely that the FJP could have emerged as the leading party and eventual victor of the election; however, it did not act alone.

Beginning in June, the Democratic Alliance for Egypt formed around the FJP. Initially intended as a national unity coalition, all other major parties would end up leaving the coalition.[20] In some cases, it was a practical matter due to ticket space, but in the vast majority of cases, ideological faults caused the Alliance to splinter. Attempting to

merge the strongly Islamic Salafist parties to the liberal secular parties around a moderately Islamic party proved far more difficult than Alliance leadership could handle. The FJP was not only too Islamic for the secular parties led by Al-Wafd[21], but also was not Islamic enough to placate the Salafist Al-Nour party, which would go on to form the opposition Islamic Bloc. [22]

After months of attrition and deal making, the Alliance had been reduced from a national unity coalition of fifteen major parties to the FJP and ten satellite parties.[23] Despite the reduced membership, once the voting process came to an end in January 2012, the Democratic Alliance still won a plurality of seats in Parliament.[24] However, in June 2012, the Supreme Court declared the election invalid over procedural problems,[25] which will be discussed in greater detail below. Despite the calls for unity following the fall of Mubarak, ideology and religion are proving to be increasingly divisive in Egyptian politics, and are proving to be a source of violence.[26]

The Role of President Mohammed Morsi

When Mubarak fell, no observer could have expected Mohammed Morsi to replace him. A US trained engineer, his main political experience prior to the presidential race was as a fundraiser and organizer for the FJP during the parliamentary election. He had been an assemblyman under Mubarak, but he had not distinguished himself and was not reelected.[27] He was not even considered an option by the Brotherhood, who chose to nominate their longtime strategist and fundraiser Khairat El-Shater .[28] However, when he and many other candidates were declared ineligible to run by the Supreme Court over their past criminal records stemming from opposition to Mubarak[29], Morsi suddenly declared his candidacy and went on to win the election.[30]

Despite the rather lackluster political background, Morsi's presidency has been highly controversial. Despite being part of the Muslim Brotherhood, no evidence shows that he is actually an Islamist. In fact, he has created a fairly moderate administration.[31] Even though Muslim Brotherhood and the FJP are Islamist organizations and have Islamist agendas, Mohammed Morsi has not demonstrated a commitment to Islamist policies and appears to, instead, be an ambitious politician using the strongest party to advance his own agenda. He has repeatedly expressed support for democratic ideals and a secular state. Trained in the West, he was noted as an assemblyman for being outspoken and independent, despite being unable to hold his seat. Because of his organizational skill rather than as a reward for party loyalty, he was even made chairman of the FJP.[32] However, strong Islamists have denounced Morsi as an infidel, as well as the entire political process for allowing him to come to power in the first place.[33] From this, he appears to be a moderate pro-democracy candidate, who is not a party front-man, which is important for democratic survival.

Unlike his appearance, his actions suggest differently. His confrontational policies and declarations suggest that he is seeking to establish himself as the next dictator rather than the president. He has repeatedly clashed with the courts[34], the military[35], and the Egyptian people[36], particularly in November of 2012. On that day, he issued sweeping declarations giving him broad lawmaking authority and restricting the courts' ability to contest either his authority or the FLP dominated parliament.[37] This led to an immediate and widespread backlash against the President. While the declaration that the President could take any necessary action to safeguard the country reads like the justification for countless other dictators seizing power, the rest of the declarations appear to be targeting the judiciary, who had been sparring with Morsi and the FLP since the parliamentary elections.[38]

However, the outrage was not just limited to the courts, and throughout the crisis, Morsi appeared to have increasingly become isolated in his declarations. The army and police may have protected the President and tried to prevent violence, but the response was decidedly half-hearted and lackluster.[39] This lack of support in his fight and the pushback from his judicial rivals led to Morsi retreating from his declaration.[40] For the moment, Egypt remains nominally democratic, though Morsi and the courts continue to declare each other's actions invalid.[41] What appears to be happening is a fight for supremacy between the judiciary and executive branch.

Morsi has also attempted to assert his control over the military, also with mixed success. Following his election and the Supreme Court's ordering dissolution of parliament, the interim-military government ordered all legislative powers transferred back to the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (Scarf).[42] Morsi quickly followed his inauguration by

ordering those same powers transferred to himself, which the army allowed. The day afterwards, he launched a shakeup of army leadership, replacing the chief of staff and defense minister Field Marshal Mohammed Hussein Tantawi.[43] These measures proved to be popular with the people and seemed to place Morsi against the army. However, following his attempted power grab ahead of the constitutional referendum, he went back to the army and handed it broad arrest powers during the unrest.[44] The army complied, though unenthusiastically as mentioned, indicating that they support the regime for the moment. Thus, in trying to control the army, Morsi appeared to be relying on his popularity, but when that disappeared, he was forced to return to the military for help.

Despite its reputation as a monolithic Islamist movement, the Muslim Brotherhood is in fact an umbrella organization for the old opposition to Mubarak. It has been splintering for decades and survived mostly because it was necessary for the survival of opposition members. It was highly successful during the elections, but that was the result of its longstanding organization rather than actual voter engagement. It failed to hold together its intended coalition while its preferred candidate was barred from running. While the Muslim Brotherhood did succeed in electing a member to the presidency, Mohammed Morsi appears to be trying to separate himself from the Brotherhood and may be angling to become the next dictator of Egypt. With new elections being due once the latest wrangling between Morsi and the courts gets worked out, parliament is still in flux[45], but it seems unlikely that it will prove to be a decisive factor in Egyptian politics for the time being.

The figure to watch, then, is President Morsi. The critical question will be whether or not he returns to power grabbing, or if he begins to act in accordance with his rhetoric, and whether he can maintain support from both the people and military. When he had popular support, for instance, he attempted to act as a populist dictator, but when he lost it, he acted like a military ruler. Given his recent drive to get new parliamentary elections, he might have realized the precariousness of his position and begun looking to solidify power with the legitimacy parliament brings. If popular support is too tenuous and the military is unreliable, then legitimacy may be his only way to hold onto power. If true, that would be a boon for democracy, but if not, then Egypt will likely revert to dictatorship.

Egypt's Judiciary: Independent Old Guard

Though the West often takes judicial independence for granted, much of the world has difficulty achieving judicial independence. It was often alleged that the judiciary in Egypt under Mubarak was completely in bed with the government. Regardless of the truth on that front, since Mubarak's downfall, the courts have striven to remain independent of the new government. However, opposition to the government is not the same thing as judicial independence. The actions and the reasoning behind those actions reveal a decidedly political angle. There is an apparent obstructionist tendency. The judiciary, led by the Egyptian Supreme Court, is firmly opposed to the Muslim Brotherhood and the Morsi regime with some shades of loyalty to Mubarak. The judiciary, therefore, is now the home of the secular political old guard, just as the legislature is becoming the domain of the younger Islamist politicians.

The Supreme Court vs. President Morsi

The most striking and persistent feature of this conflict has been the battle between President Morsi and the judiciary over parliamentary elections. There had been agitation following the November 2011 parliamentary elections, but it had appeared that the objections would come to nothing and that the Democratic Alliance would gain control of the government. Then, on the first day of the presidential election runoff between Morsi and Ahmed Shafik, the Supreme Court ruled the election invalid and ordered parliament dissolved.[46] The Islamist parties were immediately up in arms, but the Court countered that there were irregularities and that procedures were not followed, especially citing the fact that both a proportional and first-past-the-post system were used. Significantly, the ruling also struck down a law preventing members of Mubarak's regime from holding office. The ruling would stand until one month later when President Morsi ordered parliament to meet anyway.[47] Following Morsi's semi-confrontation with the army in August, the courts themselves fell silent, but the judicial system did not.

On October 11, 2012, Morsi attempted to depose the Mubarak era Prosecutor General General Abdel Maguid Mahmoud from his post.[48] The ensuing outcry and the prosecutor's refusal to leave his post forced Morsi to back down two days later.[49] This incident could be directly responsible for Morsi's declaration on November 22, which

allowed him to finally fire the Prosecutor General.[50] The Supreme Court eventually declared this part unconstitutional, and Mahmoud was reinstated.[51]Despite the focus on his claims to sweeping legislative and executive powers, most of that declaration was focused on prevent obstructionism from the courts. This battle was exacerbated on December 6 when the Judges Club, equivalent to the American Bar Association, refused to oversee the constitutional referendum following clashes between the government and courts over the legitimacy of the proceedings.[52] Three days later, bowing to pressure from both the people and courts, Morsi annulled his decree.[53] He had tried to bypass the judiciary and failed. However, the fight between Morsi and the judiciary is not finished. The President has called for new elections several times[54], but the courts have refused to allow them to proceed.[55] It appears that the power struggle between the president and the courts will continue for some time.

The Trial of Hosni Mubarak

Contrasting sharply with Ben Ali, Mubarak did not flee Egypt following his fall from power. Instead, he and his sons were arrested and charged in May with corruption and ordering the killing of protestors during the uprising.[56] Cleared of corruption charges, Mubarak was found guilty of killing protestors and sentenced to life imprisonment. However, his appeal was upheld in January, and a retrial for both the killing and corruption charges against his sons was ordered.[57] The court ruling explicitly cited prosecutorial error as the reason for the retrial. However, the case has taken an odd turn, as many judicial officials seem to be deliberately obstructing the retrial. The trial was first delayed when the judge initially slated to hear the case referred the case to another court the day the trial was supposed to begin, citing his discomfort with the case.[58] Then Mubarak was released from prison, only to be ordered back a few days later.[59] The new trial is scheduled to begin May 11, but at this point, it is far from certain that the trial will actually take place.

It seems apparent that the Egyptian judicial system is separating itself from the Islamist government. However, the reasoning behind this newfound independence is less apparent. On the one hand, its rulings have always cited procedural failings on the part of the government as reason to reject its policies. On the other hand, the court system is full of Mubarak holdouts that have shown willingness to protect their own from the empowered enemies of Mubarak. True, the decision to dissolve parliament was grounded in the flawed election, but the fact that moderate and hard-line Islamist parties dominated the body may have been a factor.[60] While it is to their credit that the judiciary prosecuted Mubarak and found him guilty during his first trial, it has shown a remarkable reluctance to actually imprison him and has deliberately prevented the retrial from happening. The entire saga of Morsi's fight with the Egyptian courts smells like wagon-circling by the courts, and their actions towards their former boss do not help this perception.

Where the Egyptian judiciary stands in relation to the ruling party is obvious, but it is not clear where it stands in relation to the post-Mubarak Egypt. Its constant opposition to the Islamists put it in the secular camp, though not clearly aligned with any particular party. Given its composition, it seems easy to say that it is a Mubarak stronghold, but it has been willing to try and imprison its former boss. The most logical conclusion then is that the judiciary is composed of professionals who served under the old regime and are now feeling threatened by the new regime, both in terms of job security and independence. In this light, the judges are not so much political activists as scared bureaucrats. Therefore, it is unlikely that any significant political shift would originate from this faction. The Egyptian judiciary seems content to protect itself from outside threats while continuing to do its job.

The Silent Power: The Egyptian Military

The wildcard in the ongoing Egyptian revolution is the military, particularly the army. Mubarak was a military ruler, having risen to command of the Air Force before being made Vice-President under Anwar Sadat.[61] His rule saw a great expansion of the power and privilege of the military elite, and they responded with absolute loyalty. Following Mubarak's ouster on February 10, the military stepped in and assumed power.[62] This was not unexpected, and many anticipated that a long period of military rule was about to begin. However, when the pro-democracy activists demanded a faster than planned return to democracy, Scarf complied. [63] On June 18, 2012, the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (Scarf) granted itself sweeping powers,[64] only to allow the newly elected president to take those same powers for himself.[65] When he then called on the army to put down riots against his November 22

declaration, it did so passively and half-heartedly[66], especially compared to how it acted under Mubarak. The army appears, then, to be less concerned with politics than it is with stability in Egypt; as long as no side threatens the status quo, the army is content to allow politics to proceed as normal. However, Morsi's control over the military is tenuous at best, so it appears that the only thing preventing the return of Scarf to power is Scarf itself wishing to avoid bloodshed.

The Fall of Mubarak

The protestors that took over Tahrir Square on January 25 were unequivocal in their demand that Mubarak must go. Mubarak was unfazed and ordered the police to break up the protests.[67] However, when that failed to quell the protests, the army was deployed. For a time it appeared that the old regime would crush this challenge as it had crushed all others. The army began arresting, torturing, and disappearing protestors just like it always had.[68] The revolution might have spluttered out. Then it stopped. The police were removed from Tahrir Square and replaced by army units, who proceeded to watch the protests rather than intervene.[69] As things continued to deteriorate, the military was not going to crush the protestors, and eventually Defense Minister Field Marshal Mohamed Hussein Tantawi told Mubarak to step down.[70] That ended Mubarak's reign and began the rule of the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces under Marshal Tantawi.[71]

Military Rule

From February 10, 2011 until President Morsi retired Marshal Tantawi on August 13, Scarf ruled Egypt alone. [72] Unlike most military regimes, Scarf appeared to rapidly mellow over time. Compared to the South American or Burmese Juntas, Scarf proved to be benign. There were extensive crackdowns on protests following Mubarak's ouster, and for a time, it appeared that a military dictator had been replaced by a military dictatorship, as analysts expected.[73] However, by November, the crackdown had been eased, and in response to the protests, Scarf pledged to hold presidential elections in July 2012, instead of late 2013[74], a pledge it upheld. Then, after declaring themselves the sole legislative body following the Supreme Court dissolving parliament, it appeared that Scarf and the newly elected president were on course for a showdown.[75]

However, one never came. Scarf allowed President Morsi to take the powers they had just claimed away, and then Marshal Tantawi accepted retirement without a struggle.[76] In other words, Scarf simply allowed itself to be stripped of power. For some reason, and in defiance of historical precedent, the military government simply allowed itself to be dissolved, shocking commentators and analysts. This is very atypical behavior for military regimes and speaks volumes for the military's role and goals in this ongoing turmoil.

Morsi's Army

Since Scarf was disbanded, the army has been loyal to, though not exactly enthusiastic about Morsi's regime. It obeys his orders but do not have the enthusiasm that a true military dictator could command. Rather, it appears to view Morsi more as a chief of state rather than a true chief executive, and therefore, protects him as a function of protecting the state. Its reaction to the November riots does not bear repeating, but its reaction to riots following that crisis has been instructive.

For example, on January 26, 2013, riots erupted in Cairo over death sentences in a deadly football riot in 2012.[77] They quickly spread throughout the country with the worst and most persistent taking place in Port Said.[78] After local police failed to stem the violence and the riots spread to neighboring cities, a state of emergency was declared. In response, General Abdul Fattah al-Sisi, the army chief of staff, issued a warning that state collapse was imminent.[79] This led to a strong, yet muted, military response in conjunction with a police crackdown that put an end to the demonstrations.[80] The army moved in to stop the riots and restore calm, but it allowed the police to do the actual dirty work, while for the most part keeping its hands clean of bloodshed.

Army as Saviors

Taking the military's actions since January 25, 2011, a pattern emerges. During the protests, the military was less interested in putting down the demonstrations than keeping them contained. The people embraced the army as their protectors compared to the more vicious police.[81] Then, when given power, it received very strong backlash from those who had just embraced it and declared soldiers the saviors of the revolution[82], a revolution that was only possible when it chose to support the protestors and not Mubarak.[83] In response, the military promised to quickly cede power back to elected officials[84] and followed through.

Since then, it has acted as a police force but in a very limited fashion. This is an organization that seems to view itself in a very messianic role and wishes to cultivate that image with the people. Consistent with typical military junta behavior, the military sought to dominate political life and crush dissent, but when the calls for power transfer proved resilient, it backed off and allowed the transfers to take place, first with the presidential election and then the retiring of Marshal Tantawi. It received a massive popularity and morale boost from its intervention in the uprising and does not wish to waste that good will.

However, the military has still acted as a tool of oppression, even if it pales in comparison to the police. The instructive difference is not the what, but the why. The police roll out to crush any dissent, but the army only gets involved when the police fail, or when a state of emergency is declared. When they intervene, people are injured and killed, but the army consistently claims that any deaths are accidental and that it would never fire live ammunition on its own people.[85] Then, during the riots following the football sentencing, the army chief felt compelled to say that the army's intervention was to prevent state collapse. It was not about the regime or the legitimacy of the grievance, but the risk to the survival of the state. This is evidence that the army now views itself as a protector of the state, not the head of state. This also explains its desire to prevent intentional death and may also explain its fervent denials of the report detailing its actions prior to joining the anti-Mubarak uprising.[86] During its occupation of Tahrir Square and since, the military has gone to great pains to promote the idea that the army refused to kill its own people and that the people drove Mubarak out with the army's support, not the other way around, which sources indicate was the actual case.[87]

It is apparent that the army does have an agenda in Egypt's ongoing turmoil. However, their goal appears to be preserving stability rather than supporting any particular side. Morsi may be able to call out the military, but no evidence exists that he actually controls it the way that Mubarak could. If that were true, then it seems unlikely that the courts would be as antagonistic towards him as they have been. Rather, the military is allowing Morsi to rule and will allow the battle between him and the courts to continue for the foreseeable future. If it reaches an actual crisis stage, then the army will have to step in, but in the meantime, the army appears content to let the sides try to subvert each other. Interestingly intrusive, Morsi ordered the report that showed the military had participated in repression during the uprising in 2011 but never released it.[88] The only explanation is that he does not wish to antagonize the military, so he withheld the report to placate the generals. His act truly demonstrates that in Egypt, power is firmly in the hands of military.

The Future of Egypt

Actual political change will be slow in coming for Egypt. The mutual antagonism between President Morsi and the judiciary will make establishing a legitimate parliament difficult. The courts continue to object to elections on procedural grounds while Morsi continues to insist that they take place as soon as possible. However beneficial that having a parliament could be for Morsi, it seems unlikely that parliament will actually be able to affect politics. There is too much division in the strongest party for it to gain a clear majority, and its opposition Islamist parties appear to be losing support and lashing out at those who do not support them.[89] There may be hope for democracy, but only if the various opposition parties can overcome their ideological differences and actually try to govern together.[90] Unfortunately, experience during the last election indicates that this will not happen soon.[91]

The real question is what the army will do. Given the Morsi's efforts to placate[92] the army,[93] the army is unlikely to remain outside of politics for the time being. However, there is nothing stopping them from getting involved if the political tensions start to boil over. Should that happen, then a new version of Scarf will likely take over, but based on its previous period of rule, Scarf may simply remain in power long enough to form a new government. If so, it would

indicate that the army is carving a niche for itself not dissimilar to the Turkish military and could herald a new and brighter future for Egyptians, in line with the vision they expressed in Tahrir Square. If not, then it will be more of the same for this oppressed people.

Conclusion

Revolutionary theorists have long held that without the support of the army, no regime could survive internal dissent.[94] This was proven in Egypt when the military chose to abandon Hosni Mubarak in the face of a popular uprising. Now, as the political factions wrangle for power, the army has remained relatively aloof, choosing to keep the peace and preserve the country, rather than actively seek political power. However, it appears that both the new government and the army are aware of how dependent the fledgling regime is on the army's support, and the army is using that to aide in its image campaign. The future of the Egyptian Revolution, therefore, relies on the army's continued indulgence, rather than the will of the people.

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