Introduction

The Arab Spring
A Struggle on Three Fronts

The year 2011 may be remembered in history as the year that witnessed the blossoming of the Arab Spring, or it may be described as the year that Islamists rose to power in several Arab states—in other words, the "Islamist Spring." It may also be remembered as one of the bloodiest years seen in the region, although the bloodshed took on a different form than in the past.

The Arab world has often seen deaths as a result of invasions, foreign occupations, regional or civil wars, terrorist attacks, or sectarian and ethnic violence. But in 2011, the context in which innocent civilians died was decidedly different. These martyrs fell as a direct result of the struggle for the right to dignity, freedom, and social justice, and the rejection of autocratic rule. That is, they died in the fight for democracy and human rights—the struggle for a "second independence."[1] This term was originally coined by Africans to describe their own fight for democracy from the dictators and tyrants that took over their countries following their initial struggle for national independence against colonial powers. This original struggle for freedom and dignity had been usurped by authoritarian regimes

[1] See CIHRS, I'lan "al-istiqlal al-thani": nahw mubadara li-l-islah al-siyasi fi-l-duwal al-'Arabiya, 2004.

who called themselves "nationalists" in order to stigmatize those resisting their authority as unpatriotic servants of "foreign" interests. From this context springs the genius of the African slogan.

This qualitative development in the Arab world is, in and of itself, a historical development worthy of celebration, particularly since the peoples of the region have for so long seen little value in political struggle except in the framework of conflict with the outside enemy. Many have often shown little concern for the domestic suffering inflicted by their "national" leaders, no matter how brutal, even as the nation deteriorated beyond what was experienced under foreign occupation.

Of course, faith in the values of freedom and dignity always existed in the Arab world, but it was a belief that appeared to be held by a small set of politicians, intellectuals, and rights advocates. With the beginning of the Tunisian uprising in December 2010, this faith was transformed into a public, collective conviction held by broad swathes of citizens in the Arab world. This is a historical development that must be recognized. Throughout 2011, thousands of citizens in numerous Arab countries sacrificed themselves as martyrs for a hope in real reform and true freedom – and they continue to do so, indicating a deep-seated faith in their own dignity and that of their fellow citizens. Before this, isolated individuals had sacrificed for the struggle for freedom and dignity in scattered protests or as victims of torture, involuntary disappearance, or other human rights abuses.

Nor were these uprisings simply a transient anomaly, for they swept through numerous countries almost simultaneously—including Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, Yemen, Syria and Bahrain—and the repercussions were felt to varying degrees across Morocco, Algeria, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, and Sudan. In the past, these peoples sacrificed hundreds of thousands of martyrs in their struggles against foreign occupations, and on several occasions they rose up to protest the US invasion of Iraq or the crimes of the Israeli occupation against the Palestinian people. This was a source of shared history among the peoples of the region, representing one of many common historical, linguistic, and cultural bonds. Yet now, the newest and most important common bond among Arab peoples is the deepening of a common faith in freedom and dignity and a collective willingness to sacrifice even life itself to see these values embodied. In this sense, the last year has been one of the most profound and significant in the history of the region, an occasion that is worth commemorating every day, with every new victory, every new sacrifice, and indeed, every new setback - for in the end such setbacks can only be temporary as long as people continue to crave a life of dignity and freedom, more then they fear the bullets and torture chambers of tyrants.

Young people – and particularly liberal and leftist youth - played the decisive role in bringing about this historical development. New media and social networks also played a vital role in giving the forces of revolution an advantage in the conflict, handing them the tactical initiative, strengthening their ability to mobilize, breaking the information siege, and combating smear and defamation campaigns. In those countries that saw popular uprisings, the results varied: setbacks in Bahrain, the successful beginning of a serious transition to a "second independence" in Tunisia, limited partial reforms in Yemen, and the bloody removal of regime heads in Libya coupled with an inability to disarm the revolutionaries. In Egypt, the uprising swept away the head of the regime but left the counter-revolutionary forces in power. In Syria, the brave struggle continues in the face of a bloodthirsty dictator who refuses to learn the lesson of Libya.

At the same time, the political groups and social forces that sparked the uprisings in the Arab world were unable to maintain the strategic initiative and, likewise, proved incapable of controlling subsequent developments or assume appropriate positions in the structures of governance during the transitional period. The situation ranges from full marginalization (Egypt) and partial marginalization (Tunisia) to the occupation of merely symbolic positions (Yemen), and from defensive retreat (Bahrain) to the total assumption of rule (Libya). The future of the conflict in Syria holds several wildly divergent possibilities.   These outcomes are the product of the interaction of three primary factors: (1) the relative balance of power of local political forces prior to the uprisings in each country; (2) the existence (or non-existence) of a leadership with strategic vision; and (3) the stance of regional and international powers, primarily that of the United States and the European Union.

The successful uprisings in Tunisia and Egypt led to the rapid ouster of both countries' presidents, avoiding the potential negative impacts of international and regional alliances on the short-term course of these revolutions. Other uprisings and revolutions, however, were affected by such alliances, both positively and negatively and, at times, decisively.

The consensus among the Gulf Cooperation Council countries (GCC), the US, and the EU on the importance of containing Iran was key to the articulation of a common policy on democracy-seeking uprisings in the region, as was reflected clearly in the joint or coordinated stances taken by the three parties on the uprisings in Yemen, Bahrain, and Syria (and in Libya, but for different reasons). The GCC countries played a leading role in formulating the stance of the Arab League, both within the organization and

in various UN bodies (Security Council, General Assembly, and the Human Rights Council).[2]

Moreover, the GCC reinforced the regional sectarian struggle (Sunni vs. Shiite), which will have a destructive impact on the future of human rights in the region and carries severe consequences for the position of the US and EU in the Arab world.

The limits of the impact of virtual space on the balance of power:

In the face of the winds of change in the Arab world, developments revealed the ruling parties that possessed or cultivated a strategic vision to meet this challenge to be the monarchy in Morocco, the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) led by Saudi Arabia and Qatar, the forces of political Islam across the region, and counterrevolutionary forces in Egypt. In contrast, revolutionary forces failed to realistically assess the power of their opponents, overestimated their own capabilities, exaggerated or dismissed the impact of regional and international actors, or were unable to properly distinguish potential allies from opponents. Whenever all of these failures came together, the losses were severe.

In **Morocco**, three major factors were decisive in warding off the storms of the Arab Spring. Firstly and most importantly, the monarchy possessed a strategic vision and assiduously refused to lose the political initiative, even in the most difficult of circumstances. King Hassan II had done the same thing in the late 1990s, when he invited Abd al-Rahman al-Youssefi - the historical leader of the biggest and most important opposition party of the country and who was then in exile and faced a death sentence issued *in absentia* - to form a government as part of a new policy known as "the alternation of power." This initiative entailed significant concessions from the monarchy and opened broader horizons for political pluralism in the country. At the same time, however, it also helped to renew political confidence in the monarchy, to infuse the ruling political elite with new blood and expand its base, and to create a better political environment for King Mohammed VI's assumption of the throne when Hassan II died shortly thereafter.

Mohammed VI is no less savvy than his father. During the short weeks that followed the eruption of the uprisings in Tunisia and then in Egypt, and with the formation of the February 20 youth movement in Morocco which

---

[2] See "The Arab Spring in the UN: Between Hope and Despair," chapter 2 of part 1 of this report.

began by organizing protests on that day, the king astutely read these signs and realized that his most effective weapon—apart from the arsenal of repressive security options that he would not hesitate to use—was regaining the political initiative. In his speech of 9 March 2011, just two weeks after the February 20 demonstrations, Mohammed VI proposed serious constitutional reforms under which the monarchy would cede some of its authority to the government, which for the first time would be formed by the majority party, whatever it happened to be.

The king then called for early parliamentary elections and did not hesitate to task the head of the winning Islamist party to form a government for the first time. Although the constitutional reforms, which were passed in a referendum on July 1, did not meet all the aspirations of the February 20 movement, most rights organizations, and other political groupings, they did include relatively progressive constitutional provisions that helped to strengthen political support for the monarchy and gradually dissolved the political impetus of the February 20 movement. This objective could not have been achieved were it not for two other factors. Firstly, the February 20 movement was unable to realistically read existing power relations, the depth of the monarchy's entrenchment and its relative popularity, and its political maneuvering capabilities which had accumulated over time. The movement's disregard for these considerations and its exclusive focus on political slogans and demands, despite their legitimacy, facilitated its own marginalization.

Secondly, Morocco, unlike other Arab countries that succumbed to the winds of change, had managed to limit gross human rights violations and to undertake an extensive accounting of past crimes against human rights, thanks also to the monarchy's strategic vision. This facilitated the reconciliation of the monarchy with broad segments of the population and, in turn, renewed the monarchy's political legitimacy. Given these three domestic factors, the impact of external actors in Morocco was negligible, especially given the speed at which monarchy seized the initiative on constitutional political reform, followed swiftly by a referendum and a call for early elections in advance of the legal date. This swiftness was coupled with the February 20 movement's delayed absorption of changing dynamics, which had a direct impact on the solidity of the political ground it occupied.

In **Bahrain**, the reversals suffered by the uprising were the direct result of the hostile - although foreseeable - stance of regional forces (the countries of the GCC), which were not satisfied with merely declaring their political stance but also sent Saudi and Emirati armed forces into Bahrain to support the regime's crackdown. This was in addition to international collusion, also to be expected given the rising tensions between the international

community and Iran over its nuclear program. The inability of the uprising's leadership to recognize the likelihood of defeat due to these two factors, along with its failure to acknowledge the limits of the Shiite community's numerical majority in these conditions, closed off possibilities for the movement and led to a slide toward a self-defeating political strategy that reached its zenith when some political factions advanced the call for an Islamic republic as an alternative to the monarchy.[3]

In **Syria**, the sudden embrace of armed resistance by the uprising's leadership in exile (the Syrian National Council) - due to pressure from some opposition parties at home, an inability of the world community to end the brutality of the Syrian regime, and the growing numbers of casualties every day - may lead down a different but no less suicidal path. This slide is exacerbated by a tendency to overestimate the impact of regional and international support. Indeed, some opposition elements mistakenly believe that the "Libyan achievement" can be repeated in Syria simply by overcoming the Russian and Chinese veto. This view underestimates the internal sources of strength of the existing Syrian regime, particularly the sectarian and ethnic equations on which it is built. Thus far, the opposition has failed to articulate a strategy, program, policies, and practices that speak to the fears of religious and ethnic minorities and reassure them of their future under a different political regime, in which the adversaries of these minorities from the Muslim Brotherhood may assume an influential position.

In this context, it is ironic that one of the factors which led to the setback of the Bahraini uprising—namely, the stance of the GCC, the US, and Europe—is one of the most important sources of political and material support for the Syrian uprising. It is also noteworthy that of all the Arab uprisings, only these two enjoyed a recognized leadership.

In **Libya**, international and regional forces—led by the Qatar-Saudi axis—played the decisive role in defeating the Qaddafi regime, but this could not compensate for the lack of strategic vision on the part of the armed groups that waged the battle on the ground and overthrew Qaddafi. They have thus far proved unable to develop an alternative regime to replace him, and the country is experiencing conflicts between warlords, despite the fact that they are all united by a single ideology—political Islam.

---

[3] The reference was to the Islamic republican system as it exists in Iran, which allowed the Bahraini government to view the appeal as the acceptance of an Iranian perspective that Bahrain is part and parcel of Iran.

In **Yemen**, President Ali Abdullah Saleh was forced out of office in exchange for the election of his former vice-president - the only candidate - as president, in compliance with the GCC Initiative, which was supported by the US and the EU. The initiative entailed Saleh's renunciation of power on the condition that he would not be prosecuted for any crimes committed during his rule, as well as the formation of a consensus government between Saleh's party, traditional opposition parties, and tribal forces, with only nominal representation for revolutionary youth. This new political equation did not appear from the heavens but rather came about as the practical expression of power relations on the ground, as the uprising had continued for nearly a year without being able to develop new power relations or establish a new political class.

The failure of the revolutionary youth to realize the depth of the entrenchment of traditional social and political forces as well as the extent of regional and international influence in a country considered to be a regional center for al-Qaeda may threaten a setback no less grave than that of Egypt. The opposite holds true as well: if the revolutionary youth develop a strategy grounded in the reality of the local balance of power and regional and international alignments and considering the legitimate interests of Yemenis in the south and the far north (the Houthis), they may gradually improve their position and influence, contain the challenge of the armed counterrevolution, and clear the way for a gradual transition to a "second independence."

Tunisia offers the best example thus far. Following the flight of former President Zine el-Abidine Ben Ali on January 14, 2011, civil and political forces were able to work together to form a shared institutional structure known as the High Commission for the Realization of the Revolution's Goals, which was recognized by the transitional authority. Through this commission, the political opposition and civil society drafted a common, sound roadmap for the transitional phase and offered proposals for fundamental legislative changes and the establishment of new institutions, which were immediately adopted by the transitional authority. This pushed Tunisia forward with many fewer problems than in Egypt and Libya.

Three main factors[4] encouraged this which were not present in Egypt or Libya. Firstly, the Tunisian army had no aspirations to play a direct political role, sufficing itself with monitoring the transition from a reasonable distance. Secondly, the intellectual underpinnings of the leadership of the Islamist Ennahda movement are more compromising than those of the

---

[4] Bahey eldin Hassan, "Why Tunisia succeeds while Egypt fails," Egypt Independent, Nov. 2, 2011, <http://www.egyptindependent.com/opinion/why-tunisia-succeeds-while-egypt-fails>.

Muslim Brotherhood and the Salafis in Egypt and Libya and geared less toward the Islamization of legislation and society. This has helped Tunisia avoid the pitfalls of sharp political and sectarian polarization. Thirdly, Tunisian civil society was more dynamic and politically focused and did not leave drafting the roadmap for the country's future to politicians alone. This relative stability was thus not greatly affected when Ennahda, which did not play a leading role in the revolution, won a plurality in the constituent assembly elections. However, Ennahda was enabled to play a decisive role in writing the temporary constitutional rules that granted basic powers to the government - formed under Ennahda's leadership - at the expense of the presidency, which enjoys only marginal prerogatives. Because of its plurality, Ennahda will have the greatest influence in drafting the country's permanent constitution. The outcomes of this influence and, perhaps, the future of Tunisia, will depend to a great extent on the interactions between Ennahda's more compromising and pragmatic leadership and the pressures of the Salafi movement, which enjoys increasing sway over Ennahda's base, especially outside of Tunisia's large cities.

Between strategic clarity and political opportunism:

In **Egypt**, the uprising has not yet been defeated, but it has suffered a major setback that may lead to the same fate as that of Bahrain. The success of the popular uprising in forcing President Hosni Mubarak from power after only 18 days was a miraculous achievement. It was an accomplishment that defied the imbalance of power relations between an entrenched authoritarian regime that had for six decades relied on formal political pluralism to prolong its life, on one side, and new, ascendant opposition forces on the other, particularly among youth. Seemingly on the sidelines, the Muslim Brotherhood, the most organized force of political Islam, made partial, ad-hoc deals with opposition groups, yet they were always careful to not challenge the military regime and began early on to cut deals with the regime at the expense of other political actors when the opportunity presented itself.[5]

---

[5] For example, Mahdi Akef, the former general guide of the Muslim Brothers, admitted to concluding a secret deal with the security apparatus for the 2005 parliamentary elections. See al-Masry al-Youm, "Mahdi 'Akif fi awwal hiwar sahafi ba'd azmat al-insihab: hunak shay' ghamid wa sirr fi maktab al-irshad wa musammim 'ala ma'rifatih," Oct. 24, 2009, <http://www.almasry-alyoum.com/article2.aspx?ArticleID=230596&IssueID=1568>. This was later confirmed by other leading Brothers, including Abd al-Hamid al-Ghazali, Akef's political advisor, and Mohammed Habib, Akef's leading deputy at the time. Khairat al-Shater, the current deputy guide, played a major role in concluding this deal. See al-Masry al-Youm, "'Abd al-Hamid al-Ghazali mustashar murshid al-ikhwan li-l-Masri al-Yawm: na'm 'aqadna safaqa ma' al-amn fi intikhabat 2005," Oct. 29, 2009, <http://www.almasry-

Over 18 days, the uprising - or the "January 25 Revolution" - shook the regime's pillars of support, but the " entrenched state's" well-established security apparatus was soon able to regain its balance, adapt to the changing situation, and plan for the coming phase. The security apparatus made a well-informed bet on the long-standing political opportunism of the Muslim Brotherhood,[6] but it was also aided by the inability of the political bases of the uprising - which had not planned for a revolution - to rapidly absorb the seismic shift that their sheer courage and frustration had created. A problem for new reformist political forces and groups has been a seeming inability to see the emergent political landscape "as it is," without illusions about the objectives of old and new regime forces, the objectives of the Muslim Brotherhood, or the limited capacities of the groups that had sparked the uprising.

The Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF), with the cooperation of the security apparatus, assumed power. An institution that does not belong to the revolution and that underwent no serious reform in its wake, the SCAF has indeed done everything in its power to crush revolutionary forces, directly and indirectly. Both houses of parliament are controlled by a majority affiliated with either political Islam (the Muslim Brotherhood, the Jihad, and the Islamic Group) or evangelical Islam (the various Salafi parties), and all Islamic factions agreed throughout 2011 to provide direct and indirect political support to the SCAF in the face of its critics. Meanwhile, representatives of the liberal and leftist currents are a small minority in the parliament, among them a few revolutionary youth who can be counted on the fingers of one hand.

During the past year of "revolution," activist youth in Egypt were increasingly targeted for various forms of repression: they have been referred to military trials, faced crackdowns on demonstrations including through the use of live ammunition, rubber bullets, and birdshot, and been crushed under armored vehicles and pursued by thugs with knives. They have been abducted and taken to undisclosed locations, and press campaigns have discredited them with charges of treason and foreign collaboration, mobilizing the citizenry against them with the claim that the revolution

alyoum.com/article2.aspx?ArticleID=231189&IssueID=1573> and al-Masry al-Youm, "al-Ghazali: al-ikhwan lan tukarrir safaqat 2005 ma' al-amn fi-l-intikhabat al-muqbila," Oct. 27, 2010, <http://www.almasry-alyoum.com/article2.aspx?ArticleID=274986>.

[6] It is instructive to review the Muslim Brothers' dealings with former presidents Gamal Abd al-Nasser and Answar al-Sadat and their willingness to conclude deals with them at the expense of democratic principles and other political forces. See, for example, 'Imad Abu Ghazi, "Maris 54: sira' al-dimuqratiya wa-l-istibdad ayyam al-ihtishad," al-Shorouk, Apr. 22, 2012, <http://www.shorouknews.com/columns/view.aspx?cdate=21042012&id=830c9b3a-f65b-4186-b1ab-3e5961999776>.

brought chaos and a security vacuum and obstructed the operation of public facilities. Activist and reformist youth in Egypt are now treated by the government in much the same way the Muslim Brotherhood was repressed before the uprising.

In contrast, Islamist political factions have encouraged citizens to support the SCAF and condemned protests against its policies. They have also remained silent about human rights crimes that have not targeted Islamists, including those that should ostensibly shock and provoke moral and religious outrage, such as dragging women through the street and stripping them or performing "virginity tests" on women in custody. Indeed, in some cases, the Islamist political forces even went so far as to blame the victims. This conduct on the part of the Islamists may be why demonstrations organized by them in the year after the revolution went unmolested, while the suppression of other protests was often bloody and led to the deaths of more than 100 people.

In Egypt, many now say that the Islamists have hijacked the revolution. This is true in one sense—the Islamists did not spark the revolution but rather joined several days later, having refused to take part in the Day of Rage on January 25, 2011, which inaugurated the uprising. However, the Islamists enjoy three features not possessed by their opponents that give them a hard-won advantage. Therefore, the fact that the fruits of the revolution fell into their hands was not a cosmic accident or unlikely outcome.

Firstly, the Islamists are closely tied to their communities, and not only due to their playing on the religious sentiment of the majority of citizens, who share their beliefs, or their use of the mosque for raising awareness, cultural education, organization, and political campaigning. They have also established capable, sophisticated social support institutions, as a result of which they have been able to engage in broad social mobilization and build a new political class. In contrast, leftist and liberal forces have proven unable to plant deep roots in a broad swath of society.

Secondly, Islamists possess the weapon of internal organization. While leftists in the Arab world have best written about organization, it is the Muslim Brotherhood who have perfected the practice. The organization of the Muslim Brotherhood is based on experience accumulated over decades, which has enabled them to withstand, with varying degrees of firmness, the onslaught of the most authoritarian and bloody of rulers.

Throughout all of this, the Muslim Brothers have been able to mobilize sufficient financial resources and skillfully blend the building of deeply-rooted traditions of collective action with the production of charismatic

leaders in various fields who have gradually become well-known national political figures, some of whom are even recognized regionally and internationally. In contrast, other political formations have always been fragile and tended to factionalism, having leaders with individualistic tendencies and lacking traditions of collective action. Therefore, they have been unable to withstand, as organizations, the actions of authoritarian and totalitarian regimes in the Arab world and have not cultivated a lasting consensus around any charismatic figures. It was in this context that new youth political groups emerged, and while they successfully overcame some of these pathologies, they have not overcome them all.   It must also be remembered that democratic liberalism in the Arab world was also subjected to systematic repression during the second half of the twentieth century, such that it lacked virtually any real partisan organization, and it only began to emerge anew in the first decade of the new millennium.

Thirdly, the leadership of the Muslim Brotherhood possesses strategic clarity. Although the victories achieved by the uprisings of the Arab Spring were a surprise to all parties - including those who sparked them - the Islamists, who were the last to join the revolutions, were the first to process what had happened and the first among the opposition to clarify a realistic, though undeclared, strategy for engaging with new power relations and new centers of power, both domestically and internationally.   In Egypt, the home of the oldest such organization and of the leadership of the international group, the Muslim Brotherhood developed their long-standing strategy of "consolidation" to absorb the new realities on the ground and incorporate them into its decades-long forward march to control society from the ground up, with the ultimate goal of controlling all state institutions. Thanks to the often blind obedience paid by members of the Brotherhood to the group's leadership, the latter was able, with cold calculation, the utmost flexibility, and the fewest possible losses, and without any previous or subsequent political declaration, to shift from a temporary alliance with the revolutionaries of Tahrir Square to a temporary alliance with the SCAF against them only one month after the revolution had begun, and with little or no consideration for the many that had been and continued to be killed, tortured, and imprisoned for creating this political opening.

A review of significant political milestones over the past year in Egypt—starting with the referendum on the constitutional amendments a month after Hosni Mubarak's ouster and including several million-person demonstrations organized by the revolutionary youth, the three major massacres perpetrated by army and police forces in 2011, and the formation of the constituent assembly in March 2012—will enable any observer to easily identify those perceived by the Muslim Brotherhood to be friends or

foes. Among those categorized as opponents by the Islamists were figures of the former ruling party as well as leftist and liberal factions, including revolutionary youth and public figures belonging to this political base. The Brotherhood has skillfully used various methods and weapons to engage with these varied opponents. In contrast, the SCAF was categorized as a temporary ally with whom deals could be made, both publicly and in secret, until the next stage of the strategy of "consolidation." That both the Islamists and the SCAF consider the other to be an ally is the flip side of their agreement to treat revolutionary forces as a common enemy which poses a challenge to the separate interests of each party. The weapons that have been used by political Islamist factions against their opponents have ranged from allegations of ties to the former regime to accusations of secularism and hostility to God's law. At the same time, the Islamists explicitly supported the SCAF's allegations against revolutionary youth, liberals, and leftists, whom it accused of sowing chaos and attempting to destroy the state.

This context may help explain the hostile stance adopted by the Muslim Brotherhood and its affiliated political party against human rights organizations when the security apparatus, backed up by the judicial system, launched a fierce attack on them in the latter months of 2011. The Brotherhood is no longer a victim that needs human rights groups to defend it; indeed, the group is readying itself to assume power and will soon become the object of these groups' criticisms.[7] At the same time, the discourse of the Muslim Brotherhood targeting the international community was different. Some political analysts even observed that some of the group's stances as declared in English diverged starkly from their stated positions in Arabic.[8]

---

[7] This seems to be a common tendency among several Islamist parties in the Arab world. See, for example, the unprecedented hostile remarks against civil society made by al-Habib al-Shoubani, the minister in charge of relations with parliament and civil society and a leader in the Moroccan Justice and Development Party, al-Masa', Apr. 5, 2012.

[8] Eric Trager, "The Muslim Brotherhood's Mendacious Charm Campaign in Washington," The New Republic, Apr. 9, 2012, <http://www.tnr.com/article/world/102413/muslim-brotherhood-egypt-arab-spring-election>. See also the Brotherhood's positive statement on civil society, particularly human rights organizations in Egypt, issued following Senator John McCain's meeting with Khairat al-Shater, which was widely hailed in American circles. However, it was later revealed that the statement was not issued in Arabic. Indeed, statements issued in Arabic evinced an extremely negative view of these same groups. Ikhwan Web, "Freedom and Justice Party Supports Role of NGOs as Essential to Democratic Process," Feb. 20, 2012, <http://www.ikhwanweb.com/article.php?id=29692>. For the statement issued exclusively in English expressing solidarity with activist Alaa Abd al-Fatah, see Ikhwan Web, "Muslim Brotherhood Condemns Military Trials for Egyptian Activists," Oct. 30, 2011, <http://www.ikhwanweb.com/article.php?id=29091>.

In contrast, revolutionary youth groups, liberals, and leftists were unable to develop a strategy and clearly identify real friends and foes. For some time, they remained the victim of confusion and romantic illusions about the attitude of the Islamists and the SCAF towards the revolution and its forces. It took nine months, up until the Maspero massacre, for many within these forces to shed their illusions about the SCAF, and their romantic hopes vested in the Muslim Brotherhood only dissipated nearly a year after the revolution, when the Brotherhood had assumed control of parliament and began using it as a platform from which to discredit revolutionary youth as thugs, to justify police repression, and to propose new legislation to suppress the freedom of assembly and the right to protest which were even more restrictive than the laws of the former regime.

The confusion and missteps of revolutionary forces reached their peak when they failed to adopt a swift, clear stance on the security and media campaign, backed up by judicial powers, launched by counterrevolutionary forces in the second half of the year against human rights organizations, which were tried in the media and the courtroom on charges of supporting the revolution. During this period, the situation was being reshaped to strengthen the old regime, not only at the expense of the revolutionaries, but also to eradicate the biggest accomplishment of political Islam in the past century.

This does not necessarily signal the return of the old regime in its old guise, but perhaps points to internal regime reform of the type resisted by the former president and his son. Mubarak was compelled to accept the necessity of such reform in the first week of the January 25 uprising, but by then it was too late to convince Egyptians to accept it.

Currently, many factors may lead Egyptians to accept now what they rejected more than a year ago. For one, revolutionary forces have been unable to convince the citizenry of their competence, while the political and moral legitimacy of the Muslim Brotherhood is simultaneously eroding in the face of increasing recognition that the group has an ulterior plan to take control of the entire state. At the same time, fear of uncertainly has grown among citizens as a result of the military regime's manufactured security vacuum, and this panic is fed from time to time by intimations of fabricated foreign conspiracies. Further exacerbating the situation is the fact that daily living conditions continue to decline and the state is on the verge of bankruptcy.

The new power relations in Egypt are reflected in the nature of the conflict over the future of the country, as seen most clearly in the conflict over the constitution. This battle over the country's future is not between the

constitution of the old regime (the 1971 constitution) and a revolutionary constitution; there is no party advocating such a revolutionary constitution, as this possibility was buried by the Islamists and SCAF with their constitutional amendments drafted only a month after Mubarak's ouster. Rather, the conflict is now between a theocratic constitution,[9] or one on the way to it, and a modified 1971 constitution—that is, an internal reform of the Mubarak regime, but in a different context. It should be noted that the January 25 revolution did not include the application of Islamic law as one of its demands. Indeed, the demand for a civil state was one of the most prominent slogans. In this context, if the forces of the revolution do not articulate a strategy based on the current realities, correct their course a year after the uprising, and reconsider their classification of friends and foes, permanent or temporary, the current setback may deteriorate into a total defeat of the original goals of the uprising and may likely end in a very bloody manner.

---

[9] Liberals and secularists have reiterated on several occasions that they do not intend to amend the constitutional article designating Islam as the state religion and Islamic law as the major source of legislation. Thus, there is no other explanation for the Muslim Brotherhood's decision to ally with the Salafis, to the exclusion of other parties, to dominate the primary levers in parliament and the constituent assembly. Even after the Administrative Court ordered the dissolution and reconstitution of the constituent assembly, the Islamists have insisted on maintaining at least 51 percent of the seats. In addition, upon declaring his candidacy for the presidency, Khairat al-Shater, the deputy guide of the Muslim Brothers and the group's *de facto* leader, declared that the implementation of Islamic law was and will remain his primary goal and that, if elected, he would form a council of Islamic scholars to help parliament achieve this goal. See al-Masry al-Youm, "al-Shatir yu'lin tashkil majmu'a min ahl al-hall wa-l-'aqd li-mu'awanatih fi tatbiq al-shari'a," Apr. 4, 2012, <http://www.almasryalyoum.com/node/751541>. This declaration is the first official confirmation from the Muslim Brothers that the group will not abandon the political platform announced in 2007, which is crucial to turning Egypt into a theocracy. See Bahey eldin Hassan, "Muslim Brothers Party's Platform in Egypt from a Human Rights Perspective," paper presented by Bahey eldin Hassan at CSID's 9th Annual Conference "Political Islam and Democracy: What do Islamists and Islamic Movements Want?" Washington, D.C., May 14, 2012. For more information about the conference, see: <https://www.csidonline.org/annual-conference/9th-annual-conference/91-reports/386-9th-annual-conference-report>. Mohammed Mursi, the president of the Freedom and Justice Party who succeeded al-Shater as the group's presidential candidate after the latter was disqualified by the elections commission, reiterated the same goal immediately upon declaring his candidacy. In his first campaign rally, he stated, "The Quran is our constitution, and Islamic law is our guide." See New York Times, "In Egypt Race, Battle Is Joined on Islam's Role," Apr. 23, 2012, <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/04/24/world/middleeast/in-egypt-morsi-escalates-battle-over-islams-role.html?_r=1>.

Against the theocratic project, not Islamist parties:

Across the Arab region, there is also a conflict between the project of the "theocratic state," perhaps most clearly embodied in Libya, and a modified authoritarianism, as exemplified by Morocco. Other countries are still vacillating between these two poles, and it may be that Tunisia alone successfully navigates a path toward a truly democratic government. As for the "second independence," the struggle in the Arab world remains in its early stages and still lacks a clear strategy and a favorable international political climate. In fact, those who raise the banner of this struggle are fighting on three fronts simultaneously, as they face the counterrevolution, the theocratic state project, and unwelcoming - if not outright hostile - international and regional opposition to the rise of true democracy. In comparison, before 2011, their struggle had been focused on only the first and third fronts.

The year 2011 marked the beginning of a struggle for a "second independence" in the region, specifically in several of the most important Arab countries, but the course of the struggle and the ranks of allies and opponents, at home and abroad, differ from country to country. While the Ennahda Islamist movement of Tunisia can be classified as a partner in the struggle for the "second independence," Islamist political groups in Egypt have taken a different course, moving toward a narrowly defined theocratic state and bending all tactical political arrangements after the revolution to this end. The struggle for a "second independence" in Egypt will thus be more difficult unless there is a fundamental reconsideration of this strategy within the Islamist camp, something of which there is no indication until now. Thus, the struggle for a "second independence" in some Arab countries will necessitate a struggle against the theocratic state, though not against Islamist parties if they are able to recognize the value of plurality and true democracy and stop approaching their role in society as that of pre-destined and heavenly ordained rulers. History has seen no compromises bridging the gap between the civil state and theocracy, for the latter can only be established by ultimately doing away with the values of justice, rule of law, and respect for human rights on which a stable, well-functioning and humane civil state is built.

In this period of the struggle for a "second independence," and against both a modified authoritarianism and a theocratic state in the Arab world, the coming years will see changes in the human rights violations that were previously widespread. It is expected that the amount and severity of gross human rights abuses will decline, with the exception of countries witnessing armed conflicts, while other violations that may be religiously justified will

increase, such as violations against women and minorities, religious freedom, and freedom of belief, thought, and literary and artistic creativity. It is also expected that youth platforms, especially political groups, will come under increasing attack, along with human rights defenders, and that they will face threats to bodily integrity and the right to life with ever increasing regularity. In this context, the task of reforming the security apparatus within Arab countries assumes crucial importance, but this faces not only the resistance of old regimes to any serious reform, but also the opportunism of some factions of Islamists in some countries in the region, which reduce the issue of security reform to bringing the apparatus as it is under the control of the Islamists and removing prominent security leaders hostile to political Islam.

Although the struggle for a "second independence" still lacks a long-term, pragmatic strategy and a favorable international political configuration, it does possess enormous momentum due to the collapse of the barrier of fear for tens of millions of citizens. These citizens now enjoy increased confidence in their ability to bring about change, have a heightened interest in public affairs, and deeply desire equality, dignity, freedom, and social justice. Whereas "resistance to colonialism" and external powers used to be the strongest regionally-shared political value, this has been engulfed within a larger and more profound shared goal of gaining freedom and dignity, no matter who the oppressor may be. Young people are now possessed of a deep-seated conviction that it is their right to determine their country's future, and they continue to demonstrate a boundless readiness to struggle and sacrifice for this goal no matter the obstacles or odds. While this determination may ebb at times, it is hard to imagine that it will disappear or be bayed into submission for any extended period of time. While real walls continue to be erected in the streets, let us hope they are never again rebuilt in the minds and hearts of this new generation.

Bahey eldin Hassan
April 30, 2012