Coming Full Circle: Post Revolutionary Change in Egypt and its Effect on Relations with
Israel

by

Benjamin Max Goldberg

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Approved by:

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Curtis Ryan, Ph.D., Thesis Director

_____

William M. Hutchins, Ph. D., Second Reader

_____

Elicka Peterson-Sparks, Ph. D., Department of Government and Justice Studies Honors
Director

_____

Ted Zerucha, Ph.D., Interim Director, The Honors College

Abstract

This thesis provides an analysis of the process of revolution that occurred in Egypt starting in January 2011 and its impact on Egyptian-Israeli relations. After the process of revolution is examined, a detailed account of the various regime changes that occurred over the next 4 years is provided. After these regime changes are detailed, the foreign policy decisions of Israel and the various Egyptian regimes are examined. This analysis culminates in a prediction for Egypt's future. A major finding of this thesis is that Egypt underwent a revolution to remove an oppressive regime to only go through years of violence, protest, and at some times anarchy, to have a regime remarkably similar to the one they wished to remove. The other main finding of this analysis is that Egyptian-Israeli relations changed drastically with regime change, but was always considered by the new regimes.

Part I: Introduction and Causes for Revolution

For a long time, there have been tensions between Egypt and Israel, but over the last few decades, there has been a tenuous peace between the two neighbors. In January 2011, Egypt faced waves of protests that caused substantial change in the regime. There were several regime changes over the following months, and each affected relations with Israel. Egypt's current political climate is unstable, and many are speculating on what will occur next. The continued changes in Egyptian politics have put strains on Egyptian-Israeli relations, particularly with the new president, Sisi, and renewed hatred for the Muslim Brotherhood, by the regime itself.

In the following examination of post-revolutionary change in Egypt, the causes for revolution will be outlined, including the elements of dissatisfaction with the regime primarily by the youth, economic disparity, the role of technology, and Mubarak's oppressive policies and unpopular foreign policy. Next, the process of revolution will be detailed examining how Mubarak fell from power. Following this, the various regime changes will be analyzed in order to understand the turmoil that Egypt endured. Then, the changes in foreign policy, specifically with Israel will be discussed to understand how Egypt and Israel's relationship has changed and evolved with the changes in Egypt's government. The conclusion will discuss future predictions for the once strong nation of Egypt.

The Arab Spring caused many changes in the Arab World, and Egypt was affected profoundly. The people of Egypt, while diverse, generally were discontent with their government, saw no hope for the future, and decided it was time to change. They overthrew an oppressive leader, only to be confronted with a well-organized Islamist government that did not espouse the same rights that the protestors fought for. This government was short-

lived, due to a coup d'état, that ushered in a new government reflective of the one Egyptians attempted to remove with Mubarak. Egypt's government changed rapidly in four years only to bring in a ruler very similar to the oppressor that Egyptians had endeavored to remove.

Uprisings in Tunisia and the ousting of Ben Ali were seen as the spark that ignited change in Egypt. However, there were many other factors influencing the Egyptian people. According to Barrington Moore, in his studies of revolution, "experience of hardship alone does not move people to resist. To shift from misery to a mass movement, people must first discover 'moral anger and a sense of social injustice'" (Moore, 15). This was especially true in Egypt, specifically in regard to socioeconomic class disparity. Prior to the revolution, Egypt was seen as a stable government in the region by Western and foreign actors; however, this perception was not the reality. Due to this perception of a stable government, Egypt experienced a large amount of economic growth in the 15 years prior to revolution; however, the wealth was only distributed to a select few, including the military, entrepreneurs, and business owners (Gallup).

The first primary cause of revolution was the deterioration of the relationship between Egypt's government and its citizens. As the Egyptian citizens experienced their country deteriorating, they became demoralized and discontented with the regime. While many might have tolerated a paternal state-citizen social contract, where people accept less freedom in exchange for high-quality state-provided social services, Egyptians were deprived of both. As Egyptian citizens' personal freedom decreased, their satisfaction with state-provided necessities declined. This twin decline in attitudes suggests that in the eyes of many Egyptians the old regime had resembled more an oppressor rather than a generous, if overprotective, guardian. Egypt's GDP was rising throughout the early 2000s, however the

citizens continued to be deprived of opportunities. Egypt's government supported

entrepreneurs and rich business owners and the military. These individuals claimed they had

access to a skilled workforce, however, Egypt's unemployment continued to rise. The IMF

reported that, in 2010, the youth unemployment rate was 25% (Gallup).

The main demographic group that had the most influence on the uprisings in Egypt

was the youth. Egypt's demographics provided a foundation for change. According to

Duncan Green, of *The Guardian*,

> Consider the demographics: an explosive mix of high population growth, leading to a
> "youth bulge", combined with urbanisation, jobless growth partly linked to structural
> adjustment, and the rapid expansion of university education has produced what the
> BBC's Paul Mason calls "a new sociological type, the graduate with no future". Two-
> thirds of Egyptians are under 30, and each year 700,000 new graduates chase 200,000
> new jobs (Green).

As Green states, high unemployment among young Egyptians was a major contributor to

discontentment with the Mubarak regime. The youth's perception of hopelessness with the

future was a major catalyst for change (Green).

Next, the second primary facilitator for revolution was technology as a fundamental

tool, used by the youth, to assist the revolution. Without technology, the Arab Spring might

have had a drastically different outcome. The self-immolation of Mohamed Bouazizi, in

Tunisia, spread through Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, and others, throughout the region to

inspire others to rise against their oppressive regimes. These social networks also allowed

ordinary citizens to organize and unite effectively. Social networks were the primary source

of news for those under 35 in Egyptian society. Leaders of the revolution used social media

to combat misinformation from the government. In his article on the role of technology in

the Egyptian revolution, Zack Brisson states,

> One leading organizer with the Democratic Front Party described how they turned to Facebook as a spin machine whenever the government provided an opportunity: 'When the security forces broke in our front door on January 26, we immediately put up a Facebook group to collect popular anger and let the media know' (Brisson).

Social media and mobile phones were essential to communicate and organize, and without those tools, the revolution would have collapsed. Mobile phones were even used by the government to inform the citizens of the status of the revolution, and in an effort to protect them from street violence when possible (Brisson).

It is important to note the technology was merely a tool that facilitated the revolution, and not necessarily a cause. Technology does have its limitations, and was not always used in support of the revolution. It is well documented that the Egyptian government monitored online and mobile communications. Like any other tool, it is in how it is used that determines its effectiveness. Technology was used to organize a revolution, but was also used to oppress Egyptian citizens. The government had used technology in the past to spy and monitor the activities of its citizens. When the government was losing control of the revolution, it saw the need to disrupt the use of technology, further oppressing its citizens. Technology requires human intent, and that intent determines whether it is used in a beneficial or malicious manner. This distinction became apparent during the beginning of regime change in Egypt (Brisson).

The third primary cause of the Egyptian revolution was its foreign policy. This is the cause that will be the primary focus of this examination of post-revolutionary change in Egypt after the process of regime change is understood. While this was not a new issue, it exacerbated the unstable situation. Egypt has had a complicated and supporting relationship with Israel, and took a stance on Israeli-Palestinian relations that was contrary to the popular opinion of Egypt's citizens. This delegitimized the government, and made the Mubarak

regime seem like a puppet to western influences. The populace wanted a government that represented them, and not one that seemed weak and influenced by those who were perceived as the enemies of the country. This foreign policy, along with domestic policies of corruption and torture led to the populace uniting and bringing down the repressive Mubarak regime. The Mubarak regime continued oppressive policies put in place under Nasser. The regime accomplished this through the police, and in conjunction with unpopular policies, facilitated the environment for revolution (Green).

Part II: Revolution

Beginning in 2011, Egypt went through several regime changes in a short period of time. On January 25th, 2011, protests erupted in Tahrir Square with over ten thousand protestors. This day was later known as "The Day of Revolt" or "The Day of Rage." These protests were non-violent and targeted Hosni Mubarak's government. Thousands of citizens marched in downtown Cairo, headed towards the offices of the ruling National Democratic Party, the foreign ministry, and the state television. Similar protests were reported in other cities across the county. These protests started as peaceful demonstrations, but eventually police forces clashed with demonstrators proclaiming "Down with Mubarak," situated primarily in Tahrir Square. Hours after these protests erupted, the interior ministry made an announcement blaming the Muslim Brotherhood for these demonstrations, a claim the Brotherhood vehemently denied. The day ended with the Interior Minister saying three protesters and a police officer were killed during the anti-government demonstrations (Al-Jazeera English).

The protests continued for the next several days. On January 26th, a protester and a police officer were killed in central Cairo as anti-government demonstrators bombarded security forces with rocks and firebombs for a second day, according to witnesses. The protestors started to get recognition internationally. Specifically, the United States released a statement of support for the protestors. The Arab League stated, "The Arab citizen is angry, is frustrated" (Al-Jazeera English). More protests and violence occurred on January 27th, with continued support by other countries in the region. This is the first day that Facebook, Twitter and Blackberry Messenger services were disrupted in an attempt to stall the revolution (Al-Jazeera English).

On January 28th, known as "The Friday of Anger," hundreds of thousands protested throughout Egypt. Internet and mobile phone text message users in Egypt reported major disruption to services as the country prepared for a new wave of protests after Friday prayers. There were several prisons that were opened by the government to release prisoners in an effort to terrorize the protestors. The army and more police were called out as well in a desperate attempt to contain the protests. Mubarak made his first address that day, and promised to form a new government. Mubarak dismissed his entire cabinet, but refused to step down as president. At this point, Mubarak's whereabouts were unknown. In the following day, Mubarak appointed a vice president for the first time in his regime (Al-Jazeera America).

On February 1st, Mubarak made another statement saying he would not run for another term and would make concessions in an effort to stop the protests. He established a new cabinet and a new prime minister. Mubarak promised reforms to the constitution, particularly Article 76, which makes it virtually impossible for independent candidates to run for office. He said his government would focus on improving the economy and providing jobs. Protests continued for the next several days, with international support for the Egyptian citizens and praise for the Egyptian army. The army remained deployed, and violence became more rampant and prevalent throughout the country (Al-Jazeera America).

For the following week, protests continued, primarily in Cairo's Tahrir Square. Differing reports are released on the amount of dead from the protests. Changes continued to occur within the government, with Mubarak's son leaving and a restructuring of the ruling party. Reuters quoted Egyptian state TV as saying "terrorists" have targeted an Israel-Egypt gas pipeline in Northern Sinai. The Muslim Brotherhood released a statement that it "has

decided to participate in a dialogue round in order to understand how serious the officials are in dealing with the demands of the people" (Reuters). With protests getting worse, the Egyptian government received increasing pressure from external actors to end the revolution in an effort to protect the lives of Egypt's citizens (Al-Jazeera America).

On February 11th, after giving power to Vice President Omar Suleiman, Mubarak resigned, giving control of the government to the Supreme Council of Egyptian Armed Forces (SCAF) (BBC News). The country's new military rulers promised to hand power to an elected, civilian government and pledged that Egypt will remain committed to all international treaties. This is in reference specifically to its 1979 peace treaty with Israel. Protestors celebrated in Tahrir Square for the following day, and then began to leave with the aid of the military. Protestors did not leave Tahrir square empty for long. Thousands returned protesting the police. Police, ambulance drivers and other workers held separate demonstrations. The military leadership issued "Communiqué No 5", calling for national solidarity and criticizing strike action, and urging workers to play their role in reviving the economy (Al-Jazeera English).

This swift transition in Egypt prompted uncertainty for relations between Israel and Egypt. Israel was unsure if the status quo would remain the same, and struggled to establish communication with the new military led government. The Israeli government released messages of support for the protestors, and was wary of increasing influence by the Muslim Brotherhood. Because of this change in influence, the Israeli government did not want the status quo to change with Egypt, because it would ultimately lead to conflict. With this region being so unstable, any change could have major repercussions (Sharnoff).

Part III: Regime Change

The first regime change in Egypt came with the resignation of Mubarak and the taking of power by the Supreme Council of Armed Forces. After taking power, SCAF dissolved the parliament and suspended the constitution. Following this, SCAF declared it will rule for six months or until general elections were held, whichever came first. Shortly after, the Muslim Brotherhood announced it was recreating a political party, but was not seeking a candidate for the presidency. Protests continued, however in smaller numbers, protestors pledged to keep protesting until all their demands were met. On February 25, 2011, the military violently dispersed a planned sit-in in Tahrir Square calling for the removal of Ahmed Shafik as prime minister. Shafik resigned after being humiliated for being a member of the old regime by writer Alaa Al Aswany on Egyptian television. SCAF appointed former transportation minister Essam Sharaf as prime minister, on the reported recommendation of opposition activists during talks earlier that week (Irshad).

Large protests continued to occur periodically protesting military trials of protestors, to stop SCAF from holding on to power indefinitely, and demanded trials of members of the Mubarak regime. Throughout the protests, the military was actively trying to quell the uprising, resulting in many arrests. Throughout March, SCAF, along with the interim government, passed resolutions to change the constitution and create an election process. Egyptian voters, through referendum, decided on a process of elections. However, shortly after, SCAF unilaterally issued a constitutional declaration establishing new rules for the formation of the Constituent Assembly with a privileged role for SCAF itself, rendering the verdict of the referendum irrelevant. This lead to further protests in Tahrir Square, with protestors demanding the dissolution of the SCAF regime (Irshad).

Protests continued for the following months, due to the ineffectiveness of the SCAF government. In June 2011, the Muslim Brotherhood's Freedom and Justice Party, headed by Mohammed Morsi, achieved legal status. Because of this, Islamists organized and began demonstrating. On July 19th, tens of thousands packed Tahrir Square, after the first call by Islamist leaders for nationwide demonstrations since Mubarak was overthrown in February. Many protesters, mostly Muslim Brotherhood supporters, called for an Islamic state and Islamic law. In the earlier protests in Tahrir Square, liberal groups called for constitutional guarantees protecting religious freedom and personal rights, whereas Islamists demanded speedy elections and recognition of Islam in the new Egyptian system. Egypt's citizens continued to be dissatisfied by military rule and demanded change (Irshad).

By mid-2012, there were Egyptian parliamentary elections, and the Muslim Brotherhood's Freedom and Justice Party and the conservative Salafist Al-Nour Party won over 70 percent of seats in the People's Assembly. This seemed contrary to the liberal outcries during the beginning of the revolution. However, the Islamists had the experience and organization to control parliament that the liberal and leftist parties could not match. The Supreme Presidential Electoral Commission was created to ensure equity in the upcoming election. Following their creation, the Commission disqualified ten controversial candidates, including the Muslim Brotherhood's first candidate. The Brotherhood was intent on obtaining the presidency, despite previous declarations (Irshad).

In May, the first presidential elections were held since Mubarak stepped down from power. Egyptian citizens chose between thirteen candidates in the first round of presidential elections. Mohammed Morsi of the Muslim Brotherhood received 5,764,952 votes, 24.8 percent and previous Prime Minister Ahmed Shafik received 5,505,327 votes, 23.7 percent,

to advance to a runoff election. Egyptians chose between Morsi and Shafik in the second round run-off election. This dissatisfied liberal voters, because there only choices were an Islamist or a member of the Mubarak regime. Just as polls closed in presidential runoff voting, SCAF issued an interim constitutional decree that granted itself broad powers over the new government's legislation, the national budget, and military affairs, without any oversight of its own activities. This was seen as a soft coup, and a way for SCAF to step in to facilitate more regime change in the future (Irshad).

By June 2012, Egypt had elected a new president, Mohamed Morsi, of the Muslim Brotherhood. Morsi was the first democratically elected leader in Egypt's history. After becoming president, Morsi began to enact new laws and policies. A state of emergency law was enacted after the 1967 Arab-Israeli war, and was not lifted until two weeks after the 2012 elections. This marked a major turning point in Egyptian politics. Many liberals believed that Morsi would enact strict religious laws, and those in the Muslim Brotherhood put their full support behind Morsi (BBC News).

Morsi began his regime with several surprise decisions. The first being a decree to reinstate the dissolved People's Assembly, ordering that it carry out its function until another assembly was elected two months after the institution of a new constitution which was yet to be drawn up. This was the first decision, of many, seen as Morsi's attempt to usurp SCAF authority in the new Egyptian government. However, this first decision did not last, because the Supreme Court ruled to suspend this Assembly once again. Following this, Morsi ordered the release of 572 prisoners detained by the military during the SCAF-led transitional period after the January 2011 revolution. In August 2012, Morsi appointed a prime minister,

Hisham Qandil, the Islamist-leaning minister of irrigation and water resources (El Sharnoubi).

In August, Morsi continued to make decrees and resolutions that were impactful and surprising. For example, after an attack by militants in the Sinai, Morsi fired Mubarak-appointed intelligence chief Mourad Mouwafi, the governor of North Sinai, and various interior ministry officials. This action further showed the Brotherhood's willingness to eliminate any Mubarak supporters in the new government. Following this move, Morsi issued a decree removing SCAF head and defense minister Mohamed Hussein Tantawi, and army chief of staff Sami Anan, the second most important figure within the military council. Military Intelligence head Abdel-Fattah El-Sisi was appointed defense minister. The same decree reversed the SCAF declaration in June and amended the March 2012 constitutional declaration, thereby returning full executive and legislative power to the president and fundamentally weakening SCAF (El Sharnoubi).

Following this substantial change, Morsi began building his new government, and attempted to appease as many groups as possible. This entailed hiring aides and advisors who were Christians, liberals, Salafists and many members of the Muslim Brotherhood. In September, Morsi spoke at the UN general assembly, giving a glimpse into his foreign policy changes. Morsi stated Egypt's position against the Syrian regime, highlighting the new "Islamic Quartet" initiative by Egypt, Turkey, Saudi Arabia and Iran to find a solution for the Syrian crisis. He also discussed his position on Israel, criticizing Israel for its settlements and hinted at the danger of Israel's undeclared nuclear arsenal in his speech. On his return to Egypt, Morsi declared there was no need to change the treaty created during the Camp David Accords of 1978. In October, Egypt sent a new envoy to Israel delivering a letter to

President Shimon Peres. The opposition initially criticized the sending of the letter, however, the Morsi regime claimed it was conventional diplomatic protocol. This gesture signaled a continuation of Egypt's friendly relations with Israel under Morsi, a relationship Mubarak was repeatedly attacked for maintaining. In November, Morsi was praised by the US for his role in brokering a ceasefire between Hamas and the Israeli government after over a week of Israeli airstrikes and Palestinian rocket fire from the Gaza Strip that left over 160 dead (Jadaliyya).

Morsi continued to make bold foreign and domestic policy decisions that appeased the majority while being seen as going against his Islamist ideology. However, his decisions became increasing antagonistic and controversial. He began to take control of the government in many ways that seemed dictatorial. The opposition, many judges and prosecutors, and large sections of the Egyptian public were beginning to recognize a pattern that they had seen under Mubarak. This pattern began with Morsi issuing a constitutional declaration, which put him beyond the bounds of judicial supervision. This declaration protected the assembly creating the new constitution from dissolution. The weeks that followed saw nationwide protests and several massive demonstrations in Tahrir Square, and at the presidential palace in Cairo. There were clashes between the president's supporters and protesters, with hundreds of injuries and several deaths (Jadaliyya).

In December, the new Constitution was pushed through, although with a large amount of opposition and criticism. Morsi called for a constitutional referendum, binding the Constituent Assembly to the deadline created in March 2011. Morsi had promised to seek a balanced Constituent Assembly in his presidential campaign, a fact that antagonized the opposition further when he called for the referendum and described the new constitution as

"revolutionary." The opposition continued to defy Morsi and stated that the referendum be postponed. Morsi ignored the opposition, and made a new declaration lifting his immunity from judicial oversight but kept the Brotherhood-dominated Constituent Assembly and Shura Council immune from dissolution. The declaration also safeguarded the previous declaration that protected all constitutional declarations by the president from any challenges by court rulings in the future. By December 26th, Morsi signed an executive order enacting the new constitution. This was shortly after the Supreme Electoral Commission announced the draft constitution had been endorsed by 63.8 percent of voters (El Sharnoubi).

After the new constitution was enacted, Morsi continued to change the government more. Morsi appointed ten new ministers, with eight members of the Muslim Brotherhood. This went against public calls for a less partisan government. January 2013 saw more protests against the Muslim Brotherhood dominated government. In response, Morsi declared a state of emergency in three cities, imposing a nighttime curfew that was later defied by residents with no resistance from police or the army, who were deployed to secure the cities following the violence. Violence continued to increase throughout Egypt, and Morsi struggled to contain the unrest (El Sharnoubi).

Morsi's government began to falter in February 2013, and lost key Islamist and Salafist allies. Morsi held a national dialogue session to discuss upcoming parliamentary elections. Mainly Islamist groups attended the session while the opposition National Salvation Front boycotted the meeting, holding to its demands of dismissing the current government and calling for the postponing of the elections. Morsi, without the support of his Islamist allies, announced parliamentary elections in April, but the Egyptian Administrative

Court overturned Morsi's decree. Following this, Morsi stated parliamentary elections would be held in October (Jadaliyya).

Anti-Brotherhood sentiment was on the rise across Egypt. There were numerous attacks on Muslim Brotherhood offices and clashes between supporters and opponents of the president.   In June, an anti-Morsi signature campaign called Tamarod (Rebel) launched in May gathered significant momentum on the Egyptian streets. The group founded by the opposition attempted to force Morsi out of office by collecting 15 million petition signatures. Tamarod announced plans for a mass demonstration and sit-in at the presidential palace on the one-year anniversary of Morsi in office. However, Morsi continued to appoint more Muslim Brotherhood members to the government, and continued making decisions that upset the opposition and non-Brotherhood Islamists. With millions expected in Egypt's streets around the anniversary of the president's first term in office, many feared the meeting of rival protest groups would result in violence (El Sharnoubi).

A group of activists and members of the opposition notified the minister of defense that momentum for planned demonstrations calling for early presidential elections was picking up unprecedented support. Egyptian intelligence estimated that no fewer than six million demonstrators would be at the demonstration. There was growing concern over potential confrontations with Islamists. The opposition met with leaders of the Salafist Nour Party and shared concerns over extended political turmoil should the Muslim Brotherhood and President Mohamed Morsi's decline to yield the opposition's demands. However, Morsi continued to defy all who pled with him for change, and continued to antagonize all those who surrounded him (Jadaliyya).

Morsi's final moments in power began with millions taking to the streets calling for his removal and the formation of a new government.   The Muslim Brotherhood insisted that it was not bowing to the demands of the street and declared the democratic right of the elected president to continue his term in office. The minister of defense consulted with political advisors and issued a statement from the central command of the army that presented a 48-hour ultimatum to the president to bow to the demands of the opposition. Massive numbers of demonstrators took to the streets to celebrate. However, the president and the Muslim Brotherhood declined to submit to the opposition's demands. On July 3rd, Defense Minister Abdel-Fattah El-Sisi addressed Egypt and announced a substantial change for Egypt's political future proposed by the opposition, which included the ousting of Morsi and presidential elections. The proposed changes included the temporary suspension of the current constitution, allowing the head of Egypt's High Constitutional Court to govern until a new president was elected by early presidential polls, putting in place checks to appease the opposition, and the removal of Morsi from office. This removal was clearly a coup d'état by the leader of SCAF that Morsi put in charge of the armed forces (El Sharnoubi).

The army ousted Morsi on July 3, 2013, ushering in yet another regime change for Egypt. The new leader of the interim government was Adly Mansour, who was the president of the Supreme Constitutional Court of Egypt. General Abdel Fattah al-Sisi facilitated the regime change and led the ousting of Morsi. This was followed by a swift crackdown on Islamists, leading to arrests of Muslim Brotherhood leaders, Morsi supporters, and shutting down of Islamist TV stations. In Sisi's speech announcing the change in government he stated, "The armed forces couldn't plug its ears or close its eyes as the movement and demands of the masses calling for them to play a national role, not a political role as the

armed forces themselves will be the first to proclaim that they will stay away from politics"

(PBS). Morsi rejected Sisi's claim that the army did not want to be involved in politics, and

declared this an unlawful military coup. This sudden change worried the Egyptian populace,

because it seemed like the government was backsliding into what it was before the 2011

revolution (Kirkpatrick, Hubbard, and Aljazeera America).

  The swift regime change continued the turmoil in Egypt, mainly due to the changes

facilitated by the interim government. On July 4th, the new leader of the country, Adly

Mansour, was sworn in to office. Mansour was a little-known judge who stated he looked

forward to parliamentary and presidential elections that will express the "true will of the

people." Meanwhile, the government restricted Morsi from speaking and arrested hundreds

of Brotherhood members. On July 5th, Mansour dissolved the upper house of parliament in

which Islamist parties had won a solid majority at the polls. This action led to violent clashes

in Cairo and Alexandria resulting in several dead. The antagonists in these clashes were pro-

and anti- Morsi groups dissatisfied with the changes in government. The violence continued

through July 8th, culminating in the army opening fire on Morsi supporters in Cairo, killing

over 50. A military spokesman, contradicting dozens of witnesses who say the attack had

been unprovoked, said the violence had started when Brotherhood members attacked the

officers' club of the Republican Guard (Hubbard and Fahim).

  With violence and turmoil increasing day by day, the new government sought to have

quick elections to bring some semblance of stability back to the country. Interim

president Mansour presented a timeline to amend the constitution and elect a new president

and parliament by mid-February. The Muslim Brotherhood continued to speak out against

this, demanding that Morsi be reinstated. The interim government reached out to other Arab

countries and publically recognized officials to bring legitimacy to the election process. However, due to its swift composition, the transition plan was criticized for being authoritarian and echoing the policies of Mubarak. Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates pledged $8 billion in aid to Egypt to support the new transitional government and undermine Islamist groups vying for power in Egypt. This ended the fuel and food shortages that were common under the Morsi regime (PBS and Kirkpatrick).

The new government made some surprisingly quick changes that led many to believe there was a campaign to undermine Morsi even before he was ousted. The sudden end to energy shortages and the swift reemergence of the police caused many to believe that these shortages were devices created to weaken the Morsi regime and facilitate his removal. The new government continued to spread information that suggested the Muslim Brotherhood had a campaign to incite violence and destabilize the country both before and after the removal of Morsi (Hubbard).

Egypt's new interim government swore in a new cabinet on July 16, 2013. Liberal and leftist politicians dominated the cabinet, completely leaving out Islamist and Muslim Brotherhood supporters from the cabinet. The cabinet was more diverse than the one formed under Morsi, including three women and three Coptic Christians. There were conflicting statements on whether or not the Islamists were intentionally not included. The government maintained that it offered them positions, but the Brotherhood stated that the government was illegitimate and the Islamists were being purposefully repressed (Fahim).

Late July 2013 saw many more protests and clashes between Morsi supporters and opposition. Millions of citizens poured into Egyptian streets after Sisi called on protesters to

give him a mandate to stop "potential terrorism" by Morsi supporters. An independent

journalist, Ashraf Khalil, commented on Sisi's statements saying,

> The animosity against the Brotherhood is so intense that there really does seem to be
> a desire to just wipe them off the political playing field. And I've had conversations
> with people where their solution is, in Arabic translates to, 'Just round them all up.'
> … How do we function as a country when we've rounded up 15 percent of the
> dissidents? (PBS)

There is clearly a disconnect between what Sisi was claiming, and what was actually

occurring; however, it is difficult to determine the true motives of the interim government.

The government continued to undermine Morsi by placing him under investigation for

several allegations, including murder and conspiring with members of the Palestinian group

Hamas to escape prison during the revolution in 2011 (Worth and Fahim).

Protests continued throughout July, culminating in a massive protest by Morsi

supporters in front of the Rabaa Mosque in Cairo. Egyptian military and police had

threatened to break up the protests, despite a series of high-level meetings from the U.S. and

Europe asking the military to hold off. Sisi had promised a humane dispersal. On August

14th, the security forces moved in on the protestors, killing at least 600 people and wounding

thousands more. The attack, aided by snipers, lasted for more than 12 hours. Following the

violence, Mansour announced a return to martial law that existed under Mubarak, and

imposed a curfew, worrying foreign actors of the return to the authoritarian government of

Mubarak. The Vice President, Mohamed ElBaradei resigned in protest of this new policy, in

an attempt to bring to light Sisi's abuses. The United States canceled longstanding joint

military exercises with the Egyptian Army set for September in an effort to condemn the

actions of the government. President Obama expressed outrage at the disturbing scenes

occurring in Egypt, while taking pains to preserve the American relationship with the

Egyptian armed forces, which are supported by the $1.5 billion a year in military and economic aid (Fahim and Sheikh).

Despite foreign protests, government sponsored violence continued against the Muslim Brotherhood. As August progressed, the country descended into anarchy with over a thousand dying in the streets. Interim Egyptian Prime Minister Hazem el-Beblawi proposed the legal dissolution of the Muslim Brotherhood, a move that could force the group back underground and usher in mass arrests of its members countrywide in an attempt to curb the rampant violence. Following this, The Egyptian police arrested Mohamed Badie, the spiritual leader of the Muslim Brotherhood, a line the police had never crossed during Mubarak's own crackdowns on the group, signaling that the government was willing to go as far as it could to eliminate the threat of the Brotherhood, specifically targeting religious officials. A Brotherhood official commented on this stating, "We came close to annihilation once under Nasser, but this is worse" (Kirkpatrick and Sheikh). This arrest signaled that most of the Brotherhood's leadership was in the custody of the government, effectively crippling the group (Kirkpatrick and Sheikh).

With the Muslim Brotherhood growing weaker by the day in Egypt, several other judicial moves occurred in Egypt. On August 22nd, Mubarak was released from prison, after a court ruled he could no longer be incarcerated. He remained under house arrest, and faced charges of complicity in the killing of more than 850 protesters killed during the 2011 revolution. Morsi and 14 other members of the Muslim Brotherhood were charged for "committing acts of violence and inciting killing and thuggery" (PBS). However, Islamists remain active and continued their course of violence throughout the country (Kirkpatrick and Nordland).

Violence continued among active, although illegal, Islamist organizations throughout the country. Egypt's Interior Minister and overseer of the police, Mohamed Ibrahim, survived a suicide car bomb that exploded near his motorcade. The attack was seen as retaliation for the aggressive government crackdown in recent weeks that has left more than 1,000 Brotherhood supporters dead. Mujahedeen's Shura Council of Ansar Bayt al-Maqdis, a militant Islamist group claimed responsibility stating, "God allowed us to break the security system of the Minister of Interior … through a suicide operation committed by one of Egypt's lions that made the Interior butcher see death with his eyes, and what is to come will be worse" (Saleh).

By September, Sisi had gained a large amount of support from foreign and domestic influences. Sisi claimed that he did not want to run, and the country did not need a general as president. However, his supporters suggested he did not have a choice in running, due to his influence over the ousting of Morsi. Khaled Al Adawi, founder of Sisi's campaign, stated, "The decision is not Sisi's or the government's, it is the Egyptian people's decision. Presidency in Egypt is a commission, not an honorary position, so if Sisi doesn't take the job when asked by the people, he will be putting himself in confrontation with the Egyptian people" (Bradley). Sisi was seen as a clear frontrunner in any election, and was perceived to have the support of Egyptian citizens (Bradley).

Egypt continued to be unstable throughout September. The president's office declared that the security situation in the country warranted a two-month extension of the state of emergency, which granted security forces extra powers. On September 23rd, an Egyptian court banned the Muslim Brotherhood, forcing them underground. All of the group's assets were seized. The interim government further showed that it did not intend to

fulfill its promises of a new, inclusive democratic process. The Brotherhood commented on these actions saying, "We are part and parcel of the Egyptian society, and a corrupt and illegitimate judicial decision cannot change that" (Kirkpatrick). The Brotherhood clearly wanted to remain in existence and planned to continue doing so in the manner it did for the 85 years it operated in secrecy (Kirkpatrick).

October saw the continuance of violence and disapproval of the interim government by foreign powers, specifically the United States. On November 4th, Morsi went on trial, facing charges of inciting the murder of protesters, but he rejected the court's authority and proclaimed himself to be the country's legitimate ruler. The trial was Morsi's first public appearance since his removal from office on July 3rd and, in a worrying event for Egypt, the second criminal trial of a former head of state in less than three years, signifying the instability of the country (Sheikh and Kirkpatrick). Violence and protests continued throughout the next month. On December 24th, a bomb was detonated at police headquarters in Cairo. It was Egypt's deadliest bombing since militants began a campaign of assassinations and other attacks against security forces when Morsi was ousted. This attack signified doubts with the government on their security ability. This was especially worrisome for citizens planning on voting in an upcoming referendum on a draft constitution (Kareem and Sheikh).

On January 18th, 2014, Egypt's citizens voted on a referendum for a new constitution. The government announced that the charter passed with 98.1 percent of the vote. This raised concerns from foreign observers over the legitimacy of the elections. United States Secretary of State Kerry voiced his concerns stating, "The work that began in Tahrir Square must not end there" (Kirkpatrick). This is referring to the strides for change during the 2011

revolution, and the need for those to be present in the new government. The new charter was not radically different from the Constitution drafted by an Islamist-led assembly and approved by a margin of almost two to one slightly more than a year before (Kirkpatrick).

In March, the government made more moves to eliminate Islamist opposition. An Egyptian criminal court sentenced 529 people to death after a single session of a mass trial, convicting them of murder for the killing of a police officer in the city of Minya during riots the previous summer after the ousting of Morsi. Another court in Cairo continued the trial of several journalists for Al Jazeera who were charged with broadcasting false reports of unrest in Egypt as part of an Islamist conspiracy to bring down the new government. In May, Mubarak and his sons were convicted of embezzlement of millions of dollars of public money for their personal use in private homes and palaces. Mubarak was sentenced to three years in prison and his sons for four years. These legal actions were used to eliminate opposition before democratic elections in June (Kirkpatrick).

In June 2014, there was a pro forma election for a new president of Egypt. General Abdel-Fattah el-Sisi won the election with 97 percent of the vote. The election had a turnout of 47 percent of eligible voters. This small turnout indicated that the citizens of Egypt did not fully support Sisi. Sisi had a monumental task ahead of him of overcoming the economic dysfunction and political polarization that plagued Egypt's three-year experiment with democracy. Foreign observers claimed that the election fell short of international standards, and the election was not truly equitable or democratic (Kirkpatrick).

Following the election, the government began to reshape and reestablish itself as a legitimate governing body. The government issued a law regulating Egypt's upcoming parliamentary elections. The law stated that the parliament would be comprised of 567 seats,

of which the President will elect 27. The remaining 540 will be distributed between 420 members, to be elected individually, and 120 seats allocated to party lists. Prime Minister Ibrahim Mehleb formed a new cabinet; the first one under Sisi's rule. In the new government, the former ministry of information was dissolved, the ministry of urban development was established and the ministry of investment was split from the ministry of trade and industry (Daily News Egypt).

Throughout the rest of 2014, the government continued to make reforms and attempt to curb the violence that continued throughout Egypt. Sisi instituted new policies to eliminate Islamist opposition, and attempted to allow the country to recover from the anarchy of the previous year. Islamist groups continued to attack Egyptians in the Sinai and near the Libyan border. New laws were put in place to protect military, vital, and public facilities from attacks. The government also attempted to limit Hamas's use of tunnels along the border with Gaza. By the end of the year, the government passed a law allowing them to dissolve terrorist entities, in an attempt to stop any further terrorist activity that occurs in the country. One major terrorist entity was Palestinian group Hamas (Daily News Egypt).

In May 2015, ousted President Morsi was sentenced to death over a 2011 mass breakout of Muslim Brotherhood prisoners, along with more than 100 others. He was sentenced to 20 years in prison in April over arrest and torture of protesters during his 2012-2013 time in office. The Muslim Brotherhood claimed the charges were groundless. However, in June the courts upheld to sentence. These were the final moments of the Muslim Brotherhood's time in power in Egypt. This signified an end to the Islamist organization operating in the open and confirmed the deliberate dissolution of Islamist groups in Egypt (Kirkpatrick).

Part IV: Foreign Policy

With Mubarak removed, the status of relations between Egypt and Israel were

uncertain to say the least. Egypt and Israel began their relationship with hostility in the 1948

Arab-Israeli war. This was followed by a 31-year state of war between the two countries

until the Camp David Accords of 1978 after which the Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty was

signed in 1979. The peace treaty has lasted since the Camp David Accords, and for many

years, Egypt has been a strong strategic partner. The peace has not always been strong, but

has lasted for over 30 years. Overall, relations between the two countries were consistent up

until the final months of Mubarak's regime. The leading Egyptian official with diplomatic

ties to Israel, the head of Egyptian intelligence, was ousted with Mubarak; therefore the first

challenge to Israel with regime change was establishing one of the very few diplomatic

channels of communication with Egypt (Jewish Virtual Library).

With the ousting of Mubarak, a new era arrived for Egyptian and Israeli diplomacy.

When Israel began to see the political unrest in Egypt and surrounding countries, the Israeli

government grew wary. Israeli policy officials stated that they were reminded of Tehran in

1979, and were concerned about Israel's security. Daniel Byman, professor at Georgetown

University, discusses Israel's challenges at this time by stating,

> The new regimes and the chaotic regional situation pose security challenges to the
> Jewish state. These challenges, and the Israeli reactions to them, are likely to worsen
> the crisis in Gaza and make the prospects for peace between the Israelis and
> Palestinians even more remote (Byman, 123).

Israel's main concern was that the revolution did not turn violent. If the revolution did turn

violent, there was a very good chance that it would spill over Egypt's borders and otherwise

have negative consequences for Israel (Byman, 123-124).

Mubarak had been a consistent partner for Israel. While he was not a pioneer for peace, like President Anwar Sadat, he consistently maintained the peace treaty and shared the strategic goals of Israel. One Israel analyst, Aluf Benn, described Mubarak's relationship with Israel, "Israel has replaced eight prime ministers, fought several wars, and engaged in peace talks with multiple partners, and Mubarak was always there" (Byman, 124). Therefore, with the ousting of Mubarak, the status quo between Israel and Egypt was disrupted. Israel was concerned about who would take power next, and what would happen with the long-standing peace treaty (Byman 124-127).

Not all officials saw the new regime change as negative. Israeli President Shimon Peres, stated, "Poverty and oppression in the region have fed resentment against Israel and the better our neighbors will have it, we shall have better neighbors" (Berti, 134). Above all else, Israel was fearful of Islamists, particularly the Muslim Brotherhood, taking power. The reason for this being that the Muslim Brotherhood had consistently opposed peace with Israel and would be the first to disrupt it. Any Islamist governments in the region were seen as negative in the view of Israel, because typically Islamists pursued the destruction of Israel and peace between Israel and any country in the region (Byman, 124-127).

SCAF's foreign policy needs to be analyzed. On September 9th, 2011, several thousand protestors attacked an Israeli embassy in Cairo. In response to this attack, the ruling military council decided to use the country's emergency law to ensure safety. During this crisis, the United States intervened recommending that Egypt honor its obligations to protect foreign diplomats in the country. After this attack, Israel continued to work with the SCAF government, but relations were steadily becoming tenser, leading up to the 2012 elections (Birnbaum and Greenberg).

After this attack, there were increased tensions between the temporary SCAF government, Egyptian protestors, and Israel (BBC News). Egyptian soldiers getting killed during a raid by Israelis on the Egypt-Israel border also exacerbated these increased tensions. After SCAF ousted Mubarak and took power, Israel promptly attempted to obtain assurances by the new interim government that the peace treaty would not be altered. Several days after the resignation of Mubarak, Israel Defense Minister Ehud Barak contacted Field Marshal Tantawi, the chief of SCAF, and obtained reassurances that the treaty would be upheld. Following this communication, SCAF decided to use the country's emergency law to ensure safety (Berti, 133).

The threat of Islamists taking power around the region was a primary concern for Israel during the Arab Spring. In the past, particularly with Iran, the rise of Islamists to power has caused many issues with Israel. According to Efraim Inbar, director of the Begin-Sadat Center for Strategic Studies, "Islamist political forces have the best chance of gaining power" (Inbar, 62). The rise of Islamist governments in the region meant there would be increased strains on the peace process with Israel. Also, the influence of the United States, one of Israel's biggest allies and advocates, declined rapidly as the Arab Spring continued. Inbar also comments that, "Israel's peace treaties with Egypt and Jordan are under great strain as anti-Israeli domestic forces in the respective countries, particularly the Islamists, become more influential and vocal" (Inbar, 63). The rising power of Islamists posed a great threat to Israel in the region, and was pivotal in the future of Egypt-Israel relations (Inbar, 61-64).

Next, During Morsi's tumultuous time in office, his foreign policy had profound effect on relations with Israel. In the 2012 elections, the Muslim Brotherhood and Salafists

won two thirds of the seats in parliament. This seemed to be one of the worst outcomes for an election in the eyes of Israeli politicians and analysts. However, Israel's government congratulated the new democratically elected government. Subsequently, Israel was unable to open a clear channel of communication with the Islamists (Berti, 132-134).

After some time, the Muslim Brotherhood affirmed the peace treaty. The leadership discussed amending the treaty, but overall decided to uphold it, a decision that surprised many Israeli officials. Morsi's regime also helped slow down violence between Hamas and Israel. Morsi did not prevent Israel from launching Operation Pillar of Defense, in which they attacked much of Hamas' leadership and infrastructure in Gaza. Morsi also ordered the army to crackdown on smuggling in the Sinai, and worked to close off tunnels to Gaza and fight off terrorists groups, such as Al-Qaeda and Hamas.   Morsi's government was also outspoken as being anti-Iran, which allowed for increasing cooperation between the Egyptian government and Israel (Pfeffer).

The Morsi regime's opposition to Hamas is interesting to note. Hamas is seen as the Palestinian counterpart to Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood. Most in the region assumed the Islamist regime would support Hamas and join in opposition to Israel. The opposition to Iran was not as much of a surprise due to the Brotherhood's anti-Shia sentiments. However, the adversarial treatment of Iran highlighted an important sectarian issue. These foreign policy decisions ultimately had a detrimental effect on the Morsi regime (Pfeffer).

The Morsi regime seemed to domestically participate in anti-Israel and anti-US rhetoric, but their foreign policy reflected something different. When Morsi took power, he did not want to radically change foreign policy, and wanted to maintain strong ties to Israel, the US, and other partners in the region.   Morsi tried to appease public opinion by visiting

Iran, and supporting many Muslim Brotherhood ideals. However, he endeavored to maintain

the status quo diplomatically with many countries, especially Israel. Any changes to Morsi's

foreign policy were seen mainly for appearances of his supporters, but overall Egyptian

foreign policies remained the same. Morsi wanted the status quo to remain the same,

because any change would have catastrophic consequences. The peace with Israel allowed

Egypt to maintain some control over the region (Ezzat).

After the military coup that removed Morsi from office, relations with Israel changed

once again for Egypt. While Morsi was in office, Israel had been able to get the upper hand

over Hamas, and had been able to get more support for the occupation of Gaza. The military

was in contact with Israel throughout Morsi's regime, and now that they are in power, the

situation was unlikely to change drastically. None of Egypt's leaders wanted to instigate

hostility between them and Israel. This is due to the political instability in Egypt, and

hostility with Israel would only exacerbate the situation. Public opinion was also against

Hamas at this time, which lead to less opposition for peace with Israel. Islamists are still in

support of Hamas, but once the Morsi regime was ousted, Islamists have very little political

clout (Scham).

The Israel-Palestinian peace process is an integral part of relations between Israel and

Egypt. The peace process has been ongoing throughout the Arab Spring, and has been

affected by political change in neighboring countries. Many believed that peace talks

between the Palestinians and Israel would change with the ousting of Morsi, but many did

not know how that change would take place. With violence and pressure from Hamas

subsiding, many believed that the peace process might continue. According to Paul Scham, a

scholar at the Middle East Institute, "Morsi's misfortunes could provide the impetus for

Palestinian reconciliation for the purpose of making peace. But for this to happen, Israel and the United States must be willing to play along and not simply rejoice in Hamas's isolation" (Scham). This statement indicates that the important players in the peace process needed to take advantage of the current situation and attempt to pursue peace in the region. This opportunity was due largely to Morsi's policies and the way he left office (Scham).

In early 2015, Islamic State in Iraq and Greater Syria group (ISIS) became very active, and presented many issues for the surrounding Arab countries. In June, ISIS-affiliated militants launched a massive assault on military positions in north Sinai, attempting to seize control of a small chunk of territory in Egypt. At least 17 Egyptian soldiers died, although some reports placed the death toll much higher. ISIS mainly attacked targets in the Sinai in an attempt to seize control of territory strategically located near Israel. The violence was encouraged by a crackdown on Islamists in Egypt, and ISIS has stated their support for Morsi and the Muslim Brotherhood (Malsin).

In June 2015, Egypt opened the border between Gaza and Egypt, along with rumors that Hamas had quietly been carrying out negotiations with Israel, underscoring the extent to which Hamas has been operating independently from Palestinian Authority in governing territory. Hamas' separate actions raised concerns that it was undermining Palestinian unity, considered necessary by many to gaining statehood. Egypt was heavily involved with combatting Hamas and aided in the process of statehood talks between Israel and the Palestinian Authority. The government continued to try to eliminate terrorism through the next months. However, the United States warned it would not be effective in eliminating terrorism if it cannot respect the civil rights of its own citizens (NYTimes).

In September 2015, Israel, as part of effort to strengthen relations with Egypt's military-backed government, reopened its embassy in Cairo. This reopening came four years to the day after the prior embassy was stormed during the 2011 uprising. In October, smugglers in Palestinian city of Rafah saw the end to their illegal trade after Egyptian forces flooded tunnels in border areas along the Sinai. Currently, only 20 of 250 tunnels are operational, diminishing Rafah's economy and raising concerns that floods will cripple significant Palestinian economic resources. This latest effort to destroy tunnels is part of a crackdown by Sisi, who claims smugglers and militants use the tunnels, compromising Egypt's security (Malsin).

Egypt's foreign policy with Israel changed with the ousting of Morsi. While relations were stable with Morsi, there were many concerns about the rise in power of the Muslim Brotherhood. When the army first took power after Morsi was ousted, the status quo seemed unlikely to change. This was due to the fact that most of Israel's contacts with Egypt were routed through the military, and since they were in charge, those contacts would remain. Due to an increase in attacks in the Sinai, most Egyptians disapproved of Hamas, which was seen as the culprit for these attacks. This led to less of a belligerent view of Israel, and a willingness to allow the government to work with Israel. However, due to events in mid-2014 between Israel and Palestine, Egypt quickly condemned Israel and sought to end any conflict that could potentially spill over into its borders. Egypt wanted to support the efforts of the Palestinians and protect the lives of civilians that it saw were being threatened by Israeli military action (Scham).

With continuous support for Palestine, the Sisi administration officials supported the two-state solution establishing a Palestinian state on lands that were occupied in 1967. The

Sisi administration quickly became critical of Israel during the 2014 Israel-Gaza conflict. Egypt criticized this operation as "oppressive policies of mass punishment rejecting 'the irresponsible Israeli escalation' in the occupied Palestinian territory, which comes in the form of 'excessive' and unnecessary use of military force leading to the death of innocent civilians" (Yashar). Egypt called for Israel to adopt self-restraint and to recognize that as an "occupation force", it has a legal and moral duty to protect civilian lives. Egypt became heavily involved in this conflict proposing an initiative for a ceasefire later accepted by Israel, but rejected by Hamas. The Sisi administration urged the world to intervene and stop the crisis when it stated that its ceasefire efforts have been met with "obstinacy and stubbornness" (Yashar).

During the 2014 conflict, Egyptian officials had several meetings with Palestinian and Israeli officials. These were held in Cairo in an effort to mediate and create a ceasefire. Sisi also ordered the Egyptian Armed Forces to transport 500 tons of aid, which included food and medical supplies, to Palestinians in the Gaza Strip. A statement was released by the military saying that Egypt is pursuing its efforts to stop the Israeli aggression on the Gaza Strip under Sisi's supervision. The conflict ended with an Egyptian-brokered ceasefire on August 26th. Egypt's diplomacy of brokering a ceasefire between Israel and Palestine, cutting Hamas down to size, keeping Qatar and Turkey out of the equation and marginalizing the United States role made Egypt the largest beneficiary of the conflict. This was seen as a major foreign policy success for the young Sisi administration, and laid the foundation for more foreign policy decisions to come (Yashar).

Sisi described the 2014 Israel–Gaza conflict as a great chance to end the 66-year-old conflict calling Israel to reach a peace deal with the Palestinians saying "I call on the Israeli

people and the government: now is the time to end the conflict ... so that prosperity prevails, so that we all can have peace and security" (Your Middle East). Sisi further stated that this conflict mainly stems from extremism, specifically referring to Hamas. The situation in Palestinian controlled parts of Israel became an environment conducive to these organizations, and led to violence. The Egyptian government promised that Egypt would guarantee Palestinians would not violate the peace treaty when reached expressing Egypt's willingness to deploy Egyptian observer forces in the West Bank and Gaza Strip (Your Middle East).

Egypt played a crucial role in mediating this conflict, and many agree that the resolution could not have been reached without their aid, and the work of Sisi. However, the Sisi administration supported the Palestinian effort more than the Israeli forces.   They believed that the Israelis were the aggressors. While not wanting to disrupt relations with Israel, Egypt wanted to make sure the Palestinian people were protected and sought the disruption of Hamas. Egypt also wanted to remain the controlling power in the region through the mediation. Qatar and Turkey also tried to be involved in the ceasefire, and if Egypt had failed, would have seized the opportunity to have influence in the region. Egypt lost much of its influence during the previous tumultuous three years, and the Sisi regime is trying to restore Egypt to its former power and influence in the Arab world (Kingsley).

One common theme throughout the Sisi administration's foreign policy has been a condemnation for Hamas and other Islamist militant groups. The Egyptian security establishment sees Hamas as inextricably linked to Egypt's own issues of insecurity and instability. Commenting on this, senior fellow at the Century Foundation, Michael Hanna states, "Egypt's post-Morsi Gaza policy has been transparently ruthless, with the ultimate

aim of producing a politically docile and malleable Hamas in Gaza by exploiting internal

divisions within the organization" (Hanna). The Islamist groups are portrayed as primarily to

blame for the country and the region's instability. While it may seem that Hamas is not as

much of a threat to Egypt as the government claims, the destabilization of Gaza does pose a

threat. The porous border between Gaza and Egypt's Sinai Peninsula has long served as a

conduit for arms and militants. Egypt has had a campaign undermine and weaken Hamas's

power for some time, but it has also been mindful of the limits of that policy due to

Egyptians' broad public sympathy for the Palestinian cause. However, many realize the

inevitability of having to deal with Hamas as they gain more power in the Gaza strip

(Hanna).

One major challenge Sisi faced when dealing with Hamas was to not seem

sympathetic to Israel. In Egypt, the majority of the public does not support Israel, and is

heavily sympathetic to the Palestinian cause. The Sisi regime wants to do what it can to

eliminate Hamas, and realizes this is not possible without the cooperation from the Israelis.

However, if the regime portrays too much cooperation or support for Israel, they will lose the

support of the Egyptian public, and other allies in the region. The Egyptian people will never

support Israel, but the Sisi administration needs to retain the status quo of relations with a

powerful strategic partner that is the only actor that can effectively cripple and ultimately

eliminate Hamas (Hanna).

From 2011 to 2014 the future of Egypt seemed uncertain. While this is still true,

Egypt is experiencing a semblance of stability for the first time in several years. This is

primarily due to the intense authoritarianism Sisi administration. The regime is internally

stable, a crucial aspect that was not part of any previous regime after the ousting of Mubarak.

Eric Trager, a fellow of the Washington Institute, comments on this stability stating, "The various state institutions and civil groups that constitute the regime will likely remain tightly aligned for one basic reason: they view the Muslim Brotherhood as a significant threat to their respective interests and thus see the regime's crackdown on the organization as essential to their own survival" (Trager). The Sisi regime does echo many of the authoritarian and repressive policies seen before the revolution. However, due to the turmoil of the previous years, this is preferred over an inept regime that can descend into chaos at any moment -- but this was the perception by foreign allies, and not necessarily Egyptians (Trager).

Part V: Conclusion

Due to the stability of the regime, Egypt has the perception of becoming stronger.

However, this does not mean there is no dissent. The Muslim Brotherhood and other Islamist

groups speak out openly against Sisi. This does not seem to pose an immediate threat due to

large economic and political support by those in favor, including both regional and global

powers, of the current administration. Although, dissent does continue to arise from

Islamists and non-Islamists alike, which the Sisi regime endeavors to stop. Many policies

and the conduct of the government indicate a return to an Egypt similar to the one under

Nasser. The ruthless and harsh treatment of the Muslim Brotherhood allows the regime to

pursue other interests undeterred. These include foreign policy decisions with Israel and

Palestine, and efforts in combatting the rise of ISIS and the Islamic State (Trager).

Egypt's future is worth monitoring in the coming years. The Sisi administration

remains stable at the moment. If recent history is examined, it is clear that stability can wane

quickly in Egypt. In 2011, protestors sought to eliminate an oppressive military state that did

not support its citizens and was extremely repressive. In the following years, the country was

torn apart by violence and oppression. This culminated in the return of what can be argued

as another military state. While the military is not the ruling power as it was in between

regime changes, the current ruler is a former general who has returned to some of the

oppressive policies of Nasser and Mubarak. Over four years, it can be argued that Egypt has

come full circle. The idealism and calls for change during the early days of revolution have

disappeared out of necessity. Violence, instead of peaceful protest and exchange of ideas,

has become the motivator for change. The regime's prime focus is not to help its citizens,

but rather to remain in power and eliminate any opposition.

The Arab Spring signaled a major disruption to the Arab region, and Egypt was one of the largest victims. Beginning with protests and the ousting of dictator Hosni Mubarak in 2011, several regime changes brought about violence, instability, and anarchy. This culminated in a regime surprisingly similar to the one removed. Egypt has once again risen out of anarchy, but is a shadow of its former influence and power. The Arab world continues to be fraught with violence and extremism, with Israel stuck in the middle. Israel has long relied on the support of Egypt. With regime change came uncertainty in that support. However, Israel was never threatened by Egypt while change occurred, and each regime saw the importance of keeping Israel as a strategic partner. This did not stop anti-Israel rhetoric, but foreign policy remained consistent. The future of the Arab World is uncertain, and change is inevitable. The future of Egypt will be determined by the actions of its government, and the willingness of its citizens to strive for change.

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