



Middle-East New-Media • A Weekly Coverage • Editor: Orit Perlov

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Newsletter - Issue No. 36

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“The LSD Period” – The Call for Jihad in Syria

Sendmonkey

The Wannabe

*"In a scene that's beyond parody, a number of Islamists held a massive conference to support Syria, which in their world means "Let's kill those Shi'a Infidels". **In the first ever display of state-sponsored-Jihad-promotion in Egypt's modern history, a number of Islamists, alongside our great ruler Mohamed Ibn Morsi the first, called upon the Nation's Muslims to support Syria and, if possible, go fight Jihad there, because, after two years of inaction, they suddenly realised that there was a conflict there and on one side there was some non-Sunni Muslims fighting some Sunni Muslims.***



Gasp and horror" [...] "During his speech, Morsi took the opportunity to define Egypt's foreign policy priorities: The Nile, Syria, and stopping the "Jewification" of Jerusalem. Please note the absence of word "Israel" or "Zionism" there. Please also note the nature of Egypt's new enemies: Christian Africans, Non-Sunni Muslims and Arabs. This speech will go

down in history as the speech laying the foundation of the Sunni-Zionist alliance against Iran, and also being the realisation of Israeli PM Netanyahu's wildest fantasy: Egypt and Jihadists versus Iran, Syria and Hezbollah, with Israel not being a part of the equation. As one Israeli opinion writer puts it, Israel should stay out of this and "let them (Arabs) kill themselves quietly". Needless to say, this will never work: The Egyptian army is too lazy to get involved in such a war, and the Salafis are not biting, with the Al-Nour Party issuing a scathing critique against the speech and initiative, calling it a distraction put forth by a fledgling regime so desperate to change the conversation from national issues to



foreign policy. But what the Al-Nour Party didn't say was that this regime is so pathetic that it did this by encouraging its citizens to go fight in foreign lands against another government and people for a sectarian cause without an official declaration of war, training or armed forces support. **In the eyes of the Muslim Brotherhood, this speech was supposed to be Morsi's "Nasser moment", creating a foreign policy conflict that supersedes any internal squabbles, but Morsi is at best a Wannabe Nasser, and this will not work, because the average Egyptian is so overwhelmed with his daily struggle for survival that the notion of Egypt being involved in any conflict outside of the country is simply outrageous"**

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Sima Diab

When Help Isn't Help At All

"Symbolically, when a President stands in a stadium of 16,000 supporters and seemingly takes a strong stand against a dictator who has violated every single law of humanity, it all seems kosher, until you realize that some help, is no help at all. Having worked closely with the refugee community for over a year and a half now I can honestly say people come to Egypt for the small chance that they will live a normal life. It's a chance full of hope for a future for their kids and to wait out the time until they can return home and pick up the pieces of their broken lives. Now those kids run the risk of becoming stateless, their situation more desperate, their status illegal and their lives infinitely more complicated. I have, many times, when asked about the role of the Egyptian government in helping Syrian refugees, and replied: Little support, and that's a good thing, we want to remain hidden because once governments get involved in refugee populations, it's the people that's worse off for it"

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Nader Bakkar

Syria: Game of nations

"There is a hidden message here, as Syria – in addition to Hamas – is one of the international pressure cards that help the Egyptian regime stabilise its rule. The Cairo Stadium speech was an attempt by the Egyptian regime to make use of the 'safe shade area' created by the recent shift in the US position. At the same time, it is maintaining the same level of settlement with Moscow and Tehran. It was fine in the Cairo Stadium to voice Islamist and patriotic sentiments by condemning Hezbollah as a way to vent popular

rage. It is even fine for the Iranians themselves if the Egyptian regime hosts such events with prominent Islamist figures to call for supporting the Syrian people. **This will offset some of the rage before 30 June and reduce Salafist criticism of the government. Still, the reality is that the Egyptian regime can't take a stand against Iran for the same reason of stabilizing its rule, especially given that Tehran is one of its biggest supporters"**

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Post June30: All The Roads Lead To.....?



Sendmonkey

All the roads lead to this

There are only a number of possible scenarios to June 30 outcome. Let's get them out of the way right now: **Scenario 1: The Muslim Brotherhood wins an outright victory, with the military going down to protect the "legitimacy" of the president, which would cause the conservatives to hide immediately, the independents to get depressed, and the revolutionaries to stick it out alone. This is not very likely, since it would cause an irreparable rift between the military and its supporters (the conservatives and independents), and could lead to even more capital flight, economic destruction and deterioration of the state" [...]** "Scenario 2: The Muslim Brotherhood suffers an outright defeat, with all of its members hunted down, and Morsi toppled. Whoever gets to a media outlet first and declare the new revolution's "decree # 1" wins, with the military guiding the transition period" [...] "This is also very unlikely. None of the forces that are calling for that day can actually agree on who will take over, and the military will not have a constitutional or political circus on its hands again. Scenario 3: The Muslim Brotherhood is broken, with their bases (along with some of their leaders) crushed in an outright street war, and with the military stepping in with a curfew and a transition scenario. The entire cabinet would change with a transitional cabinet led by, most likely, Kamal Al-Ganzoury or a similar figure. Morsi, completely weakened, would nominally stay in power until October, when a new parliamentary election would bring in a totally new parliament and prime minister, and then he would step down once the process for early presidential elections began. Personally, **I believe that this is the most likely scenario, weirdly enough; it saves the military from executing another coup, solidifies their complete control of the**

state via Morsi, and it goes well with their plan to keep the process based on elections and not revolutions"

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Mohamed A. Fouad

Salvation Now

*"The true problem is that, conservative thinking, which favours good old-fashioned democracy by virtue of results at the polls, is not sexy enough. It does not provide the fix now. It does not provide salvation now. I agree that it does not. It can, however, project us beyond this very instant to a more sustainable future. **You want to pull a "Tamarod" movement to shake the status quo, more power to you, because this is needed as a pressure movement. Yet you cannot expect to rule the country through a pressure movement. One must have a mandate and unfortunately one must win one. Winning one requires participation in this unsexy world of politics which entails going door to door, canvassing, campaigning and actually showing up to the polls on Election Day. The fact that a ruler is toppled is seriously a non-event no matter how glorious this goal might seem to be. The question of what's next is even more pressing because it requires a serious structural adjustment and change in attitude on how we approach political change and transition" [...]** "If we are gung-ho on changing things through the same attitude, we risk ending up in the same place again and again. Chapters from the books of Algeria and several other crisis-torn African countries are open for the eyes to read and digest the lessons to be had. In the heat of the moment, however, the voice of reason is silenced, and the unsexy conservative voice is lost in the clamour as everyone reaches out for their magic lamp!"*

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H.A. Hellyer

The quandary of June 30

"June 30 could go off more or less without a hitch – isolated pockets of clashes in different places. The clashes last week are not heartening signs in this regard – but it could be that the June 30 protests result in something little more than a somewhat more active version of the Ittihadiya protests from last November and December. If that does happen, and the political status quo remains, however, the presidency and the ruling party needn't

take solace in 'dodging the bullet' – because the status quo, with the economy degrading further and further, is simply not sustainable. On the contrary – **it is a slow train-wreck, and while no-one knows when it might crash, there are few who doubt that with this team at the helm, further discord is inevitable**"

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Day of reckoning: 30 June or later

"As 30 June 2013 draws nearer, it does not feel at all like a repeat of 25 January 2011. Instead, it appears to be a repeat of 28 January 2011, combined with the protests of early December 2012 outside the presidential palace in Ittihadiya. Those were the days when violence was unnecessary, but practically inevitable, and protests were unavoidable, but insufficient to provoke any change directly. Those were days when the forces of revolution went to the streets to demand the former regime step down, and for the new regime that was born from the ashes of the old to fulfil the demands of the revolution. The 30 June protests see a combination of both, with strange bedfellows indeed. **No one knows for certain what will come next, but everyone knows that there is one man who can change everything right now. And unfortunately, everyone is pretty certain that he won't, and Egypt will pay the price**" [...] "The 25 January uprising was inevitable, and it is miraculous it did not turn out to be far more chaotic and destructive. But the uprising could have been averted, or not even been as messy as it was, had Hosni Mubarak been more flexible and forward-thinking. Today, Hosni Mubarak is in jail, and there is now a new leader of Egypt, who was elected a year ago to fulfil the hopes of a revolution" [...] "Some may say this is too much of a heavy burden to put on one man, but that is the job that President Mohammed Morsi campaigned for and won. No-one said it was an easy job to have, but has it he does, and now he must live up to it. If he doesn't, or can't, he can blame only the voters for voting him into office, and himself for running"

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Bassem Sabry

Can June 30 End Well for Egypt?

"One other alternative scenario, in which something viable could come out of all of this, given the currently existential and ultra-confrontational mind-set on both sides. In this scenario, **the protests do end up preferably peaceful, an extended but lively stalemate ensues in which neither side wins or gives up.** This would force an eventual and inevitable national concord agreement that somehow brings back a more mutually

acceptable political process and environment, sufficient agreement on divisive issues and a consensual short- and medium-term road map, setting aside detail for the moment"

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The Big Pharaoh

The Road To #Jun30

What will happen if Morsi was toppled? June 30 came upon me. It is like a big wave in the sea, you either swim along with it or wait until it hits you, turns you upside down and then passes you. However, just for the sake of providing you with an answer, here it is: **the army will temporarily take power and then schedule new presidential elections. How will the Brotherhood react? I don't know, it depends on their structure post June 30 and how weakened they will be** [...] "What will happen if June 30 failed? Depends on how you define failure. To me failure is if the regime was unharmed and thus offered no concessions. If that happened, **the Brotherhood will crush everyone standing their way**. To conclude, **June 30 is coming whether you agree with it or not, whether you like the people who will participate in it or not. The choice is yours. You can swim along with the big wave or stand there till the waves hit you and turns you upside down. In both cases, you can do absolutely nothing to influence the wave**"

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Mai El-Sadany

Morsi's Pre-Tamarod Speech: Threats, Lies, and Manipulation

"In a two hour and forty minute speech of about 3,000 words, rather than focus on initiatives desperately needed in order to repair a divided country, President Mohamed Morsi instead delivered a set of pointed threats and blatant lies that come just days before a protest reflect the rejection of his presidency by over 15 million Egyptian citizens. While the expert Morsi speech observer was unlikely to be phased at Wednesday's unfortunate jamboree of name-calling, shaming, and manipulation, there are a number of takeaways reflecting the larger context at han" [...] ***"One of the broadest***



themes throughout the speech was a clear refusal on Morsi's part to back down from what has quickly turned into a 'throne.' He childishly listed the names of prominent liberals (among them two Christians) who refused to partake in his cabinets, implicitly placing blame for a lack of national reconciliation on the opposition and minorities" [.....] "A second, more implicit theme of the speech was the notion that neither the army nor the police can be counted on to carry out or even necessarily support the continuation of the January 25 Revolution"

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Hany Ghoraba

.... and that's why Egyptians are revolting again!!

*"Egyptians are adamant to go out and change a system that has backstabbed them and sent their country to dark abyss of chaos, backwardness and violence. Most Egyptians with the exception of Islamists are determined to oust Morsi's regime that lost all legitimacy. If they were successful before ousting a much stronger regime (with the help of the army) at much better times economically and socially, then they are likely to succeed in ousting the tyrannical regime of Morsi all the same. **Morsi has only one of two options either stepping down willingly and averting a conflict in the country or getting ousted by the nation. The Egyptian army as they always vowed will side with the people as they vowed repeatedly throughout the past year, hence Morsi has not alternative but to abide to the will of the people.** Egypt throughout its over 7000 years endured a lot of hardships caused by rulers of different types. Modern day Egyptians are not willing to go through more And that's why Egyptians are revolting again!"*

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On a Personal Note: Dear Mr. President/ Muslim Brotherhood



Bassem Sabry

On frustration, anger, hope and 30 June

I have participated in most major protests since 2011, as a citizen before being a writer, always feeling determined, focused, emotionally involved. But somehow I find myself feeling a strange blend of feelings this time around. One moment I am fully dissociated from everything, then I am fully

invested in the conversation and what is happening, another I am inspired, and another I am filled with trepidation and anxiety. Almost consistently though, there is a sense of dread. It is just utterly frustrating, disheartening and troubling to see where we are more than two years after a revolution that was meant to end injustice, political exclusion, repression and unify the country. Instead, much of that injustice, exclusion and repression still exists, albeit often in different forms. What is worse, we are more disunited and polarised than ever, more exclusionary, and the voices of reconciliation and bridge-building are more and more unpopular" [.....] **"I don't know what will happen on 30 June. Maybe nothing much in the end, maybe much. Egypt needs a profound breakthrough, whether better leadership through new presidential elections as Rebel calls for, or a national political consensus that emerges in the aftermath of whatever happens. I just hope it does not come at too heavy a price"**

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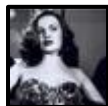


Sarah Carr

More Morsy

"I have problems with a fairly elected leader being ousted by the army (even where this is on the back of protests and even where the leader is a jumped-up little buffoon from a sinister gang tearing the country apart with its obdurateness) because it means the end of Egypt's brief experiment in democracy. The army is already swooping as the protests grow and all we hear from the MB is the steady sound of a grave being dug. There are several possible outcomes to this mess. **Even if Morsy is not sacrificed there is likely to be a major army-imposed cleaning out at levels. Whatever the result the MB will undergo a military-led emasculation of some sorts and the bill will be written in civilian blood. Everyone loses"**

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Sara Labib

Open letter to the Muslim Brotherhood

"Dear Muslim Brothers, you will pay for your irresponsible and arrogant behaviour because actions have consequences. Unlike others, I do say that you are Egyptians and should enjoy equal rights and protection. Unlike others, I don't want your annihilation or indiscriminate imprisonment without due trial. But I am becoming a minority. Ironically, even you wouldn't agree with me, you don't see yourselves as equal to Egyptians,

rather as their superiors. I regret that you will be subjected to mob violence, and I more so regret that the Egyptian people have to pay the price for your mistakes: economically, politically and socially. However, I won't stand for your fabrications and lies, you are not victims, you are perpetrators. You put in motion a certain sequence of events which culminated in the highly charged and polarized state we are in today. **Your failure is due to yourself first and foremost. And whatever violence occurs in the next few days, whatever blood is spilled, you cannot watch your hands of it"**

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Zeinobia

#June30: Hours before the Apocalypse

"I do not know what will happen but one thing for sure if violence starts and does not stop then in couple of days we will have a new SCAF. Again we got different factions protesting against Morsi with different agendas and goals as well means to reach for their goals. If we are speaking logically the size of the protests can force the MB to present the concessions they refuse to present in order to save themselves. This is of course logic. One thing for sure no one on earth or heaven even the Egyptian deep state would have imagine that Morsi's first anniversary will turn to be like that"

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Mosa'ab Elshamy

What will a 'win' look like for June30?

"This is a truly unenviable position to be in. I myself will probably go down on the 30th of June to protest against the Muslim Brotherhood, the presidency, and to call for a fulfillment of the January 25 revolution, which I fought for, and continue to believe in. But the signs of a critical and vital element interfering with the righteousness of our revolution, to actually voluntarily bring in the army, are numerous enough to be concerned. The military is not a revolutionary institution –



and it seems far too many have short memories about the failings of the military led transitional period after the downfall of Mubarak. **On the other hand, the Egyptian state is barely functioning – indeed, it is crumbling, and essentially being balanced by toothpicks. With an unsustainable reality like that on the one hand, and a scary scenario of a military coup on the other, one wonders what a ‘win’ is supposed to look like after the 30th of June.** If there is one, I cannot but help imagine it is going to be a pyrrhic and deceptive win"

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Nervana Mahmoud

A Tale of Two Egypts

"The bubble finally burst in January 2011. Gradually all parties started to come together in a loose unity against Mubarak. This unity was short lived, as different visions collided in the early post-revolution phase. In this early period both sides disagreed on whether a constitution or an election should come first" [...] **"Although the Muslim Brotherhood won a majority in the parliamentary election, it was the first phase of the presidential election that finally exposed the extent of their core supporters within society, roughly 25%. Morsi 's victory in the second phase was in a way, a reflection on how many Egyptians were still not fully aware of the potentials risks of the Muslim brotherhood's ideology on the wider society" [.....]** **"Morsi's one year in power has finally helped Egyptians to fully discover and understand what Islamism is, and what exactly the Muslim Brotherhood and other Islamist parties stand for. It was a painful eye-opening experience that enforced fault lines between what is Egyptian and what is Islamist. The result was reflected in two campaigns, one **anti-Morsi Tamarod and the other pro-Morsi Tagarod. Each represents a different vision, not just in what democracy and legitimacy should be, but a wider vision of what Egypt should be as a state and as identity. Unlike Mubarak, Morsi 's legacy was a weak regime and a weak and divided state"****

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Morsi In Free Fall!



Wael Eskandar

Why Morsi is No Longer President

"On its own, lying once to the people is enough of a reason to remove any president from power. Morsi was caught lying beyond any reasonable doubt. This is not only about promises he broke like his 100 day campaign promises, nor about policy shifts like his position on the emergency law which he changed. This is also about lying to the people before the elections in order to get elected. Before being elected, Morsi lied about working in NASA as a consultant, then lied again denying he ever said it. He lied to the Egyptian people in a public statement claiming that the prosecution had obtained confessions of protesters being funded by opposition. Lies about the history of a presidential candidate delegitimizes him once they've been uncovered, and they have"



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Wael Ghonim

Wael Ghonim Ask Morsi to Step Down

*"Today, I direct my call to the president of the republic: Dr. Morsi, every vote that elected you believing that "Our strength, in our unity" was not a slogan, but what was to be an on-the-ground reality, you have lost today. Every vote that elected you thinking you would be a president for all Egyptians, not just your people, clan and supporters, you have lost today. Every vote that elected you believing that you would honor your electoral promises, you have lost today. **Dr. Morsi, Egypt is bigger than any current, any group and any party, and you yourself announced, the day you assumed the presidency, that we are not obliged to obey you unless you fulfill your pledges, and that you won't betray Allah('s teachings) when it comes to us. Dr. Morsi, put an end to the strife we're on the brink of, for God and for the homeland, and announce your resignation before June 30"***

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Maher Hamoud

Morsi in free fall

"It is definitely a stage the feloul and the Ministry of Interior are orchestrating from a distance in order to force the military to step in and "save the country", which since Thursday appears to actually be happening. Of course the new, younger military leaders do not really want to participate directly in the Egyptian political circus again. Whether they like it or not, they will. I expect that we will have a period of at least six months or up to one year of absolute power in the hands of the military. The new military leadership might be smarter than Field Marshal Mohamed Tantawi's gang with their Soviet-style oppression tactics that destroyed the image of the army for a time in the eyes of average Egyptians. Major General Abdul Fatah Al-Sisi and his military elite would probably master the post-Brotherhood transition with some civilian facade to take the blame for whatever goes wrong. Let us all hope we do not reach an Algerian scenario like what happened in the 1990s between the military and violent Islamists. Reconciliation and dialogue will be crucial to save the country. The rule of law and justice for all, from far right to far left, is the key to stability"

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Assir: Turning Saida into a Warzone

Mustapha Hamoui

“Yes But”

"There is a sense in non-Sunni Lebanon that the Sunnis secretly support Ahmad el Assir. There is a general impression that even if the Sunnis don't support him, they somehow approve of the situation he created because it allows them to blame Hezbollah for it. Moderate Sunni politicians don't seem quite 100% forceful in their denouncements of Al-Assir, and Sunnis on facebook are not as zealous as others in posting photos of the dead soldiers. Besides, why is it that roads get cut off "in support of Assir" in Sunni areas? Why aren't the moderates preventing them? The silence of moderate Sunnis is deafening to the others" [...] "Meanwhile, the non-"moderates", the militant Sunnis who really believe that there is a Sunni-vs-Shiaa war going on, see a blatant double standards in how the Army deals with non-state-weapons: Why do they (the soldiers) turn a blind eye to Hezbollah's weapons and only attack the Sunni guys? In short, there's a complicated mix of emotions and thoughts going on in Sunni Lebanese minds. They feel bad for the fallen soldiers, but they resent those who are focusing on the dead soldiers to demonize their sect while forgetting the "real" reason the soldiers died, ie non-state (hezbollah) weapons"

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Elias Muhanna

Assir's Gamble: Blunder or Breakthrough?

*"Killing soldiers in plain daylight? Has Assir forgotten the near-universal support among Lebanese for the Nahr al-Barid operation in 2007, which saw an entire refugee camp reduced to rubble in the service of squashing a salafist group? Charismatic and flush with cash though the shaykh may be, his political instincts remain tender, and have made him vulnerable to the maneuverings of his opponents. **It will be interesting to see how Lebanon's mainstream Sunni leadership handles the aftermath of this crisis. Assir initially emerged as a minor irritant to the Future Movement (FM), then blossomed into a more serious liability as his movement caused messaging issues for Hariri and his allies, particularly on the Syrian question.** Today, Assir is gambling that his stance against Hizbullah and Syria will transform him from a fringe phenomenon punching above his weight into a force to be*

reckoned with. **Whether or not he succeeds will depend, in certain ways, on how skillfully the FM can appease the Sunni street while disavowing Assir's antics"**

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Moulahazat

Beyond The Battle of Saida

"Meet Sheikh Ahmad Al-Assir, Lebanon's rising controversial cleric, who also had armed disciples patrolling with freedom in the streets of Abra. He called for Jihad, fought in Syria, warned Hezbollah, attacked the army, before finally running away from the mosque he was preaching from (and that was apparently closer to a military complex than to a praying place)" [...]"**You don't attack the army when you don't have people inside it who can calm things down. You don't attack the army when there's a 60000 men difference. And you don't attack an army with no available political support. Had he attacked Hezbollah members, he would've got through with it using the alibi of avoiding the Sunni-Shia strife. But Al-Assir insisted on maximizing his enemies, for no relevant reason" [...]"** The parliament's extension was left unnoticed with Saida's violence. The commander of the army is now a potential candidate to the presidency. The rumor about Kahwagi's threat to the president of resigning less than 9 Months (the constitutional deadline is 6 months) before the elections raises suspicions. **So does the sudden urge to extend the mandate of Kahwagi on the head of the army that makes him not eligible to run and embarrasses him in case he would want to resign and become a candidate. You would hear a unprecedented unanimous support to the army. But beware, for a silent presidential electoral battle between three Generals (Aoun, Sleiman, Kahwaji) is starting. The battle of Saida is over. The Battle for Baabda has just begun"**



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Reflecting on The Lebanese Army



Mustapha Hamoui

For Lebanese Sunnis, Support for the Army but no Hero Worship

*"The general attitudes of average Sunnis is that the army has every right to respond forcefully to criminals and soldier-slayers like Ahmad al Assir, and that every dead soldier is a terrible loss for Lebanon. **But there is a very real and disconcerting sense that the army is only expressing its lethal force on Sunni militias and criminals, while turning a blind eye to Shiaa criminals and coordinating with their militias.** Where are the plain-faced killers of Hashem Salman? Where is the man accused of planning to kill Butros Harb? Where are the four people indicted by the international Tribunal for killing Hariri? What with Nasrallah's blatant confession of fighting in Syria? All questions that are constantly being asked by Sunnis, with dark mutterings of army complicity. Facebook and twitter are drowned in photos and footage of the Lebanese army sitting idly as Hezbollah gunmen with yellow armed bands handle "security". To put it plainly, **the support of the Sunni community for the army is guarded and conditional. Guarded because they understand that the army, despite their suspicions, is the only institution left that has a semblance of state control and unity, and conditional because they are waiting to see what the Army is planning to do with Hezbollah's armed security zones in Sunni areas**"*

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Elias Muhanna

Reactions to the Conflict in Saida on Kalam Ennas

"Why should the Army have to take permission from religious authorities to go after assailants who attacked soldiers? If the Pope goes through a checkpoint and his bodyguards shoot at Lebanese soldiers, they have the right to respond immediately. That's fine, as long as you apply those rules to everyone equally. My own personal bodyguard has been refused an official permit from the Army to carry arms. What does this mean?" [.....] "There is no conflict today between the Army and the Sunnis, or Hizbullah and the Sunnis. I want to go beyond mourning the fallen soldiers. I want the Army to take control of the country. I want a military council to take control and to shut everyone up or else we're going to have a major war in this country. I don't want parliamentary elections. I don't want democracy. I want the boot

of the army to come down on the country and to get rid of all the za`raan (trouble-makers). We can only build a country if we have the Army bearing down on us, which is better than having Islamists or Rustom al-Ghazali bearing down on us"

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Turkey



Was It or Wasn't It A Turkish Spring

Mahir Zeynalov

Turkish Spring!

*The latest expression of public anger is unprecedented in character. Unlike previous anti-government rallies and demonstrations, people are protesting wherever they are, including banging pots in their homes regardless of the time. The demonstrations gained momentum when many people across the aisle threw their weight behind the peaceful protesters in Taksim's Gezi Park, protesting the demolition of trees. The anger of people from all walks of life was directed at the authorities for turning a blind eye to wrong urban-planning policies. The public discontent went up when the police used brutal means to disperse the peacefully protesting crowds. The attempts to break up the protests largely backfired. What started as a small-scale peaceful demonstration has morphed into one of the largest anti-government demonstrations in non-election time during Erdoğan's rule" [.....] "Reading graffiti and slogans on İstanbul streets, you can see phrases like "Rebellion," "Resistance," "Insurgency" and "Revolution." Unlike Arab dictators, **Erdoğan is an elected and popular leader and Turkey is an electoral democracy, making any kind of "Turkish Spring" impossible in Turkey. The most important result of these protests could be a wake-up call to Erdoğan that he is under constant check and that he cannot do whatever he wants out of sync with public demands. But anything beyond that, without participation of wider public in protests, is just an exaggeration"***

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Esra Doğramacı

Istanbul on Saturday night: what was done, what is to come

*By forcefully removing people, by continued dispersal of tear gas, sound grenades, water cannons on the heels of understanding and dialogue; by holding rallies that will now draw diametrically drawn political lines, hopes for resolution are fading. That resolution could have been negotiated space. But as characteristic of so much in Turkey, this too can turn into a “my way or the high-way” approach. Some protestors have made the call that the Prime Minister also represents them, even if they might not have voted for him, that he is still their Prime Minister too, meaning they want him to act in the best interests of the entire country, not just his constituents. **Calls for him to resign and his government to step down are unrealistic and unhelpful. He is after all a popularly elected figure increasing at each subsequent election his share of the vote. Perhaps its the words of Gurkan Zengin, head of news of Al Jazeera Turk, which will remind the check to be kept – that “Erdogan is an important brand for Turkey, but Turkey is more important than Erdogan.”***

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Zeynep Tufekci

“Come, Come, Whoever You Are.” As a Pluralist Movement Emerges from Gezi Park in Turkey

"After the Gezi Park occupation was dispersed, dozens of neighborhood forums popped up around Istanbul where people get together to discuss a variety of issues. I've been attending these neighborhood forums, which are organized in an “agora” format where speakers line up and take turns to speak" [.....] "Perhaps the most interesting configuration to have emerged from the Gezi protests has been the LGBT community in Turkey. Long oppressed, it is also a community that has long struggled openly. Unlike other countries in Middle East, Turkey has a strong and burgeoning LGBT community that is increasingly coming



out of the closet and organizing. Like other countries in the Middle East, they face grave prejudice and oppression"

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The logo for iSTANDBUL is displayed on a textured, light beige background. It features a stylized lowercase 'i' with a small human figure icon integrated into its dot, followed by the word 'STANDBUL' in a bold, uppercase, serif font. The letters are a dark reddish-brown color, with the 'B' and 'U' appearing slightly lighter than the others.