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Why Egyptians Don't Like America

Bassem Sabry

Why Egyptians Don't Like America

"The deteriorating US public image in Egypt is not something that can be fixed overnight, but the long process toward some rectification can nonetheless begin now. The first step would be for the US to conduct a thorough review of its policy on Egypt. **Any policy that makes a deeply divided country only unite around hatred for you is quite an utterly unsuccessful one. Whatever the ultimate resolution to the current conflict in Egypt, people need to feel that it was the best solution for Egypt, and that it was primarily made by Egyptians themselves, not something unpalatable that was forced upon the country.** The final choice of new ambassador should somehow also send a reassuring and positive signal to Egyptians. More could be done to directly engage with local public opinion and the media to dispel some of the allegations surrounding US policies. But one thing that could genuinely turn things around, is for Egyptians to feel that the US is an honest broker in the Mideast peace process — a broker that it's willing to stand up to Israel, and to seek a positive resolution for the decades-old conflict. As things stand, there is no way the US will be able to win the hearts and minds of Egyptians without ending the injustice faced by Palestinians. Kerry must succeed in creating something of real value with his new initiative, against all the odds" [...] **"Virtually everyone I have ever met in a demonstration carrying an anti-Obama sign told me his problem was with the US government, not the American people"**

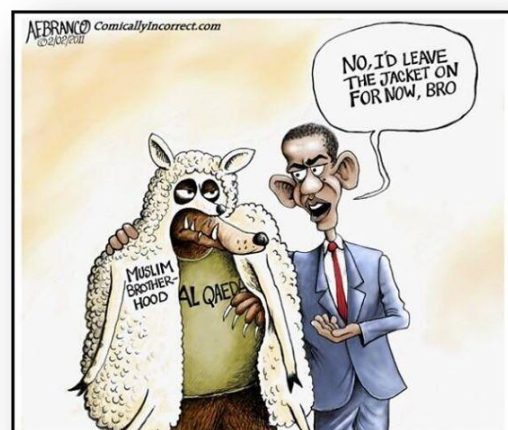


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Sendmonkey

State of play

"Ford is supposedly coming to replace arguably the most hated US ambassador of all time, Anne Patterson, which should be challenging enough, if



it weren't for the fact that he is the last US Ambassador to Syria. If people interpreted sending Anne Patterson, the former ambassador to Pakistan, as a signal of the direction the US sees Egypt heading, you can imagine how they would feel towards an ambassador coming from Syria. Immediately accusations flared that not only was Ford instrumental in setting up "The Free Syrian Army" and inflaming the Syrian civil war, but that he is sent to Egypt on a "similar mission". While the accusations are outlandish, perception is becoming reality in countries obsessed with conspiracy theories like ours, especially when a trusted journalist like Yousri Fouda sends out a tweet "warning all of Egypt of that man before he becomes the next US Ambassador." Whether sending him here was conspiracy or coincidence, the campaign has been so successful, that Ford's reputation has been obliterated here before he can even begin. The US now can choose to appoint him, and thus expecting him to work while facing the task of not only neutralizing the Patterson baggage but also clearing his own reputation, or simply choose someone else to replace Patterson who will not be as controversial. **And in case you are wondering who wouldn't be, well, someone like previous Ambassador to Egypt and current Ambassador to Turkey Francis J. Ricciardone would do the trick at this very moment. Better yet, call him up"**

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Omar Robert Hamilton

Selective memories

"The people are the great unknown. The people have spent two and a half years talking about little else other than politics. So is it too much to ask for commentators, writing in English, to **stop telling us "how democracy works?" Because, from where we're standing**, the fire sale of Greece, the bailouts of the banks, the titanic advertising budgets of electoral candidates, the Tory Old Boy's Club government and the invisible muscle of the lobbies are just a few hints that **no one's democracy is working properly**. And if the ultimate arbiter of legitimacy is the ballot box, perhaps US citizens could be allowed vote on whether to continue military aid to Egypt? Or UK citizens could choose where David Cameron next flies to peddle his weapons? There is not a fair and functional system anywhere in the world. At least Egypt's is in flux and her governments are trembling. **And as long as the people believe they don't have to accept their reality, as long as they believe that their future has not been decided for them, then something new is possible"**

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Juan Cole

Top Reasons John McCain and Lindsey Graham have no Credibility for Egypt Talks

The US wants the Egyptian military either to free the Muslim Brothers it is holding or to charge them and try them for specified statutory crimes. But Sisi sees them as 'terrorists,' guilty of attacks on innocent non-combatants when they ordered a Brotherhood paramilitary group to attack demonstrators in front of the presidential palace in Heliopolis on Dec. 6, 2012. Since Graham wanted Djokhar Tsarnaev treated as an enemy combatant and denied a civil trial, he is hardly in a position to tell the Egyptians they shouldn't treat the Brotherhood the same way" [...] "Graham and McCain are urging the Egyptian authorities to talk to the Muslim Brotherhood and find a compromise, to engage in "inclusive dialogue." But from Obamacare to Benghazi they have been relentless in their refusal to talk to President Obama in good faith on a whole range of issues and seldom compromise with him. Imagine, the GOP telling Egyptians how to do democracy..."

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A Polarized Society On A Quest For A Reconciliation Deal

H.A. Hellyer

Maybe time for the MB?

*"What are **the main points of a deal that has the best chance of being sustainable** and to the benefit of all? **Here are six points that ought to be seriously considered:** 1. **The Brotherhood worries it will be outlawed and sent underground.** It ought to receive assurances that it will not be, and that it will be fully recognised as an NGO, under an NGO regimen that is just and applies to all NGOs in Egypt. Naturally, that will entail commitments to transparency and the absence of weaponry of any kind. 2. **The Freedom and Justice party, as a political force that has a religious reference** (rather than speaking in absolutist terms in the name of God or religion) **has significant support in the country** – anywhere between 12% and 17% based on multiple recent polls. **It should continue to exist as a political party, and be allowed to run in forthcoming parliamentary elections.** 3. Those elections, and at least **the next two parliamentary and presidential elections, should have a full array of international observers to ensure the confidence of the public** and all parties in the democratic process. 4. **This will entail the recognition of the interim government by all parties – including the FJP.** The reinstatement of Morsi cannot be*

envisaged as a realistic possibility by anyone – and it would behove the Brotherhood to prepare its followers to recognise that as early as possible. 5. **A genuine peace and reconciliation process, combined with full transitional (rather than vengeful) justice, is desperately needed "** [....] "6. **There is one key state institution that is fundamentally, and existentially feared**, by supporters of the Brotherhood, as well as many other non-Islamist forces in Egyptian society. **That is the Ministry of the Interior**" [...] "A good step in that regard would be to appoint a professional human rights specialist as Minister of the Interior, with the full backing of all political forces.

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Mohamed A. Fouad

Close, but no cigar

"No matter what the refinements are, if the will to "make a deal" is not there, we can pontificate until the cows come home, but it wouldn't solve anything. Former Australian Prime Minister Malcolm Fraser once noted: "Reconciliation requires changes of heart and spirit, as well as social and economic change. It requires symbolic as well as practical action." We have drowned in an ocean of symbolism in the past two and a half years; we now owe it to ourselves to do one thing which will have a lasting positive effect. When all talks break down, granted they haven't seriously started, this situation will sort itself out at grave costs. While there should be an earnest attempt at reconciliation before resorting to the use of force, I do not believe we have seen such serious attempts yet. **We must not lose sight that while breaking the sit-ins is a great step towards stability, it remains a highly symbolic step. Conversely, in the longer term, Egypt could truly benefit from reconciliation not the resemblance of one**"

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Dr Bassem Youssef

The 'Sparking' Muslim Brotherhood

"I don't care what this man did to incite violence, or about his abnormal religious verdicts (fatwas); what happened is despicable, and is not in anyway humane or ethical. Had this happened to any journalist or media personality in Rabaa, the skies would have crumbled upon the Earth. On what grounds does a citizen give himself the right to intercept another citizen's way, and then keep him till he hands him over to the police? What is this nonsense? What happened was wrong and it does Tahrir Square

*injustice. Speaking of Tahrir Square, since Rabaa is the talk of the town: why is Tahrir Square closed till now? Why, when those conducting a sit-in in Tahrir are estimated to be a mere few scores of people, would downtown Cairo be shut down & Garden City's Corniche road turned into a two-way street, multiplying the torture inflicted upon citizens? **I do not know why there are still concrete walls all around downtown; and I can see no justification to the continued torturing of citizens [in traffic], for the extension of the sit-in, or the reason behind it. And if the reason behind it is to keep the Morsi supporters from taking Tahrir Square, I think sensibly allocated security forces around the square could keep them from taking it.** I could be wrong, but if the situation continues it will vex those living downtown, just as it's currently vexing those living in Rabaa; but perhaps differently"*

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Containment Policy: To dissolve or Not To Dissolve ?!



Bassem Sabry

Why Egypt Shouldn't Break The Pro-Morsi Sit-Ins

"From the point of view of the decision-maker in Cairo, the most effective course of action is to contain the sit-ins — make sure no more bloodshed occurs while curbing any excesses and dealing decisively with transgressions. Additionally, the best way to create pressure for compromise on the pro-Morsi camp is to move briskly with the road map and the transition to civilian democracy. It would be important for them to realize that there are many at the sit-in who are truly worried about exclusion, their own immediate safety or the return of the Mubarak police state under which many of them suffered. The signals that these individuals have been reading thus far have not been sufficiently encouraging or calming"

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Nervana Mahmoud

The Dystopian Camps

"The solution for Egypt's political deadlock may be tricky, however, there is a golden opportunity to challenge this Islamic project. Rabaa and Nahda are no more than distorting mirrors that deflect the unsustainability of the broader, mythical Islamist project. The crowds inside both camps are happy with the fraternity and sense of unity, but also because the camps have sheltered them from other challenges that they face in their daily lives. It is better to leave the jubilant

crowd alone, until they realize that sheltering reality is not the solution. Sooner or later the sponsored “camp holiday.” The Brotherhood tycoons cannot sponsor their loyal Egyptians permanently; their ideological project is more bankrupt than their dodgy finance, and the crowd will slowly realize that the organizers are running out of ideas" [...]"



If Egyptian politicians are really keen on the future of Egypt, they should focus on fixing Egypt’s dysfunctional political system, and strike the right balance between the demands of the ordinary Islamist crowd, and the wider non-Islamist Muslims, Copts and other minorities. This needs to be done in a more robust constitution, together with a series of social reforms at basic level of service, particularly in rural regions so as to counter the poisonous indoctrination by zealous Islamist preachers"[...] "Meanwhile, **ignore the “Republic of Rabaa, the Emirate of Nahda.” Egypt is bigger than them. Bloodshed will only inject life into a dystopian project that has repeatedly failed to face reality.** I hope the decision to end the sit-ins to be reversed"

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Wael Nawara

Burden on The Brotherhood To End Egypt’s Crisis

"But, if the Brotherhood’s survival rests on its ability to evolve its doctrine so that it better adapts to the prevailing societal circumstances, will the new generation of Brotherhood leaders — or those of the Freedom and Justice Party — be able to achieve a quantum leap in thought, organizational style and level of transparency, that would transform the Brotherhood into a modern political organization whose existence is harmonious with that of Egypt — or any other nation state for that matter? Will they be able to transcend the period when they were labeled an illegal organization and work within the bounds of legality, as a political party that derives its decisions from within, and is not merely a front, behind which an illegal, secret international network hides? **The answer to this question — and not any protests or sit-ins, no matter how long they can be sustained — will determine the Brotherhood’s fate**"

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Blame It On The Copts

Mina Fayek

Blame it on Copts

"Following blaming Copts for their failure, MB supporters started burning churches, houses & shops of Christians. Besides the Sinai attacks, sectarian violence towards Christians is becoming daily news in Egypt now, Assiut, Minya, Beni Suef with no plans of crackdown to stop it by state. Further more the silly reconciliation sessions that forces Copts to relinquish their rights and offers impunity to the aggressors like this one happened in Mniya which states that church would compensate the victims whom are Christians! and mentions nothing about the assualters! A clear sign on absence of Law and Order"

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Mai El-Sadany

Graffiti that Cannot Be Erased: Sectarianism Lives On

*While there is no doubt that the political events that Egypt witnessed in the last month and a half are newsworthy, this coverage has come at the expense of highlighting worrisome domestic trends that must be addressed and cannot be left to fester. **At the forefront of these local issues is the heightened level of sectarianism against Copts that Egypt is now witnessing in villages and cities across the country** [...] **"the state has failed "to decisively confront sectarian attacks, and to enforce the law by holding those responsible to account."** As described in the aforementioned NGO statement, this falls within a "pattern of impunity" that was pervasive throughout the Mubarak, Supreme Council of the Armed Forces and Morsi regimes. Unless the state begins to severely punish sectarian practices and work to reform the laws and institutions that promote inequality between Muslim and Coptic citizens, **the issue of sectarianism will only fester and is likely to take a serious turn for the worse in light of the heightened political tension, presence of unaccounted-for weapons, and the security void that plagues the nation**"*

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August 14: Rabaa Massacre & The Day After, Depression



Salamamoussa

August 14 in Egypt

"The reality of course is that many Egyptians cheered the men in arms on January 2011, including most of the Brotherhood. They cheered them again on July 3, this time without the Brothers. **In the topsy-turvy world of Egyptian politics disfigured by religion what is halal and what is haram switch roles with alarming regularity. Men with guns are bound to use guns.** And

let us not forget that the Brotherhood seems keen on possessing guns, so most Egyptians were left with the choice between those uniformed and armed, and those merely armed." [...]"

What killed hundreds in Egypt on August 14 was a deadly mix of religion, guns and politics. Chart a path for removing both the military and religion from

politics and you will be more than half way there. Chart a course to favor prosperity and dampen the visions of holy Utopias and you might even arrive at a sensible outcome. Short of that, expect plenty of mantles to be picked up by the unhappy living"



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Arabist

It only gets worse from here

"The fundamental flaw of the July 3 coup, and the reason those demonstrators that came out on June 30 against the Morsi administration were wrong to welcome it, is that it was based on an illusion. That illusion, at least among the liberal camp which is getting so much flak these days, was that even a partial return of the old army-led order could offer a chance to reboot the transition that took such a wrong turn after the fall of Hosni Mubarak on February 11, 2011. **This camp believed that gradual reform, even of a much less ambitious nature than they desired in 2011, would be more likely to come by**

*accommodating the old order than by allowing what they perceived as an arrangement between the military and the Islamists to continue. Better to focus on fixing the country, notably its economy, and preventing Morsi from sinking it altogether, and take the risk that part of the old order could come back. In this vision, a gradual transformation of the country could take place while preserving political stability through the armed forces. It would be negotiated and hard-fought, as so many democratic transitions in other parts of the world have been, but the old order would need the talent and competence of a new technocratic, and ultimately political, class to deliver and improve governance. **Their hope was that the Islamists would understand that they had lost this round, and that they could be managed somehow while a new more liberal order emerged. This, in essence, was what Mohamed ElBaradei and other liberals bought into on July 3, no doubt earnestly, and what so many other outside of formal politics fervently hoped for: not the revolution radicals want, but a wiser, more tolerant, order in the country. Unfortunately, among the broad liberal camp in Egypt, those who entertained such hopes are in a minority** [...] "It appears that much of the business and traditional elite – represented politically by the Free Egyptians and the Wafd Party among others – falls into that category. They are joined by the security establishment, or deep state if you prefer"*

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Bassem Sabry

The Aftermath of 72 Tumultuous Hours in Cairo

"Again, the one thing that is certain about Egypt is that nothing is ever certain. As things stand, it is now clear that January 25, as it once stood, is virtually beyond restoration. **Politics have utterly failed in Cairo in favor of confrontation. Right now, the long-term implications for the security of Egypt and the immediate prospects of a normal democratic process in the country are anything but a cause for optimism**"

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The Big Pharaoh

Q&A: Egypt After Rabaa

"What will happen now? Egypt is still mired in the 60 years old fight between Islamists and the ruling establishment that comes from the army. Since the revolution provided no alternatives, Egypt will remaining

seesawing between these two. A viable alternative to the Islamists and to the army needs to rise in order for this seesaw to be broken. Judging from the current weakness and disorganization of the revolution camp, I don't see this happening anytime soon. In the meantime, this camp will stand powerlessly watching this fight unfold in front of them. **Currently the future remains very bleak but I know one this: this country will not see any democracy until a viable alternative to the army and the Islamists is found"**

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Mohamed A. Fouad

Life is cheap

"I keep on remembering what a British friend once told me following events in Port Said. **"Life is cheap in Egypt." To put this "cheap life" in context, one must simply be reminded that over 2500 people have perished during the course of the past 30 months. Close to half of these deaths took place in the past 2 weeks alone.** But are we significantly better off than where we were prior to 25 January 2011? The answer is a painful no. Worst yet, **a country which started out fighting for rights and a better life is now fighting for survival and sovereignty.** I am certain that Egypt will pull through this as it has pulled through many tragedies over the course of history. I cannot, however, be certain how long it will take us to get past the hurt that will be left when the dust settles. As we once said: "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"

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Nervana Mahmoud

A Few Thoughts. Rabaa

"The only way to defeat the Junta is to stop playing into their hands; by taking a step back to lick the bleeding wounds, withdraw from the streets, and focus on winning back their other partners in the January 2011 revolution. This may take time; serious reflection on last year's tragic mistakes is needed and major reforms inside the Brotherhood's autocratic system is the only way to restore democracy in Egypt. If Rabaa is a symbol, it is certainly not a symbol of defiance or victory as Mr. Erdogan likes to promote, but a symbol of devotion and divine love, two qualities that are truly lacking at the moment. The Islamists are now the underdogs and they need, more than anyone else, to play a smarter

game that will restore their credibility in the Egyptian streets. **Egypt is now bitterly divided; those who are genuine are no longer powerful; however, decision makers, on both sides, may not necessarily be genuine. It is time to remember our revolution and our struggle for freedom, justice, and equality. That is our only salvation.** Nonetheless, the burden is not just on the Islamists' shoulders, non-Islamists must stop cheering the Junta. Demonizing the Islamists will neither uproot them from Egypt nor it will make the conservative public cheer for liberalism. **Both sides must grow-up and "wake-up." Until this happen, please stop playing the "four" symbol because it is frankly meaningless"**

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Sendmonkey

(4)common Misconceptions Egyptians have

"The danger of what 'is happening is not the MB going underground and starting a terror campaign, but that those supporters or their family members get radicalized to such a degree that he/she will resort to random violence" [...] "So please, start demanding a clear strategy to manage this conflict and the security situation, and don't feel ashamed to do so, since this is your life and future we are talking about. Also, if people tell you the strategy is to eradicate them, please remind them that if the MB are only 80,000 people., Not only will it take a genocide to kill them all, you will also have to kill their friends and relatives, which is a whole lot of killing, and that is if we discount that there is the internet, where ideas can live forever. So, while its prudent to face those who use violence against you with violence, it is imperative not to help them recruit or win supporters. While many of the police are engaging in life or death battles and heroics to protect you, many of them act in a criminal manner and we should be able to hold them to account. **Your best weapon against the MB is to create the state that they could not create, one of diversity, accountability, human rights, civilian rule and against corruption and nepotism. Only such an idea can one day end this war"**

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Inside and Outside: Hizbollah Losing Grip



Moulahazat

Hezbollah's Awkward Silence

An Israeli patrol got ambushed in Alma Al Shaeb by Hezbollah members only gets mentioned in details in Ibrahim Al-Amin's Al-Akhbar article without getting the usual glorification of Hezbollah raises many questions" [.....] "Hezbollah stayed silent, but so did Israel. Hezbollah is facing diplomatic challenges with the new EU ban along with political and military setbacks in Lebanon and Syria. He can't even risk opening another military front on the Israeli border, and that's why he probably chose to stay silent in the aftermath of the ambush. The Israelis got his silent message, and there's no need to make a big media issue out of it that might escalate things too quickly for a party already involved in battles hundred of Kilometers north of the Lebanese-Israeli border. Same goes for the Israelis. They don't have time for diplomatic/military clashes: The Israelis are relaunching peace talks with Palestinians for the first time since 2010, and the last thing they want is being accused of an aggression against the Lebanese. For both Israel and Hezbollah, their clash is a clear violation of the 1701 resolution, because it indicates hezbollah's presence south of the Litani and Israeli presence on the other side of the border"

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Tony Badran

Accomplices to Hezbollah

*"Some Hezbollah experts have cautioned that targeting Hezbollah as a terrorist group "would easily escalate into a war against an entire society in which the organization has immersed itself." But these experts have glossed over the obvious: **by deliberately implicating Lebanese society in its terrorism, Hezbollah has moved beyond using the Lebanese as shields. It is turning them into accomplices. Naim Qassem crowed the other day that "Lebanon needs the resistance in order to protect its future generations." In reality, a Lebanon entangled with Hezbollah cannot possibly have a future"***

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Joumana Haddad

Open letter to Lebanese politicians

*In short: **Whoever you are, whatever your family name is, however you portray yourself in the media, whatever the so-called values that you are fighting for are called: if you are part of our political life, then we are fed up with you. Know this: you are nobody if it weren't for us. We voted for you. You work for us.*** Let me rephrase: you are supposed to be working for us. And yet you continue to work for everybody and everything except for us: you disregard our needs, our struggles, and our rights. You disrespect our pain, our intelligence, and our ambitions. You are content to be the puppets of some external power, and/or the heirs of a feudal family that guarantees you what your own merits surely don't. You shame us and this country. Because of you we are getting more desperate and poorer by the minute. Because of you we are accepting what should be unacceptable. You rely on the tribal and religious instincts of your followers instead of relying on qualities and virtues that you do not possess. You are the spoiled successors of some father, some grandfather, some uncle, some father-in-law, some distant cousin or some local zaïm that has decided to buy you in exchange for a stupid title and a fat bank account. You have no integrity, no decency, and no humanity: and I am not generalizing one bit here. I am not disregarding the good at the expenses of the bad and the ugly: For there is no good anywhere to be seen in the decadent bunch that you represent" [.....] **"You see, at the end of the day, it might seem as if we deserve each other, you and us. But then again, that's not the case. Because on the other side of this banal, mundane, self-indulgent, and superficial majority, there is a minority who actually cares, and thinks, and has dignity, and won't shut up, and is sick and tired of you; and it will do everything it can to stop you from staying where you are"**

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Hanin Ghaddar

It's a jungle out there

"The real solution, therefore, is to diminish Hezbollah's control over state institutions. This can only be achieved through a new government that would take care of purging state institutions of Hezbollah agents. But because Hezbollah would not approve such a move, this government could only be a fait accompli. Of course, Hezbollah would go for another May 7 type-response because it only understands the language of violence. But 2013 is not 2008, and today the Party of God is pre-occupied

*with the Syrian conflict next door. **Another violent act committed by Hezbollah in Lebanon will be very dangerous for both Hezbollah and Lebanon – the Party of God cannot afford to actively be at war in both countries.** Is this a risk worth taking? Maybe not. No one really wants to summon the beast. But, **this means that Lebanon and the Lebanese will remain a hostage to the Party of God until further notice. And the jungle out there will grow infinitely***"

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The August 15 Roueiss Bombing: What Goes Around Comes Around

Elias Muhanna

Pathos and Promises: Nasrallah on the Dahiyah Blast

*"Hizbullah's fighting machine was developed over the past three decades with the single goal of facing Israel's army and intelligence services. It overcame Israel's qualitative military edge by waging effective asymmetric and psychological warfare, and preying on the fears of the Israeli public. Today it faces a foe that is adopting the same strategies, and yet Hizbullah appears poised to make the same mistakes that Israel once did, underestimating its enemy and trying to cow them with hubristic threats and military surges. As Nasrallah correctly affirmed: we, the Lebanese, are all in this together. **If Lebanon is sucked into the Syrian maelstrom, it will be our civil peace that is shattered, our tenuous balance that is disrupted. And yet the ironic truth is that the most eloquent prophet of the impending sectarian apocalypse is, simultaneously, inviting its horsemen in with promises of fresh fodder and ample bedding***"



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Marina Chamma

Beirut will never surrender, but...

"The latest attack comes at a time when almost everything else in the country is on a downward spiral, with no visible light at the end of the proverbial tunnel" [...]. "I have never seen so much pessimism from ordinary Lebanese citizens as much as I have seen in the past couple of weeks, even more so in the aftermath of the latest bombing. People know that there is always room for things to get worse, and a continuously deteriorating situation never fails to confirm our darkest fears. There seems to be a general agreement on why the latest cycle of violence is unfolding, as Hezbollah itself recognizes. This time it wasn't Israel, as many politicians were quick to point fingers at (even though we know it has the ability and intentions to do so), but from Syria or its opposition forces, as divided, partly distorted and violent as the country itself has become. It is true that today, Hezbollah may have brought this attack to itself through its involvement in Syria, but the consequences are being felt by all of us" [...]. "t a certain point, it was thought that Christians were the main group targeted by political violence, then the Sunnis and now Shias. Apparently, violence has come full circle, regardless of the reasons it was or is inflicted in the first place. The common denominator always seems to be Syria and one's position towards it"



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