The Upheaval in Egypt

Ephraim Kam

In the more than two generations since the Free Officers Revolution in Egypt in 1952, the Egyptian regime has been relatively stable. This stability rested on the combination of a strong leader, the army's support for the regime in exchange for significant benefits, and suppression of the opposition, which was perceived as dangerous to the regime. Several elements in this general picture of stability posed a threat to the regime: economic distress created perpetual potential for unrest, which indeed erupted for short periods from time to time, and the Islamic opposition occasionally constituted a danger to the regime, as in the murder of President Sadat and the wave of terrorist attacks carried out by its radical wing, mainly in the 1990s. The regime, however, was able to cope with these threats and maintain its control. The overthrow of the Mubarak regime ended this period of stability, and ushered in a period of uncertainty in Egypt.

The Fall of the Muslim Brotherhood Regime

For decades the Muslim Brotherhood dreamed and prepared for the moment when it would rise to power in Egypt. The downfall of the Mubarak regime and the ensuing political vacuum provided the Brotherhood with the opportunity it had been waiting for, even though it had not instigated the revolution. In March 2012, the Brotherhood's position appeared better than ever. The movement received more votes than any other party in free elections, and the liberal and secular groups, as well as the young people who spearheaded the revolution in early 2011, were relegated to the sidelines. The second largest party in the Egyptian parliament, the

Salafis, was likewise an Islamist group. Thus the Brotherhood effectively controlled the parliament and the government, and above all, the presidency. In cooperation with the younger level of the military command, the new president, Mohamed Morsi, quickly deposed the veteran army command from the Mubarak period. The new military leadership, headed by Defense Minister Abdel Fattah el-Sisi, was expected to continue its cooperation with the president, in part because it owed its position to him. In foreign policy, the Western governments, headed by the US administration, accepted the Brotherhood's regime as legitimate, and even wooed it in the hopes of achieving cooperation.

At the peak of the regime's power, however, its weakness also surfaced, and the situation began to go awry, partly due to mistakes by the regime's leaders and partly due to the complex reality before it. While the Brotherhood controlled the parliament, government, and presidency, the military, the legal system, and the young people who carried out the revolution remained powerful forces in their own right. Morsi was elected president with 51.7 percent of the votes, in other words, with a small majority, and in practice his power was limited. Indeed, he attempted to grab more power than his opponents from among the military command, his political rivals, and the public were willing to accept. In late 2012, he ousted the attorney general, mandated his own immunity from lawsuits, and denied the option of dismissing the ruling assembly by a court order. He appointed a committee aligned with the Brotherhood to draw up a new constitution; the result was a draft constitution that included clauses enhancing the role of religion in public affairs, which did not represent the national consensus. Morsi appointed Brotherhood members to key public positions and to jobs in the media, and gave them control of important government ministries. He dismissed a large number of the provincial governors, and appointed Brotherhood members in their stead. Human rights activists and media figures who criticized the authorities were arrested, and freedom of expression was restricted. From their position of strength, the leaders did not think that the army might unite with the liberal camp to remove the Brotherhood from power. When that happened, the Brotherhood was helpless to prevent it.

Furthermore, Morsi unwisely failed to form a coalition with political factions other than the Brotherhood to promote national reconciliation. He initially examined the possibility of cooperation in the government with other factions, and promised to appoint presidential assistants and deputies from outside the Brotherhood. He quickly abandoned these attempts, however, and relied on a narrow circle of cronies. He also failed to win over the army and security forces, even though the army's current command consists of his appointees. Morsi thereby gave many people the impression that he was trying to amass dictatorial powers for himself, and perhaps aspiring as well to establish a *sharia* state under his centralized presidential regime. Doubt also grew whether he was committed to govern as the president of all Egyptians, as he had promised, and to build a new political order that would satisfy the aspirations of a majority of the public.[1]

During its year in power, the Brotherhood refrained from pursuing radically different policies, especially in foreign affairs. Cognizant of the constraints of the situation and perhaps also attempting to consolidate power before moving in a radical direction, the Brotherhood's policy in many ways reflected continuity more than change. The regime maintained proper relations with the US administration for the purpose of continuing to receive aid and, contrary to Iranian expectations, refrained from restoring diplomatic relations with Iran. There was no crisis in relations with Israel. Prominent Brotherhood figures expressed a basically hostile and negative attitude toward Israel and Morsi avoided any contact whatsoever with Israeli leaders, but ties and coordination between the two militaries continued, mainly with respect to the situation in Sinai. The Brotherhood government mediated between Israel and Hamas during Operation Pillar of Defense, and also appointed a new ambassador to Israel. In internal affairs, beyond replacing the old army command, Morsi did not attempt to encroach on the Egyptian army's interests or status. He neither limited the army's freedom of action in defense matters nor interfered with its economic empire, and he allowed it to maintain its connections with the US and Israel.

More important, however, was the deteriorating economic and political situation in Egypt under the Brotherhood regime. During the Mubarak era, provision of education, health, and welfare services in poor areas gave

the Brotherhood the reputation of an organization sensitive to the people's needs and won it much public sympathy. When it gained power, however, it learned that providing services in a country with a population of 80 million was a completely different matter. The economic situation went from bad to worse, to a large extent because the regime demonstrated its lack of understanding and inability to manage a large and complex country like Egypt. Prices of basic goods rose, with food prices jumping 50 percent since 2010. The inexperienced government did not know how to provide basic services: transportation services declined and garbage accumulated in the streets. Unemployment rose, especially among young people, and there were fuel shortages. Strikes spread and were repressed by force. Furthermore, law and order disintegrated and crime abounded, until it became dangerous to move around in certain areas. Tourism shriveled, the flight of capital grew, and the external debt increased.[2] Growth was a low 2 percent in 2012, while direct foreign investment in Egypt shrank as a result of political and economic uncertainty. Most of the Persian Gulf countries, with the exception of Qatar, granted Egypt no substantial aid because they opposed the Brotherhood. The inexperience of Morsi and his officials in managing a country and their failure to enlist other factions in their administration made finding a way out of their dire straits even more difficult.

Consequently, an increasing number of Egyptians found it hard to believe in the government's ability to manage the country and fulfill its promises. Many began to believe that the Brotherhood had hijacked the revolution to promote its views, and that its regime was no better than the Mubarak regime. In addition, even if the Brotherhood regime did not plan to Islamize Egypt yet, many people believed that it intended to do so. The Brotherhood acquired many enemies: the liberals and the left, the legal system, businessmen, the Coptic minority, the "man on the street," and eventually also the army. The Brotherhood's failure was due in part to the fact that they relied on the power of their numbers and tried to impose their beliefs on the masses, instead of developing a social dialogue to win over the hearts and minds. Indeed, the key role played by the army in overthrowing the Brotherhood regime was complemented by that of the people at large: the masses, who played an important role in the revolution

that overthrew the Mubarak regime but were shunted aside in the following two years, returned to center stage.

The beginning of the end could be seen in November 2012, after Morsi tried to put himself above legal supervision. His opponents realized that if they did not take a stand, the Brotherhood would continue to take over the governing system. From that point on, opposition to the regime increased. The regime's failures drew the army close to the liberal groups from the Mubarak era, and restored power to the masses in the streets. Millions of people began to take part in demonstrations against the Brotherhood regime in December, and 22 million people signed a petition prepared by the Tamarod youth movement calling for Morsi's resignation and new presidential elections. For its part, the Brotherhood regime was too weak to cope with its opponents, especially when they were united against it, and had no allies. The measures employed by the regime to defend its rule were hesitant and inadequate. The final blow to the regime was administered in late June 2013 by the military command, which deposed Morsi, arrested the Brotherhood's leaders and many of its supporters, closed the Islamic TV stations and the Cairo branch of al-Jazeera, and seized power for itself.

The Army is In, the Brotherhood is Out

The act of ousting the Brotherhood leadership restored the army to center stage, while the masses in the street, after being ignored by the Brotherhood, also recovered their influence on political developments. Immediately after the coup, the military command outlined a roadmap for a transitional period, in which a temporary government would operate under an acting president. The roadmap includes a set of stages based on a new constitution in place of the constitution drafted by the Brotherhood regime – and subsequently shelved. Approval of the new constitution will lead to new presidential and parliamentary elections. The committee for approving the constitution, headed by former Egyptian Minister of Foreign Affairs and Secretary of the Arab League Amr Moussa, included representatives of all political forces in Egypt other than the Brotherhood. A majority of the ministers in the temporary government are technocrats with no political affiliation, but the government also includes several veterans of the Mubarak regime. Preparation of the constitution was

completed in November 2013, and a referendum on it is scheduled to be held in January 2014, followed several weeks later by parliamentary and presidential elections. The constitution augmented the army's authority, in part by giving military courts the authority to try civilians and granting the army the right to veto the president's appointment of a minister of defense.

Implementing the roadmap is no simple matter. In the months following the coup, the temporary government accomplished little and made limited improvement in providing basic services. The Brotherhood regime was replaced by a loose coalition of the army, liberal groups, and veterans of the Mubarak regime with no common goals or interests beyond reducing the power of the Muslim Brotherhood and other Islamic organizations. As a result, the government has no firm concept of how to implement the roadmap. The government talks about national reconciliation – with the exclusion of the Brotherhood – but does not make it clear how this will be achieved. As of now, the army's increased power, the force employed against the Brotherhood, the emergency regulations, and the closing of the Islamic TV stations are incompatible with progress toward more democracy. The liberal groups too feel uncomfortable with these developments, their desire to constrict the influence of the Islamic organizations notwithstanding.[3] By the end of 2013, even civilian groups that opposed the Muslim Brotherhood regime were criticizing the military government, and doubts were raised as to whether the alliance between the army and the liberal groups would last.

The main problem currently facing the army and the temporary government is how to deal with the Brotherhood. The army intervened in the political sphere to remove the Brotherhood from power, not necessarily to halt the Islamizing process in itself or to strengthen the liberal groups[4] but because it believed it had a duty to arrest the downward spiral in Egypt and no one else could do it. Its intervention, however, required the army to use force against the Brotherhood and other Islamic factions, which included shooting, arrests, large scale operations in Sinai, and other emergency measures. The army thereby made itself the most important and powerful factor in Egypt and a party in the internal struggle that seeks to repress the Islamic organizations and in practice supports the liberal groups.

This situation gives rise to several questions. What does the military leadership intend to do? Does it plan to continue as the dominant factor

in Egypt in the long term, or abandon politics and return the army to its barracks as soon as possible? Will it seek to use its power to influence the character of the regime, and if so, what regime will it favor? Will the army revive the political repression of the Mubarak regime, or will it encourage democracy? Will the liberal groups and young people want to continue cooperating with the army against the Brotherhood?

As yet there are no clear answers to these questions, and it is also possible that the army itself has not decided how to act. Nonetheless, several assumptions can be offered. First, Minister of Defense el-Sisi claims that the army does not seek to rule Egypt directly. It is reasonable to assume, however, that the army will not abandon its key role until stability has been achieved in the country and a viable leadership emerges. This process is liable to take a long time. Second, after the unsuccessful experiment of the Brotherhood's year in power, the army will probably not allow it to rule the country. The hard line taken by the army in suppressing the Brotherhood's leadership and operatives, at the cost of many fatalities and much international criticism, could indicate that the army will remain adamant in the future about preventing the Brotherhood from assuming a leading role, fearing that its rule would disrupt stability and lead to a renewed downward spiral. At the same time, given the Brotherhood's substantial power and influence, the army is likely to conclude that in order both to avoid exacerbating the situation and to deal successfully with the severe problems afflicting the country, it is essential to reach a compromise with the Brotherhood and with the liberal camp that will make it possible to include both of them in the government.

The Brotherhood's situation is difficult, which complicates efforts to achieve reconciliation. After its monumental rise to power, it was overthrown by force and is now considered a failure, with a majority of the people positioned against it. Held responsible for the decline in Egypt's situation, the Brotherhood has been supplanted by the army, which is determined to prevent its return to power. With many of its leaders and activists arrested, the Brotherhood's ability to act and rely on millions of supporters has been damaged. Saudi Arabia and the Gulf states support the military leadership. In this situation, the Brotherhood has no clear strategy, and is vacillating between several problematic courses of action.

On the one hand, the Brotherhood still has substantial potential force. It is the best organized political force, and enjoys a broad popular base that gives it the ability to bring hundreds of thousands of supporters to the street. Furthermore, the members' religious beliefs, their feelings that they are the victims and possess the truth, and the knowledge that the power given them by a majority of the people was taken away by illegitimate means make it difficult for them to compromise. For these reasons, they rejected several offers, including from the army, to join the post-Morsi government. Their answer was that accepting the reconciliation initiative was contingent on a restoration of legitimacy and constitutionality – i.e., on restoring Morsi to the presidency and recognition of the constitution drafted during his rule. On the other hand, if they decide on a civil uprising and the use of force, the people are liable to hold them responsible for the worsening situation, which could potentially deteriorate into civil war. If that happens, they will have to go back to underground operations, and will lose their ability to operate in the very political theater that earned them major achievements.

In late September 2013 the Emergency State Security Court in Cairo banned all political and social activity by the Brotherhood. The court also banned activity of the institutions linked to the movement, ordered the closure of all movement branches, and froze all of the Brotherhood assets until the government establishes an independent committee to manage the funds and pending a final independent ruling on the Brotherhood's status. At the same time, the government decided to delay implementation of the court ruling until the legal processes in the matter have been concluded, although it later revoked the Brotherhood's status as a registered non-governmental organization. The course of action followed by the government and the legal system indicates that the government is in no hurry to implement the decree; it is making a clear threat to make the Brotherhood illegal and to disband the Muslim Brotherhood's Freedom and Justice Party. In late December 2013, following a deadly terrorist attack in Mansoura in which 14 security personnel were killed, the government declared the Muslim Brotherhood a terrorist organization.

Against the background of these constraints, a dispute apparently exists in the Brotherhood whether to engage in dialogue with the army

about inclusion in the government, or to reject the possibility as long as its conditions are not met. It has thus far turned down the army's proposals and mediation efforts by Western entities and has not joined the government, while it is clear that the army cannot accede to its principal demands. The Brotherhood also refused to take part in the committee for drawing up a constitution in order to protest the legitimacy of the new constitution, although the al-Nur Salafi party decided to participate in order to influence the role of religion in national life. Nevertheless, although the Brotherhood's leaders have openly called for a general uprising against the army and the temporary government, in practice they have until now confined themselves to limited civil disobedience and sporadic use of force, refraining from widespread violence against the army and the government out of concern that they would lose what remains of their achievements. The question is what its long term policy will be, and whether it will be able to acknowledge its mistakes and learn lessons from its failure. The main concern is that the Brotherhood will conclude that while the democratic process brought it to power, this process was not sufficiently strong to protect it against opponents, including even liberal groups that acted contrary to democratic rules. If so, it follows that there is no point in further participation in democratic processes; it is better to seek alliances with other Islamic factions and then, if necessary, resort to force.[5]

The escalation in Sinai is one indication of this possibility. Even during Mubarak's term in office, Egyptian security forces did not exercise adequate control there, and the situation has deteriorated since he was deposed. After Morsi was overthrown, an atmosphere of chaos and rebellion prevailed, mainly in northeastern Sinai, which borders the Gaza Strip and Israel, and also in central Sinai in the proximity of the Suez Canal. Hundreds of disciplined organized terrorists belong to militant groups operating in Sinai, including armed Bedouins linked to Salafi jihad militias, smugglers, armed groups linked to organizations in the Gaza Strip, and Muslim fighters who infiltrated from Iraq and Yemen, some of whom are connected to al-Qaeda. The Bedouins do not necessarily support the Brotherhood, but they have become more religiously extreme in recent years, and are trying to exploit the army's focus on internal affairs to promote their interests in Sinai. After Morsi was deposed, these groups announced the establishment of a "war

council" for use of force against the new government and the security forces. Armed Bedouin squads have attacked Egyptian army positions and patrols and police stations, and have kidnapped administration personnel. The IDF estimates that 300 attacks were conducted against Egyptian forces in Sinai in July-August 2013. In the most deadly of these attacks, 25 policemen were murdered while on vacation.

For the first time in three years, the Egyptian army has launched a major campaign to strengthen its control of Sinai. Since mid-August 2013, following the escalation there, the army has conducted a broad offensive in Sinai, especially in the northeastern section, to uproot the terrorist strongholds and in coordination with Israel strengthen its own forces in Sinai. The army has also showed more determination in blocking the tunnels on the border of the Gaza Strip, and has limited the number of Gazans allowed to cross over into Sinai, out of concern that Hamas is sending weapons and fighters to Egypt to help the Brotherhood. The army's goal is to establish a buffer zone separating Sinai from the Gaza Strip.[6]

Where the Egyptian Regime is Headed

The Egyptian political system has now reached a watershed. The severe upheaval of the past three years, which included the use of violence, has exposed strong forces: the army, the Muslim Brotherhood and other Islamic organizations, groups of young people who began the revolution, and liberal factions – all of which are struggling to shape Egypt's future character. Some of these factions, however, have not yet decided how to conduct this struggle.

The army has become the most significant element, because it believed that it had a duty, even if force was required, to stop Egypt's downward spiral created by the Brotherhood regime during its one-year rule. The army, however, has not yet determined whether, and for how long, it will remain on center stage as the ruler of Egypt. Minister of Defense el-Sisi is Egypt's strongman at this stage, and some are comparing him to Nasser in the 1950s. He has hinted that he will run in the elections for president. If el-Sisi establishes his position as Egypt's ruler, it will strengthen the army's stature as the principal power in the country – not just the power behind the throne.

The ineptitude and mistakes of the Brotherhood, which failed to take advantage of the historic opportunity that fell into its hand to rule Egypt, led to its downfall. It must now decide whether to take part in the political process, in which case it can probably exert influence while not being the leading factor, or whether to conduct a violent struggle at great risk to itself and the country.

Other groups, especially young people who began the revolution that ended the Mubarak regime and contributed to the overthrow of Morsi, along with groups in the liberal camp, which have never headed the regime, also seek to influence the shaping of a free and democratic regime.

The internal struggle currently taking place likewise involves severe socioeconomic problems that have existed in Egypt for generations and have been aggravated by the rising violence of the past two years, undermined law and order, and the increased uncertainty that has prevailed in Egypt since the Mubark regime was overthrown. While the economic situation improved somewhat in the final months of 2013, it is still difficult. Any regime that emerges in Egypt will have to deal with the same problems that contributed to the downfall of the Mubarak regime.

The Brotherhood appears to hold the key to future developments in Egypt. Its choice between confrontation and participation in the political process will determine whether Egypt follows the path of political reform or that of increasing violence and instability. This decision will also affect the army's stance: whether to remain in a position of leadership or to move behind the scenes.

The Brotherhood might decide on a violent struggle in order to destabilize the current regime, or at least to force the regime to accept its demands. Several levels of violence are possible under this scenario: civil disobedience with a low level of violence; sporadic terrorist attacks in limited areas, such as those prevalent in Sinai; continued urban guerilla fighting on a growing scale and encouragement of a popular uprising against the government; and a civil war in the style of Algeria in the 1990s and Syria today. It is clear that this decision will require the army command to use force to remain the dominant governing party until it quells the uprising.

This is the worst and most dangerous scenario for the Brotherhood. The army could severely undercut it, and the Brotherhood is liable to lose the sympathy of supporters if it is perceived as responsible for the escalation. It is also liable to be unsuccessful in achieving its objectives. If the Brotherhood and its supporters embark on a campaign of violence, this will reflect its belief that a majority of Egyptians want it in power and that it fell victim to a conspiracy by its opponents, who deprived it of its ruling position. If such a decision is taken, the Brotherhood is more likely to choose a limited struggle, which is actually already taking place, than an all-out civil war, as it stands to lose much more in a civil war. Indeed, until now, the Islamic factions in Egypt have not been inclined to engage in large scale violent confrontation, and the example of Syria does not invite imitation. The structure of Egyptian society also tends to discourage civil war. The period immediately following the removal of Morsi suggested that the Brotherhood leadership might at least support a possible limited struggle. Months later, the Muslim Brotherhood still shows no inclination to join in the political process, and is subject to repression by the army. Its classification as a terrorist organization makes it an enemy of the regime, forces it to continue its conflict with the army, and does not allow it to take part in the political process. In several respects, these measures are also putting Egypt back where it was during Mubarak's rule. Internal security measures were stepped up in the second half of 2013, and in November, the president signed a law limiting the freedom to protest and giving the police and the security forces the authority to disperse demonstrations by force, if necessary.

Alternatively, the Brotherhood might agree to take part in the political process. From its standpoint, this scenario is also difficult, because it requires acceptance of its loss of power after having been in the government. The distrust between the Brotherhood and the army will not help them achieve such a settlement.[7] This scenario is liable to require the army and the liberal camp to make substantive concessions to the Brotherhood, regarding both government participation and the constitution. Such a scenario is not impossible, however, if it is perceived as the sole alternative to violent escalation on a major scale. The fact is that the al-Nur Salafi party has

decided to take part in the committee on drafting a constitution, and some Brotherhood members also favor participation in the political process.

Whether Egypt becomes involved in a violent struggle at some level, or whether a political process develops with the Brotherhood's participation, the internal struggle and instability in the country will probably continue for a long time, perhaps years, during which more twists and turns are possible. Over these years the army will likely continue to be the leading and most important element in the government, which will try to maintain stability in Egypt under the leadership of a military figure, for example Minister of Defense el-Sisi – like the three military figures who led Egypt during the 60 years before 2011. A military regime, however, will also face severe problems. It will have to find a solution to the same problems that led to the downfall of the Mubarak regime and the end of Morsi's rule. It will have to deal with the Brotherhood's power base, and certainly with those turning to violence. Those who are currently siding with the army – the liberal groups and the masses in the streets – also have interests that differ from those of the army. They wanted the army to get rid of Morsi and the Brotherhood, but they want an open political system, not a return to the Mubarak regime's oppression. Widespread use of force by the army will make it a target for criticism.

Does the experience of the past three years indicate that Egypt is making progress toward democracy? The presidential and parliamentary elections in 2011 and 2012 reflected, at least in part, the people's free will. Events in 2012-2013 showed, however, that in several respects, Egypt, like other Arab countries, still lacks important elements of a full democratic process. The main political forces in Egypt – the Brotherhood, the army, and most of the liberal groups – are not democratic in the Western sense of the term. The democratic process was very important to the Brotherhood for the purpose of gaining power through victory in the elections, which it achieved primarily through its organizational capability and strong motivation. After gaining power, however, it had insufficient regard for key democratic values: the subordination of religious law to the constitution, full equality for women and religious minorities, rights for other minorities, and freedom of religion and thought. By its nature, the army will likely not attribute enough significance to democratic values. Even the liberal

groups, however, accepted the army's use of force against the Brotherhood and a halt in the democratic process when it served their interests.[8]

This shortcoming illustrates a more general phenomenon. Democracy was not introduced in Egypt over time in a bottom-up process, with free elections being an important but not the sole value. When other essential values are lacking or defective, the result is a rapid and partial democratic process that is liable to lead to instability, an absence of checks and balances, a government in which the winner uses anti-democratic means, and repression of the opposition. These significant drawbacks are even more pronounced in Arab countries in which no real democratic tradition exists, political Islam bears important weight, and tribal and ethnic loyalties play a significant role. For these reasons, when pressed by the American administration to open the political system, Mubarak repeatedly stated that the US did not understand the Arab world, and that Egyptian and Arab society was not yet ready for democracy. This does not mean that a democratic regime cannot develop in Egypt, but a more reasonable assumption is that this will happen gradually, if at all, over a long period of time, when a national consensus on shaping key values is achieved.

Regional Consequences

Egypt is currently undergoing systemic change, with the final result uncertain. It is fairly clear that the concentration of power in the hands of the Muslim Brotherhood has at this stage dissipated, following the army's intervention and pressure from the masses, and the movement will likely not succeed in returning to power in Egypt. It is unclear, however, whether this will lead to the Brotherhood's inclusion in the political process together with other groups, or to an outbreak of violence, whether on a major or limited scale. It is also unclear how long the army will continue to play the key role in the political system – probably at least until the internal upheaval settles down, a process that will likely take considerable time.

The blow suffered by the Brotherhood stands to have substantive consequences beyond Egypt's borders. The Muslim Brotherhood is considered the parent movement of the Islamic organizations in the Arab world. Its failure in an important country like Egypt is likely to affect Islamic organizations in other Arab countries, such as Tunisia and Jordan,

where they are struggling against the current or previous regimes and against liberal groups. The Brotherhood's failure to govern successfully in Egypt and unite organizations and communities outside the circle of supporters behind them, and the rapidity with which it was ousted from power, can serve as an example and encourage groups combating jihad organizations in the Arab world, proving that it is possible to deflect the onset of political Islam as the next dominant political force.

The coup in Egypt has also had a negative impact on Hamas, whose relations with Syria, Iran, and Hizbollah have experienced a downturn over the past year. Even when the Brotherhood was in power, friction and tension between Hamas and the Egyptian government emerged, primarily concerning security and economic issues involving the border between the Gaza Strip and Sinai. These disagreements, however, paled next to the fact that the Brotherhood was the parent movement and ideological prop for Hamas, and provided basic sympathy and support from the Egyptian government. As security problems in Sinai grew and Egyptian control there loosened following the coup against Morsi, the Egyptian army increased its pressure on Hamas. The army embarked on a large scale campaign to close the smuggling and trading tunnels on the border of the Gaza Strip, and intensified its supervision of the movement of Gazan residents into Egypt as part of its efforts to strengthen its control of Sinai. The army regards Hamas as a questionable and even hostile factor from a security standpoint, due to its ties with the Brotherhood and jihad groups, and threatened to use force against the Gaza Strip if Hamas does not rein in its activity in Sinai.

Iran is also among those harmed by the coup in Egypt. The Brotherhood regime did not fulfill expectations by complying with calls in Egypt to renew diplomatic relations between the two countries, particularly following an exchange of unofficial visits between the two presidents. Yet the Brotherhood's downfall thwarted Iran's hopes on other levels as well: a regional Islamic awakening, a Shiite-Sunni rapprochement, a strengthening of the Islamic element in the Arab world at the expense of the nationalist element, and a weakening of the axis of moderate countries, especially the connection between Egypt and Saudi Arabia. At the same time, Morsi's fall from power had positive aspects for Iran: Iran objected

to Morsi's outspoken criticism of Assad, and the crisis in relations between the military regime in Egypt and Hamas may well push Hamas back into the arms of Iran. Overall, however, the coup in Egypt tends to work against Iran's interests. The Egyptian leadership has made it clear that an improvement in its relations with Iran requires measures that take the security of Egypt and the Arab countries into account, and this has not yet occurred.

The change emerging in Egypt's relations with the major powers should be added to this picture. Since early 2011, Egypt's relations with the American administration have been tense, following what Egypt perceived as intervention in Egypt's internal affairs, once the Obama administration urged Mubarak to give up power, even before he was overthrown. It continued after the administration expressed dismay at the army's deposing of Morsi, claiming that the army had overthrown a democratically elected regime. This tension reached a peak after the administration suspended some of its military aid to Egypt, including the supply of F-16 warplanes, Apache helicopters, air defense systems, and anti-tank missiles. For its part, Egypt complained that American policy was ignoring the fact that even if the Morsi administration was democratically elected, it had behaved undemocratically, and that millions of Egyptians had demanded its ouster.

Russia was quick to take advantage of the crisis in US-Egypt relations, following its own 40-year rift in military relations with Egypt. In November 2013, Russia's Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Defense jointly visited Egypt for talks with their Egyptian counterparts. In their discussions, the parties agreed to hold joint maneuvers in anti-terrorism warfare and anti-piracy measures, enhance cooperation between their air forces and navies, and expand their economic cooperation. Even more important, according to open sources, Russia offered Egypt a major arms deal worth $2-4 billion that would include MiG-29 warplanes, combat helicopters, air defense systems, and anti-tank missiles, as well as an upgrading of the obsolete weapon systems supplied to Egypt by the Soviet Union over 40 years ago.

Egypt's rapprochement with Russia clearly resulted from Cairo's wish to stress its dissatisfaction with the US administration's intervention in internal Egyptian affairs, principally the suspension of some US military aid. In this way, Egypt sought to show that it was not in the administration's

pocket, and that it had alternatives to its ties with the US, including in the supply of weapons. In this respect, the Russian ministers' visit to Egypt constituted an important change in relations between Egypt and Russia. So far the joint maneuvers in anti-terrorism warfare are not a breakthrough, and the large scale weapons transaction is apparently a Russian offer that Egypt has yet to accept. Furthermore, Egypt has had close ties with the US since 1980 and needs American aid, for which has no alternative; it will therefore be in no hurry to burn its bridges. If the American administration does not repair the breach between the two countries, however, Egypt's rapprochement with Russia is liable to acquire additional momentum, including in the military sphere.

Ramifications for Israel

The Brotherhood government made no significant changes in Egypt's relations with Israel, and no material worsening in relations took place. The Brotherhood's basic attitude toward Israel was hostile, however, and some of its leaders denied Israel's right to exist and regarded it as an enemy. Relations were cut back to a minimum that was consistent with Egypt's interests, mainly military coordination. The coup in Egypt did not put sympathizers with Israel in power, but it removed from office people who objected to relations with Israel for ideological reasons. The army recognizes that tightening cooperation and coordination with Israel benefits Egypt, and a broader view of the two countries' common interests, principally in the security sphere, began to prevail. The result was that Israel tried to help Egypt strengthen its control of Sinai, in part through an expanded Egyptian military presence in Sinai beyond what was stipulated in the Israeli-Egyptian peace treaty. Israel has reportedly been assisting Egyptian military operations in Sinai against jihad strongholds. In another area, Israel is trying to promote understanding of the Egyptian viewpoint in Washington in order to avoid disruption of the new Egyptian regime's relations with the US. All in all, there is no doubt that Israel is one of the main beneficiaries of the regime change in Egypt.

Notes

1 Carrie Rosefsky Wickman, "The Muslim Brotherhood after Morsi," *Foreign Affairs*, July 11, 2013, http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/139571/carrie-rosefsky-wickham/the-muslim-brotherhood-after-morsi; "Egypt: From Transition to Coup," *Strategic Strategies*, September 13, 2013, pp. 190-97, http://dx.doi.rg/10.1080/04597230.2013.830462.

2 Efraim Chalamish, "Egypt's Economic Options: The Need for an Outward Strategy," *INSS Insight* No. 454, August 8, 2013.

3 Mohammed Shuman, "Post-Brotherhood Egypt: Five Observations," *al-Monitor*, September 11, 2013, http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/politics/2013/09/criticism-of-post-brotherhood-rule.html.

4 Asher Susser, "Egypt after Morsi's Ouster: Democracy without Democrats?" *Tel Aviv Notes* 7, Special Edition no. 3, August 15, 2013.

5 "Egypt: From Transition to Coup."

6 Ehud Yaari, "Deterioration in the Sinai," *Policy Analysis*, Washington Institute for Near East Policy, July 11, 2013; Jeremy Sharp, *Egypt in Crisis: Issues for Congress*, Congressional Research Service, September 12, 2013; interview with IDF Southern Front Commander Sami Turgeman, *Israel HaYom*, September 4, 2013.

7 Jacques Neria, "Egypt after Morsi: The Defeat of Political Islam?" *Jerusalem Issue Briefs* 13, no. 19, July 12, 2013.

8 Susser, "Egypt after Morsi's Ouster."