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ISLAMIC CIVIL WAR COMES TO BANKRUPT EGYPT, AS HAPLESS U.S. “POLICY” IS EXPOSED AS BATHETIC

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AT LAST, SECRET OBAMA MIDDLE EAST POLICY REVEALED, NO KIDDING

Barry Rubin

[Jewish Press, July 9, 2013](#)

A statement by two National Security Council senior staff members has revealed the inner thinking of President Barack Obama. It is of incredible importance and I plead with you to read it. If you do you will comprehend fully what’s going on with U.S. foreign policy. Egypt, Egypt, Egypt... There are more words written about this event than demonstrators in Tahrir Square. But, to quote a recent secretary of state on Benghazi, what difference does it make? A great deal indeed.

First, let’s remember that in the face of advancing totalitarianism in the Middle East, U.S. policy completely y failed. Imagine, if you wish, what would have happened with the Nazis without Winston Churchill and Great Britain in the 1940s. The U.S. government of this day was not only ready to leave Middle Easterners to their fate; it even sided with their actual or potential oppressors.

So who has been waging the battle meanwhile? The people of Iran and Turkey, who have not won because in part the United States failed to encourage the former and did not encourage the Turkish army to do what the Egyptian army did do; the embattled Tunisian and Lebanese anti-Islamists; the Saudis (at times) and the

Persian Gulf Arabs (except for Qatar) and Jordan. Oh yes, and also Israel the most slandered and falsely reviled country on earth.

Second, the Benghazi affair was the model of the Obama Administration worldview: If you allow a video insulting Muslims, four American officials will be killed. If you support the overthrow of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, thousands of Americans might die. This is the result of placing not politics but counter-terrorism in command. And this leads to... Barack Obama's Big Decision

Is President Obama going to come down on the side of the Islamist ex-regime, remember this includes the Salafists in objective terms, or the new regime? What a remarkable irony that Obama endlessly apologized for past U.S. support for dictators and ended up adding a new chapter to that history and heightened anti-Americanism! Remember that one of his last conversations with ex-President Muhammad al-Mursi,

Obama told him that he still regarded him as the democratically elected president of Egypt. Of course, Obama will have to end up recognizing the new government. The question is how much and how long he will resist that? It is pitiful to know that the best possible result is that he will accept the rulers in Cairo and continue the economic aid. In fact, he should increase it. We should not be talking punishment for the coup but in fact a rich reward, to show others which way the wind blows.

Specifically, U.S. diplomats were urging a deal: a coalition government in Egypt in which the Brotherhood has part of the power. You can imagine how well that would work and how grateful the Brotherhood (much less the Salafists) and their opponents will be to Obama for proposing they surrender. So in other words, the army, the former opposition, and the Islamists—in short, all of the Egyptian people no matter which side they are on, will see America as their enemy.

And will Obama learn more lessons from this situation? Will he stop seeking to install a regime in Syria that is worse than Mursi's? Will he increase support for the real Iranian, Turkish, and Lebanese oppositions? Will he recognize the true strategic realities of Israel and stop seeking to install a regime like Mursi's in the territories captured by Israel in 1967 (I refer here to Hamas, not the Palestinian Authority which might well give way to Hamas after a state would be established?)

So far though, it looks like Obama is determined to be the protector of oppressive dictatorship in Egypt. Isn't that what Obama complained about what previous presidents had done? The Obama Administration has called on Egyptian leaders to pursue, "A transparent political process that is inclusive of all parties and groups," including "avoiding any arbitrary arrests of Mursi and his supporters," Bernadette Meehan, a spokeswoman for the National Security Council, said July 4 in a statement.

I don't recall such a statement being made in criticism of the Mursi regime. According to Bloomberg News, "Two U.S. officials who asked not to be identified commenting on[Obama's]private communications—I assume it was really because they were too ashamed—said the administration is concerned that some in the military may want to provoke the violence and provide a rationale for crushing the movement once and for all."

Then comes a critical statement that explains Obama Middle East policy. Pay close attention to this: **“Such a move would fail and probably prompt a shift to al-Qaeda type terrorist tactics by extremists in the Islamist movement in Egypt and elsewhere, the U.S. officials said.”** What is this saying? Remember this is a White House policy statement for all practical purposes. That if the Muslim Brotherhood or perhaps the Salafists are denied power in Muslim-majority countries they cannot be defeated but that they will be radicalized so that they will launch September 11 style attacks on America. In other words, the United States must surrender and betray its allies or else it faces disaster. This is called surrender and appeasement. And, besides, such a move would fail. There is a coherent Obama policy. Inquire no more, that is it. And that's why, for example, it wants the Turkish and Egyptian armies to accept an Islamist regime; and Syria for getting one, too; and Israel making whatever risks or concessions required to end the conflict right away no matter what the consequences. American officials say that the actually illusory demographic issue—which is simply nonsense—means that Israel better make the best deal possible now.

American allies cannot win and if they try they'll just make the Islamists angrier. The White House, it is forgotten now, even wanted to overthrow the pro-American regime in Bahrain and might have helped them replace it if the Saudis hadn't stopped them. I am not joking. I wish I were.

Remember what the two NSC staffers said, in representing Obama policy because they deserve and may well go down in history: "Such a move [fighting the Islamists in Egypt would fail and probably prompt a shift to al-Qaeda type terrorist tactics by extremists in the Islamist movement in Egypt and elsewhere."

The Obama administration, on the basis of the current CIA director John Brennan's Doctrine has given up the battle. The Muslim Brotherhood and the Salafists are holding the United States for ransom. The demand for releasing (which means not attacking) the United States is the Middle East.

Naturally, this is also involved in domestic politics since the Obama Administration will be largely judged by voters—including in the 2014 congressional elections—on whether they can prevent such (imaginary) attacks. The theme is consistent, just another way of protecting the American people while accumulating more votes. It should be emphasized that aside from everything else, this is a ridiculous U.S. strategy because the Brotherhood and Salafists haven't even thought of this tactic. This isn't just a surrender; it's a preemptive surrender.

ISLAM'S CIVIL WAR MOVES TO EGYPT

David P. Goldman

[Mid East Forum](#), July 8, 2013

The vicious crosswind ripping through Egyptian politics comes from the great Sunni-Shi'ite civil war now enveloping the Muslim world from the Hindu Kush to the Mediterranean. It took just two days for the interim government installed last week by Egypt's military to announce that Saudi Arabia and other Gulf States would provide emergency financing for the bankrupt Egyptian state. Egypt may not yet have a prime minister, but it does not really need a prime minister. It has a finance minister, though, and it badly needs a finance minister, especially one with a Rolodex in Riyadh.

As the *World Bulletin* website reported July 6:

"The Finance Ministry has intensified its contacts [with Gulf states] to stand on the volume of financial aid announced," caretaker Finance Minister Fayyad Abdel Moneim told the Anadolu Agency in a phone interview Saturday. Abdel Moneim spoke of contacts with Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), and Kuwait for urgent aid ... Defense Minister Abdel Fatah al-Sisi phoned Saudi King Abdullah bin Abdel Aziz and UAE President Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed al-Nahayyan yesterday on the latest developments in Egypt. King Abdullah was the first Arab and foreign leader to congratulate interim president Adly Mansour after his swearing-in ceremony.

Meanwhile, Egypt's central bank governor, Hisham Ramez, was on a plane to Abu Dhabi July 7 "to drum up badly need financial support", the *Financial Times* reported. The Saudis and the UAE had pledged, but not provided, US\$8 billion in loans to Egypt, because the Saudi monarchy hates and fears the Muslim Brotherhood as its would-be grave-digger. With the brothers out of power, things might be different. *The Saudi Gazette* wrote July 6:

Egypt may be able to count on more aid from two other rich Gulf States. Egypt "is in a much better position now to receive aid from Saudi Arabia and the UAE", said Citigroup regional economist Farouk Soussa. "Both Saudi Arabia and the UAE have promised significant financial aid to Egypt. It is more likely that Egypt will receive it now."

Media accounts ignored the big picture, and focused instead on the irrelevant figure of Mohamed al-Baradei, the Nobel Peace Prize winner whose appointment as prime minister in the interim government was first announced and then withdrawn on Saturday. It doesn't matter who sits in the Presidential Palace if the

country runs out of bread. Tiny Qatar had already expended a third of its foreign exchange reserves during the past year in loans to Egypt, which may explain why the eccentric emir was replaced in late June by his son. Only Saudi Arabia with its \$630 billion of cash reserves has the wherewithal to bridge Egypt's \$20 billion a year cash gap. With the country's energy supplies nearly exhausted and just two months' supply of imported wheat on hand, the victor in Cairo will be the Saudi party....

There wasn't before, there is not now, and there will not be in the future such a thing as democracy in Egypt. The now-humiliated Muslim Brotherhood is a Nazi-inspired totalitarian party carrying a crescent in place of a swastika. If Mohamed Morsi had remained in power, he would have turned Egypt into a North Korea on the Nile, a starvation state in which the ruling party rewards the quiescent with a few more calories.

The head of Egypt's armed forces, Field Marshal Abdel-Fatah al-Sisi, is not a democrat, but a dedicated Islamist whose wife is said to wear the full niqab body covering, according to Naval Postgraduate School professor Robert Springborg. "Islamic ideology penetrates Sisi's thinking about political and security matters," Springborg observes.

The question is not whether Islamism, but whose. Some Saudi commentators claim al-Sisi as their Islamist, for example Asharq al-Awsat columnist Hussein Shobokshi, who wrote July 7, "God has endowed al-Sisi with the Egyptians' love. In fact, al-Sisi brought a true legitimacy to Egypt, which will open the door to hope after a period of pointlessness, immaturity and distress. Al-Sisi will go down in history and has gained the love of people." The Saudi-funded Salafist (ultra-Islamist) Nour Party in Egypt backed the military coup, probably because it is Saudi-funded, while other Salafists took to the streets with the Muslim Brotherhood to oppose it. Again, none of this matters. The will of a people that cannot feed itself has little weight. Egypt is a banana republic without the bananas.

Whether Egypt slides into chaos or regains temporary stability under the military depends on what happens in the royal palace at Riyadh, not in Tahrir Square. It appears that the Saudis have embraced the military-backed government, whoever it turns out to include. It is conceivable that the Saudis vetoed the ascension of al-Baradei, hilariously described as a "liberal" in the major media. Al-Baradei is a slippery and unprincipled operator who did great damage to Western interests. As head of the International Atomic Energy Agency until 2009, the Egyptian diplomat repeatedly intervened to distort his own inspectors' reports about the progress of Iran's nuclear program. In effect, he acted as an Iranian agent of influence. The Saudis have more to fear from Iran than anyone else. Iran (as Michael Ledeen observes) is trying to subvert the Saudi regime through the Shi'ite minority in Eastern Province. If Riyadh did not blackball his nomination as prime minister, it should have.

There isn't going to be a war with Israel, as some commentators have offered. Israel is at worst a bystander and at best a de facto ally of the Saudis. The Saudi Wahabists hate Israel, to be sure, and would be happy if the Jewish State and all its inhabitants vanished tomorrow. But Israel presents no threat at all to Riyadh, while Iran represents an existential threat. The Saudis, we know from WikiLeaks, begged the United States to attack Iran, or to let Israel do so. The Egyptian military has no interest in losing another war with the Jewish state. It may not have enough diesel fuel to drive a division of tanks to the border....

The United States has less influence in the region than at any time since World War II, due to gross incompetence of the Obama administration as well as the Republican establishment. The Obama administration as well as Senators John McCain and Lindsey Graham courted the Muslim Brotherhood as a prospective vehicle for Muslim democracy, ignoring the catastrophic failure of the Egyptian economy as well as the totalitarian character of the Brotherhood.

Americans instinctively ask about any problem overseas, "Who are the good guys?" When told that there are no good guys, they go to see a different movie. There are no good guys in Egypt...only forces that coincide with American interests for reasons of their own. It is a gauge of American foreign policy incompetence that the medieval Saudi monarchy is a better guardian of American interests in Egypt for the time being than the United States itself.

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IT'S THE (EGYPTIAN) ECONOMY, STUPID

Evelyn Gordon

Jerusalem Post July 8, 2013

There's nothing Israel can do about the fragile situation in Egypt except beef up its forces in the south and be prepared to contain any spillover violence. But since it has no interest in yet another failed state on its borders, there's something very important it should be urging its Western allies to do: worry less about a new constitution and inclusive democratic processes and more about urgently reviving Egypt's economy. For without economic improvement, the best constitution in the world won't be able to stabilize the country.

To understand why, it's first important to understand what last week's popular revolution-cum-coup was really about. It wasn't an uprising by would-be liberal democrats infuriated at the Muslim Brotherhood's authoritarian, anti-democratic behavior in power: Though this behavior undoubtedly angered many Egyptians and played a role in driving them into the streets last week, for many, it was a secondary motive. Nor was this a coup by anti-democratic forces seeking to gain by force what they couldn't gain at the ballot box, though this motive, too, surely animated some of the estimated 14 million demonstrators. But for most, the motive was something much simpler: economic desperation.

That comes through clearly in the reportage of journalists who bothered to interview ordinary demonstrators rather than the Cairo elite. A small boat owner who used to earn his living taking tourists on Nile cruises, for instance, said he could no longer feed his children because tourist traffic had fallen so sharply. An unemployed engineer groused that "There's no construction in Egypt and no company is hiring workers." A Cairo street vendor who voted for the Brotherhood last year summarized the situation succinctly: "The city is dead. Dead. No work. No food."

People with no work and no food can't afford to wait for the next regularly scheduled election, no matter how perfect their constitution and how inclusive their democratic processes. True, the constitution the Muslim Brotherhood rammed through was far from perfect, and the government it led was far from inclusive. But had the economy been improving, both problems could have been solved through normal democratic processes: In a few years' time, new elections could have swept new forces into office, and they could have drafted and passed a new constitution.

Instead, the economy was tanking – both by objective standards (unemployment, foreign reserves, etc.) and by subjective ones: In an Egyptian poll taken last week, 63% of respondents said their standard of living had worsened over the last year, while only 13% reported an improvement. And in a country where nearly half the population lived under or just above the \$2-a-day poverty line on the eve of the 2011 revolution, the standard of living couldn't fall very far without people becoming desperate.

Thus to stabilize the country, the first step is arranging a massive infusion of economic aid. Fortunately, the Brotherhood's ouster makes this a reasonable goal: The countries most likely to be able to provide aid quickly are oil-rich Saudi Arabia and the other Gulf states, and all these countries (except Qatar) loathed the Muslim Brotherhood. But they have long had close ties with the Egyptian military, which is now de facto running the country.

The next step, however, is much harder: carrying out a long-range economic reform program that can ease some of the country's chronic problems. That means figuring out what needs to be done, rounding up donors both to finance the reforms and to provide aid that can cushion their effects on the population until the economy starts improving, and brow-beating the Egyptian government into actually implementing them.

All this may be impossible under any circumstances. But it will certainly be impossible if influential Western actors, especially in Washington, are more focused on a new constitution and inclusive democratic processes

than they are on fixing the economy – or too squeamish about “supporting a coup” to mobilize the necessary resources. The West only has so much influence, and it can’t afford to squander it on secondary issues.

One could argue that inclusive democratic processes would help promote economic reform – and sometimes, that’s true. But sometimes, democracy can actually hinder economic reform. Indeed, one reason the Muslim Brotherhood government refused to take steps that virtually every economist deemed essential, like eliminating the subsidies on staple products that eat up more than 28% of the government’s budget, is that these steps were widely unpopular....

None of the above is meant to minimize the importance of democracy; it’s a much better system than the alternatives. If Egypt could have both democracy and economic growth, that would clearly be preferable, and this should be the West’s ultimate goal.

But right now, the economy is much higher priority, so that’s where most of the effort must be directed. And if it comes to a choice, then yes, in Egypt right now, democracy should be sacrificed in favour of economic stabilization.... But if the economy doesn’t stabilize, no democracy has a prayer of lasting, and the dictatorship that follows could well be much worse than the military government now in place. After all, history has a precedent for that, too: Just remember what followed the economic meltdown of the Weimar Republic.

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Morsi Spurned Deals, Seeing Military as Tamed: David D. Kirkpatrick and Mayy El Sheikh, *New York Times*, July 6, 2013—As President Mohamed Morsi huddled in his guard’s quarters during his last hours as Egypt’s first elected leader, he received a call from an Arab foreign minister with a final offer to end a standoff with the country’s top generals.

Twelve Year-Old Explains Egyptian Crisis in Under Three Minutes: Brittany Ritell, *Jerusalem Post*, July 9, 2013
A video of a 12-year-old Egyptian boy named Ali Ahmed eloquently and passionately criticizing the last year of president Mohamed Morsi’s rule has become a YouTube sensation since going viral on Saturday. **YouTube video:**
<http://youtu.be/QeDm2PrNV1I>

Gaza Terrorists Infiltrate Sinai : Roi Kais, *Ynet News*, July 8, 2013—Dozens of members of terrorist groups affiliated with the Muslim Brotherhood have left the Gaza Strip headed to the Sinai Peninsula to fight the Egyptian army, Ynet has learned. The terrorists are taking part in the Muslim Brotherhood’s struggle against the ouster of President Mohamed Morsi. They had been taken part in battles in El-Arish over the weekend and attacked several Egyptian army posts.

Egyptian Fighting Squeezes the Gaza Strip: Linda Gradstein, *Jerusalem Post*, July 9, 2013—Shortage of cooking gas and fuel has considerably slowed life in the Palestinian enclave. Ahmed Abu Hamda, a journalist and producer in the Gaza Strip, had some work to do in the morning. But as happens frequently in Gaza, there was an electricity blackout because the area’s sole power plant is running low on fuel.

Egypt And Hamas Part Company: Neville Teller, *Eurasia Review*, July 9, 2013—Just two days after the overthrow of President Mohamed Morsi, the new interim government in Egypt closed the Rafah border crossing with the Gaza Strip indefinitely, and Nilesat – an Egyptian company that controls a number of Egyptian communications satellites – removed Hamas TV, Al-Quds, from the air.