

Egypt's 'color coup'

Written by Eric Walberg Эрик Вальберг/ Уолберг □□□□□ □□□□
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A new tactic has been added to the US democracy promotion arsenal, where 'color revolutions' are too difficult, and 'postmodern coups' fail.

The smoke is already clearing in the wake of Egypt's latest coup—the whodunnit and why. All traces of the post-2011 attempts to reform and clean up the corruption of the previous 40 years are systematically being erased. All appointees under Morsi are being replaced by military officials and old-guard Mubarakites. A state of emergency and trials by military courts are in place. Complete disregard for legal norms—presided over by the Mubarakite head of the Supreme Constitutional Court and interim President Adly Mansour—is the order of the day.

President Morsi is accused of conspiracy against Egypt—with the hapless Palestinians. The respected 70-year-old Muslim Brotherhood (MB) Supreme Guide Mohammed Badie is under arrest, and MB Secretary General Mohammed el-Beltagi, whose daughter Asmaa was murdered—shot in the back and chest—in hiding, themselves accused of murder. Documented murders, like the gassing and shooting of 36 Muslim Brotherhood prisoners in a truck this week by police, are ignored or applauded in the press and on TV, now safely back in the hands of Mubarakites, with no risk of censure (this passes for 'freedom of the press').

The horrendous death toll made President Obama squirm a bit, and cancel some F-16 fighter pilot sales. He even nixed the comradely joint "Bright Star" military exercises (what possible scenario could make US and Egyptian troops fight shoulder-to-shoulder?).

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Coup who's who

Pro-coup and anti-coup are finding unlikely bedfellows around the world: the coup is enthusiastically welcomed by the Saudi sheikhs, Israeli leaders, Syria's embattled Bashar al-Assad, and Iraq's lame duck Nouri al-Maliki (the latter two albeit fighting their own civil wars against Sunni fundamentalists). At the same time, Iran, Turkey, Europe, and, for the time being, the US, are lining up against it.

The latest anti-couplers include even some of the most pro-Zionist Zionists, not only "Bomb, bomb, bomb Iran" Senator John McCain (whose visit to Cairo last week to admonish coupmaker General Abdel Fattah el-Sisi was followed a few days later by the slaughter of thousands of MBers), but Brookings Institute neoconservative Robert Kagan, with his bipartisan Foreign Policy Initiative and Working Group on Egypt. Like McCain, he issued a statement shortly after the coup calling for suspending military and economic aid to Egypt. Kagan correctly argues that the paltry \$1.5 billion in US aid to the Egyptian military provides no real leverage. Why? Because the generals know that the Obama administration cannot afford to withdraw the aid, despite any 'threats'.

PNAC's coup strategies

Neither Kagan nor McCain is serious, of course. But why are they being holier-than-thou? Do they really care about thousands of peaceful Muslims being mowed down by US bullets? Kagan's motives must be read between the lines: "Suspending aid now is not merely a matter of principle or even of abiding by our own laws—although that ought to count for something. As a practical security matter, we may pay a heavy price down the road for our complicity—a whole new generation of Islamist fighters, some percentage of whom will turn to terrorism. The United States should acknowledge that Morsi failed utterly as Egypt's first freely elected president. But the reliance on military intervention rather than a political process to resolve crises severely threatens Egypt's progression to a stable democracy."

Yes, "Morsi failed utterly", though Kagan doesn't say why. It was because he never had a chance, having been reluctantly installed by the military following his election, in what was really just another coup, a 'postmodern' one, which on the surface gave Morsi the reins of office, but without any power to reign.

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Some background on Kagan, a devotee of Bush/ Cheney and founder of the Project for a New American Century (PNAC). On the eve of 9/11, PNAC's "Rebuilding America's Defenses: Strategy, Forces and Resources for a New Century" (2000) called for a "new Pearl Harbor" which would justify launching pre-emptive wars against nations "challenging our leadership" as "the US is the world's only superpower." In 2007, retired General Wesley Clark revealed that by 9/11, in addition to Afghanistan, the Pentagon already had plans to take down seven Muslim countries—Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Libya, Somalia, Sudan and Iran.

An important concurrent strategy to facilitate or preempt the need for such messy invasions was 'democracy promotion' and 'color revolutions', which are necessary when an anti-American government is popular and a direct invasion difficult. Groups like the US government-funded National Endowment for Democracy, International Republican Institute, and Freedom House, and their local spin-offs, created a wave of color revolutions in newly created 'nations' in the 2000s (Kyrgyzstan, Ukraine, Georgia, Serbia), by fomenting instability using young unemployed urban youth with cell phones to bring their societies to a halt, and instigating 'revolutions'.

They have advisers and financing from such as the head of Google Ideas Jared Cohen, who helped train digital activists of the Egyptian April 6th Youth Movement, and Google's billionaire boss and "Obama lackey" Eric Schmidt, who has "White House and State Department support and air cover. In reality, they are doing things the CIA cannot do," according to former State Department security official Fred Burton (courtesy of a 2007 Wikileaks).

Managing Egypt's coups

Kagan's 'Working Group on Egypt' does not want to invade Egypt, Israel's most important ally and neighbor, which would be far too messy. The intent from the 2000s on has been to promote a color revolution to shape an acceptable Egyptian government. Kagan's democracy-promotion works were active in the 25 January 2011 collapse of Mubarak's regime, and worked in the aftermath to promote western-friendly Egyptian NGOs, hoping that pro-West secularists would win in open elections—the classic color revolution.

Like the boy calling "Wolf!", Kagan also called for a suspension of aid to Egypt on 29 January 2011, "until the Egyptian government commits to free and fair elections and the transfer of power to a legitimate government." But things didn't go as planned—US funded NGOs

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promoting Washington's agenda were prosecuted, and elections, free of US interference, eventually were swept by the MB and Salafi. The 'Arab Spring' was turning into an 'Islamic Awakening'. Neither the Egyptian military nor the US could allow this unforeseen outcome.

Sisi graduated from the US Army War College in 2006, where he was indoctrinated with the PNAC line, while advising the need to cultivate "public support from religious leaders [who] can help build strong support for the establishment of democratic systems." He obviously agrees it's okay for the US to invade countries such as Afghanistan, Iraq and Iran, which challenge US leadership. Sisi likes the Saudis who have squared the circle, are faithful US allies and the model for acceptable "religious leaders". However, Egypt's MB were the long-standing respected Islamists and had to be given a chance following the collapse of the Mubarak order to see if they would be acceptable to Washington. When they started to deviate from the US-Saudi scenario, they had to be replaced.

The military cheered the opposition Tamarod movement on—no limits to *their* demonstrations—providing the pretext for the coup, employing standard Great Game tactics as used in Iran (1953), Brazil (1964) and Chile (1973). (Ironically, just this week the CIA finally admitted its role in Iran in 1953.) If Sisi had really been concerned with sustaining "the religious base, versus devaluing religion and creating instability" as he argued at the US Military College in 2006, he would have supported the reinstatement of parliament (disbanded on a technicality by his predecessor), made sure that MB officials and buildings were safe from arson and snipers, and certainly not have given a

carte blanche

to the subversion of the legitimate government by the Mubarakite old guard. By warning the opposition that they must work with the elected government, no Johnnie-come-lately Tamarod would have swamped the airwaves and streets, egged on by the Mubarakites; no gas shortages would have been orchestrated.

Mother America's liberals

Egypt has a well-ensconced pro-western elite, corrupt, extremely rich, and as events over the past two years prove beyond a doubt, vicious and unprincipled. When Morsi proved able to function despite the June 2012 postmodern coup, and refused to bow to this latest color revolution, it was necessary for Obama to give it a nudge. On 1 July, after the ultimatum of "Mother America" demanding Morsi resign, Washington finally sent word that the military takeover was about to begin. One of Morsi's aides texted: "Mother just told us that we will stop playing in one hour."

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Mother America now insists that all these revolutions/ coups should be relatively bloodless, in keeping with the New World Order principles of 'democracy' under a benign US hegemon. The US counts on the 'democracy promotion' chaos undermining the legitimate government, which is then unable to mobilize its supporters to defend it, and is easily overthrown 'by the popular will'. None of this worked in Egypt, and mass slaughter has meant that the neocon poster-boy Mohamed Elbaradei had to resign in disgrace after the killings (he will now be tried for "betrayal of trust"). But there are lots of unscrupulous liberals eager for the limelight.

Qatar analyst Larbi Sadiki asks in *Al-Jazeera*, "Who are these Arab liberals? Who amongst them has one iota of Mill or Locke's political creativity? They have an obsession with bombing Iran, bashing Islamists, and being bedfellows with the enemies of democracy. It's not their political rhetoric but their relationship with the generals of security forces and intelligence services that is cause for most concern. Instead of learning about constitutionalism or putting together theories about legal and democratic governance, they unfortunately seek satiation of their hedonism." Well, Larbi, in answer to your question, they are the new puppet rulers of Egypt (and Libya), and their friends in Tunisia and Syria are looking on longingly, waiting for their chance.

Egypt's future

Much like the old Communist International, Kagan and the 'democracy promoters' in Washington have created a "Capitalist International", according to Steven Weissman, to promote such liberals through 'democracy promotion', 'color revolutions' and now 'color coups'. The formula for the color coup: slap Sisi's wrists, paper over the massacre, and restore the safe Mubarakite order.

Kagan's tears over the fate of the likes of Asmaa are crocodile ones, intended to pressure the coupmakers into moving quickly to cover their tracks, though there is little room left for them to maneuver. The Haiti scenario where Jean-Bertrand Aristide was reinstated to carry out the last year of a lame duck presidency in 1994 is not possible now, given that the coupmakers would have to face the music for their crimes.

Pinochet was humiliated in the end, but died without facing the music. That is surely Sisi's worst-case scenario. He still has an ace, however threadbare: he could try to drape himself in

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Gamal Abdel-Nasser's nationalist cloak and turn to Russia-China for support. So the US will bite the bullet, and resign itself to a few more wintry decades subsidizing their Pinochet-on-the-Nile.

Washington must weigh the pros and cons of what follows carefully. It can't risk genuine elections in Egypt at this point. Will a frightened, weary Egypt accept phony elections, put hopes for a new, Islamic society on hold, and let their Pinochet govern with craven liberals as a cover, a la Islam Karimov in Uzbekistan? Can Egypt's dysfunctional economy be squeezed enough to keep the starving masses alive without jeopardizing either the Mubaraks or the Elbaradeis in their gated communities?

Egypt's new US Ambassador Robert Ford, with his experience in Iraq 2004–06, Algeria and Syria, is a clear sign that Obama will back the coupmakers with all the dirty tricks in the bag, including death squads, to maintain US hegemony in the region. Kagan can rest assured.

***A version of this appeared at <http://www.presstv.ir/detail/2013/08/22/319924/egypts-color-coup/>