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www.kcandassociates.org orders@kcandassociates.org
Kathleen Louise dePass Press Agent/Publicist .360.288.2652

Triste cosa es no tener amigos, pero más triste ha de ser no tener enemigos porque quién no tenga enemigos señal es de que no tiene talento que haga sombra, ni carácter que impresione, ni valor temido, ni honra de la que se murmure, ni bienes que se le codicien, ni cosa alguna que se le envidie. A sad thing it is to not have friends, but even sadder must it be not having any enemies; that a man should have no enemies is a sign that he has no talent to outshine others, nor character that inspires, nor valor that is feared, nor honor to be rumored, nor goods to be coveted, nor anything to be envied. -Jose Marti

From the desk of Craig B Hulet?

The Revenge of the Police State

Egyptian police arrest Muslim Brotherhood's top leader

Mrs. Lincoln's Egyptian Constitution

4 Reasons America's Still Funding Egyptian Military As They Slaughter Their Own People

Why does the U.S. fund Egypt's army as it commits human rights violations?



An Egyptian Apache helicopter flies over a crowd of pro-military demonstrators at Tahrir Square in Cairo on July 26. U.S. firms supply military hardware to the military, including the Apache helicopters. Ed Giles/Getty Images

Egypt's coup and the Saudi opposition
Gulf Islamist Dissent Over Egypt

Egyptian police arrest Muslim Brotherhood's top leader

The Egyptian police [detained](#) the Brotherhood's general guide, Mohamed Badie, from his apartment in Cairo's Nasr City early Tuesday. Badie has hidden from authorities since the military ordered his arrest in July, and is now expected to [stand trial](#) on August 25 charged with "incitement to murder." Alongside Badie, the military-backed government has arrested [hundreds of Brotherhood members](#), including ousted President Mohamed Morsi and top Brotherhood leader Khairat al-Shater. In response to Badie's arrest and the military's attempts to seriously weaken the Brotherhood, the organization projected resilience and [temporarily appointed](#) Mahmoud Ezzat, one of Badie's deputies, as the general guide. Senior Brotherhood leader Ahmed Akef [said](#) yesterday that Badie "is just one individual" among the millions who oppose the coup. Meanwhile, the continued detainment of Morsi, Egypt's first democratically elected leader, coincides with news of the [potential release](#) of deposed President Hosni Mubarak, signaling a dramatic reversal of events in Egypt. While the United States and European Union have backed away from the Egyptian government, Saudi Arabia and other Gulf states have promised [firm support](#) for Egypt's new leaders despite recent turmoil. On Monday, U.S. Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel [declared](#) that Washington's "ability to influence the outcome in Egypt is limited," and "it's up to the Egyptian people" to sort out their country's conditions.

Headlines

- The United Nations estimates that [at least 29,000 Syrians](#) have fled to Iraqi Kurdistan since Thursday, prompting local authorities to [set a quota](#) on daily refugee migration.
- European Union foreign ministers [will meet](#) on Wednesday to determine whether to suspend or continue EU aid to Egypt.
- An Egyptian court [will review a petition](#) for the release of Hosni Mubarak, submitted by his lawyer, on Wednesday.
- Israeli and Palestinian negotiators are set to meet for their [second round of peace talks](#) today after last week's secret talks were held in Jerusalem.
- The CIA [formally acknowledged](#) its role in instigating the 1953 coup against Iranian Prime Minister Mohammad Mossadeq.

Arguments & Analysis

['With Or Against Us'](#) (Sarah Carr, *Mada Masr*)

"It looks like we are heading towards media oppression that will be worse than under 2011. There is a public appetite for it, and the security bodies have apparently been given a green light to do as they please. Wars on terrorism rely on crude binaries: You are either with us or against us, and this is the constant message being relayed to us (Hegazy even said during the presser yesterday that Egypt is 'taking note of who is with it and who is against it'). Attempting to steer through the choppy mess that is Egypt at the moment with such a simplistic approach is disastrous, and is intended to reinforce the fiction that there are only two camps in the country. This is about bolstering the military regime's strength, and its strength is dependent on the creation of an equal and opposing force against which it must pit itself. The Brotherhood has

become its *raison d'être*: There is no other reason to justify its current position and current actions.

The Brotherhood has shown that it has access to arms. It has not condemned the church attacks in any meaningful way (and remember that Morsi oversaw an attack on a cathedral), raising suspicion that Morsi's supporters are involved in the attacks with the Brotherhood's tacit blessing. Is it a full-on terrorist organization?

The issue is that whether it is or not is not as important as the fact that the military needs it to be, and has deemed it so; and the media are not only being force fed this line, but are being forced to regurgitate it."

"But setting aside analyses of what the police could have done differently, it remains that the recent violence has only deepened people's reliance on the security state and will exempt politicians from devising solutions to political differences. With the increase in social conflict, particularly along sectarian lines, security services will once again regain their traditional role as an arbiter of these conflicts, as well as their license to employ abusive, repressive tactics. This sustained sense of insecurity will only steer Egypt away from real justice. With the empowerment of the security sector, there will be no reason or motivation to push for revolutionary demands for real reforms inside the policing establishment. It is also likely that the escalation in violence and the pro-security rhetoric that the state has been touting will make it difficult for political dissidents, who are equally opposed to the Muslim Brotherhood and the military, to employ street action.

In some ways, the MB's confrontational approach, wittingly or not, is handing back the coercive apparatus its license to kill and repress with impunity, but so are all those who are cheering on the security forces' crackdown against the Brotherhood. Many such voices have criticized Mohamed ElBaradie for resigning his post as vice president in the wake of the recent violence. But in reality there is no role for a politician in a state that is poised to pick a security solution in dealing with every pressing challenge.

As we confront the question of whether or not Egypt will witness the 'return' of the police of the Mubarak era, a number of critical questions arise, such as: Is there any revolutionary fervor left to resist this route? Or have revolutionary commitments been drained through all the blood and the failed attempts at establishing a democratic political order?"

4 Reasons America's Still Funding the Egyptian Military As They Slaughter Their Own People *Why does the U.S. fund Egypt's army as it commits human rights violations?*

August 20, 2013 As the Egyptian military brutally cracked down on the Muslim Brotherhood over the last week, the question coursing through the U.S. media was what America's response would be. Would the U.S. cut off aid to Egypt? Would the U.S. only curb economic aid? Or would the U.S. just take symbolic steps?

We've gotten some answers, but the overall response towards the Egyptian military's coup and violence remains unclear. The U.S. has reportedly curbed some economic aid, though that's only a fraction of the overall cash the U.S. gives to Egypt. The Obama administration announced a largely symbolic step in the wake of the killing of hundreds of people: the cancellation of joint military exercises.

As for the more important question of what the U.S. would do about its \$1.3 billion in annual military aid given to the Egyptian armed forces, the picture is muddled. Yesterday, *The Daily Beast's* Josh Rogin reported that the Obama administration had secretly suspended a portion of U.S. military aid in response to the Egyptian military takeover, according to Vermont Senator Patrick Leahy. Rogin reported that the U.S. was suspending the aid right now in accordance with U.S. law requiring that no aid be given to a government that came to power by way of a coup. So the U.S. is acting as if the Egyptian military's take over was a coup--which it was--while not publically saying so.

But the White House today denied the report. "We are reviewing all of our assistance to Egypt. No policy decisions have been made at this point regarding the remaining assistance," a National Security Council spokeswoman told *Yahoo! News*.

And even if Rogin's report was true, the key word is "temporary." The U.S. may have decided to suspend the aid for now--but it's likely that assistance would continue once the Egyptian military provides some democratic window dressing. Additionally, the reported suspension of aid only applies to the \$525 million that has yet to be disbursed this year--a small fraction of the overall \$1.3 billion the U.S. gives to the Egyptian military annually.

So it's business as usual. The U.S. continues to fund the Egyptian military while its killing opponents of the coup and Islamists. Why is that?

Here are 4 reasons why America funds the Egyptian military.

1. Israel

The flow of U.S. aid to Egypt began in 1979, when the Camp David peace treaty between Israel and Egypt was signed. The treaty, which ended years of acrimony between the two countries and barred any chance of a new war breaking out between them, has been kept stable because of U.S. aid to Egypt. As Harvard professor Stephen Walt has written, "the current level of U.S. aid to

Egypt and Israel is a bribe dating back to the 1979 Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty...Egypt got the money as a reward for making peace and realigning with the West.”

The benefits to both countries were great. Egypt got to build up its military and focus internally. Israel had the most powerful military in the region taken off the table as a threat as it continued to colonize the West Bank and Gaza. And more recently, Israel and Egypt have worked hand in hand to contain the threat posed to Israel from Hamas, the Islamist group that governs Gaza.

Currently there is little danger that, even with an aid cut-off, Egypt would go to war with Israel. While the Egyptian street is fiercely sympathetic to the Palestinian plight, the people running Egypt are not so stupid as to think a war with Israel would go swimmingly. Israel, though, does not want an aid cut-off because of threats posed to them from Islamist militants in the Sinai--and because a U.S. aid cut-off would send a message that America could use their purse strings to encourage better governance. Israel would not like that message, given their generous aid package as it abuses Palestinian human rights.

2. Suez Canal

The Suez Canal is one of Egypt’s most prized possessions, and it offers immense benefits to the U.S. The canal connects the Mediterranean and Red Seas, and it is a key passage for oil. It is a link for oil that passes through the canal on its way to Europe and the United States. In total, 4.5 percent of global oil supplies pass through the Suez Canal.

The Suez Canal is also used by the U.S. Navy on an expedited basis.

3. U.S. Power in the Middle East

Relatedly, the Suez Canal is also a key place where the U.S. projects force in the Middle East.

Egypt is a crucial military ally when it comes to the U.S. pursuing its war on terror. Egypt allows U.S. warplanes to fly over their territory when prosecuting the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. The Egyptian government under Hosni Mubarak also interrogated and tortured prisoners when the CIA handed off suspected terrorists to the government during its “extraordinary rendition” program.

And Egypt allows the U.S. military to train its forces on its territory.

4. Profits for U.S. Weapons Companies

The military aid the U.S. delivers to Egypt doesn't only benefit the Egyptian armed forces. It's also a crucial money-maker for U.S. weapons companies.

U.S. military aid to Egypt is what is known as Foreign Military Financing (FMF), where the U.S. gives Egypt money on the condition that the armed forces buy American weapons. So the U.S. money to Egypt effectively gets pumped back into the U.S. economy, providing jobs for Americans and profits for weapons companies.

Egypt has used FMF to buy American tanks, tear gas, guns and more. As Shana Marshall, a research fellow at the Crown Center for Middle East Studies at Brandeis University, wrote last year in *Foreign Policy*, the "the aid benefits a small and influential coterie of elites in both capitals. In the United States, the aid program provides a large and predictable source of demand for weapons exporters, while in Cairo, collaborative military production with U.S. firms help subsidize the army's commercial economic ventures."

The U.S. Defense Contractors That Benefit From Foreign Military Financing Aid To Egypt

August 19, 2013

For [decades](#), Egypt has been one of the largest recipients of U.S. foreign military aid, receiving everything from F-16s to tear gas grenades.

So who are the companies reaping the benefits?

Listed below are the 10 biggest [U.S. defense contracts](#) involving direct military aid to Egypt from 2009 to 2011, according to [The Institute for Southern Studies](#).

1. Lockheed Martin — \$259 million

In 2010, Lockheed Martin provided Egypt with 20 F-16s as well as night vision sensor systems for Apache helicopters. Lockheed Martin is the biggest beneficiary of U.S. government defense [contracts](#) — receiving a record \$36 billion in [2008](#).

Globally, Lockheed Martin is one of the largest defense contractors. Seventy-four percent of its revenues [come from military sales](#).

2. DRS Technologies — \$65.7 million

The U.S. Army contracted this U.S.-operated, Italian-owned military services company to provide vehicles, surveillance hardware and other resources to Egypt in December 2010.

3. L-3 Communication Ocean Systems — \$31.3 million

L-3 Communications provided the Egyptian government with a \$24.7 million sonar system and military [imaging equipment](#).

4. Deloitte Consulting — \$28.1 million

Deloitte, the world's second largest professional services firm, won a \$28.1 million Navy contract to provide planning and support for Egyptian aircraft programs.

5. Boeing — \$22.8 million

While most people know Boeing for its commercial [flights](#), it is also the second-largest [defense contractor](#) in the world.

Boeing won a \$22.5 million Army contract in 2010 to provide Egypt with 10 Apache helicopters. The Aerospace unit also received a contract to provide logistics support to Egypt.

6. Raytheon — \$31.6 million

The world's largest guided missiles provider gave Egypt and Turkey 178 Stinger missiles, missile launch systems and 264 months of [technical support](#) for the Hawk missile system.

7. AgustaWestland — \$17.3 million

AgustaWestland — also owned by the same Italian company that operates DRS Technologies — secured a contract to provide helicopter maintenance for the Egyptian government.

8. US Motor Works — \$14.5 million

US Motor Works landed a \$14.5 million contract in 2009 to provide engines and spare parts for the Egyptian Armament Authority.

9. Goodrich Corp. — \$10.8 million

The U.S. [Air Force](#) and Goodrich brokered a \$10.8 million contract to obtain and distribute reconnaissance systems for the F-16 jets the Egyptian air force uses.

10. Columbia Group — \$10.6 million

Columbia Group provides \$10.6 million worth of unmanned vehicle systems, along with [technical training](#), to the Egyptian navy.

The Revenge of the Police State

Aug 17 2013by [Wael Eskandar](#)



[14 August 2013, [security officer](#) firing tear gas on protesters as they attempt to escape the attacks by the security apparatus. Image originally posted to Flickr by tarek1991]

While the ongoing violence in Egypt has contributed to a state of confusion and polarization, one thing is certain: The biggest threat facing Egypt remains the return of the police state. More specifically, the threat concerns, not only the reconstitution of a police state, which never really left since Hosni Mubarak's ouster, but also the return of the implicit, if not overt, acceptance of the repressive practices of the coercive apparatus. In this respect, the current face-off between the state and the Muslim Brotherhood holds very damaging potential. Widespread anti-Muslim

Brotherhood sentiment is currently providing the state with legitimacy to use of force against the Brotherhood, and, in the future, a potential cover for using similar tactics against other dissidents as well.

There is a problem with the way security forces have violently dispersed the pro-Mohamed Morsi sit-ins, even with claims that both Nahda and Rabaa sit-ins were armed. Regardless of whether or not one agrees with the Muslim Brotherhood or with the objectives of the sit-ins, the murdering of over five hundred people goes against any sense of human decency and morality. The armed protesters' reported use of unarmed individuals as human shields is equally despicable and reprehensible. Beyond the serious moral considerations at hand, other problems persist.

The forced dispersal of Rabaa and Nahda marks a triumph of [security solutions](#) over political ones—a trend that characterized much of the Mubarak era. Security solutions rarely solve a problem without the support of a political course of action, which seems to be missing in our current context. There is no question that the Muslim Brotherhood leaders have a long history of poor negotiating behavior, showing extreme stubbornness, and failing to uphold their end of the bargain on many occasions, in [power](#) and in opposition. But this is exactly why dealing with them demands a politically savvy approach, instead of reliance on security solutions, which will only reinforce the Brotherhood's rigidity, not to mention the heavy human costs associated with such measures.

Instead, the military and its sponsored government chose a confrontational, security path. This path will only further empower the coercive apparatus without guaranteeing any results, in terms of political stability and social peace. As extremist groups are pushed into hiding, the security leaders will find excuses to employ intrusive [surveillance](#) measures, interrogate, torture, and abuse, all with zero transparency and accountability. Supporters of the crackdown among those who oppose the Brotherhood will gladly accept. Reinforcing this trend is the fact that the crackdown has apparently empowered radicalized elements among the supporters of the deposed president.

Some may say that the increasing influence of the security sector will only be limited to “counter-terrorism” and extremist Islamist groups that espouse violence. There are clear signs that this would not be the case. For example, immediately prior to the crackdown against the Muslim Brotherhood sit-ins, retired generals took control of governorships in an overwhelming majority of provinces. For many, this was a clear signal that the state has opted to “securitize” governance, and political files.

Additionally, those who believe that security sector will not overstep its boundaries clearly overlook the long history of the Egyptian state's meddling in political and private affairs in the name of counter-terrorism and national security. Given that rich history, we could safely conclude that today domestic [intelligence](#) agencies are quickly gaining a blank check to meddle in our affairs for the sake of national security. Soon Egyptians will be asked to support their government in whatever decisions it takes on the grounds that the government is at the frontlines of the fight against “violent Islamists.” Political dissidents of all orientations will be vulnerable to the accusation of being soft on “terrorism” or supportive of “radical Islamists.” Will anyone care in the confusing state of insecurity?

Egypt, in other words, is on a dangerous path. There are many reasons to believe that police forces will employ their brutal practices at Mubarak era rates. The policing establishment itself has not changed in any way, never reformed, and never held to account for its past crimes.

Minister of Interior Mohamed Ibrahim has even signaled that such a return is imminent, [pledging](#), "Security will be restored to this nation as if it was before January 25, and more." Tacit supporters of the security state will respond that there was no other way, that there was no room for negotiating with the Brotherhood, and that the forcible dispersal of the sit-ins was necessary.

Such a response, however, overlooks the major limitations of the security solution to the underlying problem, namely that calling on the police—unreformed and lacking the proper training—to resolve the standoff between the Brotherhood and the government is like asking a butcher to do a heart surgeon's job. Additionally, one could counter and ask: Was it necessary for the police to target unarmed civilians carrying cameras? Was it necessary for security forces to shoot at unarmed crowds? Was it necessary for the police to leave unprotected all the churches that suffered attacks in the aftermath of the sit-ins' dispersal?

But setting aside analyses of what the police could have done differently, it remains that the recent violence has only deepened people's reliance on the security state and will exempt politicians from devising solutions to political differences. With the increase in social conflict, particularly along sectarian lines, security services will once again regain their traditional role as an arbiter of these conflicts, as well as their license to employ abusive, repressive tactics. This sustained sense of insecurity will only steer Egypt away from real justice. With the empowerment of the security sector, there will be no reason or motivation to push for revolutionary demands for real reforms inside the policing establishment. It is also likely that the escalation in violence and the pro-security rhetoric that the state has been touting will make it difficult for political dissidents, who are equally opposed to the Muslim Brotherhood and the military, to employ street action.

In some ways, the MB's confrontational approach, wittingly or not, is handing back the coercive apparatus its license to kill and repress with impunity, but so are all those who are cheering on the security forces' crackdown against the Brotherhood. Many such voices have criticized Mohamed ElBaradie for resigning his post as vice president in the wake of the recent violence. But in reality there is no role for a politician in a state that is poised to pick a security solution in dealing with every pressing challenge.

As we confront the question of whether or not Egypt will witness the "return" of the police of the Mubarak era, a number of critical questions arise, such as: Is there any revolutionary fervor left to resist this route? Or have revolutionary commitments been drained through all the blood and the failed attempts at establishing a democratic political order?

Whether or not a new wave of revolutionary mobilization will emerge to push back against the growing power of the security state is an open question. But it is clear that the persistence of the confrontation between the state and the Muslim Brotherhood will only deepen the securitization of politics by reinforcing demands for security solutions. What it will take to reverse the return of the police state, which revolutionary activists have worked hard to resist, is uncertain. One could argue that the brutal injustices that the police are bent on committing will always make resistance structurally inevitable. But that suggests that reviving resistance will come at a high price, one that Khalid Said, Jika, Mohamed al-Guindy, and many others have paid.

Egypt's coup and the Saudi opposition

Posted By Madawi Al-Rasheed ■ Monday, August 19, 2013

It is ironic that a state claiming to rule according to Islamic principles, Saudi Arabia, fears the rise to **power** of Islamists -- both at home and in neighboring countries. One regional Islamist trend worries the Saudi leadership, the Muslim Brotherhood which has decided to engage in politics through elections and the democratic process.

Saudi legitimacy is based on an appropriation of Islamic symbols such as claims that "our constitution is the Quran" and the **application** of *sharia*. The Saudi leadership fears losing its unique Islamic credentials as Islamists in other countries reach power. It wants to remain the sole Islamic model in the Arab region. The possibility of neighboring states combining Islamist politics with democracy threatens the Saudi model and seriously **alarms** the Saudi state. The Saudi government made it clear that it does not accept the rule of Islamists in Egypt or elsewhere, for that matter. Riyadh had in the past coexisted and even cooperated and manipulated the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood but since September 11, 2001 it turned against them when deceased **Minister** of Interior Prince Nayef held the Muslim Brotherhood responsible for terrorism in Saudi Arabia.

Hours after General Abdel Fattah al-Sisi deposed Mohamed Morsi on July 3, King Abdullah congratulated the Egyptian interim government and promised \$5 billion in aid and subsidies, thus indicating his support for the change that led to removing the Muslim Brotherhood from power.

In a recent speech, King Abdullah clearly stated that he continues to back the Egyptian government in eradicating the dissent, chaos, and terrorism of those who threaten the security of Egypt, meaning the Muslim Brotherhood. Many Saudis were shocked especially after it transpired that hundreds of Egyptians were massacred in various squares in Cairo where Muslim Brotherhood supporters had been staging demonstrations and prolonged sit-ins.

While the demise of the Muslim Brotherhood had been a clear stated policy of the Saudi regime, the king's speech was mainly directed toward an internal audience, especially Saudi Islamists of all **shades**. This includes an amalgamation of Brotherhood sympathizers and others. Saudi Islamists encompass a Salafized version of the Brotherhood, not to mention militant Jihadis and those Jihadis who postpone Jihad until the right conditions are ready for launching it.

All share one agenda although they may differ over the strategy that allows them to achieve it, namely the establishment of an Islamic state in which an umma guided by the holy book rules itself, by implication a rejection of hereditary monarchical rule. While not all Saudi Islamists openly reject the monarchy, their goal implicitly undermines the Saudi state in its present configuration. A recent development among some Islamists clearly represents a shift from theorizing the duties of Muslims to calling for their rights, represented by calls for national political representation, independent judiciary, respect for human rights, and freedom of speech. This shift was invigorated by the 2011 Arab uprisings and subsequent elections in countries like Egypt and Tunisia that brought Islamists to power.

Saudi Islamists went through a euphoric mode praising democratic transformation and hoping that the winds of change will cross the Red Sea. Yet they were **not ready** to call for an uprising for fear of losing everything. The Egyptian coup and the recent massacres in Egypt demonstrated beyond doubt the might of security approaches to peaceful protest.

A divided Saudi public, sectarian differences, regional rivalries, and tribal fragmentation all mitigated against the emergence of a unified Saudi Islamist protest movement. The government absorbed some of the Islamists' euphoria when it moved its troops to Bahrain to suppress the peaceful protest movement in 2011. Moreover, Saudi full support for the Syrian uprising succeeded in deflating anger among Islamists as long as this uprising remained anchored in a sectarian discourse that depicts it as a struggle of pious Sunnis against heretical Alawis and Shiites.

Close to home, the Qatif demonstrations were God-sent, as they silenced open calls for change or democratization among the majority of Saudi Islamists. The regime deflated its own Islamists' agitations when it engaged with Shiite protesters in the oil rich Eastern province, killing more than 16 activists in the last two years. Many Islamists blamed the Shiites for the increased repression in the country, which they themselves have suffered.

The king's message was clear: zero tolerance for all those who use Islam to pursue political agendas, sort of an oxymoron in the Saudi context as the state itself had been manipulating, co-opting, and promoting Islam for agendas that are nothing but political. The foundation of the state itself is a process of instrumentalizing Islam to revive the Al-Saud control of vast territories,

under the pretext of purifying Arabia from blasphemy, innovation, and atheism. The Muslim Brotherhood and its likes appear to be latecomers to the project of politicizing Islam.

King Abdullah's message, supposedly meant for Egyptians, did not go unheeded among the many Saudi Islamists who abhorred their government's support for the Egyptian coup. Since July 3, they have turned into defenders of Morsi and the Brotherhood, issuing statements on social media condemning their own government for backing the coup. A small group of activists launched an online petition to gather signatures against the aid that had been promised to Egypt immediately after the coup. Following the circulation of the petition, a couple of veteran activists such as Mohsin al-Awaji were briefly detained while many other Islamists remain banned from travel, most famous is Sheikh Salman al-Awdah whose television program "you have Rights" was abruptly stopped on an Islamist independent television channel. The government is carefully watching the hyperactivity of Islamists and their statements on television and online, which have so far strongly condemned the Egyptian coup and their own government's unequivocal endorsement of General Sisi.

On Twitter, activists launched a hashtag clearly denouncing the king under the slogan "the king does not represent me." So far the government has not reacted to such provocation. In fact, it may prefer to keep tweets going until they materialize in action on the ground. It may also want to monitor tweets and catch transgressors. A counter hashtag under the slogan "the king represents me" was immediately launched and the Saudi press reported that it was a great success, reflecting citizens' loyalty to their king and agreement with his policies. The virtual war remains heated in a country where freedom of speech is still lagging behind and the king is sacrosanct. Official media falls short of even debating Saudi support of the Egyptian coup and since June it has demonized the Muslim Brotherhood in banal and unjustified articles and commentaries.

The Saudi regime is gradually pursuing a media blackout on Islamists but if their activism moves from the virtual world to reality, it is likely that a mere royal speech will not be sufficient. More brutal measures will no doubt be applied. Egypt and its coup are regular reminders to Saudi audiences that might is always right. The Saudi Ministry of Interior has mastered the art of silencing peaceful activists who call for respect of human rights and has shown its might when

dispersing the small demonstrations that sprung up in various regions of the country. It stays firm when facing collective action of any kind, from sit-ins and strikes to demonstrations.

The impotence of the West and the international community that often celebrates democratic transitions vis a vis the massacres in Egypt over the last weeks will only convince Saudi Islamists that they will have to remain speechless at the moment. It is obvious that no one will come to rescue them should they engage in political change and incur the wrath of their government.

The Egyptian coup sent several messages to Saudi Islamists and their counterparts in other parts of the Gulf region, the most important one is never to trust the ballot box. This will have serious consequences in the future and may well revive the old strategies of violence as the only mechanism to pursue goals.

Saudi contribution to the demise of the Muslim Brotherhood will always be remembered by the country's activists as a betrayal of Islam, a view that has already been voiced by many Islamists whose government prefers they remain speechless.

Madawi Al-Rasheed is visiting professor at The Middle East Centre at London School of Economics and Political Science and Research Fellow at Open Society Foundation.

Gulf Islamist Dissent Over Egypt

Posted By [Marc Lynch](#) ■ Sunday, August 18, 2013





King Abdullah of Saudi Arabia issued an unusually rapid and **strong endorsement** of the Egyptian **military** crackdown on the Muslim Brotherhood's sit-ins, calling on all Arabs to unite behind a crackdown on terrorism, incitement, and disorder. Bahrain, the UAE, and Kuwait rapidly backed his stance. But many of the most popular and influential Saudi and Kuwaiti Islamist personalities disagreed vehemently and publicly. Indeed, a **popular hashtag quickly appeared** on Twitter: "King Abdullah's Speech Does Not Represent Me."

There is a long history of Islamists challenging official policy in Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, of course. But even if the uproar could quickly fade away or be absorbed into politics as usual, particularly if the violence dies down in Egypt, it's worth paying attention to the growing, intense public divide between these Islamist personalities and official policy over Egypt. Even more than domestic politics, the impact might be felt most strongly in Syria -- where the same voices now criticizing the support for Egypt's crackdown have been at the forefront of mobilizing public support for the Syrian opposition.

The most public backlash thus far came with Saudi Prince Waleed bin Talal's **sudden removal of the popular** Kuwaiti Islamist personality Tareq al-Suwaidan from al-Risala TV over his support for the Muslim Brotherhood and criticism of the Egyptian military coup. Waleed posted his **letter dismissing Suwaidan on Twitter**, with the terse declaration that "there is no place for any member of the Muslim Brotherhood in our group" and explaining that Suwaidan had "confessed to his membership in the terrorist Brotherhood movement."

Suwaidan was vocal indeed in his criticism of the crackdown, but he was hardly alone. The condemnation of Egypt's crackdown and of the official Gulf support extends across multiple Islamist networks and prominent personalities. The popular **Kuwaiti Islamist personality Nabil**

el-Awadhi, for instance, raged that "the blood of innocents is flowing in Egypt ... the murderers unleash their bullets without mercy and lay siege to mosques and burn them ... and they want you Muslims to watch in silence!" When the Saudi Abd al-Aziz Tarefe **tweeted** that "what is happening in Egypt is a war against Islam," he received 1584 retweets in 24 minutes.

When I started tweeting about these responses, a lot of Saudis quickly pointed me to Mohammed bin Nasir al-Suhaybani. Suhaybani had delivered a **sermon at the Prophet's Mosque in Medina denouncing the crackdown**, and arguing that whoever supported the coup bore the responsibility for the bloodshed and had God's curse upon them. The video, posted to **YouTube**, has received hundreds of thousands of views. His rapid banishment quickly generated a popular hashtag in his defense ("Shaykh Suhayban Represents Me") -- which resonated uneasily with the hashtag "King Abdullah's Words Do Not Represent Me."

Few have been more outspoken than the influential Saudi Islamist Salman al-Awda, who tweeted in English on **August 15**: "Whoever helps a murderer - whether by word, deed, financial support, or even a gesture of approval - is an accomplice. Whoever remains silent in the face of murder to safeguard his personal interests is an accessory to the crime." Surrounded by dozens of Arabic tweets blaming the Egyptian military for said crimes, the implications for the official Saudi position were difficult to miss. "It is clear who is driving Egypt to its destruction out of fear for their own selves," he tweeted. "I am with those whose blood is being shed and against those who are blindly going about killing people."

That seems to be in line with the most popular responses among the politicized Islamists of the Gulf. Examples abound. **Ibrahim Darwish**, in a video posted two days ago, was particularly incensed by the "monstrous crime" of Muslims killing Muslims. The Saudi professor Abd al-Aziz al-Abd al-Latif on **August 16** complained about the official framing: how could it be that "supporting the coup and **financing** butchers and traitors is not *fitna* and not terrorism and not intervention in the affairs of Egypt, but *fitna* is calling for the rights of the downtrodden?"

Another popular Islamist personality, Hajjaj al-Ajmi, declared "there is no doubt that the Gulf regimes participating in shedding the blood of Egyptians **deserve the curse of God**." Others were more careful in their criticism, or focused on the need to avoid bloodshed, but their sympathies seemed clear. Mohamed al-Arefe declared himself on **August 15** to be "with Egypt in my heart and my position and my preaching," calling on Egyptians to "avoid violence,

preserve the calm, do not wash blood with blood." A'idh al-Qarni pleaded for all sides to show restraint.

This public, intense Islamist anger over official policy toward Egypt could have domestic political ramifications, at least at the margins. The **co-optation of the *Sahwa* Islamist networks** was a key part of the Saudi survival strategy in the early days of the Arab uprisings. Key *sahwa* figures such as Salman al-Awda have been **increasingly critical**, however, as with his scathing open letter on the need for political reform released in March. The argument over Egypt may further push them apart. As for Kuwait, criticism over Egypt plays into its interminable political crisis, and will likely only intensify the existing polarization. After opposition movements including the Islamic Constitutional Movement **organized a protest** outside of Egypt's Embassy, a leading pro-government politician **warned ominously** against any sign of penetration by Egyptian Muslim Brothers. None of this is likely to lead to an uprising or the like, but it puts the monarchs in an unaccustomed defensive position.

The greater impact might be felt in Syria, however. These Islamist **networks and personalities** have been **instrumental in building support** and **raising money** for the various factions of the Syrian opposition. Now, they are prominently equating Egypt's General Abdel Fattah al-Sissi with Syria's President Bashar al-Assad. **Suwaidan**, for instance, proclaims that "the right is clearly with the revolutionaries in Syria and with those who adhere to legitimacy and reject the coup in Egypt." What will happen if the Islamist networks which have been working to support the Syrian opposition begin to turn their fundraising and mobilizational efforts to Egypt?

Mrs. Lincoln's Egyptian Constitution

Posted By Nathan J. Brown ■ Tuesday, August 20, 2013



Upon first reading the **short news item** in the highbrow daily *al-Shuruq* that the judicial committee drafting amendments to Egypt's 2012 constitution is completing its work, a reader would likely have felt satisfied that it answered the Egyptian equivalent of the American question, "And apart from that, Mrs. Lincoln, how did you enjoy the play?" With the number of killed entering four digits and a political atmosphere in which Islamists and security forces appear locked in a deadly battle; with an overheated public atmosphere in which adversaries appear caught in a spiral of outlandish conspiracy theories and dehumanization; with foreign journalists subject to verbal abuse and harassment and Christians subject to much worse -- with all this, what is the point of talking about constitutional reform? The contours of Egypt's political future seem starkly clear: an abusive security state, operating (at least for the short term) in an atmosphere of panicked public approval; an Islamist opposition increasingly alienated from the political process and willing to use thuggish force; and ongoing civil strife. What does the constitutional process have to do with this? Can it even continue under such circumstances? Can a constitution written in 2012 largely by people now decried as terrorists really be amended to serve Egypt in 2013? Isn't the new regime's "road map" to restore constitutional rule and elections superseded by recent events?

No it is not. The process is likely to continue and the political logic behind the road map remains quite robust. The reason is that it offers a way to concretize and institutionalize the current political arrangements. Worrisome as they might be, those arrangements remain ones that the dominant military, security, and civilian actors have every interest in entrenching. Egypt will have a constitution again, to be sure -- but it is one that will be a codification of the will of the current regime, like all of Egypt's past constitutions. And Egypt's international partners are therefore likely to be confronted soon with a regime that looks very much like the present one but can present a formal democratic face.

When I was last in Egypt in late June, **I described a country** that was poised for dueling mass protests, expecting violence, and openly discussing military intervention. I left with a strong sense of foreboding, not simply because of the expected clash but because of the shockingly hard attitudes that had settled in -- the country was rhetorically already in a state of civil war. Those fears were unfortunately vindicated by the political and human wreckage in the weeks since. Actual civil war is likely to be avoided but a prolonged period of civil strife, violent repression, and sectarian attacks has already commenced.

The road map announced by Defense Minister General Abdel Fattah al-Sisi when he deposed President Mohamed Morsi on July 3 -- and elaborated by acting President Adly Mansour on July 8 -- purports to provide a way to heal Egypt's political wounds. It almost certainly will not do that, but it is likely to go forward nonetheless. The victorious state institutions (military, security apparatus, and judiciary) and political forces (most non-Islamist parties) have every incentive to push it along. For the former it offers the opportunity to entrench their interests, avoid responsibility for the more difficult aspects of governance (such as service provision and economics) and put a civilian face on the regime. For the latter, it offers a way in from the cold of electoral defeat and political opposition that they suffered at Islamist hands.

Only two things loom as complicating factors. First, Salafi leaders are uneasily standing aloof, having acquiesced in the coup in an effort to rescue their favorite constitutional clauses. But it is not clear if any deal is possible that will satisfy them and the non-Islamist political actors at the same time. It is difficult to imagine non-Islamists agreeing to maintain the Islamic innovations in the 2012 constitution, but it was precisely those innovations that allowed Salafi leaders to endorse the document. Second, a presidential run by Sisi -- the subject of much speculation but

little concrete indication -- would make it more difficult to present the regime as a civilian one (except in the technical sense that it would likely be preceded by Sisi's formal departure from military service). Yet even such a candidacy would likely occur through the current road map for a political transition rather than by upending it.

The first step of the July road map -- revision of the 2012 constitution -- is already underway.

But **it is a tightly controlled process** that seems designed to make the new order permanent rather than renegotiate it. The first phase -- due to be completed today -- is to have a legal/judicial committee of experts draft a series of amendments. The committee has kept its work secret, it says, to avoid agitating the public that is to be governed by the document.

Those amendments will then be submitted **to a political committee of 50 officials** and political leaders appointed by the president. The committee has not been named, but its seats have been apportioned. Actual political party leaders will number only six, and they will be distributed in a manner that will not reflect any past electoral outcomes (with Islamists only getting two seats).

The various groups that are awarded a seat seem to have been promised a voice in choosing who represents them. However, the large number of officials (at least 11 will come from state bodies and many more will likely be state employees or come from officially-chartered syndicates and unions) -- and that the legal/judicial committee will remain in existence and seems to feel that it will have final say on the wording of the amendments -- suggest that this is a process in which, **even more than in 2012**, the **Egyptian state will be reconstituting itself** more than it will be constituted by the society.

The entire process seems based on the assumption that constitution drafting is primarily a technical and only secondarily a political process. Such an idea is an odd one in general, but it likely seems preposterous to anybody who followed the drafting in Egypt in 2012.

The process is likely to produce amendments that reflect the interests of those currently dominant. The military is likely to have its favorite provisions protected. Any constitutional mechanism for meaningful oversight of the security sector is likely to have to wait for Egypt's next constitution rather than this one. The judiciary is likely to have more robust protections -- ones that provide for stronger exemption from the political process (which may be healthy) but also render it even closer to self-perpetuating (which can be problematic over the long term).

When the drafting is done, Egyptians will be called to the polls three times. First, they will be asked to approve the amendments, and they will probably say yes (if precedent is any indication, they will vote on the entire group of amendments with a single yes or no ballot). Second, they will elect a parliament (likely a unicameral one, though that matter is subject to the amendment process). Third, they will elect a president.

At this point, Egypt has election laws that can govern the referendum and the presidential election; if those are deemed to need amending, changes can be made by decree. But there is no valid parliamentary election law, and here we come to a bizarre irony in the road map. Egypt's last parliamentary election law was struck down in 2012 by the country's Supreme Constitutional Court (SCC). The Islamist-dominated upper house of the parliament had been busily working on a new one and had submitted a third draft to the SCC (which, under the 2012 constitution had to review such laws) right before the body was disbanded. That draft looked much like the law on which the disbanded parliament was based, with a mixed party list and individual system, but districts were redrawn and other concessions to the SCC's strictures were made. On July 3, Sisi (in a statement later published in the country's Official Gazette and therefore implicitly a governing, quasi-constitutional document of some unspecified kind) called on the court to hurry its review of the draft. That review has not been completed, but if the law provides the basis for the upcoming parliamentary elections, the odd result will be that a law drafted by a body deemed unconstitutionally elected, populated by politicians from an Islamist movement now being hunted down, and denounced by Egypt's non-Islamist parties would be the basis for elections that bury the brief experiment with Islamist rule.

It is unclear what the results of those elections will be. The strongest electoral performer likely to be competing in those elections -- from the Salafi camp -- has no obvious challenger at present, though a few non-Islamist parties have at least a skeletal organization and the various pieces of the pre-2011 National Democratic Party could reemerge in various guises and coalitions. A very scattered parliament is likely to be the result.

As for the presidency, its tools might be whittled down constitutionally a bit in the amendments. Even in early 2013, courts had begun to **interpret its authority** a bit restrictively and, for all the charges of "Brotherhoodization" of the state, Morsi hardly seemed to be able to exert much

control over the military and security services. His successor -- unless he comes from those parts of the state -- is likely to fare no better. There will be large segments of the state (such as education and health) in which civilian politics can operate more fully, with the breakdown of presidential, cabinet, and parliamentary roles likely to emerge more clearly in practice. But significant areas will remain informally (and, with the military, more formally) beyond the reach of political oversight.

What is clear now is that Egypt's constitutional moment is over. The hope born in the 2011 uprising was that diverse political forces would come to an agreement on the rules of politics -- ones that would protect human rights, provide for a popular voice in governance, and devise mechanisms of accountability, and do such things in ways that were broadly accepted. That hope is not just dead; it was murdered by the country's feuding leaders. The question is no longer whether the current course is the wisest one for Egypt -- it almost certainly is not. But this is the choice that Egyptian leaders have made for each other.

The result, while it is based on a destruction of the hopes of 2011, is one that will have recognizably democratic elements (elections, a multiparty system, civilian leaders). It will likely establish itself as operational even if it does not provide full stability or social and political peace. Its actual working will enable rather than avoid repression. Egypt's international interlocutors in the West may have advised against this path, but they will have to decide soon whether or not to accept it. The current regime's insistence that this is a sovereign decision will make Western governments uncomfortable for now but they will likely ultimately accept it. They will still face the question of whether to treat it as a distasteful autocracy or a flawed but aspiring democracy -- or whether to bother to make the distinction. *Nathan J. Brown is professor of political science and international affairs at the George Washington University, non-resident senior associate at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, and author of **When Victory is Not an Option: Islamist Movements in Arab Politics** (Cornell University Press, 2012).*

Craig B Hulet was both speech writer and *Special Assistant* for *Special Projects* to Congressman Jack Metcalf (Retired); he has been a consultant to federal law enforcement DEA, ATF&E of Justice/Homeland Security for over 25 years; he has written four books on international relations and philosophy, his latest is *The Hydra of Carnage: Bush's Imperial War-making and the Rule of Law - An Analysis of the Objectives and Delusions of Empire*. He has appeared on over 12,000 hours of TV and Radio: *The History Channel* "De-Coded"; He is a regular on *Coast to Coast* AM w/ George Noory and Coffee Talk KBKW; CNN, C-Span ; European Television "American Dream" and The Arsenio Hall Show; he has written for *Soldier of Fortune Magazine*, *International Combat Arms*, *Financial Security Digest*, etc.; Hulet served in Vietnam 1969-70, 101st Airborne, C Troop 2/17th Air Cav and graduated 3rd in his class at *Aberdeen Proving Grounds Ordnance School* MOS 45J20 Weapons. He remains a paid analyst and consultant in various areas of geopolitical, business and security issues: terrorism and military affairs. Hulet lives in the ancient old growth *Quinault Rain Forest*.