

## **THE HANDSOME COUP**

Egyptians are a very romantic and humorous lot. Now that they have tasted some notion of western hypocritical democracy, they went ahead and elected a Moslem Brotherhood extremist as their president and within a year struck the street again to protest and prod the army to intervene and remove Morsi and to get the chance to play a Nasser-Sadat-Mubarek on the country once more. The West, which had sabotaged the results of a democratic election once before in Algeria to short-circuit Islamists and had advised Burundi's Buoya to prepare for a rigging (he was over confident, was beaten by the Hutu Ndayaye and the Tutsi officers had to stage a coup, kill the elected and reestablish the status quo) has now made ambivalent statements about the Egyptian coup that wants to call itself a non-coup, a handsome coup, a people's coup.

Political roadmaps by African (and Arab) military forces have most often spelled chaos and dictatorship and the lot of Egypt threatens to go along the same path of repression and civil conflict. The bloodshed has already begun. What was surprising, if not funny, was the reluctance to call the coup a coup. This is not totally new either. African coups have had the tendency to call themselves all names but the true one. Redemption, Accidental, Salvation, Restoration, people's movement, and more—anything but a clear and firm assertion of ladies and gentlemen, this is coup! At the bottom of the Egyptian ongoing crisis is the hard and harsh fact that the powers that be at the regional international level are not at all ready to accept the sovereignty of the people. Kissinger was more blunt when he insulted the Chilean people of being foolish for electing the socialist Salvador Allende and went on to arrogantly declare if they are foolish with their destiny we are not expected to fold our arms and watch them do it. As we all know Allende was overthrown by a CIA sponsored coup and the butcher Pinochet brought to power. The right wingers were not as hypocritical as today's self-declared democrats.

The popular Egyptian revolt was from the outset marred by foreign interference. Qatar and others in the region intervened to assure the takeover of power by the Islamists (as in Tunisia) while others tried to short circuit the struggle for democracy to serve their own interests. However, the election was not rigged and the unsavory Moslem Brotherhood and

Morsi came to power with the support of the majority even if it was a tiny majority. The development did not amuse the West and all those who rile against Islamists. The same people who support Islamic extremists in Syria and invade other countries (Mali, Libya, etc.) to fight, as they claim, other Islamic extremists. Searching for logic and commonsense in American and western politics is becoming as difficult as finding democracy in troublesome Qatar. The fall out of the military and covert moves has been disastrous. The invasion of Libya has led to the instability and war in western Africa, the so called war against terror in East Africa has buttressed the tyrants and weakened the democratic opposition, Iraq is a mess, Afghanistan a calamity and Obama labeled the Drone Killer. Now, Egypt is added to the list of the chaos, with a legitimate government that, loathed or abhorred, was legitimate. The intervention of the army, even on the side of the people for now, is illegal. Morsi did turn out to be bad leader, repressive and sectarian but the Brotherhood had never been a shining symbol of democracy and tolerance. We could say Morsi cut short his own rope while he did get help to finish himself off from the quarters that detested and could not bear his victory.

The so called road map is not that inviting, the likes of Baradei unappealing. It is already very clear that Morsi's followers are not going to accept his ouster. The Tahrir protesters are united in their determination to oust Morsi but are not on the same wavelength on what the democratic transition should entail. The confusion spells heightened civil conflict, repression and violence. The result of a democratic election has been negated in an undemocratic way. Once again the Egyptian military has stood in the way of a democratic process as Morsi, however detested by some part of the people, had won the election and should have finished his term. This is the essence of the matter and also the complexity of the issue. Are the majority and their decision to be respected? And who gave all those, local and foreign, who have a hand in the coup the right to derail the elected government? No party supported by a substantial part of the population can easily be wiped out by repression. The Moslem Brotherhood was victimized by Nasser, Sadat and Mubarek without losing its existence. Once again, it will use the martyr card to redeem itself and all this makes the outcome in Egypt very uncertain.

**The army and the West are actually saying to the people: go ahead and vote for whomever you want but it better be the party we support with a politics we can stomach. The FIS in Algeria and the Morsis in Egypt are not, alas, halal. Obama recently said, in Tanzania, governments that stifle the free press, trample on due process and the rule of law, throw dissidents into jail, practice repression are dictatorships that America would not support. The regime in Ethiopia is a good example of tyranny but Obama is on record assisting it, hailing it and militarily cooperating with it. Hypocrisy. Morsi is, like the people in Ethiopia, a choice victim. The army intervention in the political process is to be condemned however much we dislike the politics of the Moslem Brotherhood and Morsi. It does not bode well and can only hope for the best for the Egyptian people who have had the courage and determination to sustain a long protest and to reconquer the fruit of their revolution.**