

EGYPT UPDATE NUMBER 12



CHRONICLES OF THE CONTINUED EGYPTIAN REVOLUTION OF 25 JANUARY 2011

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RELIGIOUS AND SECURITY ISSUES

I. Introduction

1. In the past months, a number of important events occurred that will be influential in determining the path that post-revolution Egypt will take. On November 28th 2011, the polls opened for the first parliamentary elections since the January 25th revolution. Initial results show a resounding victory of Islamists political parties, most significantly the political arm of the Muslim Brotherhood, and the more conservative Salafist Al-Nour party. Participation levels in these elections, which proceeded peacefully, exceeded 60%, which was a record level by Egyptian standards. Meanwhile, Violent clashes between the police and protestors occurred in Tahrir Square and neighboring streets, and, at least partially as a result of these clashes, PM Essam Sharaf was dismissed from office. The Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF) announced that it would appoint Dr. Kamal al-Ganzoury, who had been PM under former President Mubarak, as PM of a national salvation government. Earlier in November, Deputy PM in the outgoing government had released a document of so-called supra-constitutional principles that, it was planned, would act as guiding principles to the drafters of the new constitution. This document drew severe criticism from a number of fronts, most prominently from the youth groups that had led the January uprising.
2. Meanwhile, since former President Hosny Mubarak's was forced resignation in February, the internal political and security situation continues to be unstable. The economy is deteriorating steadily and sectarian tensions have been on the rise between members of Egypt's Muslim-majority population and the Coptic Christian minority, which makes up about 9% to 11% of Egypt's population, with a major incident described below, which for the first time in the last half century, pitted the Army against Christian demonstrators.
3. Overall, the only two institutions that continue to sustain themselves at present are the military and judiciary. Their importance emanates from the fact that they are at present the two primary institutions in the country, and for that reason, they are the centre of public attention. The SCAF has both executive and legislative powers, while the judiciary undertakes the trials of former officials and their aides. The judiciary will also oversee the parliamentary elections, which started on 28 November 2011 and are scheduled to be completed over a 3-month period. Both the military and judiciary are extremely influential in the process of rebuilding Egypt as a modern and

democratic state. Both institutions are facing unprecedented challenges. The SCAF is being increasingly criticized, and the legal profession is challenging the judiciary.

II. The Supra-Constitutional Principles

4. One of the most divisive developments of the past months was the release of a document prepared by Deputy PM Al-Silmy that included principles dubbed supra-constitutional principles. The purpose of these principles is to guide the Constituent Assembly in its drafting of the new constitution of Egypt. Many political parties and revolutionary youth groups opposed this document and severely criticized the Deputy PM and the entire government for preparing and sponsoring it.
5. The primary reason for which these groups rejected the Al-Silmy was what appeared to be an attempt to include provisions in the new constitution that would essentially place the Army beyond complete civilian control. Specifically, article 9 of that document gave SCAF a veto over all legislation relating to the Armed Forces and also made it the sole authority in determining the budget of the military, which would be presented to parliament for approval as a single total figure in the overall State budget. This led many to conclude that the SCAF did not intend to submit the military to full civilian control, and that it was seeking to maintain the privileged status that the military enjoyed since the 1952 revolution.
6. Many political parties, especially those established following the revolution, also criticized the PM and the government for preparing and sponsoring such a document. In essence, this dissipated what remained of the confidence and popularity that PM Essam Sharaf enjoyed among those revolutionary forces and the public in general.

III. Revolution Redux

7. Partially in reaction to the al-Silmy Supra-constitutional principles document, protestors, primarily led by the revolutionary youth groups, took to the streets and reoccupied Tahrir square. The scenes in the square were, partially, reminiscent of the 18-days of demonstrations that led to the ouster of former President Hosny Mubarak. Thousands gathered in Tahrir Square to demand that SCAF cede power to a civilian-led salvation government. In response, the police used considerable force, which led to the killing of at least 40 people.
8. Other reasons for this newest eruption of protests included the complete loss of trust between the revolutionary youth and SCAF. The former have become convinced that the latter has usurped their revolution and are doubting its intentions to turn over power to a civilian elected government. This, in their opinion, is manifest in the

absence of a clear timetable for the transfer of power to a civilian government, and fear that the Army was manipulating the political scene to secure its privileged position in the future.

9. Furthermore, many political parties and revolutionary youth are concerned at what appears to be an alliance that has been forged between the Muslim Brotherhood and SCAF, which would prejudice the political process. According to this view, SCAF had entered into an agreement with the brotherhood, as the largest and most organized political actor, by which they would be granted the freedom to engage in political activity in return to ensuring that the Army's privileges are not questioned or threatened in the future. In addition, the continued prosecution of civilians, including bloggers and political activists before military courts continues to evoke harsh criticism from these revolutionary youth.
10. The demands expressed by the demonstrators varied, but at their center was the call on the military to relinquish power to a civilian authority. Various views on the modalities of this transfer of power were expressed. Some demanded the immediate transfer of power to a presidium composed of public officials and political leaders that are popular among the revolutionary youth, primarily former IAEA Director General Dr. Mohamed Elbaradie.



Figure 1 Frontline during the November 2011 Mohamed Mahmoud street battles. (Photo credit: Hossam el-Hamalawy).

11. The most serious development following the beginning of these protests was the violent clashes that occurred between demonstrators and both police and military units deployed in the area. Most of the confrontations occurred in the Mohamed Mahmud street that is adjacent to Tahrir Square. The exact circumstances and sequence of events surrounding these clashes

is not wholly clear. What is evident, however, is that the police and military units in the area used excessive force to confront protestors. This included the use of shotguns that were aimed at the eyes of protestors, which caused the loss of sight of many of

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them. In addition, the army allegedly used excessive force that led to the death of at least 30 protestors. YouTube videos showed military personnel throwing corpses of demonstrators who appear to have been shot by security forces being thrown in garbage canisters. These and other similar images of brutality against protestors enraged the public and increased the number of protestors. It also led to the appearance of the call to depose of the head of the SCAF, Field Marshal Hussein Tantawy.

12. Following these clashes and the increased public anger, Field Marshal Tantawy gave an address in which he affirmed the commitment of SCAF to transfer power to a civilian government. He also stressed that the military was willing to relinquish power immediately if the people demanded that through a popular referendum. The Field Marshal also announced that a president would be elected by 30 June 2012 at the latest. The military also expressed its regret and apologies for the deaths that occurred in Tahrir Square, and reaffirmed its position of not using force against Egyptian civilians. The Field Marshal also announced that the Essam Sharaf cabinet would resign.
13. The statement issued by the Field Marshal drew a mixed response. For the protestors in Tahrir, who by now were in control of the area and were staging a sit-in, the statement failed to satisfy their demands. They called for the immediate resignation of the Field Marshal and the transfer of power to a civilian presidium, many of whom felt should be headed by Dr. Mohamed Elbaradie. In addition, many of those in Tahrir called on the people to boycott the elections that were scheduled to begin on 28 November.
14. It is noteworthy that the events in Tahrir square reflected the occurrence of a significant split among the major political forces in Egypt. The Muslim Brotherhood, the most significant and best organized political actor, announced that it would not participate in these demonstrations, and that it would not support calls for the removal of SCAF. To many, this position confirmed their suspicions that the brotherhood had concluded a deal with SCAF by which the latter would be allowed to retain the privileges of the military in return for allowing the former to participate in politics fully. Others believed that the brotherhood's decision was the result of a political calculation in which they realized that if there were to participate in demonstrations that might lead to the delaying of parliamentary elections in which they are slated to achieve the greatest gains.
15. An assessment of this round of protests reveals that the protest movement has lost a lot of its support among the general population. Life in Cairo outside Tahrir square

and its immediate environs, and in other cities proceeded normally, and the number of protestors remained limited compared to that of the demonstrations that brought down Mubarak. More importantly, a number of polls undertaken both by local and international research centers revealed overwhelming support of the military among Egyptians. This is due to multiple factors. First, the military's decision to side with the revolution, regardless of the reasons and calculations, ensured that it was viewed as a military that was loyal to the people not the regime. Second, the public perception of the military is that it is not tainted by the corruption of the previous regime, and that it is a truly nationalist institution that only aims to serve the country. Third, this perception is fuelled and maintained by the state media apparatus, which exalts the military and touts it as the savior and protector of the nation. More importantly, the leading factor in the dwindling support for the protest movement in Tahrir square is the desire and longing harbored by most Egyptians for a return to normalcy, and a belief that the continued demonstrations have been detrimental to the economy, which remains at the top of the priorities of the vast majority of Egyptians.



Figure 2 Tens of thousands of Egyptians gather during a demonstration at Tahrir Square in Cairo, on November 18, 2011. (Photo credit: Reuters, Mohamed Abd El-Ghany).

IV. Dismissal of the Essam Sharaf Cabinet

16. Following these violent clashes and the deaths that occurred, and in an attempt to placate public anger, SCAF announced that it had accepted the resignation of PM Essam Sharaf and his government. It was also announced that Dr. Kamal El-Ganzoury would be appointed to lead a national salvation government. Dr. El-Ganzoury is a lifetime civil servant and held many government positions, including

governor, cabinet minister, and Prime Minister under former President Mubarak. It is rumored that he had fallen out with the erstwhile President, who dismissed him and issued informal orders that he be sidelined from the public.

17. This choice of a PM was not well received among many political parties, especially those revolutionary youth groups camped in Tahrir. For many, El-Ganzoury was not an acceptable figure due to his previous affiliation with the regime, and due to his age. He is currently 78 years old. Instead, many of the revolutionary youth are insisting on either the appointment of Dr. Mohamed Elbaradie or the appointment of a presidium of civilian politicians to replace SCAF.
18. Overall, the dismissal of the PM Essam Sharaf and his cabinet was welcomed by all actors across the political spectrum. It had been the unanimous agreed that this government had failed in many of the tasks for which had been appointed, primary among which is the restoration of security in the country. Also, many, especially among the revolutionary youth, felt that this government did enjoy the power and authorities that were required to achieve its objectives. The perception among many was that SCAF had appointed this government to act like a ‘punching-bag’ or lightning rod that would attract criticism, while SCAF, which is the real wielder of power, continues to pursue its interests in the background.

V. The First Post-Revolution Parliamentary Elections

19. November 28th 2011 was a historic day for Egypt. For the first time in decades, Egyptians exercised their right to choose their representatives in the national legislature in a free and fair election. The participation percentage was unprecedented, with an over 60% rate of participation of electors. These elections are divided into three stages, the first of which began on November 28th in 9 governorates, including Cairo.
20. What also made these elections remarkable was that Egyptians living abroad were allowed to cast their votes in Egyptians diplomatic and consular postings throughout the world. Egyptians were allowed to register online, and cast their votes for the districts in which they live in Egypt.
21. The final results of these elections will not be known until mid-January when all three stages of the elections are completed. The significance of these elections is that the parliament that will emerge from them will be responsible for selecting the constituent assembly that will draft the new Egyptian constitution. In addition, these

elections will reflect the true balance of power on the Egyptian political arena, and will reflect the relative weight and popularity of the major political players.

22. Political predictions are always a perilous endeavor. Nonetheless, it is possible to speculate about the results of these elections. It is likely that Islamist political parties will achieve the greatest political gains in these elections. The Freedom and Justice of the Muslim Brotherhood is the political party that is most likely to emerge as the leading bloc in parliament. The Islamic presence in the legislature will be further enhanced by the presence of more radical Islamist parties, such as the Alnour (The Light) party. The total percentage of this Islamist bloc is hard to estimate, but will most likely exceed 40% of the seats of parliament. The second largest group of legislators who will most likely be representatives of large and established families and clans. These are mostly centered in rural areas and southern governorates, where familial connections and allegiances are a central determinant of political outcomes. The third bloc will probably be composed of liberal, leftist, and centrist political parties. Some of these will be the older pre-revolution parties, such as Al-Wafd and Al-Wasat, and newer post-revolution parties, such as Al-Adl and Al-Masreyeen Al-Ahrar.

23. To date, only the preliminary results of the first round of elections have been announced. The outcome, as many expected, is a resounding victory of the Muslim Brotherhood and other Islamist parties. What was surprising is not



Figure 3 Voters queue outside a polling station in the Shubra district of Cairo on November 28, 2011. (Photo credit: Mohammed Hossam, AFP, Getty Images).

the Freedom and Justice Party that is affiliated with the brotherhood fared well, but that the ultra-conservative Salafist Nour party performed well and secured around 25% of seats in this first round of voting. Overall, Islamist political parties bagged around 60% of seats contested in this round. The pro-revolution groups fared poorly, while the newly established ‘Egyptian Kotla’

coalition of liberal parties led by billionaire Naguib Sawires seems to have attracted the support of the liberal and educated middle class.

24. Immediately after announcing the election results, the first signs of a rift between SCAF and the Muslim Brotherhood appeared. Leading members of the brotherhood started calling for a fully empowered parliament that would be able to appoint and dismiss the government. SCAF on the other hand insists that it will continue to exercise this power. Despite have rejected calls to participate in anti-SCAF demonstrations in Tahrir Square, the brotherhood might be looking to flex its muscle and wrest greater power from the military now that it enjoys the legitimacy of its electoral success.

VI. Religious Tensions

25. On Tuesday, October 4, 2011 the Copts organized a demonstration from Cairo's heavily Christian neighborhood district of Shoubra to Maspero. They chanted "Muslim, Christian, one hand" and expressed their desire to co-exist in a civil Egyptian society until the brutality of the army and police forces were unleashed against them. The army and police forces dispersed the protestors using excessive force. Despite the security crackdown, the peaceful protestors were determined to continue demonstrating for their rights. They then scheduled another march for Sunday, October 9, 2011 to demand that the military provide protection for Coptic places of worship. The demonstration was announced four days earlier and the authorities were aware of its route. The march, which reportedly comprised 10,000 Christians and Muslims, began from the neighborhood of Shoubra at 5pm and was scheduled to end at 8pm. The march was attacked at various stages along the route by unknown opposition. Some blamed thugs sent by the army, but there were also reports that people pelted protestors with rocks and glass from apartment buildings along the road. Eventually, the protestors were able to proceed to the Maspero area.
26. On Sunday, October 9, 2011, a shocking and disturbing confrontation pitted the Army against Coptic demonstrators who had rallied from several Cairo districts to the Corniche street to demonstrate outside the Radio and Television Building known as the Maspero area.¹ The demonstration came after the latest sit-in in Maspero by Christian Orthodox Egyptians protesting against the burning of a church in the village

¹ It is worth noting that since the January revolution, each political or religious faction has chosen what may be described as "a site of identification" for demonstration. The youth of the revolution continue to protest in Tahrir Square which was the epicenter of the revolution which they have led; pro-Mubarak or pro-stability protestors have chosen Roxy Square which is in the vicinity of the Presidential Palace; the Copts have chosen the Maspero area outside the Radio and Television Building; while those protesting for private interests have chosen to demonstrate outside the Cabinet building.

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of Marinab, in Edfu, in the Upper Egypt governorate of Aswan on September 30. These were peaceful demonstrators which criticized the government in a non-sectarian manner. This and other related demonstrations were not pitting Christians against Muslims. On the contrary, the enforced solidarity among Christians and Muslims.

27. At the request of the Minister of Information, who is charged with instigating a hate campaign against the Christians, State television reported that the Copts were attacking the army and called upon “loyal” and “respectful” Egyptian citizens to support the army “in protecting Egypt.” The tactics employed by state television accounted for the attacks by Muslims from neighboring areas and resonated in several other areas, adding fuel to an already tense situation. The state television statement caused widespread outrage because it was deemed to have incited hatred against the Coptic protestors and was responsible for many lives lost. The residents of adjacent district of Boulac, Abul Ela and merchants of the Sabteyya district joined the army in attacking the protestors. These merchants were negatively impacted by the recurring demonstrations and sit-ins at Corniche Street, which blocked the main street leading to their stores. The military police took it too far and invaded the Cairo studio of United States based al Hurra television channel during its live broadcast because army soldiers were looking for certain suspects.²
28. Arriving at their destination at Maspero, protestors were cordoned in by the Military Police who used wooden batons, and violence broke out. Demonstrators claimed that they were marching peacefully toward the Egyptian state television building when they were suddenly attacked by thugs in civilian garb who carried swords, clubs, sticks, machetes and stones. An Interior Ministry spokesman said that some protestors began firing live ammunition on the army. The January 25 Coalition of the Youth of the Revolution (“Youth Coalition”), which has been involved in various anti-government protests, including Sunday's demonstration, denied that any participants shot at the Egyptian forces. The army brutally cracked down on the protestors, shooting some in the head, and running over others by military vehicles while firing intense tear gas from the nearby October 6 Bridge. There were clashes between demonstrators and the police, which also took place on the October 6 Bridge. Both sides threw rocks back and forth. Waves of protestors gradually fell back while

² Al-Hurra is a United States-based Arabic-language satellite TV channel funded by the U.S. Congress that broadcasts news and current affairs programming to audiences in the Middle East and North Africa. Its stated mission is to provide "objective, accurate and relevant news and information" to its audience while seeking to "support democratic values" and "expand the spectrum of ideas, opinions, and perspectives" available in the region's media.

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military and police forces regained control of the area, forcefully pushing remaining protestors back towards Tahrir Square.

29. According to the Minister of Health, these clashes claimed the lives of 26 people while more than 270 people were injured. This was the highest death toll resulting from any clash between protestors and police or military forces since Mubarak stepped down on February 11, 2011. State television announced that army soldiers died in the clashes but later refuted the news justifying that the presenter was “nervous” when announcing the news. Bloggers and activists posed videos and pictures online showing protestors being run over by speeding military vehicles, including armored personnel carriers. The scenes were reminiscent of the same methods used by the police against protestors during the revolution last January.
30. Government and Coptic accounts of the event are significantly different. What was the reason for the casualties is yet to be determined. It remains subject to conflicting narratives, one of which is presented by the SCAF and the other by activists and the Coptic community. Coptic Pope Shenouda III responded by calling for prayers and fasting. This was a visible way of calling attention to the injustice. The Coptic Pope called the Maspero victims “martyrs” and refuted SCAF's account of the events. In his weekly sermon on Wednesday, October 12, 2011, the Pope refrained from his usual practice of answering questions posed by members of his congregation. A blog has been created to collect eyewitnesses’ testimonies about what happened on Sunday. The site is run by activists and independently aggregates the testimonies of those who witnessed the events firsthand. Testimonies from various people all say mainly the same thing: the military's narrative is false.
31. Hours following the clash, PM Essam Sharaf appeared on state television acknowledging the divisions and mounting security concerns. He said that the incident had produced “martyrs,” both civilian and military. In response to the clashes, a curfew from 2 am until 7 am was imposed in Tahrir Square and Downtown Cairo for an indefinite period. The next morning, PM Sharaf chaired an emergency Cabinet meeting promising a probe into what happened and vowing to ban all forms of discrimination based on religion, language, gender or ethnicity.
32. The PM posted on his Facebook page that: “What took place was not a confrontation between Muslims and Christians but an attempt to create chaos and ignite sectarian sedition, which is not fitting for the children of the nation who were and will remain ‘one hand’ against the powers of destruction and extremism. Application of the law is the ideal solution for all of Egypt’s problems. I urge all children of the nation who are keen for its future not to answer those who call for sectarian sedition. This is a

fire, which will consume us all without distinction. These are wise words. May they prove true especially now and in the days to come. God protect Egypt.”

33. In the aftermath of these clashes, popular demand calls increased for the dismissal of PM Sharaf. The PM has been described as “weak,” “incompetent” and accused of “having failed to promptly and adequately respond to the disaster.” Finance Minister Hazem al-Belawi announced his resignation from office. But the SCAF had another opinion, and decided to renew confidence in Sharaf and his Cabinet, a move that increased Egyptians' anger and frustration. The Finance Minister returned to work again.
34. After discussing Sunday’s deadly clashes, more than 13 major post-revolution political parties and groups called on the SCAF to relinquish executive power to a civilian authority and said that the SCAF has failed to administer the transitional period. In a joint statement, they suggested a number of measures to be adopted by a civilian transitional authority: (1) the prosecution of those responsible for the killing of protestors at Maspero, including Major-General Hamdi Badeen, head of military police; Aswan Governor Moustafa El-Sayad; Minister of Information Osama Haikel; and anyone else involved in the Maspero clash; (2) the purging of state media of anyone who participated in deceiving the public and hiding the truth about recent events at Maspero; (3) the abolition of the Ministry of Information; (4) the elimination of restrictive state regulations governing the media; (5) the resolution of longstanding Coptic grievances by passing legislation that unifies laws governing the construction of places of worship; (6) stiffening penalties for those found guilty of violating the sanctity of places of worship; and, (7) the prosecution of those guilty of involvement in past attacks on places of worship. The statement was signed by the Free Egyptian Movement; the Socialist Popular Alliance Party; the National Front for Justice and Democracy; the Youth for Justice and Freedom Movement; the Revolutionary Socialists; the Democratic Workers Party; the Popular Committees for the Defense of the Revolution; the Lotus Revolution Coalition; the April 6 Youth Movement (Democratic Front); the Beginning Movement; and the Egyptian Social Democratic Party.
35. The National Justice Committee established a fact-finding commission that will look into the incident and punish those responsible. It also set a two-week deadline to establish a framework for a law to mandate a uniform process for permitting and constructing houses of worship regardless of religious denomination. The committee also said the government will institute a law imposing jail time and a fine for anyone found guilty of discriminating against others based on religion, language, gender or ethnicity.

36. In a press conference on October 12, the SCAF denied that the army used live ammunition against protesters, however the army neither denied nor confirmed whether armored personnel carriers had run over protesters. It implied, however, that if this had happened, it would have been unintentional. In its press conference, the SCAF showed a timeline of the events which blamed the protestors for attacking the army using stones and Molotov cocktails and stated that the army responded by firing in the air.
37. The October 9 clash marks an escalation after months of rising sectarian tension between Muslims and the Coptic Christian minority. The destruction of the Merinab church only heightened emotions. Despite the fact that the clash took place between the Copts and the army and police, it is still being described as sectarian. The unprecedented harsh response from the army as well as rhetoric from anti-Coptic state media support this contention. The army's crackdown has raised the inevitable question: "Whose army is this?" Many political activists have commented that the SCAF's insensitivity toward the Copts signified that it was the "Muslims' army" only and not Egypt's army. Comments made by SCAF and the Government on these events followed the classic tone of alluding to "hidden hands" and "foreign agendas" aimed at disturbing the country's calm. This type of rhetoric has become unacceptable to Egyptians.
38. It is important to note that the phenomenon of the burning of churches in Egypt has been recurring since the ouster of Mubarak's regime on February 11, 2011. Before the revolution, a church was bombed on New Year's Eve in Alexandria. The latest of this series of attacks on the Coptic minority was on September 30, 2011 when extremists burned down the 71-year-old Mar Guirgus church in Merinab village. Coptic demands were very simple; rebuild their church. Every time a similar attack on the Coptic community occurs, a set of issues is raised pertaining to the promulgation of the long-awaited unified law for building houses of worship without the baffling and time consuming paperwork now required. Demands are also made for another law, which condemns and criminalizes attacks on places of worship and which provides security for Christian places of worship.
39. Many Copts believe the interim government to be lax in protecting their community and securing equality for all citizens. In fact, for the last 20 years, the Mubarak regime has been lax in preventing attacks on Christians and particularly Copts by Muslims from different parts of the country from Alexandria to the Saeid (Upper Egypt). Events such as those that occurred in Alexandria, Giza and Naja Hammadi, which took place in the last few years, reveal a pattern in the police's response, which

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downgraded such events and did not hold the violent attackers responsible for their crimes. This laxity is believed to have encouraged these types of attacks and has justifiably made the Christian community in Egypt feel vulnerable and inadequately protected. In addition, for many years the Christian community has been discriminated against with respect to building and repairing churches. Even though the law authorizes the Governors to issue building permits, these permits were not given because public security advisors were against it on the grounds that it might trigger negative radical Muslim reactions. The bottom line is that the Christians were discriminated against and not treated as equally as Muslims in a country where the constitution provides for equality. Understandably, the Christians in Maspero demonstrated their anger. After all, hundreds of thousands of Egyptians have demonstrated for many reasons at many different times since January 25 including the Salfis. None, however, none were confronted in the same violent manner as the Christians.

40. The violent reaction by the military reveals two things. First, the military by reason of their training and culture have difficulty limiting or measuring their actions, which is part of basic police training. There is no substitute, therefore, for having the police back on the streets to carry out traditional police functions as is done in every country in the world. The second and most disturbing fact is that some of the military personnel in the Maspero clashes may have acted against their officers' orders because they come from rural areas where anti-Christian prejudice exists. It is important to note that anti-Christian prejudice has been fueled by frequent references made by Imams in mosques that Christians are Kuffar (infidels). This is of course contrary to Islamic teachings, but it has become popularized and therefore fuels religious intolerance and discrimination
41. Pope Shenouda III, Pope of Alexandria and Patriarch of Saint Mark Episcopate, met with two members of the SCAF, Major-General Sami Diab and Major-General Mohamed Meselhi, on October 16, 2011. The Pope asked the SCAF to release those detained during the Maspero clash which took place on October 9, 2011.
42. The meeting took place in the Papal Headquarters at the Saint Mark Cathedral in Abbasiyya and lasted for less than an hour. Three of the leaders of the Church attended the meeting and discussed the Unified Places of Worship (UPW) law and the results of the Maspero events. The Pope emphasized during the meeting that the demonstrators had not carried any weapons during their peaceful demonstration from Shoubra until Maspero on October 9, 2011. The Pope also asked the representatives of the SCAF not to include impossible or unfair conditions in the prospective UPW law, lest the consequences should be devastating and sectarian problems should

persist. The meeting also discussed the necessary means to prevent the recurrence of similar events in the future.



Figure 4 Coptic Christian protesters congregate outside the Maspero state media offices in November 2011. (Photo credit: Hassan Ibrahim, DNE).

43. The two members of the SCAF conveyed to the Pope their condolences for the lives lost during the clash and emphasized that the Armed Forces represents all of Egypt and does not differentiate between Muslims and Copts. They also indicated that there are “hidden hands” attempting to drive a wedge between the army and the people on the one hand and between Muslims and Christians on the other. The same conspiracy theory scenario was propagated by Prime Minister Essam Sharaf in his comment on the Maspero events. They also discussed how to prevent the recurrence of such events in order to preserve the stability of Egypt in this critical transitional phase.
44. They also agreed on solving all lingering problems which caused these tensions as soon as possible, including the legalization of the status of many churches, the issuance of the UPW law, and the application of the law against religious discrimination to its full extent.
45. On another note, Pope Shenouda met with Minister of Information Osama Heikal, who has been subject of harsh criticism for the shameful role of the state-television during its coverage of the Maspero events. State-television propagated the view that the Coptic demonstrators attacked army soldiers and alleged that two soldiers died during these attacks, only to refute the news a few days later. Following the meeting with the Pope, Heikal announced to reporters that there were errors in the coverage of the Television and that such efforts will be avoided in the future. The Minister of Information stressed that the Egyptian State is based on the unity of Christians and

Muslims and that it does not accept that the state-television would be the cause of division of the Egyptian people.

46. Another meeting between Pope Shenouda and Field Marshal Mohamed Hussein Tantawi, Head of the SCAF, took place on October 24, 2011, at the headquarters of the SCAF. The meeting was also attended by Head of the General Intelligence. They discussed recent developments that followed the Maspero events and issues pertinent to the demands of the Church on the prospective Anti-Discrimination law as well as efforts by expatriate Copts at escalating international pressure on the Egyptian government. This has been the third meeting of the Pope and the SCAF following the Maspero events. The first meeting took place in the Papal Headquarters between the Pope and representatives of the SCAF, while the second meeting was held between five of the bishops of the Church and some members of the SCAF, during which the bishops presented a memorandum of the Church's demands to Field Marshal Tantawi.
47. Intra-Islamic tensions are also becoming more visible. The million-man's demonstration on Friday, July 29th - known as the "Friday of Islamic Identity"- has been notable for the takeover of Tahrir Square by fundamental Salafi Muslims who substituted a Saudi-like flag displaying an Islamic coat of arms for Egypt's flag. This vocal Salafi current emerged in the turmoil of Egypt's transition and took every opportunity to assert its participation in the open process for formulating the country's future. It espouses an ultraconservative interpretation of religion foreign to Egyptian culture and identity, similar to that of Saudi Arabia.
48. On the other hand, Sufi Muslims, whom have always been under intense criticism by Salafis for particular practices and interpretation of Islam, have declared they will also establish a political party in line with Salafis and the Muslim Brotherhood. Salafis are against Sufis because the Sufis are doctrinally closer to Shiite Muslims. The Sufis' decision to organize themselves into a political party is a remarkable turn as they have always maintained their distance from politics and were known as peaceful practitioners of Islam. Their decision to partake in the political life is interpreted as a reaction to the upheaval of the Salafis, who had also been out of politics before the revolution and have since propagated the view that it was prohibited under Islamic law to oppose the ruler even if he is unjust, as long he was Muslim.
49. Overall, Egypt is suffering of increased societal and political polarization. Multiple forces in society and people are categorized into more divided groups: liberals, socialists, Communists, Salafis, Sufis, Muslim Brotherhood, and Copts, but the

Islamists remain the most pervasive in their outreach and influence in society. The most visible and tense form of polarization is that between the Islamists in general and liberals; for both have been pulling in different directions with each group seeking to expand its political influence and to fashion the future state in its image. An example of how far this polarization has gone was the massive shift of subscribers of the Egyptian Company for Mobile Services (MobiNil) to competitor networks after its major shareholder and former CEO Naguib Sawiris, a Christian Orthodox businessman, had used a profile photo on his Twitter account that was considered derogatory of Islam. The photo was a cartoon of Walt Disney characters Mickey and Minnie Mouse in traditional Salafi dress (Mickey Mouse had a beard and Minnie wore a niqab). The exploitation of extremist Sheikhs of this incident has accounted for hundreds of thousands of Muslim MobiNil subscribers leaving and boycotting the liberal Christian businessman's company.

VII. The Sinai Security Situation

50. The Sinai Peninsula, particularly the governorate of Northern Sinai witnessed multiple attacks, most of which targeted gas pipelines transporting Egyptian gas to Israel and Jordan. During some of these attacks, rocket-propelled grenades (RPGs) were used. Another incident occurred a few days later in the nearby city of al-Arish when hundreds of militants attacked a police station using machine guns and other weapons. An organization claiming to be an affiliate of al-Qaeda in Sinai claimed responsibility for these attacks on the police station, which left seven dead and more than a dozen injured. The organization is believed to comprise of Egyptian and Palestinian militants who want to transform Sinai into an Islamic Caliphate and terminate the peace treaty with Israel. In response, the government announced a major security operation to target these newly-formed al-Qaeda cells in Sinai. So far, only 15 suspects have been arrested, 10 of who are Palestinian. Following these incidents, the Governor of South Sinai assured that security conditions are stable and that all security measures have been taken to ensure the safety of its residents. South Sinai is home to the Red Sea resort of Sharm al-Sheikh, an important tourist destination and a major source of tourism income in Egypt.
51. More than 1200 police and military soldiers have been deployed in North Sinai following the attacks in al-Arish. Egyptian police have prepared defensive and offensive plans to face the emerging terrorist threat in Sinai. Reports blamed al-Qaeda operatives for al-Arish attacks and warned that Sinai might become a hub for terrorists. These reports on the presence of al-Qaeda in Sinai only emerged following al-Arish attacks. There is a great deal of uncertainty as security officials have denied the presence of al-Qaeda operatives while other Egyptian and foreign reports mention

new al-Qaeda cells in the Sinai peninsula. Other reports mentioned that Osama bin Laden's doctor Ramzy Mowafi arrived in Sinai.

52. Israel fears that Islamist groups will use Sinai as a platform to launch their attacks against its territories and deployed a large number of its forces on the border with Egypt. On the other hand, Egyptian security forces launched a security crackdown in Sinai to impose order. The campaign involved 1,500 troops, tanks and armored vehicles. These frequent incidents have called into question Egypt's capability to maintain order and security in the Sinai Peninsula and to fully protect its borders during these critical times. These attacks raise the issue whether the Egypt-Israel peace treaty should be amended to allow Egypt to deploy more troops in Sinai. These calls for an amendment are followed by more radical calls of leftists and Islamist extremists in Egypt and right-wing parties in Israel to entirely repeal the peace treaty.
53. An objective assessment of the situation in Sinai suggests that Egyptian security in the Sinai Peninsula is inadequate. There are various security breaches: those that have followed in the aftermath of the revolution and those that have already been in Sinai for a long time. It has long been warned that radical Islamic militants took advantage of the security vacuum to establish operational bases in Sinai and won many of the local Bedouin tribes to their cause. What is certain is that the Bedouins of Sinai have many reasons not to fully cooperate with Egyptian police and military. They have voiced many grievances over the past decades, and their requests were turned down. They are not allowed to own land in Sinai, their loyalty has been frequently questioned, and their demands have often been neglected. Bedouins in North Sinai, where most of the attacks take place, are particularly resentful against the government because of their poor economic conditions compared to their Southern neighbors who make high profits from tourism. The Bedouins, particularly in the North, are reported to participate in illicit drug, weapon and human trafficking as well as smuggling of illegal immigrants. There are reports that terrorist groups in Sinai tried to attract and recruit a number of wanted Bedouin fugitives in order to attack a number of vital installations and carry out terrorist attacks against military zones and police establishments.
54. Bedouins should not be seen as a security problem, which needs to be faced with more police and military presence. The new government should look to the Bedouins differently and establish a new approach in addressing their demands. The security of Sinai will not be fully attained without addressing the Bedouin's grievances. The Cabinet started to study the needs and demands of Sinai Bedouins following recent unrests.

55. The fear is that parts of Sinai might gradually be transformed into a territory that is similar to the tribal provinces in Pakistan, which are a hotbed of organized crime, terrorism, and is generally beyond the control of the State. The critical problem is that this situation may be exploited by Israel to take military measures against Sinai.

VIII. General Security Issues

56. Despite a mild improvement in the security condition, it remains far from how it was before the revolution. There have been several incidents of attacks against police stations, blocking roads and highways, and railroads. The police are not fully active and try to avoid any confrontations with citizens. Although police and military police forces have captured thousands of fugitives who escaped prisons during the revolution, more than 8000 prisoners remain at large. The number of street fights is increasing. These fights involve tens of persons. During only the first week of August, three major street fights broke out in separate areas of Cairo, each of which included no less than 70 persons and involved the use of Molotov cocktail bombs, machine guns, and other weapons. There have been multiple incidents of shootings between the police and criminal bands in various areas of the country.

57. Weapons are smuggled into Egypt from the Sudan, Libya and maybe Sinai. Egypt halted several attempts to smuggle from Libya into Egypt large quantities of automatic weapons, machine guns, sniper rifles, and large quantities of ammunition near the city of al-Salloum at the Egyptian-Libyan borders, but larger quantities have made their way into the country. Most of these weapons go to Upper Egypt and the Bedouins in Sinai.

58. In the coming weeks and months, Egypt and the international community at large will have to devise effective strategies to countenance the burgeoning threat of advanced weapons systems that are being smuggled out of Libya. The Gaddafi regime had amassed an impressive array of weapons of various types and models, and the caches and depots in which these weapons caches were stored have been found unsecured, open, and in many cases looted. The United States and other countries have pledged money to contain these weapons, but more needs to be done, especially by Egypt, to confront this threat.

59. Strikes, demonstrations and sit-ins for private interests, including demonstrations by police staff, continue to take place. What is worrisome about these activities is that they are turning violent. It has become the norm for protestors to block a road or a railway track to voice their demands and make themselves heard by the government. It is no longer unusual to hear of demonstrators storming into the office of governmental officials and forcing them to meet to their demands.

60. In turn, the government announced it will enforce the law, particularly Articles 86 and 86 *bis* of the Criminal Code, which criminalize strikes and demonstrations that disrupt economic production. The Cabinet also decided to enact a new law criminalizing strikes, sit-ins and demonstrations that would disrupt labor production and the interests of citizens. The Cabinet expressed its concern that demonstrations at this pace would expose the economy to higher risks and make the country less favorable to foreign investors.

61. Protestors have persisted in their periodic Tahrir Square sit-ins, closing all entrances to the Square and paralyzing traffic in surrounding streets. Protestors state that they are protesting because the goals of the revolution haven't yet been fully fulfilled. The police and the military police cleared the Square several times after clashing with the protestors therein. The SCAF faced a barrage of criticism by political commentators every time it cleared the Square by force.

62. Protestors called for another million-man's march on Friday, September 9, 2011 against the SCAF under the title of "the Friday of correcting the course," which denotes a fear that the revolution had been derailed from its original course. The specific demands that were expressed included:



Figure 5 Egyptian soldiers keep guard on the border between Egypt and southern Gaza Strip. (Reuters, Ibraheem Abu Mustafa).

suspending military trials of civilians; the speedy transfer of power to a civilian authority; improving the security situation; and, ensuring the independence of the judiciary. Another demand was added following the border clash incident. This demand called for the expulsion of the Israeli ambassador in Cairo and severance of all diplomatic and trade ties with Israel.

63. Egyptian authorities, on the eve of the Friday of correcting the course, announced that neither the army nor the police would provide any security forces in Tahrir square during the million-man's demonstration and that protestors would be allowed to take security measures into their own hands. The demonstration took place peacefully

save for an assault against a Ministry of Interior building near Tahrir square. Protestors were surprised there was even a security vacuum outside the Ministry of the Interior. That night, hundreds of protestors marched towards the Israeli Embassy. The lack of a security presence outside the embassy allowed angry protestors to tear down a wall, which had been erected to block any attack against the embassy premises. This continued for over three hours without the intervention of any army or police forces. Angry mobs stormed into the embassy located in the 22nd floor and scattered embassy documents. Finally, Egyptian commandos rescued six Israeli embassy guards who hid inside the embassy. After protestors stormed into the embassy, police forces arrived, started shooting tear gas bombs, dispersed the crowds after several hours, and left behind three dead and more than a thousand injured.

64. Israel evacuated its ambassador and most of its staff only a few hours after the incident. With two drastic events in only two weeks, Egyptian-Israeli relations suffered further deterioration. Leaders of the revolution blamed the SCAF for the incident due to its inaction in seeking retribution for the death of Egyptian soldiers and for failing to provide sufficient security forces outside the embassy.
65. Egyptian Minister of Information declared that the 19 arrested suspects during the events would be given a trial before the State Security Court. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu announced in a press conference the next day that Israel would return its ambassador as soon as the security of its staff and embassy was guaranteed.

IX. The Human Rights Situation

66. Since the revolution, little progress has been made in enforcing basic human rights in Egypt. To this day, significant human rights violations persist, such as trying civilians before military courts over ordinary criminal charges, abduction of political activists, and the arrest of internet activists for criticizing the SCAF.
67. NGOs and civil society organizations are going through a fierce media campaign distorting their image in the public eye and portraying them as implementing foreign agendas. Such accusations are not new to NGOs in Egypt. A group of human rights organizations filed a complaint against the Egyptian government to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), the UN Special Rapporteur on the Freedom to Peaceful Assembly and Association, the UN Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights Defenders, the UN Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Expression, and the Special Rapporteur on Human Rights Defenders with the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights. This complaint, which was submitted by 39 organizations, came in reaction to what they have described as a

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fierce governmental media campaign aimed at inciting hatred of civil society organizations in Egypt. The complaint also criticized the government's efforts to tighten restrictions on the activity of civil society organizations and subjecting them to interrogation by the Supreme State Security Prosecution, which has jurisdiction primarily over crimes concerning national security. Bringing these organizations before this judicial authority has the negative connotation of accusing them of conduct detrimental to the interests of the State.

68. Concurrently, the United States announced that it was allocating \$105 million to support civil society in Egypt. This announcement attracted local criticism from the government, which considers this funding a form of foreign intervention in Egyptian domestic affairs and demanded an investigation of all civil organizations. These organizations have conducted a joint press conference to answer these accusations and to elaborate on their complaint to the United Nations.
69. The issue that has raised the most concern among human rights activists is the continued prosecution of civilians before military courts, especially political activists and bloggers. These cases should be referred to the Prosecutor-General's Office for investigation. The referral of civilians to military trial violates Egypt's international obligations on the right to a fair trial enshrined in numerous international instruments, including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights to which Egypt is party. The SCAF has promised to end this practice, but needs to follow through on this pledge and review all judgments and convictions rendered by military courts against civilians.
70. While the SCAF has released a large number of political prisoners who were imprisoned during Mubarak's era, the SCAF has arrested and sent more than 12,000 persons to military trial over 7 months, at a rate of more than 1700 persons per month for purely criminal charges. The criterion for referring a suspect to military trial is determined by the Military Justice Law no. 16/2007. Article 48 of the Military Justice Law reads: "The military judicial authorities are exclusively competent to decide whether an offense falls within their jurisdiction." This article gives military prosecution and courts priority over the public prosecution and ordinary criminal courts in asserting their jurisdiction. Article 28 of the same law gives the military prosecution the same powers of the public prosecution. Current military laws are Martial Law no. 25/1966 amended by law no. 16/2007, according to which the law has become known as the Military Justice Law. The Military Justice Law determines its material and personal jurisdiction in Articles 4-10. Article 6 gives jurisdiction to

military courts in case of crimes mentioned in Articles 77-102³ of the Penal Code if referred to military courts by the president (the SCAF currently exercises presidential powers). The SCAF may also refer a person to military court for any crime mentioned in the Penal Code or any other law when a state of emergency is declared, thus making any crime prosecutable before military courts. It is noteworthy that Article 78 of the Penal Code criminalizes soliciting or receiving foreign funds, meaning that the SCAF may bring before military courts any person or entity accused of receiving foreign funds. How and why the military prosecution decides to assert its jurisdiction in a certain crime where it shares jurisdiction with the public prosecution is not clear yet. What happens in practice is that the public prosecution investigates all criminal law crimes unless otherwise asserted by the military prosecution. This shows that there is no need for military prosecutions, especially following an amendment to the Penal Code by decree no. 11/2011 aggravating punishments for rape, sexual harassment and abduction among other crimes. The decree also added two new Articles, 375 bis and 375 bis (a), to the Criminal Code punishing the display of force or threat of violence, aimed at combating thugs.

X. Foreign Relations Issues

71. Foreign policy was not at the center of the 25 January revolt that brought down President Hosny Mubarak. But in the months that followed, however, Egyptians began to consider how their revolution should affect their foreign relations. Egyptians feel that the policies adopted by the Mubarak regime severely undermined Egyptian standing, influence, and prestige in the region. Therefore, Egyptians will be demanding a more assertive foreign policy that aims to bring their country to the position that it deserves, namely to be the leader of the Arab world. All political parties and all leading presidential candidates share this desire. This will invariably affect relations between Egypt and many global and regional players, including Israel, Iran, the GCC States, and the United States.

1. Egyptian – Israeli Relations

72. Overall, Israel has to realize that a seismic strategic shift is occurring in the Middle East. The *modus operandi* of the previous decades is no longer tenable. The de facto arrangement whereby Israel enjoyed a cold peace with oppressive neighboring regimes is no longer applicable and cannot be reified. Israeli relations with its long-time ally, Turkey, are severely strained. The Syrian regime, which was certainly not a friend of Israel, but managed to maintain the peace on the Golan Heights is crumbling. In Egypt, and throughout the Arab countries that witnessed popular uprisings, Islamist forces are rising as the most prominent political force on the scene.

³ These crimes cover felonies and misdemeanors harmful to the security of the government.

Given this strategic outlook, Israel's interests seem to be in quickly moving to remove the salient reasons for the animosity between it and its Arab neighbors. Namely its occupation of Arab land, including the East Jerusalem, the West Bank, Gaza, and the Golan Heights. Egyptian-Israeli relations will be invariably affected by this strategic outlook, and the incidents and clashes described below are symptomatic of the type and tone of the relationship between the two countries in the future.

73. Tensions between Egypt and Israel are on the rise. Two incidents caused relations between the two countries to become increasingly unstable. First, Israeli forces pursuing infiltrators near the Egyptian-Israeli borders "accidentally" killed an Egyptian army officer and four other soldiers on Thursday, August 18, 2011. According to a statement by the Multinational Force and Observers, an international peacekeeping force overseeing the terms of the peace treaty between the two countries, Israeli troops entered Egyptian territory and killed the Egyptian servicemen. On August 19, 2011, Israeli gunfire killed another Egyptian soldier. The Israeli army was purportedly pursuing terrorist elements responsible for three attacks, which took place earlier the day before in the southern Israeli resort town of Eilat near the Egyptian border. Jama'at at-Tawheed wal-Jihad, an affiliate organization of al-Qaeda in the Gaza strip, praised the attacks and made a statement to Israel and Egypt that the Sinai peninsula has entered a new phase in the Jihad war against Israel. The Israeli army increased its troops along the Gaza strip and the Egyptian-Israeli borders following warnings that elements of the Islamic Jihad planned to attack some Israeli cities again. Israeli Defense Minister Ehud Barak confirmed that the terrorist cell that committed the attack north of Eilat was not the only one operating in Sinai. He said that the terrorist attack was an attempt to distort his country's relations with Egypt. These attacks in Eilat came along with Israel's warnings to its citizens to avoid traveling to the Sinai Peninsula for security concerns and attest to a whole new problem on Israel's hands. This was not the first incident of its kind where Egyptian soldiers were killed by Israeli gunfire, but it was the first after the revolution. Israel, however, hadn't usually apologized for these practices during Mubarak's era.
74. Angered by the deaths of Egyptian servicemen, thousands of Egyptian protestors gathered outside the Israeli embassy and threatened to prevent the Israeli ambassador from entering the building in which the embassy was located. One demonstrator climbed the 22-floor building and tore down the Israeli flag hoisted above the embassy premises, an act which was hailed by the state media as an act of heroism. Political parties and activists called on the Egyptian government to respond resolutely to the killing by Israel of Egyptian servicemen, including through halting the export of gas to Israel until it presents an official apology, pays adequate damages to the families of the soldiers, and presents serious guarantees that this incident will not

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recur in the future. Protests broke out for several days in the cities of Cairo, Alexandria and al-Menya in Upper Egypt. Protestors demanded the expulsion of the Israeli ambassador and called for a million-man's march outside the Israeli embassy on Friday, August 26, 2011. This was the first million-man's demonstration to be held outside Tahrir Square, and only a limited number of protestors showed up that day. On top of the protestors' demands were: (1) retribution for the killing of the Egyptian soldiers; (2) severance of diplomatic and trade relations with Israel; (3) halting the exportation of Egyptian gas to Israel; (4) revisiting the Egypt-Israel peace treaty; (5) the reconstruction of Sinai and putting its development at the priority of Egypt's future projects; (6) the deployment of the Egyptian army in all parts of Sinai; and, (7) halting Israeli attacks against the Gaza Strip.

75. The public reaction to this incident reflects not only resentment over the killing of soldiers, but the extent of the anger towards Israel that had been suppressed for decades, which is fuelled by Israel's policies against other Arab states and the Palestinian people.
76. In reaction to the border clash, Israel announced that terrorists had infiltrated into its southern city after crossing into Gaza from Egyptian territories. Israel criticized Egypt for its loose grip on Sinai, and Israeli Defense Minister Ehud Barak said the attacks evidenced Egypt's lack of control on its own territories. Egyptian authorities rejected Israeli accusations, and explained that the process of sweeping Sinai and pursuing terrorist elements was continuing successfully and that every day a large number of suspects were arrested and subjected to immediate investigation to collect as much information as possible about terrorist movements in the Sinai peninsula.
77. Two days following the border clash, Egypt announced it would withdraw its ambassador in Tel Aviv, but later the same day the decision was reversed. It is rumored that Field Marshal Tantawi reversed the decision of Prime Minister Essam Sharaf to avoid further escalation and to contain a looming diplomatic crisis that Egypt could not afford at the time being. Later, Israel's President and other senior officials, including the Minister of Defense, expressed regret at the incident.
78. The interests of Egypt and Israel have met as regards increasing Egyptian forces in Sinai and including this increase in an annex to the peace treaty of 1979. Israel welcomed the increase in Egyptian troops for this would save Israel effort and money in securing its borders from Islamist extremists. Egypt welcomed as well any opportunity to revisit the provisions of the peace treaty, particularly those relevant to limiting Egyptian forces in Sinai. Increasing Egyptian troops is a subject of concern not only to Egyptian authorities but also to the Egyptian public opinion, which

considers such provisions as restricting Egypt's sovereignty over its territory. Former US Ambassador to Egypt Margaret Scooby met with members of the SCAF to discuss this issue. The extent of progress made in this regard is still unknown. There have been conflicting reports: some reports state that an agreement on the increase of Egyptian troops is soon while other reports have been totally contradictory. It has not been officially confirmed by the Israeli government that it accepted this amendment to the peace treaty. The proposal will probably be presented to the Knesset for discussion. There is no information from the Egyptian side on the nature of the proposed amendments and whether the amendments will be presented to the upcoming parliament for discussion. It is worth noting that, according to the peace treaty, Sinai is divided to three limited force zones: A, B, and C, in addition to zone D inside Israel.

79. The border incident signifies that Israeli-Egyptian relations will witness a new state of affairs. As many potential presidential candidates rushed to make denunciatory remarks about the incident, the new president is expected to adopt a policy towards Israel that is markedly different to that of the Mubarak administration. Potential presidential candidates raced to make condemning comments about the incident. Amr Moussa, Egypt's former Foreign Minister and Secretary General of the League of Arab States, said he wished Egyptian ambassador to Israel was withdrawn after the incident. Abdel Monem Abol Fotouh announced that he would not repeal the peace treaty with Israel or any other treaty beneficial to Egypt if he was elected president, but he might repeal the gas exportation agreement. The incident reflects the dilemma that the SCAF is going through. The SCAF is torn between its desire to maintain peace with Israel on the one hand and to contain popular anger on the other.
80. The second major incident affecting Egyptian-Israeli relations occurred when on 9 September an angry mob stormed into the Israeli embassy in Cairo, tore down its flag, and threw documents out of the windows. Israel appealed to the United States for help. Egyptian commandos saved six Israeli embassy guards stranded inside the embassy.

2. Egyptian-Iranian Relations

81. During the Mubarak era, relations with Tehran were marked by enmity. Egypt considered Iran a strategic threat and a force for radicalism in the region. This is all changing after the revolution, and much will depend on the nature of those who are elected to power in Egypt. Iran enjoys a positive perception in Egyptian public opinion. This is due to its support of Hezbollah, which many Egyptian reveres for its resistance against Israel in Southern Lebanon, and for its defiant stance against the United States. Therefore, the public sentiment in Egypt supports stronger Egyptian-

Iranian relations. This presents a quandary for SCAF and the incoming elected political leadership. Closer relations with Iran will mean jeopardizing relations with important Arab countries, especially those in the Gulf, such as Saudi Arabia and Bahrain. This would also place greater strain on relations with the United States, which is a critical ally of the Egyptian military and the main provider of its hardware.

82. In the aftermath of the revolution, Iran's Foreign Minister announced that Iran is ready to send an ambassador to Cairo. This came weeks after Egypt's Minister of Foreign Affairs made statements that were considered indicative an initiative to a new start with Iran. Relations between the two countries have been severed after the Islamic Revolution in Iran and then Egyptian president Sadat's decision to host Iran's overthrown Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, and Egypt's recognition of Israel following the Egypt-Israel peace treaty. Relations between the two countries remained severed until an agreement was reached for both countries to establish interests sections in their respective capitals that are headed by ambassador-level diplomats.

3. Egyptian-US Relations

83. Egyptian Head of Intelligence General Morad Mowafi returned on Saturday, July 30, 2011 from a six-day visit to New York where he met US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and other officials of the Obama administration. Analysts consider this visit as part of an arrangement with the United States and the political future of Egypt, particularly as it relates to the choice of a new president.
84. The United States increased pressure on SCAF to speed up the transfer of power to an elected civilian government and to avoid the use of force against peaceful demonstrators. This is part of a balancing act that the US is trying to undertake, by ensuring that it maintains relations with the military, which is indispensable to security and stability in the region, and to gain the trust of the rising political powers in Egypt that have criticized SCAF lately.
85. The United States will be facing an important strategic challenge in the coming years. It will have to balance between its pronounced support for democracy and the likely scenario that a fully democratic Arab world will, at least on the short and intermediate terms, elect leaderships that reflect and adopt the popular sentiment that is unfavorable toward Israel.

4. Egyptian - Libyan Relations

86. Egyptian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mohamed Kamel Amr, announced on Monday, August 22, 2011 Egypt's recognition of the new regime in Libya and that the Libyan National Transitional Council ("NTC") is the Libyan people's legitimate representative. This declaration came in a joint press conference held by the Foreign Minister and the representative of the NTC in Cairo. The SCAF has been criticized for its late recognition of the NTC after it successfully entered the Libyan capital and made Muammar Ghaddafi's defeat inevitable.