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Transcript

# CONSOLIDATING EGYPT'S REVOLUTION

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**WELCOME/MODERATOR:**

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**SPEAKER:**

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Transcript by Way With Words

**AMR HAMZAWY:** Thank you very much, Jan, it's a pleasure to be here, it's a pleasure to see you all. Let me start by sharing with you two remarks which I made on Saturday, three days ago, the day on which Egyptians went to the polls to vote in the referendum on the constitution amendments. And the first remark is the turnout. For the first time in modern Egyptian history we had over 40% of eligible Egyptian voters participating in a referendum, participating in an election.

The last referendum which took place in 2007 was in relation to constitutional amendments as well, but participation was less than 5%. In fact, according to nongovernmental sources, it was 2%. The last parliamentary elections which we had was in 2010 and participation by Egyptian voters in the elections, the turnout was less than 20%, once again, according to nongovernmental organisations, between 10% and 15%.

What we saw on Saturday was for the first time in modern Egyptian history, and here my frame of reference was a time, frame of reference is since 1952, since the republic was created. For the first time we saw 40% of the Egyptian voters going to the polls and participating in a democratic test.

In fact, it was the first democratic test in Egypt since 1952 where citizens really had choice between a yes to the suggested amendments and the procedures and timeline related to them, and a no to the amendments which implied a desire to change the constitution and not to amend the old constitution.

It's quite interesting to take that voter turnout into consideration and really see what it tells us, because it tells us, to my mind, that Egyptians are committed to build their country in a democratic manner, are committed to shoulder their responsibilities as citizens in participating in democratic tests in times of choice, and it tells us that whatever was said prior to January 25 – and it was not only a political or intellectual talk, it was academic literature as well – whatever was said of inability or incompatibility of specific elements of Egyptian political culture or the lack of readiness among Egyptians to push for democracy, to transitions that count to democracy, that whatever we spend time dealing with, trying to understand, trying to analyse, is definitely less relevant than we did consider it before January 25.

I myself and different scholars, be it from Egypt or from outside, were really struggling to understand why is that we are not transitioning to democracy. Many of us offered as analytical background culturist approach, highlighting the lack of readiness among Egyptians for democratic governance, to demand democracy.

I guess this component which shaped our perception, not only of Egypt but of many Arab countries is changing drastically as of now, seeing and witnessing what happened in Tunisia, seeing and witnessing what is happening in Libya and Yemen and Bahrain and Egypt and elsewhere.

The second remark is more related to the details of the polling process on Saturday because what we used to have in Egypt before last Saturday was basically in elections and referenda was a polling process which was not complete, which was never complete. Sometimes we had no voters. As I said, the voter turnout was extremely low.

Sometimes we had voters but we did not have contested seats, municipal elections, for example, where seats were 95%, 96% in the last two rounds of the municipal elections, in the pre-election mode assigned to the former ruling party of the National Democratic Party.

Sometimes we had voters and contested seats and we did not have election monitors, we did not have an oversight body to monitor the election process. This time we really had the three elements coming

together to create for the first time since 1952 a serious electoral process. We had voters, we had choice between yes and no, which was treated in a detailed manner in the Egyptian public opinion; citizens were well informed about what they were going to choose, not all of them but many of them, and we had judges in every polling centre overseeing the process and we had for the first time civil society monitors who participated in the process and were not hindered to do their job.

Once again, related to these elements, the one element which used to be dominant, which was dominant in previous Egyptian elections, which was the interference of the security apparatus, did not exist. For the first time we saw security forces standing outside the polling centres, not inside the polling centres. We did not have the bloodshed which characterised most Egyptian elections in the last years; we did not have reports of wounded, killed Egyptians after the referendum day.

To my mind, these few remarks which I'm trying to start my presentation with are a test to the fact that Egypt is transitioning in an interesting, dynamic and of course in a very tough manner, away from Mubarak's autocracy, from the autocracy which was in fact created by the 1952 Free Officers Movement and to democratic governance which is being contested and which is going to be contested by different forces in the country.

The second point which I would like to make is to reflect a bit on what has been happening in Egypt since January 25 and up until today. Now, knowing the outcome of the referendum was 77.6% of citizens who participated in the referendum saying yes to the amendments and a bit more than 22% saying no, and knowing that since the amendments were accepted by the majority of Egyptian citizens that we are going to see the timeline and the procedures related to the amendments unfold in the next few months. I'm going to address them in my third point.

Now, the second point which I would like to make is to reflect a bit briefly on what has been changing in Egypt and Egyptian politics since January 25. To my mind, there are four major issues which have changed.

The first issue is the role of Egyptian citizens in Egyptian politics because what we have been having since 1952 was a political formula which was based on pushing out citizens from politics, pushing them away from politics, using whatever instruments were out there for autocratic governments to use, a repressive security institutions, a repressive security arm, an informal security network which should be in fact described as an informal terrorising network, using legal restrictions, political restrictions on political forces, political parties, social movements, civil society, so the formula with which Egypt was ruled since 1952 was, to a great extent, based on pushing citizens out of politics.

What has been changing since January 25 is that citizens are back and are playing politics and are in fact struggling in too many different ways to stay in the political game. Citizens, millions, the first estimate of the number of Egyptians who took out to the streets between January 25 and February 11 is anywhere between 12 and 14 million, which is an unprecedented number of people to take out to the streets in Egypt since 1919. For the first time we had that many Egyptians taking out to the streets for one cause, which was to remove Mubarak and to change the system.

Those citizens who protested between January 25 and February 11 are struggling as of now to stay in the political game in different ways, and the fact that they went to the polls on Saturday and participated over 40%, as I said, turnout is an attest that they are going stay in. They are trying to create political parties, civil society initiatives. If you are in Egypt you hear not only on a daily basis but every hour about a new initiative which is being put forward and launched.

*Transcript Not Checked Against Delivery*

There is a clear dynamism; the populous is dynamic, is interested, is participating in debates in different manners. Citizens are back to Egyptian politics in the most direct manner; they did not wait for political parties or opposition movements to take up their cause. They did it themselves, which was the beauty of what happened on January 25 and which was one of the reasons why I kept saying, whenever I had time to talk to the media between January 25 and February 11, that it's not about leadership.

People kept asking, where is the leadership of the protest movement. I said it's not a movement, these are basically demands which are being put forward and shared by a huge number of Egyptians and they did not need leadership until February 11 because their demands were articulated very well and were very clear. Because leadership would have had a limiting impact on the dynamic protest movement, on the revolution, the dynamic protest movement turning into a revolution in the three weeks between January 25 and February 11.

Citizens are back in the most direct manner, using the street, regaining control over the street as a political arena, which once again did not exist in Egypt since 1952. Regaining the street, regaining the public space as a political arena, as an arena to struggle politically is going to be a defining feature of Egyptian politics in the next years. This is not going to wither away any time soon and this is not going to be related only to big events.

We had some citizens protesting on Sunday and Monday, once the results of the referendum were announced, but this is going to be a defining feature of Egyptian politics and it's going to be a dominant component in Egyptian politics, especially as long as political parties and civil society organisations, the intermediary groups in between which are supposed to represent citizens and their interests, as long as they stay weak and they are going to stay weak structurally, weak for some time.

The second big change which happened in Egypt and continues to unfold as we talk is the fact that the state and its institutions – and it's less a change and maybe more of a discovery for Egyptian citizens as well as for analysts following Egypt from afar – the Egyptian state which we for a very long time used to see as a strong and viable state, as a mighty state, was mighty institutions, we discovered how weak that state is and we discovered that after a few days of a dynamic protest movement turning into a revolution, in fact after three days, January 25 to January 28, it was only the military establishment which was the one viable institution in Egypt to take care of policing society, of opening up a political roadmap for a solution and of ultimately removing former President Mubarak from office and getting into the transitional period in which we are.

This is more of a very challenging discovery because what we need right now in Egypt and what we will need and which makes the transition appear to democracy even more complicated is that we need to do some state building as well. It's not only about transitioning to democracy and the state building process should not be reduced to the big question and huge challenge of the security sector and how to reform the security sector.

Some initial steps were undertaken and homeland intelligence was dismantled. There are some interesting initiatives which are being undertaken by the government, to the government's credit, but once again it's not only about the security sector, it's about rebuilding state and institutions in a democratic, transparent and citizen serving manner.

This is going to be one of the big priorities of Egypt in the next years as well. To that, one of the interesting side points of the business of state building which we have to undertake is how to re-establish

based on democratic pillars the interrelations between the three branches of government, between the executives, the legislature and the judiciary.

Because what we have in the last decade – and once again this is not a creation of Mubarak, this exists since 1952 – we have had a very dominant executive which was reduced over time to the president, in the last years to the president and his family, and we had since 1952 a weakened legislature and a judiciary which lacked autonomy, which lacked independence. So how to rebuild and reshape interrelations and based on what kind of checks and balances.

All of that leads to the big question, which is going to be contested once we start with the business of drafting the new constitution, are going to move in the direction of a parliamentary republic or a presidential republic as we have been having it in an autocratic manner since 1952. All of this is going to come back and be at the forefront of the national debates once we start with the drafting of the new constitution.

The third big issue, to my mind, which needs to be positively taken care of and to be reflected upon – and here of course it's quite difficult for someone who has been part of what's going on not to romanticise. Whoever was in Egypt between January 25 and February 11 must have fallen in love with what Egyptians were able to do and so there is a degree of romanticism probably in what I'm going to say.

To my mind, the third big issue which we need to take into consideration is the fact that whatever we saw in Egyptian society prior to January 25 in terms of crises and factors limiting our capability in building a modern society and modern policy – and here I'm referring to indicators of economic development, social development, high levels of literacy. Over 17 million Egyptians, over 20%, a bit more than 20% are not educated, over 40% of Egyptians live below the poverty line.

I'm also referring to sectarian tensions and acts of sectarian violence which have been relevant in Egypt in the last three decades, so that sad societal picture which we have been encountering in the last years where at least between January 25 and February 11 was pushed aside with all its different elements and components. We did not see sectarian tensions, not only in Tahrir Square, but elsewhere in Egypt.

In fact, we saw Egyptian Copts participating at an equal level, like Egyptian Muslims; we did not see tensions across social boundaries between rich and poor, and in fact whoever states that the Egyptian revolution was a middleclass revolution really misses the point. This was a revolution in which every single sector in society participated in and it was not a middleclass revolution and it was not driven by the middleclass demand on democracy and human rights. People had too many different entry points to demand democracy, coming from different social backgrounds.

What I am trying to say is that for whatever reason at a certain crucial moment in Egyptian history that society was able to push aside its long history of sectarian tensions, its long history of social tensions, across classes, and present itself in an impressive civilised manner, in a manner which was peaceful, which was committed to the country, which did not commit a single act of violence even as violence was being imposed on the scene by the former regime, by the former president and his aides.

Of course sectarian tensions continue to exist; in fact, once again were getting back at us right after the removal of Mubarak. I'm not sure how many of you took note of the incidents in one village in Upper Egypt, Sohag, in which a church was burnt and some tensions between Salafi groups and the Coptic population where they were turning violent for a few days.

Tensions between social classes continue to exist and we see the long list of socioeconomic demands of the needy and the poor coming up and leading to daily protest activities, daily labour sit-ins, daily strikes. This is bound to happen and will continue to happen but the energy and the commitment, to my mind, which enabled Egyptians to push aside their differences and unit behind the national cause is going to be a defining feature of Egyptian politics as well.

I saw it on Saturday. The referendum was managed peacefully and in spite of all differences and in spite of a very tough controversy before Saturday, whether the amendments were right path to take or were we really undermining the revolution and its democratic demand and I was on the second side. I was against the amendments, for saying no to the amendments and at the end of the day it was managed very peacefully and the controversy was contained in an impressive democratic manner up until now.

What I'm saying with the third point is yes, it's a poor country; yes, we have different social and economic crises, we have sectarian tensions but the positive energy which is really unleashed by the demand on democracy is going to be a defining feature that will enable Egyptians to move forward in spite of the big socioeconomic and societal challenges in general.

The fourth point in terms of big changes is the fact that Egyptians may be in a region at the moment which is not preferable to that, but Egyptians stopped looking outside their country, even events in Libya apart from expressing solidarity is not on anyone's mind. People are preoccupied with what is happening in Egypt so it's in a way a highly home-grown development which we are undergoing, it's a revolution which pushes people to look inside and stop looking outside, even when it gets close to our doors.

In fact, Libya was probably, apart from the solidarity component, was Arabs demanding democracy elsewhere and of course we Egyptians express that solidarity, but Libya was probably a bit relevant until Egyptian guest workers were brought back home. But apart from that, it's a nation which is preoccupied with its own internal affairs and is not willing, as far as I can tell, to devote any attention elsewhere.

A clear test was the announcement of the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces, which was addressed to Israel but to Western powers as well, that binding regional and international treaties are not going to be touched. This was accepted, was not contested even by religious forces like the Muslim Brotherhood; it was not contested.

To my mind, it's a sign of maturity, of a political culture which is maturing while democratising. Of course, it's not ignoring the Arab component but taking a completely different approach while looking at that Arab component, not the rhetorical categorical no's or not the rhetorical categorical anti Western or anti Israeli stances which we hear elsewhere, but more of a nation being aware of the challenges ahead and being aware of the test in which it is and being aware of the fact that if it manages to build democracy, it's bound to be inspiring elsewhere in the region.

That image of Egypt, of the Egyptian centrality in the Arab world which was long lost because of the stagnation under Mubarak can be regained if we manage to build democracy, and it's, to my mind, a very rational approach to managing yourself in times of transition in the tough regional environment in which we are.

What are the challenges ahead? Since a clear majority of Egyptians approved the amendments on Saturday we are well into the procedures and the timeline defined and inherent to the constitution amendments.

The challenges ahead are the following: we will have parliamentary elections in a maximum of six months, September 2011. The first challenge, looking ahead to the parliamentary elections is the question of the electoral system. Are we going to elect the new Egyptian parliament and it's going to be a two-chamber parliament, we'll still have the Shura Consultative Council which in fact had no role whatsoever in the last years apart from approving legislation and playing a highly negative role in containing political parties and civil society organisations and in dominating the media landscape?

We'll continue to have the People's Assembly as a lower chamber and the Shura Consultative Council as an upper chamber of the Egyptian Parliament at least until a new constitution is drafted and approved?

So the first challenge is about the electoral system. Are we going to conduct our elections based on the individual candidate system which we had in the last two decades - in fact, in most of the last three decades, which produced very weak parliaments which enabled patrimonial networks, tribal loyalties, to dominate parliamentary elections, enabled corrupt business leaders, corrupt politicians, to sustain their seats in the parliament for a long time?

Or, as we prefer, as many forces in Egypt prefer, are we going to shift to a mixed system where we have party lists and a margin for independents, for individual candidates, similar to what we have in Germany but not as complicated as the German system is - because the German system will take ages to implement in Egypt - but that idea of having a mixed system?

This is the number one challenge and the big debate which is emerging as of now in Egypt. Once we got the results of the referendum we moved right away to raise the question of the electoral system.

What I'm going to say is not off the record, it's based on conversations which I did have with a group of Egyptian politicians, writers, intellectuals, with the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces. Probably we will be transitioning to a mixed system and we will have party lists and a margin for independents, but the specifics are yet to be worked out.

In fact, it's an additional sign for the commitment as they see it of the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces to really help the country to democratise because they have the mistakes, as there are some issues where they push in the wrong direction, but they are in general committed to create strong elected institutions and pull out of their current role, which is managing as a legislative as well as an executive power in Egyptian politics.

The second big challenge which we have is how to give political groups movements, especially groups and movements which did not exist before January 25 and which are trying to organise, to assemble, to attract Egyptian citizens who made the revolution, to join them, be it as members or as supporters, how to give those new forces enough time to really compete in the upcoming elections. Because we have a clear duality which can be very risky in Egypt and can lead to imbalanced parliament and this was my main reason to say no to the amendments because I feel that we would have needed a bit more time to get new powers to assemble and to be able to compete seriously in the upcoming parliamentary elections.

We have two powers which are ready and know how to compete in Egyptian parliamentary elections and have been competing in parliamentary elections since the late 1970s. The first power among them is the Muslim Brotherhood which is of course part of the National Alliance and has been pushing for democratisation in the last years and should not be punished for its excellent work in terms of

constituency building and reaching out to the electorate; it should not be punished for that, but it's a mighty power which we'll have to reckon with.

The second force, although I see it as overrated in Egyptian public debates, it's whatever remains from the former governing ruling party, the National Democratic Party. To my mind, they do not stand a great chance to get a strong representation in the new parliament but they are still there, and the layer in which they primarily exist is the layer of the municipal councils, because the parliament has been dissolved, the party headquarters is burnt, party officers in different regions in Egypt are being taken away from the party.

Of course we have yet to see that legalised; of course we are demanding an investigation commission to look into the corruption of the NDP, in fact to demand from the NDP to pay for the headquarters and offices which it has been occupying from a national perspective since 1978 and to pay for all the years between 1978 and 2011, which would mean a big blow to that party's financial capabilities, but we are yet to see that investigation commission formed. It might happen soon but it's yet to be the case.

NDP elements really exist at the municipal level, municipal councils continue to exist; they are not dissolved and they are controlled to 99.6% or 99.7% by the NDP.

We have those two forces with all due differences between the Muslim Brotherhood and the remaining elements of the NDP and we have, on the other side, existing political parties, legal opposition parties which, for different reasons, have been limited, hindered in terms of reaching out to voters, building constituencies and are having a hard time trying to adapt to the changes, and we have the new forces which are trying to assemble, creating liberal and leftist political party platforms.

Unless we manage to empower the second group of actors, legal parties which existed before January 25 and new parties which are trying to assemble and, as Jan mentioned, I am part of an initiative to establish a socially responsible liberal party platform which will be announced next week, but once again unless we have enough resources, unless we get active very soon in reaching out beyond the urban centres to be able to compete, that duality between strong, mighty Muslim Brotherhood plus NDP and weak liberal and leftist forces, be it old or new, is going to shape the new parliament.

Should that happen, which I do not hope is going to be the case but there is an element of possibility, more than a possibility that it will happen, should that happen, that is going to be quite influential in terms of shaping Egypt's political future for two reasons.

One is the parliament will represent primarily the interests and perceptions and views of the two mighty groups and discriminate against all others; secondly, the parliament itself, based on the procedures built in, the amendments that were passed on Saturday, the elected members of the parliament, of the two chambers, People's Assembly and the Shura Council, will elect the members of the Constitution Assembly which will draft a new constitution.

Of course they are entitled to elect the members, the MPs themselves, entitled to elect the members of the Constitution Assembly from within or from outside, so they can get members from the parliament to be in the Constitution Assembly, as well as members from outside, but an imbalanced parliament is bound to produce an imbalanced Constitution Assembly.

The parliament which discriminates against liberal and leftist views and puts forward more of – once again without excluding them – more of religious based political views and constitutional views is bound



to generate a constitution that will at least not meet the desires and wishes of a strong segment of the Egyptian population.

In fact there is an additional component into that duality which I described, which is the fact that most citizens who participated in the revolution were never members of political parties, never went to the elections before and really need time to be organised in terms of their interests, their perceptions and need new priorities to reach out to them.

Those were representatives of the 80% Egyptian voters who never went to the elections before since 1978 because, as I said, the maximum turnout we have before January 25 was around 20%, so we had 80%. Right now the Egyptian voters are 47 million citizens; we had 80% of them who basically abstained from entering into politics, from participating in politics, and they need time to be organised and reflect their interests.

In fact, to create a new image for politics, because when you are on the ground and you see old party members or old Muslim Brotherhood members trying to play politics, you really pause for a second and ask yourself, is that the new image of politics which Egyptians made the revolution for. Are those people able to personalise and embody the new spirit of democratic governance, of a democratic Egypt?

I cannot help but to answer that question with a clear no, so we need a new image; we need new participants in Egyptian politics and not simply whoever was there before.

The third and final challenge which I'm going to outline – and once again of course I'm looking ahead, meaning in the next six months; I'm not looking beyond that frame of reference – the third challenge is to agree on what are the red lines and what are not the red lines once the debate about the new constitution starts.

I'm referring to red lines which are perceived as some segments in the Egyptian population as such, Article 2 in the current Egyptian Constitution which stipulates that principles of Sharia mabed [unclear], Sharia, or as a primary source of legislation. It's a red line and it should not be touched for a strong segment constituency in Egypt and it's not a red line for other segments and constituencies.

The article providing and stipulating that the Egyptian state has a religion: Islam is a religion of the state; it's once again a red line for some, not a red line for others. The article in the 1971 Constitution providing for minimum of 50% worker representation in all legislative councils, it's a red line for some and not a red line for others.

The article for basically the structure, the very structure of the Egyptian political system as a presidential system, as opposed to forces which favour – and I am among those national figures and forces and intellectuals who favour a shift to a parliamentary democracy – so contesting those red lines is going to be very tough but it's bound to happen.

Let me close by highlighting how tough that contestation can be because the major argument used by the Muslim Brotherhood and religious groups before the Saturday referendum to convince citizens to go and vote with a yes to the amendments, and in spite of the fact that Article 2 was not part and is not part of the articles which are amended, the main argument used by the Brotherhood and other religious forces to convince citizens to go and vote with a yes was that if you voted no, Article 2 might be in danger.

This mobilised outside the urban centres citizens in such an intensive manner and led, especially in the Delta region, to end results with over 90%, 95% saying yes out of that fear that maybe Article 2 or the state religion article might be touched.

Of course, it's unfortunately legitimate in politics but it's morally and intellectually not a sound strategy because you are misleading voters and because everyone knows that once we have a new constitution that those issues will come up. But they were not part of what was being contested before Saturday.

It gives you a sense of how tough the contestation is going to be. Right, that's more or less where we stand. Let me stop here and take your questions. Thank you very much.

**JAN TECHAU:** Thank you very much, Amr. Before I open up to the audience and I can see and hear some feet shuffling already, I would like to ask a question. I'm so tempted to ask a CNN question, which would be like what is it like to be in a revolution like this, but I will rather ask a BBC question and connect some dots of what you said just now.

You said that this was a revolution that was carried by the people and not by any kind of institution and then you said that the institutions that do exist turned out to be rather weak, as opposed to strong like we would have expected them to be. You also said that 99.9% of the local councils are still in the hands of the old forces.

Now, given that democracy depends on more than just elections and some demands that people postulate on institutions, does this bode well for a post-election Egypt, the fact that the institutions are so weak and to the extent that they do exist, are still in the hands of the powers that be?

**AMR HAMZAWY:** Well, the local municipal councils, I wouldn't describe them as strong institutions. They are active in terms of lobbying, mobilising citizens for NDP figures and maybe we have to make a step backwards to make it clear that when I refer to NDP politicians or NDP figures or NDP members in the municipal councils, I am not referring to party politicians who were politicised and indoctrinated based on that party's ideology or perception or view.

No, it's a patrimonial network; it's a network of local leaders, business figures, some local politicians coming together and this was the only logic for them to join the NDP. They joined the NDP because it was the governing and ruling party and they do not have a set of ideas; they have interests which they are going to protect and those interests are primarily economic interests.

How to counterbalance that is going to be very tough in the elections because most of them are very well connected in the local settings. Once again, if we – which I do not expect – if we would conduct our elections based on the individual candidate system which we had before, those guys would have an excellent starting point to get the same results which they have been getting in the last decades.

If we move to a mixed system where we have party lists, you can counterbalance legally here their significance. I am aware of some initiatives which are going on to attract some of those away from the old system and give them some guarantees, some safeguards, for their interests and push them to join new forces or existing forces which were in the opposition spectrum before.

The Muslim Brotherhood is doing much of that as of now, which is once again a test to how mighty their organisational structure is and they can reach out quickly. They can offer a secure seat in the People's Assembly, which no one else can offer, in fact, and if you take their statements seriously that they are

going to contest anywhere between 35% to 40% of the seats of the People's Assembly, definitely they know that they will get more than 20%, so the block where they have secured already.

Secondly, the bigger question is how to democratise, how to manage a transition to democracy while we have weak institutions and why political movements on the ground are still aligning, trying to create their own organisational structures and do their outreach activities, that's going to be very tough.

To an extent, one has to factor in that probably the military establishment is going to be with us for some time in a safeguarding mission, as the most viable institution in the country, not primarily similar to what has been happening in Turkey, what unfolded in Turkey in the last years, but in a way they are going to safeguard the process for some time.

Secondly, the judiciary will play a crucial role and while we have had since the 1950s very weak parliaments, the judiciary in spite of the lack of autonomy, especially under Mubarak, has managed to sustain its existence as a proper and a functioning institution and it was the judiciary which managed in fact the big steps, the judicial elements and structures which managed the big steps that we undertook since February 11.

Because they were two huge steps, regardless of how we rate them, but one was the establishment of the committee which worked out the constitution amendments and members of the committee were Egyptian judges and legal experts and they work in the tradition of their judiciary which looks at itself as a national institution.

The second step was a referendum on Saturday and the management of the referendum and securing its peaceful and democratic nature was once again primarily upon the judiciary, of course besides the military establishment, which created a suitable environment for citizens to go to the polling centres and vote.

It's going to be tough and we will see huge changes in the next years. Probably before September 2011 you will have heard about the creation of maybe 20, if not more, political parties. How many of them will remain after the elections? How many of them will realign after the elections, what kind of blocks will emerge, and all the issues which will be settled after.

We have a clear timeline and we are looking ahead to the second democratic test, which is the parliamentary elections.

**JAN TECHAU:** Now it's up to you. Please raise your arms high up; I see a number of arms, the first was this gentleman here, the lady over there.

**FRANCESCA TRALDI:** Francisca Traldi, Magna Carta Foundation. I'd like to know if the social network played any particular role to mobilise the population before the referendum and if they are used to support it, thank you.

**ARTEL FIEKEL [unclear]:** Quick question: how do you explain the Military Supreme Council's insistence on going ahead with the referendum, knowing that there has been a lot of criticism against it?

**ALAR OLLJUM:** My name is Alar Olljum from the European External Action Service. Let me first congratulate you, Mr Hamzawy, from moving from being an observer to being a participant. I salute your courage. My question is also regarding Muslim Brotherhood. The revolution in Egypt was portrayed in

being, in a way, a generational one. Do you see also some generational tensions within the Muslim Brotherhood and how do you see those playing out?

My second question is: what is your advice to Europe as far as those who want to support democratic transition? If you can say one thing we should definitely do and another thing we should not do, thank you. Alar Olljum.

**JAKUB BORATYNSKI:** Jakub Boratynski, European Commission. I just have a brief question. Your remarks on military sounded quite positive, so maybe a more general question: what is the risk of revolution being stolen and the forces of the [unclear] having an upper hand, and including military in that respect?

**AMR HAMZAWY:** Well, let me start with the two questions about the Brotherhood. Yes, of course there are tensions, there are generational tensions. Young members of the Brotherhood were part of the initiation forces on January 25. We had different protest movements coming together on January 25 initiating the dynamism which created the revolution, so the young Brothers were part of it.

They have learned to work in a cross ideological manner, in a manner which does not only look at the interests of the Brotherhood itself but looks at the national spectrum as well. Those young guys, many of whom are very impressive in terms of their political outlook and how they understand what it takes to democratise Egypt, are being marginalised and discriminated against in the movement. Of course this creates tensions.

However, it's an attest to how strong the institution is, the Brotherhood as an institution is. We are yet to hear, and I suspect we will not hear about any attempt to break away from the movement and establish a different movement or break away from the party initiative which the Brotherhood has launched and which will be registering very soon once the new political party law is announced. This is going to happen probably before the end of this week or early next week.

It's an attest to how strong the organisation is that it manages to sustain and contain those tensions without any attempt to break away. Is that impacting on how the movement conducts itself politically? A bit, but not drastically.

We see the Brotherhood basically doing what it has been doing in the last years, which is a bit of initiatives to signal to the wider public opinion that A, they are willing to coordinate with nonreligious forces; they have announced recently that they are willing to sit down with everyone to agree on a united list of candidates for the upcoming parliamentary elections, but of course that came against the background of them stating that they would run for 40%, so dividing up the shares, so we keep 40% and we see what we'll do with the rest, more or less of attitude.

You see them as well announcing that they are not up to dominate or rule out the participation of anyone and when you get to talk with them – and I have had some pleasant and less pleasant encounters with them in the last days – when you listen to them, you listen to them saying that they are not up to dominating Egyptian politics and then they start using a dangerous mix of religious legitimisation and an arrogance which, quote/unquote, is legitimate because you know that they are strong and everyone else is not that strong, an arrogance in giving you the constituency argument every time you go and talk to them, well, we are on the ground, where are you.

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It is legitimate politically but you cannot build on it if you are really looking for national consensus. Yes, tensions exist, but, to answer your question, they are not moving in any direction close to AK Party in Turkey.

Probably it would be too much to ask them to do it before they get their chair in the People's Assembly for the first time, a real one, and then we will see what will happen. I guess the real changes in the movement – and here I'm speaking as a political scientist and less as an activist – the real changes will happen after the parliamentary elections. After it we will see whether they are really able to focus on

public policy measures and less on ideological claims, whether they will be able to cooperate and across ideological manner between blocks, whether they will be interested in building up national consensus, seriously addressing the red lines, which they perceive as red lines and we do not perceive – or I do not perceive – as red lines, Article 2 and so on.

These are going to be the test cases for the movement and definitely it will change, but it's not a question which is relevant to them now.

The second issue which is the Supreme Council and why the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces was determined to run and to conduct the referendum last Saturday and was determined to suggest the amendments as the way forward, in spite of extensive controversies in Egypt.

Well, there are two ways to answer that question now - based on the result or not based on the result. If you take result seriously, we have to say – and I'm the first to say it as someone who promoted the no option – maybe they judged the significance of the two groups, of the two camps, of the yes camp and the no camp better than we did. Because after all it was a close to 80% outcome.

A different way to answer it, not factoring in the result, is that they are really – and this will answer the last question about risks with regard to the military establishment – is that they are really not interested in staying in power the way they are right now for a long time. They would like to get out. Honestly, they would like to get out and they have no reason to doubt that, that they are committed to getting out as soon as possible.

It's not that they will give up on playing an indirect political role or shaping Egyptian politics and political and economic development indirectly, but they are overstretched and they do not like what they are doing in terms of managing the country as a legislative and executive force, two in one. They would like to get out; they would like to give it to elected institutions.

They were inspired, once again in honesty and in fairness to them, by a democratic principle which seems convincing, that if you ignore the timeline which is it's better to get an elected parliament first than to get an elected president first, that looking back at the history of autocracy in Egypt which was primarily the outcome of the centrality of the president, they wanted to get from the very beginning a check and balance authority before electing the president.

One can really respect where they are coming from. I have no doubt that they are not willing to stay in for a longer time, that they pushed for that track because this seemed to them and seemed to 80% of the Egyptian population, of the Egyptian voters, to be more of a clearly defined transition. Six months then we have elections, three months later we have presidential elections, March 2012 at the latest we will have the Constitution Assembly to draft a new constitution, September 2012 we have a new constitution.

We tried to push back and say what we are suggesting, which is based on a revised timeline, which is elect a new president in September 2011 and it's easier to elect a president than to elect a parliament, get a Constitution Assembly directly elected from Egyptian voters and not selected from the parliament, get it in place before the end of that year, December 2011, get a draft of the new constitution in six months, to discuss it in public hearings, to have a new constitution in 2012.

We more or less presented the same timeline but, once again, to them this was a more clear-cut option, parliament quickly and they would shift power to the parliament, keep on these executive prerogatives until a president is elected.

There is a clear will in the Supreme Council not to overdo it, not to stay for a long time, and they are very well aware of the analogies which are on everyone's mind, 1952 to 1954, because back then, right after the Free Officers coup we had a grey zone where Abdul Nasser and his group was supposed to hand over political power to civilians and this never happened. We hope it will happen this time because it's yet to happen and we are still looking for the civilians to hand over power to.

Finally, of course there are different risks in general, apart from the military, and the military is bound, as I said, to stay indirectly involved, to have the safeguarding mission, and of course to protect its benefits and its share in the Egyptian economy. The military owns over 20% of economic assets in Egypt; they are not going to give it up anytime soon.

It is bound to be very similar to what happened in Indonesia in terms of safeguarding military interests and benefits and getting them do structurally more of a safeguarding... to function in a safeguarding mode, to protect the democratic experience.

There are other risks, as there are risks of a set of actors dominating legislative councils for a longer time. There are risks of a new constitution which does not tackle the huge issues which are contested and are going to be contested or tackled from a one-sided perspective. There are structure risks with regard to state building and re-establishing the authority of state institutions based on democratic pillars, creating democratic governance.

Countries before Egypt, many of them failed transition to democracy after democratic citizens' revolutions, so there are no guarantees that this will not happen in Egypt, so there are imminent risks. I am only ruling out that we reduce our risk perception to one of two directions, to the military or to the Muslim Brotherhood; it's much more than that, in spite of the significance of the two actors.

**JAN TECHAU:** I think there were two questions, one on the generational divide, which you could maybe address real quick and whether that's going to play out after the revolution, and then, more importantly maybe even for the Brussels audience, what is Europe supposed to do, the question that came from the gentleman all the way back.

**AMR HAMZAWY:** Well, the generational change issue, I guess it was related to the Muslim Brotherhood and I did address it, and in general once again, as much as I have been arguing against perceiving the Egyptian revolution as a middleclass revolution, I completely find it misleading to describe the revolution as young Egyptians' revolution; it's not.

Once again, it was really across society, across different age groups and across different social backgrounds and in fact geographically it was really a nationwide revolution. It was not only Cairo, it was not only Tahrir Square, because Tahrir has come to have a symbolic meaning, but Suez was even more

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important than Cairo in the first two weeks, Alexandria was more dynamic than Cairo in the first two weeks. Cairo was decisive in the last few days.

What can Europe do? Well, as I started out with, I am too much in Egypt to know what is going on outside Egypt. I am even hardly following news in Libya and Yemen or Bahrain, but let me start by the easier component which is really based on talks that I did have in Cairo with some European Foreign Ministers, with different ambassadors and it's really what Europe should not do.

Europe should not [unclear] reduce its role in helping Egypt to democratise, to reaching out to political parties or civil society organisations and offers of money or technical assistance. This is not what we

need. This is definitely, to my mind, would be the wrong approach and unfortunately, be it at a government level or at a nongovernmental level, some European partners are exactly trying to do that, to pick up their preferred list of actors, of civil society organisations, of political party initiatives or existing political parties, and offer them technical assistance or financial aid, or let us know what you need.

This is basically once again not the right way to do it and because it's not the right way, even in the initiative which I am part of and, as I said, it's a liberal initiative, we agreed on a red line which is do not reach out to European or American organisations as of now.

We are not interested in technical assistance, we are not interested in financial assistance and the most which we would accept – and I guess this applies to many Egyptian political actors – would be if programs, party building programs or civil society programs, are offered in a transparent manner, A, in Egypt: B, not outside: C, across ideological differences – do not pick up your preferred or your wish list of seeming liberal, because you do not know.

My claims that we are establishing a liberal party is a claim until the party exists. Do not pick up your wish list and operate based on that. So if this is offered in a transparent way in Egypt and across ideological differences and not operating based on the wish list, the [unclear] scenario, that would be fine. This is not where I see Europe being active.

Where I see Europe active and what Europe, to my mind, should do is to offer at a government to government level technical assistance to the Egyptian Government in managing the huge challenges of conducting the elections, creating a Constitution Assembly, drafting a new constitution, getting that constitution to be discussed nationwide and public hearings reflecting on the nationwide debates and including them in the drafting of the constitutions.

There are so many technical issues where we can benefit at the government to government level, so leave the nongovernmental and political party component aside and focus on the government to government level in terms of technical assistance relevant to democracy promotion.

There is a huge contribution which Europe can do with regard to state building, to institution building in Egypt at a government to government level, security sector reform and beyond the security sector reform, how to create democratic governance, how to recreate Egyptian institutions based on democratic pillars - that is going to take time - how to translate transparency, accountability in the institutional reality in Egypt.

Thirdly – and this is really a national demand where the government does not stand anywhere away from national forces and where national forces, in spite of their differences, ideological or with the referendum

or with the constitution amendments, will they really stand united? What we need is definitely economic assistance.

Egypt is economically in a bad shape, not in a bad shape because of the revolution, it has been in a bad shape for a long time. There are different initiatives which are emerging domestically, but of course we need economic assistance, we need help in the next tough two years and here you can combine between economic assistance and economic help and state building criteria, transparency as a criterion, accountability as a criterion.

This is a quick answer to what Europe should do and should not do and I'm more interested in pushing for what should not be done because I unfortunately saw it being offered in the last weeks in a growing manner, and it's unfortunately really doing the same mistakes once again.

**JAN TECHAU:** Thanks Amr, let's go onto a second round.

**MOHAMED-RAJA'I BARAKAT:** My name is Mohamed-Raja'i Barakat. I have many questions; I will try to be short. We speak about liberalism and many Arab citizens, even if they are from the left, they speak about liberalism. Here we have another notion, another meaning for liberalism; would you please explain it for us between the liberalism of the Arab countries and the liberalism in Europe?

You speak about democracy and 80% of Egyptians are not involved in democracy and the political life. Even here in Europe we vote every two years or three or four years and then we don't feel that we are involved in the political life. What's the future of Mr Mubarak or Mubarak's family? I read in Egyptian newspapers during the two last weeks that even former ministers of the government were involved in [unclear] actions in Alexandria, in Sharm El-Sheikh, in Taba. What's going to happen on this level? Thank you.

**RUTH BAJADA:** First of all, I'd like to wish you luck in your upcoming project and hopefully you [inaudible]. I have a question. By the way, my name is Ruth Bayada [unclear] from the External Action Service.

I have a question on the Salafi groups that you mentioned. How strong and organised are they and are they in any way linked to the Brotherhood? What role would you envisage for them in a new democratic Egypt?

A second question, I know you did not want to speak about Egyptian foreign policy, but surely Egypt is a big country in the region and we've already started saying that Egypt is on the route for smuggling, you have the Sinai problem, you had the ship that was meant to go to Alexandria. Do you think that Egypt will regain a role in the region and what kind of role do you envisage for it?

**ANGELO BORGOGNI:** My name is Burgogni, European Commission. I would like to take on the question of the Brotherhood from another angle. The current debate on the constitution amendment has been polarised with the facilitation of the mandate that the president [unclear] should be reduced and to extent the representation in the parliament. That is for sure an important aspect of democracy; nevertheless, I think that the time could be mature also to take on the religious aspect also in the constitution.

Article 2 is saying that it is not only in Egypt that Egypt is understanding the fabric and is basing its lowest position from Islam. Don't you think that this could be an aspect that should be tackled and, if so,



do you think that the international organisations could work on it, for example the civil societies on an organisational basis?

**VIT NOVOTNY:** Hello, I'm Vit Novotny from the Centre for European Studies. Just to ask about the demonstrations in Egypt. I guess so many people turned up, 14 million, and I suppose you need something more than a negative vision of getting rid of the dictators, as they perceived the president and the establishment. Was there any positive reference point that brought together everybody who was demonstrating on the streets?

**TAMRU AFROWI:** My name is Tamru Afrowi [unclear]. I have two questions. The first one is related to the political front that you announced that you'd be doing. Can you talk more about this and how can individual Egyptian people participate and support that front? The second question is again related to the Muslim Brotherhood, and what odds do you think they have of gaining more than 50% of the People's Assembly and how can the political front that you are aiming to launch help reduce that percentage?

**JAN TECHAU:** Amr, we normally have five minutes left, but please take seven if you need them.

**AMR HAMZAWY:** Sure. Let me start with the last two questions. The initiative which I am part of is composed briefly of representatives of those 80% of Egyptian voters who never participated in politics before. The core of it is a group of mid-career and young professionals coming from non-political backgrounds, corporate, business, banks, academia and not only social science but social science, technical sciences, natural sciences. You have one huge component and those, to my mind, are the citizens who made the revolution.

Some of them were organised in networks like the Alliance of the January 25 Youth, which is composed out of 12 networks and movements, and some were not organised.

The second group is representatives of the business community; a third group is basically the intellectual arm of what's going on, writers, intellectuals. The first three groups are really urban based. A fourth group takes you outside urban centres to different regions in Egypt and is structured according to different logics.

One is a Coptic component. We have had in Egypt in the last years a very dynamic scene, civil society scene, among Egyptian Copts, which is one of the greatest achievements of the revolution, to my mind, that they are now mobilised and interested in participating in politics.

In fact, if you take it from a sector perspective, the most extensive participation of the referendum on Saturday came from Egyptian Copts, early estimates of over 70% which is very impressive. We have a component based on the Coptic civil society scene; we have different components related to El-Barad, [unclear] campaigns and campaigns which were launched in the last two years to push for democratisation.

We have finally a component taking us to connections to independent labour unions and professional associations and initiatives which have been going on since two to four years to establish independent labour unions, so that's what we are trying to do.

At the beginning we tried a mix between left of the centre and right of the centre, to merge and not to allow for limited resources and limited time to be wasted over ideological differences, but that formula

seems to be less productive in terms of attracting citizens to join and less productive in terms of enabling us to work quickly.

An attempt to establish a left of the centre party platform was announced last Friday. We will probably coordinate before the elections and our attempt to establish a liberal socially responsible platform will be announced next week.

How to counter the power of the Brotherhood is a tough question, but once again you have to get into the test and get started right away. We do not have the luxury of building neatly defined party structures. Basically it comes down to nominating candidates, pushing them to their districts and getting them to do their electoral campaigns right away.

We will wait and see. We are still unclear as to how many candidates would like to run, as well as everyone else in Egypt outside the Brotherhood: everyone else is unclear about how many candidates the respective organisations or parties are going to run. This question will be debated.

To the liberal platform and what it means in Egypt, very briefly in order not to go over the time, it means a commitment to the market economy, to a socially responsible market economy similar to what we have here but taking into consideration the big economic and social difference between Western European countries and Egypt, but a socially responsible market economy.

Secondly, it means a commitment to the civil nature of Egyptian politics and of the Egyptian state and here the civil component is against a militarisation of Egyptian politics, as well as an Islamisation of Egyptian politics, a commitment to equal citizenship rights to Egyptians, regardless of their religious affiliation, Muslims and Copts, and a commitment to the human rights international frame of reference, human rights frame of reference as a binding frame of reference for civil liberties, political rights and socioeconomic rights. That's more or less where we stand.

The challenge would be to translate that before the elections in a party platform, to make policy measures out of it. What else do I have? Salafi groups and I'll stop.

**MOHAMED-RAJA'I BARAKAT:** About Mubarak.

**AMR HAMZAWY:** I'm really not interested in what's going to happen to Mubarak. We are done with him and he is a removed president. From a legal perspective, he is a potential criminal. He cannot leave the country; his assets are frozen, the ones which we could put our hands on. God knows how much we could not put our hands on. Whatever will happen to him, he is out of Egyptian politics and I'm very much against losing track and devoting attention to what will happen to the Mubarak family.

Once again, there is a clear legal path which is being followed against him and his family; we are demanding more globally a transitional justice institution, similar to the Reconciliation Committee which we had in different countries at transition to democracy, and not only a selective treatment with a focus on Mubarak and his son and his wife.

There was an excellent joke in Egypt on February 12. The Salafi groups is a very tough question. Are they linked to the Brotherhood? I would like to end on a happy note with a joke, not with the Salafi group, which is a depressing issue. So are they linked to the Brotherhood? Yes and no. What kind of political role they will play, they are making up their mind. The fact is that they have a very strong

presence, especially in Upper Egypt, and that they have been unchecked; their power and their outreach has been unchecked for a very long time.

They are gradually trying to push forward their views, their perceptions and there is a degree of openness, from not only the military establishment but from the Brotherhood, to listen to them, to include them, which is fine as long as you demand them to deliver what should be delivered in a democratic party.

That's going to be very tough. I was in the political delegation which went to the village in which the church was burnt and what I saw there was a different Egypt, a completely different Egypt, where the tension between Salafi groups and the Coptic population was a lesson in being humble and not overestimating the outreach we can have as liberal and leftist groups in that social fabric we are looking.

Okay, to end on a joke, on February 12 or February 13, so the rumour was that Mubarak died and so the joke in town was, well, no, no, no, he should not die now, he should just see what we are doing once we removed him. People were really happy to now... some people wished Mubarak to die before February 11. Once we removed him, the wish was no, no, he should stay and stay awake and see what is happening in the country once he was removed.

On Mubarak, he is in Sharm El-Sheikh; there were some rumours that he is trying behind the scenes to influence what's going on, but he is definitely out of the picture and the military establishment has no interest whatsoever in getting him back again. It's done. That part of Egyptian history with Mubarak is over. The system is still there but he and his family are out of the picture.

**JAN TECHAU:** Amr, thank you very much. Thank you very much for your patience with and for being here when there is much bigger fish to fry in your home country. I have a very, very brief one for you, so to break the time bank here, on my own expense. David Cameron in London gave a speech after Mubarak was ousted from office and it was like a huge apology almost on behalf of the West that they had sat on the wrong horse, that the entire strategy of valuing stability over democracy had failed and we needed to change and it was now a huge watershed and the West would have to behave differently in the future. Was that perceived to be helpful? Was that perceived to be a joke? How was that being perceived in the country?

**AMR HAMZAWY:** Well, it was not perceived, period, and for good reasons. This came too late; it came after such devastating Western reluctance to endorse a democracy movement in Tunisia and in Egypt and the same reluctance, apart from what's going on in Libya, the same reluctance I am seeing unfolding in Yemen, I'm seeing unfolding in Bahrain, a military intervention by the Saudis in Bahrain as being dealt with silently in spite of the highly undemocratic nature of it.

No, it was not perceived. I met the Prime Minister in Egypt and I highly value his commitment to democracy, but once again, as long as it's a rhetorical commitment, as long as it's not translated in policy measures in the right time, these statements and speeches will continue to be not perceived in Egypt.

There is an interesting component – and here more of a regional perspective. Arab citizens really feel empowered for the first time. It's a home-grown issue. This was not imposed on us and we were not helped by anyone; we did it on our own and that sense of empowerment is very central to understand why, in spite of the bloodshed in Libya and in spite of crimes against humanity, people are still standing up to Gaddafi [unclear] and trying to push him out, or in spite of the killing of around 60 Yemeni civilians in a night people are still protesting in Bahrain once again, in spite of the Saudi interventions. There is a

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sense of empowerment which is home-grown and I am glad that this cannot be interpreted or cannot be declared to be the outcome of any meaningful or significant Western policy because that policy did not exist.

**JAN TECHAU:** Amr, you said that there was a risk of romanticising the good old days of the revolution now that we are a couple of weeks into the post-revolution period; you sounded like a very clearheaded romantic today. Thanks for combining the activism with the analysis, thanks for being with us.

**AMR HAMZAWY:** My pleasure.

**JAN TECHAU:** Thanks to all of you for being here early in the evening today and please return to Carnegie on the occasion of our next event. Thank you very much, good night.