

POLITICAL
REPORTS

28 MAY 2018



المعهد المصري للدراسات
EGYPTIAN INSTITUTE FOR STUDIES

The Brotherhood
From Revolution to Coup – II

Dr. Badr Hassan Shafei



WWW.EIPSS-EG.ORG

[f](#) Eipss.EG [t](#) Eis_EG

TURKEY- ISTANBUL

Bahçelievler, Yenibosna Mh 29 Ekim Cad. No: 7 A2 Blok 3. Plaza D: 64
Tel/Fax: +90 212 227 2262 E-Mail: info@eis-eg.org

The Brotherhood: From Revolution to Coup – II

Dr. Badr Hassan Shafei

[Part I of this report addressed two phases of the Muslim Brotherhood experiment from the revolution of 2011 to the coup d'état in 2013:

a) From the outbreak of the January 25 revolution (2011) to February 11, when former president Hosni Mubarak stepped down.

b) During the period of the military junta from 11 February, 2011 to 30 June, 2012, when the first democratically elected civil president assumed power.]

Remarks on the period of junta rule and the MB performance at the time

1- The Brotherhood returned to the reformist approach “or more precisely the revolutionary reformist approach” and was unwilling to engage in confrontations with the army. It is true that the Brotherhood did not support all the SCAF stances, but it was clear that they maintained good relations with the army to prompt the military institution to hand over power. In fact, this approach led to a rift between the revolutionary forces and the MB due to allegations raised by the ultra-secularists that there was a deal between the Muslim Brotherhood and the army. However, the Brotherhood failed to prove the opposite, especially with regard to the events of Mohamed Mahmoud St., a few days before the parliamentary elections. (On November 19, 2011, there were clashes between the security forces and revolutionaries in Mohamed Mahmoud St., but the MB did not officially participate.) It is true that the Brotherhood realized that the army may have been working to implicate them in order to postpone elections, or to distort the image of Islamists through the expected practice of violence if they participated in these events. However, the Brotherhood did not succeed in justifying their position (of “not participating” in the protests) to these young people who were there; they even



accused them of bullying and stirring up riots. This caused a great rift that had its dangerous repercussions, including the popular support provided by some revolutionary movements to the army in its military coup against the Brotherhood in 2013.

2- The military worked on the segregation between the Muslim Brotherhood on the one hand, and other revolutionary youth forces, and real national forces on the other by accusing the MB of using elections to reach power (!!), and that they did not care about achieving the goals of the January revolution. Although this is not true, as the Brotherhood took to the Tahrir Square many times; however they failed to justify the events which they did not attend.

3- The military has also worked to drive a wedge between the Brotherhood and the traditional “domesticated” opposition by allowing these forces and others (remnants of the Mubarak regime) to exploit the satellite TV channels and the media in general to distort the image of the Muslim Brotherhood; and through political polarization which had reached its utmost limit. It is true that the Brotherhood sought to ease this polarization through holding the ‘Dialogue for Egypt’ on March 16, 2011 just three days before the referendum, and through the “National Alliance”, which also began during the same month, including 34 political parties from various trends, including the traditional parties. However, 24 parties later withdrew, and only 10 parties remained in the alliance; as the concessions provided by the MB seem to have not been enough to attract secularist parties. In short, there was no great deal of pragmatism on the part of the MB in dealing with these parties.

4- The Muslim Brotherhood’s non-commitment to their pledge to limit their participation in the parliament to only one “third” of the number of seats – badly affected the Brotherhood’s credibility. This image was subsequently reinforced by the



MB's pursuit to dominate the parliament positions and parliamentary committees' membership.

5- Regarding the process of MB's selection of candidates for the parliament, there was a real problem between selections according to the party (Freedom and Justice Party) criteria – focusing on the political background of the candidate -and the group criteria – focusing on trust and obedience. Consequently, this was reflected in the parliamentary performance in general.

6- With regard to the performance of the People's Assembly (parliament) under the Brotherhood majority, the PA entered into early confrontations, which contributed to increasing the crisis of mistrust on the one hand, and led to conspiracy against the parliament on the other. The People's Assembly then wanted to change the Supreme Constitutional Court law. Although this was an important demand by revolutionaries because the court judges were appointed by former President Hosni Mubarak, but the timing was incorrect. This could have been done through the revolutionary momentum, or after Morsi's access to power, especially during the popular momentum that he enjoyed during the early period of his tenure. Hence, the timing - not the principle - was wrong, especially that it came at a time when the court was considering the issue of the constitutionality of the election law which gave individuals the right to run for elections (one-third of the total number of nominees) outside the political parties.

7- The crisis of mistrust that was created by the formation of the First Constituent Assembly (March 2012) and the Second Constituent Assembly (June 2012), where there was an alleged desire from the Islamic trend (the Brotherhood and Al-Nour Party at the time) to dominate the Assembly. Although there were efforts to contain this crisis through response to the other party, but these efforts came after distrust rooted deep among rival parties, especially in light of reports on secret coordination between



the secularist parties and the SCAF which was always seeking to thwart the efforts to form the constituent assembly.

8- The Brotherhood did not succeed in winning any of the parties to their side, neither the army (by non-agreement to give it a privileged position in the constitution), nor the revolutionary youth forces (by denying their belief that “legitimacy springs from the Tahrir Square and that there was need to prosecute the military and prompt them to leave power immediately), nor even the national and domesticated opposition. Thus, the MB remained lonely in the arena – except for some Islamists who supported the group, deepening political and even religious polarization.

9- With regard to MB’s running for presidential elections, this was one of the other cracks added to the preceding rifts, which contributed to the promotion of allegations that the group was only preoccupied with reaching power. This gave the counterrevolution media a chance to undermine the credibility of the group and distort its image to a large extent. However, the MB gave reasons for this move, including:

- a) The SCAF’s obstruction of the formation of a government with real powers expressing the will of the people despite the failure of the Ganzouri Government,
- b) The SCAF’s threatening to dissolve the elected People's Assembly and Shura Council,
- c) The military council’s pushing for a presidential candidate or more from among the remnants of the Mubarak regime in attempt to reproduce the former regime again,
- d) The SCAF’s obstruction of the work of the Constituent Assembly and raising controversy around it with the aim of impeding the preparation of the Constitution in the time limit set for that.

Despite the rationality of these reasons, however, it was possible to expand the search for a national figure to be nominated for the presidency election and supported by the MB as well as other forces instead of limiting the efforts to only three figures (Tareq

Al-Beshri, Hossam Al-Gheriani, and Mahmoud Mekki). This put the Brotherhood in the range of criticism on the one hand, and led to the alignment of the junta and the forces of the traditional opposition and Mubarak regime remnants to confront the Brotherhood on the other. Perhaps this also prompted the military junta to issue a complementary constitutional declaration on the eve of the presidential election's round of return, giving the SCAF the right of legislation in the face of the potential president.

Third: The MB experiment – the power stage

After the failure of the military council to abort the revolution in June 2012 because of the MB's nomination of a presidential candidate in the face of Ahmed Shafiq, son of the military institution, and then taking to the Tahrir Square Immediately after completing the count of votes and announcing Morsi's victory - the military junta had to deal with the Brotherhood not as partners in the revolution as it was in 1952, but as the ruling authority. But for the first time, there was discrepancy between the presidency and the military institutions, although the president under the constitution is considered the supreme commander of the armed forces.

Between Morsi, Tantawi, and Anan

Meanwhile, Morsi was aimed at subjugating the military. However, the confrontation began early through Morsi's ousting of Defense Minister Field Marshal Hussein Tantawi and Chief of Staff Lt. General Sami Anan 40 days after taking over, taking advantage of the killing of 16 Egyptian soldiers in North Sinai. But from the point of view of his opponents (including the revolutionary forces), Morsi committed a mistake, by appointing the head of military intelligence, Abdel-Fattah al-Sisi, in the post of Minister of Defense. However, some observers believe that Morsi did not select al-Sisi, but Tantawi was the one who imposed him In return for agreeing to resign. Therefore,

these are mere analyses and estimates that need to be documented and clarified in light of the conflicting circumstances especially that the owner of the original testimony (Dr. Morsi) is still in prison.

According to opponents of Morsi, he made a mistake again by not using the great popularity he enjoyed after the dismissal of Tantawi and Anan in taking long-awaited revolutionary steps, such as dismissal of the Prosecutor General, the suspension of the work of the Supreme Constitutional Court, and the purification of the media and the Interior Ministry. They believe that the delay in taking these steps enabled the other party to re-arrange its ranks on the one hand, and prepare for overthrowing Morsi on the other.

During that period, President Morsi made some decisions without consulting his advisers, such as the issuance of the constitutional declaration in November 2012 – where most of the president's advisers, including Vice President Mahmoud Makki who announced that he did not hear about the matter. This was interpreted by Morsi's opponents as a result of the MB's influence on the President, which helped to distort his image before the public opinion.

Morsi and the military institution ... Clash or harmony?

On the other hand, it was clear that the army was not obedient to Morsi and abstained from carrying out his orders, which would not only weaken his rule and break his prestige, but it could even lead to overthrowing him and even eliminating him if possible. This was evident through several things, including:

1- The Republican Guard forces' abstention from protecting the President inside the Presidential Palace during the events of Al-Ittihadiya after the issuance of the constitutional declaration on November 22, 2012. This allowed some demonstrators to access the President's convoy and attack it, in a joint plot between the Republican Guard and the Interior Ministry, headed by Ahmed Gamal al-Din.



2- The army command invited - without informing the president - the political forces to discuss the political crisis resulting from the constitutional declaration issued by Morsi.

3- The army forces' abstention from implementing the curfew in the canal cities after the sentences issued in the issue of the Port Said Massacre.

4- The army's incitement of the political factions and the people to take to the street on June 30, and calling on them to demand the intervention of the army, as revealed later by Dr. Mona Makram Ebeid.

5- Rejection of any proposals submitted by Morsi to resolve the crisis such as the early parliamentary elections, followed by a referendum on his legitimacy -so that the country would not be void of institutions if the referendum was conducted first. However, Al- Sisi always used to reply that the opposition refuse these solutions.

6- The army's intervention to overthrow Morsi, although most of the opposition did not want to overthrow him, but only demanded to hold a referendum on his remaining in power. Perhaps Sisi's nomination for presidency later explains why Morsi was overthrown, and why Sisi did not agree on holding a referendum.

7- The army's continued repression against the Muslim Brotherhood in particular, and bringing them to trial, not through military courts as happened in the Nasserite experiment, but through politicized civil courts.

8- The army's continued policy of exclusion and escalation against the Muslim Brotherhood, refusing to negotiate with them, declaring them a terrorist group, and launching a fierce media war against them. However, the Muslim Brotherhood, in turn, refused to accept the military move, as they represented the legitimate authority, and accordingly they also rejected Sisi's road map and maintained their demonstrations against the coup.

In fact, the period of Morsi's presidency revealed several things, including:



- 1- The absence of a clear program or a real strategic vision for the MB, as the Renaissance Project was a set of ideas, many of which lacked mechanisms.
- 2- The poor media role of both the group and the presidency, which contributed not only to the distortion of Morsi as president, but it also drew a negative mental image for the group, which may need a long time to improve. However, the army was aware of the importance of the media earlier, as evidenced by the first leaking of Al-Sisi during a meeting with military commanders in December 2012 and his talk about the need to prepare media arms to cooperate with the army.
- 3- The president's abstention from revealing the facts to the public opinion, or to thwart the coup plan in the last few hours by calling for a referendum on his legitimacy, especially after the pressures he came under.
- 4- The indifference of the presidency and the group - to a certain extent - toward the advice submitted to them internally and externally, which may be due to the wrong information provided by the intelligence to the presidency. Consequently, decisions or responses to the demands of the opposition were delayed, and therefore the ceiling of demands was continually escalating from asking for dismissal of Hisham Qandil's government, to demanding a referendum on Morsi's remaining in power, and finally to demanding his departure without a referendum.
- 5- The previous point is linked to a misjudgment of the internal and external situation, where the June 30 demonstrations were underestimated and were expected to end quickly.
- 6- This may have been repeated – misjudgment of the situation – in the dispersal of the Rabaa and Nahda sit-ins on 14 August 2013 despite the severe warnings, and even the repressive practices carried out by the Army in the events of the Republican Guard (July 8, 2013) and the Manassa massacre (July 26, 2013). However, the MB and the leaders of the legitimacy coalition were betting on the resilience and the ability to

peacefully overcome the interior ministry and the army, as happened during the revolution of January 25. It is clear that they did not read the scene correctly.

7- It is also noted that the MB did not develop a vision for all possibilities, and therefore when the Rabaa and Nahda sit-ins were dispersed, there were no alternatives. Moreover, the MB decision to take to the street two days after the Rabaa and Nahda massacres, particularly in Ramses Square, was among the group's major mistakes, making the MB members and supporters an easy target to army and police snipers.

