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The relationship between Saudi Arabia and the Muslim Brotherhood movement in Egypt has gone through many stages. However, the outbreak of the Egyptian January 25 Revolution (2011) has introduced new factors on the structure of this relationship, experiencing a new transitional stage with special features that reflect the nature of the “transition situation” experienced by the Arab world, and also experienced by the regional and international systems.

The “transitional phase” in the Arab world in general is so much complicated and interrelated, especially in regard to ongoing attempts to rearrange the regional centers of gravity of Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Iran and Israel, in the context of the ongoing restructuring of the regional system in the Middle East.

It is certain that this “transitional phase” has strongly reflected on the relationship between Riyadh and the Muslim Brotherhood of Egypt, including several topics, including: the future of inter-relationships between the two countries, the future of moves of change and revolutions in the Arab world, the future relationship between the religious and political aspects in the Arab world, and the future of Arab political systems themselves in light of the legitimacy crisis they are currently experiencing (especially that has worsened greatly since the outbreak of the Arab revolutions).

In this context, it may be possible to refer to three scenarios concerning the Saudi relationship with the Muslim Brotherhood movement in Egypt, especially amid increasing obstacles in the way of such relationship due to overlapping with developments in the Arab world and the Middle East region; and the new variables in international policies towards the Middle East and the Arab political systems,

especially regarding the integration or exclusion of Islamic movements in the political process in these countries.

First scenario: Deterioration of relations between Saudi Arabia and Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood

This scenario is based on the likeliness of continuation of the current status quo without any change. Accordingly, it is expected that the potential of the Arab world, especially Saudi Arabia and Egypt, will continue to erode gradually, especially with the increasing internal and external crises caused by the policies of Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman and his close advisors and associates, as revealed by the assassination of Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi.

This scenario may accelerate if Prince Mohammed bin Salman becomes king of Saudi Arabia, which means continued Saudi support for the policy of “excluding and demonizing the Muslim Brotherhood” under various pretexts, whether by the Egyptian military institution or other religious institutions or civil forces that may wish to exclude or restrict their political influence.

Also, continuation of Egyptian army in power may exacerbate the crisis in Egypt and accordingly increase the chances of fulfillment of this scenario. This will probably mean that the chances of achieving “Egyptian national reconciliation”, which remains a necessary condition for getting the country out of its current predicament, will diminish. Despite the risks this scenario carries, it is the most likely scenario in the foreseeable future.

Second scenario: Absence of regional stability, and prospects for deterioration of the situation in Saudi Arabia, Egypt and the Arab world in general

Researchers point to the increasing instability and regional conflicts in the Arab world and the Middle East, and the worsening state-society relations, amounting to civil wars and internal conflicts in some Arab regimes under the slogan of “combating terrorism”, amid growing international and regional pressures and interventions. This exacerbated the overall outcome of the internal shortcomings of the Arab world led to serious repercussions on the regimes of these countries and their fragile stability.

The aggravation of these problems in the Arab world, at the social, economic and political levels, may lead in the short and medium term to deterioration of the security situation in Saudi Arabia and the entire region, especially if the United States and Israel waged a war against Iran's allies and its military presence in Syria.

Perhaps one of the greatest dangers of this scenario is the unlikelihood of predicting its mechanisms and repercussions on the entities of the Arab countries themselves; and accordingly, the future of the Islamist movements, especially the Muslim Brotherhood of Egypt, under a regional system that is experiencing a serious transition.

This scenario may also be the worst of all scenarios, and its potential for the foreseeable future is medium, but not entirely excluded.

Third Scenario: Improved relations between Saudi Arabia and Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood

This scenario may be likely if a change occurs in Saudi policies at the Arab and regional levels, especially in case of failure of Prince Mohammed bin Salman to ascend throne,

and restoration of the kingdom policies of maintaining regional calm, especially during the era of the late King Fahd bin Abdul Aziz.

On the other hand, realization of this scenario requires some elements, including: restoration of the democratic process in Egypt, the return of the army to its barracks for “protecting” the security of the country instead of “controlling reins of government and economic affairs”, stopping the policy of “exclusion of the Muslim Brotherhood” and allowing them to engage again in politics and social, economic, charitable and advocacy activities, as well as various areas of trade unions activities.

To achieve this scenario, there would necessarily be a new revolution in Egypt restoration of the democratic path and civil rule, elimination of the role of the counterrevolution countries. Also, there would be real changes in the policies of international powers towards the Middle East in general, and Egypt in particular.

Although this scenario is the most likely one for the interests of the peoples of the Arab world, its realization on the ground seems unlikely, at least in the foreseeable future.

Saudi Arabia's relationship with the Muslim Brotherhood after Egypt's January 25 Revolution went through several stages, but it has generally been characterized by continued tension. Although Islamist movements may have lost an important round in this conflict, it is difficult to imagine achievement of stability in the Arab world under a complete exclusion of the role of these movements.