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Robert Fisk: President Morsi, a rigged ballot and a fox's tale that has all of Cairo abuzz

The Long View: The army intelligence service is said to want a mini-revolution to get rid of corrupt officers

Robert Fisk

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There is a fox in Tahrir Square. Bushy tailed and thickly furred, he claims to hear everything. And this is what he says: that 50.7 per cent of Egyptian voters cast their ballot for Mubarak's former Prime Minister, Ahmed Shafiq, in last month's elections; that only 49.3 per cent voted for Mohamed Morsi of the Muslim Brotherhood's Freedom and Justice party; but that the military were so fearful of the hundreds of thousands of Brotherhood supporters who would gather in Tahrir Square they gave the victory to Morsi.

Now foxes can be deceitful. But this is a well-connected fox and he claims that Morsi actually met four leading members of the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (Scaf) in Egypt four days before the election results were proclaimed and that he agreed to accept his presidency before the constitutional court rather than the newly dissolved parliament – which is exactly what he did on Saturday. He says there will be another election in a year's time, although I have my doubts.

Now behind this piece of Reynard-gossip is a further piece of information – shattering if true – that the Egyptian army's intelligence service is outraged by the behaviour of some members of

the Scaf (in particular, the four who supposedly met Morsi) and wants a mini-revolution to get rid of officers whom it believes to be corrupt. These young soldiers call themselves the New Liberal Officers – a different version of the Free Officers Movement which overthrew the corrupt King Farouk way back in 1952.

Many of the present young intelligence officers were very sympathetic to the Egyptian revolution last year – and several of them were shot dead by government snipers long after Mubarak's departure during a Tahrir Square demonstration. They admire the current head of military intelligence, soon to retire and to be replaced, so it is said, by another respected military officer with the unfortunate name of Ahmed Mosad.

I have to say that all Cairo is abuzz with "the deal", and almost every newspaper has a version of how Morsi got to be President – though I must also add that none have gone as far as the fox. He says, for example, that the military intelligence services – like some of the Scaf officers – want a thorough clean out of generals who control a third of the Egyptian economy in lucrative scams that include shopping malls, banks and vast amounts of property. Where does Morsi stand in relation to this? Even the fox doesn't know.

Nor is there any plausible explanation as to why Shafiq set off to the United Arab Emirates the day after the election results were announced, reportedly to perform the "umra" pilgrimage in Saudi Arabia. There is much talk of a court case against Shafiq going back to Mubarak's era.

One man who was not present at the Morsi-Scaf meeting, says the fox, is Mohamed el-Baradei, but he may well be asked to be Morsi's Prime Minister. The Nobel prize-winner and former nuclear "watchdog" has expressed a profound lack of interest in such a role. Baradei's appointment would help Morsi keep the streets calm and allow Egypt to come up with an economic plan to persuade the International Monetary Fund to loan the country the money it needs to survive. There is also talk of great tensions between the military intelligence and the staff of the interior ministry, some of whom are fearful that another mini-revolution will have them in court for committing crimes against Egyptian civilians during the anti-Mubarak revolution.

There are persistent rumours that the plain-clothes "baltagi" thugs who were used to beat protesters last year were employed to prevent Christians voting in some Egyptian villages. Interestingly, when Sultan Faruq ran through election irregularities before announcing the presidential winner eight days ago, he said he didn't know who prevented the village voters getting to the polling station.

All of which is quite a story. Not the kind that can be confirmed – but Egypt is not a country which lends itself to hard facts when the Egyptian press (a mercifully wonderful institution after the dog-day years of Mubarak's newspapers) makes so much up. But one fact cannot be denied. When he wanted to show that he was a revolutionary animal, the fox held out his back paw. And there was a very severe year-old bullet wound in it.