

افغانستان آزاد – آزاد افغانستان

AA-AA

چو کشور نېاشد تن من مېباد بدين يوم وېر زنده يک تن مېباد
همه سر به سر تن به کشتن دهيم از آن به که کشور به دشمن دهيم

www.afgazad.com

afgazad@gmail.com

European Languages

زبان های اروپایی

<http://www.counterpunch.org/2016/08/09/the-winds-of-change-in-egypt-again-this-time-from-britain/print/>

The Winds of Change in Egypt, Again: This Time From Britain

By Oamar Kssem
August 9, 2016

The British Home Office has issued a new document specifically addressing asylum in Britain for Egyptian Muslim Brothers, in a rejection of David Cameron's previous antagonistic policies towards the movement.

The document is flawed, however, and reveals the mind-boggling dependence of the British Home Office on the narrow-minded mindset and contradictory stances of Washington beltway think-tanks. Although it does too little too late and *finally* displays some concern about the *mountains* of Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch (HRW) reports of human rights abuses in Egypt, really what it does is to pull the rug from under the feet of the Sisi régime, which Britain had previously been instrumental in propping up.

Before analysing the real purpose of this document, let us review the decline of the Egyptian, and more generally of the Middle-eastern counterrevolutionary movement in the past year and a half, up until the spectacular collapse of the attempted Turkish coup on July 15.

Saudi-Arabia, the Emirates and the Yemen War

On February 9 2015 I wrote about the winds of change blowing in Egypt. At the time, they were blowing from Saudi Arabia, which, under the reign of King Abdulla, had been the conduit for the counterrevolutionary movement that destroyed democracy in Egypt in 2013.

The court officials in Riyadh that had conspired with UAE leader Mohamed bin Zayed (MbZ) to channel funds to Abdel-Fattah el-Sisi, Egyptian Junta leader, to organise social chaos and massive demonstrations on June 30 2013 along classic colour revolution lines, followed by a putsch on July 3rd, had also been conspiring in a high-stakes succession battle for the Saudi crown as Abdulla lay dying.

Since 1953 the sons of Abdelaziz al-Saud, founder of the dynasty, had ruled Saudi Arabia, with Saudi Crown Prince Salman bin Abdulaziz and Deputy Crown Prince Muqrin bin Abdulaziz the last to qualify for this royal conveyor-belt of rulers, as Abdulla lay dying. The problem faced the Saudi family as to which elements of the next generation would dominate: who would in fact fill Muqrin's post. Washington's closest Middle-east ally would face a political intrigue straight out of the pages of history textbooks on the Middle-Ages.

I explained how Abdulla's secretary (and effective Prime Minister), Khalid al-Tuwaiji, conspired with Sisi and MbZ to put Abdulla's son Mutaib in the position of Deputy Crown Prince to ensure the regional dominance of the counterrevolutionary cabal and to further MbZ's ambitions in regard to Saudi Arabia's Eastern province and the region in general, after his own putsch in Abu Dhabi against his elder brother, Khalifa.

Salman was undesirable: his accession to the crown would mean the accession of Muhammad bin Nayef bin Abdulaziz to the position of Crown Prince instead of Muqrin. Salman's 30-year old son Muhammad bin Salman al-Saud would then become Deputy Crown Prince, to put him in line for the throne in short order, given the bad health of both his father and Muhammad bin Nayef. As it was the Tuwaiji/MbZ/Sisi conspiracy failed. Salman's son acceded to quickly replace commoner Tuwaiji, a key figure in the control of the Saudi crown by MbZ, in the post of Prime Minister. He then merged all economic and financial departments under his authority, and put his brother in effective charge of the oil ministry.

So, Muhammad bin Salman became 'number one', as he also took over the Defence Ministry, launching the War in Yemen essentially to impose his authority on the Saudi clan, and to establish himself as the 'warrior king' in the eyes of the all-important Saudi Twittersphere. Crucial in that calculation was calling upon Abdulla's son Mutaib, still head of the National Guard, one of Saudi Arabia's three armies, to heel, by calling the National Guard into action under his orders in the new war.

The first purpose of the Yemen War, the destruction of Yemen and the further impoverishment of its already poor people, was therefore to consolidate the Saudi clan behind the new ruler. Clearly, the task there was also to reverse the Yemeni coup orchestrated by the Tuwaiji/MbZ counterrevolutionary cabal, which in Yemen included the dictator who had been deposed during the Arab Spring – Ali Abdulla al-Saleh. The purpose at that time had been to remove Al-Islah, the Muslim Brotherhood Party which had been the main beneficiary of the 2011 revolution through free and fair elections.

It would serve the interests of the new Saudi régime to blame the blowback from this coup on Iran, given the fact that Ali Abdulla al-Saleh had allied himself with a minority faction in the new revolutionary government – the Houthis – who were distinctive in that they were Shi'a. The

Houthis are originally 'Zaydi' Shi'a, a sect nevertheless that is not messianic like Iranian Twelver Shi'ism, and more akin to the Sunni Islamic-law based Muslim Brothers. But Ali Abdulla al-Saleh, who was known to build up and nurture various extremist groups, including al-Qaeda, for his own purposes, deliberately engineered sectarian divisions. He increasingly forced the alignment of Houthis with Iran and Hezbollah in Lebanon in order to spook Saudis into giving him support and money.

The military takeover of Yemen by Houthis would thus inevitably be aligned with Iran *by default*, not by Iranian design, and was financed and organised by Tuwaiji/MbZ/Saleh to boot. The new Saudi régime had now to row back on this coup against the Yemeni Muslim Brothers/Al-Islah, whose most famous figure internationally is Nobel Laureate Tawakkol Karman.

The Saudi new régime brought back all the elements in Saudi Arabia which had condemned the coup organised against the Muslim Brother-led Egyptian government, and which Abdulla's government had fired and marginalised. But the obvious US/EU interests in maintaining the Sisi régime in Egypt at that time meant that there was little that could be done in that regard, even if they had wished to bring change.

The war in Yemen, the first organised military aggression against a neighbor by the third Saudi state (formed in 1932) in its history, would absorb all of its energies and still does, given that the war is in a stalemate, partly as a result of the fact that MbZ is playing both ends against the middle, by putting his forces in the way of danger as participants in the Saudi effort, on the one hand, and in a logic all of his own, also continuing to support the Houthis.

Although MbZ may suffer from megalomania and excess money, it is impossible to deny that his involvement in coup after coup, in Libya and more recently in Turkey for instance, and his actions more generally, do not play to the interests of important lobbies in Washington. This is evident from his close alliance with Israel, which supports his autocratic rule. More generally it plays to the desire of the Western 'security state' to continue to maintain its main power base in the Middle-east by sowing discord, and destroying all anti-colonial political movements. It is from this power base that the securitization of the Western 'democratic state', in train since 2001, if not since the 1980s, can safely continue (with the dire prospect, should things remain as they are, of Western democracies ultimately transiting to political systems modeled on MbZ's ideas).

Since February 2015 Sisi's fortunes have collapsed, despite no overt moves against him. Continued funding from Saudi Arabia would only be possible by selling Red Sea islands to the desert state, angering Sisi's own supporters, and leading to political chaos. Sisi is now the first president of Egypt to have no official residence, and whose whereabouts in the country are always kept secret.

Now, the British Home document on asylum rules for Muslim Brothers, both undermines the stance of the Sisi régime on the Muslim Brothers, as well as going against MbZ's long standing crusade against them.

Apparent volte-face of Britain's new government

The Washington Institute for Near East Policy (WINEP) seems to have spelled out the foreign policy stance of the new British government, saving Whitehall mandarins the effort of too much thought.

The Home Office document interprets the events of the Egyptian Revolution, in an effort, it appears, when the document is considered as a whole, to distance itself from any suggestion that this is an endorsement of kidnapped president Morsi, and that he should be reinstated. If this is indeed a correct interpretation then what we shall see the document is trying to do, *will undoubtedly fail*.

In view of the fact that there is wholesale acceptance of the charges brought by Amnesty and HRW against the Egyptian Junta in the Home Office document, which includes the charge of the wholesale politicization of the Egyptian judiciary, a fatal contradiction appears, therefore, in also accepting WINEP's interpretation of events during the Egyptian revolution on the basis of a reification of the Supreme Constitutional Court and its actions.

WINEP on the actions of the ex-Mubarak Supreme Constitutional Court

WINEP agrees that the Supreme Constitutional Court was Mubarak-appointed, and therefore completely in thrall to the régime that was being displaced at the time, that it dissolved the People's Assembly, and that it unilaterally revoked a law that barred former régime officials from holding office, thus allowing Mubarak-era Prime Minister Shafik to run against Morsi.

Given that we are talking about a revolution here, it was generous of the revolutionary forces, that they worked within these extremely difficult constraints imposed by the Supreme Constitutional Court, without calling for violent revolt. This is not recognised – it will never be recognised by counterrevolutionary forces which definitely included Britain – that there was an attempt by revolutionary forces to work *within the law*.

WINEP/the document go on to say that the fundamental problem with Morsi was that '[w]ith the lower house of parliament dissolved, Morsi had both executive and legislative control of the government. In late November 2012, Morsi declared himself, the Shura Council (previously a consultative body without legislative authority), and the constituent assembly immune from judicial review'.

Never mind that the problem, in other words the legal conditions, were *clearly thus created* by the Supreme Constitutional Court, and that therefore, in the light of the resultant fact that Morsi had both executive and legislative control of the government, Morsi *acted legally* by declaring himself and the constituent assembly immune from judicial review. Therefore once again, revolutionary forces were working *within the law* as they found it. The outrage that followed Morsi's action was nothing other than a reflection of the fact that *the old régime would always be a sore loser* in any legal manoeuvring. This is why ultimately it had to *resort to force*.

Morsi had to claim immunity to save democracy, and it was a *legal move*. He rescinded the claim, once the constituent assembly had passed the new election law, in order to reinstate a parliament which the ex-Mubarak Supreme Constitutional Court had actually dissolved unfairly. The Supreme Constitutional Court had a problem with the election procedures on independent candidates, which affected 1/3 of seats only. Instead of demanding redress within a certain time frame on those seats, to protect the continuity of democracy, wholesale dissolution was sought.

The aggression shown by the Supreme Constitutional Court in these matters indicated to Morsi that a dissolution of the constituent assembly drafting the election law would soon follow, making it impossible to re-establish parliament at all. Not only was Morsi in his legal rights to do what he did, but his judgement was correct and astute. The roar of disapproval from the old régime was the simple recognition that they had lost the legal game.

The fact that there was ultimately no legal basis for detaining Morsi is actually recognised by the Home Office document. So why is there no demand for his release? Or at least a demand for proffering charges that actually stack up?

Demonisation of Morsi's government

Charges by the Home Office Document that the economy collapsed under Morsi have fairly and squarely been demolished – here. The turnaround effected by Morsi's government under extreme pressure was nothing short of astonishing. The same complete nonsense is peddled in The Economist's recent article 'The Ruining of Egypt', which says of Sisi that "he is as incompetent as Muhammad Morsi, the elected Islamist president, whom Mr Sisi deposed".

Both The Economist and the Home Office are really distraught by the inability of the 2013 US/British-backed coup in Egypt to bring financial returns, and to threaten instead disorder on the region, on a cataclysmic scale – if we haven't actually reached such a level yet.

The *weirdest statement* made by the Home Office is that 'Many analysts criticize Morsi's tactics as heavy-handed. Middle East expert Robin Wright referred to his style of governing as "majoritarianism," meaning "autocratic rule by the largest party"'. Who is Robin Wright? And is he putting forth these ideas on the basis that he is a Middle-east expert, or a political philosopher? The fact of the matter is that Morsi's cabinet contained many of his political opponents, in crucial positions, who –it is absolutely clear – worked hard to undermine his government.

If majoritarianism was a charge to be made against politicians, then really why don't the US and Britain bring Nouri al-Maliki to justice and charge him with alienating 8m Sunni Iraqis, and causing the rise of ISIS/DAESH as a result, besides absconding with billions of US \$'s which should have been spend on mending Baghdad's sewers?

Disorder on a cataclysmic scale

The political chaos in Egypt, with close to 100m people, the region's most populous country, thus adding unprecedented risks to a state of chaos already reigning across the 4,500 km from

Mosul in Iraq to Bamako in Mali, and the equally long distance to Mogadishu, seems to be leading to a foreign policy rethink in Britain, a perhaps other Western capitals.

But Western governments are currently run by mental pygmies, who trot myopically after the facts, never able to catch them up. US, British and French Special Forces are carrying on secret wars in Iraq, Syria, Egypt, Libya, Somalia, Mali, Nigeria, and the Sahel which cannot be, and will *never* be, contained unless *the rule of law* isn't established in major centres of 'civilisation' like Cairo, Baghdad and Damascus, which then radiates outwards to stabilise the world and create peace and prosperity.

But judging by the garbage in this new Home Office document on asylum, Western governments have *lost the language* of law. What is worse, two and half thousand years of Western philosophy doesn't seem to have taught officials in these governments anything about the law of non-contradiction. Perhaps there is some wisdom in the dictum of the Islamic philosopher Avicenna (Ibn Sina) who recommends that : "*Anyone who denies the law of noncontradiction should be beaten and burned until he admits that to be beaten is not the same as not to be beaten, and to be burned is not the same as not to be burned.*" (Avicenna, Metaphysics, I; commenting on Aristotle, Topics I.11.105a4–5)

What is particularly alarming about the document, however, is its craven nature. The attempt by the document to pre-empt the number of asylum applications the new policy might engender up front, and to therefore wriggle out of its real obligations is clear from its statement that: "*The Egyptian authorities is (sic.) unlikely to have the capacity, capability or interest in seeking to persecute everyone associated with the MB given the sheer scale of the number of members and supporters. The evidence does not suggest that merely being a member of, or, in particular, a supporter of the MB will put a person at risk of persecution*".

They only want leaders of the Muslim Brothers to apply, not the trodden masses. Why? Perhaps they just want their help in turning around the complete basket case that Egypt has become. Fat chance – not on this basis. You broke it, you fix it.