

Egypt and shifting power influence structures in the middle east



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Happenings in Egypt and shifting power equations in Middle East

Introduction The popular conception that international media is working overtime to project is Egypt is experiencing a popular uprising motivated through years' of tyrannical misrule of Hosni Mubarak. But, as days go by it increasingly seems that Egyptian Army is pressing for a change of regime, sooner the better. Though there can be no denial of the fact that people of Egypt were genuinely fed up of Mubarak's oppression and rampant corruption but the movement got a genuine boost when the army decided to remain neutral. The situation is indeed complex and needs a little more elaboration for the uninitiated to get a real grasp of the situation at ground level and the forces that are at play in this violent drama (Blair 2011). Role of US United States is one of the biggest donors in Egypt but those donations and aids measure up to hardly around 3% of the country's GDP thus an average Egyptian rarely considers such aid as being worthwhile and is thus not very concerned about US reaction to the current happenings in their country. Moreover, the current emphasis of providing US aid to a handful of business men and the remote possibility of creating permanent job opportunities in that country also have made Egyptians rather indifferent copious volumes of US aid that regularly flows into their economy. However, United States is vitally interested about Egypt due to its control over Suez Canal and consequent impact on global transportation of crude oil and would under no circumstances be willing to let go of its hold over the country. Perhaps it is because of this reason; United States wants a speedy end to the

current turmoil and wants Vice President of Egypt to assume power with the direct help of the army. This would also preclude any possibility of a chaotic interlude in a post Hosni Mubarak scenario (Brady 2011). Role of Israel

Though Israel has kept a very low profile in the current situation it is nonetheless very eager to know the outcome of the current unrest in Egypt. It is the only country in the Middle East with which Israel has a peace treaty; so if we factor in the potential threats from Hamas and Hezbollah, Israel would like a pro-American regime take control of Egypt. If that happens, Egyptian army, though nowhere as well organized as Israeli armed forces, would still remain under tight American leash and Israel would have no cause to worry about any aggression from this front (Friedman 2011). Role of Saudi Arabia

Faced with economic pressures, Saudi Arabia had given up its role as a 'swing producer' of crude and accepted the quota and control regime that other OPEC countries adhere to. Saudi foreign policy is centered on maintaining its paramount position in the Arabian Peninsula what with its prominent position in International Monetary Fund and several other Arabic and Islamic funds and aids institutions. Saudi Arabia frequently intermediates in internal crises of other Arabic countries and often plays the role of arbitrator in inter-country disputes in this region. With largest crude reserves in the world under its control and with enormous financial clout, Saudi Arabia is indeed the single most important factor in Middle East geopolitics (Greenwald 2011). Current unrest in Egypt surely has immense implications for Saudi Arabia. There is absolutely no doubt that Saudi Arabia is a prosperous country in terms of GDP but a major part of that wealth is barricaded within the four walls of the palace and the inequality of income distribution is too brazen to escape the attention of even the most casual

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observer. The urban population of Saudi Arabia is almost of the same age as that in Egypt and subsidized bread and petrodollars might not be able to stave off the spillover of popular resentment for long. It is therefore no wonder that 86-year old King Abdullah was one of the first to denounce the popular uprising in Egypt as the handiwork of a bunch of infiltrators (Palmer 2011). Conclusion Popular uprising against autocratic regimes have become commonplace in Middle East. Starting with Yemen and Tunisia, the wave has hit Egypt now and might any day spill over to the mightiest of Arab nations - Saudi Arabia. Regime changes will surely induce a fresh bout of instability in this already volatile region and will have worldwide implications with its invariable impact on production of crude oil. Reference Blair, Edmund. " Egypt's Mubarak sends in army, resists demands to quit." Reuters. January 28, 2011. <http://www.reuters.com/article/2011/01/28/us-egypt-protest-idUSTRE7003UW20110128> (accessed February 6, 2011). Brady, Jeff. " Unrest In Egypt Spurs Worry Over Oil Supply." npr: Find a Station. February 3, 2011. <http://www.npr.org/2011/02/03/133449654/unrest-in-egypt-spurs-worry-over-oil-supply> (accessed February 6, 2011). Friedman, George. " Stratfor Geopolitical Reports on current situation in Egypt." Dangers of Allah: Only false prophets feel the need to kill in order to spread their faith. February 5, 2011. <http://actforamerica.wordpress.com/2011/02/05/stratfor-geopolitical-reports-on-current-situation-in-egypt/> (accessed February 6, 2011). Greenwald, Igor. " Egypt Today, Saudi Arabia Tomorrow?" Seeking Alpha. February 1, 2011. <http://seekingalpha.com/article/249974-egypt-today-saudi-arabia-tomorrow> (accessed February 6, 2011). Palmer, Elizabeth. " The Social Instability Leading to Egypt's Unrest." CBS News. January 29, 2011.

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