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MEMORANDUM THRU

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FOR HQMC, Strategy and Plans Division (PLU), Plans, Policies, and Operations, Washington, D.C. 20380-1775

Subj: EGYPT PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION OBSERVATIONS 6 JUNE - 9 JULY 2011

1. **Purpose.** To report observations of Egypt's Presidential Election during In-Country Training (ICT) by Captain Andy Macak, 8244 MENA FAO.

2. **BLUF/Executive Summary.** Everything on the Egyptian Street today is discussed in terms of pre and post revolution Egypt. The consensus is that the emotions and perspectives of Egyptians have not changed; rather they have become more emboldened to act on their beliefs and grievances than before January 2011. Despite Muslim Brotherhood (MB) Candidate Mohamed Morsi assuming the office of President on 30 June, competing visions for Egypt remain between religious moderates, religious fundamentalists, disenfranchised youth, the liberals and those who support the 'old way' and stability found in the military establishment. However the results of the recent parliamentary and presidential elections are better explained as a [narrow] popular rejection of the former regime rather than a mandate for an Islamic State. With \$1.3 billion a year in US military aid and the largest military in the continent, the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF) remains committed to ensuring stability returns to Egypt as well as securing their stake of control in the Egyptian economy, which ranges between 15-40% of the overall economy. What actions they will take to ensure to that end are uncertain at this time and it is difficult to assess the loyalty of their junior officers as they remain closed off and distant from foreign officials. In the near term, Morsi is challenged with navigating the re-institution of a dissolved parliament, completing a new constitution and forming his cabinet. Speeches aside, the decisions he makes and how he acts on them will provide indicators of his vision for Egypt. In short, the elections are over but the long-anticipated confrontation between SCAF and the MB is only delayed while the MB maneuvers to build support and legitimacy as Egypt's ruling party before challenging for more authority when the opportunity arises. If there is one thing everyone has in common, it is to sort through this complex political situation to achieve stability, which will encourage tourism and money to flow back into the economy and put bread on the table.

3. Observations and Analysis.

a. *Pre-Elections Overview.* The American University of Cairo bookstore has a section dedicated to a new field known as ‘Tahrir Studies’ with such books as: The Activists Handbook, From Dictatorship to Democracy, Liberation Square, The Struggle for Egypt and best-seller Translating Egypt’s Revolution. However, the *thawra* (revolution or uprising) is better categorized as a popular uprising and rejection of the former regime than an Islamic revolution. The MB was hesitant to join the movement at first but later jumped onboard to exploit the success of the demonstrations and fall of ousted President Hosni Mubarak. Initial electoral success in the parliamentary elections between November 2011 and January 2012 for the MB is largely attributable to their pre-existing organization, structure, and social-political network compared to other parties and candidates vice a mandate by 70% of the population for an Islamist government. After this initial electoral success, a waning of confidence emerged over the priorities of the new parliament. Some Egyptians who supported the MB in the parliamentary elections shared that the MB controlled parliament became more preoccupied with ‘ridiculous’ social issues with their corrupted interpretation of Islam than addressing deep-seated economic issues for the benefit of society. The parliament chose to focus on ratifying new laws such as one in April that allowed a man to have sexual intercourse with his wife up to three hours after her death as opposed to seeking an Egyptian minimum wage to help the 40% of society that lives off less than two dollars a day. On the streets, posters of each candidate covered entire walls of Cairo. Most were prominently displayed, but former Prime Minister Ahmed Shafiq had many that were vandalized and often accompanied by negative graffiti directed towards SCAF. Days prior to the runoff on 16-17 June, the Supreme Constitutional Court (SCC) ruled that Shafiq was approved to run as a viable candidate after earlier dispute and that one third of the parliament would be dissolved (and possibly the entire parliament) based on the MB occupying seats reserved for independent candidates. The SCC reasoned that this infringed on the exercise of political rights of independent candidates. In the days that followed, SCAF issued a decree that granted it all executive and legislative powers, the right to Declare War and granted military police and intelligence officers the authority to detain civilians. The actions taken by the military and Mubarak appointed SCC days leading up to the elections built a high level of uncertainty of the transparency and honesty of the impending historic election. The MB chose to embrace the democratic process as their best chance to win popular support of the people vice attempting to confront the military head-on in these controversial decisions.

b. *Observations During Elections.* According to some on the Egyptian Street, national and regional Arab media, and collaborated by officials observing the elections, the conduct of the Presidential Election was a significant improvement from the legislative elections, but still not perfect. During the legislative elections, ballots were taken from each district to a central counting facility lending potential for ballot stuffing and corruption. During the presidential elections, all ballots were counted at district facilities and reported to the central elections commission. However, there was no systematic monitoring of the election, which still left the door open to question the legitimacy of the results. On the day of the elections, voting sites in the suburbs of Dokki, Agouba, and Mohandiseen appeared secure, organized and running smoothly based on personal observation. Everyone appeared satisfied with the process, received the purple ink on their right pinky finger afterwards and lines typically did not exceed 20-30 outside the exterior walls. Al-Jazeera prominently displayed images of voting

sites secured by Egyptian security forces at a number of locations and reported no complaints or violations on the days of the election. When passing through Tahrir Square in a cab the night after the elections, the MB reported Mohamed Morsi had won the election and the crowd had begun to grow quickly to celebrate his self-proclaimed victory. The cab driver was keen to highlight that no police were present in the streets that night which caused him concern but he realized it was to avoid a direct confrontation between the people and the military. The official results were delayed until the following week reportedly due to each candidate accusing the other of electoral violations. However, chatter on the streets expressed doubt in the transparency and honesty of the elections and that SCAF was going to emplace Shafiq as the new president, for better or worse depending on who was sharing their perspective. On 24 June, I was in the southern city of Aswan the night Morsi was officially announced as the winner by the elections commission. The energy and emotion of Tahrir extended all the way down to the southern portion of the country. Two Army FAOs and I took a walk thru downtown and their city square beside the train station where a middle school aged kid was standing atop a statue in the center waving the Egyptian flag. People of all ages crowded around to join in the moment, watch Morsi address the nation on a projector screen hung for people to view, and packed into the nearby cafes.

c. *Influence of the Media.* I estimate no more than 5,000 people were present in Aswan in the heart of the crowd on 24 June. This is proportionally substantial for a city of 275,000, compared to the crowds in Tahrir on television. Local and regional media outlets claimed million man marches in Tahrir, but even the average uneducated Egyptian knows that a million Egyptians cannot fit into the space available. According to the opinion of a few Egyptians encountered, the MB secured Qatari government support to ensure Al-Jazeera maintained a high number reported and keeps images of tightly packed crowds in Tahrir on the television sets at home. A strict count of activists in Tahrir is not as influential as is what the networks broadcast. With the media keeping a densely packed news feed of crowds in Tahrir Square on televisions around the world calling for the end of military rule, the message is more effective regardless of the actual number. Think tanks that deal with measuring crowds would estimate 5m^2 per person in a dense crowd and perhaps 2.5m^2 per person in a very dense crowd. Based off the total square area of Tahrir Square and connected open spaces, the most the area could hold is 75,000 – 150,000. 150,00 people for Cairo as a city of 20 million amounts to .075% of the greater population. When compared to a crowd of 5,000 in a rural city of 275,000, this equates to 1.8% of the population. Aswan's numbers do not necessarily mean that they were more energized, but does illustrate that proportionally, the energy of Tahrir carried throughout the country. More representative was the energy itself in Aswan. It was not violent or angry, it was celebratory - a truly unifying historic event for those present. Egyptians are known for staying up late at night, but compared to previous nights, entire families were witnessed playing in the parks as if it were 4th of July weekend in the US.

d. *Post Elections.* Morsi won 51.7% of the runoff vote over Shafiq's 48.3% according to the Egyptian Election Commission. The Egyptian Street has remained as divided as the reported results since they were announced. Sorting through the mass diversity of opinions, the Egyptian Street in the MB camp is generally composed from a segment of society that is either economically deprived, young and influenceable, maintains extreme or fundamentalist views of Islam, or radically rejects the notion of the old regime returning to power. This

contrasts the other half of society that appears generally more educated and more economically stable, mature, comprised of non-Muslim religious minorities and favors stability under the 'old way.' The first day after, a teenage kid working at a hotel with no guests could not help but share his positive thoughts about the elections, his hatred for Mubarak, and his hopes he be executed like Saddam. He additionally volunteered his support for President Obama who he believes is a devote Muslim and speaks Arabic. This emotional young man's opinion is contrasted by the Coptic driver later in the day who sweated behind the wheel the entire time, concerned about what this meant for his community. A boat ferry driver proudly displayed a smile on his face, claiming that because Morsi won the elections they must have been 90% honest and transparent. Had the results been reported conversely, the elections would have been considered manipulated. A 21-year-old kid in Giza and his band of five friends pride themselves on the blood they shed in Tahrir Square, while his father considers them young, immature and easily influenceable and believes Shafiq was robbed of the election to avoid violence in the streets. A showroom manager in Cairo is dumb founded that SCAF allowed Morsi to become president. In the middle of these extremes is Mohammed of Upper Egypt, an educated and very religious man who believes that the MB is not good but that Shafiq was a worse alternative. He compared US elections to Egypt, rationalizing that Egyptians had two bad candidates and had to choose between the lesser of the two evils. Another man put it this way, "I voted for Shafiq in the first round. But due to the actions by the military leading up to the run-off, I decided to vote for Morsi – because if we don't like Morsi, we can elect a new president in four years. If we elected Shafiq, it would be tough to remove him. We would have elected another president for life." If there is one thing everyone has in common, it is to sort through this complex political situation to achieve stability, which will encourage tourism and money to flow back into the economy and put bread on the table.

e. *The Way Forward.* Everyone is waiting to see who Morsi appoints as his Prime Minister, and to his cabinet on 14 July. Meetings and speeches aside, this will signal his true intentions on the path he has in mind for Egypt. The general consensus is that if he has Egypt's best interests at heart, he will form a coalition from the many interest groups in Egypt to lead Egypt into the future on a unified front. However the fear and suspicion remains that he will name a MB strong man as the Prime Minister and even if he appoints a diverse cabinet, it will be in name only as he assigns MB deputies for each of them. Some Egyptians have expressed that should this happen, the presidency of Morsi and the MB will be short lived and eventually either the military will intervene or the people will take back to the streets. Since Morsi assumed the office of President, he has delivered eloquent speeches and promised all that democracy values and represents in a modern state. He has met with the many diverse interest groups that comprise Egypt, seeking unity in the days ahead. His comments have aimed towards the future vice getting bogged down in the grievances of the past. His published plan for the first 100 days focuses on security, traffic, bread quality, fuel and rubbish collection all aimed to improve the quality of life of all Egyptians. A plan to boost tourism to 25 million visitors a year is underway, compared to the peak of 14 million in 2010 before the revolution and the drop of 30% since January 2011. The SCC lifted the authority of military officers to conduct detentions and the focus appeared on the future. However as of 8 July, an investigation has been launched to re-investigate the order to kill protesters during the revolution and Morsi ordered the return of the dissolved parliament. The MB highlights that while SCAF maintains the power of legislation, Morsi has veto authority. While the MB maneuvers to gain support and legitimacy as Egypt's ruling party and SCAF patiently

monitors each step, the Egyptian people remain divided and restless to reach a resolution which will allow for a strong and stable Egypt.

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