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The Politics of Security Sector Reform in Egypt

Summary

- In Egypt, security sector reform (SSR) hinges on achieving democratic reforms, particularly the reconstitution of an elected parliament and preparation of a new constitution that defines the roles and responsibilities of military and security institutions based on transparency, accountability, and respect for civilian authorities.
- In this highly political process, arranging the disengagement of Egypt's military from government and the economy will be essential. Democratically elected leaders will need to consult widely while keeping an open door to reformists in the security sector.
- At the same time, the police and security establishments must be transformed into effective, accountable, and politically neutral law-enforcement bodies that deliver human security and protect human rights. Downsizing the security services to a number consonant with its professional mission is vital.
- Egypt's new president will play a central—although not exclusive—role in advancing the above aims. He will have to forge a wide societal consensus on the boundaries of SSR. He will also have to reach an accommodation with military leaders to ensure that SSR initiatives receive their support.
- The responsibility for advancing SSR lies with Egypt's political community. The international community can help by supporting elected officials and providing technical expertise and economic support.

The unprecedented mobilization during the eighteen-day uprising that toppled Hosni Mubarak in Egypt was in large part a product of the growing unpopularity of the police and the humiliation and injury that Egyptians suffered at the hands of security officers. The struggle to redress these grievances and to remove the political power structure that granted police officers a license to abuse with impunity represented a first step toward reforming security institutions. In the aftermath of the January 25 Revolution, however, while accommodating popular pressures for transformative political, social, and economic change, the

Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF) tried to defend Egypt's existing prerogatives and institutions. The SCAF allowed free elections for parliament and the presidency but dissolved the lower house of parliament in response to a court ruling that elections for one-third of its seats had been unconstitutional. On June 17 the SCAF issued an annex to the Constitutional Declaration that, first, limited the president's powers to manage the military and determine the country's national security policy and, second, transferred the lawmaking powers of the dissolved parliament to the SCAF.

This paper was prepared amid two events that marked a dramatic turn in the course of the Egyptian revolution. On August 5, 2012, militant groups in the northern Sinai attacked an Egyptian border checkpoint, killing sixteen Egyptian security personnel. The attackers then stormed across the border in two captured Egyptian armored vehicles and were killed by Israeli forces shortly thereafter. In the aftermath of the attack, President Mohamed Morsi announced the retirement of the SCAF head and defense minister, Field Marshal Mohammed Hussein Tantawi, and the commanders of the army, navy, and air defense forces. Morsi also suspended the June 17 Constitutional Declaration annex that limit the powers of the presidency. He then appointed General Abdel Fattah al-Sisi, the former head of military intel-ligence, as defense minister. The full implications of this exertion of presidential authority were not immediately apparent. While the recent moves are poised to limit the role of the military in governing the country, the fate of its longstanding political and economic privileges, which pre-date the January 25 Revolution, remains unclear. Thus, the struggle between civilian political leaders and the military will not end. Instead, tensions will evolve as civilian and military leaders maneuver for position and adapt to new political realities. In this contest, the actions of Egypt's military leaders will pivot around strategic, institutional, and economic interests, as well as concerns about immunity.

Strategically, Egypt's military is eager to keep the country out of costly wars with its neigh-bors, particularly Israel, and to shield the defense establishment from any adventurous foreign policy initiatives that elected civilian politicians may choose to advance. The military also is keen to maintain reasonably friendly ties with the United States with a view to securing the continued flow of valuable military aid from Washington to Cairo. The military will be wary of any democratic reforms that weaken its monopoly over defining Egypt's geopolitical strategy.

The military establishment has large economic interests in Egypt as the owner of a host of lucrative and heavily subsidized revenue-generating commercial enterprises. In addition, the military's budget is not subject to meaningful oversight by elected civilian officeholders, and there is little transparency concerning the production and allocation of its revenues. The military is likely to resist efforts to institute democratic standards of transparency and accountability. Military leaders may also seek to exert control over the ministries that could challenge their long-term interests, including the ministries of defense, interior, foreign affairs, and finance.

Regarding immunity, the SCAF's heavy-handed management of various crises over the past year may have deepened its commitment to asserting some degree of control over Egyptian politics in the foreseeable future. Under SCAF rule, security forces repeatedly used deadly force against unarmed protesters and employed repressive tactics to control political dissent. This led to popular demands to prosecute SCAF members for suspected involvement in the deaths and torture of protesters and activists. The military will want to retain the ability to resist such demands and avoid future trials.

Defining the Challenge of Security Sector Reform in Egypt

Security sector reform (SSR) entails efforts to transform or reconstruct the security sector to allow the development of good governance based on democratic principles. More specifical-

ly, SSR seeks to enhance the ability of security organizations to provide for human security in accordance with the rule of law and under the oversight of elected civilian institutions. The scope and nature of SSR agendas can vary across contexts, from postconflict settings to established democratic systems to countries transitioning away from authoritarian rule.[1] Egypt exemplifies the last category in that the dynamics of its transition pivot around a prolonged contest between civilian and military leaders to define the rules and boundaries of democratic change.

The most pressing priorities for SSR in Egypt entail disengaging military institutions from political and economic activities that are not relevant to their mission of national defense and subjecting these institutions to meaningful oversight by elected civilian bodies, and transforming the police establishment from a coercive apparatus into an accountable, politically neutral organization that upholds the rule of law and protects human rights. These challenges may seem conceptually distinct, but they are interrelated in a broader political context, in which the military establishment and other entrenched bureaucracies are attempting to limit the scope of institutional reform. Military interest in attenuating civilian control in a post-Mubarak Egypt seems to have deepened its reliance on the coercive capacity of the ministry of interior, which has taken the lead in suppressing popular mobilization. Civilian security forces, sometimes in coordination with the military, repeatedly used deadly force in confrontations with protesters calling for ending SCAF's rule. The intertwining of institutional interests between the military and the police impedes SSR.

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Egyptian Armed Forces and Ministry of Defense

Scope, Size, Role, and Historical Development

The Egyptian military establishment encompasses the army, navy, air force, and air defense forces, all of which fall under the leadership of the Ministry of Defense (MoD).[2] The 1971 constitution, which remained in effect until Mubarak's ouster, designates the president of the republic as the supreme commander of the armed forces. It describes the armed forces as belonging to the people and states that their mission is "to protect the country, its territorial integrity and security."[3] Under the March 30, 2011, Constitutional Declaration, the SCAF was the de facto president of the country until Morsi's election in June 2012. The council consists of Egypt's most senior military leaders and was headed by Minister of Defense Mohamed Hussein Tantawi until he was retired in mid-August. The SCAF exercised substantial authority under the Constitutional Declaration annex it issued on June 17, 2012. On August 12 President Morsi annulled the annex, though the extent to which the president will seek to further limit the influence of military leaders in the future is still an open question.

Before the January 25 Revolution, Egypt's military was central to politics, though the degree and visibility of its involvement have varied over time.[4] Since the 1952 military coup that deposed the monarchy, every Egyptian president until Morsi came from the officer corps. The military's engagement in politics was most overt under the late president Gamal Abdel Nasser; during his regime, officers occupied a variety of senior government posts and were tasked with managing public sector enterprises, sometimes including state-owned media outlets. The aftermath of Egypt's defeat in the 1967 war with Israel saw a movement toward greater professionalization inside the military, resulting in the officers' gradually reducing their direct involvement in day-to-day governance responsibilities. This trend was further reinforced under president Anwar al-Sadat, who sought to curb the power of senior officers after clashing with key military figures loyal to Nasser and his legacy. These developments, however, did not eliminate the power of the military establishment as much as reconfigure it.

The reorientation of Egypt's foreign and defense policies in the 1970s, and the growth of state-managed multiparty competition under Sadat and Mubarak, helped transform the military from an active protagonist in the Egyptian political arena to an invisible power operating behind the scenes in cooperation with the president to advance its interests. In the aftermath of the 1979 peace treaty with Israel, the military received a valuable U.S. aid package—on average, $1.3 billion annually from Washington. Ironically the state of peace brought about by the Camp David Accords did not curb the size and influence of the Egyptian military, as one might have expected. Instead, peace with Israel was the precursor to expanding the military's power in the domestic arena. The armed forces grew, military spending increased, and Egyptian leaders created rewarding opportunities for military bureaucracies to strengthen their role in domestic economic production. The shift in Egypt's foreign and defense policies contributed to the crystallization of a new of set of political and economic interests that guided the military's domestic behavior in the following decades.

The January 25 Revolution and the Military's Longstanding Interests

The new structural realities after 1979 created an incentive for the military to lobby for continued positive relations with the United States, even in the face of strong domestic reservations, if not full-fledged opposition, to Egypt's pro-U.S. foreign policies. This commitment was not purely economic, in the sense that military leaders have appeared to be disinterested in engaging in adventurous initiatives that could involve Egypt in armed conflicts with its neighbors. Today, however, military leaders can no longer take for granted popular commitment to the major tenets of Mubarak's foreign policy, given growing pressure for popular participation in foreign policy decisions, particularly those related to the United States and Israel. These pressures were on public display in September 2011, when protesters gathered in front of the Israeli Embassy, took down the Israeli flag in one incident, and broke into the embassy's offices in another.

According to the 1971 constitution and the Constitutional Declaration currently in effect, the military's mission is national defense. Successive military leaders, however, have described participation in economic development as one of the Egyptian armed forces' major tasks.[5] Through the Ministry of Military Production, the Arab Organization for Industrialization (AOI), and the National Services Project Organization (NSPO), Egypt's military owns and manages an economic empire that encompasses construction, tourism, maritime transport, and production of petrochemicals, household appliances, pharmaceuticals, and food products.[6] These enterprises enjoy lucrative subsidies and tax and licensing exemptions, and the revenues they generate are returned to the military's own accounts rather than adding to the state's funds. There is minimal transparency concerning these revenues and how they are allocated. Under Law no. 32 of 1979, the military maintains its own commercial bank accounts, and its budget is independent of the rest of the government.[7] Observers suspect that corruption pervades many of these economic endeavors. In one recent high-profile example, a former director of an AOI firm was accused of receiving bribes from Mercedes Benz in return for supply contracts.[8]

There is no consensus among relevant experts over the size of the military's economic interests, largely due to lack of transparency surrounding its operations. Official sources claim that the military's economic enterprises represent less than 10 percent of Egypt's gross domestic product (GDP); figures reported by news media have ranged from 5 to 40 percent.[9] Researchers have tried to discover the nature and extent of the military's participation in the Egyptian economy, but the task is challenging because there are no credible public numbers and Egyptian authorities have made it difficult for reporters to investigate the subject.[10] According to Egyptian law, the press cannot publish information about the military without MoD approval.[11]

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Beyond the challenge the January 25 Revolution posed to the military's longstanding interest in preserving Egypt's foreign policy orientation and maintaining its own economic privileges, it created more personal concerns to military leaders, namely the fear of future prosecution for past offenses. These concerns were heightened when Mubarak and his associates were tried for ordering the deaths of protesters during the 2011 eighteen-day uprising. Under SCAF leadership, Egyptian security forces have employed deadly force in dealing with protesters. Clashes between security forces and protesters in the Maspero area on October 9, 2011, resulted in at least twenty-seven deaths and hundreds of injuries.[12] During nationwide protests in November 2011, 40 were killed and more than 2,000 were injured.[13] At least 16 individuals died and 928 were injured in the military's crackdown in Tahrir Square during the week of December 16, 2011.[14] Given that many voices have called for holding accountable those responsible for ordering and executing these attacks, military leaders might risk prosecution should they submit to complete civilian control.

How the Military's Interests Are Shaping Its Vision of SSR

The military's interest in protecting its members from prosecution and preserving its political and economic privileges poses a major challenge to efforts to subordinate military leaders and institutions to elected civilian oversight. While Egyptian activists express a strong commitment to getting the military out of politics and subjecting it to full civilian control, the SCAF has articulated an alternative vision—one that is not consistent with democratic principles, let alone effective SSR. Military leaders have said they would hand over power to a civilian government, but recent developments indicate that this does not include giving up privileges the military enjoyed under Mubarak, and SCAF has signaled that it would not give up its economic privileges under any conditions. As one SCAF member publicly stated, "We will fight for our projects and this is a battle we will not abandon. We will not let anyone destroy the effort in which we have invested for thirty years, or let anyone, whoever it is, touch the projects of the armed forces."[15]

The SCAF has also signaled that it would not accept full subordination to civilian authority and subject its budget and operations to the oversight of elected bodies. In the fall of 2011 the SCAF-sponsored government of Essam Sharaf attempted to build support for a set of principles concerning the status of the armed forces in the new constitution. The initiative, laid out in what was known as the Al-Selmi document, was ultimately sidelined but offered a picture of the SCAF's preference for how its place should be defined and what civil-military relations should look like in post-Mubarak Egypt. One draft of the document delegated the task of auditing and approving the military's budget, as well as the power to wage war, to a national defense and security council headed by the president. Another article stated that the military's affairs and decisions concerning armament would be delegated to a council formed by the army.[16] The document also established the military as the protector of constitutional legitimacy, which some observers interpreted as an implicit carte blanche for the military to intervene in politics. The Al-Selmi document has disappeared from public discussions, and it remains unclear whether constitutional drafters would be willing to accommodate provisions similar to those contained in it.

As the debate over the future of the armed forces in the new constitution evolves, four major questions will determine the ability of the political community to advance SSR efforts that could subordinate military institutions to elected civilian leaders: whether the military budget and operations will be open for auditing and deliberation by parliament, as is the case with the budget of every other government agency; whether the president will take full responsibility as commander-in-chief of the armed forces without any deference to unelected bodies and powers inside the military; whether the scope of the military's mandate will be limited to national defense rather than economic activities; and whether the

judiciary and its related courts will provide impartial arenas capable of issuing judgments that advance the goal of accountable civilian governments.

Ministry of Interior and the Police Sector

Defining the Scope, Size, and Role of the Ministry of Interior

The 1971 constitution designated the president of the republic as the chief commander of police forces. Under Mubarak, the president was the head of the Supreme Council of the Police (SCP)—*al-majles al-a'la lil shorta*—a body composed of senior police officials responsible for formulating broad policies, determining priorities, and managing the operations of the Egyptian police. The March 30 Constitutional Declaration described the police as a civilian entity responsible for "the maintenance of order, public security and morals." Egypt's domestic security forces fall under the executive authority of the Ministry of Interior (MoI). In 2009 MoI employed 1.7 million individuals, including 850,000 police personnel and administrative staff, 450,000 Central Security Forces (CFS) (*al-amn al-markazi*) personnel, and 400,000 individuals as part of the State Security Investigations Services (SSIS) (*mabahes amn al-dawla*).[17] Under Mubarak, MoI's size and influence grew markedly, due partly to the increase in violent confrontations between the government and Islamist insurgents in the 1990s, and partly to the need to contain growing political and socioeconomic discontent. According to Egyptian economic expert Abdel Khaleq Farouq, the number of those employed by MoI grew from 124,000 in 1951 to 200,000 in 1971 to 800,000 in 2006.[18] MoI's share of state employment grew from 9 percent to 21 percent between 1974 and 2002.[19] By 2011 MoI had developed into a highly sophisticated coercive apparatus that, covertly and overtly, penetrated all walks of Egypt's political, social, and economic life.

The interior ministry's authority spans numerous geographical and functional security agencies dealing with criminal investigations, drug trafficking, morality policing, immigration and border control, counterterrorism and homeland security, traffic control and vehicle licensing, tax evasion, prison management, election administration, public transportation security, and tourism security.[20] Each of Egypt's twenty-seven governorates has a security directorate (*modoreyat al-amn*) that reports directly to the minister of interior.

The Centrality of the MoI Reform to the Goals of the Revolution

The longstanding enmity between the security agencies and the Egyptian people was one of the basic causes of the January 25 Revolution. Egyptians who participated in the eighteen-day uprising speak with great pride about the events of January 28, 2011, particularly the withdrawal of uniformed police from Egyptian streets in apparent defeat after failing to contain anti-Mubarak protests. That many saw the disappearance of security personnel as a joyous event reflected the extent to which the police had come to be a source of distress rather than safety for Egyptians. It also speaks to the widespread belief that the January 25 Revolution was a fight against the brutality and humiliation that Egyptians faced in their dealings with MoI personnel. Even with Mubarak's fall, the deep-seated hatred toward the police has not subsided. Almost all expressions of popular mobilization over the past year reflect the persistence of strong public hostility toward the security establishment, and a determination not to allow a return to the old ways that were prevalent under Mubarak.

Protesters' signs, chants, and slogans often contain insults directed at police officers, mocking their intelligence, educational credentials, and competence. The recurrence of the common slogan in every protest that "we, the people, are the redline" (*ihna al-sha'b al-khatt al-ahmar*) reflects the pervasive expectation that no Egyptian should suffer humiliation at the hands of security officers. Transforming the domestic security establishment from a

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coercive apparatus into an accountable, transparent, and politically neutral public service is at the heart of the unfinished struggle for transformative change in Egypt. In other words, SSR is at the epicenter of any effort to give the January 25 Revolution depth and permanence.

Key Institutional Flaws in the Structure of the MoI

Under Mubarak's rule, the police and all domestic security organizations were devoted to preserving the regime and its interests rather than protecting Egyptians and providing for their security. Through SSIS, MoI was heavily involved in a host of repressive practices, including the intimidation and arrest of political dissidents, surveillance of political parties and activists and subversion of their activities through secret agents, and electoral rigging and fraud. SSIS is believed to have played a large role in influencing appointments and promotions in a host of government bureaucracies, state institutions, and public universities, and contributed to the professional marginalization of many individuals whom the regime deemed politically threatening. The Central Security Forces (CSF), a paramilitary police force tasked with riot control and counterterrorism, frequently employed excessive force in dispersing public expressions of political dissent. It was a common belief among Egyptians that MoI contracted paid thugs (*baltagiyya*), some with serious criminal records.[21] Police officials used these civilian-clothed gangs to assault and intimidate political dissidents and voters during election season. These gangs were highly visible in international media coverage of the eighteen-day uprising, when they roamed around the Tahrir Square area waiting for an opportune moment to attack anti-Mubarak protesters.

Police brutality was not limited to the regime's political opponents. Egyptian police routinely engaged in arbitrarily arresting ordinary citizens under the guise of crime prevention and used a variety of violent and cruel methods to interrogate prisoners. Reporting on the state of human rights in Egypt in 2010, Amnesty International noted that "torture and other ill-treatment of detainees was systematic in police stations, prisons and SSI detention centers and, for the most part, committed with impunity. In some cases, police were reported to have threatened victims against lodging complaints. In rare cases, however, alleged torturers were prosecuted."[22] Most Egyptians know at least one law-abiding citizen whom patrol officers have stopped for questioning. Frequently this could result in hours-long detention until authorities verified that the person in question had no outstanding arrest warrants against them. While detained, individuals were treated like criminals with no rights or access to legal counsel, and may have suffered verbal and physical abuse if they attempted to complain or question the conditions under which they were held. On June 6, 2010, two police detectives reportedly beat to death a young man named Khalid Said after arresting him in a cybercafé in Alexandria. Gruesome photos of Said's corpse proliferated virally on social networking sites, generating widespread public outrage. Official statements that the suspect had a long criminal record and died as a result of a drug overdose only fueled public anger. Said's death prompted the formation of a Facebook group known as We Are All Khalid Said, which quickly attracted hundreds of thousands of followers and brought greater attention to the issue of police brutality. The group is believed to have been influential in circulating the call for protests that were scheduled for January 25, 2011 and turned into the mass uprising that ousted Mubarak.

The former interior minister, Habib al-Adly, along with Mubarak, received a life sentence on June 2, 2012, for failing to prevent security forces from using deadly force against protesters during the 2011 uprising, but animosity between Egyptians and the police remains alive and well. There is widespread dismay that al-Adly's deputies were exonerated for the deaths of 800 people and injury of 6,000 during the uprising. Egyptians feel that police officers have been deliberately lax in fighting crime and filling the security vacuum that emerged after January 28, 2011—the day security forces withdrew en masse from the

Egyptian streets—to punish Egyptians for overthrowing and humiliating their old bosses and their longtime patrons within the Mubarak regime. This perception was heightened on February 1, 2012, when police passively watched as civilian thugs violently attacked Ahly Ultras soccer fans in Port Said stadium, leaving seventy people dead. Finally, there is a widespread feeling that MoI has not changed its old habits, as CSF has continued to employ violent tactics, now in coordination with military forces, in dealing with protests even after the departure of Mubarak and al-Adly.[23]

The absence of any perceived change inside MoI has contributed to the general feeling among many activists that the goals of transformative change that animated the January 25 Revolution have not been achieved.

The absence of any perceived change inside MoI has contributed, though not exclusively, to the general feeling among many activists that the goals of transformative change that animated the January 25 Revolution have not been achieved. The very sight of police brutality arguably has been one of the major catalysts for popular mobilization against the SCAF-led political order throughout the past year. Political rallies or sit-ins consisting of a few dozen activists can turn into hundreds of thousands whenever the word spreads that security forces are attacking a peaceful protest. The Mohammed Mahmoud Street battles of November 2011 were a case in point. After security personnel used force to end a relatively small Tahrir-Square sit-in involving dozens of people, thousands of individuals rushed into the square and surrounded the MoI building in downtown Cairo, leading to one of the bloodiest and most dramatic confrontations between security forces and protesters since Mubarak's fall.

However, popular pressure to reform the domestic security sector has yet to yield meaningful results. Most of the reforms introduced have been either cosmetic or focused on personnel reshuffles that have fallen short of instituting changes in the way MoI operates. In the aftermath of the Revolution, senior MoI leaders were replaced and many of them faced trial. The government of Essam Sharaf appointed a new minister of interior, Mansour El-Essawy, a retired police general who had been out of the security establishment for over a decade. El-Essawy pledged to reform MoI and restore public confidence in the police. After protesters stormed into several SSIS offices on March 5, 2012, El-Essawy announced that SSIS would be replaced by the Homeland Security Sector (HSS), which would be responsible for counterterrorism and national security, but without adopting the abusive practices prevalent in SSIS. In response to popular pressure to purge MoI of Mubarak's loyalists and those suspected of killing protesters, El-Essawy announced on July 13, 2011 what was described as the biggest police reshuffle in history, as 82 colonels and 505 generals, including 27 accused of killing protesters, were retired.[24] On December 7, 2011, El-Essawy was replaced as interior minister by Mohamed Ibrahim, a former police general who served at MoI until 2007. This appointment was met with disapproval from those who criticize his alleged role in plotting a 2005 police attack against a sit-in staged by a group of Sudanese refugees.[25] In July 2012 MoI witnessed a new wave of personnel reorganization, including the retirement of 454 generals.[26] Human rights organizations claim that the move fell short of purging the police force of the old guard responsible for past abuse.[27] The new government of Hesham Qandil, which was sworn in on August 2, brought to office a new minister of interior, Ahmed Gamal Eddin, who had previously served as the head of the ministry's public security bureau. This appointment received mixed reviews, as some observers perceive Gamal Eddin as an extension of the power of Mubarak-era police veterans who have long controlled MoI.[28]

Despite changes in leadership and the renaming of SSIS, the country's highest investigative service, MoI remains the center of Egypt's coercive security apparatus. Under Mubarak, SSIS fended off violent and peaceful regime challengers through arrests, torture, and surveillance, with no regard for basic human rights. With one exception, all the ministers of interior who served during the Mubarak presidency came from SSIS. Despite its name change the institution has remained largely intact. In addition, the militarized nature of MoI and the security establishment it shepherds has continued. The police force was defined in

the 1971 constitution and the 2011 Constitutional Declaration as a civilian entity. Yet the secrecy surrounding its activities evokes the traits of a closed military establishment that is removed from society and governed with little transparency and accountability. The SCP, which is responsible for forming domestic security policies, consists mainly of MoI leaders, along with the president, who appoints the minister of interior himself. Put simply, the same old-boys' club of MoI veterans that design security policies is also in charge of executing them with no meaningful interference or oversight from outsiders.

Reinforcing the appearance of inaccessibility and opacity is the impression that the police academy is not open to Egyptians from all walks of life and is believed to discriminate against those with critical political views of the government and the sons of low-income families that lack connections to power and privilege. That Egyptian law allows some individuals to fulfill their mandatory military service through work at MoI-affiliated organizations further contributes to the domestic security establishment's air of militarization. For instance, military conscripts who have not completed basic education usually serve in the lower ranks of the CSF. These are the same forces that were seen at the frontlines of confrontations between security personnel and protesters during the first three days of the 2011 uprising.

Existing Visions for MoI Reform

Before the dissolution of the lower house, many parliamentarians (MPs) claimed that restructuring MoI was a priority, but very little progress was achieved. The Muslim Brotherhood's Freedom and Justice Party (FJP) told media outlets in early February 2012 that it had prepared a plan for MoI restructuring. However, the known elements of the plan focused on additional purges that would rid MoI of personnel loyal to the former ruling party and Mubarak's minister of interior, putting the HSS under greater oversight and downsizing the CSF.[29] Parliamentarians reportedly asked Minister of Interior Mohamed Ibrahim to devise a strategy for reform, which he promised but did not deliver, possibly due to the public falling out between the SCAF-sponsored government of Kamal El-Ganzouri and the FJP-led majority in parliament.

Without official action on MoI reform, the most comprehensive proposal for change has come from the National Initiative for Rebuilding the Police, a civil society initiative that includes human rights nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and concerned citizens. The initiative, also known as Police for Egypt (PFE), includes members of the Honorable Police Officers Coalition, a group of police officers and concerned citizens who seek to reform Egypt's police in accordance with human rights principles.[30] PFE aims to reform the domestic security establishment based on the principles of accountability, political leadership, and decentralization. The plan also seeks to uphold the civilian character of the police and grant police the ability to unionize and lobby for greater rights and better working conditions. PFE's plan, which has undergone several revisions, includes several short-term proposals. First is to dissolve the MoI's General Elections Directorate and delegate its responsibilities to the Higher Elections Commission. The MoI role in elections then would be limited to securing polling sites under the supervision of the judges responsible for monitoring the voting process. Second is to establish the HSS as an independent agency subject to meaningful oversight. This would protect against past abuses and prevent HSS from reasserting covert control over the ministry. Third is to investigate MoI officials who may have ordered the killing of protesters and discharge policemen on trial for such charges. A fourth proposal is to expel police officials involved in illicit practices. To counter the growth of street crime, the document proposes that CSF personnel patrol neighborhoods under the supervision of police authorities. It also calls for an increased number of hotlines to enable reporting

of emergencies, crime, and police violations; the calls would be monitored to ensure that services are provided.

In addition, PFE presents a set of long-term measures for enhancing the transparency of MoI operations. The plan recommends filling the post of interior minister with someone from outside the security establishment—preferably a politician able to ensure the ministry meets public needs. The plan recommends decentralizing the police by authorizing every governorate to manage its own police force, presumably under a system in which governors are selected through elections rather than appointments. Such a decentralized system, PFE argues, would improve performance and local accountability. It would also give citizens the ability to hold elected local officials accountable for police performance. The PFE recommends that parliament adopt legislation that places limits on police authority to conduct criminal investigations and levies serious penalties for overstepping these limits. Under such legislation, police could not investigate or detain citizens without probable cause, and the practice of police detaining individuals for not carrying a national identification document, or being on the street at a late hour, would end. In conducting criminal investigations, police often overstep their legal authority by pressuring suspects to extract information or confessions, even though interrogating and charging suspects is the responsibility of public prosecutors and not that the police.

PFE calls for dissolving the CSF and delegating its responsibilities to special formations that would be available in each police station to deal with problems such as counterterrorism, drug trafficking, and rioting. In the events of protests, the function of such forces would not entail attacking or dispersing protests, but rather securing and protecting them. The laws regulating the use of force and live rounds must be amended to set clear limitations on these practices such that their use would be a last resort and limited to dire situations.

PFE recommends limiting attendance at the police academy to holders of law degrees. Academy training would be tailored to specific specializations, such as criminal investigation or counternarcotics, so that graduates would specialize in a single field of policing throughout their career. PFE also calls on the academy to end discriminatory admissions practices so that Egypt's police forces are truly representative of the society they serve. PFE's plan includes proposals for improving the working conditions of police personnel, revising pay scales to guarantee a living wage and avoid petty corruption. The document calls to create a police union that empowers police employees to lobby for greater rights and better working conditions. The plan demands an end to the practice of referring police officers to military trials for professional wrongdoing. The threat of such trials, in which suspects enjoy few rights, may have been used to pressure lower-ranking personnel to carry out ethically questionable directives. As means for upholding the civilian character of the police, the plan recommends annulling executive orders that allow conscripts to work at MoI-affiliated organizations as an alternative to military service. PFE proposes downsizing the inflated MoI bureaucracy by delegating responsibilities to other government agencies. Prisons would be administered by the justice ministry. Customs, immigration, and naturalization affairs could be transferred to the ministry of foreign affairs. Downsizing MoI by transferring functions to other agencies could be the first step in institutional reform.

Evaluating the Success of PFE

As of early May 2012 the lower house's Defense and National Security Committee was reportedly deliberating laws that speak to the objectives of the PFE. It is unclear how many proposals a future parliament would seek to adopt, and if adopted, whether the proposals would be effectively implemented. In some ways, the possibility of SSR and the future of the PFE initiative will depend on how Egypt's transition evolves and the type of political system that emerges in the coming year. Ministerial reform depends on the political will of government

The possibility of SSR and the future of the PFE initiative will depend on how Egypt's transition evolves and the type of political system that emerges in the coming year.

elites. The PFE initiative should be viewed as a conversation starter, not the final word. PFE has brought much-needed public awareness of the need for deep institutional reform of the security establishment. What began as a conversation among activists and civil society organizations has expanded into a wider debate that encompasses legislators and important decision makers—a step forward.

By setting forth an actionable vision for reforming the interior ministry in accordance with democratic principles, PFE raised the level of debate among political elites as to how to grapple with the challenge of SSR. In the aftermath of the January 25 Revolution, many opinion makers conceived of SSR largely as a process of purging MoI of its bad apples. Today when they speak of SSR, they refer to restructuring MoI and its institutions. The PFE's comprehensive vision is guided by the belief that correcting MoI's flaws requires revising its institutional configuration and incentive structure that promotes corruption and abusive practices. The positive response to the PFE recommendations could be attributed to the initiative's links to civil society, and its success in bringing to the table stakeholders from within the police establishment who are committed to meaningfully reforming their institution. This experience offers a useful model for future grassroots efforts aimed at reforming the military sector and subordinating it to elected civilian leadership in accordance with democratic principles.

That said, reforming the interior ministry should be viewed as a long-term struggle. Senior MoI officials appeared less than eager to engage in discussions with parliament and civil society. PFE may have prepared the intellectual groundwork for a serious debate on reforming the domestic security sector, but implementation faces serious obstacles.

The Future of SSR: Prospects and Scenarios

It is tempting to characterize Egypt as a country undergoing a democratic transition and as a candidate for SSR. On closer examination it is clear, however, that the political will to undertake such reforms is tenuous because the political struggles required to pave the way for meaningful change remain unresolved. The key questions concerning the political role of the ministry of interior and the role of the military in domestic politics and the economy are at the center of the country's political dialogue. Since assuming office, SCAF has employed various strategies—institutional engineering, violence against protesters, and arrests of dissidents—to limit the scope of the transition in order to ensure that civilian leadership does not challenge its political and economic privileges in the foreseeable future. Military leaders seem to fear that reforms could undermine their ability to dictate defense and foreign policies, or weaken their grip over the vast economic empire the military owns. They are also concerned that once they submit to an independent civilian leadership, they could become vulnerable to prosecution for crimes they allegedly committed in the past. Increasingly, they have focused their worries on Egypt's newly elected president.

Morsi's election has signaled a new and increasingly contentious relationship between the Muslim Brotherhood and the military, as recent developments have shown. As the president seeks to consolidate his power vis-à-vis Egypt's traditional governing elites, he may use executive appointments to limit the power of entrenched bureaucratic interests inside key ministries, including MoI, and could support SSR initiatives to further curb the influence of the military and police establishments. This is not to say that SSR goals would definitely be advanced under a Morsi presidency. Shortly after assuming office, Morsi told senior police officials that he rejected the term "purging the police."[31] At the same time, he probably feels that he has a popular mandate to push for changes that will advance the principle of popular sovereignty. In response, military leaders are likely to rely on antireform forces within the bureaucracy and exploit the fears of Islamist domination within the secular

opposition to curb the influence of the Muslim Brotherhood inside state institutions. Many secular-leaning members of the political community may accept, if not actively support, a persistent military role in politics to counterbalance the growing political power of Islamist groups. The pursuit of an SSR agenda could be more difficult if Morsi's actions promote further polarization among political elites across Islamist versus non-Islamist lines.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The SSR agenda in Egypt is in a formative stage, and the prospects of its advancing will be closely linked to the process of democratic change. Bringing military bureaucracies and domestic security agencies under the oversight of elected civilian bodies will be a difficult task, as military leaders remain committed to shielding their operations from elected officials. The persistence of pockets of unchecked power inside the Egyptian state, particularly inside the military establishment and MoI, challenges the fundamental tenets of SSR, let alone the basic principles of democratic governance. Efforts that seek to build broad reform coalitions that cut across the Islamist-secular divide, encompassing legislators, stakeholders inside security bureaucracies, civil society organizations, and popular pressure groups, will be an important element of any successful strategy to advance credible SSR initiatives in the long run.

Limiting the military's political power by subordinating the military to democratically elected civilian authority presents perhaps Egypt's most difficult and crucial political challenge.

Limiting the military's political power by subordinating the military to democratically elected civilian authority presents perhaps Egypt's most difficult and crucial political challenge. The first priority is consolidating the democratic gains that have already been made through constitutional reforms that assure basic human and individual rights, that provide for an independent judiciary, and that delineate an appropriately bounded set of powers for a professional, nonpolitical military and security apparatus. To achieve this goal, a greater measure of consensus within the various sectors of Egypt's political opposition is vital. So too will be the manifestation of presidential leadership geared to mobilizing consensus in favor of reforms.

The task of defining consensus in the drafting of a new constitution is the responsibility of Egypt's democratically elected leaders. In the coming months, they will need to engage a wide number of sectors, while keeping an open door to dialogue with the military, particularly reformists within the security apparatus who articulate a readiness to advance security reform. But whatever the boundaries of consensus, SSR is unlikely to unfold if it remains purely a legal or constitutional matter. Because actions matter as much as words, concerted efforts are needed to assure that the new generation of civilian leaders constitutes the core forces within the new cabinet. Elected civilian officials must enjoy effective control over the revenue-generating enterprises that the military currently owns. Any further development or possible dismantling of such projects should rest within democratically elected legislative bodies.

In developing a strategy for achieving civilian control over the military, the approach taken by the PFE initiative—namely, devising a vision for reform in collaboration with stakeholders from security agencies and raising it to the level of decision makers—offers a useful model. Building support for SSR is primarily the responsibility of Egypt's partisans of transformative change. Members of the international community, particularly the United States, must be conscious of how its relationship with Egyptians, elected and unelected, reinforce or undermine such efforts. The U.S. government could support proponents of SSR in Egypt by making a point to manage its relationship with Egypt through civilian officials and popularly accountable parties.

In reforming the security sector, it is important that Egyptian leaders focus on transforming the police and security establishment from a coercive apparatus into a politically

neutral and effective law-enforcement body that provides human security for all Egyptians. Past parliamentary debates regarding MoI reform offer a start for a long-term effort to advance the type of change that could rectify the institutional flaws of the police establishment and empower it to address Egyptians' demands for greater security. There is little doubt that these efforts will face resistance, and success will depend on the ability of elected civilian officials to gain full control over all parts of executive bureaucracies. As these efforts proceed, enhancing popular participation in deliberations over relevant proposals for advancing SSR is crucial, especially as they relate to questions of transitional justice and addressing past abuses and crimes committed by security officials.

As efforts to reform security institutions unfold, the question of transitional justice will remain on the front burner. Left unattended, it will boil over, undermining the authority of any newly elected government. There are a host of formulas and methods for addressing this challenge, and though Egypt's leaders in the parliament, judiciary, and executive will have to forge a difficult consensus regarding the key elements of such a formula, they will benefit from examining the experiences of other former autocracies that have faced this difficult task. Balancing the need for justice and accountability while securing a reformed security apparatus committed to respecting international democratic and human rights norms is the crucial challenge.

Notes

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