

How Should the West Respond to Egypt?

This week, the Egyptian military violently cracked down on the Muslim Brotherhood. Hundreds have died, and thousands have been injured. The West is crying foul, and the new vice president, Mohamed ElBaradei, resigned in protest.

Before the crackdown, the military was facing criticism from most of the world for its coup that ousted Islamic radical President Mohammed Morsi.

Personally, I was very pleased to hear the Egyptian military toppled Morsi. And my guess is that, privately, many Western governments were as well (not to mention Middle Eastern ones like Saudi Arabia and Israel). But because he was elected “democratically,” they don’t want to appear hypocritical in defending a military takeover.

In fact, the media and Western politicians seem determined to support the democratically elected Muslim Brotherhood, despite their systematic clamping down on human rights, freedom of speech and freedom of religion.

They don’t have the courage to state the obvious, as House Majority Leader Eric Cantor, R-Va., did when he “praised the military as ‘perhaps the only trusted national institution in Egypt today.’” To be clear, Cantor’s remarks came before the bloody crackdown.

Is the Military Acting Anti-Democratically?

There are some who claim that democracy in its purest form simply means *majority rules*. But anyone with just an ounce of common sense knows that when we speak of democracy today, we are speaking of more than a democratically elected government, but also about civil rights for minorities—such as the Coptic

Christians in Egypt.

Where would America be without the Bill of Rights? And the fact that we once told former slaves they were three-fifths of a person (an upgrade from their status as slaves) is a horrible stain upon the books of U.S. history.

You know who was also elected through a democratic process? Adolf Hitler! But once in power, he quickly became a dictator and started a world war that took the lives of nearly 80 million people.

The great hope of the Arab Spring was that Western-style freedoms would come to Egypt and other Middle Eastern countries, rather than Islamic oppression. The Muslim Brotherhood was elected into power for the purpose of ensuring freedom, not denying it. Once in office, Morsi put Egypt on a path that surely would have ended with Sharia law as the law of the land. This would have been disastrous to Egypt's Christian minority as well as the secular majority that probably would never have seen another free election.

According to the *National Review*, "Indeed, the abuse of Egypt's Christians has reached unprecedented levels in the modern era. Al-Qaeda's flag has been raised above their churches; their pope is in hiding under threat of death; a priest was shot in front of his church, and another Copt beheaded; their children are being abducted; nary a day goes by without a church being attacked or set aflame; hate filled graffiti covers their homes and churches."

I just received an email from Ramez Atallah, the general director of the Bible Society of Egypt, which reads:

"Complete destruction of Egyptian Bible Society by Muslim Fundamentalists.

"I have just received the sad news of the complete burning and destruction (*by Muslim fundamentalists*) of our Bible Society's

bookshops in Assiut & Minia (the largest cities in Southern Egypt). These were both very beautiful, fully equipped bookshops. Fortunately we were closed today, fearing such an attack, so none of our staff were injured. The attackers demolished the metal doors protecting the bookshops, broke the store windows behind them and set the bookshops on fire."

The military had no other option than to seize control for the sake of the nation. Atallah goes on to say the Muslim Brotherhood sit-ins have brought the city and its economy to a standstill and that most of Cairo's residents feel the sit-ins must be dispersed by the police.

Islamists and Power

Frankly, radical Islamic groups cannot be trusted with power. They are obsessed with imposing Sharia law and care very little about the welfare of the average citizen. The very fact that Muslim Brotherhood leaders were allowing women and children to be part of their peaceful sit-ins, despite the threat of deadly force from the Egyptian military, reveals how little they value the lives of others.

Since taking power, the Muslim Brotherhood has put far more emphasis on Islamic issues than economic ones. As *Time* magazine reports, "The value of the Egyptian pound has plummeted to record lows, foreign-currency reserves have dropped to less than half of the \$36 billion held by the regime of former dictator Hosni Mubarak before he was ousted in February 2011. The budget deficit has climbed to more than 11% of the country's GDP. Tourism, one of the anchors of Egypt's foreign-currency cash flow, has never truly recovered from the 2011 revolution."

The only group at this point that can keep them in check—or, better yet, disband them completely—is the Egyptian military. Do we really want a new Hamas-run, Gaza-style regime—only 100

times larger—right on the border of Israel?

When the Egyptians voted for the Muslim Brotherhood, did they realize that secular music, hair gel, blue jeans, dating and freedom of speech would eventually be outlawed? Did they realize religious police would follow them around and others would spy on them (and report them if they were not religious enough)? Well, that is where the Muslim Brotherhood was taking this nation.

While all agree it is tragic that hundreds are dying in the streets of Cairo, we can be sure that allowing the Muslim Brotherhood to rule would bring persecution, economic disaster and an Iranian-style oppression—a definite end to any hope that the Arab Spring was legit.

To be clear, no one knows how responsible or irresponsible the Egyptian military will be in ruling. But we do know they acted in accordance with the will of the people and that they are much more preferable than an Islamic theocracy.

Let me close with a quote from the brilliant commentator Daniel Pipes:

“No tolerance for the intolerant. Just as fascists and communists are not legitimate players in a democracy, neither are Islamists. No matter how smooth talking, they remain autocrats who disregard the popular will. Better that they be excluded entirely from participatory politics.”

What do you think about the military takeover in Egypt? Use the comments area below to respond.

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