American Foreign Policy Council

Muslim Brotherhood

QUICK FACTS

Geographic Areas of Operation: Europe, Middle East and North Africa, North America, and Sub-Saharan Africa

Numerical Strength (Members): Exact numbers unknown; estimated in the millions

Leadership: Mohammed Badie (Egypt), Ali Saddredine Bayanouni (Syria), Boudjerra Soltani (Algeria), Sheikh Sadeq Abdallah bin Al-Majed (Sudan), among others

Religious Identification: Sunni Islam

Quick Facts Courtesy of the U.S. State Department's Country Reports on Terrorism

Founded in Egypt in 1928, the Muslim Brotherhood is one of the world's oldest, largest and most influential Sunni Islamist groups—and an inspiration for the ideology and actions of most contemporary Islamist movements. In the first decades of its existence, the movement was actively involved in the efforts to drive the British out of Egypt, while also seeking to oppose Western colonialism and support Palestinian opponents of the state of Israel in the Middle East. Following Gamal Abdel Nasser's assumption of power in Egypt in 1952, the Brotherhood was formally outlawed and, as a vehicle of political opposition, was alternatively demonized, repressed or silently tolerated during the decades that followed. Throughout this period, the movement developed a wide network of social and religious charities and programs, expanding its influence across the entire Muslim world and beyond.

Simultaneously, it underwent key ideological evolutions, such as formally distancing itself in the 1950s from elements of the group that were advocating the violent overthrow of non-Islamic regimes. This move, how-

ever, split the Brotherhood itself, creating deep-seated grievances that resurfaced in the wake of the Arab Spring. While the movement did not play a prominent role in the origins of the 2011 Egyptian uprising, it was a key beneficiary of it—translating its traditional social influence into tangible political power and regional clout. However, little over a year after assuming power, the Muslim Brotherhood-dominated government led by Mohammad Morsi was ousted by the Egyptian military. The resulting (and ongoing) crackdown on the Brotherhood has severely degraded the group's leadership and capabilities inside Egypt.

HISTORY & IDEOLOGY

The "Society of the Muslim Brothers" *(Jama'at al-Ikhwan al-Muslimin)* was founded in 1928 by Hassan al-Banna, a young primary school teacher from the city of Isma'iliyya in southern Egypt.[1] In its original form, the Brotherhood was a religious, youth and educational group. It advocated moral reform and a revival of Islam in Egypt and the Middle East at a time when Westernization was associated with modernization across the region. Inspired by the thinking of Muslim scholars Muhammad Abdu (1849-1905), Rashid Rida (1865-1935) and Jamal al-Din al-Afghani (1839-1897), al-Banna was convinced that the process of "Westernization" had corrupted his fellow Muslims, and that secular sentiments were among the principal reasons for the decline of Islam. He felt that the weaknesses of the Muslim world could only be cured by an appreciation for the comprehensiveness of Islam. He strove to convince Muslims that Islam had answers for all the issues they confronted, be they political, social, educational, and even recreational. To al-Banna, Islam was the only solution necessary for the afflictions that plagued Muslim societies, and the only way to achieve their regeneration. In an essay titled "Our Mission," Al Banna explained that "we believe that Islam is an all embracing concept which regulates every aspect of life."

Al Banna placed significant emphasis on the importance of living as an active Muslim. To this end, he established extensive social programs which invested heavily in the communities around them. The Muslim Brotherhood grew in popularity as these programs alleviated social and economic problems in a way that the Egyptian government and other organizations failed to do.

Al Banna was focused on sustaining unity—both within the group and between the group and the society it tried to reach. He promoted vague slogans rather than precise ideologies, pressing for a "return to Islam" and assuring supporters that "the Qur'an is our constitution." The result was that the Muslim Brotherhood established an inclusive umbrella for anyone who believed that Islam could be an encompassing way of life.

Al Banna extended the idea of Islam's value into the pressing regional concerns of the day. He saw the British rule in Egypt as a hindrance to Islam's full potential, and as such, promoted efforts to expel the British. The Brotherhood also actively supported the Palestinians in their efforts to drive the immigrating Jews out of what would become the state of Israel.

Al Banna published tracts on these issues, including one titled "On Jihad." In this piece, Al Banna argued that too many Muslims were passively watching as their values were overcome by the brand of modernity that Westernization brought. He called supporters to invest themselves in pressing back against a Western tide. However, al-Banna believed that *jihad* was not restricted to the struggle against "apostates" *(kuffar)*, but was in fact a more comprehensive awakening of Muslim hearts and minds. In the 1930s, Al-Banna's opposition to British influence found expression as his organization began to recruit followers who saw the appeal in its ideology on issues ranging from poverty and education to nationalism and the nascent Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

The movement's popularity grew even as scores of its leaders faced government repression, jail, and torture. As a result, the Muslim Brothers increasingly became viewed as heroes fighting against British colonial rule. Consequently, the Brotherhood moved beyond charitable and educational activities to become an openly political movement. As it transformed, it extended its membership from a thousand members in 1936 to nearly two million in 1948.[2] Al Banna was assassinated in 1949 by the secret police of King Faruk (who blamed the Brotherhood for anti-government acts such as the murder of Prime Minister al-Nuqrashi in 1948).

After Al Banna's death, the government accelerated its repression of the group. Nearly 4,000 members were arrested in 1949, and most were not released from prison until after the Free Officers Revolution in 1952. Al Banna was replaced as General Guide by Hassan Al Hudaiby, a judge who had not been a member prior to his appointment as the organization's leader. For this reason—and the fact that he lacked charisma and hard-earned credibility among Brotherhood followers—Hudaiby struggled to direct the organization.

The Brotherhood supported the Free Officers in the 1952 Egyptian revolution and anticipated having influence in the resulting government. Instead, President Gamal Abdel Nasser accused the group of attempting a government takeover and his government clamped down quickly on the organization, sentencing thousands of members to terms in prison.

That same year, a man named Sayyid Qutb joined the Brotherhood. An accomplished writer, Qutb was put in charge of the publishing wing of the organization. From this pulpit, Qutb advanced his ideas about the relationship

between political service and the will of God. He argued that political activity ought to be directed toward ascertaining and implementing the will of God. He likewise argued that God had given Muslims a clear pattern for government and rule of law, and thus any effort to create a new system based on man's interest was tantamount to subverting God's intent. Qutb's writings in the early years of his Brotherhood tenure were well received by Hudaiby and others in the group's leadership.

In his passionate writings, which are still cited by Islamists today, Qutb declared that Egyptians had deviated from Islam and that Muslims were obliged to use *jihad* as a means to combat Western powers, which he regarded as morally decadent, idolatrous and intrinsically hostile to the Islamic faith. In his influential manifesto *Milestones (Ma'alim fi-l-tariq)*, published in 1964, Qutb expressed his belief that Islam, understood as a complete sociopolitical system, or "way of life," was the remedy to all problems of contemporary Arab and Muslim societies. In fact, the decline of the Muslim world stemmed from ills directly imported from the West—immorality, secularism, corruption—that had taken Muslims back to a corrupt, pre-Islamic state (*jahiliyya* in Arabic). As an antidote, Qutb called for absolute submission to the principles of Islam. In this view, anything non-Islamic was inherently evil, including any political authority said to be "democratic" that ran counter to a "genuine" government based on the rule of Islamic law.

But over time, Qutb began to expand on his ideas and, more importantly, couple them with a prescription for action. Qutb argued that *jahiliyyah* – traditionally understood to refer to the time before the Prophet had his visions – was not a historic reference, so much as a religious one. In other words, *jahiliyyah* as Qutb understood it was a timeless act of "rebellion against God's sovereignty on earth."[3] Qutb argued that those in rebellion against God had wrested control of governments around the world and that the only response to this blatant advancement of rebellion was to actively and violently challenge it.

It is in response to Qutb's passionate conclusion that the real shift in Brotherhood ideology occurred. While Hudaiby and the Brothers had embraced Qutb's articulation of the relationship between God and government, Hudaiby opposed Qutb's conclusions about the role that violence should play in achieving that end. Hudaiby wrote an essay called "Missionaries, Not Judges" in response to Qutb's work in an effort to propose an alternative, non-violent path. Both Qutb and Hudaiby believed that governments not working in obedience with God's will (and according to His structure) were dangerous because they interfered with an individual's ability to choose the right path in

their pursuit of righteousness. However, where Qutb believed that violence could be used to restore the right balance, Hudaiby feared it would only further cloud the individual's ability to choose correctly.

The cleavage between the two perspectives grew as the organization sought to find its way amid extensive government persecution. Hudaiby's conclusions prescribed a generational approach to change. As he advocated education as the antidote for *jhiliyyah*, accepting his perspective meant acknowledging that change would take decades. Qutb's followers, on the other hand, were attracted by the potential for quick and decisive improvements.

Qutb was hanged by the Egyptian state in 1966, but his ideas and the rift they generated within the Brotherhood continued long after. The leadership of the organization continued to support calls for change through the gradual education of society. Most of those who supported Qutb's call for the violent toppling of the existing *jahiliyyah* order went on to leave the Brotherhood and form alternative organizations more open to this line of thinking, including al Jama'at al Islamiyya and al Jihad. Both of these Brotherhood offshoots were implicated in the subsequent assassination of President Anwar Sadat, and members of each went on to play significant roles in al-Qaeda.

Those who remained in the Brotherhood in the late 1960s and into the 1970s and 1980s faced the difficult task of rebuilding an organization that had been dramatically weakened by government repression, repeated imprisonment, and internal ideological rifts. In 1973, Umar al Tilmisani became the General Guide of the Brotherhood, and did so as a clear advocate of moderation. While far more engaged in the existing political process than his predecessors had been, Tilmisani repeatedly emphasized that the Brotherhood did not seek power for its own sake, but rather in an effort to slowly align the Egyptian state with the will of God.

Because the Brotherhood lacked the right to call themselves a political party, under Tilmisani's leadership the group aligned themselves with other political players in an effort to advance its agenda. At one point in the 1980s, the Brotherhood joined with the well-established secular Wafd party. That union produced 58 parliamentary seats for the combined groups, of which the Brotherhood filled eight.

However, the Muslim Brotherhood's effort to rebrand itself as a politically-active moderate group that renounced violence prompted fierce criticism from other Islamist groups. Prominent al-Qaeda leaders, such as Ayman al-Zawahiri, called the movement's shift and its participation in Egypt's political debate and elections a posture contrary to God's sovereignty *(hakimiyya)* and a "betrayal."[4] Indeed it is this issue that ultimately resulted in many mem-

bers leaving the Brotherhood, and as was the case with al Jihad and Jama'at al Islamiya, in some cases forming new groups entirely. The Islamist group Hamas, originally formed by the Palestinian Muslim Brothers, condemned the choice made by the Egyptian Brotherhood to renounce violence, and it continues to see violent *jihad* as the most viable way to rid Muslim lands of infidel presence. Criticism of the Brotherhood's ideological and political shifts has also emanated from Syria, where the group's leadership openly supported attacks against Israel and the U.S. in Iraq and voiced full support for Hamas and the Iranian-backed Shi'ite militia Hezbollah.[5]

It should be made clear that the Brotherhood's involvement in the political process has not fundamentally altered the core ideological tenets that Al Banna laid out in the 1940s. As one leader in the group explained in 2007, "There is a difference between freedom and democracy in Islam (and in the West). Freedom in Islam is a freedom to conform to rules. If we compare it to the traffic light does freedom mean that when I find the light is red, can I pass under it with my car? There are limitations on freedom in Islam. Nowhere, in any nation or in any set of laws do we find what we call unconstrained freedom."[6]

But the right path to pursue this "constrained freedom" is challenging to find, even for those who have accepted the non-violent standard. Conflict has long festered between the movement's conservative old guard, longtime reformists, and a younger generation of members who saw potential to make the movement far more encompassing that it was. In 1996, several prominent members of the Brotherhood broke away to form new political factions, such as the "Center Party" *(Hizb al-Wasat)* and the "Movement for Change," also known as *Kefaya*—"enough" in Egyptian Arabic. In 2007, the movement published a platform that clearly laid out the inflexible principles of the old guard, including the rejection of the civil nature of the state and a call to establish a theocratic government and exclude non-Muslim minorities from domestic politics.[7]

GLOBAL REACH

Although banned and clandestine for most of its history, the Muslim Brotherhood has managed to grow throughout the Muslim world, especially in Egypt's neighboring countries—Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, Sudan, Jordan, and the Palestinian territories—as well as in the Arabian Peninsula (Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Yemen, Oman, and Bahrain). The movement has also achieved global status by expanding well beyond its traditional Middle Eastern borders and into the West. For decades, these different offshoots have remained largely

autonomous from their Egyptian base and independent from one another, making it inaccurate to characterize the Brotherhood as a coherent and homogenous organization.

The Brotherhood first began to spread its ideology throughout the Middle East in the 1930s, essentially as a response to Western colonial presence. In Palestine, the movement was established in 1935 by the brother of al-Banna himself, Abd al-Rahman, along with other figures such as Izz al-Din al-Qassam, who was one of the leaders of the armed resistance against the British.[8] At the time, the Brotherhood's activities were primarily of a social and religious nature, and included the creation of associations, schools and the establishment of mosques intended to "bring an Islamic generation up."[9] It was in 1987, in the context of the first *Intifada* (Palestinian uprising), that the Brotherhood politicized itself by founding the Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas),[10] which in turn took on a greater military bent. In contrast, such politicization occurred earlier in countries like Syria and Jordan, where the Brotherhood became an opposition force to the regime in the first years after national independence.[11] The Islamic Action Front (IAF),[12] the Jordanian Brotherhood's political wing, is, for instance, the country's only established opposition party.

In Syria, after the 1963 Ba'athist coup, the Brotherhood became the main (Sunni) opposition force to the ruling (Shi'ite Alawite) Assad clan. The conflict quickly developed into an open armed struggle, culminating in the Hama uprising of 1982 that was famously crushed by the country's military, nearly wiped out the movement when thousands of its members were killed.[13] After that, the movement ceased to be active politically inside the country, but managed to maintain a support network there. Most Syrian Brothers renounced violence and adopted a more reformist approach, calling for the establishment of a pluralistic and democratic political system.[14]

Since the beginning of the Syrian uprising in 2011, the Brotherhood has joined the anti-regime movement.[15] Led by former leader in exile Ali Sadreddine al-Bayanouni,[16] its members have held the most seats within the Syrian National Council (SNC), one of the main opposition groups arrayed against Bashar al-Assad. Moreover, Syrian Brothers led the relief committee that distributes aid and money to the rebels. Like in Egypt, the Syrian Brotherhood continues to declare that it espouses a moderate, "Turkish-style" Islamist agenda – a manifesto unveiled in April 2012 does not mention the word Islam and contains pledges to respect individual rights – and will not seek to take over the future political system or establish any form of Islamist government. Yet, even while downplaying their influence within the SNC to reduce Western fears and earn the trust of Syria's ethno-religious minorities, in July 2012 the Muslim Brothers announced their intention to create their

own party.[17] As the civil war in Syria continues unabated, the Muslim Brotherhood continues to figure prominently in it, comprising a large part of the coalition of rebels fighting the Syrian government.[18]

In Jordan, the Brotherhood has also sought reform by positioning itself as a leading player in the 2011 anti-government protests and denouncing public corruption and poverty.[19] Contrary to its presence in other countries, however, the movement also seeks to change the system from within.[20] In Iraq, where the group's history remains relatively unknown, the Iraqi Islamic Party (the Brotherhood's primary manifestation there) was banned during the 1960s and forced underground by Saddam Hussein. It reemerged after 2003, and has since displayed an ambiguous posture, voicing harsh criticism of the U.S. and Iraq's new political elites while still choosing to take part in the transitional process.[21]

In the Gulf, the Brotherhood has branches in several countries, most of which were established by militants who were driven out of Egypt in the 1950s. Many found shelter in Saudi Arabia, but their doctrine was seen as a challenge to that country's official Wahhabi creed. The movement was never allowed to deal with religious issues, and therefore invested its energies in the educational field as an alternate way of disseminating its ideology. This led to the emergence of movements like the "Awakening" *(Sahwa)*, known for its support of rebellion against the Saudi leadership.[22] But Wahhabism, in turn, influenced the Brotherhood and drew many of its members toward its more conservative Islamic ideas.

Elsewhere, such as in the United Arab Emirates and Qatar, the Brotherhood relied on a strong intellectual and media presence to influence local populations.[23] With the exception of Oman, where the Brotherhood has faced severe crackdowns, the movement also managed to gain seats in parliaments across the region: in Kuwait via the *Hadas* movement;[24] in Yemen through *Islah* or the "Congregation for Reform;"[25] and in Bahrain through *Al-Minbar*, although this group has lost its prominence since the rise of Shi'ite opposition.[26]

In North Africa, the Brotherhood's expansion was also fueled by resentment of colonial rule. In Algeria, its members joined the uprising against the French during that country's war for independence before being marginalized by the secular FLN party. In the 1990s, the Algerian Brotherhood did not join *jihadist* factions in their fight against the state; instead, the group favored a peaceful resolution of the conflict and a return to democracy, even taking part in the coalition backing current president Abdelaziz Bouteflika in the early 2000s.[27] In Tunisia, the Brotherhood influenced Islamists, in particular *Al-Nahda* (the Renaissance Party) founded in 1989, whose leaders advocate democracy and

pluralism "within an Islamist framework."[28] Formerly outlawed by the Ben Ali regime, *Al-Nahda* made a historic return in the wake of the 2011 "Jasmine Revolution"[29] and became a legalized party, benefiting from considerable popular support in the parliamentary elections and winning 40 % of the votes. It is now the most influential political force of Tunisia.

In Morocco, the Justice and Development party also won the largest number of seats in the 2011 parliamentary election, gaining 27% of the votes and becoming the country's major opposition party. In Libya, the Brotherhood has maintained a presence since the 1940s when King Idris I offered Egyptian Brothers refuge from persecution. However, after seizing power in a coup, Muammar al-Qadhafi considered the Muslim Brothers a menace and actively worked to eliminate them. Despite this repression, the Brotherhood maintained a vast network of sympathizers in Libya.[30] The Party of Justice and Construction (the political arm of the Muslim brotherhood in Libya) has gained seats in the legislative body since Qadhafi's death.[31] Finally, in Sudan the Brotherhood enjoys a significant, though informal, presence, and has launched mass Islamization campaigns that have allowed its representatives to infiltrate virtually all state institutions.[32]

In addition to its traditional geographic reach, the Brotherhood has gained significant ground in Europe through regional forums like the Federation of Islamic Organizations in Europe, the Forum of European Muslim Youth and Student Organizations, and the European Council for Fatwa and Research.[33] Starting in the 1960s, members and sympathizers of the group moved to Europe and established a vast and sophisticated network of mosques and Islamic charities and schools, such as those in England (Muslim Association of Britain), France (Union des Organisations Islamiques de France), Germany (Islamische Gemeinschaft Deutschland), and Italy (Unione delle Comunita' ed Organizzazioni Islamiche in Italia).[34] With considerable foreign funding and the relative tolerance of European governments seeking to engage in a dialogue with Muslim minorities,[35] Brotherhood-related organizations have gained prominent positions on the Continent's sociopolitical scene, presenting themselves as the legitimate representatives of Muslim communities in Europe and "moderate" interlocutors for governments and the media.

In addition to its presence in Europe, the Brotherhood has also reached out to Muslims in the United States, where its members have been present since the 1960s. The movement launched its first long-term strategy there in 1975, focusing on proselytizing efforts and the creation of specific structures for youth and newly arrived Muslim immigrants. Seeking to exert political influence at the state and federal levels, Muslim Brothers have been represented in multiple religious organizations such as the Muslim Students' Association (MSA), the Islamic Society of North America (ISNA), the Islamic Circle of North

America (ICNA), the Muslim American Society (MAS) and a variety of other activist groups. On May 22, 1991, the Brotherhood issued a programmatic memorandum titled "The General Strategic Objective for the [Brotherhood] in North America,"[36] which highlighted its goal to penetrate the heart of American society. The memorandum stated that all Muslims had to "understand that their work in America [was] a grand *jihad* in eliminating and destroying Western civilization from within and sabotaging its miserable house by their hands so that God's religion [Islam] is victorious over all religions."[37]

RECENT ACTIVITY

Ideological differences within the Brotherhood proved divisive after the fall of President Hosni Mubarak's regime in 2011. When the 2011 revolution occurred, the organization was suddenly presented with three clear political options.[38] First, it could establish itself as simply a social movement, focused on sharing the values the organization supports at a grassroots level. This option would enable the different ideological strands to continue to thrive even as the purpose of the organization shifted. Second, it could act as a political action group representing a specific set of interests and leveraging its influence to support candidates and policies that served those interests. This would require the organization to begin matching policy recommendations with their ideological positions, and could foster debate of contradictions that arose. Finally, it could form a political party and actively seek to transform its existing social capital into political capital.

By the time the first parliamentary elections following the revolution had occurred, it was clear the organization had chosen the third option. As the organization's Old Guard cemented its places of control both within the Brotherhood and in the newly-created Freedom and Justice Party (FJP), it formed the latter in the image of the original. Rather than create a movement that was distinct from the Brotherhood itself, the FJP was nearly identical in structure and style to its parent organization. The initial leader of this party, Saad el Katatny, was a well-connected member of the Brotherhood's most conservative wing. His appointment was a signal to reformers in the organization of a more rigid platform to come.

Even more interesting was the fact that the choice effectively repudiated the constrained ideological pluralism that had characterized the organization for so much of its existence. The FJP was designated not *a* political party representing the interests of the Muslim Brotherhood, but *the* political party of the organization. The distinction is important, because it reflects the leaders' intention to force coalescence around a single perspective and a single method of participation in the political process. Younger members of the Muslim

Brotherhood were not at liberty to join other parties that better reflected their less conservative policy perspectives. Instead they were, in many cases, expelled from the group.

It was over a week before the Muslim Brotherhood as an organization condoned their members' involvement in the 2011 Tahrir protests. Explanations for this "delay" are varied and inconclusive. Once the Brotherhood did officially demonstrate its support, however, it did so with no more clear a revolutionary platform than any of the other groups which had initiated the uprising. Yet once President Hosni Mubarak stepped down, the Brotherhood quickly emerged as the most organized opposition group in Egypt, which gave them great influence in the post-revolutionary process.

Immediately after Mubarak's departure, the Supreme Council for Armed Forces (a 20 member organization representing all four branches of the Egyptian military known as SCAF) convened a group of eight jurists to develop amendments to the existing Egyptian constitution that would govern the path ahead. The leader of this group of eight was a jurist with at least moderate Islamist leanings; a very conservative member of the Brotherhood was present in the small group as well. This group – which was supported by the SCAF – determined that elections would precede the creation of a new constitution. Indeed, the new constitution would be written by a group of individuals chosen by the not-yet-elected parliament.

This gave huge significance to the first set of parliamentary elections, and advantaged the Brotherhood, which was the only well-organized opposition group and had a well-honed structure that spanned the entire state. Even with the internal fissures that erupted in the group during this time, the Brotherhood's Freedom and Justice Party secured 47% of the seats in the new parliament, and formed a governing coalition with the Salafist parties, securing 71% of the legislature.

The movement promised to provide a remedy to the previous "corrupt" era by bringing morality back into politics and tackling poverty and unemployment—two promises that had long cemented its popularity among the poorest and most deprived. In the eyes of its sympathizers, the Brotherhood's defense of Islamic principles and values rendered it more capable of running a government, implementing long-awaited economic reforms, and ensuring greater social justice.[39] However, the Brotherhood's rise to power also prompted concerns regarding its ability to govern all Egyptians – including Copts and Secularists – rather than just those who supported an Islamist agenda.

The first round of the Egyptian presidential elections was held on May 23 and 24, 2012. A month prior, the High Election Commission had disqualified 10 potential presidential candidates, including Khairat El Shater, the charismatic chief financier for the Brotherhood. The Brotherhood quickly replaced him with the more conservative Mohamed Morsi, who served as the chairman of the Freedom and Justice Party. Despite his late entry to the ballot, Morsi emerged as one of the top two vote-getters in the primary and the Brotherhood geared up for a run-off election against Ahmed Shafik in June 2012.

Before the run-off elections took place, the Egyptian Supreme court moved to dissolve the People's Assembly (which was then dominated by a Muslim Brotherhood majority) under the justification that the original move to place the elections before a Constitution was written rendered the outcome of those elections illegal. Almost simultaneously, the SCAF issued an amendment to the Constitutional Declaration in which it appointed itself as the controller of Egypt's budget, foreign policy, defense and national security.[40]

On June 30, 2012, Mohamed Morsi was sworn in as the first civilian president of Egypt in more than sixty years. However, his power was constrained by the changes the SCAF had made just before the elections and in the early days of his tenure, and Morsi was accommodating of the dominant role the SCAF clearly intended to play in Egyptian politics. Nevertheless, Morsi did not shy away from controversial choices – the first of which was to call back the recently-dissolved parliament. Morsi also took steps to limit the appearance that he was only a president to those who supported the Islamist agenda: he resigned as a member of the Muslim Brotherhood, and appointed individuals from a variety of parties and backgrounds to serve in his administration. But his leadership was still met with deep skepticism by more liberal groups, and the sentiment worsened as Morsi began to challenge the SCAF's influence over affairs of state.

On August 5, 2012, militants attacked a guard station at the Rafah border crossing in Sinai and 16 Egyptian soldiers were killed in the process. Morsi used this event – and the failure it represented in the SCAF's ability to protect national security – to force the resignation of Field Marshal Hussein Tantawi, the Egyptian Defense Minister and the man expected to succeed him. Morsi then replaced the leaders of all three branches of the armed forces with younger officers, and made Abdel Fatal Al Sissi the new Minister of Defense. As a result of this strategic reshuffle, Morsi brought the Egyptian armed forces under the control of a civilian authority for the first time in six decades.

Morsi then went further and eliminated the SCAF's legislative and executive powers. The result was that some members of the SCAF and the Egyptian public began to voice concerns about the amount of power and influence the

new president was accumulating. But on November 22, 2012, Morsi issued a decree that granted even greater powers to the office of the presidency. Under this new guidance, the presidential office became virtually immune to legal challenges to its decisions. Morsi argued that such a move was necessary in order to remove vestiges of the Mubarak regime still trying to undermine the power of the revolutionary order. Opponents of the decree saw it quite differently, however, arguing that the Brotherhood was making the long-feared slogan of "One man, one vote, one time" a dangerous reality.

Morsi's move effectively consolidated his opposition, which had previously been divided between those who supported the old guard's preservation efforts and those who wanted the revolution to produce more practical manifestations of the liberal values that undergirded it. They became a single group calling for his ouster.

Apparently tone-deaf to the concerns being raised, Morsi pushed the constituent assembly to provide a draft constitution. On November 29, eighty-five members of the previously 100-strong group (15 members boycotted the vote) moved to approve the draft. Morsi approved it and scheduled a national referendum for December 15. In response, opposition groups staged a series of protests in Tahrir Square. Morsi called for a national dialogue, but the largest opposition group refused to participate unless Morsi recanted his decree for sweeping presidential powers and withdrew the draft constitution. Morsi agreed to the former, but refused to do the latter. In December, the referendum was approved by 64% of the vote.

Despite his victory in securing the newly-approved constitution, Morsi faced immense opposition in early 2013. In addition to the power-grabbing gaffes that characterized Morsi's leadership, the Brotherhood more broadly had struggled to form political coalitions beyond the networks it had established upon coming into office. For this reason, the organization struggled to gain traction in a state that was dominated by curried favors and personal affiliations.

Mubarak's regime had placed priority not on ideology but on loyalty, and a network of personal gain and professional patronage predominated throughout the state. The Brotherhood, though far better organized than any other political party, did not have a clear mechanism for building alliances or even extending party affiliation that would have allowed it to gain support across different government and political networks. Thus, while the organization tried to demonstrate a willingness to work within old state institutions, its rhetoric suggested a broader desire to create an entirely new ruling elite – something which the old elite viewed with suspicion and, in some cases, hostility.

Early in the Brotherhood's tenure in power, members of the old state elite could not afford to directly challenge the group without incurring the wrath of revolutionary forces. But as the FJP under Morsi's leadership gained more and more institutional control and demonstrated a willingness to use it to the detriment of those who disagreed with them, new – if temporary – allegiances were built between the old state and the new revolutionaries.

This new alliance resulted in a groundswell of opposition to the Morsi regime specifically, and the Muslim Brotherhood organization more broadly. On June 30, 2013 the opposition staged huge protests calling for early presidential elections. Morsi refused their calls, and four days later, on July 3, the military forcefully removed him from office and once again took control of the Egyptian state.

The SCAF quickly moved to crush the Muslim Brotherhood following Morsi's ouster. Thousands of Brotherhood members were arrested in the months after, and are currently awaiting trial. In December 2013, the Egyptian government declared the Muslim Brotherhood a terrorist organization, and in so doing dramatically broadened the range of actions the state could legally take against it. In March 2014, 529 members of the organization were simultaneously sentenced to death after a one-day trial for their role in riots in Minya the previous August. Thirty-seven more were sentenced the following month, and 683 more shortly after that.

Since the Muslim Brotherhood defines Morsi's ouster as a military coup, its leaders have called for anti-coup protests in response.[41] Officially, Brotherhood leaders have only called for peaceful protests, but many Islamist supporters have reacted violently, most vividly in a series of attacks against Coptic Christians.[42] However, Brotherhood leaders like Dr. Murad Ali assert that the Muslim Brotherhood condemns attacks against the Copts and reaffirm that they wish the backlash against the military to be peaceful.[43]

While recent events in Egypt have drained the Muslim Brotherhood of its influence for the moment, it is unlikely that the movement will disappear from the political scene entirely. In the past, the Brotherhood has survived under hostile regimes, and it has the potential to expand its influence in the uncertain political terrain that has prevailed since the start of the Arab Spring. However, the nature of this influence could take a number of forms. In the past, regime oppression has engendered fissures within the group regarding the role that force should play in advancing the organization's objectives. There is little doubt that recent developments will be met with further organizational soul searching. If what leadership remains of the Brotherhood continue to advise patience, restraint and education in the face of persecution, even more members are likely to leave the group, either to join groups

pursuing more radical – and violent – efforts for change, or to spawn new ones. However, if the Brotherhood's leadership instead breaks with decades of tradition and actually supports the use of violence in response to Morsi's overthrow, the repercussions for the surrounding region could be immense.

ENDNOTES

[1] For an overview of the Muslim Brotherhood's core ideology, see Hassan al-Banna's writings and memoirs, particularly the *Letter To A Muslim Student*, which develops the main principles of the movement. For the English translation, see http://www.jannah.org/articles/letter.html; see also Brynjar Lia, *The Society of the Muslim Brothers in Egypt: The Rise of an Islamic Mass Movement*, 1928-1942 (New York; Ithaca Press, 1998) and Richard Paul Mitchell, The Society of the Muslim Brothers (London & New York: Oxford University Press, 1969).

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