

## **How Will Egypt Return to “Normalcy”? By Praying for the Best.**

By: Lee Singletary

Egypt, the most populous desert country in the Arab world and Africa, rich with ancient history and world wonders, is now a country in turmoil. After more than three decades of presidential reign, Egypt's iron-fisted ruler, Hosni Sayyid Mubarak is feeling the iron-boot by not only Egyptian citizens who have grown tired of his repressive 30-year rule, but also of the United States.

Mubarak was appointed president following the assassination of his predecessor Anwar El Sadat in 1981. Despite having the greatest percentage increase of all emerging markets in 2004, high unemployment rates and constant low rankings in the Human Development Index persist in Egypt. In all that Mubarak has done to improve ties with western nations and accept the U.S. as an ally to speak out against radical Arab nations, his accomplishments are overshadowed by political corruption, poverty levels, and low wages. The country annually receives billions of dollars in foreign aid, yet the money barely makes a dent in the average Egyptian's life.

In all the chaos that has stemmed from the opposition towards Mubarak by Egypt's citizens, the world's super powers, particularly the U.S., are scrambling to figure out how to keep the country from imploding. With an unstable government and protestors' outcry for Mubarak to resign, the state of the country is anything but stable.

Fourth-year Drexel University student Yousef Ezz blames his frustration with the situation in his home country on Mubarak's aid-funding misdemeanors, stating, “[we] get billions in aid every year and the country has only been getting poorer and poorer. So much has been done for foreign MNC's (Multinational Enterprise Companies) but nothing for the people.” Egypt-born Ezz views the situation in his homeland with non-

biased eyes. Raised nearly equally in both Egypt and the U.S., his insights depict those of a man who sees both sides of the story, yet still sides with the people of Egypt who are suffering as a result of Mubarak's rule.

It is Mubarak's financial choices that have created instability within modern Egyptian society, yet has made the Mubarak family one of the wealthiest in the world. A combination of American military aid as well as foreign investments has allowed the president and his supporting cabinet to reap the benefits of the funds coming into the country. Regardless of the allocation of these funds, Ezz adds, "Egypt can't be a functioning society if the president has instilled a 'state of emergency' for over 30 years."

The U.S. has helped fund this "state of emergency" over the Mubarak regime in an effort to enhance its relationship with Israel, gain an ally that is against the more radical Arab nations, and to build military to military efforts to combat international terrorism. So what went wrong? For starters, it certainly seems as though Mubarak has outlived his usefulness to the U.S. Perhaps the president's financial decisions are being used as an excuse to intervene and promote a democratic political structure by the world's power nations. With a death toll approaching 300 and demonstrators demanding the immediate resignation of the president, it would make sense for the U.S. to intervene at this time, rather than later while the country re-establishes its government.

Some might say, "who says what's happening in Egypt is any of America's business?" On the other hand, weren't [we] friends with Mubarak for his 30-year reign? Now all of a sudden, [we] back off and refrain from helping out our ally regardless of the relationship America and Egypt shared. In a presidential address on February 1, 2011, President Obama stated that "it is not the role of any other country to determine Egypt's leaders, only the Egyptian people can do that." Obama also states the transition "must begin

now,” despite Mubarak’s announcement that he will not be seeking reelection in September 2011.

The President’s address was given in a peaceful tone, focusing on the need for the country to return to normalcy for the sake of its citizens. But what do the citizens themselves think is best? When asked how he thinks the country will operate in Mubarak’s absence, Ezz said he believes “the government will have a hard time making a comeback from this crisis, the country has become so unstable, the economy is crippled and the security force is non existent.”

He adds, “[I] can only pray for the best.”

With no end in sight with regard to the massive protests taking place in Egypt’s major cities, it seems as though “praying for the best” is the Egyptian’s best option. There are differing views on whether or not the U.S. should be involved with Egypt’s return to normalcy, however “normalcy” is not what Obama is enforcing. Rather, Obama want to see a change to democracy and Mubarak recognizes that change needs to happen to better the state of the country in turmoil. Apparently, Egypt has not been “normal” for the past 30 years and democracy is the best solution. Meanwhile, Egyptian Vice President Omar Suleiman says, “Egypt is not ready for democracy.” So, who really knows what’s normal anyway?