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Rev. Forces & Management of Int'l Relations

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The transformations of the Arab revolutionary scene in general, and the Egyptian scene in particular, over the past seven years (2011-2018) have revealed the existence of many challenges, or more precisely loopholes and imbalances in the revolutionary forces' management of the situation. In fact, addressing and facing these loopholes would lead to higher rates of effectiveness in achieving the objectives pursued by these forces, enhancing their potential, and even boosting their chances of managing the scene. One of these loopholes that should be addressed is the role of revolutionary forces in the management of international relations.

Management of international relations requires existence of clear views and approaches; building plans and policies; and defining the stages, steps, procedures, and mechanisms for carrying out these plans and policies.

This can be addressed through three main axes:

First: Revolutionary forces and the concept of international relations

The revolutionary forces have been suffering from lack of a clear vision of the “international relations” concept, where they limited it to maintaining political contacts with countries and governments; and accordingly, if these contacts ceased, relations would eventually break off, which is completely inaccurate.

Therefore, we need to state the following:

1- International relations are interactive, cooperative or conflict-based patterns between international actors; and thus, these relations can be managed through

specific mechanisms at the conflict level, that are different from the mechanisms used at the cooperative level.

2- International relations are not only political, and we should not politicize other dimensions, including economics, security, military, culture, art, and sports, etc. If political relations are suspended or strained, this cessation should not be reflected negatively on other dimensions of these relations, which must be sustained as they serve as the unwavering foundations of relations or interactions between countries and peoples. If all elements of international relations collapsed, the natural result would be escalation of hostile tendencies that would entrench in the conscience of the peoples; and the relations between nations and peoples would then shift from temporary crises to protracted conflicts likely to explode in the event of any crisis.

3- The revolutionary forces' management of their international relations has mostly been linked to political systems, ignoring the fact that these systems represent only one dimension of the international relations elements or components.

Second: Revolutionary forces and actors of international relations

1- States

States – whatever their size, influence, nature of political system, ideology, population, or economic and military potential are – constitute a source of recognition of legitimacy, granting an official status, and providing official political incubators to the revolutionary forces.

2- Organizations

Types of organizations variate according to the criteria that we rely on in classification, where there are:

A- Intergovernmental Organizations (IGOs):

Membership of intergovernmental organizations such as the United Nations, including its branches, bodies and agencies; the European Union; the African Union; the Arab League, etc. is limited to States and Governments. Therefore, it is important for the revolutionary forces to manage interactions with these IGOs in accordance with the map of political alliances, work on building major blocs within them, and not to underestimate the size and influence of NGOs member-states because they are ultimately equal in the right to vote. For example, the UN General Assembly voted in favor of according Palestine non-Member Observer State status in the United Nations.

B- Nongovernmental organizations (NGOs):

Non-governmental organizations are international actors whose members are not states, such as Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, etc. which tackle specialized issues and files (like disarmament, environmental protection, human rights, ...). Therefore, it is important to build links with these organizations, and provide them with the data, information, and documents they need for supporting their files, while diversifying mechanisms and forms of interaction and networking with them. This requires monitoring the maps of these organizations and recognizing their interests; taking into consideration not to focus on only one of them, as each NGO has its areas of interest and influence. NGOs can contribute to creating an environment that could be supportive of the issues related to popular revolutions and democratic transformations and their basic files.

C- Civil society organizations as well as religious, educational, research and media institutions in various countries of the world:

These organizations and institutions constitute what is known as the third sector, beside the public and private sectors, as they speak for the largest sector of citizens. Therefore, these institutions can serve as platforms for creating a domestic and international public opinion supportive of popular revolutions and democratic transformations. This requires preparation of basic databases and monitoring and analytical maps of these organizations in different countries of the world, especially in countries of interest to the movement of the Egyptian or Arab revolutionary forces.

3- International Corporations:

International Corporations constitute one of the most important actors in the structure of international relations. Management of relations with these international corporations can be cooperative, where revolutionary forces cooperate with these corporations for enhancing their financial, investment, and negotiation potential; or it can be conflict-based, where revolutionary forces target corporations owned by anti-revolutions parties that are supportive of the regimes of tyranny, domination and corruption in the Arab world. These international corporations are usually referred to as: *Multinational Corporations*, with reference to membership, management or finance (usually large corporations incorporated in one country but produce or sell goods or services in various countries); or as *Transnational Corporations* with reference to their branches overseas (usually based in one state but have branches or subsidiaries operating in other states).

4- International Movements:

'International movements' here refer to political currents, social movements, and various pressure groups that are not part of the traditional associations such as political parties or trade unions. These international movements include large sectors of citizens in various countries of the world and constitute the main hubs of movements of change in these countries. Thus, it is important for revolutionary forces to interact with these movements and enhance relations with their various components worldwide. It is also extremely significant for them to create a network of relations with the Arab political currents and social movements which were mainly behind the generation of revolutions in the Arab world – in order to build a transborder and transnational revolutionary current away from self-identification or national affiliation.

5- Transnational individuals:

A transnational individual is a person engaged in international activity, without being a representative of any of the previous international actors (States, organizations, movements, corporations). The significance of transnational individuals stems from the importance of their role, their symbolic status, and the size of their followers (on the internet). These days, there are public figures that have tens of millions of followers on social networking sites; and accordingly, such famous and effective figures can be key starting points in managing a number of issues of interest to movements of political and social change.

Third: Movement controls

With this clear map of international relations actors, it is important to emphasize a number of basic considerations for setting a map for movement towards managing the interactions with them:

1- To avoid underestimating the value of any effort, role or actor, no matter how little they are; because any little effort, role or actor may be useful, albeit partially, at some point in the process of change. Arab revolutions have revealed that preserving the life of only one person is extremely significant for all; therefore, the international actor that we may underestimate today can play an important role at some stage in the future.

2- Taking into consideration the significance of internal considerations and determinants in the countries which have witnessed Arab Spring revolutions, and the fact that the primary bet remains on national forces on the ground, yet revolutionary forces should not ignore the regional and international environment and its impact, both negatively and positively in the course of the process of change – in light of the unlimited overlap between the internal and external environments and the fact that many internal parties have external extensions. The fact that regional and international actors control the management of revolutionary scenes in all countries that have witnessed Arab Spring revolutions, including Tunisia, Libya, Egypt, Yemen, and Syria, show clearly the impact of regional and international environment on the course of the process of change.

3- While focusing on international actors in the neighboring Arab countries, revolutionary forces should not ignore the international actors in regions such as Latin America or South and Southeast Asia; because the pressures exerted by the counter-

revolution forces against these remote countries may be lighter than the pressures exercised on neighboring countries, such as Qatar, Turkey, Sudan, and Algeria for their attitude towards Arab revolutions.

4- The political opposition forces that defend Arab revolutions abroad should undertake management of international relations for revolutionary forces, as they have necessary capabilities and potential for moving more dynamically than revolutionary forces at home, provided that the relation between opposition forces abroad and governments of the countries where they live should be based on coordination, for securing freedom of movement, but not on guidance.

5- The poor material resources, lack of human experience, or the political pressures exerted on some of the revolutionary forces in exile should not be used as excuses for not undertaking the file of international relations management, in accordance with the rule of “What cannot be completely attained, should not be completely left.” At least, the revolutionary forces abroad can monitor international actors, building a database on them, establish a network of relations in this regard, and suggest the best way to deal with these actors.

6- The role played by exiled communities that belong to Arab revolutions countries, is extremely significant both in organizing events, taking into consideration the legal regulations of the countries where they reside and in the exchange of experiences on dealing with the international actors in these countries.

7- The research centers and academic institutions can play an important role, not only in monitoring, assessment, analysis, interpretation, forecasting and providing an outlook for the future, but also in serving as platforms or umbrellas to manage many

interactions with international actors related to the issues of Arab revolutions and their fundamental transformations.

