المعهد المصري للدراسات
EGYPTIAN INSTITUTE FOR STUDIES

Proposed Project to Solve Egyptian Political Crisis

Dr. Mamdouh Almuneir

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The Egyptian revolution is in retreat and even close to clinical death due to the weakness of opposition forces, both at home and abroad; the regime's brutal repression of opponents; and the regional and international interference in the Egyptian scene (in favor of the regime), as well as the people's reluctance to attempt to revolt again due to suffering a state of frustration and despair, and lack of an inclusive project and an effective and influential leadership.

This paper attempts to outline the features of a political project to solve the Egyptian crisis, taking into consideration the current situation, including domestic and regional actors, the extent of their influence, their relation networks, and the relative weight of each of them; in addition to addressing the key aspects of current and future conflict management.

Vision and Mission:

The military's success in stealing or hijacking the January revolution from the early days of its eruption was due to absence of a clear vision for managing the conflict; as the movement of revolutionary and political forces was only a reaction to the regime's steps, not based on a clear vision of confrontation and its various dimensions. Therefore, the counterrevolution has won in the end at least in this round of confrontation.

In fact, any proposed vision must adopt an ultimate goal of building a modern democratic state that should not clash with the society's values and constants, within the framework of a new formula of relations among the society's main components, with the aim of building a fair, leading state.

In order to reach this ultimate goal, there must be interim goals commensurate with the current circumstances. For example, a likely interim goal may be addressing the issue of human rights and detainees; where the interim goal that comes next may be unity and alignment of national forces despite differences, as they all agree on the need to remove Abdel Fattah al-Sisi, taking into mind that there can never be any political solution in the presence of this tyrant.

However, the main and strategic factor that should govern the interim goals must be feasibility of execution on the ground.

Strategic goals:

In the Egyptian case, the strategic goals proposed to be achieved sequentially or in parallel include:

1- Reviving the revolutionary or protesting status in every possible way and maintaining escalation, even if based on partial demands.

2- Restoring the people's trust in the political leadership of the change project, either by creation of a new leadership, or by reproducing the old leadership on new terms, so that the leadership could enjoy credibility and have influence over revolutionary and popular masses.

3- Exposure of the regime's crimes and opening all corruption files related to its symbols, both at home and abroad.

4- Cooperating with those who disagree with the regime from within, with the aim of preserving the homeland and avoiding its collapse, and not at the expense of the supreme interests of the country.

5- Maximization of the moral and political legitimacy of rejection of Egypt's military coup externally using all possible means

6- Consolidation of the revolution's allied network of the anti-Sisi camp at home and abroad, and boosting relations with them within mechanisms that guarantee their safety.

7- Introducing an appropriate and reliable alternative for running the state during the transitional period, bearing in mind that the ones that lead the revolution are not necessarily the ones that may run the state.

8- Reassuring those who are afraid of the fall of the current regime, including state institutions, various society segments, and foreign powers, especially Western forces, with the aim of at least neutralizing them, by engaging in a broad discussion with them on securing their interests in the event of Sisi's removal from the scene, without conceding or compromising the supreme interests of the country.

9- Maintaining peacefulness of the revolutionary movement in general, while confirming the legitimacy of self-defense, taking into mind that any attempt to arm the revolution is a wrong step that must be avoided regardless of its religious and moral legitimacy, for many reasons.

10- Areas of peaceful action on the ground are broad enough to achieve the change project's required goals, albeit at the minimum level.

11- Moving externally on all possible levels, including rights, media, law and politics, to confront the coup, besiege it and delegitimize it.

12- Neutralizing the military institution or reducing the scope of confrontation with it.

13- Forming a professional shadow government to be ready to run the state in the wake of the overthrow of the Sisi regime.

Leadership required to manage the conflict:

1- Intellectual Leadership:

The intellectual leadership required may comprise figures proficient in strategic thinking with all dimensions and schools, where their primary task is to prepare the change project and intellectually frame it, and then to provide answers for the revolution's foundational questions about the state, society, and even the region and the world.

For example, the task of this level of leadership is to provide a clear definition of the desired revolution, including its identity and features, its ultimate goals, and its relation with regional and international environment.

In addition, such intellectual leadership must provide answers to the thorny questions about the revolution, such as:

- What kind of state is targeted by the revolution?

- Will such state be established through reforming the already existing one or by creation of a completely new one?

- What are the form and limits of the targeted transitional justice and how it will be implemented?

- What is the change project's attitude towards the talk by some about arming the revolution?

The task of this intellectual leadership is not to lay down detailed answers to the questions posed, but to provide clear general frameworks about how matters should go on in order to achieve the change project's vision and mission.

The intellectual leadership is not required to lead the revolution, but to direct, guide and control its movement. In this regard, some suggest that the Istanbul-located Egyptian Institute for Studies (EIS) can act as the incubator of such leadership, given its large and varied research capabilities that qualify it to play this role.

2- Political leadership:

This political leadership required may comprise professionals in political and administrative work, whose mission shall be to transform the theoretical project produced by the intellectual leadership into programs, plans and executive sub-projects that can be implemented on the ground, taking into account weaknesses, strengths, challenges and opportunities, based on the project's vision, mission, and strategic objectives.

Creation of such leadership requires certain agreed criteria, including:

1- Competence and honesty admitted by opposition forces, especially the youth, and accordingly win confidence these forces in its ability to manage the conflict, and thus motivate masses to make sacrifices for the success of the project, as it is necessary for the project to be adopted by large segments of the elite and the people based on trust in the project's leadership.

There are three practical ways to find such leadership, namely:

A) First: Such leadership may impose itself on the scene as a de facto, as did actor and contractor Mohamed Ali, for example, of course with a difference. In order to succeed in imposing itself, the following must be available in such leadership:

1- The ability to transform the project into an inspiring idea that the people can adopt and rally around to achieve salvation, albeit relatively.

2- Having sufficient financial and human resources to promote itself and the project it adopts.

3- The ability to achieve sequential successes, albeit small, to boost its credibility and win the trust of the political elite and the people.

B) Second: A group of prominent figures that still enjoy people's confidence at home and abroad (especially in the Arab and Islamic worlds) may nominate such leadership, introduce them to people, and ask everyone to cooperate with them and exert the best possible effort they can to save the homeland.

In this way, the new political leadership is likely to win people's confidence, and accordingly funding, human resources, and others.

C) Third: A group of current opposition entities may line up together to form a political leadership; but in this case, they have to convince masses of themselves and their ability to manage the nascent political project and achieve its goals.

In my opinion, likely solution of the crisis lies in the following steps:

1- Agreement on the entity or a team to whom the theoretical (intellectual) preparation of the change project will be assigned, as differences around this point will be limited.

2- Discussing the project in its theoretical level within a specific time frame in order to approve its final form, where everyone must commit "in writing" to work according to its policies or ideas, thus reducing the methodological and intellectual differences among opposition forces.

3- Selection of an arbitration commission that does not participate in the work of the political leadership or the new opposition grouping, nor does it express its opinion on its work. The role of this jury is to document the minutes of the meetings and the positions of various parties or persons in this gathering. In the event of occurrence of an internal disagreement or problem, the commission shall solely have the right to investigate and impose penalties.

Everyone must fully accept the decisions of this independent commission and sign on them.

Thus, the new opposition grouping would have managed to provide the two most important points it needs to achieve success and ensure its continuation, namely:

First, a theoretical project, which comprises a clear road map to follow.

Second, a practical way to manage its internal differences.

Only actual performance on the ground may grant the project's leadership the confidence of masses and enable it to lead them once again to turn the project to a success case and save the homeland.

The proposed project's movement framework:

1) This new change project shall operate within the global system and adheres to its red lines;

2) The project does not depend on a specific political faction, as it moves professionally in harmony with everyone.

3) The project shall transfer the revolutionary weight from inside to outside, where movement will mostly be focused abroad during its early stages, to overcome the obstacle of tightened security grip at home. Then it shall move gradually inward with achievement of the goals of each stage.

4) The project is based on professional institutional work that is legally licensed in the countries in which it is implemented with full commitment to its legal requirements.

5) The project shall rely on soft powers, including their political, media, legal and human rights branches as its main tool to achieve its goals.

6) The theoretical (intellectual) aspect of the project shall ensure that all the suspicions raised around it are addressed, and shall provide practical solutions to weaknesses.

9) The project shall work to employ the effort of everyone participating.

10) As long as those in charge of the change project are keen on codifying its mechanisms of action and avoiding clashing with the global system, the regime will not be able to foil it.

11) Optimal employment of young people at home and abroad and providing them with the necessary competence and skills.

12) Employing information technology professionally, whether in management, direction, or influence.

A proposed procedural envision for launching the project:

1- A sincere small group move together along two tracks, namely:

A- First: Convincing and assigning an efficient team or entity to prepare the project (intellectually) within a specific time frame.

B- Second: Such team or entity may consider itself the project's political leadership, provided that they meet the qualifications of political leadership mentioned above; or seek a "nucleus" for such political leadership under the same requirements; or push opposition entities to unite together and create the political leadership, according to the above requirements.

2- During this period, which should not exceed three months of hard work, it will be necessary for this sincere small group to seek financial and human resources, so that it would be able to promote the new project and the new political leadership.
This requires the 'stimulus group' to coordinate with media entities to reduce expenses; given that the financial resources will mostly go to media work and public relations in the early months. The more it succeeds in coordinating with the media institutions, the more time and effort will be saved.

3- The interim goal, for at least two years, must be around the issue of detainees and human rights in general, given the fact that it is undisputable; and through which important channels can be opened with the international community, without sensitivities.

4- The new proposed project and political leadership are likely to restore confidence of masses, and thus the project succeed in achieving its ultimate goals.

Finally, it is important to admit that some of the points introduced above may raise questions and accordingly need further clarification. However, the paper, in general, may help readers to understand the thinking patterns required to solve the Egyptian crisis, regardless of agreement or disagreement with the ideas presented above.