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On the tenth anniversary of the January Revolution, key Israeli assessments have concluded that drivers of the Egyptian revolution (2011) are still existing, including poor economic conditions and absence of democracy; but because the head of the regime, Abdel Fattah al-Sisi, pre-controls the judicial, bureaucratic and security systems, it is difficult for these institutions to allow a revolution to topple the current regime.

First: the internal situation

Since 2013, the Israelis have watched the numerous protests that took place in Egyptian streets from time to time, where hundreds and thousands of Egyptians took to the streets in Cairo, Alexandria, Suez and other cities chanting against Sisi. When looking into the causes that motivated Egyptian protesters and demonstrators to take to the streets, it is difficult to find fundamental differences between them and the causes of the January 2011 revolution.

The first reason, according to the Israeli view, is that Sisi has turned into an undisputed leader, just as Mubarak used to be. After ending his first presidential term, he was "elected" again in March 2018 by 97% of the votes for a second term, in absence of an effective opposition that would seriously compete with him. Meanwhile, the Egyptian parliament approved a number of amendments that would enable Sisi to remain in office until 2034, which means that a likely democratic system in Egypt has become a distant dream.

The second reason, according to Israeli estimates, is the economic issue. Egypt, with 100 million people, is still going through a stifling economic crisis. The average monthly wage is 2,000 Egyptian pounds (EGP), equivalent to about \$ 120. The official unemployment rate is 8%, while the real rate is much higher. More than 30% of the Egyptian people live below the poverty line, with less than \$ 1.5 a day, while the regime runs a security force, a judicial system, and bureaucratic tools that all support Sisi and completely back him.

Israeli estimates indicate that the Egyptian events since 2013 have been due to actions taken by Sisi that were the reason for eruption of these demonstrations. Al-Sisi has significantly cut subsidies for

the poor classes and raised tax rates. Due to building lavish presidential palaces, he was criticized for squandering public money. At the same time, Sisi is waging a fierce war against Islamic groups in the Sinai, and has worked to reduce the Islamic tide in Egypt, according to Israeli estimates.

Recently, the Israeli security services monitored the repeated influx of thousands of Egyptians towards Tahrir Square in central Cairo to demonstrate against Sisi, which formed the basis for the likely explosion of the economic situation in the face of the regime. During these demonstrations, the headlines in news bulletins and social networking sites recurred dramatically, bearing the contents of "The revolution is back again", "Massive demonstrations sweeping Tahrir Square", and Thousands call for the overthrow of the Sisi regime".

The Israelis believe that regardless of the validity of the circulated numbers of Egyptian protesters from time to time, whether they are accurate or exaggerated numbers, there is a new state in the street, i.e. breaking the barrier of fear among Egyptians, following Egyptian opposition calls upon Egyptian masses to take to the street for demonstrating and bringing down the regime, accusing it of corruption, and building presidential palaces at the expense of Egyptians that a large number of them hardly find something to eat.

The Israeli media have also monitored the parties that used to stand behind the frequent demonstrations that have erupted in Egypt since the coup d'état of 2013 at every internal event and occasion, noticing that although these parties do not share ideological ties, yet they share the fact that they are pursued by the regime, because the 2013 coup was against democracy, and the emergency laws that the post-2013 regime enacted have enabled it to persecute its opponents, through suppression of demonstrations and detention without trial.

The current truth, according to Israeli assessments, is that there is a time bomb in the face of the Egyptian regime, namely the socio-economic problem; and that explosion of that bomb has become a matter of time, In the event that the Egyptian citizen does not feel any improvement in the economic situation in the foreseeable future, where demonstrations extremely similar to the ones that erupted in 2011 will return again. The Sisi regime will then be facing a new test, while slogans against Israel are being chanted in these likely demonstrations, given that Sisi is accused of being a friend of Tel Aviv, and an enemy of the Egyptian people.

Second: the cold normalization

In terms of the warmth of relations between the Egyptian regime and the occupying power,

In light of the Israeli "honeymoon" with some Gulf countries, which coincides with "cold peace" with the Egyptian people, Israel is pushing for Egypt to be included in this warm peace emerging with the Gulf states.

It has become known to all the volume of telephone conversations Abdel Fattah al-Sisi holds with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, and the extent of the full coordination of the Egyptian army with his Israeli counterpart in North Sinai, especially with the presence of the Israeli ambassador to Cairo, Amira Oron, and her intense activities.

On the other hand, the Egyptian media launched a sweeping attack on the Egyptian actor Mohamed Ramadan, who had a picture published with the Israeli artist Omir Adam while he was in Dubai, threatening his artistic future, forcing him to publish an apology for any links he had with the Zionist singer, prompting the Israeli side to put forward a sign. A big question is why relations between Egypt and Israel have not moved.

Israelis ask: Why can't an Israeli businessman sell advanced Israeli technology to Egypt? And why did the agricultural cooperation that flourished in previous decades stop? Is there room for a return to cooperation in the apparel and food industry that has been suspended in recent years? While the relationship between Israel and the UAE is heating up, peace with Egypt is still cold.

Israeli diplomatic circles are talking about expanding activity with Egypt, even though everyone understands that peace between them is frozen, despite the existence of many areas of bilateral cooperation, the most important of which are trade exchange, water and agriculture, in the absence of the Egyptians' enthusiasm to promote these areas; More than twenty years ago, Israel tried to initiate the establishment of joint Egyptian water desalination facilities, but this has not yet happened. However, there are attempts by the Israeli government to persuade Israeli water companies to work in Egypt, as the Israelis are counting on Egypt's need for large quantities of water, in light of the Renaissance Dam crisis, and Egypt's need for alternative water sources to compensate for the expected shortfall.

Despite this, Israeli tourism is open to Egypt, during 2019 300,000 Israelis arrived, most of them traveled to Sinai. As Israel promoted direct flights from Eilat to Sharm El Sheikh, and tourism packages that bring Egypt and Israel together, before the Corona crisis. With the new wave of normalization in the region, perhaps the time has come to revitalize tourism between the two countries.

A noticeable bilateral development occurred in January 2020, which is the creation of the EMGF, a multinational organization that includes Egypt, Israel, Greece, Cyprus, Jordan and the Palestinian Authority. The establishment of this body symbolizes the geopolitical change taking place in the region. Egypt and Israel signed an agreement to export Israeli gas to Egypt. Perhaps the excellent personal relationship between Israeli Energy Minister Yuval Steinitz and Egyptian Minister of Energy Tariq Al-Mulla played a role in this historical development.

But the Egyptians have always stood against normalization with Israel. And to this day their trade unions abide by the decisions made since 1977 not to normalize. When the UAE received the Israeli singer Omer Adam, it was attacked by the Egyptians, calls for boycott, and legal moves against it, because Egypt could not break its association with the Palestinian cause. To this day, incitement against Israel continues in the Egyptian media, press, television and films.

In Egypt, there has been a lot of hostility towards the Israelis, incitement against them, and blaming them over the years, and evidence for this is abundant in the Egyptian media. Despite Sisi's decision to renew a thousand-year-old Jewish cemetery in Cairo, and to renew the Synagogue of Elijah the Prophet in Alexandria with financial investment by the Egyptian government, which was inaugurated a year ago, which deserved Israeli praise, this did not change the attitude of the Egyptians towards Israel, including The incitement of social networks against it, and the popular feeling against it.

Third: the natural gas agreements

The relations between Israel and Egypt have not been affected so far by the Corona crisis, and the plan to annex the West Bank, as the agreements to export Israeli natural gas to Egypt remain the same; rather, agreements to export Israeli gas to liquefy it in Egyptian facilities are fully implemented This is despite observers expecting a decline in economic relations between Israel, Egypt and various other Arab countries, including the impact on natural gas exports.

The first agreement to sell Israeli gas to Egypt was signed two years ago, at a cost of \$ 15 billion within ten years, and gas began to flow to Egypt in January 2020 via a pipeline starting in Ashkelon. In June Noble Energy, which owns the Tamar and Leviathan gas fields, upgraded the pipeline linking Israel to Egypt.

It is true that this initiative is based on connecting Israel, Cyprus, Greece and Italy via a 2,000 km pipeline that runs through the Mediterranean Sea; And that the European Union announced that it would invest tens of millions of euros to investigate the feasibility of extending this line. Perhaps the reason for Europe's interest in it is to reduce its dependence on gas imports from Russia, and Israel believes that it will be a major partner in building it.

While Egypt is expanding its naval forces to defend its gas fields and pipelines, and is moving ahead with massive deals to purchase advanced weapons to enhance its naval power; Israel believes that one of the reasons for developing Egypt's naval military capabilities is its need to defend its gas exports, whether by tankers, as is happening now, or the pipeline - although what matters most to Egypt in this is its main competition with Turkey.

Fourth: the Egyptian army

Since the 2013 coup, Israeli circles have been following the growing capabilities of the Egyptian army, especially the navy, and the source of concern is the possibility of Sisi missing from the scene of events, and the advent of an Egyptian leader who does not like Israel. Therefore, Israeli security opinions appeared to be divided over how to respond to expanding the capabilities of the Egyptian navy and its army in general, as there is great concern that if the Egyptian army becomes "too strong", it could be used by an Egyptian leader less friendly to Israel than Sisi. This was the basis of the criticism directed at Netanyahu, who agreed to Germany's sale of advanced submarines to Egypt.

There is an Israeli debate about the position on the peace treaty with Egypt, which constituted a decisive moment in the history of Israel, as it has become stronger than ever now, in light of the great changes that the Middle East has recently witnessed. However, the military and strategic forums in Tel Aviv raised long-term questions about the possibility of Egypt and Israel witnessing a military confrontation in the long run. Four decades after the signing of the peace agreement, major political changes have occurred in Egypt, in conjunction with the massive military armament, which increases

concern in Israel that Cairo may prepare for another military campaign, despite the fact that the peace agreement with Egypt marked a decisive moment in the history of Israel.

After decades of war between Egypt and Israel, it seemed that the threat had finally been removed, and that Israel had entered a regional peace plan, but the changes that took place in Egypt in recent years have aroused Israeli anxiety, which has escalated since the events of the Arab Spring, the fall of Hosni Mubarak, and the rise of the Muslim Brotherhood led by President Mohamed Morsi, then the coup against him, and the arrival of the generals in a military coup.

Although the late Egyptian leader Mohamed Morsi was hostile to Israel, he focused more on internal affairs, avoiding violating the terms of the peace agreement, and did not stay in power for a long time. A military coup that Sisi carried out in 2013 overthrew him and restored military rule to the country. The system has some changes that Israel has followed closely.

The Israeli security and military system agreed that Sisi would fight ISIS in Sinai, and allowed him to send tens of thousands of soldiers to the peninsula, equipped with modern combat systems such as helicopters, tanks and anti-aircraft guns, and at the same time, Egypt began a rapid and comprehensive arming process, so it began to buy barges. Submarines, and even helicopters, are absolutely free.

Israeli military forums continued to buy hundreds of "Abrams" tanks, anti-tank vehicles, artillery and combat systems, and acquired new surface-to-air missiles with a range of hundreds of kilometers, and increased the number of F-16s. As part of improving the logistical infrastructure, it paved the highways in Sinai, dug tunnels under the Suez Canal, and renovated old military ports on either side of them, while constructing other new ports, and preparing fuel and ammunition depots.

All of this is happening in light of the Israeli conviction that the peace agreement with Egypt is not firm, because Egypt is ruled by a military dictatorship, and that the peace agreement with Israel is not acceptable to the Egyptian elites nor the Egyptian people, who are still hostile to Israel, but rather deny its existence.

The feared Israeli scenario is that Egyptian forces cross the border from Sinai, and flow into Israel, with the aim of dismantling it within a few hours, perhaps with covers of electronic noise that may

create a black hole for the Israeli technological systems. At the same time, Egyptian military forces may use the logistical infrastructure set up in the Canal and the Sinai region to reinforce the invading forces.

In this case, the Egyptian navy, which is the sixth largest in the world, might try to blockade Israel from its remote Mediterranean ports and block supplies from it. It is possible that Hamas and Hezbollah will join this by attacking with continuous barrages of rockets, and armed attacks erupt from inside the Palestinian territories, with the outbreak of Arab demonstrations in Israel by hostile elements, as happened in the late 2000s.

Fifth: competition with the Gulf

It was noticeable that the coverage of the "official" Egyptian media regarding the announcement of the decision to normalize relations between the UAE and Israel was noticeably muted. Some saw that the cold reaction to the decision came based on security directives, as the Sisi regime seemed afraid that the UAE would pull the rug from under its feet with its recent agreement with Israel, at a time when the regime was marketing itself as an agent for Israel and the West in the region.

Some Israeli analysts have noted the Egyptian concern that Abu Dhabi will gain an advanced position in Tel Aviv than the Sisi regime is currently occupying, and they have expressed this on more than one occasion. The recent months have witnessed many evidences that show Egyptian concern about the UAE agreement, the most important of which is Israeli evidence, including that Netanyahu said that the agreement with the UAE is no less important than the peace agreement with Egypt. And that Yitzhak Levanon, the former Israeli ambassador to Egypt, said that Cairo is afraid of Abu Dhabi winning a more advanced position in Tel Aviv than it is, in addition to the claims of the Israeli orientalist Zvi Barel that Sisi fears that the Emirati normalization will transfer the center of regional attention from Cairo to Abu Dhabi, and the confirmation of the Washington Institute for Studies. Near East that Sisi is concerned about the UAE agreement, for fear of deporting him as the main interlocutor with Israel.

The Israelis have clearly expressed that the UAE agreement puts Sisi in trouble, because of his commitment to the Palestinian cause, which requires Egypt's permanent presence in it, and it enjoys the support of the Egyptians, but the UAE agreement may deprive it of this paper. Meanwhile, former

Mossad chief Shabtai Shavit claimed that the UAE agreement is more important than the Egyptian peace.

There are important questions about what are Sisi's real concerns about the normalization agreement between Mohammed bin Zayed and Benjamin Netanyahu, and what are Israel's options regarding the comparison between them, if any? And what areas would Abu Dhabi dominate in Israel at the expense of Cairo? Does the UAE have something to give to Israel in order to bring them closer together at the expense of Egypt? Does the competition between them lead to Egypt making greater concessions to Israel? And other questions.

However, the truth is that we are facing an integrated normalization network and a strategic system, Emirati, Saudi, Egyptian, and Israeli, and Washington is supervising them all. Although Israel celebrates its agreement with the UAE, its next gateway to the Gulf region, there are files that Egypt manages more efficiently than the Emirates in the Palestinian, Sudanese and Libyan arenas, while maintaining a distribution of roles between them, one that draws policies, and the other funds and pays the financial cost.

The Israeli view of Egypt remains the most important and has the strategic weight, despite the security services and abundant financial services provided by the UAE. Therefore, Israel views the UAE as an active and effective player, and not as a regional power. In the event that Egypt fears that the UAE will encroach on its role with Israel, it may make heavy strategic concessions related to Sinai in favor of implementing Israeli projects related to the expansion of the Gaza Strip to the south, which has been reported in recent years, but the time may come in the event of an acceleration of Arab-Israeli normalization.

It is no longer a secret that the Egyptian regime has implemented the Israeli demands against Hamas in Gaza without paying a reward, but at the same time it fears that Israel will play a hostile role to it in the Renaissance Dam file with Ethiopia, in addition to the decline of the Egyptian regime's influence in its southern side in Sudan in favor of the growing Emirati influence there. . Here, there is a legitimate fear that the Egyptian regime will make serious concessions to Israel in order to preserve its regional role by re-introducing the Israeli plans for Sinai and expanding them in the Gaza Strip, to solve the Israeli security problem.

At the same time, Israeli circles spoke about the Egyptian regime's public support for the normalization agreements between Israel and the Emirates, Bahrain and Sudan, as one of the distinctive features and benefits of the Israeli-Egyptian partnership in the eastern Mediterranean basin, as Cairo warmly welcomed these agreements and prevented their discussion in the Arab League based on Palestinian demands. ; All this is completely different from the Egyptian behavior patterns prevailing in the past.

The same Israeli circles see that this Egyptian position should be seen as one of the important rewards that Israel gets because of its commitment to the new power in the Mediterranean. Because with regard to the demarcation of economic water borders and the conflict this entails for the future of Libya, Israel gave explicit support to the Greek and Egyptian positions vis-à-vis Turkey.

This position is an important part of the developing partnership between Israel, Egypt, the UAE and France, as Minister of Regional Cooperation Ofir Akunis visited Athens and signed a cooperation plan that includes Greece, Cyprus, the Emirates and Bahrain with Israel, and participated in a tripartite meeting with his colleagues from Cyprus and Greece.

These developments can be seen as building blocks for a new regional group of great importance at this time, especially for Egypt and Israel, because it is necessary for Israel to maintain close Mediterranean cooperation in the era of uncertainty it is facing, and to rely on increasing indications that the patience of the United States and Europe is running out. In the face of the positions of Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan.

Sixth: confrontation with Turkey

It is no secret to anyone that the Egyptian and Israeli regimes are disturbed by the public aspirations of Turkish President Erdogan towards the so-called "neo-Ottomans", which will inevitably have an impact on Egyptian attitudes toward Israel; This raises questions about why Egypt has focused on confronting Turkey, even though historically, Egypt has not agreed to play the role of "the little neighbor in the northeast" of Israel within the strategic vision of the regional system.

It is strange that the Egyptian regime's stance in support of Israel coincides with the persistence of the Egyptian public's anti-Israel stances, especially among the intellectual and cultural elite. However,

other political and ideological priorities, and geostrategic and economic considerations, led to a significant shift in Egypt's attitudes toward Israel.

For example, the economic water map, as defined by Turkey and Libya in the eastern Mediterranean, threatens to prevent Egypt from accessing European markets, and in this case Egypt's interests coincide with Israel and Cyprus, as Turkish policy aims to pose a challenge to all of them. Moreover, the Egyptian need for cooperation with Israel does not lie solely in facing the Turkish challenge, despite its emergence as a major and immediate factor.

Israel, Greece and Egypt are jointly facing what has become known as the "Turkish challenge", which puts them before harsh tests, which may carry predictions that the escalation of conflicts in the eastern Mediterranean may reach the point of deterioration into a military confrontation.

Even the government meeting that Israel witnessed in June, with the presence of Greek Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis in Israel, has strategic importance that outweighs the Corona pandemic and tourism. In the weeks following that summit, the challenge facing Turkey and its partners in the eastern Mediterranean, especially Greece, Cyprus and Egypt, has intensified.

The information available to Israel indicates that Greece fully supports the Egyptian moves in Libya, but it is doubtful that it will be able to intervene in a military confrontation on its side against Turkey. As for what Israel can do, if the conflicts in the eastern Mediterranean escalate to the point of deteriorating into a military conflict, it will not be able to directly participate in the fight against Turkey, whether with Greece and Cyprus, or with Egypt in Libya.

At the same time, deepening Israeli intelligence cooperation with Greece and Egypt is an essential component of adequate preparation for the challenge posed by Turkey, along with joint military activities, a focus on air force and naval exercises, and in partnership with US forces, and a focus on strengthening relations and maintaining the balance of power Regional, and strengthening the Israeli navy in the face of Turkish naval armament.

Conclusion

The review of more than seven successive years of Egyptian-Israeli bilateral relations, specifically since the 2013 military coup, indicates a state of complex intertwining interests between them, so

February 23, 2021

that the regime in Cairo sees itself as existentially linked with Tel Aviv, which provides it with the political cover coming from Washington.

It is true that this was fruitful in the Trump era, but the matter may change with the new US President Joe Biden, which puts more unexpected challenges on the two close allies in Cairo and Tel Aviv.

