



Egypt: Did Anything Important Happen?

When the Los Angeles Times confirmed that protests that started in January in Tunisia and then moved to Egypt were spreading to Algeria, Bahrain, Libya, Morocco, Cameroon, and Kuwait, many concluded that they were being driven by unhappy citizens connected via the internet. On Twitter, for example, protests set for Monday, February 14th, in Bahrain, can be found at [#feb14](#), and [#bahman](#) for Libya. Algerian protest details can be found on [#feb19](#), protests in Morocco at [#feb20](#), Cameroon at [#feb23](#), and Kuwait at [#mar8](#).



Some commentators have concluded that there was [no one single cause](#) of the Egyptian protests, suggesting that modest exposures of indiscretion by various leaders through Wikileaks had driven disgust into outrage. Some respected writers offered proof that social networking sites were working together to create the pressure to remove Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak. Anthony Wile, at *The Daily Bell*, explored the evidence that the revolution in Egypt “has been manipulated and that the Anglo-American elite plans to replicate the Egyptian revolution not just in the Middle East but worldwide via the use of the internet...”

The Alliance of Youth Movements (AYM) started in December, 2008 with the help of many in that Anglo-American elite, including the U.S. State Department, Facebook, Google, YouTube, AT&T, and Columbia Law School. It announced its efforts to “launch a global network and empower young people mobilizing against violence and oppression,” according to initial statements at its founding meeting. One of AYM’s founders is Jared Cohen, who was an advisor to both Secretaries of State Condoleezza Rice and Hillary Clinton, and is now Director of Google Ideas. Others involved with AYM are Blue State Digital which operated Obama’s online presidential campaign, Jack Dorsey of Twitter, Scott Heiferman of MeetUp, and representatives of the World Bank.

One especially notable is Google marketing executive Weal Ghonim who spent 12 days behind bars during the Egyptian riots. He deferred any importance he might have had in assisting the demonstrations by noting that “I’m not a hero. I [just] slept for 12 days, [but that] the real heroes [were those] who took part in the demonstrations, sacrificed their lives, were beaten, arrested and exposed to danger.”

That diffident deflection by Ghonim doesn’t withstand scrutiny. Working closely with potential Egyptian presidential candidate (to run against Hosni Mubarak) Mohamed ElBaradei, Ghonim not only built ElBaradei’s Facebook page but also his campaign website back in February of 2010. In addition, Ghonim was instrumental in generating opposition to Mubarak through the [April 6 Youth Movement](#), the Muslim Brotherhood, and various labor unions opposed to Mubarak. As *The New American’s* Tom Eddlem [pointed out](#):

The protests began as Internet-connected youth seeking more economic and political freedoms rallied using Internet-based social media, and were [only] much later joined by other...unsavory



Written by [Bob Adelman](#) on February 14, 2011

groups such as...the Muslim Brotherhood and the Egyptian Communist Party.” In a prescient note, Eddlem warned that “dark forces could...exploit the upheaval to again suppress the freedom of the people who yearn for freedom...the enemies of freedom never sleep and often operate under false flags....

Now that the demonstrations have faded from the television screens as are the incessant nightly news updates, reality in Egypt is now discernible: the Egyptian military now run the country, Mubarak is gone as is his son (the heir-apparent), the constitution has been suspended, and promises have been made about a new government apparatus being in place in six months. As noted by George Friedman of [Stratfor Global Intelligence](#):

What happened was not a revolution. The demonstrators never brought down Mubarak, let alone the regime. What happened was a military coup that used the cover of protests to force Mubarak out of office in order to preserve the regime. When it became clear [on] February 10th that Mubarak would not voluntarily step down, the military staged what amounted to a coup to force his resignation. Once he was forced out of office, the military took over the existing regime by creating a military council and taking control of critical ministries. The regime was always centered on the military. What happened on February 11th was that the military took direct control.

What that means for the present is that existing treaties, including those with Israel, will remain in effect. Relations with the United States will remain intact, as will the flow of foreign aid. As Friedman concluded, “The week began with an old soldier running Egypt. It ended with different old soldiers running Egypt with even more formal power than Mubarak had.”

The cause of freedom has neither won a battle nor lost one. Chances for democracy gaining a foothold among the 80 million poor and oppressed victims of decades of tyranny in Egypt remain remote. Friedman was clear:

An 82-year old man has been thrown out of office, and his son will not be president. The constitution and parliament are gone and a military junta is in charge. The rest is speculation.

Photo: Angry Egyptian protestors shout anti-government slogans during a protest in Suez, Egypt, Thursday, Jan. 27, 2011: AP Images



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