

Arab Spring: A Case Study of Egyptian Revolution 2011

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Abstract

Egyptian Revolution, also known as Arab Spring or Arab Uprising, was a shock for international community because Egypt has been seen as one of the strongest military state in North Africa region. Experts and observers even suggested that this revolution is the biggest event since the Cold War. No one ever saw this coming; yet, the Revolution happened, and it succeeded to topple President Hosni Mubarak from power. Indeed, prior to the revolution, there are factors that became the preliminary incidents as well as problems that led to the revolution, and most of these factors came from within the country. Nevertheless, this revolution has given idea to other states with repressive regime in the North Africa region, which started the 'domino effect' in Middle East and North Africa region. As for Egyptians, though successfulnes of the revolution brought positive outcome for them, the negative result also followed as well as responses from international community. The objective of this paper is to examine the Egyptian Revolution that led to the end of Hosni Mubarak regime.

Keywords: *Arab Spring; Egyptian Revolution; President Hosni Mubarak; 'domino effect'; Middle East and North Africa region.*

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Introduction

It is well known to the world that in Middle East-North Africa region, repressive regime has endured for decades, and Egypt is not an exception. In fact, according to Freedom House's data of 2007, Egypt was one of the countries in Africa region that became "more repressive but remained within the same category".¹ Indeed, this was not the first time for Egyptians to revolt against Mubarak: they have been doing this since long ago², but they never succeeded. Then suddenly, there was uprisings throughout Middle East-North Africa region that startled the experts and observers. Started in Tunisia, this demonstration then spreaded throughout the Middle East-North Africa region, brought a destruction to the dictatorship by people's demands to topple the regime (for example,

in Tunisia and Egypt) and an unrest situation to all of the authoritarian regimes in Middle East-North Africa countries. In Egypt's case, this is the first time Egyptians succeeded their revolt against Mubarak.

Research Method

This research paper applies a qualitative analysis by using journals, books, news reports, commentaries, etc. As the main sources to illustrate the critical debates. Since there are series of Arab Spring, this paper will limit its discussion to Egyptian Revolution on 25 January 2011 until the fall of Hosni Mubarak. In order to do so, the discussion on this paper is divided into two sections.

Substantially, this essay will discuss about the Egyptian 25 January revolution and how the world responds to it. In essence, this essay will be divided into two sections. The first section will describe the situation during Arab Spring in Egypt, including the reason behind the event. The second section will discuss the impact of the Arab Spring on Egypt, and how western countries responded to this event. In the last, this essay will be ended by a conclusion in which I will argue that Egyptian Revolution, as part of Arab Spring, is one of the biggest event after the Cold War given how this

¹ Paul D. Williams, 'Thinking about Security in Africa', *International Affairs*, vol. 83, no. 6, 2007, p. 1023.

² Prior to the revolution, there were a lot of demonstrations; the recent demonstrations are the Kefaya Movement and The April 6 Movement. The April 6 Movement was the one that inspired the youngsters in Egypt to use social media (Facebook and Twitter) for the first time to gather people under the name "We Are All Khaled Said". This name was used in order to honour a businessman named Khaled Said who died on June 2010, and also marked the brutality of policemen. (Mohamed Elshahed, 'Breaking the Fear Barrier of Mubarak's Regime', *The Social Science Research Council (SSRC) Website*, <http://www.ssrc.org/pages/breaking-the-fear-barrier-of-mubarak-s-regime/>, consulted 8 January 2014).

event got responses from all over the world, and yet, with its own characteristic.

The 'Arab Spring'

'Arab Spring' or 'Arab Uprisings' or 'Arab Awakening' is a term that used to describe a series of protests and demonstrations that happened in North Africa-Middle East countries since the late 2010.³ This event started in Tunisia on 18 December 2010 after the death of Muhammad Bouazizi from Sidi Bouzid⁴, then spread throughout Middle East-North Africa countries such as Yemen, Syria, Bahrain, Algeria, Morocco, etc.⁵ (also known as a 'domino effect'); however, it is Egypt that introduce the term of 'Arab

Spring' to western media after its revolution on 25 January 2011. 'Arab Spring' started in the middle of winter, which made it seemed irrelevant if we called the event that happened as 'Arab Spring'⁶; yet, this is the term that western media popularized, which based on a tide of democracy in the wake of Iraq incursion on 2005.⁷ Moreover, because of the 'domino effect' that characterizes it, the term of 'Arab spring' itself is also often referred to European Revolution in 1848 and 1989 by media and experts such as Henry E. Hale, Jack A. Goldstone, etc.⁸

Nevertheless, Jack A. Goldstone in his article *Understanding the Revolutions of 2011: Weakness and Resilience in Middle Eastern Authorocracies* argued that we should not assume those cases as the same⁹. They are the same revolution, but with different purpose. While European revolution in 1848 was about people's demand to overthrow the traditional monarchy regimes, and 1989 was intended to end the Communist regime, the

³ UCDP, 'Arabian Spring', *Uppsala Conflict Data Program Website*, 23 December 2011, www.ucdp.uu.se/database/, consulted on 28 November 2013, p. 2.

⁴ He burnt himself with combustible liquid after the humiliation he got in front of governor's office, and died on 4 January 2011 (International Crisis Group, 'Popular Protests in North Africa and the Middle East (IV): Tunisia's Way', *Crisis Group Middle East/North Africa Report*, no. 106, 28 April 2011, p. 3.). This incidents then stimulated anger from Tunisians and, after it has been aired through media, thousands of Arab people around the continent. As a result, the Union Générale des Travailleurs Tunisiens (UGTT) conducted a demonstration on Saturday 18 December 2010. This event ended with a flight of President Ben Ali into an exile in Saudi Arabia where he finally gets his punishment for violence and murdering around hundreds of rebels. (Jeremy Bowen, *Arab Uprisings: The People Want the Fall of the Regime*, London: Simon & Schuster UK Ltd., 2012, p. 35-46.)

⁵ Abdelkader Abdelali, 'Wave of Change in the Arab World and Chances for a Transition to Democracy', *Contemporary Arab Affairs*, vol. 6, no. 2, 2013, p. 198.

⁶ Stephan Rosiny, 'The Arab Spring: Triggers, Dynamics, and Prospects', *German Institute of Global and Area Studies (GIGA) Focus*, no. 1, 2012, p. 2.

⁷ UCDP, p. 3.

⁸ Henry E. Hale, 'Regime Change Cascades: What We Have Learned from the 1848 Revolutions to the 2011 Arab Uprisings', *The Annual Review of Political Science*, vol. 16, 2013, p. 332.

⁹ Jack A. Goldstone, 'Understanding the Revolutions of 2011: Weakness and Resilience in Middle Eastern Authorocracies', *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 90, no. 3, 2011, p. 8.

Arab spring has its own characteristics that differentiate it with European Revolutions. Arab Spring is a revolution which purpose is to overturn modern sultanate throughout the continent, but not necessarily change or overthrown the government. Another difference is while revolution in Europe was actuated by external forces, in Egypt, it was internal factors that became the engine of revolution.¹⁰

In Egypt, revolution started on 25 January, which was a national holiday. It is a Police Day: the day when Egyptians recall a British attack on a police station in Ismailiyya in 1952. President Mubarak himself declared in 2004 that 25 January is a symbol of “patriotism and sacrifice”, so Egyptians could show their admiration towards police.¹¹ However, Egyptians did not think the same: for them, police was merely a very corrupt, ill trained, has no respect towards human rights¹², and a brutal instrument of President Hosni Mubarak. Now, Egyptians have had enough of police

brutality, and they wanted the Emergency Law to be eliminated. A successful Tunisia’s revolution eleven days before buoyed Egyptian (anti-Mubarak) activists; gave them spirit and hope to organize and convene people through Facebook and Twitter to protest against Hosni Mubarak. However, Egyptian security service has prepared: government spread police officers, Central Security Forces (CSF) troops, and agents as civilians around the Ministry of Interior on Sheikh Riham Street through Tahrir Square.¹³

These anticipations seemed a successful tactic from Minister of Interior, Habib al Adly; conversely, it was not. The law enforcement officers may have access to some access routes, but beyond those routes, it was the people who took control. As a result, around noon, people from all across Egypt poured into the streets and moved towards Tahrir Square and parliament. They took a route through the ancient Qasr al-Nil bridge, infiltrated security barriers, and lined up in small groups through the Nile Corniche from the southern and northern district whilst shouted for *Karama* (dignity) and *Hurriyah* (freedom)¹⁴.

¹⁰ Noha Bakr, ‘The Egyptian Revolution’, in Stephen Calleya and Monika Wohlfeld (ed.), *Change and Opportunities in the Emerging Mediterranean*, 2012, http://www.um.edu.mt/data/assets/pdf_file/0004/150394/, consulted on 2 November 2013, p. 68-69.

¹¹ Steven A. Cook, *The Struggle for Egypt: From Nasser to Tahrir Square*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2012, p. 281.

¹² Spindel, Chad, ‘The People Want to Topple the Regime: Exploring the Arab Spring in Egypt, Syria, and Jordan’, *Sage Open*, November 2011, p. 3

¹³ Cook, p. 282.

¹⁴ Ann M. Lesch, ‘Egypt’s Spring: Causes of the Revolution’, *Middle East Policy Council Website*, 2013, <http://www.mepc.org/journal/middle-east->

As a response, the police fired tears gas to stop the demonstrators, but they countered back by throwing stones and bricks. In the late afternoon, it seemed like nearly 90.000 people occupied the Tahrir Square (Liberation Square) which became a headquarters of the revolution¹⁵. By night, the demonstrators were suppressed to Qasr al Aini Street, and half miles back to the Square by hundreds of troops from CSF who used shields, batons, and metal pipes. What astonishing from that night was while most of young policemen worked hard to control the riot in Tahrir Square, senior police officers enjoyed and celebrated their Police Day-break in the Semiramis Intercontinental Hotel, not far away from Tahrir Square.¹⁶

Moreover, according to Minister of Interior, until 26 January, they have arrested around 500 people.¹⁷ On 27 January,

government cut the internet and mobile services¹⁸, and on 28 January, situation was getting critical: hundreds of thousands of people throughout the country conflicted with the police and central security forces, and even tried to take over the Ministry of Interior.¹⁹ This situation was too overwhelming, caused the police finally stepped back and military took over the situation at night, which gave an impression that Mubarak has lost his control over the country.²⁰ Indeed, this situation was marked as a turning point in Egyptians revolution.

On Saturday 29 January early morning, Mubarak made a speech, addressing to the nation that he will dismiss the government and form the new government in the next day, but he will stay as a president.²¹ Later that day, Mubarak dismissed the government and designated

policy-archives/egypts-spring-causes-revolution, consulted 16 September 2013.

¹⁵ This is why Egyptian Revolution is also known as Tahrir Revolution. For the demonstrators, Tahrir square did not symbolize their freedom and emancipation (because 'Tahrir' means 'Liberation' in Arabic), but it was a symbol of public space degradation under 30 years of Mubarak's regime. They chose this place for mass gathering simply because they share this public space together and protect it from regime's tyranny. After the revolution, Tahrir square then symbolizes the changing in society. (Ahmad Shokr, 'The Eighteen Days of Tahrir' in Jeannie Sowers and Chris Toensing (ed.), *The Journey to Tahrir: Revolution, Protest, and Social Change in Egypt*, London: Verso, 2012, p. 42).

¹⁶ Cook, p. 284.

¹⁷ Sherine El Madany and Yasmine Saleh, 'Egypt on

Edge as Demonstrations Turn Violent', *Reuters Website*, 26 January 2011, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2011/01/26/>, consulted 31 October 2013.

¹⁸ Mona El-Ghobashy, 'The Praxis of the Egyptian Revolution' in Jeannie Sowers and Chris Toensing (ed.), *The Journey to Tahrir: Revolution, Protest, and Social Change in Egypt*, London: Verso, 2012, p. 35.

¹⁹ Cook, p. 285.

²⁰ Jeremy M. Sharp, 'Egypt: The January 25 Revolution and Implications for U.S Foreign Policy', *Congressional Research Service Report*, 11 February 2011, p. 3.

²¹ Yasmine Saleh and Dina Zayed, 'Highlights: Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak's Speech', *Reuters Website*, 29 January 2011, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2011/01/29/us-egypt-mubarak-speech-id-USTRE07S0SA20110129>, consulted 6 November 2013.

two military personnel: Omer Suleiman (National Intelligent Chief) as his Vice President, and Ahmad Shafiq (Civil Aviation Minister) as Prime Minister.²² However, Egyptians did not want it. They wanted Mubarak to step down. Yet, until 30 January 2011, Mubarak still resisted to retreat, while damage from the revolution has advanced: around 300 people have been killed, Egyptian stock market has collapsed, trading has stopped, and most of all, Egyptian tourism has crashed.²³ It was obvious that the longer revolution continues, the more damage will happen.

On Monday 31 January 2011, Egyptian army announced that they will not use force against Mubarak. It seemed as the end of Mubarak regime, yet he still resisted. In that morning, the new Vice President Omer Suleiman announced on Egyptian television, on President Hosni Mubarak behalf, that they will conduct a new parliamentary election in district.²⁴ In response, African Union demanded a fair election in Egypt.²⁵ Moreover, still in the same day, Mubarak ordered his new Prime

Minister for the continuation of government subsidies and price reduction.²⁶

In addition, on Tuesday 1 February 2011, Mubarak made his second appeal to the nation by saying that he will amend the constitution, especially article 76 and 77 regarding the presidential. At the end of his speech, Mubarak said,

“Hosni Mubarak who speaks to you today is proud of the long years he spent in the service of Egypt and its people. This dear nation is my country, it is the country of all Egyptians, here I have lived and fought for its sake and I defended its land, its sovereignty and interests and on this land I will die and history will judge me and others for our merits and faults.”²⁷

This appeal was apparently able to win people’s sympathy since they asked the rioters to end the demonstration.²⁸ However, this situation was not lasted long: people’s rage generated again on the following day and 3 February when violent clash happened around Tahrir Square between pro-democracy protesters and Mubarak’s

²² Sharp, p. 3.

²³ Sharp, p. 3.

²⁴ Sharp, p. 6.

²⁵ Mikael Eriksson and Kristina Zetterlund, ‘Dealing with Change: EU and AU Responses to the Uprisings in Tunisia, Egypt, and Libya’, *FOI Website*, January 2013, <http://www.foi.se>, p. 41.

²⁶ Anonymous, ‘Timeline: Egypt’s Revolution’, *Aljazeera Website*, 14 February 2011, <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2011/01/201112515334871490.html>, consulted 6 November 2011.

²⁷ Anonymous, ‘Hosni Mubarak’s Speech: Full Text’, *The Guardian Website*, 2 February 2011, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2011/feb/02/president-hosni-mubarak-egypt-speech>, consulted 6 November 2013.

²⁸ Rana Muhammad Taha, Hend Kortam, and Nouran el-Behairy, ‘The Rise and Fall of Mubarak’, *Daily News Egypt Website*, 11 February 2013, <http://www.dailynewsegypt.com/2013/02/11/the-rise-and-fall-of-mubarak/>, consulted 6 November 2013.

opponents.²⁹ At least, 1.500 people were injured, and at the end of the day, three of them died.

Since that day, demonstrations kept to continue, demanding Mubarak to step down with the level of violent increased every day. Then, finally, on 11 February 2011, after 18 days of demonstration and violent, Vice President Suleiman announced that President Hosni Mubarak stepped down after 29 years 120 days of his presidency, handed over his power to Supreme Council of the Egyptian Armed Forces.³⁰ In 18 days revolution, approximately 846 Egyptians were killed whereas around 6467 rioters were wounded.³¹

This phenomenon was definitely exceptional. Egypt seemed strong and normal; what happened in Tunisia was not a guarantee that Egypt will follow the same path. Even Egyptians were still unsure about what will happen in their country one day prior to the revolution.³² There is no doubt that this incident brought a shock to the world since no one expecting this event will happen in Egypt. In its publication,

POMEPS supports this opinion by stating that

*“What made January 25 extraordinary was not that Egyptians protested against Mubarak regime – that had been happening for a decade. What made it extraordinary was that for the first time, hundreds of thousands of ordinary, non activist Egyptians joined them on the streets to demand the overthrow of the regime”.*³³

Moreover, Lisa Anderson (in her article *Demystifying the Arab Spring: Parsing the Differences Between Tunisia, Egypt, and Libya*), added that the pattern of Egyptian revolution was also unique: it was driven by the youngsters and city people.³⁴

Still, 25 January Revolution was not coming out of the void. There are three preliminary demonstrations that led to the biggest revolution in one of North Africa powerful state. One of these demonstrations is the Kefaya Movement. Kefaya means “enough” in Arabic. This movement was established in the early 2000s in order to criticize the Mubarak administration for doing nothing on the second Israeli intifada

²⁹ Anonymous, ‘Timeline: Egypt’s Revolution’.

³⁰ Taha Özhan, ‘New Egypt versus the *Felool*: Struggle for Democracy’, *Insight Turkey*, vol. 15, no. 1, 2013, p. 13.

³¹ Bakr, p. 68.

³² Cook, p. 282.

³³ POMEPS, ‘Arab Uprisings: The State of the Egyptian Revolution’, *Project on Middle East Political Science (POMEPS)*, 7 September 2011, p. 3.

³⁴ Lisa Anderson, ‘Demystifying the Arab Spring: Parsing the Differences Between Tunisia, Egypt, and Libya’, *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 90, no. 3, May/June 2011, p. 2.

in Palestine. This has happened since 1979 Camp David Agreement; however, in the early 2000s, around ten thousands students were demonstrating at Cairo University for the violent continuation of Israel troops towards Palestinians.³⁵ This movement continued during 2003, and in 2004 and 2005, it organized a series of demonstration, demanding for the termination of Mubarak regime and country's emergency law.³⁶

In 2008, the youth activists from Kefaya Movement established an April 6th Youth Movement, which helped workers of a weaving company to protest to the government. This group succeeded to gather around 70.000 participants on Facebook under the name of "We Are All Khaled Said".³⁷ This name was used in honor of Khaled Said, a middle class man who died under the police brutality in Sidi Gaber, Alexandria on 6 June 2010.

Indeed, there are reasons behind that revolution apart from the successful Tunisia's revolution; the first is social problems. In his article, *The Reasons for and the Impacts of the Egypt Revolution*, Liao

Baizhi discloses that Egypt is the highest density country in the Arab region with around 80 million people with "a child born on average every 23 seconds".³⁸ This high birth rate caused many problems in the society from environment to unemployment. Concerning the unemployment, Egypt indeed has a quite high unemployment rate; yet, not so high compared to the US and many European countries.³⁹

Still, Egypt's unemployment rate was very high (8-11 per cent) compare to 2007 unemployment rate that only 8.9 per cent, according to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).⁴⁰ Most of people who suffer are young people under 29 years-old with partition: 18 per cent with high educational background, and around 40-50 per cent with university degree. Moreover, there is a high differentiation between male and female concerning job's opportunity, with 9 per cent for male and 19 per cent for female until 2011.⁴¹ Each year,

³⁵ Ali Sarihan, 'Is the Arab Spring in the Third Wave of Democratization? The Case of Syria and Egypt', *Turkish Journal of Politics*, vol. 3, no. 11, 2012, p. 70.

³⁶ Dina Shehata, 'The Fall of the Pharaoh: How Hosni Mubarak's Reign Come to an End', *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 90, no. 3, 2011, p. 28.

³⁷ Shehata, p. 28.

³⁸ Liao Baizhi, 'The Reasons For and the Impacts of the Egypt Revolution', *Contemporary International Relations*, vol. 21, no. 2, 2011, p. 120.

³⁹ Andrey V. Korotayev, Julia V. Zinkina, 'Egyptian Revolution: A Demographic Structural Analysis', *Entelequia*, no. 13, 2011, www.eumed.net/entelequia, consulted 7 November 2013, p. 145.

⁴⁰ Earl (Tim) Sullivan, 'Youth Power and the Revolution' in Dan Tschirgi, Walid Kazziha, and Sean F. McMahon (ed.), *Egypt's Tahrir Revolution*, London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc., 2013, p. 69.

⁴¹ Nadia Ramsis Farah, 'The Political Economy of

around 700.000 fresh graduate students competed for around 200.000 jobs with most of them failed.⁴² Without job, these young people has no income to finance their family or do what they want to do in their lives like other people. This situation then explains why most of the protesters were youngsters. The second reason is economic unrest. Prior to 25 January revolution, Egypt's economy was growing: economy has increased up to 7% in 2006-2008 (from 1981-2011, economy has grown 4,5 fold), exports in Egypt have tripled, and total cumulative foreign investment has reached 46 billion dollars in 2006-2009.⁴³ Overall Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in Egypt also showed an improvement: increased from 1.355 dollars in 1981 to 6.200 dollars in 2010⁴⁴. During the financial crisis, Egypt economy was growing as well; annual economic growth rates was a little bit slow (from 7,2% to 4,6%), but it was still an

achievement.⁴⁵ Yet, those improvements did not benefit all the Egyptians: according to the CIA World Factbook, in 2010, inflation rate in Egypt was extreme at 12,8%⁴⁶ compare to 2009 with 18,3%⁴⁷; moreover, approximately 2,5 million Egyptians lived on 2 dollars per day, and around 35-40% Egyptians lived below 2 dollars per day.⁴⁸

In addition, gap between the rich and poor was also astonishing: whereas around 20% Egyptians lived under poverty line, 2-3% of populations were labelled "rich" or "upper class". Furthermore, Mubarak himself had saving around 40 billion dollars while his wife and sons kept 3-5 billion dollars in their personal account.⁴⁹ When people deprecated this economic inequality, Mubarak arbitrarily either sent them to the jail or killed them. These facts then led to another cause of revolution: corruption,

Egypt's Revolution' in Dan Tschirgi, Walid Kazzuha, and Sean F. McMahon (ed.), *Egypt's Tahrir Revolution*, London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc., 2013, p. 55.

⁴² Duncan Green, 'What Caused the Revolution in Egypt?', *The Guardian Website*, 18 February 2011, <http://www.theguardian.com/global-development/poverty-matters/2011/feb/17/what-caused-egyptian-revolution>, consulted 2 January 2014.

⁴³Bakr, p. 58.

⁴⁴ Ali Sarihan, 'Is the Arab Spring in the Third Wave of Democratization?: The Case of Syria and Egypt', *Turkish Journal of Politics*, vol. 3, no. 1, Summer 2012, p. 75.

⁴⁵ Korotayev and Zinkina, p. 140.

⁴⁶ Find the Data, 'CIA World Factbook 2010', 8 October 2013, <http://cia-world-factbook.findthedata.org/l/1146/Egypt>, consulted 6 January 2014.

⁴⁷ Find the Data, 'CIA World Factbook 2010', 22 October 2013, <http://cia-world-factbook.findthedata.org/l/15/Egypt>, consulted 6 January 2014.

⁴⁸ Sarihan, p. 75.

⁴⁹ Sarihan, p. 75-76.

which attained its peak: Egypt is ranked 80 in the world.⁵⁰

Another sector that generate the revolution is political unrest. Unlike monarchies where the sovereignty is hereditary, Egypt is a republic with authoritarian regime, which means presidency for life. Mubarak has governed Egypt for a very long time, and he intended to pass it to his son. This means that there is no chance for another competitor⁵¹. Furthermore, there was a suspicion that parliamentary election in 2010 was unfair in favour of the NDP (Mubarak's party), which intended to secure the position for Mubarak's son⁵². Added these to the fact that Mubarak handled the situation during the revolution by using brutality (he utilized tears gas, rubber bullets, and water cannons), he only generated people's wrath, not alleviated it.⁵³

Also, there was a factor from outside the country, namely Tunisian Revolution. This may not necessarily give direct impact to Egyptian Revolution, but this event was a trigger for Egyptian Revolution since the same thing has happened in Egypt.

⁵⁰ Bakr, p. 64.

⁵¹ Bakr, p. 66.

⁵² Dina Shehata, 'The Fall of the Pharaoh: How Hosni Mubarak's Reign Came to an End', *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 90, no. 26, 2011, p. 29.

⁵³ Bakr, p. 66.

Mohammed Al-Bouazizi's story in Tunisia and Khaled Said's story in Egypt have been the trigger for revolution to happen. Though what happened to both of them, Said especially, was not the first time in Egyptian brutal history, both of them represented middle class people who tried to make a living without any help from the government.⁵⁴ Since the middle class was the people who suffered the most, they felt related to Al-Bouazizi and Said.

Tunisia, like Egypt has a strong military tradition, yet Tunisians were succeeded to overthrow President Ben Ali's regime. This then gives hope for all the Egyptians to do the same.⁵⁵ When we see the factors that generated Egyptian revolution one by one, the revolution seemed unreasonable. However, when these factors are combined together, revolution will be something that unavoidable.

Impacts of and Responds for Arab Spring to Egypt

During the Cold War, Middle East was one of the most crucial battlefield for the United States and Soviet Union: they

⁵⁴ Abeer Yassin, 'Understanding the Egyptian Revolution: People and De-Securitization', DOI: 10.7763/IPEDR, Vol. 48, no. 32, 2012, p. 150.

⁵⁵ Mustafa Kamel al-Sayyid, 'What Went Wrong with Mubarak's Regime?' in Dan Tschirgi, Walid Kazziha, and Sean F. McMahon (ed.), *Egypt's Tahrir Revolution*, London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc., 2013, p. 25.

were competed for influence, supplied weapons, cash, and political support⁵⁶. This situation lasted until the United States won the war and become the most powerful player in the Africa continent, which means that the United States and other Western countries can control the Africa continent.⁵⁷ Therefore, what happened in Egypt and other Middle East countries indeed gives impact to how Western countries see Egypt as well as impact to Egypt's foreign policy.

In terms of economy, Arab Spring has brought a huge impact to Egypt: Egyptian foreign exchange reserves plummeted up to around 21 billion dollars compared to before the revolution.⁵⁸ This was also followed by deteriorations in foreign investment in Egypt (fall until 4,8 billion USD for fiscal year 2010/2011) and Egypt stock exchanges; in addition, Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) also showed a decline of 65 million USD, which is the lowest level in Egypt's FDI.⁵⁹

In terms of foreign policy, it seems like there is no significant changes in Egyptian's foreign policy. However, the new transitional government that run by SCAF,

has stated that Egypt intends to improve its relations with Iran since both countries have no formal relationship.⁶⁰ This, as Halawa stated in *Egypt Independent Website*, has shown by Egypt allowing Iranian ships to sail through Suez Canal in February, just after Mubarak stepped down. Halawa then further explain that local newspaper even had preached that Iran has designated its ambassador to Egypt, which later denied by the Iranian government. Moreover, relationship with Iran is overlapping with reconciliation between Palestinian factions (Fatah and Hamas), which is pivotal in Egypt's foreign policy.

There are two consequences if Egypt succeeded to pull this policy: on the one hand, this normalization with Iran could help Palestinian reconciliation; on the other hand, it could construct tension between Egypt and Egypt's oldest ally, namely Saudi Arabia. Considering this affair, Egyptian senior diplomat then stated that there will be no major changes in foreign policy. In his statement, he also mentioned that Egypt still keeps a careful alliance with Western countries and other Arab states, is still

⁵⁶ Bowen, p. 13.

⁵⁷ Bowen, p. 13.

⁵⁸ Doaa S. Abdou and Zeinab Zaazou, 'The Egyptian Revolution and Post Socio-Economic Impact', *Topics in Middle Eastern and African Economies*, vol. 15, no. 1, May 2013, p. 98.

⁵⁹ Abdou and Zaazou, p. 98-99.

⁶⁰ Omar Halawa, 'New Egyptian Foreign Policy Challenges Regional Alliances', *Egypt Independent Website*, 20 April 2011, <http://www.egyptindependent.com/news/new-egyptian-foreign-policy-challenges-regional-alliances>, consulted 8 November 2013.

maintaining a good partnership with Israel, is not normalizing relations with Iran, and still keeps track of good relations with Nile Basin countries.⁶¹

Since this was a big event in Arab world, response comes from not only regional communities but also international communities. From regional communities, respond comes from African Union (AU). As noted before, the African Union wanted Egypt to conduct a free election, and a government that respects people's rights. However, it was just a statement. Though AU has several policy in regards of the "unconstitutional regime change", it did not view the Egyptian revolution or Tunisian revolution as such of situation, which then explain why AU has not reacted properly; in fact, AU only reacted when the demonstration has become more violent.⁶² Lack of instrument and proper action made AU becoming a dormant player in the region.

As for international response to Egypt's revolution, Egyptian revolution is a surprise. Since Egypt is still an important player in Middle East for Western countries,

⁶¹ Dina Ezzat, 'Egypt's Foreign Policy a Year after the Revolution', *Ahram Online*, 26 January 2012, <http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/1/114/32770/Egypt/-January-Revolution-continues/Egypt-foreign-policy-a-year-after-the-revolution.aspx>, consulted 8 November 2013.

⁶² Eriksson and Zetterlund, p. 45.

response came from everywhere. From European Union (EU), for example, response came as a support for human rights and democracy transition so that it can proceed in a peaceful way. In order to do this, the EU has provided technical assistance to help the authorities to manage an election in Egypt. As for the economic transition, the EU has provided around 449 million Euro for the period 2011-2013. Furthermore, EU and Egypt also approved to scrutinize together the possibilities of deeper trade and investment relations, including a chance for a Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement (DCFTA).⁶³

In addition, the response is not only come from European Union, but also from the United States. As the US ally, Egypt has got advantages from the US since 1980; as a return, Egypt is also the most important partner for the US peace process with Israel.⁶⁴ Therefore, what happened in Egypt indeed disrupted what the US and President Hosni Mubarak has built since 1980. With

⁶³ European Union, 'EU's Response to the "Arab Spring": The State-of-Play after Two Years', *European Union*, A 70/ 13, 8 February 2013, www.eeas.europa.eu, consulted 26 September 2013, p. 6.

⁶⁴ Philippe Droz-Vincent, 'A Post-Revolutionary Egyptian Foreign Policy?... Not yet', *The German Marshall Fund of the United States (GMF)*, July 2012, p. 1.

today's revolution in Egypt, the US indeed needs to think a new approach that suitable for US-Egypt relations in the long term. During the Revolution, the US has demanded for President Hosni Mubarak to step down. However, during this transition process, what the US can do is supporting Egypt like the EU and not interfering in the election process.⁶⁵ As for financial support, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton had proposed 150 million dollars for emergency aid (military assistance) to Egypt when she visited Cairo on February, and 250 million dollars for economic assistance.⁶⁶

Moreover, response also comes from Asian countries, such as China. Different with other countries mentioned above, China responded the revolution by limiting its people to get any details of information about Egyptian revolution.⁶⁷ Since China and Egypt has quite a similar system⁶⁸,

⁶⁵ Emad El-Din Shahin, 'The Arab Spring and Western Policy Choices', *Peace Policy Website*, 6 July 2011, www.peacepolicy.org, consulted 16 September 2013.

⁶⁶ Uri Dadush and Michele Dunne, 'American and European Responses to the Arab Spring: What's the Big idea?', *The Washington Quarterly*, vol. 34, no. 4, p. 133.

⁶⁷ Nuh Yilmaz, Taha Özhan, et al., *SETA Policy Report: The Anatomy of Egyptian Revolution: From 25th January to the New Constitution*, no. 9, January 2012, p. 35.

⁶⁸ Both China and Egypt has enjoyed the improvement in terms of economy with social gap in one side and political dissatisfying on the other side. This has created unrest situation in public. (Nuh Yilmaz, Taha Özhan, et al., p. 36).

China is clearly worried about the impact of Egyptian Revolution to itself. Added to the fact that China has also challenges from surrounding countries (for example, North Korea, Japan, etc.), Chinese government definitely wants to avoid bigger conflict from inside the country.

Conclusion

In summary, Egypt is a country that has suffered under dictatorship and corrupt regime for many years. This lengthy period was characterized by poverty, unemployment and political unrest. These characteristics then created a wide gap between the rich and poor people. As mentioned before, this is not the first time for Egyptians to revolt against their government, but this is the first time they gathered together to revolt against their government. Egyptian revolution was a shock for international society. As outsiders, people always perceive situation in Egypt was under control. Yet, revolution happened, and Peter Jones in his article even has categorized it as one of the biggest events after the Cold War, and it is not without reason: Egyptian Revolution, as part of Arab Spring, was a big event given the number of people who joined it, the shock, impacts, and responds from regional and international society.

Indeed, a successful Tunisia's Revolution eleven days earlier was a generator for Egyptians to start their own revolution and changed their government. Yet, how it started was different, and Egyptian Revolution has its own characteristic: it was dominated by youngsters and city people, not activists. In addition, impact from this event to Egypt was also huge, not only in terms of economy, but also politics. Since this is such a big event, there is no doubt that this will also bring responses from both regional and international communities such as the United States, European Union, African Union, etc.

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