

The Sudan Revolution: Inqazh II or Recurrence of Popular Military Takeovers

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The only definitive success for the Sudanese revolution so far is that the revolution has proven beyond reasonable doubt the corruptness of the ideology of ruling in the name of religion. The revolution has also terminated, with a knockout punch, the scheme by political Islam groups who seek to establish a theocratic state ruled by Islamic sharia. The philosophy of such a state is predicated on the non-recognition of other political compatriots. It relies procedurally on the mechanism of selective empowerment aimed at ensuring the perpetuation of the state and its Islamic elites, thus providing no real peaceful transition of power.

In contrast to the Egyptian revolution, which raised suspicions about its own credibility due to the fact it brought down a government of the Islamic Brothers that ruled for only one year, the Sudanese revolution rose against a regime that ruled for thirty years during which the regime was not only unable to succeed but also contributed to the decline of the Sudan itself not only on the account of the corruptness of the human component but also due to the inherent ignobleness of a system that treated nations with condescendence in the name of religion when it forewent mechanisms for transparency and accountability in the name of empowerment for the ruling system. The logical result of this corruptness was unmitigated collapse.

In this context, the fate of the revolution in the Sudan has not been decided yet. We are faced, in our judgement, with three scenarios each of which has its own logical merits, and what perhaps tips the balance to the success of one scenario over the other is the extent to which the Alliance for the Declaration of Freedom and Change remains united, along with its ability to overcome the secondary competition and contradictions within its ranks.

The First Scenario is the continuation of the previous regime with new faces,

meaning that we will witness a new version of Inqaz. The success of this scenario is contingent upon the ability of the Military Council to maintain

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control over the decision-making process within the Supreme Council proposed in the Constitutional Document, which was in turn put forward by the Alliance for the Declaration of Freedom and Change. Such mere notion of such control has been rejected so far by the revolutionists whose efforts aim at confining the competencies of the Military Council to within the National Security Council which they had proposed with a view of avoiding a significant role for the military in decision-making.

It appears to me that the wrangle about the apportionment of powers in the two councils proposed in the constitutional Document is the emblem of the current running battle between the civilians and the military. Each of the parties in this battle has both its own narrative as well as regional and international supporters. The Military Council proposes the necessity of assigning the positions of the president of the Supreme Council and that of his deputy to military personnel. In this context, the Military Council advances the following two reasons for its stance on the matter:

- The nature of security and military threats prevailing on the Sudanese national soil. The military cites Darfur where tens of citizens were killed in confrontations that ensued for a variety of reasons between the government and Darfurians; and also the situation in the Nuba Mountains where the leader of Sudan People's Liberation Movement in South Kurdufan, Abdel Aziz Al Hilo, who has ceased military operations in the areas under his control, awaits the conclusion of the discussions between the revolutionaries and the Military Council in Khartoum. The Military Council also cites the situation in Khartoum which continues to witness the spread of weapons. Following the announcement about the seizure of more than forty ammunition depots in Khartoum immediately after the overthrow of Al Bashir, an announcement has been made recently about a new depot containing explosive belts and weapons fitted with silencers in Khartoum's upscale Al Taif neighborhood. The announcement was made on the eve of the anticipated response from the Military Council to the Constitutional Document presented to it by the opposition.

- The inability of the civilians to assume power, which was what both the President of the Military Council Abdel Fatah Al Burhan and his Deputy Mohammed Hamdan Daglo (popularly known as Hamiditi) have eluded to. This inability is invariably highlighted by the multiplicity of proposals which the Council receives from opposition. The number of such proposals, which is said to have reached a hundred, is compounded by the conflicting content of the proposals. Secondly, the military points to the numerous delegations visiting the Council as a manifestation of the inability of the civilians to assume the reins of power. Thirdly, the dearth of appropriate cadre ready is cited by the military as another reason for the unpreparedness of the civilians to assume power.

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Military Council and his Deputy because of the role played by the two men in the alliance for the support of legitimacy in Yemen where fighting troops on the ground are secured from the Sudan. As for Egypt, its posture stands at a certain distance from those of Riyadh and Abu Dhabi; and that is due to the fact that Egypt's interests in the Sudan are far more complex because they are interests connected to the immediate neighborliness which entails the possibility of the flow of refugees or the export of security threats in the event of the volatility of the Sudanese state or its total collapse.

Egyptian interests are also connected to the two dossiers of the Nile and the Millennium Dam. Thus, in light of Egypt's historical awareness of the complexities of the Sudanese scene and its composition, Egypt has chosen to formulate its position with utmost meticulousness. In spite of its relative interaction with the Military Council, Egypt references its position vis-à-vis the Sudan with the phrase "respect for the choices of the Sudanese people and trust in the Sudanese Armed Forces." With verbal variations that never mentioned Al Bashir by name, and which in my view did not offer him practical support until his removal from power, the essence of these words seems to be constant in Cairo since the beginning of the events in December 2018,

The Second Scenario is that the Alliance for the Announcement of Freedom and Change succeeds to assume real power,

which is a matter connected to the escalation of international pressures and those of the African Union to the level that brings about the acceptance of the existence of two councils; one of which is supreme with an absolute majority and powers to the civilians, and another for national security, as proposed in the Constitutional Document. That means that the competencies of military personnel will have to be confined to the framework of confronting security and military threats as well as formulating the positions of the Sudanese state on matters concerning its geopolitical perspectives and regional relations. This scenario has many opportunities for success on the account of a number of reasons, including the historical experience which Sudanese opposition has accumulated in confronting military dictatorships as well as the resultant cumulative experiences related to the formation of alliances and negotiations. Hence, two issues pose a challenge to this scenario: The first is the ability and amenability of the Alliance for the Declaration of Freedom and Change to coopt into the structures of government and power those Islamist elites who have not been convicted of political or financial wrongdoings in order to achieve social peace and also to avoid possible confrontations in the event of total exclusion of these groups. The second challenge pertains to the ability of the political parties to abandon completion during the interim period and to bypass secondary contradictions among these parties, especially that confusion has occurred more than once in the formulation of political positions on the part of Alliance for the Declaration of Freedom and Change

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whether in the context of articulating political positions or in regard to the haste in presenting the Constitutional Document despite its shortcomings which were pointed out by Mr. Sadiq Al Mahdi and others; or in regard to the stance of the Communist Party which opposes the presence of a single military personnel in the structures of government during the interim period.

Under the cloud of relative confusion by the Sudanese civil alliance, the regional support seems to be lacking for the movement for freedom and change. The United Arab Emirates was mindful of such a scenario, consequently it began to invite some leaders of the political parties that exert relative weight on the ground to visit Abu Dhabi in order to gauge their positions. These were unannounced visits which generated plenty of debate and perhaps discord within the Sudanese opposition. As for Cairo, it definitely has communication channels with the Freedom and Change movement. However, given its historical experiences with the discord among civilians in the Sudan and the failure of the Sudanese political parties to achieve political stability or economic development in the aftermath of the revolutions of 1964 and 1985, as well as having been influenced historically by the centrally authoritative paradigm of governance, Cairo is pessimistic about a political stability in the Sudan that will enable Cairo to achieve its interests in the regional stability associated with its western and southern borders.

The Third Scenario is the cohesion of the opposition and the ability to manage the interim period

This scenario seems to be the weakest so far despite the fact that the Professionals' Alliance, the nucleus of the movement, seems to possess immense professional wherewithal in the realms of political and professional expertise, which is obvious in the group's proposal for a relatively long interim period during which technocrats would exert control over aspects of power. The volume of trepidation toward this prospect is huge on the part of political parties which this interim period deprives of a presence in power in a manner that does not guarantee its future interactions as well the scope of its impact on the weight of these popular parties which, in light of their failure historically in the administration of the state of the Sudan, currently suffer rejection by social Sudanese groups whose weight cannot be ignored. On the regional level, there is anxiety and fears also of the Professionals' Alliance because it is vertically unknown, and what is known about its members and formations is less than the unknown, especially as it relates to its stance vis-à-vis Sudan's regional relations and the interests of the neighboring countries. It appears that this alliance has failed so far in articulating assurances that could be agreed on at both internal and external levels, and which would in turn make the alliance acceptable.

Nonetheless, the biggest challenge facing the Alliance for the Declaration of

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Freedom and Change consists in the political activists' advances that are not grounded in any political experience, and are rather driven by impetus and revolutionary purity which do not fathom the mysteries of the world of politics and the imperatives of occasional tactical flexibility.

In the case of the success of the first scenario, namely; more weight and wider powers to the military over the civilians during the interim period, it is expected that we will witness a new version of Inqaz rule, albeit abridged. Although it will endeavor to provide opportunities to opposition elite to participate in state institutions with the view to contain revolutionary activities, the regime will seek to maintain a majoritarian percentage of adherents of the national Islamic movement in the system in order to neutralize the group's security threats which the Islamists have promised to unleash since the first day after the ousting of Al Bashir. The Islamists' threat is under the pretexts of defense of the Islamic Sharia and that the revolution is a communist movement.

The second and the third scenarios are relatively interconnected; and the chances for their success hinge, on internal level, on the ability of members of the opposition to exercise self-denial and to forsake political interests for individuals and entities in the interest of the overarching national interests. Furthermore, the success of these two scenarios depends also on both the ability to achieve internal discipline among the various components of the Alliance for Freedom and Changes as well as on the level of the maturity of the political activists. I think that require a robust and effective internal dialogue; otherwise, we may witness the reproduction of Sudan's two crises during the previous democratic rules.

On the external level, crystallizing a flexible stance on the issues of the war in Yemen and other regional dossiers will secure regional support, which will consequently help in building a truly new Sudan.



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