

This Revolution Will Do Until the Real Thing Comes Along

Neoconservatives like Charles Krauthammer warn that the popular uprising against U.S.-financed Egyptian dictator Hosni Mubarak could easily become a victory for radical Islamists. The neoconservatives scoff at assurances that the Muslim Brotherhood has traded violence for a constructive role in Egyptian society and democratic politics.

Indeed, the neocons argue, the Brotherhood, as the best-organized force in Egyptian society (representing up to 30 percent of the population), is in the ideal position to seize the popular movement, betray the people, and install a theocratic state in the post-Mubarak era. With Egypt as a base of operation, goes the narrative, the Islamists would spread their ideology to the rest of the region through terror and subversion, with terrible consequences for the West.

Is there any merit to this analysis? Perhaps. No one can predict such things; revolution is a radically uncertain process. Nevertheless, one should not casually assume that Egypt is like Iran of 1979 or Afghanistan post-Soviet invasion. That sounds more like neoconservative fear-monger-

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ing than hard-headed speculation. (The more fevered of that ilk see the Egyptian uprising as the first step toward constructing a global caliphate that would include the United States. See Glenn Beck and Sean Hannity for details.)

To be sure, revolution has its risks. Yet the neoconservatives seem oblivious

of the risks in the "solution" they would like the Obama administration to impose on the Egyptians. Krauthammer prefers "an interim government led by the military." He writes in "Toward a Soft [sic] Landing in Egypt":

"The military is the best vehicle for guiding the country to free elections over the coming months. Whether it does so with Mubarak at the top, or with Vice President Omar Suleiman or perhaps with some technocrat who arouses no ire among the demonstrators, mat-

ters not to us. If the army calculates that sacrificing Mubarak (through exile) will satisfy the opposition and end the unrest, so be it.

"The overriding objective is a period of stability during which secularists and other democratic elements of civil society can organize themselves for the coming elections and prevail. ... The

"extraordinary rendition" policy. How easy it is for Krauthammer, sitting safely in the United States, to propose that the Egyptians submit themselves to any U.S.-conceived plan. Can he guarantee it will deliver freedom? One can't help suspecting that freedom for the Egyptians is not his priority. In fact, he knows the risks his proposal entails, but he calculates that

they all fall on the Egyptian people. What he seeks to avoid is risk to "U.S. interests," that is, to the American government's domination of the Middle East.

In calling on the U.S. government to work behind the scenes to impose such a "resolution," the neocons display the same big-power presumptuousness that has caused most of the problems that emanate from the Middle East today. The imperialist mentality endures, with each incident of blowback furnishing the excuse for the next oppressive manipulation.

The dangers that admittedly loom in Egypt stem from the moderate nature of the Egyptian people's aims. They seek merely to change the structure and personnel

of the government. The essence of the State - the apparatus of organized violence - would remain intact. As long as the State exists, there is a danger it will be seized by a military strongman, by theocrats, or by some other brand of oppressor.

In other words, the only true revolution is one aimed at abolishing the State - an anarchist revolution. (Peaceful, of course.) That's the best hope for avoiding a revolution gone wrong.

Of course the Egyptians do not yet have an antistate mindset, so in throwing off the Mubarak dictatorship they indeed run the risk that something worse could follow. Yet they apparently think it's a risk worth taking. Under the circumstances, that position seems reasonable.

The American people can help them by demanding that "their" government keep hands off.

This revolution will have to do until the real thing comes along.

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The Egyptian military may be respected by the people, but it has also been the source of dictators, including the hated Mubarak

key is the military."

Krauthammer's confident tone is no comfort. Is there no danger in an army takeover? Has there never been a brutal military dictatorship?

The Egyptian military may be respected by the people, but it has also been the source of dictators, including the hated Mubarak. And why should the Egyptians accept Suleiman in the "interim"? He was Mubarak's chief torturer and a tool of the U.S. government's criminal

Multiracial Census is a Double-Edged Sword

A lot of people are eagerly waiting results of the 2010 census information that details how Americans identify themselves racially. The data will be released state by state this month and is expected to show a significant growth in the numbers of people who identify as multiracial. When the data is made public, it is expected the number of Americans identifying as multiracial will have grown by 35 percent in the last decade.

As interracial marriages become more common, so too has the number of mixed raced people in our society. The 2000 census was the first that allowed these individuals to easily identify all parts of their racial backgrounds if they so

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Judge Greg Mathis

chose. Those who support the classification see it as an important step to breaking down racial barriers and moving toward an America that is free of prejudice.

However, some believe that the designation will only serve to further undermine the political clout and social significance of racial minorities, particularly African Americans. This line of thinking isn't too far-fetched. Often times, many of our positive, Black public figures with one non-Black parent are claimed by the White majority. The accomplishments of these

individuals are so significant that America often likes to ignore the one drop rule it instituted and enforced - to keep tabs on and marginalize anyone with ancestry that was not purely white - and tout the White ancestry of those we in the African American community are rightfully proud of. President Obama, who many tried to hail as the first multiracial President, instead of the first Black President, comes to mind.

Indeed, President Obama's mother is White. But he has publicly identified as a Black man and

even checked that box - and nothing else - on his census form. And isn't that what the census designa-

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tion is all about? Giving individuals the right to identify with as many or as few ethnic groups in their background as they choose?

Unlocking the shackles of the one drop rule and allowing indi-

viduals to celebrate all of who they are is a positive step toward racial harmony and acceptance in this country.

However, the larger society must be careful it does not dilute the voice of groups, like African Americans, that have fought so hard to be heard, seen and recognized for their achievements.



Judge Greg Mathis

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Week on the Web

Powell's Books, Portland's largest book seller and one of the nation's largest independent book stores, has laid off 31 of its lower-level staff members. No word yet on how it will affect their operations ... in "Latest News"



Strikes and protests in Egypt continued throughout the week. Egyptian vice president has threatened to institute martial law if they continue... In "Latest News"

Portland's rap duo "Get It Squad" won BET's "106 & Park" in January and will be heading back later in the year to compete again ... in "Music" & "Entertainment"

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