

1. Mark your confusion.
2. Show evidence of a close reading on the page.
3. Write a one-page reflection in your WN

After Egypt, Who Should the U.S. Back?

Egypt rejoiced after the ouster of its 30-year strongman, but his departure also leaves a void. Who benefits now that Mubarak is gone?

Egypt's longtime ruler, President Hosni Mubarak, stepped down Friday after 30 years in power and 18 days of largely peaceful protests. The military took control and declared martial law, suspending the constitution and dissolving parliament in what it called the first step toward transitioning Egypt to democracy. Here's a look at who came out on top in the new Egypt, and who is understandably nervous about what comes next

WINNERS

The protesters

The Egyptians who bravely used the "power of peaceful protest" to depose Mubarak deserve their big party, says The Baltimore Sun in an editorial. The world hasn't seen such an "outpouring of hope... since the fall of communism 20 years ago," and this triumph will reverberate among "all those around the world who believe in democracy." Their fight isn't over, but the protesters' demands can no longer be ignored.

Egypt's military

Democracy could eventually blossom in Egypt, but for now, Egypt's military has solidified its new power "by neutralizing the political institutions of Egypt," says Ed Morrissey in Hot Air. The suspension of the widely despised parliament and constitution actually "won praise from protesters," says NPR. But the army has good reason to placate them — as long as Egyptians see progress, the military gets to keep profiting from its "enormous stake in the national economy."

Al Jazeera

"Many are calling this al Jazeera's moment," says The Daily Beast. Its English-language coverage of the protests convinced many Americans that the Arab network is fair and balanced, not "Terror Television." Al Jazeera also busted Egypt's "government monopoly on information," says Nicholas Kristof in The New York Times, which made it "the most critical technology" in the uprising. In fact, Al Jazeera has "played a greater role in promoting democracy in the Arab world than anything the United States did."

Muslim Brotherhood

If "Egypt holds elections that allow an ardent Islamic populace to vote their preferences," the big winner will be the Muslim Brotherhood, says Lawrence Solomon in National Post. At least three-fourths of Egyptians favor imposing Sharia law, stoning adulterers, and embracing Islamic fundamentalism. Unless the Brotherhood is banned, the Islamic group stands to gain in an open election.

Obama

The president has been criticized for sending mixed messages and reacting slowly to events in Egypt, says John Dickerson in Slate. But "whether by design or dithering, U.S. policy makers didn't get in the way of events in Cairo. That strategy appears to have been successful." Yes, there was a "long wishy-washy phase," agrees Kristof in The New York Times, but "Obama got it pitch-perfect on Friday," backing the people and their right to determine their future.

LOSERS

Mubarak and his cronies

The Egyptian ruler was not only deposed, but Swiss, U.S., and British authorities are now racing to freeze the billions of dollars in "allegedly ill-gotten gains" thought to have been amassed by Mubarak and "several cronies," say Isabel Vincent and Melissa Klein in the New York Post.

Other Arab autocrats

Mubarak's fall has sent "a shockwave of both unease and hope throughout the Islamic world," says Bruce Riedel in The Daily Beast. Already facing protests of their own, the "autocrats in Algiers, Manama, Sana, Riyadh, and Tripoli will be wondering if they are next." Iran's leaders and their "clients in Syria and Lebanon" have particular reason to worry, says Jackson Diehl in The Washington Post. This uprising "will spell the final doom of the Arab governing model of autocratic nationalism."

Israel

"The damage to Israel" from Egypt's revolution "may well be existential," says Henry Siegman in The Huffington Post. Israel was allowed to pursue its "confiscations of Palestinian territories" because U.S. influence kept Mubarak looking the other way. Now, "no surviving Arab regime will dare challenge the popular anger that exists in every Arab country toward Israel" for its humiliating, "never-ending occupation" of Palestinian lands.

Al Qaeda

Mubarak's ouster leaves Al Qaeda "closer to the brink of annihilation than ever before," says Adam Serwer in The American Prospect. Osama bin Laden promised that "the only way to topple the oppressive dictators of the Muslim world was through violence and terrorism." Well, "Egyptians proved the extremists wrong." Al Qaeda's decades of brutal killing has "achieved nothing even distantly resembling the triumph the Egyptian people have secured" through 18 days of "strategic nonviolence."

Chinese and Russian leaders?

"I don't think this is confined to the Middle East," said Sen. John McCain (R-Ariz.) on "Face the Nation." The yearning for democracy is "universal." Vladimir Putin and his "KGB cronies" ought to be feeling "a little less cocky." The same goes for China's Hu Jintao and the "few men who govern and decide the fate of 1.3 billion people."

Possible WN topics:

Do you agree with John McCain that the yearning for democracy is universal?
What might be another country where revolution might be prompted from social networking?

How might this event change the world?