

Fomenting Civil War in Egypt

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The [killing of more than 50 people](#) at a demonstration in support of ousted Egyptian President Morsi in Cairo on July 8 has justifiably horrified many in Egypt and internationally. The pro-Morsi elements have placed the blame on the military forces, while the military claims it was attacked with live ammunition. While accusations are hurled back and forth, a new aspect to this story is emerging - the presence of a third force, namely snipers stationed on rooftops firing at both sides of the conflict. This revelation raises serious questions about the true nature of the conflict in Egypt and the disturbing similarities between this incident and similar ones in Syria, Thailand, and elsewhere.

The Cairo Massacre

As thousands gathered near the Republican Guard headquarters where many believe the Egyptian military is holding former President Morsi, violence erupted, killing at least 51 people and injuring hundreds. The bloody incident marked a clear transition from a purely political conflict to a potential civil war.

According to military officials, pro-Morsi “terrorists” attempted to storm the building, thereby eliciting a violent response from the military forces defending themselves. Colonel Ahmad Mohammad Ali, a spokesman for the Egyptian military claimed that police personnel were attacked while attempting to secure the area. He [noted](#) that, “They were on top of buildings...they either fired or threw things down...they were firing live ammunition and the military had to defend itself.” Colonel Ali’s comments have been echoed by most major media outlets in Egypt which are largely controlled by forces sympathetic to the military and the former Mubarak regime. However, the Muslim Brotherhood and other pro-Morsi forces paint a distinctly different picture.

[A statement](#) on the Muslim Brotherhood’s Freedom and Justice Party website naturally blames the Egyptian military forces for wantonly killing what it describes as “peaceful protestors who reject the military coup and demand reinstatement of their elected President Mohamed Morsi.” From the Islamist perspective, the massacre, as well as the coup itself, was a direct assault not only on the Muslim Brotherhood but on democracy itself. Moreover, the killings seem to have set the precedent that Islamist elements have no recourse in Egypt other than violence.

Despite the differences between these opposing factions, there is a common thread between them - both are blaming the other for inciting the violence that could lead to a total destabilization of the country. However, here it critical to note that the bulk of the killings on Monday took place at the hands of unknown snipers stationed on rooftops, as

shown in this [youtube video](#). Although the snipers appear to be wearing military uniforms, their actual identity remains unclear. Because it is impossible to verify exactly who the snipers were, and who they were working for, it is critical to instead examine the possible motives or lack thereof.

The military has claimed repeatedly that they were attacked and that the response was purely defensive. However, this cannot possibly explain the presence of military snipers on rooftops, no mere defensive posture. Conversely, the claim by the Muslim Brotherhood and allied supporters that the snipers were obviously Egyptian military does not seem consistent with the political circumstances, nor the facts on the ground.

First and foremost, it should be noted that the military stands *nothing* to gain and *everything* to lose from using such tactics. Having seized power in what can only be regarded as one of the most “popular coups” (not my term) in modern history, they already had the majority of the country and world opinion on their side. There was no worldwide condemnation of their actions, rather, governments seemed to be falling over themselves to “look forward” and “call for stability”, both simply coded language for tacit support. So, with the world watching Egypt, carefully scrutinizing every move the military and secular opposition make, in what possible way could they stand to benefit from sowing such chaos? Naturally, they stood to gain nothing. Moreover, the notion that Egyptian military snipers would fire at their fellow soldiers is far-fetched to say the least.

Secondly, the Muslim Brotherhood and their supporters undoubtedly understood the impossibility of fighting the military on the streets. Whatever weapons sources claim they had (bottles, rocks, small arms) are certainly not enough to significantly impact the military. The notion that these demonstrators attempted to “storm” the Republican Guard headquarters seems laughable. Although the crowd was predominantly comprised of fervent supporters of the deposed President Morsi, they were still regular Egyptians, not militant Salafists or some such formation.

So it would seem that neither side really stood to benefit or had the capability to do what the other side is suggesting. That would then raise the most critical question of all...if the snipers were not part of either side, then who exactly were they? It would seem that the only logical conclusion would be that the snipers were from some as yet unknown third party whose interest was not in taking sides but in ensuring that violent clashes and killings would take place so as to stoke tensions and foment civil war. Keen observers will note that we have seen this scenario before, most recently in Syria.

The Syrian and Thai Precedent

At the outbreak of the violence in Syria in 2011, many wondered how the situation on the ground escalated so quickly. It would seem, according to mainstream Western media reports, that the Syrian security forces had simply gone mad and began killing peaceful demonstrators at random. However, what became clear within days was the fact that unknown snipers stationed on rooftops in cities such as Deraa and Hama were indeed the main culprits. As seen in [these videos](#) as well as countless articles, the presence of snipers on rooftops throughout Syria is undeniable. Naturally, the claim was immediately made that the snipers were merely Assad’s military forces. Conveniently enough, no evidence was ever produced that showed the initial snipers were indeed government soldiers.

Interestingly, the Arab League observer mission, itself openly hostile to the Assad regime,

noted in its report of early 2012 that many of the atrocities including sniper shootings, could be correctly attributed to a third, unknown force inside the country. As the [report](#) noted:

The Mission determined that there is an armed entity that is not mentioned in the protocol. This development on the ground can undoubtedly be attributed to the excessive use of force by Syrian government forces in response to protests that occurred before the deployment of the Mission demanding the fall of the regime. **In some zones, this armed entity reacted by attacking Syrian security forces and citizens, causing the government to respond with further violence.**

The report corroborates what many eyewitnesses have stated, namely that some of the violence that erupted at the outset of the conflict in Syria was attributable to this “third force” replete with snipers and military training and equipment. Predictably, the report attempts to spin the violence from the “third force” as being purely in response to the Syrian military, but provides no evidence other than a generic assertion that “undoubtedly [the violence] should be attributed to the excessive use of force by Government forces”. Essentially then, it should be clear that there was some element inside of Syria during the early stages of the conflict that used snipers and other forms of violence and terror to push the opposition and government into full scale war. It seems to have worked quite successfully.

Syria is certainly not the only country that has experienced this sort of phenomenon. In 2010, violence erupted between the government of Thailand and red shirted supporters of US-backed former Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra. Just as in Syria, [mysterious gunmen](#) armed with sniper rifles, machine guns, and grenades emerged within the ranks of the red shirts and began attacking Thai troops, killing a prominent Colonel and six other soldiers. The attempt to “storm” a military facility with protestors was clearly a cynically orchestrated cover for the fomenting of chaos and possible destabilization of the country with the intention of installing Washington’s darling Shinawatra. Here again we see that snipers and other armed, unknown fighters were at the center of the incident.

What happened in Thailand was no mere accident. It required coordination and planning, financing and materiel support. This indicates that, contrary to the mainstream media’s fantastical narrative, this was no mere political protest and should not be treated as such. Rather, as in Syria, we see a clear example of the lengths to which certain elements will go to achieve their political aims.

The details of the massacre in Egypt are still coming out, so it is impossible to say for certain exactly what happened. However, judging from previous experiences in Syria and Thailand, one should have reservations about the narrative being sold to the public. Who exactly were those snipers in Cairo? Who gave the order to fire at both pro-Morsi protestors and at the military forces? The answers to these and other questions must emerge with time. Hopefully, there is still a united and peaceful Egypt when they finally do.

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