

The Influence of The Egyptian Events In 2011 On Turkish-Saudi Relations Turkish and Saudi Positions Towards the Egyptian Crisis

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Abstract

The events of change in 2011 in the region played a major role in the growth or decline of Turkish-Saudi relations and the intensification of competition. The positions of the two countries on these events varied according to their interests, and these positions had a significant impact on the Turkish-Saudi relations and the escalation of tension between them, which constituted a brake on a growing path. The relations between the two countries, in addition to the efforts of both countries on the issue of the Egyptian crisis - Turkey and Saudi Arabia - to prove their presence in the region and its issues and to play a greater role. The intensification of competition between the countries of the region requires these forces to maintain their position and work to achieve internal stability and protect their national security linked to regional security.

Indicating that the foregoing refers to Turkey's position on the change in Egypt 2011 and what happened in 2013, which contradicts Saudi Arabia's position on the change in Egypt, and this indicates the difference in Turkish attitudes and return towards the events of change in Egypt according to interests, which was reflected on Relations between the two countries.

Turkey's support for the popular revolutions and work to strengthen its relations with the political Islamic trend that advanced after those revolutions, this matter constituted a provocative factor for the official parties affected by those revolutions, which see that the Turkish position causes damage to its interests and conditions, including Saudi Arabia, which prompted them to adopt negative attitudes towards Turkey, which was embodied in the Turkish position on the Egyptian crisis opposing the coup in Egypt and the resignation of Morsi and its negative repercussions on its relations with Saudi Arabia, which was with the coup and Morsi removal from power.

Keywords

The impact of Egyptian events on Turkish-Saudi relations, The Egyptian crisis, Turkish-Saudi relations, Turkey, Kingdom Saudi Arabia.

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Introduction

First: The Turkish position towards the Egyptian crisis

Egypt has a significant status in the Turkish foreign policy towards the Arab region, because of the geopolitical, geocultural and geoeconomics status of Egypt in relation to Turkey. Since the beginning of the Egyptian revolution, Turkey has taken advanced positions in support of the wave of popular protests. Obviously, Turkey has to maintain good relations with the ruling Arab regimes in Arab countries, and not to interfere in their internal affairs. This was guided by Ahmed Davutoglu's advice, but it found in the events of change an opportunity to invest in social and political changes and developments and not to spectate only (Al-Hajj, 2016)

The Turkish statements, specifically by former Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan in his famous speech to the late President Hosni Mubarak in the early days of the revolution, demanded him to listen to the desire of his people, and not to cling to power against the people's desire. This act is considered unreasonable and immoral, that is, not adhering to the ruling. Recep Tayyip Erdogan used phrases far from diplomacy. (Elhamy, 2017)

Turkey considered Hosni Mubarak to be a source of danger, and this emerged through the statements of politicians and media professionals, and was clearly embodied in the apathy of the Turkish-Egyptian relationship during the era of Hosni Mubarak. (Hoso, 2014)

That is why we find that Turkey's position has begun to escalate and support the demonstrations and supports dethroning the Egyptian regime. After it became clear that Mubarak would fall, Erdogan declared that the Egyptian president should step down and respond to the demonstrators. (Khalid, 2020)

As Turkey will not remain a silent spectator of what is happening in Egypt, and it feels sorry for the lives it lost and the casualties and deaths in those demonstrations, Turkey was keen to be the first country to visit Egypt after the end of the revolution. Abdullah Gul, the President of the Turkish Republic at that time, visited Egypt on the 3rd of March 2011. During that visit, he met with civil society institutions, during which he was keen to meet with different sects, including the youth of the revolution. (Al-Hajj, 2016) The Prime Minister, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, also visited Egypt in September 2011, with a delegation of (250) businessmen in Turkey. One of the results of that visit was the signing of ten agreements in the economic aspect, and this is an indication towards the harbingers of establishing a new regional order in the region. (Al-Hajj, 2016) Turkey signed with Egypt in March 2012 the Maritime Ro-Ro Agreement to link Turkish ports with Gulf ports through Egyptian ports. In addition, Turkey deposited in the Egyptian Bank an amount of one billion dollars, at an interest rate of (1%) maturing after five years. This indicates that Turkish position is in favor of the new Egyptian regime and the transitional period. (Gharib, 2018)

After the elections and the victory of Mohamed Morsi as president of Egypt, Egyptian-Turkish cooperation reached its climax. This period is considered the golden age in Egyptian-Turkish relations. On September 30, 2012, Egyptian President Mohamed Morsi visited Turkey where talks took place, and he attended the activities of the fourth annual conference of the Turkish Justice and Development Party.

He delivered an unprecedented speech at this conference in Egyptian-Turkish diplomacy which was within the framework of the political aspect. As for the military and security aspect, on October 23, 2012, military maneuvers began between Turkey and Egypt known as "the Sea of Friendship". In these maneuvers, Egypt replaced Israel, where these maneuvers were to exchange experiences between them. As for the economic aspect, the relationship between the Egyptian Republic and the Turkish Republic has been very strengthened, culminating in strategic relations and economic partnerships, including the maritime and rail transport agreements on June 12, 2013, as well as six agreements in the field of customs and ports. (Abu Diya, 2018) During the rule of Mohamed Morsi, Turkey sought to build economic and security relations, as it saw that the success of this model (the Muslim Brotherhood) confirmed that political Islam could lead the power in the Arab countries where the events of change took place. (Hadinegoro et al., 2015)

On the third of July 2013, a military coup took place against the regime of Mohamed Morsi. Turkey's position was opposed to the military coup that was led and implemented by the Egyptian Minister of Defense Abdel Fattah El-Sisi. Turkey sided with Morsi and his government, bypassing diplomacy with verbal threats, summoning ambassadors, and threatening to review economic agreements.

Turkey called on the international community, the United States of America, and the European Union to take a position similar to Turkey's. What happened in Egypt is a coup against the will of the Egyptian people. (Al-Hajj, 2016) Turkey's position was sharp towards the new regime by calling it a coup. Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan was keen to raise the slogan (Rabaa). The "Rabaa" slogan appeared after the imprisonment of Mohamed Morsi, a military operation that took place on August 14, 2013, when the police and army forces moved to disperse the sit-ins of opponents of the July 3, 2013 coup in Egypt. The main sit-ins were in Rabaa Al-Adawiya Square in Cairo and Al-Nahda Square in Giza. Estimates of the number of dead and injured in the events varied, and Human Rights Watch described what happened as likely crimes against humanity and the most serious mass unlawful killing in modern Egyptian history. Interim Vice President Mohamed ElBaradei, who was appointed by the Minister of Defense in the coup statement, submitted his resignation in protest of the events. Erdogan rejected Mohamed ElBaradei's request, the Egyptian Vice President for Foreign Relations, to speak by phone considering him as an illegitimate representative of Egypt, who was appointed by the coup leaders. This made clear Turkey's anti-coup stance against Morsi. (France24TV)

Turkey asked the Security Council to impose sanctions on the Egyptian regime in 2013. Egypt responded by pressuring it against Turkey's candidacy for a seat in the Security Council in 2014. The relationship between them reached a peak of deterioration due to Turkey's adoption of its position against the new Egyptian regime. The sharp and decisive Turkish position and the speech of Recep Tayyip Erdogan led to the severing of diplomatic relations, as Egypt expelled the Turkish ambassador, and Turkey responded with reciprocity. On October 28, 2014, Egypt announced its refusal to extend the (Ro-Ro Agreement) and stop its implementation in April 2015 when the agreement expired. This is due to Turkey's position against the new regime, which has strained political and diplomatic relations between the two countries. (Al-Hajj, 2016) Turkey provided the Egyptian opposition with satellite channels attacking the coup and gave them the opportunity to hold conferences, seminars and political events. Turkey refused to give any legitimacy to the coup, and they engaged in a wide campaign of public and clear incitement against the Egyptian authorities, but the Egyptian opposition was not able to manage the battle with the Egyptian regime. Day after day, the consolidation of the Egyptian regime and the weakness of the Egyptian opposition increased. This was reflected in the sharp and solid Turkish position and began to retreat from the requirement for the return of Mohamed Morsi, repealing the death sentence from him (Al-Hami)

Turkish President, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, criticized the Security Council in his speech to the United Nations General Assembly for adopting silence towards Egypt, saying, "It witnessed a coup against a president elected by the people, and thousands of people were killed asking about the fate of their votes. United Nations and democratic countries spectated and legitimized this coup." This speech led to tension in the relations between the two countries. (Gharib, 2018) From the economic side, during the rule of Mohamed Morsi, Turkey signed 27 cooperation agreements in various fields, and it also lent Egypt several billions in the form of cash and in-kind aid to cover its economic deficit after the revolution. But in light of the military coup and the tension that occurred between the two governments, these agreements are threatened with freezing. Signs of that tension began to be reflected in economic relations, as Turkey stopped shipping garbage collection cars that it had pledged to send to Egypt. Egypt, in turn, stopped importing some Turkish products. Egyptian television also launched a boycott of Turkish TV series. (Al-Zawawi, 2012)

The tension in relations between Egypt and Turkey increased Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's criticism of Sisi's re-election as president of Egypt. Erdogan signed an agreement with Sudan to develop Suakin Island overlooking the Red Sea to establish Turkish military bases on the Red Sea. Egyptian newspapers at the time attacked Sudan's decision, saying that Khartoum "opened its ports for the transfer of weapons of terrorists to Egypt. "This agreement threatens the Egyptian national security from the south, whereas Turkey responded that it was a strategic island for the Ottomans and that it seeks to revive it again to be a station for Turkish pilgrims.

During this period, the Turkish-Egyptian relations reached the peak of hostility when "Erdogan" intervened in the Libyan issue to implement the military agreement concluded with the Government of National Accord. He supported the "Al-Sarraj" government militarily by sending military equipment, and diplomatically by standing by the Government of National Accord in all international forums in the face of the Libyan National Army led by Field Marshal "KhalifaHaftar", which is supported by the Egyptian government and the United Arab Emirates, which poses a threat to Egyptian national security. Here, the relations between the two countries reached the stage of open and public hostility, which almost reached the level of military intervention by the

Egyptian army to protect the Egyptian national security. (Al-Badri, M, Al-Sayed, & Issa, 2021) Indicating that the foregoing refers to Turkey's position on the change in Egypt in 2011 and what happened in 2013, contradict Saudi Arabia's position on the change in Egypt. This indicates the difference in Turkish attitudes and the return to the events of change in Egypt according to interests. This is reflected in the relations between the two countries.

Second: The Saudi position towards the Egyptian crisis

The measures to suppress the peaceful January 2011-revolution in Egypt, since it out broke on the 25th of January, witnessed a series of serious crimes against the activists and masses of the revolution including premeditated killings, indiscriminate killings, and the serious injury of citizens where some of them were in complete or partial disability. In addition, it also resulted in kidnapping, arrest and torture of citizens by the police forces and security elements of the former ruling National Party. The Saudi position at the beginning of the Egyptian revolution was reservations about the revolution and its demands. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia expressed its opposition to the overthrow of the Egyptian regime (Hosni Mubarak's regime). This became clear when Saudi King Abdullah announced his support for the Egyptian regime on January 29, 2011, when King Abdullah called Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak expressing his support in this confrontation. At the same time, King Abdullah called US President Obama and asked him not to humiliate Mubarak, and made it clear that Saudi Arabia is able to pay the same amount of US aid to Egypt if the United States decides to cut off that aid to Egypt. Saudi support for the regime of Hosni Mubarak continued until the last moment, because it represents the pivotal pillar of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in the region. (Bishara, 2016)

The stand of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia against Egyptian revolution is the fear of revolutionary expansion into the Arab Gulf region and threatens its monarchy regimes of attraction to Saudi Arabia. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia was afraid of the assumption of new regimes that would threaten its position in the Arab and Islamic world. (Marzouk, 2020) Saudi Arabia tried to use the Carrot-stick policy in order to prevent the trial of Hosni Mubarak, but the voice of the Egyptian street was very strong, forcing the Military Council to submit to their will. The Saudi ruling elite understood and decided not to antagonize the Egyptian street and stand by them even if with a little something. During the period of Muhammad Morsi's rule in Egypt, relations between Saudi Arabia and Egypt became tense, and Saudi Arabia began to fear Morsi, because he belonged to the Muslim Brotherhood Party. During the period of Morsi's rule, none of the Saudi political officials visited Egypt despite the fact that many Egyptian officials visited the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (Marzouk, 2020)

With the outbreak of the June 30, 2013 revolution, and the removal of Mohamed Morsi from power, the Saudi position was with the coup and the resignation of Mohamed Morsi, through Riyadh keenness to communicate directly with the Egyptian Defense Minister Abdel Fattah el-Sisi. The Saudi King Abdullah bin Abdul Aziz saluted all the Egyptian armed forces, and dealt with the situation directly. Saudi Arabia sent a congratulatory message to the interim Egyptian President (Adly Mansour) before taking an oath. Saudi Arabia hastened to send financial aid to consolidate the position of power in Egypt, as it sent five billion dollars (two billion dollars in the form of gas and oil products, two billion in the form of deposits, and one billion in the form of cash), through Saudi positions with Mohamed Morsi and the acceptance of the coup and support for Abdel Fattah Sisi. It showed a clear determination to confront the idea of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt. (Jibril, 2019)

That is why when the army seized power in Egypt at the beginning of July of 2013, Saudi Arabia was quick to congratulate the new regime in a phone conversation, expressing happiness, because General Abdel Fattah el-Sisi saved the country from darkness. Saudi Arabia remained silent and did not issue any protest to the Egyptian army's shooting of demonstrators supporting Mohamed Morsi. On the contrary, the new regime received promises of a five billion dollar aid package. Saudi King Abdullah has stated that he supports Sisi, saying, "Let the whole world realize that the people and government of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia support and still support our brothers in Egypt in confronting terrorism, extremism and sedition, and everyone who tries to interfere in Egypt internal affairs." In mid-2014, King Abdullah called for a donors' conference to help Egypt combat political Islam. The King said that any country that will not contribute to building the future of Egypt will not have a place among us. (Al-Mayahi, 2016)

Since the 2013 coup and the overthrow of Morsi, King Abdullah until his death in January 2015 has

provided Egypt with almost unconditional support, which it considers a vital ally standing with it against common threats. King Salman bin Abdulaziz assumed the throne, and the position of Saudi Arabia continued as it was during the reign of King Abdullah. King Salman bin Abdulaziz stressed the coordination and continuity of work between Egypt and Saudi Arabia. King Salman directed to support the Egyptian oil needs for a period of 5 years, in addition to raising the level of Saudi investments in Egypt to reach nearly \$8 billion. (Arabiya, 2016) Saudi King Salman paid an official visit to Egypt in April 2016, where the delegation accompanying the king signed several important trade and border agreements with the Egyptian government with the aim of improving relations between the two countries. During the visit, King Salman delivered a speech before the Egyptian Parliament, and received an honorary doctorate from Cairo University. He met both the Sheikh of Al-Azhar, and the Pope of Alexandria. The Saudi and Egyptian parties also signed several agreements and memoranda of understanding between the two countries in a number of fields to implement several projects, the most important of which is the establishment of King Salman bin Abdulaziz University in Tor Sinai, residential communities within the King's Program for the Development of the Sinai Peninsula, and the establishment of a bridge linking the two countries across Sinai. (Arabiya, 2016)

Saudi King Salman bin Abdulaziz announced his agreement with Egyptian President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi to build the bridge linking the two countries across the Red Sea, during the Egyptian-Saudi summit in Cairo in April 2016. The Egyptian president announced that the bridge would be named "King Salman bin Abdulaziz Bridge" ". This bridge will be an international outlet for the Saudi-Egyptian projects, and is a major crossing for pilgrims and tourists, as well as job opportunities that will be made available by the project. (Nadhir, 2015)

The effect of Egyptian crisis on Turkish-Saudi relations

According to the Saudi-Turkish vision regarding the outstanding issues in the Middle East as well as the Arab world, the Egyptian crisis was considered one of the most prominent of these files. The Turkish position supported the legitimacy in Egypt, while the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia was against that legitimacy. Most of the Gulf Cooperation Council countries were on the side of the military coup on June 30, 2013. The position of both Turkey and Saudi Arabia on the Egyptian crisis represents a major point of divergence in Turkish-Saudi relations. (Al Mubaid) Turkey's support for the popular revolutions and work to strengthen its relations with the political Islamic trend advanced after those revolutions. This matter constituted a provocation to the official parties affected by these revolutions, which see that the Turkish position is causing damage to their interests and conditions, including Saudi Arabia. This prompted the adoption of negative attitudes towards Turkey, which was embodied in the Turkish position on the Egyptian crisis opposing the coup in Egypt and the resignation of Morsi and its negative repercussions on its relations with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, which was with the coup and toppling Morsi (Kamel, A, & Najm, 217) The events of Arab change in 2011 constituted a source of a crisis in Turkey's diplomacy, as Turkey adopted a policy of supporting the paths of revolutions. The success of the change in Egypt and Tunisia boosted Turkey's chances of being the nucleus of a new regional order, but the coup that took place upset the scales and exposed the Turkish position to obstacles. One of the most important obstacles was the strained Turkish-Saudi relations, because Saudi Arabia was against the Turkish position towards the coup and considered the rise of the Islamic movement a threat to it. This is what caused the cooling of Turkish-Saudi relations and a decrease in the volume of trade exchange between the two countries from (8) billion dollars in 2012 to (6) billion dollars in 2014. (Kamel et al., 217)

At the threshold of the change, Turkey tried to achieve two goals. The first is to overthrow authoritarian regimes and replace them with democratic ones. The second is the attempt to enhance cooperation with regional powers. That is why Turkey preferred to get closer to Egypt and stand with the revolutionary demonstrators and demand the resignation of former Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak and call for the establishment of a democratic system. (Duran, 2016) Stepping up the power by Mohamed Morsi, who was from the Muslim Brotherhood, raised Saudi fears, because its conservative Islamic orientation is based on absolute loyalty not on democratic representation. This differs from the Muslim Brotherhood, which is why the Saudi position was aimed at overthrowing Morsi, which reflected negatively on Turkish-Saudi relations. (P & Rollants, 2016)

The victory of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt and Turkey's support for affected Turkish-Saudi relations. This matter led to tension in the relations of the two countries. (Al-Qidra & Y., 2013) The

Turkish position did not conform to the Saudi position, which led to the delay in signing the free trade agreement with the Gulf Cooperation Council countries without giving any reasons, an agreement that was scheduled to be signed in December 2011. (R, 2016)

The Turkish-Saudi rapprochement is based on elements of convergence of interests. As for Turkey's role and its partial temporary reservation, it is based on non-consensual elements. These reactions and positions of both Turkey and Saudi Arabia are expected due to the nature of the political regimes in both countries. Turkey was looking at the events of change as the end of the Middle East and the beginning of new arrangements, while the transformation of the countries surrounding the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia into democratic regimes becomes an element of instability for it according to the face of the Saudi political system. The change in the Egyptian regime is a severe loss for the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

The Hosni Mubarak regime was a very strong ally of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, as both Saudi Arabia and Egypt cooperated in many files. Therefore, it is not surprising that the Saudi position is in opposition to the Turkish position. (Al-Baqmi & M, 2018) The Turkish position was also embodied in Recep Tayyip Erdogan's speech before the United Nations General Assembly, in which he criticized the silence of the United Nations and democratic countries against the coup in Egypt. Their legitimization of this coup led to condemnation by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, which considered this speech unacceptable. Thus, it led to strained relations between the two countries. The position of Turkey and Saudi Arabia on the Egyptian crisis was different. When the regime of Hosni Mubarak fell, Saudi Arabia was disturbed by the fall of its ally, while Turkey showed its support for this movement. In 2015, when King Salman bin Abdulaziz came to power following the death of King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz, he took a position different from that of King Abdullah. He tried to restore relations with Turkey, as Turkey was eager for this relationship; Because of the political isolation that she was suffering from after the demise of Morsi. The Egyptian file remained stuck between the Turkish-Saudi relations. Turkey began to retreat from its position towards Morsi and his return to the stipulation of his release, and then to the stipulation of dropping the death sentence against Morsi. Turkey began to hint at the possibility of establishing economic relations between the two countries. To strengthen this relationship, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan visited Saudi Arabia three times in one year in 2015. (Majali & N, 2019)

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