

Egypt: Not a coup



KAMAL GABALLA

If you are following the social Media in Egypt nowadays, you will find this message:

THIS IS FOR ALL MY FOREIGN FRIENDS:
Dear All,
Thanks for your concern about Egypt.
If you believe Egypt's Revolution is not a coup, put this cover and share it, let the entire world know this was a revolution.
COUP is a sudden, violent, and illegal seizure of power from a government.
The civilians made a revolution and the army responded.
On June 17, the Bengali daily newspaper Prothom-Alo and The Daily Star published my article "End of a religious state".
The lead of that article was focusing on the concerns and fears which were high in Egypt ahead of June 30, where masses were expected to march to the presidential palace, demanding the withdrawal of President Mohamed Morsi from power, as well as early presidential elections.
These fears were particularly high among Islamist movements and revolutionary groups who supported the "Tamarod" (Rebel) campaign that collected millions of anti-Morsi petitions last month and organized mass demonstrations that led to his ouster.
I raised these very important questions then: Will Morsi's administration fall on June 30? Or will the Muslim Brotherhood make compromises to cool down the civil opposition forces (such as sacking Prime Minister Hisham Kandil's government, freezing the activity of the Shura Council (upper house of parlia-

ment), changing the general prosecutor, amending the election law to make it more transparent and representatives of the voters, etc?
On this July 3, Wednesday morning, I posted this on my own Facebook:
We will see the end of a religious state very soon in Egypt.
Let me give you an overall background about the situation in Egypt.
When the 25th January 2011 revolt erupted against Mubarak, we mostly were happy because of the corruption that we were suffering at the time.
When he stated that he is not going to stay in power when his term ends after 9 months, most of the people agreed and started to get back home. Then a senseless battle broke out in Tahrir square between some people who claimed to be Mubarak supporters and the demonstrators. That was known as "the Camel Battle". So the people got back to the square and demanded that he should leave power at once. Very strange! Isn't it? Why did his supporters attack the demonstrators if they were going home anyway and weren't going to revolt anymore? Who was benefiting from this? Who would benefit from people marching back to Tahrir? But unfortunately the fight was perfectly fabricated. So Mubarak stepped down and the Military Council took over as interim authority to handle the country (for almost one and half year) until we would elect another president, this was on 11/2/2011. Even then, USA and the international community did not recognize what went on in Egypt as a "coup".
Since then a lot of demonstrations, protests and sit-ins took place against the military council, forcing them to rush and to hand over power to an elected regime. The last round of presidential elections was between Morsi

and Ahmed Shafiq, the former prime minister in Mubarak's regime. So the competition was tough. The result was 51%Morsi, 49%Shafiq. Shafiq claimed an election fraud took place and overlooked by the military council because the council wanted to get rid of the whole issue as soon as possible.
Then Morsi, who belongs to a radical religious group that embraces violence, started to encourage lawyers who belonged to the same group to fabricate corruption allegations against his formal opponent, Shafiq. So he left the country for UAE.
On 21 November 2012, Morsi issued a constitutional declaration that suspended the constitution and seized all legislative powers; he also removed the Prosecutor General and appointed another one who belongs to his group, an act of a clear ridicule and disrespect.
Since then the demonstrations and protests did not stop. Every day he was aggravating the situation by new unnecessary dictatorial decision such as appointing people only from his group as ministers and government officials. He increased taxes and raised prices, cut electricity almost 4-5hours every day. Besides, gas stations have almost run out of fuel.
What really made the situation worse is that he held a conference at Cairo National Stadium three weeks ago and invited all the leaders of the terrorist groups and extremist religious figures who spent the whole meeting threatening and intimidating his opponents and also it was full of incitement against other religions. Last week, he made a public statement at Cairo International Conference Hall attacking all his opponents and media channels, and accusing them of being traitors and remnants of the old regime. He even included in his attack some figures that we all consider as patriotic symbols of the revolution of 25 January 2011.
That's why the current uprising took place since Sunday 30 June 2013, his first anniversary in office, a year that most people here consider it to be the worst year in the Egyptian contemporary history.
The army refused and rejected the shouts and threats of violence and killings unleashed by Morsi after three days of the (more than 30 million Egyptians) demonstrations and rallies against him.
Then the army decided to side with the will of the people, removing Morsi from office and appointing a civilian interim president (the Head of the Constitutional Court according to the constitution) to manage the country until we elect another president.
From thousands of messages I followed at the Social Media, I chose this comment as an example, written by Mr. Bassam Rady, a diplomat at Egyptian Ministry of foreign Affairs, on his Facebook to all his foreign friends:
It is not a coup d'état Mr. Obama.
It is not a coup d'état CNN.
I hope I made it clear for you to understand what is going on in Egypt.
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The joy of belonging

SHIFTING IMAGES



MILIA ALI

WHILE people can be generally characterised as introverts or extroverts, socially awkward or gregarious, there is no doubt that everyone has an innate desire to belong to a group. This is despite the fact that group dynamics can be challenging at its best and toxic at its worst. Groups are at times marked by petty ego battles, attempts at dominance, and disputes and controversies. But, in most cases, the benefits far outweigh the negatives. Unfortunately, in a fast changing world "real-time" groups seem to be on the wane since people find it easier to form "virtual" networks on Facebook and other social media locations.
I have nothing against Facebook and am grateful that it helps me stay connected to my grandchildren even 8,000 miles away. But the flip side is that at times I feel I am prying into other people's private lives or clogging my brain with details of someone else's travel plans (including hotels and flight schedules). In any case, no one can convince me that having a conversation on the cell phone or chatting online can ever substitute face to face meetings with friends -- complete with steaming cups of tea, sizzling *samosas*, spontaneous laughter or a tear or two accompanied by an occasional hug!
In the current backdrop of the distant and detached social interactions in simulated space, I feel blessed to belong to a "real" group, initially formed as a literature class in a nearby church in McLean, Virginia. Gradually, the class morphed into a cohesive and supportive group of like-minded people who have a passion for reading. Participants (more buddies) are averse to calling it a "club" since the word connotes a sense of formality and creates the impression of an elitist assembly of people who get together for want of nothing better to do. The consensus has been to term it as a literature group/class where members read a short story or novel and meet for a follow-up discussion.
The heterogeneity of the group, cutting across gender, race and economic strata, makes our interactions especially interesting and feisty. While discussing the complexities of a plot or theme we often veer into personal territory where someone relates an intimate life experience. This may lead

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to an intense conversation on human relationships or a philosophical dialogue on the state of the world. In many ways these diversions help us bond. We are a part of an intimate world where debates on the new trends in American literature or the literary worth of old classics facilitate the sharing of a part of our lives.
Interestingly, the literature group also serves as a first stop for seeking advice on mundane matters like which dentist is best at root canal, which stores have throwaway deals, or which restaurants offer gourmet cuisine. In short, we have managed to generate a level of informality which is rather strange given that most of us have separate social spheres and rarely meet outside the group meetings except for special celebrations.
The noteworthy lesson, for me, has been that informal, unstructured groups allow uninhibited exchanges in contrast to the sometimes sleek and sterile discourse which dominates most social gatherings. At a personal level, the literature group gives me a sense of belonging in a country, which is my home, and yet I don't have deeply entrenched roots in it. In addition, the group interactions have helped me grow. Not as a literary critic, but, as someone who is able to see different perspectives and view the world through a prism that displays colours in a continuous spectrum rather than discrete bands.
I am certain that most of my readers are part of some group (real or virtual, formal or informal) which serves as a support system and a sounding board when needed. However, in the competitive world of today people have become increasingly busy and rarely meet to spend "real" quality time. This may be partially because cell phones, emails and Facebook have replaced actual conversations and meetings. Once again Facebook has its charms ... but I would never trade it for the joys of group "therapy." Face to face human interactions provide an infectious enjoyment since one feels elevated in mind and body when surrounded by good cheer. A warm smile, a soft touch or even a casual pat can speak volumes -- more than any Facebook post or text message.
Life will go on, as it always does -- but let's try to spare an hour or two each week for group interactions where we can share. Share a meal, share a cup of coffee, share a book and, most importantly, share our thoughts!

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Propaganda prevailed over truth

MOZAMMEL H. KHAN

THE age-old saying that truth shall prevail does not apply in Bangladesh. This was once again proven in the startling results in the recently held local elections of the four city corporations in which the incumbent candidates lost by big margins. It was generally believed that they did their job sedulously without major allegations of corruption. All of them did a tremendous amount of development works, yet the voters, in a very free and fair exercise of franchise, did not endorse their continuation as the mayor of their respective cities. Many analysts ascribed most of the responsibilities to the shortcomings of the government.
I heard from local observers that 'propaganda' had worked as the single most detrimental element against the incumbents. It was also disclosed by an MP, who was the chief campaign coordinator of the Rajshahi mayor, who pointed out the use of religion against the incumbent. He said: "It was said that thousands of people were killed on the night of May 5" when the law enforcing authorities dispersed the supporters of Hefajat-e-Islam (HI) from Shapla Chattar. And the voters were implored to vote for opposition candidates "to save Islam." This propaganda, in his judgement, was flagrant violation of the election code of conduct, which the Election Commission failed to uphold.
Religion was always used, albeit unsuccessfully, in the politics of the country. For instance, during the language movement, the propaganda was spread that the demonstrators had come from across the border. In the recent past, allegations like 'if AL comes to power there would be *uludhanni* in the mosques' were rampant. But this time around, a new term, 'atheist,' was brought into the political landscape to counter the rise of *Ganajagoron Mancha*. *Ganajagoron Mancha* was the renaissance of patriotism which had dwindled over the years since our

victory in the War of Liberation.
However, it became a bitter pill for those who, either themselves, or their kin of the '71 generation, sided with the wrong side in the War of Liberation. They adopted the Goebbels's propaganda model through a so-called newspaper led by its 'brave editor' and declared an all-out war to malign the activists of the *Ganajagoron Mancha* as atheists. The outcome was the crystallisation of HI with their 13-point demand, the rallying point of which was to "punish the 'atheist' leaders of Shahbagh, bloggers and anti-Islamists who make 'derogatory comments' about Prophet Muhammad (pbuh)." This is the point that enticed the madrasa students to come out in record numbers to vent their anger; albeit most of them do not know what a "blog" is and who "bloggers" are.
The Shahbagh movement, as it is popularly known, had nothing whatsoever to do with religion, and the leaders of the movement have declared it vociferously over and over again. Yet, the "brave editor" and a few "noted BNP intellectuals," most of whom are former pro-Chinese ultra-leftists, were constantly telling blunt lies to malign a movement that touched the hearts and souls of Bengalis all around the globe.
HI's ultimatum to the government to accept its 13-point demand or face ouster was buoyed by the success of its Long March. Its sit-in programme at Shapla Chattar, at the behest of its potential beneficiaries who were 'heartbroken' at the peaceful ending of the long march, was a direct challenge to the authority of a popularly elected government. The government had no other option but to reassert its authority, which the law enforcing authorities did with the minimal use of force. This success of the law enforcers in flushing the HI men out had disappointed the propagandists who opened a new front with yet the worst propaganda that 'thousands of people have been killed' in the flushing-out

operation. The results of the four city elections proved that, this time around, they were successful.
It was not only the failure of the government but also of many of the mainstream newspapers which are considered pro-liberation, who remained on the sideline in exposing the truth. Although the printed version of the daily is in suspension, its online edition is still spreading the blatant lies. One of its eyewitness reports read: "I went to Shapla Chattar in the morning of May 6 and counted 71 corpses," and this rubbish was widely posted in the social media.
Many of the nation's dignitaries, who are considered the conscience of the nation, went to Shahbagh Square to declare their allegiance to the resurrection of patriotism, but never rebutted the falsehood spread by the daily and the opposition politicians. In the West, no degree of 'democracy and freedom of expression,' Western concepts to start with, would allow any newspaper to function whose principal goal is to disseminate lies and provoke hatred.
Many individuals and newspapers took stands, probably due to their disgruntlement with the government, the AL or the PM, for one reason or the other, as if it is only AL's responsibility to preserve the values of the Liberation War or to respect and fulfill the dream of our martyrs.
It brings us down to the saying that when AL wins the election, it is the party that wins; but when it loses, all those who upheld the principles of 1971 and everything they symbolise, lose. The divide has never been more clearly defined and the consequence of the loss is not ambiguous. Should the adherents of the Liberation War let that happen?

The writer is Convenor of the Canadian Committee for Human Rights and Democracy in Bangladesh.

ACROSS
1 Actor Carrey
4 Weapon of mouse destruction
8 Zits
12 Man-mouse link
13 Midwestern state
14 Addition sign
15 The national pastime
17 Node
18 - pro quo
19 British patrolman
20 First lady before Michelle
22 Old Mac-Donald's place
24 Twistable cookie
25 Fort Dix, for one
29 Sea (Fr.)
30 Gray snapper
31 Snapshot
32 You might run on one to get home

DOWN
1 Task
2 401(k)
3 Catcher
4 Under-ground chamber
5 Close
6 Villainous look
7 Informa-tion
8 Store-house
9 Con
10 Versifier's tributes
11 Baltimore
12 News-paper
13 Act now!
14 Prolonged sleep
15 "Of course"
16 DOWN
17 Task
18 401(k)
19 Catcher
20 Under-ground chamber
21 Close
22 Villainous look
23 Informa-tion
24 Store-house
25 Con
26 Versifier's tributes
27 Baltimore
28 News-paper
29 Act now!
30 Prolonged sleep

Solution time: 25 mins.
BECK NOW TISAR
ELAN AVE RULE
NISI BAS ABAT
TATTTOO TAMP
BRIBE UNITE DO
LUND VIN UNITE
OTT BUG INANE
CHAIRLIFTS
GNAT ASTRAL
CELL URL ROVE
ARTA RES ADEN
TROY EVE PERT

Yesterday's answer 5-31

CRYPTOQUIP

CRSNL DJLDQJSUM KE LUMQML
SU RSZ VSUQN VSMRK, KRL
ATLNSZK ZRITKLA "KRSZ
SZ KRL NQZK AIOCI"
Yesterday's Cryptogquip: SINCE I HAVE VERY LOGICAL IDEAS ABOUT HEARING ORGANS, YOU MIGHT DESCRIBE ME AS EAR-RATIONAL.
Today's Cryptogquip Clue: S equals I

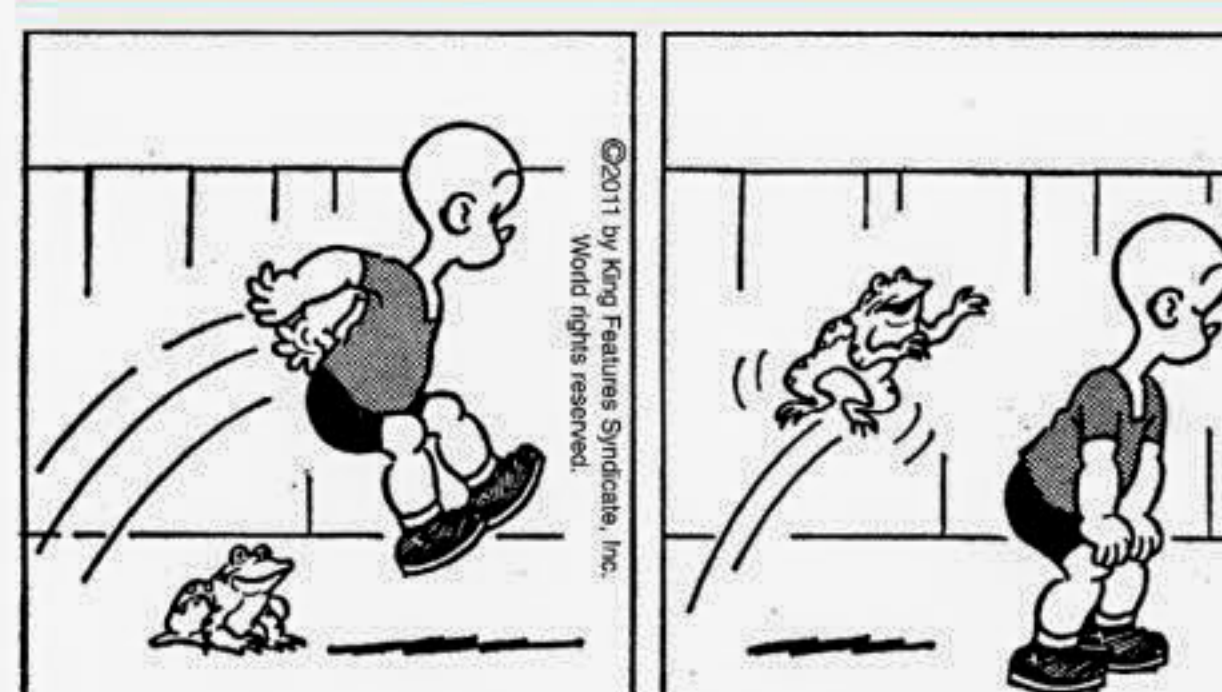
BEETLE BAILY



by Mort Walker



HENRY



by Don Trachte



QUOTABLE Quotes

"If we don't believe in freedom of expression for people we despise, we don't believe in it at all."
Noam Chomsky