

The week ending July 5, 2013

GREATER MIDDLE EAST

Egypt army ousts Morsi after a year in power

Egypt's armed forces [ousted Egypt's first democratically elected president](#) on Wednesday after just a year in power, installing a temporary civilian government, suspending the constitution and calling for new elections. Islamist President Mohammed Morsi denounced it as a "full coup" by the military. After the televised announcement by the army chief, millions of anti-Morsi protesters in cities around the country erupted in delirious scenes of joy, with shouts of "God is great" and "Long live Egypt." Fireworks burst over crowds dancing and waving flags in Cairo's Tahrir Square, epicenter of the 2011 uprising that ousted autocrat Hosni Mubarak. It was one of multiple centers of a stunning four-day anti-Morsi revolt that brought out the biggest anti-government rallies Egypt has seen, topping even those of 2011. The chief justice of the Supreme Constitutional Court will step in as interim president until new elections are held.

IRAN

Democrats and Republicans call for tougher action on Iran

In a broad show of bipartisan support for containing the threat of a nuclear-armed Iran, the House Foreign Affairs Committee signed a letter to President Obama calling for him to increase pressure on the Islamic Republic, [The Washington Times](#) reported. "Our diplomatic goal must be to reach a negotiated settlement in which Iran agrees to verifiably dismantle its nuclear weapons program," states the letter. "For this outcome to be realized, Iran must face intensifying pressure." Iranian leaders argue that the nuclear program is peaceful, but refuse to allow the Obama administration and its allies access to facilities to prove such claims. The House members who wrote to Obama pointed to a report by the International Atomic Energy Agency which cited acceleration in Iran's nuclear activities. "Our diplomacy and sanctions strategies must reflect these dangerous realities," they wrote.

Rouhani calls for change in privacy policies

Hassan Rouhani, president-elect of Iran, reached out to government and clergy officials to encourage an end to government meddling in the lives of Iranians. His message is consistent with his "moderate" platform that led to Rouhani's victory. [Reuters](#) reported that he encouraged officials to loosen media control, increase government transparency, and end government interference in personal matters stating that "a strong government does not mean a government that interferes and intervenes in all affairs. It is not a government that limits the lives of people". A monopoly over state television and a ban on satellite and foreign new broadcasts are policies that many of Iranians wish to see change, but Rouhani's ability to do so may be limited. The decisions of the majority

conservative camp in parliament and ultimately the decisions of Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei will determine the course of policy change in Iran.

ISRAEL AND THE PALESTINIANS

Chaos in Middle East Grows as the U.S. Focuses on Israel

While the political landscape in Syria and Egypt is increasingly unstable, the United States has stayed focused on one of its central goals: a viable peace agreement between the Israelis and Palestinians. Secretary of State John Kerry is currently wrapping up his fifth visit to the region in just 3 months dedicated to renewing the peace process. While critics have said that the focus should be elsewhere, according to [The New York Times](#), U.S. officials believe the focus on the peace process is particularly critical because of the chaos elsewhere in the region. While Kerry is committed to staying focused on the peace process, others fear that this is not the optimal time for peace. Ghaith al-Omari, executive director of the American Task Force on Palestine was consistent with this theory saying that “to reach a deal, you need Arab support from Saudi Arabia and Egypt. With all the chaos, you might not get that”. With a strong focus from the U.S. currently on the peace process, the priorities may be likely to shift in the coming weeks.

Abbas praises Kerry, says window for peace deal closing

Secretary John Kerry has just recently completed his fifth trip to the Middle East in four months. The state department has considered this visit to be progressive with regards to the Arab-Israeli peace process. According to [The Jerusalem Post](#), President Abbas of the PA had stated after Kerry’s visit, “We are optimistic because Kerry is serious and determined to achieve a solution”. Abbas continued to say that Kerry had promised to return to the region within a week. Right now it is the ambition of the United States to facilitate direct negotiations between the Israelis and Palestinians. Prime Minister Netanyahu has openly stated that he was willing to do so. By contrast, Abbas has set out various “pre-conditions” before coming to the table. The United States has expressed that the only way genuine peace can be achieved between the Palestinians and Israelis is through direct negotiations.

ISRAEL IN THE NEWS

Israeli doctors save Syrian lives

A lack of peace between Israel and Syria does not stop Israeli doctors from admitting severely injured patients into hospitals in Northern Israel. Reports [cite](#) between 50 and 100 cases of Syrians injured in the bloodshed of the civil war being treated at Ziv and Western Galilee Medical Center, two Israeli hospitals. Both hospitals feel their role as a regional hospital is to help all those in need of humanitarian aid, and as Dr. Oscar Embon of Ziv Medical Center commented “We treat patients regardless of religion, race, nationality and give the best care we can provide”. Upon eruption of the civil war in Syria, Israel’s Health Ministry and Defense Ministry allotted \$830,000 to fund hospital treatment of Syrians. These funds have been used by the IDF to set up a field hospital on the Syrian border, and the IDF also grants permission to those in need of critical care to enter into Israel for treatment.