Bureaucratic Factors in Barack Obama's Policy Towards Egypt's Protests in January-February 2011

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Abstract:

There is a dearth in the literature on the White days of the street protests in Cairo which overthrew former Egyptian President Mohamed Hosni Mubarak in February 2011. During the eighteen days, members of the Barack Hussein Obama House's decision making process during the eighteen Administrations disagreed over the extent to which they should support their strategic ally Mubarak on the one hand or the protesters' demands for democratization on the other hand. Foreign policy theories, such as the Bureaucratic Politics Model (BPM), may potentially be used to explain the reaction of different members of the Obama Administration. Testing the reaction of the Obama Administration during the eighteen days of the protests in Cairo against the main assumptions of the BPM, this paper argues that the BPM's explanation of Obama's policies was not strong enough. It was ultimately President Obama's personal beliefs and ideas which determined the American foreign policy towards Cairo during these protests.

ملخص:

لا يوجد الكثير من البحث العلمي عن سياسات البيت الأبيض الأمريكي تجاه مظاهرات 25 يناير 2011 المناهضة للرئيس المصري الأسبق محمد حسني مبارك .في أثناء الأيام الثمانية عشر من المظاهرات، إنقسم أعضاء إدارة الرئيس الأمريكي باراك حسين أوباما حول مـــدى التأييد لمبارك حليف واشنطن الإستراتيجي من ناحية، مقابل مدى التأييــد للمتظاهريـن ذوي المطالب الديمقراطية من ناحية أخرى .إن نظريات تحليل السياسة الخارجية، مثل نظرية السياسات البيروقراطية، قد يتم استخدامها لتقديم تفسيراً عقلانياً لردود فعل أعضاء إدارة أوباما .بمقارنة الأحداث في البيت الأبيض بفرضيات نظرية السياسات البيروقراطية، تقدم هذه الورقة أطروحة مفادها أن نظرية السياسات البيروقراطية لا تقدم تفسيراً قويا لسياسات أوباما في هذه الفترة . إن إعتقادات أوباما الشخصية هي التي حددت السياسة الأمريكية تجاه التظاهرات المصرية.

Introduction:

On January 25, 2011, protests broke out in Egypt, calling for political reform and the secession of Egyptian President Mohamed Hosni Mubarak from power. The protests took the administration of American President Barack Hussein Obama by surprise, and they caused confusion and disagreement within the administration on how to respond to the anti-Mubarak demonstrations. Old-school traditionalist members of the administration called for democratic transition in Egypt on a slow, careful pace, fearing that a fast transition would threaten the stability of Egypt. On the other hand, the younger generation of the Obama Administration staff, the so-called "Obamians", called for a faster, more radical tone of democratic transition in Egypt.

One important aspect of Obama's foreign policy is his closeness to his inner circle of "Obamians". The Obamians is a team of young staffers who worked on Obama's presidential campaign in 2008 and helped him shape his ideology and political personality. He later appointed them to his national security team, and relied on them as close advisors. They had little foreign policy experience before they entered office with the Obama Administration, and they were not familiar with the mechanisms and restraints of decision-making. Rather, they had their own beliefs which were more lenient towards supporting human rights and democratization. This made them take a harsher stance against Mubarak, and support American military intervention in Libya, unlike the older generation members of the Obama Administration who had a more pragmatic view of the world. The Obamians included Deputy National Security Advisor Ben Rhodes, Deputy National Security Advisor Denis McDonough, Special Assistant to the President on Human Rights Samantha Power, National Security Advisor to the Vice President Anthony Blinken, US Ambassador to the United Nations Suzan Rice, Deputy National Security Advisor John Brennan, and foreign policy advisor Michael McFaul (Mann 2012, p. xviii-xiv, 66-80).

There is a dearth in the literature on the foreign policy making of the Obama Administration during the eighteen days of the January 25 events in Egypt, and this paper is an attempt to fill this gap. Furthermore, the competition over foreign policy action within any American administration (like the one stated above) may potentially show the utility of the Bureaucratic Politics Model (BPM). The BPM analyzes foreign policy making by focusing on the competition between different bureaucracies, or different institutions, within the government, and how this competition results in a final decision on foreign policy action. Therefore, this paper tests the actions of the Obama Administration, during the events in Egypt, against the assumptions of the BPM. However, this paper argues that Washington's response to the January 25, 2011 events in Cairo did not reflect the Bureaucratic Politics Model (BPM). Rather, Washington's response and foreign policy making reflected Obama's personal presidential preferences. This is because the different institutions did not adhere to the positions which they were expected to hold under the BPM analysis.

H1: Obama's response to the January 25, 2011 events in Egypt runs counter to the Bureaucratic Politics Model.

I will test the decision-making process of the Obama Administration during the eighteen days of the January 25, 2011 events, and compare them to the three assumptions of the Bureaucratic Politics Model (BPM). The first assumption is the Miles' Law: "Where you stand depends on where you sit" (attributed to Rufus E. Miles of Princeton University). The second assumption is "pulling and hauling": that conflict occurs between different government departments, and winning this conflict, or competition, depends on the amount of bargaining influence that each department enjoys. The third assumption is that the final foreign policy decision, or the final result or outcome, is a compromise between the desires of all the competing departments. These three assumptions will be explained in more detail below.

To test for the BPM, the following research questions will be raised, based on the three assumptions of the Bureaucratic Politics Model, to compare the Obama decision-making process during Egypt's protests to the BPM's assumptions:

RQ1: Did the policy preferences of the members of the Obama Administration follow the Miles' Law as advocated by the Bureaucratic Politics Model?

RQ2: Did bargaining, or "pulling and hauling", occur between different members of the Obama Administration? Was there a winner based on bargaining influence?

RQ3: Were President Obama's final decisions on how to deal with the January 25 protests a compromise between the competing departments?

The next section discusses the theoretical framework of the Bureaucratic Politics Model (BPM) and its assumptions in more detail

I - Theoretical Framework: The Bureaucratic Politics Model (BPM):

In their early works on analyzing the American foreign policy during the Cuban Missile Crisis and the Vietnam War, Allison and Halperin (1972) introduced the Bureaucratic Politics Model (BPM). The model implied that American foreign policy is not just articulated by the President of the United States. Rather, it is the results of the interaction of several bureaucratic actors within the American government, where each bureaucratic actor sees foreign policy goals and tools from his/her own perspective:

The "maker" of government policy is not one calculating decision-maker, but rather a conglomerate of large organizations and political actors who differ substantially about what their government should do on any particular issue, and who compete in attempting to affect both governmental decisions and the actions of their government. (Allison and Halperin 1972, p. 42).

According to Allison and Halperin's Bureaucratic Politics Model, foreign policy outcomes are a result of the interaction and bargaining between all of these governmental institutions, or, as Allison and Halperin call it, "pushing and hauling":

> This Bureaucratic Politics Model sees no unitary actor but rather many actors as players… Players choose in terms of no consistent set of strategic objectives, but rather according to various conceptions of national security, organizational, domestic, and personal interests. Players make governmental decisions not by a single rational choice, but by "pulling and hauling". (This by no means implies that individual players are not acting rationally, given their interests) (Allison and Halperin 1972, 43).

Based on the above, Marsh (2014) deduced that the BPM has three basic assumptions: The first assumption is that the foreign policy views of any "player" in the American government depends on his bureaucratic post, or job. This reflects the Miles' Law: "Where you stand depends on where you sit." For example, the Department of State would prefer diplomatic solutions to problems, while the Department of Defence would prefer military solutions. This was seen, for instance, in the failed American military operation to save the American hostages in Iran in April 1980 (Operation Desert One), when the State Department opposed the military operation, while the Department of Defence supported it (Goldstein and Pevehouse 2014, p. 137). The second assumption is that conflict and disagreement about foreign policy actions ("pulling and hauling") occurs between different players in the government, and that these players get involved in a process of "bargaining" in order to convince the president of their views. The success or failure of each player, in convincing the president, depends on the player's "bargaining influence" vis-à-vis the other players; the higher the player's bargaining influence, the more powerful he is,

and the more likely he is to succeed at convincing the president. The third assumption is that the foreign policy outcome, which results from this conflict and bargaining process, is a compromise among all of the competing views (Marsh 2014, passim).

Nevertheless, the Bureaucratic Politics Model is not without its critics. For example, using evidence from the Cuban Missile Crisis and other incidents, Krasner (1972) argues that the BPM ignores the real extent of the president's decision-making power. Rather, argues Krasner, the bureaucracies are only as influential as the president allows them to be. The bureaucracies will be in control of an issue "only if presidential interest and attention are absent". In other words, if a president is highly interested in a certain issue, then he will become directly involved in it, and will not allow the bureaucracies to take over: "The ability of bureaucracies to independently establish policies is a function of presidential attention… The Chief Executive involves himself in those areas which he determines to be important" (Krasner 1972, p. 168)

Similarly, using evidence from the SALT I decision-making process during the Lyndon Johnson and Richard Nixon Administrations, Rosati (1981) argues that the President of the United States has the ultimate power, and that the BPM would hold only if the President allows the bureaucracies to dominate. The President would allow the bureaucracies to dominate only if the issue in question does not attract enough presidential attention. If the issue is crucial, however, the president will pay a high amount of attention, and "presidential dominance" will prevail instead of "bureaucratic dominance". Rosati argues, therefore, that "the president's level of involvement is the critical factor accounting for the difference in decision-making behavior.", and that "a president can be an omnipotent player if he so desires." "Thus, when the issue is extremely critical, the president and his closest advisors are likely to become heavily involved." In sum, argues Rosati: "Two factors are principally responsible for the structure of decision-making that occurs within the executive branch: the level of presidential attention and involvement, and the level of individual and organizational attention and

involvement." Based on these two factors, Rosati generates a number of hypotheses: Firstly, that "Presidential Dominance is prevalent when presidential involvement is high." Secondly, that "Bureaucratic Dominance is prevalent when individual and organizational involvement are high, and presidential involvement is low." Thirdly, that "the more critical the issue, the more likely it is that the Presidential Dominance structure of decision-making will occur" (Rosati 1981, passim).

The next section presents the literature on Egypt, the literature on democratization in American foreign policy, and the literature on the Obama Administration.

II - Literature Review

A - US policy towards Egypt: Egypt as a "pivotal state":

Chase, Hill and Kennedy (1996) describe Egypt as one of the so-called "pivotal states" in the world, due to its large population, its important geographical location, and, most importantly, regional influence. They describe a "pivotal state" as follows:

> What really defines a pivotal state is its capacity to affect regional and international stability. A pivotal state is so important regionally that its collapse would spell trans-boundary mayhem: migration, communal violence… and so on. A pivotal state's steady economic progress and stability, on the other hand, would bolster its region's economic vitality and political soundness and benefit American trade and investment. (Chase et al 1996, p. 37)

Egypt's pivotal status was provided by its geographic proximity to vital oil regions, and Cairo's involvement in the Arab-Israeli peace process. Mubarak's government provided a bulwark against radical Islamic fundamentalism. According to Chase, Hill and Kennedy, the collapse of the Mubarak regime would damage American interests "more than the Iranian revolution [in 1979] did." The Arab-Israeli peace process, a key factor of US foreign policy in the Middle East, would suffer "serious, perhaps irreparable, harm." Furthermore,

> An unstable Egypt would undermine the American diplomatic plan of isolating fundamentalist 'rogue' states in the region and encourage extremist opposition to governments everywhere from Algeria to Turkey. The fall of the Mubarak regime could well lead Saudi Arabia to reevaluate its pro-Western stance... Finally, the effect on oil and financial markets worldwide could be enormous. (Chase et al 1996, p. 40).

Obama's rhetoric before the 2011 events did reflect these beliefs. In a BBC interview on June 2, 2009, Obama described Mubarak as "a stalwart ally to the US", that "he has sustained peace with Israel," and therefore Obama believed that Mubarak was "a force for good and stability in the region." (Obama 2009b).

B- US policy towards democratization in the Middle East:

There are authors who argue that the United States maintains authoritarianism in Egypt (and the Arab World in general) because it has strategic interests with these authoritarian regimes. According to Perry (2004) for example, the failure of most regimes in the Arab world, especially Egypt, to democratize was "seen in large part as a function of Washington's need to for allies in the area." This is

especially true, since Washington's policies made America "too unpopular for democratic governments maintain such alliances with." Therefore, Washington's "fear of democracy" caused it to support authoritarian regimes such as that of Mubarak. This was seen in George W. Bush's rhetoric after his failure to control Iraq, where he rhetorically called for democratization but, in reality, sought help from authoritarian regimes (Perry 2004, passim).

Nodia (2014) offers a similar argument, that the constraints of national interests in democratic governments prevent their international democratization efforts:

> Democratic governments do not have the power to turn all autocracies into democracies. Moreover, even democratic governments remain obliged to serve the security and economic interests of their own respective nations… Democracies, in other words, have no choice but to carry on pragmatic relations with autocratic governments: signing oil and gas deals with them, balancing less dangerous dictators against more threatening ones, and the like. (Nodia 2014, pp. 140-141)

It is this conflict between democratization and strategic interests which caused the disagreement among members of the Obama Administration over how to respond to the January 25 demonstrations.

C- Obama's Foreign Policy Making:

Seeing a gap in analysing Obama's decision to apply a troop surge in Afghanistan in 2009, particularly using any formal foreign policy making models, Marsh (2014) tested for the Bureaucratic Politics Model (BPM) in this surge decision. He tested the decision-making process in the White House against the three main assumptions of the BPM. These assumptions were as follows: First, that the policy preferences of each actor was determined by his/her formal position in the American Government (which is the Miles' Law: "Where you stand depends on where you sit"). Second, bargaining and conflict takes placed between the different actors in the government ("pulling and hauling"), and the more the

bargaining advantage an actor has, the more influence he will have on policymaking. Third, that "pulling and hauling" among actors will lead to a final decision based on a compromise. Seeing a match between the decision making process in Obama's Afghanistan surge on the one hand, and the three assumptions of the BPM on the other hand, Marsh concluded that the BPM provided a "compelling and descriptively accurate account" to Obama's decision to start the Afghanistan troop surge (Marsh 2014, passim).

In a similar fashion, following the tradition and methodology of Marsh (2014), Blomdahl (2016) tested Obama's decision to launch a military attack on Libya in 2011 against the three assumptions of the BPM. Blomdahl concluded the following: The first assumption, "where you stand depends on where you sit", did not hold. Secretary of Defence Robert Gates and the military establishment were against the military campaign on Libya, seeing that the United States was already overstretched in Afghanistan and Iraq. Members of Obama's National Security Advisor team, all of whom had humanitarian beliefs, supported the military campaign. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton was against military intervention at first, then switched sides and agreed to it. The second assumption on bargaining and bargaining influence did successfully hold, since there was apparent "pulling and hauling" between members of the Obama Administration. The third assumption, that the final decision was a compromise, did not hold, as Obama followed the advice of his close advisors in the National Security Council and did not follow the advice of senior staff with traditional thoughts, like the Department of Defence or Secretary of Defence Robert Gates. Thus, the BPM did not hold in Obama's decision to launch a military campaign against the Qaddafi regime in 2011 (Blomdahl 2016, passim).

In the tradition of Marsh (2014) and Blomdahl, (2016), this paper tests the decision making process in the White House during the January 25, 2011 protests against the three assumptions of the BPM.

The next section presents the historical background of the eighteen days of the anti-Mubarak protests, and the section that follows will compare these events to the three assumptions of the BPM.

III – The Historical Background:

Obama's policies towards the eighteen-day anti-Mubarak protests in 2011 can be divided into stages. The first stage was between January 25 and February 1, when Obama did not call for Mubarak to resign. The second stage came on February 1, 2011 when Obama phoned Mubarak and asked him to resign. The third stage came in the final few days of the protests, when it was clear that Mubarak would eventually fall. These events will be tested against the three assumptions of the Bureaucratic Politics Model.

The First Stage: From January 25 to February 1, 2011: Dual-Track:

When the protests against the Mubarak regime first broke on January 25, 2011, the Obama Administration was divided on how to respond. The National Security team, including Denis McDonough, John Brennan, Samantha Power and Ben Rhodes urged strong support for the demonstrators. They wanted Obama to be "on the right side of history" and feared that if he did not support the protesters, then he would be perceived as betraying the principles which he laid out in his 2009 Cairo University speech, when he called for democratization and reform. They also saw that reform and democratization would lead to stability. (The Obamians were sensitive to the criticism from some conservatives and human rights activists that Obama was too slow and cautious in reacting to the developments in Tunisia in 2010-2011).

On the other hand, the traditionalists in the Obama Administration, who were set in the traditional foreign policy establishment and way of thinking, urged caution and feared the consequences of abandoning Mubarak. These included Vice President Joe Biden, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, Secretary of Defence Robert Gates and National Security Advisor Thomas Donilon. They urged for an

orderly democratic transition in Egypt, in order to prevent a power void which could be filled by radical Islamic groups, as in Iran's 1979 revolution.

Both sides agreed that democratic reform in Egypt was essential, but they disagreed on the extent of the reform and on the fate of Mubarak. (This rift between both groups will become more evident as the situation in Egypt develops, especially after Mubarak's speech on February 1, 2011.) These divisions within the Obama Administration were not on the basis of the Miles Law, i.e.; not on the basis of "Where you stand depends on where you sit." Rather, the stances of the Obamians were based on their personal beliefs rather than their posts in the national security team. As Obama himself described this division within his administration, this divide was "almost entirely along generational lines." (Obama 2020, p. 644).

Obama was generally more lenient to the first group; the "Obamian" junior advisers. He saw that his stance would be a triumph for both of idealism (pressing for democratic change) and realism (maintaining stability and US national interests). (Cooper, Landler and Sanger 2011, Gates 2014, p. 504-505, Gerges 2012, p. 165, Mann 2012, p. 266-267, and Sanger 2012, p. 291).

During the first stage of the protests, however, Obama did not disagree a lot with the traditionalists in his administration, and seemed to support Egyptian democratization without calling for the abdication of Mubarak. On January 25, the first day of protests in Egypt, US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton said in a press conference that Washington supported "the fundamental right of expression and assembly for all people," and urged all parties to "exercise restraint and refrain from violence." In keeping with the traditionalist views, Clinton gave what she called in her memoirs a "measured response", where she added that Washington's assessment was that "the Egyptian government is stable" (Clinton 2014, p. 339 and Clinton 2011d). On January 26, the second day of protests, Clinton urged the Egyptian government to start reforms immediately, saying: "We believe strongly that the Egyptian government has an important

opportunity at this moment in time to implement political, economic and social reforms to respond to the legitimate needs and interests of the Egyptian people." But she did not call for the removal of Mubarak. The White House took a similar stance, as White House spokesman Robert Gibbs said: "This is an important time for the [Mubarak] government to demonstrate its responsibilities to the people of Egypt in recognizing those universal rights" (Mohamed 2011). On the next day, January 27, Obama was careful to show his support to Mubarak amid the continued protests, saying that Mubarak was "very helpful on a range of tough issues," but added that "making sure that they are moving forward on reform - political reform, economic reform - is absolutely critical for the long-term well-being of Egypt." (Spetalnik and Alexander 2011a). In another sign that Washington was still treading cautiously, Vice President Joe Biden, when asked about Mubarak's authoritarian rule in an interview with PBS on January 27, said: "Look, Mubarak has been an ally of ours in a number of things, and he's been very responsible on... geopolitical interests in the region: Middle East peace efforts, the actions Egypt has taken relative to normalizing the relationship with Israel... I would not refer to him as a dictator" ("Exclusive" 2011 and Spetalnik and Alexander 2011b).

These remarks from Obama and his White House, and from the Secretary of State, showed that the traditionalists in Washington wanted genuine change originating from the Egyptian government, instead of an overthrow similar to what happened in Tunisia. It also seemed that, for the time being, Obama did not call for an abdication of Mubarak. On this basis, said a senior US official, the Obama Administration pursued a "dual-track" approach, with US diplomats reaching out to Mubarak government officials and, at the same time, to Egyptian democracy activists, in order to encourage a peaceful dialogue for reform. (Spetalnik and Alexander 2011a and Spetalnik and Alexander 2011b).

Things started to take a different turn on Friday January 28, the so-called Friday of Anger when violent clashes between the protesters and the riot police reached unprecedented levels. On that day, Washington warned Egypt on economic and

military aid, which amounted to about $1.5 billion in Fiscal Year 2010, as Gibbs said: "We will be reviewing our assistance posture based on events that take place in the coming days... We are watching very closely the actions of the government, of the police, of all the security forces and all of those in the military. That their actions may affect our assistance would be the subject of that review." (Mason and Mohammad 2011).

On January 30, however, Clinton told Christiane Amanpour of ABC News that the United States did not intend to cut military aid to Egypt, despite the White House announcement that the aid was under review. "There is no discussion as of this time about cutting off any aid," said Clinton. "We always are looking and reviewing our aid." (Clinton 2011b and Landler 2011a)

On January 29, Mubarak appointed Omar Suleiman, head of Egypt's intelligence agency, as vice president. On January 30, Clinton said that appointing a vice president in Egypt was indeed a demand of Washington's for years, but Suleiman's appointment as VP was only the "bare beginning" of a "process that leads to the kind of concrete steps to achieve democratic and economic reform" (Clinton 2011b). "We have been very clear that we want to see a transition to democracy," Clinton told Fox News on January 30, "and we want to see the kind of steps taken to bring that about... We want to see an orderly transition" (Clinton 2011a). Clinton later wrote in her memoir that she preferred to stress that the transition should be "orderly" rather than "immediate". (Clinton 2014, p. 341). Being a traditionalist, Clinton was wary of the consequences of a sudden departure of Mubarak, given that the Middle East had potential sources of instability such as the Arab-Israeli conflict, the Iranian nuclear program, and Islamic militancy. At the same time, she wanted to remain true to the American ideals of freedom and democracy (Clinton 2014, p. 339-345). She therefore supported a process that must include a national dialogue between Mubarak and the protesters, and "free, fair and credible" elections, which were scheduled for September 2011 (Landler 2011a).

However, Washington supported Suleiman to play the pivotal role in the transition process in Egypt, meaning that Washington was still relying on the existing government to manage the democratic transition (Cooper and Sanger 2011). Washington's support to Suleiman was also complimented by the fact that Suleiman was Israel's preferable choice to succeed Mubarak (Donnison 2011 and "Wikileaks" 2011). (When asked by ABC and Fox News about her statement five days earlier that the Egyptian government was "stable", Clinton replied that the situation in Egypt was "volatile.") (Clinton 2011a and Clinton 2011b). On January 30, Clinton reiterated her calls for reform under Mubarak, as she told CBS that Washington asked the Egyptian authorities to "start a process of national dialogue that will lead to a transition" to democracy and that they expected Mubarak to keep his promises of economic and democratic reform ("Face the Nation" 2011).

So far, the Bureaucratic Politics Model is not very clear. The fact that the Obamians base their policies on personal ideologies, rather than their national security posts, run contrary to the Miles Law (BPM's first assumption). Pushing and hauling (BPM's second assumption) is evident in the debate between the Obamians and the traditionalists. Finally, during this first stage of the Egyptian revolution, Obama and the traditionalists seem to be trying to balance between American ideals and American interests, while the Obamians saw that America's interests lied in leaning towards the demonstrators.

During the first few days of the crisis, Obama did not put too much pressure on Mubarak to reform or step down. The major turning point came on February 1, when Mubarak delivered a defiant speech which will lead Obama to take a harsher stance against Mubarak and lean even further towards the Obamians' stance.

The Second Stage: Obama's Policy Shift: Mubarak's Defiant Speech:

Before February 1, Obama wanted to put pressure on Mubarak on reform without asking him to resign. He did not lose sight of Mubarak's usefulness to Washington. However, the turning point, or moment of reckoning, for Obama came on February 1 after a defiant speech by Mubarak (Cooper, Landler and Sanger 2011, Cooper and Worth 2012, Gerges 2012, p. 166, Mann 2012, p. 262, and Landler, Cooper and Kirkpatrick 2011).

On the night of February 1, Cairo time, Mubarak delivered a defiant speech where he said that he would not run for reelection in September 2011 (the date of the upcoming presidential elections in Egypt), and said that he would stay, as president, to supervise political reforms in Egypt. However, he spent most of the speech talking about the protests being enticed by anti-Egypt conspiracies. He did not lift the emergency law, and did not promise that his son, Gamal Mubarak, would not run for election. He also did not specify the kinds of reforms which he was talking about, or provide guarantees that they would be acheived (Obama 2020, p. 646-647 and Sanger 2012, p. 295-296).

Obama was not convinced that Mubarak's pledges were sufficient or sincere, or that they would stabilize Egypt. "I could have lived with any genuine transition plan he might have presented, even if it left much of the regime's existing network intact," said Obama (Obama 2020, p. 648). But Mubarak speech did not offer this. "That is not going to cut it" said Obama about Mubarak's speech (Clinton 2014, p. 343 and Obama 2020, p. 647). After that speech, Obama started to see Mubarak as a liability to the United States, and that Mubarak is no longer a factor for stability in Egypt (Gerges 2012, p. 167). According to Donilon: "Obama thought that it was a futile effort to try to save Mubarak. Mubarak was doomed". Obama said that "History is moving here, and we have to be on the right side of history" (Sanger 2012, p. 295).

On February 1, Brennan, Rhodes, McDonough and Blinken (all "Obamians") urged Obama to call Mubarak and tell him to leave office in the next few days. Biden, Clinton, Donilon and Gates, on the other hand, continued to urge caution

against a hasty political change in Egypt. In the end, they all agreed that Obama should call Mubarak, congratulate him on the steps he took, and urge his early departure (Gates 2014, p. 505 - 506). In a tense phone call, Obama called Mubarak, congratulated him on the steps he took, and told him to step aside. Obama told Mubarak that if he stayed in office and "dragged out the transition process, then the protests will continue and possibly spin out of control." Obama added that stepping down would ensure the election of a government that was not dominated by the Muslim Brothers, adding that Mubarak can "use his stature behind the scenes to help usher in a new Egyptian government." Mubarak got angry, and told Obama that he does not understand Egyptian culture. "You don't understand this part of the world. You're young," Mubarak told Obama. Both men never spoke to each other again (Cooper and Worth 2012, Mann 2012, p. 263, and Obama 2020, p. 647).

After the phone call, there was debate within the administration over what Obama should say in a public statement. The traditionalists urged caution and warned against an American heavy handed policy against Mubarak which might backfire. The Obamians, on the other hand, said that events in Egypt were moving too fast and that Obama had to keep up. Obama took the Obamian side (Clinton 2014, p. 343). "Let's prepare a statement. We're calling on Mubarak to step down now," said Obama (Obama 2020, p. 648). Thus, he gave a public speech on February 1, where he issued a vague statement that an "orderly transition must be meaningful, it must be peaceful, and it must begin now" (Shadid 2011). Obama has used the word "transition" in public. He did not want to say the word "resign" in public because he did not want to seem that he was interfering in Egypt's internal affairs (Mann 2012, p. 264). Furthermore, while preparing for the speech, Gates urged Obama not to use the word "now", but the junior advisers insisted on using the word "now". Obama eventually used the word "now" in the speech (Gates p. 506). "If 'now' is not in my remarks, there's no point in me going out there and talking," said Obama to his aides (Cooper and Worth 2012).

On February 2, Robert Gibbs made his famous "now means now" and "now means yesterday" statement. When asked whether the White House was "satisfied with Mubarak in power until September", Gibbs avoided the question and said: "I am not going to get into all the details." (Gibbs 2011).

The rift among members of the Obama Administration would continue, and this would be seen in the Frank Wisner incident: During the early stages of the protests, in an effort to keep with the "dual-track" approach of supporting Mubarak and trying to satisfy the protesters' demands, Obama sent Frank Wisner, a former ambassador to Egypt, to Mubarak to open a "two-way dialogue" according to a senior administration official. Wisner arrived in Cairo on January 31. (It was Clinton's suggestion to send Wisner) (Landler 2011b and Mann 262).

On February 5, however, Wisner, who came from the old school of foreign policy, made an embarrassing remark, as he said that Mubarak was an "old friend" of the United States, that Mubarak "must stay in office in order to steer" the change towards democracy, and that "Mubarak's continued leadership is critical, it's his opportunity to write his own legacy." This statement shocked the democratic opposition in Egypt and cast doubts over Washington's commitment to real reform in Egypt (Cooper, Landler and Sanger 2011).

Obama was outraged at Wisner, and he ordered his administration to say publicly that Wisner was only speaking for himself, and ordered his staff to "pull the messaging [on Egypt] into the White House" (Mann 2012, p. 265, Sanger 2012, p. 300). A senior Obama Administration official said that Wisner "was speaking for himself and not for the US Government." Furthermore, the US State Department, Clinton, and even Wisner himself, later said that his remarks were made in a "personal capacity" (Fisk 2011). If the Wisner incident showed anything, it showed the continuous rift in the Obama Administration on how to deal with Mubarak (Sanger 2012, p. 300).

However, Clinton, too, made remarks which showed that she agreed with Wisner that Mubarak should stay, thus adding to the confusion (Mann 2012, p. 265-6, Sanger 2012, p. 300-301). Clinton repeatedly expressed concern that a hasty exit of Mubarak would complicate Egypt's transition to democracy given the lack of a political culture there (Cooper, Landler and Sanger 2011). Clinton publicly warned on February 5 that transition to democracy "can backslide into just another authoritarian regime. Revolutions have overthrown dictators in the name of democracy only to see the political process hijacked by new autocrats who use violence, deception, and rigged elections to stay in power or to advance an agenda of extremism" (Clinton 2011c). On February 6, she reiterated the warnings that reforms should not be rushed, saying that "we want to play a constructive role in helping countries move in the direction of more openness and more democracy and participation and market access... But it is the case that some countries will move at different paces." Furthermore, a senior administration official, speaking on the condition of anonymity, said that Washington wanted reforms that would unfold "over the medium term" because Egypt was "a country that is not used to democracy as we know it, and it is going to take a while for them to get used to the idea" (Richter and Cloud, 2011).

During the second stage of the Egyptian demonstrations, there was a clear disagreement among members of the Obama Administration on how to respond to Mubarak's speech. Eventually, Obama took the sides of the Obamians and urged Mubarak to resign (although not publicly). The Bureaucratic Politics Model (BPM) again did not offer a complete analysis in this stage. The idealistic beliefs of the Obamians in the national security team run counter to the Miles Law, thus disproving the BPM's first assumption. Pulling and hauling did exist, thus supporting the BPM's second assumption. However, Obama has squarely taken the side of the Obamians instead of adopting a compromise between the Obamians and the traditionalists, thus disproving the BPM's third assumption.

The Final Stage: Mubarak Steps Down:

However, towards the end of the crisis, as Mubarak was standing on his last leg, the Obama Administration started to lean heavier towards the protesters' cause. On the morning of Thursday February 10, CIA Director Leon Panetta told a Congressional hearing that there was "a strong likelihood that Mubarak may step down this evening" ("DNI James Clapper" 2011). In the early afternoon on the same day, Obama told an audience in Michigan that "We are witnessing history unfold" in Egypt. (Obama 2011). His remarks were broadcast live on Egyptian state TV (Cornwall 2011). Indeed, on the night of Friday February 11, 2011, Cairo time, Suleiman announced that Mubarak has stepped down from power. Shortly afterwards, Obama gave a speech, praising the protesters in Egypt and their quest for freedom and democracy (Sanger 2011). This showed a general agreement among members of the Obama Administration that it became futile to try to support Mubarak, therefore the Bureaucratic Politics Model (BPM) would not hold in this stage due to lack of serious disagreement.

The next section will give a general summary of the comparison of the events above events with the three assumptions of the Bureaucratic Politics Model.

IV - Findings: Comparing The Events to the BPM Assumptions:

This section will compare Washington's decision-making process during the Egyptian protests to the assumptions of the BPM. If there is a match, then the BPM provides a sound explanation to Obama's decision-making process.

The First Assumption: The Miles Law:

The Miles' Law says that an actor's bureaucratic interest is to achieve the interests of his/her department or organisation. The bureaucratic positions of Vice President Biden, Secretary of Defence Gates and Secretary of State Clinton, might have supported their traditional national security stance not to call for Mubarak's fast departure. On the other hand, there is little evidence that the personal views or convictions of the young Obamians, the junior members of the

National Security Advisor team, would have changed depending on the bureaucratic position they held. Their aggressive pro-democratic, pro-human rights stance against Mubarak and their insistence on Mubarak's departure was due to personal beliefs which they had, regardless of their posts. Thus, the Miles' Law ("where you stand depends on where you sit") only provided a partial explanation here   .

The Second Assumption: "Pulling and Hauling": Political Bargaining and Bargaining Influence:

The Bureaucratic Politics Model says that political bargaining and competition between actors to influence the final decision ("pulling and hauling") is a key ingredient of the foreign policy making process. Indeed, "pulling and hauling" did occur. The BPM also says that the more bargaining influence an actor has, the more likely he is to affect the final foreign policy decision. This was evident with the young Obamians, whose personal closeness to President Obama helped them shape his foreign policy decisions on Egypt.

The Third Assumption: The Resultant Policy is a Compromise:

The BPM says that the resultant final policy decision is the result of a political compromise between the actors, based on the bargaining between them. However, the evidence in Obama's reaction to the January 25 protests shows that it was not a compromise, and that Obama was lenient towards his own ideals and those of his national security team (the Obamians) to take a harsh stance against Mubarak.

The first assumption (the Miles' Law) and the third assumption (the resulting compromise) of the BPM did not hold, while the second assumption (political bargaining and bargaining influence) did hold. Thus, the BPM did not hold because, during this crisis situation in a pivotal country (Egypt), President Obama was highly interested and highly involved in the decision-making process, allowing him to use his presidential powers to shape the American foreign policy making in this incident.

V - Conclusion:

Only one of the three assumptions of the Bureaucratic Politics Model ("pulling and hauling") was confirmed in the American reaction to the January 25 protests in Egypt. The other two assumptions (The Miles' Law, and the result as a compromise) were disconfirmed. Therefore, the BPM did not hold in this situation. This is because the crisis situation attracted the presidential attention and led President Obama to show his ideological and personal beliefs. Krasner and Rosati's criticisms of the BPM proved correct. President Obama paid special attention to the crisis in Egypt, and therefore did not allow the bureaucracies to dominate. Therefore, we saw a case of Rosati's "Presidential Domination". There is a research opportunity to further examine Obama's personal beliefs and ideology and see how they fit in the theory of foreign policy analysis, perhaps expanding on Rosati's "Presidential Domination" and see how it fits in Obama's foreign policy decisions, especially in a crisis situation.

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