

UMD poll: Egyptians see military putting brake on revolution 2:1

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A new University of Maryland public opinion poll finds Egyptians harboring serious doubts about their military's commitment to the revolution that ousted the Mubarak regime last spring.

In the poll, 43 percent of [Egyptians](#) said they believe military authorities are working against the aims of the revolution, compared to nearly 21 percent who saw them as advancing these aims.

"There appears to be a major shift in Egyptian [public attitudes](#) toward military authorities, and this will likely have important consequences for politics there in coming weeks," says University of Maryland Sadat Professor and researcher Shibley Telhami, who conducts polling in Egypt and other Arab nations each year in conjunction with Zogby International.

"Egyptians have continuously expressed trust in the military institution, particularly in the early weeks after the fall of Mubarak, but this new survey suggests a loss of confidence that will be hard to address simply through modest steps, including the change of transitional government," Telhami adds.

The surveys were conducted in five [Arab nations](#) in October 2011: Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco and the [United Arab Emirates](#). The sample size is 3,000, and the margin of error is plus or minus 1.8 percent.

Among Telhami's other conclusions from polling in Egypt:

"The poll reveals that Turkey is the biggest winner of the Arab Spring, seen to have played the 'most constructive' role in these event," Telhami concludes. "It's Prime Minister is the most admired among world leaders, and those who envision a new President for Egypt want that person to look most like him. Egyptians want their country to look more like Turkey than any of the other Muslim, Arab or other choices provided."

"Arabs in the five countries studied appear to overwhelmingly favor the rebels over the governments in Yemen, Syria, and Bahrain, though the support varies from country to country," Telhami says. "Still, they remain suspicious of foreign intervention and highly divided, even with respect to the international intervention in Libya."

KEY SURVEY FINDINGS

Egyptian Elections:

*Plurality of Egyptians (43 percent) believe that the military rulers are working to slow or reverse the gains of the revolution, while only 21 percent believe that they are working to advance these gains, and 14 percent believe that the military authorities are indifferent;

*Roughly one-third of Egyptians say they are likely to vote for an Islamic party in Parliamentary elections;

*Of the Egyptian Presidential candidates, Amr Mousa receives the support of 21 percent of those polled, followed by Muhammad ElBaradei and Ahmad Shafiq.

Arab Spring:

*Turkey emerges in the polls the big winner, seen as the "most constructive" player, and its prime minister the most admired among world leaders;

*Iran suffered mixed results. More people in 2011 identify Iran as one of the two biggest threats they face than ever before (18 percent), and a plurality (35 percent) believe that if Iran acquires weapons of mass destruction it would be negative for the Middle East. On the other hand, Iran's President, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad remains relatively popular, and most Arabs (64 percent) still feel Iran has the right to its nuclear program and should not be pressured by the international community to halt it;

*Although France remains relatively popular, it has suffered a major setback in Arab public opinion in comparison with the past several years. While 23 percent said they preferred France if there were only one superpower in 2009, this has now dropped to only 10 percent. This appears related to the issue of the international intervention in Libya: A plurality of Arabs in the five countries polled (46 percent) say the international intervention was a mistake, although this varies from country to country;

*Overall, the Arabs polled strongly take the sides of the rebels against the government in Yemen (89 percent), Syria (86 percent), and Bahrain (64 percent), though support for particular rebels varies regionally;

*A majority of those polled, 55 percent, are more optimistic about the future of the Arab world in light of the Arab Spring, 16 percent are pessimistic and 23 percent feel no change. A majority feel the Arab Spring is mostly about "ordinary people seeking dignity, freedom and a better life," while 19 percent believe it is about foreign powers trying to

stir trouble in the region and 16 percent feel it is about opposition parties or sects seeking to control governments.

More information: Additional findings, including attitudes toward the United States, the Arab-Israeli conflict and media usage are available online: ter.ps/2x

Provided by University of Maryland

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