EGYPTIAN POLICY BASED ON INSIGHTS OF HISTORY OF MUSLIM MOVEMENT AND SALAFI MOVEMENT

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ABSTRACT

The aftermath of the Arab Spring was leaving a great turnover for many countries as the regime changed, so does Egypt. As one of the most influential countries both in the Middle East and North Africa, Egypt's domestic politics is quite dynamics since immemorial time, from numerous kingdoms, West colonialism until republic under the authoritarian regime in this modern days. For once, the dynamics of politics itself comes from the grass-root level whichever reached the top such as al-Ikhwan al-Muslimun or Muslim Brotherhood and Salafi Movements which caught people’s attention, not only in Egypt but the entire world. Both basically have religious intentions as it is considered Islamic movements except for their differences in political experience, religious interpretation and manners overpower contestation. Although Egypt currently is controlled by a military coup regime that tends to perpetuate the power, the Brotherhood and Salafi Movements which likewise spread to many countries still lurking and it might be consolidating the power to turn back the democracy to Egyptian who suffer from authoritarian style regime ever since the establishment of the nation after independence from British colonialism. This paper is aimed to describe the policy of the Islamic movement in Egypt which is based on religious intention and the interaction with politics and democratic goal from the nature of establishment, during the Arab Spring and the prospect for Muslim Brotherhood and Salafi Movements as the unrest recently occured.

Keywords: Democracy, Policy, Muslim Brotherhood, Salafi, Egypt

A. INTRODUCTION

Once upon a time, Egypt was a center of the world when the Pharaohs rule the people to make a great civilization that ancient period. Since those day until recent, Egypt still be able to catch up the attention of the world, though it is not the only one. The uprisings of Middle East guide Arabian and countries in North Africa to a new phase in their history of politics. Yıldırım (2014) states that the phenomenon so-called Policy of the Arab Spring which spread from Tunisia to Egypt, Libya, Syria and Yemen since 2011 ago becomes a landmark of a new period in the Arab world. He emphasizes on the political process in Egypt, a transcontinental country between two civilizations (Arab and Africa) – that brought Salafi movements turn their steps toward politics prior to the January 25 Revolution. Not only that, Muslim Brotherhood who persistently grows in the
grass root also appeared in the meaningful time as they democratically winning the election and led policy the country, though it was cut by the coup.

There is the crossroads between religion and politics along with the perspectives that willing to segregate or combine it in state administration policy for the sake of nation. Since 1981, Egypt was in tyranny of authoritarian regime of Hosni Mubarak that led the nation to rebel in 2011 at Tahrir Square as people succeeded to topple down the longest-standing regime in Egyptian political history. According to Brown (2013) regarding to the Egypt’s revolution, Islam is undeniably playing a different and stronger role to the political movement that risen during the period. Though some institutions such Al-Azhar university and a civil society such Jam’iyya Al-Sunna Al-Muhammadeyya do not engage in direct political practices, it is playing the presence role to guide Egyptian or at least their followers to stand with their political choices (Brown, 2013; Yıldırım, 2014).

Hence, the political situation in Egypt likewise influence the other countries nearby, even further such as Indonesia and Malaysia or even United Kingdom (UK) and United States of America (USA). Geospatially, Egypt holds the policy of Suez Canal and the entrance to Israel’s security, consequently the stability and the instability will significantly influence the nations which have interests, whether economics or politics. In order to have a comprehensive outlook of politics in Egypt, it must begin from the history that exhibits the actors of policy maker and relations which form the present Egypt as a political entity in global politics.

B. CONCEPT

a. Ikhwanul Muslim

Al-Ikhwan al-Muslimun or famously known as Muslim Brotherhood was established in Ismailia on 1928 by Hasan al-Banna and six members of British Labour force camp. Hasan al-Banna who is the son of Sheikh Ahmad al-Banna and the pupil of Sheikh Muhammad Zahran was the most prominent actor in establishing Muslim Brotherhood (Kalyoncu, 2017). His thought about Islam as a comprehensive system (shumuliyya) which establish an order for life in every aspects was mesmerizing many people that who become their followers (Meijer, 2012).

b. Salafi

Salafi is the movement which rooted in Arabian soil since centuries ago. Although, Salafi movements exhibited 3 differences from the Brotherhood, first is the interest in the right interpretation of sacred texts and following appropriate practice to be applied in personal behaviour. Second, the movements tend to be informally organized and unstructured as the followers follow specific scholars. Third, Salafi movement tend to be avoiding social involvement and focus on preaching to the truth and leading by example (Brown, 2012).

C. METHOD

This research uses literature study, carried out by searching for relevant keywords in catalogs, indexes, search engines, and full text sources on the history
of Egypt, Muslim Brotherhood and the Salafi movement to narrow the search to subject titles and to find relevant sources.

This research is also carried out by means of subject search, so that the subject title of a specific term or phrase can be used consistently by online or print indexes to describe a book or article. In addition, this research was also carried out by searching for the latest scientific books and articles in catalogs and databases, sorted by latest date and searching for books from scientific magazines and articles from scientific journals so that the source is newer and the more references and latest citations. Search for citations in scientific sources such as track references, footnotes, endnotes, citations, etc. in relevant readings.

D. EXPLANATION

a. Egypt’s Political History

Tayyar Arı (2017a) states for a quite long time, Egypt was in Ottoman State’s control and regularly sending the Vali (governor) to govern Egypt, though Memluk dynasty was the previous ruler of Egypt. When Napoleon Bonaparte in 1798 tried to invade Egypt especially after the War of Ehram, Ottoman State officially sent Mehmet Ali Paşa along the troops to stop them (Arı, 2017a).

Historically, the invasion of Egypt in order to compete with great power such like Ottoman State and Britain and to take control over Indian trade road were France’s purposes. That time, Ottoman State also engaged in a cooperation treaty with Russian Tsar to make coalition against French which automatically made Ottoman State cooperated with England to counter the French movement towards Egypt and Indian trade road. In 25th of May 1799, the defense in the Siege of Akka by Cezzar Ahmet Paşa that assisted by Britain and Russia was successful to stop Napoleon and his troops (Arı, 2017a; Özdal & Karaca, 2018).

A few years later, Misir Valisi (Egypt Governorate) was introduced in 1805 as Mehmet Ali Paşa appointed as the governor. Unforeseenly, Mehmet Ali wanted to control the territory under his own dynasty that was why since that days, the independence attempts were barely made. Egypt under Mehmet Ali was more independent, he even commenced direct economic and diplomatic relations with Western countries as if it has the sovereign as he expanded the territories to Sudan until Syria and a part of Anatolia. Mehmet Ali and his dynasty whom controlled the region under Ottoman State administration as the governor was given the title Hidiv (Khedive) until 1952 when Hür Subaylar coup happened (Arı, 2017a).

Egypt as a province under Ottoman State begun in the early of sixteenth century until Britain took it as protectorate in 1914. More than 5 decades, the French and British were competing over formal control of Egypt since they had a lot of companies whose interests lay on Suez Canal, cotton production and development of infrastructure in Egypt. Even the Khedive Ismail itself were under strong influence of colonial powers from 1850s. The Egyptian nationalism only arised until 1879 when the revolt against foreign control was on the move. The slogan “Egypt for the Egyptians” was became popular and widespread by National Party (Hizb al-Watani). The Egyptian army likewise became the center of attention to make Egypt independent which led by Arabi. Until 13th of
September 1882 when Arabi and his followers were defeated by the British as it let them to occupy the Egypt (Burns, 1928).

According to Elinor Burns (1928, p. 13), the military convention between Ottoman State and Britain were concluded and British earned “exclusive privileges” to determine the Egyptian government in order to carry out British’s interests. She emphasizes that most of European powers were accepting the domination of British in the colonialism era. British reached its top performance in capitalizing its own wealth and gaining territories to be colonized.

Previously, Egypt had an influential weight in the international economy and significantly control over British’s economy as well as its political structure even after 1882. The financial system likewise was controlled by British banks as the foreigners who want to stay must be mediated with feudal landlords to perpetuate the colonial regime. That is why the national bourgeoisie had the duty to pioneer the liberation movement in regard of the maturity of political forces and social classes in society (Arı, 2017a). In 1914, British declared the war with the Ottoman State and formally proclaimed Egypt as the protectorate, then appointing Abbas II’s uncle, Husayn Kamil with the title of Sultan which means erasing the Khedive title (Baker et. al., 2019).

After the World War I, a rich landlord’s son named Zaghlul rised to national contestation by gaining his popularity in public due to his criticism on reforming the practices of Khedive and then turn to Sultan which both are the same. Subsequently he was establishing Delegation Party (al-Wafd al-Misri) that move the country until it was banned in 1953 because of the accusation as actor behind the scene which a coup attempt in 1952 occurred (Arı, 2017a).

Arı (2017, p. 165) describes that Britain in 1922 was giving the declaration of Egypt’s independence unilaterally but still foresee autonomy in internal affairs has not change slightly. Even after Egypt became Sultanate in 1922 with Sultan Fuad in reigning until 1936 and his successors until 1952, Britain has always have the way to push their interests toward Egyptian regimes (Baker et. al., 2019). Due to strong influence by Arabi, in 1928 the British government insisted on the withdrawal of a measure proposed by Egyptian government which government servants were divided into mudir, mamour and omdeh whom appointed by the superior of each ranks. Foreigners in Egypt held the privileges such as cannot be taxed, applicable to legislate, build the bye-laws and according to their nationals a foreigner must be tried in civil cases by the Mixed Courts and in criminal cases by the Consular Court of his own country (Burns, 1928). This unfair policies obviously trigger the heat and create the gap between local natives and foreigners which led to the hatred towards British oppression.

The pressure of Egyptian to become independent from British influence was always in national movement agenda, until stopped for a while because of Arab-Israel War in 1948. The feeling of lost in the war that triggered a huge of young officers in 23 July 1952 to overthrow the old regime as they called themselves as Free Officers (Hür Subaylar). They did a coup to change the Sultan Farouk that sat in the Ras el-Tin Palace’s throne and succeeded to topple him down in 26th of July 1952. The day will always be remembered as the first revolution that
happened over hundred years reign of many kingdoms in Egypt and turned the country to an independent country that ruled by people (Arı, 2017a).

First decades of independence, according to Canbegi (2013 as it cited in Kurun, 2015) Gamal Abd el-Nasser who was became Prime Minister and subsequently President after general elections in 1956 whilst ruling strongly influenced by Soviet Union so that his policies kind of socialist. The second president was Muhammad Anwar el-Sadat who maintaining secularization and democratization’s attempt which made by previous president, thus gradually reforming the system by liberalizing economics and de-emphasizing socialism (Kalyoncu, 2017). Though he was murdered due to participation in Camp David Accords 1978 and crackdowning on dissent of various kinds in 1981, his successor Hosni Mubarak maintained most of his predecessor's policies as he made his authoritarian regime undeniable (Kalyoncu, 2017, p. 68).

During Hosni Mubarak who ruled Egypt for 30 years long, he was more closed to America compared to Sadat who was more closed to Soviet Union. Anwar el-Sadat promised the liberal policies called “openness” in October 1973 but could not allow foreign investors to come. Yet Mubarak who was elected through people referendum in October 1982, gave more freedom to newspaper as it reprinted and political prisoners were released, but for the political movement was not freed to do the activities (Arı, 2017a). Until the Arab Spring occurred in 2011, there was also one unique actor in Egypt politics who persistently move through good and bad times ever since 1928 as far as the prohibition in 2018 though it was not the first time, there is Muslim Brotherhood.

**b. The Brotherhood and Salafi in Egypt**

*Al-Ikhwan al-Muslimun* or famously known as Muslim Brotherhood. Firstly, it was established as religious-social movement in order to disseminate the idea of the Society of Muslim Brotherhood which against the secularization and oppression by colonial power. Due to its proximity with education institutions and having many students as followers, the Brotherhood becomes stronger as it has schools, mosques, clubs and social forces, though Hasan al-Banna refused to attach with politics in 1932. When the second national conference of Muslim Brotherhood was being held in 1934, General Guidance Council is established as a decision-making body along with propaganda channel which able to reach wider people in Egypt. Printing press is meant to disseminate the idea and secure independent finance of the Brotherhood. During this conference, Hasan al-Banna took the title *al-Murshid al-Amm* (General Guide) for fellow Muslim Brotherhood (Kalyoncu, 2017).

Between 1941 and 1945, Hasan al-Banna let Muslim Brotherhood to support few of members to enter the candidacy for parliamentary elections. Unfortunately, the aftermath of World War II, Muslim Brotherhood was banned in 1948 due to its criticism toward regime and Britain oppression. Subsequently, around 1949-1952 Muslim Brotherhood reformed their policies, but again it was banned in 1954 as it accused for trying to assassinate Gamal Abd el-Nasser and it was driven underground (Kalyoncu, 2017, pp. 66-67; Meijer, 2012).

Prior to the independence of Egypt, in 1949 Hasan al-Banna was assassinated and General Guide turned to Hasan al-Hudaybi in 1951 who
maintained a similar close relations with national elites. After the abolition of the parliamentary system in 1952, Muslim Brotherhood portrayed itself as ‘civil protector’ whilst registered as a political party as it against al-Hudaybi’s wish. Regime transition which led to the dynamics of internal affairs, political parties were banned in 1953 and Muslim Brotherhood needed to adjust themselves to become a religious association. Similarly happened, Muslim Brotherhood was banned in December 1954 along brief releases in 1957 and 1964 (Meijer, pp. 302-303).

Throughout Nasser’s regime, al-Hudaybi and approximately 4000 members of Muslim Brotherhood were imprisoned while the other members exiled to neighbour Arab countries such as Jordan and Syria. Until 1970, new president Muhammad Anwar el-Sadat who was acceded to power try to reform predecessor’s policies, the ban towards Muslim Brotherhood and other parties were lifted up (Kalyoncu, 2017).

Gradually, imprisoned members were released and Muslim Brotherhood restructures itself in 1973. Umar al-Tilmisani took al-Hudaybi’s position due to his death and pave the path for Muslim Brotherhood to participate in 1984’s election that merged with New Wafd Party. In 1986, Muslim Brotherhood applied for the license to become political party and next year it was in a coalition with Workers’ Party. Ever since the al-Hudaybi until al-Tilmisani’s period, Muslim Brotherhood condemned terrorism (irhab) and expelled Sayyid Qutb’s thoughts which widely famous in the religious movement that time. Hence, in 1980s there were changing in political terms which used by secularists such as rights (huquq), freedom (hurriyya), the constitution (al-dustur), supremacy of law (siyada al-qanun), and democracy that regularly utilized by Muslim Brotherhood’s leaders in their rhetorics (Meijer, 2012).

The election in 1987, Mustafa Mashhur proposed ‘Islam is the solution’ (al-Islam huwa al-Hall) as the slogan until he formally took the title General Guide in replace of al-Tilmisani in 1996 (Meijer, 2002, p. 309). Muslim Brotherhood was considered as moderate movement compared to another marginal Islamist movement such like al-Jama’a al-Islamiyya which violently protest against regime in 1990s. Muslim Brotherhood members asked for the license to become a political party, but in that period the regime of Hosni Mubarak refused as their attitude towards Islamist movement was negative (Kurun, 2015). Mashhur manages the Brotherhood until 2002 as he was kind of a leader who steeped in the older ideology of Muslim Brotherhood (Meijer, 2012).

Mustafa Mashhur was suffered a stroke and died in 14 November 2002, but Mamun al-Hudaybi was already in charge of Muslim Brotherhood until he has died of a heart attack in January 2004. Previously, Mamun was a deputy of General Guide in Muslim Brotherhood and after taking the General Guide position, he blames USA for exploiting the event of 9/11 and takes care of the Islamic movement even bigger than before (The Guardian, 18/2/2004). Mahdi Akef was replacing Mamun al-Hudaybi in January 2004 and subsequently issued political reform initiative which gave a broader vision to such issues democracy, human rights and women emancipation. During his period, the Brotherhood movement seemed to be tolerant and engaging, though after his resignation in
January 2010, al-Sisi’s coup regime was detaining him until his last breath in jail at 2017 (Tamimi, 2017).

When Muhammad Badi’ replaces Mahdi Akef in 2010 and succeeded raising Mohamed Morsi to presidential position after the 25th January Revolution in 2011, the Brotherhood movement influenced by three figures – General Guide, Freedom and Justice Party (FJP) which led by Saad al-Katatni and Egyptian President Mohamed Morsi (Brown, 2013). Kalyoncu (2017) states that Morsi was the first president who elected in a democratic way in June 2012. Yet, Morsi cannot solve the problems among various interest group which led to military coup in 2013 and left 1400 dead casualties and 16000 (most of them are Muslim Brotherhood members) imprisoned (Ari, 2017b; Kalyoncu, 2017).

Thus, Morsi faced a number of opposition from majority elements of the previous regime such like judiciary, media, business, and even the Copts as he had seen the difficulties to punish the undemocratic supporters of the former regime in a legal way. Fellow secularist, leftist and Coptic groups were returning to Tahrir Square and shouting for revolting once more by demanding early presidential elections. Likewise, military gave a 48-hour ultimatum and the head of Egyptian Army General Abd el-Fattah al-Sisi whom selected by Morsi himself did the coup and declared Morsi’s detention along with suspension of the constitution. As al-Sisi steps up to the presidential position after his arrangement with Adly Mansour as the interim, he remained as the authoritarian regime and perpetuate his reign by winning absurd election in 2014 and again in 2018, though the voters were participated only 40 per cent of Egypt population (Kalyoncu, 2017; Kurun, 2015).

According to Brown (2013), Islamic forces throughout many regions are being reshaped by political participation including Muslim Brotherhood and Salafi movement in Egypt that who enters the political realm it will not remain unchanged. The movement which based on religion and subsequently engaged in politics will be influenced and adjust with its supporters or to attract voters. That is why in Egypt, there are secularist and leftist groups which are keeping religion aside and forfeiting the democracy spirit of January revolution in the Arab Spring period in order to avoid religious government. Both Muslim Brotherhood and Salafi are fundamentally formed by religion spirit and sighted as threat for the recent regime. The result of military coup in 2013 is prohibition of Muslim Brotherhood and its party Freedom and Justice Party as the authoritarian regime returns (Ari, 2017b). Finally, as it reported by BBC (17/6/2019) Muhammad Morsi who once was leading Egypt died in prison which previously collapsed in court due to terrible treatment of the current regime and alongside him there are some senior leaders of the Brotherhood who also went on trial.

Beside Muslim Brotherhood, another group who caught the attention in the January revolution is Salafi movement (Brown, 2012). Recently, salafism does not have a homogeneous structure in terms of actions and opinions like Muslim Brotherhood, but it still can be categorized regarding their views of politics and the societies. There are four categories of them, firstly Traditional Salafism which focus on dawah (invitation to Islam) and strengthen of akaid (doctrines of religious faith) as some of them are keeping the distance from Ash’arism and Maturidism, considering Mu’tazilah, Kharijism and Shiism as deviation and
rejecting Sufi respectively. Secondly, Rigid Salafism whom harshly behave towards politics and political parties by obeying the recent rulers without agreeing with any kind of opposition. Thirdly, Jihadist Salafism whom resort the violence against injustice and tyranny of regime. Fourthly, Reformist Salafism which adopts more moderate attitude towards political and social issues by supporting active involvement in public domain (Yıldırım, 2014).

Lacroix (2016) states that in the wake of Arab Spring, many Salafi political parties begun to rise in different Arab countries and the emergence of Hizb al-Nour (the Party of Light) in Egypt was one of the unpredictable thing. It was founded in June 2011 as a robust contender to the Brotherhood and the second-biggest party in the parliament as it has been effective in the suburbs and rural areas of Egypt for years and become the greatest Salafi party which rely on the Salafi discourse (Yıldırım, 2014).

The root of Hizb al-Nour is Salafi Dawah which established in Alexandria around 1970s and one of the leaders, Yasir Burhami acknowledged the relationship between the Salafi Dawah with the party but clearly stated that Hizb al-Nour is not the underbow or political arm of Salafi Dawah. Hizb al-Nour had received many supports from prominent independent Salafi sheikhs and earned around 25 per cent of the votes in the parliamentary elections, putting it as the second-biggest party in Egypt next to Muslim Brotherhood’s Freedom and Justice Party. The president of party Imad Abd el-Ghaffour was intending to fully embrace the rules of political game and open for countless alliances in order to achieve its political goal, whilst Yasir Burhami believed the party’s gains supposed to be benefitting the Dawah and pushing for shari’a-based legislation (Lacroix, 2016).

Salafi movements describe the differences with Muslim Brotherhood in “Dawah methods and prochedures” such as Hizb al-Nour which have to adopt policies to create real solutions to the real problems of the country. Eventhough, the leaders of Hizb al-Nour like Yunus Makhyoum must supported Abd el-Fattah el-Sisi, the junta leader who led the military coup in 2013 in order to secure their interest and prominence, while the others such like Hizb el-Benna Wa el-Tamnia, Hizb al-Asala and Hizb al-Fadyla are against it. Though the current regime is not giving as they were hoping for. Hizb al-Nour that became the greatest representative of Salafi movements, is failed to seize the chance to become a political party that will create policies for solution, yet it chose military coup over civil politics (Yıldırım, 2014).

Although, Hizb al-Nour’s intra-rupture triggers new party to be born, Hizb al-Watan (Homeland Party) due to Abd el-Ghaffour’s thinking to segregate the politics and preaching (dawah). Continuously, the pragmatism inside Salafi movements are growing naturally which driven by different considerations. Only at second round of election after the 2011 Revolution, Hizb al-Nour supported Muhammad Morsi and in the end feel disappointed. When the coup was in rage they decided to stand behind the coup mongers and explained that was the only way to guarantee the presence of Islamic party in government and protect Islamic identity in the consitution (Lacroix, 2016).
According to Yıldırım (2014), most of movements in Egypt which based on Islamic values are coming from the oldest religious-civil groups such as “Al-Gam’eyya Al-Shar’eyya” and “Al-Sunna Al-Muhammadeyya” which started in early 20th century. There is also Medresetu’s-Selefiyye (the Salafist School) that came from student movements in universities and renew the movement with name “Cemaatu’l-Islamiyye” that later joined the Muslim Brotherhood. Unfortunately, Salafi movements are encountering difficulties to balance “fatwa” and “policy” in political practice in example attitude on religious influence (Yıldırım, 2014).

Brown (2013) emphasizes on the strength of Muslim Brotherhood and Salafi movements are laid on their ability to change the society from the ground up in the suspicious or hostile regimes. As military coup regime which currently led by President el-Sisi seemed to return Egypt to authoritarian regime by pushing the parliament to allow him rule until 2030 based on constitutional changes that extend the period to six years per term (Awadalla, 2019). Lately, the unrest which occured in Egypt backgrounded by the dissatisfaction of el-Sisi regime and anti-coup mongers that led to violent repression by government who left more than 2600 people in detained including children, human right lawyers, academicians and politicians as government treat them abusively unfair (Allinson, 2019).

This accidents might bring Egyptian to rise once more and out to the street to express their aspirations toward government which cannot fulfill the goal of 2011 Revolution that one of it is to erase the corruption and change the regime to be more accountable and bring wealth to nation. The protesters most probably came from the same factions those against the coup regime and see it unjustly govern the country by ignoring the corruption cronies still remain inside state’s bodies. Arı (2017b) urges that along with el-Sisi, Egypt brought back to Mubarak regime as traditional foreign policy reapplies and people live in tyranny.

E. CONCLUSION

As many experts say that Muslim Brotherhood and Salafi which has been rooted in the people have the ability to change society from the ground, eventhough the Brotherhood is already banned. Muslim Brotherhood was having the experience in succeeding their chosen candidate to rise to presidential position and survival through many challenges in different manner regimes. It still has hope to rise once more and stand up for democracy, since it adjustable and adaptable to many conditions and current condition was not the first. The organization can be banned, but the people and ideas are living throughout the times. Until the chance comes again, the Brotherhood members which live in exile can trigger the revolution again, similar to what Muhammad Ali did through social media in igniting protest towards government last years.

On the other side, in political realm Salafi movements are famously known with its pragmatism that need to be changed so that can be more flexible when it turns to politics and have to cooperate among similar fundamental idea movements. The religious and creating Islamic society intentions need to be compromised with other parties which are contradicting the ideas. The main vision to create a new Egypt or the advancement of Egypt has to be concluded in an altogether way, so there is no one left behind or put aside because all Egyptian
as a nation have to get the same rights and duties as they embrace their Egyptian identity.

Muslim Brotherhood and Salafi movement already give an example of how to struggle for power in a domestic politics. So other Muslim Brotherhood’s branches and Salafi movements in the other countries need to take the lesson-learn in order to success in fulfilling the interest of people or earning the sympathies of people until it can reach the top of government that can really govern all parties, including the military that can trigger the coup or foreign intervention that can create unrest.

REFERENCE
