



Policy Analysis /

Islamists, Liberals, and the Future of Egypt

by [Naguib Sawiris](#)

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Egyptian business leader Naguib Sawiris believes that the United States has no choice but to provide economic support to an Egyptian government dominated by Islamic parties, due to the country's pivotal role in the Middle East. "The collapse of Egypt would be immeasurable," Sawiris said in his keynote address to The Washington Institute's Weinberg Founders Conference.

Sawiris, who founded the liberal, secular Free Egyptians Party, criticized the Egyptian military government for rushing to hold elections without giving non-Islamic parties the opportunity to prepare properly. He said that the Muslim Brotherhood had been organizing underground for decades under the regime of deposed President Hosni Mubarak.

Sawiris, a Coptic Christian, said that he was not optimistic about the political future of his nation under the Islamic parties, but said that as an Egyptian patriot he has no plans to leave.

He expressed his belief that regardless of whether the incoming Islamist government terminates the peace treaty with Israel, the Egyptian army does not want another war with Israel -- nor could Egypt wage such a war effectively, since it relies on American military systems that Washington would not permit to be so used.

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