To all Our Friends Around the World: 18 Days that Shook the World

Thank you for your many messages of solidarity and support throughout these last two weeks. And a salute to Egypt's wonderful youth, who changed the course of history through peaceful demonstrations. The moral power of non-violence was never more ably deployed for the cause of more freedom, more justice and to lay the foundations of better tomorrows. By the moral force of their solidarity, and the nobility of their cause, they challenged all expectations and triumphed. The Egyptian Revolution of 25 January 2011 now belongs to the history books. It is a brilliant chapter in the unfolding story of the struggle for human dignity and the values of our common humanity.

In these 18 days that shook the world, men and women, young and old, Muslims and Christians, rich and poor came together as never before. The army never unleashed a volley against any of the millions of demonstrators. All melded together and showed the true mettle of "the people". They redefined the meaning of Egyptian greatness. During those long days of struggle, days when the police forces were either attacking the demonstrators or totally absent from the scene, there was not one incident of burning of churches, indeed we saw Christians and Muslims praying by the thousands in Tahrir square, each protecting and respecting the other. Hundreds of thousands of young men and women demonstrated for days on end, and not one case of harassment was noted. Volunteers provided safety and order, and neighbors came together to form neighborhood watches to protect their homes and families against thugs and ruffians who attacked homes and looted public buildings, and to provide public services by sharing as never before. The people got to know each other better than ever before. Neighborhoods became more than physical definitions, they became communities again. The demonstrators protected cultural institutions like the Egyptian museum and the Library of Alexandria, which many recognized as their own.

Today the people are all celebrating the resignation of President Mubarak and the start of a new era. But the road ahead is going to be difficult. We must ensure that this moment of euphoria and the solidarity created by this revolutionary movement launched by our youth on January 25th are effectively transformed into the institutions and laws that will be the real guarantors of a true democracy. After the demonstrations, the battles and the celebrations in the streets, we must now do the equally demanding work of designing new institutions, selecting new leaders and creating new laws -- to fashion the wise constraints that make people free.

But I have unlimited confidence in Egypt's youth. It is the dawn of a new day.

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