

## **Egypt Today; The Muslim Brotherhood; The Jobs Numbers and Obama in**

Chris MatthewsAssociated Press

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<Byline: Chris Matthews, Ron Allen, David Corn, Michelle Caruso-Cabrera,  
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<High: Thousands of anti-government protesters were back in the streets of  
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supporters who stormed them the last two days. What are we to make of the  
Muslim Brotherhood? This Sunday's Super Bowl and the two teams, the  
Pittsburgh Steelers and the Green Bay Packers, represent what the election  
is going to be about.>

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CHRIS MATTHEWS, HOST: D-Day. Let's play HARDBALL.

Good evening. I'm Chris Matthews in Washington. Leading off tonight: The calm after the storm. Thousands of anti-government protesters were back in the streets of Cairo today, this time with little interference from the pro-Mubarak supporters who stormed them the last two days. And while the unrest continues in Egypt with no end in sight, a debate has broken open on this side of the Atlantic. Is the Obama administration pushing too hard to show Mubarak the door?

Plus, what are we to make of the Muslim Brotherhood, which is angling to step into the breach over there? The Brotherhood has renounced violence and promises to play by the rules, but is it just waiting for its moment to seize control and short circuit the democratic process?

Also, bad news, good news. The economy only created 36,000 new jobs, but the unemployment rate in this country dropped from 9.4 percent down to 9 percent last month. That number may be more important for President Obama because that's the number public pays attention to. I think he needs to get the number down to 8 in order to win reelection.

And I've been saying that this is the Scranton to Oshkosh election, Scranton Wis -- Pennsylvania, actually, to Wisconsin. Well, Sunday's Super Bowl has the same theme, Pittsburgh versus Green Bay. Politics and the Super Bowl later in the show.

And Let Me Finish tonight with a major American president who was born 100 years ago this Sunday.

We start with Egypt. Joining me right now from Cairo is NBC News's Ron Allen. Ron, I guess the best question is what happened today in this ongoing saga?

RON ALLEN, NBC CORRESPONDENT: We've been asking ourselves that question today, Chris, what does all this mean? Where are we right now? The opposition has just declared that next week will be a week of resistance. We had a day of departure, a Friday farewell today, and none of that happened. And so the opposition is now in a position where they have to try and find ways to rally the troops, their troops. There's certainly a lot of passion, a lot of energy. Out in the streets tonight, there in the square tonight, there are still thousands of people, tens of thousands of people, perhaps, who are vowing to stay there through the night and stage what is becoming a sit-in, essentially.

The question is, can they maintain that, especially as the work week begins here on Monday? We understand now that the opposition leaders are telling people that they should perhaps go to work on Monday and then protest on Tuesday to try and deal with the reality here that a lot of people in this community need to get back to work to earn money. They want their kids to go back to school. Students want to go back to school. And they need to get this country running again because these protests have ground the entire place to a halt.

On the other hand, the government is remaining steadfast. The prime minister again tonight said that there is no intention by President Mubarak to leave. It's very unlikely that's going to happen, he said. And that remains their position. Hosni Mubarak is digging in. He keeps making concessions, making gestures that he hopes, I guess, will give him more time because, again, at the end of the day today, there's no indication that he is going to step down -- Chris.

MATTHEWS: Well, the latest offer, as I understand it, from the president's palace is that he won't run for reelection in September. His son, Gamal, will not run. They're going to have dialogue with the Muslim Brotherhood. What is the demand from the streets? This is what I have never figured out. Are they willing to accept the army taking over, putting Suleiman or somebody in the place of Mubarak and holding free elections, real elections this September? Is that good enough?

ALLEN: Well, this gets complicated, Chris, because the opposition demand has always been that Mubarak step down, pure and simple, bottom line, you got to do that. And that, apparently, is not going happen. It hasn't happened yet. That's not to say it won't happen, but there's every indication from the government that they're trying to play the situation in a way that Mubarak does not have to do that. He may do it in a way that where he does -- becomes a ceremonial leader. But we start getting into semantics.

The other question, as a practical matter, is what has to happen in this country in order to have a free and fair election, and how quickly can that happen? The elections are scheduled for September. Can the apparatus of state, can the media be altered? Can the real nitty-gritty of an election happen free and fairly? The dynamics change between now and September. Some say it can't. So what do you do in the interim?

MATTHEWS: That's right.

ALLEN: You know, we're talking about a seven-month period. And some people will say to the opposition, Look, you know, you've gotten enough. You know, chill out. It's only seven months. And they would say the same thing to Mubarak. It's only seven months. Why can't you step down? It's been 32 years.

MATTHEWS: Thank you. Great reporting. Thank you, Ron Allen. Have a nice weekend -- although that seems like an absurd thing to say in Cairo. But hope you get through everything all right this weekend -- Ron Allen in the streets of Cairo.

President Obama was asked today if Mubarak needs to step down in order for reform to begin. Here is what the president said here in America. Let's listen.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

BARACK OBAMA, PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES: Once the president himself announced that he was not going to be running again, and since his term is up relatively shortly, the key question he should be asking himself is, How do I leave a legacy behind in which Egypt is able to get through this transformative period? And

my hope is, is that he will end up making the right decision.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

MATTHEWS: Well, Ed Walker served as ambassador to Egypt and Israel during the Clinton administration. He's also the former assistant secretary of state for near eastern affairs. Can't have a better guest than you, sir. So you're watching the streets are all week long. What do you see it heading toward?

EDWARD WALKER, FORMER U.S. AMBASSADOR TO EGYPT: I see it heading towards a stronger military position, taking the role of guarantor of the state, guarantor of the constitution, if you will, or the changing constitution, and the desire to maintain the credibility of the military with the street. And clearly, it has credibility.

MATTHEWS: If the military comes out in full uniform on a place platform somewhere and declares to the street, with all the television power they have over there, and says, Mr. Mubarak is going to Sharm-el- Sheikh on permanent leave -- he's not going to be our active president, he's not leaving the country, he's under our protection, we are going to rule until the open elections are held in September, Mr. Suleiman, the designated VP, will be the head of government -- will that stop the rioting? Will that stop, I should say, the protesting?

WALKER: It's going to put it -- yes, I think it will stop the rioting by all but the most committed rioters. But there has to be some guarantees in there. People are fed up with the promises of government in Egypt. They want to have concrete steps taken, such as changing the constitution so political process can take place, opening the door for all parties to have discussions and be a part of the decision-making process.

MATTHEWS: What about this country and our decision-making process? I don't think I've ever heard of this happening before. The U.N. ambassador, Susan Rice, apparently openly says, We got to get rid of Mubarak. Meanwhile, Tom Donilon, the head of the National Security Council, director, and the secretary of state, Hillary Clinton, both say, No, slow down on this. Stop pushing this guy so publicly. Let him make the move. How did that leak? How can you leak out the Situation Room? Isn't that supposed to be the high-security room?

WALKER: Well, yes, it is and it isn't. It's only high security until the participants walk out the door and then purvey -- let their stories be known.

MATTHEWS: Right.

WALKER: Susan is correct. Mubarak -- I mean, there's no way you can solve this thing with Mubarak in place. What the secretary of state is saying is that, Let's try and make this so it's a rational transition and you're not going to turn the place over to chaos. I don't believe it will go into chaos, but they've got to be a little bit more forceful in the kinds of states that they take now to prove to the people of Egypt that Mubarak is not coming back. This is not -- this is the end of this particular regime.

MATTHEWS: You know, my concern, trying to figure out what's best for us, best for Egypt, best for our relationship with that part of the world, like most Americans, I'm thinking, could it be that Mubarak has one point - - You don't let a mob pick a government?

WALKER: That's right.

MATTHEWS: This is no environment -- when he says, You don't know the culture of this -- don't let the mob -- this isn't the French revolution. Let's make this the American revolution, where we actually have a constitutional process, we actually prove to have a better government than the one we've dumped in London. OK, that's the goal, have better than what you had before, not worse.

WALKER: Right.

MATTHEWS: Most revolutions, it seems, in third world countries --

WALKER: Turns out worse.

MATTHEWS: -- go to worse.

WALKER: Right. That's true.

MATTHEWS: So -- right? So let's not cheer for the mob to make the decision. Let's cheer for the mob to maybe get the government to make the right decision.

WALKER: But isn't --

MATTHEWS: That's different.

WALKER: Isn't that what the president was saying? You're not cheering for the mob, he's cheering for transition. He's cheering for the military to have -- step in to --

MATTHEWS: Right. OK.

WALKER: -- have an orderly transition in which steps are taken, one, two, three.

MATTHEWS: Yes, it seems to me cooling it down, get the people off the street --

WALKER: Right.

MATTHEWS: -- have a military sort of hammer that says, We're going to have calm for six months --

WALKER: Right.

MATTHEWS: -- that's the protector of the peace, and then a clearly open door to a new kind of government.

WALKER: Open door and a few -- a number of immediate steps that are taken that gives credibility to what the military (INAUDIBLE)

MATTHEWS: Well, we got to figure out what those are. Appreciate you coming on, Ambassador Edward Walker --

WALKER: Appreciate it.

MATTHEWS: -- who had all those posts over in the Middle East, Israel and Egypt, as well.

Coming up, we'll talk to a lot -- we talked a lot about the Muslim Brotherhood were ready to -- well, are they willing to walk into this power vacuum? Of course they are. The question is, is that good for us? They say they've renounced violence. OK. That's what they've said. But once they get some power, would the Brotherhood really support democracy in Egypt or simply turn it into an Islamic state like Iran?

You're watching HARDBALL, only on MSNBC.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

MATTHEWS: How's President Obama doing? Well, it depends who you ask. According to the Gallup poll, the president's approval ratings are the most polarized of any president two years into his presidency. Democrats think he's great -- 81 percent approve of the job the president's doing. But only 13 percent of Republicans approve of the job he's doing. That's a wide gap, 68-point gap, actually.

It's the biggest of any president at this point in his term and the fourth largest in history. Only the fourth, fifth and six years of the George W. Bush presidency had bigger gaps between the parties. We're getting used to this gap, ladies and gentlemen, between Democrats and Republicans and what they think of a president.

We'll be right back.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

MATTHEWS: Welcome back to HARDBALL. In the post-Mubarak Egypt, the country's largest opposition force, the Muslim Brotherhood, would have new power. Although the group now renounces violence, some of the world's most dangerous terrorists, including Osama bin Laden's second in command, were once members of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt. What would an empowered Brotherhood mean for the United States if it got into power?

With me now is Peter Bergen, the great author of *The Longest War: Inside the Enduring Conflict* -- there it is -- *Between America and al Qaeda*, and Abderrahim Foukara, who's Washington bureau chief -- and he's been great for us -- for Al Jazeera, as well. That's his main work. In fact, it's your employment.

Here we are. Let me go -- here's what -- your reporting, first of all. Muslim Brotherhood -- bad news for the United States if they get a chunk of the power over there?

PETER BERGEN, AUTHOR, THE LONGEST WAR : Indifferent news. Certainly not bad news. I think these are -- you know, this is a group that's engaged in conventional politics in Egypt for decades now. Their attitude to Israel is going to be different probably than Mubarak's. But I think, you know, writ large, they have participated in elections in a peaceful way for a long time, something they've been criticized for by al Qaeda. And they're going to be part of Egypt's future because they're part of its present.

MATTHEWS: Do they route for al Qaeda?

BERGEN: No. In, al Qaeda's number two, Ayman al Zawahiri, who was, as you pointed out in the introduction, a member of the Muslim Brotherhood, has written a book-length denunciation of the Muslim Brotherhood --

MATTHEWS: OK, here's my problem with your argument, and I think you're accurate because you know your material. But who killed Anwar Sadat?

BERGEN: Well, it was the Islamic Group and the Jihad Group, which are, like, you know, shoots off the Muslim Brotherhood. But you know, anybody --

MATTHEWS: Did they root for that? Were they part of that? When they got gunned down in that parade by the people who dressed in military costumes, were the -- in uniforms, were they cheering for that? Were they happy for that, the death of Anwar Sadat?

BERGEN: I think there were a lot of people who were unhappy with the fact that Sadat had made peace with Israel, but they weren't involved in the attack and --

MATTHEWS: Did they cheer his death?

BERGEN: I actually don't know, Chris.

MATTHEWS: That's the kind of thing I want to know. I know where your heart is, where your sentiment is, because in the end, that's who you end up backing, who you're rooting for.

BERGEN: Don't forget this is -- this group also has played ball with Mubarak for a very long time. So I mean, it's not like they're looking for some sort of revolution in Egypt. And I would just make the point that anybody who bombs an abortion clinic in this country is a Christian fundamentalist, but very few Christian fundamentalists bomb abortion clinics. So the Muslim Brotherhood may have spawned some people that are militant, but this is a very, very large group, and the militant groups are very, very small. So -- and the Muslim Brotherhood --

MATTHEWS: No. Let me draw a distinction there. I would say the Republican forces in Ireland who support -- in the old days, supported the actions of the IRA, the provisional IRA. You don't want to have people that will give cover, give protection, give secret hiding places to a terrorist group. And my question is, does the Muslim Brotherhood -- would they be out there giving refuge, support, economically, support morally, to terrorists?

BERGEN: I don't think so. I mean, we also have to look at the nature of Egyptian society. Don't forget that these militants completely destroyed themselves with their actions in the '90s. They killed more than a thousand Egyptians.

MATTHEWS: Yes.

BERGEN: They -- with the Luxor massacre in '97 --

MATTHEWS: OK. Your view? Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt.

ABDERRAHIM FOUKARA, AL JAZEERA: Well, I --

MATTHEWS: Are they a danger to the United States?

FOUKARA: I -- when I look at -- first of all, when I look at what's happening in Tahrir Square, it's not about the Muslim Brotherhood. It's about -- what started it off was young people who were disaffected, socially, economically and politically. They just want political freedom. They're done with this regime.

The other political movements, including the Muslim Brotherhood -- in a way, it's a good thing that they didn't get involved right there because this thing would have been over a long time ago. They finally jumped on the bandwagon. It was expected they would jump on the bandwagon. If there's a new government in Egypt, as Peter said, Muslim Brotherhood would in one way or another be part of it. Would the Muslim Brotherhood be calling the shots in that government? A lot of people would think that it's insanity to think that. As far as the Israelis are concerned, yes there is a lot of concern inside of Egypt and even in the wider Arab world about the Muslim Brotherhood --

MATTHEWS: Aren't the Hamas group that took over the Gaza area of the Palestinian -- potential Palestinian state -- aren't they offspring of the Muslim Brotherhood?

FOUKARA: There are a lot of people who see very strong connections between the Muslim Brotherhood and Hamas. And basically, they would say that the problem is a problem of violence that the Israelis and Hamas would have to sort out. But focusing on the Muslim Brotherhood to try to stall change in Egypt I think is creating more problems for Egypt and for relations with the United States than actually solving them.

MATTHEWS: So in other words, don't let the people in the street who are secular be stopped by fear of the Muslim Brotherhood.

FOUKARA: Well, one of the things -- one of the slogans we actually heard today from the demonstrators -- many of the demonstrators in Cairo is that, We're not Muslim Brotherhood. And I think people are aware that they may -- that line may be used, but --

(CROSSTALK)

MATTHEWS: Let's hear from someone who is. A Muslim Brotherhood spokesperson told NBC News, quote, We're not going for revenge. If he does leave and there are no more victims, he can step down peacefully. But if Mubarak continues to cling to office and there are more victims, then he could be put on trial by a new Egyptian government.

That I think was a clarification of a statement put out by someone associated formerly with the Muslim Brotherhood, who's living in exile, or an expatriate in the Alpine region of Italy, who put out a statement out of nowhere, I thought, saying, We're going to put this guy on trial, which to me is fighting words, one more reason for Mubarak not to give up, if he knows he's facing some Islamic court somewhere.

BERGEN: Well, no doubt. But I think -- yes, I mean, I think that statement spoke for itself. You know, I've interviewed quite a number of leaders of the Muslim Brotherhood. These are not Molotov cocktail-throwing revolutionaries. These tend to be doctors and lawyers, and you know, middle class people who've been -- you know, feel that the Mubarak regime hasn't performed. And one of the reasons the Muslim Brotherhood has risen up is precisely because the Mubarak regime didn't perform. So if there was some sort of natural catastrophe, the government did nothing about it, but the Muslim Brotherhood would be out doing charity.

MATTHEWS: OK.

I have got you gentlemen here, both. Call the shots. What do you think is going happen now? Do you think Mubarak may hang in there for another couple months?

FOUKARA: I think he will hang in there, prediction -- it could be right, could be wrong, predicated on the fact that anything could happen, as we have seen with this whole thing --

(CROSSTALK)

MATTHEWS: Well, based on today, does he have the strength to hang in there?

FOUKARA: I think -- if I were to make a prediction, I think he will hang in there for a few more days.

But now bigger and bigger and bigger chunks of the international community, including the United States, seem to be cutting their bridges with him. He has real reason to think about his next step, if the street, if the protesters stay on the streets. And I think we have seen enough will and enough organization on the part of the demonstrators to be able to put it off.

MATTHEWS: Peter, your thoughts?

BERGEN: He hasn't been able to employ total repression. And for dictators, that is problematic. If you can't do total repression, you're out.

MATTHEWS: Well, I get the sense he is hanging in there. I have been watching this guy 30 years. He is a strong man. He thinks he is a pharaoh. He thinks he is Egypt. I don't see how he sees anybody in the streets he wants to turn it over to. So it's a question whether he turns it over to Suleiman and he believes that will quell the rioting.

And if he doesn't believe that will quell the rioting, what does he gain by stepping out of office?

FOUKARA: One thing I -- one quick thing I would say, that regardless of whether he steps or he stays, remnants of the regime, the current regime, will stay. But his departure would be a major symbol to the protesters --

(CROSSTALK)

MATTHEWS: Departure to Sharm el-Sheikh or out of the country? Where would he go?

FOUKARA: Well, stepping down in one way or another.

(CROSSTALK)

MATTHEWS: I don't think he wants to go to Montenegro.

FOUKARA: But if --

MATTHEWS: That story was out today.

FOUKARA: Yes.

MATTHEWS: I mean --

FOUKARA: But if the protesters managed to get him to step down, that would be a strong symbol.

MATTHEWS: OK, step down. It's getting -- I think we're finding people moving to something here in the center. We will see.

Peter Bergen, thank you for your expertise. Good luck with the book. It's called?

BERGEN: The Longest War.

MATTHEWS: The Longest War.

And, of course, my new friend Abder Foukara, thank you for joining us again from Al-Jazeera.

Up next: Senator Rand Paul, well, he is unleashed. The Tea Party favorite has already cast some noteworthy votes in the United States Senate. Now he wants to cut off aid to Israel. His reasoning? You will get it in the Sideshow.

You're watching HARDBALL, only on MSNBC.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

MATTHEWS: Back to HARDBALL. Time for the Sideshow.

First: Rand Paul, a man with a mission. The Tea Party senator offered up his own budget last week. Not only does the proposal cuts \$500 billion from the current budget. It goes somewhere Republicans, even the strictest deficit hawks, are loathe to go.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

SEN. RAND PAUL (R), KENTUCKY: I want to be a friend of Israel. I think it's -- they are an important ally. But I also think that their per capita income is greater than probably three-fourths of the rest of the world.

Should we be giving money to a -- free money or welfare to a rich nation? And I don't think so.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

MATTHEWS: Well, cutting aid to Israel, the proposal will get more attention than support. Senator Paul has also made a stand during yesterday's vote to criminalize aiming a handheld laser at an aircraft. Straightforward, right? Not to Mr. Tea Party. Senate Paul was the one and only nay vote on that bill. His reasoning? The states ought to take care of it.

Is he saying airplanes are not interstate commerce?

Next, ever wonder what a Rick Santorum presidency would look like? Well, here's a preview. The all-but-declared candidate for president offered the following at a Tea Party event in South Carolina -- quote -- I would sign a bill tomorrow to eliminate the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals. That court is rogue. It's a pox on the Western pox of our country.

A pox? The 9th Circuit Court is the largest appeals court in the country. Santorum's real issue? The court is based in San Francisco and is known for issuing decisions that rile conservatives. Maybe you would like to eliminate the city of San Francisco.

Finally, Mike Bloomberg looks in the mirror and likes what he sees. This week, the

New Yorker magazine cover featured Gotham's mayor in this not-so-flattering pose, unless you are Mike Bloomberg. His reaction to the caricature? Quote: I thought I was great, it was great. I have said this a thousand times. I like what I see in the mirror. I hope everybody here does. Hmm. Mirror, mirror on the wall, who is the richest mayor of them all?

Now for tonight's Number.

Sarah Palin's lawyer filed applications with the United States Patent Office to trademark the name Sarah Palin and that of her daughter, Bristol Palin. In short, they're looking to protect the Palin brand. And that's tonight's Number -- patent application number 85170226 -- Sarah Palin trademarks Sarah Palin, tonight's show me the money Big Number.

Up next: The unemployment rate drops sharply, down from 9.4 down to 9.0, but the economy is not creating many jobs. Where does the economy need to be for President Obama to get reelected? I say 8 percent.

You're watching HARDBALL, only on MSNBC.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

MICHELLE CARUSO-CABRERA, CNBC CORRESPONDENT: I'm Michelle Caruso-Cabrera with your CNBC Market Wrap.

Stocks closing out their best week in two months with modest gains, the Dow Jones industrials climbing 30 points, the S P 500 up three. The Nasdaq finished with a gain of 15 points.

Investors digesting a rather tepid jobs report. The unemployment rate fell from 9.4 percent to 9 percent in January, but only 36,000 jobs were added. And that was well below the 145,000 that economists were expecting.

Semiconductors some of the strongest performers today after Bank of America, Merrill Lynch delivered a bullish roundup on the sector. You can see the big moves there. Optical component maker JDS Uniphase was the standout on surprisingly strong earnings, thanks to blistering demand for tablets and smartphones.

Health insurer Aetna another standout on blockbuster earnings, an upbeat outlook and a dividend bump.

And retailers advanced on strong January sales, despite signs that much of the spending is going on in the upper-income brackets.

Overall, a solid weekend for the markets. All of the major indices gained between 2 percent and 3 percent for the week.

That is from CNBC. We are first in business worldwide -- now back to HARDBALL.

MATTHEWS: Depends who you're talking to.

Welcome back on HARDBALL.

Look, January's job numbers are out, and they look genuinely good. They are down from 9.4 percent down to 9 percent. But how many thousands of jobs? Only 36,000 jobs, which is less than economists expected the last month to produce. Everyone is rooting for our economy to keep getting better, at least in this country, but how important are these numbers for President Obama's chance to keep his own job in 2012?

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