I guess we never saw it coming. The threat of a government overthrown by protestors in Egypt, a friendly nation to the United States and a documented ally, was the last thing on our minds until last week. In retrospect, we certainly should have seen it coming. We have not broken the habit of supporting dictatorships. In this age of instant information via internet, twitter, Facebook, YouTube, emails, etc. people virtually gather and a collective anger can be taken to the streets immediately. Any dictatorship should be worried because their time will come. It has come to Egypt and we are caught off guard.

If not now, then soon President Mubarak will have to step down and relinquish power. Just who gets that power is unknown and that is the big problem. It brings memories of the Iran rebellion in 1979. President Jimmy Carter decided it was time to turn his back on the Shah of Iran, the dictator, and expect the young democratic movement to take over and bring liberty to this “ally”. He was so wrong. The democratic movement was pushed to the side by the radical Muslim Imams who took control of the government ever since. Our “ally” is now one of our worst enemies.

The Egyptian matter is actually a great challenge and opportunity for President Barack Obama. During the last presidential election he was criticized by rival candidates for his lack of foreign experience. The biggest criticizer is now his Secretary of State, the Honorable Hillary Clinton. These two have got to come together with a strategy that will finesse this situation into a democratic and peaceful process. President Mubarak has to step down and a peaceful, freedom loving entity must take control and bring this nation under democracy and open elections. If they pull this off, President Obama will have earned some serious notches on his presidential “belt”.

Egypt is one of the oldest civilizations on earth. For some reason it has yet to evolve to modern democracy. That alone would get it out of its immense poverty and unemployment (30% officially). Their first big boss was President Nasser who led the revolt over King Farouk. Upon Nasser’s death, his confidant Anwar Sadat became president. Upon his assassination in 1981, President Mubarak became the big boss and has enjoyed that for 30 years replete with rigged elections every eight years. It is most critical that Egypt does this in a correct manner. If they don’t there will be unrest in the Middle East like never before. Israel will be most intimidated and will probably freshen up its nuclear arsenal. Iran, with its devious goals, will feel even more empowered and start doing wicked things. Twenty-five percent of the Arab population is Egyptian. It is imperative that we two nations remain allies and promoters of peace.

Equally important as the destabilization issue is the adverse impact on the economy. Egypt controls the Suez Canal which is the biggest avenue for oil and gas shipments. If it is closed or blocked, every nation in the world will be immediately damaged through the lack of world trade. 1.8 million barrels of oil passes through the Suez Canal every day. It would take an extra six weeks to get products to market. Just this chaos that is happening today is taking stock markets across the world down and gasoline prices are marching north as you read this article. Our president is facing a great challenge and we should cheer him on and hope this ends up being progress and not a throw back.

In the interim, President Obama must end his embargo on off shore drilling immediately. If not we are going to see $6.00 a gallon of gasoline before Easter and it won't stop there. This will reflect beyond the gas pump. Groceries, electricity, clothing, and many other staples are going to rise immediately. The Marcellus Shale in New York should also be reopened and exploration within the rest of the nation needs to get underway now! This could be much worse than the Iran takeover or the oil embargo of the '70s. Mr. President you are at a fork in the road and please make the right decision – open the wells.

The whole Middle East is starting to pop. Tunisia just chased off their dictator and Yemen is on the verge of falling. Jordan is having trouble and Egypt's neighbor to the south, Sudan, is experiencing serious violence. If the U.N. is worth anything it had better get serious about this matter. The African Union can now show its worth during this crisis. Most of all, America, the traditional leader of the world, should meet its destiny and lead the world to a return to peace and the advancement of democracy. Let us pray.

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