



**Consulate General of the Arab Republic of Egypt, Sydney
Level 3, 241 Commonwealth Street
Surry Hills NSW 2010**

**Speech for
Country Women's Association Study School
Egypt – Egyptian Political History Introduction**

**At: University of New England Wright Centre
Armidale NSW**

**Saturday 7th February, 2009
9.00am-7.30pm**

*His Excellency Mr Tarek Abousenna,
Consul General of Egypt*

- Ladies and Gentlemen

It is a great honour and pleasure to be here today with all of you to talk about Egypt's political history.

I will concentrate my speech on Egypt's political formations and influences that brought about our modern day Arab Republic of Egypt. By observing the various turning points in timelines, one can realize the grandeur of what came about to form Egypt. The North African and Middle Eastern state that has come to play such an empirical role in its regional and international role.

With that I will discuss some of the factors that have moulded Egyptian politics. As you may know, Egypt enjoys a deep rooted civilization which began when the ancient Egyptians settled around the River Nile around 7,000 B.C.

4,000 years later Kingdoms of Upper and Lower Egypt unite, Successive dynasties witness flourishing trade, prosperity and the development of great cultural traditions. Writing, including hieroglyphics, is used as an instrument of the state. Construction of the pyramids – around 2,500 BC – is a formidable engineering achievement.

Later, Egypt was conquered and ruled by many foreign invaders that include the Assyrians from Mesopotamia, the Persians, Alexander the Great of Macedonia who founded Alexandria, and Arabs.

It was only until 969 that Cairo was established as a capital.

Then Egypt was ruled by Mamlukes for about 300 years until Egypt was absorbed by the Ottoman Empire. For a brief time Napoleon Bonaparte and later the British had their eye on Egypt due to its strategic geographic location and trade waters. And as the Suez Canal was built by 1769, Egypt was all so ever valuable to the Western powers at the time and by 1882 till after 1914 the British were officially the protectorate of Egypt.

Thus, Egypt's political system is one of the oldest, its first parliament was introduced to Egypt in 1824, and the first constitution was constituted in 1882.

At the end of the 18th century, Egypt witnessed important political and social developments were taking place and Egypt was evolving while adapting and adopting to its changing tides. This included Mohamed Ali's, who is also known as the founder of modern Egypt, complete administrative transformation that was unprecedented before.

The parliamentary council kept undergoing several changes along the years and under the reign of Khedive Ismail. Even Khedive Tawfik dissolved the parliament completely in 1881 as a result of revolts in the Orabi revolution. And under the British protectorate in 1914 the legislative assembly was adjourned.

By the end of World War 1, the 1919 revolution broke out demanding freedom, independence and democratic political system for Egypt. And by 1922 Fuad the First becomes King of Egypt and Egypt gains its independence.

A new constitution was inaugurated in 1923 which constituted a binary parliament: the Senate and the House of Representatives.

Political life from 1923 till 1952 fluctuated between democracy and non-democracy with British occupation authorities and the palace intervened to make matters worse, in July 1952, the revolution broke out in Egypt , republic declared and the parties dissolved , and in 1956, a new constitution was promulgated providing for the formation of the national assembly.

On September 11, 1971 Egypt's permanent constitution was promulgated supporting a democratic parliamentary system, encouraging sovereignty of law, asserting the independence of the judiciary and urging Pluralism .

The People Assembly has become the legislative Authority, , entrusted with endorsing state general policies , economic and social development plans and the budget , it also monitors the Executive , and in 1979 , the first legislative elections were held in Egypt within the framework of a multi party system, in which many political parties participated.

The constitution was amended on May 1980 to establish the Shura (consultative) Council, and in 2005, the constitution was amended again to allow for the first ever presidential elections in Egypt .

Ladies and gentlemen ,

Thank you for your listening, and now I ask Mr Bassel Taman, Vice Consul to continue talking about the Egyptian political system and the Egyptian Foreign policy.