

Geopolitical Analysis of Egypt

When one thinks of Egypt, their mind might immediately go to the Nile River, or perhaps, the ancient Egyptians and their pyramids. This paper shall take readers beyond these imagines and will discuss the physical base of Egypt, including the physical layout of the country, its location, and many other aspects which make Egypt the country it is and how it affects its abilities to function effectively.



Figure 1 Map of Egypt

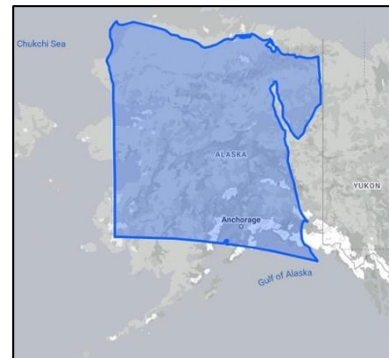


Figure 2 Comparison of Egypt to Alaska

First, this paper must cover the basics needed to provide a geopolitical analysis: it will discuss the size, shape, and location of Egypt. The country of Egypt is a part of the African continent and lies in the northeastern corner of the continent. Egypt has a prorupt shape, due to the Sinai Peninsula which “acts as the land bridge between Africa and Asia.”¹ The Sinai Peninsula is separated from Egypt by the Suez Canal, the location of which is shown in figure 1, which links the Mediterranean Sea and the Red Sea. “The Suez Canal is important because it is the shortest maritime route from Europe to Asia.”²

When looking at the size of Egypt on a map it looks rather small due to map distortion. Egypt is larger than the state of Texas but smaller than the state of Alaska (see figure 2³) and covers approximately 627,838 square miles⁴ of land with a population of 112,026,473 people. With such high population density and little area to expand, Egypt faces overcrowding that could

potentially add to social unrest, particularly when combined with political corruption. According to Transparency International, a nonprofit working against global corruption by promoting transparency, accountability, and integrity, Egypt is extremely corrupt and has become increasingly more corrupt in recent years. Transparency International uses a scale of one hundred (being not corrupt) to zero (being highly corrupt). Egypt's score is thirty with a ranking of one hundred thirty out of one hundred eighty. This means that government officials in Egypt are highly corrupt which also hurts how the country is run.

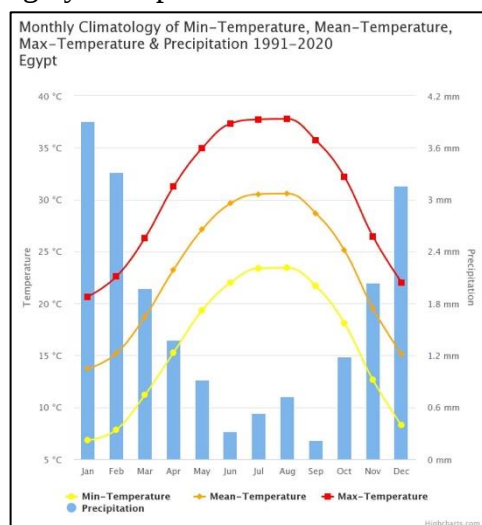


Figure 3 Climatology Analysis of Egypt

While Egypt covers a vast amount of land, it's makes parts of it much harder to live on than others. Egypt's climate is dry and hot with large swaths of desert. The summers in Egypt are hot and dry and winters are mild with rainfall along the coast, with Alexandria receiving the most rainfall on average.⁵ Due to there being large areas of desert, most of Egypt's

population lives in the Nile River Valley and delta, which has rich farmland. Figure 3 shows a climatology analysis of Egypt regarding minimum, maximum, and median temperatures, and precipitation monthly from 1991 to 2021.⁶ This helps illustrate how the temperatures and precipitation interact in creating the climate of Egypt. The climate also affects the topography and the vegetation of a region. This impacts how the people in this region make money to support themselves which in turns affects how the country functions.

According to the State Information Service of Egypt, the topography of Egypt is divided into four major parts. The Nile Valley and Delta, the Eastern Desert, Western Desert, and the Sinai Peninsula.⁷ The first type of topography of Egypt is the Nile River Delta goes from north of

the Nile River Valley all the way to the Mediterranean Sea and divides Egypt into Upper and Lower Egypt, “extending from Wadi Halfa to the south of Cairo and from North Cairo to the Mediterranean Sea.”⁸ The Nile River splits into two branches called the “Dumiat and Rashid”⁹ that “embrace the highly fertile agricultural lands of the Delta.”¹⁰ The next area of topography is the Eastern Desert. The eastern desert extends from the Nile River in the west all the way to the Suez Gulf and the Suez Canal in the East. The eastern desert is also rich in natural resources such as oil, gold, and coal. The third type of topography is the Western Desert. The Western Desert extends from the Nile River in the east all the way to the border between Egypt and Libya and is divided into a northern section and a southern section. The northern section of the Western Desert contains the Baharia Oasis, the coastal plane, the Natroun valley, the northern plateau, and the great depression. Farafra, Dakhla, Kharga, and el-Owainat are included in the southern section of the Western Desert. The final part of the four main parts of the topography of Egypt is the Sinai Peninsula. The Sinai Peninsula is triangular with the Mediterranean Sea on the north side, the Suez Gulf to the west and the Gulf of Aqaba to the east. Some of the prominent features of the Sinai Peninsula sections are the high-rise granite mountains and Mount Catherine, the highest point in Egypt, in the southern section and the great amounts of water resources derived from rainwater in the central section. The range in topography can also make it hard to govern as the different types of terrain have different challenges associated with each. With large deserts people are spaced further apart and in smaller groups so it can be hard to keep track of them all. In the mountains it is hard to monitor the high peaks and all the valleys. The Sinai Peninsula also has its own challenges, as it has the Suez Canal that could act as a barrier to the central government. These all together can cause a country to function in a disjointed way, which strains a country and over time destabilizes it.

The vegetation of a country is also a factor of how the country can function effectively. Egypt has not forested but does have citrus and date palm groves. Vegetation that has been introduced to the region include eucalyptus and Cyprus trees.¹¹ Papyrus is also native to Egypt but is now found in botanical gardens as Spanish reed and common reed appear in water channels.¹² With large desert areas it can make agriculture difficult which could pose a problem for the country and its effective running. The Nile River Valley has rich farmland that can be used for agriculture but there is only so much land available in that area. While there are small oases and wells around the desert, they cannot support a large population and the crops grow with much more difficulty, which results in smaller groups of people in more rural areas.

Overall, the physical base of the country and the factors that contribute to it have great influence over how the government of a country exerts control. The lack of viable farmland along with the striking changes in topography and the large population in a relatively small area with a highly corrupt government really hinders Egypt's ability to function effectively as a country. Today the country of Egypt is struggling to stay afloat with how the government spends the funds and people worrying about starvation. The physical base of the Egypt also affects these conditions and possibly contributes to the worsening of them.

The Population and Demographics of Egypt

The country of Egypt has a large population with diverse demographics. This section will discuss the religious, ethnic, and linguistic demographics, as well as the population of Egypt and how these demographics relate to it. It will also discuss how the population and demographics affect how the country can function as a political entity and how effective it is at its political functioning.

Egypt has a population of approximately 112,135, 941people.¹³ While this seems like the population would not be that cramped into one area due to Egypt’s size, 627,838 square miles,¹⁴ much of the population lives in the Nile River Valley. Cairo, the capital of Egypt, has a population of about eleven million people¹⁵ living within its limits. Figure 4¹⁶

Year ▼	Population	Growth Rate
2023	112,716,598	1.67%
2022	110,990,103	1.75%
2020	107,465,134	1.75%
2019	105,618,671	1.81%
2018	103,740,765	1.92%
2017	101,789,386	2.01%
2015	97,723,799	2.29%
2010	87,252,413	1.99%
2005	79,075,310	2.07%
2000	71,371,371	2.15%

Figure 5 Egypt’s Rate of Natural Increase Over the Last 23 Years

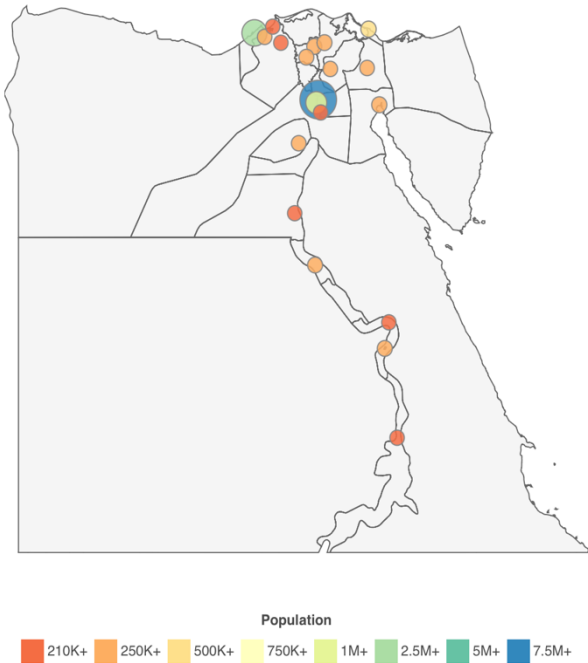


Figure 4 Population Density Map of Egypt shows how the population density of Egypt is dispersed over the country. While most of the population does reside in the Nile River Valley, there is a portion of the population that does live outside of it. This is a rather small group of people that are nomadic. Due to the

population living mainly in the Nile River Valley this could be a great asset to the governing body as it could allow for a more easily governed population. Referring back to figure 4, one can see the most densely populated areas are along the Nile, which means the government could have a much easier time communicating as there is not a large topographic obstacle in the way and the population is not spread over as much area and is closer to the central government.

A key element of understanding population is to consider the natural rate of increase. The natural rate of increase is the rate at which the population is increasing over time due to births in

relation to death rate. Egypt's rate of natural increase as of 2023 is 1.67 percent.¹⁷ For comparison the United State rate of natural increase is only 0.47 percent,¹⁸ which makes Egypt's rate of natural increase is about four times higher than that of the United States. While Egypt's rate of natural increase is at 1.67 percent which is high Egypt's overall natural rate of increase has been going down over the past several years as demonstrated by figure 5.¹⁹ The rate of natural increase in Egypt has slowed over the last two decades which could be a sign that the population is leveling out. This could create issues from the government as they would then have to find a way to try to get young people to come into the country to keep a younger population for the defense of the country. The population as it gets old is less likely to volunteer to be a part of the national defense as they would have already completed some military service when they were younger. Overall, the age of population and rate of natural increase could play a big part in how the government can put down rebellions and maintain defense in their own country.

There are also several components that are crucial to look at. The first of which is religion. In Egypt, about ninety percent of the country is Muslim, which has been deemed the national religion of Egypt, with the other ten percent being Christian. The Christian part of the population generally follows the Coptic orthodox church. The Coptic church has between six to ten million members, the majority which are in Egypt.²⁰ The other ninety percent of the population practice the Muslim religion, particularly the Sunni sect of the Muslim religion. During the 1980s the Egyptian president at the time placed all the mosques under state supervision and requiring Muslim preachers to register with government authority.²¹ As shown in figure 6,²² the distribution of religious affiliation in Egypt is pretty much exactly split ninety percent and ten percent. This could pose issues in a country and create religious tensions that are not easy to govern. Religious tensions have caused wars and violence for centuries and have been a huge

point of contention in many countries around the world. In the past, there have been numerous religions related violent outbreaks in Egypt that resulted in bombing, riots, and burning of

Egypt religious affiliation (2015)

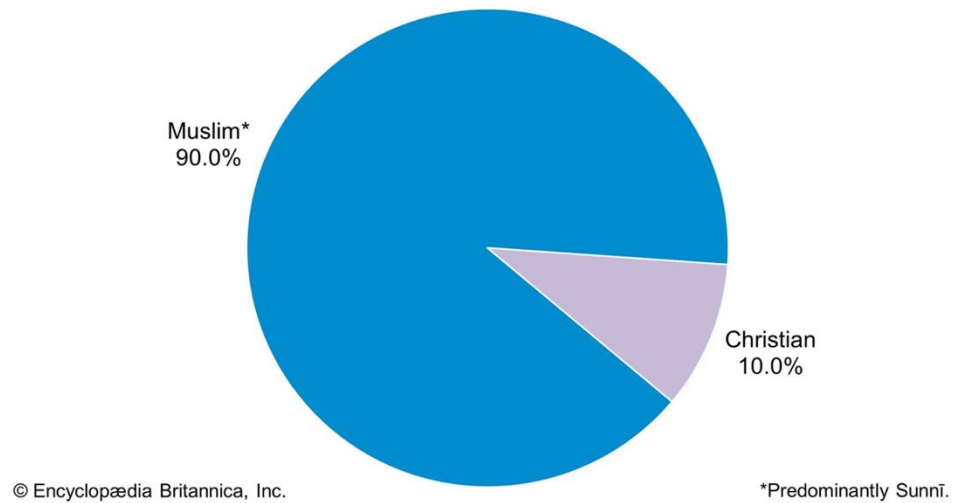


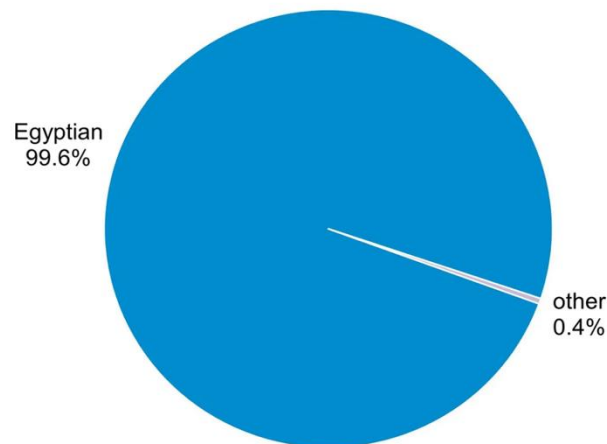
Figure 6 Religious Affiliations of Egyptians as of 2015

Coptic churches.²³ This has shown that religion has a huge effect on how a country can be governed. Religious tensions create situations that can test how well the government can protect their own people and to suppress rebellions or insurrections that could try and topple the government.

The current form of government in Egypt is a democratic republic. Their democracy however has been plagued with lots of issues. The monarchy was officially removed in 1953 but they didn't have their first presidential election until 2005. Their system at this time was a government system where the legislature selected the candidates and the people confirmed. In 2005 however, they had their first presidential election where multiple candidates could run. In 2013, there was a military coup that removed Mohamed Morsi from power and led to the rise of Abdel Fattah el-Sisi. Since the coup, the governmental structure has gone through periods of progress and setback. There have also been several uprisings which have contributed to the political instability in the country. The political instability creates many issues over time as tensions rise.

Some other demographics that should be discussed are also the linguistics in the country and the ethnic diversity. The country of Egypt is mainly comprised of ethnic Egyptians with few other ethnicities as shown in figure 7.²⁴ This reflects how Egypt is a nation-state which is a state

Egypt ethnic composition (2006)



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Figure 7 Ethnic Composition of Egypt

comprised of a majority group of people that is primarily located in just that country. The ethnic composition of a country is another hurdle that can cause challenges in governing a country effectively. The ethnic composition along with linguistics are major components that could create tensions alongside religions. The official language of Egypt is Arabic,²⁵ which is also the primary language spoken in Egypt. Arabic being the main language spoken and most ethnic Egyptians, this could be a positive thing in helping the government function better as they do not have to cater to different ethnic groups with conflicting views or risk there being something mistranslated if there are many languages being spoken.

Overall, the population and the demographics of Egypt could either help or harm how the government functions. This all depends on how the government perceives these factors and how they use them in relation to the ideals of the population of their country. These factors have some

counteracting effects on each other hence one must not only examine them individually but how they affect things. These factors have a more down turning effect on the country of Egypt and affect how the country preforms as a political entity negatively.

The Resources of Egypt

This portion of the paper will discuss the resources of Egypt and how they affect how Egypt can function as a country. Resources does not just mean the natural resources that are found in the country of Egypt it includes the ecumene, self-sustainability, tourism, and economic capability. All these factors affect how Egypt can function greatly. To start, one must look at Egypt's natural resources, which include petroleum, natural gas, phosphates, and iron ore.²⁶ Egypt is the twenty-sixth largest producer of crude oil in the world²⁷ and has several oil deposits onshore and offshore as shown in figure eight. Egypt produces approximately six hundred and ninety-nine thousand barrels of oil a day,²⁸ which they mainly sell to India, Germany, Italy, China, and Greece. While Egypt is the twenty-sixth largest producer of crude oil, it is also the twenty-ninth largest importer of crude oil in the world.²⁹ Egypt's production of crude oil over the years has been on a decline for several years as they have not yet found any new oil deposits.

Recently, Egypt has also been relying more on natural gas due to their natural gas fields have come online starting in the mid-two thousand tens.³⁰ Egypt imports

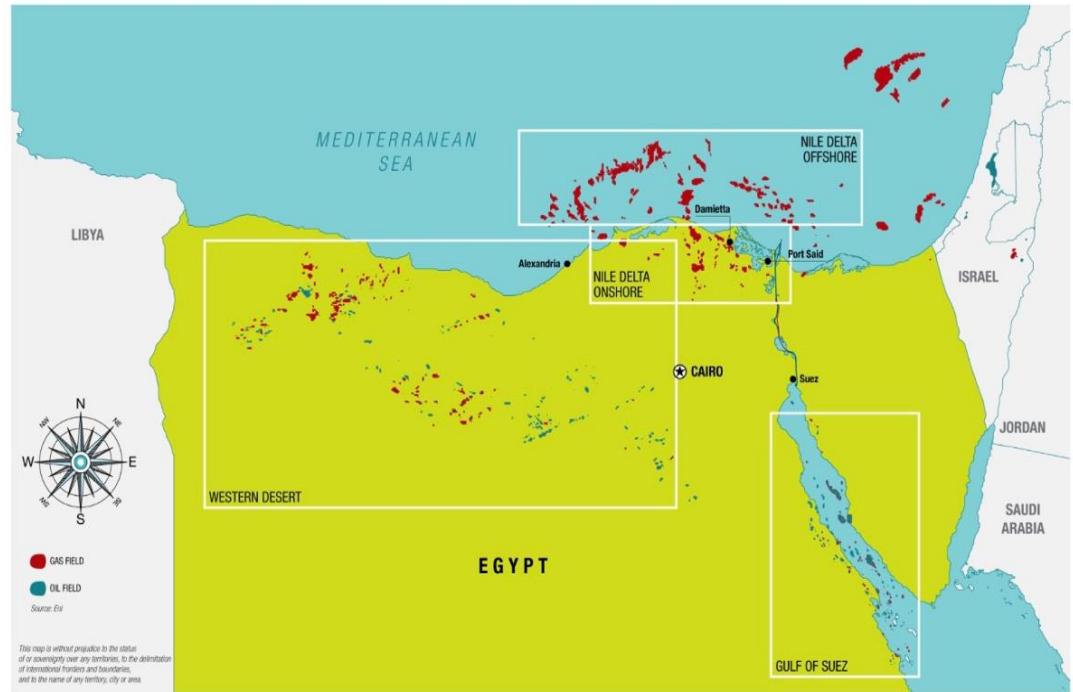


Figure 8 Oil and Gas Fields in Egypt

some natural gas;

they are ranked sixteenth in the world for natural gas reserves and twentieth in the world for natural gas production.³¹ Egypt does import about 127,487 cubic feet of natural gas. Overall while Egypt does produce crude oil and natural gas, they still must import a great deal of oil and natural gas to keep up with their energy consumption, which can hinder their ability to function well as a country.

Moving to the other natural recourses located in Egypt, phosphates and iron ore.

Phosphates are one of the parts of fertilizer. Egypt exports about 22,716 tones of diammonium phosphate a year during a time frame of 2002 to 2020³² which is the most widely used of form of

phosphate fertilizer. The final natural resource that Egypt possesses is iron ore. The country has been consistently producing about 560,000 tons of iron and shown in figure 9 are the iron

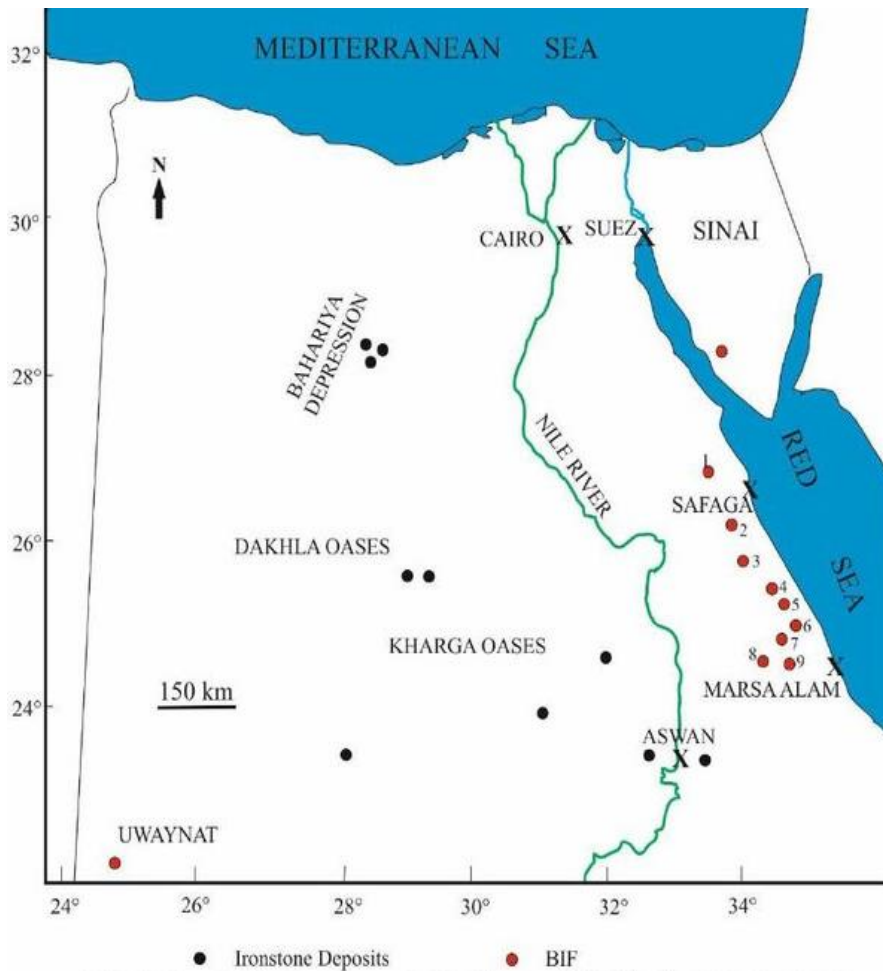


Figure 9 Iron Deposits Across Egypt

deposits across Egypt where the iron ore is located.

The ecumene of Egypt is confined to about seven percent of the country³³ as the rest is desert. Much of the population of the country lives along the Nile riverbank as that is where most of the fertile farmland is. Shown in

figure 10 is an aerial view

of Egypt which illustrates the much more fertile than the surrounding deserts. Most of the population lives in the valley with a small number living nomadically in the desert. This causes Egypt to likely never be fully able to be self-sufficient when it comes to producing enough

animal protein, grains, or vegetable oil.³⁴ This means that Egypt must import the food that it is not able to produce for its people which greatly affects how it functions as a country as this could cause issues if the countries, they import from are not friendly to them.

Finally, tourism is a great resource to Egypt. The tourism sector in Egypt produces about 4.7 percent of the gross nation product of Egypt as of 2019.³⁵ While tourism of course plummeted



Figure 10 Ariel View of Egypt

because of the covid-19 pandemic it has rebounded somewhat over the last 2 years. This has also caused a lot of inflation in the country which has also resulted in the Egyptian pound being worth about half a U.S. dollar.³⁶ This shows that the country of Egypt is reliant on their tourism industry which could cause massive issues for them in function. Looking back to 2020, Egypt's tourism dropped to 3.7 million tourists rather than the almost 13 million tourists the year before in 2019.³⁷ This caused the inflation and drop in value of the Egyptian pound. Overall, this causes a huge issue for the government as if tourism drops so does the ability to function properly as a country.

To conclude, while Egypt has several natural resources that help it maintain its ability to function it also must bring in enough resources from outside the country that it suffers. Importing is not always a bad thing, in Egypt's case the number of items they must import, and the importance of the items means that maintaining good relations with their trading partners is vital. Due to the limited amount of land that people live on and can farm also creates a large problem. This is due to the increasing population in a fixed amount of land will also exacerbate issues as you can only fit so many people in that space. Egypt is looking for a future that may be uncertain as they seem to have many issues, they are struggling with currently that will only seem to increase.

Final Analysis of Egypt

This paper analyzed different aspects of the country of Egypt. It started with the physical

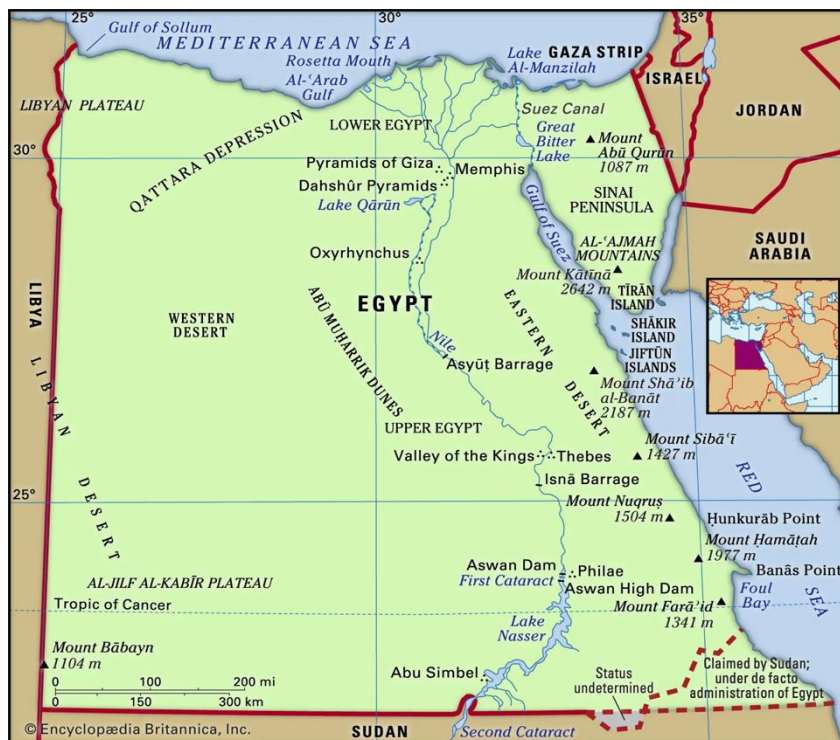


Figure 11 Map of Egypt

base of Egypt, then moved to the population and demographics of Egypt, and finally discussed the resources of Egypt. To conclude this paper will analyze what strengths and weaknesses that effect the Egypt's ability to function in the world today.

Egypt has strengths in both its physical base and its

population and demographics. The strengths that lay in Egypt's physical base would be its

geographic location and the shape of Egypt. The shape of Egypt is mainly compact with the Sinai Peninsula. Figure 11³⁸ demonstrates the physical shape of Egypt. While Sinai Peninsula could be seen as a weakness due to the disconnect between the central portion of the government and the peninsula. This shape though allows for Egypt to have control over the Suez Canal which could restrict access of travel between the Mediterranean Sea and the Red Sea. This brings in the geographic location as one of the strengths of Egypt. The control of commerce through the Suez Canal is a huge strength for Egypt as they can affect another country's commerce abilities. This requires other countries to maintain somewhat good relations with Egypt so the country does not restrict the passage through the canal.

The other strength that is present other than the geographic location and shape is some demographic factors. One of the main factors is that a majority of the country, about ninety percent, follows the Sunni sect of the Muslim religion as shown in figure 6³⁹ (back in paper B). This could be seen as a strength as there is not a large religious divide that could result in conflict. This means that the lack of religious conflict leaves one area the government does not have focus on and monitor.

The country does have a good number of weaknesses, however. High rates of inflation in Egypt, the small amount of currency, and the need to import resources such as food. First Egypt has an extremely high rate of inflation. As of February the annual inflation rate in Egypt has risen to 32.9 percent where as it had been 26.5 percent in January.⁴⁰ Figure 12⁴¹ illustrates inflation over the last several decades and predicts a few years into the future compared to what it was the previous year. The Egyptian government has tried to curb the economic struggle by accepting a three billion dollar loan from the International Monetary Fund which has resulted in the value of the Egyptian pound to plummet. In relation to the U.S. dollar, you would need thirty

egyptian pounds to make one U.S. dollar. The inflation has been mainly affecting food prices recently cause them to become increasingly high. Since last year food prices have risen almost 61.5 percent which causes about one third of the population of Egypt that lives in poverty to struggle for food.⁴²

This then introduce the next problem of Egypt having to import foods such as grain and having limited ecumene. The lack of ecumene means that as the population increases over time the less space there is available and the more they will have to expand and reshape the landscape. This could cause over crowding in the cities and

it is very expensive to develop the land and make it suitable for a large number of people to live on. Along with the lack of eumene there is even more of a lack of farmable land. A lack of farmable land means that Egypt would struggle to if not fall under the amount of food they need to produce to feed the people in their country. This results in Egypt needing to import large amounts of food to feed its population. Due to the rising inflation not only in Egypt but around the world, due to the conflict between Russia and Ukraine, the cost of the food that Egypt is importing has gone up as well. This means that the cost of the food is going to increase

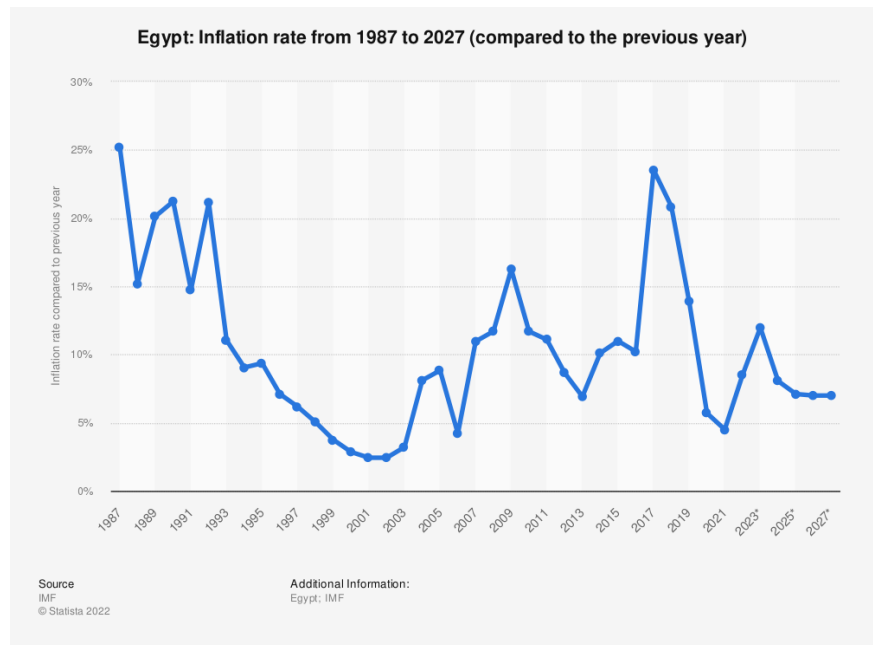


Figure 12 Inflation Rate in Egypt From 1987 - 2027

dramatically making food less accessible to those who are in poverty which is about one third of the country.

In conclusion, while Egypt does have some strengths that could help them in the world, they have weaknesses that are far more drastic and hamper their ability to be competitive. The fact that Egypt must import large amounts of food to feed its population causes huge issues and makes it much more vulnerable. The high inflation in the country also causes the country to be more vulnerable as it makes it harder for the population to afford necessities which could lead to uprisings and conflict due to an unhappy population. These factors outweigh the strengths presently in Egypt. Overall, the country of Egypt is struggling but could rebound over time if they are able to get inflation down and become more self-sufficient when it comes to food.

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