SOS Egypt: Violence Begins, "Thugs" = Police.

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We are no longer sleeping atop a volcano.

> **tommiesunshine**: RT @Dima_Khatib: There are calls for doctors to head to Tahrir Square, *but only accompanied by groups to protect them.* People need medical care #**egypt** #jan25 [1 minute ago]

"Thugs" = Police. This evening in Cairo a sleeping volcano erupted, spewing fire. Pro-government "protesters" broke the back of the past week of peaceful revolution with Molotov cocktails and men carrying whips atop camels. Presently, in Tahrir Square, anti-Mubarak demonstrators are surrounded by surging pro-Mubarak crowds, and unable to leave the square as the army stands by, presently motionless. And then there's this tweet a few minutes ago, as the Mubarak government tries to shift blame:

> Breaking: #Egypt state TV accuses #MuslimBrotherhood of throwing fireballs at #Tahrir. CNN sees NO EVIDENCE of this.

"Thugs," among the Egyptian people these days, means the state police and the secret security forces. It is very likely that the counter "demonstrators" are seeded with these thugs. Moreover, it is beyond any possible suspension of disbelief that this is a spontaneous outpouring of support for Mubarak. This gathering of weapons-toting thugs has been some time in the making, and would have required the acquiescence of the secret police, who, after all, have proved themselves very adept at rooting out opposition parties and individuals. This "demonstration" required exacting preparation. And where was Mubarak? And, especially, where was Vice President Omar Suleiman? He's not without interest here since he was the head of the Mukhabarat, or General Intelligence Directorate; Suleiman was Mubarak's go-to man for spying, torturing, misinforming, and disrupting.

What Next? Frankly, it's an absurd exercise to speculate. "What next?" includes not only Egypt but the region, note the demonstrations in Jordan, the unease in Israel, and the stirrings in Yemen. Yet, one can be sure that Mubarak himself is the only one who can decide whether Egypt burns or heals. And even that is uncertain; the revolution "genie" is out of the bottle, and Egypt without Mubarak is rife for instability. If Mubarak truly loves his country, as he affirmed in last night's speech, then the time to leave - *now*, not in September - has long past.