

Aid as Leverage?
Understanding the U.S.-Egypt Military Relationship

Matthew Craig Axelrod
The Lauder Institute, University of Pennsylvania

A RESEARCH PAPER

Presented to the Faculties of the University of Pennsylvania in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirement for the Master of Arts

April 2011

Faculty Advisor: Dr. John Neiva

Table of Contents

Introduction	1-2
The U.S.-Egypt Strategic Relationship	2-4
Critique of the U.S.-Egypt Military Relationship	4-10
Is Egypt a strategic partner?	
Does supporting the military mean supporting authoritarianism?	
Responding to the Critiques	10-18
Exhibit 1: Map of Freedom: Middle East and North Africa	
Exhibit 2: US Security Assistance	
Conclusion	18-19
Appendix: Summary of U.S. State Department Report on Human Rights 2009	20-21

Introduction

As political turmoil continues to upend regimes in the Arab World, the roles of the region's militaries have proved pivotal. In Tunisia and Egypt the militaries refused to suppress civilian protestors and then ushered two long-serving autocrats from power. In Libya the military has fractured, with factions supporting Colonel Qadhafi and factions fighting alongside the rebel militias. Yemeni generals have thrown their support behind protestors in that country. Saudi Arabia's military is currently in Bahrain, where it is protecting the royal family there against protesters.

In the past few years, each of these militaries and others in the region have received assistance and training from the United States. Egypt has received the most, around \$1.3 billion annually since signing a peace treaty with Israel in 1979. Military aid has been controversial, receiving criticism from academics and various political lobbies in Washington, and support from the Arab governments who consistently seek greater funding and support. As the region's political status quo shifts, now is a fitting time to reflect on the characteristics of this funding and ask some important questions.

How has military and security assistance benefited the United States and recipient countries in the Middle East? What are the political consequences of military assistance? How does military assistance help the United States achieve its strategic goals? Does military assistance strengthen autocratic regimes? Is providing military assistance to nondemocratic regimes consistent with the character of American principles and rhetoric?

This paper explores the case of Egypt to elucidate the complexities of American military assistance. It draws upon academic sources, government and news reports, interviews with American and Egyptian government officials, and the author's own

experience as the Egypt Country Director in the Office of the Secretary of Defense from 2005-2007.

The U.S.-Egypt Strategic Relationship

Both the United States and Egypt have benefited from a thirty-year-old strategic relationship. U.S. Ambassador to Egypt Francis Ricciardone explained the benefits and the importance of aid to Egypt in a 2007 memo to the Director of U.S. Foreign

Assistance:

Egyptian strategic partnership played a central role in promoting peace and stability, countering extremism and terrorism, and creating an environment in which political and economic reforms can prosper. A key pillar of the relationship, U.S. economic and security assistance both symbolizes and vastly strengthens our nation's historic cooperation and long-term commitment to the partnership.¹

While many would have taken issue that political and economic reforms could possibly prosper under former President Hosni Mubarak, it was not easy to disagree that Egypt supported the regional strategic goals of the United States. For thirty years, Egypt had maintained a durable peace with Israel, supported (or refrained from blocking) U.S. military operations in the Middle East, and cooperated with U.S. intelligence on countering extremist groups in the region.

Operationally, Egypt's cooperation enabled the U.S. military to maintain a high operational tempo in the region. Egypt granted expedited treatment and enhanced security to hundreds of U.S. naval ships as they passed through the Suez Canal and overflight

¹ United States. U.S. Department of State. U.S. Embassy in Egypt. *Endorsement Memo for Director of U.S. Foreign Assistance Henrietta Fore*. By Francis J. Ricciardone. November 15, 2007. Print.

permissions to several thousand U.S. military flights annually.² During Operation Desert Storm, Egypt expedited transit of 762 U.S. naval vessels and permitted 34,952 overflights.³ Following the 9/11 attacks and through operations in Afghanistan and Iraq, Egypt permitted more than 36,000 overflights.⁴ When Turkey refused American forces access through its territory in 2003, Egypt agreed to assist in the strategic lift of the 4th Infantry Division through the Suez Canal. If necessary, US military planners could likely have relied on Egypt for emergency military basing.

Egypt, for its part, forged a strong and lucrative relationship with the world's most powerful military, and has leveraged that relationship to modernize its forces. Egypt remains the second-largest recipient of U.S. military aid, receiving \$1.3 billion annually. Prior to formalizing relations with the United States, Egypt relied exclusively on Soviet-bloc weaponry. Now, over half of its equipment is American-made,⁵ and American assistance likely accounts for up to 85% of Egypt's military procurement budget.⁶ Military assistance has funded training programs in the United States for over 6,600 Egyptian officers since 1995,⁷ and roughly 600 officers continue to attend classes each

² *Review of U.S. Policy and Assistance Programs to Egypt*, 109th Cong. (2006) (testimony of Michael Coulter, Deputy Assistant Secretary, Political Military Affairs Bureau). Print.

³ The Arab Republic of Egypt. Egyptian Ministry of Defense. *A Partnership for Peace, Stability and Progress: Egypt's FY 2007 Request for Military Assistance*. 2007.

⁴ United States. Government Accountability Office. *Security Assistance State and DOD Need to Assess How the Foreign Military Financing Program for Egypt Achieves U.S. Foreign Policy and Security Goals : Report to the Committee on International Relations, House of Representatives*. [Washington, D.C.]: U.S. Government Accountability Office, 2006. P. 17. Print.

⁵ The Arab Republic of Egypt. Egyptian Ministry of Defense, *A Partnership for Peace, Stability and Progress: Egypt's FY 2008 Request for Military Assistance*. 2008. P 14.

⁶ Personal Interview with a U.S. Military Officer who served in Egypt. Cairo, Egypt, June 28, 2008. Egypt's military budget is an Egyptian state secret.

⁷ *Review of U.S. Policy and Assistance Programs to Egypt*, 109th Cong. (2006) (testimony of Michael Coulter, Deputy Assistant Secretary, Political Military Affairs Bureau). Print.

year.⁸ Every other year, Egypt, in cooperation with U.S. Central Command, hosts BRIGHT STAR, the largest multinational military exercise in the Middle East.

Thirty years of training together and managing a large assistance program led to close relationships and easy access between the militaries. Each military maintains an office in the other's capital, staffed by dozens of personnel. Two-star generals serve as office chiefs, positions ordinarily staffed by colonels in most other countries. For over 25 years, senior delegations have met annually in either Cairo or Washington to specifically discuss the defense relationship, military cooperation, and strategic policy.⁹ Although American military personnel with responsibility for Egypt rotate approximately every two years, the top two Egyptian generals who liaise with US officials have covered the American portfolio for over a decade.

Critique of the U.S.-Egypt Military Relationship

Through the years the close military relationship has come under fire from two major critiques, which are basically contradictory but lead to the same conclusion – reducing aid. The first argues that Egypt does too little to support U.S. policy in the region. That military aid should buy more than it does, and that Egypt might not be such a valuable strategic partner. The second side advocates rejecting Egypt as a strategic partner because the regime maintains its power through repression and fear. Both sides recommend ending, reducing, or conditioning aid to force Egypt to change its foreign and

⁸ The Arab Republic of Egypt. Egyptian Ministry of Defense. *A Partnership for Peace, Stability and Progress: Egypt's FY 2007 Request for Military Assistance*. 2007. page13.

⁹ The 27th U.S.-Egypt Military Cooperation Committee convened in January 2011 in Washington, D.C. The Chief of Staff of the Egyptian Armed Forces and the U.S. Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs co-chaired the event.

domestic policies. Both critiques draw a causal relationship between U.S. aid as leverage and Egyptian behavior.

Is Egypt a strategic partner?

The first critique emerged in the mid-1990s as the political and academic community began reconsidering Cold War foreign policies. Writing in 1997, Duncan Clarke of American University judged that Egypt's importance to the U.S. had faded:

The key political objectives of US aid to Egypt have been realized. The aid almost certainly helped solidify peace between Egypt and Israel. It allowed Egypt to stand apart from the rest of the Arab World after the Camp David accords... and Egypt once again has a leading role among Arab states.... Egypt's importance for the United States after the Cold War, while substantial, has diminished appreciably, partly because of the disappearance of the (real or supposed) Soviet threat to the region.¹⁰

Egypt's aid program began in the early 1980s after the American-brokered peace agreement between Israel and Egypt, when an unwritten understanding set U.S. military assistance at a ratio of 3:2 for the two countries, respectively.¹¹ This ratio largely held until the late 1990s, when Israel negotiated a ten-year agreement with the US that gradually shifted its assistance from economic aid to military aid. Egypt, on the other hand, failed to even sign a written agreement. The best it could get was a reduction in economic support but continued military assistance at \$1.3 billion a year, an amount unchanged since 1985.¹² As those ten-year agreements wound down in the mid-2000s, the situation got even worse for Egypt.

¹⁰ Clarke, Duncan L. "US Security Assistance to Egypt and Israel: Politically Untouchable?" *The Middle East Journal* 51.2 (Spring 1997): 202-03. Print.

¹¹ Sharp, Jeremy, *US Foreign Aid to Israel*, Congressional Research Services (January 2, 2008), p. 15.

¹² Interview with Graeme Bannerman, March 24, 2009, in Washington, DC. Sonny Callahan (R-Alabama), Chairman of the House Foreign Operations Subcommittee put language in the 1998 Foreign Operations Appropriations bill that maintained Egypt's FMF program at a level of \$1.3 billion per year and reduced the ESF program each year by \$40 million, starting at \$815 million in the first year and leveling at \$415 million at the end of ten years—in effect a ten-year agreement for Egypt.

As Egypt's peace with Israel persisted and its strategic value to U.S. regional goals became less apparent, Members of Congress argued that Egypt ought to do more to justify its aid package. Members of Congress hold significant power over aid to Egypt, as they earmark the funds directly in the Foreign Affairs Appropriations Bill. Continued funding would necessitate greater cooperation from Egypt on a range of issues that concerned the United States and particularly Members of Congress. At times these included a more open relationship with Israel, counterterrorism support, increased security on Egypt's border with Gaza to prevent smuggling, and greater freedoms for religious minorities in Egypt, especially the Christian Coptic community. Members of Congress argued on strategic grounds that military assistance should be conditioned or reappropriated to compel Egyptian cooperation or reflect the lack thereof.

As ranking member of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, the late Tom Lantos repeatedly questioned Egypt's peaceful intentions towards Israel and attempted to reduce Egypt's military aid. In a 2004 subcommittee hearing he argued that a safer security environment for Egypt precluded the need for Egypt to acquire "significant new military capabilities with United States taxpayer money."¹³ He went on to charge that Egypt failed to support US strategic interests in the region, and spent too much on defense and too little on development. As a corrective, Congressman Lantos announced his intention "to support the Egyptian people by introducing legislation to phase out military assistance for Egypt over the next 3 years, transforming the 1.3 billion annual gift to the Egyptian military into assistance for improving the quality of life for the Egyptian people."¹⁴

¹³ Lantos, Tom, Remarks during a hearing of the Subcommittee on the Middle East and Central Asia of the House Committee on International Relations, June 16, 2004.

¹⁴ Ibid.

Lantos never amassed the support necessary to pass binding legislation, but he set a precedent soon to be followed.

In 2007, Congressional appropriators coalesced into an ad-hoc coalition targeting military aid. Each represented interests who objected to Egypt's foreign and domestic policies. Representative Nita Lowey, echoing Tom Lantos, expressed concern for Israel's security and urged Egypt to do more to stem the flow of weapons into Gaza.¹⁵

Representative Dave Obey championed human rights issues by denouncing the imprisonment of Egyptian opposition politician Ayman Nour.¹⁶ Representative Frank Wolf brought pressure to bear on behalf of Egypt's expatriate Coptic community, which protested religious persecution in Egypt.¹⁷ These powerful members of the House Appropriations Committee placed conditions on \$100M of Egypt's 2008 assistance. For Congress to release the money, the Secretary of State would have to certify that Egypt had taken "concrete and measurable steps" to promote the independence of the judiciary, curb police abuses, and clean up smuggling networks on the border between Egypt and Gaza. Deputy Secretary of State John Negroponte issued such a certification on the Secretary's behalf on February 29, 2008. In its accompanying waiver justification, the State Department reported "some modest progress" in all three areas but determined that "more remains to be done."¹⁸ Congress attempted to reduce funding, but the Administration defended the status quo.

¹⁵ Erlanger, Steven, "Israel Urges Egypt to Act Against Hamas," *New York Times*, November 9, 2007.

¹⁶ Dumke, David, "Battle Over Aid," *Al Ahram Weekly*, June 21-27, 2007.

¹⁷ Personal interview with an Egyptian diplomat who served in the Egyptian Embassy in Washington, DC at the time. Cairo, Egypt, March 2, 2009.

¹⁸ Ironically, State likely could have certified progress on tunnel interdiction, the one area where the Egyptian military had some leverage (and arguably the only area where the Bush and Mubarak Administrations had a shared interest).

Does supporting the military mean supporting authoritarianism?

A second critique comes from a variety of thinkers, academics, and activists, and rests primarily on moral grounds – mainly that because the Egyptian military is a bulwark for an authoritarian regime, supporting the Egyptian military is akin to supporting authoritarianism. This reasoning stems from a broader, longstanding critique that the United States has for some years aided authoritarian regimes in the Middle East. President George W. Bush embraced this principle himself in a 2004 address in front of the United Nations General Assembly:

For too long, many nations, including my own, tolerated and even excused oppression in the Middle East in the name of stability... We must take a different approach. We must help the reformers of the Middle East as they work for freedom and strive to build a community of peaceful, democratic nations.¹⁹

Advocates for a dramatic shift in U.S. policy argue that supporting authoritarianism works against U.S. interest and erodes U.S. credibility in the Middle East writ large. This critique is usually put forth by a broad cross-section of individuals. Mark LeVine, a professor of Middle Eastern history at the University of California-Irvine, articulated a particularly hard-line in 2007 when commenting on a visit to Egypt by Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice. He accused the United States of “craven coddling of one of the world's oldest and most authoritarian regimes.”²⁰ In a commentary for the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Ahmad Al-Sayed El-Naggar of

¹⁹ Bush, George W. "Address by Mr. George W. Bush, President of the United States of America." Address. 3rd Plenary Meeting, General Assembly of the United Nations, Fifty-Night Session. New York. 21 Sept. 2004. UN. Web.

²⁰ LeVine, Mark. "The Price of Hypocrisy." *Asia Times Online*. 25 Jan. 2007. Web. <http://atimes.com/atimes/Middle_East/IA25Ak06.html>.

Egypt's respected Al Ahram Center for Political and Strategic Studies wrote that U.S. military assistance is "devoted mainly to strengthening the regime's domestic security and its ability to confront popular movements," rather than strengthening Egypt's national defenses.²¹ In Washington, policymakers and advisers in Washington often articulate a nuanced defense of aid to Egypt, arguing that military assistance serves a strategic purpose, the abandonment of which poses numerous challenges. But this has changed. A newly formed bipartisan group of respected foreign policy experts recently implied a link between U.S. aid and support for authoritarianism, indicating a growing frustration with conventional aid rationale:

As a close partner of Egypt and a provider of substantial military and economic assistance, the United States has a stake in the path Egypt takes. American support for authoritarian regimes tarnishes U.S. credentials, contributing to what President Obama has called the "cycle of suspicion and discord" between the United States and Muslim peoples.²²

Democracy advocates who challenged military assistance on moral and strategic grounds advocated similar tactics as Congress for a slightly different aim. Whereas Members of Congress supported using military assistance as a lever mostly to force the Mubarak regime to be more supportive of U.S. security interests, democracy advocates in Egypt and the international community proposed the same tactic to push Mubarak's hand on political reform. Amr Hamzawy, research director at the Carnegie Endowment's Middle East Center in Beirut, served as one of the "wise men" who negotiated with Omar Suleiman during the period of political upheaval in Egypt in late January and early February. He has argued for linking aid to "clear benchmarks and timelines on political

²¹ El-Naggar, Ahmad Al-Sayed. "U.S. Aid to Egypt: The Current Situation and Future Prospects." Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, June 2009. Web.

²² "A Letter to Secretary Clinton From the Working Group on Egypt." 7 Apr. 2010. Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. Web. <<http://www.carnegieendowment.org/publications/?fa=view&id=40535>>.

reform,” as well as giving “less to the Egyptian military and more to domestic civil society and to American nongovernmental organizations involved in democracy promotion.”²³ Egyptian sociologist and democracy advocate Saad Eddin Ibrahim recommended a broad policy of “making aid, trade and investment conditional upon Middle East governments' (including Israel's) taking concrete steps toward full democracy.”²⁴ John Bradley, a journalist who anticipated the recent political upheaval in his 2008 book, “Inside Egypt: The Land of the Pharaohs on the Brink of a Revolution,” has argued that U.S. aid should explicitly be tied to progress on political reform, especially free and fair presidential and parliamentary elections, a genuine drive against corruption and the lifting of continued restrictions on freedom of expression.”²⁵

Responding to the Critiques

Defending arms transfers to authoritarian regimes is no simple task, but a careful review of the critiques opens the door to a nuanced approach to foreign policy that takes into account the limits of American agency and the logistical demands of its power projection in the Middle East. The critiques rest on two policy assumptions – one, that conditioning aid can bring about reform in a recipient country, and two, that military assistance for authoritarian regimes is counterproductive to American interests. The first is simplistic and potentially destructive; the second is partially correct but too broad a

²³ Hamzawy, Amr, and Michael McFaul. "The U.S. and Egypt: Giving up on the 'Liberty Doctrine'" Editorial. *International Herald Tribune* 3 July 2006. Web. <<http://www.carnegieendowment.org/publications/index.cfm?fa=view&id=18498&prog=zgp&proj=zdr1,zme>>.

²⁴ Ibrahim, Saad Eddin. "Dissident Asks: Can Bush Turn Words Into Action?" Editorial. *Washington Post* 23 Nov. 2003. Web. <<http://www.eicds.org/english/publications/saadarticles/2003/dissident.htm>>.

²⁵ Bradley, John R. "Fires of the Nile, Dark Clouds Over Egypt." Editorial. *The Jewish Daily Forward* 30 Oct. 2008. Web. <<http://www.forward.com/articles/14473/>>.

principle. Egypt is an interesting test case, especially given the role of the military in its recent political events.

For a donor to condition assistance on a recipient meeting certain goals seems logical. International donor institutions often condition loans on reform in the financial and economic sector. It would seem that there would be a power relationship to exploit. In the case of the U.S.-Egypt aid, however, attempts to condition money had little positive effect. The threat of Congressional conditions in 2007 placed enough pressure on the Egyptian military to exert some additional effort to protect Israel, as it ultimately allocated \$23 million of its \$1.3 billion in aid to enhance security on its border with Gaza,²⁶ but the conditions failed in their larger goals of reorienting military expenditures to focus on border security and counterterrorism, and of motivating political reform in Egypt. Moreover the condition campaign increased bilateral tensions²⁷ and the conditions provided the Mubarak regime an opportunity to grandstand against American intervention. At the heart of the failure was a self-referential understanding of carrots and sticks and a misunderstanding of how Egyptians and Americans viewed the relationship.

First, giving Egypt \$1.3 billion annually did not buy America a client state. The Government of Egypt aligned its policies with the United States when it suited the interests of the Egyptian government. For instance, Egypt cooperated in undermining Hamas, which it considered a threat, but refused to contribute troops to Iraq, which could delegitimize the regime among its own people. More pertinently, the Government of Egypt resisted the Bush Administration's and later Congress's calls for political reform.

²⁶ Knickmeyer, Ellen. "Egypt to Bolster Gaza Border." *The Washington Post* 7 Jan. 2008: A14. Web. <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/01/06/AR2008010602055_pf.html>.

²⁷ Ibid.

On more than one occasion, and once while in Egypt, Secretary Rice called on Egypt to lift its Emergency Law.²⁸ Mubarak refused. Separately, in a flagrant abuse of power, the Egyptian Government imprisoned opposition leader Ayman Nour after Mr. Nour performed well in the country's first multi-candidate presidential elections. The more loudly and publicly that the Bush Administration protested the arrest, the more recalcitrant the Mubarak Government became. Shortly after Bush left office, however, Ayman Nour was freed. Few doubted that the timing was coincidental.

Second, Americans and Egyptians, for the most part, viewed continued military assistance through different historical lenses. For many American political leaders, and especially for those who viewed the relationship as one of patron-client, the Egyptian-Israel peace treaty was ancient history. Members of Congress who took the "patron-client" view looked at annual military assistance and asked, "what has Egypt done for us lately?" Egyptian officials, on the other hand, largely understood the aid as payment for services rendered. They linked the money to Egypt's difficult decision thirty years ago to break from its Arab neighbors and make peace with Israel, its longstanding support for U.S. goals in the region, and its operational support for US forces on a daily basis. They saw Suez transits, landings, and over-flights as valuable logistics support without which the US could not conduct its ongoing operations without considerably more trouble and expense. These services were rarely raised during Congressional deliberations. Through this lens, Members of Congress could have viewed the assistance package military

²⁸ In a speech at the American University of Cairo in June 2005, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice said, "The day must come when the rule of law replaces emergency decrees -- and when the independent judiciary replaces arbitrary justice." After President Mubarak's reelection in September 2005, Rice said, "President Mubarak now has an opportunity to follow through on several key campaign promises, including a pledge to lift the emergency law." (Reuters News Service, "White House: Egypt vote a step to free elections," September 10, 2005.)

operating expenses in the region, and therefore as a defense expenditure. As long as it was identified as aid, it was viewed as charity, which inaccurately reflected the mutually-beneficial relationship between the US and Egyptian militaries.

Third, attempting to pressure the military to force political action displayed a misunderstanding of the military's role in contemporary Egyptian politics and society, a misreading of the dynamic behind Egyptian regime survival, or both. Under Mubarak, the Egyptian military was significantly depoliticized, the culmination of a process begun by President Sadat and continued by President Mubarak to professionalize, appease, and isolate the Egyptian military from politics. Dr. Imad Harb explained the army's progression since the height of its political moment under Nasser:

When the regime was a ruler regime between 1952 and 1970, the military was prominent in state institutions and political decisions. When the decompression of the early 1970s paved the way for the start of multi-party politics, the military respected the wishes of the political leadership under President Sadat and withdrew from active participation in politics. Since the early 1980s, this nonparticipation has led to the military's complete subordination to the civilianized authority of President Husni Mubarak.²⁹

Conversely, as the military receded from politics, the security services gained strength, and came to comprise the bulk of the Egyptian Government's coercive apparatus. The Egyptian military remained the prime guarantor of stability in times of great crisis, but its influence on day-to-day governing and political reform was slight. A more likely scenario than the Egyptian military forcing the Egyptian government to reform in order to preserve military aid from the U.S., was the Egyptian regime supplementing any shortfall in the event of a reduction.

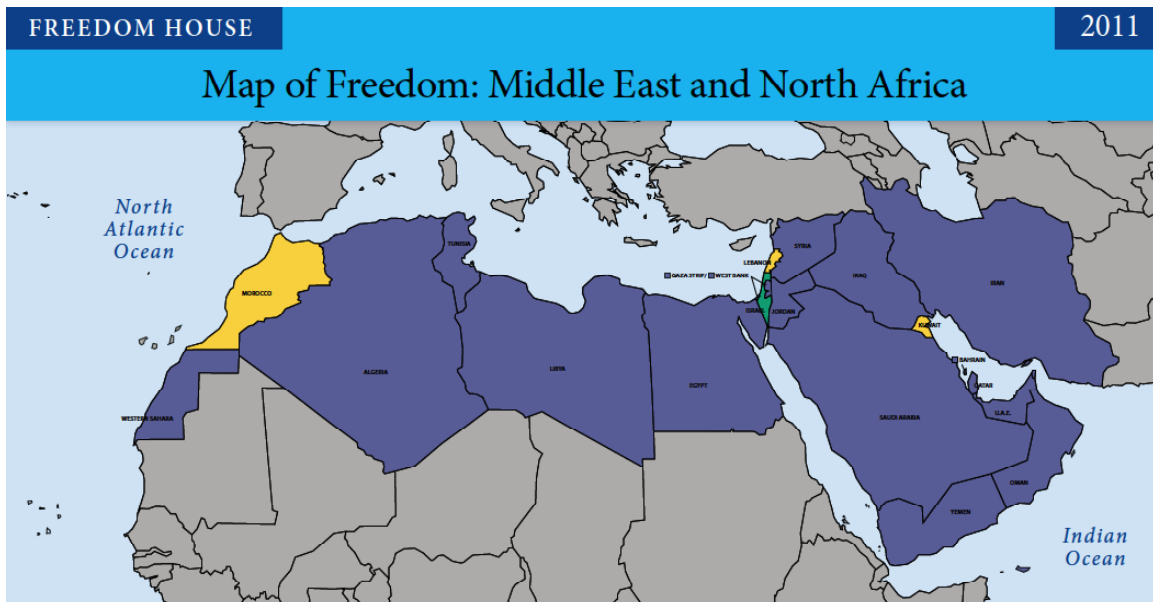
²⁹ Harb, Imad. "The Egyptian Military in Politics: Disengagement or Accommodation?" *The Middle East Journal* 57.2 (Spring 2003): 270. Print.

A consideration of the military's institutional role in Egypt leads to addressing the second challenge to military aid, namely, that the United States valued stability over democracy and therefore supported authoritarian regimes in the Middle East. This challenge continues to persist. It is not easily refuted.

There is no government in the Middle East that does not rule through some form of authoritarianism. The Economist Intelligence Unit's 2010 Democracy Index named the Middle East the "most repressive region in the world," categorizing 16 out of 20 countries as authoritarian, with the exceptions of Iraq, Lebanon, and the Palestinian Territories (hybrid regimes) and Israel (a flawed democracy).³⁰ Freedom House's political map of the region is striking, with its authoritarian "purple" coloring nearly the entire region (Exhibit 1).

Exhibit 1: Map of Freedom: Middle East and North Africa

(Free: Israel; Partly Free: Morocco, Lebanon, and Kuwait; Unfree: The remainder of the region.)³¹



³⁰ "Democracy Index 2010: Democracy in Retreat." *Www.eiu.com*. Economist Intelligence Unit, 2010. Web.

³¹ Freedom House, <http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=594>

The U.S. State Department has no illusions about the poor state of political freedoms in the Middle East. A summary of the most recent set of State Department Country Reports on Human Rights Practices offers a clear negative judgment on the region's poor state of human rights and political freedoms (Appendix).

Nevertheless, the U.S. maintains relationships with most of these countries, and provides monetary support for "Peace and Security" to 16 of them. This specifically includes support for counterterrorism, combating weapons of mass destruction, stabilization operations and security sector reform, counter-narcotics, transnational crime, conflict mitigation and reconciliation, and foreign military financing. Israel and Egypt are the largest recipients of the latter, placing them both at the top of security assistance in general (Exhibit 2).

Exhibit 2: US Security Assistance (in \$MM)³²

³² Data compiled from the U.S. State Department, Foreign Assistance, <http://foreignassistance.gov/>

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Israel	2,257.7	2,340.2	2,380.6	2,550.0	2,775.0
Egypt	1,290.5	1,302.7	1,293.6	1,304.7	1,305.7
Jordan	213.4	283.9	376.4	358.3	380.0
Lebanon	7.4	296.5	13.2	172.6	129.3
WB/ Gaza	95.8	0.0	26.4	233.5	100.7
Bahrain	19.0	16.4	5.3	9.2	20.5
Tunisia	10.3	10.8	10.4	13.8	19.9
Yemen	10.8	13.7	7.9	5.9	19.6
Morocco	16.0	16.3	7.0	7.2	15.7
Oman	15.4	15.9	7.7	9.4	12.0
Algeria	0.8	1.8	1.6	1.4	2.4
Libya	0.0	0.0	1.0	0.8	0.8
UAE	1.0	1.6	0.3	0.9	0.2
Saudi Arabia	1.6	0.3	0.1	0.4	0.2
Kuwait	0.6	1.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Qatar	0.9	1.1	0.3	0.0	0.0
Total	3,941.3	4,302.3	4,131.7	4,668.0	4,782.1

Sensitive to the perils and immorality of aiding repression, the United States monitors security assistance programs with end-use agreements for military hardware and validates that recipients of security assistance respect human rights. This is ensured by the Leahy Law, which is included in the Foreign Operations Appropriations Acts that appropriate security assistance:

None of the funds made available by this Act may be provided to any unit of the security forces of a foreign country if the Secretary of State has credible evidence that such unit has committed gross violations of human rights, unless the Secretary determines and reports to the Committees on Appropriations that the government of such country is taking effective measures to bring the responsible members of the security forces unit to justice.³³

This restriction, however, applies only to the recipient institution in the foreign country, which implies that aid can continue to one part of a regime even while other parts of that

³³ "Limitation on Assistance to Security Forces (The "Leahy Law")." Center for International Policy. Web. <<http://ciponline.org/facts/leahy.htm>>.

same regime engage in activities that may violate human rights. This was exactly the case in Egypt.

In her comprehensive explanation of how the Mubarak regime ruled, Maye Kassem from American University in Cairo described a mix of patronage and corruption (using state resources including money and jobs to shore up regime support), exclusion (legally consolidating power within the executive by prohibiting dissent and organization), and coercion (using violence to repress dissent and ensure cooperation).³⁴ Egyptian security services handled the last part, as described by the U.S. State Department:

Security forces used unwarranted lethal force and tortured and abused prisoners and detainees, in most cases with impunity. Prison and detention center conditions were poor. Security forces arbitrarily arrested and detained individuals, in some cases for political purposes, and kept them in prolonged pretrial detention.³⁵

But the military stood apart from this violence. In fact, senior military officials expressed dissatisfaction with abusive repression and regret over those instances when the military was used for political purposes, such as the trying of civilian political opponents in military tribunals.³⁶ The military was thus both co-opted by the regime, as its institutions were used for political ends, and excluded from politics, as it could not exert control of the state security forces. Ironically, that disassociation from politics made the Egyptian military a credible institution among the Egyptian people.

³⁴ *Egyptian Politics: The Dynamics of Authoritarian Rule*. USA: Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc., 2004.

³⁵ United States. U.S. Department of State. Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor. *2009 Human Rights Report: Egypt*. Web. <www.state.gov>.

³⁶ Author's interview with a Major General in the Egyptian Military and advisor to Egyptian Defense Minister Tantawi. Cairo, Egypt. August 11, 2008.

Consecutive U.S. administrations supported the Egyptian military with arms because it was in U.S. strategic interests to bolster the durable peace between Israel and Egypt and to ally itself with a powerful Arab military in the region. But it also viewed the Egyptian military as the possible future arbiter of any domestic crisis in Egypt. This judgment came from the military's own behavior, as it intervened in domestic affairs only twice in several decades—the bread riots of 1977 and the Central Security Force unrest of 1986³⁷, and from sustained interaction with the military-to-military interaction over 30 years. That interaction included the training of thousands of Egyptian military officers in the United States and the stationing of hundreds, perhaps thousands, of American officers in Egypt. A consensus emerged that the military relationship was worth protecting, that the military did not contribute to authoritarianism in Egypt, and that reducing aid would not bring about political reform. In a joint letter to House Leader Nancy Pelosi in 2007, Secretaries Robert Gates and Condoleezza Rice stated this declaratively:

Egypt has been a partner for peace in the Middle East for almost thirty years. Egypt's continued tactical and strategic cooperation is essential to sustaining success in the War on Terror, including ongoing operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. By facilitating the transit of U.S. naval vessels through the Suez Canal and permitting unfettered overflight access, Egypt has earned the trust of U.S. military commanders in-theater.

...Much work remains to be done in promoting human rights, judicial reform and border security in Egypt. Withholding funds destined for the Egyptian military will not help achieve these goals.³⁸

As democracy advocates pointed out, reducing or cutting military assistance to Egypt may have improved the image of the United States among those who believed that

³⁷ Stephen H. Gotowicki, "The Role of the Egyptian Military in Domestic Society," Institute of National Strategic Studies, National Defense University, 1997.

³⁸ Gates, Robert, and Condoleezza Rice. Letter to The Honorable Nancy Pelosi, Speaker of the House of Representatives. 3 Oct. 2007.

the country supports authoritarian regimes in the Middle East. It is a reach, however, and likely incorrect, to assume that doing so would have encouraged authoritarian regimes to reform. This is primarily because the Egyptian military was not a political body, and because the Mubarak regime would sooner supplement military funds than endanger its own existence by advancing political reform for \$1.3B in assistance.

Conclusion

In the end, it was not foreign leverage that brought about political reform in Egypt, but domestic political action. The U.S. Government's belief that the Egyptian army could arbitrate a critical rupture in Egyptian politics proved correct in February 2011, when in response to weeks of popular demonstrations and regime intransigence, Field Marshal Mohammed Hussein Tantawi ushered President Mubarak from power. Tantawi now serves as the head of the The Supreme Council of the Egyptian Armed Forces, Egypt's current ruling body.

A policy of continued U.S. military assistance to Egypt seems to have been validated, as the U.S. maintained a strong partner for several decades, and at "the moment of truth" the Egyptian military stepped in on the side of the people rather than on the side of a repressive regime.

But the picture is not entirely clear. On the one hand the new military leadership has stated that it will honor its political commitments abroad, meaning its durable peace with Israel.³⁹ Indeed, Israeli leaders have even expressed satisfaction in upgraded border

³⁹ Egypt. *Army Council: Egypt Is Committed to All Treaties*. Egypt State Information Service, 13 Feb. 2011. Web. <<http://www.sis.gov.eg/En/Story.aspx?sid=53702>>.

security measures.⁴⁰ More importantly, the military has also stated its intentions to preside over a democratic transition.⁴¹ But on the other hand there have been disturbing allegations that the Egyptian military has adopted some of the repressive practices of the deposed regime, including detentions and torture.⁴² The only thing that is clear is that the Egyptian military is no longer dissociated from politics. As the transition period continues to progress, the U.S.-Egypt military and strategic relationship will enter a new phase. Understanding its benefits, and its limitations, will aid in restructuring and balancing the relationship.

⁴⁰ Vick, Karl. "Were the Israelis Behind the 'Mystery' Air Strike in Sudan?" *Time*. 6 Apr. 2011. Web. <globalspin.blogs.time.com>.

⁴¹ Egypt. The Supreme Council of the Armed Forces. *Constitutional Proclamation*. Egypt State Information Service, 13 Feb. 2011. Web. <<http://www.sis.gov.eg/En/Story.aspx?sid=53709>>.

⁴² McGreal, Chris. "Egypt's Army 'involved in Detentions and Torture'" *The Guardian*. 9 Feb. 2011. Web. <guardian.co.uk>.

Appendix: Summary of U.S. State Department Report on Human Rights 2009

	Algeria	Bahrain	Egypt	Iran	Jordan	Kuwait	Lebanon	Libya
System of Rule	presidential/multiparty	monarchy	republic	constitutional, theocratic republic Shia Muslim clergy dominate	constitutional monarchy	constitutional, hereditary	parliamentary republic	authoritarian
	State of Emergency in effect since 1992		state of emergency in effect since 1967		multiparty parliament			
Respect for Human Rights	denied due process in some instances; pretrial detention abused; some instances of torture judiciary not impartial in civil matters	some instances of cruel treatment trafficking in persons	limited use of force, torture, etc; police brutality	multiple acts of unlawful killings, political abductions, and systematic torture imprisonment and detainment for political beliefs after election protests	arbitrary interference of privacy; monitoring phone & internet, surveillance, etc unnecessary force in some instances	some reports of prisoner abuse some arbitrary arrest of nonnationals	some reports of govt torture and cruel punishment, arbitrary arrests no progress towards disbanding armed militia groups	disappearances, torture, arbitrary arrests, lengthy pretrial detention political prisoners, lack of independent judiciary
	disappearances	discrimination especially against Shia majority	arbitrary arrest & detainment	monitored activities, phone, internet, mail	reduced cases of police mistreatment	police corruption	lack of independent judiciary	
	infringed on privacy rights		security forces not held accountable		lack of independent judiciary		frequently interfered w/ privacy	
Freedom of speech	self-censored public criticism of govt	provided that fundamental Islamic doctrine not infringed	partially restricted through harassment and arrests	severely restricted in practice	generally free, though used caution when criticizing govt	generally free	legally prohibited from criticizing president	severely limited
Freedom of press	informal pressure on publishers, editors, etc -- self-censorship radio & tv govt owned, opposition generally denied access	self-censorship	self-censorship, detain journalists, etc	arbitrary censorship	self-censorship due to fines and threats of detainment	self-censorship	self-censorship due to political violence	govt owned all print and broadcast media
	generally unimpeded	restricted use of internet	rare occasions restricted websites & monitored	threatened and jailed journalists	govt controlled access	monitored some blogs, groups, etc		pervasive self-censorship
Internet Freedom	govt monitors email & chat-rooms	blocked many site, blogs, chat sites, etc	police harassment of some bloggers	govt increased control on internet	govt monitoring	some sites blocked		monitored
	new law for using electronic data in prosecutions	did not monitor email	govt promoted through low-cost access	govt harassed indiv who posted critical comments on govt				
Academic Freedom	delays & denied international experts	some self-censorship on political issues	restricted	significantly restricted	some limitations	self-censorship	no restrictions	severely restricted
			self-censorship on sensitive issues	"2006 presidential call for removal of secular and liberal professors"	govt monitoring of conferences, etc			
Freedom of Assembly	in constitution but severely restricted in practice due to "state of emergency" govt status demonstrations banned	restricted in practice requests necessary for public gathering	restricted permits required for public gathering, denied for political events	restricted in practice, and closely monitored	restricted	generally free	approval for rallies	severely restricted in practice
		limited in practice	restricted	dispersed peaceful demonstrations, targeted university students	approval needed for gatherings			permits necessary for gathering
Freedom of Association	in constitution but severely restricted in practice due to "state of emergency" govt status permits required	cannot form political parties	restricted	limited in practice	limited in practice	limited in practice	limited in practice	restricted to govt affiliated institutions
		restricted registration of political parties, NGOs, associations, etc	various types of permits	arbitrary requirements, arrested group leaders, etc		restricted licenses	inconsistent requirements	
Freedom of Religion	in constitution but severely restricted in practice Islam declared as state religion (99% of population Sunni Muslim) non-Muslims can hold public office (limited)	Islam declared official religion permits for religious groups needed	restricted Islam official religion	severely restricted in practice, esp. Baha'i faith discrimination against non-Shia religious groups	some restrictions	respected freedom of belief and worship within the home non-Muslim religious organizations limited due to requirements	generally respected	generally respected
		discrimination against majority Shia population	govt did not recognize some religions	discrimination against Baha'i faith				
Freedom of Movement	in constitution but severely restricted in practice cooperated with UNHCR	generally respected right of free movement	military zones w/ limitations	restricted foreign travel esp. for skilled	some restrictions	limited foreign travel	limitations on refugees	generally free, limited foreign travel
	restrictions on travel in 4 provinces due to security concerns		limitations of travel for women, males w/o compulsory military service,					
Elections and Political Participation	removal of presidential term limits in 2008	democratically elected Council of Deputies (lower Parliament)	low turnout, fraud	neither free nor fair presidential election	limited ability to change govt	limited right to change govt	generally free & fair parliamentary election	do not have right to peacefully change govt
	limited due to limitations on assembly, association, etc	ruling family held all strategic cabinet positions	limited right to change govt due to continual state of emergency	censorship, blocked websites, cell phones, etc	some election irregularities	free & fair parliamentary election	cultural barriers to women's participation	prohibits political parties
	contested 2009 election	allegations of gerrymandering and vote rigging				limited formation of political parties		no constitution
Corruption and Transparency	corruption laws not implemented exists according to World Bank indicators	lack of transparency in many areas some corrupt practices	low level corruption lack of transparency	official corruption & lack of transparency	lack of transparency	some corruption	serious govt corruption problem	favoritism based on family and tribal ties govt corruption
Worker Rights	unions must be approved	limited right to unions	first independent labor union permitted	severely restricted	restricted	some limitations	collective bargaining	limited collective bargaining
	two-thirds labor force in unions workers can strike, collective bargaining for unions,	collective bargaining discrimination to foreign workers	limited right to unions tripartite negotiations	child labor arrested union organizers	collective bargaining			prohibits independent associations, strikes

Appendix: Summary of U.S. State Department Report on Human Rights 2009⁴³

⁴³ Appendix prepared by Anita Sapre, University of Pennsylvania Research Assistant. Information from the United States. U.S. Department of State. Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor. *2009 Human Rights Report*. Web. <www.state.gov>.

	Morocco	Oman	Qatar	Saudi Arabia	Syria	Tunisia	United Arab Emirates	Yemen
System of Rule	monarchy	hereditary monarchy	constitutional monarchy	monarchy	republic	presidential	federation of emirates	republic
	elected parliament		no elections for national leadership all appointed	Shari'a + 1992 Basic Law	authoritarian presidential regime	constitutional republic	7 emirate rulers appointed constitute Federal Suprem Council	popular vote for presidential election but one party rule
Respect for Human Rights	torture and abuse during pretrial detention	generally respected human rights	prolonged detentions	torture & abuse, arbitrary arrest	systematically repressed ability to change govt	torture and physical abuse	arbitrary detention, lack of judiciary independence	human rights violations increased over the year
	arbitrary arrest and detention	inability to change govt	discrimination against noncitizens, "Didoons" (stateless persons)	new judicial system	arbitrary deprivation of life, torture & abuse, arrest & detainment w/o due process	arbitrary arrest and detention	interference w/ privacy	corruption, political-military connection, voting fraud limit the ability to change govt
	lack of independent judiciary	govt monitored some communications		lack of due process; political prisoners; no right to change govt	violated privacy		no right to change govt	arbitrary killings, political disappearances, torture, arbitrary arrest, prolonged detention
	some interference with privacy			violence against women & children	discrimination against women			lack of independent judiciary
Freedom of speech	limited in practice	limited	limited in practice	Basic Law strictly limits	Emergency Law provisions to restrict freedom of speech	reprisals for criticism of the government	restricted in practice	restricted in practice
Freedom of press	increase in media restrictions	self-censorship	self-censorship -due to political and economic pressure	limited media, can be legalay banned	detained journalists	restricted	extensive self-censorship	threatened & harassed journalists
		prohibits criticism of sultan			self censorship	impose self-censorship through intimidation	fear of deportation	self - censorship
Internet Freedom	generally unrestricted access	restricted	restricted through censorship	restricted (about 8% access)	widely available but censored	Govt monitors internet	restricted some sites, monitored chat rooms, etc	blocked access to some political and religious sites
		non-transparent criteria for blocking sites	monitored email, chat rooms, etc			Govt blocks sites relating to "domestic human rights, opposition, and Islamist groups"		blocked opposition sites
						YouTube blocked		
Academic Freedom	some restriction	limited for controversial matters	self-censorship	restricted	restricted	limited academic freedom	censored school materials	restricted
	tolerated political activism on campuses			censored course content		self-censorship in universities		monitored professors and students
Freedom of Assembly	permission needed for public assemblies	prior approval necessary	many restrictions for public meetings	prohibited public demonstration	permission required for gatherings of more than 3 people	public rallies blocked for groups critical of the government	permits required for public gathering	permits required, monitored meetings
				Basic Law does not provide for freedom of assembly		meetings are also blocked		
Freedom of Association	some specific limitations	limited due to registration	administrative obstacles	Basic Law does not provide for freedom of assembly	restricted due to registration process	generally blocked for critical groups	political organization, political parties, and trade unions are illegal	politically parties prohibited
				no independent political parties			govt censorship of association materials	
Freedom of Religion	non-Muslims openly practiced	generally free to worship	some restrictions on public worship	law does not protect religious freedom explicitly	generally respected, some restrictions	Govt employs all imams	denies Muslims freedom to change religion	generally respected, decreased during the year
	varying degrees of restrictions for different faiths	religious gatherings only on govt approved houses of worship		limited public practice of non Sunni Islam	monitored militant Islam groups		restricted religious freedom in practice	discriminatory practices
				prohibited public worship of non-Muslim religions	no official state religion		individual emirates exercise autonomy on religious matters	
Freedom of Movement	generally respected	generally respected	severely restricted for non-citizens	generally not restricted, though Basic Law does not provide provisions	exit visas for limited foreign travel	restricted for some dissidents	restrictions to foreign travel	limited movement of women, foreigners and tourists
	restricted movement in Western Sahara							
Elections and Political Participation	restrictions on political parties	60% participation in Consultative Council elections	no elections for national leaders	political parties prohibited	neither free nor fair presidential, parliamentary or local elections	One party rule	consensus among rulers, ruling families, and other leading families	problems with voter registration, ballot counting, and use of state resources for ruling party
	Parliamentary elections ran smoothly	no formal legislative powers for elected	forbids political parties	no elections, ruling family appoints leadership	suppressed political opposition	Elections rigged for ruling party	laws discourage women's political activity	first competitive election
		no political parties	municipal elections -- 75% of citizens could not vote			Patronage for ruling party members		
Corruption and Transparency	serious corruption issue	isolated corruption		some corruption	national anticorruption campaign	Corruption on the rise	generally effective penalties for corruption	frequent corrupt activities
					bribes, and corruption continued		some corruption at administrative level	widespread in every branch and level of govt
Worker Rights	collective bargaining	right to unions, strikes, etc	restrictions on non-citizens	no labor unions	in practice not free to form unions	Unions are independent but limited in power	no unions permitted	many restrictions to implementation of unions
	ability to form unions	collective bargaining	collective bargaining	no collective bargaining	no collective bargaining in practice	Workers can organize and bargain collectively	professional organizations exist	collective bargaining