

WRITTEN STATEMENT
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HOUSE FOREIGN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE
FULL COMMITTEE HEARING
“Next Steps on Egypt Policy”
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Chairman Royce, Ranking Member Engel, and distinguished Members of the Committee, thank you for inviting me to appear before you today to discuss next steps regarding U.S. policy toward Egypt.

Egypt and the U.S.-Egypt relationship matter to us. Egypt is a vital partner in the region. Our longstanding partnership is predicated on shared interests – promoting a stable and prosperous Egypt; securing regional peace and maintaining peace with Israel; and countering extremism and terrorism throughout the Middle East and North Africa. This partnership has brought the United States significant benefits: from easy transit through the Suez Canal, military overflights that facilitate our activities, and the counter-terrorism and counter-proliferation gains that come from Egypt’s efforts to control its borders with Gaza and security-challenged countries like Libya.

As the most populous Arab country, a historically key regional actor, and a bellwether for trends across the region, what happens in Egypt clearly has an

impact far beyond its borders. There can be no doubt that a reliable Egyptian partner is in U.S. strategic interests.

As we rely on Egypt to partner with us in facing such fundamental regional challenges, however, we also firmly believe that the best, most reliable Egyptian partner is a democratic Egypt. A sustainable, inclusive, non-violent transition to a democratically-elected government will give Egypt the best opportunity to succeed, and Egypt's success can be the region's success.

The dramatic past 33 months in Egypt's history have focused on what the Egyptian people want in terms of democracy, political and economic reform, and what their governments need to do to meet the aspirations of those millions who created the January 25, 2011 revolution. Those aspirations have not yet been met, and Egypt's democratic transition has been anything but easy or linear.

Following the historic January 2011 revolution, the Muslim Brotherhood's Freedom and Justice Party won parliamentary elections and President Morsy was voted into power in an election viewed as free and fair. Mr. Morsy, however, proved unwilling or unable to govern in a way that was inclusive, alienating large swaths of Egyptian society, and the interim government that replaced him July 3 responded to the desires of the millions of Egyptians who believed the revolution had taken a wrong turn and sought a return to security and stability after years of unrest.

The interim government that came to power in the days after July 3 also has made decisions inconsistent with inclusive democracy. The decision to remove Morsy; excessive force used against protestors in August; restrictions on the press, civil society, and opposition parties; and the continued detention of many members of the opposition, are all troubling. So too have been the restrictions in place as a result of the extension of the state of emergency. I must also note that we have consistently and strongly condemned the heinous violence we have seen against Coptic churches and members of their community. There is no place in Egypt for such acts of terror. We have also condemned attacks on the security forces in the Sinai and elsewhere in Egypt.

We were deeply troubled by the events of July 3, and in the wake of the violence of mid-August, we made clear that we could not continue business as usual. That is why we recently announced, after considerable review, a recalibration of our assistance to Egypt. The decision represents an effort to ensure that assistance continues and is directed toward core U.S. interests, including helping Egypt secure its borders and the Sinai, prevent the flow of weapons into Gaza that threaten Israel, and counter terrorists seeking to attack U.S. and Egyptian interests. We will continue military training and education, as well as the sustainment of certain U.S.-origin military systems to the degree permissible.

We are, however, withholding the delivery of several major weapons systems -- to include F-16s, M1A1 tank kits, Harpoon missiles, and Apache helicopters. We will review these decisions in light of credible progress on the interim government's political roadmap and progress towards a sustainable, inclusive, and peaceful transition to democracy.

We will work with the interim government and Congress to provide economic support that directly benefits the Egyptian people – including in the areas of health, democracy and governance, and private sector growth – but we are not moving forward with any further cash transfers to the government.

This recalibration of assistance reflects our effort to do all we can to advance our core interests in Egypt and the region, including regional security interests, while at the same time impressing upon the Egyptian leadership the importance to the United States of progress towards a democratic transition – progress we believe the Egyptian people have been asking for. Our decision is designed to use our continued military and economic assistance to encourage a transition to an inclusive democracy and a strong, private sector-led economy that can reinforce political stability.

We welcome the interim Egyptian government's commitment to a political roadmap to restore a democratically-elected civilian government and will monitor how that roadmap is implemented. It includes a constitutional amendment process

culminating in a national referendum – probably in December. If that referendum is successful, parliamentary and presidential elections would follow next spring. As this process moves forward, we look to the current Egyptian leadership to be inclusive, respect the rights of all Egyptians, and respect the rule of law, freedom of expression and peaceful assembly, and the role of civil society, as well as religious freedom. The constitution now being debated within the Constituent Assembly should protect fundamental freedoms, and the upcoming elections should be free and fair, with participation across the entire political spectrum. We appreciate that the Egyptian leadership has committed to allowing international and domestic observation of those elections.

Beyond the roadmap, the United States has stayed firm to its principles and interests of advancing civil society engagement by encouraging the interim government to pass an NGO law that conforms to international standards and Egypt's own international commitments, registering concern over the June NGO trial verdict against NGO workers, and urging redress of that verdict. We have also raised our concerns about the state of emergency, which the government recently announced would not be extended when it expires on November 14.

Regarding the economy, we are encouraging the interim government to maintain economic stability, help restore growth and investment, and create jobs. Millions of Egyptians have taken to the streets over the past few years demanding

their government provide economic opportunities. And so it will be critical for the interim government and its successor to take measures to ease the concerns of the business community and domestic and international investors, and to attract new economic opportunities for Egyptians.

Egypt has an enormous opportunity now to pursue the aspirations of the revolution of January 25, 2011, and to provide for the needs of the Egyptian people. The United States wants to help in this endeavor. To do that, and to actively advance our core interests in the region, we need to have the ability to continue U.S. assistance to Egypt.

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Engel, and distinguished Members of this Committee, we want to work closely with Congress both to continue our assistance relationship with Egypt, consistent with the law and our national interests, and to encourage progress on Egypt's democratic transition. Congress plays a critical role in our bilateral relationship with Egypt. Thank you for inviting us to appear before you today, and I look forward to answering your questions.