

Engaging With the Freedom and Justice Party: Protecting American National Security Interests in Post-Arab Spring Egypt

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Final Report of the Institute of Politics
National Security Student Policy Group



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ABOUT THE INSTITUTE OF POLITICS NATIONAL SECURITY POLICY GROUP

The Institute of Politics is a non-profit organization located in the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University. It is a living memorial President John F. Kennedy, and its mission is to unite and engage students, particularly undergraduates, with academics, politicians, activists, and policymakers on a non-partisan basis and to stimulate and nurture their interest in public service and leadership. The Institute strives to promote greater understanding and cooperation between the academic world and the world of politics and public affairs. Led by a Director, Senior Advisory Board, Student Advisory Committee, and staff, the Institute provides wide-ranging opportunities for both Harvard students and the general public.

The National Security Policy Group is part of the Institute of Politics' Policy Program, an initiative designed to help students express their views and make recommendations on complex and pressing policy issues such as healthcare and education. The National Security group was created in 2010 by Jean-Philippe Gauthier, a Harvard undergraduate, in order to deal with issues relating to national security and foreign affairs. This report is the result of a semester-long intensive effort by a team of 17 undergraduates and is the third report published by the National Security Policy Group.

The Institute of Politics does not endorse specific policy positions; accordingly, all views expressed in this publication should be understood to be solely those of the authors.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

For the past semester, a team of interdisciplinary undergraduates have worked to analyze the ongoing political developments in Egypt following the fall of former president Hosni Mubarak's regime in 2011. The goal of this work has been to offer policy recommendations to facilitate the United States' ability to meet the new challenges and opportunities we anticipate will come from these changes. As research progressed and it became apparent to the team that Muslim Brotherhood was likely to rise to a previously unmatched position of power in Egyptian politics, the team chose to focus on how the U.S. could credibly engage with the Brotherhood and its political arm, the Freedom and Justice Party, in order to support American interests in Egypt and the Middle East. The students gathered information from scholarly and news articles, as well as through interviews with leading academic experts and an Egyptian politician, Wael Nawara. Unfortunately, we were unable to secure meetings with American or Egyptian diplomats, or direct representatives of the Muslim Brotherhood.

This report would never have made it to this stage had it not been for the tremendous efforts of the IOP's staff, including Laura Simolaris, the executive director of the policy program, Esten Perez, director of communications, Catherine McLaughlin, the executive director of the Institute of Politics, and Trey Grayson, the director of the Institute. A massive thank you also goes to Jean-Philippe Gauthier and Kathryn Walsh, the direct supervisors of the program, for all their hard work and support throughout the year.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In the wake of the Arab Spring, the United States national security establishment is faced with a rapidly changing political landscape in Egypt. These changes affect many of our regional national security interests, from mounting counterterrorism operations to preventing nuclear proliferation. Based on the results of the Egyptian parliamentary elections in November 2011 and the first round of presidential elections in May 2012 as well as our assessment of leading political players' organizational capabilities, it is expected the Freedom and Justice Party (FJP), the political arm of the Muslim Brotherhood (MB), will increasingly control civilian power in the national government in the coming months. They will balance against the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF) for control of Egypt's immediate future.

In order to promote American national security interests, it is essential that the U.S. engage quickly but wisely with both leading political forces in Egypt to promote the creation of a democratic Egypt and sustaining the strength of the Egyptian military. The U.S. should use conditional foreign aid to the Egyptian government to help it build domestic social services capabilities and develop local economies. Concurrently, American diplomatic efforts to engage with the FJP and Egyptian national government, as both combined and separate entities, will help deliver international legitimacy to both bodies. Finally, American engagement with the FJP must be balanced with a pragmatic approach towards removing the Egyptian military as an obstruction to democratic politics. This approach will combine near-term sustained military aid—on the conditions that the SCAF abide the transitional constitution and other stipulations for human rights and justice—with a long-term plan to decrease military aid in order to level the power distribution between the civilian and military regimes.

These efforts will all serve our foreign policy objectives for Egypt and the Middle East.

Near-Term Foreign Policy Objectives for Egypt

- A. **Democracy:** The U.S.'s primary objective for over the next months should be facilitating the establishment of legitimate, pluralist, and representative democracy in Egypt. Not only is it politically necessary for the U.S. to stand vocally on the side of democracy, but the creation of democracy in Egypt will engender state stability, social and economic liberalization and moderation, and human rights and justice.
- B. **Strong Military:** As the U.S. advocates democratization in Egypt, it must incentivize the Egyptian military to become part of the democratization process rather than usurping it or becoming a casualty in the long run. A strong Egyptian military is critical to the U.S.'s regional national security interests, from monitoring terrorist networks to balancing against Iran.

Long-Term Foreign Policy Objectives for Egypt

- A. **Counterterrorism Support:** As noted above, the Egyptian military has long supported American intelligence and military efforts to disable and destroy regional terrorist networks. It is urgent that America sustain intelligence and military connections with the

Egyptian military in order to protect the U.S.'s ability to complete these long-term objectives.

- B. **The Suez Canal:** The Suez Canal is a critical military and economic artery for America, allowing the rapid transportation of military (naval ships, weaponry, troops, and supplies) and economic assets (especially oil and other natural resources) between the Persian Gulf and the West. The continued ability to traverse the Suez is critical for American military flexibility and domestic economic infrastructure. The U.S. must work with the Egyptian government to perpetuate its access to the Canal.
- C. **Egyptian-Israeli Peace:** Since the 1979 Camp David Accords, Egypt has been a leading Arab proponent of the Israeli-Palestinian peace process. The importance of Egypt's support for a peace process cannot be understated. Although today's Freedom and Justice Party does not offer the same broad support for the peace process as Mubarak's regime expressed, it maintains a qualified willingness to support the process. Through political and economic engagement, the U.S. can protect and build on this willingness in the long-term interest of Arab-Israeli peace.
- D. **Counterbalance to Iran:** In light of the ongoing threat of nuclear proliferation in Iran, it America's national security interest to balance political, economic, and military resources against Iran. Before the Arab Spring, Egypt has historically been a constant supporter of America's posture towards Iran. The Egyptian government has recently moderated its stance towards Iran, most notably by allowing them to move ships through the Suez Canal en route to Syria. However, as shown by its vocal opposition to the Assad regime in Syria, a close ally of Iran, the Egyptian government's vision for Egypt-Iran relations appears to remain nebulous. The U.S. should work with the Egyptians to garner their support for political and economic sanctions against Iran.

Geopolitical Context: Key Long-Term Foreign Policy Interests in the Middle East

- A. **Democracy:** In the past decade, American unilateralism and questions about the legitimacy of the U.S.'s use of force in AfPak, Iraq, and the Arabian Peninsula have painted the U.S. as a manipulative would-be hegemon. This perception limits the U.S. diplomatic effectiveness and flexibility, and must be ameliorated. One path is through visibly returning to core American values of liberty and human rights, and acting—non-unilaterally and non-coercively—to promote these ideals in the Middle East, including in Egypt.
- B. **Counterterrorism:** Counterterrorism—political, economic, intelligence and military—is a core American interest in the Middle East. In the coming years, America must continue to build cooperative relationships with regional militaries, including Egypt, in order to sustain political-economic and military pressure on those terrorist organizations who would export destruction.
- C. **Oil and Investments:** The Persian Gulf is arguably the energy hub of the world, and as such, draws together a multitude of American economic interests focusing on oil. This precious resource, and the political and financial investments Americans have locked into it, remains a critical factor affecting America's future trajectory towards global

political-economic preeminence. Our Middle Eastern foreign policies must all take into consideration this high-priority interest and bolster our ability to protect it.

- D. **Iran:** With the potential for a nuclear Iran, it is increasingly important for the U.S. to draw together a coalition of the willing to place political, economic, and if necessary, military pressure on Iran to disincentive nuclear proliferation.

Now is the time to accelerate engagement, with a keen eye for balancing civilian and military power in the new Egyptian national government, and a caution against creating a single-party system. The speed with which politics are changing in Egypt underscores the urgency of an American initiative to aid in the creation of a national democratic government which, through demonstrated social service and economic development credibility, can gain the faith of the Egyptian people. A legitimate democracy in Egypt is the best political system to balance against the entrenched political influence of the military, provide genuine popular sovereignty and thereby moderate fundamentalist and potentially anti-Americanism, and promote American national security interests in Egypt and the Middle East.

PROFILE OF THE FREEDOM AND JUSTICE PARTY

Egypt's Freedom and Justice Party (FJP), the political arm of the Muslim Brotherhood (MB), has demonstrably connected with the Egyptian people since the Arab Spring arrived in Cairo. This popularity contributed to the FJP's success in the November 2011 parliamentary elections during which it won a majority of votes.¹ Leading up to this electoral success, the FJP drew on two key political advantages to beat its opponents. First, it built its political platform upon the belief that Islamist politics can create and sustain a just and modern society. Though Islamist, the FJP's view of politics is moderate relative to the more conservative Salafis (an ultra-orthodox Muslim group that won approximately 28 percent of the vote in the recent parliamentary elections) who argue for absolute adherence to shari'ah law.² This moderation may have helped the MB appeal to a wider range of Egyptians, who, as a broader population, do not endorse an extreme Islamic ideology.³ Second, it drew on the MB's extensive social services network in Egypt to build popular support—the importance of this organizational advantage cannot be understated.

FJP Domestic Politics: Muslim Brotherhood Moderation and Social Services

Since crackdowns early in Mubarak's reign, the MB has actively moderated its political stance and refrained from combative political tactics (e.g. terrorism) for two reasons: first, to prevent its destruction by the Egyptian government; and second, to improve the MB's popularity with the general public, who did not endorse a radical Islamist vision or the instability engendered by a violent opposition to the government. This moderation reflects a generational divide within the Brotherhood between members of the conservative, more anti-Western "old-guard" which initiated the necessary moderation under Mubarak, and the pro-democracy, pro-pluralism younger generation which played a key role in protests that eventually toppled the dictator.⁴ In an interview with PBS, Shadi Hamid, a member of the Brookings Institution, noted that the younger Brotherhood members desire a "Turkish model of Islamism" where democracy, pluralism, and Islamic values all co-exist peacefully.⁵

Looking forward, it will be the policies of the younger progressives that will likely dominate the FJP agenda within the next five to ten years as they ascend to party leadership positions.⁶ As both Hamid suggests, these policies can be anticipated within the framework that the FJP is a pragmatic actor which can accommodate respect free markets and human rights—which fits the

¹ David Kirkpatrick and Steven Myers, "Overtures to Egypt's Islamists Reverse Longtime U.S. Policy," *The New York Times*, 3 January, 2012, http://www.nytimes.com/2012/01/04/world/middleeast/us-reverses-policy-in-reaching-out-to-muslim-brotherhood.html?_r=2&pagewanted=all.

² "Al-Nour (Light Party)," *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*, <http://egyptelections.carnegieendowment.org/2011/09/21/al-nour-light-party>.

³ "Interview Shadi Hamid," *Frontline*, 12 February, 2011, <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/revolution-in-cairo/interviews/shadi-hamid.html>.

⁴ Charles Levinson, "'Brothers' in Egypt Present Two Faces," *Wall Street Journal*, 15 February, 2011, <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748704629004576135882819143872.html>.

⁵ "Interview with Shadi Hamid."

⁶ *Ibid.*

broader public opinion of the Egyptian public and the desires of the international community—into an Islamist agenda.^{7,8,9} For instance, on the FJP’s newly-launched English website, a brainchild of presidential candidate al-Shater, the FJP expresses explicit commitment to maintaining universal suffrage.¹⁰ In keeping with this commitment, they are actively involved in youth voter registration¹¹ and have recently held several conferences organized around women and politics.¹² Al-Shater has also emphasized that Christians can and should be allowed to serve in public office.¹³

It is important to be mindful that Al-Shater’s consistent messages of using Islam only in “consultation”¹⁴ only imply a current disinclination on the FJP’s part to endorse political disenfranchisement based on religious teachings. Thus, the future of the political rights of religious minorities and women remains tenuous. No concrete policies to improve relations between Muslims and Christians have been suggested or passed through the legislature. Further, though the FJP does endorse female equality and the advancement of women’s rights¹⁵, prominent party members have spoken against a law banning Female Genital Mutilation¹⁶ and advocated other rollbacks of women’s rights.¹⁷ Thus, even as we interpret the liberal tilt of the FJP’s moderated Islamist agenda, we must remain cautious.

Part of the Muslim Brotherhood’s strategy for moderation was to rebrand itself as a social services organization.¹⁸ By the early 2000s, the MB had developed sufficient administrative and logistical infrastructure to provide the Egyptian people with a variety of social services including but not limited to schools and medical care.¹⁹ These services often offered what the government could or did not to its people, effectively letting the MB create a state within a state. The people of Egypt have come to rely on these services, and tend to gravitate towards Brotherhood-

⁷ “Interview Shadi Hamid.”

⁸ Kirkpatrick and Myers, “Overtures to Egypt’s Islamists Reverse Longtime U.S. Policy.”

⁹ Mohamed El Dahshan, “Where Will the Muslim Brotherhood Take Egypt’s Economy?” 6 February, 2012, <http://yaleglobal.yale.edu/content/muslim-brotherhood-take-egypts-economy>.

¹⁰ Steven A. Cook, “Egypt’s “Engineer“: A Look Under the Hood,” *blogs.crf.org*, Council on Foreign Relations, 2 April, 2012, <http://blogs.cfr.org/cook/2012/04/02/egypts-engineer-a...>

¹¹ “Ikhwan Web,” 9 March, 2012, <http://www.ikhwanweb.com/articles.php?pid=84>.

¹² “Ikhwan Web,” 19 March, 2012, <http://www.ikhwanweb.com/article.php?id=29793>.

¹³ Shibley Telhami, “The New Egyptian Politics,” *Brookings Institution*, 4 April, 2012, http://www.brookings.edu/opinions/2012/0404_egypt_telh...

¹⁴ Elliot Abrams, “What Does the Muslim Brotherhood Intend?” *blogs.crf.org*, Council on Foreign Relations, 13 April, 2012, <http://blogs.cfr.org/abrams/2012/04/13/what-does-the-m...>

¹⁵ “Ikhwan Web,” Freedom and Justice Party Statement on the International Women’s Day, <http://www.ikhwanweb.com/article.php?id=29768>.

¹⁶ Jessica Gray, “Islamist Parliamentarian Objects to Egypt’s Ban on FGM,” *Women’s News*, <http://womensenews.org/story/genital-mutilation/120327/islamist-parliamentarian-objects-egypts-ban-fgm>.

¹⁷ Sarah Mourad, “Egypt’s Islamist Family Laws Take Women Back to Square One,” *Albawaba*, <http://www.albawaba.com/editorchoice/egypt-islamist-family-law-419745>.

¹⁸ Nadine Farag, “Between Piety and Politics: Social Services and the Muslim Brotherhood,” *PBS Frontline*, 22 February, 2011.

¹⁹ Jeffrey Fleishman, “Many in Egypt’s Muslim Brotherhood wary of Plunge into Politics,” *Los Angeles Times*, April 29, 2012, <http://articles.latimes.com/2012/apr/29/world/la-fg-egypt-muslim-brotherhood-20120429>.

sponsored service programs because these programs are both cheaper and of higher quality than those offered by the Egyptian government.²⁰ The MB's value as a service organization provides it a strong advantage against its competitors, particularly the ultra-conservative Salafis and the disorganized liberal parties, as none of these opposition parties have the organization capacity to provide tangible resources to the population.

Although it is difficult to attribute the FJP's recent political success purely either its moderated ideology or established social services operations, it is clear that both aspects of its political strategy are sustainable and can give the FJP the potential for long-term political success. Therefore, as long as the MB can provide social services to the average Egyptian and the FJP maintains a political ideology which includes a moderated Islamist direction and a focus on legitimate representative politics, the FJP will maintain or increase its power in the Egyptian government. This assessment bars counteraction by the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF) which can directly incapacitate the MB by imprisoning or otherwise limiting key individuals' ability to lead, or undermining the efficacy of their social services work. Our finding is expected to apply for the next several years at least, given the above condition, during which time the organization of the liberals is expected to gradually coalesce and the Salafi conservatives to remain on the far right.

FJP Foreign Policy

FJP on the War on Terror:

The FJP and the Muslim Brotherhood have expressed support for the American "war on terror" in the past, but are opposed to certain aspects of its implementation. Specifically, the FJP opposes Western Islamophobia propagated by the "War on Terror" through its linkage of Islam and terrorism²¹, the vague definition of "terrorism" manipulated to serve American interests²², the "meddling in the affairs of countries in the Middle East", and crimes committed in countries such as Iraq and Afghanistan under the guise of fighting the war on terror.²³ These core objections led the Muslim Brotherhood to reject President Bush's 2008 visit to Egypt. In addition, the Muslim Brotherhood's leader Sheikh Muhammad Madhi'Akef in 2007 rejected the existence of Al Qaeda as "an American invention, so that they will have something to fight for."²⁴ In spite of these disagreements with the U.S. about the War on Terror, the MB has reportedly pledged support²⁵ for the war on terror and has distanced itself from its violent and

²⁰ "Egypt: Social Programs Bolster Appeal of Muslim Brotherhood," *IRIN Humanitarian News and Analysis*, 22 February, 2006, <http://www.irinnews.org/Report/26150/EGYPT-Social-programmes-bolster-appeal-of-Muslim-Brotherhood>.

²¹ Hamza Khaled, "Fighting Terrorism Requires More than Just Killing Bin Laden," *Ikhwan Web*, 2 May 2011, <http://www.ikhwanweb.com/article.php?id=28507&ref=search.php>.

²² "The Muslim Brotherhood's Statement 'Together Against Torture,'" *Ikhwan Web*, 14 December, 2005, <http://www.ikhwanweb.com/article.php?id=5124&ref=search.php>.

²³ Hamza, "Fighting Terrorism."

²⁴ "Egyptian Newspaper Says Obama Met with MB in Secret Meeting," *Global Muslim Brotherhood Daily Report*, 4 June, 2009, <http://globalmbreport.org/?p=1494>.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

terrorist past. However, any cooperation with America—by the MB and by extension, the FJP—will be to a lesser extent than under the Mubarak era due to these objections.

FJP-Iran Relations:

Although there is a history of tension between Egypt and Iran, since the Arab Spring, the two states have moved closer. Historical tensions were rooted in Egypt's close ties with the West and Israel following Mubarak's granting of asylum to the Shah of Iran after the 1979 Iranian Revolution.²⁶ Currently, Iran maintains close contact with Muslim Brotherhood and wants diplomatic relations with Egypt²⁷; Egypt has sent positive signals for this bilateral reconciliation.²⁸ Egyptian public opinion is decidedly more positive towards Iran than the United States. A recent Gallup poll says 40% of Egyptians believe closer relations with Iran would be good while only 28% believe the same of closer relations with the U.S.²⁹ Further, 82% oppose U.S. economic aid to Egypt, up from 71% last December, and many would rather replace the funds with money from Iran.³⁰

The growing and improving relationship between Iran and Egypt, stemming in part from Iran's prior opposition to Mubarak, is worrying to the U.S. In early April, FJP delegates traveling to the U.S. on their first official visit noted that they encourage free trade and foreign investment and integration into global financial markets. Nevertheless, Ann Paterson, U.S. Ambassador to Egypt, has expressed concerns about growing relations between the two, citing Egypt's allowance of Iranian naval vessels through the Suez Canal. Some silver lining for recent improvements to Egypt-Iranian relations is Iran's support of Syria's Bashar al-Assad, which contradicts the FJP's foreign relations committee and party vice-chairman denouncement of the crackdown and massacres Assad has committed.

FJP-Israel Relations:

The FJP has stated that it will uphold its 1979 peace treaty with Israel³¹, though this peace will concede to Israel less than during the Mubarak era. Party rhetoric has confirmed this: an FJP Member of Parliament declared in April that the party would not revise the treaty and that no peace agreements were up for re-examination. However, this peace will not be the same as

²⁶ David Schenker, "Cairo Joins the Battle Against Tehran," *Commentary Magazine*, January, 1970, <https://www.commentarymagazine.com/article/cairo-joins-the-battle-against-tehran/>.

²⁷ Chana Ya'ar, "Iran Wants to Choke Israel Through Muslim Brotherhood Alliance," *Israel National News*, 1 February, 2012, <http://www.israelnationalnews.com/News/News.aspx/152326#.T4rrjIGft94>.

²⁸ Davoud Ahmadzadeh, "Major Concerns in Iran-Egypt Relations," *Iran Review*, 1 April, 2012, http://www.iranreview.org/content/Documents/Major_Concerns_in_Iran_Egypt_Relations.htm.

²⁹ Ahmed Younis and Mohamed Younis, "Egyptians Sour on U.S., Eye Closer Ties to Turkey, Iran," *Gallup World*, 23 March, 2012, <http://www.gallup.com/poll/153401/egyptians-sour-eye-closer-ties-turkey-iran.aspx>.

³⁰ "US Polling Center: Egyptians Want Iran to Replace US as Strategic Partner," *Fars News Agency*, 2 April, 2012, <http://english.farsnews.com/newstext.php?nn=9101140018>.

³¹ Elhanan Miller, "Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood: We Acknowledge Peace with Israel," *The Times of Israel*, 29 March, 2012, <http://www.timesofisrael.com/muslim-brotherhood-official-we-are-the-only-egyptian-party-to-acknowledge-peace-with-israel>.

before: in March, a founding party member announced that peace with Israel would take on a different form, where Israel is “accountable to the entire Egyptian people and not to one man alone.” How Egypt’s position towards Israel will shift from a policy standpoint remains unclear. In past years, Mubarak went beyond the terms of the 1979 peace treaty and exerted substantial pressure on Palestinians to make compromises with Israel whilst seeking a Palestinian state. The FJP is expressly opposed to the Israeli occupation and less likely to make similar efforts. For example, in August 2011 it emphasized the need to stop security cooperation with the Israeli occupation.³² The FJP and Muslim Brotherhood also maintain an official ban of its members and affiliates from visiting the Occupied Territories, despite its voiced support for the 1979 peace treaty.

FJP-Syria:

The FJP is vocally critical of the continuing hostilities in the Syrian uprisings and the refusal of President Bashar Al-Assad to adhere to a ceasefire. Indeed, the FJP has joined the international in officially condemning the Syrian regime, which continues to assault the Syrian National Council and the Free Syrian Army.^{33,34} The FJP has labeled Assad’s assaults a “massacre”³⁵, and has declared that the international community must act swiftly against Assad and has expressed anger towards the West and Arabs for being indifferent to the situation.³⁶ The Chinese and Russian Security Council veto that backed an Arab plan urging the Syrian President to step down and put forward harsher sanctions against Syria was similarly met with FJP condemnation.³⁷

FJP-Russia/China Relations:

The respective relationships between the FJP and Russia and China are influenced by its view of the two nations’ responses toward the crisis in Syria. It has urged Russia and China to take a “more humane” stance on Syria (e.g. call for international intervention), and believes the two nations should feel responsible for the ongoing casualties in Syria: “The FJP stresses that states rejecting actions intended to prevent such atrocities, such as Russia and China, and used their so-called veto in the Security Council, have to bear their historic responsibilities in the killing and torture of women and children and the elderly as well as hundreds of men who are murdered every day.”³⁸ For now, it seems that both nations recognize the FJP as a legitimate representative body in Egypt, as they send diplomats and ambassadors on official visits with the

³² “FJP: Palestinian Reconciliation is Pivotal,” *Ikhwan Web*, 11 August 2011, <http://www.ikhwanweb.com/article.php?id=28922>.

³³ Elizabeth A. Kennedy and Ben Hubbard, “Syria Ceasefire: Assad Troops Break Truce, Shell Cities, Says Opposition,” *Huffington Post*, 17 April, 2012, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/04/17/syria-ceasefire-assad-troops-break-truce_n_1430672.html.

³⁴ “Times Topics: Bashar Al-Assad” *The New York Times*, 29 March, 2012, http://topics.nytimes.com/top/reference/timestopics/people/a/bashar_al_assad/index.html.

³⁵ “The Freedom and Justice Party Views on Current Events,” *Ikhwan Web*, 23 March 2012, <http://www.ikhwanweb.com/article.php?id=29805&ref=search.php>.

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ *Ibid.*

FJP, and vice versa. In China, the FJP is “hoping to transfer to Egypt Chinese experience in the establishment of small and medium enterprises.”³⁹ It should be noted that in Russia, the Muslim Brotherhood is considered a terrorist organization and banned from the country, though the FJP is recognized as an official group of Egypt.⁴⁰ Though the FJP is legitimized by both nations and maintains diplomatic relations, its opposition to China’s and Russia’s positions on Syria dominates the current relationship.

³⁹ “The Freedom and Justice Party Views on Current Events.”

⁴⁰ The Supreme Court of the Russian Federation, “Supreme Court Ruling on the Recognition of a Number of Foreign Terrorist Organizations,” *Religare*, 24 June, 2003, http://www.religare.ru/2_5347.html.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The goal is to promote stability and democratically-principled governance in the short-term in order to allow the gradual cementation of a militarily-strong, democratic state. The long-term cementation of this vision includes in it the consolidation of a democratic opposition—the hallmark of a democratic state, sustainment of the Egyptian military’s strength even as it is removed from Egyptian politics, and ultimately, the distribution of political power to people so that no single political entity, including the military, can co-opt their state.

Along the path to achieving this vision, the FJP must be able to consolidate its legitimate influence, and build on the democratic (representational) platform it has already created through moderation and extensive social services operations. The FJP’s legitimacy will help promote representational governance in Egypt; simultaneously, it will help bolster the FJP against undermining attempts by the SCAF, which remains a strong power player in Egyptian politics. The U.S. should help the FJP towards this end by allocating increased foreign aid to government efforts towards domestic economic development and social service efforts; as the FJP has a dominant role in politics, successful improvements will help its legitimacy without the party itself receiving any direct funding from America. Further, the U.S. should expressly endorse the FJP’s role as a legitimate player in Egyptian politics, being careful not to equate the FJP with the Egyptian government. The critical balance here is to support the FJP in order to support the burgeoning democratic Egyptian government—this approach is most in keeping with our long-term interests.

Yet even as the SCAF is balanced against by the FJP, it must not be outbalanced. The U.S. must help to ensure that the SCAF is incentivized to engage with the democratic process rather than undermining or bypassing it by ensuring that the SCAF does not feel rapidly disempowered or uncertain of its future influence in Egyptian politics (which would provide incentive for it to act destructively in the short-term). In the long-term, American aid will be reduced to the military as the domestic democratic regime consolidates political legitimacy. This downshift will need to be gradual and cautious, conducted only as the domestic regime is able to effectively handle the military’s resistance to change and attempts to undermine the political process. This ability is not purely institutional: it is democratic. Only when the Egyptian population has gained a vested interest in and been empowered through involvement in fair and representative politics will it provide the necessary disincentive to the military to intervene in the fledgling democracy. A military is not politically infallible, as we are seeing today in Syria, and will not be keen throw its weight around if it expects widespread public rejection as we have seen throughout the Arab Spring.

Unfortunately, until the state—as opposed to a military oligarchy—has a true monopoly on violence in Egypt, democratic politics cannot be sustained. This means that the military must be beholden to the system—not to any one party, whether it be the SCAF, FJP, or a future liberal regime. The end-goal, as elucidated in this paper’s introduction, is the development of a strong military which can secure Egypt without hindering internal democracy.

Diplomatic Engagement

A first step towards helping the FJP build democratic legitimacy is for the U.S. to express its support of the FJP as a leading player in Egyptian politics.⁴¹ After a recent visit to Egypt, Senator Kerry, head of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, said, “The United States needs to deal with the new reality...and it needs to step up its game” in engaging with the rising political player.⁴² Moving forward, this means that public statements by the U.S. government should continue to express support for the FJP as a credible partner in Egypt. Given the positive reaction to Obama’s 2009 Cairo speech, it appears that a stronger stance of U.S. support could be favorably received. Whereas 2008 levels of approval of the United States were around 20%, as of 2009, 25% of Egyptians had favorable opinions on the United States.⁴³ Now is an opportunity for the U.S. to connect with the current leaders of Egyptian politics, and help build the bridge to a stable and democratic Egypt. Additionally, the U.S. should legitimize the new Egyptian democracy, led by the FJP, with increased American delegations and embassy presence to improve official relations between the two. These interactions will inevitably bring the U.S. into contact with the FJP, allowing the two parties to build ties.⁴⁴ Communications must stress the FJP’s role as a *democratic* leader in Egypt—and therefore, must be able to cite genuine efforts by the FJP towards democracy.

Initial steps the U.S. can take towards helping the FJP build domestic and international legitimacy should also include increased official engagement between the two parties. According to Shadi Hamid, what the Muslim Brotherhood wants from a relationship with the United States is “[i]nternational legitimacy”: it “wants to be seen as a respectable actor, and that’s important in terms of attracting foreign investment, improving its economic situation, boosting trade with Europe and the U.S.”⁴⁵ There is a concern that this engagement could hurt the FJP’s domestic credibility; however, the FJP is actually uniquely poised to engage with the U.S. due to its “strong nationalist credentials” and “very strong anti-American credentials.” These characteristics of the FJP, constructed by the MB over decades’ time, mean that the FJP is less likely, as compared to the liberal parties, to be accused of being unduly swayed by foreign influences, even as it embraces Western acceptance onto the world stage.^{46,47}

⁴¹ David D. Kirkpatrick and Steven Lee Meyers, “Overtures to Egypt’s Islamists Reverse Longtime U.S. Policy,” January 3, 2012, <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/01/04/world/middleeast/us-reverses-policy-in-reaching-out-to-muslim-brotherhood.html?pagewanted=all>.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Spencer Ackerman, “Poll Reveals Growing Muslim Antipathy to Obama Foreign Policy,” 18 June, 2010, <http://washingtonindependent.com/87411/poll-reveals-growing-muslim-antipathy-to-obama-foreign-policy>.

⁴⁴ H.A. Hellyer, “The Muslim Brotherhood is Dead: Long Live the Freedom and Justice Party,” *Huffington Post*, 17 April, 2012, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/ha-hellyer/the-mb-is-dead-long-live-the-freedom-and-justice-party_b_1418866.html.

⁴⁵ Azmat Khan, “Why Is America Reaching Out to Egypt’s Muslim Brotherhood?” 6 January, 2012, *PBS Frontline*, <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/foreign-affairs-defense/revolution-in-cairo-foreign-affairs-defense/why-is-america-reaching-out-to-egypts-muslim-brotherhood/>.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

One of the first steps the U.S. and FJP can take together on the world stage is for the U.S. should support the Egyptian stance towards the Syrian uprisings and release a joint-declaration with the FJP restating their mutual position against Assad's continued assaults. This prioritizes enhancing trust between the FJP and the U.S. and brings the two together to tackle the Syrian conflict. By collaborating with the FJP in issuing a joint-declaration condemning the Syrian regime, America will signal to the FJP that it does indeed intend to enhance relations and that it views the FJP as an important and legitimate player in the Middle East. This policy would also distance Egypt and the FJP from Iran, China, and Russia due to their opposing positions from the FJP towards the Syrian conflict, benefitting the U.S. because Egypt will not draw closer to anti-Western and anti-American states and will maintain a strong relationship with the U.S.

Economic Aid

The historic cornerstone of U.S.-Egypt relations, conditional economic aid should be the necessary complement to U.S. diplomatic engagement with the FJP as we move forward. However, aid must not continue to be distributed as it was under Mubarak. American aid cannot become tied to a single party again—instead, it must be tied to a vision of a democratic Egypt. Again, the critical balance with aid and engagement is communicating that America supports a democratic Egyptian regime, of which the FJP is a current leader—not that America supports the FJP.

The first step towards achieving this balance is by reforming the aid structure. Moving forward, aid provision to Egypt should continue at the pre-revolution levels of around \$1.5 billion per year. Prior to the revolution, typically 75 to 85 per cent of the aid was military aid.⁴⁸ America should reform its aid provision to slowly phase out military aid in favor of economic aid for Egypt. “Slowly” is a key word here: aid must not leave the military so quickly that the military is weakened or the SCAF perceives its political clout to be evaporating, both of which bode poorly for a strong democratic Egypt in the future. The increase in domestic aid can be used by the Egyptian government to overlay official social service networks over the previously-established MB social services networks, thereby enhancing the FJP's popularity as the leading party in Egypt's democracy even as the state within a state created by the MB is slowly deconstructed. Although the decrease in military aid may be worrisome to some Egyptians, a flourishing government social services program will produce more tangible benefits—for healthcare, education, and general welfare—for citizens.

Providing aid to the growing democracy is of course a risky endeavor, and in doing it, the U.S. must show itself to be on the side of democracy and not the FJP. This can be achieved through carefully placed conditions on the foreign aid given directly to the Egyptian government. By offering the funds to the government, the U.S. is endorsing its legitimacy and exhibiting trust in the Egyptian government's ability to serve. However, as the FJP effectively runs the government at this point, the danger exists that these funds may be co-opted for FJP political purposes—

⁴⁸ Jeremy Sharp, “Egypt: Background and U.S. Relations,” Congressional Research Service, 14 June, 2006, <http://fpc.state.gov/documents/organization/68818.pdf>.

perhaps to continue building the unofficial MB social services network, fund domestic campaigns and other political initiatives, et cetera. This must not be allowed to happen, or the U.S. will find itself tied again to an Egyptian political party. This would inevitably drive up anti-Americanism, thereby limiting the U.S. diplomatic effectiveness in Egypt—an unacceptable consequence given the high-value nature of our national security interests in Egypt.

To prevent this ill-use of American foreign aid, conditional use must be established and monitors must be put in place to watch over the funds' allocation. The conditions should be predominantly negative, as positive requirements necessarily curtail the Egyptian government's sovereignty over the funds. Negatively, they should prohibit the removal of funds from official auspices, so that any ill-use of the aid would be forced through official channels where it can be better-monitored. Further, the conditions should prohibit the use of funds to support party-specific political initiatives, including election and advertisement campaigns, party administrative costs, and party recruiting efforts. In keeping with this, the conditions should set a high bar for targeting the allocation of funds to domestic social services and development projects. It bodes poorly for the democratic system if the FJP were to funnel American aid into fortifying the MB's social services' network under the guise of expanding the government's aid to the people. It would bode equally poorly for the FJP to target development initiatives towards particular constituents in order to build its own political support.

Thus, the question of how American aid should be targeted must be required to pass through the Egyptian legislature and meet the approval of a super-majority of Egyptian lawmakers before being allocated for social services and development initiatives. The super-majority requirement is high, and will surely stall the use of the aid. However, a lower bar presents the opportunity for the majority-strong FJP to monopolize the targeting of aid which is itself a far worse outcome than stalled aid. The super-majority requirement will ensure that non-FJP (majority) members of the parliament can curb illicit use of the aid, and potentially—though this hope may be optimistic—force non-majority parliament members to form a coalition in order to better influence the allocation of American aid. Even if a working coalition cannot be established, the super-majority requirement will force all parties in the government to have hands in the process of allocating aid, which will offset initiatives by the FJP to empower select portions of the citizenry for its own political gain and thereby stall the democratization process.

There is the argument that if the super-majority requirement brings the Egyptian parliament to slow-down or stand-still, American aid may contribute to a failure of Egyptian governance and be vilified by the Egyptian public. It will remain American diplomats' responsibility to judge the effects of American aid and the probability that the super-majority requirement will be met. If the requirement appears set too high and the above scenario threatens, since the bar cannot be lowered, the U.S. must be prepared to remove its aid in order to preserve influence and distance itself from a dysfunctional legislature. However, this is a last resort. Throughout the course of aid being provided, the U.S. must take an extremely active role, bartering influence and assets with the FJP, in particular, to facilitate the passage of aid through the super-majority. Though potentially contrary to our immediate interests in democratization, diplomatic engagement directly with the FJP to help the party build domestic legitimacy can be leveraged to increase the FJP's willingness to compromise with non-majority parties.

Further, the U.S. must consistently voice to the Egyptian parliament and political players that American aid is an invaluable tool for Egyptians to pull themselves from the socioeconomic hole that Mubarak left them in and thereby legitimize themselves. The lack of positive limits to the aid will be concrete indication of our interest in the Egyptians themselves running the aid process, and the negative conditions listed above—specifically the super-majority requirement—will show that the U.S. is not endorsing the FJP as a hegemonic leader. Rather, it will show that the U.S. endorses the democratic process, and that America believes that just and effective allocation of aid will benefit all political parties who can take credit for aiding its passage to help the people. This final point is critical: the allocation of aid will help legitimize all parties who cooperate, and most importantly, will begin to forge a bond between the Egyptian people and their government which has finally begun to meet its socioeconomic needs. Here, we are betting two ways: first, that the Egyptian political parties are genuinely interested in democracy and serving the people; and second, that they can be sold on absolute gains in legitimacy rather than relative gains to other players in the parliament. The latter “bet” may be a tough sell; however, the U.S. can frame all improvements in legitimacy as fundamentally necessary for a party’s existence today, because as the system moves forward certain parties will inevitably continue to gain legitimacy. Those parties which rebuke the opportunity for gains today will suffer tomorrow.

Caution

This approach, combining both engagement and economic aid, with the FJP, requires caution on America’s part. To stress the above point: the U.S. should not find itself in the position of supporting a particular regime—in this case, the FJP’s—to the detriment of the Egyptian government, as America has in the past to its own detriment. Thus, the strategy of engagement should focus on the government as a whole, with our focus on the FJP framed exclusively in terms of helping bridge Egypt to stability and democracy. This means setting rigid conditions for use of American aid, in order to assure two things: first, that aid is used exclusively to promote social security and economic growth; and second, that it is no way used to undercut other democratic contenders (e.g. by focusing social services on contentious political zones, fortifying the FJP’s political machine, etc.). America must ensure that both the FJP and the Egyptian people understand its role as purely supportive, non-manipulative, and pro-stability and democracy.

Setting and fulfilling this role will be critical for the U.S. to overcome internal opposition to the use of American aid. Though this opposition is not politically mainstream at this time, it retains the potential to drive policy. For instance, in February 2012, in response to Salafist assertions that donations from Egyptian citizens should replace U.S. financial assistance to Egypt, president of the FJP Mohamed Morsi expressed his party’s predominant sentiment towards U.S. aid when he said there was “no time to speak about the issue right now.”⁴⁹ The MB

⁴⁹ “Brotherhood: U.S. aid ‘chain that restricts Egypt’s freedom,’” *Ahram Online*, 15 February, 2012, <http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/3/0/34634/Business/0/Brotherhood-U.S.-aid-chain-that-restricts-Egypt-fre.aspx>.

deputy leader Rashad Bayoumi simultaneously issued a statement saying, “U.S. assistance is like a chain that restricts our freedom. The Egyptian people should reject this humiliating aid.”⁵⁰ While Bayoumi is certainly not alone in perceiving the aid program as a fetter on his country, the voice of Morsi is expected to prevail for at least another year or two as the government transitions and consolidates. It is too early to discuss the possibility of rejecting U.S. financial aid to Egypt, even if it is directed to the military, because “this could hinder the ongoing process of restructuring state institutions.”⁵¹ Now is the time for the U.S. to engage with the FJP, and ameliorate the opposition by showing itself to be genuinely non-manipulative and pro-democracy.

U.S.-SCAF Relations

Yet, even with caution, taking this approach could strain American relations with the Egyptian military. To decrease chances of immediate negative effects, American aid to the Egyptian military should not be removed (or projected to be removed) at exorbitant rates such that the military feels its influence on Egyptian politics will be quickly, irreparably harmed. If it feels so, it may react precipitously, creating further instability. Instead, military aid should be held level, even as additional aid is allocated to the civilian regime. As the civilian regime gains legitimacy and functional momentum, military aid can slowly be decreased. Gradual shift towards engagement, with the associated direction change for foreign aid, will help ease the entire system towards democracy and ease the military into a new role as a strong protector of the Egyptian state without the political clout its leaders enjoyed under Mubarak.

As the gradual shift in aid from military to economic is undertaken, certain conditions must be set on the continued military aid in order to both disincentivize SCAF co-option of the democratic process and encourage the SCAF to willingly limit its involvement in civil affairs. The top-tier conditions for sustained aid at the current rate are the SCAF’s adherence to the transitional constitution, maintenance of positive relations with Israel⁵², and refrainment from human rights violations as were committed early in the revolution.⁵³ The SCAF’s fulfillment of these conditions will ensure that it retains the military operating capacity its political influence relies on and many American national security interests hinge upon, without allowing it to co-opt the democratic process. By the time the democratic process is functional, including the coalescence of a genuine opposition, the SCAF’s ability to manipulate politics will be naturally mediated by the will of the newly-empowered people. Concurrently, the maintenance of a strong military throughout the early stages of democratization may help—in addition to the conditions set on American aid—to mediate intentions and efforts by the FJP to dominate the democratic process themselves; in the military, they will have a natural, though not democratic, opposition force to such actions. This in itself would be helpful as democracy builds in Egypt.

⁵⁰ “Brotherhood: U.S. aid ‘chain that restricts Egypt’s freedom.’”

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² “U.S. Support for Egypt,” *U.S. Department of State*, 2012, <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2012/03/186709.htm>.

⁵³ Dina Guirguis, “U.S. should abandon support of SCAF,” 19 October, 2011, <http://thehill.com/blogs/congress-blog/foreign-policy/188547-us-should-abandon-support-of-scaf>.

Looking forward past the early stages, it is clear that the Egyptian military must not be crippled and left a casualty of the democratization process. It is in the long-term interests of the FJP as well as SCAF to see a well-funded military so as to preserve Egypt's position as one of the foremost regional Arab powers. Further, a weakened Egyptian military would run counter to certain U.S. national security interests—particularly counterterrorism and intelligence cooperation, securing the Suez Canal, and balancing against Iran. Thus, while long-term interests of dignity, justice, democracy, and human rights for the Egyptian people are obvious goals of the U.S., they need to be more of a long-term objective and a long-term campaign of enhancing soft-power influence, while in the short-term America should use its hard power to reinforce the stability provided by SCAF that is in compliance with our national security interests by continuing to provide military aid to the SCAF. Through conditioned sustained military aid followed by gradually decreased aid, the SCAF can be held in place by the U.S. while keeping it from overriding democratic reform.

CONCLUSION

“One of the things that the United States needs to avoid is the appearance that it is a puppet master manipulating whoever is still in power in Cairo.”⁵⁴

In addressing the question of how the United States can influence current political developments in Egypt without appearing as a puppet master and ruining the legitimacy of its partners, the U.S. has two options: it can either adopt a hands-off approach towards Egyptian politics, or it can follow the diplomatic engagement-conditional aid approach outlined in this paper. The former option risks America forfeiting all leverage in Egypt. Alternatively, the latter entails endorsing the government through diplomatic interactions and financial assistance in key development areas, particularly social services and economic growth. In an effort to prevent the appearance of U.S. meddling, the assistance would not be U.S.-directed; rather, the Egyptian government would have control over its use, limited only by negative conditions.

The sole limits on its agency would be delineated in conditions that promote democracy by preventing single-party monopolization of aid and the resulting hegemonic entrenchment. Wisely chosen conditions can ensure that the FJP cannot use the aid to illegitimately consolidate its political base by providing targeted social services or economic favors to important constituents. Instead, conditions will promote the establishment of true legitimacy for the leading party—and most importantly, the national government—by offering a long-term path towards political preeminence: the creation of security and prosperity. As the government (and leading party) employs U.S. assistance to create and run social services and build the Egyptian economy, thereby fulfilling the two gravest needs of the Egyptian people, Egyptians will come to believe in their government. Simultaneously, these conditions can help ensure that aid is not used to establish a hegemony in Egypt, but rather to build a pluralist system in which the people have a vested interest. As the U.S. pursues a path of engagement with the Egyptian government and the FJP, it should simultaneously adopt a model for future U.S. aid to SCAF and the Egyptian military in which aid will gradually be tapered when the democratic regime has exhibited functional stability and genuine popular support. Until a democratic opposition is solidified, the military should continue to receive aid pending its adherence to key conditions that allow it to be part of the democratization process. Eventually, this model will allow the military to coexist as a necessary support to the national regime rather than as an obstructive political force.

To conclude, the U.S. is in a unique position to influence Egyptian politics such that a sustainable system which incorporates oppositional views is born, with a forward look towards legitimate pluralistic rule. America’s strategy must focus on supporting the FJP to the extent that it can help build stability without gaining hegemonic control over politics; supporting the SCAF to the extent that it will not undermine stability while remaining a strong force in the region; and remaining steadfastly in support of democracy, promoting pluralism and using diplomatic engagement and conditioned aid to guide power back to the hands of the people.

⁵⁴ Tom Gjelten, “U.S. Struggles To Balance Its Interests In Egypt,” *National Public Radio*, 11 February, 2011, <http://www.npr.org/2011/02/11/133691051/U-S-Struggles-To-Balance-Interests-In-Egypt>.