

U.S.-Egyptian “Historic Partnership” Reeks with Hypocrisy

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Largely overshadowed by events in Iraq and Syria, the Obama administration is dropping its pretense at displeasure with the military junta in Egypt and restoring full support for the regime that so recently quashed the country’s faltering attempt at democracy.

Secretary of State John Kerry, en route to troubled Baghdad, stopped in Cairo, where he announced that Washington would soon release a briefly withheld portion of the more than a billion dollars in aid that the Egyptian military receives each year from American taxpayers.

Kerry affirmed the “historic partnership” between the U.S. and Egyptian governments, while expressing confidence “that the [10] Apaches [helicopter gunships] will come, and that they will come very, very soon.” The *New York Times* [noted](#) that “the Egyptian military has been especially eager” to receive the gunships.

Considering how the military government treats the Egyptian people, one can fully believe it.

Let’s remember that in 2011, when Egyptians took to the streets to demand an end to the decades-long dictatorship of Hosni Mubarak, the Obama administration — in particular then-secretary of state Hillary Clinton — stood by Mubarak until the bitter end. Two years earlier, when asked about Mubarak’s despicable human-rights record, which was documented in State Department reports, Clinton [said](#), “I really consider President and Mrs. Mubarak to be friends of my family. So I hope to see him often here in Egypt and in the United States.” That statement led some to wonder if she was the right person to be handling the Egyptian crisis for the U.S. government.

Moreover, the *New York Times* [reported](#), State Department cables given to WikiLeaks revealed that “relations with Mr. Mubarak warmed up because President Obama played down the public ‘name and shame’ approach of the Bush administration.” (Behind the scenes, the *Times* reported, diplomats repeatedly “raised concerns with Egyptian officials about jailed dissidents and bloggers, and kept tabs on reports of torture by the police.”) Military aid to the government continued to flow.

When Mubarak’s ouster was inevitable, the administration backed an abortive “compromise” that would have put Mubarak’s chief enforcer in charge. Thus the U.S. government’s claim that it supported the popular Arab Spring was exposed as a sham.

The Egyptian people's uprising led to their first elections and a victory for candidates associated with the Muslim Brotherhood, which, despite its reputation among American hawks, had forsworn violence decades before. The administration of President Mohammed Morsi (June 2012 – July 2013) was marred by repression, exclusion, incompetence, an uncooperative opposition, and public discontent, but that did not justify what followed: a military coup, the suppression of the Muslim Brotherhood and other opposition, violence against peaceful demonstrators, silencing of opposition media, jailing of journalists on the thinnest of pretexts, and death sentences for hundreds of Egyptians, including the leader of the Muslim Brotherhood. All this was topped off this past spring by the election of former general Abdel Fattah el-Sisi as president, with a suspicious 95 percent of the vote.

This is the regime that Kerry and Obama wish to work with in pursuit of their “historic partnership.” Do they think the world is blind and deaf?

The U.S. ruling elite has long seen Egypt's military as a bulwark against the sort of popular political change that would conflict with the regional hegemonic program of American administrations and their ally Israel. For example, in 1978 Israel and Egypt signed an accord at Camp David under prodding by then-president Jimmy Carter in return for billions of dollars in annual military aid from America's taxpayers. With the two countries putting aside their historic differences, Egypt was removed as an ally of the Palestinians in their struggle for an independent state on the West Bank, occupied by Israel since 1967, and in the Gaza Strip, whose borders are controlled by Israel. Mubarak helped enforce the brutal Israeli blockade of the Gaza Strip imposed in 2007. For that reason, Palestinians welcomed the dictator's ouster and the election of Morsi, and received the news of the coup against Morsi with apprehension.

But the coup — which the Obama administration was reluctant to identify as such — served U.S. government interests. Its alliance with Egypt's military dictatorship shows the hypocrisy of Barack Obama's paeans to freedom and self-government. Americans should be embarrassed.

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